

Institution: University of York
Unit of Assessment: Politics and International Studies
<p>a. Context</p> <p>The Department of Politics has a rich tradition of producing policy relevant research and undertaking public engagement, exhibited in the work of former/emeritus members of the Department, including Rod Rhodes, Haleh Afshar (life peer, OBE), Mark Evans, Adrian Leftwich and Sue Mendus (CBE). During the assessment period, we have built on this tradition by embedding impact in the Department's research strategy, policies and procedures (detailed in REF5), and promoting the diffusion of best practice through training, mentoring and investment. The Department actively seeks to inform and shape public policy and debate, especially in those areas of the discipline around which our research clusters are organised. These are: <i>Conflict, Security and Development, Political Economy, Comparative Politics and Public Policy</i>, and <i>Political Philosophy</i>. The research clusters work alongside and across the Department's three outward-facing research centres, the <i>Post-war Reconstruction and Development Unit (PRDU)</i>, <i>Morrell Centre for the Study of Toleration</i> and <i>Centre for Applied Human Rights (CAHR)</i>, which are founded on an explicit commitment to engage with non-academic users to produce research that is demand driven and policy relevant.</p> <p>The main non-academic beneficiaries from our research are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National policymakers and public organisations • Multilateral, regional and bilateral organisations • NGOs and other private and third sector bodies • Practitioners <p>The Department's research produces a diverse range of significant impacts, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioned research for government departments and agencies • Oral and written evidence to parliamentary committees and public inquiries • Advising governments, political parties, NGOs and private sector bodies • Participation in non-academic networks, workshops and conferences • Shaping public debate and policy discourse • Preparing or contributing to the production of policy reports and public documents • Providing training and capacity building programmes for practitioners and user-groups
<p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>The Department aims to ensure that engagement and impact are integrated fully into our wider research culture and across the diversity of our research activities. We support the co-production of knowledge and long-term engagement with and research funding from external user organisations. We consciously promote research that has a wide relevance, with our individual researchers and centres continually engaged with external organisations. Impact activities are overseen by the Department Research Committee (DRC), led and coordinated by the Department's Impact Champion (currently Smith), and supported by the Department's Research Development Officer (a new post created during the assessment period and shared with Sociology). Concentrated groupings of expertise within clusters and centres support impact activities across the diversity of the field. Our approach is based on enabling impact in all research activities through four key mechanisms:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Strategic user engagement.</i> The Department systematically engages with non-academic beneficiaries at each stage of the research process in order to maximise the potential for appropriate impact. Staff across all research clusters have been invited to provide expert evidence and input to a variety of public bodies, including Mendus to the Leveson Inquiry and Nuffield Working Party on Personalised Healthcare; and Clegg, Barakat, Ritchie and Smith to House of Commons Select Committees. Staff also engage with officials, think tanks and other non-academic users as a core part of our research identity, including, for example, O'Neill's

work on distributive justice and flood insurance, leading to sustained engagement with the National Flood Forum, the insurance industry, the Scottish Government, Defra, and the Labour Party; Ritchie's work on UK foreign and defence policy and close links with the Liberal Democrats, the NGO Parliamentary Liaison Group on Nuclear Weapons, British Pugwash Group (Executive Board member), Nuclear Information Service and the Project on Nuclear Issues at the Royal United Services Institute (Executive Board member); and Quaglia's contribution to policy debates on financial regulation through invited participation in private sector roundtables organised by TheCityUK (the body representing the UK financial services industry) and individual banks (e.g. Barclay's Annual Conference). We have ongoing relationships with non-academic users/bodies dedicated to social and policy impact, including major funding in the 2008-13 period from UNICEF, Rausing, Al Tajir Trust and others. Finally, as part of our core mission, we undertake commissioned research on behalf of many policy bodies with our fruitful and sustained relationship with DfID one example of this.

