

Institution: Abertay University
Unit of Assessment: UoA18 Law
<p>1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy</p> <p>1.1 Unit context and structure</p> <p>Abertay is a focussed and compact University that in recent years has grown its reputation, including being named the top modern university in Scotland (<i>Guardian Good University Guide 2019; Times/Sunday Times Good University Guide 2017</i>). Abertay University is the Times/Sunday Times University of the Year for Teaching Quality in 2021. We produce high-quality research and knowledge exchange (RKE) aligned with international, national and local priorities, which delivers real impact for society (REF5a). The Law Unit has contributed significantly to these achievements.</p> <p>UoA18 (7 FTE; of whom 2 FTE were previously submitted to our REF2014 submission) is contained within the Division of Law, which is part of the School of Business, Law and Social Sciences. During the REF2021 period, the UoA has transitioned from focussing predominately on law at Scottish and EU level towards a broader research portfolio which includes engagement with a wider range of jurisdictions, including non-European and Overseas Development Aid countries (examples are included in Section 4). This allows the UoA to engage with a far broader range of stakeholders and end-users. It further allows for a greater depth of analysis by allowing cross-jurisdictional comparisons; which the UoA could not have achieved at the start of the REF2021 period. The UoA has also appointed several staff at a relatively early stage in their career so during this assessment period, we have focussed on staff development and laying strong foundations to purposefully build progress in terms of research quality, research income and impact.</p> <p>UoA18 comprises two interacting research groups which evolved from our REF2014 themes (Policing & Security Law, and Employment Law & Employment Rights) in response to external developments, opportunities and challenges.</p> <p>(i) Transnational/ International Criminal law (O'Neill, and a new member of staff, Mitchell). Our REF2014 theme of Policing and Security was based on the Unit hosting a collaborative research network titled Policing and European Studies. This theme built on the EU's legal provisions on Police and Judicial Cooperation in Criminal Matters. As the UK's legal relationship with EU institutions evolves, and specifically now that the UK will be a signatory to international agreements in its own right rather than as an EU member, this theme evolved into the Transnational/ International Criminal law group. Focus is on transnational law enforcement generally, and trafficking in human beings in particular. This refocus has been made possible by new staff bringing their expertise in international criminal law to the Unit and the development of new research interests among existing staff.</p> <p>Research in the REF2021 Transnational/International Criminal law group has resulted in individually authored publications, with collective external engagement in pursuit of knowledge exchange and consultancy (O'Neill). A number of high-quality research outputs has been produced, for example, 'Constructivism, constitutionalism and the EU's area of freedom security and justice post-Lisbon' (O'Neill).</p> <p>(ii) Law and Society (Cunningham, Grant, Kouletakis, McKay/Nienaber, Mitchell, and Weldon-Johns) UoA18's Law and Society theme developed out of the REF2014 Employment law and Employment Rights theme, as a result of new expertise being brought into the Unit. Focus is on intellectual property (IP) law and its impact on access rights for people with disabilities, medical law, bioethics and reproductive rights, which has led to nascent synergies in the area of ethical reproductive rights and employment law research.</p>

1.2 Research and impact strategy

Our overall Unit strategy is to deliver research with impact, combining academic excellence with stakeholder collaboration. The Unit operates within the context of **Abertay's RKE Strategy** (2014-19 & 2020-25), **R-LINCS: Research-Led Innovation Nodes for Contemporary Society**. R-LINCS integrates our research into a single Abertay-wide initiative designed to capitalise on our compact, focussed and collaborative nature. R-LINCS bridges conventional boundaries among research disciplines to devise innovative cross- and inter-disciplinary approaches that deliver research with impact. Essential for a small University, our strategy guides and supports our Unit's research activity directly and brings together School and Divisional planning, staff management, research studentships, and central funding in five-year plans.

R-LINCS (2014-19) was organised into 4 cross-cutting contemporary themes (creative industries, environment, security, society), and was centrally led and managed. It provided:

- (i) A single, pan-University research leadership to drive our discipline strengths and interdisciplinary research agenda and foster external collaborations, including with external organisations (Sections 1, 3 and 4);
- (ii) A cross-University **Graduate School**, which delivers a coherent, Abertay-wide integrated training programme for staff and Postgraduate Research Students (PGRS) (Section 2);
- (iii) Intra- and inter-theme support for RKE including funded and co-funded doctoral studentships and Pump Priming awards (Section 2, 3);
- (iv) Facilitation of public engagement (Section 4).

We have refreshed our strategy (**R-LINCS2**, 2020-25) to use our expertise to target specific Challenge Spaces presented by modern society, through research leadership in our Pools of Excellence, i.e., distinct ways of working that cross-cut Challenge Space areas and discipline strengths encapsulated in our academic Divisions (REF5a). Of particular note for UoA18 is one of four research Challenge Spaces, **Security, Equality & Social Justice**, where the Unit will play a leading role going forwards. RKE governance is managed by Abertay's Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee. The R-LINCS strategy is overseen by Abertay's Research Executive and implemented by research leaders.

UoA18's high standards of research ethics and integrity align with that of the institution. Abertay fully engages with (and is a signatory to CSCDR and KEC):

- the principles of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity (CSRI)
- the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers (CSCDR)
- the Knowledge Exchange Concordat (KEC)
- the Concordat on Open Research Data (CORD)
- the Concordat for Engaging the Public with Research (CEPR), which we use to guide development of supportive RKE policies, practices and structures (Section 2).

