

<p><b>Institution: UNIVERSITY of WEST LONDON</b></p>
<p><b>Unit of Assessment: 3   ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONS, DENTISTRY, NURSING and PHARMACY</b></p>
<p><b>a. Overview</b></p> <p>The College of Nursing, Midwifery and Healthcare and the School of Psychology, Social Work and Health Sciences provide undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral education for: midwifery; adult; child, mental health and learning disabilities nursing; social work, psychology; and CPD for practitioners.</p> <p>Our research groups are interdisciplinary and closely aligned to discrete areas of professional practice with a clear purpose to influence health policy and the effectiveness of care delivery within a range of health settings. Research is clustered in well-established research groups including: Richard Wells Research Centre; Centre for Research in Midwifery and Childbirth and the Psychology Research Centre (Health and Wellbeing Group). Professor Heather Loveday directs research programmes within these centres, and has been instrumental in nurturing the emerging research groups in Mental Health Nursing, Learning Disabilities Nursing and Long Term Chronic Conditions. New appointments at professorial and associate professorial level are leading these newer research groups.</p> <p>Research groups have evolved based on the outgoing strategy of supporting staff to undertake research through our structured PhD programme. This is delivered centrally within the University and linked to areas of professional practice and policy aligned to our partnerships with the NHS, Government and commercial partners.</p> <p>The research groups submitting for this assessment period are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Richard Wells Research Centre/ INSPIRE (Infection Prevention and Epidemiology);</li> <li>• The Centre for Research in Midwifery and Childbirth/ Psychology Research Centre;</li> <li>• Mental Health and Learning Disabilities/ Psychology Research Centre;</li> <li>• Long Term Chronic Illness Nursing/ Nutritional Science.</li> </ul> <p>Across the Research Excellence Framework assessment period, strategy has been, and continues to be, directed by the University of West London's Strategic Plans (2008-2013 and 2013-2018), and by the University Research and Scholarship Strategy (2008-2013 updated October 2010). Moreover, the increased engagement of 'young' researchers within this submission is driven predominantly by the NHS and Government agenda of assuring quality and standards within the identified professions, such that these are formally linked to policy and practice to safeguard both the quality and delivery of effective care. Research groups are strongly supported by the University's <i>Institute for Practice, Interdisciplinary Research and Enterprise</i> (INSPIRE), established in August 2011 under the leadership of the Senior Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise), and through which research-related activities and the PhD infrastructure are overseen. Through this institutional structure and its supporting processes, research in allied healthcare contributes to the strategic direction of the University and exemplifies a fully participatory research culture in which the educational and clinical expertise in the University is nurtured, synergised and disseminated to both internal and external stakeholders.</p>
<p><b>b. Research strategy</b></p> <p>The University Research and Scholarship Strategy (2008-2013) is aligned with the vocational and professional tradition of enhancement of learning and the pursuit of excellence in applied, pedagogic and practice-based research. This strategic approach is fundamental to the research disciplines within this submission, with innovation and the creation of knowledge, supportive of teaching, learning and effective translation to practice - embedded across all academic programmes. The strategic approach is formally supported by the <i>Institute for Teaching, Innovation</i></p>

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*& Learning* (INSTIL) and INSPIRE. The University established both institutions in the last five years specifically to support and implement actions embedded within the broad University Strategy (2008-2013) and the more specific University Research, Scholarship & Enterprise Strategy (2008-2013). Specific aims were to:

- Create and sustain a vibrant and growing research and enterprise culture across the University that all academic staff engage with;
- accelerate the development of research capacity and capability and scholarly activity at the University;
- increase the attractiveness of the University to potential students, staff, employers, funding bodies, and other potential stakeholders as an institution known for its pursuit of excellence in applied, pedagogic and practice-based research;
- maximise the potential for knowledge generated within the University to be translated into solutions addressing contemporary issues regionally, nationally and internationally.

**Within the research environment described, the objectives and deliverables relevant to this unit of assessment for the current assessment period, are aligned to the University strategic aims and have been threefold:**

- Development and enhanced engagement with staff to foster a research culture within which all academic staff participate in research, scholarly and/or enterprise activity that directly influences clinical practice, service provision, educational innovation and/or policy;
- strengthening existing research centres and establishing new research groups to facilitate internal and external collaboration, interdisciplinary research, sustained funding and increased doctoral students numbers;
- embedding research, scholarship or enterprise in all teaching and learning activity ensuring that in particular all our practice-based programmes are enriched by research evidence and able to influence practice of the future.

