Institution: University of Worcester

Unit of Assessment: 23 Education

1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy

Unit context and structure

This submission consists primarily of staff from the School of Education, with one staff member from another School whose activity is focused in Education. The School is constituted of four departments, which are the organisational units for initial teacher education (Departments of Primary Education and Secondary Education), education studies and teacher/school leader professional development (Department of Education and Inclusion) and early childhood awards (Department of Children and Families). Research activity is located both within departmental units and their specialisms, as well as cross-School through Research Groups.

The submission is built around five research groups (Social Psychology of Education; Social Justice; Post Compulsory Education; Religion and Society; and Inclusion by Design). Each of the research groups has a regular programme of research activities, drawing together doctoral researchers, staff, external academics, and members of the public.

The Social Psychology of Education Research Group (led by Kington) focuses on the importance of social and learning relationships across all phases of education, in both formal and informal settings, and how these impact on the effectiveness and retention of practitioners, and the quality of children's learning experiences. The group currently has 22 members from across the Schools of Education and Psychology, as well as five associate members (academics and practitioners). In addition to monthly discussion meetings, the group hosts specialist research methods training, research skills workshops, and a seminar series open to the public. The group has supported members in the development of their writing and, in addition to many individual publications, 2020 saw the publication of a book co-authored and edited by members of the group. Further, 12 members of the group have embarked on the 'Teacher Identity and Retention Project (TRIP)', a mixed-methods, longitudinal research study exploring how the reasons for teachers choosing to remain in the profession relate back to individual and collective identity.

The Social Justice Research Group (led by Woolley) is engaged in research around education and social justice, including issues relating to diversity, equality and inclusion. It shares work in progress through seminars in a mutually supportive environment that gives critical and insightful enrichment to individual activities. Several members contributed chapters to the volume *Understanding Inclusion: core concepts, policy and practice* (Routledge 2018), bringing together experienced and emerging researchers and building capacity by jointly writing this significant publication in the field.

The Post Compulsory Education Research Group is comprised of colleagues employed in, or associated with, the University of Worcester and its educational partners (led by Elliott and Dhillon). The aim of the group has been to provide a supportive and strategic forum in which members and associates plan, undertake and disseminate applied research, with a clear focus on enhancing the understanding and quality of learning, teaching, management and leadership in post-compulsory education.

The Religion and Society Research Group is a cross-University, interdisciplinary, and external collaboration with colleagues at Worcester co-founded and convened by Parker (Education), Darren Oldridge (History) and Worcester Cathedral (The Rev'd Canon Dr Georgina Byrne, also an Hon. Fellow of the UW). Colleagues across the University and beyond are affiliated with the group - (Prof Rob Freathy (Exeter) and international affiliates, notably Professors Schweitzer (Tubingen) and Simojoki (Humboldt, Berlin). Three doctoral students have completed their projects within the group (one UW-funded; one Leverhulme Trust-funded) on the history of RE teachers and teaching (Russell), collective worship in schools (Shillitoe), and religious education

policy in Wales (Jones). Two further doctoral students are working with Parker. Further, a Turkish government-funded visiting doctoral researcher spent a term with Parker on the development of theological and religious education in England in 2019 (Utku). In late 2020, Dr Maria Lucenti, a German funding council Prime DAAD scholar, began work with Parker on Islam in religious education textbooks in England. The Religion and Society Research Group worked closely with Byrne at Worcester Cathedral in 2018 on a series of public lectures on Religion and Society during Advent, the inaugural lecture of which was given by Parker on religious education in British broadcasting. The Religion and Society Research Group is the home of the international peer-reviewed *Journal of Beliefs and Values: Studies in Religion and Education* and *Brill Research Perspectives in Religion and Education*, both of which are edited by Parker.

The Inclusion by Design Research Group (led by Bracken) brings together academics, students and student services colleagues who are interested in strengthening learning outcomes and social experiences of diverse learners. This community of researchers and practitioners is keen to extend internal and external networks to promote ever greater inclusive practice through inclusive curriculum and learning space design.

The School of Education sits within the College of Arts, Humanities and Education. The new College structure was implemented in 2018/19 to ensure greater support for Research & Knowledge Exchange and Learning & Teaching in Schools, more consistency of practice, wider sharing of good practice, and increased opportunity for interdisciplinary activities. College Directors of Research & Knowledge Exchange and of Learning & Teaching were appointed to meet these objectives (REF 5a 1.1.5).

Research across the College is overseen by a College Director of Research and Knowledge Exchange (Dr Paul Newland) who works closely with the School senior leadership teams and the Research School on areas of research strategy and recruitment and staff development. The Director chairs the College RKE subcommittee which oversees implementation of University RKE strategy, works with Research Group leads, and organises research events and training.

Research and impact strategy

Unit's strategic research objectives during the assessment period

In its REF 2014 submission, the unit identified the following strategic objectives: to develop its research groups; to develop its research leadership through recruitment, progression and honorary appointments.

