

<p>Institution: Sheffield Hallam University</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: UOA 25 Education</p>
<p>a. Context Education research has achieved impact by promoting dialogue between researchers, policymakers, and practitioners. Main non-academic user groups, beneficiaries and audiences of this research are organisations with a significant reach in policy construction and implementation, and those responsible for practitioner-focused CPD. These include the DfE and the National College (NC); national and local organisations with specific interests including charities such as <i>Gatsby</i>, <i>Booktrust</i>, and organisations such as <i>National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics</i>; <i>Science Learning Centre Network</i>, Local Authorities (LAs) and new organisational groups, such as <i>Rotherham</i> and <i>Leicester LAs</i>, <i>Stockport PCT</i>, <i>Sheffield</i> and other <i>Teaching School Alliances</i>; and also practitioners: head teachers and teachers across the region and beyond, and teacher educators at SHU and elsewhere. The Centre for Inclusion and Education Research (CEIR) has provided infrastructure to support research impact through the period, and the remit of the Centre for Science Education (CSE) has included promoting research impact through CPD and curriculum development focusing on STEM education in the UK and beyond.</p> <p>b. Approach to impact The approach used to optimise impact on beneficiaries and audiences has been based upon partnerships and relationship-building with policymakers, research funders and user groups. Researchers apply knowledge generated through research to impact on policy, policy debates, programme delivery and educational practice. Researchers have well-established relationships with key policy-making organisations leading to research commissions with a high potential for, and actual impacts on, policy. Researchers have developed enduring relationships with policymakers committed to evidence-based policymaking. Findings from projects have impacted on subsequent policy and practice leading to the identification of further research questions for funders. For example, as described in REF5, during the assessment period nine studies were undertaken (value: £737k) for the DfE in curriculum and school policy. Researchers have also collaborated with the National College (NC) for whom 12 studies have been conducted since 2008 (value: £1155k), six for what was known as the National College for School Leadership (value: £358k) and six for what was the Teaching Agency (value: £797k). Impacts on policy have been achieved through presenting research findings directly to policy makers. For example, 14 presentations have been delivered to the DfE since 2008, based upon nine research reports. The DfE has used reports produced in the assessment period to steer policy. For example, the 2008 Choice Advice Study was used to inform the Government's revision of the School Admissions and Appeals Code, and also to inform the 2009 guidance to LAs on how they should run their Choice Advice services. Relationships with new partners and commissioning bodies have also been established, affording new opportunities to establish cycles of funder-led research with the potential for impact. For example, Simkins' work has led to a commission to undertake a series of studies for the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics (NCETM, 5 studies from 2009: value: £240k). Merchant and Burnett's work established a new relationship with the Booktrust (four studies since January 2012, value: £117k). McCaig's work on student choice in HE has been applied to young people's decision-making, to develop links with new funders in relation to STEM apprenticeships and business mentoring. An investment in building strength in conducting Random Control Trials (RCTs) has enabled membership of the Education Endowment Fund Evaluation panel, which has resulted in commissions to undertake four studies (2013-14). Relationships with user groups have been established to enable researchers and users to come together for mutual benefit. For example a collaboration between SHU and the University of Sheffield, funded by HEFCE (£34,200 to education at SHU), led to the establishment of the Regional Education Expertise Forum (REEF) which provides opportunities for school leaders across the region to discuss research outcomes and to identify research needs. As a consequence, research digests for practitioners (on behaviour management, home-school links, and digital literacy) have been produced. Contacts established in the Forum resulted in the Mentoring Pilot Project for teachers of English, with the salary of an appointed part-time mentor paid by a local academy and participating schools. HEIF funding (see below) is used to link</p>

research and practice through knowledge exchange activities, and collaborative work in literacy, mathematics, and science in the Sheffield Teaching Schools Alliance (value: £27k). It has also been used to establish a Research Engaged Schools Network (a further £15k), involving five local TSAs. CEIR and CSE using HEIF funding (value: £30k) developed the Science and Innovation Observatory. Workshops and policy briefings on STEM evaluation and STEM careers aimed at practitioners, policy makers and other stakeholders, have led to impacts on organisations including the Royal Academy of Engineering.

SHU research also impacts on **programme delivery**. For example, SHU research informed the work of Booktrust in reshaping their book selection, and in providing refreshed guidance for local Bookstart coordinators. SHU work with the NCETM has influenced the organisation's CPD design to include collaborative teacher-focused and research-informed CPD, informing their discussions with key funders especially the DfE, contributing to the NCETM's recommissioning in 2012. Similarly, Simkins' work has led to impacts on programme delivery in the NC (see REF3bi).

Researchers also contribute to **policy debate and public engagement**. For example, as well as being used by policy makers, research on the phonics screening check informed the position of UKLA, ICAN and others to argue against the screening check. It was cited in a parliamentary Early Day Motion (no. 774), and debated in the professional press (for example the Times Educational Supplement, 12 April 2013; the National Association of Headteachers bulletin 3rd April 2013, <http://bit.ly/14EzdwU>). Hirst and Formby's work has also stimulated widespread debate on issues related to sex and relationships education (see Impact Case Study REF3bii).

