

<b>Institution: Robert Gordon University</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: 19 Business and Management Studies</b>
<b>a. Overview</b>

The staff returned to UoA 19 are drawn from three departments in Aberdeen Business School: Management; Accounting & Finance; and Communication, Marketing & Media. They are all members of the Research Institute for Management, Governance and Society (IMaGeS) (see REF5b.). The multidisciplinary nature of IMaGeS research and ways of working means that members of IMaGeS are also returned to other UoAs within Panel C (UoA 16 Architecture, Built Environment and Planning, UoA 20 Law, UoA 21 Politics and International Studies), and Panel D (UoA 36 Communication, Cultural and Media Studies, Library and Information Management).

There are members of IMaGeS working in three thematic groups which span research, teaching and corporate engagement activities: **Entrepreneurship**, **Environment** and **Professions**. In addition to these cognate groups, there are scholars leading research in **Sales Management**, **Critical Management Studies** and **Corporate Governance**. The staff who belong to each of these areas of research activity and evidence of the calibre of their work are discussed in section 5c. below.

<b>b. Research Strategy</b>
-----------------------------

### University Level

RAE 2008 saw a step change improvement in performance from RAE 2001 across the university, and this allowed RGU to invest the increased Research Excellence Grant strategically. Work done at the university level led to the development of a new research strategy, *'to be internationally recognised for excellence in applied research in key thematic areas and to demonstrate tangible success in applying that research for the benefit of the wider community'*. In 2009 this strategy was taken forward through the creation of three multidisciplinary Research Institutes (RIs). Although each one is associated with a Faculty, the researchers who belong to each Research Institute are drawn from across the university.

Each Research Institute is led by an academic Director whose role is to focus and manage research. The Directors initially worked with the top researchers across the university in order to identify the research themes which reflected both current areas of strength and important strategic areas for RGU. A Principal Member was then appointed to take responsibility for each of those themes in order to maintain and extend academic excellence in their areas and develop that research in ways that would also meet the needs and challenges faced by the economy and society. Principal Members are bought out by their Research Institute in order to focus 80% of their time on their own research, and the research development of the others within their theme. There are three levels of membership of the Institutes for which staff may apply: Senior Researcher (60% time bought out by RI); Established Researcher (40% time bought out by RI); Developing Researcher (20% time bought out by RI). Applications for membership (or a higher level of membership) are considered annually by the Research Institute Directors and the Theme Leaders. In order to join and remain members of their chosen RI, staff must demonstrate their excellence at the appropriate level against key performance indicators for publications, grant income, doctoral supervision/completions and, for more senior staff, research leadership and esteem. The interface between the departments and the Research Institute, and the mentoring of staff wishing to join the Research Institute is undertaken by Research Coordinators within each academic department.

Research governance has been restructured to accommodate the Research Institutes and ensure that key research management indicators are reported and debated at the highest level of the university. Each Research Institute has an Executive Committee which meets three times a year and which is responsible for the respective Institute's research governance. The Executive Committees subsequently report to the University's Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (RKEC) which is chaired by the Vice-Principal and Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and

## Environment template (REF5)

Academic Support Services). RKEC subsequently reports to the University's Academic Council and Board of Governors.

### Faculty level: Institute for Management, Governance and Society

The Research Institute associated with Aberdeen Business School (ABS) is the Institute for Management, Governance and Society (IMaGeS). IMaGeS members are mainly drawn from within ABS, but also hail from the other two faculties: Faculty of Design and Technology; and the Faculty of Health and Social Care. The research themes in IMaGeS are: Business and Enterprise; Governance and Society; Information and Communication and world class research can be found in each of these areas. The researchers returned to UoA19 are all members of the Business and Enterprise and/or the Governance and Society themes.

The strategic focus of the research themes has been to a) consolidate and grow research in areas of excellence as identified by RAE2008. Thus in terms of research outputs the emphasis has been placed on the quality rather than the quantity of outputs, both for the themes as a whole and for each of the individuals within those themes. In line with this strategy, and the HEFCE/SFC emphasis on internationally excellent and world class research, the bar for inclusion in REF has been set very high, with individual outputs being subject to two rounds of external review by senior figures from top UK universities. The number and quality of individuals returned in REF2 therefore reflects this highly selective approach. In addition to this, IMaGeS aims to b) become self-funding and c) develop a vibrant research student community. These strategic priorities will be discussed in REF5d. and REF5cii. respectively.

