

Institution: University of Chester

Unit of Assessment: 26 Sport and Exercise Sciences, Leisure and Tourism

a. Overview

In this submission we seek to show how the Department of Sport and Exercise Sciences (SES) has built strategically upon the momentum gained from a positive RAE2008 outcome by consolidating a research group in the field of **Applied Sport Sciences** to complement a specialism in the **Sociology of Sport**. These two research strands are expressions of staff research expertise as well as mapping onto thriving MSc, MRes and PhD programmes. Through the groups the Department has been committed to developing theoretically-informed, empirical and applied research characterised by a breadth of intellectual and methodological approaches. These include robust experimental and applied physiological and performance analysis (PA) research alongside theoretically-informed empirical sociological studies. In this way, the Department has sought to make a significant regional, national and international contribution to bridging the gap between scientific knowledge and applied practice in such areas as professional, elite and academy (a system that develops talented young athletes from the ages of 16-19 and engages them in high performance development programmes) sport, and physical education (PE) and youth sport.

Since RAE2008, the Department has endeavoured to nurture a strong and dynamic research culture built upon an amalgam of established and up-and-coming research staff. Foundational and applied research is now flourishing. The period 2008-2013 has witnessed substantial development in research (applied, in particular) and publication outputs (in peer-reviewed journals; single, co-authored and edited texts; and reports and presentations for and to sports clubs and national sporting bodies). In RAE2008, the Department's submission consisted entirely of the work of sociologists of sport. The creation of the Applied Sport Sciences Research Group was a strategic response following wide-ranging consultation with professional and elite sports organizations regarding the significant contributions that individual members of the nascent Group were making in the application of sports science to their sports. The step-change the Department has achieved over the past five years is illustrated by the number of staff submitted to REF2014 (12.4) compared with RAE2008 (5.8), total research income over the same period (£142,093 cf. £68,948), PhD completions (7.5 cf. 1; with 4 subsequent successfully examined/awarded and 18 PhD students currently registered), and papers published (124 cf. 64), as well as collaborations.

The University's policy of channelling income from RAE2008 directly to the relevant research groups has enabled the Department to continue with plans to expand its research activities in an incremental and focussed manner. In 2008, we indicated our intention to 'utilise research-related income to fund an expansion of the volume of activity'. This has been achieved, in general terms, with the addition of the Applied Sport Sciences Group and, more specifically, through increases in the volume of research-active staff alongside increased published outputs. In addition, quality-related (QR) funds have been used to sustain and systematically develop a critical mass of PGR students across the research groups. The over-arching strategic goal has been a self-sustaining and vibrant research culture to underpin Applied Sport Sciences and the Sociology of Sport.

To this end, our research-minded recruitment policy has blended young, early-career researchers (ECRs) with established colleagues to create a research environment possessing vitality and sustainability. The dynamism and vibrancy is evidenced not only in the increased volume of outputs (e.g. publications, doctoral theses, and invited talks) but also in invitations to examine doctoral and masters theses, collaborative ventures (in the UK and abroad) as well as externally-funded applied research. The sustainability of the groups has been enhanced by strategic investment in MRes programmes strongly oriented to empirical and applied research and the supply of future PGRs. Against this backdrop we have strategically invested QR funds – supplemented by University resources and research income from organizations such as the Rugby Football League (RFL) and Rugby Football Union (RFU) – in sustainable research; in other words, PGR projects that develop earlier lines of research enquiry. In the Applied Sport Sciences, for example, Moss's England Handball Association (EHA)-funded doctoral project on the physiological demands of English team handball applies the methodology developed by earlier RFL- and RFU-sponsored work of Sykes and Cahill in rugby league and rugby union respectively and builds upon the foundational research of Twist in the physiological demands of games. Similarly, Norris' study of the biochemical and physiological responses to high intensity collisions (i.e. the tackle) develops Twist's earlier work while Velentza's RFU-funded doctoral study of talent identification and development builds upon the work of Waldron and Worsfold. In the Sociology of Sport, Wheeler's

