

<p>Institution: Brunel University</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: 23 Sociology</p>
<p>a. Context</p> <p>Working closely with both national and international non-academic user groups, our work tackles major UK and international priorities relating to health and well-being; and culture and society. The unit's research structure, strategies and a culture emphasising user collaboration ensure that impact is felt across a diverse audience spectrum. Our three interdisciplinary Research Centres - the Centre for Biomedicine & Society (CBAS); the Centre for Culture, Media & Regulation (CCMR); and the recently formed Centre for Comedy Studies Research (CCSR) - generate impact across three broad areas:</p> <p>(1) Public Policy, Regulation and Public Debate. Impact is facilitated by all three Centres. For example, CBAS research critical of consent to the use of fresh embryos for stem cell research is shaping UK policy and regulation (Williams, Wainwright); as is Seale's ongoing research on assisted dying. Public debate was enhanced by CCMR's international conference on the future of media regulation in light of the Leveson Inquiry (Henderson, Wilkin); a colloquium on communication technology and social change in Iraq (Wilkin); and CCSR's international conference on the public role of comedy (Lockyer, Weaver, Roberts). Roberts has worked closely with policy makers and activists involved with the Speakers' Corner Trust (SCT) on the use of public spaces for free expression, and with filmmakers on a documentary about Speakers' Corner.</p> <p>(2) Culture and Society. Public benefit has been provided through CCMR research on the relationship between media, democracy and civil society including a conference on the regulation of new media and intercultural relations in collaboration with the Runnymede Trust (Sharma). Advice has been provided to the British Film Institute (BFI), on decisions about which films should be digitised (Malik); on corporate social responsibility and brand image for The Group, the UK's leading online communication consultancy firm (Wilkin); and to Barcelona Council on the urban development of Barcelona since the Olympic Games (Degen). A major exhibition on how digital technologies are transforming architectural practice was held at the London Building Centre (Degen). CCSR has worked with Dave's Leicester Comedy Festival on the value of comedy in tackling disability (Lockyer).</p> <p>(3) Health Related Guidelines, Training and Debates. CBAS research in this area has influenced professional training on medical communication skills (Seale), medical ethics (Williams, Wainwright) and professional guidelines on the treatment of schizophrenia (Seale). It has also contributed to practitioner debates on the moral status of the fetus and embryo (Williams, Wainwright); the role of scientific press officers (Wainwright, Henderson); and science communication (Riesch).</p>
<p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>We have a culture of promoting research and impact 'for the benefit of individuals and society at large' which builds on the University's Royal Charter and historic mission. Our approach is characterised by a clear impact strategy and supported by the University with a wide range of mechanisms, infrastructure and investments, co-ordinated by our Departmental impact co-ordinator (Williams). Users are involved at all stages of the research, from identification of the research question through to the co-production of knowledge and evidence. For example, co-applicant clinicians and scientists helped identify the research foci of Williams's 5-year Wellcome Trust Biomedical Ethics Programme. We actively seek the appointment of international visiting researchers who help us disseminate our findings to non-academic user groups more widely. Visiting Profs Waldby (Sydney University) and Petersen (Monash) visited in July 2013, and have ensured that our findings on stem cell research (Williams) and stem cell tourism (Wainwright) are considered by policy makers in Australia. The promotion of research and impact is facilitated by ongoing interaction with key stakeholders including parliamentary bodies, NGOs, government agencies, charities and pressure groups, detailed below. This identifies needs and allows the widest dissemination of key findings. Research feeds into training, professional guidelines and practitioner debate through interaction with medical training bodies and clinical services; and close links with core stakeholders, including broadcasters and publishers who engage beyond the academy, ensure the widest possible distribution of research and impact. We actively encourage specialist training - for example, PhD student Samuel won a competitive 3 month Wellcome Trust Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology Placement Fellowship to enhance awareness of policy processes, including learning how to write a Parliamentary Policy Briefing Paper.</p>

