

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

Institution: University of East London
Unit of Assessment: 17 Business & Management Studies
1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy

1.1 Context

The research in the University of East London's (UEL) Royal Docks School of Business and Law (RDSBL) is strongly influenced by its location in one of the UK's most culturally mixed and socioeconomically deprived areas, but which is undergoing seismic change in the economic landscape resulting from investment in the Docklands regeneration zone and Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. Our work is inspired by this context as well as the egalitarian and inclusive ethos that has shaped the institution's outlook from its beginnings and which continues to influence the focus of our critical enquiry and participatory engagement with local and global communities.

The UoA is distinguished by its commitment to producing inter-disciplinary research that contributes to knowledge and impact by addressing concerns related to innovation, entrepreneurship, sustainability, governance, equality, diversity and culture at the interface of the local business community and the wider global business environment.

The UoA comprises a diverse body of staff and students - 85% of UoA staff and 90% of postgraduate research (PGR) students are from a range of ethnic backgrounds; The majority (65%) of PGR pay international fees, but of the home/EU students, nearly half graduated from UEL, indicating that we support a strong research pipeline. The diversity of this research community informs our approach, our collaborative partnerships and our engagement with local businesses, public authorities, voluntary organisations and communities.

Since 2014, the strengthening of our research environment together with targeted recruitment, development and promotion of research active staff, has both improved our depth of engagement with local organisations and expanded our global scope, reach and impact. During the current assessment period our investment in the research community, infrastructure and research environment can be evidenced by the significant increase in FTE submitting to REF2021 (from 3.25 in 2014 to 14.2 in 2021) and the gender and ethnic diversity of staff involved in high quality research. During the current assessment period the UoA has increased the number of PGR completions nearly threefold and research grants awarded by tenfold (GBP 51,819 in 2014 to GBP 512,391 grant value awarded).

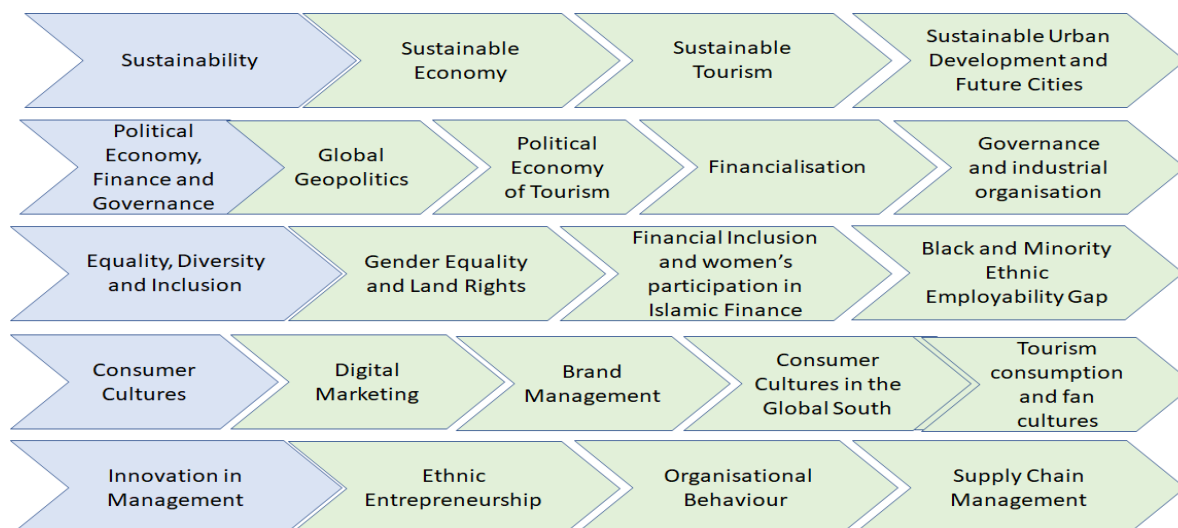
1.2 Structure

Since 2015, the UoA has formed part of the RDSBL. The management and coordination of the School's research is provided by the School's Director of Impact and Innovation (*Roy-Mukherjee*), who represents the UOA's interests at university-level and chairs the School's Impact and Innovation Committee (SIIC) whose membership includes Early Career Researchers, Readers and Professors together with Research Centre Directors, Research Degrees Leader, Impact Coordinator and Chair of the School Ethics Committee. The committee meets regularly to discuss the continuous research and impact strategy and ways to continuously enhance the work and broaden the inclusivity of the UOA.

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

1.3 Research and Impact Strategy

During the current period of assessment, the UoA has effectively built on its first successful submission in 2014. The intellectual framework of the UoA research and impact strategy is provided by five thematic priorities and advanced through four Research Centres, each of which draw upon the expertise of UoA staff across RDSBL and its external partners. These themes underpin the interdisciplinary nature of our research and focus of our impact, addressing various areas of contemporary business and management concern (See Section 4).



During the current period of assessment, and in line with the University's Vision 2028, the RDSBL Research and Impact Strategy (2015-20) has evolved to focus on the following five objectives:

Strategic:

- To strengthen a diverse, inclusive and sustainable research environment.
- To facilitate a high calibre of scholarship and research outputs aligned with priority thematic areas.
- To generate and disseminate high impact research, in collaboration with a wide range of professional, practitioner and community partners.

Enabling:

- To increase PGR numbers and ensure a successful doctoral programme.
- To support the growth and diversification of research income generation, interdisciplinary collaborations and external partnerships.

1.3.1 Strengthen a Diverse, Inclusive and Sustainable Research Environment

During this period of assessment, the UoA has benefitted from increased investment in its research communities (academic staff, ECRs, external partners and students) research centres, and supporting research infrastructure. RDSBL has made significantly enhanced the diversity and sustainability of its research environment and improve the breadth and diversity of research through the following initiatives:

- **Expansion and consolidation of research centres** (Section 2.1) to create a platform for dialogue, mentoring and collaborative research for publications, grant applications, public engagement, training and consultancy. The research centres also provide an important platform for staff and ECRs to present preliminary research findings, work in progress and as a forum for book launches.