doctoral study of the role of parents in the transmission of sporting capital grew out of Green's PhD student's (Smith, 2006) study of youths' sports participation. By the same token, Wilson's study of university students' leisure life-styles continues the research of Haycock (2013) and the original, foundational work of Roberts on the sporting and leisure careers of youth. The PhD studies of Bicknell, Jones and Scattergood (into the 14-19 PE curriculum, primary school PE and working-class PE, respectively) develop Green's and McEvilly's research, while Law's doctoral research extends the work of Bloyce and Waddington in the sociological study of elite sport. Looking beyond REF2014, the groups are ambitious in their plans (see below) in order to (i) achieve deeper understanding of the applied implications of existing research into all codes of rugby at all levels; (ii) extend current impact-related Applied Sport Sciences research into new areas, such as boxing (and martial arts generally), handball and touch rugby; (iii) broaden sociological research into PE, sport and young people to incorporate early childhood and elite youth sport as well as extend previous and current studies of professional football and golf into the realm of 'pay and conditions'; and (iv) conduct comparative and collaborative research in PE, youth sport, sports participation, parenting, exercise-induced muscle damage and optimizing performance in Norway. New research funds would be invested, primarily, in doctoral projects focused upon empirical and applied studies.

In terms of organization and structure, the Applied Sport Sciences Research Group comprises a core of established academic staff (Lamb, Morris, Nicholas, Twist, Worsfold) complemented by ECRs (Highton, McWhannell, Smith, Thomson) appointed during the REF2014 period. The Group has been further extended and strengthened by doctoral students (Burt, Cahill, Moss, Norris, Sykes, Waldron, Velentza) on projects sponsored by professional rugby clubs – such as St Helens RFC, Warrington Wolves RFC – and/or governing bodies themselves – for example, RFL, RFU and EHA. The Group incorporates integrated physiological, movement analysis and nutritional approaches to understanding and optimizing human exercise, health and/or athletic performance. The research is driven and informed by applied practice from within the field of sport and provides practical solutions via individual or multidisciplinary scientific approaches.

Between 2008-13, the Applied Sport Sciences Group's main achievements have been to (i) identify real-world problems faced by coaching staff in rugby league, rugby union, handball and touch rugby; (ii) conduct and publish high-quality research (i.e. rigorous, innovative, original and significant in relation to the intellectual agenda in applied sports science) in these sports in order to understand better the physiological and movement demands imposed on athletes; (iii) identify the best predictors of performance and their underpinning scientific mechanisms; and (iv) develop suitable research models that enable the controlled study of specified interventions on athlete performance. These achievements illustrate the manner in which the group have sought to engage with innovative aspects of the application of sport sciences. In the future, the Group plans to: (i) develop further understanding of the determinants of performance in rugby league, rugby union, handball and touch rugby (i.e. studying the key performance predictors coupled with suitably designed intervention studies); (ii) examine the immediate and prolonged implications of match and training demands on rugby players' health. This has already begun with a newly-funded PhD, and further work planned on examining the health and well-being of ageing players. More specifically, this route of enquiry will investigate post-career issues in rugby players, with an emphasis on functional capability, health, well-being (physical and mental) and physical activity; (iii) extend the reach of Applied Sport Sciences into other relatively neglected sports (especially boxing and martial arts, where several projects are in development) that may benefit from the kinds of fundamental and applied work referred to in Section 3; (iv) develop the innovative, sponsored MRes programme; and, (v) develop and extend collaborative research with colleagues in Denmark, Norway, Portugal and Australia to further examine the determinants of team sport performance.

For its part, the Sociology of Sport Research Group is based in the Chester Centre for Research into Sport and Society (Chester CRSS), established in 2004. It consists of four core established staff (Bloyce, Green, Roberts, Waddington) and an ECR (McEvilly). The appointment of Roberts and Waddington to professorial positions amounted to formal recognition of their longer-term *de facto* roles in the Department. Prior to his current appointment, Roberts held numerous visiting posts at Chester since the late 1980s. As well as acting in an advisory capacity on research in the Sociology of Sport, he has co-supervised PhD students in such areas as youth sport, parenting and leisure careers as well as co-authoring papers with current and former members of the Research Group. Waddington was a co-founder of the Chester CRSS and, prior to his current post, held a Visiting Professorship from 2004. He has co-authored papers and co-supervised PGR

students in the fields of doping, pain and injury and, latterly, pay and conditions in elite sport. In 2013, McEvilly joined the research group as an ECR and a replacement for Smith following his appointment to a professorial position at Edge Hill University.

