

Institution: University of Northampton
Unit of Assessment: Business and Management Studies (UoA17)
<p>1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy</p> <p>1.1 Unit context & structure</p> <p>The Business and Management unit has significantly grown in size, strength and expertise since 2014 growing from 12 staff members to 23 in REF2021. This has been led by structural changes at University level, growth in university research institutes and by the appointment of a new Dean in the Faculty of Business and Law in 2015. There has been a clear coherent strategy to identify and create support activities for all research active staff. This strategy has included the appointment of a Head of Research, Mortimer, in 2015 and the development of two research centres made up of faculty members, who undertake applied research parallel to their teaching responsibilities. Alongside these centres are two research institutes, both self-sufficient and independent from the faculty, that support Business related staff with research. These institutes have full time researchers and have a focus on commercial opportunities, as well as pure research.</p> <p>Much of the research undertaken in the unit is linked to the University of Northampton Strategic Plan 2015-2020. This plan is heavily influenced by the fact that the UoN is the first UK member of the Ashoka U network of socially impactful universities. We consequently have a number of institution-wide Changemaker Challenges that focus on social impact generally but also specifically on social impact in Northamptonshire. These challenges are themed around Education, Health and Well-Being, Heritage and Culture, and Business and Enterprise. The University is also committed to aligning its impact work with the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and will be making its first submission to the 2021 Times Higher Education Impact Rankings in December 2020. We have aligned ourselves to the SDGs 'To build resilient Infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation', 'to promote sustained inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all' and 'Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns'.</p> <p>The themes of sustainability and impact therefore run across many of the research activities of the unit, reflecting the growing recognition that in today's world, businesses are expected to operate in a corporately and socially responsible manner and consider the impact of their activities on the environment and society, as well as on the creation of profit.</p> <p>This emphasis is evidenced by the development of The Institute for Social Innovation and Impact (ISII), run by Hazenberg, which was established in 2014 and evolved from the Social Enterprise Research Group documented in the last REF submission. It reflects how work in this area has moved from social responsibility and social enterprises to social innovation and the measurement of social impact. The demand for research in this area, and the availability of funding to develop this knowledge, has led to the Institute's steady growth over the years from two staff up to eight staff in 2020, alongside its support for 14 PGRs between 2014-2021. Since its inception ISII has brought in over 2,500,000 of direct research income into the university, sourced from central and local government, private and third sector organisations, and European funding. The Institute of Logistics, Infrastructure, Supply and Transport (ILIST), run by Fassam, is also a result of our interest in sustainability. Its inception was linked to research into environmentally friendly transport systems. ILIST focuses on the areas of cyber security, disruptive technologies, logistics, supply chain and transformational travel.</p> <p>The first of our research centres, The Centre for Sustainable Business Practices (CSBP), led by Hosseinian-Far, brings together colleagues researching sustainability within profit-making businesses across numerous disciplines such as Marketing, Finance and HRM. Sustainability topics vary from advertising ethics and cyber security to supply chain management and corporate social responsibility. The centre presently has 22 staff members and has seen a steady increase in numbers. It is at the heart of the Environmental, Social and Corporate Governance movement</p>

within the South-East Midlands and beyond, helping charities, civic institutions and businesses work together. For example, it plays an active part in the Lord-Lieutenant's Leaders' Forum which brings together commercial, civic and charity leaders in the county to explore issues of business and society. The Centre also collaborates with external prominent industry organisations to promote external collaborations and enhance collaborative research opportunities, such as the Institute for Small Business and Entrepreneurship (ISBE).

Our other main area of expertise is encapsulated in the Centre for China and Emerging Economies (CCEE), led by **He**. The centre's two main areas of interest are the internationalisation of Chinese enterprises and its impact on global economic organisation and the post-acquisition integration process involving Chinese overseas acquisitions. However, it is also involved with research in Africa, Brazil and Central Asia. The Centre has 12 staff members and external partners include the Chinese Ministry of Science and Technology, Nanjing University of Science and Technology and the University of Sao Paulo.

1.2 Research objectives

We have performed well against our three main objectives that were laid out in our REF2014 submission, as well as our University Strategy in 2015:

1. To develop a stronger vibrant research culture in a supportive environment for staff at all levels and doctoral researchers.

