

Institution: Kingston University

Unit of Assessment: 19, Business and Management Studies

a. Context

The Unit's main non-academic beneficiaries are government policy makers; decision-makers in industry, commerce and the professions; and professional and trade bodies and their members.

The distinctive policy-focused research of the Unit has influenced government policies and interventions at local (e.g. local authorities), national (e.g. BIS) and supra-national levels (e.g. European Commission).

The Unit's research also benefits management practice in industry, commerce and the professions. The Unit's partners and collaborators include large multinational corporations, SMEs, the not for profit sector (e.g. Young Enterprise), non-governmental organisations, and United Nations bodies.

Professional and trade bodies (e.g. CIPD, ICAS, ACCA) are also influenced by the Unit's research which helps these users to understand the changing nature of business and society, and informs their training programmes and codes of practice by drawing upon the relevant knowledge base.

b. Approach to impact

A number of distinct approaches to impact are supported by the Unit. These comprise engagement with businesses and national and supra-national government departments, and the development and maintenance of research degree programmes that encourage and support impact.

Engagement with businesses and organisations

The Unit has a KTP awards scheme that is a well-established and successful route to impact. Since 2008 there have been 15 KTPs. One, with KBC Advanced Technologies plc, an independent provider of consultancy services to the oil refining, petrochemical and process industries worldwide, was awarded the highest grade of 'outstanding' by the Technology Strategy Board. It introduced a major management of change initiative to improve the management of organisational knowledge between KBC's international locations. Another involved MacGregor Industries, a family business that supplies engineered plastic and distributes radio control equipment. To become more competitive and to grow its business, the company needed to develop expertise in strategic marketing and new product development (at the time, MacGregor had no in-house marketing experience), and through the KTP the Unit supplied the knowledge the company required.

Hill has advised on performance improvements in corporate organisations, including Aditya Birla Group, Balfour Beatty, DeBeers, Genpact, GKN, HSBC, Sainsbury's and Smiths Group. This led to research that was published in the book *Essential Operations Management* (2011) and has been adopted by 72 academics in 53 HEIs as the course text to teach 85 modules with 9,479 students.

The Unit, through research and evaluation, validated an alternative model of support for SMEs that promotes social and economic inclusion. Supporting Inclusion through Enterprise Development was a practice-based initiative that provided advice and support for entrepreneurs in hard to reach groups. This involved providing advice through community-based organisations and developing community-based business advisers accredited by the Small Firms Enterprise Development Initiative. This model has been replicated in programmes across Europe (Portugal, Spain, Germany and the Czech Republic) through workshops (for example in 2013 in London) and the development of community advisers.

The Employment Engagement Consortium (EEC), with financial support from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) and member organisations, brings together organisations to develop, manage and maintain effective engagement strategies with the aim of improving individual and organisational performance. EEC members benefit from knowledge sharing and networking events in addition to access to research from the Unit and the CIPD. The Co-operative Group, for example, used the research from the EEC to identify personal attributes that had an impact on engagement and job role fit. This led to the Co-op changing the way it measured engagement and identifying and testing a range of drivers to get a clearer understanding

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of what makes a difference to engagement.

Engagement with government departments

Strong relationships with government departments have been developed over a number of years, with members of the Unit acting as advisors and serving on various committees. For example:

- Rettie is the academic consultant for DECC's 'Green Deal Proposals' and the 'Low Carbon Communities Challenge' evaluation, and has influenced national strategy on energy use, smart meters and heating controls
- Blackburn served as special advisor to the House of Lords' SME Exports Select Committee (2012-13) and assisted in the preparation of a report for parliamentary debate
- Smallbone acts as an OECD expert team member. This role focuses on SMEs across the OECD economies, monitoring and comparing their challenges as well as addressing thematic issues such as human capital in SMEs. The research output influences the policy of the OECD in promoting specific strategies for SME development.

The Unit is also the UK member of the European Network for Social and Economic Research (ENSR), a European-wide consortium of 27 research institutes and consultancies focused on applied policy research. Through this the Unit has contributed to policy formation by leading on a major project for the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, feeding into the European Commission's analysis of SME policies in Europe.

Developing impact through the research degrees programmes

Research relevance and impact is integral to the doctoral programmes (DBA/PhD). On the DBA in particular, senior managers are recruited to undertake research of direct relevance to their own organisation, sector or profession. One DBA candidate focused on governance within the UK charity sector, using the findings to develop codes of practice and training for trustees within three charities. Another investigated the use in practice of credit risk models: the results were used by a consultancy firm in several major projects, associated with Irish banks and the National Asset Management Agency, on repairs to the Irish banking sector following the 2008 financial crisis.

