

Institution:	GOLDSMITHS, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON
Unit of Assessment:	22 Social work and Social policy
a. Context	

This UoA is located (as of September 2012) in a new department of Social, Therapeutic and Community Studies (STaCS), combining Social Work, Community and Youth Work, Community Arts and a range of therapeutic studies including counselling, psychotherapy and art psychotherapy. Elements of this grouping have come forward from a predecessor department of Professional and Community Education (PACE), though in new combinations. The UoA has three user group constituencies: practitioners in social work, community and youth work, and therapeutic settings; policy-makers; and users, including users of social work services, therapeutic services, and participants in a variety of forms of social action in communities, especially community development, community arts and music, and faith based social action. These link to and across our three thematic research clusters: Community Engagement and Faith Communities; Diversity and Marginalisation in Professional Education; and Professional Interventions for Empowerment. Impact is built in to all the unit's research activity, which is almost always designed with social change in mind, and often in co-production with non-academic partners coming from these beneficiary communities. A particular inflection is towards impacts which enable the voicing of largely unvoiced groups

b. Approach to impact

Our approach to impact can best be summarised under five headings, as follows:

1. Research projects shaping and influencing public policy: A key element in our approach is the use and design of research projects to shape and influence public policy and debate. Some of this is focused on calibrating the policy-making imagination with the lived and practiced reality, for example challenging policy misapprehensions about faith groups' skills or capacities; and producing an evidence base for academic and career progression among minority identities in professional practices. Other policy work challenges established norms, modes of thought and practices, for example the religious literacy work which invites public partners to explore their 'subconscious secularity' as they engage with new laws on religion and belief. A general emphasis is on hearing the 'under-voiced' identities of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and religion and belief through research. This frequently involves us in partnership working with policy-making individuals and communities, and reflects the professional values and benchmarks of the social work, community work, youth work and therapeutic practices which underpin the submission. These require that our research work is anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory and a key goal is to produce research which has the impact of improving equality and social inclusion. On religion and belief in particular, our work is designed to provide a challenge to conventional wisdom, and policy debate has been stimulated and informed by research evidence in this area and others, leading to change in policy directions, as shown in our ICSs.

2. Generating tools for change: As a professionally and practice-focused unit, we are also committed to the generation of tools for change arising out of research and this has been an area of strength, for example with new approaches to measurement of faith-based social action (Dinham 2011), a large scale training programme in religious literacy (Dinham 2009-present), and an extensive toolkit, with training, for supporting diversity in social work education (Bernard *et al* 2012). This approach has led to changes in workplace and pedagogical practices, as well as improvements in legal and regulatory frameworks, for example in the work of the Religious Literacy programme with the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

3. Practice-focused consultancies and evaluation: These are an essential aspect of our approach, and many of our projects start from commissions for change initiatives which are then translated through to more formal academic outputs as the process unfolds. Thus, a strand of consultancy on post-qualifying social work training, in partnership with a number of Local Authorities, is giving rise to reports and training in the first instance, and to a series of conference papers and academic publications in due course. Likewise a British Academy award is enabling a team in the therapeutic practices to reflect on and model approaches to group work for professional development. Another in Community and Youth Work is working to understand community group work practices and to share the learning in professional settings. These approaches enable a wider contribution to CPD. They also lead to the development of resources to enhance professional practice.

4. *Community engagement*: Impact in this UoA depends in large part on partnership and community engagement. The Department is strongly connected with large numbers of professionals, community settings and agencies through its teaching and student placement components, and this positions us well for an agile response to opportunities as they arise. This is consolidated by the cultivation of personal and professional networks which enable us to draw together partnerships for impact responsively and rapidly. Our multi-disciplinarity as a dept also supports the ability to combine in unusual ways, for example exploring the translation of ideas and practices of post-traumatic stress and growth from therapeutic settings to social work and community work contexts (Campbell 2009; Cohen 2013); and connecting religious studies to professional practice through, e.g., equipping social workers to engage well with the religion and belief identities of their service users (Dinham).

5. *Targeted dissemination*: A strength is also in our connections to policy-makers, especially in the work on faith communities, but also through engagement with local authorities and to the Regional Development Agencies (2008-11, now defunct). A key approach in this area too is to maximise existing connections made through our professional education programmes, for example with regulatory bodies and local authorities. A proactive approach to impact is also demonstrated in the dissemination of outputs through a range of media including conferences (eg the annual Religious Literacy Conferences, 2010-present), exhibitions (eg the annual Art Psychotherapy show, which is open to the public), performances (eg a recent 'Call and Response' community music event), and social media including the use of podcasts and twitter. We have also encouraged KTPs (for example, Dinham 2009-11; Mayo 2009-12) to formalise and co-fund projects for the implementation of research findings in practice settings, in partnership with community agencies (Fairtlough 2009-13; Staempfli, 2012; Campbell, 2013-15). We have been closely involved in the ESRC RDI initiative for Social Work (Bernard).

c. Strategy and plans

Impact strategy is the bedrock of our overall research strategy. As detailed in our REF5 we have developed collaborative partnerships linking policy makers, practitioners and research and we intend to extend this approach over the coming years to strengthen each of our thematic research areas. These goals are driven forward in our Centre for Community Engagement Research (CCER) and the Faiths and Civil Society Unit (FCSU).

