

Institution: Buckinghamshire New University
Unit of Assessment: 23 - Education
<p>1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy</p> <p>Buckinghamshire New University (BNU) has a strong ambition and commitment to grow its research into HE pedagogy, enabling a submission in this UoA for the first time. Education research is developing as part of the University research and impact strategy to enable educational excellence. BNU's focus on education, combined with applied research, has enabled the University to attract a strong group of researchers with emphasis on the pedagogic process. This focus has been maintained and strengthened under successive University strategies enabling the building of critical mass in pedagogic research drawing on disciplines across the University. Therefore, the emergence of this unit is intrinsically embedded in BNU's mission and institutional strategies.</p> <p>In line with the University's core strategic objective for research and impact, education research throughout this REF period has focused predominantly on applied pedagogic research or applied research in education, benefitting professional practice and the development of evidence-based, high-quality learning and teaching. The strength of the education unit is its multi-disciplinary nature, drawing on a variety of disciplinary sub-fields including psychology, business, computing, nursing, and performing arts. Our future strategy will involve further expansion of other disciplines such as social policy and allied health. The most impactful research in this UoA has brought key pedagogic principles to multiple learning disciplines and developed teaching practises to suit diverse learning needs. With this emphasis on applied research, education research has grown through academic and stakeholder partnerships and funding. Specifically, the unit comprises 9 academics (8.5 FTE): Cleaver, Evangelatou, Festeu, Fryer, Kelly, Kingsley, Robertson, Sims, and Smith. Three staff contributing to the research environment of this unit have either retired (Humberstone, Edwards) or moved to other universities (Schaub). Four other members of staff from the University's Directorate for Student Success (Ellis, Hockley, Irwin, Wilson-Medhurst) have contributed to the development of a growing research environment, initially through projects, as part of an interdisciplinary approach.</p> <p>The Directorate for Student Success (DfSS) was established in 2018 and brings together the Centre for Learning and Teaching Excellence and the Centre for Students and Wellbeing, and a vision to create a learning community at BNU that stimulates every student to achieve their potential and flourish. The Directorate plays an important role, therefore, to instil a research-informed culture for staff along the pathway to teaching excellence. To illustrate, evidence-based practice lies at the heart of the DfSS approach where staff are supported to link research and practice in their teaching to support students in reaching their best outcomes. BNU consistently performs above sector average for the number of academic staff who are Fellows of the Higher Education Academy. As a developing research area, the DfSS has a valuable role for the future strategy in this UoA.</p> <p>During this REF period, three robust strategic themes have been pursued. These are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Practice-based research in HE 2. International research programmes 3. Interdisciplinary research

1. Practice-based Research in HE (Evangelatou, Fryer, Kelly, Kingsley, Robertson, Sims, Smith). BNU attracts academics with a passion for evidence-based teaching practice in HE and for disseminating their professional expertise to the next generation. The University promotes a culture of research-led and research-informed practice, enabling colleagues to actively pursue interests and, through this research, actively enhance education practice within the University. This is facilitated as part of staff development (section 2). The research publications of academic staff submitted within this UoA demonstrate this practice-led approach across a range of disciplines such as psychology and performing arts. To illustrate, Robertson and Kingsley, both experienced researchers themselves and authors of the book 'Your A-Z of Research Methods and Statistics in Psychology Made Simple', use evidence-based research practice to consider the pedagogical issues associated with teaching research methods to HE psychology students. In this they provide an example of how evidence-based research can build an understanding of the challenges of teaching research methods and statistics to psychology students who are 'reluctant scientists', and how this can inform and support the development of teaching practice. They continue with this strand of research amongst others, extending its boundaries from tertiary to secondary education in an effort to use evidence-based research to understand the way students from diverse groups, at different stages in their educational careers, feel and engage with research practices.

Another example is drawn from the area of coaching psychology (Sims) involving the exploration of how educationally-based research informs practice in psychology and business. Moreover, BNU runs a masters-level programme in applied positive psychology and a specialist short course in positive psychology in coaching that educates through current evidenced-based research in the field of positive psychology. Research brings this practice up-to-date and is relevant to coaching the student experience (e.g., student procrastination) (Sims). Related to this project, funding was achieved to explore inclusive leadership in collaboration with a secondary school (Sims). Various sector publications including educational magazines (Innovate: Journal of the Institute of Teaching and Learning, Nov 2020; Independent Schools Magazine, March, 2021) and presentations have been produced in addition to academic presentations (e.g. the European Congress of Positive Psychology, 2020). Sims is a Developmental Psychologist, Positive Psychologist and Coaching Psychologist. She intends to continue growing developmental and educational research at BNU with a focus on 'Positive Education' and applying this research to those working in leadership and wellbeing roles in education contexts.

