

Institution: The University of Wolverhampton
Unit of Assessment: 18 Law
<p>1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy</p> <p><u>a) How Research is Structured across the Unit</u></p> <p>A unit of Law has been entered in all research evaluation assessments since 1992, showing a consistent improvement in its research profile. In 2001, the Law entry achieved a creditable 3a, and in RAE2008, we were ranked 47th nationally and 4th of all new university submissions. In 2014, the rating of our published outputs remained high with approximately 10% of our outputs ranked as world leading.</p> <p>Most core staff submitted for REF2014 have been retained, although five professors and one reader have subsequently retired or left. Sadly, the research active Head of the Law School, Professor Sparrow, passed away in 2015. In order to fill this research gap, we invested strategically in several lecturer appointments, appointing both staff with an established research profile and early career researchers (ECRs). We have therefore reviewed and enhanced the support mechanisms they need so that law research benefits from the vitality of those new to research to enable our commitment to remain sustainable long term. We currently have 2 professors (both male), 1 reader (male) and 9 lecturer/senior lecturers (3 male/6 female) who have significant responsibility for research (SRR).</p> <p>Our Research Vision is to transform our “University of Opportunity” into a “Global University of Positive Outcomes, Influence and Impact”. We are increasing the outcomes, the influence and impact of our research, knowledge transfer and scholarship on: our student experiences, our clients and other stakeholders, including professional and governmental bodies locally, regionally, nationally and globally. Our research has led to significant impact outside academia. Funded research on homelessness has been recognised at national and European levels. The practice-based work led by Walton on insolvency law has impacted on law and practice nationally and attracted international attention, leading to Walton being commissioned to re-draft Kenya’s insolvency legislation. We have identified areas of longstanding specialism and are ensuring they remain sustainable whilst encouraging new areas of expertise, such as the recent support for the interdisciplinary work in the area of intellectual property.</p> <p>In order to build upon strong research performance, the University made a long-term strategic investment in legal research following RAE1996, leading to the establishment in 2010 of the Law Research Centre (LRC), which oversees all of the University’s law research. The LRC sits within the Law School, which itself sits within the Faculty of Arts, Business and Social Sciences (FABSS). The LRC provides a focal point for law research and associated areas covered by the REF Law panel, for example, black letter law, socio-legal research, criminal justice and criminology. PhD students enjoy the vitality of the LRC and are supported by supervisors who are members of it.</p> <p>The LRC provides support for research covering different specialisms and employing diverse methodologies. It consists of two areas of excellence:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Commercial Law, focusing on arbitration law, corporate law, financial services law and crime, capital markets law, employment law, insolvency law and intellectual property law; and 2. Criminal Justice, concentrating on historical and current aspects of criminal justice and human rights in both the national and international context of policing, criminal law, the law of evidence and human rights, including issues around homelessness.

The LRC provides a vibrant and inclusive law research community that encourages high quality, impactful research and scholarship. Bringing together experienced, developing and new legal researchers, the LRC builds upon previous successful research evaluation achievements through key strategic objectives, namely to:

- foster research activity that impacts on social, legal and professional practice, leading to the practical application of ideas;
- develop further a culture of encouraging research that stimulates academic and wider social debate in law, criminal justice and criminology and the transfer of knowledge within them;
- expand on existing relationships, promoting new external relationships and collaborative activity nationally and internationally;
- provide research support for early career and established researchers to develop research careers;
- encourage research that supports and underpins the curriculum; and
- provide staff and students with opportunities for engagement with the research undertaken by members of the LRC.

These have been successfully delivered, as evidenced below in Section b).

Both areas of research are led by experienced senior researchers. Projects undertaken by staff involve a considered mixture of research and underpinning subject specific teaching and learning (for example, modules on Victims and Offenders, Punishment and Society, Police and Society, Prisons and Prisoners, Company Law, Law of Criminal Evidence, Protest Law, Intellectual Property Law, International Corporate Insolvency, Law Relating to Capital Markets and International Banking Law) and applied research, which is designed to impact upon law and policy makers and practitioners (including research undertaken in the areas of homelessness, police disciplinary procedures, insolvency litigation and corporate rescue). The LRC encourages research designed to have a positive impact upon all higher education stakeholders, including students, law-makers legal practitioners and other professional practitioners.

b) Research Objectives (Past and Future) and Performance

The success of the strategic objectives of the LRC is evidenced by the national and international standing of its members, their research outputs, success with research consultancies, funded research opportunities, conference presentations, participation or leadership in research and policy-making bodies, collaborative work, membership of research networks and editorial and invited reviewing activity.

