

Impact template (REF3a)

Institution: University of Oxford**Unit of Assessment:** UOA21**a. Context**

The University of Oxford's UoA comprises the Department of Politics and International Relations (DPIR) and our new public policy school, the Blavatnik School of Government (BSG). Oxford Politics and International Relations has a long and distinguished tradition of bringing research insights to bear in the public sphere. Our commitment to engagement and the desire to enable practice and policy to benefit from our research are essential aspects of our research strategy, which is reflected in strong, institutionalised links with practitioners and the policy community through our research centres and programmes, and the new Blavatnik School of Government.

Research and types of impact: The breadth and appeal of our research programme is central to the impacts that we generate. We engage with the most academically and societally significant questions and cover every major sub-field of the discipline, giving rise to research impacts in areas as diverse as constitutional design, election oversight, democratising reforms of political parties, disability policy, local government finance, performance management in public administration, climate change, terrorism, global governance, the laws and ethics of war, the responsibility of states to protect citizens from mass atrocities, hate speech, and standards in public life, among many others. By its nature, research in politics and international relations is both empirical (bringing evidence to bear to understand policy processes and outcomes) and normative (engaging in debates about appropriate concepts and principles in public policy). Both aspects of our work are evident in the impacts that we generate by contributing to the evidence base for policy, and to the conceptual and normative analysis that guides policy and public debate.

Mechanisms and beneficiaries: We achieve research impacts through three principal mechanisms: (i) advisory and collaborative relationships with practitioners, (ii) our extensive networks of engagement (through research centres, visiting fellowship schemes for practitioners, seminars and conferences), and (iii) our programme of communications. This has enabled us to reach a wide range of audiences and beneficiaries, including:

- National governments and civil servants - from the UK, to Washington and Moscow;
- Inter-governmental organizations - such as the United Nations, World Bank, WTO, IMF, OECD, OSCE and the EU;
- Politicians and political parties - from the British Labour Party to Egypt's democratisation movement, Indian and Kuwaiti legislators;
- Policy institutes at national and international level - for instance, IPPR, Chatham House, the Nuffield Council for Bioethics and the International Council on Human Rights Policy;
- Non-governmental organisations, pressure and advocacy groups - examples include the Fabian Society, Amnesty International, and the International Trade Union Confederation;
- Media professionals and journalists from around the world; and
- Citizens - through broadcasts, publications for general audiences, and a wide range of departmental communications.

During the REF period our most significant achievement was the launch of the Blavatnik School of Government, which marks a step-change in our capacity for practice-oriented research and our ability to connect with practitioners today and in the future. DPIR played the key role in securing a £75 million donation from Len Blavatnik to establish the new School, which enabled Professor Woods to move in 2011 from DPIR to become the first Dean of BSG. The Blavatnik School enrolled its first cohort of students in 2012/13 and already hosts a Distinguished Practitioner Programme and a Practitioner Short Course programme. It will grow to full size by 2015, eventually offering training to 120 students a year, educating a new generation of practitioners to pursue better government, stronger societies and richer human opportunities across the world.

b. Approach to impact

Framework and coordination: DPIR's impact strategy is developed and actively monitored by the Research Committee in coordination with the Strategic Management Group, both of which report to

the General Purposes Committee, chaired by the Head of Department (HoD). Since the creation of the Blavatnik School of Government in 2010, the coordinated development of our impact strategies has been achieved by the HoD's membership of the BSG Management Committee, and regular consultation and planning by the HoD and the BSG Dean under the aegis of the Social Sciences Division's Planning and Resources Committee.

These mechanisms to coordinate strategic planning are enabling us to implement a qualitative leap in the support for impact and engagement. The impact and engagement teams of DPIP and BSG now comprise a Knowledge Exchange Officer (since 2012), a Senior Research Facilitator (with an additional post under recruitment), three Events Officers, and three posts to manage Communications, Alumni Relations and Digital Content. These teams are responsible for the effective use of the web and media to disseminate our research; lend administrative support to our practitioner training programmes and partnerships with the policy community and industry, which form part of BSG's graduate programme; and also support our research centres in running seminars, conferences, workshops and visiting fellowship schemes to build practitioner networks, and help researchers in attracting funding for impact projects. This framework allows us to give effective practical and financial support to the impact activities of all our researchers.