We are compliant with our **CSRI** commitments: all staff and students and visiting researchers are required to adhere to the highest standards of **integrity** in the conduct of their research as set out in the Abertay Research Code of Conduct (ARCoC) and engage in mandatory research integrity training (including Research Ethics and GDPR for Researchers).

The University's **research ethics** management system requires approval to be obtained for all proposed research before it may be carried out. Members of the Unit are centrally involved in research ethics reviews on behalf of the University (Kouletakis, Weldon-Johns, and going forward, Mitchell). The research ethics system, therefore, is fully embedded in our research and teaching structures. Law submissions are viewed initially by a member from UoA18 before final review by the University Research Ethics Committee. The University's GDPR Risk Assessment and Data Management (and Open Data management) Processes are linked to the University's Research Ethics Strategy and processes.

The University has taken important strides to develop an **open research** environment. Published outputs are open-access compliant and we are working towards open access compliance with our research data by December 2021. Our Open Access and Research Data Management Policies,

researcher development training and individual support is provided by our dedicated Research Support Manager, increasing staff engagement with open research, pre-registration, and open-access data repositories. We are committed to the responsible use of metrics in research evaluation and are a signatory of the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (**DORA**). Our policy and practice on research metrics for research assessment is included within our ARCoC and informs our Recruitment and Promotions policies and procedures and our REF Code of Practice.

Our strategy as a small Unit, has focused on specific research areas and on researcher development, collaboration, and stakeholder engagement. Since REF2014, our overall Unit goal has been to deliver research with impact, combining academic excellence with stakeholder collaboration. Our **strategic objective during the REF2021 period** has been to **re-focus our research** and develop active research groups, that produce internationally recognised research which **prioritises collaboration and external impact** (Sections 1, 3, 4).

We have achieved this during the REF2021 period by:

- (i) consolidating our research experience and interests to form two sustainable research groups **Transnational/ International Criminal Law** and **Law and Society**. Some staff are active in more than one group and have overlapping interests;
- (ii) appointing and developing new research-active staff with a broader but complementary range of research interests;
- (iii) supporting staff who are at relatively early stage in their careers, to develop a portfolio of outputs which provide a basis for larger funding applications and collaborations in the future;
- (iv) engaging with a range of regional, national and transnational stakeholders to achieve impact, through changes to policy, practice and laws.

Our strategy for **impact** as a relatively small Unit has involved focusing our research on real-world challenges, engaging with third-sector users of the law and with participants in law reform. We have focussed on a relatively narrow range of impact pathways, principally contributing to legislative reform, at a sub-national, national and international level, including responding to consultations directly connected to issues addressed in our research outputs. In particular, we have focussed on engagement with Scottish and UK **government consultations** on legislative and policy proposals, together with ongoing engagement with the Police Service of Scotland.

Engagement with third-sector users of law has addressed the needs of end-users of research. This is exemplified in Kouletakis's **Impact Case Study** titled '*Enhancing the optimal application of the Marrakesh Treaty and increasing access to literary works for the disabled community through transnational comparisons*', which focusses on the Treaty's incorporation into national legislation. The Impact Case Study relates to UoA18's approach to enabling impact from its research through engagement with third-sectors users of law. The same can be said of O'Neill's Impact Case Study titled '*Changing the law on human trafficking in Scotland*' that underpinned contributions to the Scottish Parliament Justice Committee during the drafting of the Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Scotland) Act 2015. O'Neill contributed to ensuring a clear crime definition, ensuring that there were no transnational or inter-jurisdictional gaps in definition, and addressing the issue of child victims, so informing the effective drafting of legislation.

1.3 Future plans

The University's RKE Strategy for 2020 to 2025 (**R-LINCS2**), aims to enable "focused collaborative research and inter-disciplinary innovation for impact".

The Unit's strategy is framed around the **Security, Equality and Social Justice** Challenge Space to which both the **Transnational/International Criminal law** and the **Law and Society** groups will actively contribute. In addition, McKay/Nienaber, Weldon-Johns and Kouletakis have ongoing research interests that contribute to the **Health and Care Across the Life Span** Challenge Space (section 4)

Collaborative research will continue to be encouraged, both within and beyond the university, in order to develop larger and more impactful research clusters and research grant applications of scale. These research clusters will be formed both within the law discipline, as well as across disciplines, to support empirical research and to build on achievements to date.

Our **objectives for the next five years** are as follows:

1. Continue to produce high-quality research outputs.
2. Achieve impact beyond academia which yields economic, social and cultural benefits by developing partnerships with a wider set of societal actors.
3. Nurture productive research collaborations nationally and internationally, to improve income generation success and to enhance reputation.

The delivery of these objectives will require continued investment in staff and facilities, R-LINCS/ Future Scholar studentships, and networking to stimulate new collaborations and grant applications. For R-LINCS2, Abertay has committed to fully funded R-LINCS2 PhD studentships, funded PhD studentships for newly appointed academic staff (dependent on R-LINCS2 objectives alignment), Pump Priming and Open Access funds. Key areas of focus for development are research group leadership, mentoring Early Career Researchers (ECR) and developing established staff. Central to leadership and mentoring will be strengthening the role of **Work-in-progress seminars**, where UoA18 staff present fledgling research ideas to their colleagues in the Unit who provide peer support, as well as engaging with colleagues as part of the R-LINCS2 **Security, Equality and Social Justice** Challenge Space. This will be key to maintaining and developing our research focus, enhancing best practice in research (e.g., Open Research, research design), consolidating existing, and stimulating new, stakeholder links, and exploring funding opportunities. Academic management to support the development of our research is a University-wide development agenda (Section 2) and will be effected via e.g. block teaching and sabbaticals.

