

<b>Institution: Staffordshire University</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: 17 Business and Management</b>
Note: names of people whose outputs are submitted to this UOA are in bold
<b>1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy</b>

### a. Overview

Business and Management research at Staffordshire is located in the Staffordshire Business School (SBS). Our work is interdisciplinary and highly collaborative, reaching throughout the University. Much of our research is co-designed with national and international collaborators and stakeholders, including the World Health Organisation (WHO), the EU, Local Enterprise Partnerships, and the Welsh Assembly. We focus on applied and high-quality research. As a result impact is embedded into our research design from the outset.

This Unit comprises 9.1 FTE, an increase of 25% over REF2014, and includes ECRs, full-time, and fractional staff. It combines researchers from cognate disciplines within the Business School with colleagues across the University, benefitting from a commitment to interdisciplinary research.

The interdisciplinary nature of the work of the researchers in this UOA is demonstrated by research collaborations with other UOAs. **FAIRBURN** is a member of the Centre for Health and Development (UOA3) and the Centre for Ceramics, Creative Industries and Creative Communities (UOA34). **PUGH** has worked with the Sports Exercise and Performance Psychology Research Group with SLATER, S JONES and BARKER (UOA3). **PUTTICK** is a member of the Centre for Crime, Justice and Security (UOA20).

During this REF period, the Unit's research was supported by the Centre for Applied Business Research (CABR). CABR has evolved into a revised and expanded Centre for Business, Innovation, and Enterprise (CBIE). CBIE is designed to make SBS research a key part of regional commerce and industry through our REF2014 themes **emerging markets** and **inequalities, employment, and welfare**. We have developed our research capability in the complementary area of **innovation and leadership** through strategic appointments and the development of existing staff.

### b. Key Achievements

**Emerging markets** research led by **ADNETT**, HASHI and **PUGH**, the former two now Emeritus, has resulted in research outputs and impact on public policy. **ADNETT**, HASHI, **PUGH** and other colleagues have supervised emerging markets PhDs co-designed with Balkan stakeholders to achieve impact inside government organisations (detailed in Section 2). Of the many journal articles derived from this research (Section 2d), two have been included as outputs in this submission: one co-authored by HASHI and **PUGH** with Lumir Abdixiku on business tax evasion in transition economies (output identifier 2973); and another by **ADNETT** and **PUGH** with Selena Begovic on currency board arrangements (2263).

**PUGH** and HASHI worked with international stakeholders to advance economic reconstruction in the Balkans. **PUGH's** work with the Kosovo Ministry of Finance in 2015 supported colleagues in the Macroeconomics Research Department with new insights into modelling inflation and imports.

Research by **ZHAO**, a recent addition to the School, has addressed the digital divide and the digital economy in emerging economies of the Pacific and the Middle East (6254).

Our thematic **Inequalities, employment, and welfare** research has grown since REF2014. Research led by **FAIRBURN** on air quality, indicators and environmental justice has directly influenced the WHO and provides the underpinning research for the impact case study **Tackling environmental inequality: reducing risk in deprived areas**.

**JONES** undertook comparative research on civil society organisational involvement in Local Enterprise Partnerships, City Deals, Enterprise Zones and City Regions in England and Wales. The research considered how governance restructuring shapes political, economic, social, and cultural landscapes. It uncovered tensions and opportunities for local elites and civil society actors within the context of devolution and austerity policies. The ESRC funded project 'Spaces of New Localism: Stakeholder Engagement and Economic Development in Wales and England' work-package **Spaces of New Localism: Stakeholder Engagement and Economic Development in Wales and England** (GBP352,000, GBP88,000 to Staffordshire from University of Sheffield) was part of a wider collaboration with the Wales Institute of Social & Economic Research, Data & Methods (WISERD, total grant GBP7,538,922). This work-package has influenced international debates on city-regions and particularly shaped research agendas on the links between institution-building, democracy, and the reproduction of deep social divides that run through urban society at large (6801, 4807, 4805), and underpins an impact case study **Tackling Austerity, Welfare and Work in Contemporary Britain**.

**PUTTICK's** (4583) research into labour market regulations and state support for wages reconsiders the efficacy of existing mechanisms, and it identifies alternative approaches.

**ETHERINGTON's** work with **JONES** (4715) similarly challenges neoliberal approaches to city-region building. **ADAM** (6292) investigated employment policies in the UK, identifying limitations in the existing supply-side strategies which have dominated the policy arena. Research by **GALLAGE** (6158) challenges conventional wisdom that reciprocity in prosocial exchange systems is the norm.

