

## Impact template (REF3a)

<b>Institution:</b> Queen's University Belfast
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 32 Philosophy
<p><b>a. Context</b></p> <p>The current six-strong Philosophy unit is a small, new and generally young group of philosophers mostly appointed within the period of the current REF cycle, including the appointment in 2012 of the current professorial Director of Research for the unit (<b>Archard</b>).</p> <p>The Philosophy unit is located within the School of Politics, International Studies and Philosophy and sustains a flourishing research culture. This encompasses discussion of work in progress, visiting speakers and participation in regular colloquia, workshops, and conferences, publications and outreach activities. Half of the unit's research lies in normative theory – moral, legal and political philosophy – and the Centre of Ethics set up with the appointment of, and directed by, <b>Walker</b> in 2012 seeks to direct that research outward to work within primarily the broader Northern Ireland community and to engage a range of non-academic beneficiaries: teachers, medical practitioners, politicians, civil servants, business executives and legal personnel.</p> <p>There are three main types of impact: influence upon public policy, education for citizenship, and the ethical training of professionals. The first derives from the use of high quality normative research in relevant areas of law and policy (such as <b>Archard's</b> work on the family, children and procreation); the second from the <i>sui generis</i> work of <b>Archard</b> and <b>Watkins</b> in using and refining their own research within a Philosophy for Citizenship programme; and the third is operationalized by the Centre for Ethics directed by <b>Walker</b> which offers training opportunities in research and professional ethics for a wide range of user groups (medicine, pharmaceuticals, civil service, business).</p>
<p><b>b. Approach to impact</b></p> <p>The unit has identified the application of normative theory, represented in the research work of half of its staff, to matters of contemporary practical importance as central to a successful impact strategy. Consequently, under the guidance and mentorship of <b>Archard</b>, it has identified two key strategic initiatives as crucial: the role of <b>Archard</b> within a major United Kingdom regulatory and advisory body, the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA); and the further development of the successful Philosophy for Citizenship programme. These are the case studies submitted by the unit.</p> <p>The unit's general impact strategy has been supported and facilitated at a number of inter-related levels: the individual; the unit; the School; the Faculty; and the wider University. At the individual and School levels, senior staff, in particular Directors of Research (DRs), via research group activities and annual appraisal procedures, have promoted the need to engage pro-actively with non-academic communities within Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, the United Kingdom and internationally. In addition, the University's promotion-related profiles include 'economic and societal impact' under the Research descriptors, thereby reinforcing the significance of impact in respect of career development.</p> <p>The newly refined model of strategic management of research and impact within the School represents continuity, but with a sharper, more cohesive focus, centred on a Research Committee. A bespoke impact-related budget provides staff with financial support to enable them to disseminate research findings to potential/actual beneficiaries, whether at conferences, round-tables, or, for instance, evidence-giving sessions at parliamentary committees. The School facilitates internships whereby staff might be seconded for some period of time to an organisation, body or government agency (at regional or national level) in order to provide research-based advice in some specific area. It also manages the teaching and administrative commitments of staff so that they can take up positions on public bodies.</p> <p>The University and School have also provided financial and in-kind support for the new Centre for Ethics which serves as a focus for impact-related research in normative theory. This has involved giving priority to <b>Walker's</b> work as the Centre's Director, and in funding workshops and colloquia under the Centre's name.</p> <p>University and School support acknowledges the time devoted by relevant members of the unit to public engagement and impact-related activity; by funding, where appropriate, events and</p>

## Impact template (REF3a)

programmes of work (such as a major Schools conference); by making available resources and personnel within the University who can assist impact-related activity (such as the Leadership Institute working in conjunction with the Centre for Ethics); by encouraging links between Philosophy and other subjects whose research may further enhance the impact (for example, through the Faculty's new Institute for Collaborative Research in the Humanities); and by providing relevant training, e.g. on media presentations.

In the REF period the Philosophy unit has developed important links to academics from the Schools of Law and of Politics, International Studies and Philosophy, whose research is of direct and obvious relevance to its impact activity. These links are recognised in the institution of a new *MA in Moral, Legal and Political Philosophy*, and in the inauguration of an annual 'Law, Politics and Philosophy' event: in 2013 a colloquium on 'Punishment and Responsibility' addressed by Honorary Visiting Professor Philip Pettit and in 2014 to be a major conference devoted to the work of Martha Nussbaum.