Relationships with key users. The development and nurturing of long-term relationships with public and private users is central to our approach to impact, some of which are illustrated here. **Cultural organisations** engaged with include BBC Media Action, whom Henderson advises on the impact of story lines in radio, particularly with regard to governance; Sharma co-organised the 'Noise of the Past' public event (Coventry Cathedral), enhancing public awareness of Britain's postcolonial history; Roberts was keynote speaker at Cendeac Arts Centre, Murcia, Spain, on the changing nature of the public sphere. Engagement with **policy makers and governmental authorities** includes Degen advising Barcelona Council and Milton Keynes Planning Department, architects and urban designers on how to involve the general public effectively in urban design; Sharma, in collaboration with the Runnymede Trust, the UK's leading race equality policy organisation, organising a 'Digital Race Workshop' in which digital activists and researchers communicated about the changing configurations of 'race' in a networked society. **Health care provider/regulator** engagement includes keynote talks at practitioner conferences eg Royal College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists (Seale, Williams); Williams's work on embryo donation for stem cell research has been discussed with the Human Fertilisation & Embryology Authority, the BMA Ethics Committee and the Nuffield Council on Bioethics, with a view to changing policy; Seale provided Evidence to the 2010 Commission on Assisted Dying (see case study) and has ongoing links with legislators in Parliament promoting or opposing Bills concerning the legalisation of assisted dying (Lord Joffe, Baroness Finlay); Seale's research on communication in health care, in collaboration with Royal College of Psychiatrists (RCP), led to evidence-driven workshops with psychiatrists on the implementation of NICE schizophrenia guidelines and informed the production of a continuing professional development online module in communication skills hosted by the RCP; ongoing NHS collaborations with, for example, Guy's Hospital, London, where ethical aspects of clinical work have been discussed in staff focus groups and meetings (Wainwright, Williams). Engagement with **charitable groups** includes Seale's end of life research, used by lobbying and campaigning groups concerned with palliative care and assisted dying (Dignity in Dying, National Council for Palliative Care, Health Care Professionals for Assisted Dying). Wilkin is consultant for a new public-private third sector agency in Tripoli promoting English language acquisition, business skills, and entrepreneurship; and for The Abundance Lab, a Third Sector charity, examining the impact of new communication technology and social media in post-Saddam Iraq and post-Gaddafi Libya.

Institutional support to enable impact. Brunel provides infrastructure for the realisation of impact by facilitating research excellence, knowledge transfer and relationships with national and international end users. It promotes an embedded culture of impact through diverse means. For example, 'Understanding Impact' forms part of the Professional Development in Academic Practice course for all new staff (Malik, Weaver) and impact has been incorporated into the academic promotions process at all levels. Staff and students are exposed to the needs of non-academic groups through the University's prize-winning work placement scheme (Rate My Placement 'Best University Placement/Careers Service' 2010, 2012). Through placement visits staff develop strong links with NGOs, government departments, health charities, industries, and partner non-academic supervisors are encouraged to identify their own priority areas of research. The 'Impact Toolkit' developed by Brunel's Research Office provides training on effective impact pathways, and advice and expertise on liaising with users and funding bodies. To support visibility and free access to our research by non-academic users, Brunel introduced the open-access Brunel Research Archive in 2007, providing an on-line archive of all research outputs, followed by an Open Access Mandate and an Open Access Publishing Fund. The University supports research impact with a competitive research leave scheme that emphasises impact as a key criterion (Degen, Henderson, Lockyer, Rojek, Roberts, Sharma). For example, during her leave Lockyer successfully applied for University recognition of the CCSR, the first international Centre of its kind to combine industry, the public, comedians and academics, and with a primarily non-academic Advisory Group. The competitive £15k early career Brunel Research Initiatives and Enterprise Fund also requires identification of the impact of research. With her award, Malik developed her collaboration with the BFI, including a workshop on 'Diasporic Film in Communities' attended by curators, cultural policy makers and film programmers, as well as Arts Council England and Film London representatives. The Departmental impact infrastructure revolves around our Research Centres which act as contact points for external users, channel institutional support for research and dissemination, and promote stakeholder engagement. Competitive Research Centre Seminar funding of £2.5k,