Thematic research into 'innovation and leadership' constitutes a major focus of the work of **ZHAO** and **NICHOLDS**, who are recent appointments. **ZHAO** specialises in digital transformation strategy. She works to help governments, industries, and businesses tackle challenges in the digitisation process. Her research (6254) on e-government diffusion identifies how national culture can have positive and negative effects on diffusion. **NICHOLDS** (4965, 4970) has examined aims to bring critical discourse and reflexivity to life through organisations' attempts to re-conceptualise the leadership of successful organisations, places, and spaces.

Innovation research forms part of the work of **FAIRBURN** (2266) identifying the characteristics of effective innovation support programmes for small and medium-sized businesses in traditional manufacturing sectors across EU countries. **PUGH's** meta-regression analysis of literature on R&D subsidies (2250) reveals no substantial additionality from public subsidy.

**JONES's** research has influenced the local industrial strategy for Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire. As befits our mission as the 'Connected University' and given our importance to the local economy (REF5a section 1), the University and this UOA have a strong relationship with the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SSLEP). **JONES** (DVC as well as member of this UOA) is Director of SSLEP and a core member of the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) Steering Group.

### c. Research and Impact Strategy

The development of research in the unit has been supported by the growing importance of research within the University. Prior to 2018, research was seen as supporting teaching. Since 2018 research excellence is recognised as an important goal. The University's 2018 Research, Innovation and Impact Strategy states:

Research excellence is at the heart of Staffordshire University, [and is] central to the vision and strategy of being the Connected and Digital University...our Strategic Plan...[is] underpinned by research excellence.

As outlined in REF5a (section 2), our research is monitored by the University's Research and Innovation Committee, which reports to the Academic Board chaired by the Vice-Chancellor. The growing institutional importance of research is further seen by the creation in 2019 of the new role

of Associate Dean for Research and Enterprise (ADRE), with the appointment of **ZHAO** as ADRE for the School.

During this REF period, we have implemented several measures to support research within the Unit:

- Investment in Research Fellows to increase innovation and leadership research capacity.
- Timetabled Research Allowances (TRA) – 20% of contractual hours as ring-fenced research time – were allocated on a competitive basis within the School: six FTE staff benefitted in 2015-16, growing to eight FTE in 2016-17. TRAs were available to both ECRs and established academics and prioritised publication in high impact peer-reviewed journals. TRAs have since been mainstreamed and all staff submitted in this UOA have a minimum of 20% time for research in line with our Code of Practice.
- Research mentors for all staff who requested them, with mentoring time embedded into workload allocation.
- Induction for new staff members from the School's research lead.
- Research seminars organised at the School level, which, because of their interdisciplinary nature, are open to all across the institution. These are led by **NICHOLDS** and focus on ECR development.

Under **ZHAO**'s leadership as ADRE, the School has enhanced its collaborative and high-performing research culture and capacity. Initiatives include:

- The development and implementation of a School-level research strategy and action plan. This plan emphasises driving the research agenda, building research capacity, and further embedding impact as part of research.
- A conference fund scheme, which provides an open and transparent process for managing requests for staff attendance at research conferences.
- Enhancing the research environment by appointing international, highly regarded Visiting Professors, including Prof Teck Yong Eng, a leading researcher in digital marketing and big data analytics, and Prof Craig Standing, an expert in Business Information Technology. Our visiting titleholders mentor staff, develop collaborative research and co-supervise doctoral candidates.
- Strengthening research leadership and governance by introducing a School Research Committee.

Our two impact case studies exemplify our strategic approach to including impact processes and concerns in our research design. This attention to stakeholder collaboration and applied research underpins our role as a civic university. **JONES** and **ETHERINGTON**'s research with Sheffield TUC and the Institute for Employment rights has highlighted the effect of national policies on employment rights. **FAIRBURN**'s research with UK government agencies has led to the WHO developing tools to address environmental inequalities worldwide.

We have generated sustainable, long-term research connections to key stakeholders throughout Europe. From the early 2000s to date, Staffordshire researchers contributed to developments in Western Balkan countries – particularly Albania, Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia, and Montenegro, through curriculum development in business disciplines, joint research projects informing outcomes as varied as higher education reforms, privatisation, and trade negotiations, and a Masters and PhD scholarship programme in Applied Economics (section 2). The PG programme now sees Staffordshire graduates in leading positions in the universities of each of these countries as well as in ministries of finance, central banks (including three vice governors) and in government. Government figures include, at various times, two ministers of finance, a deputy prime minister and a prime minister.

Our research complies fully with the University's Open Access mandate and policy (REF5a section 2). We support the University's Statement on the Responsible Use of Metrics and have used it to prepare our submission to REF2021.

