

**Institution: Buckinghamshire New University**

**Unit of Assessment: Sport & Exercise Sciences, Leisure and Tourism**

**a. Overview**

Over the last eight years there has been a gradual shift in emphasis within the research Group towards sport, health, exercise and wellbeing. Research activity has built on the previous foundations of work undertaken into leisure and tourism education, particularly research into non-formal education, providing critical, supportive and directional input to local, national and international agendas, as evidenced by the Impact Case Studies.

Research activity now focuses on two broad themes:

- a) Sport, health, exercise and wellbeing
- b) Sport, society and social policy

While the Group pursuing this research is currently small, the intention is to build on the strengths provided by established researchers through the development of active early career researchers, and the expansion of the Group's critical mass through future research appointments.

**b. Research strategy**

The strategy outlined in RAE2008 concentrated on three strands: investment in the themes of Leisure and Tourism Education and Leisure and Tourism Organisation and Society, support for the emerging area of Events Management, and continued exploration of collaborative projects. Recently there has been a re-focus of emphasis away from tourism education, influenced in part by the retirement of the Reader in Tourism, while Events Management is no longer active. Research activity has been focused on the remaining two strands of the strategy through research projects undertaken, investment in resources and staffing, and expansion of collaborative working. The future research strategy has as its focus the development of collaborative projects with other universities to enhance visibility, develop professional networks and expand funding opportunities, enabling the development and future expansion of the Group's synergies within the specific areas of sport, health, exercise, and wellbeing.

The strategy is focused on the following key areas:

1. **Growing external academic strategic collaborations:** the Group has already developed collaborations with higher education institutions and external academic partners including, for example, the University of Northumbria and the University of Loughborough. Based on existing research activities, strategic collaborations will be sought to strengthen international reputation and visibility, specifically in the areas of sport and exercise science. Moreover, collaborative bids for research funding will be pursued.
2. **Growing externally-funded applied research with external professional and industry partners:** in line with the University's mission to drive professional and creative influence, the Group is pursuing opportunities to extend innovative research activity with a range of partners. This is illustrated by the Group's involvement in the following:
  - The Football Association: a workforce development review evaluating the current professional development experiences of its staff.
  - Watford Football Club: innovative research and applied practice in the area of motion capture the interface between broadcast technology and sport biomechanics for the senior coaching and sport science team.
  - Oxford City Football Club: a research & knowledge transfer project.
  - NHS Buckinghamshire: externally funded diabetes research.

3. **Extending social policy research and community projects with a clear applied focus to health and wellbeing:** one focus of the 2008 RAE submission was on projects linked to applied research within the area of lifestyle, identity, leisure and wellbeing. Building on this existing work (e.g. Movers & Shakers), the Group is planning to extend knowledge that provides benefits for public sector and community organisations. For example, research within the area of 'third age leisure' has potential to add value to social and leisure policy within the south-east region.
4. **Investment in physical infrastructure:** Recently, the University has allocated £80,000 for the enhancement of facilities in the Human Performance Laboratory (sport sciences). In addition, £250, 000 has been secured through university capital and investment funding for the development of motion capture facilities which will enhance the Group's ability to conduct research and develop a national and international reputation in this field. As part of the University's campus strategy, the research Group will seek to enhance further its physical infrastructure and technology to capitalise on the potential for collaborative and applied research. Improved facilities will also enhance the Group's ability to undertake quality, sustainable research, particularly when working collaboratively with partners such as the University of Northumbria.

### c. People, including:

#### i. Staffing strategy and staff development

In order to achieve the Group's future strategy, the recruitment and development of staff is central. The people strategy includes the following core areas:

#### 1. Staffing Strategy

In line with the research strategy, the University has specifically sought to employ research active staff within the Group's research themes who demonstrate the highest potential to achieve excellence in their field. They are expected to possess a PhD or be very close to completion with evidence of research outputs and external collaborations during their doctoral studies. Most recently, two new members of staff (Stone, Gibbon) exemplify this with strong early career researcher profiles. Stone completed his PhD within the first term of his employment and Gibbon's doctoral study is virtually completed. Both commenced employment with experience of collaborative research and publications in international peer-reviewed journals. The University is committed to retaining research active staff through providing support as follows:

- a) fostering an interdisciplinary group approach in order to promote collaboration within the areas of health, exercise, and wellbeing. For example, there is potential for innovative research within the areas of performance, psychology, stress and resilience, ageing, health and wellbeing.
- b) facilitating research activity for all stages of research careers through a time allowance. To illustrate, all staff have one day per week that is free of teaching duties.
- c) identifying funding for the employment of two full-time post-doctoral Research Assistant posts to support the collaborative research programme and increase the critical mass of research active staff
- d) employing a fractional (e.g., 0.2 post) Visiting Research Fellow to provide leadership and project management for the development of research in sport, health, exercise and wellbeing. For example, a Visiting Research Fellow post may be created through an existing collaboration in the health sector.
- e) developing new funded PhD student opportunities within the area of sport, exercise, and health to develop the supervisory skills and experience of staff (e.g., match-funded bursaries via NHS grants and through professional football clubs)

#### 2. Staff development:

The University is committed to supporting research active staff through its staff development programme as follows:

- a) Early Career Researchers: the group is promoting funding of development opportunities through external commercial and academic collaboration; Early Career Research secondments are awarded to support researchers in maintaining their research trajectory (e.g. Stone). This involves structured support and mentoring to realise early career research targets. Support for recent employees (e.g. Gibbon) is planned for 2013-14;
- b) For more experienced academics, support is provided for the development of consultancy and funding streams to build their research;
- b) Financial support is available for attendance and presentation at conferences and further professional training;
- c) Support for staff through investment in technology and equipment that facilitates research and scholarly activity (e.g., training in biopsy; professional training in performance analysis with Dartfish & Quintic);
- d) Provision of financial and external support for writing grant applications (e.g., mentoring by experienced researchers);
- e) Joint supervision with experienced researchers to build experience in Early Career Researchers (e.g. Stone)
- f) Support applications for 'Visiting Professorships' and staff exchanges engaging in knowledge exchange and short secondments (e.g. Humberstone, Riddick)
- g) Progression: The University has adopted the principles of the Concordat to support the career development of researchers. To illustrate, one research assistant (Stan) and a research student (Hockley) have recently secured employment in lecturing at the University;
- h) Ethics: The University maintains the highest standards of research quality and integrity. A number of policies and procedures are in place to support this (e.g., The Code of Good Research Practice, Ethics Policy). A University Research Ethics Panel meets on a monthly basis to consider project applications. The Panel is chaired by a visiting Professor (Walters), and reports to the University Research Committee which is responsible for broader policy decisions relating to ethics and governance. The University also ensures that research supervisor training incorporates effective practice for ethical and quality matters.

**ii) Research students**

Since RAE2008, nine students associated with the group achieved a PhD. Currently, there are seven research students working towards completion of PhD awards. Research students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own development as researchers. At the beginning of their research, they complete a 'Working Agreement' which, in addition to detailing student and supervisor responsibilities, also requires students to assess their own skills using the online Vitae Researcher Development Framework Planner. This is then discussed with their supervisors and training and development priorities are agreed. Developmental progress is reviewed on an annual basis with a panel (chaired by a senior researcher) and new research objectives are agreed for the coming year. Employability skills are addressed as part of this review, and strengthened by the requirement for research students to present an updated CV as part of their Annual Review.

The following table summarises the Group's research student activity over the assessment period as Student instance FTE (STULOAD) – in accordance with the FAQ on the REF website.

	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
STULOAD	325.7	538.4	455	305	525.9

PhD research students are supported in a variety of ways. A bespoke programme offers research training in such areas as research philosophy, methodological issues, data visualisation methods, presentation of research, preparation for viva, and influencing and networking. They are also

