

Institution: Edge Hill University
Unit of Assessment: C17 Business and Management Studies
<p>Section 1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy</p> <p>Overview</p> <p>We are proud to present our first REF submission to UOA17. To achieve this, our key objective has been to effect a step-change within the Business School (EHUBS) to transform it from a school well-respected for its teaching, to one with a reputation also for excellent research. EHUBS now has a clear strategy for future development centred on 'business and society'; the transformative potential of business to improve society. This has been reached by reshaping the Unit through the recruitment of research leaders and research-active staff at all levels, in order to create a critical mass capable of delivering our vision.</p> <p>We have built a research-supportive environment via quality mentoring and support for early and mid-career researchers, targeted assistance for those making the transition to research independence, and established research leaders in key areas. We have also sought out partners for collaborative research and knowledge exchange regionally, nationally and internationally to ensure that our research generates sustainable economic and social benefits, especially for the north west of England, which has experienced generations of economic decline.</p> <p>To achieve our goal of moving EHUBS to a school underpinned by research, since 2014 we have focused on four inter-related priorities designed to build our research environment and culture:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To create a vibrant research environment that supports research focused on broad conceptualisations of business and society. 2. To substantially increase research capacity by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Investing in research-active staff b. Enhancing the quality and quantity of outputs c. Improving external grant capture thereby building a solid research base within the Unit for future development. 3. To upskill research-active staff through targeted training and mentoring, and to build a research environment capable of sustained success and continuous improvement 4. To develop collaborative partnerships that fit with our key theme and that will facilitate research and impact, leading to long-term impact in the area of business and society. <p>We have achieved these goals as evidenced by:</p> <p><u>Priority 1: Creating a vibrant environment:</u> EHUBS has made significant progress by submitting over 50% of eligible staff in REF2021.</p> <p>Our central theme of business and society, is distilled into four clusters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • management and society • marketing and consumer research • international business and economics • sustainability, entrepreneurship and innovation. <p>These clusters facilitate collegial working, the cross-fertilisation of ideas, support for early- and mid-career researchers, and PGRs, and support for research which is transformative, policy-relevant and involves end-user participation.</p> <p>EHUBS researchers are also actively involved in cross-disciplinary research and knowledge exchange through EHU's Institute for Social Responsibility (ISR), led by Crotty, and the Health Research Institute (HRI). This involvement facilitates both interdisciplinary and cross-University working, at the intersections of business and society and between disciplines. ISR also provides research support and training opportunities, open to all EHUBS staff.</p>

The outcomes from these initiatives and investments in research environment can be seen in the increase in the number of PhD students (from one registration in 2014 to 13 in 2020); increases in external grant-income; and a growth in research outputs (from 40 peer reviewed articles between 2008-2013 to 135 for this REF cycle), and the hosting of the 10th International Critical Management Studies (CMS) Conference July 2017, chaired by **Wankhade** and **Woodruffe-Burton**.

Priority 2: Investment in staff is evident in at all career stages: We have recruited senior research leaders to EHUBS to drive strategy and lead the creation of a sustainable research culture. Specifically, we have appointed four professors **Woodruffe-Burton** (marketing and gender); **Cassidy** (transforming the high street); **Wankhade** (public-sector performance) and **Crotty** (corporate social responsibility) and two associate deans (from our parent faculty) are affiliated to the school, **Bolton** (SMEs and enterprise); **Konstantopoulou** (social media and branding). An additional professor is returned to UOA28.

Three mid-career researchers were also recruited, again with an emphasis on our overarching research theme, and adding sustainable critical mass to our research base: **Gazdula** (social enterprise); **Kelly** (supply chain management); **Phelan** (entrepreneurship in the global south). Finally, we have appointed four ECRs who combine high-quality publications with excellent future potential: **Ahmad** (information literacy); **Robin** (marketing and privacy); **Unlu** (social networks); and **Zheng** (corporate governance).

Pinar (welfare economics) and **Dent** (sustainability and international business) were also promoted to personal chairs during the period, indicating that the research culture within the school is able to nurture individuals to success.

Priority 3: We have introduced processes and activities to upskill staff and enhance research performance. We have reviewed induction and development processes and enhanced the performance and development review (PDR) process to ensure that research is explicitly discussed for all staff. This allocates time for research based on delivery of agreed objectives and is managed formally throughout the academic year. Further, we have also supported existing staff to PhD completion; one of whom (**Naughton**) is included in this submission and a further six are being supported on their journey to research independence.

Priority 4: The unit has developed its focus on international collaboration, helped by staff new to the Unit bringing such international collaborations with them. Consequently, more than 20 of the papers submitted in REF 2 are co-authored with international scholars. This increase in international collaboration not only contributes to the knowledge production (e.g., research papers), but has facilitated a growing international reputation for the Unit's work.

We have also extended our existing networks of strong external relationships and established interdisciplinary connections across the University to supplement and strengthen our research culture and outputs. EHUBS researchers are benefitting from the writing and project evaluation support given by ISR, facilitating purposeful collaboration with four other departments (Social Sciences; Law & Criminology; Health & Social Care; and Paramedic Practice) and prompting collaborative research bids, joint doctoral supervision, and impact-related activities. This open and collaborative spirit has also facilitated the establishment of SustainNET, to bring together academics from Business, Biology, Geography, Health/Medicine, Education, Psychology, Social Sciences and the Centre for Teaching and Learning, alongside community groups in our region, to improve sustainability outcomes.