Within the field of performing arts, interrogating current industry practices and disseminating findings to undergraduate students is evident in the work of Kelly. Working with ground-breaking theatre company, Station House Opera, as part of an AHRC-funded research fellowship with Royal Central School of Speech and Drama and BNU (2012-2016), this facilitated a telematic performance work, *The Doors Project*, and BNU hosted a symposium that took place simultaneously in London and High Wycombe. Work from the project and how it directly informed teaching on the BA Performing Arts (Film, TV & Stage) was published in *RiDE Research In Drama Education* in a special issue on intermediality and drama education (2016).

Finally, Cleaver's research outputs (e.g., 2018, 2019) have provided a robust platform to stimulate expansion of pedagogic research at BNU, embedding this in the curriculum, enhancement and teaching practice. Emerging themes include social aspects of student experiences in higher education (e.g., a sense of belonging, value proposition, and intangible aspects of programme enhancement). Through Cleaver's research, the notion of "intangible assets" point to the values, behaviours, and culture that exists in higher education environments

that can transform students' attitudes and motivations during their university experience. This research has begun to underpin BNU's formal approach to 'enhancement' and dissemination of good pedagogic practices.

2. Leaders in the development of international research programmes (Festeu)

BNU's participation in EU funded projects spans over twenty years. The expertise developed over this period has enabled BNU to contribute to the implementation of innovative educational and professional development programmes across Europe. The projects led by BNU benefitted from the research expertise of reputable EU universities and our innovative and technologically advanced pedagogical expertise. The competencies that we have developed over the years have enhanced the educational culture within the University and stimulated engagement in international collaboration beyond Europe. BNU is in a leading position to model and share this expertise and to influence policy and pedagogic practice at international levels.

One of the UoA case studies in this unit is a project involving the development of business entrepreneurial programmes and its impact on national policy and the future of entrepreneurial education and teaching in HE (Festeu). BNU led the development of an entrepreneurship educational programme drawing on experts' opinions. The notion of developing an innovative evidence-based curriculum for Eastern European universities has led to the implementation of a programme that responds to social need. This project enhanced innovation policy and entrepreneurship activity in Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine with the aid of EU partner universities from France, United Kingdom, Portugal, Finland and Sweden.

Furthermore, another example of an education-focused project within this unit is a multi-disciplinary project led by BNU (Festeu) where entrepreneurship and engineering are taught in a very innovative way, employing Fabrication Laboratories to encourage creativity and entrepreneurship through team effort and distribution of tasks within a product development project (FABLAB). This research explored students' opinions regarding the new advanced pedagogical approach. The results of the research were subsequently published and are now applied in Eastern European countries to develop curricula that represent the 'student voice'. A number of universities have adopted the curriculum development framework based on BNU's research including Belarus National Technical University, Belarus State University, Ternopil National Technical University-Ukraine, Kharkiv National University of Economics-Ukraine, Kiev Polytechnic Institute-Ukraine, in collaboration with the University of Valencia, Institute of Management of Lisbon and Ghent University-Belgium.

3. Interdisciplinary research

Within this strategic theme, a key strand of the immersive work-related simulation research (impact case study: Mather, Fryer) focused on aligning experiences with the HEFCE (now OfS) themes for interdisciplinary curriculum innovation. The interdisciplinary partnership brought together immersive simulation teaching research for nursing and performing arts with the development of Capstone assessments that combine live simulation with peer review and self-reflection to connect knowledge between courses. The second interdisciplinary partnership involved students from disciplines of computing and art and design, developing student work-readiness through interdisciplinary live briefs, team and collaborative learning and other multi-professional experiences. Both examples of interdisciplinary partnership involved placing students in authentic, demanding real-life scenarios and evaluating their communication and problem-solving through multiple media including student self-reflection, peer review and transcripts of recordings. Fryer and co-workers disseminated positive findings associated with the use of capstone assessments and reflective learning in the Journals of Nursing Management