We will achieve our **first objective** and continue to build on the work during the REF2021 period by continuing to support the development of individual staff as appropriate to their experience. This will involve researcher development support provided by the Graduate School, *Development Discussions*, sabbatical leave, research leadership and mentoring.

We will achieve **our second objective** by leveraging the track-record and networks that were built during the current assessment period and by extending the range of organisations that we collaborate with, so increasing our research's impact upon society. Staff will engage with the Scottish Law Commission, and law commissions in other jurisdictions, such as South Africa and Louisiana. In addition, further research impact pathways will be developed, to include engagement with identified end-users of cross- and inter-disciplinary (law-led or law-supported) research output. For example, Kouletakis will build on a research project with academics based in Nigeria on reforming Nigeria IP law; McKay/Nienaber will continue work on reforming research law in South Africa.

UoA18 staff will work within larger RKE groups in order to develop more cross- and inter-disciplinary impacts. For example, Mitchell is the principal investigator on a Society of Legal Scholars funded project 'Mainstreaming Women's Rights' (2020-2021) that is exploring how human rights law is taught in law schools and looks specifically at whether content on reproductive rights is included. Preliminary data from this project were presented at various academic conferences and at the Abortion Rights Scotland AGM. She also used some of this data in responding to the Scottish and UK government consultations on the continuation of tele-medical abortion.

To achieve our **third objective** staff will seek out external and R-LINCS opportunities for national and international research collaboration. We will support staff to work with international partners, e.g., through targeted investment in time and travel. These collaborations will be underpinned by higher quality outputs (objective 1). We will increase income generation through one-to-one grant

application support from the Graduate School (including our grant application peer-review processes) and the availability of an exemplar applications repository.

We have clear, sustainable plans to continue developing the vitality of our research environment. We will continue to build on our existing strengths, providing a sustainable base of expertise.

2. People

2.1 Staffing strategy

Our **University Strategic Plans** affirm Abertay's commitment to develop and sustain an inclusive and supportive culture, one that recognises and values colleagues and students with different backgrounds, experiences and attitudes to feel able to achieve their full potential by contributing fresh ideas and perspectives that have a positive impact on the world.

This UoA18 of 7 FTE is an increase from the 4FTE submitted to REF2014 and involves 5 FTE not previously submitted to REF2014. Their REF2021 return reflects investment in our academic staff and research leadership, culminating in a new and recent professorial appointment in 2020. Our staffing strategy since REF2014 has been to ensure that those recruited to academic posts in UoA18 have a developing research track record. The research base of UoA18 was broadened with **strategic appointments** of early- and mid-career researchers (Cunningham, Mitchell and Kouletakis) and at professorial level (McKay/Nienaber), so that the Unit now comprises a good balance of experience, with one professor, one senior lecturer and five lecturers. Two UoA18 staff hold professional legal qualifications. Research in UoA18, therefore, now enjoys a broader base than it did in REF2014. These appointments are enabling an increased research focus within the Unit, and a growing ability to attract, develop and retain high quality researchers. Our focus has been on the development of **early-career and mid-career researchers** now in post.

New staff benefit from a comprehensive Induction Programme covering Postgraduate Research Degrees and regulations, Abertay's RKE Strategy, ARCoC, CSRI, CORD and CSCDR. The University's commitment to investing in staff is evidenced by a Gold award from NHS Scotland Healthy Working Lives since 2016.

2.2 Staff development

Consistent with the CSCDR, line managers are committed to staff well-being and all UoA18 staff have twice-yearly *Developmental Discussions* with their line manager to appraise both short-term research objectives and long-term plans, discuss training and development needs, and review any well-being or workload issues. These discussions are also used to develop a workload plan, including research time for staff with a Significant Responsibility for Research, which takes account of experience, teaching loads and individual circumstances.

Training and development needs are met through the Graduate School and the Head of Division, who organise specific training in legal research for both staff and PGRS. The Graduate School has three Researcher Development Staff who, together with senior Abertay staff, provide **>100 development opportunities annually**. Training includes advanced statistics, GDPR for research, impact, enterprise, PGRS supervision, public engagement, paper and grant writing. Where necessary, staff development needs were met by external organisations, (e.g., Fast Track Impact; national Aurora leadership programme).

A key element in the development of staff, especially those at a relatively early stage of their career, are opportunities to attend conferences and events run by stakeholders to allow these staff to build up experience of presenting their research findings and network with potential future collaborators. For example, Kouletakis published an article and gave a presentation at the Scottish Law and Innovation (SCOTLIN) (en)lightening talks series on decolonising copyright law. Divisional budgets include funding for national and international travel, which supports development objectives agreed through the University's *Development Discussions*. In addition, UoA18 staff are funded to attend **third sector/ policy sector events**, with a view to developing impact, to encourage collaboration, and the contribution of the research base to the economy and

society. In particular, staff have been focussed on proposed changes to legal frameworks and their operation in practice. For example, Kouletakis has worked with the Global Expert Network on Copyright User Rights, South Africa's Freedom of Expression Institute, and the American University in Washington's Programme on Information Justice and Intellectual Property in the submission of commentary on and legislative changes to South Africa's copyright system pertaining to visually impaired persons.