These objectives were elaborated and extended in the School's Research and Knowledge Exchange Strategy (2014-19) which flowed from the institutional research strategy (REF5a 2.1). The School's overarching strategic ambition was to deliver excellent research which would make a difference to the lives of its target communities. To achieve this, it would: increase its income from research; increase its research student body; enhance its research culture; and recruit and develop excellent researchers at all career stages. As with the University strategy (REF5a 2.2), the unit has been largely successful in meeting its objectives. This will be elaborated throughout this narrative, but we particularly note the following:
- There has been a significant increase in income over the period compared to REF 2014: average income for the last REF assessment period was £25k per annum; for this assessment period, it is £118k.
- The unit had 18 doctoral completions in the assessment period, compared to 8 in REF2014.
- The unit has appointed two new professors (Dhillon and Savin-Baden); two staff have been promoted to professor (Kington, Woolley), and two honorary professors have been appointed (West-Burham and McCulloch).

Impact Strategy

The unit's approach to facilitating impact has included:
- Appointing an Impact champion who works to support staff to identify and develop their impact
- Enhancing staff understanding of impact through staff development, specifically through all-staff away days focused on research impact
- Engaging strategically with stakeholders such as local authorities, schools, educational practitioners, charities and not for profit organisations
- Recognising and rewarding publication in professional journals
- Presenting regularly at conferences with practitioner audiences
- Embedding research in the curriculum
- Feeding research into CPD

The selected Impact Case Studies show many of these approaches in action:
- *ICS1 - Enhancing educational policy, practice and performance by increasing understanding of teacher identity and development at all career stages*
  The case study articulates how researchers worked closely with stakeholders in the development and dissemination of the research and how their research informed the development of CPD for schools.
- *ICS2 - Enhancing inclusive practice in educational settings*
  The case study demonstrates how impact has flowed from research informing the curriculum and informing educational practitioners.

Inter-disciplinary Research

The University's College Structure was developed as an enabler of interdisciplinary research (REF5a 2.5). College Directors of RKE are tasked with identifying and developing interdisciplinary opportunities across Schools in a College but also between Colleges where appropriate. This is manifested in the submitting unit through the research groups outlined above.

Open Research

The University is committed to developing and maintaining an Open Research environment. It fundamentally recognises the value of open access publication to the HE sector, to the public, to the University and its researchers, but most vitally to the integrity and value of its research.

All staff are required to upload outputs from research onto WRaP, the University's research repository. The College is provided with monthly reports on Open Access (OA) compliance from a central Open Access Team based in Library Services (see REF5a 2.6). Information about WRaP and OA features in staff induction; training workshops are offered through the staff development programme; and 1-1 support is available on request from the Open Access and Advocacy Support officer.

The University will look to review and revise its Open Access Policy in 2021 in light of national and international developments, in particular Plan S. The University has recently signed up to the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) and has established a working group to implement its principles.

Research Integrity

At University level, the University's Research Integrity & Governance Committee has oversight of policies and procedures to support research integrity, and its Chair is the University's Research Integrity Champion. The Champion is expected to embed a culture of integrity across University through developing training and support for staff but also raising its profile.

At College level, Research Ethics Panels are responsible for review of all staff and research student projects to ensure they are conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards. Panel Chairs (Kington) and Vice Chairs (Gossman) are experienced researchers, whilst panel reviewers are drawn from across the College; lay reviewers are also recruited to the panel. Training is provided to all reviewers before they engage in the role. There is an annual audit of reviews to ensure the Panels are fulfilling their role.

The University's Research Integrity Champion works closely with the Chairs of Ethics Panels at College level to ensure a culture of research integrity is embedded in the wider research culture of the College, offering support and guidance to research students and staff and maintaining a high profile for the research integrity agenda.

Future strategic aims

The University's new RKE Strategy 2020-25 was approved in summer 2020 (REF5a 2.3). The expectation is that Schools' strategic objectives will flow from the University strategy but will also reflect disciplinary priorities, with Schools required to develop a strategy implementation plan accordingly. Inevitably, the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted on the development of this plan and aims set out here are consequently preliminary.

The new strategy identifies five areas of challenge, and research in the unit will be developed in three of these areas – Professional Education, Culture, Identity & Social Exclusion, Digital Innovation - building on the existing strengths in the current Research Groups:

Specific research objectives are to:
- Increase the volume of bids submitted and increase rates of success and thus annual income totals; and to expand the diversity of funding bodies applied to, including charitable and third sector bodies.
- Increase the number of PhD registrations and completions; grow staff capacity to support doctoral research through a team-based approach to supervision, and by directing ECRs to the supervisor training provided by the Research School (see section 3).
- Retain ECRs and support their research career progression, encouraging and facilitating ECR's involvement in PGR supervision and PGT teaching.
- Consolidate and expand the research culture through a diverse range of events including conferences, symposia, workshops, and readings.

2. People

Staffing strategy and staff development

Recruitment and progression

A primary focus for the School is the delivery of quality professional education which supports students to qualify as teachers. It is necessary therefore to recruit staff with experience of professional practice; consequently many staff in the School are second career academics, in some cases having come directly from practice. There has then been a mixed portfolio of recruitment over this period to meet this need, with staff appointed to teaching-only as well standard academic posts. However, there has been an increased emphasis on research in the recruitment process over the assessment period, with staff recruited to standard academic contracts normally expected to have a doctorate or to be working towards one. Further, new appointments are expected to align with research groups in the School.