This has led, in part, to the creation of several initiatives which are detailed in Section 2 of this document. Examples include a mentoring scheme, small grants scheme, seminar series and an associate professorship development programme. The unit has several Early Career Researchers (**Fassam**, **Gioletti** and **Naumov**) and it has therefore been important to encourage these colleagues to publish and collaborate with more experienced staff members to develop themselves as researchers. The research centres and institutes have been key in enabling this collaboration to take place by stimulating discussion, collaboration and interaction between staff at all levels.

2. To strengthen current collaborative research relationships and build new regional, national and international partnerships.

This is demonstrated by the large number of collaborations and joint projects detailed in Section 4 which cover projects based in Northampton, UK, Europe, Central Asia and the Far East. Examples include the work of the ISII which plays a critical role in the internationalisation strategy, building research partnerships in the East and South East Asia regions, predominantly in Vietnam, but also including Hong Kong, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines and South Korea.

3. Deepen and strengthen the research expertise of the existing research groups and centres.

In REF2014 research was focused around the Social Enterprise Research Group and the China, Transitional and Developing Economics Research Centre. Over the course of the last 6 years these have developed into the ISII and the CCEE respectively, as well as the unit now including the research centre CSBP and research institute ILIST. We have strengthened our specialism in sustainability by the appointment of **Hosseinian-Far** in January 2018 who is now the Chair of CSBP and is presently putting together a new MSc in Sustainability Management which will involve colleagues from across the faculty. An important addition to the CCEE has been **Ai** who was appointed in January 2016 and has strengthened the quality and quantity of our research activity in that area.

Our globally focused research is also supported by a keen commitment to the development of the local region (Northamptonshire) through the University Changemaker Challenges embedded in the University Strategy. We have supported PhD studentships presently having three PhD students who are looking into "Exploring Stakeholder Collaboration in Region Branding strategies

for the county of Northamptonshire” supervised by **Daye** and **Mortimer**, “Harnessing alternative economic growth in Northamptonshire” and “Exploring family business succession from the successors perspective in Northamptonshire” supervised by **Fakoussa** and **Wang**. **Hazenberg** and **Thomas** supervised a student working on “Mapping social enterprise ecosystems across England, including Northamptonshire”. We also awarded small grants on a competitive basis, an example of this allowed **Ryu** to examine Social Enterprises in the Northamptonshire area.

Our research objectives, moving forward to the next REF cycle, are based on building on our excellent progress in this Unit and a recognition of the large number of ECRs within the Unit alongside a growing but still small number of more experienced researchers.

1. To strengthen the quality of the outputs and this objective is being supported by further mentoring activity, increased training on identifying appropriate journals for publication and more opportunities to take part in national and international collaboration. An example of this is a new collaboration with Universiti Teknologi MARA (UITM) which is enabling several colleagues to identify common areas of interest with colleagues from UITM, hopefully leading to strong collaborative research, particularly in the area of sustainability.
2. A greater emphasis will be placed on identifying and documenting the impact of research outputs at an earlier stage of the process, utilising our relatively new Pure system to collect evidence and document progress. This will involve the sharing of good practice and a number of workshops and training sessions for research active staff.
3. More resources and emphasis are to be placed on bid writing, including the exploration of alternative and smaller funds so that our expertise in this area can be developed. It is planned to direct appropriate resources, such as a time allowance in recognition of investment needed in this area.
4. It is our intention to appoint research active staff where possible and continue to invest in researcher development. This is in line with the central University strategy of creating a clear researcher development path from ECR to professor, supported by a strong ECR development course, appointment to Associate Professor and opportunities to apply for professorship.

The introduction of the Teaching and Research contracts is a positive step in recognising the support that is needed for our research active staff. The institution’s move towards semesterisation in 2021/2022 is also seen as an encouraging development in terms of workload planning. There has also been recent investment in the Research and Innovation Funding Support (RIFS) who are planning to work more closely with the research centres to provide bespoke support in terms of the identification, submission and running of funded projects, with the assistance on the recently acquired Funding Institutional application.