Research seminars operate not only at a School-wide (cross- and inter-disciplinary) basis, but also within UoA18. Law research seminars broaden and deepen the understanding of legal research frameworks and to embed legal theoretical analysis in ongoing research, within our PGRS and staff. The research seminar programme included presentations on legal research methods, research strategy, and presentations by external speakers. Staff actively engaged with this process, with current research presentations leading to targeted external conferences, and subsequent publications.

ECRs and mid-career researchers are supported to engage in peer review of academic journal articles, and to develop their external research networks through presentation at research conferences and organising research conference streams and workshops. We have also supported their engagement in government consultations, Law Commission consultations on law reform, and engagement with relevant third sector organisations in order to develop impact from their current research outputs.

ECRs and other new appointees are given additional support in the form of a reduced teaching load in their first year to establish their research. There is a 2-year probation period to ensure regular objective setting and discussion with line managers. Depending on experience and qualifications, ECRs may also be required to complete Abertay's Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PGCAP). This qualification has a research focus as well as developing teaching skills, including modules such as 'Developing Academic Practice' and 'The Effective Research Academic', covering the supervision of postgraduate students, the research funding landscape, project management, developing a research niche, and internal research procedures (e.g., ethics, data management). For established staff, additional research time can be provided through a formal Sabbatical scheme (Section 2.4).

Within UoA18, all new staff are offered mentoring by a more experienced colleague. This is particularly important for ECRs and staff new to Abertay. In addition, and given our small size, we joined a Cross-Institutional Academic Mentoring Scheme called TRAM (from 2016) with 6 Universities including St Andrews, Dundee and Trinity College Dublin. Originally aimed at ECRs it has since been extended to senior academics/researchers.

2.3 Training and supervision of postgraduate research students

We value our PGRS for their contribution to the vitality of our research community: they work alongside experts to pose new questions and find creative solutions to problems facing society. PGRS numbers in the Unit have held steady over the REF2021 period (Table 1). There has been an increase in joint supervision with counselling and psychology academics of cross- and inter-disciplinary postgraduate research, reflecting a clustering of research interests in the University. No professional doctorate students are currently registered in UoA18, and no such qualifications have been awarded – the University does not currently offer this award.

PGRS are based in Abertay's Graduate School, allowing access to training and a large peer group from other disciplines. The Graduate School serves to promote integration, collaboration, informal support groups, mentoring, networking and a multi-disciplinary research and working ethos within the University community. PGRS have several formal (e.g., representation on the University Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee) and informal routes (e.g., the Postgraduate Research Student Survey, and the Graduate School Forum and Rep system) for providing feedback, which allows monitoring of Abertay responses against national benchmarks and addresses any issues should they arise.

Table 1. UOA 18 PGRS during the REF2021 period

PhD/MPhil/LLM by Research	First Registered	Awarded
PhD 1 A possible model for regulating capital market crimes: A Comparative Study of Business Law in Britain and Saudi Arabia	October 2011	March 2017
PhD 2 Trafficking in Human Beings for Forced Labour in Domestic and International Law: A Comparative Legal Study of The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and The United Kingdom.	October 2012	Summer 2016
PhD 3 The Regulation of Prostitution within the EU – A comparative study of the prostitution laws in Germany, Sweden and the UK in light of the efforts of the Stockholm Programme and the developments thereafter to combat organised crime and human trafficking.	January 2015	Ongoing (awarded post this REF period)

As well as providing physical resources (allocated desk in an open-plan office, social area, IT equipment), the Graduate School provides:

- **Progress panels:** Students complete an annual progress report and presentation to a Review Panel to assure student progress, supervision quality and provide an opportunity to address any issues.
- **Personal development planning:** Students track meetings, achievements, goals and training needs into a Vitae Researcher Development Framework system, which must be submitted for approval one month before the PhD thesis. This ensures that students are systematically focused on progress, and are able to articulate research, experience and wider achievements attained throughout their PG training.
- **Annual Graduate School conference:** All PGRS are required to present their research to peers, supervisors and academic staff from across Abertay, helping students develop presentation skills and confidence in a professional context.
- **Training:** Weekly skills-based seminars are held to meet training needs, including research methods, statistics, qualitative analysis, public engagement and outreach training, academic writing, funding applications and business development.
- **Access to Researcher Development Staff:** providing tailored statistical support, and academic advice e.g., funding applications.
- **Funding opportunities:** students can apply to a dedicated fund for conference attendance and researcher training support.

The University makes effective use of regional and national development and networking opportunities. We encourage our PGRS to work and exchange ideas with people and organisations in the wider research environment. Examples include courses provided by other Universities, VITAE and Advance HE.

PGRS in Law are fully integrated in the Unit's research activities, working closely with academic staff and engaging with the wider legal (and inter-disciplinary) academic community, for example through presenting their work at national and international conferences.

Abertay Futures Scholarships have enabled tuition fees to be waived for PGRS engaged in UoA18 research priority areas. Support is also available through the University's R-LINCS studentship and co-funded studentship scheme. By bringing together discipline-specific research under the remit of themed, competitive internal funding schemes, the Graduate School has supported the growth of the postgraduate student base, the cross-fertilisation of ideas and expertise, enhanced the supervisory contribution and research output of staff, with an increased focus on the high-quality publication of PGRS research.