#### d. Future strategy

To drive the Unit's future, we developed the Centre for Applied Business Research (CABR) into the Centre for Business, Innovation and Enterprise (CBIE) at the end of this REF period. CBIE combines SBS's cross-disciplinary research with the University's underpinning enterprise, innovation, and knowledge exchange ecosystem. We established CBIE to focus on the research underpinning innovation and economic challenges in the Staffordshire region. CBIE is a hub for cultivating and embedding innovation in start-ups and SMEs throughout the innovation cycle. CBIE research methods, resources, and projects are connected into the University's Innovation Enterprise Zone, and Catalyst building (section 3). This emphasis on linked-up work aligns with the University's Civic agenda, and CBIE supports collaborative research with colleagues in other units e.g., GIDLOW's work on health inequalities (UOA3) and GRATTON's work on economic hardship (UOA34).

We will use CBIE to drive transformational change by supporting innovation, entrepreneurship, and impactful research through investment in researchers. CBIE's future research strategy encompasses:

- Doubling capacity from 9FTE to ca 20FTE through targeted recruitment at early-career and senior levels, capability acceleration of existing staff, and external mentoring for researchers.
- Providing further time, space and facilities for all staff to consider, collaborate and execute world-leading impactful research.
- Use our growing knowledge exchange infrastructure to provide UK businesses with access to our leading knowledge and capability, cementing our position as a champion of applied business research.
- Enhance our interdisciplinary research culture by developing the themes of Business, Innovation and Entrepreneurship to support Regional Resilience in the context of the government's 'levelling-up' and 'building back better' priorities for Staffordshire.
- Growing PGR recruitment by 10% annually. We will achieve this goal by focusing on regional and international collaboration to develop a pipeline of future researchers, and by maximising the learning opportunities for distance learning PhDs and professional doctorates.

To achieve these aims, we are co-locating Staffordshire Business School with the University's Employer Partnerships service within the new Catalyst building, due to open in 2021 (section 3). This connection will enhance our current Innovation Enterprise Zone facilities by providing a new high quality, digitally enabled collision space for learning, research, and knowledge exchange.

## 2. People

#### a. Staffing Strategy

The support for researchers at all stages in their career and the importance given to research in business and management is reflected in the 25% growth to 9.1FTEs submitted since REF2014.

Five of those submitted in 2014 have been promoted, which underlines our commitment to staff development. Three were promoted to Professor: **FAIRBURN** internally; and two took chairs internationally (McMANUS 2018; BY 2019). We have used staff development strategically to propel a sustainable growth, and the number of ECRs submitted has increased from one to three (**GALLAGE, ADAMS, OLAREWAJU**). Two of those submitted in REF2014 continue to contribute to our research environment through their Emeritus status (DENT and HASHI).

## Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

In addition to the recruitment of **ZHAO** as ADRE, we have supported research growth by recruiting **ETHERINGTON** (0.2FTE), a longstanding collaborator of **JONES**. **ETHERINGTON** provides senior support to the **inequalities, employment, and welfare** theme.

### b. Staff development and support

In line with the principles of the Concordat for the Career Development of Researchers, all researchers have an annual Performance and Development Review (PDR) with their manager to set objectives, review progress and identify appropriate training and development needs. The ADRE, **ZHAO**, supports staff and managers to develop individual plans and development requirements that support individuals' research careers and the Unit's broader research direction.

In line with our REF5a and Code of Practice, all staff returned to this UOA are supported by:

1. A minimum of 20% allocation of contracted hours for research.
2. Appropriate annual research objectives, which include research grant targets, and the production of high-quality research outputs.

Research, Innovation and Impact Services (RIIS) offers all staff and PGRs a centralised programme of researcher training. This training has been designed with input from the ADREs. Senior staff from this unit have led sessions on the institutional research training programme, available to both staff and PGRs within the unit:

- 'Building your academic online profile', **FAIRBURN**.
- 'Qualitative Analysis with NVivo' and 'Research networking and collaborative opportunities', **MAHESHWARI**.
- 'Producing 4\* outputs in social sciences' and 'Top Ten Tips: For (doctoral) researchers', **JONES**.

Within SBS, an Action Plan for the UOA has been developed and implemented to address the key areas for improvement identified in our Culture, Employment and Development in Academic Research Survey (CEDARS) 2020. Coaching and mentoring are available for staff, facilitated by senior staff in the UOA, and the Professoriate. Time for mentoring/coaching is factored into workload planning to ensure mentors and mentees have adequate time to participate.

The UOA's research seminar series (led by **NICHOLDS**), which all university researchers may attend, is a key part of our research culture. It supports the creation of interdisciplinary research networks and the dissemination of research findings, and it allows ECRs to receive supportive academic critique. Staff are encouraged to attend and present at the annual University Research Conference, which provides an opportunity for all staff and PGRs to share findings and develop trans-university research.