There are 67 Category A eligible staff in the School (44 FT, 23 PT), six of whom are ECRs. 28 Category A eligible staff were recruited in the period. Table 1 shows the balance between contract levels in the unit for both Category A Eligible and Submitted staff (see REF5a 3.1.6 for institutional comparison).

	% Category A Eligible	% Category A Submitted
Lecturer/Research Fellow (K0)	4	11
Senior Lecturer/Senior Research Fellow (J0)	68	28
Principal Lecturer/Principal Research Fellow/Head of School (I0)	19	28
Professor (F1)	9	33

Table 1: Proportion of staff by contract level

The School has significantly expanded its research leadership during the assessment period. It has appointed two new Professors (Dhillon and Savin-Baden in 2015), and there have been two internal promotions to Professor from Principal Lecturer (Kington in 2015 and Woolley in 2019). It has also appointed two Honorary Professors (West-Burnham, McCulloch) who play a key role in mentoring less experienced researchers. The majority of new appointments in the period have been at Senior Lecturer. As can be seen from Table 1, this group is under-represented in the submission. This reflects the fact that a high proportion of staff appointed in the assessment period at this contract level are currently undertaking a doctorate or have only recently completed. It is expected that these staff will be well-placed to be part of any future REF submission.

The School has recruited a small number of research-only staff over the period for funded projects (see Section 3). It has also attracted visiting international researchers, funded by international mobility schemes such as CAPES (Brazil), who have been based in the School from 1-12 months, particularly in areas related to inclusive education and the history of religious education.

Staff development

The University was granted the HR Excellence in Research award in 2016 and is a signatory to the new Researcher Development Concordat, reflecting its commitment to researcher development.

All research-active staff in the unit complete an individual research plan as part of the annual appraisal process, with short- and long-term objectives and identified training needs: progress against these objectives is monitored with line managers.

These training needs can often be met through the University's Researcher Development Programme, which is designed to support staff at all career stages (REF5a 3.2). Staff in the unit have consistently engaged with the University's Research Leadership Programme, its Research Supervisor Development Programme, Bid Development training and Impact and Engagement training. Staff in the unit have also been active contributors to this programme. This is complemented by development events run by the School, including: research away days at departmental level, getting published, writing retreats, and shut-up and write events.

Staff can also access the University's Research Mentoring Programme (REF5a 3.2.4). They can do so at any point from appointment onwards and at any career stage. This programme has also offered an opportunity for Mentors to develop their skills, with all mentors receiving dedicated training for the role. Less formalised mentoring takes place in the School, particularly through the research groups which support new and emerging researchers to get involved in research projects and develop a publication profile, and the role of College Director RKE. A key component of this approach has been the publication of edited volumes by senior researchers on areas reflecting the schools research and practice expertise which provide opportunity for less experienced staff to publish their work. A good example of this is Woolley, R. (ed). (2017) *Understanding Inclusion: Core Concepts, Policy and Practice*. Routledge, London.

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Staff in the unit can access the University's research leave programme (see REF5a 3.2.3). Five staff in the unit have been awarded leave in the assessment period (Blackmore, Bracken, Savage, Solvason, Woolley). This has enabled them to develop their research, publish and extend the impact of their research. Further, all Category A staff have 20 days research and scholarly activity leave. This is complemented by individualised allocation of workloads, for example: ECRs are given reduced administrative and teaching loads in their first year of employment; and are given priority with internal research support funds; staff who are immediately post-doctoral are supported to produce outputs from their PhDs and to create a continuation strategy.

The School supports staff to engage in doctoral study both through contributing 50% of fees but also through workload management to ensure timely completion and effective dissemination. 13 staff have been supported and 6 staff have completed their doctorate in the period.

The School also funds staff to attend and present at research and practitioner conferences regionally, nationally and internationally. This includes events run by TEAN (Teacher Education Advancement Network), UCET (University Council for the Education of Teachers), BERA (British Educational Research Association) and EECERA (European Early Childhood Education Research Association). This ensures staff remain aware of developments in their field, have opportunities to disseminate their work, and are able to network with academics and practitioners. The School has invested £128,596 in this activity over the assessment period.

Research students

The School offers both a PhD programme and, since 2014, a Doctor of Education (EdD) programme. It has expanded its PGR community over the assessment period. There are currently 10 students on the PhD programme and 6 on the EdD. 22 students (21 PhD, 1 EdD) successfully completed their doctorates over the assessment period, several of whom in collaboration with other Schools (Allied Health and Community, Humanities, Sport & Exercise Science). Six of these students were funded by University doctoral studentships and one by the Leverhulme Trust. Five were staff in the School, including one PhD by Prior Published Work.