1.3 Open research

Staff receive training and support in open access, copyright and data-management. In 2019 the University launched its CRIS (Current Research Information System) enabling greater visibility of not only research outputs, but also research activities and datasets. In 2020 the University purchased a platform for digital preservation, and staff are now moving towards a more open research environment, where open research has progressed from being encouraged, to becoming an integral part of the research life-cycle. Datasets are uploaded to the CRIS on submission, where they are checked for replicability and long-term digital preservation. A data management plan is required for all research projects as part of the ethical approval prior to any research being carried out. To facilitate this, staff are encouraged to use [DMPonline](#) and examples of well-written data management plans, and one-to-one training sessions are available to all staff. A strong emphasis is placed on ensuring that our data adheres to the FAIR (findable, accessible, interoperable and reasonable) principles of sharing of data, striving to be as open as possible, but understanding when necessary restrictions are required.

Staff have been provided with training in the selection of places for publication, use tools such as Sherpa/Romeo and the creative commons to check funder requirements, restrictions relating to copyright, and the selection of appropriate licencing of research outputs. An institutional fund is available to cover the cost of open access where a green (non-payment) route is either not an option, or where the embargo period is extensive. This fund covers the payments for articles, chapters and monographs. Where possible scholarly chapters are made open access. Research activities, such as presentations at conferences, workshops and educational resources are made available under a creative commons licence.

1.4 Research integrity

The University supports the Concordat to Support Research Integrity building this into a rigorous Research Ethics policy. This is implemented at a Faculty level by the Faculty of Business and Law Ethics Committee which is presently chaired by **Daye**. The committee consists of representatives from all the different Subject Groups. It assesses all ethics applications submitted by research-active staff and is also responsible for overseeing the ethics and integrity procedures undertaken within undergraduate and postgraduate taught modules. The Chair for the committee is a member of the University Ethics Committee.

2. People

2.1 Staffing strategy & development

Staff development is embedded in the structure of the Business and Management unit. A number of initiatives have been put in place over the last seven years to create a supportive environment for all staff, from ECR to experienced researchers. To assist in this challenge, **Mortimer** and **Mansour** were supported to attend the Development Programme for Directors of Research run by the Chartered Institute of Business Schools and the British Academy of Management.

In order to ensure that research is considered during the recruitment process, the Research Lead contributes to the selection process, by discussing research plans and publication records with each candidate and feeding back to the interview panel. This involvement has led to the recognition that support is essential for our ECRs from the beginning of their employment and has led to the organising of specific sessions for ECRs to not only to provide training and impart knowledge but also to enable them to meet each other across subject groups and create their own support network.

In line with our focus on ECRs, a mentoring scheme has been running for the last three years. At present ten colleagues have been matched with more experienced researchers to assist them in moving their research forward. The mentorship scheme provides support for producing research outputs, networking, skills development and evaluating impact. This collaboration between experienced academics and ECRs helps develop careers, broaden networks and increase collaborations.

The most significant initiative in terms of research support and expansion in this unit has been the Research Development Awards (RDAs). This was a faculty-led program where staff members at all levels had the opportunity to apply for research hours to be included in their workload allocation. These ringfenced research hours allowed staff members to undertake further research alongside their teaching obligations. The scheme was initially based on the submission of research plans followed by a meeting with the Research Lead and the Dean. We have supported over fifty staff members throughout the scheme. RDAs now been superseded by the introduction of the Teaching and Research Contracts, a University wide initiative, which provide research active staff with designated research hours on their workload.

A Small Grants Award Scheme of up to GBP2000 has also been available (2018-2020). In this application, it was necessary to demonstrate how the fund would be used to move their research

forward as well as assisting in the application for external funds in the future. Fourteen projects have been supported, enabling colleagues to collect data, disseminate information and form important networks. An example from this initiative is the work on Social Enterprises in Northamptonshire by **Ryu** which has led to a conference paper at the EMES International Research conference on Social Enterprise and also assisted in successfully winning a bid examining the Concept of Social Enterprise from the Korean Studies Grant of GBP5,000. This study also led to a PhD studentship and was integral in the successful application to SEUK to make Northampton a Social Enterprise Place. A further small grant enabled **Ai** to visit China to collect further data on understanding the mechanisms through which cultural integration takes place from international acquisitions by multinational corporations from emerging economies. The fund enabled him to undertake a longitudinal study and he has written a research paper from this research published in the Journal of World Business. Another Faculty programme to support bidding has been the introduction of writing retreats supported through external facilitators. These writing retreats have led to the formation of several research bids such as an Erasmus+ KA107 Staff Mobility Central Asia and an APROV Augmented Procurement Visibility grant.

