

Institution: Queen's University Belfast
Unit of Assessment: 23
<p>1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy</p> <p><u>Introductory synopsis</u></p> <p>Education research at Queen's University has shown improvement over a series of REF cycles, achieved its highest ratings in REF 2014 and has sought to build on that. Noteworthy in our REF2014 submission was the significant and positive impact of our research in our own region, with its distinctive education system and its distinctive challenges. Since 2014 the University has undergone significant restructuring and a new institutional research strategy has been implemented. Education research at Queen's has thrived and grown further in this new context, with investment in staff and support leading to a growth in the scale and impact of our research. Furthermore, while our contribution to education in our own region remains a high priority, the internationalisation of our work and its impact has grown significantly. Our areas of research excellence, originally focused on addressing key challenges in our own context, are also key global challenges encompassing issues such as the role of education in ethnically divided, and often conflicted, societies; children's rights and voice; the impact of social disadvantage; equality and human rights; and the need for rigorous approaches to support evidence-informed policy. We have achieved this while significantly enhancing our level of inter-disciplinary work. The Institutional Environment Statement highlights the advances across the University to support research – including interdisciplinary research -- and in this Environment Statement we highlight the way Education research has thrived in this new context.</p> <p><u>Organisational structure, size and context</u></p> <p>Since REF2014 Education has become part of the new School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work (SSESW) which combines strengths in Education, Criminology, Social Policy, Social Work and Sociology. Education is supported as a core disciplinary group with its own academic lead (MacKenzie) and has a complement of 31.6 academic staff. In the School overall there are 75.2 academic staff, 31 contract research staff, 37 support staff and 154 PGR students.</p> <p>The School is led by a Head of School and senior management team. Our Director of Research (Hughes) Chairs our School Research Committee and is responsible for our School research strategy which emphasises our core disciplines and the opportunity to work in multidisciplinary modes. She also represents us at Faculty and University levels on research issues.</p> <p>University investment in research supports an ecosystem underpinned by core disciplines and new interdisciplinary centres of excellence. There are eight research centres or networks in the School, five of which have their foundations in Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centre for Evidence and Social Innovation (CESI) • Centre for Children's Rights (CCR) • Centre for Shared Education (CSE) • Centre for Applied Behaviour Analysis (CBA) • Centre for Language Education (CLE) <p>Three of these Centres have operated through REF2014 (CSE, CCR, CBA). The previous Centre of Effective Education was expanded to become the Centre for Evidence and Social Innovation (CESI). The Centre for Language Education has just been launched, reflecting the expansion of research and staffing in this area.</p>

Research and impact strategy

The School research strategy is committed to maintaining and enhancing our foundational core disciplines while encouraging interdisciplinarity and cross-disciplinary working. We are also committed to internationalisation, through strategic partnerships and attracting global talent, and the use of global excellence in our research for local impact.

We aim to produce world-leading research, expanding the frontiers of knowledge and understanding, informing policy and practice, and making a social difference locally, regionally and globally.

As noted above, we have five research centres with their foundations in Education. Three of these Centres were included in the REF2014 return and have expanded in the quality and impact of their research since then:

- CCR has 25 academic members from the disciplines of Education, Law, Sociology and Criminology and promotes research on the rights of children and young people, particularly those from disadvantaged and marginalised groups. Its research activity focuses on substantive children's rights issues, children's participation in decision-making and children's rights-based research methods. CCR has a significant role with UN bodies and its Lundy Model of Child Participation is widely used internationally.
- CSE has ten members and its work is focused on the processes involved in social cohesion and respect for diversity in schools in divided societies. Aligned with the development of the Northern Ireland model of Shared Education, which is now a statutory duty in Northern Ireland, the Centre is organised around research, programme development, and education and training. It has delivered national and international research on school collaboration in ethically and religiously divided societies. The University received a Queen's Anniversary Prize for Higher and Further Education for this work in 2019.
- In REF2014 CBA was identified as an emerging area and its research portfolio has since expanded. CBA has members from across the university and the local community and has links to research centres and organisations in India, USA, New Zealand, and across Europe. It conducts research on educational inequalities, social inclusion and the improvement of social and educational outcomes for all learners. Its conceptual basis is rooted in Radical Behaviourism with behaviour analytic research applications in education generally, including autism and other developmental disabilities.

In REF2014 the Centre for Effective Education (CEE) reported considerable expertise in the use of randomised controlled trials, and research using large-scale quantitative and longitudinal research, and systematic reviews. CEE was one of the core elements in a university-wide initiative on Improving Children's Lives (ICL), which included academics and centres across all three Faculties. Following the establishment of the new institutional research strategy, the core leadership group in CEE and ICL successfully submitted a proposal to establish a new, institutionally supported, interdisciplinary unit called the Centre for Evidence and Social Innovation (CESI).

CESI is the largest research centre in SSES with over 130 academics, researchers and support staff drawn from the disciplines of Education, Social work, Nursing and Midwifery, Public Health, Psychology, Economics, Sociology, Social Policy, Natural and Built Environment, and Criminology. CESI connects research evidence to solutions that improve the lives of children, families and communities, while its focus on innovation shapes its approach to bringing together academic research with policy and practice need, to foster faster positive social change. CESI currently organises its work around three core strands: good health and wellbeing; quality education; and sustainable cities and communities. CESI drives interdisciplinary collaboration within the University; has mobilised relationships and partnerships with a wide range of external stakeholders regionally, nationally and internationally; and leads capacity building in specialist research methodologies and approaches associated with the design and evaluation of

interventions in education, social care and health, and in broader approaches to evidence synthesis and the use of evidence in policy and practice.