The Unit's commitment to external collaboration and relationship building has also led to significant impact, as demonstrated via the impact case studies. Both **Wankhade's** research on the improvement of emergency services' performance, and **Cassidy's** work on High Street regeneration, have influenced policy and benefitted both business and the public sector directly from their collaborative working and subsequent interventions.

1.2 Business and society research theme

The transformative role of business in society can be understood in various disciplinary and situational contexts, as indicated through our four cluster areas. While these clusters have emerged organically from the research interests of colleagues joining the School, they now

influence decisions around academic recruitment, selection and appointment of PGRs. Furthermore, the research undertaken within these clusters aligns closely with the overall aims of the University's ISR, facilitating opportunities for collaboration and cross-fertilisation of research ideas. Business School staff are active in the ISR, giving seminars and running cross-disciplinary research training workshops, and contributing to the blog. The clusters also help to develop and sustain collaboration and partnerships which, in turn, enrich them. The four clusters are:

Management and society

This cluster aims to produce transformative research through the critical study of organisations and organisational culture in a range of business and society contexts. Although small, it has a strong international and multi-disciplinary focus, specifically on public-sector performance enhancement (**Wankhade**), corporate social responsibility (CSR) and civil society development in the former Soviet republics (**Crotty**), social enterprise and entrepreneurship (**Gazdula**) and sustainable tourism (**Phelan**).

Marketing, consumer and services research

With a strong focus on applied and impactful research, this grouping links business and society with marketing and the consumer. **Cassidy's** work recognises the critical role of town centres, pre-COVID 19, in the economic health and vitality of society, identifying and evaluating best practice in high street regeneration across Europe. **Robin's** research is located within the field of digital marketing and business, and it tackles the sensitive topic of privacy and information disclosure on consumers and organisations. **Woodruffe-Burton** works on emancipatory consumer-research with a focus on gender and sexual orientation.

International business economics and sustainability

This cluster undertakes research on sustainability, international trade, well-being and research policy, with a deliberate interdisciplinary focus. This is informed strongly by **Dent's** work on renewable energy, trade and climate action. Welfare and environmental economics (**Pinar**, **Unlu**) and international corporate governance (**Zheng**) also inform the activity of this cluster.

Entrepreneurship and innovation

This cluster addresses topical business issues and challenges, with a particular focus on SMEs: e.g., **Konstantopoulou's** work shows how SMEs can use social media to establish communication pathways to young adults in a non-western context. Relatedly, **Ahmad's** work shows how language diversity influences knowledge sharing in organisations. **Bolton's** research compares India's design sector with those in advanced economies and provides insights into the strategic drivers and critical success factors for innovation. This research area also has a strong focus on supply-chain management and practitioner impact. **Kelly's** work highlights the risk of prevalent adversarial attitudes hindering potential supply chain innovations, and how cooperative trading relationship can generate wealth for all. **Emmanuel-Ebikake's** work establishes supplier sustainability models for practitioners with emphasis on the wider implications for supply decisions on the whole of society, alongside increased organisational expectations of corporate social responsibility and ethics.

Integrity: Research ethics and integrity practices are central at EHBUS to ensuring research is conducted according to the highest standards of practice and respect for all involved in the research process. This is informed both by the Concordat for Research Integrity and guidance supplied by the British Academy of Management/Chartered Association of Business Schools. Within EHUBS, all staff research proposals are scrutinised by the School's Research Ethics Committee (chaired by **Wankhade** and **Pinar** during the period and made up for a mixture of experienced staff and ECRs) to make recommendations to the relevant subject research ethics committee which is responsible for approving projects. Before ethical approval applications are made any potential risks to researchers/participants involved in the research are reviewed and mitigated.

We believe that a commitment to open research is an important way of achieving reach and communicating with diverse audiences. The University has a growing number of agreements

with publishers to allow gold OA, making the version of record (not AAM) OA, and without embargo, so research can reach its non-subscription holding users more quickly. We believe that making our work OA will make it more accessible and beneficial to other researchers and research users; particularly colleagues and research users without access to subscriptions in ODA countries, which, given our research interests, is vital. In addition, **Ahmad** was a board member of the Open Access Funding De Gruyter (2016-2018) to support open access publishing in different countries.

In the next REF cycle, along with promoting OA for journal articles, we will explore with Library and Learning Services options for OA books and chapters, for example by working with Open Book Publishers, university presses and other providers. This will build on the steps we have already taken with several open access chapters (alongside journal articles and conference proceedings) available via our repository, Pure. We will also continue to promote both the awareness and importance of OA to all staff when making their publishing decisions.

Our commitment to integrity is also reflected in our use of responsible metrics. Following the University's statement on metrics, we do not use basic metrics to inform any of our decisions regarding promotions or access to resources. We work with our colleagues to ensure that they are aware of the limitations of simple metrics when describing their own work.