Between 2008-13, Sociology of Sport's main achievements have been to (i) contribute to knowledge of new and complex problems in the areas of PE (e.g. pre-school PE, PE teachers' knowledge of their pupils and teacher educators' understandings of their trainees), the sports careers of children and youth at home and abroad, as well as relationships between sport, health and drugs and processes of professionalization; (ii) build a critical mass of PGR students in order to invigorate further a self-sustaining Research Group based upon established staff supplemented by new and up-and-coming ECRs and doctoral students; (iii) expand the number and breadth of publications emanating from a more diversified base of empirical research studies; (iv) generate and develop research in Norway to parallel on-going lines of research enquiry in England (including comparative sports participation, parenting strategies and PE teacher education); and (v) sustain two peer-review journals with high impact factors (the *European Physical Education Review [EPER]* and the *International Journal for Sports Politics and Policy [IJSPP]*). In the future, the Sociology of Sport Group plans to extend its research interests in children and young people's engagement with PE, sport and physical recreation, as well as new and complex problems in the form of comparative studies of parental cultivation of youngsters' sporting capital, youths' leisure and sporting lifestyles, and school PE in England and Norway (intended to complement Wheeler, Wilson, Jones and Scattergood's doctoral studies *vis-à-vis* the research of Green, McEvilly and Roberts). In addition, the group will investigate the 'pay and conditions' of elite sportspeople, thereby extending the doctoral studies of Fry and Platts alongside Bloyce and Waddington's research as well as complementing Applied Sport Sciences' research in elite sports performance.

b. Research strategy

In an attempt to build upon the upward trajectory since RAE2001 and the momentum gained from RAE2008, the Department's Research Policy and Strategy revolved around (a) enhancing the research-active staff base; (b) developing applied work; (c) increasing PGR activity; (d) increasing outputs; and (e) initiating regional, national and international collaborations. The specific strategies employed to achieve these policy goals involved developing the research base by adding the Applied Sport Sciences Group and appointing ECRs. This Group was then charged with extending its applied research beyond rugby league and into rugby union, handball, touch rugby, angling and boxing. Increases in PGRs (in the form of a critical mass of doctoral students in each of the two research groups) was achieved via investment from QR funds alongside part- or wholly-funded bursaries obtained from organizations such as the RFL, RFU and EHA. At the same time, the PGR culture was strategically enhanced by generating thriving MSc and MRes programmes. Increases in outputs and dissemination of the applied work were a natural outcome of these strategies.

The Departmental Research Policy and Strategy post-2014 will aim to (a) extend the Group's work in rugby with a particular focus on player health; (b) enhance the work of the Applied Sport Sciences Group by introducing a psychological element; (c) develop applied work into other sports (especially martial arts); (d) develop and strengthen links with Danish, Norwegian, Portuguese and Australian institutions for collaborative and comparative research in both Applied Sport Sciences (e.g. in handball and touch rugby) and Sociology of Sport; and, (e) extend the MRes programme. More specifically, this will involve projects which examine (i) the physical, mental and social well-being of retired rugby players; (ii) the role of touch rugby in promoting fitness and health in inactive populations; (iii) the demands of elite and sub-elite touch rugby in British and overseas players; and, (iv) parenting and children's sporting cultures and the impact of PE on youth sport and active leisure lifestyles (both of which are underway at Hedmark University College, Norway).

Research in the two groups is promoted and sustained via several interrelated mechanisms. Responsibility for steering the Research Policy and Strategy of the Department, as well as facilitating and monitoring the research-activity of individual staff members and post-graduate students, lies with the Department's Research Committee. The Committee is chaired and co-ordinated by the Research Development Officer (RDO) (Twist) who, in turn, advises the Head of Department (HoD) (Green). The Research Policy and Strategy (see below) is frequently reviewed by the RDO – in conjunction with the HoD and in consultation with the Research Committee – and is a permanent agenda item for Department meetings (where PGRs are present).