Educational research at SHU has a strong role in **influencing educational practice** through strategic dissemination and support. Researchers are well-established in user networks and professional associations and build time into projects to undertake activities that broaden the reach of their findings. SHU encourages writing for professional audiences, through investment of time and appraisal targets. Colleagues working in curriculum research have been particularly successful in publishing their work in journals and magazines that are widely read by teachers and practitioners (e.g. *English 4-11*, and *Pastoral Care in Education*). This approach to influencing educational practice can be illustrated with reference to research in literacy education. The work was conducted through partnerships with professional associations such as United Kingdom Literacy Association (UKLA), and disseminated through national and regional CPD conferences, as well as through the JISC-funded DefT project which produced an Open Educational Resource (www.digitalfutures.org). CPD for schools and teachers was also conducted. Outputs from research on education policy and leadership, written to inform user audiences, are available to educational leaders and teachers. For example, work on Choice Advice for DCSF (2008) was used to develop a policy and practice briefing on *Researching Hard to Reach Groups*. Summaries and full versions of these reports can be accessed on the CEIR website (<http://bit.ly/1hhQa5e>).

Since 2008 CSE has made a significant research-based contribution to CPD for STEM practitioners with regional, national and international reach. Together with the Universities of Leeds, Sheffield and York, SHU is part of a consortium running the National Science Learning Centre (SLC) at York through a Joint Venture Company, and the Regional SLC for Yorkshire and the Humber at SHU; Leach represents SHU on the Board of the JV company. Research conducted at SHU and elsewhere has been disseminated via 450 throughput days of CPD for teachers and teacher educators during the assessment period, drawing directly upon research findings. An 'Impact Toolkit' is completed by course participants 6 weeks after attending CPD events; teachers report a strong positive impact on their subject knowledge, their own classroom practice and that of their colleagues, and their pupils.

Impact is supported through investment, infrastructure and staff development. In 2010, SHU invested in a number of Knowledge Transfer Champions, one of whom has supported the impact agenda by facilitating access to HEIF funds. These resources, totalling £72k in the REF period, have been drawn on to support impact activities in education as described above. In addition to its core staffing, CEIR supports the work of all staff across the education submission. It builds and sustains relationships with government departments, policy organisations, charities and other research funders, and groups of schools. It brokers relationships where funders are seeking expertise in SHU, enabling an agile response to funders' needs, enabling us to respond to a rapidly changing policy environment. Staff development promotes the achievement of research impact through training courses addressing research and knowledge transfer skills. Staff are supported by the SHU Media Relations team to share their expertise in ways that maximise the reach and

Impact template (REF3a)

impact of research. Events and activities are promoted to relevant audiences using traditional and new media. All staff in this submission are searchable on the database through which research expertise is accessed by the media.

c. Strategy and plans

In line with SHU's Impact Strategy, the aims for impact have been: to produce relevant and accessible research which is communicated widely to maximise impact on practitioners and professional services; to develop links with potential research users; to build effective partnerships with policymakers, stakeholders and user-groups; to support the co-production and exchange of knowledge; and to work with partners within SHU to ensure that internal structures and processes support impact. These aims will be built upon in the SloE's **objectives for impact in the period 2014-20**. The SloE Director of Research will monitor objectives, and report on them to the SloE executive, on an annual basis. The aims are to:

i) develop the institutional infrastructure and staffing base required to procure and deliver high profile policy research and evaluation contracts for government and other local and national agencies. This will be achieved by investing in new posts to enable high quality research with potential for impact which meets the needs of funders. One additional academic post exists in the budget of the SloE to support partnership-building in the UK and beyond.

ii) disseminate findings and guidance. This will be achieved through a range of activities such as increasing the use of social media, increasing the use of SHU's media team to disseminate findings, establishing the provision and promotion of a public seminar programme of at least 10 annual sessions involving internal and external speakers, and investing in at least 3 launch and dissemination events per annum to maximise the impact of research and evaluation outputs.

iii) increase the pool of staff in the SloE who are engaged in research contracts as expert advisors. This will be achieved through the provision of targeted support and assistance; for example through staff development, time allocation, and attention to impact activities as part of the annual appraisal process. Success will be measured by the number of staff members newly engaged in the provision of expert advice and guidance.

v) forge new, and strengthen existing, relationships with research users to enhance knowledge exchange and nurture co-production activities. As well as building upon existing mechanisms, this will be achieved through investment in extending existing relationships with groups of schools/academies and policymakers, in the UK and beyond. This may take the form of research training through professional doctorates, or short courses in areas of user interest and SloE expertise. Additional academic staff time will be allocated to support this work early in 2014.

d. Relationship to case studies

The two case studies exemplify the approach to impact outlined above. They demonstrate how partnerships with funders are developed and how these impact on policy, practice and public engagement. Together they provide evidence of the claims made in REF5a about links between academic analysis, contract research and impact activities. Both case studies are underpinned by rigorous academic research as evidenced by the outputs listed in the case studies. REF3bi was supported through an enduring relationship with a major funder, whereas REF3bii is underpinned by multiple funding streams. The case studies show multiple types of impact, including those on programme delivery, policy debate, public engagement, and educational practice.

The impact of the academic outputs from both programmes of research have significance and reach beyond individual projects, as evidenced in the case studies. In each case, the insights secured were shared with end users through multiple routes. Not only were research reports presented in face-to-face meetings with the commissioners of research; additional activities included the production of guidance documents, expert presentations, CPD and activities to support public engagement (including media work). The researchers also served as members of, and expert witnesses to, local and national government committees and groups.

The case studies have generated a series of learning points which have informed the SloE's impact strategy 2014-2020. First, they illustrate that securing impact is a long-term activity, which needs development with strategic investment over time. Second, they show that impact is best secured through multiple modes of engagement with research funders and end-users, underpinned by sustained relationships and partnerships. Finally, they illustrate that impact that begins locally can grow over time, through strategic development, to be highly significant and with both national and international reach.