**Evidence of key achievements as measured against the stated priorities include:**

- Continuous funding for the DH Healthcare associated Infection Research Network and Service User Research Forum that continues to be instrumental in the evaluation of the effectiveness of prevention programmes, led by multi-professional teams;
- the awarding of significant research funding from the NIHR DH Policy Research Programme to evaluate the national programme to reduce MRSA bloodstream infections in England; scope the interventions used by Primary Care organisations to reduce healthcare infections in primary and community settings; investigate the patient experience of MRSA screening and update the National Evidence based Guidelines for Preventing Healthcare associated Infection in Hospitals;
- the award of ‘collaborating status’ within the Joanna Briggs Institute to support engagement of increased number of staff formally engaging with research and scholarship and influencing health policy and practice;
- maximising the potential of investment made by the University through “pump-priming” funds to develop new research groupings that have subsequently attracted enhanced engagement with external stakeholders and increased applications for PhD programmes;
- investment to build strategic research capacity has been instrumental in the development of vibrant research groupings through the appointment of a Professor of Evidence-based Healthcare, a Professor of Mental Health Nursing, and a Professor of Midwifery;

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- institutional research and growth of capacity to undertake doctoral supervision via new staff appointments, and support for existing staff to complete PhD study. The completion of doctoral study by staff members and the importance of that in attracting new and senior researchers to the organisation and the development of a professional doctorate in health for key stakeholders;
- creation of the role of Provost for Health to draw disciplines together across and beyond the University to strengthen the impact of interdisciplinary work and in particular - dissemination to a broader yet more influential audience.

Over the assessment period the CNMH has enhanced its approach to dissemination. The impact of studies, especially linked to infection control, has not only been targeted towards policy makers but to a broad range of practitioners, many of whom are our key stakeholders responsible for the delivery of care within London and the Thames Valley. This approach underpins the necessity for continual development of professional staff both to encourage innovation and to raise awareness of current thinking around best practice.

**The full potential of research groups within allied healthcare** and indeed the wider University research environment - is emerging rapidly. In response to Ambition 2018, interdisciplinary research, in particular, has informed the CNMH and SPSWH main research objectives for 2013-2018 and include the ambition to:

- Establish a sustainable high quality research profile for the CNMH, SPSWH and the University, building on our current strength in the field of infection prevention and patient safety and evidence synthesis, focussing upon National and European priority areas:
  - Health promotion and disease prevention (public health) and primary care;
  - mental health and learning disability;
  - maternal wellbeing and child health;
  - simulated learning for healthcare professionals.

This strategy will drive excellence in our educational programmes, create a more vibrant culture of research, scholarship and enterprise to improve the treatment, care and experience of patients/clients, as well as exploit available income streams to support research and enterprise. This will be achieved in part through repositioning the Richard Wells Research Centre as the 'hub' for research groups within these strategic areas. Such developments fit with the University's main research objectives for 2013-2018 to produce '*impactful research which can benefit people, society and the economy*' (p3); and create stronger links between research and teaching; consolidate the focus on life-long examination of education, and increase the interaction with users of research and other key collaborators.

A key priority for allied health professional and interdisciplinary research activity is to meet ambitious key performance indicators for 2018 in the following areas:

- number of research publications of a minimum of national relevance;
- value of research bids submitted and awarded;
- percentage of academic staff with a doctorate;
- number of registered MPhil/PhD students.

Monitoring of progress towards these targets is through the reporting of annual data using the current governance structure (University Research, Scholarship and Enterprise Committee), via

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the School and College Research, Scholarship and Enterprise Committees and the INSPIRE Management Group.

**The trajectory for interdisciplinary partnership working** will be the key focus of the aforementioned research groups, with a continued and enhanced focus on research that will harness 'evidence-based practice in infection control'. The further development of research groups within the professional disciplines of learning disability and mental health nursing will be nurtured to ensure an approach that will influence policy makers and practice, opening up the potential for new funding streams of strategic importance to our disciplines.

At the same time, partnership working through the engagement of Visiting Professors has been highly influential and supportive to the development of research. The support of Professor William Maton-Howarth and the recent appointment of Dr Bobby Prasad have been key in developing research bids. The appointment of Professor Bob Gates in the field of Learning Disability has been important in raising the profile of on-going research at the institution in relation to the future professional training and required policy, to ensure effective working of learning disability practitioners for diverse health environments. This approach will be enhanced to assure all research groups have strong partnership links with external academics and stakeholders.

### Summary plans for period 2014-2018:

- Increase publication rates in high impact journals;
- increase visiting appointments and exchanges;
- continue with identified research groupings and recruit new staff with reference to those areas of specialism;
- continue to focus on improving evidence-based practice and further explore impact on both policy makers and healthcare users;
- continue to apply for funding to the main relevant research councils and Department of Health, and other funding organisations, and develop European collaborations to access European funds;
- develop a strategy to access funding from employers and stakeholders to support the planned increase in PhD studentships;
- evaluate the effectiveness of the existing research development programme for PhD students and in particular the professional doctorate programme;
- develop PhD cohort-based provision for Educational Research.