### Strategy Implementation:

The aim of consolidating and growing research in areas of excellence in IMaGeS has been achieved in different ways by the different research groups. Two of our existing themes from RAE 2008 continue to be represented here: Entrepreneurship and Environment.

**Entrepreneurship** continues to be an area of strength for both teaching and research at RGU. The work of the Centre for Entrepreneurship, led by Professor Alistair Anderson, Theme Leader for Business and Enterprise, has continued to enjoy significant international recognition in this REF period. Anderson and his co-authors, many of whom began their careers as his doctoral students, have been dubbed the 'Aberdeen School' (Rosa & Caulkins, 2012, p107) and are recognised within the international entrepreneurship community as producing an important stream of work (Fayolle, 2014) in interpretivist entrepreneurship research which has had an impact on the discipline as a whole. Anderson himself is Editor of one of the leading journals in the field and has produced some 40 peer-reviewed journal articles within this REF period and has been cited around 3000 times since 2008. Within RGU the Aberdeen School (which includes Professor Heather Fulford who is being returned to UoA 36) continues to thrive and influence the next generation of researchers on a wide range of issues, especially social aspects of entrepreneurship (Anderson 4), the theory and practice of social networks (Anderson 1; Anderson 3), and entrepreneurship education (Anderson 2). Anderson writes extensively with junior colleagues in order to support their development, is involved in the supervision of 8 doctoral students (including 3 members of staff) and has had 9 doctoral completions during this period.

Colleagues in the **Environment** theme (Professor Seonaidh McDonald and Dr Abhishek Agarwal) have grown the size and reach of their research group by reaching out to a wider, multidisciplinary group across the university that includes colleagues submitted to other UoAs (Gray, Laing and Strachan to UoA 16 Architecture, Built Environment and Planning and Kruijzen to UoA 15 General Engineering). This work, linked to the Centre for Understanding Sustainable Practice, deals with a wide range of sustainability issues including Energy (Agarwal and Strachan), Transport (Gray), Built Environment (Gray and Laing), Waste (Agarwal, McDonald and Kruijzen) and Consumer Behaviour (McDonald). Work undertaken by this group examines strategies and practices for sustainability from the level of national and international policy (Agarwal 1), right through to groups (McDonald 2) and individual members of the public (McDonald 3; McDonald 4) and constitutes a significant critique of extant conceptualisations of sustainability across a number of social science disciplines.

The Leadership theme reported in UoA 36 and the Accounting Professions theme discussed in UoA 35 in RAE2008 have been consolidated and grown through collaboration between key researchers (for example, in funding bids (Gammie and Tourish), doctoral supervision (Ejiogu) (Anderson and Gammie) and doctoral completions (Kearney) (Anderson and Gammie)) to form a broader interest in the professions. The **Professions** theme comprises work by Professor Elizabeth Gammie, Dr Susan Hamilton, and Professor Ashly Pinnington and complements some of the work done within the Entrepreneurship theme. Gammie and Hamilton's work centres on the Accounting profession (Gammie 1; Gammie 2; Gammie 3; Gammie 4; Hamilton 1; Hamilton 2) whilst Pinnington has investigated a range of professions including Law (Pinnington 1; Pinnington 4), Project Management (Pinnington 3) and Management (Pinnington 2) across a range of sectors. Gammie and Pinnington have also researched gender issues within these contexts (Gammie 2; Gammie 4; Pinnington 4). Together these pieces offer a critical view of how these professions have and should develop over time.