The development of impact from research is underpinned by an expectation that a minimum of 20% of QR funds will be deployed in impact generating activities. In practice, virtually all research

projects based in the Applied Sport Sciences are based around impact-related applied studies. The Sociology of Sport Research Group has sought to generate impact indirectly via influencing the preparedness of reflexive graduates and post-graduates *en route* to teacher training, sports development and similar vocations. Our graduate-related employment ranking (fourth among SES departments in the UK in 2013, according to KIS data) bear testimony to this claim. The Head of Performance Analysis at the English Institute of Sport [EIS]), for example, has observed that, since 2010, 50% of recruits to paid positions at the EIS have come from Chester.

c. People, including:

i. Staffing strategy and staff development

In terms of staffing strategy, the research needs of the two groups are always a major consideration in the appointment of new staff. At every opportunity since RAE2008 the Department has sought to recruit ECRs with the potential to develop the two main research areas. More specifically, three research-active staff submitted in RAE2008 (Dunning, Murphy, Smith) have left the Department while six have been appointed, including five ECRs (Highton, McEvilly, McWhannell, Smith, Thomson) and one established researcher (Roberts) – all of whom are included in this submission. In addition, ‘impact’ is one of the criteria considered explicitly by the University in applications for promotion to the position of Reader (e.g. Twist) or Professor as well as accelerated promotion generally (e.g. McWhannell, Worsfold).

In terms of staff development, Departmental QR funds and a central Faculty Research Support Fund are available to support individual researchers to attend conferences each year. Research-active staff can apply for research sabbaticals for periods of empirical research and/or writing-up. QR funds have also been used to enable research staff from both research groups and their PhD students to present their research at conferences (e.g. ECSS 2008-2013) and, among other things, utilized to employ specialists for the entry and analysis of survey and time-budget data.

Staff workloads are managed by the HoD in conjunction with the Deputy HoD and the RDO. The teaching loads of research-active staff were substantially restricted during the current REF period. In terms of their development and integration, all new researchers were placed in one of the two research groups and allocated a research mentor to support them in accordance with the RCUK’s concordat on supporting the career development of researchers (the University holds the HR Excellence in Research Award and provides a range of workshops including research supervisor training and grant applications). Annual Professional Development Reviews are used by the HoD to focus on the needs of all research-active staff (and ECRs in particular) as well as research outcomes. Under the guidance of the RDO, other senior researchers hold regular meetings with colleagues to discuss the progress of their research and their research needs. New researchers are strongly encouraged to become members of supervisory teams and, where feasible, co-supervisors for PhD students (as in the cases of ECRs Highton, McEvilly, McWhannell, Smith and Thomson) as well as members of the British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences (BASES).

ii. Research students

During the REF2014 period, the Applied Sport Sciences Research Group had six PhD completions (Highton, Jones, Morris, Page, Sykes, Waldron) with two subsequent awards/successful examinations (Burt, Connell). The Sociology of Sport Research Group had two PhD completions (Cock, Platts) and two subsequently successful examinations (Powell, Wheeler), as well as a completion (Mordal-Moen) in Norway. All bar one of the Applied Sport Sciences Group and all of the Sociology completions, as well as the Norwegian PGR, have progressed into academic posts with a research ‘brief’. In addition, there are currently eight Applied Sport Sciences and 10 Sociology of Sport students at various stages of their doctoral studies.

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	TOTAL
Res. degree registrations (FTE)	10.50	12.28	14.93	14.13	12.92	64.74

Training and support for PGR students is a shared responsibility between the Graduate School (with responsibility for providing generic training and support) and the subject department which provides supervision and specialist training and support. PGR students are offered face-to-face training sessions by the Graduate School, supported by a Moodle site providing on-line access to training materials. Students receive a central University induction and a departmental induction. All students undertake a skills audit to help them to identify their training needs and are encouraged to attend taught sessions from within the MSc Applied Sport Sciences and Sociology of Sport

curricula. Each year, the Departmental PhD and ECR Research Seminar series provides a vehicle for research students and ECRs to present their work. For the past five years, the Department has also held an annual one-day internal Careers and Research Conference at which PGRs present their research. The best PGR students are funded to attend and present their work at the BASES Student Conference or the BASES Annual Conference. Both the Department and the University make specific funds available annually to support conference attendance among PGR students.

