

<p>Institution: University of Bristol</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: Education - UoA 25</p>
<p>a. Context</p> <p>Achieving high impact is at the heart of everything we do at the Graduate School of Education (GSoE). We believe that in many areas of education, true research excellence is achieved when scholarship of the highest quality leads to major societal benefits. This idea underpins the GSoE's research culture. We regard impact, not as an accidental after-thought, but something which determines the research questions we ask and the answers we seek. It also underpins our engagement and dissemination activities involving a wide range of stakeholders, users and beneficiaries. The GSoE has a critical mass of researchers in 5 interdisciplinary research areas: these are international and comparative education; globalisation and education; assessment and education; science, mathematics, technology enhanced learning and professional development; and mind, brain, learning and well-being. We also house specialist expertise in advanced methodological innovations, such as the Centre for Multi-level Modelling, and in Narrative Inquiry.</p> <p>In 2012/13 we restructured into three Thematic Groups (Learning Lives, Learning Inquiry, Learning Societies) to provide greater intellectual coherence across the School, and to act as inclusive academic homes for all our staff and doctoral students. These structures enable us to provide both across-the-board and bespoke capacity building for our research activity, including the development of impact-related questions, how to engage stakeholders, and the most effective means of disseminating findings to stakeholders, users, and beneficiaries to ensure reach.</p> <p>Our stakeholders, users and beneficiaries include students, parents, teachers, head-teachers, administrators, academics, policymakers, programme developers, development workers, community workers, counsellors, the judiciary, media, and lay members of the public located within and beyond the UK. They are also found in a range of sectors, from early-years learning to schools, universities, and further education colleges, and in a variety of formal and informal organisations - such as families, Local Education Authorities, Ministries of Education, professional associations, teacher unions, education firms, international development agencies, NGOs, and regional and international organisations. This diversity results in a wide range of impacts, including (1) the development of tools, algorithms and knowledge which we place in the public arena via peer reviewed journals; (2) expert advice to schools, governments, firms and NGOs with a demonstrable impact on policy, programmes and commercial activity; (3) engagement with the public through mainstream and social media aimed at adults and young learners; (4) changes in professional standards and practice; (5) Professional Development and Teacher Education; and (6) the development of statistical methodology and applications for the UK and overseas.</p>
<p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>We have undertaken specific actions and policies to make explicit, and build, pathways to impact.</p> <p>Pathway 1 - Identifying impact-related research questions: Achieving impact begins with the development of questions whose answers have direct policy, programme, and practice relevance. This can be seen in ESRC-funded projects, such as Thomas' <i>Improving Educational Evaluation and Quality in China</i>, which demonstrated very strong potential for impact because of its research questions. It subsequently received an "outstanding" rating for its research impact. The questions driving many research projects within the GSoE are focused on how to improve teaching and learning experiences in ways that benefit young people students, families and communities. For example, during the inception phase, Tikly's DfID-funded <i>EdQual Research Programme Consortium</i> (2005-11) asked: how might low-income countries improve the quality of education so as to improve learning outcomes? Similarly, Feiler's <i>Disability Data Collection Project</i> (2010-12) asked: what might be learnt from the parents of children with disabilities and their child's experiences of schooling, to better inform schools' practices? Based on the answers, Feiler and colleagues were able to develop a fit-for-purpose Toolkit now used by schools in England to ensure a student's disability does not become invisible to teachers and administrators in schools.</p> <p>Pathway 2 - Engaging stakeholders: We engage key stakeholders throughout the research process to ensure our research is relevant to end-stage users. For instance, in research carried out by Jay, <i>Everyday Maths: Empowering Parents to Support their Children's Mathematical Understanding</i> (funded by Nuffield, 2012), his team worked with the Bristol Local Education</p>