and Reflective Practice (see Impact Case Study). The approach received national recognition and was nominated for a Nursing Times “Teaching Innovation of the Year Award”. Evidence of international influence includes citation in the global standard text of Merriam, S. B., & Baumgartner, L. M. (2020) “Learning in adulthood: A comprehensive guide” and testimony from Michigan State University reporting that Fryer and Boot’s work “...was used to support our efforts to build interactive curriculum materials to build communication, teamwork and leadership skills in CyberInfrastructure (CI) professionals”. Findings from other interdisciplinary partnership work reported in the same Impact Case study were disseminated by students and staff at Higher Education conferences, such as the JISC Change Agents' Network [conference] 2017: Supporting Effective Partnerships, the UUK/HEA Conference: Innovation and Excellence in Teaching and Learning. London, 20 March 2018, and the Innovation in learning and teaching projects: end-of-programme workshop, Birmingham, 21 March 2018.

Future Directions and Strategy

BNU’s overarching strategy has been to develop excellence in research and impact across our subject mix, incubate nascent disciplines, and ensure research and enterprise support our educational focus.

For this REF period, the University has pursued four key strategic goals:

- a) Increase the volume and quality of research and impact;
- b) Maintain research and enterprise income;
- c) Ensure research and enterprise activity enriches the student experience; and
- d) Secure improved external recognition for the impact of our research and enterprise.

As a developing UoA, this unit will maintain its focus on these strategic goals and expand the range of cross-disciplinary themes. To illustrate, an emerging area of research that aligns to our strategic goals relates to widening participation and its commitment to reducing educational inequalities. With BNU’s richly diverse student body, we are ideally placed to undertake research initiatives to explore widening participation in HE. HEFCE funded projects are a reflection of this (for example, Hate Crime Cultural Change Project (£445,000, Hockley).

A further example of a future strategic research strand in this unit is related to Gypsy, Traveller and Roma (GTR) communities’ inclusion in higher education. As outlined in the institutional environment statement, the professional focus of BNU research means that a wider contribution to the economy and to society is often inherent in the research process. In September 2019, BNU, in collaboration with Baroness Janet Whitaker, the Co-Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on GTR convened a workshop at the House of Lords to bring together a range of key influencers, HEIs, NGOs, and GTR graduates to explore what could be done to support widening participation aims. This culminated in BNU creating a UK-wide pledge for higher education institutions to support more GTR students. This project is also a central strand of BNU’s Social Work and Social Policy research unit (UoA 20) illustrating the interdisciplinarity potential for the University’s overarching research strategy.

Finally, the Directorate for Student Success will act as a catalyst to stimulate ongoing research related to learning and teaching excellence and evidence-based pedagogical approaches for optimal student outcomes and achievement. For example, developing researcher (Wilson-Medhurst) is focused on social aspects of student experiences in higher education such as professional identity construction.

Open Access

In line with the University's institutional statement, the unit actively participates in the University's open access policy (2015) by rapidly placing all published items on the University's open access repository system and ensuring the long-term preservation of outputs. The unit has also actively engaged Associate Lecturers and fixed-term contract holders in the research process by ensuring that conference and research development opportunities are available to them. The University Research Ethics Panel has a wide membership from across the university. The ethics panel has oversight of school sub-committees, which review student and staff research. Through the University's research office, the unit subscribes to the UK Research Integrity Office and has participated in the UKRIO self-assessment exercise during the REF period. The Code of Good Research Practice and the University Ethics Policy are regularly updated, most recently in 2019.

2. People**Staffing strategy and staff development**

Following the institutional transformation process that occurred between 2016/17 and 2018/19, the staffing position has been characterised by flexibility, interdisciplinarity, renewal and growth. The University's transformation programme involved the reorganisation of internal school structures (from more hierarchical faculty structures to flatter School units) that has facilitated new synergies between cognate subjects. This represents a positive opportunity for research aligned to education, enabling greater integration of research activity across the University's seven schools. Moreover, the Directorate for Student Success has a vital role in helping to cultivate and enable research that underpins learning and teaching excellence.