offered access to the Professional Doctorate modules in Qualitative Research Methods and Quantitative Research Methods. The University is affiliated to the Consortium for Research Excellence, Support and Training (CREST), which has 14 affiliated Higher Education Institutions. CREST co-ordinate training throughout the year and organise research networking events and an Annual Conference of poster and paper presentations. Further support is available for students through access to Epigeum's 15 online research skills courses, which enables researchers to develop key skills, including entrepreneurship, methods, transferable skills, ethics and integrity. Students are also encouraged to disseminate their research through a range of mechanisms. To illustrate, University funding is available to support research students who wish to present their work at national and international conferences (e.g. Iordanova-Krasteva, 2008, 4<sup>th</sup> International Tourism Conference, Turkey; Alexander, 2010, International Conference on Sustainable Tourism, Crete; Kesgin, 2011 7<sup>th</sup> Biennial Symposium of Consumer Psychology of Tourism, Hospitality and Leisure, Thailand). Students are also supported through encouraging practical application of research findings to the wider university environment (e.g. Cole's development of a guide to employability has received national attention as an exemplar of good practice). Research students are also encouraged to publish their work through conference proceedings and in journals (e.g. Coates, E, 2010, *Sport in Society*; Sealy W, 2008 *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing*; Alexander Z, 2010, *International Journal of Tourism Research*).

### c. Income, infrastructure and facilities

**Research Income:** The Group's research income of £330,000 shows a considerable increase over the RAE2008 return, when eligible research income was £58,000. The projects supported reflect the move away from Leisure and Tourism Education and Leisure and Tourism Organisation and Society towards the two themes given in section a) above. Examples of Leisure and Tourism Education projects include Image Enriched Learning for Tourism (Festeu) – an HEA-funded project of £6,000 to support the use of digital image resources in tourism education in collaboration with Professor Tribe at the University of Surrey; the National Teaching Foundation funded *Jouissance of Learning* project (£30,000) directed by Humberstone and Clayton in association with Sheffield Hallam University (see Clayton, Beard, Humberstone, and Wolstenholme, (2009) '*The jouissance of learning: evolutionary musings on the pleasures of learning in higher education*', *Teaching in Higher Education*, 14:4, 375 — 386); and the European Commission Leonardo da Vinci programme directed by Festeu involving piloting Virtual Learning Environments in Departments of Tourism (£9,000).

Sport, exercise, health and wellbeing research has been promoted through projects such as the Health Rehabilitation through Physical Exercise (HARPE) project, led by Festeu and McCormack, funded through the EU Erasmus programme in conjunction with Transylvania University, Kaunas University of Medicine, Lithuania, and the National Sports Academy, Bulgaria (total project funding £280,000 Euros, of which 80,000 Euros funded research at Buckinghamshire New University). The Football Association funded a workforce development programme for their employees (£27,000), NHS Buckinghamshire Healthcare funded a research project into diabetes (£3,000), and Cole led a short KTP with Oxford City Football Club to raise awareness of Oxford City Casuals and their learning disabilities programme (£800). Humberstone was an academic consultant on the EU funded *Breaking Barriers* project (£2,500) which created an informal network of non-formal education organisations, in conjunction with European partners King Charles University, Prague, Associacio de Poralisia Cerebral de Combra Lisbon, and bsj Marburg, Germany and the Higher Education Academy.

**Strategies for generating grant income:** Future income will be generated through sources such as early career fellowships, regional sporting associations and the generation of fees for research and development services with non-academic users and beneficiaries. Other sources will include community consultancy, EU funded projects. To illustrate, the group will pursue sources of funding from external collaboration with NHS Buckinghamshire Healthcare, professional football clubs such as Watford FC, the Football Association, and Performance Management companies. This supplements projects such as Sports England 'Active Universities' programme (Page, 2011-13) and the Football Association knowledge-share (2012-present).

**Supporting infrastructure:** Strategic decisions regarding research and research directions are debated and agreed by the University Research Committee. Recent investment of £80,000 has enhanced the research environment through the purchase of the following: F50 ELISA plate reader (Tecan, Trappes, France), Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (The Magstim Company Ltd, Whitland, UK), DS7AH Muscle Stimulator (Digitimer Ltd, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, UK), Powerlab Data Acquisition System (AdInstruments, New South Wales, Australia) and Finometer (Finapres Medical Systems, Amsterdam, Netherlands). These instruments will allow the Group to build on existing collaborations with academic institutions through contributing to multi site research studies. Furthermore, they will enable development of the Group's research profile into healthy ageing, specifically, the neuromuscular, cardiac autonomic and endocrine responses to resistance exercise in older adults. The Human Performance Laboratory is served by one full time Sport Science Officer who is also studying for an MPhil. Investment plans include the purchase of a £250,000 motion analysis and capture facility, which will present a significant opportunity to advance its human movement research. For example, it allows the Group to analyse the effects of prescribed exercise rehabilitation programmes on kinematic predictors of functional movement recovery, in both healthy and clinical populations.