Recruitment to doctoral programmes is overseen by School-level Course Leaders (PhD and EdD) who work closely with the central Research School (REF5a 3.3.2-3). In growing its PGR numbers, the unit has taken a three-pronged approach:
- It has sought to increase its supervisory capacity. 19 staff in the unit are currently on the University's Register of Approved Supervisors.
- It has been successful in winning University-funded PhD studentships as noted above.
- It has focused on growing numbers within its Research Groups.

Course Leaders also play a core role in oversight of research student progress. They sit on the University's Research Degree Board and are responsible for annual monitoring of student progress within the School.

The University has a well-established graduate school (branded as the Research School) that is responsible for the management of all Research Degree Programmes (RDPs) from recruitment to examination, in partnership with the academic schools (REF5a 3.3.2-3). The Research School is also responsible for research student life, i.e., for the wider development and wellbeing of research students.

The University has expanded the Research School team to reflect the growth in student numbers over the REF period. It provides a dedicated work and social space for students. The Research School team, co-located in this student space, provides advice and guidance for students on their programmes, and, working closely with other student-facing departments such as the Disability & Dyslexia Service, the student mental health team, careers service, also offers pastoral and wider support. A comprehensive programme of support and guidance has been developed for PGR students and supervisors around mental health and wellbeing.

All students on research degree programmes are required to undertake an associated training programme, run by the Research School (REF5a 3.3.4-5). The programme has been mapped against Vitae's Researcher Development Framework. The programme offers a suite of modules, short courses and workshops, delivered face-to-face or online, some of which are compulsory for all doctoral students, focused on the following core areas: planning and managing research; academic writing; research methods; data analysis; research integrity and ethics; dissemination, engagement and impact; careers and employability.

The University also supports students to engage with external training where this is specialist and not available through the University's programmes. Students are also able to access training offered through the GuildHE Research network.

Beyond the programme, the Research School offers additional development opportunities. Research Students have opportunities to teach and can access modules and workshops to develop their skills in this area, with the opportunity to gain associate or full fellowship of the Higher Education Academy. The University offers research student-specific dissemination opportunities including an annual 'Images of Research' exhibition and student-led PGR Conference. The University provides funding opportunities for students to attend and speak at external conference and events and separate funds to support students to develop inter and cross-disciplinary networks, seminar series, conferences and events. The University is a member of the Brilliant Club, a charity focused on improving access to university, which provides opportunities for doctoral students to go to schools and deliver tutorials in their area of expertise. The Research School also provides ad hoc opportunities: for example, in 2019 the lead for the development programme worked with a student team to deliver a University programme for Pint of Science.

Feedback is sought from doctoral students via the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) every 2 years (see REF5a 3.3.6) and feedback has been utilised over this period to encourage doctoral students to feel more embedded within the culture of the School. For example:

- The School's Research Seminar series encourages participation from doctoral students,
- The School runs its own annual PGR conference for doctoral students from across the region.
- There is research student representation on the College RKE Subcommittee which ensures the student voice is fed into the development of research strategy at College level.

Supervisors are supported in their role through the Research Supervisor Development programme. This programme has been in place for 20 years but was redesigned and relaunched in 2018/19. The programme offers a wide range of support for supervisors at various career stages on themes such as: introduction to supervision, supervisory styles, regulations and processes, supervising international students, PGR mental health and wellbeing, supporting student progress. New supervisors must complete the whole programme, but more experienced supervisors must also engage with core elements and all supervisors are required to engage in regular refresher training (every 3 years). The programme is complemented by supervisor lunches that bring together supervisors to discuss key topics and challenges in supervision.

All supervisors are encouraged to engage with the UKCGE Good Supervisor Practice Framework and Accreditation programme, with workshops currently underway to support supervisors to apply for recognition. Professor Stephen Parker has recently been accredited by the UKCGE for his excellence in supervisory practice.

Equality and diversity

The University has a fundamental commitment to equality and diversity (REF5a 3.4). It seeks to consider and apply equality and diversity principles in all that it does. Its policies and processes are designed to disadvantage no-one and are subject to ongoing equality impact assessment to ensure this is the case.

The unit's approach flows from this with the Head of School ensuring that the University's principles and policies are fully enacted. Line managers ensure staff are aware of and are supported to engage with, for example, the University's flexible working policy, its parental leave policies, its policies which support carers (such as its Critical Illness Policy) and its staff wellbeing initiatives (see REF5a 3.1.8)

Several staff in the unit have benefitted from the University's flexible working policy (REF5a 3.1.8) with a move to part-time or compressed hours. There is no evidence that this has impacted on research productivity, access to funding or progression. It is notable that both at institutional (REF5a table 2) and unit level, part-time staff are as well-represented in the Category A submitted as eligible category.

Staff in the unit have taken parental leave in the assessment period. They have received active support to transition back to work after the leave period, through 'keeping-in-touch' days, phased return, and mentoring. It is ensured that where a staff member takes parental leave this does not impact on research leadership or supervisory roles. The School has a fair and flexible approach to working, particularly during the current lockdown period in recognition of the challenges of home schooling.