In addition, we have a number of outstanding individuals working at the centre of networks of doctoral students and more junior researchers in their own specific fields: Professor Bill Donaldson is a professor of marketing specialising in **Sales Management**. His research currently centres on the area of sales force automation (Donaldson 2; Donaldson 3), particularly on examining aspects of the implementation of these systems; Dr Robert Halsall is a discourse theorist with expertise in **Critical Management Studies**. His previous training as a linguist informs his inquiry into cultural aspects of organizations at the individual (Halsall 3) or international (Halsall 1; Halsall 2; Halsall 4) level, with particular reference to UK and German thinking; Professor Charlie Weir is an economist and an expert in **Corporate Governance** (Weir 1; Weir 2), Performance (Weir 3; Weir 4) and Control. These individuals have opted to grow their research by recruiting doctoral students and mentoring post-doctoral colleagues in their own specialist areas (as evidenced by the groups of doctoral completions presented in REF5cii).

Across all of these themes, research work is underpinned by significant expertise in qualitative research methods. Methodological and/or ontological work is the explicit focus of some of the research presented here (Halsall 1, McDonald 1; Pinnington 1) but runs through a wide range of IMAGeS outputs.

Thus the three themes presented here have implemented IMAGeS strategy using different approaches, by for example adding colleagues, networking across disciplines, joining forces with other groups or mentoring the next generation of researchers, all of these cognate areas can demonstrate consolidation and growth in their own discipline areas. In line with RGU research strategy, this will continue to be a focus for the development of research going forward.

### c. People, including:

#### I. Staffing strategy and staff development

We have a strong degree of continuity within our group of senior research staff: Anderson, Donaldson, McDonald, and Pinnington were all returned in RAE2008 in UoA 36 Business and Management Studies, whilst Gammie and Weir were returned as part of our submission to UoA 35 Accounting & Finance. Although some staff have moved on since the last Research Assessment Exercise we have been able to maintain collaborative links with them through joint authorship (Anderson & Drakopoulou Dodd; McDonald & Drakopoulou Dodd; McDonald & Thyne; Pinnington & Suseno; Pinnington & Tourish), funding bids (Gammie & Tourish) and doctoral supervision (Anderson, Tourish & Tourish; Anderson, McDonald & Thyne; Donaldson, McDonald & Thyne; Donaldson & Nash; Donaldson & Tourish; Halsall & Lal; McDonald & Kretsos; Pinnington & Kretsos).

One of the most important ongoing research strategies for ABS as a whole is the development of staff in the early stages of their research careers. Over this period we have had 5 staff candidates complete their research degrees at RGU, 2 at other universities and we currently have a further 17

## Environment template (REF5)

members of academic staff registered for doctorates internally (16 from the 3 departments covered by UoA 19) and 6 externally. This is a very resource intense research development strategy because it ties up supervisor capacity and each staff candidate has a 20% workload reduction and is eligible to apply for a sabbatical period in their final writing up stages. This has a very real effect on the ability to deliver teaching, administration and doctoral supervision as well as research. However ABS is committed to this strategy over the long term and it is already delivering benefits. Of the staff candidates who completed in the last period, 2 are being returned to UoA 36. Further, we have very recently begun to employ our own doctoral graduates in greater numbers, with seven doctoral graduates from this REF period gaining academic or research positions within ABS following their graduation. One of these (Agarwal) is returned to UoA19 as an Early Career Researcher. All of the senior colleagues in this REF return are actively involved in mentoring our post-doctoral staff and developing researchers, primarily through one-to-one support with their writing for publication, as evidenced by the high numbers of outputs co-authored with colleagues over and above those returned for REF.

For the more experienced research staff, as well as being able to advance through the membership levels of IMaGeS on the basis of their research achievements and thereby secure more research time, the University has a commitment to rewarding research excellence through the internal promotions process. During this period, Halsall has been promoted to Reader, and McDonald (and Fulford, returned to UoA36) to Professor in recognition of their research achievements.