As outlined in the institutional environment statement and code of practice, the Bucks Academic Framework (BAF) was introduced in July 2018 to clarify the roles and expectations of permanent academic staff. All submitting staff within this UOA are situated within the 'Education with Research' track, with no staff whose dedicated role is primarily for research. Additional staff on the Education with Research track have an interest in education research but are commencing their research careers, either working on masters or doctoral study, or working towards this.

BNU aspires to be a leading UK University in applied, practice-based and translational research and related advanced scholarship in our fields of professional, creative and translational practice. To achieve this, BNU has a core commitment to staff development, with centralised funding resources for continued professional development and research development activities. Staff research development is supported centrally, through the research team and HR Directorate, as outlined in the institutional statement. As many academic staff join BNU from professional or clinical practice roles, they are often relatively new to academic careers. Therefore, such staff are supported and encouraged to embark on a research degree. Fourteen academic staff have been supported to undertake doctoral study relating to education in the current REF period.

Staff Researcher Development

As outlined in Section 1, practice-based research in HE is a key strategic aspect of this unit. BNU often attracts academics with a passion for evidence-based teaching practice in HE and for disseminating their professional expertise to the next generation (see e.g., Robertson,

Kingsley, Sims, Fryer, Kelly). Their interest in academic research often starts with HE and professional practice pedagogy to enhance their own teaching and professional standards. As part of this, BNU has a wider commitment to supporting staff across a range of academic disciplines to achieve fellowship of the Higher Education Academy/Advance HE and offers the following variety of routes/activities to support the professional and research development of staff:

- Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (called the Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in HE until 2018)
- Academic Professional Apprenticeship- we are one of the first nationally to deliver the programme
- Postgraduate Certificate in Education
- MA Education
- MSc Mental Health and Wellbeing in Education
- Other non credit-bearing activities include:
- Teaching and Supporting Learning in HE: short course that confers Associate Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (not credit bearing)
- CPD route to professional accreditation: staff can apply for Associate Fellowship, Fellowship or Senior Fellowship through our accreditation scheme. We perform above the sector consistently for the percentage of academic staff who are Fellows of HEA
- Annual staff development conference

Specific investment relating to research in education has included support to present at the following conferences:

- Society for Research in Higher Education, Wales 2017 (Jones)
- Biennial International Meaning Conference, Canada 2018 (Smith)
- 12th Annual University of Glasgow Learning and Teaching Conference, Scotland 2019 (Rochon)
- Theatre and Performance Research Association (T@PRA), with 2 members of staff contributing papers with education related themes (Kelly, Fryer)

Training and supervision of PGR students

A total of 12 students registered during the REF period undertook doctoral study aligned to UOA 23, with 1 completing during that time (i.e., Day). Seven students have undertaken the Professional Doctorate in Education which recruited cohorts in 2011 and 2013; four of which related to education (all four were staff) and the remainder for education in nursing. One student (Day) was supported by the University to undertake doctoral research into [Identification and Evaluation of Predictors for Learning Success and of Models for Teaching Computer Programming in Contemporary Contexts](#) and is now employed as a Graduate teaching assistant.

Training of PGR students is arranged centrally as outlined in the institutional environment statement. Students in this unit have been supported in a range of ways. To illustrate, resources and facilities are available through BNU's membership of the Guild HE Research consortium. This offers access to training opportunities, sector support and networking, including a Summer School and Virtual Doctoral Training Network.

All PGR students are required to use the Vitae Researcher Development framework planner. After induction, they receive a one-to-one meeting with the research support team to discuss development requirements and set up their planner account. MPhil and PhD students may access any postgraduate research training programmes or modules running for taught Masters and Professional Doctorate students.

Research students are supported by a team of dedicated supervisors who in turn are supported through research supervisor training, with supervisor induction training provided by Staffordshire University who awards our research degrees.

Evidence of how the submitting unit supports and promotes equality and diversity

BNU's vision is to be a vibrant inclusive community that inspires learning, develops potential, widens participation and transforms lives. We strive to create a work and study environment which is not only free from any form of discrimination but actively celebrates and values diversity. The unit aligns fully with the university's commitment to deliver a vibrant, inclusive learning community which actively celebrates diversity and is free from discrimination. The University is committed to full equal opportunity. To illustrate, annual action plans are led by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) working group that reports to a new university EDI committee chaired by the Vice Chancellor.