Staff in the unit are committed to equality and diversity. Staff were members of the University's Athena SWAN self-assessment team; the University received its institutional Bronze Award in April 2018 and is committed to making departmental applications in the next 2 years. Staff are also engaged with various staff networks focused on protected characteristics and with the LGBTQ+ Allies scheme.

3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

Income

The unit has sought to increase its external funding over the assessment period from its REF 2014 levels and has been successful in doing so. Research Groups are expected to develop their own strategies for RKE income generation. They have been supported in this by the central Research Office and primarily, since the academic restructure, by a College Director of RKE and RKE Facilitator. The Director's role is to provide leadership and guidance for Research Groups in developing their strategy, whilst the Facilitator works with Research Group leads to develop a bespoke funding opportunities service for members. Staff have also accessed training (general and bespoke) on bid development provided by the Research Office.

Major funding successes include:
- A Leverhulme Trust research grant (£219,050) awarded to Stephen Parker to explore the history of religious education on radio and television for schools (2014-17).
- Significant funding (£385,130) from the Ministry of Defence (via BAE Systems) for a series of projects undertaken in partnership with a tech company to explore and develop "digital humans" in training and development contexts.
- Funding (£300k) from Erasmus+ for two projects (GUIDE and SCALE) to develop and implement resources for educators to enable them to provide more effective support for students with disabilities.
- Funding from the British Academy awarded to Sean Bracken for a collaborative project on universal design for learning with a colleague from Brazil (£10k) and for an academic writing workshop to support the development of colleagues working in HEIs in countries in receipt of ODA (£19k).

In addition to this funding, staff in the School have been successful in winning grants from a diverse range of funders for evaluations and other projects, including: local authority bodies (e.g. Blaenau Gwent County Council, Herefordshire and Worcestershire Fire Service) health bodies (e.g. Health

Education England), professional bodies (AdvanceHE, TACTYC), learned societies (e.g. Society for Educational Studies) and charities (e.g. Brook).

Infrastructure and facilities

The University has significantly expanded its institutional infrastructure for supporting research and impact over the assessment period, establishing a RKE Directorate consisting of a Research Office, Research School and College RKE infrastructure (REF5a 4.1). It has also expanded support for researchers offered by Library Services.

The RKE Directorate provides wide-ranging support and guidance for researchers around identifying funding (including access to funding databases, such as *Research Professional*), bid development, KE and impact generation (including use of *Vertigo Ventures Impact Tracker*), project delivery (including contract negotiation, liaison with partners, financial and other reporting) and research governance (including data management, data sharing, protecting and exploiting IP).

The University has established robust Pre- and Post-Award processes for externally funded projects (approved in 2018/19 and subject to evaluation and review in 2020/21). These processes scaffold the Research Office support systems set out above and ensure good governance for bids and for projects.

It has been recognised that processes need to incorporate Equality Impact Assessments at various stages of both pre- and post-award. In lieu of this broader development, the University has adopted the BBSRC EIA guidance and template for reviewing research bids. It has also been agreed to undertake a review of bidding over a 5-year period from an equality perspective and this will be completed in 2021. The review will inform the development of support mechanisms for bidding.

It also provides access for researchers to a current research information system (PURE), a publication repository (WRAP – Worcester Research and Publications), major citation databases (Scopus and Web of Science), and subject-specific databases.

The University offers a range of research support schemes designed to support researchers at all career stages and, variously, to pump prime projects, develop international collaborations, advance existing areas of work (REF5a 4.1.6).

Staff in the unit have been successful in gaining funding from these schemes:
- PhD studentships: as noted above (2.2.3), staff have been awarded six fully-funded full time PhD studentships (Elliott, Howard, Kington, Parker x 2, Woolley).
- Vacation Research Assistantships (VRAs): staff in the unit have been awarded 4 VRAs over the period. These have been used to undertake systematic or critical literature reviews to underpin longer term projects.
- Facilitating International Research Collaboration scheme: Bracken received funding through this new scheme to support the development of a project with partners in Morocco and Brazil focused on universal design for learning.

Funding is also offered at School-level. In addition to funding for conference attendance already highlighted, it runs a Student as Academic Partners (SAP) scheme which provides opportunity for staff and students to work in partnership on a research project. Between 2015 and 2020, 22 research projects were undertaken by 24 members of staff in partnership with 77 students ranging from level four to seven (i.e. undergraduate and postgraduate taught students). Notable successes included the publication of a peer-reviewed research article by one new member of academic staff and two level-five students, the launch and evaluation of online and mobile technology learning platforms, and the adoption of a pedagogical tool kit by the primary partnership consisting of over 500 schools.

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

Collaboration

Staff in the unit collaborate extensively with HEIs, nationally and internationally.

Bracken is engaged in research collaborations with Boston College and CAST (US) which led to the establishment of INCLUDE (International Collaboratory for Leadership in Universally Designed Education) with Associate Professor Dr Richard Jackson (July 2019 – Present). He has further collaborated with UNISA (South Africa) and University of Ibn Zohr (Morocco) (August -November 2020); Universidade Municipal de São Caetano do Sul, Brazil – USCS (December 2018 - December 2021).