In this vein, the Department hosted the 2011 BASES Student Conference and PGR students played a central role in organizing the conference and charring sessions. In addition, all PGR students are encouraged and enabled to teach on the undergraduate and, where appropriate, MSc Applied Sport Sciences and Sociology of Sport programmes. They are also required to present (and engage in Q&A) on their research projects within the Research Methods modules on the MSc programmes. Students involved in teaching undertake specific training to prepare them and may undertake modules leading to Associate Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy as a basis for future applications for academic posts.

The University is compliant with the RCUK *Concordat on Research Integrity* and meets the QAA Quality Code requirements. Every PhD student is supported by a team of at least two approved supervisors, one of whom is designated Director of Studies and who has previously supervised at least one student to successful completion. Supervision meetings take place frequently, with at least one meeting per month being recorded with outcomes and targets. Following a probationary period of 6-9 months, student progress is reviewed formally. Thereafter, a termly meeting of the full supervisory team reviews progress and an Annual Progress Review considers progress against objectives and expectations before the Annual Progress Board meeting. Students must submit a report, present a seminar and attend an interview before their upgrade from MPhil to PhD can be confirmed. Each Faculty has at least one Faculty PG tutor who is available to see PGR students by appointment and to resolve any issues they may have. New applications for research degrees are filtered through the RDO before being scrutinised by the Graduate School. All registered students are required to engage in the University's Postgraduate Training Programme and seek approval for their research from the Faculty of Applied Sciences' Research Ethics Committee (in existence for more than a decade and modelled on the regional NHS Research Ethics Committee). The University's Research and Knowledge Transfer Office monitors all funded projects closely, including impact activities.

d. Income, infrastructure and facilities

Despite the limited funding available (e.g. no research council funding), the fact that the two Research Groups attracted external funding – £142,093 (an average of circa £28,400 per year: approximately £2,200 per year per FTE across the five-year cycle) – from professional clubs, governing bodies of sport and commercial organizations is a reflection of the quality of their work and the strength of their collaborative partnerships. These funds have been used to increase the number of PhD students and facilitate publications in basic and applied research as well as purchase and update the necessary equipment to sustain and develop research (e.g. GPS units). In terms of research-related capital funding, the University provides a capital allowance for use in the resourcing of research laboratories and makes one-off allowances for updating equipment and special projects. The Department has seven laboratories devoted to sports science, including a Research Laboratory specifically dedicated to Applied Sport Sciences research. A dedicated Performance Analysis (PA) Laboratory has been described by the 'founding father' of PA as the largest university PA laboratory in the UK. In addition, a dedicated Strength and Conditioning Laboratory was brought on stream in August 2013. PGR students in Applied Sport Sciences have privileged access to all laboratories and technicians and sole access (along with research staff) to the dedicated Research Laboratory and its technicians.

The Sociology of Sport Research Group is based in the Chester CRSS and incorporates a dedicated teaching and seminar space. Both research groups have priority access to two seminar/interview rooms, designed specifically with research in mind, as part of a general refurbishment of the building during 2011-12. The Chester CRSS has a small library of approximately 100 sociology books and all issues of four core journals held in a resource room (with internet-linked workstations, printer, and scanner) available to PGR students. The Group possesses a range of essential technological equipment to support its research activities in interviewing, observation and data analysis in particular, as well as technical support.

Situated at the heart of the Department are two large PhD rooms solely for doctoral students

from each research group, in which all PhD students have a separate desk and PC connected to the library on-line. Externally-funded PhD students also have a laptop, as do all PhD students in the data collection phase of their projects. The two PhD students working on RFU projects also have an office at the RFU headquarters at Twickenham while the EHA PhD student has an office at the EHA's headquarters. Every member of staff has a separate office and desktop computer as well as a laptop. Departmental offices are situated close to the University Library which subscribes to over 1,000 printed journals and more than 13,000 electronic journals which can be accessed on-line. It has approximately 260,000 printed volumes in its collections and books can be borrowed from any of the libraries at the University's different sites. The collections also include 15,000 e-books which are core academic texts plus access to many other online materials. In addition to the excellent paper and electronic journal and book collections in Chester, through membership of SCONUL Access, staff and students have access to library facilities equal to those of a Russell Group university. Research-active staff have access to Departmental funds for conference attendance, employment of MSc students as research assistants and research 'buy-out'.