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

- **Targeted recruitment and promotion** of research active staff (Section 2.4) aligned with a more focused strategic direction and focus on core research strengths and thematic priorities.
- **Staff development** (Section 2.4) active support for and recruitment of PGR students into emerging areas of research aligned with our principal research themes. The introduction of the 'researcher development programme' and the 'early career researcher network and mentoring scheme' has enhanced research mentoring and created a more inclusive research culture.
- **To develop and enhance impactful research** (Section 4.1- 4.2) centred on a critical mass of core UoA staff around core research strengths. The RDSBL has developed interdisciplinary 'impact platforms' and enhanced the quality of impact case studies through targeted mentoring and seed funding as well as training on Impact Template use, via the Vertigo Ventures Training System.
- **Increased research visibility** (Section 4.2 – 4.3) organise more public events to disseminate research impact both at a local and international level through our research centres; increase the visibility of research to the student body, UEL staff and visiting scholars as well as to the general public and external stakeholders.
- **Student research internships schemes** enable students to work with academic staff on twelve-week research projects. We have had several students present their work at the Poster Competition organised by the UEL Knowledge Dock. A group of undergraduate research interns presented a poster on 'Impact of Globalisation on Inequality' for which they received recognition.
- **Support for research-informed teaching** amongst all members of staff resulting in improved NSS, PTES and PRES scores results at School and Institutional level. The UoA encourages and supports the active engagement of staff in pedagogical research, disseminated through workshops, seminars, visiting speakers and collaborative projects in this area. Learning and Teaching conferences are designed to share best practice research-informed teaching and to enable staff to embed this approach in their curricula (Section 2.2.)

1.3.2 Facilitate a High Calibre of Scholarship and Research Outputs

The UoA has implemented a number of organisational and resource-driven initiatives to support staff to produce high-calibre research outputs. This has resulted in a threefold increase in the number of high-quality publications (3* and above) during the current assessment period and fivefold increase in the number of staff engaging in high quality research. Our work is shaped by the five thematic priorities related to sustainability; political economy and governance; equality, diversity and inclusion; consumer cultures; innovation, entrepreneurship and management, and contributes to advancing areas of significant theoretical debate as well as addresses key areas of practical concern for our external public, private and community stakeholders (Section 4.1 - 4.2). UoA staff are also encouraged to produce and disseminate work through a range of professional, policy and other media that is relevant and accessible to wider stakeholders and the general public. During the current assessment period the RDSBL research budget (GBP 96,000 approx annual) has been increased and the following initiatives implemented to support an increased in the number and quality of published outputs by UoA staff:

- **Investment in research infrastructure:** improvements to the research infrastructure and facilities including, the 'Bloomberg trading room', the Tax and Accountancy Clinic and the Institute for Government and Public Policy (IGPP).
- **Support for staff conference attendance and research training:** funding for staff to participate and present in conferences, including PhD students and ERC staff. Staff are also encouraged to attend external workshops and training programmes to enhance their research skills

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

- **Methodology workshops:** ECR lead (*Mingasova*) and the UoA coordinator (*Roy-Mukherjee*) have developed methodology workshops for early and mid-career researchers inviting both in-house and external speakers to present innovative and updated research methodologies in various fields of study related to business
- **Annual research review process:** feedback on staff outputs prior to publication is provided through peer review. This has enhanced the focus on originality, methodology and significance, thereby raising the quality of the work.
- **Writing retreats:** (off-campus) retreats provide a conducive environment for staff to focus on their writing with minimal distraction. There are additional workshops that focus on topics such as writing techniques, writing research proposals and impact case studies.
- **Mentoring system:** research centre Directors and senior research staff provide support and guidance to ECRs and mid-career researchers in developing research plans, setting clear performance measures and expectations underpinned by effective support and personal development reviews. External mentors have also been hired in to provide expertise support in niche research areas and have been incorporated into funded research projects (see Section 1.3.5) led by senior research staff in the UOA.

1.3.3 Generate and disseminate high impact research, in collaboration with a wide range of professional, practitioner and community partners.

Guided by its thematic priorities and supported by the work of the Research Centres, the UoA has broadened and strengthened the network of public, private and civil society partnerships and collaborative research partnerships with a range of local, national and international HEIs through which its research is both carried out and impact is targeted. Supported by the various initiatives outlined in 1.3.1, the tenfold increase in research income during this period of assessment has also been strengthened by and contributed to a more robust ecosystem of external collaborative research, partnership with public stakeholders and civic engagement. The latter is undertaken by, for example, the Tax and Accountancy Clinic and UEL Centre for Mediation and Workplace Conflict while staff have actively strengthened collaborative relationships with HEIs across Europe (*Bianchi* with Wageningen University and Research, Netherlands; *Fouskas* with the Ministry of Science Technology and Education, Republic of Srpska; *Mimoza* with Meiji University, Japan). The UoA has encouraged the emergence of inter-disciplinary research teams around a number of thematic priorities, including on such themes as the gig economy, social entrepreneurship, sustainability and degrowth. UoA staff have also developed strong links to the local authorities (LB Tower Hamlets and Newham) with whom major research bids on social entrepreneurship have been developed and work on community enterprise and sustainability is being undertaken. The research centres also regularly host public lectures and debates of significant public import, guided by our over-arching thematic priorities (See Section 4.2)

1.3.4 Increase PGR numbers and ensure a successful doctoral programme.

The UoA has committed resources to expanding the recruitment of high-calibre PGR students and to ensure that they complete their research within the requisite registration period. To achieve this the UoA has developed an effective Post Graduate Research (PGR) strategy centred on:

- Effective recruitment and admissions processes that are designed to attract high-quality candidates to work in targeted areas of research expertise within the School.
- Tracking PGR student progress through an annual review system and supporting students at risk.