A weekly Research Seminars Series is run during term time giving a platform for all doctoral students and research staff to present their research and receive feedback from colleagues. This originally was only available for doctoral students but has expanded over the last four years to enable staff at all levels as well as visiting professors/speakers to contribute. It provides an opportunity for staff to become aware of and get involved with research being undertaken in other subject areas and thereby lead to interdisciplinary research. Examples of such activities include joint papers with colleagues from the International Business and the Accounting and Finance subject groups. A further development opportunity for staff and students to enhance their presentation skills and to network across the different faculties is the University Annual Research Conference. This conference was originally a faculty run research conference but was collaborated with other faculty led conferences in 2018 to create a University wide event. This is now in its third year, with thirteen Business staff and doctoral students presenting their research over two days in 2020.

Central resources such as The Graduate School and Research and Innovation Funding Support (RIFS) assist with our strategy to develop researchers. The importance of providing support for ECRs is recognised across the institution with the Graduate School offering sessions specifically for this group throughout the year e.g. "Designing Research with Impact in Mind", and "Making External Partnerships Work for You". Over 40 workshops a year are put on by the Graduate School with staff from this Unit supporting many of these sessions by facilitation.

The university has a process for appointing Visiting Professors and Fellows, who contribute to the research activity of the department. We currently have 10 Visiting Professors and 4 Visiting Fellows who work alongside colleagues in the department with related interests, participate in departmental events such as conferences and research seminars, contribute to PGR supervision and provide links to external bodies. Examples of this are Professor Berg from Lulea University of Technology, Sweden and Professor Barry from University of East London hosting sessions for doctoral students and staff on Academic Ethics and Integrity and Professor Johnston from SOAS presenting the keynote speech at the University Research Conference and providing one to one support and workshops on writing impact case studies and preparations for REF to colleagues in the faculty.

2.2 Postgraduate research students

A head of Doctoral Programmes, **Mansour**, was appointed in 2018. This new appointment is driving our programme of PGR development within the faculty putting sustainability and vitality at the heart of our PGR offerings. The number of level 8 research students supported by this unit has increased considerably over the last seven years. This is due in part, to the introduction of the successful Doctor of Business (DBA) programme in 2014 which now runs alongside our PhD programme. As of July 2020, there were 23 PhD completions and 6 DBA completions. In July 2020 our numbers of students were as follows.

Level 8 Doctoral Students:

- **44 DBA** students at the taught module stage
- **55 DBA** students in the thesis stage
- **46 PhD** students (including students with Partner Regents College)

To strengthen our research capability, finance has been provided to support the sponsorship of PhDs in particular topic areas with 17 studentships advertised since 2016. Three of these are linked to the University Changemaker Challenges. Two of these funded projects are with ILIST where students are not only supervised by staff within the Business and Management area but also from Waste Management and Computing, illustrating some of the cross-disciplinary work that is taking place in the institute. The ISII presently has seven funded PhDs and has seven completions during the REF period, with additional funding being provided through HEFCE Global Challenges Research Fund, G4S and the Office for Students.

This interdisciplinary commitment is reflected in our PhD community working in the circular economy and supply chain management in areas as diverse as leather, food, wheat, medical supplies and thermal installation. Supervisory teams are often formed across different subject groups and have led to new collaboration and publishing opportunities. An example of this is a PhD student who is looking at Sustainability in the leather industry and is being supervised by a chemist from the Leather department, **Jraisat**, an expert in supply change management and **Mortimer**, an experienced researcher from the Marketing area. Another example is a student exploring sustainability and impact within UNESCO Biosphere Reserves, combining ecological/environmental science and business/impact measurement supervised by **Hazenberg** and **Giroletti**.

