

**Institution: University of East Anglia**

**Unit of Assessment: 25 Education**

**a. Context**

The research impact of the School of Education and Lifelong Learning (EDU) builds on a long history of engagement with practitioners and policy makers, not only as users of EDU research but also as problem-definers, evidence gatherers and interpreters within the research process. This distinctive approach to ensuring research impact emerged from the Centre for Applied Research in Education's (CARE) seminal work on the School Council's Humanities Curriculum Project in the 1970s, which challenged the separation of research from action, and led to re-conceptualisation of the role of academic educational researchers in relation to the wider public. The School's current strategy for maximising research impact continues to be informed by this commitment to promoting democratic principles of practice and to ensuring that research serves a purpose in addressing inequalities in society and education. CARE plays a leading role in the School with relation to maximising impact by sharing expertise on dissemination and ways of engaging diverse stakeholders in research.

The School's reputation as one of the country's outstanding providers of high quality primary and secondary initial teacher education (attested by consistent awards of Ofsted Grade 1 and positioned in the top ten University Providers out of 75 in the 2012 The Good University Guide) has built on and contributed to the impact of its research within educational communities locally, regionally and nationally. Teachers in partnership schools have contributed to developing and using research approaches and findings to enhance their practice and make lasting institutional changes. The strong practice of research-led and research-informed teaching is reflected in the high profile of many of the School's researchers in the professional literature – for example, Haydn, Gordon, Cox and Cockburn – which pre-service and in-service teachers are required to read as part of their induction into, and progression through, the teaching profession. The launch of postgraduate courses in areas such as counselling and international education has led to new directions in research activity, which has influenced a greater diversity of institutions (such as international development organisations, hospitals and police services) as well as individuals outside the formal education sector.

Academic staff members are involved in research which has resulted in innovation in teaching and learning approaches and in internationalising the curriculum not only within the School, but more broadly in Higher Education. This has benefited both home and international students and their educators. Through promoting interdisciplinary research, the *Literacy and Development* and the *Research in Mathematics Education* Groups (LDG and RME), have developed new approaches for mediating theory and methodology and communicating their research findings across disciplinary boundaries. This has ensured that their research has reached audiences outside higher education institutions. For instance, our mathematics education research has introduced innovative approaches to improving secondary student engagement with mathematics (see MAUD example in Section b) and our literacy and development research has introduced concepts of 'situated literacies' to policy makers in UNESCO and child-led research methodologies to NGOs such as CamFed International (Campaign for Female Education).

**b. Approach to impact**

The School's approach to maximising impact has been developed in the context of the strong structures and policies provided by the University. For example, by including enterprise and engagement as a category equivalent to research and teaching in its promotion criteria, the University provides a strong incentive for all academic staff to undertake activities that will secure and extend the impact of their research. Moreover, the School has also drawn on university-wide strategies, like CUE East (the Community-University Engagement initiative funded by HEFCE as part of its Beacon for Public Engagement scheme), the University's Press Office and Research and Enterprise Services, for maximising and supporting impact. Examples include:

## Impact template (REF3a)

- Using internally competitive University grant schemes such the Outreach Opportunities Fund for projects that develop or extend research that benefits local communities (for instance, the outreach project with recently-arrived Eastern and Central European high school pupils carried out by Priyadharshini and Watson in 2011).
- Deploying the remarkable success with another internally competitive University grant scheme (the UEA Teaching Fellowships: 10 out of 60 allocated to EDU since 2007-8) towards projects that enhance the impact of research on the professional practice and learning experience within HE. Recent examples (2012-13) include the projects carried out by Magyar, Robinson-Pant, Lane, Lamb, Lebeau and Westrup.
- Another notable example of this success is MAUD, the annual *Maths at Uni Day*. This is an event launched in 2006 as collaboration between EDU's RME Group and UEA's School of Mathematics which evolved in 2008 into an annual event with regional schools and the Norfolk Further Mathematics Centre. Throughout, MAUD – with the design of its activities drawing on the findings of research conducted by RME Group researchers – has introduced hundreds of A-level students to the experience and benefits of university-level studies in mathematics.
- Using University infrastructure and facilities for discussions of research with the general public, situated in public spaces (e.g., Café Conversations with topics such as 'Increasing Happiness, Decreasing Consumption' and 'Boredom in Later Life', in the Atrium of the Norwich Forum).

Further, a key vehicle for the School's impact strategy is CARE's distinctive approach to impact, which centres on participation by, and engagement with, communities beyond academia through:

- Providing an actual and virtual 'entry point' for external agencies and individuals seeking information on research or research collaboration, through the CARE *Archive*, located physically in the Lawrence Stenhouse Building at UEA (which houses EDU) and virtually within the CARE website (which includes a regular newsletter on CARE activities).
- Offering a space for methodological exploration, through organising symposia, collaborative publications and mentoring of new researchers. This is outward-looking and facilitates research events by, and with, participants from outside academia, and from outside the UK.
- Developing opportunities for the general public to engage with the School's research face-to-face (e.g. launch of the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA) Fellows Education Forum by Elliott in 2010) and virtually (e.g. Robinson-Pant's invited contribution to UNESCO World Education Blog, 2012).