1.3 Future strategic aims and goals

EHUBS will continue to extend and enhance its capacity to develop theoretically-driven research and knowledge exchange that encompasses the broadest conceptualisation of business and society. We recognise that we are still a young Unit in research terms and so our work over the coming period must seek to consolidate the progress made since 2014, alongside more ambitious goals to sustain continuous improvement. To that end our focus remains on research capacity building, both for those transitioning to research independence and for early and mid-career staff to ensure sustainability and continuity.

We will also continue to improve the quality and quantity of outputs, and attract both self-funded and externally-funded doctoral students. We will continue to recruit staff with the highest possible research profile in areas that enhance our overarching theme (eight such appointments since census date), whilst nurturing our existing staff within the collegial environment of the groups as described above, to produce high-quality outputs. This will be done by extending support for writing retreats, introducing one-to-one mentoring and using our new centre and groups to facilitate co-authoring. Strategically, we will encourage staff with larger projects to apply for teaching relief to the University's Research Investment Fund (RIF). We aim to increase the number of high-quality outputs per member of staff with SRR to a minimum of three in the coming period. We will also enhance the further development of staff through supporting their attendance at the most promising international conferences in their field. This will both raise the profile of EHUBS, but also facilitate network-building with international scholars and journal editors.

We will also use our reshaped research groups to double the number of PhDs through targeted recruitment of graduate teaching assistants (the GTA package includes a fully funded PhD), the emergency services professional-doctorate candidates, self-funding PGRs, and funding secured from external sources.

A particular area for development is to increase our external research income. To facilitate this, we will also formalise our current research clusters into groups and eventually a research centre, and leverage our interdisciplinary connections made via the research institutes to form teams for external grant capture, leading to internationally excellent research outputs and impact. By enhancing the research clusters into stronger communities of academic exchange, they will be better able to drive forward our strategy and will help to optimise the relationships and collaborations we have both internally and externally (see section 3). We will pursue funding from a range of sources, both for research and commissioned projects and consultancy to substantially increase income from external sources.

Section 2. People

During this REF period, our primary goal has been to generate sufficient critical mass in the area of business and society research. We believe that investment in people is the key element to sustaining research, which is then complemented by excellent resources and income generation. This strategy's success can be evidenced by the fact that over 50% of the School's staff now have significant responsibility for research, whilst others are being supported to make the transition to research independence. All staff with SRR have either been recruited, promoted or have otherwise progressed their careers during the current REF period. Our success has been achieved through the alignment of our policies process and development initiatives with the Concordat to Support the Development of Researchers as demonstrated throughout this section.

Staffing strategy and staff development

Upskilling and capacity building: To facilitate the transformation needed to make our first REF submission, we introduced an Annual Research Development Week. This focuses specifically on research skills and is open to all research-active staff and those looking to make the transition to research independence. Over the REF period, the itinerary for this week has included inviting editors of ABS listed journals, feedback sessions on papers and targeted assistance with paper revisions, one-to-one coaching and the writing of research plans. Alongside this, we also introduced a co-authoring initiative, pairing senior colleagues with less experienced staff, and developed a research training series in collaboration with the ISR. This training, open to all staff, focuses on grant capture, paper development, managing research time, and research methods. Staff were also given time to attend other research-development initiatives across the University including writing retreats and writing days, and other research training provided centrally. The embedding of our research culture has been supported by the research seminar series which rotates internal and external speakers and is key to creating a weekly forum for exchange at all career stages.

Mentoring support to researchers including ECR/postdocs: We have a mixed economy of staff across career stages, with some entering academia from professional backgrounds. Staff development is therefore fundamental to ensuring vitality and sustainability, and has allowed us to make that transition to being more research focused. This approach also underpins succession planning.

All ECRs and staff transitioning to independent researcher status via PhD completion have a named mentor. This facilitates joint conference presentation, PGR supervision, critical friend/peer review, advising on potential funding streams and target journals. More experienced staff are also encouraged to co-author with their mentees and other ECRs: examples in this submission include **Pinar** with **Unlu** and **Woodruffe-Burton** with **Catahan**.

ECRs/post-docs receive a tailored induction/probation programme to support the alignment of their skills/development needs with the Unit's objectives. This includes a detailed five-year research plan and training needs analysis, alongside the ring-fencing of time for staff to meet their agreed objectives: the research plan that is monitored through the PDR process and monthly mentoring meetings. During this REF period eight ECRs were supported, producing 26 peer reviewed outputs.

Working practices to support research and career progression: Staff with significant responsibility for research and those who are undertaking doctoral studies or training to be independent researchers are allocated at least one research day a week. Support for career progression is also a vital part of the EHUBS research environment. Through the deployment of a range of activities, we have seen staff succeed in promotion through research track during this REF period. Through interventions outlined above, two mid-career academics were promoted to professor in the REF period: **Pinar**, who was an ECR in the last REF period (Economics) and **Dent** (International Business). Six staff submitted were also promoted from lecturer to senior lecturer and reader grades. These promotions represent 35% of the UOA's staff. The recruitment of high-calibre ECRs from well-regarded PhD programmes (Lancaster, Leicester, Liverpool, Leeds and Dublin) has also strengthened our research capacity. Our aim is that through the additional support created by the formalising of our research clusters into research groups, these processes will be strengthened and will facilitate further career progression during the next period. This will include

exploring the possibility of teaching relief organised both within the School and further engagement with central research support funds.

Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI): We are a diverse Unit both in terms of gender and ethnic representation. On the census date we had 12 female staff, three of whom were professors, and 19 male staff, four of whom were professors. Since the census date **Konstantopoulou** has been promoted to professor and another female professorial appointment has been made (Dedman), so we now have gender-balance (5/5) at professorial level. We also have 10 BAME staff members, including one professor. In addition, the school's Director, **Woodruffe-Burton** is a founder member of the Chartered Association of Business School's (CABS) EDI Committee and she helped develop the CABS policy on EDI. She also co-authored a CABS proposal for a mentorship scheme for BAME academics, which will be piloted at EHUBS in the next REF period. Furthermore, she has been an invited speaker and panellist at numerous national conferences and workshops on diversity and has been a UCU LGBT+ representative in two local branches. It is thus natural that, under her leadership, EHUBS proudly stands for equality, diversity and inclusivity across all its activities for staff and students.

The School has also supported two female academics to take part in Advance HE's Aurora programme. The School also operates successful family-friendly working practices: an example of innovative practice also includes the conversion a small meeting-room into a private space for nursing mothers. In addition, anyone returning from parental leave is treated the same as someone returning from long-term absence, with a phased return, teaching relief and additional mentoring support on an individual basis. Within the unit, EHUBS staff have also been panellists for Athena Swan since the charter expanded into arts and social sciences. EHUBS is currently working on an application for departmental Athena Swan status. This will be central to the Unit's EDI strategy in the next REF period which will include greater monitoring of the uptake of research support resources with respect to EDI considerations.

Supporting PGR students: EHUBS has a growing number of research students which includes self-funded candidates, professional-doctorate students and University-funded GTAs – a highly competitive scheme. In this REF period, 14 PGRs were recruited (4 PhD, 4 GTA, 5 Prof. Doc, 1 MRes), and 4 PhDs awarded. Our approach to supporting, mentoring, training and supervising PGR students is guided by our core philosophy of driving forward research in the School which also fits with the business and society research theme.

Currently, 11 staff are members of Edge Hill supervisory teams. All staff undertaking supervision attend annual training sessions provided by the Graduate School. Staff new to supervision have a more in-depth training programme and join teams with experienced co-supervisors. Staff are also encouraged to participate in sector bodies such as the UKCGE.

We aim to give all our PGR students an enriching and supportive experience. PGRs are co-located in the School building in a designated PGR room to facilitate discussion and peer-support. This is equipped with desk space, computers and printers. PGRs also have access to the state-of-the-art library (opened in 2019), with dedicated learning pods for solo study and attractive researcher-only space on the top floor. This provides networking opportunities with PGRs from across the institution. As full and active member of EHUBS, all PGRs are encouraged and supported to participate in research seminars and workshops, to boost and build their confidence, develop their skills, and build their own networks. We also support all PGRs who wish to attend doctoral symposia or conferences in their field. A full doctoral training programme is also delivered centrally by the Graduate School, and this is complemented by EHUBS's own research seminar series and symposia, as well as the tailored development programme identified in the learning needs analysis. This provision maximises opportunities to present papers or posters in addition to engaging with inputs from external speakers.

Our GTA students also gain teaching experience as part of their training and can opt to take the PGCert in Teaching in Higher Education (also open to non-GTAs) – this has helped to make them highly employable – alongside training on the use of social media and writing blogs, to support the dissemination of their research. PGRs can also access all training available to staff, including the research training programme co-created by EHUBS and ISR (see above). By folding these transferable-skills opportunities into their experience, we hope to equip all PGRs to secure the

professional route of their choosing once their studies are complete: recent graduates include GTAs who are now lecturers at Salford Business School and Liverpool JMU; of other PhD graduates, one is a diversity and management consultant and another is advisor to the National Centre for Diversity.

We also have staff who are making the transition to research independence through their doctoral studies. We strongly encourage staff to be supervised by academics at other institutions, to seek out specific supervisory skills, and to expand their networks. The Unit allocates time to attend events at other institutions and staff are also encouraged to engage with EHU research training opportunities outlined above.

We are particularly pleased to have launched the University's first professional doctorate. In identifying a research gap and a theory-practice divide within the emergency services setting, we launched the unique professional doctorate programme in emergency services management in 2017. Working in close partnership with the ambulance, police, and fire services, this programme realises the potential of research to have a positive impact on professional practice. An external professional/practitioner is included in supervisory teams, providing candidates essential industry expertise to support their projects. It also fits within our strategy of helping business to be a force and agent for improving society. To date we have five students on this programme (all yet to graduate), and will seek to grow this in the next REF period.

Academic year of enrolment	Count of professional doctorate student enrolments
2017/18	2
2018/19	1
2019/20	2

Industry links and visiting scholars: The Unit has direct links to local and regional businesses through the University's Productivity and Innovation Centre (PIC) led by **Bolton**. In this role, **Bolton** supports regional business growth as a board member of the SEED Health Alliance, part of the Academic Health Sciences Network in the North West. He is also a member of Liverpool City Region Professional and Business Services (PBS) Board. Over the last two years **Bolton** has contributed directly to the development of PBS regional strategy, has developed the Growth Journey Model and is undertaking economic-growth hotspot mapping for the region. This is likely to produce considerable impact over the next REF period.