To further support PGRS, new staff and those inexperienced in postgraduate supervision are required to complete an online Epigeum course on **Supervising Doctoral Studies** and our in-

house training before being mentored (if inexperienced) through a first PGRS supervision. Those new to Research Degrees examination must engage with our **Novice Internal Examiners Process** which involves in-house training and observation of *viva voce*.

More UoA18 staff (2 FTE for REF2014; 4 FTE for REF2021) are now engaged in supervising PGRS and PhDs. LLM by Research as well as MPhil research degrees are awarded, both of which are also safe stepping-stones to the PhD. The Unit will consider opportunities which arise for fully funded MRes/ MPhil/ PhD studentships under the R-LINCS2 scheme in order to assist in developing cross- and inter-disciplinary research.

Recruitment of students is centrally managed, and our procedures adhere to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education requiring that selection is undertaken by at least three suitably trained staff and is compliant with our Equality & Diversity Policy. The University's Admissions Policy states that, subject to availability, admission is open to all those that have the ability to benefit from the opportunity to study for a given degree. Abertay will only admit students to programmes of research degree study that are properly resourced and supported.

The Unit's research environment extends to undergraduate students, whose research capacity is being developed by encouraging their application for a Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland Vacation Scholarship, in order to develop their research projects over the summer holidays.

2.4 Equality diversity and Inclusion

To maintain consistency, inclusion and fairness all REF2021 Units have followed a centralised approach to Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). Abertay's ethos embeds inclusion, diversity and equality in all our policies, operations and strategic thinking. We recognise and value colleagues and students with different backgrounds, experiences and attitudes who bring fresh ideas and perspectives to the University. Since REF2014, the University has been awarded the **Athena SWAN** Bronze award (2015, 2018). Led by the Graduate School, the self-assessment team helped drive development of fair and equitable policies and practices to support researchers, staff and students across Abertay. In 2016, we became – and remain at time of writing – the first and only University in Scotland to hold the **Race Equality Charter Mark** bronze.

Our Academic Recruitment and Promotion Policies are applied to ensure a fair, equitable, transparent and consistent process for appointing and reviewing the grade of academic staff. We have not presented EDI data here due to the small numbers involved which would make individuals easily identifiable. As a signatory of DORA, when considering appointments and promotions, we evaluate research on its own merit rather than on the journal Impact Factor.

Consistent with CSCDR, all staff have undergone mandatory Diversity in the Workplace and Unconscious Bias training, and Recruitment and Selection training is required for all involved in recruitment and promotion decisions. Our **EDI Action Plan** requires an **Equality Impact Assessment** (EIA) for policy, statements and procedures and makes accessible relevant software systems and supporting information. UoA18 staff are represented on University and School committees, thereby ensuring EDI is promoted. UoA18 staff are representatives on the School Staff Engagement Advisory Team which has ensured that staff with caring or health responsibilities are supported during COVID restrictions.

Our **Sabbatical Policy** encourages staff to apply for sabbatical leave for research (6-12 months). The policy provides for particular consideration of leave following maternity/adoption/shared parental leave to help re-establish an employee's career and allows for sabbatical leave to be explored as positive action to promote career development for under-represented groups. During REF2021 we have supported 2 law sabbaticals (**Law and Society** - Weldon-Johns; **Transnational/International Criminal law** - O'Neill) which reflects the strategic investments given to law research at Abertay. These led to a **visiting fellowship** to the **Institute of Advanced Legal Studies** in London (2017-18) and initial work on proposals for large research projects which are now being taken forward.

The University's suite of **Work Life Balance Policies (Flexible Working, Maternity Leave, Parental Leave, Shared Paternal Leave, Adoption Leave, Carer's Leave)** are designed to support staff to balance work and home-life and deal with personal responsibilities. Well established policies are in place which both comply with current legislation and aim to establish a "best practice" culture. Abertay supports all periods of maternity leave regardless of provision by external research funders.

Support is also given for training in gender awareness (including leadership), and opportunity for gender-equal work flexibility. The University is engaged with the Aurora leadership programme, which two current law staff (Mitchell, Weldon-Johns) have successfully completed. This programme has produced dividends, with Weldon-Johns now leading on several research projects (Section 4). There is also support for flexible working, adoption, carer's, maternity and paternity leave. Staff who have taken maternity leave are given reduced teaching loads upon return to work to support resumption of research activities. Flexible (home) working is fully supported, with a new Digital Strategy launched in 2019 empowering staff to deliver in a way that works best for them.

2.5 REF 2021

To facilitate the development of fair and equitable processes, the REF2021 Steering Group and particularly the REF2021 Code of Practice (CoP) Working Group have diverse membership. Membership of the latter group included a UoA18 academic. EIAs have been carried out by an independent panel during CoP development. Unit composition adhered to the CoP and the REF Unit Champion group for selecting outputs comprised 3 staff (2 female). Promoting research opportunity across all staff has been a focus of UoA18 during REF2021: the submission is 86% female; 94% of outputs are attributed to female staff.