Authority, teachers and parents to ensure community diversity was taken into account to raise the mathematical achievement of students. Deakin-Crick and Broadfoot developed a self-assessment tool (ELLI) enabling over 50,000 students and adults to reflect upon, and take responsibility for, their own learning. This tool is also used in schools, corporate organisations and communities in the UK and overseas. Young people are also key stakeholders. Facer, an AHRC Leadership Fellow, is working with young people in Bristol on a *Connected Communities* project – ‘80by18’ (AHRC funded - 2012-15). 25 students from 5 schools are engaged in researching the skills Bristol young people will need by 18 years of age. The results of their work will be located on a website and disseminated to all young people. We believe better informed politicians benefit the communities they serve. For example, Washbrook’s specially-commissioned research analyses on the cumulative gaps in children’s cognitive, social and emotional and health outcomes from living in low-income households directly informed the recommendations of the *Independent Review on Poverty and Life Chances* in 2010 (led by Frank Field, MP). Timmis and Sutherland drew on their research on technology-enhanced learning and social justice and the curriculum respectively, to engage policymakers at two Westminster Foras (Sept and Oct, 2013). At the international level, Dale (as Scientific Coordinator, EU Network of Experts on Social Science and Education) together with Robertson (2009-11) provided expert advice to policymakers in the EC’s DG-Education and Culture, including the EC’s ‘Communication on Evidence-Based Policy and Practice’, ‘early school leavers’, and ‘innovation’, as well as provided input into the EC’s *Horizon 2020* education priorities. Robertson (2010-2013) worked with the Open Society to develop a globally-accessible, research-informed media platform examining issues in the privatisation of education. Crossley’s small-states research network engaged policymakers and Commonwealth Ministers; this engagement fed into the Education Strategic Plan 2010-12 and UNESCO and World Bank policy forums. The EdQual research programme (Tikly, Barrett, Sutherland, Thomas, Yu) engaged policy makers and practitioners in the design of research projects and interventions instrumental in shaping policy and practice. This led to leadership training being taken up as a specific policy by the Ghanaian government in their 5-Year Education Sector plan, and on-going work within the Tanzanian Institute of Education to develop language supportive textbooks. The Centre for Multi-level Modelling engages a wide range of stakeholders in using statistical tools; it has around 10,000 users of its on-line training tool, of whom 70% are international and 14% are non-academic, including the Department for Education, the AQA Examination Board and HEFCE.

Pathway 3 - Disseminating research findings: Our communication strategy is designed to create routes to impact by facilitating dialogue and interaction with key user groups and the public. We use a range of traditional and newer media outlets. We have dedicated and accessible web-pages for our large research projects, research centres, and members of the GSoE. We also disseminate our policy findings through the Faculty’s ‘Policy Bristol’ portal. We also promote the use of podcasts, blogs, Twitter, Facebook and other forms of social media to disseminate research. Facer’s AHRC *Connected Communities* and Jay’s *Everyday Maths* projects, have a dedicated twitter feed for users. Robertson is co-founder of the *GlobalHigherEd* blog that disseminates research on changes taking place across the globe in the higher education sector (average 10,000 hits per month), and is a featured blog on *InsideHigherEd*. The GSoE has been developing a data-base (ESIS) of users and beneficiaries to disseminate research briefings, as well as research seminars and events that are open to a wide range of users. We carry Briefing Papers on completed research projects on the GSoE website downloadable by the public to inform their decisions. For example, Leckie’s Briefing Paper on school league tables is aimed at helping parents decide what to consider when choosing a school. Similarly, Erduran’s Briefing Paper aimed at teachers as users shows how scientific argumentation can lead to changes in their performance. Members of the GSoE regularly appear in the press. For example, Howard-Jones’ research on education and neuroscience featured in the *Times Education Supplement* (March 2013); Thomas’ research on improving teacher development was reported by the *China Daily* (November 2012); Robertson’s research on HE commercialisation was reported in *France 24* (March 2010) and *UK* (May, 2011) presses. The GSoE also convenes an annual Festival of Education aimed at engaging the public.

