Environment template (REF5) Panel C

Institution: University of Sunderland
Unit of assessment: 19 BUSINESS & MANAGEMENT

a. Overview

The period leading up to RAE 2008 was a time of significant structural and managerial change for the faculty within which our discipline resides (the Faculty of Business and Law: FBL), and therefore no submission was made for this unit; research-active individuals were submitted in other units where possible. Since that time the Faculty has redeveloped its research culture around professionally-focussed research, and, under a new Executive, has introduced a clear strategy and management structure over the last two years to consolidate this work, supported by the infrastructure articulated by the University Research Plan. Our research is now organised within three research clusters that contribute to the International Centre for Research into Innovation, Sustainability and Entrepreneurship (RISE), which also includes research clusters for Tourism and Law. Much of our work builds upon successful collaborations with business, both regionally and further afield, and we welcome the introduction of impact as a measure within REF as we believe that our work is having demonstrable impact within our external stakeholder community.

b. Research strategy

Evaluation of the strategy or strategies outlined as part of RAE 2008: Following the RAE 2008, the University of Sunderland developed a research strategy that focused on four Research Beacons and three Research Centres, along with a centralised University infrastructure to provide support for research. This strategy had the effect of focussing most research activity within the Beacons, where the majority of the available funding was directed. In 2012 the University gave a clear signal that research was to be made more inclusive with the introduction of a University Research Plan which reinforced the importance of research across *all* areas. It states that the fundamental context for our research is to underpin the academic standing of the University as a seat of higher learning and scholarship. The University is committed to being research active, with a research active curriculum, undertaking research that both enhances the learning experience of our students, and delivers impact. It was this development that underpinned the generation of a new momentum and direction for the research in the Faculty, and helped to consolidate the work that we had already started in Business and Management. Research within FBL is now focused around the interdisciplinary International Centre for Research into Innovation, Sustainability and Entrepreneurship (RISE), and Business and Management research is managed and delivered through three of the five research clusters that operate within the centre. The clusters are Marketing, Enterprise, and Leadership and Professional Practice (LPP). Our aim within RISE is to work collaboratively to help improve the economic competitiveness of business partners and increase the effectiveness of public services and policy. RISE provides a focus for developing the relationship between policy and practice with the work of members influencing thinking in business, government and the public sector at a local, national and international level. As such, it builds upon the professionally focused research done by individuals over previous years, offers an infrastructure to support and share that research , and provides a means to develop synergies between the various streams of work that are either currently ongoing or are being developed.

During the period leading up to this REF submission our formally research active staff as measured by academic output have represented only a small percentage of the faculty staff numbers. However, during this same period many more members of staff have been actively engaged in collaborative projects with business and industry, producing significant impact in those communities. Funding from such projects, including KTPs, has amounted to just over £70,000. It is this capacity upon which we plan to build within our new structure.

Outline the main objectives and activities in research for five years following submission:

Our stated vision through to 2020 is that all academic staff within the faculty will become actively involved in research to develop a thriving and sustainable research culture and an internationally renowned research centre. This vision is supported by a Faculty research plan which has as key objectives:

1. To develop an excellent profile of research outputs in Business and Management for REF 2020
2. To develop the three research clusters in Business and Management, building research

capacity and expertise

3. To increase levels of research income through externally funded research to meet university targets in the three Business and Management research clusters
4. To develop strong links between the subject teams and research clusters in Business and Management to help grow external partnerships and develop research informed teaching
5. To establish an early career mentoring scheme within Business and Management subject teams to help build research capacity and invest in up and coming researchers
6. To develop the staff profile of each Business and Management research cluster through a recruitment strategy that supports the appointment of senior academics with an established track record.

Research cluster leaders, under the leadership of the Associate Dean for Research, have responsibility for achievement of these objectives. The objectives will be regularly reviewed and as the current faculty research plan is for the period 2012-2015 a new research plan will be developed for the faculty in 2014/15 to take into account the outcome of REF 2014. Activities now underway to advance these objectives include:

- Employment of a clear structural arrangement between research clusters and academic teams, allowing collaboration between research cluster leaders and academic team leaders to draw together the research and scholarly activity of members, embracing a range of approaches to scholarship and offering a more efficient oversight of the synergy between the teaching, research and outreach activities of members. Cluster leaders and team leaders work together to review research opportunities and doctoral applications to make a judgement about the fit with the work of both team and cluster and to ensure that appropriate resources are available for research activities.