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

- Regular supervisory meetings recorded on PhD Manager.
- Encouraging PGR students to join and become involved in the work of research centres, enhancing the research ecosystem.
- Emphasising the importance of research ethics and ethical approval through workshops and School Ethics Committee.

The Research Degrees Subcommittee, chaired by the Research Degrees Leader, makes final decisions on applications, monitors student progress and manages the process of formal transfer onto the PhD programme. This strategy has contributed to an increase in PGR income and threefold increase in doctoral completion rates (31 since 2014), as well as enhanced PGR satisfaction (93.33% of students positively responded to the Supervision category). It has also enabled the students to make significant contributions to the research environment of the school.

1.3.5 Support the growth and diversification of research income generation, interdisciplinary collaborations and external partnerships.

To support UoA staff to apply for research funding the RDSBL Director of Impact and Innovation has implemented several key initiatives to help increase grant capture and the management of collaborative research projects evidenced in the number of UoA staff working collaboratively with external partners and submitting applications for research funding. In comparison with REF2014, there has been an increase in the number of grant submissions by UoA staff, resulting in a tenfold increase in research income within the UOA.

- **Researcher Development Programme:** This programme complements the university program, offering discipline-specific support to early career (ECR) staff, and post-graduate (PGR) students, new staff and all staff who self-identify as 'developing or re-engaging researchers. The programme offers funded initiatives, interdisciplinary events, and resources to enhance grant applications, academic publishing and career development. Senior academic staff act as mentors to offer guidance and support in the development of personal research plans and funding applications.
- **Grant writing support:** University support offered by the ReDs team (e.g., pre-award support; GrantCraft training; Research Professional subscription) is complemented by individual support from staff in the UoA.
- **Seed funding projects:** the UoA has seen an increase in seed funding applications invested in collaborative projects that demonstrate research impact at a local and global scale.

2. People

2.1 Research Centres

Research in the UOA, is guided by the inter-disciplinary thematic framework (see Section 4.1) and brought together under the umbrella of the four research centres. The research centres support an inclusive and inter-disciplinary research ecosystem that has catalysed a wider scope of collaborative research partnerships and public engagement as well as provided a platform for an increasingly diverse scope of domestic and internationally focused research.

- Centre for the Study of Sates, Markets & People (STAMP): Launched in 2013, STAMP is a major inter-disciplinary research centre in the RDSBL whose members are drawn from across the UoA and the university. Its primary focus is the study of global and European political

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

economy and the forms of governance and regulation required to address global capitalism, crises and geo-political conflicts. STAMP is led by *Professor Vassilis K. Fouskas* and *Dr. Shampa Roy-Mukherjee*, with support from an executive board comprised of UoA staff and an international advisory board drawn from major international universities around the world. The Centre hosts the *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* (Routledge).

- Noon Centre for Equality & Diversity in Business and CIFLAC Centre for the Islamic Finance, Law & Communities (CIFLAC): Led by *Professor Siraj Sait* the Noon Centre and CIFLAC were launched in 2012 with the support of Lord Noon (Kt. MBE). The Noon Centre provides a platform for collaborative, high impact academic and policy-oriented research to address complex intersectional issues at the local, national and global level and which contribute to a fairer, inclusive and resilient society aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the UK's 2018 Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. CIFLAC provides a forum for research, education, training and consultancy on Islamic finance and banking industry and is major platform for dialogue between lawyers, bankers, academics and policymakers working in these areas.
- Centre for Innovation Management & Enterprise (CIME): Relunched in autumn 2020 CIME is led by *Dr Slawomir Raszewski* with support from an international advisory board drawn from business and academia. CIME brings together an inter-disciplinary group of scholars in the UoA to promote and develop interdisciplinary impactful research, business-relevant teaching and practitioner engagement in business and society. CIME's principal focus relates to the theory and practice of innovation and enterprise, including inter alia, the following research themes: sustainability; finance; digital transformations, innovation in management and entrepreneurship; equality, diversity & inclusion.

2.2. Equality and Diversity

Linked to our egalitarian ethos and spirit of inclusivity, the UoA is strongly committed to promoting equality, diversity in its research, as well as its day-to-day working practices. The RDSBL is committed to ensuring that all members of staff, regardless of their ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or disability, should have the opportunity to be involved, including as PI, in research. This has improved the level of female participation in high calibre scholarship and research in the current assessment period such that 30% of FTE submissions to REF 2021 will be from female members of staff compared to none in the REF2014. Although this is still not 50%, it represents significant progress and we continue to seek ways to support women researchers in business.

An Equality Impact Assessment is conducted after every Annual Research Review to ensure that there are no barriers to members of staff with protected characteristics carrying out research. This also applies to the School's procedures for awarding research conference funding and mini-sabbaticals as described above.

The RDSBL was awarded the Athena SWAN Bronze Award in October 2020 in recognition for its commitment to gender equality. The Athena SWAN School Committee consisting of academic staff, students and staff from professional services and senior management (*Roy-Mukherjee, Jackson, Sait, Mingazova, Kypuram, McDonald, Harrison, Sait, Sandland, Page-Tickell, Akoto Al-Abdulrazak, Okoya*) and the School EDI committee (*Sait, Roy-Mukherjee Akoto Al-Abdulrazak, Okoya, Wyld, Courtney, Ali*) have been set up to ensure that the structure, practices and processes in the School are reflected upon from an equality, diversity and inclusion perspective.

RDSBL staff are also able to obtain further support for their career development through external

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

initiatives with other universities, such as Aspire, the Diversifying Leadership Programme, the Aurora Leadership Development Programme. In 2017 *Okoya*, chair of UEL's Womens' Network, was shortlisted for the prestigious Excellence in Diversity Award (EIDA). She is also an Athena Swan champion, leads the Women's Network and helps run the Young Black Professionals student mentoring scheme at UEL.