### c. II. Research students

In line with its commitment to multidisciplinary working, RGU organises training and development for both its research students and supervisors centrally. All research students attend a *PGCert Research Methods* which is coordinated centrally by the Graduate Studies team and delivered in two, one week, modules by many of the top research active staff across the university. The *PGCert Research Methods* has been recently revalidated and consistently enjoys excellent student feedback. Since 2004, a Supervisor Training Programme for all research degree supervisors, regardless of experience, has been operated by the University. There is an initial one day training session which has currently been attended by over 90% of the University's supervisors. In addition half day CPD/refresher sessions were introduced in January 2010. These must be attended by all supervisors every three years and have already attracted 44% of the University's supervisory base. Regular evaluations of these events provide the University with positive feedback as well as useful suggestions for future course content. In PRES 2011, under *Supervision*, the University outperformed its national benchmarks in terms of the supervisory skills offered to students including subject expertise, mentoring and availability. Together these initiatives have been instrumental in improving our doctoral completion rates from 54.5% (2000/01) to 83.3% (2008/09). RGU was one of the first universities to introduce an Internal Convenor to chair doctoral viva voce examinations in 2004 and we also provide training for this role. At the University level, the management and development of the research student community is overseen by Professor Peter Robertson, Vice-Principal and Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Academic Support Services) who chairs the Research Degrees Committee.

Each Research Institute has a Graduate School providing all postgraduate research students within the institution a supportive environment. The IMaGeS Graduate School is led by McDonald who manages a team of Research Degrees Coordinators responsible for the admission, support, and development of the research degrees students within their cognate area. The IMaGeS Graduate School is the largest in the university with 129 research students, representing over 40% of the RGU research student community. The three departments returned to UoA19 have a combined total of 88 research students, 39 studying full time and 49 studying part time. The staff returned here are involved in the supervision of a combined total of 36 research students. Full time students have dedicated desks within our two newly refurbished research student rooms within the ABS building and are clustered in cognate areas. Part time students are able to use one of 10 hot desks within these rooms. Those based remotely tend to use them during their visits to the university whilst many part time students based in Aberdeen, including staff candidates, make use of them on particular days or evenings, adding to the variety and vibrancy of the research student

## Environment template (REF5)

community. More than 80% of the research students engaged with PRES 2011 and the results highlighted many areas of good practice. However research students noted the lack of a doctoral seminar programme and so in 2012, in addition to the occasional Master Classes and seminars we hold on issues such as publishing (Anderson), specific research methods (Halsall, McDonald, Pinnington), viva preparation (Pinnington) and academic writing (Donaldson), the Graduate School has introduced a regular series of student-led seminars where they can present their own work and receive feedback from their peers and IMaGeS members in a supportive environment. In 2012 RGU pioneered an enhancement-led internal review of research degrees. IMaGeS Graduate School had their processes and practices scrutinised by an external panel, who made three minor recommendations for further improvement and awarded seven commendations for excellent current practices.

In addition to in-house research training, as a core member of the Scottish Graduate School for Social Sciences (SGSSS), the Scottish ESRC Doctoral Training Centre, our research students have access to a rich Scotland-wide advanced skills programme. In addition, the SGSSS offers a summer school for all social science doctoral students studying in Scottish universities including discipline-specific training, masterclasses and workshops as well as practical activities based around transferable skills, knowledge exchange and specialised IT packages. There are strong connections between IMaGeS and SGSSS as Dr Simon Burnett and McDonald were members of the cross university panel which set up this DTC and Burnett is now seconded to SGSSS as an Associate Director. Additionally, McDonald has delivered one of the 2012 summer school masterclasses on Qualitative Data Analysis with Dr Natasha Mauthner from University of Aberdeen.

In RAE 2008 the panel feedback to UoA36 noted that the doctorates awarded were lower than the national median for Business and Management Studies. This has been an area of strategic focus over the last REF period and the numbers accordingly show a significant increase to 28 doctorates awarded. These are clustered around the themes outlined above: **Entrepreneurship** (Bryant, Gan (joint with Environment), Hardwick, Hollond-Noronha, Kearney, Mueller, Rizzo (and Ssendi who was returned to UoA 20 Law); **Environment** (Doctoral completions in this area include an ESRC CASE studentship (Aitken) jointly funded by Scottish and Southern Energy Ltd. The others are Agarwal, Gan (joint with Entrepreneurship), and Osseichuk-Russell (and Otitoju who was returned to UoA 16 Architecture, Built Environment and Planning)); **Professions** (Elewa, Karanda, Okafor, Ritchie, Seow, Tsiontsi, Yaghfour); **Economics & Finance** (Adeola-Omole, Kume. Kyari, Owusu, Salykova (and Turgenbayev who was returned to UoA 21 Politics and International Studies); **Marketing** (Azzopardi, Hamilton, Harris, Opoku-Wusu, Ting, Thomson). Many of these graduates have already begun to publish in peer-reviewed journals.

