

<p>Institution: Sheffield Hallam University</p> <hr/> <p>Unit of Assessment: 19 Business and Management Studies</p> <hr/> <p>a. Context</p> <p>The strategic goal of the Research Institute within the Sheffield Business School is to undertake research, consultancy and knowledge transfer activities which provide added value to external partners. This is achieved through empirically-grounded applied research projects, located mainly in regional-national organisations; these include Small and Medium Size Enterprises (SMEs), the public and the third sector. The primary non-academic beneficiaries are managers and professionals who work in these sectors; however, research has also impacted on policy and decision makers in, for example, the charities sector. Examples of impact include: i) enhancing the operational and strategic approaches taken by SMEs; ii) improving effectiveness of workplace practices, altering management practices and leadership; iii) providing alternative economic models and models of governance and iv) accountancy regimes in voluntary organisations.</p> <hr/> <p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>Project engagement with corporate clients is developed through the Business Engagement Team (BET) which has fostered relationships with a wide range of business and public sector organisations. Business Development Fellows from BET ensure that staff from the Research Institute with the appropriate research expertise are closely matched to the needs of clients.</p> <p>Engagement is also maintained through individual contacts between members of the Research Institute and collaborating organisations. Morgan, for example, is a member of various working groups concerned with the development of policy and regulation for charities. Ridley-Duff takes up board positions on infrastructure bodies that influence the development of social enterprises and explores opportunities to co-host events or make joint research and knowledge transfer bids. These individual contacts are coordinated through the Research Institute and make a strategic contribution to development of impact.</p> <p>The unit views Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs) as a significant mechanism to build on relationships with collaborators and develop impact. During the period 2008-13 the unit developed four KTP's. These were initiated either through BET or through engagement with our user networks. The KTP (1548) with Foster's Bakery involved Doherty (in RAE2008 and from 2010 appointed as Emeritus Professor) as lead academic. Research into HR problems (retention rates; absenteeism etc.) and consequent interventions into HR strategies and operations significantly improved the HR and strategic management process and company performance which resulted in efficiency gains with a positive impact on reducing HR costs. The KTP with Ideagen, a software company (7123), resulted in strategic change of the marketing approach such that it developed and implemented a new Value Proposition and undertook a comprehensive rebranding exercise. The KTP with Timberplay, a company that specialises in the production of children's play equipment and spaces, improved their commercial competitive advantage and enhanced their reputation as a knowledge base company.</p> <p>Engagement with users is also secured through various series of seminars and workshops. 'Headspace' was originated by two members (Darwin (in RAE2008 and since 2009 Visiting Fellow) and Bryant (in RAE2008 and since 2011 Emeritus Professor)) with a particular interest in organisation development and learning. These were jointly run from 2009-2012 by academics and practitioners/managers in order to provide a platform for the discussions of practitioner-relevant issues from a research-informed perspective. Examples include: "Reverse logistics - moving products back through the supply chain", and "What do organisations and sponsors want from coaching and how can they get it?". These events regularly attract some 40 managers and professionals from the region. The unit is also responsible for Management lectures at which distinguished academics or professionals address particular issues. These can attract up to 200 managers and other professionals. The unit has also been responsible for the delivery of regular 'Thinking Person's Lunch' seminars. In 2012-13 the unit has been responsible for the delivery of ESRC 'Festival of Social Science' seminars; themes include 'Communicating and understanding financial information', 'Public service delivery and the Third Sector', 'Cooperation for positive social</p>

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change in Sheffield', 'Elite Performance', 'Enterprise Zones: past experience and future prospects' and 'Corporate responsibility rethought: social impact and sustainability'. These attract between 30-40 attendees.

At a sectoral level impact through workshop events is created through three main vehicles: i) The Public Sector Facilities Management Network - this brings together individuals and organisations in the public sector to develop and improve the field of facilities management. The network helps to share ideas and best practice in a range of areas including healthcare, education, local government, police, and the fire service. The network crucially provides access to the latest research developments in the field and enables members to share experiences and knowledge with others working in different areas of the public sector. Membership is open to all UK public sector organisations, and selected private organisations that provide services to the public. During the period November 2012 – July 2013 there were six of these days which attracted some 30-40; ii) The Coaching and Mentoring Research days – these provide an opportunity for the dissemination of research to practitioners; typically there are four of these each year and they attract 20-30 HR professionals; iii) the annual Cooperative and Social Enterprise Summer School – led by Ridley-Duff - this three-day event is designed to explore the social and economic contribution of co-operatives and social enterprises and embedded in the design is the presentation and discussion of research. It typically attracts 25 managers and professionals from within the social enterprise sector.