UoA staff (*Page-Tickell, Sandland, Roy-Mukherjee Udeogu, Boahen, Butt*) are currently working on projects and sharing best practice in areas such as reducing the awarding gap amongst BAME students, dual delivery models and their impact on the digital divide.

2.3 Staff Recruitment

Since REF2014 the University has experienced several rounds of restructuring which inevitably has led to a high turnover of staff. One of the cornerstones of RDSBL's recruitment strategy has been to support the transition of our best PGR students into full-time academic researchers, as well as to recruit and nurture the development of early career researchers with the demonstrable ability and potential to contribute new and existing strategic fields of growth. Once recruited the ECRs are mentored and supported through our Developing Researcher programme and Early Career Researcher Network. We have also funded several academic Doctorates (*Mingazhova, Yerby, Udeogu, Kypuram, Butt, Okaya, Olatubosun and Page-Tickell*). The support provided builds their research expertise and provides them with skills to develop research informed teaching. Our newly appointed ECRs include experienced industry practitioners (*Lutz, Page-Tickell, Bigi, Adisa, Ambe, Hussain, Olatubosun, Naghieh, Preddie*). This has benefitted the School leading to an infusion of new expertise and a consequent diversification of research outputs and grant application activity.

2.4 Staff Development Strategy

The RDSBL has provided increased support for research active staff through:

- Retaining, rewarding and promoting staff through annual Performance Development Review (PDR) which encompasses all areas of teaching, research and management. Staff can agree a personal development plan with their line manager and identify their research goals and training needs. Based on research performance the School has promoted several staff to senior research positions, including Readers and Professorships (*Bianchi, Lutz, Chandler, Richter*)
- Providing funding to staff for research development activities such as conference presentation skills, learning new and innovative research methodology skills, specialist software training and writing grant and funding proposals. UoA staff working in relation to *political economy, finance and governance* attended the Econometric Modelling and Forecasting Summer School run by Timberlake consultants every year (*Boahen, Udeogu, Roy-Mukherjee*). UoA staff working in the area of *consumer cultures* (*Kelly, Abdulrazak, Kypuram, Gbadamosi*) attended a conference on digital marketing run by Google Digital Garage.
- Providing a flexible working environment for staff to meet their learning and teaching and research commitments. Several staff have taken research sabbaticals ranging from six months to four weeks leading to several published outputs and research collaborations (*Bianchi, Lutz, Chan, Kelly, Fouskas*)
- Offering competitive grants to staff from the QR Global Challenges fund, supporting in projects that are connected to developing countries and transition economies. At School-level seed funding is available to staff for small research projects.

ERCs and new staff are supported through the annual Researcher Development Programme

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

and Early Career Researcher Network Forum and Mentoring Scheme. The aim is to enhance their research skills through encouraging the following:

- Participation in drafting research bids making use of their expertise and methodological skills.
- Participation in workshops and seminars by way of presenting their ongoing research to wider audiences (students, members of UEL staff, general public)
- Participation, together with PhD students, in the organisation of research workshops, seminars and special events taking care of logistical and practical issues concerning preparation and dissemination of their research
- Organising their research material for publication and having one to one meetings with their mentors to discuss publication outlets, peer-review processes, targeting high impact 3* and 4* journals.

Four former PhD students are now ECRs in the Department of Business (*Udeogu, Butt, Yerby and Mingazhova*). Their research on banking capital regulation and financialization have broadened the scope of the UOAs work related to thematic areas of *political economy, finance and governance*. Senior Lecturer in Marketing, *Mingazova* also recently completed her PhD in the School and specialises on innovative qualitative research into youth consumption.

2.5 PGR Students and Doctoral Supervision

Since 2014 there have been 31 completions in the UOA, the highest result across the University. PGR students have access to all university facilities and any additional support for specific projects (see section 1.3.4). PGR students also have the option to sign up-to 6 hours of teaching per week which helps with their professional development. In addition to in-house research skills training PGR students also receive funding to participate in conferences and external methodology training workshops. For example, *Udeogu*, received funding to attend a conference at Cardiff University in 2016 on the impact of financialization in Sub-Saharan African countries.

Currently there are 43 PGR students in the School and 22 in the UoA working on a range of topics. Topics include: “The role of Chinese banks in China’s economic rise” (Ms Chenzhu Song), “The role of Islamic banking in the Malaysian panic of 1997” (Ms Ainie Shahar), “Passionate leaders at work” (Mr Sok-Ho Trinh), “Petroleum resource governance in Nigeria” (Mr. Aslam Kaitah) and hospitality organisations and ethics institutionalisation (Janice Lalu).

The PRES 2018 survey results highlight the categories in which RDSBL has scored higher than the UEL benchmark, namely supervision, progression, professional development, teaching and well-being. Other areas such as resources, research culture, research skills and overall experience have all been areas targeted for improvement in our research strategy.

PGR students go onto achieve promising careers in academia, corporate and financial institutions. Four of our recent PhD graduates are currently employed as Lecturer/Senior Lecturer in RDSBL (*Butt; Mingazhova, Udeogu, Boateng, Okoya*). *Yerby* was recruited as a Teaching Fellow by the LSE and *Alele* hired by a fintech company in the City of London. Most of our PGR students are international and on completion return to high profile sector jobs in their respective countries and/or return to their corporate sector roles.

3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

3.1 Research income

Investment in an improved research environment has helped to support the growth in the number of local and international collaborative partnerships and concomitant step-change in the growth and scope of research outputs, grant applications and research impact. This is demonstrated in the growing number of published outputs and grant applications, some of which involve ECRs, and the tenfold increase in research income between 2014-2020 (GBP 51,819 to GBP 512,391)

The UoA has seen an increase in the number of internal 'seed' funding applications invested in small collaborative projects:

- *Duong* received GBP 2000 to carry out research in collaboration with the University of Economics (Ho Chi Minh City) on the impact of a shift to online learning on the student experience in Vietnam as a result of Covid-19.
- *Fouskas* received GBP 2,000 from the Lipman & Miliband Trust to organise a STAMP lecture honouring Professor Peter Gowan of London Metropolitan University; he also received a grant of GBP 1,000 from the Political Quarterly to organise a STAMP workshop on Brexit.
- *Fouskas* received GBP 4000 to appoint two external researchers from the University of Banja Luka to conduct fieldwork on outbound youth migration. This is a pilot project requested by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Education he advises.