- Progressive deployment of a research active curriculum within the remit of the University's Research Active Curriculum (RAC) policy, which was introduced in 2009 to address the national/international concern at an institutional level with the effectiveness of the research/teaching nexus. The RAC policy was the first stage in the University's mission to make the research effort more inclusive to a greater number of staff by identifying a four part model through which staff research could inform the curriculum, and it underpins the 2012 Research Plan. This serves a dual purpose, enhancing the student experience through teaching informed by current research both in discipline and discipline pedagogy, and also empowering individual members of staff to enhance their research profile. New programme validations and existing programme annual monitoring reports are required to comment specifically on how the RAC policy has been addressed, acting as a driver for all staff to engage with research active curriculum. It is anticipated that this will lead to an increase of staff members able to contribute to future research assessments.

- Facilitation of embedded research culture and research advancement via funding, support and mentoring of colleagues to achieve doctoral qualifications. Out of a unit of 38 FTEs, currently 8 members of staff have doctorates, three are close to completion and a further 16 are enrolled on PhD or Professional Doctorate programmes funded by the faculty. This demonstrates an on-going commitment to building research capacity and ensuring a critical mass of active researchers within the Business and Management unit who are able to offer doctoral supervision and post-doctoral engagement.

New and Developing Initiatives of Strategic Importance: Going forward the key priority coming from the Faculty Executive is the development of a strong research culture that is inclusive, focussed, sustainable, and that works in synergy with our external engagement activities such that research feeds external engagement and vice-versa. In this way we seek to maximise the impact that our research can offer to the regional, national, and international business and management community. Important elements of this are the dissemination of work going on in various parts of the faculty, and building formal relationships with community partners to help us to identify opportunities and outlets for our work. This is being achieved in the following ways:

1: The unit has appointed visiting professors linked to key areas for development. The visiting professors offer professional expertise and insight into the business communities within which the unit operates, teach on corporate and doctoral programmes, and advise on potential opportunities for impact of research projects. As such they contribute significantly to the research culture of RISE and provide an opportunity for professional updating of academic members of staff. **David Gibson** OBE, Queen's University Belfast is appointed to the Enterprise cluster, and the LPP Cluster has appointed **Dr Maxine Craig**, Head of Organisational Development at South Tees Hospitals NHS Trust to work with us to develop our work with the NHS and the Public Sector more generally, and **Professor Gary Shaw**, National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) national interview adviser, to support us in our rapidly developing work stream looking at the re-education of police officers to deal with the challenges faced in the 21st Century. These are core work streams for us, as we seek to address some of the issues emerging from the high-profile failures in these services over recent years. Our collaborations with these individuals are starting to be disseminated through joint publications, for example:

Sanders G and Craig M (2013) Dealing with the Hidden Side of Organisational Life: Supporting NHS Teams and Clinicians in Difficulty. *British Academy of Management Conference*. Liverpool, September 10th-12th.

Lawson R, Shaw G, Sanders G, and Smith P (2013) The Use of Storytelling as a Research Method: The Case of the Police Service of England and Wales. *ECRM Annual Conference*, Guimares, Portugal. July 4th-5th.

2: The University has a well-established and successful cross-faculty Professional Doctorate programme which accepts high-level leaders from regional and national organisations. The Programme Director is also the LPP Research cluster leader within FBL (Sanders), and this facilitates the identification of research opportunities for the unit that will allow us to work directly with practitioners on high-level strategic projects. It has dual strands of development of professional practice through personal transformation and development in a discipline area through a strategic project on organisational change. As such, in many cases it supports the unit by linking the work of two of our clusters: LPP and the relevant discipline-based cluster. The aim is to produce researching professionals who will continue to work with us after graduation to build sustained impact in organisations. We have had some significant successes with this so far; for example, the leader of our Enterprise Cluster (Seddighi) supervised an individual who was at the time Operational Risk Manager with the Royal Bank of Scotland (Maxwell). Through his research he developed a new system of auditing, and this, together with the personal transformation that he achieved through his programme, gave him a more strategic perspective and led him to be employed as Risk Specialist with the Bank of England. He has continued to work and publish with the cluster leader, for example:

Maxwell, A., Eichhorn, M., Seddighi, H., Smith, P. (2012) "Measuring Operational Risk in the context of Basel II: How can the Internal Audit Function strengthen its role?", *Journal of International Banking Law and Regulation*, **3** (2)

Maxwell, A.,Eichhorn,M.,Seddighi,H.,Smith, P. (2012) "360° Internal Auditing: A complementary methodology to strengthen the effectiveness of Internal Audit functions?" *Audit and Risk*

We are beginning to use the Professional Doctorate more strategically to support the work of the Business and Management unit, and we are helped in this by our practitioner visiting professors. For example, the conference paper relating to police service detailed above (Lawson *et al*) is an output of a Professional Doctorate student who is also a unit member (Lawson) working in collaboration with Visiting Professor Shaw. Visiting Professor Craig is supporting professional doctorate programmes for three members of NHS staff to research into issues arising from NHS responses to the Francis review: Leadership in acute units; resilience of staff within a culture of organisational change, and risk management in child protection. Several of the supervisions with which we are involved are cross-faculty, and this offers us the opportunity to work alongside those with a stronger and more established research culture which strengthens our own work. For example, the leader of the LPP cluster is working with a member of the Health Sciences and Well-being Beacon to co-supervise a student from the NHS to explore modern notions of

professionalism among health service staff.