This demonstrates institutional support for the Group's established and early career researchers who are expanding and extending their research profiles rapidly within the research community. The University's investment in physical infrastructure together with external academic and applied research partners will ensure the sustainability and expansion of innovative research across sport, exercise, health and wellbeing. The development of an active research culture has been fostered through investment in funded international conference attendance, early career researcher secondments, bursaries, capital equipment, and studentships. The burgeoning research culture is being recognised externally with publications in international journals, dissemination at international conferences, visiting professorships and editorial posts.

#### **d. Collaboration or contribution to the discipline or research base**

##### **Contribution to the discipline/research base**

**Leisure and ageing bodies** (Humberstone & Riddick): In June 2009, Buckinghamshire New University hosted the 'Third Age and Leisure Research, Principles and Practice' Conference, in partnership with the Leisure Studies Association. The conference focused specifically on leisure/sport research and practice and the third age. To support this initiative, Professor Carol Cutler-Riddick from Gallaudet University, USA was invited to the University as a Visiting Professor to contribute to this development and present one of the keynote papers. This conference led on to further research in health, well-being and ageing amongst women and men over 55 years participating in diverse and complementary activities. External collaborators include Brunel University; Gallaudet University, Washington; Buckinghamshire NHS Trust and community groups.

**Outdoor education and learning** (Humberstone & colleagues): This builds upon research into outdoor education, teacher-pupil interaction and issues of diversity in particular gender undertaken by Humberstone and colleagues (f. 1993). Humberstone has focused on developing theory-based practice in outdoor education, linking the educational theoretical dimensions of outdoor learning with nature-based sport. She has also played a significant role in the promotion of this emerging academic field through, for example, her role as editor-in-chief of the Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning since 2005, and her invitation to be co-editor of the commissioned International Handbook of Outdoor Studies, to be published by Routledge late 2014 early 2015. She has also applied theory to practice through engagement with a range of practitioners within the UK and Europe: the NFE project involved European partners including Civic Association Ester, Czech Republic, FRAJDA, Poland and Youth Exchange Agency, Lithuania, plus groups from France, Romania, Austria, Finland, Norway, Germany, Sweden and Greece.

**Networks and clusters and of research collaborations:** The European Institute of Outdoor Adventure Education and Experiential Learning (EOE) is a network of organisations and individuals

and aims to enhance the transnational development of outdoor adventure education and experiential learning, to realise youth exchange projects, organise international conferences, develop quality standards and enhance co-operation between youth care organisations, experts and practitioners in the field.

**Keynotes and Invited Lectures**

**Humberstone** – invited keynote: Adventurous activities, embodiment and nature: Spiritual, sensual and sustainable? International Congress of Physical Activity and Human Movement Sciences (VIII CIEFMH-XIV SPEF), Rio Claro, Brazil, May 2013

**Humberstone** – invited keynote: Researching place-based experience-Exploring the ways in which 'place'/nature become embodied, Sense of Place in Outdoor Education/Friluftsliv: Transcultural Perspectives Research Seminar, Norway Sport University, Oslo. January 2013

**Humberstone** – invited keynote: 'The New Forest in UK: Well-being, the senses and young people's experiences', EoE Conference Into the Woods: About the significance of woods and wilderness for youth work in Europe, Metsakartano, Finland, October 2011

**Humberstone** – invited keynote: Shifting Realities. Leisure Studies International Conference: 'Leisure in Transition: People, Policy and Places' Southampton Solent University, July 2011

**Humberstone** – invited keynote: "Silver Surfers", Ageing Bodies, Embodiment and Active Leisure: A Study in Windsurfing. Exercise, Physical Activity and Older People. Brunel Institute for Ageing Studies, Brunel University, February 2011

**Humberstone** – invited keynote: Adventure Recreation in a Time of Globalisation: Can Adventure Recreation be Sustainable and Safe? International Congress of Sport for All and Sport Tourism, Kemer Turkey, November 2009

**Festeu** – invited keynote: International Conference, 'Risk and Entrepreneurship', Brasov, Romania, 2010.

**Bakir**. Special invitation: 'International Conference within the framework of Alexandria 2010 Capital of Arab Tourism', Alexandria, Egypt, April 2010.