Successful grant applications to external funding bodies made by UoA staff include:

- *Bathgate* (formerly of CIME) secured EURO 124,680.00 as part of an EC Interreg IVC (ERDF) project: Zero-impact Cultural Heritage Event Network (Total budget: EURO 1,252,456.14). Led by Umbria Regional Government, Italy, and including a consortium of academic and local government partners, the aim was to develop a shared methodology to reduce the impact of events and festivals on the cultural heritage of historic urban cores. This project commenced during the previous period of assessment but ran until December 2014.
- *Bathgate* (formerly of CIME) secured EURO 71,287.68 EU FP7 grant (Total budget: EURO 3,999,997.00) as part of a multi-sectoral project (TRADEIT: Traditional Food: Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Technology Transfer) to support a network of food SMEs and researchers in of collaboration, innovation, entrepreneurship and technology transfer to increase the competitiveness and inter-regional advantage of traditional food producing SMEs (2014-2017).
- *Mostert* (formerly of CIME) secured two Erasmus + grants (2014 and 2016): SETTLE – Social entrepreneurship training (EURO 64,402.00); and on building employability through sports entrepreneurship (EURO 36,698.00).
- *Bianchi* is part of a successful British Academy/Leverhulme Small Research Grants (GBP 9,964.00) bid (2018-2021) to research the impact of the European financial crisis on state support for social tourism in Spain. The project is led by the University of Nottingham and includes the University of Huelva and University of Malaga.
- (2018) London City Airport awarded GBP 10,000 to *Ali, N.* and *Schmitz* to carry out a survey with 205 business travellers in order to determine whether 'bleisure' travel contributes to productivity and well-being.

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

- *Sait* was awarded GBP 5,000.00 from the Global Challenge Research Fund for training on Muslim women's land rights (July 2019); he also secured funding from UN-HABITAT for three projects (April, 2020): on land and climate change (USD 55,000.00); gender and youth (USD 30,000.00); and land finance and curriculum (USD 20,000.00).

Improved research support and a widening network of external collaborative partners has resulted in staff both participating in and leading applications during the period of assessment. These include: **Even our unsuccessful bids have expanded our increasing our networks and collaborative partnerships**

- *Bianchi* and *Linden* have worked with the Global Learning London Development Education Centre (London Borough of Tower Hamlets) and several European partners to develop a series of four projects, around social entrepreneurship, tourism/creative sectors and immigrant entrepreneurs in deprived parts of East London (March 2019 – October 2020). *Bianchi* and *Linden* also developed work looking into participatory cultural heritage governance in East London as part of a project led by Carlos III University submitted to Horizon 2020 (JPI Cultural Heritage) (Sept 2019).
- In relation to our work on the political economy of transition states and governance *Fouskas* led a consortium of six European partners (2014-15) on the project The Idea of Europe in the Balkans and a consortium comprising a further 16 universities on a Horizon 2020 application (2014 -15) The Balkans in Europe: Governance, Innovation, Development.
- *Bianchi* and *Fouskas* were partners in a European-wide consortium to develop a programme of research on overtourism and sustainable degrowth, led by Wageningen University and Research (Netherlands). This project was submitted to the Horizon 2020 - Research and Innovation Framework Programme (Marie Skłodowska Curie Action: H2020-MSCA-ITN-2020).
- *Bianchi* coordinated an application to the EU COST ACTION (European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST) (2016) on cross-border tourism and regional economic development in European borderlands in partnership with the University of Huelva (Spain)

3.2 Infrastructure and Facilities

UoA staff are based at University Square Stratford (USS) and Docklands campuses. As the more central campus USS regularly hosts public events, research seminars and engagement activities. The UoA receives support for its research through a dedicated School Research Administrator, as well as an Academic Services Librarian. The Academic Services Librarian provides students and members of staff with assistance in locating subject-specific resources as well as training in the use of legal databases (Lexis-Nexis, Scopus and Westlaw).

USS hosts the world-class Bloomberg trading room. 16 Bloomberg terminals are available to staff and students for research. Investment in this facility has allowed our staff and PGR students to expand their research in financial markets using real-time trading information and data analytics. Staff and students can carry out comprehensive research on the view of industries and their key constituents at sector, industry and company level using Bloomberg. Students making use of this facility complete the globally recognised Bloomberg Market Concepts (BMC).

During the current assessment period the RDSBL has set up a Tax and Accountancy Clinic to

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

support the local businesses and communities in East London. The Clinic provides free accounting advice to the most vulnerable communities in the local area and has been particularly active during the Covid-19 lockdown period. It provided awareness and guidance to local SMEs about the financial support provided HMRC during the lockdown and how to access it. Currently staff within the UoA (Roy-Mukherjee, Boahen, Udeogu) area carrying out an internally funded research project on the financial resilience of the local SMEs and local councils impacted by Covid-19. The project aims to inform policy of the local councils and their SME strategy.

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

The UoA encourages all staff to generate and disseminate high quality research that impacts policy, industry and society more broadly. Staff are committed to producing work of the highest academic rigour and quality while remaining mindful of the relationship between theory, policy and practice. As demonstrated by the submitted outputs and grant application activities our research is shaped by a combination of UEL's egalitarian heritage and ethos, the diverse and challenging local socio-economic context as well as the innovative methodologies and critical theoretical frameworks develop by UoA staff looking into questions of wider global import. UoA staff engage with a diverse range of commercial (London City Airport; Good Projects, ADKN, Nomad Projects), government (e.g. London Boroughs of Tower Hamlets & Newham; Republic of SRPSKA, Bosnia & Herzegovina; Region of Crete, Greece), inter-governmental (e.g. UN-HABITAT), not-for-profit (e.g. Global Learning London) and numerous academic stakeholders in local, national and international contexts.

