

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

Institution: University of East London
Unit of Assessment: 4 Psychology, Psychiatry and Neuroscience
1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy

Students in the School of Psychology are predominantly recruited from Newham and neighbouring boroughs, meaning the demographic mix and socioeconomic challenges are reflected in the population: 61% do not identify as white; 57% are in the lowest tiers of the index of multiple deprivation; And 64% are 'first in family' to attend university. Recent research, conducted by members of staff in collaboration with students, revealed that 27.8% of our students reported experiencing physical or sexual domestic abuse as children; 19.5% had lived with a family member who was a substance abuser; and 44.5% were raised either in single parent households or with non-parental figures in caregiving roles. **Many students reported that these challenging early life experiences were what motivated them to study psychology.**

Our research and impact strategy over recent years has prioritised **research which is relevant to and reflects the priorities of the lives lived by our students and our local communities.** In 2014 we set out the following strategic aims:

1. Develop partnerships to build on our areas of strength
2. Develop supportive research groups
3. Disseminate the results of our work to foster impact
4. Build interdisciplinary collaborations and links with external stakeholders
5. Actively synthesise our practitioner and academic expertise to maximise research opportunities for PGR students
6. Develop our early and mid-career (and practice-led) staff to increase success rates for external grant writing.

Despite our small scale - with 29 research-active staff members - we believe that we have achieved these aims to a level which makes us **one of the most productive head-for-head research departments in the UK.** Our future research and impact strategy is to further strengthen our partnerships with local communities through large-scale funded projects that deliver world-leading impact through significant engagement with the needs of the diverse population of East London. Our research environment extends far beyond the campus to the rich and diverse environments in which our students and local communities live.

1.1 Key Achievements

Partnerships which build on our areas of strength

Our location in Newham in East London places us *at the centre of one of most demographically and socioeconomically diverse regions of the UK.* Our strong connections to local community organisations (see section 4) allow us access to hard-to-reach populations in order to conduct *world-leading research which makes a real difference to real peoples' lives.* For example, our Baby Development Lab works with Newham Council and local community organisations such as the Parents and Communities Together Trust. Their work on *stress contagion (i.e. how stress is transmitted across parent-child dyads)* and the *early living environment (i.e. how noisy and chaotic living environments affect early development)* has received funding from the Nuffield Foundation, Economic and Social Research Council, Leverhulme Trust and European Research Council. Their

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

world-leading research findings are fed directly back to local research participants through community-based training events for parents and practitioners.

Develop supportive research groups

We have prioritised recruiting new staff who can build on these strengths by engaging with hard-to-reach, at-risk communities. For example, we have recently established a new research group, led by Dr Emma Howarth, which has already received funding from the National Institute of Health Research to develop new educational programmes for children and families experiencing domestic abuse and child maltreatment. This research is being conducted in close partnership with organisations that provide support for victims of domestic abuse.

Disseminate for impact

Rates of mental illness in Newham are amongst the highest in the UK. Professor John Read, a member of our Mental Health and Distress research group, recently prepared a report for Public Health England on community-based treatment practices for depression which received blanket media coverage across all major news networks around the UK and across the world (see section 4.3). It has been implemented into practitioner care guidelines globally and has led to changes in the National Institute for Health Care Excellence guidelines for antidepressant use.

Build interdisciplinary collaborations and links with stakeholders

Our Drugs and Addictive Behaviours Research Group, led by Professor John Turner and Dr Steve Sharman, has partnered with the Gordon Moody Association, which is the sole UK residential treatment provider for individuals with gambling problems. This stakeholder partnership has led to research which has changed our understanding of why some people are especially vulnerable to behavioural addictions such as gambling. Their findings have informed reports from All Party Parliamentary groups and Public Health England and have led to changes in how gambling is regulated to protect vulnerable populations in the UK.

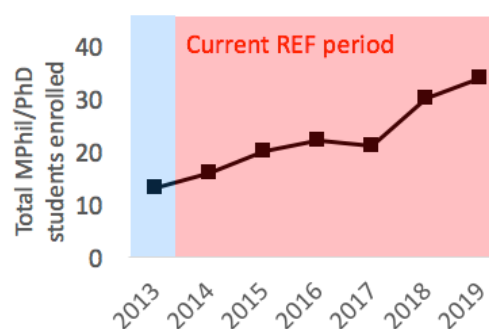
Synthesise our practitioner and academic expertise

We have a well-established Clinical Psychology Professional Doctorate, with circa forty trainees per annum. Our team (n=14) of clinical academics contributes to the practitioner-focused research in the School and research active staff support their clinical colleagues to deliver research training.