e. Collaboration or contribution to the discipline or research base

The Applied Sport Sciences Research Group has collaborated with a wide range of organizations including professional teams (such as, England Rugby Union senior team, England Squash, England Touch Association, Harlequins RFC, Port Vale FC, St Helens RFC, Stoke City FC, Warwickshire CCC, Warrington Wolves RFC); Olympic Squads (GB Track Cycling, GB Para Cycling, GB Water Polo, GB Goalball, GB Taekwondo, GB Archery, GB Boxing); sports organizations and governing bodies (Chester Triathlon, EIS, English Cricket Board, IRB, Premiership Rugby, RFL, RFU, Swim Wales, The Angling Trust, UK Athletics, Wrexham Triathlon); schools (King's School Rowing Club) and commercial companies (Adidas, Callaway Golf, Nike, PGiR Limited). Academically, the Group has collaborated nationally with Heriot-Watt, Manchester Metropolitan and Huddersfield Universities and internationally with Australian Catholic University, the universities of Queensland and New England in Australia, Porto in Portugal, Groningen in the Netherlands, West Hungary and the Norwegian School of Sports Sciences plus handball clubs in Denmark, Norway and Portugal.

In terms of publications, the Group's contribution to the research base took the form of 62 peer-reviewed papers, two chapters and numerous abstracts during the REF period. With the encouragement of the RFL and RFU, Twist and Worsfold are co-editing *The Science of Rugby* (Routledge). The Group has also contributed to academic leadership in the form of editorial roles on behalf of the International Rugby Board's (IRB) Science and Rugby Network (Twist) and all have performed peer-reviewer roles for a wide range of journals. With regard to academic leadership via academic advisory roles, Highton is currently nutritional consultant and Twist (BASES Accredited Sport Scientist) is the sports science advisor to St Helens RFC. Worsfold is a Level 7 Accredited Performance Analyst (ISPAS) and serves in a consultancy capacity as Biomechanics Technical Lead for the English Institute of Sport. His applied research featured in a 2012 Government dossier entitled *Supporting a UK Success Story: The Impact of University Research*. Lamb became a Fellow of BASES in 2011 and is a member of its Awards Committee. Twist delivered the 2011 BASES Annual Student Conference hosted by the University of Chester and was invited to organize Rugby League symposia at the BASES 2009 and 2013 Annual conferences. In terms of invited talks, Highton presented his research to various sports clubs and organizations (e.g. St Helens RFC, Warrington Wolves RFC, RFL) and delivered invited lectures at the University of Porto (2011) and Liverpool Hope University (2012). Twist gave invited talks at the Norwegian School of Sports Sciences (2010), University of Porto (2011), English Institute of Sport/Football Association (2011), Liverpool Hope University (2012), University of Chichester (2012), plus talks to coaches as part of the Level 4 United Kingdom Coaching Certificate (2010, 2012) and RFL Coach Education seminars (2012). Worsfold has been an invited keynote speaker at RFU, IRB and EIS conferences and delivered guest lectures at Liverpool JMU, Myerscough College, the Norwegian School of Sports Science and the universities of West Hungary and Chichester. In addition, group members have examined doctoral theses at seven UK universities.

In terms of the significance of the Applied Sport Sciences Group's research, Twist and colleagues' research into fatigue and recovery and its application to Super League players – part-funded by the RFL, Warrington Wolves RFC and St Helen's RFC – has spawned numerous papers, as well as funded PhD projects and generated debate within rugby circles more generally. According to the Director of Sports Sciences at the RFU, the Groups' GPS-related work "has

created the largest data set of in-game running loads in rugby union in the world ... [is] groundbreaking ... [and] has provided aggregated data which [has enabled], among other things, club support staff ... to generate return to return-to-play tests ... fitness tests specific to each position [and] design recovery and training loads between matches”.