3: Through RISE the Faculty has put in place a system to provide a fair and transparent mechanism through which resources are offered to support an individual's research: As well as funding to support doctoral study, staff may apply for funding to attend conferences, and over the last year 10 conference papers were presented by 5 members of Business and Management staff. Finally, through the RISE infrastructure staff may apply for various levels of research time allowance. All funding decisions are output-based; so, for example, conference attendance will not be supported unless a paper has been accepted and the presenter agrees also to present the paper in-house; doctoral funding is subject to an annual review of progress.

Priority developmental areas for the unit: The activities and initiatives described above are moving us in a positive direction to achieve our stated objectives. Some additional initiatives to address objectives 5 & 6 are described under section c; however, objective 3 remains a priority area. There is a need to increase levels of research income through QR and externally funded research, and this is expressly provided for in the Faculty Research Plan. To date even the established researchers in the Faculty have had limited success in this area, so we understand that development is required across the staff resource if this objective is to be achieved. Support is provided centrally by the University Graduate Research Support (GRS) Office in the form of external advisers who can advise on writing bids to the various funding bodies. Additionally, there is support available on a faculty level, through the RISE Research Centre, for members of staff to identify potential sources of funding and develop strategies for maximising funding opportunities. However, more work needs to be done to build confidence and expertise in this area. Several strategic appointments have been made this year to bring this type of expertise into the Faculty, and these individuals will be working with established staff towards achieving objective 3.

In relation to objective 2, considerable progress has been made in the development and strengthening of the Enterprise and LPP clusters, but the development of the Marketing cluster is still at an early stage and is a key priority for us. To this end, at the time of writing a Marketing readership appointment is pending, and two visiting professor nominations are under consideration.

c. People

Staffing strategy and staff development: We recognise that the success of the research plan depends on the quality and engagement of staff. As previously described, during 2012/13 a number of structural changes have taken place within the Faculty which have led to the establishment of new academic teaching teams, each of which is linked to one of the research clusters. This has been accompanied by a change in recruitment policy to ensure that research and teaching are intrinsically linked in order to comply with the University's Research Active Curriculum policy. One of the essential criteria for new academic appointments is a doctorate (or a doctorate close to completion) and a priority during recruitment is 'fit' with the research areas within the unit.

Existing members of staff are actively supported to achieve doctorates and to become research active (see section b), and all academic staff have the opportunity to engage with research activity as part of their agreed workload. Over and above this allowance is the financial support and time allowance that can be applied for through RISE. In addition, the Faculty is about to launch a formal mentoring scheme open to both new and established members of staff and led by an established member of staff who has recently been appointed professor (Sanders). Sanders led the University-wide project to develop the Research Active Curriculum Policy which underpins the University Research Plan, and also worked on secondment for two years (2007-2009) in the University's central academic staff development unit, so is ideally placed to identify and support staff development needs across the teaching/research nexus.

A range of research training programmes is available within the University and in partnership with the other universities in the region,and, in collaboration with the Universities of Northumbria and Teesside, Sunderland developed and piloted a Leadership Foundation funded programme "Leading on Research Excellence", a tailor-made strategic leadership programme for Readers and Professors across the region.

Staffing policy and evidence of its effectiveness: The structural and managerial changes within the Faculty that have informed our staffing policy have happened too recently for us to make any meaningful measure of its effectiveness. However, the University offers a system of promotion to personal chairs and readerships, and it is worthy of note that since the establishment of RISE two existing members of staff have been promoted to reader and one to professor. In addition, two external appointments have been made at reader level. Moving forward, we have measures in place to ensure the success of the overall strategy. Key to this is a core of research leaders who have responsibility to drive the research plan and to support and develop research capacity:

Dr Paul Smith is Associate Dean for Research, Director of RISE and member of the Leadership and Professional Practice cluster. He previously worked in management and organizational development in the UK National Health Service, obtained his PhD in work-based learning from the University of Leeds and is on the editorial advisory board of a number of journals. He is a recognised scholar in work-based learning with strong links to the University Forum for Human Resource Development. His main research interests are in work related learning, leadership and higher education policy. **Professor Richard Li-Hua** is Professor of Strategic Management and Development and the International Director RISE, with responsibility for developing international research collaborations. He is a member of the Enterprise cluster. A world leading expert on technology and innovation and an internationally recognized authority on international technology transfer and Chinese business and management, he is a frequent speaker at international conferences and publishes frequently in leading international journals.