The UOA is supported by an institutional Research Impact Manager, who provides training and guidance on research impact strategy and activities. In this REF period we have benefitted from a strong, diverse network of 21 visiting Professors and Fellows, who facilitate collaboration and provide mentoring and support for ECRs and PGRs. The visiting titleholders include academics from the UK, Brazil, Malaysia, Australia, USA, Czech Republic, and Croatia, and senior leaders from industry, government, and NGOs.

To support our research, the University inaugurated an Entrepreneur in Residence (EiR) scheme in 2018. There are currently four EiRs, coming from a range of industry backgrounds. In addition, four Emeritus Professors are aligned to the Unit and support the research environment by co-authoring research outputs (**WILLIAMSON**) and co-supervising PGRs (**HASHI**, **ADNETT**). Together, our EiRs and emeriti ensure continuity between our established and emerging research themes, and help our researchers to forge connections to academic and industry networks.



## Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

In 2020, SBS established a Conference Fund to enable staff to present papers at high-quality peer-reviewed conferences. The fund is open to all staff members. We have used it strategically by encouraging our ECRs (e.g., **OLAREWAJU**) to access the funding to present their research findings and develop external networks.

Promotion to Associate Professor and Professor is through an annual Professorial Call (see REF5a, section 3). All staff seeking promotion are encouraged to attend preparatory workshops. Senior members of the unit (**ZHAO, PUGH**) deliver these workshops and mentor prospective applicants.

As part of their induction, new academic staff receive mandatory training in key areas including Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion and Prevent. Current staff undertake regular updates in these areas. New academic staff receive a 24-month probationary period. During this period, they are provided with additional support to set and achieve research and teaching objectives, including regular review meetings with their manager.

### c. ECR support

In addition to their protected research time, ECRs engage with training in grant writing and publishing by the ADRE (**ZHAO**) and RIIS. Regularly scheduled interdisciplinary research meetings across the University support growth in peer-to-peer networks of ECRs to enhance the research environment.

### d. Supporting PGRs

As reported in REF4a, there were 16 doctoral completions in the REF cycle (>60% female). Our success in supporting PGR students is seen in their contribution to outputs, including 23% of REF outputs (2263, 2973, 4733, 2260, 2266), prestigious awards (see p. 8 below) and high-quality employment (section 4).

There were an **additional 18 completions** on our blended learning PhD and **seven offshore DBA completions**, which are not in the REF4a data. Total completions in the REF period are 41, or 0.64 completions per FTE pa, more than double the sector's REF2014 UOA average of 0.29.

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	Total
<b>REF4a Completions</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>16</b>
PhD	7	1	4	2	1			15
ProfDoc						1		1
<b>Completions not in REF4a</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>25</b>
PhD	2	2	5	3	1	5		18
ProfDoc					1	3	3	7
<b>Total completions</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>41</b>

68% of completions (28/41) were achieved through our prestigious PhD Programme in Applied Economics. The Programme has notably recruited from the Western Balkans. In the assessment period the Programme secured GBP484,130 funding for fees and scholarships from the Open Society Foundations (OSF) for 26 Western Balkan individuals. The OSF PGRs studied under a 'blended learning' mode with one semester each year full-time at Staffordshire University and the remainder part-time in their home countries.

In 2019/20, there were 34 doctoral researchers in the Unit, comprising 19 PhDs and 15 ProfDoc. The Unit's strengths in offering flexibility via distance learning PhDs have continued. Four of our current PhD students study via distance learning. 76% of current doctorate students (26/34) are

international, demonstrating our strong international reputation and networks. All ProfDoc students are part-time, with an even split between full- and part-time PhDs.

Much of our PGR recruitment has been through our Applied Economics PhD programme. Successful candidates are often employed in industry or academia and their research areas are often directly relevant to their role. The prestige of the PhD programme meant that recruitment was competitive with local promotion in the Balkans region for the OSF positions to support the selection of talented researchers, and action to ensure gender balance.

We recruit students in cohorts to ensure peer support throughout the PhD. “Mini conferences” with leading external participants commenting on students’ papers were held each semester, with annual conferences in the Balkans allowing OSF students to share research and network with current and former students. Since 2000 to date, generations of leading Western Balkans applied economists have met, established collaborative networks, and participated in research projects across country and ethnic lines through our PhD programme.

In addition to accessing training through the centralised university training programme and the Graduate School, additional (individual or group) sessions to address the specific needs of research students with further practical support has been put in place (e.g., sessions on specific research methods such as econometrics delivered by **PUGH**). One-to-one and drop-in sessions for PGRs provide additional support. English language support is provided as required to ensure competence for publishing in anglophone peer-reviewed journals.

