

<p>Institution: University of Southampton</p> <p>Unit of Assessment: 25 Education</p> <p>a. Context Established at the end of the 19th Century, Southampton Education School has a mature culture of engagement with policy, practice and public audiences. It has an international reputation for excellence in the areas of our four research centres: <i>Leadership, School Improvement & Effectiveness (LSIE)</i>, <i>Social Justice & Inclusive Education (SJIE)</i>, <i>Lifelong and Work-Related Learning (LWRL)</i>, and <i>Mathematics & Science Education (MaSE)</i>. Our research is designed to improve learning outcomes for children and adults and to enhance social and economic life chances and well-being. We seek to maximise the validity and impact of our research by actively engaging non-academic beneficiaries in its design, implementation and interpretation. The main user groups for our work (and <i>some</i> examples of that work) include:</p> <p>Schools and those with a stake in schools: Our research on educational improvement and effectiveness has impacted (and is impacting) on how schools work in partnership (Muijs, Reynolds), how they use data to improve pupil outcomes (Downey, Kelly), on teacher development and on the responses of schools to diversity issues (Messiou). Our research on mathematics education, pedagogy and curriculum has influenced (and is influencing) Initial Teacher Education and teaching practice through the take-up of special research-designed textbooks and resources for teachers in the UK, China and Singapore (Edwards, Fan, Hyde, Jones). And our research on science education has led (and is leading) to successful collaborations with bio-medical and pharmaceutical companies (e.g. AstraZeneca, BUPA) through our <i>Science Learning Centre</i> (Byrne, Christodoulou, Griffiths, Grace) and our <i>Lifelab</i> project (Grace), which together create hugely successful training resources and CPD for science teachers across the South of England. Most of our stakeholder research relationships include a ‘school improvement’ element; for example, with our data effectiveness and post-16 progression work in Dorset (Kelly, Downey) and with our Science Learning Centre work in North Kent (Griffiths, Grace).</p> <p>School leavers, university students and graduates: Our research on vocational education and apprenticeship has impacted (and is impacting) on how young people are prepared for (and how they access) the labour market. It has supported (and is supporting) training providers and employers to improve the quality of apprenticeships, training and workplace learning (Brockmann, Fuller). Our research on transitions into, through and from university is achieving impact on widening participation and student engagement strategies (Enders, Tomlinson). Research on lifelong learning and education-to-work transitions is also benefiting public organisations like the British armed forces through formal contracts of career progression to educational attainment (Dyke, Dismore).</p> <p>People who are vulnerable to poor physical health, well-being and quality of life: Our research has involved people with disabilities in the design and implementation of projects and our research has focused on delivering practical solutions to: enhancing quality of life, communication and emotional well-being through, for example, ‘Intensive Interaction’ (Nind); improving educational engagement through the innovative use of technology (Parsons); and helping young people and their families make informed choices about health, diet and lifestyle (Byrne, Christodoulou, Grace, Woods-Townsend).</p> <p>Government departments, inter-governmental and non-governmental agencies, and charitable organisations: Our researchers have been engaged by leading policy-makers as school improvement consultants (e.g. Reynolds’s work for the Welsh Assembly). They work in partnership with voluntary organisations like the Fisher Family Trust, CfBT Education Trust and Jersey Community Relations Trust (Downey, Kelly, Muijs and Reynolds), and our work with organisations like the Autism Education Trust (Parsons) and ‘Us in a Bus’ (Nind) are helping to find new ways for research to reach beneficiaries and impact meaningfully on their lives and outcomes.</p> <p>b. Approach to impact We take a proactive approach to the development of partnerships to enable impact. The Director of Research and Enterprise, a senior professor, serves as Impact Champion on the School’s management group, monitoring progress and facilitating the implementation and sharing of new ideas and practices. Impact is a standing agendum for the School’s Research and Enterprise Group, where the four Heads of Research Centre (and the Director of PGR) report the</p>
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development of key impact activities being undertaken by their research teams. Our impact strategy focuses on identifying and forging close relationships with relevant policy and practitioner communities and actively encouraging staff to undertake policy-leading and/or practice-leading research with the aim of advancing knowledge and effecting change. Action for impact is organised through our four research centres. We illustrate our approach to impact with the following **examples** of how we use partnerships to reach major user audiences.

Direct engagement with school teachers: Science and Mathematics Education (MaSE)

Based on extensive research evidence about ways to engage teenagers on issues about their health and well-being, the work of our science education research team is informing teachers' professional development through *Lifelab* and the School of Education's regional (South East) *Science Learning Centre*. To date more than 30 secondary schools in Hampshire (incl. 75% of schools in Southampton) have benefited from professional training and development linked to *Lifelab* alone, and through our EU-funded *Pri Sci Net* project; 60 primary teachers on UK sites in Hampshire, East Sussex and Kent are being trained in inquiry-based science education. Local teachers can access health-related science curriculum topics which are supported by a range of activities undertaken at Southampton General Hospital and at the University of Southampton Education School. Our Mathematics education researchers draw on their pedagogical and curriculum research to develop resources to enhance teachers' practice and in the critically important task of producing Mathematics textbooks. [Fan is Editor-in-Chief of two series of mathematics textbooks being used throughout Singapore (Multimedia Publications) and China (Zhejiang Education Publishing)]

Direct engagement with vulnerable young people: social justice & inclusive education(SJIE)

The research undertaken as part of our ESRC-funded KTP (2008-10, Nind) with partner, Serendipity Educational Services Ltd, produced a transferable, robust, holistic educational model for teenage girls with complex special educational needs related to behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. It was awarded Grade A ('outstanding') by the Technology Strategy Board (TSB). The KTP outcomes included: improvements to the company's operations through the introduction of an integrated curriculum, which resulted in significantly improved engagement of the students and a consequent reduction in behavioural incidents; a web portal for disseminating the KTP model enabling engagement with a wider audience; significantly improved visibility of the school and its achievements through an art exhibition at an art centre in the South of England.

