

Institution: University of East Anglia

Unit of Assessment: 21 Politics and International Studies

a. Context

Range of Research Activities: Impact has derived primarily from our concentration of research expertise in Public Policy and Management, and Cultural Politics, Communications and Media. Growing strength in a third area of expertise, Critical International Relations, also contributes to our impact.

User Groups: Within the UoA impact activity has been strategically directed at three key groups of non-academic user:

1. Elected and appointed officials in public institutions at national and international levels. We have engaged directly with key organisations, including the European Commission and the European Parliament, the UK Parliament, the OECD, the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Scottish Government, DEFRA and the Environmental Audit Committee, and the Electoral Commission.
2. Officials and other policy actors forming and implementing policy in relation to regulation and competition, including the Centre on Regulation in Europe (CERRE), the Office of Fair Trading (OFT), and the Office of Communications (Ofcom).
3. Public and political actors involved in shaping the form and content of public debate, public understanding of political issues, and the character and effect of political communication. Key organisations with which we have engaged include the Select Committee on Culture, Media and Sport, the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association, the Performing Rights Society (PRS) for Music, UK Music, Comic Relief, Friends of the Earth, and UK based think-tanks. This third dimension of impact has also been delivered through contributions to a variety of broadcast, print and social media.

Types of Impact: In engaging with these different users, the unit has sought to produce original primary source material, data and analysis that informs policy evaluation and facilitates improvements in service delivery, procedure and policy. Kassim's research on Commission officials in the EU has enhanced the self-understanding of that organization's top and senior management as well as contributing to a reassessment by the FCO of the recruitment practices of UK officials to EU institutions. Turnpenny's research has affected the practices of the Environmental Audit Committee and provided frameworks for evaluating policy impact. Hanretty's research has informed policy actors' evaluations of the regulatory framework of public service broadcasting and its relationship to plurality in the media market. Through participation in official consultations and informal seminars, staff have sought to aid political actors' understanding of key issues and to enhance their effectiveness. This includes Street's provision of advice on the relation between celebrity, politics and citizenship and Finlayson's advice to the think-tank Compass and engagement with the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR).

b. Approach to impact

Concentrating on those areas of research concerned with issues of public policy, we have sought to achieve impact through three routes: direct collaboration with users, practitioner engagement and public engagement.

1. *Direct collaboration with users.* This has resulted from our network of contacts and our research partnerships. The unit has collaborated with the European Commission, the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) and the Centre on Regulation in Europe (CERRE). Hanretty, for example, was commissioned to report to CERRE on independent regulation, and Kassim advised the OFT on the European Competition Network. Similarly, our co-leadership of media@uea (UEA's media research network) has helped to build links with the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association and with Ofcom. Involvement in the RCUK Centre for Copyright and New Business Models in the Creative Industries (CREATE) has contributed to emerging partnerships with PRS for Music and UK Music. This will lead, among other things, to a policy report on the regulation of Collecting Societies and on EC reform of collective rights management. Further examples of these collaborations include: Hanretty's report for the British Academy on the comparative health of

Impact template (REF3a)

public service broadcasting and his work with the Legal Services Board on the performance of lawyers; Turnpenny's work on 'Linking Impact Assessment Instruments to Sustainability Expertise' (LIAISE) and UK National Ecosystem Assessment follow-on phase projects, and his work with the Environmental Audit Commission; Finlayson's contribution to Compass (advising on reports and policy positions); Kassim's interaction with senior managers in the European Commission, the FCO and the Scottish Government; and James's role as a member of the Advisory Committee to the Law Commission's review of electoral law. All of these collaborations were the direct result of contact established through particular research projects.

2. *Practitioner engagement.* To build relationships with practitioners, we run high profile special guest lecture series ('The Too Difficult Box', 'Media and Politics' and 'Philosopher Kings') which feature politicians (e.g. Vince Cable, Lord Hunt, Chair of the Press Complaints Commission, Margaret Hodge, and David Willetts), industry figures (e.g. Ed Richards, Ofcom) and journalists (e.g. Anne McElvoy of the *Economist*, Gary Gibbon of Channel 4 News). Similarly, 'The Coalition at One' conference, convened by the Rt Hon Charles Clarke and Kassim with the Institute for Government, was designed to strengthen relationships with the Institute and the IPPR, as well as with individual practitioners, including the broadcasters Nick Robinson and Adam Boulton, the pollster Bob Worcester and the publisher and editor Iain Dale. These events enable us to create forums in which staff in the unit may inform and influence key individual political actors (and gain experience in doing so). They also develop contacts that can be mobilised in the design of future research projects.