Postgraduate researchers are encouraged to present their work at SBS research seminars and at the University-wide Staffordshire University Postgraduate Research Conference (until 2019) and Staffordshire University Research Conference (from 2020). These events offer important developmental opportunities for our ECRs and PGRs, enabling them to gain presentation skills and to receive supportive disciplinary and interdisciplinary feedback on their work. Furthermore, to support their development of public engagement and communications skills, we invite PGRs to contribute to the Staffordshire Business School Blog, which **FAIRBURN** coordinates.

SBS PGRs are represented on the School’s Research Committee. They participate in University-wide research governance via membership of the Graduate School Steering Group and the University’s Research and Innovation Committee (RIC). RIC is chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (**JONES**) and has oversight of all research at the University. The Committee’s membership includes two PGR representatives, one who is supervised in this Unit (**TALAM**), and an ECR representative, also from this UOA (**ADAM**).

SBS PGRs have access to centralised resources available to all postgraduate researchers across the University (e.g., library services) and have access to research training programmes organised by the Graduate School/RIIS. The University’s PhD students have a Doctoral students’ space adjacent to RIIS. SBS PhD students also have a dedicated PhD room within the School.

The quality of the work produced by the PhD students and graduates is demonstrated by outputs within *Regional Studies*, *Science and Public Policy*, *Small Business Economics*, *Applied Economics*, *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business*, *International Business Review*, *Economic Systems* and *Research Policy*; and published books derived from PhD research. 33 peer-reviewed publications of the PhD students and graduates have been co-authored with SBS staff.

The quality of the research has been recognised by international awards, fellowships, and postdoctoral scholarships in the current REF period:

- In 2016 and 2017 two students (respectively from Croatia and Kosovo) joined five previous Staffordshire winners of the Austrian Central Bank’s *Olga Radzyner Award* (for the best papers by young economists from Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe).

## Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

- three Staffordshire PhD graduates joined four previous Staffordshire recipients of Fulbright scholarships (all from Kosovo – respectively, in 2014, 2018 and 2019).
- a combined PhD fellowship at the World Trade Organisation and Fulbright scholarship for postdoctoral studies (from Montenegro, 2019).
- British Academy of Management 2018 *Best Paper Award* in 'Marketing and Retail' (part-time home DBA student).

### e. Equality and diversity

Although we are a small unit we maintain a diverse and inclusive research community. Of the 11 staff entered in this UOA, 7 were appointed from 2018 onwards to support the growth and development of research. 44% FTE of the staff entered are BAME, 33% FTE are female, and 33% FTE are ECRs.

During the REF period two members of staff have benefitted from flexible working arrangements. We now have 3 staff on part-time contracts, supporting their circumstances as under our Code of Practice.

The Unit composition is notably more diverse than in REF2014 in all these aspects: the FTE of female staff (33%) is a marked increase compared to 14% in REF2014, while the FTE of BAME staff (44%) is a significant improvement on the 7% of FTE in REF2014. The proportion of ECRs has increased from 14% to 33%

Another indicator of commitment in practice to equality and diversity is the PhD scholarship programme for students from the Western Balkan region, jointly financed by the OSF and the University. Of the 28 students on this programme in the current REF period, the majority were women, which is especially notable for a region still characterised by traditional attitudes towards gender roles. Diversity is at the heart of this programme, which was designed not only to remedy a deficiency of trained economists in these countries but also to bring together young scholars and future leaders across national and ethnic lines. As is well known, in this region ethnicity is almost synonymous with religious heritage. Our graduates reflect that mix by identifying as Muslim, Orthodox Christian, Roman Catholic, and one self-identified as 'Mixed'.

## 3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

### a. Infrastructure and facilities

During the assessment period the Unit has benefited from internal HEFCE/Research England recurrent grant allocations to support core infrastructure, provide Research Assistant support, foster international research collaborations, pump prime new research initiatives, and provide impact acceleration funding. Within the period staff have benefited from investment in developing Official Development Assistance-related research through three GBP4,000 Quality Related Global Challenges Research Fund (QR GCRF) grants (i.e., **ZHAO** and **GALLAGE**, 2020; **MAHESHWARI**, 2018).

The School has developed its research capacity in conjunction with the University's commitment to collaborative research, which has intensified throughout the REF period (see REF5a). The appointment of the ADRE, **ZHAO**, was a significant institutional investment in our research capability. Her appointment has provided senior strategic support for research, mentorship, and a focal point for further interdisciplinary collaboration.

As detailed in REF5a, the permanent appointment of an institutional Research Impact Manager within RIIS has provided training and guidance on research impact strategy, planning, and evidencing. Colleagues and PGRs within the Unit can now access training on utilising the institutional repository to store research impact evidence.