Our local community in East London features one of the highest populations in the UK of voluntary migrants and forced migrants (refugees). Interdisciplinary research by Professor Tribe (Psychology) working with colleagues from other UoAs (e.g. Allied Health, Social Policy and Sociology), has radically changed our approach to how practitioners provide mental health services for refugees. Her findings now underpin the official practitioner guidance on refugees from NHS England, from charities including Mind, and from international organisations such as The Refugee Council and the Red Cross.

Developing early and mid-career researchers, and PGR students

In addition to our senior researchers, whose research impacts on a national and international scale, we have also invested heavily in supporting the work of our early and mid-career researchers. Reflecting our heavily international undergraduate student body, we have actively recruited PGR students and early and mid-career research staff from international and BAME backgrounds



Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

(e.g. 30% of PGRs from international and BAME backgrounds). We have prioritised providing funding for support early career researchers: since submission to REF2014, the School has increased its externally funded PhD student population by 320%. And, working within our tight financial budget, we have developed internship schemes to provide micro-level 'seed' support for undergraduate students interested in conducting their own research.

In sections 2, 3 and 4 which follow, we aim to tell some of the research stories that have emerged from UEL during the current REF period. Through this, we shall describe not just our high-impact, senior researchers - but also our junior researchers, who are less well recognised. Many of them come from challenged backgrounds, and are, with our support, just setting out on their research careers. We want to take this opportunity to celebrate them.

2. People

Our research-active staff members are divided into four research groups. Unfortunately, it is not possible to describe in detail all our researchers and their work. Instead, we have selected a few individual research stories to highlight. In this section, we concentrate on our **junior** researchers, and how we support them. In sections 3 and 4, we further describe the research outcomes of our more **senior** researchers, including descriptions of how their research has led to large-scale externally funded grant capture (section 3.1-3.3) and to national and international research dissemination and policy impact (section 4.1-4.6).

In section 2.1, we describe our four research groups in turn. We then describe the support services that we have in place for our researchers – divided into research support (section 2.2), and research leadership (2.3).

2.1 Research Groups

2.1.1 - Drugs and Addictive Behaviours

This group is made up of five staff members. Their research is recognised as leading the way on understanding addiction - and, in particular, how addiction can affect vulnerable populations. Here is one example of some typical research from this group:

Catherine Kimber, originally from Guadeloupe, moved to the UK in her early twenties, working in retail and starting a family. Joining UEL as a mature student she successfully completed our BSc Psychology degree, gaining a first-class degree in 2014 and publishing work from her final year thesis looking at e-cigarette use. This work formed the basis of a successful bid for a UEL Excellence PhD scholarship to investigate cognitive factors in nicotine addiction and e-cigarette use. Gaining her doctorate in 2017, Catherine worked at UEL for a short period before securing a Research Fellowship funded by Cancer Research UK; continuing to work as a leading researcher in the field of nicotine addiction. Catherine has been an invited speaker at numerous national and international conferences, her work has garnered significant academic and policy-linked impact and she has 15 peer reviewed publications to date.

Other group members are: Dr Dominic Conroy, Dr Steven Sharman, Dr Kirstie Soar, Dr Meredith Terlecki, Professor John Turner.

2.1.2 - Developmental Psychology

This group is made up of five staff members and focuses on challenging environments for child development. Their aim is to explore how the diverse early life experiences encountered by the children in our local communities can affect long term development.

Here is one example of a typical research project from this group:

Layal Husain's family is from Bahrain. Building on her own experience of moving to the UK at an early age, her research examines complementary schools - which are voluntary schools set up by linguistic, cultural, or religious communities which focus on maintaining community languages and cultures. To support her research, she set up a partnership with the non-profit organisation the Newham Partnership for Complementary Education to secure a prestigious Economic and Social Research Council UCL, Bloomsbury and East London Doctoral Training Programme scholarship. During her PhD, Layal has attended regular, staff- and student-organised seminars and training events. She has also been partnered with three undergraduate students - who help with her project and whom she mentors in starting their own research careers. Findings from her research have been published and presented internationally - but Layal says that her main aim is for her research insights to be fed directly back into the complementary education schools with whom she works.