Our research plans for Law, described in our REF2014 submission, were to maintain high quality research outputs from experienced researchers and to strengthen the work begun on developing ECRs. Our plans, and resulting successful outcomes, were to:

i) continue to allocate resources to support future REF entries and apportion monies to support both experienced and new researchers through various initiatives including the award of full and partial sabbaticals

Evaluation: external funding provided eight mini-sabbaticals for staff to permit them to concentrate on externally-funded projects. Every year a competitive round of applications is considered by FABSS's Faculty Research Committee (FRC), whereby staff below the level of Professor may be provided with additional research time.

ii) design a seminar programme of talks and workshops for new researchers and appointees to discuss their research plans and to present work in progress

Evaluation: we developed a monthly Law Journal series of talks where all colleagues and PhD students have the opportunity to present their latest research works in progress. In addition, the

Law Journal talks have broadened their remit to include teaching and learning in law as well as substantive law. Feedback received has often been used to fine tune papers for publication, for example, Haynes' work on Sharia finance, which benefitted from feedback to improve its consideration of the history of different types of secured lending.

iii) continue with the mentoring scheme, allocating new researchers to mentors with an established research background

Evaluation: the Research Mentoring Scheme remains a positive encouragement to new and ECRs. Some ECRs have achieved their PhDs during the current REF period (for example, Allan and Barnes), whilst others were appointed having recently been awarded their respective PhDs (for example, Jacobs and Potocnik). We have developed a three-year planning cycle for colleagues who wish to engage in a research career, whether they are ECRs who have recently acquired their PhD, or established colleagues who have previously not undertaken research (Busst and Olley). Our mentoring scheme is producing very effective researchers: Jacobs is editor-in-chief of the *Wolverhampton Law Journal* (WLJ) and principal investigator (PI) on an INSOL International-funded project looking at insolvency practitioner remuneration around the world; Potocnik has led our founder membership of the West Midlands Legal Doctoral Network and is also a member of the University's Arts Learning and Teaching Research Group, following research work on the arts-related *pARTicipate* project.

iv) assess and monitor individual and sub-group research plans and progress

Evaluation: annual assessment is made by FRC of staff research activity and, dependent upon it, research hours allocation may be increased or decreased. As well as outputs, the annual assessment looks at research impact, and external and internal service to the University.

v) provide opportunities for new appointees and LRC members to showcase research in progress; to organise law research "connections" through "research opportunity meetings" to explore potential interdisciplinary links across the University's faculties and with outside organisations

Evaluation: we encourage all staff to attend Law Journal talks, leading to interdisciplinary projects being undertaken between the Law School and other parts of the University. These have informed teaching and curriculum design, such as:

- establishing innovative undergraduate and postgraduate modules whereby Intellectual Property Law students assist and advise students in the School of Art and the School of Performing Arts to take commercial advantage of their respective artistic outputs. This has now grown into a University-wide Cross Faculty Collaboration (CFC), led by Potocnik; and
- the interdisciplinary Policing and Crime Research Lab, led by McDaniel, which is actively engaged in applying for research grants looking at cybercrime and cyber security, rehabilitation of offenders and Policing, Street Triage and Missing Children.

vi) increase further its number of active researchers, engaging with outside agencies and conducting externally funded research, leading to impactful outputs

Evaluation: we have continued to make positive, vital and sustainable contacts with outside agencies, and to ensure succession, to include all members of staff. CFC, has, as part of its remit, a commitment to apply for external funding to support some of its activities and the main purpose of the Policing and Crime Research Lab is to engage in externally funded projects. Examples of successful proposals are:

- Walton, Jacobs and Umfreville with the World Bank/Kenyan Government, INSOL International, the Insolvency Service, R3 and the ICAEW (the basis of our Impact Case Studies);
- the work of McDaniel, Moss, and Singh with the Police Mutual Assurance Society; and

- Williams, Moss and Singh with the AXIS Hub network in Wyre Forest and Student Homelessness Project.

We have had clear successes here and the CFC and the Policing and Crime Research Lab will open up new areas.

vii) continue to attract and hold national and international conferences at the University; and to continue to invite seminar presentations from external researchers

Evaluation: we continually learn from other areas and are a fully engaged part of the academy, and are keen to look at new ideas in new areas.

We have had a number of successful external speakers present at LRC events, either as part of the Law Journal series, for example, Human Rights after Brexit - A Roundtable Discussion (with Dr Javier Garcia Oliva (Manchester); Dr Dimitrios Giannouloupoulos (Goldsmiths, London); and Dr Natasa Mavronicola (Birmingham) and the Prisons and Prisoners Guest Lecture Speaker Series with, for example, Professor Nicholas Hardwick (the former Chair of Parole Board and former HM Chief Inspector of Prisons) and David Water (former Chair, Independent Monitoring Board, Long Lartin Prison).

In addition, we have continued to hold events that showcase our specific areas of expertise. Examples include:

- December 2014, Singh and Moss hosted a conference at the European Parliament on their project on Children Rough Sleepers and Runaways, in order to present research findings and discuss future policy and practice. Key speakers included MEP Cécile Kyenge and European Councillor Regína Jensdóttir.
- March 2018, Haynes co-organised a major international conference with the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies in London entitled "Current Developments in the Law and Regulation of Banking", with senior speakers from both practice and academia, including Peter Casey, former Head of Islamic Finance at the Dubai Financial Services Authority.
- November 2018, with Aston University, Walton and Jacobs co-hosted an Insolvency Law and Practice conference, marking 15 years of the significant changes introduced by the Enterprise Act 2002, with eminent speakers from the UK, Professor David Milman (Lancaster) and Professor Andrew Keay (Leeds), and overseas, Professor David Brown (Adelaide University). The event was attended by academics, leading practitioners, representatives from the Insolvency Service, professional and trade bodies, the judiciary, the Pre-Pack Pool and the Law Commission. Papers presented have subsequently been published in two special editions of *Insolvency Intelligence*, edited by the conference organisers.
- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, plans for further joint Insolvency Law conferences, with the University of Pretoria in September 2020 and with Aston University in November 2020, will be re-scheduled.