We receive academic support from the central Library Services and RIIS provides further research support. RIIS's staff work closely with our researchers to provide guidance concerning pre- and post-award actions, research policy and governance, ethics, research impact, civic engagement, researcher development, and supporting PGRs with the Graduate School.

Since 2017, the University has secured funding of GBP4,075,904 towards establishing the University Innovation Enterprise Zone (IEZ) [REF5A]. This funding has supported knowledge exchange with SMEs around advanced manufacturing, advanced materials, digital innovation, and intelligent mobility. This portfolio of facilities secured University Enterprise Zone status and includes Research England funding (GBP779,500) in 2019, providing collaborative research and knowledge exchange opportunities for UOA staff. **JONES** is the Executive lead for the IEZ. His research on the institutional and governance failures of local and regional economic development over the past two decades in post-industrial regions has been informing strategies for the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership area. As noted in Section 1, the IEZ will provide increased opportunities for CBIE to enhance our thematic 'inequalities, employment and welfare' and 'innovation and leadership' research expertise, in turn boosting our contribution to the University's civic agenda.

### b. Future Facilities Development

In 2017, the University secured GBP8,000,000 funding from HEFCE towards a total investment of GBP43,000,000 for the 'Catalyst' building, which will provide the new home for Staffordshire Business School as part of the Centre for Business Innovation and Enterprise. This building will open in 2021. With the IEZ, the Catalyst will facilitate learning, research, and knowledge exchange for all Unit staff and industry stakeholders by providing leading, digital resources for business engagement and innovation and leadership research.

The Catalyst's development supports CBIE's enhanced thematic focus on Innovation and complements the appointment of **ZHAO**, who is an expert in entrepreneurship and digital technologies. **FAIRBURN** also supports this thematic outreach work through his collaborations with the Centre for Ceramics, Creative Industries and Creative Communities (section 4).

### c. Research income

13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	Total
35,569	23,240	43,304	94,606	203,441	89,905	50,216	539,881

15 research projects worth GBP539,881 over the period were supported by further knowledge exchange and consultancy projects to support impact activities (38 projects worth GBP1,000,000) and GBP454,130 from the Open Society Foundation to fund scholarships for students from the Western Balkan for the Applied Economics PhD Programme. RIIS supports our research income generation by providing guidance and resources for bid production and project management delivery.

Our research income includes funding from the European Commission, Innovate UK, ESRC and the Swiss Development Corporation. These awards from major partners have supported our national and international collaborative research. Notable projects include:

- 2014-2016 **PUGH – Swiss Development Corporation** funding (EUR36,000) for an institutional research partnership to mentor the Regional Research Promotion Programme (RRPP) project KS\_205, 'Mapping Clientelism and its Causes: Rents, Rent-seeking and Democracy in Kosovo and Albania'. This project generated two papers published in *Post-Communist Economies* (2019) exploring political business cycle effects in microeconomic datasets.

- 2014-2019 **JONES – ESRC** part of Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research and Data (WISERD)/Civil Society (total grant GBP7,538,992), work-package ‘Spaces of New Localism: Stakeholder Engagement and Economic Development in Wales and England’ (GBP352,000 of which GBP88,000 came to Staffordshire University from University of Sheffield).
- 2015-2018 **PUGH – Innovate UK** project with Amey Plc, to streamline highway works through planning information from utility providers and telecommunications companies on a ‘smart city’ platform (GBP82,000).
- 2017-2019 **FAIRBURN – EU ERASMUS Strategic Partnership** project ‘Adoption of Sustainable Accounting Practices for Reporting’ (ReportAsap), which delivered research for knowledge exchange into sustainable accounting practices (EUR293,650).
- 2017-2018 **PUGH and WILLIAMSON – Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire Enterprise Partnership** research: Evaluating (i) the impact of different modes of implementing food hygiene regulations on business compliance and (ii) the effect of that compliance on business survival (GBP26,000).
- 2018-2019 **MAHESHWARI – Newton Mobility Grant** project ‘Sustaining country brand equity: improving Brazil’s strength in international markets’; with the University of Sao Paulo, Brazil.
- 2019–2024 **JONES – ESRC** part of the Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research and Data (WISERD) Civil Society: Changing Perspective on Civic Stratification and Civil Repair (total grant GBP7,927,419) work-package, ‘Civil Society, and Placed-based Strategies for Sustainable Development’, in partnership with Manchester Metropolitan University, University of Turin, University of Salento, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, United Welsh, and the Cardiff Capital Region (GBP100,000 grant secured from 2021).
- 2020-2021 **OLAREWAJU and ZHAO – British Academy** Special Research Grant – COVID 19 project, ‘The impact of COVID-19 on BAME owned businesses in the UK’.