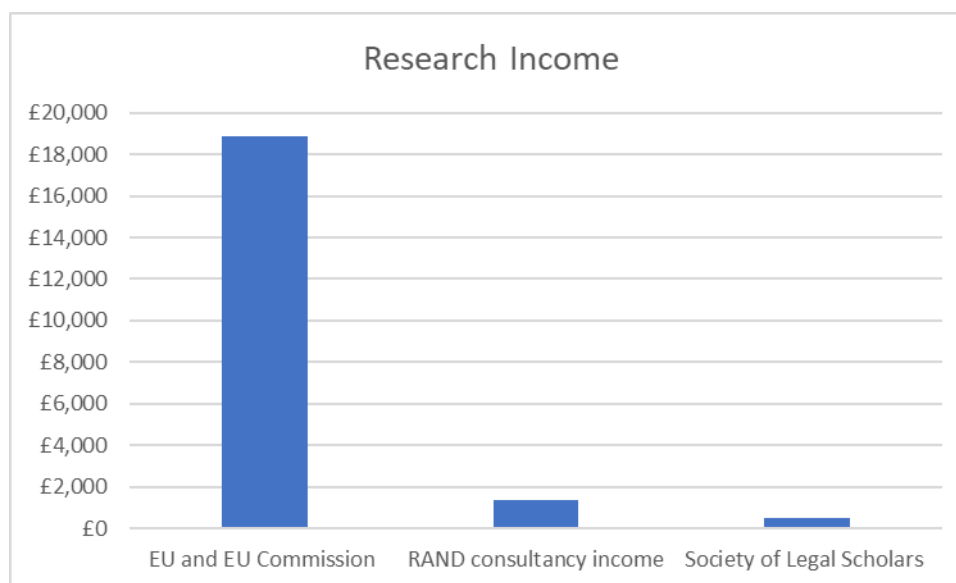
3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

3.1 Research funding strategy

UoA18 is a small unit, comprising 7 FTE academics engaged in research and impact alongside teaching (Scottish Law Society accredited LLB degree together with teaching modules across the University). As described previously, during the REF2021 period our resources have focussed on developing staff who are at a relatively early stage in their career and supporting them as they develop a portfolio of research outputs. Given this focus, we have not been able to pursue major grants during the REF2021 period. Those grants we have secured are either aligned with areas where we are prioritising development of impact or have been used to support staff development. Although this approach has generated only very modest income during the REF2021 period, we believe that our focus on staff development and developing networks of collaborators was appropriate for the Units staffing complement and experience at the time, and it will allow us to bid for more substantial funding going forward.

Income received during the REF2021 period has predominately been received from EU or EU funded projects (Figure 1). This work aligns strongly with the Transnational/ International Criminal law theme (Section 1.1).

We have also used external funding to support staff development. For example, the Society of Legal Scholars grant helped support a sabbatical for O'Neill. We will continue to use small grants to support staff development. For example, since the end of the REF 2021 period a further grant from the SLS has been used to support collaborative research with Leeds Beckett University on reproductive rights in legal education, which will provide preliminary research findings that will form the basis of larger future bids.

Figure 1. External funding received, and spent over the REF 2021 period

3.2 Infrastructure and facilities

Abertay provides support for research at an institutional level through the Graduate School, in our approach to research governance and leadership and in the **Research Enterprise and Innovation Services**. The latter offers advice and support on research related matters, including IP, contract management, costing, reviewing and approving applications for external funding, processing and managing grants awarded. **Graduate School** resources (e.g., Researcher Development staff, training seminars, peer-review college) are available to all staff and are called upon regularly to improve the quality of grant submissions. R-LINCS provides leadership including in Academic Enterprise (two academics with excellent track record in KE) and in 2019, Abertay initiated **Bell Street Ventures**, an enterprise hub situated on campus to develop enterprise and entrepreneurship skills and is supported by a charitable donation and Santander Universities Network. In the current REF period staff have been increasingly involved in international consultancy opportunities, informing international policies, and developing impact arising from their research (Section 4). University-wide points of contact provide excellent **pooled expertise** to support staff research. Through the R-LINCS scheme, staff can access pump-priming funding for small projects that, if successful, would merit subsequent submission to competitive funding. We also support open access publication costs.

The University offers an efficient **IT infrastructure** for research and data management and collaboration, including PURE, a digital repository for publications and a dedicated group within the internal Social Network research community. The Unit benefits from a dedicated **law librarian** and **law library**, with law collections held together, with associated study spaces, within Abertay's Bernard King Library. The law library provides access to standard law research resources and databases. The Unit additionally benefits from formally agreed access to Dundee University law library and the SCONUL arrangements. Dedicated library staff provide further support for academic research by managing open access for publications and data. The University provides specialist IT and communications support to staff and research students.

3.3 Future plans

During the REF2021 period we have focussed on building and developing a team which encompasses research and engagement with a broad range of jurisdictions. Now this team is in place, and we have developed strong networks for collaboration (Section 4.2), the UoA will focus to secure more diverse sources of funding. We will target UKRI income, UK charities and funders such as the National Institute for Health Research. Furthermore, and in line with the University R-LINCS2 RKE Strategy we will develop productive focussed collaboration with external partners (Section 4.2) and our colleagues in UoA 6, 21 and 32, all of which have secured major funding during the REF 2021 period. A prime example of an emerging area of work within the UoA which

forms the basis of collaborative work with other Abertay UoAs is Weldon-Johns's research on the games industry (Section 4.2.1).