4.1 Contribution to the academic community and wider research environment

Research by UoA staff is underpinned by the five thematic priorities and supported by the by the Research Centres in line with the strategic direction given by the RDSBL Research and Impact strategy (2015-2020).

a) Sustainability:

Research in this area encompasses diverse areas of business and sustainable economic development. UoA work on such areas as sustainable tourism and degrowth in the Mediterranean (*Bianchi, Fouskas*); energy security and sustainability in Eastern Europe, Black Sea and the Balkans/Eastern Mediterranean (*Raszewski, Roy-Mukherjee, Fouskas*). There is a strong focus on the UN Sustainable Development Goals and their relationship to tourism (*Bianchi*), land rights, climate justice and womens' empowerment (*Sait*). Staff (*Hayes; Bigi, Kypuram, Roy-Mukherjee*) also work with UEL's Sustainability Research Institute on community enterprise initiatives in Newham.

b) Political Economy, Finance and Governance:

Research in this area is concerned with innovative methods of analysis in banking, financialization and trade (*Duong, Shabani, Tat Lung; Udeogu*), governance (*Fouskas, Hayes*), the political economy of energy (*Rasewski, Fouskas*), tourism (*Bianchi*), and Islamic finance (*Sait*). There is a strong current of work framed by heterodox political economy theoretical perspectives, in relation to the rise of Chinese capitalism (*Fouskas, Roy-Mukherjee, Huang and Udeogu*); neoliberalism/ordoliberalism and the European financial crisis (*Fouskas, Roy-Mukherjee*), and the Arab 'spring' (*Roy-Mukherjee*). UoA staff are noted for their work related to specific geographic regions, including the Balkans and Mediterranean (*Bianchi, Fouskas*), Eastern Europe (*Rasewski*), Sub-Saharan Africa (*Sait, Udeogu*) and, the Middle East and North Africa (*Elfeituri, Roy-Mukherjee*,

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

Sait).

c) Innovation, Management and Entrepreneurship:

Research in this area is concerned with innovation in management, new business models and employment. Staff have examined the impact of Covid-19 on the tourism industries and entrepreneurship (*Bianchi*), small businesses (*Ambe*), unemployment and the financial resilience of the local economy in Newham and Tower Hamlets (*Roy-Mukherjee, Boahen, Udeogu, Sait*). UoA staff have carried out work in relation to 'bleisure travel' and its relationship to worker productivity and well-being (*Ali, N., Schmitz*); the influence of AI on strategy formulation (*Bigi*); inter-organization collaboration and responsible management (*Hayes*), women's' entrepreneurship (*Gbadamosi*); supply chain planning and forecasting (*Ali, M.*).

d) Equality, Diversity & Inclusion:

This research theme is concerned with the influence of ethnicity, culture and digital transformations on business practice and organisational cultures in a variety of business and national contexts. Staff have investigated employee relations in the 'gig economy' (*Naghieh, Boocock, Page-Tickell, Roy-Mukherjee*); the influence of ethnicity on consumption (*Al-Abdulrazak, Gbadamosi*) and the influence of patriarchy on the work-life balance in Nigeria (*Adisa*). UoA staff specialised in tourism focus on Arab hospitality and Islamic travel (*Ali, N.*) and have developed projects on tourism, social enterprise and immigrant entrepreneurship in East London (*Bianchi, Linden*).

e) Consumer Cultures:

This research theme is concerned with consumer cultures, marketing and the interconnection between consumer behaviour and technology. Staff have investigated branding and consumption among specific ethnic communities (*Al-Abdulrazak; Gbadamosi*), brand history and the importance of marketing workers as cultural intermediaries in developmental processes for brands (*Kelly*). Staff have also developed innovative approaches to the study of consumption looking at vinyl record collectors (*Kelly, Linden*), the travel behaviour of Eurovision Song Contest fans (*Linden*). Staff also carry out work on digital marketing and the influence of social media and technology on consumption (*Broderick*).

Further to increasing the quantity and scope of published outputs in a diverse spectrum of interdisciplinary and leading peer-reviewed journals, monographs, edited collections and book chapters UoA staff make a significant contribution to the wider academic and research community through journal editorships, editorial board membership, working for funding agencies and playing an active role in professional associations.

- *Fouskas* is the founding Editor-in-chief of Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies (Taylor & Francis) - on whose editorial board *Bianchi* and *Roy-Mukherjee* also serve – and sits on numerous editorial boards (Journal of Global Fault-lines; Journal of Contemporary Central and Eastern Europe; Notebooks).
- *Bianchi* is an Associate Editor for Annals of Tourism Research Empirical Insights, a new golden open access social journal affiliated to Annals of Tourism Research (ABS rank 4*; Impact Factor 5.908) and a member of the editorial board of Tourism Planning & Development (Taylor & Francis).
- *Gbadamosi* sits on the Editorial Boards of Journal of Global Marketing (Routledge), Journal of African Business (Routledge), African Journal of Economic and Management Studies (Emerald).
- *Kelly* sits on the Advisory Panel for the book Business Research Methods (Bryman, Bell and

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

Harley, Oxford University Press, 2019). In 2018 he was also awarded the title of 'Outstanding Reviewer' by the Journal of Arts and Markets.

Staff are also actively involved in diverse academic and professional associations. *Bianchi* is a Fellow of the Royal Anthropological Institute's (RAI) Tourism and Heritage committee and Research Committee 50 on International Tourism (International Sociological Association). The IoHT is a member of the Awards for Training and Higher Education (ATHE), Association of Tourism and Leisure Education (ATLAS) and Institute of Hospitality. *Fouskas* is chief adviser to REDETE (Researching Economic Development and Entrepreneurship in Transition Economies), the largest academic and professional network in the Balkans (www.redete.org). *Gbadamosi* is the current Program Chair for the International Academy of African Business Development (IAABD) annual conferences. *Sait* sits on the advisory committee of the World Urban Forum and the High-Level UN-Habitat Stakeholder Advisory Group.