viii) support successful PhD completions as a key strategic objective

Evaluation: we trebled the number of successful PhD completions, against a target to double it. We have had 10 completions, with another 12 in progress, and have expanded our pool of active supervisors of PhD students from 4 to 8. High quality has been upheld and, in our latest PRES survey results (PRES2019), we once again received a 100% rating for satisfaction with supervision. We are founding members and co-funders of the West Midlands Legal Doctoral Network, along with Aston University, Birmingham City University, Coventry University, Birmingham University and Warwick University, which has led to networking and other opportunities for our PhD students.

Future Strategy

These successes have allowed us to develop new horizons for the future. Our forward-looking research strategy includes the following:

1 Attracting and supporting high quality PGR students by encouraging Master's level students who have shown an interest in further study. Our PGR students are integral to our work and are integrated into the Law School by providing opportunities for teaching as well as dissemination of their research. They are essential to our plans to ensure sustainable research in years to come.

2 We continue attracting PhD students to our main commercial areas of research expertise: Insolvency Law, Intellectual Property Law and Financial Law. It is crucial to a sustainable and vital research environment to have a balanced mix of PGR students, ECRs and experienced researchers. This ensures that we remain up-to-date in our research fields, with enthusiastic colleagues who continually challenge us to be cutting-edge researchers.

3 The continued success of a successful WLJ, with contributions from research students, members of staff and external contributors (UK and overseas). WLJ is available in hard copy and electronically on the University webpage, as well as on SSRN. Articles on SSRN are frequently in the Top Ten downloads for Law & Society eJournals, requiring hundreds of downloads. WLJ is listed on the Directory of Open Access Journals.

WLJ is of strategic importance, as it emphasises to students our standing as an established research institution. The Editorial Board includes illustrious alumni, senior figures drawn from the judiciary, legal profession and academia. WLJ publishes a wide array of outputs in the field of law and law-related subjects and is relevant to students, academics and practitioners. It demonstrates our commitment to open access and shares, in a transparent manner, up-to-date world-leading research. WLJ also offers the opportunity to write, honour, and disseminate research on special topics: for example, the first Special Issue on Women in Law and Criminal Justice in 2019. Each year's Special Issue coincides with a student essay competition and the opportunity for the winning entry to be published in WLJ.

4 Applying successfully for externally funded research projects, which are likely to have impact outside of academia. These are significantly in excess of our achievements in the REF2014 submission and we are particularly committed to research projects in the areas of Insolvency Law, Policing and Homelessness reform, both within the UK and overseas. In addition to pre-existing relationships with external funders, we have expanded our vision to be even more international by continuing to make bids to the European Commission and also to bid, successfully, for support from INSOL International.

5 In order to ensure vitality and secure sustainability, we have invested in a number of projects, intended to have long term effects. These are:

5.1 West Midlands Legal Doctoral Network (WMLDN)

WMLDN is a research network designed to support research and knowledge exchange for PGR students at Wolverhampton Law School and across the region.

5.2 Cross Faculty Collaboration (CFC)

As mentioned above, cross-faculty cooperation started in 2018, between the Law School and the Schools of Art and Performing Arts. In addition to the lectures on Intellectual Property Law given to students in the Schools of Art and Performing Arts, students of the Law School are given a context in which creative talent drives its work. For example, law students being given the opportunity to work with artists and businesses from the region on issues in practice (CFC Live Cases). Law students are presented with contextual knowledge to support their studies of Intellectual Property Law. Furthermore, the Law School and the Business School have designed

an interdisciplinary workshop, called “Build Your Brand Value with Trade Marks”, which was first offered to participants of the Black Country Business Festival in May 2019 (with over 7,500 in attendance) and is repeated on an annual basis.

5.3 A series of events aimed at “Celebrating Women in Law”

Throughout 2019, there was a range of activities within the Law School to celebrate women in law, inspired by the centenary of the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act 1919 and the First 100 Years project. As part of these celebrations and regarding our commitment to interdisciplinary cooperation, a student art competition led to the creation of six portraits of Law School alumnae being displayed in the Law School.

c) Impact from the research and the link to Impact Case Studies

The Unit is submitting 2 Impact Case Studies, relating to Insolvency Litigation and Pre-Pack Administration. Both have had strong policy and practice impact and changes to Pre-Pack Administration are ongoing, both in the UK and overseas, where Australian law has also been influenced as a result. Work in this area is vital and forms a living component of the life of the Unit with evidence of succession for ECRs. The funded research carried out by Jacobs on behalf of INSOL International, has led to her being invited to present her research and recommendations on insolvency ethics to a combined audience of the Insolvency Bankruptcy Board of India, Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs and the three Indian Insolvency Professional Agencies.