Kington has developed new and extended existing collaborations over the period. The Inspirational and Effective Teachers project (2012-14), in partnership with the University of Oxford (Sammons, Lindorff & Ortega), was commissioned by the Education Development Trust (formerly CfBT). A second collaboration with the University of Oxford (Lindorff) was developed more recently for a project exploring the impact of home-schooling during lockdown on parent-child relationships (March-June 2020). Two studies were also carried out with a colleague at the University of Nottingham (Townsend). Kington has developed international collaborations through her involvement in the longitudinal (2015-2019) International Comparative Analysis of Teaching and Learning (ICALT) project, led by colleagues at the University of Groningen.

Parker has been involved in a close collaborative research with Rob Freathy (Exeter), Friedrich Schweitzer (Tubingen, Germany) and Henrik Simojoki (Humboldt, Berlin) across the period.

Solvason has engaged in research collaborations with Sussex University to carry out funded research for TACTYC into the role of Maintained Nursery Schools (2018-19), and with Dr Winwood at the University of Wolverhampton on the functioning of the 'Team Around the Child'.

Woolley has engaged in research collaborations with not-for profit organisations and universities in Italy, Spain and Poland through the Erasmus+ funded *SCALE Project* (Student Centred Adult Learning Engagement in Higher Education, 2018-2021) as principal investigator (€241,665) and with *GR8 AS U R*, Norfolk, evaluating two National Lottery Reaching Communities projects (2014-present).

Contribution to the discipline

Staff in the unit have made significant contributions to the discipline as follows:

Keynotes and invited talks

Bracken gave invited keynote presentations at University of Hertfordshire, Business School, Learning and Teaching Conference (7 Sep 2020); State of São Paulo Secretariat of Persons with Disabilities and the State Universities of São Paulo (USP / UNIFESP / UNICAMP) (27 August 2020); University of Barcelona (Spain) - 2nd International Conference for the Association of Universities and Research Centres in Catalonia (7-8 Nov 2019); Queens University, Belfast, Northern Ireland (2 August 2019). Dart was invited to give a public lecture at the University at Herefordshire and Ludlow College of Technology. Russell was invited to present at an International symposium on Religious Education in October 2020 in Tübingen, Germany. She was also invited to present at follow-up International Symposium at the University of Exeter, March 2015. She was invited to give a paper at the Department of Education, University of Oxford, on 26 November 2019. Savin Baden gave invited keynote presentations at Roskilde University, Denmark (2018); University of Aalborg (2017), Targeting Online Behaviour Conference (9 February 2018), Waterfoot Hotel, Derry; University of Wolverhampton Teaching and Learning Conference (4 April 2017); 10th PBL Conference Jejeu, South Korea (21 October 2016); Teaching and Communicating Science in the Digital Age, Society for Experimental Biology, EPA Symposium,

London (15-17 December 2014); 11th International Conference on Remote Engineering and Virtual Instrumentation 26-28 February 2014 Porto, Portugal; Euroversity Network Project, University of Manchester (14 March 2014); UK Council for Graduate Education Conference, Aston University, Birmingham (27 March 2014). Solvason has given invited keynote presentations at: Early Childhood Studies Degrees Network, 22nd January 2021, TACTYC conference June 2020, University of Sussex Early Years Research Conference, March 2018, University of Sussex, EY Partnership Conference, January 2016. She was invited to give a public lecture at The Early Years Summit (Early Years TV), June 2020, recording a podcast on Supporting Children's Speech and Language Development. Over 7000 practitioners signed up for this event. She gave a Sage Masterclass podcast on Ethics in Early Childhood Research, 2018. In 2017 and 2016 she was invited to present workshops for head teachers at the Festival of Leadership and Learning, held in Stoke-on-Trent. Woolley gave an invited keynote presentation on Relationships Education at the Think2Speak conference, Lincoln, November 2017, and was invited by the Holocaust Education Trust to present at a national workshop in February 2016 entitled Remembrance and Remembering: exploring possibilities in primary education.

Blackmore has been an invited speaker at several international conferences, including the International Technology, Education and Development (INTED) Conference (2015 and 2018). Bracken was also invited to present at AdvanceHE: Virtual Assessment and Feedback Symposium (October 2020); 4th Pan Canadian Conference on Universal Design for Learning (October 2019) Royal Roads University, Vancouver Island, BC, Canada; AHEAD Conference on Inclusion in Higher Education (March 2019) Dublin, Ireland; International Conference on Education Quality (June 2019) University of Ibn Zohr, Morocco; CAST Conference on Universal Design for Learning (August 2018) Harvard Law School, Boston USA; NASEN Live, Conference Centre Birmingham (July 2018); Researching Advancing and Inspiring Student Engagement (RAISE) Joint Inclusive Practice & Assessment SIGs (May 2018) Northumbria University; Higher Education Teaching and Learning Association (HETL) International Conference (June 2017), University of the West of Scotland; Supporting Inclusive HE in Flemish Belgium – Learning from a Erasmus Transnational Project (July 2016) SIHO Ghent, Belgium. Prowle was invited to present at the annual Conference of the Association of Child Protection Practitioners (AOCPP) in York (2019), and was invited to give an online public lecture for AOCPP (December 2020). Solvason was also invited to present at: BECERA International Conference (February 2021); the Child Poverty in Educational Contexts Conference (July 2019) at the University of Sussex; the EECRA Conference (August 2018) in Budapest; the TACTYC Conference (June 2018) in Birmingham; Value and Virtue in Practice-based Research Conference, July 2016, York University; Partnership Research Conference (June, 2016); Value and Virtue Conference, York University, (June 2015); and the inaugural PCET Conference (June 2014) at Bournville College.