The FBL Research Seminar Series (RSS) is key in bringing together researchers at all levels, including our PGR students. It provides a regular forum for a constructive and supportive discussion about research and introduces our PGR students to our wider research community. It also includes our doctoral students' transfer seminars (when they are required to present their progress after one year of study). Each PGR must present at least one research seminar per year as well as being encouraged to present his/her work at internal and external conferences.

In addition to these seminars, the need to provide discipline specific research methods and methodology workshops for our PGRs has led to the recent introduction of the Doctoral Development Programme which runs parallel to the university Graduate School workshops. It runs as a series of workshops covering topics such as Research Philosophy, recently facilitated by **Mansour** and **Mortimer** and Digital Researchers facilitated by **Ryu**. The programme consists of sessions that allow members of staff and supervisors to offer their shared experience back to the community.

It has been important to increase our supervisory capacity and to involve as many research active staff in supervision as possible. Supervisor training is run regularly by the Graduate School and is mandatory for all new research active members of staff. These recently trained colleagues are then often matched with a more experienced supervisor (2 completions minimum) to share knowledge and provide supervisory opportunities. Nineteen colleagues in this unit have completed the first of two modules of this supervisory training course, which is the minimum required to be given supervisory responsibilities and two are currently attending. Six colleagues have also completed the second module and been awarded the Postgraduate Certificate in Research Degree Supervision.

As the number of supervisors has increased, the need for a monitoring system of supervisory support has been recognised. This approach was developed within the Business unit as a recommendation from the University Research Degrees Committee. The reviews ensure that Doctoral Researchers (PhD and DBA) receive regular supervision meetings with their supervisory team, and that the core discussion points arising from these meetings are appropriately recorded.

The review includes the transfer process deadlines and requirements. The reviews take place twice a year in Autumn and Spring.

A probationary period, and key project development milestones (e.g. an initial project proposal, an ethical application, and a 'Transfer' seminar and viva), ensure that progress is carefully monitored, and supervisory support is tailored to individual needs. An annual progress review provides an auditable quality check of both the researcher's work and the supervisory team's work in support of the researcher's personal/professional development. Postgraduate Researchers received an annual development fund which can be (currently GBP300 for part-time and GBP500 for fulltime PGRs) used for anything related to their studies such as equipment or conference attendance, and opportunities exist for PGRs to apply for additional funds in support of their research, plus an institutional postgraduate Research Environment Enhancement Fund (REEF) initiative which enables PGRs to run, facilitate and co-create opportunities and events with of the aim of enhancing research environment. Teaching opportunities for PGR students have also been more formalized from the centre to ensure equity and transparency. Enabling students to work on modules with other academic colleagues has strengthened their contact with the various Subject Groups and has led, in some instances, to job opportunities.

Evidence that the support being provided to our Level 8 students is being recognised is provided in the PRES results. Over the REF period, the University of Northampton has scored strongly in Advance HE's Postgraduate Researcher Experience Survey (PRES) (ranked 1st overall in 2020 and 4th overall in 2018). This is reflected in disaggregated data for postgraduate researchers in the subject area of Business and Management which recorded 96% overall satisfaction compared with 81% across the University sector.

2.3 Equality and diversity

The University of Northampton's Equality and Inclusion Policy and Procedure establishes honesty, fairness and consistency in the recruitment and progression of research staff. All staff undertake an e-learning module on Equality and Diversity and unconscious bias as part of their induction programme. The individual needs and wellbeing of all colleagues are supported through the PDR process, with sensitive, bespoke arrangements in place in the faculty to support, for example, flexible and remote working, career development for part-time and fixed-term researchers, conference attendance for colleagues and PGRs, and appropriate adjustments for colleagues with disabilities, long-term illnesses, caring responsibilities and returning from leave periods.

In addition, many colleagues participate in a growing number of colleague-led support and advocacy groups such as the Global Ethnic Minority (GEM) Network (co-chaired by Daye), LGBTQ+ group and Staff Disability Network. Many staff members have also benefited from the University's Navigator (men and transmasculine) and 'Springboard+' (women, trans and non-binary) staff development programme for colleagues in academic or professional services roles which provides an opportunity for staff to undertake personal and professional development and support for leadership, goal-setting and strategic visioning skills.

