

Institution: University of the West of Scotland
Unit of Assessment: UoA 25
a. Context <p>The majority of the staff submitted under UoA25 are based within the School of Education. The School research ethos is one that emphasises the importance of applied and vocational research and encourages inter-disciplinary approaches to the research that is carried out, which in turn reflects the University's mission statement.</p> <p>At the time of the last RAE, educational research was mostly focused on the outputs of the five academics that were submitted. Based on developments and growth within the School of Education, the number of REF-returnable staff has almost tripled in number and there has been a gradual widening and diversification of research interests and expertise which has coincided with the forming of two research groups: the Institute for Youth and Community Research and the Centre of Excellence in Education. The Institute and Centre have provided focused structures for research support. All research active staff and PhD students are aligned to the Institute and/or the Centre and both of these groups provide support and resources for the development of applied research. Collaboration within and between members of the Institute and Centre is encouraged through the prioritisation of research funding applications, the organisation of joint seminars and other forms of research support.</p>
b. Approach to impact <p>The submitted impact case studies reflect the School's approach to embed potential impact into research work through engagement with external organisations and end users. A wide range of colleagues in UOA 25 engage with external organisations to inform their research questions and in some cases directly collaborate with external organisations in developing full research projects. Several also plan their research activity in such a way as to ensure that the emerging insights become embedded within continuing professional development (CPD) and knowledge exchange programmes and inform public and policy debates. The submitted case studies demonstrate these approaches.</p> <p>In the first case study on gang culture and youth offending, the researchers drew upon long established relationships with community-based youth organisations, social work services and the Scottish Prison Service to enable them to adopt a qualitative, ethnographic approach to exploring these issues which prioritised the voices of the most marginalised young people in the West of Scotland. They liaised and collaborated with journalists before, during and after the implementation of their research projects in order to stimulate public debate around the emerging insights, and consulted with youth and community practitioners and the police in order to draw directly upon their research insights to inform the design and implementation of CPD and knowledge exchange programmes, practitioner funding applications and community police engagement workshops. In addition, Deuchar and Holligan's active liaison and engagement with the Scottish Government's Community safety Unit ensured that their work had a direct impact on policy analysis and debate around violence reduction strategies in Scotland.</p> <p>In the second case study on holocaust education, the researchers were able to use their research findings to build upon and develop strong working relationships with schools, local authorities and outside agencies such as the International Task Force on Holocaust Education (now renamed as International Holocaust Remembrance Association) and Children's Identity and Citizenship in Europe network to ensure that research in Holocaust education had a wide influence on CPD citizenship initiatives and course developments, as well as underpinning Local Authority preparations for Holocaust Remembrance Day activities in Scotland. Further, the research into Lessons from Auschwitz project and other areas were acknowledged by agencies such as the Holocaust Education Trust, IHRA and United Nations Educational Impact section as being influential in both policy and educational initiatives.</p>

Impact template (REF3a)**c. Strategy and plans**

Staff and research student recruitment and development has focused on building and reinforcing overarching sub-themes and areas of expertise within the Institute and Centre as well as developing new and emerging research fields within the School. In the last few years, the investment in new staff posts along with the development of existing staff research profiles has allowed for considerable growth in this UoA since the 2008 RAE. This has resulted in almost a tripling of the number of staff submitted under UoA 25 in the present REF compared with the 2008 submission, as well as a moderate but healthy growth in total research income during the period 2008-2013.

Drawing on the existing examples of national and international engagement with external bodies, staff within UoA 25 have enhanced and developed the applied focus of educational research. For example, existing partnerships between colleagues within the School of Education and colleagues in wider Europe, Asia and the USA have resulted in the organisation of international seminar series and conferences, keynote presentations and external consultancy.

The development of the new research structures within the School of Education was undertaken in order to build upon key research strengths and target support for research more effectively. The Institute and Centre, led by research active Professors, have control over research budgets aimed at extending and developing research outputs and related knowledge exchange forums. In so doing, they are focused on building, nurturing and developing a critical mass of collaborative and funded research projects aligned to the core themes and sub-themes that will stimulate impact in and beyond academia.

d. Relationship to case studies

The approach to impact within UoA 25 involves working with partner organisations in the development and implementation of research projects and on taking a focused approach to ensuring that colleagues work closely with national and international agencies to ensure that the insights have a direct influence on policy and practice. This approach underpins aspects of both case studies where collaboration with key stakeholders has informed the research methods and allowed the research findings to inform policy and practice in a range of settings. For example, case study 1 involves collaboration and liaison with community-based organisations, the Scottish Government and the Scottish Police College as well as Danish practitioners and active engagement with the national and international media. Case study 2 involves collaborations with schools and local authorities and has also had wider international impact as evidenced by IHRA, CiCe and the UN. Further, there have been articles in the wider media, which have acknowledged the research in this area.

Research support has been targeted to aid the development of research outputs that will have the potential to generate impact. The research Institute and Centre both provide a focus for discussion of impact, opportunities for public dissemination and knowledge transfer. The use of research resources to underpin impact is also evident. For example, initial internal funding from the University enabled colleagues from the School of Education to organise a one-day conference which attracted delegates from policy and practice, as well as academic, contexts in 2011 and which led on directly to the founding of the Institute for Youth and Community Research and the further nurturing of the research activity described in case study 1. As a further example, research from case study 2 has been instrumental in both developing wider teaching and learning initiatives, both within and outside UWS, through collaboration with the Yad Vashem Holocaust Centre in Jerusalem and in the development of Holocaust and wider genocide study as an integral part of citizenship programmes in schools. All of the submitted case study research areas have been supported with the allocation of PhD students.