Direct engagement with professional services and practitioners: Leadership, School Improvement and Effectiveness (LSIE)

Our collaborative research with local councils and Sixth-form colleges has shown that inter-school networks and collaborations make a difference to school performance and that pupil outcomes improve in schools that are part of a network, especially when high- and low-performing schools work together. This has led these partnerships (e.g. Southampton Colleges Consortium) to refine their partnership work in focusing on pupil outcomes. Our development of new quantitative metrics and ways of interpreting / using school attainment and progression data are being used to improve school performance. Downey and Kelly utilised these techniques in recent work with Dorset LA, which led to a more effective use of data to inform strategies for educational improvement.

Direct engagement with government agencies and public policy (LWRL)

Our research has helped shift the focus of government apprenticeship policy from 'quantity' to 'quality'. Understanding the organisational and pedagogical characteristics that underpin apprenticeship is central to identifying how the programmes can be enhanced for apprentices and employers. Fuller's research on the criteria that underpin high quality ('expansive') apprenticeships has informed the work of national government; for example, in her role as Specialist Advisor to the (then) DIUS House of Commons Select Committee scrutiny of the Apprenticeship Bill (2008), and most recently (2012) in the BIS Select Committee and Public Accounts Committee, and the government-commissioned Richard Review reports on apprenticeship.

Support and Funding: The Impact Champion has a budget of £10,000 p.a. for supporting impact-related activities including: (a) undertaking evaluations to explore who is using our research, how, and with what benefits; (b) organising additional user-engagement events beyond those budgeted in original grants; (c) producing resources for policy-makers and practitioners (e.g. policy briefings, practitioner guides); and (d) travel and subsistence funds to enable researchers to develop external partnerships and to discuss research impact with key stakeholders. Where research

Impact template (REF3a)

projects attract overheads, a proportion is allocated to the investigators to facilitate stakeholder involvement and contribution to policy and practice debates. Research impact is actively considered and promoted at each level of the School's management and organisation (e.g. by encouraging the setting up of Lifelab and the Maths & Science Learning Centre) and by generous allowances for staff to undertake government advisory roles (e.g. *Reynolds* – 1 day/week with Wales government and 10+ days p.a. with Malaysia government). The School's approach to impact is further supported by members of the University of Southampton's Research and Innovation Services (RIS) team, who have specialist expertise in collaboration management / development in the field of educational research, and the University's Communications and Marketing team. For example, the University's '*Public Policy@Southampton*' unit, aimed at increasing the impact of all research carried out at Southampton, recently (December 2012) hosted a public seminar attended by more than 50 people at the House of Commons to present the findings of research by the School (Hoskins) on 'active citizenship in times of austerity', with an invited panel of national and European politicians who responded to the project's findings. Finally, 'contribution to impact' is a factor in the appointment, appraisal and promotion of academic staff.

c. Strategy and plans

Planning and Strategy Development: Our conviction that educational research should improve learner outcomes and individual life chances, and address societal and economic problems, lies at the heart of our impact strategy which we have been developing during the assessment period 2008-13. Our strategy going forward will build on our existing achievements and focus on four key objectives: a) *Strengthening our external collaborative partnerships* within a culture that facilitates and celebrates impact-producing activity. We will continue to work with government agencies including acting as advisors to inform policies; professional and practitioners in vocational and special needs industry and other partners through KTPs. b) *Consolidating our research partnerships with primary and secondary schools and FE colleges.* We will develop further our network of schools and promote inter-school collaborations; apply for more funding for our innovative Lifelab programme with teenagers; and expand our initiatives to spark interests in science within the UK and in Europe and Asia. c) *Engaging research users at the earliest opportunity in the research process for timely feedback from potential users and generating demand for our research findings.* Typically, this involves consulting stakeholders about the formulation of the project and convening an advisory group involving representation from the anticipated beneficiaries of the research (including policy-makers and practitioners) who can act as 'champions' for the dissemination of findings to relevant user communities. d) *Strengthening our communication and social media strategies targeting a wide range of users to maximise utilisation of the research findings.* We will continue to use a range of dissemination channels to target our researcher users. Our research impact brochures ('*Advancing and Effecting Change*') target our external collaborators and we use social media for the wider audience and the general public. Our social media strategy is led by the Impact Champion who is supported by social media champions in each research centre, a social and digital media expert from the University, and marketing officers. Social media is being used to reach out to our user-audiences through a suite of Word Press blogs, Twitter and Facebook. Post 2013, we will expand training in the use of social media for all staff and PhD researchers.

The Impact Champion will continue to *monitor and evaluate our impact strategy* through user surveys, website and policy document trawls, and analysing requests from the non-academic audience for our research findings and data.

d. Relationship to case studies

Our chosen case studies exemplify our impact strategy as follows: '**Improving Educational Effectiveness and Quality**' shows how our direct engagement with the professional services and practitioners has had a demonstrable policy impact in the UK and internationally regarding the effects of (and practice within) 'good' schools and has pioneered novel approaches to school improvement, school organisation and the use of data in schools. '**Developing Fundamental Communication and Emotional Well-being**' shows how our direct engagement with vulnerable young people and practitioners has had a national and international impact on the practice of professionals who teach people with severe learning disabilities. '**Improving the Quality of Apprenticeships**' shows how our direct engagement with the government has informed vocational and educational policy through the Apprenticeship Bill and how our research has informed the evaluating of the quality of apprenticeships.