

<b>Institution:</b> University of Hertfordshire
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> Panel C (19): Business and Management Studies
<p><b>a. Context</b></p> <p>The University of Hertfordshire (UH) has a reputation for being business-facing and was named the Times Higher Education Entrepreneurial University of the Year in 2010. This business-facing approach has helped shape the context within which Hertfordshire Business School (HBS) research makes its impact. The School has a particular focus on user-driven research, and we have a diverse base of non-academic user groups including: trades unions, NGOs, industry professionals, SMEs, larger companies in a range of sectors, public sector organisations, government agencies, and policy makers.</p> <p>There are particularly strong relationships between some of our research groupings and certain user groups.</p> <p>This is the case, for example, between the <b>Global Economy and Business Research Unit</b> and the UN; the World Bank; UNICEF and Oxfam; the TUC; the Polish trade union bodies Solidarity and OPZZ; the Department for Communities and Local Government; Norwegian Trades Unions; European Public Services Union (EPSU); the Communication Workers Union (CWU); and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.</p> <p>The <b>Finance and Accounting Research Unit</b> has close relationships with Molex Inc; BDO Stoy Hayward; European Finance Research Advisory Group (EFRAG); the European Commission, International Accounting Standards Board (IASB); the US Finance Accounting Standards Board (FASB); and the Institute of Chartered Accountants Scotland (ICAS).</p> <p>Similarly, the <b>Creative Industries Research and Consulting Unit</b> can demonstrate close relationships with Creative Skillset; the Broadcast Equalities and Training Regulator; GLA London Cultural Policy Reference Group; and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.</p> <p>The main impacts of our research are concerned with: health and welfare, culture and creativity, the economy, public policy and services, international development, and public discourse.</p>
<p><b>b. Approach to impact</b></p> <p>Staff are specifically allocated time to engage with research users through the Hertfordshire Business School's Research Allowance system, which awards staff time allocations to undertake their research in a range of ways. The panel that monitors this system and allocates allowances takes into account the potential for impact of the research. Since June 2011 the application pro-forma for a research allowance has specifically required applicants to indicate the potential for research impact and to identify the steps they are taking both to capture and record evidence of the impact. This approach has enabled the School to monitor understanding of research impact and to design interventions, including a session for researchers during the annual research 'awayday' to create a greater common understanding of impact, how it might be planned for in research design, and how it might be captured and evidenced. Staff from the unit have also had a number of other opportunities to develop their understanding, including regular briefings organised by the university's Research Grants Team, and through Business School research seminars.</p> <p>Funds have been made available to ensure that research staff can travel in order to support external engagement – for example, to allow attendance at networking events with a practitioner audience where engagement with users has been facilitated. Funds include those allocated to the Head of each Research Unit to fund its activity; professorial and reader allocations; Business</p>

School Seedcorn Funding; and university funds that have been specifically allocated to projects aimed at furthering the scope of impact or tracking, gathering evidence of and cataloguing impact.

An example of activity underwritten by the university would be the Academic/Industry Symposium held with the support of the British Film Institute at NESTA's (National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts) London offices during the 2011 London Film Festival. An invited group of thirty film academics and thirty representatives of the film industry and its publicly funded support organisations met in a day-long conference event to examine how the two groups could work together. Another was a workshop jointly funded with public service union Unison, also in June 2011, which brought together trades unions and NGOs from ten European countries to discuss the challenges and best practices associated with trade unions and the use of migrant labour in the care sector.

The CRoMES (Centre for Research on Management, Economy and Society) weekly research seminars, while primarily targeted at internal staff and research students in the Business School, are open to a wider audience, and visitors from communities that could benefit from attendance are routinely invited and have often attended. For example, the attendance of representatives of the creative industries support organisation, Creative Connexions, at a 2008 research seminar concerned with the creative industries in China, led directly to the staff member involved being appointed to advise a UK product design company on market entry to China. A School professorial inaugural lecture (financially supported and organised through the Social Science Arts and Humanities Research Institute) is another example of where engagement with a wider community was engendered. An audience of more than 200 attended a public lecture on the impacts of recent Polish migration to the UK, including local and county councillors and representatives of the Polish community in the region.