### d. Income, infrastructure and facilities

#### Income

The total level of external research income is 20% higher in this period than for the combined total of UoAs 35 and 36 in the period covered by RAE2008. In RAE2008 the income per FTE was £22,056 for UoA 35 and £23,657 for UoA 36 respectively. In this period the income per FTE is £83,432, showing a significant improvement in this figure. The income for this period includes funding from UK research councils and national charities, but the largest proportion (over 70%) comes from public (income source 4) and private (income source 5) organisations. This reflects the strategic emphasis of RGU and IMaGeS on translational, applied research. These figures show clear improvement in income generation since the inception of IMaGeS as a Research Institute. This level of income is not yet sufficient to complement the research monies received from the institutional success in RAE2008 to the extent that IMaGeS is financially self-sufficient and this remains a strategic ambition for the group. In order to increase income we intend to continue to target industry funding sources (including competitive tenders, contract research and KTPs), where we already have a strong track record of winning significant levels of funding.

## Environment template (REF5)

### Infrastructure and facilities

RGU continues to make significant investments in the university's infrastructure, particularly in terms of commissioning new buildings and improving the fabric of existing buildings. Since RAE2008 the group leading the implementation of the Estates Masterplan have invested some £120 million in the commissioning and upgrading of university buildings. The most significant investment was in the delivery of a major new building (Riverside East) which has allowed the movement of the final academic departments from the Faculty of Design and Technology on to the Garthdee campus and provided new, state of the art University Library premises. This has been complemented by the completion of a major refurbishment of the Faculty of Health and Social Care and Aberdeen Business School buildings. The purpose of this work is to establish the university on a single site, providing state of the art teaching and learning facilities for the student population, promote interdisciplinary working within and between faculties, and provide inspiring social spaces for the whole university community.

The IMAGeS research community has benefitted a great deal from these strategic developments. Over the course of 2012/13 the facilities within the Aberdeen Business School building have been significantly upgraded. For the first time, all five of the academic departments within ABS have been collocated in a single building and the senior IMAGeS members who were previously housed in a separate building have been integrated into a new suite of offices on the top floor. Following the refurbishment the research students have moved into two purpose built research hubs where they are now collocated in cognate groups.

The University has led the field in terms of electronic learning resources for many years and this is reflected in the provision of excellent ICT facilities which benefit research directly (for example by having remote access to software and data storage and by allowing doctoral students based at a distance to attend and lead research seminars virtually) and indirectly (through for example access to a state of the art Institutional Repository OpenAir which promotes the sharing of research outputs with the academic community).

### e. Collaboration and contribution to the discipline or research base

#### Collaboration

In line with the RGU research strategy for excellence in applied research, IMAGeS researchers collaborate with a wide range of public, private and third sector organisations in the pursuit of their research. Within this REF period, research has been undertaken in collaboration with Aberdeen Chamber of Commerce (Donaldson), Aberdeen City Council (Weir), Aberdeen Harbour Board (Donaldson) Anderson, Bell and Christie Architects (McDonald), Databuild Ltd (Agarwal), Fortis (Donaldson), Grampian Housing Association (McDonald), Govan Housing Association (McDonald), Inch and District Hospital (Donaldson), Marketing Management Services International (Donaldson), Queens Cross Housing Association (McDonald), Scottish and Southern Energy Ltd (McDonald), Renewable Power Exchange (McDonald) and UK National Industrial Symbiosis Programme (Agarwal).

#### Collaboration with other universities

As can be seen from the outputs returned (REF2) there are many individual collaborations with co-authors all over the world. However colleagues also hold a number of more formal honorary positions at UK institutions, including Aberdeen University (Anderson), University of the Highlands and Islands (Anderson), Lancaster University (Anderson), Manchester Business School (Pinnington) and Imperial College, London (Weir). Further afield Anderson holds Visiting positions at University of Sousse in Tunisia, City College in Greece, University of Limerick in Ireland and Aarhus Business School in Denmark. Pinnington is Dean of the Faculty of Business, The British University in Dubai and a Visiting Professor, Faculty of Economics, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia.