Impact template (REF3a)

recently awarded to CCSR and CCMR, supports interdisciplinary collaborations and engagement with non-academic users, with a focus on potential impact. For example, CCMR's 2013 international conference included an Industry Perspectives Panel for non-academic users. The University's successful Public Lecture Series (Malik, Seale, Williams 2013; Roberts, Wainwright 2012; Sharma 2011) attracts 300 people per session, conveying our research to the local community. An external PR consultancy actively supports staff media engagement, and we utilise University IT facilities to run a Twitter feed disseminating news of our research and events.

c. Strategy and plans

The University and School's Strategic Plans continue to identify impact and knowledge transfer as a primary aim. In the future we focus on three main strategies utilising implementation strategies based on the 'Payback Framework' developed by Brunel scholars Buxton and Hannay. These will enable us to expand our national and international research impact, facilitated by prioritising the key research areas in which we have internationally recognised expertise.

International research excellence and relevance. The University recognises that impact rests on internationally excellent and policy relevant research and has identified external funding, strong research centres and interdisciplinary research as the means to achieve this. We will further develop international liaisons using University resources (for example, dedicated personnel in the Research Office) and identify staff best suited to attend responsive subject-group training (for example, on user partnerships for Horizon 2020). Drawing on a successful cross-University initiative to develop high quality interdisciplinary groupings, selected staff will be encouraged to participate in broad initiatives such as that on Synthetic Biology (which led to a cross-University BBSRC proposal; Williams, Wainwright), in order to develop new collaborations.

Effective research dissemination and knowledge transfer. We will make increased use of our School Impact Database, a growing list of existing collaborations with industry, government organisations etc, in order to develop fruitful partnerships. We will continue to build on our work with government agencies, charitable sector and other user bodies to identify future collaborative opportunities and potential impact on policy and practices. We will promote international user links for the new CCSR, including novel collaborations with comedians in Eastern Europe. Funding will be available for the promotion of existing research activities through expert seminars and workshops and with wider practitioner audiences. In addition to more traditional media outlets, we will promote the use of new media to target audiences, with success monitored through appropriate metrics.

Mutually beneficial engagement with stakeholders and end users. To enhance research relevance and impact the Department promotes mutually beneficial engagement with non-academic users at all stages of research, from identification of the research focus through to dissemination. To improve this collaboration we will forge links with new constituencies as exemplified by CCSR, which has Centre Ambassadors including Jo Brand - comedian, writer, actress; Lee Mack - comedian, actor; Simon Minty - co-founder and Producer of Abnormally Funny People; and Geoff Rowe - Director & Founder of Dave's Leicester Comedy Festival. We will also increase staff involvement in public committees and advisory boards, such as Williams's recent appointments to the Department of Health's Policy Research Programme's Commissioning Panel and to the International Stem Cell Ethics Forum. We will encourage further utilisation of the University's Knowledge Transfer Scheme, which will require the identification of partner organisations and the broadening of projects to encompass the scheme's goals.

d. Relationship to case studies

The Department's case studies illustrate the scale of our research impact. As examples of best practice, they have informed our strategy by demonstrating the importance of external funding and institutional support, strong Centres, effective knowledge transfer and dissemination and engagement with end users. Seale's case study on end-of-life care has had impact on public policy and practitioner debates about ethical issues in the health field, as well as charitable groups. Impact was enhanced by Brunel's provision of a dedicated public relations service and was supported through participation in the Public Lecture series. Sharma's case study on multicultural awareness illustrates research that has had impact on public awareness through work with cultural organisations. Impact was enhanced by participation in the Public Lecture Series; and funding awarded by the Pro-Vice Chancellor's Impact Fund enabled the production of a DVD which documented research outputs and was shown at numerous dissemination events.