Journal editorial work

Blackmore is the editor of an e-journal *New Perspectives* and was lead editor for a special edition of *Education Sciences*. Bracken has been a guest editor for four editions of *Issues in Education Quality*. Dhillon is a member of the International Editorial Board of the *Journal of Vocational Education and Training* (JVET). Dhillon is also an associate editor of the *Journal of Educational Management Administration & Leadership*. Elliott has been an Editorial Board member of the international peer-reviewed journal *Quality Assurance in Education (Emerald, UK)*. He has been a member of the Editorial Advisory Board for the international peer-reviewed journal *Research in Language and Education* (Van Yuzuncu Yil University, Turkey). He has been a member of the Editorial Advisory Board for the peer reviewed *International Journal of Human Resource Development: Practice, Policy and Research (EAPM, WFPMA, UFHRD, UK)*. Gossman has been a member of the editorial panel for the Staff Educational and Development Association publication *Educational Developments* since 2013. Kington co-edited the BERA publication, *Insights* (2011-15), as well as becoming the first Associate Editor for *Review of Education* (2012-15), a journal of the British Education Research Association, with responsibility for practitioner supplements: she now serves on the editorial board (since 2015). Parker became Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Beliefs and Values: studies in religion and education* in 2015 and founding editor and Editor-in-Chief of the journal *Brill Research Perspectives in Religion and Education* since 2018. He has

been senior series editor of Peter Lang's series in Religious Education and Values, a series now into 18 volumes, since 2010. He is on the editorial boards of the journals *Religions, Practical Theology and History of Education.* Savin-Baden is on the editorial board of: *Journal of Post Digital Science and Education* and *International Journal of Medical Education.* Sewell is a member of the editorial board of the *Journal of Educational Psychology in Practice.* Solvason serves on the editorial board of *New Zealand International Research in Early Childhood Education* since 2017. Woolley is on the editorial board of the *Journal of Critical Education Policy Studies (JCEPS)*.

Reviews for funding bodies

Bracken has provided funding reviews for the Singapore Ministry of Education, the ESRC, the South African Ministry of Education, and the Estonia Ministry of Education. Kington has been a member of the Outer Assessment Board of the Irish Research Council since 2015. Further, she reviewed research proposals for the Education University of Hong Kong prior to submission to the Research Grants Councill's General Research Fund (GRF) and Early Career Scheme (ECS) (2018-9). Kington is also a reviewer for the BERA College of Reviewers (established in 2020) which assesses all grants and awards given by the association, and the ESRC Peer review College (since 2009). Parker is in his second term as member of the Peer Review College of the Arts and Humanities Research Council (2014-).

Advisory board and steering group membership

Savin Baden was on the advisory board of the Digital and Ethical futures group (based at Trinity College Oxford) funded by William Temple Foundation. She was on the steering group of the AHRC funded study 'A creative partnership to develop immersive simulations of ancient heritage sites' (lead by Bournemouth University) (2017-2020). She was on the Blended Learning Advisory Group, Church of England Theology Programmes (2016 to present). She was also on the international advisory board for International Research Symposium on PBL 2017.

Blackmore is a member of the Biochemical Society and the Association of Science Education. She also furthers her international research engagement by being a long-term member of the *New Perspectives in Science Education* international forum. As a result of leading a research project exploring student teachers' experience of primary science teaching and the perceived impact on developing professional identity, (published in the European Journal of Teacher Education, 2015), Karen was approached to consult on a study into teacher resilience by academics at the National Institute of Education in Singapore.

Bracken is a member of Worcestershire Local Authority Special Educational Needs Provider Collaborative Group (January 2019 to present).

Elliott is Immediate Past President of the Association for Research in Post-Compulsory Education; he continues to serve on the Association's Executive. He is a Fellow of the College of Teachers, the Higher Education Academy and the Royal Society of Arts. He is a member of the British Education Research Association and the English Speaking Union. He was a GuildHE nominated Board Member of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator from 2012 to 2020, and a member of its Risk and Audit Committee from 2016 to 2020. He was a member of the British Academy and Royal Society Joint Academies Working Group on Research in Further Education in 2017; in the same year he was appointed an Expert Panellist for the HEFCE and Association of Colleges Scholarship Project.

Hatley is a member of the international Academic Network for Global Education and Learning (ANGEL network). Jenny is a member of the BERA SIGs for Early Career Researchers, Research Methodology in Education, Social Justice, Comparative and International Education and Educational Technology. Jenny is currently the co-chair for a national working group for Global Citizenship Education (GCED) as part of the national One Shared World Coalition.