The Philosophy unit maintains a flourishing blog, *The Thoughtful Scholar* <http://blogs.qub.ac.uk/thoughtfulscholar> which publishes philosophical opinion pieces from its members designed to provoke yet be accessible to an informed lay audience. Open to all, the blog ensures that philosophical research and discussion can retain intellectual integrity and, at the same time, engage the interest of those outside the academy.

The Philosophy unit is a recognised branch of the Royal Institute of Philosophy which funds philosophical activity – workshops, colloquia, web development, and visiting speakers – specifically designed to be accessible to and available to the general public.

Within the unit, **Archard**, as Director of Research, plays a leading role in developing and nurturing impact-related activities. He is the author of research underpinning the two impact case studies. He has extensive experience of public policy work with the HFEA (2003-2014) and as a member and Deputy Chair of a Nuffield Council on Bioethics Working party (2003-2006). He is also a contributor to the local media as an ethical expert, being, for example, an invited discussant on BBC Northern Ireland's *Sunday Sequence* programme. As a member of the AHRC Care for the Future Advisory Board as well as of its main Advisory Board he has a well-developed and informed sense of the current, and future, landscape of arts and humanities research funding. He acts as a mentor to **Watkins** in his development of the Philosophy for Citizenship project, and as the immediate supervisor of the work of **Walker** within the Centre for Ethics. He acts as an annual appraiser of the work of all members of the unit. Impact is a key element within mentorship and appraisal.

### c. Strategy and plans

The Philosophy unit recognises that the research of half of its number – **Archard**, **Walker**, **Watkins** – is of direct relevance to impact work, and two of these members of the unit (**Archard** and **Watkins**) are key to the two impact case studies. All three acknowledge the importance both of research that can underpin impact work and of that work itself. This is reflected in the impact achieved thus far and in the development of future plans. **Archard's** experience from the HFEA of which he has been a member for 10 years and within the AHRC gives him a unique and privileged role in discerning the possible relationships between high-quality research within the arts and humanities community and high impact work in the areas of public policy and law.

A number of plans are being developed:

- the Philosophy for Citizenship project will expand and develop further into the areas of curriculum design (contributing to the implementation of an intellectually creditable Citizenship Education programme in Northern Ireland schools), and the training of teachers who can deliver such a programme;
- the Centre for Ethics will expand its work of offering research and professional ethics to a range of user groups (the Northern Ireland medical profession will be the target constituency of the new MA in Bioethics and Medical Law, and medical students will be offered bespoke ethical training from members of the unit);
- funded research activity will have an outward looking impact-relevant focus (**Archard** was PI on an AHRC 'Care for the Future' funded project (£28,000) on intergenerational injustice, and is PI on a major (£1.5M) AHRC Large Grant bid on 'Past, Present and Future Wrongdoing')

## Impact template (REF3a)

which will employ 'Cities' and 'Children' as its two thematic case studies. This bid will have a clear potential for research-grounded impact, its two case studies considering, first, how far modern cities that have been the locus of significant past conflict and wrongdoing can and should, in its urban planning, commissioned public art, and memorials, recognise and preserve the past; and, second, in what ways criminal justice, education, social welfare and child protection systems and organizations should accommodate the wrongdoing of children and the perpetration of wrong against children.

Philosophy is a small unit but one that benefits significantly in the implementation of its impact strategy from its inclusion within a large School. This broader context provides the unit with considerable practical experience of public engagement, active links with regional and national policy-makers, examples of good practice, as well as resources in-kind to support impact-related activity and relevant research. Moreover, the School is committed to building on existing impact-focused activities through the introduction of impact workshops designed for both staff and PGRs, 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 will become an even more salient feature both of the formal processes of staff appraisal and promotion as well as progress reviews of our PGR students, buttressed by informal advice and guidance to both staff and PGR students.

**d. Relationship to case studies**

The unit has identified the applied normative theory done by half of its staff in their research as most congenial to impact-related work, and it has given priority to the development of two particular areas of impact work: one being a development of an existing programme of **Watkins'** schools outreach work, the other being the development of **Archard's** work within a Government body.

The support for the underpinning research and for these case studies represents the fruitful application and utilisation of available School, Faculty and University resources. Thus, the research work of **Archard** and **Watkins** has benefited from the University research support packages awarded to new appointments, and from discussion within School events (seminars, colloquia, workshops). The School's Research Committee and the University's Research and Enterprise Directorate have provided financial support for the development of the Philosophy for Citizenship programme. **Archard's** work for the HFEA has been assisted by the management of his teaching commitments to permit his on-going attendance at Authority meetings, and by an appropriate allocation of administrative responsibilities within the School.