CESI also hosts Campbell UK & Ireland, the national centre of the Campbell Collaboration. The Campbell Collaboration is an international, voluntary, non-profit research network that undertakes, promotes and publishes systematic reviews. Within this, the UK & Ireland Centre seeks to achieve positive social and economic change nationally by promoting an evidence-based approaches to policy and practice through the production and use of high-quality systematic reviews. The Centre also hosts the Education Co-ordinating Group (led by Miller, Editor) which has editorial responsibility for all of the education-focussed systematic reviews published by Campbell.

CLE is an emerging research area arising from the expansion of teaching and research in this area and the Centre was formally launched in 2021 with seven founding members. CLE is committed to conducting language education research across local, national and international contexts. Its founding members share goals on the nexus of critical studies and language learning, teaching and assessment. CLE has a number of current comparative projects underway, including work on the use of corpora to investigate language use in intercultural and multicultural contexts, and an extensive network of international partners in Indonesia, Japan and China.

The Senator George J. Mitchell Institute for Global Peace, Security and Justice was established as a global research institute of the University with a strong focus on interdisciplinary work. It has a Director and four theme leaders, and 65 Fellows (including three from Education) and 25 Associate Fellows (including three from Education). Through research, education and civic engagement, the Mitchell Institute aims to make a difference to the lives of ordinary people struggling with the aftermath of conflict by empowering them to realise fairness, justice and tolerance and the role of education in post-conflict reconstruction and tackling radicalisation is seen as particularly significant.

In our REF2014 submission we identified our key priorities as:

- undertaking high quality research
- sustaining our high level of external research funding and increase the proportion from UKRI or equivalent sources
- further developing collaboration with international partners, and
- continuing to play a major role in impacting on education policy and practice locally and enhancing our impact on national and international policy and practice.

This Environment Statement attests to our continued commitment to these goals and our success in meeting them.

The Institutional Environment Statement provides details on the enhanced support systems at Faculty and University level. Education research has benefitted from these developments through: additional funding streams to support networking and project development; enhanced advice and support from staff in the Research and Enterprise Directorate, including a dedicated Faculty Impact Officer; and dedicated support from a Faculty based Finance Office.

Impact is an institutional priority, as is outlined in the Institutional Environment Statement, and has always been a feature of Education research at Queen's. We are supported by our Faculty Impact Office and a University-wide Public Engagement Office. A series of our research projects, including work on Shared Education, CESI's work on Innovation Zones, and work on the impact of conflict on children and peacebuilding, have been highlighted as Signature Projects of the University's Social Charter, an institutional statement of our commitment to making a positive difference on society. Our work on these areas, and on Children's Rights, has been taken on by transnational organisations, including agencies of the United Nations, the Council of Europe and the British Council.

This is further underpinned by the University support systems, including the Engaged Research Strategy, the QPol blog and podcast series, and our links with Pivotal, Northern Ireland's only Social Policy Think Tank. Within Northern Ireland staff disseminate research findings and information through the Knowledge Exchange Seminars held in conjunction with the Northern Ireland Assembly, and local professional journals such as NI Agenda. Some staff are also regular contributors to public debate through radio and television media, and social media including the Slugger O'Toole, an award-winning news and opinion portal which takes a critical look at various strands of political politics in Ireland and Britain. Queen's is a foundation subscriber to The Conversation and regular training and briefing sessions are held with Conversation staff to encourage contributions. Education staff have contributed articles on autism, assessment, faith schools, education and conflict, and gender.

Interdisciplinary research (IDR)

Interdisciplinary research has always been encouraged within our research culture and, like many Education UoAs, the academic staff are drawn from a wide range of disciplinary backgrounds. The creation of the School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work significantly enhanced our commitment to interdisciplinary working, building on a wide range of projects involving staff across the disciplines was already underway, particularly in relation to policies and interventions impacting on the lives of children and young people. In order to encourage further exploration of interdisciplinarity in our work, and through an extensive consultation process involving all research staff in the school, we identified five interdisciplinary research groups (IRGS) connecting the School's core disciplines, including: health, wellbeing and inclusion; children, young people and families: policy and practice; contested societies; crime and social justice; and education: advancing understanding, improving outcomes. IRG leads were appointed with each taking responsibility for developing a programme of activity including, for example, regular group meetings, seminars, reading groups, visiting and speaker presentations. Additionally, whole school Research Away Days provide opportunity to share research developments across core disciplines.

Our research centres also provide a key basis for interdisciplinarity and most include academics from disciplines other than Education. The establishment of CESI has taken interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary work to a higher level, with membership of the Centre drawn from all three Faculties of the University. Interdisciplinarity is also a key feature of our work on the role of education in conflicted or divided societies, supported through the Senator George J. Mitchell Institute for Global Peace, Security and Justice, and in our work on children's rights and voice.

When it became clear that the pandemic would severely limit our face to face interaction, we introduced virtual 'meet new researchers' and '30 Minutes With' sessions. These weekly sessions are very popular with staff and PGR students and have now been extended to include external speakers, with between 30-50 staff participating regularly.

Open research

The Education UoA is fully compliant with the University's institutional open access (OA) policy and benefits from a dedicated team who deliver advice and training and monitor ongoing compliance. During the period OA has been embedded as the norm in Education research, with academic staff required to complete a mandatory training course – all new staff and PGRs receive training in OA requirements and a Library-based OA team act as the main point of contact for queries about OA and related issues. Virtually all of our publications subject to the OA Policy for REF are compliant.

Research integrity and ethics

All staff and students are aware of the importance of research ethics and integrity, with regular training available to all levels on all these issues offered both by the institution and by the

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

School's Research Ethics Committee. The latter offers workshops and Q&A sessions to all research students and staff, in addition to having developed a comprehensive digital training resource for ethical applications.