We have also hosted visiting professors (VP) during the REF period including Prof. David Weir who ran a research workshop for ECRs during his tenure. He also helped with the initial discussions around REF environment strategy and collaborated with **Wankhade** to co-edit a book on police services. VP Andy Newton was Chair of the College of Paramedics and played an important role in garnering support for the professional doctorate with the College and wider ambulance community. Early in the REF cycle (October 2015-March 2016) Prof Denis Fischbacher-Smith (University of Glasgow) provided assistance with an initial conceptualisation of our REF impact case studies and facilitated an exchange visit to the Adam Smith Business School to help build research capacity and culture within EHUBS.

REF Management: In alignment with University's REF Code of Practice we constituted a departmental REF group to implement peer review process; comprising Wankhade (DoR), Woodruffe-Burton (HoD), Pinar (REF UOA co-coordinator), along with a rotation of ECRs to support their personal development. All staff with significant responsibility for research selected and self-reviewed outputs they wished to be considered for submission; for former staff this was facilitated by UOA co-ordinators. All outputs identified for consideration were peer reviewed internally by at least two members of staff (senior staff and those with subject expertise). Our REF group would then discuss the internal reviews to identify outputs for external review to support calibration and agreement on scores and rankings. External reviewers were identified after input from individual staff members on their outputs and using our network connections (for example Wankhade's CABS Research Committee membership). All self-review scores and peer

review scores were made available on a shared drive to enhance transparency and to support personal development. The REF group then identified a long-list of outputs for consideration by REF Decisions Panel, based on ranking, fit with unit's research narrative and to support representation of our submitted staff. Out of 43 outputs, selected by REF Decisions Panel, 35% are attributed to female staff (higher than their representation in submission (29%)), 24% to BAME staff (slightly lower than their representation in submission (29%)). The process has been underpinned by support from the Research Office and collaboration with other UOA co-ordinators from panel C units.

Section 3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

Income: During the period the Unit generated modest research income from national and international funding bodies. This should be viewed in the context of transformation from a teaching-led to a research-informed Business School, and the organic nature of development during the period. Our strategy has focused on building capacity through use of internal research-investment funds, with staff then supported to use their expanding track records to target external funds, including through collaboration. Our research has been supported by funding from a range of bodies, reflecting both a strategic focus on the Unit's 'business and society' theme, and hiring decisions made during the period. Beyond research funding, our research has been informed by our wider approach to external engagement.

Given our focus on capacity building, the University's Research Office has provided extensive support to staff. Since 2014, staff received £70k (to cover directly incurred costs) from EHU's research support funds for activities to enhance the research base and environment. A further £22k has been used to attend and present at international conferences (**Cassidy, Dent, Emmanuel-Ebikake, Kelly, Pinar, Robin, Wankhade, Woodruffe-Burton**). Papers arising from these conferences support both impact case studies and research outputs. **Wankhade** received £5k from IKEF to deliver the Ambulance Amber Review Report, which forms part of his impact case for this submission.

Through both internal (GCRF QR) and external (Newton Fund, GCRF) we developed a portfolio of development-orientated research on which to build. **Pinar's** British Academy project (£59,266) with Marmara University, Turkey, investigated the role of foreign direct investment in Turkey's economic development. EHUBS has also developed several projects funded by EHU's allocation of GCRF QR funds: **Pinar** was also awarded £24,000 to investigate regional inequality in Turkey and **Crotty** was awarded £5000 to build a UK-Ukraine-USA network of academics to research women's groups and gender equality in Ukraine. The latter is a partnership between Edge Hill, the Harvard University Ukraine Research Institute and The Ukraine Academy of Sciences in L'viv and Kyiv. This has been followed up with a British Academy (GCRF) Workshop grant application (£16,486, awarded March 2021).

In addition, the Unit has also engaged in contract research, including **Wankhade's** research on managing challenging work in NHS ambulance trusts (£58,500 from Health Education England) and **Pinar's** project to investigate the quality outcome framework for commissioners of health interventions (£24,320 from St Helen's Clinical Commissioning Group).

Research activity has also been informed and supported through the broader work of the school, including knowledge exchange work with non-academic partners and through pedagogic innovation. This includes EU funding, which has led to the publication of research results as outputs, via **Kelly's** ERAMUS+ funded project (€53,270) in collaboration with University of Twente, the Technische University of Dortmund, Lappeenranta University of Technology and University of Economics in Bratislava, and which has successfully upskilled local businesses and students. **Emmanuel-Ebikake's** research has been informed by engagement in European Structural and Investment Funds, via Lancashire LEP.

Although this is a good start, we recognise that when compared to other business schools in the sector, this amount of external funding is low. Building on the platform now established, our 'business and society' theme will be driven through an increased emphasis on grant capture, with a number of opportunity areas prioritised. These include international development (including ODA) research, a range of contract-research activity reflecting the policy and practice interests of staff and non-academic stakeholders and the broad area of regional, urban and rural development in the UK (leveraging our engagement with LEPs and other bodies). Staff will be supported to map their research interests on to key funder and stakeholder priorities, including those in the UKRI R&D Roadmap and forthcoming 'Place Strategy', regional economic development priorities, the research needs of key non-academic stakeholders and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

To prioritise sustainability, we have set a target of bidding for £1m over the next REF period. This will be a combination of UKRI, charities and contract research commissions. We recognise that this is a stretching target, but we will use the PDR process to support bidding, allied to research development support.