### c. People, including:

#### i. Staffing strategy and staff development

Over the assessment period, the University has rationalised to ensure all activities, and in particular staff appointments, align with our strategic ambitions to underpin pedagogic activity and professional training with impactful research. INSTIL & INSPIRE were created as part of a strategy which saw dissolution of faculties in favour of a flat eight-school academic structure; a significant advantage of this has been the accessibility of central resource to support all academic areas. For example the 22+ permanent academic and support staff including six professors within INSTIL & INSPIRE (all new appointments since 2008) also hold embedded roles within each of the academic schools, whilst vice versa all members of University academic staff hold affiliate positions aligned to a research interest in INSTIL &/or INSPIRE. As a consequence all academic staff, not just those whose research is submitted as part of this unit of assessment, are encouraged to undertake effective scholarship.

REFThe University adopted a new *Academic Employment Framework* in August 2013. The Framework clarifies staff roles and responsibilities in relation to teaching, academic leadership and research. Its 'career family' approach to academic contracts enables all academic staff to have support, i.e. 'balancing their outputs according to their development, duties and responsibilities for each academic year' (p23). The introduction of the new Framework supports the key performance indicators outlined in *Ambition: 2018* (University Strategic Plan 2013-2018). Fundamental to supporting the development of a culture supportive of research is the integration of local (department/school) and University-wide (INSTIL/INSPIRE) knowledge, expertise & resource. This framework has significantly influenced the working practice of several of our key 'young' researchers within this submission as it enables individuals to effectively map and monitor their career progression. The promotion of two staff members to the position of 'Associate Professor' who would have been classified as 'young researchers' within the previous Research Assessment Exercise is testament to the success of the newly implemented framework.

Both full and part time staff within the designated research disciplines hold long-term contracts with the University. Recent appointments have been at professorial level to lead and nurture the new research groups (e.g. Professor Bonner and Professor Gates) contributing to the unit's succession plans and future sustainability. Support for all staff to become active researchers includes time to undertake the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice with its embedded pedagogic research project; postgraduate training in research methods; opportunities for staff to publish in VISTAS (the University research journal launched in 2011), and to present at national seminars and conferences, and within institutional Annual Teaching and Learning and MPhil/PhD conferences.

## ii. Research students

The University has sought to balance an increase in the number of registered MPhil/PhD students with supervisory capacity and specialist subject alignment; this has been a key priority within this unit of assessment. The integrated nature of health-related research has provided an enhanced and supportive environment, and has led to a more interdisciplinary approach; for example: young researchers from the discipline of Psychology working within the Midwifery and Child birth research centre. Within the submitting unit, all research groups have attracted students studying for higher degrees, and all research programmes are focussed on improving practice within a healthcare setting.

The research groups, directed by Professor Loveday, ensure the quality of training and supervision of postgraduate research students through adherence to the University's *Code of Practice for Research Students and Supervisors* (approved by the University Research Degrees Sub-Committee, October 2011). The *Code of Practice* is intended to '*provide a framework for research in an atmosphere of scholarship and collegiality enabling students to complete their degrees successfully within the time limits*' (p1). It makes explicit the responsibilities of students and supervisors and provides examples of good supervisory practice. More formal requirements are provided by the University's Research Degree regulations.

Postgraduate research students receive academic support through the appointment of two supervisors including at least one subject specialist. The appointment of additional external supervision is possible. Pastoral support is provided through the University's central student support services. Students and supervisory staff are supported administratively through the Research Office in INSPIRE. Research training is aligned with the *VITAE Researcher Development Framework* thus affording support to students and staff with the development of postgraduate research and employability skills. There are regular evening research seminars where students and staff share experiences.

During the REF assessment period, the University has sought to support research activity and provide opportunity to aspiring PhD students through the award of Vice Chancellor and Graduate Scholarships. This UoA has benefited greatly from the award of Graduate Scholarships to MPhil/PhD students, and as a direct a result the culture of postgraduate research and evidence-

based practice has flourished. The staff submitted within this UoA all contribute to professional and doctoral programmes within their aligned disciplines and to the direct supervision of MPhil/PhD training and specialist workshops. Specifically, Professor Loveday, Dr Trenoweth and Professor Bonner supervise doctorates and contribute to the wider doctoral programme of the University.