The Case Studies were selected as the best options in the Unit for engendering impact and they possess synergies with each other. Strong ongoing policy and practice impact with regard to the Pre-Pack Case Study and the 2020 Manolete Report underlines the sustainability of the Unit's impact going forward. Funded research on Company Voluntary Arrangements conducted by Walton and Jacobs in 2018 will have fully evidenced impact in the next REF cycle.

In addition to our long-established expertise in insolvency law, we continue to target other areas of impactful research. Our collaborative work on protracted police disciplinary procedures is informing changes in the approach to such proceedings by West Midlands Police. Our continued work on the problems faced by the homeless is designed to improve the treatment of one of society's most vulnerable groups. We have a burgeoning expertise in legal pedagogy and many colleagues write research-informed textbooks used both by students and practitioners alike. Our research is designed to inform and to have educational impact, as well as to have direct impact outside academia.

d) Supporting Interdisciplinary Research

Our interdisciplinary work is discussed in bv) and bviii5.2) above. Our approach is to embed interdisciplinarity centrally into our strategic vision and our work with Arts, Performing Arts, Business and Criminology is reflective of that. Looking at legal problems from an interdisciplinary viewpoint has permitted new links to be forged with colleagues outside the LRC, to work in wider research teams and to work closely with practitioners. The cross faculty approach to research, instigated by members of the LRC, encourages staff to find new, effective ways to work together and promotes the sustainable development of research in the University.

e) Progress towards an Open Research Environment

We undertake, where possible, to achieve the following, beyond the minimum required by the University's Open Access Policy:

- enabling open access for outputs beyond the scope of the minimum policy requirements – this has included 4 externally funded research reports being freely available on the University website;
- licensing of content published in the WLJ that allows use beyond the minimum of ‘search within the text, read it and download it without charge’. WLJ has Gold Open Access (with an appropriate Creative Commons Licence and listing on the Directory of Open Access Journals); and
- no WLJ embargo periods.

f) Supporting a Culture of Research Integrity

The Unit supports a culture of research integrity in line with the University’s policies and strategies, notably the Research Strategy, the Ethics Policy and the Code of Practice. Compliance with these has engendered a culture of research integrity, and ensures that research is conducted according to all appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards. FABSS has an Ethics Committee which adjudicates on any ethical issues which may arise (i.e., if any research involves surveying or interviewing subjects). Colleagues in LRC engage in mentoring, participation in FABSS’s Ethics Committee, and have been involved in drafting and ensuring compliance with the University’s REF Code of Practice.

2. People

a) Staffing Strategy and Staff Development

Our objective is to have a vital and sustainable environment for all our staff and students. Following REF2014, we took the strategic decision to employ and encourage ECRs (for example, Barnes, Devi-McGleish, Hyett, Jacobs, McDaniel, Potocnik and Stonard). All new starters enjoy an additional workload research allowance. We have encouraged more experienced researchers to apply for promotion to Reader (Glover and Williams) to ensure we have a smooth succession when more experienced researchers retire in due course.

The University Research Mentoring Scheme also encourages senior researchers to collaborate with ECRs to assist in their development and to encourage succession. Walton has worked with Jacobs. Cox has worked with McDaniel, Stonard and Devi-McGleish. McDaniel and Williams worked with Moss. Stonard and McDaniel have continued to work with one of our former professors (Brooks). Until 2018, Williams continued to work with one of our retired emeritus professors (Waddington, now sadly deceased).

In order to be attractive in the labour market, and to encourage fairness, we recruit to permanent contracts.

All colleagues are on the same employment contracts but, from 2018/19, existing staff could choose, and new appointments are advertised on, a role profile based on staffing strategy with a role descriptor, which is based on research and teaching or scholarship and teaching. Colleagues who wish to move from a teaching-focused role to one where they have SRR are encouraged to put forward a guided three-year plan so that they have some time, and space, to begin their research career. At present, Barnes and Busst are on this trajectory. Devi-McGleish, Glover, Hyett, Jacobs, McDaniel, Olley, Potocnik, Stonard and Williams all hold roles where they have SRR.

As mentioned above under research strategy, every year the LRC has a budget based upon its income from the previous REF, which it must spend on REF-related activity. Most of this money is used to allocate research time to colleagues applying for remission from teaching or other duties. Readers and Professors have set hours for conducting research (respectively, 45% and 53% of their total workload). Junior colleagues on the research and teaching role descriptor will apply for either 120, 250 or 400 hours. Criteria for decisions include past performance, current and future

plans, likely quality of outputs, and how the work will be sustained going forward. These are added to the existing 180 hours p.a. allocated for scholarly and research activity to total either 300 (approximately 20% of total workload), 430 (approximately 28%) or 580 hours (approximately 38%) per annum. Research targets are agreed with appraisers annually and take into account the amount of time available. No-one who has applied has ever failed to receive at least the lowest bracket of award. Moreover, colleagues are encouraged to apply for further research hours from the University's ERAS scheme, under which, for example, Potocnik was awarded a further 300 hours in 2019/20.