Support and expectations for research income will be informed by academic career stage. Senior researchers will be expected to drive bidding throughout the next REF cycle. For senior researchers there will also be a focus on larger projects, sustaining significant postdoctoral research assistant roles and generating contributions to overheads, the former reflecting increased ambition in terms of contribution to knowledge and the latter reflecting the need for external funding to support the long-term sustainability of the School. In addition, building on the work of **Wankhade** and **Pinar** identified above, there will be greater focus on contract research working with collaborators and partners, some of which may give rise to impact in future years. For researchers without a track record but a good research profile, we will encourage them to target smaller internal and external funding pots to establish themselves.

For many researchers, the focus will continue to be on accessing internal research support funds for profile development and pump-priming for external bids, including the collection of preliminary data, generation of publications and proving feasibility for future phases of research. In this regard we will be working closely with ECRs and other colleagues less experienced in bid development to seek University funding and this will be actively encouraged through the research groups.

Our research groups will help to re-orientate our activity with respect to grant capture to build teams in advance of targeted calls that are directed at the UKRI strategic priorities, particularly marrying our business and society theme with the current government's 'levelling-up' agenda. We will also use the enhanced profile arising from the formalised groups to collaborate with academics and groups at other HEIs with successful track records in bidding for external funds. Our established international links (see section 4) will also facilitate the development of teams to target funds such as Horizon Europe (through international collaborations and via a targeted approach to the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions). We will also leverage our links with the University's PIC to seek out opportunities for commissioned research and consultancy, whilst exploring other opportunities to work with charities and other funders on projects that might be lower in value, but higher in impact.

Supported by the Institute for Social Responsibility, and incorporating SustainNET (formed during this REF period), we will formalise a research group on Business and Society. This will bring together current research streams on corporate social responsibility and ethics (**Crotty & Emmanuel-Ebikake**), marketing and gender (**Woodruffe-Burton**), public sector management and performance (**Wankhade**), social enterprise and entrepreneurship (**Gazdula & Phelan**), sustainability (**Dent**) and corporate governance (**Zheng**). This will raise the profile of business and society research at Edge Hill, attracting high-calibre academics and PhD students, in time becoming seen as a centre of excellence. The group will also facilitate team-building for grant capture specific to the UKRI priority areas of sustainability and global governance, and host visiting scholars in this area.

Allied to the Centre, we will formalise a group on Local Economy and Well-being including our work on high street regeneration (**Cassidy**), welfare economics (**Pinar**) and SMEs (**Bolton & Naughton**). This group will work collaboratively across the University, aligning with academics working on areas such as community wealth-building and community engagement (supported by ISR). Furthermore, by embedding staff in the University's PIC and promoting practitioner engagement, it will work directly with business on co-created research projects.

Finally, we will take the opportunity presented by the emerging engineering department and the STEM Research Institute (to be formalised in 2021/22) at EHU to explore further collaboration aligned to the UKRI digital economy priority theme. Bringing together work on social networks (**Unlu**), supply chains (**Kelly**) and social media (**Konstantopoulou**), we will thus formalise a digital economy group to cross-fertilise ideas across disciplines, facilitating grant capture.

Infrastructure: The School considers infrastructure and facilities to be key in strengthening research capacity and fostering a vibrant research environment. EHUBS has the infrastructure and capacity to host workshops, conferences, internal and external research seminars, and the provision of accommodation to visiting research scholars. We have also invested in a new PGR room (£3k) to help create a space for exchange and peer support. We have a new IT lab room, which offers some of the latest ICT available with key software packages: for example it provides an environment for staff training and research and for knowledge exchange among staff and PGRs, and Leximancer (£4k) and MATLAB (£2k) software packages have facilitated a range of research outputs. To assist in the successful delivery of future conferences at the School, we invested in 12 Microsoft Surface Pros.

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

Business schools by their very nature seek to engage collaboratively through the co-production and exchange of knowledge with enterprises, non-profits and through national, international and inter-university collaborations; EHUBS is no different in this regard. Improving our reputation and contribution to the knowledge base, economy and society drives our approach to collaboration and engagement. To realise this during this REF period, we have drawn both on the arrangements available within EHU – specifically the research institutes, and the PIC – in combination with the specific relationships brought into the Unit via the recruitment of research leaders in key areas. We have also used internal support funds to facilitate some of our networking activity.