Our impact strategy has three overarching aims: supporting staff to act in advisory roles and to work with practitioners, facilitating engagement with the policy community, and enhancing the public understanding of politics and international relations through communications.

(1) Supporting staff to act in advisory roles and to work with practitioners

Enabling our research to benefit the work of practitioners is an essential part of our mission and culture, which we support through variation of duties, special leave and generous consultancy arrangements.

Long-term engagement: Long-term relationships between academics and the policy community are central in constructing an evidence-base for policy and in developing normative frameworks to guide policy formation. We foster a culture that facilitates this engagement and we support it through special leave and by varying the duties of researchers who act in advisory roles. Examples of long-term engagement include Bogdanor (advising governments of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Israel, Romania, Slovakia and Trinidad on constitutional matters); Skach (working with the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq); Deas (advising the Colombian government on FARC terrorism); Roberts (working with the UN, British and US Militaries, see impact case study 21-01); and Woods (advising the IMF and World Bank). We also granted special leave to enable researchers to undertake longer term research-led policy work. Examples include: Wood (to work in the Treasury and Number 10 under Gordon Brown); Stears (to work at IPPR, and to take up the position as Ed Miliband's chief speech writer, 21-05); Nabulsi (to serve as the first electoral commissioner for the Palestine National Council); and Welsh in her forthcoming role as UN Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect (21-04).

Support for consultancy: To enable the policy community to benefit from research, the University's generous consultancy arrangements allow our members to undertake up to 30 days of consultancy work each year. Examples include: Nicolaïdis (member of the EU Reflection Group on the Future of Europe chaired by Felipe Gonzales, 2008-10); Philp (advising the EU on corruption control); Whitefield (working with the Russian Ministry of Health and Social Protection in developing new social policy for the disabled in Russia); McLean (advising the UK's Electoral Commission and the Boundary Commission, both of which informed the Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011 and the drafting of House of Lords Reform Bill, 2010).

Our researchers also contribute to policy evaluation and development by giving evidence to Inquiries and Parliamentary Select Committees. Examples of evidence given in this assessment period include: Waldron and Fielden (Leveson Inquiry); Picard and Levy (House of Lords Select Committee on Communications Inquiries into Media Plurality and Convergence, 2013); Painter (House of Commons Science and Technology Select Committee on communicating the risks and uncertainties linked to Climate Change, 2013); Margetts and Hood (House of Commons Public Administration Select Committee, 2011, 2013); and Hurrell (Foreign Affairs Committee UK-Brazil Relations, 2011). Formal evidence is an important aspect of our case studies

(Roberts 21-01, McLean 21-03, Hine/Philp/Peele 21-07, and Hood 21-09).

(2) Facilitating engagement with the policy community

The UoA's extensive networks of engagement with practitioners and the wider policy community are supported by our research centres, visiting fellowship schemes, practice oriented seminars, conferences and workshops, as well as a distinguished practitioner programme.

Centres and networks: We provide administrative support for our ten research centres and networks and their impact activities, which include special workshops, seminars and conferences for policy makers and practitioners, publishing policy papers and briefings, and day-to-day meetings with practitioners. An example is the *Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism*, which has extensive practitioner networks in international journalism and brings journalists and practitioners in the media business from around the world together with our scholars. In 2011-12 alone, the Institute held 82 events attracting 3,000 attendees, and published 14 policy reports which have been downloaded 300,000 times. DPIR's other centres and networks have equally extensive engagement programmes and include: the *Centre for International Studies* (one of the largest and most active centres in Europe, which serves as the focal point for International Relations research in Oxford); the *Institute for Ethics, Law and Armed Conflict (ELAC)*; the *Global Economic Governance Programme*; the *Oxford Centre for the Study of Inequality and Democracy*; the *Public Policy Unit*; the *Centre for the Study of Social Justice*; the *Oxford Sciences Po Research Group in the Social Sciences*; the *Network on the History of Political Thought*; and the *Research Network on Government in Africa*.