The School's Research Ethics Committee takes a 'quality promotion' approach, and is proactive in constructing guidelines for ethical conduct in general, and specifically in relation to data protection (for which the School has an additional policy to that of the institution), Covid19 considerations, and online and digital research. These novel contributions have since been adopted within many of the other schools within the Faculty. Members undertake and offer regular training in relation to changes in legislation, share exemplars of good practice and have a co-curated resource of academic texts on ethical concerns in addition to the BERA ethics guide. Since 2019, the School has implemented a tiered system of review for project proposals to develop the capacity of all staff, with additional layer of review for those applications requiring amendments, for further quality assurance. Regular updates on ethics issues are made available to all staff with core documents held on online sites.

The University's overall ethics policy is overseen centrally by a research governance office who conduct audits of the ethics application process.

2. People

Summary

The establishment of SSESW has provided additional investment in Education and new posts which have helped strengthen its core research areas and supported the emergence of new areas of research excellence. We have expanded our core complement and attracted a significant proportion of new staff from outside Northern Ireland, an aspiration that was challenging to deliver in the past.

The University has established a more supportive and holistic approach to personal development for all academic and contract research staff, and PGRs. Support arrangements for all staff and PGRs provide enhanced service delivery; new funding and logistical support and training streams; opportunities for Faculty-wide investment initiatives; and additional resource through the economies of scale gained from larger Schools. In addition, the appetite and level of support for interdisciplinarity in research and PGR activity has been enhanced.

Equality and diversity have always been institutional priorities and this commitment has been formalised through the establishment of institution-wide networks, both to support staff and to provide a critical voice in engagement with University policy.

Staffing profile and recruitment

Since REF2014 nine Education academics have left the Queen's University, including four retirements, while investment has allowed for the appointment of 14 new academic staff. These appointments support research and teaching across the Education portfolio, with notable appointments to enhance quantitative expertise in CESI, language research and behaviour analysis, the last two reflecting investment in developing and emerging research areas. Table 1 shows the current staff profile.

Table 1: Current staff profile (%) for Education UoA (based on FTEs)

	Professor	Senior Lecturer	Lecturer	All
Men	28.3	15.1	56.6	100
Women	22.3	19.4	58.3	100
All	24.4	17.9	57.7	100

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

Appointments include a mix of ECRs and experienced academics. Attracting academics to Education at Queen's from outside Northern Ireland has been challenging previously, but in the current REF period this has accounted for half of our new appointments.

Bagley was appointed as Head of School in 2017 and three colleagues have undertaken senior University leadership positions during the REF period: Faculty Dean of Graduate Studies (Elwood); Faculty Dean of Research (2016-18), Acting Pro Vice Chancellor for Research (2018-19) (Connolly); (Pro Vice Chancellor (2010-15), Acting Head of School (2017) and Acting Faculty Dean of Research (2018-19) (Gallagher).

The Senior Management Board (SMB) comprises the Head of School, School Manager, Directors of Research, Education, Graduate Studies and Internationalisation, an elected staff representative, and the SWAN lead. The Director of Research chairs the Research Committee, which includes a PGR representative, and is supported by an Impact Champion and REF Champion drawn from the academic staff, and a dedicated member of support staff. The Director of Research is a member of the Faculty Research Committee and the University Research Forum.

There are 31 contract researchers employed in the School with twelve working on projects with a core education component: many of the contract researchers work on interdisciplinary projects with colleagues from across the School or University.

In REF2014 88% of our academic staff were returned and we have adhered to the policy of seeking to attract and appoint research-active staff for almost all academic posts. The University has a category for staff in posts focused on professional activities where scholarship on teaching and pedagogy, but not academic research, is a contractual requirement: currently there are three of these staff working in Education, at Lecturer, Senior Lecturer and Professorial level.

Staff development and career progression

As outlined in the Institutional Environment Statement, the University launched a new strategy for staff development in 2018, supported by the People and Culture Directorate. A new approach to academic career development, designed in consultation with staff, takes a holistic view of everyone's contribution beyond a narrow set of metrics. The approach to workload allocation and academic profiles was revised in the light of these changes, with a category of 'citizenship' added to those of research and teaching in the profiles: this recognises and rewards leadership skills, collegiality, impact, and contribution to the discipline.

There is an extensive range of reward systems to recognise exceptional performance, contribution and accomplishments. Regular staff surveys monitor the implementation and impact of these arrangements. The Personal Development Review (PDR) process, in which all staff are assigned a mentor from amongst the experienced academic staff, is managed at the School level. The STAR (Staff Recognition) Scheme recognises and rewards staff for exceptional performance. Introduced in response to employee feedback, it allows managers to reward staff via a Performance Award (annually) or a Recognition Award (real time).

Support for all staff, particularly ECRs, and PGRs has been significantly enhanced as a consequence of the new institutional research strategy. All Schools are allocated a research budget which is managed by the Director of Research, in conjunction with core disciplinary leads, and is used to support individuals for conference travel and professional development opportunities; for research training and upskilling; support for PGR fieldwork costs; and to support seminars and guest speakers. A more clearly codified system for sabbatical leave has been implemented allowing staff to plan, well in advance, the most effective use of this opportunity.

Faculty provides a range of funding opportunities to support networking and proposal development and a research grant incentivisation scheme while dedicated staff from the

Research and Enterprise Directorate provide updates on external research funding opportunities. These staff also provide individual advice and support to proposal development. The Faculty Office includes a dedicated finance team who run all costings for external research grant proposals. An internal review process is applied to all proposals for external research funding and has been found to increase our level of success. There is also a Faculty Impact Officer who provides advice, support and training on impact activities and information on impact opportunities, particularly in relation to policy impact.