2. *Investment in research centres.* The Department has supported the development of impact from our research primarily through investment in outward-facing research centres. Since 2008, the Department has invested heavily in both CAHR and PRDU, each of which have doubled their staffing complement since RAE 2008 and benefitted from enlarged and improved space and increased funding for research support. These centres bridge theoretical and applied research in conflict assessment, peace building, humanitarian intervention and human rights, and are research hubs for cross-cluster and interdepartmental activity. This increased investment has strengthened the capacity of our centres to carry out commissioned research on behalf of major international organisations, such as the PRDU's £487,391 contract in 2013 with UNICEF in Somalia. In conjunction with the Overseas Development Institute's Humanitarian Policy Group, the PRDU holds an annual summer school for development practitioners and is one of a very small number of institutions to be chosen by DfID and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) to run the Chevening Senior Fellowship Programmes, aimed at facilitating global peace and stability. In the case of CAHR, additional investment by the Department has gone hand in hand with the Sigrid Rausing Trust's ongoing support for the Protective Fellowships Scheme (worth £895,841 since 2006 including renewed funding of £360,000 for 2011-14), which grants human rights defenders the opportunity to study at York in collaboration with academic staff and research students.
3. *Investment in staff.* The Department's impact agenda has shaped recruitment during the assessment period at all levels. First, external chair appointments were made to provide research leadership of our large cohort of ECRs and to enhance the policy relevance and non-academic impact of our research (e.g. Smith's links with local and central government on Whitehall reform and policy delivery, Heron with the Overseas Development Institute and Commonwealth Secretariat on trade and development issues; and Quaglia with the EU and UK financial services industry and policy community). Second, we have identified and recruited high-quality ECRs and lecturers with an emerging track record of research impact and user networks (e.g. White's work with the Security Industry Authority, O'Neill's with the National Flood Forum and Ritchie's with a range of stakeholders linked to UK nuclear weapons policy).
4. *Training and support.* We have overhauled our staff training and mentoring procedures in line with the recruitment of ECRs to maximise the policy and societal impact of their research. All staff benefit from training sessions provided at individual (though one-to-one mentoring arrangements), cluster, Department and University levels, including sessions on drafting pathways to impact, identifying beneficiaries, engaging users and producing targeted summaries. Impact issues are also explored in Annual Performance Reviews and as part of the twice yearly Publication and Research Review. These meetings allow DRC to identify specific packages of support and determine how best to sustain user engagement and impact (e.g. Clegg has benefited from such a programme of support and his academic research on social spending targets in IMF country programmes has recently been taken up by the House of Commons International Development Committee). The Impact Champion and Research Development Officer provide individual and Departmental support, including finding funding from external organisations, identifying external research partners and helping to support established relationships. Impact plans in research grant and research leave applications are peer-reviewed by DRC. We have also introduced flexibility into workloads and structured teaching in order to allow staff to enhance impact activity (e.g. teaching within the PRDU is

structured to enable staff members to undertake work with practitioners in the field).

c. Strategy and plans

Our strategy for impact over the next five years develops the primary aspects of our current approach (outlined above), namely, to support impact through investing internal funds to increase income from external funders and to support strategic relationships with key users. We will grow and further embed research impact in the following ways:

1. Encourage staff to apply for secondments to external non-academic organisations, to enhance and strengthen our relationships. Primarily, this will be supported through external funding opportunities and the University's ESRC Impact Accelerator Account. Where major opportunities arise, staff will also be able to access additional departmental support.
2. Use the Department's Research Development Officer and Impact Champion to develop networks, organise user events and create a social media strategy that identifies the most fruitful way of using the web to increase dissemination and impact. We will also use these administrative roles to map where public agendas meet departmental research and skills through systematically searching think tanks, policy organisations, Whitehall and parliamentary committees. Through raising awareness of the research in the Department, we will increase opportunities for developing relationships and increase the impact of our research.
3. Ensure that research and advice is available in an accessible way when issues arise. We will develop mechanisms for distilling, storing and disseminating research findings in ways that are attractive to policy makers.
4. Develop an individual timelines with appropriate staff in order to support their pathways to impact at the best time.
5. Use the Department's research expertise in global development politics (e.g. Clegg, Haagh, Heron, Spary, as well as PRDU and CAHR) and excellent links with DfID and other donor organisations to develop and sustain long-term relationships with funders, policy-makers and development practitioners.
6. Encourage collaboration and actively seek dialogue with a diverse range of communities, groups, individuals and environments outside the academy at all stages of the research process.

d. Relationship to case studies

The three impact case studies submitted here exemplify the Department's approach to impact during the assessment period. All three underline York's research strengths in global development politics and its distinctive reputation for producing work that is ambitious, theoretically informed, empirically grounded, internationally oriented and policy relevant. Leftwich's impacts on the policy and strategy of key development agencies and NGOs build on long-term relationships with UK and overseas bodies, and reflect sustained Departmental support (including replacement teaching). The example of Leftwich has shaped our aspirations, institutional knowledge and strategies for user-group engagement. In Barakat's case, increased Department investment in PRDU staffing and infrastructure strengthened the research capacity of the unit, enabling it to build long-term relationships with key organisations (in this case DfID and UNICEF) and to carry out commissioned research on their behalf. Similarly, Haagh's public engagement with the Council of Europe and the Canadian National Council of Welfare is a product of the Department's strategy of enabling impact by providing the necessary time, resources and support to individual researchers, as well as centres, to conduct the underpinning research and subsequent public engagement.