Visiting fellowships: Central to the reciprocity of our relationships with practitioners and policy makers are our extensive visiting fellowship programmes. BSG's Distinguished Practitioner Programme hosts six visitors a year. The first cohort, in 2012-13, included: Rima Khalaf Hunaidi (Executive Secretary for United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia), Lord Malloch-Brown (Chairman of Europe, Middle East and Africa at FTI Consulting), Trevor Manuel (Minister in the Presidency: National Planning Commission), Montek Singh Ahluwalia (Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission for India), Ernesto Zedillo (former President of Mexico), and Mo Ibrahim (founder of Celtel International and the Mo Ibrahim Foundation). All of our centres and research programmes also host visiting fellows from outside the academy. For instance, *ELAC* enables two or three military personnel a year to spend a full academic year at the Institute, while the *Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism* has a visiting journalists programme for around 12 practitioners each year from around the world.

Seminars, conferences, workshops: We endeavour to communicate first-hand the broad range of our research and its significance. Activity levels are high. We support approximately 70 events per term – public lectures, seminars, workshops and conferences - many of which directly focus on engagement with practitioners, creating opportunities for policy makers to reflect on practice. For instance, the weekly seminars in European Studies regularly host members of the European Parliament and the European Council, policy institutes, and the media. We also organise tailored knowledge exchange workshops with specific groups of practitioners. Examples include workshops on the role of external actors in conflicts and conflict resolution in the Post-Soviet space (Sasse, 2012) and BSG's annual conference on Challenges to Government (next hosted Dec 2013). The intensity of the programme contributes to the strength of our networks and the consistently high levels of engagement.

Short courses for professionals and policy makers: Through our executive education programmes, we partner with governments, NGOs and the private sector to develop a range of short courses specifically for professionals and policy makers. The courses provide intensive programmes of learning delivered by our academics and offer networking opportunities. DPIR initiatives include: the *Chevening Parliamentarian Programme* for Indian MPs (2011-13), which hosted three separate cohorts of Indian MPs and addressed practical and policy questions in the context of political science research; and the *Chevening Rolls-Royce Science and Innovation Leadership Programme (CRISP)*, delivered in partnership with the Saïd Business School, for mid-career Indian professionals working in the fields of business and public administration. The Blavatnik School of Government hosts a distinguished *Practitioner Short Course Programme* on topics ranging from "Natural Resource Management" to the forthcoming

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course on “Leadership and Ethics”.

(3) Enhancing the public understanding of politics and international relations through communications

Effective use of the media and the web, and publishing for general audiences enables us to promote engagement with our research by meeting the public’s inherent interest in politics and international relations and current affairs.

Using the Media: Our researchers appear in all major international media (*BBC, Guardian, Financial Times, Al Jazeera, ABC Australia, China Daily, CNN, Globe and Mail, New York Times, The Times*). Leading examples include Bogdanor, Woods and Mitter who have all appeared more than 40 times over the last four years, commenting on the UK elections in 2010, the global financial crisis and its aftermath, and Chinese politics respectively. We draw on the University Press Office to provide media training for our researchers and to profile major research projects and findings.

Publishing for general audiences: Several of the books published by our researchers achieved wide public readership. Prominent examples include: Brown’s *The Rise and Fall of Communism* (2009) - 28,000 copies sold to date; Shlaim’s *Israel and Palestine* (2009) - over 10,000 copies; and Hazareesingh’s *In the Shadow of the General* (2012), which sparked TV debates and documentaries on de Gaulle in France and was awarded a French government prize for “stimulating civic reflection in France”. In addition, major publicly available digital resources for teachers, educators, and researchers were generated by Philp’s *William Godwin’s Diary Project*, which maps radical intellectual and political life in London during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and by Nabulsi’s *Teaching Contemporary Palestinian Political History* project.

Communications: Over the last 5 years we have implemented a broad communications strategy using podcasts and blog publishing to reach audiences beyond academia. “Politics in Spires” (<http://politicsinspires.org/>) a multi-authored blog, has published more than 400 articles since its inception in 2010, in collaboration with Cambridge (POLIS). With weekly audiences that average 1,700, it attracts the majority of visits from non-academic network domains, has 1,800 followers on Twitter and 2,864 on Facebook. Research findings publicised on the blog have subsequently been featured by mainstream media (for instance work on election modelling - Channel 4 News). Many of our open seminars reach wide audiences through podcasts on our website, the University podcast site, and on itunesU. For example the 66 seminars held by ELAC (June 2009-Jan 2012) were downloaded more than 700,000 times from itunesU. DPIR’s alumni magazine, *Inspires* has a circulation of over 11,500.