A series of support systems apply at institutional level. All new staff are provided with generous start-up packages to help establish their research careers during their probationary period, which normally lasts for up to three years, though accelerated confirmation in post is possible. New staff are supported by a mentor and meet with a panel to review progress at least annually.

ECRs and Postdocs

In SSESW support for ECRs is focused on contract research staff and colleagues recently appointed to their first academic post and contract research staff. All newly appointed ECR academics join our probationary programme, as outlined in the previous section, and are given generous start-up packages for their research activities, including time allocation and direct funding for conference attendance, professional development and pilot work. As part of their probation they are required to undertake a number of training courses and have access to a wide variety of additional training opportunities. Currently we have four Education academic staff in the probation programme.

The University is a signatory of the 'Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers' and holds the EU HR Excellence in Research Award. All contract researchers are guaranteed 10 annual development days and benefit from a 'Researcher Development Framework'. Contract researchers are encouraged to attend School Board and Away Day meetings, and contribute to seminar programmes across the School. An AHSS Researcher Society was established in 2019, with funding from Faculty to support training, talks and related activities. Annual Researcher Prizes were established in 2018 to recognise the exceptional contributions of these colleagues to the University. In particular, the prizes aim to reward those who excel in what they do, who 'go the extra-mile' in their research, in their contribution to the life of the University, in their contribution to Public Engagement and in the provision of support for their group, colleagues, or School. Contract researchers across the University have a Forum where their perspectives on issues can be made direct to the PVC with responsibility for research and enterprise.

PGR Students

A University Graduate School was established in 2015 with a dedicated building with facilities for self-study and training, classrooms and event space. The SSESW Doctoral Research Centre was absorbed into the Graduate School to ensure they had full access to the Post Graduate Development Programme. This provides students with access to training programmes in writing and research methods, personal development, leadership and employability programmes. The Graduate School also serves as a social and academic hub for students across all disciplines, creating a space for inter-disciplinarity, and fostering links within the university and beyond. Supplementary bespoke training is provided by the School.

In 2016 Queen's was a lead partner in the successful bid for the ESRC Northern Ireland North East (NINE) DTP with the Universities of Durham, Newcastle, Northumbria, Teesside, Sunderland and Ulster. Elwood was appointed the first Academic Director of the NINE DTP at Queen's (2016-2018). Education at Queen's was accorded pathway status in NINE DTP as well as aligned to three other interdisciplinary pathways: Health and Well-being; Children, Youth and Families; and Conflict, Security and Justice. Our MRes in Social Sciences Research was accorded ESRC accredited status through the NINE DTP. To date three students from Education at Queen's have gained NINE DTP scholarships. All full time doctoral students are

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

entitled to office accommodation and computing facilities and our success in completions continues to grow: of the average annual rate of Doctoral completions has risen from 16.6 during REF2014 to 18.8 for REF2021.

The table below shows the number of doctoral graduates per year disaggregated by traditional and professional programmes are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: PhD and professional programme graduates per year

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	Total
PhD	9	5	8	6	8.46	7.19	7	50.65
EdD	6	8	15	18	11	13.73	10	81.73
DCh*	1			1	1		0.27	3.27
Total	16	13	23	25	20.46	20.92	17.27	135.65

*Sociology degree supervised by UoA23 submitted staff member

The development of a new Integrated PhD in SSESW reflects our concern to realign doctoral provision to reflect the models of DTPs within the UKRI doctoral training frameworks. We will combine training with independent research and retain the depth and rigour of a traditional research degree. The training routes may vary, but will typically consist of a one-year Master's course (MRes) leading directly into a three-year PhD.

All PGR students are assigned two supervisors. A Supervisory Forum was established in 2018 and provides guidance on regulation and a dedicated space for discussing and clarifying the supervisory process. The Graduate School also provides ongoing supervisory training. A student/staff partnership programme for good practice in supervision has been developed between the Graduate School and the Students Union. A School PGR Forum was established in 2017 to provide a mechanism for student voice and networking opportunities. A PGR representative also sits on the school Research Committee. Since 2008 SSESW has run a student-led Annual PGR conference, initially co-organised with University College Dublin. Over the REF period an average of 38 papers were presented at each annual conference.

All PGRs are required to participate in Annual Progress Review (APR) where a student presents their progress to an independent panel of academics from the School which recommend advancement if satisfactory progress is being made.

Equality and diversity

Equality and diversity issues have been an institutional priority for many years. Current University policy on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) is outlined in the Institutional Environment Statement, as is the establishment of a network of initiatives and support groups, most of which include the active involvement of Education academic staff.

The Queen's Gender Initiative is a long-standing commitment to provide networking opportunities for women academics and provide support for promotion opportunities, and Education academics have both contributed to and benefitted from network activities and mentoring. SSESW was awarded a Bronze Swan award in 2016 and re-applied in 2020: we are currently awaiting the outcome. Two colleagues (Elwood; Donnelly) have participated in the AURORA leadership programme (Advance HE) which is designed to harness the leadership potential of aspirant female leaders. Elwood is currently the AURORA Champion for the Faculty and has mentored three cohorts of AURORA participants across the AHSS Faculty. Staff returning from a period of maternity leave are offered a 'teaching-free' semester. Inter alia this same right is accorded to all staff returning from a lengthy period of illness.

The University's Disability Action Plan promotes positive attitudes towards, and encourages participation from, disabled staff and students.

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

In 2016 Queen's launched its Trans Equality Policy and won a 2019 Universities HR Award for its work to provide equality for those who identify as transgender or transsexual.

In 2018 Queen's established PRISM as our LGBT+ network for staff to provide a safe, inclusive and welcoming space for staff, promote LGBT+ equality across the campus and inform University policy. PRISM won the Best LGBT+ Initiative at the 2019 NI Equality and Diversity Awards.