For its part, the Sociology of Sport Research Group collaborates with a wide variety of partners, ranging from Cheshire West and Chester Council to universities in the UK such as Edinburgh, Liverpool and Wolverhampton and the Scottish government. The Group has a variety of international links with the Norwegian School of Sports Sciences, Hedmark University College, Norway, and various universities in Western and Eastern Europe, Russia, Central Asia and North Africa. The Group contributed to the research base in a number of interrelated ways. They have, for example, published 62 sole or co-authored peer-reviewed and three professional papers since 2008, as well as 29 chapters in edited collections, five sole- and three co-authored books/scholarly monographs as well as three edited collections. The Group has also contributed to academic leadership in the form of journal editorial roles: Bloyce has co-edited the *IJSP* since its inception in 2009, while Green has been editor of *EPER* since 1997 and is an editorial board member of the *IJSP* and the *Scandinavian Sports Studies Forum*. McEvelly is the Assistant Editor for *EPER*, while Roberts currently serves on the editorial boards of the *IJSP*, *Journal of Education and Work*, *Journal of Youth Studies*, *Leisure Studies*, *World Leisure Journal* and *Society and Leisure*. Waddington is a member of the editorial boards for *EPER* and *IJSP*. In addition, several Sociology of Sport Group members performed academic advisory roles on applications to the Economic and Social Research Council, as well as the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the Wellcome Trust. Green was an invited member of the Expert Panel at the RFU's inaugural Talent Identification and Development conference in 2013. Green, Roberts and Waddington served as external referees on professorial positions at universities in the UK, Belgium, Norway and Singapore and external advisers on international research projects. Roberts has been an Academician of the Academy of Learned Societies for the Social Sciences since 2001 and is a Senior Fellow and Founder Member of the World Leisure Academy and a Research Fellow at the Asia-Pacific Centre for the Study and Training of Leisure. He was a founder member of the Leisure Studies Association and has served as an international assessor for the Australian Research Council, the New Eurasia Foundation (Russia), the Rustaveli Foundation (Georgia) and the National Centre of Science and Technology Evaluation (Kazakhstan). In terms of invited talks, Green was an invited keynote speaker at the 6th Youth Sport Conference (Bled, Slovenia) in 2012, the Norwegian National Conference on PE (Oslo) in the same year and the 2nd Annual PE Conference (Ormskirk, UK) in 2011. He delivered invited lectures at UK universities (Wolverhampton, Worcester, Ulster) and internationally at universities in Copenhagen, Gothenburg, Hedmark, Porto, Gran Canaria, and Southern Denmark. Roberts was an invited keynote speaker at the European Sociological Conference (Geneva) in 2011 and at the International Sociological Association Research Committee on Leisure conference (Palermo) in 2011, and delivered invited talks at Greenwich, Middlesex, Salford, Beijing and Berlin. Waddington delivered keynotes on doping and sport in Aarhus, Bologna and Copenhagen as well as at London's Institute of Ideas. Bloyce delivered invited talks at the University of Ulster. In addition, members of the Group examined doctoral theses at 18 universities in the UK and abroad.

In terms of significance, via collaboration with Norwegian researchers (particularly his former PhD student, Mordal-Moen) at Hedmark University College as well as at Norsk Monitor and Statistics Norway, Green's research explores the lessons to be learned about PE and youth sport from an especially sports-active nation which is beginning to challenge public thinking there. Roberts' research in Central Asia has broken new ground in the study of youths' lives as will his study of youth in North Africa recently commissioned through EU Framework 7 funding. Waddington's research on drugs and doping in sport (crystallized in his influential texts *Drugs, Sport and Health* and *An Introduction to Drugs in Sport* as well as the forthcoming *Routledge Handbook of Drugs in Sport*) led to collaborative research which impacted policy and political debate surrounding WADA and a keynote speech at the 2011 International Symposium on Sports Medicine and Doping in Europe (itself, part of a quasi-judicial investigation).

All-in-all, the Department's research activities reflect a maturity in the research culture strategically developed since RAE2001 as well as a rising trajectory and momentum gained from RAE2008, in particular.