The Centre for Entrepreneurship attracts a vibrant community of visiting scholars from institutions in China (Xiuxiang Zhang, Ma Zhiong, Jin Hi Li) Spain (Ana Bojica, Matilde Ruiz Arroya, Maria Torreblanca, Nuria Toledano), Canada (Monica Dichon), Iran (Sadaat Raaman), Oman (Rashid Ali

## Environment template (REF5)

Ibrahim Al-Balushi), and Sweden (Johan Gadeffors). Weir has had visiting scholars from China (Wenjing Xu) and Australia (Darren Henry) and Gammie has hosted visits from Ros Whiting (New Zealand) and Nurgul Chambers (Turkey).

### Contribution to the discipline:

One way that IMAGeS researchers contribute to the discipline is by serving on editorial boards. Most notably, Anderson is the Editor of *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*, one of the top international journals in the field. Since 2008, colleagues have also edited a number of special issues of peer reviewed journals including *The Journal of Asia, Entrepreneurship and Sustainability* (Anderson), *Business Strategy and the Environment* (Agarwal), *Journal of Industrial Ecology* (Agarwal), *Journal of Marketing Management* (Donaldson) and *Journal of Rural Enterprise and Management* (Anderson).

They have also served on a wide range of editorial boards (28 in total) in **Entrepreneurship** (notably, *Journal of Small Business Management* (Anderson) *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation* (Anderson)), **Environment** (notably *Sustainable Development Journal* (Agarwal) and *Journal of Industrial Ecology* (Agarwal)), and **Professions** (notably, *International Journal of Human Resource Management* (Pinnington), and *Journal of Accounting Education* (Hamilton)), as well as some of the most respected Business and Management journals (notably *European Journal of Marketing* (Donaldson), *Human Resource Management Journal* (Pinnington), *Journal of Marketing Management* (Donaldson) *Business Strategy and the Environment* (Agarwal)).

Colleagues have made contributions to key conferences in their disciplines. Most notably, Donaldson chaired the Academy of Marketing in 2008. Agarwal has been a track chair in the International Sustainable Development Research Conference for five years when the conference was held in India (2008), Netherlands (2009), Hong Kong (2010), New York (2011) and UK (2012). Anderson is a much sought after keynote speaker and has delivered 23 keynote speeches and has been an invited speaker at 16 conferences in Europe, Asia, East Asia and North Africa since 2008.

As well as peer reviewing at the highest level for grant awarding bodies within the UK as Reviewers and Rappourters for ESRC (Anderson, McDonald, Pinnington) and EPSRC (McDonald), the opinions of IMAGeS scholars have been sought out by international bodies including the Austrian Science Fund (McDonald), the Danish Council for Strategic Research (Anderson), European Science Foundation (Anderson), Israel Science Foundation (Anderson), the McArthur Foundation, USA (Anderson), the National Research Foundation of Korea (Anderson), the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (Anderson), the Royal Society of New Zealand (Anderson) and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (Anderson).

Staff included here are researching at the forefront of several fields, as evidenced by the publications in leading mainstream (*British Journal of Management*; *Journal of Management Studies*; *Organization*; *Work, Employment and Society*) and specialist journals (*Annals of Tourism Research*; *British Accounting Review*; *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*; *European Journal of Finance*; *Industrial Marketing Management*; *International Small Business Journal*; *Sustainable Development*). IMAGeS staff hail from and publish in a wide range of social science base disciplines and the genuine commitment to multidisciplinary research, fostered by RGU and enacted through the Research Institutes, means that the overarching contribution is not to a single discipline, but rather that the hallmark of IMAGeS research is a significant contribution to the spaces in between the traditional disciplines.

Fayolle, A. (2014) Introduction to the Handbook in Alain Fayolle (ed.) *Handbook of research on entrepreneurship: What we know and what we need to know*, Edward Elgar: Cheltenham.

Rosa, P., and Caulkins, D.D., (2012) *Entrepreneurship Studies* in D.D. Caulkins & A.T. Jordan (Eds) *A Companion to Organizational Anthropology*, pp98-121. Wiley: London.