In 2019 iRise was established as a network for BAME and International Staff. In addition to providing networking opportunities, and advice and support, iRise helps to influence University policy on inclusion. Four academic staff from the Education UoA are on the iRise Committee, one of whom has been a member of the External Advisory Group for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion for UKRI since the inception of that group in 2019.

We operate a reasonable working hours' policy, whereby meetings are only held (as far as is possible) between 10am and 4pm to help staff with parental/caring responsibility, and the designation of research only days for all staff provides protected time. The University and School's commitment to staff and student wellbeing is further reflected in the response to COVID19: staff were explicitly encouraged to prioritise family commitments where required, and a 'work pause' was introduced in July and December 2020 where all staff were encouraged to suspend online School activity to enable a period of mental and physical rest.

3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

Overview of research grants/income and strategies for funding

In REF2014 Education at Queen's reported an exceptionally high level of research grant income, largely as a consequence of funding for work on Shared Education from two major Foundations. The work on this theme continues, albeit at more modest funding levels, and a priority over the REF2021 period was to sustain and diversify our funding sources. With an average research income of over £2m per annum during the REF2021 period we have sustained our high level of funding, while an extension of our funding sources has been achieved through a range of bodies supporting work on large scale trials, in the UK and internationally, and an increase in the level of funding from UK research councils or equivalent sources. The overall profiles of research income for the two periods is shown on Table 2.

Table 2: Research income profile (%average per year) for REF2014 (2008-12) and REF2021 (2013-19)

	Research income profile (%) 2009-12	Research income profile (%) 2013-19
UK-based charities (open competitive process)	27	56
UK central government bodies/local authorities, health and hospital authorities	29	24
Health research funding bodies	0	9
BEIS Research Councils, The Royal Society, British Academy and The Royal Society of Edinburgh	1	6
Non-EU-based charities (open competitive process)	22	1
EU-based charities (open competitive process)	9	1
EU government bodies	2	1
Other	9	2
TOTAL	100	100

Under the institutional research strategy there has been a significant enhancement in support from the Research and Enterprise Directorate in relation to external research grants and, in particular, large projects addressing significant global challenges. This support includes more effective intelligence on funding opportunities and greater support for the development of proposals. Within the Faculty there is an internal peer-review process for all proposals which has increased our success rate in applications.

In addition, funding is available from Faculty to support networking and related activity aimed at outputs or the development of research proposals, while institutional support and advice is available to support engaged research.

Over the REF period we have received 14 major research grants (£200k+) worth a total of £8.8m. These have included grants from the National Institute of Health Research the ESRC, the Education Endowment Foundation and the Medical Research Council. The topics of these projects include studies on early childhood development and peacebuilding (Connolly, Dunne and Miller); a multi-site cluster randomised trial of an interactive film-based intervention to reduce teenage pregnancy and promote positive sexual health (O'Hare); the role of a city in promoting food, education, trust and health (Dunne); cluster randomized control trials of SMART Spaces implementation (O'Hare, Cockerill, Stark, & Thurston); the effectiveness of an Enhanced Book-Gifting Intervention for Improving Reading Outcomes for Children in Care (Connolly and Roberts); and the Political Economies of School Exclusion and their Consequences (Duffy, Gallagher and Lundy).

Most of the larger awards have come through CESI and reflect the expertise it has developed in the use of large-scale randomized control trials to test interventions, and related work on intervention design and implementation. There have also been strong programmes of work on children's rights and participation, and the application of Lundy Model, and on the role of education in divided societies including work on school networks, and these are reflected particularly in the impact case studies included in this submission.

At an institutional level, applications for small external grants are not prioritised, apart from exceptional circumstances. Nonetheless, in Education we recognize the value of local engagement and sometimes this provides a warrant for modest external awards addressing significant local issues as in, for example, SCOTENS awards which support all-Ireland networking and engagement on issues related to teacher education: the value of these awards belies their strategic significance and, where appropriate, these are part of our income planning and research culture. More generally there are a number of local funding sources where the potential income is modest, but the priority of making a positive contribution to our society, and supporting work particularly in the Northern Ireland school system, is important.

Organisational structure and support for research and impact

SSESW is located in five buildings close to the main Lanyon Building at the heart of the University campus and beside the University's central McClay Library. One building contains the support staff for undergraduate support, one has support staff for postgraduate support and one is mainly dedicated to PGR students. Academic staff are provided with individual offices and are located across all of the buildings. Investment of £500k allowed for the refurbishment of a building dedicated to CESI which houses the Director and support staff, and the contract researchers working on CESI projects.

The SSESW Director of Research administers a research budget with the two core disciplinary leads, including Education (MacKenzie), which is used to support participation in conferences and related study activities. Funds are also available to support REF-related activities, including training in research writing, impact activities and assessment of outputs. Following the advent of the pandemic the research strategy budget was repurposed to support small-scale exploratory projects on the impact of lock downs, with the intention that these could translate to larger scale funding proposals.

The Research and Enterprise Directorate was established in 2011 and received significant investment during the REF2021 period to expand its activities. Academic staff have access to specialist advice and support and the pre- and post-award stages, with support for proposal development and costing, and post-award support for managing grants, administration and recruitment. Research and Enterprise also has an Impact team, with a central manager and dedicated Impact Officers for each Faculty. A series of institutional funds are available to provide seed funding for research activity, most notably support for engaged research.

