

<p>Institution: University of Worcester</p> <hr/> <p>Unit of Assessment: 26 - Sport and Exercise Sciences, Leisure and Tourism</p> <hr/> <p>a. Context</p> <p>In 2007, the research strategy of the submitting unit became focussed on applied research and knowledge transfer. Since this time, the research projects and outputs have developed to provide impact and significance to local communities, the wider region and where appropriate nationally and beyond. During the period of this assessment, as the research groups in the Institute of Sport & Exercise Science (ISES) have developed, the research has benefitted a diverse range of non-academic users including sport practitioners, businesses, managers and educators in sport related disciplines.</p> <p>Research in the submitting unit is organised around thematic research interest groups (RIGs) including Physical Education; Physical Activity, Health & Well-being; Sociological Studies of Sport, Exercise and the Body; Sports Performance; and the Regulation of Performance. In some of these groups e.g. Sports Performance, original research is imparted to non-academic end users through organised practitioner events hosted by the submitting unit and through the consultancy work co-ordinated by the Motion & Performance Centre (MPC). Examples of such events include the Coaching Summit (May 2011, 2012) and practitioner workshops (Worcester Rowing Club 09.02.12). In other RIGs e.g. Physical Activity, Health & Well-being, commissioned research has been undertaken in collaboration with colleagues from the University's Institute of Health and Society in direct response to the specific needs of regional organisations working in health and well-being (e.g. Birmingham Women's NHS Foundation Trust). Irrespective of funding, research is actively disseminated to practitioners through professional publications (<i>The Sport & Exercise Scientist</i>), and at conferences and meetings (Coach Sharing Network Group 14.06.10), sport and exercise magazines (<i>Athletics Weekly</i>), websites (www.thefamilygp.com) and other local media which is organised and supported by the University's Communications and Participation Department.</p> <p>Our case studies are both examples of directly funded projects where researchers have provided expertise in the fields of childhood obesity and physical education.</p> <hr/> <p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>The University of Worcester's (UW) Strategic Plan 2007-12 under the broad heading <i>Generating Knowledge and Promoting Enterprise</i>, identified the following key objective: "to support the development and expand the reach of our areas of research excellence, in particular interdisciplinary and multi-professional research and consultancy, with social and/or community identified impacts". The University, therefore, identified that engagement with the community and region is a high priority. This priority is paralleled with the unit's vision and there is an expectation that researchers will focus on producing applied research which impacts on the lives of people and develops from community engagement. Consequently a number of the sport scientists undertake consultancy work which is co-ordinated through the MPC centre, a specialist centre that provides the key link between academics and athlete and coach end-users in the region. For example, Faull draws upon her research in reflective practice and develops these key skills in athletes to support improved performance (http://www.worc.ac.uk/discover/5800). Faull has also worked with the coaches and players of the local professional basketball team, Worcester Wolves, to improve performance (http://www.worcesterwolves.org/the-wolves/wolves-staff/). Similarly, Renfree has utilised his research on individual pace profiles in rowing to underpin a physiological workshop (February 2012) to Worcester Rowing Club.</p> <p>Faull, Edwards, and Purdy have contributed to the regional Coach Sharing Network group hosted at UW in association with Sports Partnership Herefordshire and Worcestershire. Initiated in 2009 by the University's coaching staff these bi-monthly meetings attract coaches in a range of sports from across the region to reflect upon and develop their own practice through the sharing of evidence-based research. In 2010 and 2011 colleagues additionally hosted a Coaching Summit which attracted 60 regional coaches to a day event of research-led lectures, workshops and</p>

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practical sessions led by leading practitioners and researchers (<http://www.worc.ac.uk/discover/former-england-rugby-coach-to-headline-coaching-summit.html> and <http://www.worc.ac.uk/discover/leading-sport-experts-deliver-inspiring-workshops-at-coaching-summit.html>).

A further way in which researchers engage with non-academic beneficiaries is as expert members on local and regional committees. This is particularly true of the Physical Activity, Health and Well-being research group. Further to his research evaluating the National Step-o-meter project (2002, 2003, 2008) Jarrett attends the Active Worcestershire Committee, the Worcester Prostate Survivorship Development Group and the Wellbeing in Worcester Committee. Jarrett's work with the local NHS trust has recently led to the launch of a lifestyle intervention programme to augment Breast cancer recovery (<http://www.worcester.ac.uk/discover/universit-lifestyle-programme-ains-to-reduce-recurrence-of-breast-cancer.html>). Professor Peters' expertise in Childhood Obesity has guided the work of the Physical Activity Network – West Midlands, the Worcestershire Childhood Obesity Strategy Steering Group, and the Worcestershire PCT MEND Steering Group and these are detailed in the case study. Peters' expertise has also led to his leadership of the evaluation of other lifestyle programmes (<http://www.worcester.ac.uk/discover/university-of-worcester-helping-to-tackle-obesity-in-dudley.html>). In Physical Education, Professor Hardman is the International President of PE & Sport in School section of the Executive Board of FIEP Europe and Jones, V is regional representative for FIEP Europe. Hardman is an expert advisor to UNESCO, WHO and IOC in the domain of school PE and sport development. This research has led to UW being the PE Monitoring Advisory Centre (2008 - 2012) for UNESCO to co-ordinate annual and five year monitoring data to review the impact of inter-governmental policy agreements upon PE provision in countries and regions around the world. Hardman was on the executive committee of ENSEE (2003 – 2011) and also on ENSEE's PE, Curriculum Development committee (2008 – 2011).