Evidence of the local, national and global reach of our work and its contribution to the research community as well as wider to issue of significant import to economic, commercial, policy practitioners is evinced by the number and diversity of invited keynotes given by several UoA staff, nationally and internationally.

- Linked to our research on political economy, the *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* (JBNES), whose founding Editor-in-chief is STAMP Director Professor *Fouskas*, celebrated its 20th anniversary in April 2018 in Banja Luka, Bosnia & Herzegovina. This event was held jointly with the REDETE network and was sponsored by Routledge-Taylor & Francis, local banks, Ministries and Universities. In recognition of his work on tourism political economy and sustainability, *Bianchi* was invited to be expert participant at the roundtable on Governing Mobilities and Sustainable Tourism at the Università luav di Venezia (July 2019). *Bianchi's* work on tourism, citizenship and politics has led to numerous invitations to deliver keynote talks at the University of Primorska, Slovenia (September 2014), Saxion University, Netherlands (July 2017) and University of Oulu, Finland (September, 2016).
- Linked to our work on entrepreneurship, equality and diversity *Gbadamosi* was invited to deliver keynote talks at the International Academy of African Business and Development at the University of South Africa, Durban (May, 2018) and University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania (May 2019) and on Pentecostalism, entrepreneurship and customer-orientation at Edinburgh Napier University (January, 2014). *Ali* was invited to give a keynote on 'Halal Tourism at the Tourism Management Institute's annual convention (November, 2015). *Hayes* was invited to give a keynote speech on Mauritius, migration and merging at the Mahatma Gandhi Institute (2015).
- In recognition of UoA expertise in innovative areas of finance *Sait* was invited to deliver the annual public lecture, Revitalising Islamic and Social Finance at the London School of Economics (2016) and training for a World Bank Masterclass on Land and Financing Tools in MENA and Asia at the World Bank Land and Poverty Conference in Washington DC (March 2017). *Sait* was invited as a high-level plenary speaker at Dialogue 6: Partnerships and Initiatives Supporting Culture and Innovation in Cities (February 2020). In the area of international finance *Duong* was invited to give key-note speeches at the Open University, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam (2016 and 2017).

4.2 Public Engagement and Impact on Economy and Society

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

Many of the School's leading researchers have developed and sustained ongoing relationships with external partners and collaborators to achieve work that is 'outstanding in terms of their reach and significance' (HEFCE). UoA staff are closely engaged with the local authorities, SMEs and local communities to provide professional support work to specific organisations and residents in the area, particularly the more vulnerable.

i. The Tax and Accountancy Clinic was set up in March 2020 as a free online service to support local businesses and communities during the Covid-19 national lockdown. The main aim was to raise awareness and help access the various government funded schemes, grants and welfare payments made available to businesses and households as a result of the lockdown. As and when the economy starts to re-open the Clinic will continue to provide tax and accountancy services to the local community. The Clinic has two co-directors (*Ambe* and *Hussain*) and is supported by other UoA Accounting staff (*Boahen, Duong, Osinubi*)

ii. The UEL Centre for Mediation and Workplace Conflict Management was established in 2019 and run by *Hobby* and *Hayes*. The Centre aims to promote and develop interdisciplinary research, teaching and engagement with practitioners to offer training in conflict and compromise training. *Page-Tickell* has spoken at professional conferences, with former UoA staff members (*Yerby*) including, the East London CIPD Conference Workplace Compromise. A key function of the centre is to contribute to the research agenda on conflict resolution, mediation and restorative practices. In 2019 the Centre hosted a conference (Managing Conflict and Difficult Conversations), attended by 80 HR professionals. The Centre hosts the Pan-London Community of Practice for mediation and provides mediators for HEIs across London. is Staff involved in setting up the centre together with other UoA members (*Yerby, Naghieh, Boocock; Page-Tickel; Roy-Mukherjee*) have published numerous related works on workplace mediation, including, an edited volume: *Conflict and Shifting Boundaries in the Gig Economy; An Interdisciplinary Analysis* (Emerald, 2020).

iii. The Noon Centre supports key collaborative projects in Newham Council, such as '50 steps to a Healthier Newham' and is developing work on the economic impact of Covid-19 in East London. As part of its commitment to promoting a fairer and more inclusive society the Centre provides advice to local business and helps to link students with employers through the Elite Scholars programme.

UoA staff contribute to wider public debate through the development of sustained and wide-ranging research partnerships with numerous universities, public authorities and NGOs across Europe. Our research centres organise of several events and workshops open to the wider academic community and the general public. These include:

- In June 2018 the Noon Centre organised a public event to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Ford Dagenham strike of 1968. at which two of the original women strikers (Gwen Davis and Eileen Pullen) spoke of their experiences and about gender and pay equality in the workplace today. In March 2019 Former Paralympic athlete and journalist Ade Adepitan was invited to spoke of his experiences of working in the media and the challenges he had to address in order to do so.
- Since 2014 the STAMP research centre has organised over 60 seminars, public debates and lectures on themes of contemporary economic and political import, including the Arab uprising (February 2015); the global financial crisis (December, 16); the future of the Labour Party (March 2016) and Brexit (April and December 2016). In December 2017 *Fouskas* and *Roy-Mukherjee* convened the STAMP Conference on "Neoliberalism and Ordoliberalism" at which they delivered keynote lectures. This resulted in a special edition of *Critical Sociology* guest edited by them. In

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

June 2019 the STAMP research centre organised a conference on “Privatisation in Europe” to debate the variegated state of privatisation programmes across EU/Euro-zone countries. The event brought together an esteemed group of international scholars as well as a number of ECRs from STAMP and Economics staff in RDSBL (*Fouskas, Roy-Mukherjee, Udeogu*), and was managed by STAMP Visiting Fellow, *Dr. Ozgun Sarimehmet Duman*.