Our plans are underpinned by Abertay's strategic commitment: over the next 5 years the University will support the development of newly appointed academic staff by allocating a PhD research studentship to each of them, subject to the approval of a research plan that is aligned with the R-LINCS objectives. We will also invest in support for fully funded R-LINCS2 PhD studentships, Abertay Futures Scholarships, Pump Priming awards, and Open Access Publication awards.

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

4.1 Contribution to the research base

Our contributions are reflected in sustained scholarly outputs over the period. Since 2014 the Unit has produced 66 scholarly outputs, comprising 42 journal articles, four single-authored books, an edited book, and 12 book chapters, as well as a number of other outputs such as comments on draft bills and reports. UoA18 has increasingly focussed on joint papers with Abertay or external co-authors (Weldon-Johns, Kouletakis, McKay/Nienaber) which form the foundation for larger collaborative projects.

UoA18 academics have been **invited as guest lecturers** to a number of UK Universities; sector events; **internationally funded workshops and international conferences**. Staff are frequently asked to peer review academic publications, also for research proposals at an international level, such as EU Marie Sklodowska-Curie applications, and the Narodowe Centrum Nauki - NCN; (National Science Centre) in Poland <http://www.ncn.gov.pl>.

In addition to the peer review of academic articles, research leadership is provided through McKay/Nienaber's editorship of the African Human Rights Law Journal and being Deputy Editor of the Journal of Contemporary Roman Dutch Law. Weldon-Johns provides academic leadership through editorial work as member of the Juridical Review advisory board, and co-director of the Scottish Universities Law Institute, (SULI), which involves reviewing SULI book proposals. Weldon-Johns acted as Convenor (2019-2021) and Deputy Convenor (2017/18) of the Labour Law Section of Society of Legal Scholars annual conference, 2017-18, and panel chair at 2018 Conference, Queen Mary University, London, and Conference section convenor and panel chair at the 2019 conference, University of Central Lancashire, Preston. In addition, Weldon-Johns was SULI conference organiser, for the SULI Showcase conference – Reflections on Scots Law, 31st August 2019, Discovery Point, Dundee, in conjunction with colleagues from Strathclyde and Dundee Universities. Along with two colleagues from other universities, Mitchell has launched the Gender, Justice, and International Law Research Network. This grew from a 2018 workshop on new voices on women and international law.

Both the **Transnational/ International Criminal law** and the **Law and Society** groups at Abertay have been actively involved with the activities of the Glasgow University based Scottish Universities Legal Research on Europe group (SULNE) in the context of the impact of Brexit (Kouletakis, Weldon-Johns, Mitchell and O'Neill). This engaged with the Scottish government and parliament and the wider community, on Brexit-related activities. This included involvement in publications on the impact of Brexit in Scotland and giving evidence to the Scottish Government on the impact of Brexit on staff specialist areas of interest.

4.1.1 Transnational/ International Criminal law

The work of the **Transnational/ International Criminal law** group resulted in an international conference, a journal special edition and an edited collection, as well as a number of highly regarded journal articles. Three Abertay PhD students were associated with this research network. Staff contributed in writing to, and attended, the Scottish Government's EU Justice & Security Summit, 24th November 2016. Staff also contributed to an international workshop held by Durham University, involving law enforcement staff from a number of EU jurisdictions, which led to a briefing paper forwarded to the UK Home Office on the impact of Brexit on the UK interaction with the EU on Police and Judicial Co-operation in Criminal matters.

4.1.2 Law and Society

The work of the REF2021 **Law and Society** theme, previously the REF2014 Employment law and Employment Rights theme, continued in a number of areas, with Weldon-Johns, and new members of staff, McKay/Nienaber and Kouletakis increasingly taking a leadership role in various research networks. For example, Kouletakis is a founding member of SULNE and Weldon-Johns a co-director of the FAWN network as well as co-director of the Scottish Universities Law Institute (other examples of these researchers' leadership roles are included in Section 4.2.2)

McKay/Nienaber's research focuses on how society deals with disease, specifically communicable viral diseases. Governments' response to COVID will be the impetus for a number of future projects. She further addresses legal and ethical issues related to the development through clinical research of medical treatment, including vaccines, as well as their deployment. Weldon-Johns examines employment equality law, work-family rights and the boundaries between work and private life in the UK and EU. This research is included in her monograph, *Assisted Reproduction, Discrimination and the Law*. Kouletakis analyses IP law as a species of public law, serving public purposes. She examines the nexus between IP law, health and disability. Mitchell's research interests straddle critical approaches to human rights law, women's rights, and reproductive rights.

4.2 Academic and non-academic collaboration

Abertay's legal research end-user engagement focusses on work with legislatures and key stakeholders through specialist and targeted information dissemination methods. To this end we have frequently provided, short, targeted, briefing notes which were appreciated by end-users, such as politicians, political lobby groups, police officers and prosecutors. Targeted briefing notes were facilitated by developing good working relationships with the end-user of the unit's research.

4.2.1 Transnational/International Criminal law

The UoA contributed to the Abertay based Policing and European Studies research network. This network included Scottish police and prosecutors, as well as policy makers from different EU member states. O'Neill provided legal and cross- and inter-disciplinary academic leadership through this network which continued to operate until the Brexit vote in 2016. A conference, journal special edition and edited collection were produced during the REF2021 period with two Abertay law PhD students being associated with the network during this time-period.