Pathway 4 - Support for staff: We value research-based impact and look at how best to support our staff to achieve it. To facilitate this: (1) we have made impact explicit in the GSoE’s research strategy through the development of an impact and engagement strategy; (2) ‘Impact’ is a standing item on the GSoE’s Research Committee agenda; (3) we have appointed key personnel to advise

Impact template (REF3a)

and mentor staff in developing impact; an Impact Director (Robertson) (2010) supported by Thomas, and a Director of Public Engagement (Howard Jones) (2013). These personnel support all GSoE staff and students, and interface with the rest of the university to ensure coherent policy and practice; (4) staff and students are supported through School-wide workshops aimed at building capacity around writing for different media, the development of Briefing Papers on education research in clear and concise language, in developing the technical skills to use social media, in engaging with the media, and in working with policymakers and the wider public.

Pathway 5 - Use of university resources: The University has identified impact as a key priority in its Impact Action Plan 2011-15 as well as its Vision and Strategy 2009-16. It incentivises impact-oriented activities with its Impact Development Fund (IDF) and provides up to £150000 to develop relationships with non-academic users. We access a wide variety of university, Alumni and Faculty resources to support impact development, including: (1) access to internal and external funds to support research impact, including the Higher Education Impact Fund (Crossley, Thomas, Tikly, Deakin-Crick, Erduran); (2) the University's Research Commercialisation team (Deakin-Crick); (3) support to various project leads from the University's Research, Enterprise and Development to build impact into grant proposals (broadly across the GSoE); (4) expertise from the Centre for Public Engagement, as well as university journalists, to review research outputs and research briefings to ensure readability; and (5) programmes supporting Non-Executive Director training.

c. Strategy and plans

Our strategy within the GSoE for the period 2014-2020 will be to grow impact by:

- planning for each member of staff to deliver significant and measurable impacts over a 5-year time-span, including a tailored-plan with targeted and Impact Accelerator funds;
- encouraging and supporting impact by setting up new mechanisms to identify, track, fund, nurture and reward impact activities within the GSoE through: using the University's PURE research management platform to record impact; further embedding the use of the ESIS database of users and beneficiaries to disseminate Briefing Papers, research seminars and events to a wide range of users; the development of a *Handbook of Good Practice in Impact*; the use of University mechanisms which acknowledges and rewards impact, including the Vice Chancellor's Impact Award; accessing additional pay increments for staff who have achieved notable impact, particularly around hard-to-reach users, stakeholders and beneficiaries; and setting up mechanisms to gain feedback from stakeholders that enable us to feed this back into our Vision, Research Strategy and Handbook;
- building impact into our staff recruitment, promotion and retention criteria;
- enhancing further engagements with end users, including the identification of new partners, and making full use of our industry links, such as those that are part of our recent EC-funded Initial Training Network and the SW Doctoral Training Centre; and
- encouraging greater levels of entrepreneurship/social innovation amongst our graduate students and academics where research outcomes might lead to commercial outcomes through the use of university infrastructures (SETsquared Incubator; the New Enterprise Competition).

d. Relationship to case studies

The case studies reflect the diversity of research in the GSoE and our commitment to understanding, and engaging with the issues and concerns of our stakeholders. The submitted case studies indicate the success of policies implemented by Bristol over the REF period. These include: (1) long-term and rigorous academic research leading to highly developed expertise (see case studies on *Institutional Evaluation Methodologies to Enhance Education Quality* and *Raising the Achievement of Black and Ethnic Minority Students*); (2) intensive user engagement leading to bespoke commissioned research with far reaching consequences for key beneficiaries – including students, teachers and policymakers (see the case study on *Inequality in School Readiness of British Children*); and (3) the development of durable partnerships with policymakers leading to the development of strategic (see case study on *Small States and Education Priorities*). Taken as a whole, our cases studies demonstrate the very high value the GSoE places on research impact, and the support it offers to staff and students to achieve this across a range of stakeholder groups.