- UoA staff have also been working with the local authorities of Newham and Tower Hamlets to support and advise on Covid-19 socio-economic recovery initiatives (*Sait*). *Bianchi* and *Linden* have worked with the Global Learning London DEC (Tower Hamlets) to develop impactful programmes of research targeting immigrant communities, arts practitioners and tourism entrepreneurs struggling to integrate in the wider economy.
- UoA staff (*Hayes, Roy-Mukherjee, Kypuram, Bigi, Mingazhova, Butt, Duong, Gbadamosi*) are working with the Sustainability Research Institute (UEL) to support local residents and other actors (housing developers, local council) on community enterprise initiatives and to provide business consultancy to SMEs working in green and innovative projects as part of the Advancing Resource Efficiency and Urban Ecology Innovations (ARENA) project. *Hayes* also works with the Centre for Cultural and Creative Industries (Bath Spa Business School) to analyse the governance of collaborations in creative industries.
- In 2019 *Ali, N.* and *Schmitz* delivered a report *Bleisure Travel Report: Worker Productivity and Well-being* commissioned by London City Airport.

Through work carried out by staff in the Noon (*Sait*) and STAMP (*Fouskas*) research centres, our work has grown in its international stature and impact.

- Since 2013, in his role as Policy Adviser to the Ministry of Science, Technology & Education in the Republic of SRPSKA, Bosnia & Herzegovina *Fouskas* has influenced government policy in its drive to reverse high levels of unemployment and outbound youth migration, while affecting ethnic reconciliation and promoting multi-faith cultural cooperation. His work has improved links between the Ministry and other universities across Bosnia, the Balkans and Europe, and made a substantial contribution to macroeconomic policy oriented towards enhancing the employability for young graduates and halting youth emigration from the Republic.
- *Mimoza* received a GBP 3,200 grant from the Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation and GBP 6,000 from the Toshiba International to host workshops at Meiji University, Tokyo (2016) and SOAS, University of London (2017) to discuss the impact of ‘Abenomics’.
- *Huang* is working with local authorities and tax consultants in Guangdong Province in China to bring about policy change relating to the deviant behaviour in SMEs in the province.
- *Sait* collaborates with such international agencies as UN-Habitat, the World Bank and the Global Land Tools Network and has contributed to major UN policy papers in the areas of land reform, gender equality, education, smart cities and impact of Covid-19.

4.3 Media and Public Awareness

Staff in the UoA are actively involved in informing and engaging public debate in national and international media as well as by giving public lectures to a variety of audiences. Many also feature

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

prominently in national and international media (Al-Jazeera, BBC, Bloomberg; CBC, CBS, RT, TRT World), and make frequent contributions to the print media (Alba Sud; Brave New Europe; Open Democracy), commercial reports and public policy.

Bianchi has lectured on UNESCO World Heritage for the international cruise company, Seabourn Cruises, and on the Politics of Tourism, at Kelowna Public Library, British Columbia, Canada (September 2018). He has given interviews to CBC Radio Canada and spoken at a Tortoise Media "ThinkIn" on the moral basis of holidays (April 2019). *Linden* has given an interview for the Turkish national broadcaster international channel, TRT World, on the call for a boycott of the 2019 Eurovision Song contest, the Israel-Palestine conflict (the event took place in Tel Aviv), the voting system, and Turkey's continued absence from Eurovision (May, 2019). He has also contributed views on fans and fandoms to popular culture magazines such as E!News and Noisey/Vice, as well as the BBC.

Fouskas is a regular commentator for: Radio Kapodistria (Slovenia and Italy); Russian International TV (RT-London) and TG-48 (New York); Al-Jazeera English; BBC Radio 3 and 4 (Free Thinking series and "Moral Maze"); Radio Sputnik (Moscow), BBC Radio 5 Live; Bloomberg.org; Dutch National TV in its Newshour (Newshour is the leading daily current affairs show on Dutch National Television, Australian ABC); The London-based London Greek Radio (LGR) and the Athens-based Hellenic Radio and Television Broadcasting (ERT).

Fouskas has appeared several times on Greek and Cypriot TV and given interviews to the BBC (UK), Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Istanbul Broadcasting (Turkey), Zagreb National TV, Ankara Radio (Turkey), Alpha Channel (Greece), Alter (Greece), Bosnian Television and Radio, RIK (Cyprus), Sigma Channel (Cyprus), Italian Amisnet, Croatian TV and Radio, Swedish TV and the Finnish Uutiset.

Fouskas participated in Michael Buerk's "Moral Maze" (BBC Radio 4). He provided consultancy for The Wall Street Journal on the Greek shipping industry, and to the Greek Ministry of Defence on the Cyprus issue. He has written countless op-eds for Open Democracy and The Conversation, as well as in many print and electronic outlets in the Balkans. He's a regular contributor to the mainstream daily, The Paper of the Editorialists (Greece), il Manifesto (Italy), Iskra (Greece), Brave New Europe, the Axis of Logic and other media outlets in the UK, Europe and elsewhere.

4.4. Conclusion

During this period of assessment research in the UoA has undergone considerable growth and diversification. The UoA has capitalised on its strengths in relation to its geographic location and diverse body of staff to boost the quantity and scope of research outputs, grant awards and applications and external collaboration across a wide range of areas. This work has been guided and supported by the four research centres and aligned with five organising thematic clusters. The body of research active staff in the UoA has undergone considerable change and renewal thanks in part to the development and promotion of PGRs and ECRS. While bringing in valuable new perspectives and diversifying the focus of research, our work continues to be inspired by the spirit of critical enquiry and participatory engagement with local and global communities that has always been the hallmark of the institution.

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)**References**

Rustin, M. and G. Poynter (Eds.) (2020) *Building a radical university: A history of the University of East London*. London: Lawrence & Wishart.