Over the last 6 years we have strived to keep diversity and equality at the forefront of our recruitment and development. Our achievement in this area is evidenced by a greater diversity amongst the research team in Business, going from 42% women (5) submitted in REF2014 up to 52% women (13) in REF2021. Our senior research team of Associate Professors (**Mortimer, Mansour, He** and **Hosseinian-Far**) are also ethnically and gender diverse with half of them being women. This increasing diversity is further evidenced through our Small Grants scheme where 42% of awards were to women in 2018, further increasing to 57% in 2019.

3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

3.1 Research funding and strategies for generating income

Research income has grown significantly within the unit from GBP703,474 reported in REF2014 to GBP2,298,826 over this assessment period (2014-2020). This growth has been enabled through our focus on the themes of sustainable growth, social innovation and internationalisation as well as the institute's expertise on bidding for promising commercial opportunities.

The Unit has a portfolio of research funding from a range of national and international funding agencies including H2020, ESF, ERDF, ERASMUS+ and the British Council. Much of this income has been achieved through the Research Institutes and Centres. The ISII, under the leadership of **Hazenberg**, has been involved with several European projects such as an FP7 project, Erasmus+, two ESF projects and two ERDF evaluations. The FP7 EFESIIS project worth GBP250,000 to the university (GBP2,400,000 total project value) ran from 2014 to 2017 with the aim to explore social enterprise ecosystems in Europe and is discussed in more detail in Section 4. The ISII also have a GCRF funded project for SE Asia that has funded three ongoing PGRs as well as being the evaluators for the ESF/National Lottery Community Fund Building Better Opportunities project in Northamptonshire (research funding of over GBP253,000).

Research funding of GBP68,700 was also awarded to ILIST, under the leadership of **Fassam**, to run The Network Northants project in 2016/2017. The project was led by Northamptonshire County Council in partnership with the Institute to identify synergies that could be made across the sustainable public transportation within the county and led to the first global holistic procurement transport commissioning social enterprise co-owned by the project stakeholders. A more recent significant project with ILIST is the Architecture for EurOpean Logistics Information eXchange (AEOLIX). This is a platform which enables information on supply chain data to be shared between multiple organisations and thereby lead to interoperability and collaboration. Lastly, the Post-Consumer High-tech Recycled Polymers for a Circular Economy (PolyCE) GBP200,000 project is concerned with the Waste of Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) and applying circular economy solutions to minimise that waste.

The Centre for China and Emerging Economics, under the leadership of **He**, has won several high-profile grants. Examples of these are a GBP30,000 award from the British Council to work with Jiangnan University of China to develop an innovative model to support internationalisation capacity building of Chinese universities and a further GBP35,000 from the British Council working with the Kazakh-British University of Technology on a Researchers Link Programme examining the impact of emerging economies and their multinational enterprises on the world economy. Another British Council fund of GBP10,800 was awarded to **Batista** in 2015, member of the CSBP, to finance a joint project with the Fundacao Getulio Vargas (FRG) University in Brazil to examine food supply chains to minimise food waste and maximize social benefits.

The Business Innovation Grant (BIG) Ideas project is central financial support provided by the Higher Education Innovation Funding, with the aim of strengthening links between the university and local businesses and the community. The first round, between April and July 2019 created 50 expressions of interest across the university and eight successful 'Big Ideas' were awarded. One of these was awarded to this unit and provided GBP5,000 to fund two academics to work with Pluswipes, a company based in Corby producing infection control products. The purpose of the project was to assist the organisation in developing their cyber resilience and risk management. The second round of BIG Ideas awarded **Gough**, an active member of CSBP, to advise Travis Perkins on ways in which they could minimise the creation of excess waste within their business and manage the waste that was created in the most effective way.

The central Research and Innovation Funding Support (RIFS) is crucial in supporting colleagues to identify and apply for external funding and they run numerous drop-in sessions and tailored workshops to provides that support. Moving forward, the University has recently extended its institutional support by investing in Funding Institutional which can be used alongside Pure and GRANTfinder to support the faculty in discovering new, relevant research opportunities for staff to apply for.