All staff recruitment and selection processes are in accordance with institutional policies on equality and diversity. This includes training in equality and diversity and unconscious bias. The University is committed to further accreditations linked to its EDI work including the 'Disability Confident Employer' (Job Centre Plus) and 'Mindful Employer' charter.

The University is in the process of applying for the Race Equality Charter mark and a BAME network has been created to promote enhanced awareness and inclusivity within our populations. The University also created the GTRSBintoHE, a sector-wide pledge to support the participation of students from GTR communities. Finally, reasonable adjustments and increased support is provided for staff whose circumstances may impact their research productivity. Such support has included employing additional part-time lecturers and flexible working to support researcher development and impact strategy. All staff in the unit were confidentially asked to submit details of any equality-related circumstances during the REF period. No such circumstances were declared in the present unit.

3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

Income

More than £800,000 has been received in funding for education-based research in the latest REF period, from organisations including the European Commission (Erasmus+ and TEMPUS programmes), HEFCE and ESRC. They include projects led by BNU:

- Funded by the EU, SUCSID-Inter-university Start-up centres was achieved focusing on students' innovations, development and promotion (TEMPUS Project) (Festeu, EUR 1.216 Mil. BNU150k). The main outputs of the project were: methodology and training courses for improvement of creativity and competence in innovations development, presentation and promotion (IDP). Nine start-up centres were established in nine universities in Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine. A system of 'training for trainers' and Life

Long Learning (LLL) and retraining in the field of innovation policy development in Partner Countries. (Project 2012-2016).

- Funded by the Executive Agency of the European Commission 'FABLAB' involved the development of a network infrastructure for youth innovation entrepreneurship support on FABLAB platforms (Capacity Building in HE, 2015-2018) (**Festeu**, EUR 571k / £420k). The FABLAB Project involved three organisations from Belarus and three from the Ukraine.
- Benefiting from rich tradition, expertise and reputation within the UK furniture manufacturing sector, BNU led a consortium of EU partners within the 'ARTURE' project - Art and Furniture Strategic Partnership (EUR 364,000 / BNU EUR 84,460 **Festeu** /Kaner). The aim of the ARTURE Project was to create a strategic partnership between HE institutes and the organisations that support furniture industries, facilitating the exchange, flow and co-creation of knowledge to address the vocational skills mismatches and shortage of skilled workforce.
- IM-FUTURE, funded by the Erasmus-Knowledge Alliance (Festeu, EUR 363,828/BNU EUR 85,640) developed a joint study programme between higher education and vocational education and training, culminating in an international master's Degree for the Furniture Sector (2016-2019). <https://imfutureproject.learning-platform.eu/>
- BNU has been involved in EU funded projects for more than two decades. In recognition of our international activity and expertise we have been invited by the leading university in Moldova-Academy of Economic Sciences to contribute to the development of the national policy on HE internationalisation. Elevating internationalism of HE in Moldova – ELEVATE (£32k of total fund EUR 778,194, **Festeu**). This resulted in development of national legislation which will elevate the process of internationalisation of Moldovan higher education and research.

Regarding BNU's growing future strategic theme on widening participation, a number of innovative HEFCE funded projects were achieved including:

- HEFCE Catalyst Award, "Traversing digital creative perspectives: preparing design and technology students for interdisciplinary work." and "Student Safeguarding on Campus Project". Subject of Impact Case Study "Creating authentic education experiences with work-related simulation in collaboration and interdisciplinary partnerships" delivered by Mather (£39,000)
- 'Hate Crime Cultural Change Project' (£445,000) (Ellis, Hockley)
- "Never OK: Sexual Harassment, Assault and Violence on Campus Intervention Project (£49,000, Ellis, Irwin)
- NHS London - Educational Outcomes Framework Project – "The Development of an on-line electronic system for student nurse evaluation of the learning environment in clinical placements" (£41,307, Irwin)
- National Collaborative Outreach Programme: 'Realising Your **Potential**' 2018 / 19 (£81,000) (Irwin, Hockley).

It is apparent from the themes of the above research projects that research and knowledge exchange activity can enrich our inclusive, learning community within the University and beyond through our external partners. In accordance with the institutional research directions, the unit's

future strategy is based upon developing high quality research outputs, enabling impact and enhancing BNU's reputation for education-based research.