**Contribution to professional associations:**

**Humberstone**: Editor-in-chief, *Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning* since 2011 (co-editor 2005-10). Invited Co-Editor of the Routledge-commissioned *International Handbook of Outdoor Studies*, (with Prof Karla Henderson, North Carolina State University, US, Dr Heather Prince, Cumbria University). Journal editor, *The Institute for Outdoor Learning* (UK) and the *National Centre for Outdoor Education*, Sweden. Elected member of European Institute for Outdoor Adventure Education and Experiential Learning (chair, 2004-2008).

**Wickens**: Editor, *Journal of Hospitality Marketing and Management* (2010-2012); Membership of editorial board: *Journal of Tourism and Recreation Research* (2011- to present); *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management* (2009 – to present); *International Journal of Hospitality Knowledge Management* (2006 –to present); *International Journal of Tourism Policy* (2006 - 09); *Tourism and International Interdisciplinary Journal* (2007 – to present).

**Bakir & Wickens**. Membership of editorial board: *Journal of Crowd Safety and Security Management*, on line journal (2009 – to present)

**Conferences: Organisation of and member of academic committees:**

**Humberstone:**

The Sixth International Outdoor Education Research Conference (IOERC): *Future faces: Outdoor education research innovations and visions*. Co-organiser and academic committee. University of Otago, New Zealand, 26-29 November 2013.

European Institute for Outdoor Adventure Education and Experiential Learning, *13th annual*

conference: *Urban nature: inclusive learning through youth work and school work*. Board member. The Swedish School of Sport and Health Sciences (GIH) in partnership with EOE and Frilustliv group, Stockholm, Sweden, June 2013.

European Institute for Outdoor Adventure Education and Experiential Learning *10th annual conference -Encountering, Experiencing and Exploring Nature in Education*. Board member. Youth Centre, Metsäkartano, Finland, October 2011

Fifth International Outdoor Education Research conference: *Researching in 'frilustliv and outdoor education: Different places, critical perspectives and new possibilities*. University of Copenhagen, Denmark 4th, July 2011.

Leisure Studies International Conference, '*Leisure in Transition: People, Policy and Places*' Southampton Solent University, July 2011;

European Institute for Outdoor Adventure Education and Experiential Learning *9th annual conference- Water – Spaces for Experiences: Youth and Outdoor Education in Europe*. Board member. Ueckermünde, Germany, September 2009

'*Third Age and Leisure Research, Principles and Practice*', Conference in partnership with the Leisure Studies Association, Lead of Organising Committee, Buckinghamshire New University, June 2009.

Fourth International Outdoor Education Research Conference: *Outdoor Education research and theory: critical reflections, new directions* La Trobe University, Beechworth, Victoria, Australia, April 2009

**Briedenhann, Wickens, Bakir:**

3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on Special Interest Tourism & Destination Management, Conference organisation committee Kathmandu, Nepal, 2011.

**Wickens, Bakir:**

Sustainability Issues in Tourism: Conference co-organiser, Boğaziçi University, Istanbul, Turkey, November 2013.

**Memberships & Professional Networks**

**Bradley:** Chair of British Association of Sport & Exercise Sciences Psychology Special Interest Group

**Humberstone:** Elected Member of European Institute for Outdoor Adventure Education and Experiential Learning

**Visiting Professorships**

**Bakir:** Visiting Professor of Research Methods at Novi Sad University, Serbia

**Humberstone:** Visiting Professor, Faculty of Law and Management, University of Mauritius, up to 2009.

**Humberstone:** Visiting Professor, Department of Physical Education, Institute of Bioscience, University of Sao Paulo, Brazil from May 2013.

**External Doctoral Examinations**

**Wickens:** Oxford Brookes University, 2009

**Humberstone:** Edinburgh University 2010, Cardiff Metropolitan University 2011, Cumbria University 2011, La Trobe University, Australia 2011, Monash University, Australia, 2012, University of Southern Queensland, Australia 2013

**Clayton:** University of Glasgow, 2011