Other group members are: Dr Paula Booth; Professor Caroline Edmonds; Dr Louise Goupil, Dr Emma Howarth (see section 3.2); Dr Sam Wass (see section 3.3).

2.1.3 - Mental Health and Social Change

This group is made up of nine staff members. The group is internationally recognised for its work championing community- and family-based approaches to mental health. The group's research has achieved blanket media impact and led to policy changes both at UK government and international level (see section 4).

Here is one example of a typical research project from this group:

Danilo di Emidio is from Spanish and Italian heritage. Danilo worked as a secondary school teacher for fifteen years, and during this time became interested in the impact of the school environment on pupil's mental health. He contacted UEL (Tucker) and was directed to the newly formed UCL, Bloomsbury and East London Doctoral Training Programme, of which UEL was a founding partner. Professor Tucker supported Danilo through the application process, and he was successful in securing a 1+3 PhD scholarship to investigate how the current UK education policy focus on attainment and achievement impacts adolescents' mental health. Danilo works with a local sixth form college to run his project as part of the school enrichment programme for year 12 and 13 pupils. Danilo has undertaken UEL's Researcher Development Programme, and undertaken seminar and lecture teaching at UEL. Danilo has presented his research in local and national education and mental health conferences.

Other group members are: Dr Lucia Berdondini, Dr Ken Gannon, Professor David Harper, Dr Matthew Jones Chesters, Dr Tim Lomas, Professor Mark McDermott, Dr Trishna Patel, Professor John Read (see section 4.2), Professor Ian Tucker.

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

2.1.4 – Cognition and Neuroscience

This group is made up of ten staff members and focuses on neural underpinnings of cognition and atypical development. Using EEG, fNIRS, tDCS and other systems (see section 3.3) they collaborate with the other research groups to explore the neural underpinnings of cognition, including how early adversity and atypical development can impact on brain function.

Here is one example of a typical research project from this group:

Farhan Mirza is a second-generation Bangladeshi, who is the first member of his family to go to university. He lives alone with his mother, who has mental health issues. He says that caring for her from a young age is what sparked his interest in psychology and neuroscience. During his undergraduate degree at UEL, Farhan applied for and secured a micro-funding internship to gain some research experience. He spent this running an EEG experiment on how stress affects auditory information processing with the support of our staff, which led to employment as a Research Fellow working at UEL on a team funded by an Economic and Social Research Council grant. At the time of writing, Farhan has five publications in high-ranked journals, and has just started working at a hospital for women with complex mental health needs.

Other group members are: Professor Verity Brown, Dr Moreno Coco, Professor Cynthia Fu (see section 4.3), Dr Jeremy Lemoine, Dr Josie Malinowski, Dr Matteo Martini, Dr Mary Spiller, Dr Anna Stone, Professor Volker Thoma, Dr Melanie Vitkovitch.

2.2 Research Support

हृदी - Hindi	বাংলা - Bengali	Français - French	Urdu - اردو
普通话 - Mandarin	Espanol - Spanish	ਪੰਜਾਬੀ - Punjabi	
	Fula - Fula		

Early-career researchers, particularly those from non-traditional academic backgrounds, often require additional levels of support - such as support with using English as an additional language - at the start of their research careers. While our financial resources to provide this type of support are limited, we look to internal forms of support wherever possible. For example, we have implemented peer mentoring schemes, to which all staff and postgraduate students have access. Many more senior researchers have encountered, and met, similar challenges early in their own research careers - which makes them perfectly positioned to help. These operate tier-to-tier - so postgraduates mentor undergraduates, ECRs mentor postgraduates, and senior staff mentor ECRs.

In addition, all research groups host regular meetings - to allow junior researchers to present analyses 'in progress' to an audience of peers, to discuss their other support needs, etc. And we organise other events, such as:

- regular "just write!" sessions for postgraduate researchers and ECR which provide a protected time-slot for grant/paper writing and data analyses.