Infrastructure

At the organisational level, the university supplements QR income (c. £225k pa during the REF period) with its own resources to fund the Research Enterprise Development Unit (RED), staff research activity, and development and dissemination initiatives. The RED unit comprises the Director of Research and Enterprise, administrators, and a dedicated PGR registrar, together with a Head of Business Engagement. RED has responsibility for the institutional repository, ethical review processes, project management, funding bid support, reporting, governance, REF and KEF. The University has appointed a Knowledge Transfer Manager to establish KTPs across the organisation. In 2020, the University created a Professoriate forum to provide a leading role in the intellectual life of the University. The Professoriate will play an important role for this UoA to build public and community engagement. This forum will influence and contribute to the advancement of university policies and strategies in the areas of research and scholarship, learning and teaching, enterprise, research governance and staff development. A key aim of the Professoriate is to enhance collaboration and communication between staff with common interests, such as education research, working in different disciplines and situated within different academic schools.

All researcher development activities, seminars and conferences are available for staff and research students.

Staff aligned with this UOA are from a range of disciplines across the university with many staff commencing or working towards doctoral study. Academic expertise includes psychology, performance, nursing, computing and business, with submitting staff sited within 3 different schools. Additionally significant research initiatives undertaken aligned with this UOA are undertaken by academic staff within the Directorate of Student Success, a dedicated team to support academic enhancement.

Facilities

In addition to core facilities as outlined in the institutional statement, there are dedicated resources supporting research of staff submitting in this UOA. Psychology researchers have an observation laboratory and specialist equipment such as Biopac© (investment of £10,000), allowing measurement of the activity of the cardiovascular system, brain, autonomic nervous system and more, Tobii eye tracking equipment and HTC Vive, virtual reality software. Research related to nursing and operating practice education make use of state of the art simulation suites available at all three campuses. We have an ultra-modern simulated operating theatre with the latest high fidelity simulation manikins. The simulation technical team create authentic and safe clinical learning environment for students and by adding layer upon layer to the scenarios they are able to capture the realism of clinical settings. This has enabled evaluation of teaching methods using these innovative methods which resulted in being shortlisted and highly commended for a Times Higher Education award for the team in 2019. The innovative teaching methods have developed skills in use of moulage - the art of applying mock wounds and injuries for training purposes which can be applied to both teaching and research.

In the field of theatre and drama, the University has three workshop studios one of which is a dedicated performance space. These spaces have been used to conduct research practice including T@PRA symposia held at BNU: the *Returning Ghosts Symposium* in May 2017, *The Doors – Spaces of Telematic Theatre* (2014), a day-long symposium and telematic performance, co-performed with Station House Opera and co-hosted with RCSSD and *Nowhere* (2011) - a site-specific telematic performance interrogating 360° audio-visual space by linking two remote locations (BNU and RCSSD) using emergent mobile Internet technologies. Considerable technical expertise was brought to bear in staging these symposia alongside leading industry practitioners.

4. Collaboration and contribution to the research base, economy and society

Collaborators

Erasmus+ projects have involved collaboration with a wide range of universities, commercial partners and not-for-profit organisations across Europe, with a specific focus on supporting development of programmes in Eastern Europe including HEI and government organisations in Ukraine, Moldova, Kosovo and Spain, Belgium.

The SUCSID Project was led by BNU (acting as academic leader) in collaboration with Montpellier University (acting as finance manager). The partnership also involved University Lumiere-France, Royal Institute of Technology-Sweden, Institute Superior of Management-Portugal, Tampere University of Technology acting as EU partners. The beneficiaries were Kharkiv national University of Economics, Kharkiv national University of Civil Engineering and Architecture, National Academy of Municipal Economy-Ukraine, Ternopil National Technical University, The Belarus state University, Belarus national Technical University and Sumy state University-Ukraine, The Academy of Economic Science-Moldova, Komrat State University-Moldova, Ministry of Education Belarus, Ministry of Education Ukraine, Ministry of Education Moldova.

As part of the National Collaborative Outreach Programme, funded by HEFCE/OFS, BNU has undertaken projects to research widening participation and student safety.

In partnership with the University of Exeter, Mather and Rochon co-organised the Change Agents' Network Conference 2017: Supporting Effective Partnerships (supported by Jisc). This partnership also supported the HEFCE-funded Catalyst project.

