

<p><b>Institution: Southampton Solent University</b></p>
<p><b>Unit of Assessment: 26</b></p>
<p><b>a. Context</b></p> <p>Southampton Solent University launched its Sport provision with the scholarly ambition to produce both respectable research outputs and contribute to societal good. Despite its recent nascence, the research team has make rapid progress in creating the pathways required and in starting to deliver benefits to non-academic stakeholders, through developing a proactive approach to translating research findings for end-user benefit. Such non-academic beneficiaries include professional football clubs (Southampton FC, Portsmouth FC, Crystal Palace FC and AFC Bournemouth) that have allowed us to to implement our research findings regarding strength training and associated areas of conditioning. Similarly the Anglo-European College of Chiropractic collaborate with us on projects relating to the low back pain research. Members of our research group worked extensively with GB diving and GB wheelchair rugby in the build up to London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics respectively, allowing the research group to instil our strength and conditioning and biomechanical approaches with the squads. The Zambian Institute of Sport was created by members of the research group with the main aim to explore and develop systems of professionalising Zambian sport. The methods in which this has been undertaken is through participatory research approaches that engage the end users to ensure sustainability and ownership.</p>
<p><b>b. Approach to impact</b></p> <p>The applied nature of our research means that we are often involved with end-users at an early stage i.e. during the research project lifecycle and, where appropriate, in the design stage. This is particularly the case with such partners as AFC Bournemouth who were instrumental in the co-design of the work undertaken by Mola and colleagues in strength training in elite footballers. We often proactively approach potential end-users (Hampshire Talented athlete scheme who provide participants for our research studies) and at other times are approached by them (for example Portsmouth FC). We endeavour to create and maintain constructive two-way engagement with these groups (for example we host nutrition and strength and conditioning workshops for the Hampshire Talented athlete Scheme) in the since the development of that long-term, mutually beneficial partnerships is the most effect way of achieving our research and community goals.</p> <p>The department’s particular focus is on improving performance such that we work along an exercise continuum from elite sport through to health of the nation. Research clusters were formed and funded by the University to create a critical mass of research driven staff in areas of commonality. Several such clusters in diverse, exercise related areas have enabled the researchers to publish and make great impacts in areas where the University had little or no previous accomplishments: from chronic low back pain, elite sport in a range of sports from Premiership football (e.g., Southampton FC - whose updates on their website when the group works with them have up to 2 million followers worldwide) and GB and community level wheelchair rugby (Channel 4 covered the support the research group did for GB wheelchair rugby during the London 2012 Paralympic games), to sport development approaches using sport as a vehicle to tackle issues surrounding HIV/Aids in Africa. The approach to impact is particularly strong in regards to HIV/AIDs in Africa (particularly south of the Sahara) which has the most heavily HIV/AIDS affected region of the world. The impact is addressing stigma and stereotypes with those with HIV/AIDS using sport as a means to promote empowering identities such as sport coaches and leaders. This has been undertaken through a qualitative study to evaluate the ‘Positive and Kicking’ programme which uses sport as a method to empower HIV positive people in Lusaka (Zambia). Similarly, a mix method approach has been adopted to evaluate UK Sport funded ‘Go Sisters’; the largest empowerment programme for girls in Zambia. This programme uses</p>

sport to empower underprivileged girls through providing skills in sport leadership (coaches, event managers etc.), school fees support, and small grants to set up small coaching businesses etc.

### **c. Strategy and plans**

The main focus in the first five years of the department's research strategy has been to produce high quality research outputs from relatively small cluster driven projects. Research efforts have been steered by the Cluster Leader who has encouraged a focus on areas of strength for SSU in terms of expertise and facilities (the MedX lumbar extension machine as an example whereby the group has developed a strong applied research approach to the strategy). Although initially constrained by the newness of the department and absence from key networks of practitioners, the group has so far succeeded in its strategy of creating opportunities for knowledge exchange/societal impact. Our successes have gathered momentum as beneficial research findings have been both published and adopted as best practice by practitioners. What is more efforts to create research partners of end users, rather than research subjects, (whether this be professional athletes/clubs or organisations that require assistance in addressing low back pain or professional bodies in sport) have succeeded in creating an embryonic network of beneficiaries with SSU at its heart.

In addition, SSU staff have been active in developing strong associations with professional bodies in the management of Football through Lawrie McMenemy Centre for Football Research which is developing further research based interventions in various elements -not included in as case studies in this submission since impact has preceded publication in many respects. With regard to lived experiences, Elliott's (2012 and in press) papers that analyse the lived experiences of migrant athletes in host nations identify how the problems of dislocation, adjustment and loneliness can have negative consequences for athletes. It also shows how the migration process is a transitory one that has the capacity to change over time. These analyses are fundamental to underpinning the support systems offered by Elite Welfare Management (EWM) - an organisation whose aims have been informed by the Elliott's work and used to develop an induction and on-going education programme for migrants employed at professional football clubs.

With respect to the future and a specific impact strategy, this will be developed for the sport research cluster and informed by the future institutional impact strategy and lessons learned from REF 2014 exercise, but it is likely to include:

- Creation of an impact activity database
- Creation of more formal role for the Press Office in impact activity from tracking social media to marketing the research groups endeavours.
- Identification of project related impact aims whereby an action plan will be drawn up by each member of the Sport cluster clearly showing any new research activity will develop into impact. For example, extending the lumbar extension research findings for uptake by the wider professional football community that could have impact on a global scale for football if found to be useful.
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### **d. Relationship to case studies**

This new department is a small one and as such we consider the need for a tightly focussed approach to our research to be critical in allowing us to deliver research that transfers social benefits. This has enabled constructive engagement with our end-user. In the case of study 1 we have engaged with end users such as GB Wheelchair Rugby and Women's basketball squads; employing the strength and conditioning approach that enabled positive benefits to this squad on the international stage during the London 2012 Paralympic Games. These

show evidence of how the approach can create interim impact and benefit to the end user. Similarly, in case study 2 the Anglo-European College of Chiropractic are both research collaborators and, through its membership, disseminators and practitioners of our findings. Where no such professional body exists, the research team have been active in the founding of new institutions where its research findings are needed – such as the Zambian Institute of Sport and the EWM.