Working under the directorship of RISE are the cluster leaders who are responsible for supporting and mentoring staff to achieve research objectives and to become more actively engaged with the research activities of the unit (for example by co-publishing). **Professor Gail Sanders** is Leader of the Leadership and Professional Practice Research cluster and Professor of Management Education and Development. She was author of the University Research Active Curriculum Policy which informs the University Research Plan, and is Programme Director for the University Professional Doctorate which represents over 25% of the PG research student provision in the institution. She is also academic staff mentor co-ordinator for the Faculty of Business and Law, with a responsibility for ensuring successful mentoring of early career researchers. Her main research interests are professional identity, professional learning, and inter-professional working, particularly within the Health Service. **Dr Hamid Seddighi** is leader of the Enterprise cluster, and also DBA programme leader. He has supervised to successful completion many research candidates in the area of innovation and growth, international trade and finance and applied economics. He has published over 30 articles in the fields of firm's innovation and growth, and international trade and finance in international journals including *Journal of Applied Economics, Applied Financial Economics, Regional Studies* and the *Journal of Knowledge Economy*. He has also authored/co-authored five textbooks in the area of international trade, economic modelling and econometrics. **Dr Seema Bhate** is the Marketing cluster leader. Her main area of research is in consumer behaviour and cognitive style. She a reviewer for the *European Journal of Marketing, Academy of Marketing, Journal of Applied Social Psychology* and the *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*. She has conducted consultancy work for various organisations such as The Rotary; Durham Wildlife Trust and Expedient Training Services.

RISE provides a structure within which the development of research staff can be clearly articulated so that we can sustain the significant development that has taken place since 2011. Each year alongside the university's formal and long-established appraisal process, every member of academic staff will complete a personal research plan. These plans will require staff to reflect on existing research achievements, develop a future programme of research and identify research support needs. Funding will then be allocated to support specific research support requests if they meet the objectives of the overall strategy. In addition, continued appointment of experienced research staff will help to strengthen the research culture and supporting infrastructure for aspiring research staff. This process has started with the appointment of a reader to the LPP cluster: **Dr Patricia Bryans** was appointed Reader in Leadership and Management in September 2013. Dr Bryan's research focuses on gender issues of leadership; the experiences of women managers, media representations of women leaders and leader/manager education, development and learning, including informal learning at work.

Research students

Postgraduate Research (PGR) students are supported through their programmes by a robust infrastructure at both University and Faculty level, designed to ensure that their work is of the appropriate standard, and that they achieve their qualification within an appropriate time period whilst enjoying an excellent student experience. Central support is described in section (d). Within the Faculty customised facilities are provided for research students where they have access to office space and meeting rooms. The facilities are close to the library which carries a good stock of relevant books and journals in electronic and paper format. All supervisors receive university-accredited training for supervision on a regular basis, and the supervisory team must include at least one member who is experienced in supporting doctoral students through to completion. Research student consultative committees are held regularly in order to field any issues that arise, and the Faculty Postgraduate Research Student Sub-Committee monitors student progress and exam arrangements. All doctoral students are offered a librarian 'buddy' who offers one-to-one help and support in information retrieval. A full-time administrative assistant working across the Faculty has responsibility for scheduling annual monitoring reviews and supporting the cluster leaders. The research cluster leaders are responsible for all aspects of research student provision for doctoral students associated with their area, including admissions in line with the clusters' objectives. A schedule of regular RISE research seminars offers students an opportunity to present their work to a cross-disciplinary group of peers and academic staff.

d. Income, infrastructure and facilities (25% weighting)

The University Graduate Research Support team (GRS), within Academic Services, provides central support for research. This team provides support for postgraduate research students, for research active staff, research project managers, and senior management through the provision of management information. Central support is also provided for the identification of funding opportunities, and bid writing and submission.