3.2 Infrastructure and facilities

The University has recently invested heavily in its facilities, having completed the move to the purpose-built Waterside Campus in 2018 at a total cost of GBP330,000,000. The campus has been heralded as the cutting edge of university infrastructure, winning the 2019 Royal Institute for Chartered Surveyors' coveted 'Design Through Innovation' award. While it is not possible to attribute a precise portion of this investment to Business, the department has benefitted from the new working environment with state-of-the-art IT infrastructure, new office space and a new library. The new workspaces facilitate scholarly dialogue and the exchange of research knowledge between disciplines creating a more interdisciplinary environment.

The new campus has also transformed the experience and working environment of the PGR community. Whereas PGRs previously were separate and located across the campus, the new senate building provides an impressive, purpose-built, co-designed suite for the University's whole multidisciplinary PGR community. The success of this strategic investment in PGR workspace is seen in strong, improving PRES results for PGRs at the University of Northampton.

The Bloomberg suite is an area dedicated to Economics and Accounting and Finance staff and students, located on the ground floor of the Senate building. This new suite consists of nine Reuters terminals which provide research students and staff access to exclusive live financial trading data in a user-friendly manner in order to make economic forecasts and trading strategies. This is a great facility for researchers in this area moving forward.

As part of the University's new Research Strategy to 2025 and the move within this to integrate Institute functions and collaboration, the ISII are moving in 2021 to the University's new Development Hub, where they will be based alongside the other research institutes. This new space includes dedicated Institute offices, data storage, meeting rooms and teaching/conference facilities. By embedding the research institutes together in shared office spaces, the University is seeking to drive further research collaboration between Institutes and their aligned research centres. The Institutes also share dedicated support functions from Human Resources and Finance, including a dedicated HR officer and Faculty accountant to support them with recruitment and fiscal planning. The Institutes also work closely with the RIFS team on funding applications and project management, whilst the University allows them dedicated expenditure for research dissemination and marketing. Finally, the Institutes also share a 1.0FTE admin support member of staff who works on supporting administrative functions including purchase orders, invoicing, office management and other miscellaneous support.

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

4.1 Effectiveness of research collaborations, networks and partnerships

There are many examples of collaboration and contributions at Institute, Centre and individual level, many of which are linked to funded projects discussed earlier. At the core of these partnerships is the University's commitment to sustainable growth, social innovation and internationalisation. This is embodied at the University by our commitment to sign up to the SDG accord later in 2020 and to submit for the first time to the Times Higher Impact rankings in 2021, as well as our commitment at the Faculty level to the UNPRME initiative. Our collaborations and partnership strategy are centred on these principles, so as to ensure that our partnerships are linked together by these common goals.

The ISII ran the FP7 EFESIIS project between 2014 and 2017 with the aim to explore social enterprise ecosystems in Europe. The project was led by the University of Florence in Italy and the University of Northampton, led by **Hazenberg**, was one of eleven universities across eleven different European countries. The project's impacts were both policy and practitioner focused, directly informed the EC's policy brief '[How can policy-makers improve their country's support to social enterprises?](#)', as well as presenting findings to the European Commission and European Parliament. Practitioner engagement was also in-depth, with two stakeholder conferences taking place in 2015 and 2017.

Further afield, **Hazenberg** has established two formal research partnerships in Vietnam with the National Economics University (NEU) and the Vietnam National University (VNU). With NEU, the

focus is on joint research into social business in Vietnam (funded by the United Nations Development Programme); supporting them in launching their new MSc in Social Innovation, and research and business support in the establishment of their Impact Hub social business incubator (funded by the British Council). The focus of this association with VNU was on supporting the institution with social impact measurement in Vietnam. This work was funded by the British Academy and has led to the creation of Vietnam's first online social impact measurement tool, which VNU now actively use with social enterprises through their THRIIVE social investment programme. ISII has since leveraged this work to also win funding from the British Council for two further projects to expand this focus on social innovation ecosystem building to Hong Kong, South Korea, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia, engaging with leading HEIs in each of these countries as co-researchers. This work has led to the establishment of the new Social Innovation Linkages for Knowledge Exchange Network (SILKEN) in partnership with Glasgow Caledonian University, which seeks to promote social innovation globally amongst HEIs. ISII has also recently signed an MOU with Sungkyunkwan University in South Korea to support them with their social innovation research and teaching. This global research excellence also led to the ISII being invited to deliver the social innovation and social impact modules on Global Business Scholl Barcelona's new G-Accelerator post-graduate programme, demonstrating the growing impact around sustainable growth, social innovation and internationalisation.