#### d. Income Strategy

Our future funding strategy recognises the need to diversify income sources. The UOA will focus on transnational funding opportunities, to retain our international research collaborations (beyond Europe) [section 4].

In line with our strategic priorities around supporting innovation within the local economy, we will continue to prioritise the sustainable growth of knowledge exchange activities. These opportunities will supply us with a pathway to impact for our research outputs in SME digital transformation, circular economy, and regional recovery and resilience.

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

**a. Research Collaborations and Networks**

Staffordshire Business School has taken a strategic approach to local, national, and international partnerships and collaboration, working with RIIS and other internal departments during the REF period to maximise academic links with national and overseas partners. The researchers in the Unit have attracted a wide range of funding streams including research, knowledge transfer, EU capacity building, and EU exchange schemes, and they have supported national and international projects throughout the REF period. The School protects and sustains key international strategic partnerships beyond individual projects by supporting regular dialogue, mobility periods (Erasmus KA1 mobility funds) and targeted institutional support for academic endeavours.

Our researchers have created a wide network of international and national collaborators and have published almost 100 outputs in the REF period (as indexed by Scopus). 45% of these outputs are the result of international collaborations, and a further 29% are the result of national collaborations (source: SciVal). Our staff have collaborators in this REF period from 69 institutions spanning 22 countries. The majority of these are academic collaborators, including mature collaborations with universities in Australia (**ZHAO**), Brazil, (**MAHESHWARI**), the United Arab Emirates and Serbia (**HASHI**), and Bosnia, Albania and Kosovo (**PUGH**). Our range of collaborative work includes outputs with significant non-academic institutions, most notably the World Health Organisation (**FAIRBURN**) and Helmholtz Zentrum München – the German Research Centre for Environmental Health (**FAIRBURN**).

These relationships have supported a diverse range of communities. Our partnerships have focused on employment and training discrimination due to age (50+) (with the SILVER WORKERS initiative), and on solutions to poverty alleviation in specific ethnic minorities groups in China (with funding from GCRF, and **ZHAO** as PI).

Due to our well-established PhD programme, we have forged connections and delivered collaborative research with alumni at a range of prestigious organisations. These collaborations include:

**UK:** University of Sheffield; Sussex University; Bournemouth University; University of Lincoln; Nottingham Trent University; and Manchester Metropolitan University.

**EU:** Trinity College University, Dublin; University of Split, Croatia; Tampere University, Finland; Munich University of Applied Sciences, Germany; University of Zagreb, Croatia; Università Politecnica delle Marche, Italy; University of Granada, Spain; PAR University, Croatia; Dortmund Technical University, Germany; University of Twente, Netherlands; Lappeenranta University of Technology, Finland; Mainz University, Germany; University of Helsinki, Finland; University of Turin, Italy; University of Salento, Italy; Oulu University, Finland; Oslo Metropolitan University.

**Balkans:** University of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina; South East European University, North Macedonia; Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, North Macedonia; University of Prelip, North Macedonia; University of Tirana, Albania; and, in Kosovo: University of Prishtina, University for Business and Technology, Dukagjini College, University Kadri Zeka, University 'Haxhi Zeka' NË PEJË; and University of Gjakova.

**Other:** Guangxi University, China; Sao Paulo University, Brazil; National University Singapore.

**Research Institutes:** Riinvest Institute for Development Research, Kosovo; Center for Development Evaluation and Social Science Research, Bosnia; Center for Interdisciplinary Social Applied Research, Bosnia; Centre for Economic Research and Graduate Education, Economics Institute (CERGE-EI), Czech Republic.

Examples of collaboration:

- **JONES** undertakes collaborative research with the Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research and Data (Founding Co-Director in 2009) through collaborative papers and grant funded projects around civil society, regional policy, and devolution (section 3).