The Unit has organised a series of workshops (2012 onwards), co-sponsored by the Society for the Advancement of Management Studies, to engage later stage doctoral candidates with practitioner audiences to embed impact in their research activities. These have involved workshops with staff from BIS and Barclays bank and are open to all the HE community.

Support for achieving impact

The Unit's Business Development team, working with the University's Enterprise Support Department, provides a point of advice and help throughout the research process with a focus on impact. This includes initiating meetings between potential commissioners /sponsors and appropriate researchers leading to the identification of research opportunities, and providing assistance with tracking the impact of research undertaken. Research direction is also discussed with external stakeholders through an Advisory Board. These relationships have developed into KTPs, collaborative research projects, and knowledge exchange leading to impact.

It is the Unit's strategy to support members of staff to attend practitioner conferences, workshops and networking events. Further opportunities for developing impact are promoted in day-to-day research group meetings and strategically focused away days. Whilst externally-funded research often has an in-built impact element, the Unit also requires that applications for internal funding include an impact plan, consciously paralleling the research councils' emphasis on impact.

c. Strategy and plans

The Unit will concentrate on building impact in areas of research strength (i.e. Entrepreneurship and SME development, Marketing and Human Resource Management), as well as developing impact in other areas where staff have expertise (e.g. operations research). The strategic objectives of the Unit for the next five years are to:

1. Improve engagement through business community-linked and employer-led research projects

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2. Grow and maintain links with regional, national and international organisations in order to effect change in the economy and society and maximise impact
3. Grow and maintain strategic links with national and international organizations and partners based on research excellence in order to stimulate new agendas and the sharing of ideas
4. Build upon the success of established research centres and foster nascent research which has the potential for high impact outside academe.

In order to achieve these objectives the Unit will develop existing relationships and new partnerships. Researchers in the Unit continue to work with accountancy bodies in helping them understand the SME market and how this might affect their strategies. The Institute for Chartered Accountants Scotland (ICAS) has supported two projects through its research foundation, drawing upon the Unit's expertise and the latest research project is seeking to understand how accountants can help SMEs seek finance. Research on small and medium sized accountancy practices that has been influential in the strategies of the ACCA will continue, and has recently attracted support from the Institute for Public Accountants (Australia).

Research by the Unit on the effects of regulation on SMEs has attracted support from the World Bank to help them raise understanding of the SME market and shape their strategies for SMEs.

The EEC goes beyond the topic of engagement to examine the related areas of wellbeing, happiness, skills, training and related areas: this will achieve impact on company valuations by linking employee wellbeing and skills management to the bottom line.

A new external relationship is being developed with London Fusion, an offshoot of the AHRC's London-based Creativeworks Hub, with the Unit becoming a partner in the initiative. This helps London-based SMEs in the creative industries to work with researchers to foster their collaboration, innovation and growth.

Staff will continue to act as advisors and serve on various committees:

- Rettie has been appointed to the committee of a major conference to be held in 2014, the Third European Energy Efficiency and Behaviour Conference, organised by the Energy Savings Trust and the UK Energy Research Centre.
- Smallbone is an appointed member of an OECD steering committee for a project on inclusive entrepreneurship (from 2013).
- Blackburn has been appointed a member of the Small Business Charter Management Board (from 2013) which is seeking to develop schemes for the delivery of enterprise support through business schools.

The Unit's external engagements are reviewed at regular intervals, including an analysis of current impact performance. This will feed into the ongoing development of the Unit's impact strategies.

d. Relationship to case studies

The case studies exemplify the Unit's approach to impact through policy change, through engagement with government departments in the UK and abroad, and with professional bodies.

'The Cost Effectiveness of Male HPV Vaccination' case study demonstrates a change in government policy and a net reduction in immunisation costs (circa €98.9m) to a cohort of 11 to 23-year old Italian males. The Unit provided both time and financial support to the researcher resulting in the development of the underlying financial model.

The case study on accounting and auditing regulation illustrates how knowledge transfer to the government departments and accounting bodies was facilitated by the Unit's strategic emphasis on networking activities and funded research. Researchers were supported to attend relevant events and to develop and maintain relationships with government departments and professional bodies.

The case study on 'The impact on policy and practice in human resources to improve employee engagement', exemplifies the Unit's strategic approach to developing research with direct impact and the ongoing development and support for researchers to maintain relationships with key stakeholders including government departments, companies, and the professional bodies.