c. Strategy and plans

In developing the impact environment over the next five years, the UoA aims to build on its achievements in the assessment period with three core priorities:

(1) Supporting staff to work with practitioners: We aim to create a culture where generating impact is the norm by:

- significantly expanding our capacity to carry out policy-relevant research. We are currently recruiting to five new posts in the fields of public administration, government, international and global public policy, of which two are Chairs. These appointments will be complemented by further permanent and fixed term appointments over the next five years as BSG grows to full size;
- strengthening the links between policy-relevant research and active engagement through new collaborations between the Blavatnik School of Government, DPIR research institutes (ELAC, the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, the Public Policy Unit and others), and individual researchers in DPIR with joint applications for major research grants; and
- making impact awareness and training a component of inductions at all career stages, sharing best practice examples of impact and pathways to achieving it, and ensuring that the impact elements of all new research projects are actively managed from their inception.

(2) Facilitating engagement with practitioners: We plan to consolidate our existing networks

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and reach new groups of potential beneficiaries by:

- developing and growing the DPIR and BSG executive education programmes;
- developing new channels for impact to reflect areas of innovation and growing research strength, for instance in global governance and public policy, institutional design and political economy; and
- using our database of 11,500 politics and international relations alumni to reach new partner organisations with which we currently have no involvement.

(3) Enhancing public understanding through communication: We aim to extend significantly the reach of our research impacts, and to increase their visibility for external audiences by:

- developing a new outreach programme to promote a step-change in the public understanding of quantitative social science through (i) short courses for teachers and potential university applicants and (ii) open access online master classes in quantitative methods - building on our success in attracting £1.3 million in Q-Step funding; and
- growing our online media presence through a new dedicated knowledge exchange section of our website that relates our research findings to impacts and target audiences.

d. Relationship to case studies

Our case studies are illustrative of the breadth and significance of our research impacts across the full range of sub-disciplines from government to international relations and political theory, and demonstrate the effectiveness of our support for impact in each of the three areas outlined above.

(1) Supporting staff to act in advisory roles and to work with practitioners

In all case studies, impact was achieved as a result of the sustained engagement by researchers with the principal audiences, supported by the UoA in a range of ways including consultancy arrangements, variation of duties, and special leave. This support was instrumental in Hine's work with the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority and Philp's management of the research work of the Committee on Standards in Public Life since 2007 (21-07); McLean's work with the Calman Commission and HM Treasury (21-03); Roberts' (21-01) participation in a number of official boards and groups of experts on the laws of war; Hood's (21-09) leadership of the ESRC Public Services Programme; and the consultancy work of Caplan (21-08) and Welsh (21-04). We also supported Stears' research for IPPR and his secondment to the Labour Party (21-05).

(2) Facilitating engagement with practitioners

Our policy of facilitating engagement with practitioners by hosting conferences and supporting the impact work of our research centres was equally consequential. Conferences hosted by the UoA were central to several impact case studies, including: Caplan's (21-08) conference on UN benchmarking and peace consolidation; Rodin's (21-02) conference to review the US Army White Paper; and Welsh's conference on the responsibility to protect (R2P) with key UN and R2P policy community representatives. Our administrative support for the impact activities of our research centres also played a significant role in many of the case studies. For example, the networks of the Centre for International Studies and its 'Changing Character of War Programme' were critical to impacts on peace-building (Caplan 21-08) and responses to the changing character of war (Roberts 21-01). The Centre for the Study of Social Justice (directed by Simon Caney) provided a forum to discuss the relationship between theory and policy and shaped Caney's work on climate change (21-06), Stears' research on democracy (21-05), and Philp's work on ethical standards in public life (21-07). The Public Policy Unit's networks supported the impacts of Hood's work on performance targets (21-09), McLean's work on regional funding (21-03), and Stears' engagement with the British Left (21-05).

(3) Engaging wider audiences through communications

Our communications strategies, too, played an important role in the case studies. For instance. ELAC's active mailing list, with more than 700 individuals - many from governmental and policy organisations - generated practitioner engagement, mobilised research funding, enabled collaborative work and networking that made central contributions to Welsh (21-04) and Rodin (21-02). ELAC's podcasting output and its policy briefs facilitated engagement with a wider audience.