With respect to the research institutes, we have drawn specifically on resources, skills and wider University networks to establish SustainNET, an interdisciplinary network that reaches across all faculties and community groups in our region. This was led by **Dent** and initially facilitated by a Knowledge Exchange seed-corn grant from ISR. **Dent** had record of developing international collaborations before arriving at EHUBS, having worked as a special advisor to the REN21 organisation, which has produced the annual Global Status Reports on Renewable Energy and is sponsored by the UN Environment Programme. He was also founder and core partner of Asia Europe Energy Policy Research Network project. The combination of **Dent's** prior experience, and support from ISR facilitated a 'sustainability fair' in Ormskirk town centre that brought together interest groups and academics to kick start collaborations for improved sustainability outcomes across our region. SustainNET has now established a seminar series, supported and promoted by ISR, and is working on developing collaborative projects across the University and with community groups to improve sustainability outcomes in our region. This network includes staff at all levels and thus also provides a collaborative and nurturing environment for ECRs and those seeking to make the transition to research independence. This work has potential to expand and grow the impact of the unit's research in the next REF period.

EHUBS has also utilised connections made through the PIC (led by **Bolton**) to foster collaboration and co-create outputs. The PIC has worked with more than 160 SMEs in the Lancashire region since its inception in 2018; with a specific focus on innovation and business process re-engineering. These connections are now being utilised through EHUBS staff linking up with the PIC to work directly with SMEs. The benefit of this approach is illustrated by **Emmanuel-Ebikake** having worked with local SMEs on business model development through the Innovation Spring programme; she collected case studies that formed the basis of an article currently under review

with the *Business Process Management* journal. With plans to formalise the secondment of staff at all levels to the PIC in the next REF period, and the expansion of the PIC into the Liverpool City Region in 2021, this will become a fruitful mechanism for co-creation of research that will directly benefit the local and regional economy.

Other collaborations have arisen from connections brought into EHUBS through recruitment during the period. Seeking out staff with such connections was also part of our strategy to move the School to one that was under-pinned by research. An example is **Cassidy's** work on High Street regeneration. An expert in retail and marketing, she brought with her links with councils in Warrington, Wolverhampton, Stockton, Nottingham, Mansfield, West Lancashire where she has worked as an advisor on strategic retail and high street management. This experience led to her appointment as co-author of *Grimsey Review 2 (GR2)*, a strategic review of the UK High Street. Through receiving support in this role (through research time and school resources), **Cassidy** co-authored the Covid-19 Grimsey supplement on how to 'build back better'. The findings from GR2 and the COVID-19 supplement have influenced national Town Centre High Street policy and regeneration in the form of the Future High Streets fund. Linked to this work, **Cassidy** is also chair of ESRC Consumer Data Research Centre RAG panel and explored health and well-being on the High street in collaboration with Edge Hill's Health Research Institute. **Cassidy's** contribution to the regeneration of the UK economy and society now forms one of our impact cases for this REF.

Prior to joining EHUBS, **Wankhade** had established a HEIF-supported Centre for Emergency Services Management and Training and was the founder and editor-in-chief of the *International Journal on Emergency Services*. As such, he brought his emergency service network to EHUBS. Since his appointment, he has become an Adviser and Lead Reviewer to the AMBER Ambulance Review, Welsh Government (2018), supported with a grant from the University's Impact and Knowledge Exchange Fund; a Trustee of Fire Service Research & Training Trust; and a strategic advisor to the Larrey Society, a think tank on emergency services. He has also been appointed Fellow of the Institute of Civil Protection and Emergency Management (ICPEM) and Chair of a new Special Interest Group on 'Blue Light Services' with a remit to work with both practitioners and scholars. With support from the University's RIF, these networks have been effectively utilised to establish the first emergency services professional doctorate in the UK. This will contribute directly to the improvement of public services, and thus make a direct contribution to our economy and society. **Wankhade** has also published in several professional publications and outlets including Ambulance Today and FIRE. Combined, his work forms an impact case study for this REF submission.

Collaboration with professional bodies and international networks:

To maintain a thriving and purposeful research environment, it is essential that we maintain links with the business community through professional bodies and organisations. This is a mark of esteem and it also assists in reputation building. This is supported by the School, and time and resources are available to support these interactions. These links allow staff to build and maintain networks both to inform and influence policy and practice, and for professional practice to inform our research. Some specific examples of this type of activity include: **Kelly** is the Vice President of the International Purchasing and Supply Education and Research Association (IPSERA) and established its Educator's Conference and Education Special Interest Group; **Gazdula** is an external executive consultant at Reed Global; **Pinar** is a senior fellow of the Rimini Centre for Economic Analysis where he has been contributing to the organisation of international conferences and international events.

EHUBs staff are also visiting professors at other HEIs including. **Konstantopoulou**: Visiting Professor in Strategy, Innovation and Educational Development at the University of Vitez (Bosnia and Herzegovina); **Pinar**: Visiting Professor, Department of Economics, University Orleans; **Cassidy**: Visiting Professor Nottingham Business School (NTU) and **Bolton**: Visiting Professor of Creative Consumer Insight, Faculty of Engineering, Design Department, ICESI University, Cali, Colombia.

EHUBS also has a growing international network of collaborators resulting in more than 20 co-authored outputs in the submission. These international collaborations also extend to overseas

research projects on our core theme of business and society. Examples of international collaboration include:

- Abo Akademi University, Finland, on the digital workplace information literacy, funded by the Academy of Finland (**Ahmad**)
- The Centre for Advanced Retail Studies (CARS) at Massey University (New Zealand), advising the Takapuna Beach Business Association (TBBA) in Auckland and Retail NZ and the First Retail Group in Wellington (**Cassidy**)
- The regeneration plan for the City of Roeselare, Belgium as a model of best practice to feature in the second Grimsey Review of the High Street, 2018 (**Cassidy**)
- A trial of a women's entrepreneurial toolkit in Malawi with the involvement of Malawi Institute of Management and Malawian Businesswomen's Association (**Gazdula**).

