

Impact template (REF3a)

Institution: St Mary's University College
Unit of Assessment: 26: Sport and Exercise Sciences, Leisure and Tourism
a. Context <p>The Unit of Assessment 26 sits within the School of Sport, Health and Applied Science, which has a number of highly applied degree programmes (in addition to a large BASES-accredited Sport Science programme) such as <i>Strength and Conditioning Science</i>, <i>Sports Coaching Science</i>, <i>Sports Rehabilitation</i>, and <i>Health, Exercise and Physical Activity</i>. Additionally there are two active Centres in the School, described in section b. These act as vehicles for impact for the growing research portfolio, enabling the UoA's research to influence activities such as coaching, sports science practice, sports medicine and health promotion programmes. Great strides have occurred since the embryonic research portfolio submitted to the RAE2008 to enable research to occur and for that research to have impact amongst non-academics. There is now a cadre of established researchers, younger researchers and PhD students, and signs of significant research impact are becoming evident.</p>
b. Approach to impact <p>The RAE2008 submission described the intention to develop centres as a focal point for developing excellence in research, knowledge transfer and enterprise within the School, and these have now been embedded and evolved to become vehicles for impact. The Centre for Health, Applied Sport and Exercise Science (CHASES; incorporating The St Mary's Clinic) was established in 2009, and the Centre for Workplace and Community Health (CWCH) was established in 2005. Both Centres have developed into strong stand-alone units with their own Directors and dedicated staff teams, delivering sport and health clinics and services. These Centres are integrated into the School, and comprise a mixture of expert practitioners and researchers, focussed on knowledge transfer with the distinct goal of achieving research impact. Furthermore, processes are in place with full administrative support to enable academic staff practitioners to transition into the Centres in order to practise in their specialist areas and conduct and apply research. Both Centres have generated enough income not only to be independently sustainable, but also to facilitate new and impactful research in the 'real world'. Thus, a range of end users interface regularly with the Centres, providing opportunity for applied research and impact. The institution's Research and Enterprise Development team (RED) provides support in areas such as legal agreements and contracts, finances, staff training and cross-department collaboration.</p> <p>These Centres have created a platform for research impact to be nurtured and developed through direct interaction (predominantly through service provision) with external bodies such as the NHS, local government, sports governing bodies and agencies, sports medicine and sports science practitioners, individual athletes and coaches. A good example of this is the St Mary's Endurance Performance and Coaching Centre (EPACC; supported by the Virgin London Marathon and England Athletics). Services for the athletes are derived from CHASES through ongoing partnership agreements, reviewed and refreshed on an annual basis. A research agenda is embedded into the service provision, for example, through systematic data collection and retrospective analysis.</p> <p>CWCH has continued to successfully win significant funding through NHS, local government and other agency tenders, enabling ongoing provision of health and wellbeing services and the recruitment of three research fellows. In turn, these research fellows are working on conducting</p>

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research through the Centre's health promotion projects in the workplace and hard-to-reach communities, for example, in the London Borough of Hounslow. Over time the Centre intends to increase its research impact further by directly applying research findings to these groups through the ongoing development and delivery of its own health interventions.

CHASES, Directed by Dr Pedlar, provides a range of research-informed services and has established a portfolio of clients and partners including expert practitioners and coaches embedded in elite and community sport. Impact is achieved directly through service delivery to a range of individuals and groups in areas such as performance monitoring and evaluation, advice-giving regarding training programmes, and a range of health and well-being interventions. Furthermore, events have been held to specifically promote research impact. For example, a symposium was held by CHASES in November 2011 on the subject of Interdisciplinary Sports Rehabilitation, with a mixture of research-focussed and practice-focussed speakers, designed to influence practice through the application of new research findings.

The UoA has prioritised the communication of new research outputs internally via a weekly school newsletter, but also externally by taking advantage of the institutional communications and marketing team to generate press releases around its research. These have taken the form of summary articles, for example:

- Brown (breast pain during running), [New research links exercise to breast pain](#) (April 2013)
- Gissane (concussion), [Reader in sports rehabilitation publishes studies in concussion](#) (July 2013)

c. Strategy and plans

The UoA's strategy is to continue the development of CHASES and CWCH with an emphasis on research and research impact. In its applied work (delivery of clinics and interventions in sport and health), it intends to develop materials, approaches and protocols that are based on research evidence, and to evaluate its interventions and clinics with appropriate research methods.

By continuing to work with sport and exercise science and medicine practitioners in a number of external organisations and agencies, the Unit will ensure that the significance of its research findings are understood, to increase the likelihood that they will be acted upon. The case study of Dr Pedlar's work is a good example of the types of impact that can be achieved.

The distribution of School research funds to support ongoing research and research development will require the scope and approach to impact to be explicitly defined by the researcher or research group requesting funding. Clearly demonstrable pathways to impact outside of academia will be required before funding is granted.

The Unit intends to hold a number of workshop and symposia style events with end user groups in industry, at least annually, in both sport and health. Since 2010 it has invited user groups to School research seminars, in order to disseminate new research directly to practitioners. An example of this was Leanne Claydon's seminar on the subject of rehabilitation following stroke (March 2013), where rehabilitation staff from a local charity concerned with neurological disorders (Integrated Neurological Services; www.ins.org.uk) were invited and attended, forming new networks for ongoing research and research impact. Practitioners in sport and exercise science and medicine from the locally based organisations such as the Rugby Football Union and the English Institute of Sport are invited to the sport-related seminars.

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The UoA will continue to use SMUC's marketing and communications department to generate timely press releases concerning its research to ensure maximum reach, and will make use of social media to promote its work through various Twitter accounts and Facebook pages. The St Mary's marketing team keeps careful records of all press releases and citations.

d. Relationship to case studies

The Unit's two case studies provide contrasting examples of its research impact. Dr Gissane's work on sports injury epidemiology spans three decades, and has led to a bylaw change in a major national sport. His work has evolved in recent years to have an impact on defining the incidence of concussion in club and school sport, and to test new approaches to the pitchside diagnosis of concussion. This case study thus encompasses practical changes at 'grassroots' sports level – a significant development, given the need to encourage more widespread uptake of sport as a way to increase physical activity amongst the general population. Dr Gissane has recently taken on a PhD student in this area in order to expand the work and implement strategies in local rugby clubs around the management of concussion injuries.

Dr Pedlar's work, all completed within the last decade, has considered various aspects of performance and health in endurance athletes, receiving much attention from professionals in sports science and sports medicine. His work on medico-physiological issues in distance runners has directly informed medical policy, investigations and therapy strategies applied to elite distance runners, and raised the profile of issues relating to the Female Athlete Triad for coaches such as those within British Athletics and England Athletics

These case studies form a basis for future research impact amongst the Unit's early career researchers and its evolving research portfolio.