Kington has served as an elected member of the British Educational Research Association (BERA) Academic Publications Committee (2010-2016), the BERA College of Reviewers (since 2020), and the British Psychological Society (BPS) Psychology of Education Section Committee (since 2020). Kington is also involved with several research networks including BERA's special interest groups for Teacher Education and Research Methodology, the American Educational Research Association (AERA), and the International Mixed Methods Research Association. In addition, Kington works closely with research networks developed through her role as Fellow of the College of Teaching (FCollT) and Associate Fellow of the British Psychological Society (AFBPSs).

Parker was Secretary, then Vice-President, and is now President of the History of Education Society, UK (2020-2022). He is a committee member of the Church of England Record Society (2018) and Membership Secretary of the International Seminar on Religious Education and Values (2020-). He is an Associate Fellow of the University of Warwick's Centre for Education Studies and a member of Domus: the interdisciplinary centre for the history of childhood and education at the University of Birmingham.

Research event organisation

Bracken is Co-Chair for the International Conference on Education Quality (ICEQ), University of Ibn Zohr, Morocco. He organized research conferences in 2019 and 2020.

Savin Baden has worked on a number of conference committees, including Digital 2011; International PBL Symposium 2013; Program Committee of the 1st International Conference of the Portuguese Society for Engineering Education (CISPEE'13 & 2016).

PhD examination

Several staff have been involved in PG research examination. Bracken has examined a doctoral degree at UNESP, Faculdade de Filosofia e Ciências - Câmpus de Marília, São Paulo Brazil (2019). Duncan has examined doctorates at Staffordshire University in 2018 and 2019. Elliott has examined doctorates at Huddersfield University (2017), Portsmouth University (2019), Sunderland University (2020), University of Worcester (2020). Kington has examined doctorates at the University of Derby (2016 & 2018, EdD), University of Nottingham (2017, PhD), and the University of York, 2019 & 2020, PhD) within this REF cycle. She was also external examiner for the Doctor of Education programme (EdD) at the UCL Institute of Education for 4 years (2015-18). Parker has examined seven doctorates at UCL/Institute of Education (2014), Macquarie University, New South Wales, Australia (2014), Liverpool Hope University (2014), Glyndwr University (2016), Durham (2018), Canterbury Christ Church University (2018), University of South Wales, Pontypridd, (2018). Price has examined doctorate(s) at Birmingham University (School of Engineering). MPhil (2014), PhD (2015), PhD (May 2016), PhD (Jan 2019). Woolley has examined doctorates at the University of Derby (PhD, 2014) and University of Winchester (EdD, 2020).

Dhillon is Visiting Professor and co-supervisor for PhD students at Panjabi University Patiala (PUP), India, and international mentor for educational research at the Central University of Punjab, India.

Contribution to economy and society

The unit and its staff make significant contributions to economy and society.

The School of Education has extensive partnerships with organisations offering Higher Education opportunities to non-traditional and first-generation students. Once significant example is The Learning Institute (part of WeST Academy) which has centres across the south west of England and in London. As a part of developing the HE nature of their work, academics from the unit have contributed to staff development activities focusing on enhancing research skills (Woolley),

developing processes for the approval of research ethics (Solvason) and undertaking collaborative research to build capacity and evidence the impact of the work of the organization (Elliott).

Woolley has been commissioned by long-standing partner of the University to evaluate the provision of arts interventions in special schools as a part of a Paul Hamlyn-funded project developed by Meadow Arts.

Savin-Baden has worked with the Bishops of Oxford, Coventry and Worcester to increase understanding of digital afterlife and the spiritual realm and, through this, has gained access to speak to clergy and readers. She has advised the Saltley Trust on discipleship training for a digital age. She has also been invited to provide expert comment on October 2016 on Learning in an Age of Digital Fluency for Premier Radio, UK.

Dart has worked with partners in Malawi and Zambia (AIMZ) and with Sight Savers International on albinism (2012-17). He is currently working with Advantage Africa to evaluate factors affecting the inclusive education of children with specific learning difficulties (SpLDs) of primary school age in Kenya.

Dhillon has developed strong partnerships for research and knowledge exchange with Sikh communities, both regionally and internationally. She has worked in collaboration with a number Sikh and Panjabi organisations, such as the Sikh and Punjabi Studies in UK Higher Education Group, Punjab Research Group and the Centre for Sikh and Panjabi Studies. In 2018 she was given an honour and award by the British Sikh community for her contribution to education and research on Sikh families.

Duncan has engaged with Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Children's Services to review their Safe Reduction of Looked After Children Strategy.

Parker was instrumental in establishing a local RE teacher 'hub', which meets termly linking university academics with teachers and other community bodies, including representatives from Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education.

The Kinship Children Project (Prowle) began in December 2018. Findings formed the basis of a report to the Cross-Party Parliamentary Group for Kinship Care. The University researchers accompanied some representatives of the kinship care youth group to the Houses of Parliament in July 2019 in order to support their participation in a national focus group, developed to inform policy and practice across England.