

Institution: Queen's University Belfast

Unit of Assessment: 21 Politics and International Studies

a. Context

The School's research in the areas of politics and international studies has a long record of impact. This has been facilitated by a well-established, yet evolving nexus of relationships with non-academic audiences reflecting the School's research strengths including: policy and politics in Northern Ireland and in the European Union, international relations, environmental policy, Middle Eastern politics, conflict management and conflict resolution, and gender politics. Researchers in these fields have over many years developed a network of contacts with end-users at regional, national and international levels, including with the Northern Ireland (NI) Assembly, the Irish Parliament (Dail), Executive Departments in Northern Ireland and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) in London. These contacts have been enhanced during the REF period via a series of new or replacement appointments, thereby expanding the researchers' opportunities to exert impact on public policy and legislation and contribute to the development of policy agendas, policy options and policy and administrative debates.

During the REF period, the School has developed a more strategic approach to the promotion of research impacts that provides a sharper and more cohesive focus to activities. The further development of the approach is being facilitated by the School's new Research Committee (2012) and by the pooling of in-house research-related budgets, the earmarking of a dedicated impact budget and the reallocation of administrative tasks. The focus of the Research Committee is on activities that enable staff to exert impact on end-users/beneficiaries of their research and, in particular, to produce a more fully articulated impact strategy. In developing the latter, the Research Committee draws upon a variety of pre-existing pro- and reactive methods (see below) to promote the impact of research undertaken in the School. The approach provides staff with advice/guidance as well as financial support enabling them to disseminate research findings to potential/actual beneficiaries, whether at conferences, roundtables, evidence-giving sessions at parliamentary committees and government fora, and via secondments to policy communities.

b. Approach to Impact

Our impact-related activity continues to operate at a number of levels: the individual; the School; the Faculty; and the wider University.

At individual/School level, successive Heads of School and DRs via research cluster activities, mentoring and annual appraisal procedures, promote the need to engage pro-actively with non-academic communities within Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, the United Kingdom and globally. Embedded within such procedures is the promotion of 'routes to impact', whereby senior colleagues with impact-related experience (e.g. from the case studies) communicate the means they have adopted to reach significant end-users during the research process, from planning research agendas to the dissemination of research outputs. Whether on a one-to-one or a collective basis, senior colleagues within the School use both formal and informal methods of conveying the importance of impact-related activities to all colleagues (and post-graduate researchers) in ways that are consistent with career progression policy within the University: its promotion-related profiles include 'economic and societal impact' under the Research descriptors, thereby reinforcing the significance of impact in respect of career development.

At Faculty/University level, one means of reaching policy makers in both the NI Assembly and the NI Executive is the creation of *QPo*, a University-supported initiative, embracing academics and potential end-users of research, designed to act as a knowledge transfer vehicle between QUB and, primarily, the devolved institutions. Colleagues are actively involved in its activities, thereby contributing to *QPo*'s policy-related and knowledge transfer research agenda. A further Faculty initiative has been the creation in 2012-13 of two new Research Institutes: the Institute for Collaborative Research in the Humanities and the Institute for the Study of Conflict Transformation and Social Justice (ISCTSJ). Staff are integrally involved in these new Institutes, which are designed to provide further platforms for active engagement with end-users, both formally and informally. At the University level, staff are actively involved in presenting their research as part of the Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS) hosted by the Northern Ireland Assembly. The

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series involves research-based presentations designed to promote evidence-led policy and law-making in Northern Ireland in line with the Executive's Programme for Government.

The forms of engagement practised by staff are extensive and allow their research to inform policy debates in a range of fora and influence policy options at regional, national and international levels, including sub-national and national government, legislatures, civic organizations and a wide range of advisory bodies. The extent of the School's collective reach and the diverse scope of engagement with significant non-academic stakeholders has been achieved *inter alia* via:

- presentations at key stakeholder meetings/conferences, the reach of which extends to regional, national and international audiences/policy makers: Galligan – Fianna Fail; Milton-Edwards – the 'Quartet', the Dutch Government, the National Security Agency and the EU; Bulley – Labour Party; Baker – Chatham House, Atlantic Council, International Islamic Financial Policy Forum; Bourne – Sri Lankan Government, United Nations.
- formal appointment to Government and public sector bodies: Galligan – McKay Commission; Phinnemore – FCO; Bew – House of Lords, Committee on Standards in Public Life (Chair), Department of Education; McCall – Maze/Long Kesh Working Group; Wilford – Commissioner for Public Appointments; O'Callaghan – Archives Committee, Irish Department of Justice and Law Reform.
- written and oral evidence to committees in legislatures: Galligan – Oireachtas Joint Sub-Committee on Women's Rights, House of Commons Committee of inquiry into women in STEM careers; Wilford – NI Assembly (Procedure Committee, Environment Committee, Assembly and Executive Review Committee), House of Commons Northern Ireland Affairs Select Committee), National Assembly for Wales (Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee), , British-Irish Inter-parliamentary Association; McGowan – NI Assembly (Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister Committee); Phinnemore – House of Commons (Foreign Affairs); Walker – Scottish Parliament (Justice Committee).
- submissions to independent panels: Galligan - The Panel of Parties in the Northern Ireland Executive on parades and protests; flags, symbols and emblems, and related matters; and the past (Ambassador Richard N. Hass).
- formal involvement in civic society organizations: Baker – Centre for Progressive Economics (CPE); Barry – CPE, North Down District Council, Green New Deal Group; Lisle – Ulster Museum.
- research findings supplied to Government Departments, advisory panels/bodies and committees: MacCarthaigh – Irish Constitutional Convention (ICC); Galligan – ICC; Wilford – NI Assembly Commission, NI Electoral Commission, UK Electoral Commission, the Silk Commission, NI Assembly Independent Salary and Review Panel; Agarin – German Federal Government.
- research presentations to professional bodies, trade unions and non-governmental organizations: Baker, Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA), Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU); Barry – ICTU; Wilford – Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, International Conference of Parliamentary Researchers, NICVA.
- research presentations to sixth form teachers and students of politics: Barry, Breen, Garry, McBride, McLoughlin, Wilford
- the publicizing of research findings via broadcast and print media, including the BBC (nationally and regionally), ITV, RTE (Ireland), CNN, RTF, RAI CBC, Vatican Radio and PBS as well as quality broadsheets (e.g. Financial Times, Irish Times).

c. Strategy and plans

The School is committed to building on existing impact-focused activities through the introduction of impact workshops designed for both staff and postgraduate research (PGR) students, led by colleagues with direct impact-related experience and actual/potential end-users of research. A designated 'Impact Fund' is available to staff to enable them to promote their research to end-users, underpinned by media training opportunities and the development of a research dissemination strategy. Awareness of the importance of research impact, already evident in the inclusion of impact plans in grant and sabbatical leave applications, will become an even more salient feature both of the formal processes of staff appraisal and promotion as well as progress

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reviews of our PGR students, buttressed by informal advice and guidance to both staff and PGR students.

The developing impact strategy includes the exploitation of existing networks and the cultivation of new ones. One specific example of the latter concerns the Northern Ireland Executive's proposals for the redevelopment of the Maze/Long Kesh site that includes an International Peace and Conflict Transformation Centre. The School harbours considerable expertise in the field of ethnic conflict management/transformation and was integrally involved in the consultation process on the development of the proposed Centre's programme of activities. This involvement – enhanced by the establishment in 2012 of the ISCTSJ whose first Senior Research Fellow (McCall) is a member of the UoA – will continue as the plans are re-visited and re-developed. 'Joining-up' the ISCTSJ initiative with the Executive's re-developed plans for an International Peace and Conflict Transformation Centre is high on the School's research impact agenda: it will provide a platform for the dissemination of relevant research findings on conflict transformation to regional, national and international non-academic audiences.

In addition, the School is planning to complement the QPOL and KESS series with a discrete politics-focused rolling seminar, operated under the Chatham House Rule, with the representatives from the Northern Ireland Executive, the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Northern Ireland Office, designed to transfer research findings to potential beneficiaries. The impacts of this targeted relationship will relate to policy, legislation and administration in Northern Ireland.

d. Relationship to case studies

Facilitating productive relationships with end-users of the School's research activity and securing its impact is exemplified by the four case-studies.

Phinnemore's case-study was enabled by his release from teaching and associated administration in order to complete an 'inward loan' with the FCO during 2010-11 and in particular the passage of the EU Bill, now Act (2011), through Parliament.

Milton-Edwards benefited from the facilitation of her fieldwork, conference attendance and travel by the School both before and during the REF-cycle, thereby evidencing the School's determination to reach significant policy makers on a global level.

At local/regional level, Wilford's role as co-coordinator of the NI devolution monitoring team from 1999 to 2009 and the introduction in 2009-10 of the MA in Legislative Studies and Practice, extended his existing relationships both with politicians and officials in the new devolved institutions, aided by the School's readiness to provide material support in the form of travel and subsistence costs incurred in furtherance of those relationships.

Galligan's case-study has been assisted by her appointment as Director of the Centre for the Advancement of Women in Politics within the School, itself established on the basis of a strategic, University-supported, initiative.

In each of these cases, the School has actively supported the relevant colleague, whether financially and/or through the enabling of secondments and leave provision. Such support has to date been primarily demand-led and, while this approach has paid dividends, the School's developing impact strategy will incorporate a complementary, supply-led dimension, including a bespoke impact fund accessible to all colleagues, administered via the Research Committee. Each of the case study researchers has been involved in advising colleagues on how impact can be secured.