In addition, the LRC has adopted the University's Sabbatical Scheme, a competitive process, whereby individuals may apply for relief from teaching or other duties, typically for a semester, in order to engage in a specific research project. A budget is reserved each year, administered by the Funding Sub-Committee of the LRC, which decides upon funding applications for colleagues' research expenditure. Before COVID-19, this covered conference costs. Each member of LRC has, at some time, benefitted from such support.

Support provided to Walton, leader of the Insolvency Law specialism, led directly to the two submitted impact case studies. We recognised after REF2014 that, in order to conduct effective impactful research, it was necessary to do more than conduct black-letter law research in isolation and trust to luck whether such ideas were picked up by the courts or policy makers. A more strategic approach was required. Walton was supported, as a senior academic in his field, to continue his work and to engage with the profession, the Government and other stakeholders. This enabled him to sit on R3's General Technical Committee and the Insolvency Lawyers' Association Technical Committee (in both cases as the only non-practitioner). Importantly, a semester long sabbatical enabled Walton to conduct two significant externally-funded empirical studies. This time and resourcing permitted Walton to be in a position where he was sought out to conduct research for R3, ICAEW, ACCA and the IPA and encouraged to apply to do research for the Government. Research that has Government backing, or the backing of professional bodies, is far more likely to be relevant to real life issues and far more likely to have impact. This strategy has been successful throughout the REF period.

b) Research Students

All PGR students at the University are members of either a Research Institute or Research Centre, here the LRC, and also have membership of the University's Doctoral College ("DC"), which provides a comprehensive Postgraduate Researchers' Development Programme. International PhD students, a majority of those within LRC, also benefit from the support offered by the University's International Academy.

The LRC encourages PGR students to engage with the DC's Postgraduate Researchers' Development Programme workshops. During the COVID-19 pandemic, PGR activities were held remotely both at a LRC level and University-wide by DC. Specific Law PGRs were encouraged to attend a weekly meeting on Microsoft Teams, in addition to regular support and supervisory meetings. Law PGRs are supported to present at internal (for example, the University's Annual Research Conference and the Law Journal monthly talks) and external conference events (for example, regular WMDLN and annual SLS conferences), and specific training sessions are held to build confidence in presenting at such events. Details of relevant internal and external events are provided to all PGRs in the University's Research Almanac and on the Law PGR Canvas (the University's VLE) page.

Members of the LRC are active in the management and training of PGR students at Faculty level and require students to attend appropriate training sessions put on by the DC, including the DC Masterclasses, the University Annual Research Conference and the University Researchers' Week. In order to enhance career development, students are supported through training to teach and provided with paid teaching opportunities (for example, Barnes – before joining the staff, Bate, Chanakira, Terfa-Tarhembra and Vasiliou).

PGR students (as well as other colleagues) may bid for research monies from the LRC budget to enable them to present or attend at important conferences or external training sessions. All PGRs who have requested such support have received it. Such support has included presenting at overseas conferences (for example, Chanakira).

PGR students present work in progress to the LRC as part of the Law Journal series of talks, which have continued online during the COVID-19 pandemic. PGR students are encouraged to participate in the monthly Law School Jurisprudence Reading Surgery, designed to help with their theoretical framework whatever their research area.

Supervision teams are usually made up of 1 senior and 1 ECR. This allows for careful succession planning and to embed knowledge and experience.

We have co-founded and co-fund the WMDLN, which allows our PhD students to expand their personal networks, engages them in further training opportunities and permits dissemination of their research. In the summer of 2020, 4 PGR students presented their research at the University's Annual Research Conference and all were financially supported in presenting their research at external, national or international conferences. As a direct result of presenting at the University's conference, 3 PGR students had papers accepted for the Society of Legal Scholars conference in September 2020.

All PGR students have an annual progress review conducted by 2 academics, independent of the supervisory team, where they are encouraged to discuss any concerns they may have. There are, therefore, several support mechanisms, whether academic or pastoral in nature, for PGRs. If there are concerns expressed by the reviewers as to the PGR's progress, the student is identified as "proceeding with caution" and a plan is put into place in order to ensure that the project is put back on track.

The 2017 and 2019 PRES surveys showed a 100% satisfaction rating from PhD students. Each PGR student has access to a 'hot desk' with a networked computer in an office co-located with their supervisory team. Access to supervisors outside of formal meetings is encouraged. When PGR students wish to acquire teaching experience, this is facilitated by the LRC, and visiting lecturer appointments are arranged. These opportunities are written into the PGR Offer made to each student.

We have increased completions of PhDs from 3 in the previous REF to 10 in this REF period. None is a professional doctorate.

c) Equality and Diversity

The University of Wolverhampton is fully committed to the advancement of equality and the elimination of unlawful and unfair discrimination. We value the benefits that a diverse student and staff population brings to the University and see them as integral to the vitality of the LRC. In addition to ensuring that our campuses are safe and inclusive spaces for all, we work closely with national organisations such as AdvanceHE and Stonewall, and local community groups, to further equality and diversity. Specific examples of our commitment to equality and diversity are:

1. The LRC's Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) is used and monitored regularly at FRC. The GEAP is intended to fulfil the LRC's gender duty commitments, work towards sustaining equitable working environments and enable us to identify ourselves as an employer of choice, not only to our staff, but to students, funders, research councils and industry.
2. The proportion of female staff submitted to REF2014 was 25%. We aimed to move towards a sustainable equal proportion of female researchers being entered for REF2021,

and subsequently, and are keen to encourage female colleagues into more senior research roles. Of the staff submitted to REF2021, 50% are female.