The AHSS Faculty has dedicated support staff who provide expert advice on funding opportunities and on the development of proposals. These staff attend the Faculty Research Committee and circulate regular updates on opportunities to all academic staff. An internal peer review process was established within the Faculty as a means of providing useful feedback at the proposal writing stage and has resulted in a higher success rate with submissions. Faculty has a dedicated fund to support networking and pilot activities as part of proposal development with regular calls to the fund through the academic year. Within Research and Enterprise an ESRC Acceleration Account is available to support impact activities and an Education academic (Dunn) is a member of the Steering Committee.

At all levels of the University effective use is made of social media and web-based vehicles to promote understanding and awareness of research underway in the University and its relevance to our society. During the covid lockdown a series of podcast series were established and contributions from Education academics have included programmes on shared education, the role of education in conflict, radicalization and education and the impact of the Social Charter. Queen's is also a partner in the Pivotal Think Tank and Education academics have contributed to its seminars and podcast on education policy debates. Education has also contributed to the Queen's policy blog (QPol) and The Conversation.

Operational infrastructure, facilities and specialist equipment

The SSESW Director of Research is the strategic lead for the School as a whole and represents our interests at Faculty and University level. Within the School the Director of Research works with two core disciplinary leads, including Education (MacKenzie). Each of the five buildings used by the School contains teaching and seminar rooms, with open access computer facilities widely available. PGRs in the School have their own dedicated building – for admin support, office space, social space and a kitchen – and access to the facilities of the University Graduate School. The Library has staff dedicated to supporting Education and runs regular training and information sessions for PGRs and staff, especially ECRs and postdocs.

The dedicated CESI building is housed over 4 floors on a site close to the main campus. In addition to a reception and waiting areas, the building has 20 offices of varying occupancy that can accommodate 60 research and professional support staff. There are two multi-functional research suites, equipped with double sided mirrors for observation of focus groups, family therapy groups, or related activities, and also a room that is used as a secure data storage space. There is a large seminar room with the capacity to hold 60+ delegates and two ground floor meeting rooms these are all fully equipped with presentation screens, AV equipment and remote conference call facilities. On the fourth floor there is designated office space for up to 16 visiting fellows or academics. The building has three kitchens and a large bright staff dining/breakout area. On the ground floor there is also a wellbeing room for staff, with additional facilities within this that are designed to be used by our colleagues who are breastfeeding.

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

Summary

Academics in the Education UoA have always been well-connected with key education stakeholders in our own region and have played an important role in supporting educational

developments, as well as carrying out and reporting research on issues of significant local concern. Alongside this our staff are active participants in national and international professional associations, and in editorial roles in academic journals, locally, nationally and internationally. We outline below our current network of connections and the growth of internationalisation in our research partnerships and networks of influence: internationalisation for us is evident both in terms of partnerships with academic colleagues and institutions across the world, but also in our engagement with policymakers, NGOs and international organisations. Allied with the evidence included in our Impact Case Studies, it is also evident in the way the research we carry out is having an impact on the policy for, and delivery of, education in different parts of the world.

Academic collaborations and contribution to the wider academic community

All Education academics are encouraged to join and play an active role in national and international professional disciplinary organisations, with many being members of BERA and AERA. In line with the institutional research strategy, enhanced funding support is available from the School and Faculty for conference attendance, student visits and networking activities, including the organisation and delivery of seminars and workshops. Since REF 2014 the level of international engagement by academic staff from the Education UoA has increased, as has the extent to which our work is responding to and impacting on global issues and being carried out with international partners, particularly in Asia, Europe, the Mediterranean region and North America. Based on the principle of global excellence and local impact we retain a high priority to engagement with practitioners, policymakers and NGOs working on education issues in our own region: as an anchor institution with a commitment to place this has always been a feature of the work of Queen's University and, as noted above, was institutionalised in our Social Charter. In Education we see ourselves as playing a particularly important role in this ambition. This section of the environment statement reflects academic partnerships and engagement.

Education academics in Queen's are well connected to the local and international disciplinary community and play significant roles in the discipline. Elwood is an elected Fellow of Association of Educational Assessment Europe and served as President of the Association from 2018 to 2020; Gallagher, Connolly and Hughes are elected Fellows of the Academy of Social Sciences; Thurston is a Distinguished Visiting Professor at Zhengzhou University, China; and Hughes holds a UNESCO Chair on Globalising the Shared Education Model for Improving Relations in Divided Societies. Gallagher, Hughes and Thurston are members of the ESRC Peer Review College. Belluigi is a member of UKRI's Future Leaders Fellowships Peer Review College and a Newton Prize reviewer.

Members of the UoA play roles in a number of professional associations. Donnelly is a member of the organising committee of the BELMAS UK review of Educational leadership, Management and Administration. Thurston was the Secretary/Treasurer of the AERA Cooperative Learning SIG from 2014 to 2017. Hughes has acted as a reviewer for the National Research Councils of Hong Kong and the Netherlands, and was a member of the Executive Council of the British Educational Research Association until 2016. Gallagher has acted as a reviewer for the National Research Council in Israel. Bhatt is a Trustee and Governing Council member for the Society for Research into Higher Education (SRHE), and co-convener of the Society's Digital University Network. Bagley and Hughes are on the Learner Research Network Advisory Board. O'Hare was Chair of Children's Research Network (2016-2018). Elwood was an appointed member of the International Panel for the Norwegian Research Council Review of Educational Research (2016-17). Dillenburger is a Visiting Professor at the University of Applied Sciences in Würzburg, Germany. Storey was secretary of the European Association of Behaviour Analysis until 2020. Dunne is Expert Consultant for Early Childhood Peace Consortium and Program Co-Chair for the AERA Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis Special Interest Group. Kerr is a Trustee of the UK Field Studies Council (FSC). Belluigi is a Research Associate of the Chair for the Transformation of Higher Education of Nelson Mandela University, South Africa, and was a Visiting Professor to Jadavpur University, India until 2020. Engman is the Strand organizer on Language Maintenance and Revitalisation, American Association of Applied Linguistics.