Dissemination strategies are of primary importance for achieving impact. Staff are encouraged to publish in professional and sports publications in addition to academic journals to reach the wider community of end-users and beneficiaries including sport practitioners and businesses e.g. Renfree has contributed to Athletics Weekly articles underpinned by his research on pacing (<http://www.athleticsweekly.com/coaching/how-to-pace-yourself-in-distance-races/>); Faull's article on reflective practice with sports coaches is published in *The Sport & Exercise Scientist* (<http://www.bases.org.uk/write/Documents/SESautumn2011updated.pdf>).

A key infrastructural mechanism which promotes impact and benefits of the unit's research is funding for conference attendance. Conference attendance, is supported financially if research is being presented and the individual can demonstrate dissemination and value of their work to others. Conferences in sport often involve practitioners, sports businesses and other stakeholders, and this is an important way that staff are able to increase the reach of their research.

As part of the University's requirement to promote the work of its staff and students, the Communications and Participation Department liaises with the unit to identify news stories to profile on the website, release to local media and also to identify experts to respond to local and national news and events for radio and television. Researchers are encouraged to contact the communications team to discuss a press release for their work which supports wider dissemination to non-academic users (<http://www.thefamilygp.com/UK-child-measurement-programme-flawed-experts-warn.htm>). The University also publishes *Inspire*, which is a research magazine aimed at disseminating its research outcome and expertise to a wide range of stakeholders and end users (circulation copies and the web <http://www.worc.ac.uk/discover/inspire-research-magazine.html>).

c. Strategy and plans

In its Strategic Plan (2013-18), UW identifies its continued commitment to foster research with the potential to achieve major social impact. The University has a strong regional focus and particularly seeks to have a transformative effect on Worcestershire and more broadly the West Midlands, although this does not limit its drive to have impact nationally or internationally.

As detailed in the research strategy (environmental template), there has been substantial investment in developing partnerships with practitioners and professionals in health and well-being

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and disability sport. In collaboration with these partners, further on-going research is being undertaken that will have direct relevance and implications for non-academic end-users. Examples from some of the research groups include:

- In physical activity, health and well-being the group will continue to undertake research to improve quality of life in a range of populations e.g. wellness programme for Multiple Sclerosis Society, and gait analysis following ankle replacement and reconstructive surgery with UWE Bristol and Spire Bristol Hospital. Griffiths and Jarrett will continue to work closely with colleagues in the University's McClelland Centre for Health and Well-Being and associated partners e.g. Worcestershire NHS Trust.
- In Disability sport, the appointment of a Professor (during 2013-14) will bring further research expertise to our talented coaching staff (Harding, Mycock) who play a significant role in the development of disability sport in Herefordshire and Worcestershire (Dizzy Kids, Worcester Blind Football Club, Football Coaching Advisory group at the Royal National College for Blind, Hereford). Our partnership with GB Wheelchair Basketball has already indicated interest in a matched-fund PhD studentship to support the performance of their men's and women's squads (confirmed September 2013).

Another key element of the strategy is the approach to staffing. Further to the successful impact of appointing part time Professors (Hardman and St Clair Gibson), there are plans to appoint two full time Professors in Sports Science and Sport Pedagogy. The recruitment process will emphasise a significant track record of undertaking research with impact in these areas.

UW has made significant investment in the development of The McClelland Centre for health and well-being and the University Arena during the assessment period. These first class specialist facilities provide a vital link between researchers and a wide range of local, regional and national beneficiaries. The Arena, opened in May 2013, has already established strong relationships with GB Netball, GB Wheelchair Basketball and is the new home for Worcester Wolves Basketball team and will provide opportunities for the unit's researchers to inform and enhance performance. Similarly, the McClelland Centre supports collaborative partnerships with Worcestershire NHS Trusts, and runs wellness programmes for individuals with heart disease, cancer and diabetes that are guided and informed by staff in the Physical Activity, Health and Well-being research group.

In response to UW new Strategic Plan 2013 – 2018, ISES has undertaken an audit of staff to identify existing excellent practice, developing practice and ideas for future development in a number of key themes and priority areas. This audit is expected to inform the unit's future approach to research impact, including use of media and publications, to reach wider audience, and establishing and managing partnerships with beneficiaries.

d. Relationship to case studies

The two impact case-studies are both based on research undertaken in the submitting unit (ISES). They reflect, however, a range of impact, and elaborate on the reach and significance of the unit's research. The first, *Addressing the Childhood Obesity Problem in the West Midlands: enhancing child weight management programmes*, demonstrates how research has led directly to changes in practice at a regional level which has wide reaching impact on the health and well-being of children. The second, *The Global Provision of Physical Education in Schools: stimulating debate and shaping policy*, exemplifies how the unit's research has been highly impactful in the development of national and international policy in physical education. Both case studies, also exemplify aspects of the submitting unit's approach to impact. The first exemplifies the drive to work closely both with research users (in this instance, the West Midlands' Department of Health) and with potential beneficiaries (in this instance, practitioners working in childhood obesity). The second exemplifies the ambition to inform national and international policy.