3. For the year 2019/20, 62% of research buy-out funding was used to support female colleagues (which percentage was broadly consistent with previous years). One colleague was given the maximum level of 400 hours buy-out in 2018/19, and another in 2019/20, to give them time to write outputs following return from maternity leave.

4. We continue to have in place our mentoring programme for promotion of early and mid-career staff. Our research bidding teams have a gender balance and where supervisory experience permits, we promote gender-balanced supervisory teams. We ensure that we have gender-balanced shortlisting and appointment panels for new posts. Our job advertisements promote gender initiatives and include reference to our commitment to Athena SWAN principles.

5. Gender monitoring is embedded in all research reports and budget monitoring with regular collection of qualitative and quantitative data.

6. One of our ECRs, Potocnik, leads the University's Athena SWAN Subject Specific (Law) group submitting in 2021.

7. All staff undergo mandatory equality and diversity and unconscious bias training, every two years.

8. Visiting lecturers are actively encouraged to contribute to the research life of the School. Ian Twinberrow, a Family Court Liaison Officer at Wolverhampton City Council, delivered a Law Journal Club seminar "What's in a name? The case of *C (Children)* [2016] EWCA Civ 364" and Matthew Davis, a recent PhD graduate from Birmingham University spoke about his thesis looking at how the UK views the legal rights of asylum seekers. Davis has subsequently published an article in the WLJ on the subject of his Law Journal talk.

9. We have followed the University's REF Code of Practice in selecting the output portfolio, which pays due regard to equality and diversity issues, whilst safeguarding confidentiality.

10. During the pandemic lockdown we continued to encourage researchers to meet online and to interact with one another. This was a particularly important support mechanism for our PGR students. Our weekly online informal meetings assist in keeping our research discussions alive whilst encouraging colleagues to offer support generally, especially for those researchers who were living isolated lives. Although our current staff base is not very ethnically diverse, our PGR students are. We are conscious of the need to ensure an atmosphere of inclusivity across our research base.

3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

a) Research Funding and Strategies for Generating Research Income

Our total research income for REF2014 was GBP104,947 and, in REF2021, this nearly doubled to GBP198,702.

Our strategy since REF2014 has been to:

- 1) consolidate areas of research strength and pursue appropriate externally-funded research projects, which are most likely to have impact; and

2) identify new areas of research where research expertise might lead to further funded and impactful opportunities.

The first part of the strategy has borne fruit with funded projects related to our longstanding expertise in the areas of insolvency law, policing and homelessness. The second is a living element of the strategy and we have bid into research areas on intellectual property, cybercrime and cyber security, and offender rehabilitation.

Research proposals involve a balanced team both in terms of gender and experience. Some ECRs have been involved in (Jacobs and McDaniel) or led successful bids (Jacobs).

During the current census period, we have secured new funding. Particularly good examples are:

- Singh, Moss and Williams, An Evaluation of the Axis Youth Hub Project, The Big Lottery Wyre Forest Nightstop, Kidderminster (GBP25,000).
- Walton and Umfreville, Pre-packaged administration Insolvency Service (GBP19,220).
- Walton, Kenyan Insolvency Law, World Bank/Kenyan Government (USD100,000 pre-withholding tax, USD80,000 post tax = GBP60,000).

It remains a strategic objective for colleagues to establish strong links with external bodies, including statutory, voluntary, community, professional and business organisations, and community groups, as well as to work collaboratively on funding opportunities. An example is the work led by Walton and completed for the Insolvency Service, the World Bank/Kenyan Government, R3, the ICAEW and the IPA. These are a product of close links forged by Walton with those organisations by being on national technical committees and being invited regularly to speak at practitioner conferences. A highly effective way of ensuring research is relevant, impactful, and reaches its target audience is to work with trade, professional, and Government bodies. This has led directly to impactful research, as evidenced in the two impact case studies, also discussed at 1c), above. Research findings have been recognised by Government and professional bodies and cited several times in Parliament and in the courts. The reach and significance of such impact is due to the high quality of the research and the strategic approach adopted to ensure research findings are widely known and relevant to current practical problems, such as pre-packaged administration and insolvency litigation funding. Both Impact Case Studies are in areas of legal practice identified early as likely to require academic research, in order to inform debate and reform, and are examples of this strategy working.