**d. Income, infrastructure and facilities**

Across the REF assessment period, the established research centres have been successful in securing external research income to support the work of its sub-groups:

Sponsor	Project	Value	
1	Ethnic Health Foundation	EHF African Communities Project	3,500
2	Burdett Trust	Hospital to Home Postnatal Project	56,915
3	Wembley Centre For Health Care (PCT)	FHHS Business Office WELREN	440,594
4	WELREN (NHS)	CM and Children	5,300
5	Dept of Health & National Institute for Health Research (via Oxford University)	BIRTHPLACE PROJECT	7,114
6	Imperial NHS Trust -Save the Baby Imperial College London	Evaluation Of caseload midwifery in a multi-ethnic population	23,277
7	King's Fund	Traditional & complementary health care approaches for children in multi ethnic community	87,712
8	Lambeth PCT	Sexual Health Self Management Programme	20,000
9	Get Well UK	Get Well UK	11,492
10	Smith & Nephew Foundation	Centre for CRICP	15,000
11	NHS CORE LEARNING UNIT	Translation research developing blended e-learning infection prevention and control programmes to support the incorporation of evidenced based guidelines into clinical practices in the NHS in England.	12,165
12	Department of Health	Department of Health National Healthcare associated infection research network	1,148,369
13	Oxford University - Department of Health Policy Research Programme	NPEU birthplace at home in England	37,628
14	King's Fund	Traditional & complementary health care approaches for children in multi ethnic community.	17,729
15	Department of Health	MRSA	58,486
		<b>Total:</b>	<b>1,945,283</b>

Research Centres within the submitting unit have competed successfully for internal institutional funds from INSPIRE to support research development i.e. funding of Graduate Scholars and conference attendance. INSPIRE has its own management group of which Professor Loveday and Professor Mitchell are members, and through this they can influence strategic direction and decisions concerning research implementation. INSPIRE provides also a physical research space for all staff and postgraduate research students, and offers a welcoming and well-equipped area where staff and postgraduate students can meet to discuss research with each other, and with Professors and Readers located there.

The University Research, Scholarship and Enterprise Committee (URSEC) meets termly and is chaired by Professor Woodman in his capacity as Senior Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise). URSEC receives reports on issues of University-wide interest. The Schools and Colleges submit termly updates and an annual report of their research, enterprise and scholarly

activities. URSEC also advises on research governance within the individual Schools. It oversees metrics for research and key performance indicators (KPIs) and their fitness for purpose in the context of the University's Strategic Plan. A University Research Degrees Sub-Committee scrutinises progression by postgraduate research students from registration to MPhil status, and onward to doctoral (PhD) completion.

#### **e. Collaboration or contribution to the discipline or research base**

As signalled in REF3a, a significant focus for this UoA is on informing national policy and practice in infection prevention and control - to save lives. This research has generated much interest worldwide, and facilitated connections with researchers across nations. In particular it has enabled a positive relation with the Joanna Briggs Institute in Australia and has led to the University becoming an affiliated collaborator. This collaboration goes to the heart of the research strategy enabling the Research Centres and groups to capture and influence research at the *macro* (institutional, structural), *meso* (departmental, team, and subject-related) and *micro* (individual academics) levels of research practice, and develop a strategy as to where best the research may influence practice in the future.

A key focus of the HCAI research network and Service User Research Forum (SURF) is engaging researchers and the public to identify research priorities, and to support the work of independent advisory committee on antimicrobial resistance and healthcare associated infection (ARHAI). This has played a significant role at both national and international levels in influencing research across continents; it has provided a model of working that places importance on the role of public involvement in the development of research projects nationally.

Professor Bob Gates and Dr Kay Mafuba have worked closely with national bodies to address factors that influence social policy and the effectiveness of training programmes in asserting best practice within learning disability. Professor Gates has been influential in addressing practical issues such as staffing levels in achieving effective patient care and satisfaction. The strengthening of networks and collaborations with national bodies are clearly important for the design and effectiveness of future healthcare within the UK and beyond.

The Director of Research and leaders of the research groups all act as reviewers for national and international refereed journals. Professor Loveday is Associate Editor for the International Journal of Nursing Practice (2012 – present); is Editor for the Journal of Infection Prevention (2009-2012), and a member of the Editorial Advisory Board of the Journal Infection Prevention (2012). Dr Kim Drake is an Associate Editor for SAGE Open Journal, and is a member of the Editorial Board for the journal Personality and Individual Differences. Ms Jennie Wilson is Deputy Editor of the journal of Infection Prevention.

The newly appointed Professor of Learning Disability, Professor Bob Gates holds significant roles including: Editorial Board member of the journal - Intellectual Disability Research and Intellectual Disability Info Web Pages; International Board member of Working Papers in the Health Sciences, University of Southampton <http://www.southampton.ac.uk/wphs/index.page>, and Honorary Professor of Learning Disabilities, at Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust.

This high-level collaboration and contribution not only enhances the profile of the research groups but also provides a vibrant research environment within which to operate.