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

- a Psychology Staff Research Training Programme, with workshops on EEG, MPlus, Matlab, Eye-Tracking, Advanced Quantitative Data Analytics, and Grant Writing.
- peer-to-peer 'don't be scared to ask' technical support sessions, organised by and for postgraduate students - e.g. weekly Matlab/R classes
- specialist reading groups based on common research interests
- social opportunities - such as 'bring a dish from your country' cultural evenings

In order to maximise the limited financial resources that we have for support via university research funds we have:

- implemented a micro-level 'seed grant scheme' of £1000-2000 - which students (undergraduate, postgraduate) partnered with a member of the research staff may apply for (see section 3.4).
- provided small start-up grants to ECRs which cover equipment costs (see section 3.5) administrative support, conference travel, software training etc.
- supported high-impact dissemination events to bring together researchers, local community organisations and other key stakeholders (e.g. local NHS Trusts, service users) and national policy makers. Recent examples include two events which both led directly to national policy change: a national event on gambling organised by our addictive behaviours cluster (section 2.1.1), and an interdisciplinary event on refugees organised by our mental health and distress cluster (section 2.1.3).

2.3 Research Leadership

Research leadership operates at multiple tiers. Formal leadership operates through a dotted-line management structure from Pro-Vice Chancellor for Impact and Innovation, Dean of School, and School Director of Impact and Innovation. Leadership also operates through research group leaders, mentoring and staff-student supervisory relationships. Key roles operate on 3-year rotation so as to develop leadership expertise across multiple staff members. Additionally:

- All staff have annual Performance Development Reviews with their line manager, in which their research aims and objectives are re-evaluated yearly.
- Staff and PGRs undertake UEL's Researcher Development Programme (RDP), which offers a suite of research skills workshops for staff and PGR students.
- The School Director of Impact and Innovation (Tucker) works with the Dean of School, and School Management Team (Department Heads, Directors of Education and Experience, Careers and Engagement) in delivering strategic aims. Tucker works with other School DIs and the Pro Vice Chancellor for Impact and Innovation (Brown). Annual School Plans are developed in concert with institutional equality and diversity plans, represented on the University Executive Board by the Dean of the Office for Institutional Equity.

2.4 Equality and Diversity

Recognising and celebrating diversity is central to our research philosophy at UEL (see also sections 1, 2, and 3.6). Our REF-submitted research staff are 54% female, 35% international (1st generation immigrant), 16% BAME. These numbers still do not accurately reflect our undergraduate population but are a substantial increase on previous submissions. Mid-career staff who have had a research break (e.g. through maternity/paternity, temporary change of role etc) are supported through 'Mid-Career Development' Programme, which includes specialist training (e.g. funding opportunities for researchers with career breaks). We were the first school in the

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

university to receive a Bronze Athena SWAN award and are working towards a Silver submission in 2021. The School contributes to UEL's Race Equality Charter work and was awarded the Race Equality Charter Bronze award in May 2019.

3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

Income: In this section, we describe some examples of the large-scale, nationally and internationally funded research projects that we host at UEL (section 3.1). We also describe our own micro-level internal 'seed' funding schemes which have played an essential role in supporting small-scale research in our school (section 3.2).

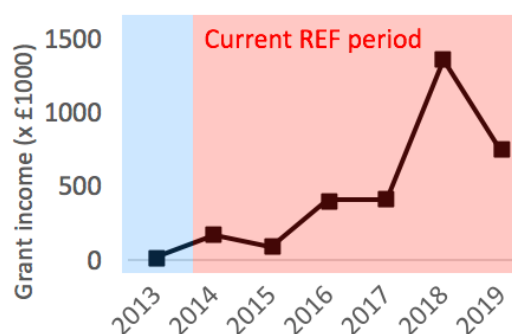
Infrastructure and facilities: We also describe how UEL has invested in state-of-the-art equipment and facilities (section 3.3) – including world-leading facilities for some state-of-the-art neuroimaging methods.

But for us, **world-leading research infrastructure is not just about access to the latest 7 Tesla scanner!** Equally if not more important are the strong and proud relationships that we have with local hard-to-access communities, who make our research possible. These we describe in section 3.4.

3.1 External grant capture and non-HESA funding and consultancy

During REF2021 period there has been a **rapid increase in our school's external grant capture and non-HESA funding and consultancy**. At the end of the previous REF period our average annual external income was **£46k** (2013-14); today, it is **£785k** (2019-2020). In total, we won **£2.5m** in external income during the REF2021 period, with 22 successful bids, and we already have **£1.9m** in funding secured for the next REF cycle (2020-2025).