Colleagues in the LRC have established the Policing and Crime Research Lab, an internal specialist cross-disciplinary research group, with the expertise to bid for funding opportunities that cut across different disciplines. It has close links with, for example, West Midlands Police and the Police Federation. The CFC is multi-disciplinary and has made strategically strong links with industry (for example, The F-List for Music CIC) and local authorities (for example, Wolverhampton City Council). These links support applications for funded research opportunities, where research can be conducted that has a real-world impact on, for example, Women in the Creative Industries.

b) Organisational Infrastructure Supporting Research and Impact

The LRC takes advantage of the University's Research Support services, as a user of those services, but also feeds into them where appropriate. Members of the LRC take advantage of research opportunities highlighted by the University's Project Support Office ("PSO"). For example, work with the PSO led to a successful bid for a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship (which unfortunately did not go ahead as the Fellow took employment elsewhere prior to the project's commencement). Guidance is sought from PSO on all significant bids for externally funded research projects. Members of the LRC work with the University's Research Policy Unit ("RPU") by contributing to various University-wide policies, such as the REF Code of Practice and

the Impact Policy. As well as encouraging LRC PGRs to engage with the training support offered by the University's Doctoral College, members of the LRC also contribute to such training sessions.

c) Equality and Diversity

The Unit's policy of providing support for acquiring research funding and support for accessing scholarly or operational infrastructure is discussed in 2c), above.

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

a) Arrangements and Support for, and Effectiveness of, Research Collaborations, Networks and Partnerships

The members of the LRC are a mixture of ECRs and experienced researchers. It is part of the LRC's strategy to work as teams, so that the benefit of experience and connections may be passed onto the next generation of researchers and benefit all. Applications for research funding support are made to the LRC, whose Funding Sub-Committee actively encourages bids for research projects that involve external partners. Although some of these funded research bids on behalf of research partners are fully funded, the LRC takes a strategic view of projects where the prospective outcome is likely to lead to a high-quality publication or impact outside of academia - research time may be supported by the LRC in addition to the research time paid for by external funding. This was the case, for example, with the pre-pack administration research carried out on behalf of the Insolvency Service, where extra work was identified part way through the project even though there was no additional funding available from the Insolvency Service to meet the costs of the necessary additional research time.

The University is a local, regional, national and international institution. The LRC encourages place-based research activity designed to have a local impact (for example, the research projects looking at police disciplinary procedures conducted by West Midlands Police and the research conducted for Nightstop looking at problems of rough sleeping in Wyre Forest); a national impact (for example, research on pre-pack administration carried out on behalf of the Insolvency Service and company voluntary arrangements carried out on behalf of the UK insolvency profession), and international (for example, research carried out at the request of the World Bank to allow for a re-drafting of Kenyan insolvency legislation and research sponsored by INSOL International, looking at international standards for insolvency practitioner ethics).

b) Relationships with Key Research Users, Beneficiaries or Audiences

We have created solid, longstanding and sustainable networks and are always looking for new opportunities to ensure the LRC is a lively and varied venue for researchers at all stages of their careers. Indeed, these networks contribute both to the vitality and sustainability of the Unit. Examples of colleagues with successful collaborations or networks elsewhere include:

Cox co-organised an ESRC Festival of Social Science event entitled Piracy and Plymouth: privateering, profiting and policing, held at the University of Plymouth in November 2016. In 2017 he acted as historical consultant for the BBC's *Who Do You Think You Are?* production company, Wall to Wall Television, and acted as an advisor to GovNet in 2018.

Jacobs was appointed as an expert consultant for the INSOL International Working Group 10 on the recommendation of the Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Restructuring, Insolvency and Turnaround Association. INSOL Working Group 10 is tasked with the drafting of best practice rules for administrators and creditors to be used as a benchmark for regulatory bodies of Insolvency Practitioners across the world. Jacobs is a member of the INSOL Early Researcher Academic

group and, in 2020, was appointed extraordinary lecturer at the University of Pretoria. This link led directly to a joint insolvency conference in Pretoria in September 2020 (postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic). The link is intended to lead to future comparative and collaborative research projects in the area of Insolvency Law.

Singh and Williams are members of the AXIS Hub network in Wyre Forest, with whom we have collaborated on a 5-year Big Lottery Evaluation, and we are collaborating with some of the Hub network partners on a European bid.

c) Wider Contributions to Economy and Society

Our research strategy enables research active colleagues to use their expertise for the benefit of society beyond the direct impact of the research itself. Walton is on the Insolvency Lawyers Association's Technical Committee, which introduced the idea of "rescue administration" during the COVID-19 pandemic. The protocol co-produced by the Committee was used, for example, in the Debenhams rescue in April 2020. As part of his membership of R3's General Technical Committee, Walton was asked to co-lead on the creation of the R3 COVID-19 SME Company Voluntary Arrangement template, which it is hoped will be adopted widely to safeguard the future of businesses as the country trades out of the crisis. These are clear examples of research expertise being used for the public good.

