

Institution: Bishop Grosseteste University

Unit of Assessment: 25 Education

a. Context

Bishop Grosseteste University (BGU) is a small, specialist, higher education institution and GuildHE/Consortium of Research Excellence and Training (CREST) member originally founded in the 1800s as a teacher training college. It is also a member of the MASHEIN project; the Management of Small Higher Education Institutions Network. With 63.5 full and part-time staff, educational research at BGU has since 2000 been a strategic priority and its vision to establish a more research-inspired identity, culture and environment was realised with an entry into RAE 2008 for the first time. The institution continues to broaden the base of research active staff in education and to support educational research in a fair and inclusive and manner in proportion to its size and heritage.

BGU's unit entry into REF 2014 includes six members of staff with diverse interests and experiences. With a broad focus derived from its wide ranging portfolio, the Unit's two main impact areas relate to informing and influencing the leadership and management of higher education, and lecturer self-efficacy in particular, and spiritual development, and children's spirituality in particular (Professor John Sharp and Dr. Kate Adams). As one of Britain's newest Universities (transferring from University College status in 2012), BGU has a developing educational research trajectory with a research strategy linked to teaching and learning and curriculum development. As such, impact user groups, beneficiaries and audiences and other stakeholders include HEIs, educational leaders and managers, institutional and national policy makers, teachers in schools and colleges, doctoral candidates and students. Its developing research activity and impact case studies have influence at all levels.

b. Approach to impact

As part of its research infrastructure and support, and within the lifetime of the assessment period, BGU's research was centralised into a new unit intended to further develop research activity and better serve the strategic needs of the institution. The Centre for Educational Development and Research (CEDaR), replacing its research centre in 2010, now has responsibility to promote, develop and fund all research activity across the institution. CEDaR is led by Professor Chris Atkin (appointed within the assessment period), previously of Liverpool Hope University and Nottingham University, and Professor John Sharp, previously of Plymouth University and the University of Southampton.

The unit has developed impact through various modes of interaction, engagement and relationships. Examples include membership of and representation at specialist interest groups and societies. Specifically, Sharp has represented BGU as a member of the GuildHE/CREST consortium aimed at supporting collaborative research endeavours among similar smaller institutions and funded, until recently, with a HEFCE grant. He is also on the editorial board of the prestigious International Journal of Science Education and edits articles regularly for other journals including the Journal of Further and Higher Education. Adams is on the executive committee of the International Association of Children's Spirituality. She also sits on the editorial board of the Journal of Religious Education and is editorial consultant for Resource, the professional Journal of the national Association of Teachers of RE. All of these examples evidence mechanisms by which BGU's research has allowed Sharp and Adams to develop network relationships with key users and stakeholder groups demonstrating reach as well as impact (e.g. the local Diocese). This work, extending well beyond the boundaries of the institution, has been and continues to be funded by the institution's own Research Support or RSF Fund and monies allocated from QR income generated by RAE 2008. Both Sharp and Adams have, in addition, produced publications for professional audiences, with Adams, in particular, reaching a broad cross-section of the general public by way of a number of high profile radio interview broadcasts (e.g. the Today programme on Radio 4) and expert comments in popular magazines (e.g. Sainsbury's magazine, Vogue, and

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Reader's Digest) and blogs (e.g. Psychology Today). Adams was also awarded a research sabbatical in 2008 in order to write 'Unseen Worlds: Looking through the lens of childhood' (Jessica Kingsley) bridging an academic and professional audience.

As part of its developing and growing research infrastructure, Adams received recognition for her research activities with the award of internal Readership in 2010, making full use of the institution's promotions policy intended to recognise research excellence and promote career development to professorial status. Sharp has also been awarded travel funding from BGU and Charles Sturt University in Australis, where he is now adjunct professor, to develop relationships and further research activities and impact on the lecturer self-efficacy project with reciprocal visits by Dr. Brian Hemmings from CSU.

c. Strategy and plans

The research of the unit has evolved a research culture which has been acknowledged through generous financial and logistic support as indicated above. A new approach to workload planning and mentoring which recognises research activity provides variable time for research according to individual and collective achievements and aspirations. With its strategy under review following the appointment of a new VC, and by way of a vision for 2015, BGU expects to see further measurable differences in its research activity as a result of its research strategy and inward investment. BGU also expects to have a growing international reputation for research activity in key portfolio areas. During the lifetime of the current REF, BGU's Research Strategy embodies the University's mission, values and ethos to grow its research activity including the growth of doctoral programmes (EdD and PhD) introduced in 2009 with an expectation of achieving Research Degree Awarding Powers by 2020.

As a measure of its success in growing its research activity since 2000, emerging projects involving staff across the unit but not entered for the REF. These include:

Academic literacies and student writing

A number of colleagues are working with academic staff at Rhode Island College to research a long term project designed to support teachers with their writing skills and confidence. A number of academic staff visits have already been made to look at the work going on in writing in Rhode Island and here in Lincoln. Plans are now in place for three projects: first a pilot study involving teachers across Lincolnshire replicating the Rhode Island Writing project format and assessing its impact on teachers and their pupils; second an academic literacies study involving BGU foundation degree students; third a replication in Rhode Island of the methodology used in a current doctoral study here at BGU leading to a comparative, cross cultural published article. Colleagues involved in this project are all enrolled on BGU's new doctoral programmes.

Creative Little Scientists'

The Creative Little Scientists project is a pan-European project funded under FP7 Science in Society initiative. BGU is working with 11 other HEIs in nine EU countries to investigate aspects of creativity, mathematics and science in the early years setting. Work on this project to date includes pilot studies in schools in England and Wales and international visits to representative institutions. Colleagues have co-authored web-based reports as the project unfolds.

Learner engagement with Higher Education

Academics at BGU led by Professor Sharp have been working with colleagues in the School of Education, Charles Sturt University, Australia to look at lecturer self-efficacy, student engagement and boredom proneness and its impact on degree outcome. By collaborating in this project, colleagues looking to develop expertise in quantitative and mixed-methods research have an opportunity to learn about the research cycle through to publication, as well as understand more fully how students approach their studies and experience higher education. This work impacts directly on learning and teaching and curriculum development.

Impact template (REF3a)**Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development in Primary Schools**

In this project Dr Adams has been working with colleagues at the University of Herefordshire and the International Association of Children's Spirituality to conduct a base line survey on how trainee teachers are introduced to their obligations to teach/support children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The team of researchers has a range of outputs planned from the project and is taking these forward collectively.

Education and the Rural Hybrid Energy Enterprise Systems (RHEES)

Professor Atkin is involved in the education element of the Engineering and Physical Science Research Council (EPSRC) funded research project exploring alternative renewable energy possibilities in rural Britain with sample sites in Lincolnshire, the Peak District and Caithness. A full-time researcher is based at BGU working with Atkin who is the principal investigator for work package 2: Community Engagement. RHEES is a collaborative project involving researchers at the University of Nottingham, the University of Leicester, Loughborough University, the University of Birmingham and Manchester Metropolitan University. The project is one of five funded under the RCUK Bridging the Urban and Rural Divide call for bids and at 3.7 million pounds is one of the largest.

d. Relationship to case studies

Having entered RAE 2008 for the first time, BGU's investment in, encouragement and support for its research activity and impact, as evidenced above and elsewhere in this submission, have been instrumental in the overall profile raising and importance attached to research at BGU. The strategic coupling of funding from internal and QR sources (e.g. RAE 2008) and addressing workload practices created the research spaces and incentive without which the impacts described would not have been possible.