Fassam has worked closely with several European partners during the AEOLIX project including Chalmers University of Technology in Sweden, as well as global businesses such as Unilever and Kuehne + Nagel one of the world's leading logistics companies. This project has involved ILIST operating a living lab to explore the impact of digital innovations on supply-chain integrity and sustainability in logistics, as a means to reduce criminality and fraud in supply-chains. As part of the WEEE project the institute is collaborating with Fraunhofer, considered to be the world's leading applied research organisation as well as Phillips and the United National University based in Japan. This research seeks to reduce plastic use and waste in supply-chains and the logistics sector, through the utilisation of the circular economy. Both of these projects demonstrate the desire to drive sustainability through business innovation and improving international standards that runs through the Faculty, and links closely with the social innovation focus of the University.

Within the research centres, **He** has forged close relationships between CCEE and business and local authorities both in the UK and overseas as already demonstrated in previous sections. In the local area, the centre is a strategic partner of South East Midlands Local Enterprise partnership (SEMLEP) and is now widely viewed, in Northamptonshire and the wider SEMLEP region, as the vanguard regarding China engagement, successfully collaborating with a range of business and local authorities such as Silverstone Circuit, Lincolnshire County Council and Northampton Borough Council. Part of its contribution at the local level is the "Doing business in China" series which has already provided three events in 2020. More internationally, **He**, the chair of the centre, has been appointed as Ambassador for International Exchange by the Hunan Provincial Government of China with the role of forging a closer business relationship between China and the UK. He was also recently invited to provide evidence to the UK Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee inquiry into "The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's role in blocking foreign asset stripping in the UK".

International collaboration also takes place at an individual level. Examples include **Uba** who is undertaking joint research with the University of Lagos and is part of the Technology Incubation Centre in Lagos which is a Federal Government supported initiative to nurture the start-up and growth of new innovative businesses. **Mortimer** writes on international advertising regulation with colleagues from universities in Australia and the US and **Ai** collaborates with colleagues from Singapore, China, USA and Hong Kong as well as from Royal Holloway in London.

After working on several British Council projects in Central Asia, two colleagues, **Daye** and **Wang** are members of a research group with HEI partner institutions in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan to investigate the prospects of China's Belt and Road Initiative on the development of tourism, funded by EU's KA107 - Higher education staff mobility Funding.

4.2 Relationships with key research users/beneficiaries

Several of our research active staff are key contributors to their research specialism by being on editorial panels and reviewers of prestigious academic journals. **Hazenberg** is Associate Editor for the Social Enterprise Journal and the Journal of Social Entrepreneurship. **Hosseinian-Far** is Founding Editor & Editor-in-Chief for the International Journal of Strategic Engineering and Editor of the Open Journal of Big Data (OJBD). **Jraisat** is on the board of the Journal of Advances in Management Sciences and Information systems and **Mortimer** was deputy editor of the Journal of Marketing Communications for several years. **Ai** is an Editorial Review Board member of the Management Organisation Review and **Mansour** is a reviewer for Organisational Studies and International Journal of Management Education.

Others have organised academic and practitioner conferences on our campus, such as **Mansour** who was the conference chair for Annual Dilemmas for Human Services International Research Conference in 2016 and 2018 and the Main Convenor and stream organiser for the 10th International Critical Management Conference in 2017. **Gough** organised the Logistics Research Network Annual Conference for the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport and He organised the Northampton-China Forum in 2016 and 2020.

Most colleagues are members of their relevant scholarly society. **Mortimer** was Chair of the Marketing Communications Special Interest Group within the Academy of Marketing for several years as well as an active member of the American Academy of Advertising. Several colleagues are members of the Academy of International Business, the European International Business Academy and the Regional Studies Association. **Hosseinian-Far** has been an External Associate of the Sustainability Research Institute (SRI) at the University of East London since 2012 and an external associate of the Public Transportation systems (PTS) Research Group at RMIT Australia since 2020.