Pinar's international collaboration with colleagues in Turkey has generated an external research grant from the Newton Advanced Fellowship (2014-2016) of the British Academy (with Marmara University, Turkey) and been supported by the University's allocation of the Global Challenges Research Fund (Marmara University and Piri Reis University, Turkey). **Crotty** has developed a network with the Harvard University Ukraine Research Institute, and the National Academy of Sciences in L'viv and Kyiv, to research women's groups and gender equality in Ukraine. She plans to build this network in a substantive base for further impact and knowledge exchange between academics in the UK, USA and Ukraine and women's groups therein. This project also links directly to her leadership of ISR, which will facilitate dissemination. In the next period, we hope to leverage these examples further to target international funding calls, including Horizon Europe.

These international connections reinforce our overall theme of business and society and, as a young school in research terms, allow EHUBS to raise its international profile and reputation. These networks also facilitate development opportunities, for all staff, but particularly for ECRs, and so we will seek to extend these networks, and facilitate arising grant bids, in the coming REF period.

Contribution to the research base:

Our staff are increasingly involved with journal editorial boards. This is a measure of esteem for a School in our current position, and it affords us in-house expertise that can be deployed to enhance the quality of outputs generally. Selected examples of editorial positions include:

Cassidy: editorial board member of the *Journal of Services Marketing*

Crotty: editorial board member of *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management*

Dent: editorial board member of *Asia-Europe Journal*; *East Asia: An International Quarterly*

Konstantopoulou: editorial board member of *Journal of Global Responsibility*; *International Journal of Sales, Retail and Marketing*

Pinar: editorial board member of *Journal of Research in Economics and Energy Research Letters*; *Sustainability*

Wankhade: editor-in-chief of *International Journal of Emergency Services* (2012-current),, and on the editorial board of the *Irish Journal of Paramedicine*

Woodruffe-Burton: Member of the editorial board, guest editor, *Journal of Marketing Management*, 'Reflections on a memorable AM 2016'

Some of the work carried out by our team has been acknowledged by journals and associations, again building esteem and reputation for a school in transition. **Ahmad** was awarded the European Student Award by Association for Information Science and Technology (2015). Two of **Crotty's** articles were awarded Best Paper Awards: 1) the Public Management & Governance track, British Academy of Management meeting, 2015, and 2) Academy of Management, Social Issues in Management Track, 2014. **Konstantopoulou** obtained Team Award from the Minister of Science and Higher Education in Poland for excellent achievements in the field of science. **Wankhade** obtained Outstanding Reviewer Award from the *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, Emerald Literati Network in 2015.

Our team in EHBS has been also active peer reviewing for learned funding bodies: ESRC (**Cassidy, Crotty, Dent**), British Academy of Management (**Crotty, Wankhade**), British Academy (**Crotty, Dent**), National Research Foundation of Korea (**Dent**), Israel Science Foundation (**Dent**), National Centre of Science and Technology Evaluation of the Republic of Kazakhstan (**Pinar**), European Academy of Management (**Wankhade**), AHRC (**Bolton**).

Our team has delivered 100+ international conference presentations including: Academy of Marketing, British Academy of Management, Academy of Management, International Renewable Energy Conference, British Educational Research Association, Regional Studies Association, American Marketing Association. Furthermore, the research team also delivered 30 keynote/invited talks, including: **Dent**: House of Commons International Trade Committee at Westminster on the UK's free trade agreement options in the Asia-Pacific; **Phelan**: Sustainable Tourism Research Series, University of Guerrero (Mexico) (2017); **Wankhade**: Emergency Services Management Leadership Summit (2019) and Westminster Social Policy Forum (2018).

In addition to the keynote and invited talks, our team has taken a major role in organising 10+ international conferences: **Cassidy**: Chair and conference organiser for the 2nd, 3rd and 4th symposiums (2018-2020) of the NRRKEC; Co-chair for the annual Academy of Marketing Conference (2020); **Gazdula**: British Education Studies Association 2018 International Conference Chair; **Kelly**: Scientific Committee for the International Purchasing & Supply Education & Research Association conferences (2018-2020); **Phelan**: Organising Committee 14th Rural Entrepreneurship Conference (2016); **Pinar**: Co-organise workshops of "Understanding the Capital Flows" (2016) and "On the Road to EU: Determinants of Regional Well-being and Inequalities in Turkey" (2019); **Wankhade**: Chair of the 10th International Critical Management Studies Conference; Track Chairs on Strategic Leadership in Emergency Services at European Academy of Management Conferences; **Woodruffe-Burton**: Co-Chair of the 10th International Critical Management Studies Conference.

Finally, we have contributed to the external doctoral examining at: Brighton University; Monash University, Australia; Anglia Ruskin University, Birmingham University, Nottingham Trent University, Lincoln University, Durham University, Lancaster University, University of Limerick, Napier University, Anglia Ruskin University.