### c. Strategy and plans

The School's impact strategy is aligned with, and elaborates further, the strategic objectives in the Social Sciences Faculty Impact Enhancement Strategy (which includes Impact Champions in each School and a competition for small project funding to promote impact from research). Specifically, the School's strategies aim to sustain and strengthen the impact of educational research locally, nationally and internationally through continued dissemination, engagement and collaboration.

**Strategies to maximise local impact:** Over the next five years, the School will intensify its work with educational practitioners and policy makers in a range of institutions across East Anglia, particularly with partnership schools through teacher education programmes and collaborative research, and with third sector organisations (e.g. current collaboration with Red Balloon, an organisation for bullied children). The EdD (Doctorate in Education), the graduates of which benefit from doctoral supervision by, and collaboration with, EDU researchers, has contributed to strengthening capacity in a range of professions within which its graduates work (e.g. head teachers, local education advisors, paramedics and midwives). Practitioner research and applied educational research will remain core activities, with staff principally involved with teacher education programmes being offered more allocated research time, as well as mentoring towards funding applications and publications. CARE will play a major role in disseminating research to East Anglian audiences, drawing on the support of the Community-University Engagement Office to organise events with the general public. CARE will support dissemination of research outputs in hard copy and electronically via the School website, and continue to host regular events to facilitate methodological debate between academics, professionals and the wider public.

**Strategies to extend impact on a local level to national and international levels:** The two impact case studies submitted illustrate how small-scale research projects can be developed to have an impact on groups and institutions outside the UK. To this aim:

- EDU will fund faculty to present their research in national and international conferences that are tailored to attract policy makers and practitioners (such as the *Teacher Education Policy* in Europe, the *Association of Mathematics Education Teachers* and the *World Association of Learning Studies* conferences, following three examples of recent staff contributions).
- One such international conference per year will be hosted by EDU. Past examples include: the BAICE (British Association for International and Comparative Education) 2010 conference on *Education for Social Justice*; and, the *International Children’s Spirituality* conference 2012.
- EDU will involve its international research student community further in critical discussion of research conducted in the School through events focusing on methodological issues (e.g. CARE *Internationalising Research Ethics* symposium), as well as through day-to-day interaction in seminars and supervision. Valuing the contribution of international research students in taking forward and adapting research methods and findings to their own country contexts has been key to ensuring that the School’s research has a lasting impact on their professional practice and institutions worldwide (evidenced particularly through the School’s longstanding work with educational officials and teachers from Malaysia, Ethiopia, Hong Kong and Egypt). Many international doctoral students return to influential positions in their home countries (an example being the previous Head of the Curriculum Section in the Malaysian Ministry of Education who went on to become Malaysian Ambassador at UNESCO).
- Faculty conducting research in the local context will extend the national and international impact of their projects through investigating a wider range of dissemination activities (supported by the University Press Office) and to develop international partnerships which target follow-up research and collaborative research bidding.
- Faculty will expand their service in advisory roles to international agencies and on national/international committees in order to strengthen links with policy makers and practitioners (such as Robinson-Pant’s current work as Global Research Coordinator for the IFAD/UNESCO research project in Cambodia, Egypt and Ethiopia *Learning, Knowledge and Skills for Agriculture to Improve Rural Livelihoods*).
- EDU will provide training and guidance to strengthen researchers’ understanding and use of social networking media to promote and disseminate the outcomes and importance of their research.

**d. Relationship to case studies**

The two case studies demonstrate how research – initially conducted in collaboration with local schools, teachers and students – can be developed to have an impact on a wide range of educational practitioners in an international context. The synergies described in section (a) – between CARE’s innovative participatory approaches and the School’s exemplary track record in teacher education – can be seen in the ways in which both case studies draw on their strong networks with local practitioners both to facilitate the research and to embed the findings.

- *Children’s participation in decision-making in primary classrooms* illustrates how strategies for developing the methodological impact of the project at the international level were generated through an ESRC seminar series, which led to publications for a wider international audience of policy makers and practitioners. The researchers’ interaction with international agencies were strengthened through this collaboration and, along with the dissemination of the study reports on CFBT’s website, led to CamFEd International and UNICEF incorporating child-led research methods into their policy and programmes.
- *Measuring the working atmosphere in the classroom: The Haydn Scale* illustrates how in-depth research in local schools was developed through Haydn’s role as teacher educator into a tool for immediate impact on teacher education and classroom practice. The scale is now widely used in schools and in teacher education across the UK and beyond, and has become one of the most extensively used instruments for influencing classroom climate and behaviour in schools.