

Institution: The University of Nottingham
Unit of Assessment: 21
<p>a. Context.</p> <p>The School of Politics and International Relations produces high-quality research with ‘real-world’ relevance, which forms the basis of on-going engagement with users of that research. We engage with stakeholders both pro- and reactively. Examples provided below and outlined further in the case studies include work on security and foreign policy, governance and political trust, social cohesion and engagement. Beneficiaries include local, national and supra-national bodies – ranging from Nottingham City Council to the European Union – as well as the public and the media.</p> <p>b. Approach to impact.</p> <p>We strive for a broad and inclusive approach to impact, encouraging and supporting engagement wherever possible. We believe that all colleagues have the potential to disseminate their work beyond academia, and we have promoted engagement at all levels. In addition to promoting broad reach, we also have mechanisms in place to facilitate in-depth engagement with users of research.</p> <p>We are supported in this by the broader University framework. The contracts of academic staff allow for the allocation of a proportion of their time (subject to University approval) to external consultancy and advisory work, and the School is willing to support the buy-out of staff time of individuals working with specific organisations. In particular, since 2008, this has enabled Cowley, Goodwin, and Stevens to secure ESRC- or Leverhulme-funded secondments to Whitehall (to the Treasury, the Department for Communities and Local Government, and the Home Office and other departments, respectively). The University’s Business Engagement and Innovation Services support knowledge transfer and national and international partnerships through its Expertise Guide and its funded research priority groups; their HERMES funding allowed Goodwin to extend his secondment at DCLG [see case study #4]. The Centre for Advanced Studies provides an interface with external stakeholders. The University’s Communication’s Office assists (inter alia) with media training, monitoring and press releases, and one-to-one mentoring with staff.</p> <p>University facilities are complemented by the School’s own structures and resources. Knowledge transfer is overseen by Research Committee, which provides funds to help develop external engagement (which last year amounted to £13k). This has included hiring professional communications experts to work with colleagues to develop their work for an external audience and putting on workshops run by experienced staff for their colleagues.</p> <p>In addition, we have been at the forefront of politics departments in the UK in our use of social media as a tool for disseminating research – and two of our submitted case studies [#1, #4] make extensive use of social media. During the 2010 Westminster election, the School set up a blog (<i>Election2010</i>) devoted to the contest which gained coverage and acclaim. It won Gold in the ‘Innovation and Creative Thinking’ category at the Higher Education Information Services Trust (HEIST) Awards in 2011 and Gold in the CASE (Council for Support and Advancement of Education) Circle of Excellence Awards in the ‘Other Uses of Social Media’ category. CASE spans North America, Europe and SE Asia and 32 international entries were judged in that category with just one Gold (Nottingham) award made. It also won the national Some Comms award for the year’s best ‘low budget campaign’ in December 2010; was ‘highly commended’ in the category ‘Most Innovative Use of New Media’ at the How-Do Public Services Communications Awards; and was shortlisted for the CIPR Excellence Awards, for the ‘Best Low Budget Campaign’ category.</p> <p>Building on that success we launched in 2011 a wider School blog (entitled Ballots and Bullets), drawing on the expertise of academic staff and postgraduate researchers, with the occasional guest post. The guiding principle was to try to bridge academia and the world outside and to highlight the research and expertise within the School. By May 2013 it had featured almost 550</p>

posts, featuring almost every member of staff. PGR students are also encouraged to write for the blog. This has resulted in over **250,000 page views**, from almost 100,000 unique visitors (some 158,000 visits). **Traffic comes from 179 countries**, with one third of the total coming from outside the UK. The School has also been at the forefront in its use of Facebook and Twitter. As of May 2013, it was the second most followed Politics department in the UK on Twitter, and one of only two with more than 2000 followers. Individual colleagues also have their own accounts, and (as of May 2013) we had four of the top 20 most followed academics in the UK. Initially funded by a small HEIF grant, the blog proved so successful that the University provided the School with funding for a social media officer, to work both on the blog and on the School's approach to dissemination more widely. This has included a programme of one-on-one meetings with staff, to discuss dissemination plans, as well as training sessions with staff and PGR students.

Both the University and the School have mechanisms to encourage staff to embed external impact into their research. Engagement with user communities is actively supported through the University performance review process and the promotion process. Applications for School study leave require applicants to specify the potential non-academic beneficiaries, requiring all colleagues to think positively about the external benefits of their research. Similarly, all research centres are required to outline their plans for external engagement each year. Work on external engagement also forms a formal part of the training of PGR students.

The School organises multiple **conferences and seminars** bringing together academics and practitioners. All of the conferences organised by the Centre for British Politics and the Centre for Conflict Security and Terrorism have included a mixture of academics and practitioners, as have many of the seminars and conferences organised by the Centre for the Study of Social and Global Justice and the Institute for Asia and Pacific Studies. The 'Political Communication' conference in 2012 was partnered with an exhibition of political posters at the People's History Museum, opened by *Times* columnist Matthew Parris, and covered by multiple media outlets. The School has been successful in attracting AHRC and ESRC **collaborative studentships**, with The People's History Museum, Manchester; the Committee on Standards in Public Life; and Nottingham City Council. Our ESRC seminar series on 'Practical Utopias and Utopian Practices' organised by **Sargisson** included at least 50% practitioners and research users. And we have expanded our team of **Honorary Professors**, year-on-year, to provide regular contacts with the world beyond academia. They now include: Jeremy Greenstock, Sherard Cowper-Coles, Jacqui Smith, Ted Cattle, Carolyn Quinn, Michael Cockerell, Tim Cross, and Ion Trewin.