Support for staff in achieving impact: Staff are supported through BET in the *development of engagement*. BET also provides comprehensive support for workshops and seminar series. The academic/research staffing of this team is three Business Development Fellows and one Research Associate all of whom work with members of the Research Institute to develop research based impact. It is a key aspect of the research strategy to develop and strengthen this relationship. The Research Institute will be working with BET and the University's Research and Innovation Office (RIO) to support the initial development of 10 KTP's in the period 2014-6.

Administrative support for impact activities is provided by the Business and Research Team. This dedicated local administrative team provides comprehensive support for KTPs, research projects, and the knowledge transfer events such as the workshops and seminars.

Staff are also supported by mentoring and the allocation of selective teaching relief and funding to develop impact informed by annual review of public engagement activities.

Institutional support for achieving impact: The University's research and impact support is provided by RIO. RIO provides central expertise to help deliver the four priorities of the University's impact strategy. It is an essential partner in helping the Research Centres to deliver research priorities working with organisations and companies to achieve economic and social transformation. Dedicated personnel (8.0 FTE) support the exploitation of research and create commercial technology transfer relationships with external organisations. RIO also provides support to the unit through the process of acquisition of Knowledge Transfer Partnerships and their management. RIO also involves staff from the Research Institute to work with the University's 'Innovation Futures Programme'. This scheme, which is ERDF supported, enables staff to work as consultants to enable clients to assess new opportunities and create innovative action plans. For example, two members of staff investigated the link between innovation and leadership style in a local manufacturer and a supplier of office equipment.

c. Strategy and plans

The overall goal for 2014 - 2019 is to develop and implement a sustainable impact strategy in line with our overarching objective b as laid out in REF5: '*to undertake research, consultancy and knowledge transfer activities which provide added value to partners and to document and measure 'impact' as an integral part of these*'. The challenge for the unit is to ensure that the outcomes of

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this applied research are systematically captured and disseminated as research outputs in a virtuous cycle of collaborative research/knowledge transfer which leads to the improvement of thinking and practices in work organisations. This overall goal is aligned with the commitment of the University to promote successful partnerships, knowledge exchange and public engagement and to enable these through the provision of a supporting infrastructure. The specific aims of the impact strategy 2013-2020 are therefore:

1. To work collaboratively with partners to attract ten new KTPs during the next three years utilising the expertise of research active staff as academic lead. The initial development of these KTP's will be through the use of University funding from the Higher Education Innovation Fund.
2. To work collaboratively with BET to ensure the presence of research experience in a greater range of projects undertaken by BET than is presently the case. This will require a high-level of collaboration between the BET and the Research Institute.
3. To work within the Research Institute to develop further collaboration between the different units that constitute the Research Institute – Business and Management, Hospitality and Tourism, and Food Innovation.
4. To work with RIO in improving mechanisms through which evidence on impact and impact-related activities is captured and collated in a systematic manner.
5. To deliver training provisions, guidance and support for academic staff to develop skills-sets necessary to secure impact and to further deepen relationships between research and impact.
6. To build on existing strength in public engagement in order to develop an increased range of research based public events.

d. Relationship to case studies

The case studies provide evidence of a virtuous circle between academic analysis, collaboratively articulated and solution-driven research, and its dissemination to a variety of audiences, including practitioner and user audiences as well as publication in academic journals.

In learning from these cases two overarching issues became apparent which are reflected in our future aims. The first is the importance of collecting and generating impact data and evidence of impact throughout all stages of research programmes. These will be provided through a closer relationship between the Research Institute and the Business and Research Team and the SHU Research and Innovation Office as appropriate. The second is the realisation that academic staff require further support, guidance and training about 'impact' and its relationship to research. This will be provided by the provision of mentoring and workshops.

Case Study 1 (Democratising Cooperatives, Charities and Social Enterprises) has been developed by a new generation of researchers (Ridley-Duff and Coule). They developed conceptual rigour in their initial thinking to inform a series of research projects. They then undertook impact activities through knowledge transfer events to generate further collaboratively-defined research in order to instigate changes in their sector. This case study exemplifies how research-based conceptual analysis by researchers who are relatively new into research can be linked with knowledge transfer work with practitioners in the social economy thereby instigating changes in governance structures.

Case Study 2 (Simplifying Audit Requirements for Smaller Charities) is based on a programme of research which represents the 'solution-based approach' as the issues faced by charities and the complexities of their accounting regimes posed problems for their effective operation. The main thrust of Morgan's research was thus 'problem-focused' and its findings and resulting dissemination and knowledge transfer activities resulted in policy changes that impacted on smaller charities. This programme of research was part-funded by government bodies (Office of the Third Sector), Charity Aid Foundation, the Charity Commission and the Association of Charity Independent Examiners. This has been valuable experience for the unit in that it highlights that the involvement of user bodies in funding increases their commitment to the research and its impact which then impacts on its potential reach.