The CCER has been established specifically with the goal of having impact in communities by:

- Shaping and engaging in partnerships for external research funding to address identified needs in the community and voluntary and community organisations;
- Improving the learning experience and employability of students by matching both research dissertations and projects to community research needs;
- Providing knowledge and skills exchange between the institution and community partners;
- Promoting and supporting wider activities across the institution;
- Hosting topical seminars, conferences, talks, and workshops;
- Producing co-authored publications, reports and other outputs.

The work of the CCER is based on a distinctive framework of values arising from the professional disciplines represented in the Department. This emphasises a 'co-production' model, recognising the importance of involving partners equitably in systems of research agenda setting, shaping, governance, and delivery. The Centre is an evolution of the earlier Centre for Lifelong Learning and Active Citizenship (2008-2012), and emerges out of a year-long process of participatory research which identified an appetite for a community research and knowledge exchange resource. In this way, the Centre has been developed in partnership, as is reflected in its governance through a steering group comprised of Goldsmiths' academic staff, other academic and research experts, and participants from voluntary and community sector organisations, groups, policy makers, trade unions, Goldsmiths students' union, and faith-based community groups. The Centre is also committed, in its founding documents, to making connections for impacts between the local and the global, nurturing existing links with international collaborators, for example, the TATA Institute for Social Sciences, Mumbai, India, with whom the Centre's director has been working on caste and exclusion (Green 2007-present).

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The FCSU drives impacts in another, distinctive way. Twelve Fellows are appointed for periods of three (renewable) years each, who are a mixture of policy-makers (in Whitehall, and through the Chair, Lord Tyler, in the House of Lords), CEOs of practice-focused faith-based agencies and bodies, and leading thinkers and academics from a range of pertinent disciplines, in the UK and internationally. This group is a standing resource for partnership work and dissemination, providing reach in to networks and readiness for responsive approaches to grant capture and tenders. The group meets at least once annually to consider strategically new challenges and opportunities for research with change in mind. This combination of reach and responsiveness enables a nimble and effective capacity for impact which places the unit in the forefront of work on faith and social action. It has enabled at least seven research projects, upwards of fifteen outputs, and underpinned at least one major policy in this period, as shown in one of our impact case studies.

As a department, we are also positioning as an impacts resource to those academic departments elsewhere in the institution which are less well placed in this regard. This is part of a new departmental research plan designed to sustain and build on partnerships, inside and outside of the university. Key strands are: to increase staff expertise through mentorship, and skills and ideas labs, and through seeking highly impactful researchers in new appointments as they arise; consolidating networks of researchers and community partners to support rapid responsiveness to calls for research and consultancy; building in short sabbaticals to allow colleagues to plan and undertake intensive periods of impacts activities; and developing annual research and consultancy plans, with a specific impacts focus, in Professional Development Reviews.

d. Relationship to case studies

Because impact is built in to our research at the outset, projects are almost always undertaken with social change in mind. Thus the Religious Literacy Programme has conducted research to understand levels of understanding and engagement with religious identity in universities, and more widely, specifically in order to develop a programme of training for better practice, which has now been delivered to more than 400 direct participants in over 150 organisations, as well as much more widely through activities in secular international contexts, including Canada, the USA, Sweden, Norway, Finland, and across the UK. The programme has also provided consultancy for practitioners in university and employer settings, in line with the department's approach, above. Likewise the project, *Diversity and Progression Among Social Work Students in England*, set out with the specific purpose of producing a toolkit to enhance the learning experiences of diverse student groups in Social Work, drawing on research to identify the barriers and opportunities to their progression. The resulting toolkit has been shared with two large international audiences from the US, Canada, the UK and Spain, and an international teaching and research network has now been formed. Both ICS's are an expression of our commitment to hear the unvoiced, as well as to connect policy up with practice through research.

Strategically, we have also supported applications for research council networks and seminars (including making up FEC shortfalls) which ensure dissemination and connection-making (eg Dinham's AHRC FaithXChange network). We have also made the most of internal funded opportunities, for example the institution's 'Making a Difference' event which show-cased Dinham's religious literacy work to a broad audience of community partners. Advisory Panels attached to professional courses in each of our disciplines have also become active within the new department in engaging with opportunities for disseminating research and connecting it with settings which can make use of it, eg Bernard's DoH work has extended its reach in to a wider range of local authorities as a result of connections made in these fora. The department has also learned, in the other direction, from activities included in the ICSs and incorporated aspects in to the wider approach to impact. For example, the structure of the Faiths and Civil Society Unit, with a political chair and an extensive Fellowship combining policy-makers, practitioners and researchers, has been translated in to the structure for the Centre for Community Engagement Research.

ICSs have also been recognised and supported through the academic promotions and progression system at Goldsmiths. Distinguished 'Professional/Societal Impact' is one of three strands of achievement considered in promotion to Professor (along with 'academic productivity, reputation and esteem' and 'Pedagogical leadership') and this was identified as an important aspect of the promotion of Dinham to Professor, as well as of Tiller, Fletcher and Fairtlough to Senior Lectureships, in this period.