Staff have been encouraged to carry out research-based consultancy through the Corporate and Professional Development Unit (CPDU) in the Business School, and to engage in contract research. The latter has led, for example, to research by the **Creative Industries Research and Consulting Unit** for Creative Skillset (the Creative Industries Sector Skills Council) on the future skills needs of radio and television, and work on the impact of freelance working for BETR (Broadcast Equalities and Training Regulator) arising from earlier research funded by the EU ESF/EQUAL Programme. Both pieces of research have shaped these organisations' policy formulations.

Undergraduate students have been engaged in the organisation of research events, which have been specifically designed to further ensure that they are accessible to non-academic audiences. A particular example would be the role played by final-year undergraduate Event Management students in supporting the organisation of the London Film Festival Academic/Industry Symposium, the outcomes of which were fed into Lord Chris Smith's independent review panel, which produced the 2012 report 'A Future for British Film'.

The Business School has a significant track record in the operation and management of Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) programmes. KTPs have provided an important route to research impact and have been won on the basis of the user research delivery associated with the School. Research expertise of staff in the marketing group, for example, has been channelled into a number of KTP projects, including those that have focussed on sustainable marketing and green branding (e.g., Abbey Steel), while projects with Catomance Ltd and Howe Green Ltd were built around research on market entry strategies and, in particular, distributor and partner selection.

Finally, staff are encouraged to follow through with activity to gather evidence of the impact generated, which can range from engaging in personal communications with external partners via letters and emails, or documenting web pages and training or campaigning materials, as well as official externally generated reports.

**c. Strategy and plans**

As a result of changes in both procedures and research culture within the School, staff are now taking a more systematic approach to planning for, identifying, further developing and collecting feedback on the impact of research. A requirement for all staff applying for a research allowance will continue to be that they address questions around the impact that may be associated with their planned research. The research allowance application requires them to identify where impact might occur during the planning process, to assess opportunities for maximising the significance and reach of the research impact, and to provide mechanisms for the collection of evidence of the impact. Staff making external applications for grant funding will be expected to supply an impact plan which demonstrates, through goals and milestones, how – should the grant be won – impact is expected to occur and how it will be captured and recorded.

Engagement with users will be further enhanced through the Business School's biennial research conferences, an event designed to disseminate research findings to a wider audience. The next will be held in June 2014. The conference is conceived as a showcase for Business School research, in which communication is not primarily between specialists within academic disciplines but between staff in disparate disciplines within the School, the broader university and, importantly, the wider business community. The unit expects to work closely with its own Marketing Executive as well as the university's central Marketing and Communications Department to ensure that the reach of its research impact is maximised.

All research active staff in the unit have been trained in the use of the university's Research Information System (RIS) which was commissioned and installed in 2012. In addition to maintaining a database of outputs, the RIS enables the unit to capture evidence of impact, record details of research users and contacts, and facilitate ongoing engagement with practitioner and other communities outside the university. A rolling programme of training is in place to allow new members of staff, or those new to research, to become familiar with the use of the RIS.

**d. Relationship to case studies**

The two impact case studies submitted are underpinned by longstanding research undertaken within the HBS. Each can be traced back to the activities of the **Global Economy and Research Business Unit**.

The first case study, 'Contributing to an inclusive and cohesive workplace for migrant workers', has as its main beneficiaries the trades unions, with the main impact of the research being concerned with health and welfare, and public policy.

The second case study; 'Influencing international policy on improving access to water and sanitation services in the developing world' describes research that has an impact on international development and, in particular, public policy concerned with services. The main users for this research being NGOs, government agencies and policy makers.

These impact case studies demonstrate the ways in which staff have engaged with and developed relationships with key users. These methods include targeted dissemination involving sharing research findings with potential users and policy makers by e-mail; using existing networks to reach potential users; using consultancy activities to generate impact; or presenting at practitioner, or policy maker, oriented workshops. These activities and their follow-through are also evidenced in the case studies through the documents referenced . For both case studies, the university provided grant awards totalling £17,000 to support the initial research activity (which led to important outputs), then for the subsequent generation of impact, and finally for their follow-up activity to capture evidence of impact.