Five academics in the Education UoA are actively involved in the Syrian Programme of the Council of At Risk Academics (CARA), one of whom serves as a member of the Steering Committee for the academic programme in Syria (since 2018). This involves mentorship of research applications, research process and outputs.

Staff also play active roles in academic journals, with most staff acting as reviewers. Many staff also play more formal editorial roles in academic journals. Thurston is Editor in Chief of the International Journal of Educational Research (IJER), and on the Editorial Boards of Technology, Pedagogy and Education, and Educational Psychology. Gallagher was the lead editor of Education, Citizenship and Social Justice until 2020, and is a Board member of Irish Educational Studies and the Journal of Children's Studies. Biggart is Editor of Youth Studies. Bagley is Deputy Editor of Ethnography and Education. Elwood is an executive editor of *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy and Practice*. Bhatt is the Executive Editor for Teaching in Higher Education and on the Editorial Boards of Teaching in Higher Education and Post Digital Science & Education. Hughes was co-editor of the British Educational Research Journal until 2015 and was until recently a member of the Editorial Board. She is also on the Editorial Boards of Ethics and Education and Policy Futures in Education. Miller is Editor of the Campbell Education Coordinating group with editorial responsibility for all education systematic reviews published by the journal Campbell Systematic Reviews. Chong is an associate editor of Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching, and managing editor of Higher Education Research and Development and managing editor, Research and Practice in Autonomy.

Much of the extensive academic engagement is carried out through our research centres and is focused on our current and developing areas of research excellence:

- CESI is currently running projects with international academic partners, with the LINKS project, run in partnership with UNICEF Yale, Harvard and New York University (USA), along with research teams in Vietnam, Egypt, Timor-Leste, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Mali, the most extensive. CESI also hosts Campbell UK & Ireland, a national centre of the international Campbell Collaboration.
- CSE has been supported by GCRF funding to work in West Asia and South East Europe, and has carried out joint seminars and exchange programmes with academic partners in the USA, Lebanon, South Africa, Cyprus and Israel.
- Education staff work collaboratively through the Council for at Risk Academics to provide mentorship on research applications, research process and outputs for displaced academics.
- CBA has an extensive network of research partnerships in North American and Europe largely focused on the delivery of research outputs and support materials.
- CLE has extensive partnerships with academic partners in Indonesia, China and Japan, including work focused on the use of corpora to investigate language use in intercultural and multicultural contexts.

We welcome Visiting Fellows to Belfast and have been awarded Visiting Fellowships in global partners, including Fulbright Teacher awards for US practitioners, Visiting Fellows from North Macedonia, the USA, Australia, Italy, Greece, China, Czechia, France, South Africa and Pakistan. There are also extensive partnerships with major UK and Irish universities in collaborative research projects, currently including Oxford, Cardiff, Glasgow, University College Dublin, Birmingham, Kent and Reading. Colleagues have also delivered invited keynote talks in a host of global universities in Europe, the USA, Indonesia, Malaysia, Australia, India and China.

Among the international academic conferences hosted in Queen's during the REF period are the following: Campbell Collaboration Colloquium (2014), BERA (2015), UNESCO Colloquium and Unitwin Chair Network Conference (2018), the 26th International Conference on Learning (2019), 4th DOCTRID Conference (2015), 4th CBA Conference (2015). In addition, we co-hosted the 'Advancing Critical University Studies' (2019) held at Nelson Mandela University, South Africa.

Staff have received recognition of their work in a variety of contexts, including awards for published work from academic journals and international professional associations, with the most notable in the REF period being the award to the University of a Queen's Anniversary Prize for Higher and Further Education for our work on Shared Education, presented by HRH Prince Charles in 2020.

Engagement with non-academic communities

As part of our local commitment to education in Northern Ireland we have widespread institutional and individual links with key regional stakeholders such as the Department of Education (DE), the Education Authority (EA), the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) and the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA), as well as all the representative groups in education in our region. We have strong links with non-departmental public bodies, such as the Office of the NI Commissioner for Children and Young People and the Equality Commission, and organisations in the voluntary and community sector. Staff from the Education UoA engage with policymakers and politicians on a regular basis and are often called on to offer advice and evidence on education policy issues. Our staff have provided formal evidence briefings to the NI Assembly Education Committee and often receive invitations to meet and work with community groups.

Examples of this work include:

- The provision of advice to NI and UK organisations, such as the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) steering group for the TIMSS 2015 study in Northern Ireland (McClune); NI Expert for PISA 2018 (NFER) and PISA 2022 (University of Oxford/Pearson) (Elwood); the NI Interfaith Forum (Nelson); the Children's Research Network of Ireland and Northern Ireland (CRNINI) (O'Hare was Chair of the Executive Committee 2016-18); and the Education for Sustainable Development Forum (Kerr).
- CSE engages closely and regularly with local education bodies and the Social Change Initiative, while Hughes led a project for the EU Special Support Programme Body (SEUPB) commission to develop measures which were included in the shared education strand of PEACE IV.
- A major focus of CESI's work has been with distressed urban communities in Belfast, working in collaboration with community organisations to develop and inform a long-term regeneration strategy with the educational needs of children and young people at its core.
- CBA has carried out research with the Royal Victoria Hospital Belfast which has informed the development of eye-care services for children in special educational settings across the UK, and with local airports and carriers to use an innovative video modelling technique and Natural Environment Teaching to support children with autism to travel by aeroplane.
- CLE has worked with Barnardos to provide Initial English Language Support for adults and children who are newly arrived to NI, most notably from the Syrian civil war, and has collaborated with the Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre to develop language programmes for newly settled migrants and refugees (O'Boyle).
- Miller is a member of the What Works Trial Advice Panel (TAP) which aims to improve impact evaluation across central government in the UK, providing free advice to policy teams and analysts and training to civil servants on the benefits and technicalities of impact evaluation and is a member of the Education Endowment Expert Advisory Group.
- Elwood was an invited member of Peer Review panel for CCEA for 2020 and 2021 Centre Assessed Grades.