Walton (along with Jacobs and Umfreville) has carried out, and continues so to do, several research projects for the Insolvency Service, the insolvency profession and, as the World Bank nominated consultant, on behalf of the Kenyan Government, he has re-drafted the Kenyan Insolvency Legislation. Much of this work has been secured due to Walton's longstanding relationship with the insolvency trade and professional bodies. The LRC has supported Walton in attending the R3 General Technical Committee and the Insolvency Lawyers' Association Technical Committee, which has opened up the world of funding for insolvency-related projects. It has also ensured that the insolvency research conducted is focused on practical issues, well informed and up-to-date. The results of the research projects have been supported by the respective organisations with the result that the research has been extensively publicised and has had significant impact, as well as press coverage. The 2 Impact Case Studies are evidence of how successful this strategy has been. Walton has an international reputation for his work and is often asked to give talks or lectures elsewhere, for example, the University of Adelaide is funding him to visit and speak to practitioners in Adelaide in July 2021 and the University of Keio is similarly funding him to visit and speak in Tokyo in 2021. Walton took over, for a three-year period, leadership of INSOL International's prestigious Global Insolvency Practice Course in 2020. Also in 2020, he was included in the *Lawdragon Global Restructuring Advisors & Consultants Guide*.

Moss, Singh, Pease (honorary professor at UCL) and McDaniel were funded by the Police Mutual Assurance Society for research into Police Disciplinary Proceedings for the West Midlands Police. Their recommendations are likely to lead to changes in internal disciplinary procedures.

The consequence is that the Unit has been able to build upon the Impact Case Studies and develop work in other spheres at the same time. The Unit has been able to do this across both the Commercial Law and Criminal Justice areas of work.

d) Engaging with Diverse Communities and Publics

The Unit remains heavily engaged with diverse communities and publics and it is worth emphasising the research aimed at benefiting the homeless. We have looked to inform and improve how the police operate. The work of Potocnik with her membership on The F-List for Music CIC (where she sits on the Board of Directors) and its answers to calls for evidence by the Intellectual Property Office on Intellectual Property Enforcement and ADR and the DCMS's call for evidence around the economics of music streaming is opening up a new area of potentially

impactful research. Potocnik's work concentrates on a feminist approach to Intellectual Property Law and her work with The F-List looks to encourage greater representation of women in the creative industries.

Haynes commenced in 2016 acting as an adviser to both the Cabinet Office and the OECD and to the Home Office in 2018. He has been asked to speak at the Universities of Bloemfontein, Johannesburg, Palermo Sicily, The West Indies, Trinidad, and the Humboldt Foundation at the University of Hamburg, Germany. He has also been asked to speak on issues relating to Islamic Law at the University of Kuwait and his work on 'Securitisation and Currency Hedging under Islamic Shafi Law' has been published and well received.

e) Contribution to the Sustainability of the Discipline

The LRC has contributed to the sustainability of the discipline by remaining active and successful in different areas of enquiry. We have engaged consistently with stakeholders and research users and been able to remain relevant and engaged in consequence. This dynamism has also enabled us to have a vital, living research and impact environment, regardless of career stage. Diversity, too, has played a role enabling us to remain relevant and dynamic, thereby improving the lives of many in and beyond the academy. As a Unit, we have been able to exercise considerable thematic, sectoral, and geographical reach enabling the work that we do in the UK to have resonance abroad; the insolvency work being a good example of this. These factors, taken together both underpin and facilitate the ability of the Unit to contribute to the discipline of Law in a sustainable way.

f) Indicators of Wider Influence

The list is not exhaustive but gives a flavour of the extensive links we have, some related to academia, but many related to the outside world. We are committed to conducting research which people find useful, which is impactful, vital, and sustainable. We have consolidated our strategy since REF2014 and have clear structures and practices in place to sustain the LRC for many years to come.

Journal editorship

Glover is a member of the editorial board of the UK Law Students Association journal *Legal Issues* and a Council member of the Society of Legal Scholars. Haynes is a member of the Executive Editorial Board of the *Company Lawyer*, a member of the Executive Editorial Board of the *Journal of Financial Crime* and a member of the Editorial Advisory Board of the *Transactions of the Centre for Business Law* at the University of the Free State, South Africa. Jacobs is editor in chief of WLJ (Cox, Panesar, Potocnik and Walton act as sub-editors. Potocnik was guest editor-in-chief for the Special Issue on Women in the Law and Criminal Justice).

Membership of Research Council or similar national and international committees

Walton is a member of the AHRC Peer Review College.

Other

We see our role as academics as including the authorship of high quality texts (used by both students and practitioners). Examples would be: Glover who is the author of the major student and practitioner text on evidence law *Murphy on Evidence*; Haynes who authors the major text, the *Law Relating to International Banking*, is also editor and primary author of the *Financial Services Law Guide* and is one of the co-authors of the *Encyclopaedia of Butterworths Financial Services*; the Head of Wolverhampton Law School, Panesar authors a major student text *Equity and the Law of Trusts*; Walton co-authors the standard student textbook on Insolvency Law with

Professor Andrew Keay of Leeds University, co-authored the 20th and 21st editions of *Kerr and Hunter on Receivers and Administrators* with Thomas Robinson of counsel, is general editor of *Totty, Moss and Segal on Insolvency*, a significant practitioner text and is, along with one other academic and two practitioners, including a judge, case editor for the *Bankruptcy and Personal Insolvency Law Reports*.

All members of the LRC have presented at numerous national and international conferences. Most members of the LRC have acted as examiners for PhD and as reviewers for journals or publishers.