During the current REF period, projects based entirely or primarily in our school have been funded by: Research Councils UK (ESRC - multiple projects); UK Research and Innovation (UKRI - multiple projects); National Institutes for Health Research (NIHR - multiple projects); the Leverhulme Trust; the European Union (Horizon 2020). We have also received funding directly from local councils (London Boroughs of Barking and Dagenham).



In addition, during the current REF period, projects based entirely or primarily in our school have been funded by the following medical charities: Study of Addiction Research, Cancer Research UK; GambleAware, Rosetrees Trust, Richard Benjamin Trust, Fight for Sight and the Rett Syndrome Research Trust. And through external collaborations we have also received grant income into the school from: Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, Royal Society of New Zealand, Israel Science Foundation, Public Health Agency Northern Ireland and Brain Canada.

3.2 Micro-level funding

Despite this rapid growth in external grant income, our financial resources are far more limited than those available to other schools. To maximise resources, we have during this REF period invested heavily in micro-level 'seed' awards, which students partnered with a member of the

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

research staff may apply for. These allow students to gain the first foothold in research and allow research staff members to collect pilot or exploratory data to inform a funding application or dissemination activity. They also provide opportunities to present at conferences, work directly with external collaborators and stakeholders, gain experience of writing for publication - all supported by a member of the research staff. This support provides students with valuable experience that strengthens graduate opportunities, e.g. applications for professional Clinical/Educational doctorate programmes.

Infrastructure and facilities

3.3 State-of-the-art equipment

Through our own university funds, and also through external research grants from the ESRC, the MRC, the Nuffield Foundation, the Rosetrees Trust and others, we have invested in the following state-of-the-art facilities: EEG systems from: Biosemi (dual 64-channel system, making us the first lab in the UK to record live dual neuroimaging); EGI (128-channel); Neuroelectrics EEG system; Spectratech OEG-16H for functional near-infrared spectroscopy (fNIRS); two new sets of tDCS (neuromodulation) equipment; four virtual reality (VR) headsets; a Medoc-TSA II for thermal stimulation (pain); dual physiological recordings using electrocardiography; electro-dermal activity; actigraphy; eye tracking systems from: Eyelink; Tobii (multiple). We also maintain extensive suite of software licences, including Matlab, Tobii Studio, CANTAB, NVivo and others. Training is provided to new staff and PhD students for all equipment and software.

3.4 Community links

Through our own university funds, and also through external research grants from the ESRC, the MRC, the Nuffield Foundation, the Rosetrees Trust and others, we have invested in the following state-of-the-art facilities: EEG systems from: Biosemi (dual 64-channel system, making us the first lab in the UK to record live dual neuroimaging); EGI (128-channel); Neuroelectrics EEG system; Spectratech OEG-16H for functional near-infrared spectroscopy (fNIRS); two new sets of tDCS (neuromodulation) equipment; four virtual reality (VR) headsets; a Medoc-TSA II for thermal stimulation (pain); dual physiological recordings using electrocardiography; electro-dermal activity; actigraphy; eye tracking systems from: Eyelink; Tobii (multiple). We also maintain extensive suite of software licences, including Matlab, Tobii Studio, CANTAB, NVivo and others. Training is provided to new staff and PhD students for all equipment and software.

For us, world-leading research is not just about access to the latest equipment. Most of our research is only possible due to our close relationships with local community organisations - many of which have been **nurtured over years and decades**. Crucially, we work hard to ensure that these relationships are *bidirectionally* beneficial - for example, by ensuring that the results and insights from our research are fed directly back to the organisations that made them possible (see section 4).

Some examples of the local community organisations that we have collaborated with over the current REF period are: Newham Council; Barking and Dagenham Council; Black Church Domestic Abuse Forum; Parents and Communities Together Trust; Iroko Theatre Company; Sparkle and Dark Theatre Company; Creativity, Resilience, Empowerment, Wellbeing (CREW); RESET Drug & Alcohol Service; Basildon Mind; Chase Farm; Rights & Equality Newham; Psychologists for Social Change; Mile End Project; Newham CAMHS; Outsider Music; Shoreditch Trust; Postcode Parents, British Refugee Council.

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

We are proud to work with these organisations, and to contribute to their work through our research.