Networks

BNU is a member of Advance HE and actively supports staff achieving fellowships of the academy, with short courses in HE education, the academic professional apprenticeship and writing retreats to support application. Staff are also supported to engage with academic and professional networks and can use BNU facilities to host events and meetings. BNU's partnerships, such as the OAHSN, ICHP, GuildHE and the AUG, facilitate participation in collaborative networks and access to funding, e.g., Research England Development Fund.

In 2019 BNU joined with other universities in founding the Oxford-Cambridge Arc Universities Group (AUG), intended to support economic growth through learning, research and innovation.

Kelly and Fryer are active members of T@PRA as part of their interest in education in performance. They regularly present papers at the annual T@PRA conference and Kelly has

been an Executive Committee member and Co-convenor of the New Technologies for Performance Working Group for two terms. As a result of this connection, Kelly is part of a research project seeking funding from the AHRC entitled, *Here, There and Everywhere* a study of the impact of Covid-19 on theatre in the UK and Italy. If successful, this project will run from November 2020 and comprises academic researchers, industry partners (including National Theatre of Wales, National Theatre of Scotland) and leading industry professionals and companies.

Doctoral student Jones is an active member of the Society for Research in Higher Education (SRE) regularly presenting, as part of the organising committee and session lead. He also worked with JISC to support the "Summer of student innovation 2016" by supporting development of education technology ideas, with the aim of improving students' creative design, research, entrepreneurial and project management skills. Jones is also a member of the national research panel for "Computing for schools" focussing on how universities can link with schools.

Partnerships

A number of partnerships have developed through specific projects and initiatives in this unit. To illustrate, research involving the development of the HE GRT pledge involves building on existing partnerships with Coventry and Anglia Ruskin universities and GRT-related NGOs including ACERT, the Traveller Movement and Friends, Families and Travellers, and the National Educational Opportunity Network (NEON).

Fryer is working with Dr Colette Conroy (University of Hull) on a book proposal on Ranciere and Performance, which will have direct impact on teaching performance in HE. The proposed edited collection has 12 prestigious contributors from a wide range of universities in the UK and internationally.

Kelly has worked in partnership with the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, dreamthinkspeak, Station House Opera, Dante or Die, Coney and the London International Festival of Theatre.

Sims has been working on projects with Sevenoaks school investigating perceptions of leadership in secondary school children.

There is a growing strategic partnership in the field of teacher training involving a large teacher training provider in Buckinghamshire (Astra Alliance). This involves the delivery of mentorship training for those mentoring newly qualified teachers. An annual 'Teachers as Researchers' conference has become a successful event with 80-100 participants and this partnership is exploring a research agenda focused on high quality teacher training experiences as part of the Early Career Framework.

Wider activities and contributions to the research base, economy and society

As described in their impact case study, Fryer and co-workers' innovative performance-simulation, self-reflection and peer review technique practice was shortlisted for a Student Nursing Times Awards and implemented by Michigan State University. The deeply transformative impact of this approach is evident from student testimonies. From the same case study, members of the HEFCE Catalyst A research team collectively contributed to strengthening local government, school and cultural society partnerships by directly involving

these bodies in research work. Individuals contribute through providing support to conferences, and editorial membership (e.g. Mather at the 2014 & 2015 IAP European Conferences on Technology in the Classroom and as a panel member for IAFOR Journal of Education; Rochon and Jones in their support of JISC events). Jones, a member of the education research team is also recognised for the quality of his education practice and contribution to the student body through the award of National Teaching Fellow to Jones in 2020.

Other examples of contribution to the research base and wider economy include:

- Mather RA (2014) Multivariate Gradient Analysis for Evaluating and Visualizing a Learning Platform for Computer Programming. European Conference on Technology in the Classroom (ECTC, 2014), pp111-126
- Kelly, Jem (Co-Investigator) *Here, There and Everywhere*: a study of online performance during the COVID-19 pandemic in the UK and Italy. AHRC application with partner universities November 2020 – April 2022
- Smith is key organiser of annual positive psychology conferences at BNU, with presenters and attendees from across the UK. These initiatives include showcase of the team's work on teaching positive psychology techniques.
- Building on their research, Kingsley and Robertson have produced a book on teaching research methods in HE, as outlined in Section 1.