Infrastructure: GRS provides administrative support for PGR students and their supervisors. A key role is to maintain a record of student /supervisors meetings, which are required on a weekly basis for full-time students and monthly for part-time students. Where it becomes evident that supervision meetings are not working effectively this can be followed up and action taken as appropriate. Students are required to attend an annual monitoring review where they present a progress report to an independent panel. This offers a regular opportunity for the student to present their work for peer review, provides them with a motivational target to encourage their progress, and allows a formal review of the supervisory team to ensure that it continues to be appropriate to the student's needs. Central Academic Services provide a comprehensive offering of PGR student training programmes that spans the VITAE researcher development framework. All PhD students are required to attend this programme. The PRES survey in 2011 showed good scores for student satisfaction with their skills development, ranging from 73% for transferable and research skills to 85% for analytical and project management skills and 87% for independent learning. The recent university-wide PGR review identified this as "a comprehensive skills training programme."

Professional Doctorate students have access to the same support infrastructure, but training is not compulsory because the programme has a 'taught' first year, led on behalf of the university by the faculty's LPP Research Cluster Leader (Sanders). In a 2012 Postgraduate Research review this system was commended by the review panel, with a recommendation that other doctoral routes consider adopting the same model.

In addition to the extensive provision made for PGR students, the University provides a well-established internal training and certification programme for research student supervision, annual monitoring, and examination, and offers the opportunity to participate in Vitae, UKCGE and Research Council training events.

Facilities: Central support is provided through the Research Support (RS) team in Academic Services - Research Professional for funding opportunities and intelligence; pFACT for costing and pricing of proposals; SURE for full text of outputs in the institutional repository; e-submission support; contract negotiation tracking; web portals for university research; and, REF submission management.

Income: Research funding is a key priority for Business and Management. Although this remains a challenge for the Unit, annual and medium term targets for research funding applications are set by the clusters, and members are increasingly outward facing and engaged in appropriate network and capacity building to facilitate successful grant applications in the longer term. Collaborative work with our visiting professors and with Professional Doctorate candidates are seen as having strong potential for development. In addition the Faculty has recently appointed a Principal Lecturer for External Engagement who himself is engaged with and understands research, and he has begun to work with cluster leaders to identify funding opportunities.

e. Collaboration and contribution to the discipline or research base

This unit has established a range of research collaborations which have generated important economic and societal benefits while enhancing the curriculum of our programmes. Our contribution to the discipline is particularly strong in two key areas: management education and development and innovation and technology management.

Our research is interdisciplinary in nature with strong links in particular across Health Sciences and Public Sector Management. Professor Gail Sanders' work combines leadership and professionalism in the public services, with papers published in both areas. She regularly presents papers at national and international conferences. The focus of her work is professional learning at doctoral level. She is co-author of the book '*The Professional Doctorate'* (Palgrave, 2013), and is currently co-editing a Professional Doctorate special edition of the journal *Higher Education, Skills and Work-based Learning* with a colleague from the University of Central Florida. She is on the Editorial Review Board for *Journal of Mentoring and Coaching* and is also a research grant assessor for the Higher Education Academy.

The work of Paul Smith is relevant to management development and work-based learning. He is on the editorial advisory board of *Industry and Higher Education*, the *European Journal of Training and Development* and *Higher Education, Skills and Work-based Learning*. He is an external examiner of PhDs in a number of countries and has strong links with the University Forum for Human Resource Development, regularly being track chair at their annual international conference. He has published in Education and Health Management journals (*Journal of Vocational Education & Training and Journal of Health Organisation and Management*).

Trish Bryans' work explores women in leadership and media representations of women leaders and leader/manager education. She has published in a variety of journals including *Management Learning, Gender in Management, Gender and Education, Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management, Futures Journal* and the *Journal of Workplace Learning.*

Professor Richard Li-Hua's academic research leadership has been reflected and embedded through managing large cross-universities and international research teams/consortia. He has secured several high profile research projects, including TWO UK Prime Minister Initiative 2 UK-China Connect and UK-US Connect (PMI2), EU-China Intellectual Property Initiative TWO (IPR2) and EU FP7Marie Curie Actions. He is a world leading expert on innovation management and technology strategy and internationally recognized authority on international technology transfer. He is a frequent speaker at international conferences and was an invited senior expert of science and technology for the Ministry of Science and Technology of the Peoples Republic of China in 2010. Richard was the Founding Editor of *Journal of Technology Management* in China and *Journal of Technology Management and Strategy* in China (Chinese version). He is the Consulting Editor of *Journal of Chinese Entrepreneurship, Journal of Knowledge Based Innovation in China, Journal of Chinese Economic and Foreign Trade Studies* and *Journal of Science and Technology Policy* in China.

Dr Hamid Seddighi has published over 30 articles in international journals and 5 textbooks in the area of applied economics, business and management and applied econometrics and finance. He is an International Grant External Assessor for The Research Grant Council (RGC) of Hong Kong.