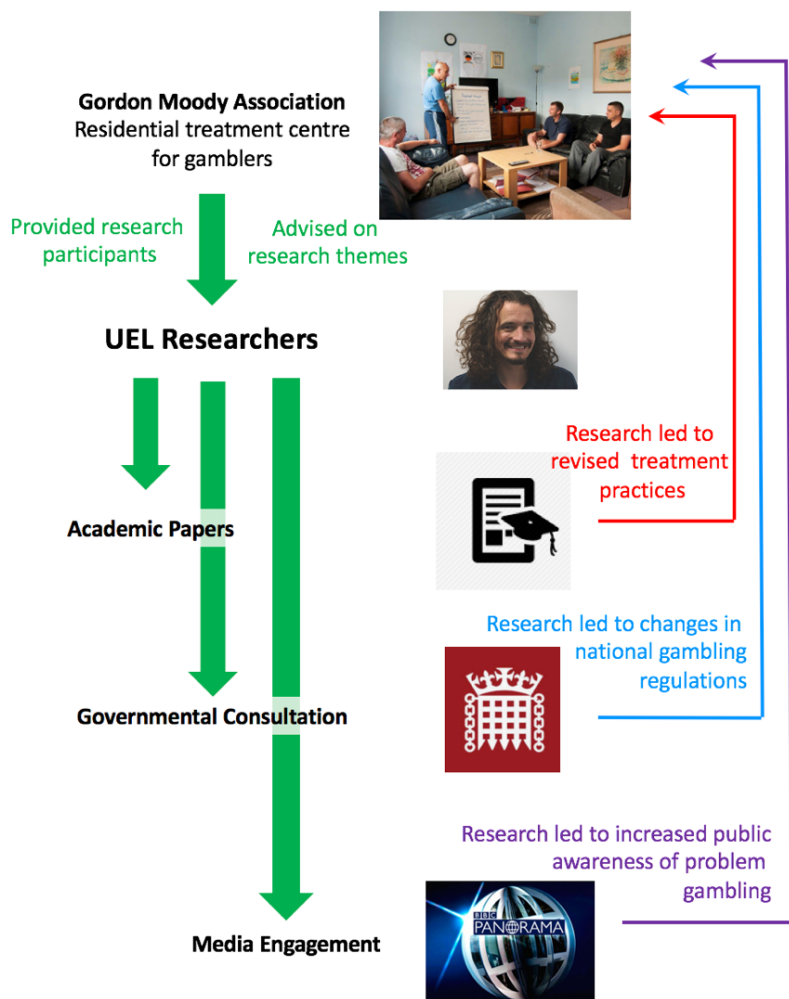
4. Collaboration and contribution to the research base, economy and society

Our philosophy at UEL is to conduct research which is embedded in our local communities, and which makes a difference both within those communities, but also nationally and internationally.

We disseminate the results of our research through traditional means, such as academic publications (section 4.1), and we contribute to the research community through journal editorships, funding agencies and so on (section 4.2). But a particular strength of our school is our **research-led engagement with the wider economy and society**. Many of our senior researchers feature prominently in national and international media (e.g. BBC, Sky News, CNN) (section 4.3), contribute to reports for NGOs (e.g. Red Cross, Mind, Médecins Sans Frontières) and All-Party Parliamentary Committees (section 4.4), and engage with commercial sectors (e.g. Tesco, Ikea etc - see section 4.5).

The biggest strength of our school, though, and our over-arching mission, is to ensure that **our research engages with the communities who make it possible** (section 4.6).

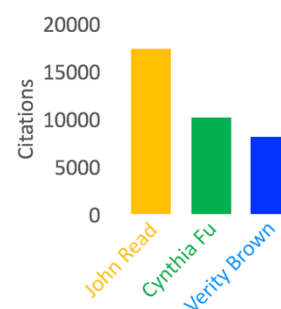
What's in it for our research participants



Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

4.1 Our research is highly cited

While our strength as a school is small-scale community projects that emphasise participant engagement and dissemination, we nevertheless also manage to publish at good rates in high-ranking journals. **12.5% of our staff members were ranked in the top 2% most cited scientists in their field in 2019.** 95% of our REF-submitted outputs are in Journals ranked in the top quartile by Scopus. During the current REF period our staff have published in the high-ranking journals including: *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*; *Proceedings of the National Academy of the Sciences*; *Current Biology*; *PLoS Biology*; *Addiction*; *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B*; *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*; *Translational Psychiatry*; and *Child Development*.