Collectively, all of the above has resulted in the following types of engagement:

Establishing Partnerships. In addition to the secondments to national government listed above, **Lowndes** has worked with multiple local authorities on projects related to faith, extremism and local governance, including Peterborough, Nottingham City Council, Sheffield First Partnership and Derby Community Safety, as well as being the co-organiser of the Cohesion, Integration and Extremism Policy Workshops organised with the Smith Institute and held at the House of Commons in 2012. **Heywood** has been appointed Local Research Correspondent on corruption in the UK by the European Commission's DG Home Affairs, contributing to a major EU Anti-Corruption report. See also **Meyer-Sahling's** work on developing meritocratic civil services in the post-communist world (case study #2) and **Goodwin's** work with local and national governments in the UK dealing with far-right extremism (#4)

Access to Expertise. **Renz** has addressed the Swedish National Defence College, the Norwegian Defence Establishment, the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Finnish National Defence University, the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Defence Academy's Advance Command and Staff Course, and the NATO Defence College in Rome. **Mumford** has addressed NATO's Allied Rapid Reaction Corps, as well as writing a working paper for the US Army War College. **Gegout** has addressed officials from the Norwegian Ministry for Development Aid at the Nobel Prize Institute in Oslo, Norway, and DfID and NGO officials at RUSI in London. **Cowley** served as Vice Chair of the Government's Youth Citizenship Commission (2008-2009), reporting to the Lord Chancellor and the Prime Minister in 2009. He served on the Independent Parliamentary

Standards Authority's Panel of Experts, to advise on reforms to MPs pay and expenses (2012). **Rees** has provided evidence for the House of Lords Select Committee on the European Union. **Hirono** has worked with the British embassy in Beijing and in partnership with RUSI on policy recommendations on Sino-UK cooperation on non-traditional security issues. See also **Van der Eijk's** work as an adviser to the Committee on Standards in Public Life (case study #3).

Public Engagement. Members of the school have appeared in over 400 media appearances since 2008, including all the major outlets in the UK and many beyond. Particular highlights include **Fielding's** work on politics and fiction, which has produced two authored and presented radio programmes for Radio 4, along with a string of articles for the *Guardian* and other outlets; he also assisted the National Theatre with their award-winning production of 'This House'. **Cowley** has been Radio 4's election night expert since 2005, and also authored and presented three programmes for Radio 4. **Dinas** co-founded the Greek Public Policy Forum, to address issues relating to the Greek crisis, involving both academics and professionals, and was principal investigator on Choose4Greece, a voting advice application for the Greek electorate. **Humphrey's** work on public opinion on shale gas – supported by funds from the Science, Technology and Society priority group – has been widely disseminated amongst journalists and energy practitioners. See also **Cowley's** work with the media on behaviour in Parliament (case study #1).

c. Strategy and plans.

The School's revised research strategy adopted in 2011 explicitly included 'impact' as one of the School's research goals. It noted that maximising the impact of our research will have important potential uses beyond the REF, 'as part of profiling the School with potential and current students and alumni, with research funders and potential partners, and providers of placements and internships'. It identified five goals for beyond 2013:

- To target University sources of support for impact-related activities
- To target external knowledge transfer and impact funding
- To invest in building long term relationships with key non-academic partners, aiming to bring partners to Nottingham and to work with them in situ
- To make more use of our growing body of Honorary Professors to help enable the communication of our research, and possible routes to impact;
- To continue to use the Blog, School and Centre websites, and other innovative outlets to communicate our research and engage with non-academics

We will be helped in this by the **University's revised Knowledge Exchange Framework** for the period 2013-18, adopted in 2013, which recognises KE as a core activity underpinning research and teaching. It brings forward new priorities for action to increase effective external engagement, income generation and impact. The Framework is governed by the University's Knowledge Exchange Board and through Faculty and School Directors of Research and Teaching with support from the Business Engagement and Innovation Services Department. The School's Research Committee will be responsible for the delivery of this strategy, and for the continuing funding and support of potential work.

d. Relationship to case studies.

The four case studies selected are illustrative of involvement with government and other political actors, in the UK and overseas. They have been chosen to reflect the main users of the School's research, a range of research strengths and types of impacts, and different ways in which the work was supported. The case studies demonstrate varying types of engagement: beyond the UK with government and NGOs (#2); within the UK with both local and national government (#4); within the UK with policy-makers (#3) and with the media (#1). One (#4) draws on a secondment, supported by both the ESRC and university funding, which facilitated its extension; two (#1 and #4) have involved extensive dissemination via social media. All four are continuous, on-going, projects, with the potential for further impact in the future.