Building on engagement with the Scottish police during the REF2014 period, O'Neill developed further relations with other UK and Irish police services, through engagement at seminars in the context of Brexit, inter alia in conjunction with the University of Durham and at the Scottish Parliament, or through informal and off-the-record interviews. There has been increased engagement with the policy community in this REF cycle, at a Scottish, UK and EU level. This included O'Neill giving evidence to Scottish government consultations, in the context of human trafficking (submitted Impact Case Study) and, latterly, in the context of criminal law, policing and security in light of Brexit. O'Neill contributed, both in writing and in person, to the Scottish Government's EU Justice & Security Summit, 24th November 2016. O'Neill also contributed to an international workshop held by Durham University, involving law enforcement officers from several EU jurisdictions, which led to a briefing paper forwarded to the UK Home Office on the impact of Brexit on transnational Police and Judicial Co-operation provisions.

O'Neill acted as a consultant to European Parliament commissioned report (RAND Europe's consultancy contract with the European Parliament "The Cost of Non-Europe in the Fight against Terrorism", May 2017 to January 2018). O'Neill was also involved in the Scottish Government and UK Independent Anti-Trafficking Commissioner's workshops on combatting human trafficking, held between 2016 and 2017, involving, inter alia, active engagement with the drafting of the Scottish Government Human Trafficking Strategy.

Mitchell is currently involved in a further research network, Gendering International Law Research, which is due to run until 2022, with colleagues in the Republic of Ireland and the Open University. This network engages in knowledge exchange and consultancy work related to the network's

expertise in gender and international law. Research dissemination activity is planned with interested stakeholders such as Alliance for Choice, British Pregnancy Advisory Service, Family Planning Association Northern Ireland and Engender.

Through participation in the research consortia and events described above, the Unit has developed solid and sustainable working relationships with researchers and a diverse range of research end-users and third-sector organisations, which we believe will lead to future collaborative funding bids (Section 3).

4.2.2 Law and Society

McKay/Nienaber brings her research leadership to the **Law and Society** theme through her involvement with:

- South African researchers and research ethics networks on the redrafting of South Africa's standard MTA (materials transfer agreement);
- working as an Associate of the Centre for Ethics and Philosophy of Health Sciences at the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Pretoria, South Africa;
- being a Deputy Chair of the Medical Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Pretoria; and
- being an Associate of the Centre for Human Rights, a human rights NGO doing research and promoting activism in human rights across Africa.

Weldon-Johns has recently:

- become a member of the Scottish Parliament Register of COVID-19 experts; and
- had been appointed a Framework Member of the Scottish Parliament Framework Award for Provision of Research Services in Relation to Covid-19 (10 June 2020 to 31 May 2023) relating to employment law and work-family rights.

ECR and mid-career research that exemplify our academic and non-academic collaboration includes:

- Cunningham's engagement with the Stair Society (Scots Private Law History Group) which engages with Scottish legal profession and judiciary;
- Kouletakis's engagement with the Global Expert Network on Copyright User Rights and the Freedom of Expression Institute of South Africa; and
- Mitchell is the principal investigator on a Society of Legal Scholars funded project 'Mainstreaming Women's Rights' (2020-2021) that is exploring how human rights law is taught in law schools and looks specifically at whether content on reproductive rights is included. Preliminary data from this project was presented at various academic conferences and at the Abortion Rights Scotland AGM. She also used some of this data in responding to the Scottish and UK government consultations on the continuation of tele-medical abortion.

Knowledge exchange in the form of engagement with end-users of research includes:

- Mitchell using data from an earlier research study to respond to the Scottish and UK government consultations on the continuation of tele-medical abortion;
- Weldon-Johns work on employment which includes:
 - acting as the guest facilitator of the CAT Tayside Social Policy Conference "Employment on the Edge", 31st August 2018;
 - facilitating two workshops on "Better Ways of Working?";
 - a research project "Cross-Discipline Survey of Dundee-Based Computer Games Companies". Weldon-Johns additionally engaged with third sector bodies in this area of research, to include the Fathers Network Scotland International Women's Day event on the 8th March 2019, where contact was made with policy makers (MSPs) and the relevant third sector, which is likely to lead to inform practice in this area. The Creative Industries are one of the fastest growing industry sectors in the UK with Dundee being a hub for computer games companies which are a key sector of the creative industries. Weldon-Johns's work aligns strongly with other

Abertay work to support games companies, including the multimillion-pound AHRC-sponsored project InGAME;

- Kouletakis' work on Intellectual Property including:
 - Submitting a comment tabled before the South African Department of Trade and Industry's public hearings originally scheduled for 27 – 29 June 2018. Kouletakis was invited to make this submission by the Global Expert Network on Copyright User Rights and the Freedom of Expression Institute of South Africa;
 - working with Electronic Information for Libraries Africa, Asia Pacific, Europe and Latin America; Bookshare.org (a shared online library of scanned books for people with visual impairments); the South African National Council for the Blind; and the Treatment Action Campaign (South Africa); and
 - Being the invited speaker at the L&A Legal Consultants (in partnership with Babcock University, Nigeria) IPR webinar series, a Nigerian-based event which was attended by a candidate for the World Intellectual Property Organization's position of Director-General and Nigerian policymakers.

Engagement activities during REF2014 were continued and further developed for the REF2021 period, being expanded to include engagement with South African legislative reform (Kouletakis, McKay/Nienaber).