4.2 Our researchers contribute to the global research community

Our 29 staff hold multiple journal editorships, editorial board membership, working for funding agencies and professional agencies. These include:

- REF2008 and 2014 Panel 4; Psychology, Psychiatry and Neuroscience Panel Membership (Brown)
- Editorial Board (formerly Editor-in-Chief) Neuroscience and Biobehavioural Reviews (Brown)
- Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh (Brown)
- European Research Council Life Science Advanced Grant Panel Member (Brown)
- Review Editor of Neuropediatrics (Edmonds)
- REF2021 Panel 4; Psychology, Psychiatry and Neuroscience Panel Assessor (Fu)
- Expert Reviewer for the NICE Guidelines (Fu)
- Associate Editor of Frontiers, Psychotherapy, Computational Psychiatry and Mood Disorders (Fu);
- Editorial Board of Journal of Gender-Based Violence (Howarth)
- Editorial Board of Frontiers and Scientific Reports (Martini);
- Editor of Psychosis, and Editorial Board of Stress and Health (Read);
- Review Editor for Frontiers (Thoma)
- Honorary treasurer of British Association of Cognitive Neuroscience (Thoma)
- Review Editor of Neuroimaging and Stimulation (Thoma)
- Guest Associate Editor of Cognition (Thoma)
- Editorial Board of British Sociological Association's flagship Sociology journal (Tucker)

4.3 Our research has international media reach

Members of our staff are highly active in informing and engaging with public debate on the national and international media. For example, Professor John Read's research on treatment practices for depression has led to over 50 features in national print (e.g. Daily Mail, Daily Mirror etc) and TV (e.g. BBC, Sky News) - and to coverage in the US, Brazil, Spain, Australia, China and around the world. This research is particularly notable for the high levels of user engagement it engenders: for example, one article on the BBC website about his research received 10% of all comments for that day for the BBC - showing its exceptional effectiveness in stimulating public engagement and debate.

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

4.4 Our research engages with the public sector and NGOs

UEL staff are regularly invited to contribute to **policy-making** by contributing to **All Party Parliamentary Group reports** and other policy bodies. They also feature on several taskforces organised by the **British Psychology Society**, undertaken collaborative research with the **BBC** and **Mind**, and have written policy guidelines for **NHS England**, the **Red Cross**, **Amnesty International**, and many others.

For example, research supported by two small UKRI Communities and Culture Network+ grants investigated the impact of new digital forms of support on mental ill-health (Tucker). This was a collaboration with **the mental health charity Mind** (based in East London), to investigate the impact of online peer support on experiences of mental ill-health. Mind run a major Online Peer Support Community (Elefriends), which is one of the largest specialised online peer support mental health communities globally. This collaborative research included Mind staff as co-researchers and included local and national users of Elefriends. The project findings were fed directly back to Mind, who used them to design the guidance for Elefriends.



the british
psychological society



Department for
Digital, Culture,
Media & Sport

4.5 Our research engages with the commercial sector

Our researchers also have a strong track record of engaging with the commercial sector. For example, findings from one recent ESRC project hosted at UEL were used by **Thomas Cook** to contribute to the design of the leisure facilities at their holiday resorts. They also led to a project with New River, who own 35 **shopping centres** around the UK, to raise awareness of how shopping centres can be stressful and over-stimulating environments for children, and to introduce steps to minimise this. They also contributed to work with **Center Parcs**, and to consultancy work with other organisations including: Lego (multiple occasions), Fisher Price, Tesco, Dulux, Ikea, Argos, Nickelodeon, the Cartoon Network and Aardman Animations.

4.6 Our research is embedded within our local communities

As we have described throughout, our philosophy is to do things differently. We engage closely with local organisations to do research which engages with local peoples' lives (see section 3.2). At this, we believe that **we are world-leading**.

Through our community-based engagement we have contributed to the research base both nationally and internationally, and we have generated research which has been disseminated through the media around the world, and which has national and international policy impact. Our top priority, though, as a school, is to ensure that the results of our research are shared first amongst the local community organisations that make our research possible.

The research that makes us most proud is our **small-scale research**. For example, Dr Ava Kanyeredzi is the PI for the **Black Church Domestic Abuse Forum** - a collaboration of practitioners,

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

pastors, counsellors, journalists, lawyers, theologians and psychologists convened in East London. Through small-scale funding from the Cinnamon Network, it has developed training in domestic abuse awareness to support local churches. Insights from this research are already informing how responses to domestic abuse are integrated across church, health, social work and support agencies, to **make a real difference to real peoples' lives**.