3. *Public engagement.* The unit's efforts aim to enhance the wider understanding of issues and phenomena, and to shape or inform public attitudes and values. This element of our approach has been realised through our active participation in many forms of media. For example, Sinclair became a BBC 'New Generation Thinker' broadcasting regularly on BBC Radio 3 and 4; Street, Inthorn and Skey have all contributed to BBC Radio 4's *Thinking Allowed*; Finlayson has contributed to *The Today Programme* and writes for *The Guardian* (including a pseudonymous five-part series on 'How to Argue'); Brown was an expert witness on *The Moral Maze*; Franzen and Marsden write regularly for *The Huffington Post*; Kassim has written for *European Voice*, Street for the *New Statesman*, and Hanretty for the *Financial Times*.

Infrastructural support

The forms of impact documented above are the product of the unit's research strategy that emphasizes the importance of interaction with users and beneficiaries through dissemination, the cultivation of relations with practitioners, and the involvement of users and beneficiaries in the design of research projects. Colleagues are encouraged to utilise the networks established through research centres inside and outside UEA, as well as developing their own. The appointment of the Rt Hon Charles Clarke as Visiting Professor in 2010 has greatly enhanced the unit's ability to forge links with users and practitioners, and to strengthen practitioner engagement across the range of the unit's research specialisms.

The University's Press Office has been crucial to our public engagement strategy, both in providing staff training but also in identifying and securing media opportunities. We contributed to the creation of the UEA Centre for the Public Understanding of the Humanities and have benefitted from the 'Thought Out' project which promotes research through public lecture series at UEA London.

As part of the unit's research strategy, all staff are required to write an impact strategy into their research plans, which are discussed as part of the six-monthly review meetings with the School Research Director, the Deputy Research Director and the School's Impact Champion. Support is offered to staff in the form of a bank of previous research grant bids and feedback through the internal peer review of grant applications, as well as School-level discussion in Management Meetings and the Research Away Day. Staff are also supported in developing user-collaborations through the funding of engagement with users (at UEA London and elsewhere) and with institutional support for wider dissemination, including websites and non-academic publications.

c. Strategy and plans

Reflecting on our own impact activities and learning from the practices of other units at UEA and

elsewhere, we have begun to implement a unit level strategy for impact in 2014-2020. This has five components:

1. *The appointment of an Impact Champion:* Responsible for monitoring impact developments, collecting examples of good practice from within the University and beyond, and advising colleagues in the development of their individual approaches, the impact champion works in close partnership with the unit's Research Director who has oversight of all aspects of the research strategy.
2. *Training:* To strengthen the impact-related skills of all staff (especially early career scholars and new appointments), we have revised our staff mentoring scheme to place greater emphasis on achieving different forms of impact and on media communication. This training is supplemented by School-wide seminars and away day sessions on impact, and by training sessions provided by UEA's Centre for Staff Education and Development and Research and Enterprise Service.
3. *Funding:* School funding has already been directed to support impact initiatives; we will continue to prioritize those that form sustainable collaborations with practitioner organisations
4. *Dissemination:* We are professionalizing and refining the dissemination of research findings via social media, mass media and public events. We have developed a system of policy briefings, and we have set up a blog (www.ueapolitics.org) to accompany the individual blogs of various colleagues. The Rt Hon Charles Clarke has also been key to our dissemination strategy. He has facilitated contact with leading political actors and hosted forums that have enabled interaction between researchers and policy practitioners.
5. *Relationship Building:* We are consolidating existing relationships with practitioners and user beneficiaries in the UK and beyond, through the networks established by research centres and through the relations developed by individual researchers – for example, Kassim and the EU institutions and the UK FCO, Turnpenny with DEFRA, and Street with the PRS for Music, community music organisations and local schools. In 2013, members of the unit visited five leading Chinese universities as part of an initiative to build research collaborations that will serve our impact strategy. A first project with Fudan University, on media coverage of climate change, is already underway.

d. Relationship to case studies

Research in Public Policy and Public Management has pioneered the unit's impact strategy. Public engagement has long been a School priority, and in Kassim's research on the Commission a new collaborative relationship was forged with users. The aims, coverage and application of the research project were developed in consultation with the Secretary General of the European Commission with a view to providing data and analyses that would deliver a new understanding of the backgrounds of staff, their career paths, networking behaviour, beliefs and attitudes to administrative reform and enlargement, and thereby making a major contribution towards improved career and personnel management.

Turnpenny developed a post-research pathway to impact, where project findings were communicated to and taken up by the Environmental Audit Committee (EAC). Written and oral evidence given to the EAC by Turnpenny and colleagues formed the basis for two of the headline recommendations of the EAC's 2011 report 'Embedding Sustainable Development Across Government', and led to changes in the ways in which the EAC engages with experts.

These two experiences, with their emphasis on policy users and actors, informed and shaped the development of the unit's research impact strategy as outlined above. Other impact case studies have also resulted from the unit's impact strategy. These include Hanretty's contribution - via British Academy funding – to debate about public service broadcasting, and Street and Inthorn's ESRC-funded research into the relationship between popular culture and citizenship. These two case studies are examples of the broad range and types of impact facilitated within the unit. The former has had impact at policy actor level and on public engagement; the latter has focussed primarily on public engagement, but has also involved NGOs.