Our engagement with non-academic communities has an important international dimension, with a high priority on work related to our experience as a divided society which has gone through a period of violent conflict and developed a peace process rooted in the principles of equality and human rights:

- The CESI LINKS project works with UNICEF Offices across the world (in Vietnam, Egypt, Timor-Leste, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Mali) on early childhood development and peacebuilding. Through this project Connolly, Dunne and Miller have established a global network of researchers and practitioners who share a commitment to contributing to sustainable development and peacebuilding through investment in high quality ECD programmes.
- CSE has a long-standing programme of work in Israel and South East Europe, especially Kosovo and North Macedonia, in which they have engaged with national and local government bodies, education organizations and NGOs. There are enduring relationships with the Jerusalem Municipal Authority, the Center for Education Technology and the Abraham Initiatives (Tel Aviv), the Center for Human Rights and Conflict Resolution (Skopje) and the Los Angeles Unified School District. These organizations have adapted the NI Model of Shared Education to their own contexts and some of the work in South East Europe has been facilitated by the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the EU. UNESCO, UNICEF and the British Council have shown a keen interest in the shared education model and CSE has worked closely with these organisations to explore potential for the model.
- Staff have worked with the Council of Europe on various aspects of its mission to promote democracy and human rights. Gallagher is a member of the Council's CDPPE Sub-Group on Higher Education Policy, the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Local Mission of Higher Education, and as a member of the writing team for the higher education volume of the Reference Framework for Competences for Democratic Culture. Gallagher is also a Deputy Board Member of the European Wergeland Centre, Oslo.
- The Council on Children's rights and UN agencies have adopted and promoted the Lundy Model of Child Participation as an exemplar approach to international advocacy on the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. CCR works closely with UNICEF, the UN Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence Against Children and a range of international NGOs including Child Rights Connect, Save the Children, Plan International and Terres des Hommes. This work has also had an impact on law and practice in Ireland, New Zealand, Colombia and Australia.
- CBA has developed a standardised qualification framework for 'Job Coach for People with Disabilities' across Europe and Dillenburger has been involved in delivering training and support to special education staff for the Department of Education in the Czech Republic.
- From CLE Linse has a longstanding relationship with Cambridge Global English and has co-developed primary level texts for second language learners and a Macmillan 4-level pre-primary course designed to stimulate young learners which has been shortlisted for British Council awards.
- We have noted above the Queen's Anniversary Prize (2019) to the University for its work on Shared Education, and this work has also been acknowledged in an award to the University from the Los Angeles City Council in a special ceremony in 2017.

Wider impact on non-academic world and communities

Queen's University has always played a significant role in its local region and the research work of the Education UoA is an important example of that work. We have always maintained close and positive relationships with all education stakeholders in Northern Ireland, and play an important role in informing and critiquing education policy and practice here. Many of our staff work with government departments, arms-length bodies and NGOs, and we have regular engagements with officials in the Department of Education, the Education Authority, education interest groups and teacher trade unions. In this REF cycle our capacity to engage has been enhanced through the strengthening of the University's capacity in this area, whether this is through the establishment of the Public Engagement Office, contributing Signature Projects to the University's Social Charter, the development and support of an engaged research policy, our institutional role in The Conversation and our own vehicles for disseminating our research and expertise through the QPol blog or the University podcast series.

The University is also committed to global excellence and internationalisation in research, with a commitment to using global excellence for local impact as the connection between our international and local missions. Over this REF period the Education UoA has made an important contribution to this priority, whether this is work on community divisions and conflict, children's rights, the role of disadvantage in educational opportunities and outcomes, and interventions to support children and young people with special and additional needs – all of these are challenges in Northern Ireland, but are key global challenges as well.

The extent to which the research excellence of the UoA has developed a strong international profile is confirmed through our impact case studies highlighting, for example, the way the Lundy Model of Child Participation has been adapted and promoted by UN agencies as an exemplar approach to international advocacy on the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Following this endorsement Children's Rights agencies in countries across the world have used the Lundy Model to ensure the voice of children and young people is heard in matters affecting their future. A further example is the way the Northern Ireland Model of Shared Education is being adapted for implementation in a number of divided societies.

The internationalisation of our work is highlighted even more by the way staff in CESI have developed world-leading expertise in the use of randomized control trials to evaluate interventions and have used this expertise to work on intervention design. A large volume of this work has been carried out for the Education Endowment Fund and thus contributed to evidence-informed practice in schools and classrooms. This expertise has led to international collaboration with leading US universities in research on early childhood education and peacebuilding.

All of this work is indicative of a trajectory of development for Education research in Queen's which has been evident over a series of REF cycles. In this current cycle it has been further enhanced through investment in new posts and the way we have attracted a much higher proportion of international staff to join us than ever before. The restructuring of the University during the REF cycle has also enabled this process by enhancing the economies of scale provided by a larger School, while at the same time strengthening research collaboration which had already existed. Additional investment in the support infrastructure of the University for research has provided enhanced information and advice, and this has contributed to heightened ambition and achievement in our research outcomes. Support by the University for internationalisation has enhanced opportunities for engagement, networking and relationship-building, while practical support for international workshops, seminars and partnership development has provided the seed-bed for greater impact and excellence. The fact that these developments are rooted in a sustainable infrastructure suggests that we can plan confidently for further improvement in the years ahead.