- Staffordshire Business School is part of the 'Leading to Grow' project sponsored by BEIS and led by the Small Business Charter. This project includes 16 other Business Schools providing support for micro and SME businesses. **FAIRBURN** leads the SBS contribution.
- **PUGH**, 2015. Two linked projects managed by the European Union Office in Kosovo arose from long-standing collaboration and joint publication with Staffordshire PhD graduate Professor Petrit GASHI, University of Pristina, and gave rise to an influential report for the Kosovo Foundation for Open Society (2015), which helped to build the negotiating position for Kosovo's side in the negotiations leading to the Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the EU (April 2016). This Report highlighted the supply-side constraints on Kosovo's export sector and the corresponding need for gradual rather than sudden opening of the economy. These arguments helped persuade Kosovo's government to identify differentiated support needs for particular industries and to negotiate industry-specific concessions. The underpinning research paper was subsequently revised for publication in *Applied Economics* (2016): <https://doi.org/10.1080/00036846.2016.1245836>.
- During Gashi's term as Chair of the Privatisation Agency of Kosovo (2016-19), he collaborated with HASHI and **PUGH** to publish a paper in *Eastern European Economics* on privatisation in Kosovo (2020).
- HASHI co-ordinated EUFORIA (2015-18) a network between 16 international collaborators in 5 countries, including HE, Public, and Private sector participants. EUFORIA was funded through the EU Erasmus+ Capacity Building Programme. Through this project, the 'Entrepreneurial Universities for Industry Alliances' achieved 398 Memorandums of Understanding signed with companies, over 1000 students placed in companies, publication of the edited collection *From Theory to Practice: Case Studies of Kosovar Companies* (2018), and the revision of economics and business curricula in six partner universities in Kosovo.
- **MAHESHWARI** was awarded (2018) a ConFap Researcher Mobility Newton Fund grant to undertake the research project 'Sustaining country brand equity: improving Brazil's strength in international markets' with the University of Sao Paulo.

#### b. Relations with users, beneficiaries and society:

Links are retained with PhD graduates who are holding senior international industry and governmental positions:

- Central Banks in the Western Balkan region. Graduates include current Vice Governors (the Republic of Kosovo and Montenegro) and Chief Economists (Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Kosovo).
- World Bank. Graduates include Erjon LUCI (World Bank, based in Tirana); Hilda SHIJAKU (World Bank, based in Tirana); Jane BOGOEV (World Bank, based in Washington, DC); Sandra HLIVNJAK (World Bank, based in Sarajevo); and Zorica KALEZIC (World Bank, 2014-17, and the International Monetary Fund, 2017-19, both Washington, DC).
- Government ministers, senior advisors, and heads of other official bodies. In the current REF period, these include: Deputy Minister of Finance (Albania); Minister of Finance (Kosovo); Minister of Infrastructure (Kosovo); and, most recently, Dr Avdullah HOTI (PhD, 2007) was elected as Prime Minister of Kosovo (03-06-2020). Other Staffordshire PhD graduates have served as advisors to Prime Ministers (Kosovo) and Ministers of Finance (Macedonia and Kosovo) and as the Chairman of the Board of the Privatisation Commission, (Kosovo, 2016-19). Pre-2014, a Staffordshire PhD graduate served as Minister of the Economy, Minister of European Integration, and then Deputy Prime Minister (all Macedonia).

Throughout the REF period the Unit has secured funding to work with national and international research partners generating impact and support for the regional economy:

- **FAIRBURN** co-ordinated the EU Erasmus KA2 Strategic Partnership project SMARTOUR 'Sustainable Manages in the Tourism Sector' (2015-17). Five partners from three EU countries, including HE and industry, created an online training tool to support tourism



organisations in the partner countries. This work facilitated transnational research and development and provided all partners intelligence to support their local economic tourism strategy.

- **FAIRBURN** co-ordinated the EU ERASMUS KA2 Strategic Partnership project 'Adoption of Sustainable Accounting Practices for Reporting' (ReportAsap) (2017-2019), which involved 5 transnational partners from the EU. The research focused on rationalising the number of frameworks, standards and protocols to assist companies in adopting and implementing the sustainable accountability practices.
- **FAIRBURN** was a partner in Silver Workers, an Erasmus KA2 VET funding project (2015) co-ordinated by VISES ONG Onlus in Italy, alongside 6 other collaborators from five countries. This work led to recommendations for future policy for employment and training needs for the over 50s.
- FISEROVA and **PUGH** collaborated with the national HR Director for DFS Furniture PLC (a FTSE 100 Company) to investigate the determinants and sales effects of the newly introduced Net Promotor Score (NPS). Findings were presented at the 2017 and 2018 British Academy of Management Conferences, the latter winning a 'Best Paper' Award. According to a testimonial from the then-HR Director: '*The research undertaken with the Staffordshire academics informed continued Boardroom and Executive Committee debate and decision making*'.
- Staffordshire University is ranked 42<sup>nd</sup> in the 2020 Entrepreneurial Impact Rankings of Universities. The Unit contributes to the Be Inspired project (BISU), a flagship business start-up programme targeting students and graduates. Since 2013 BISU has created 288 businesses and 342 jobs with a business sustainability rate (surviving three years or more) of 70%. BISU is funded from HEIF and the European Regional Development Fund. Through CABR and, now, CBIE, Staffordshire Business School supports innovation and entrepreneurship across the Staffordshire region through partnerships with the local Chamber of Commerce and business support NGOs.

### c. Contribution to research base, economy and society

#### *Professional Networks, Committees and Working Groups*

- **FAIRBURN** chaired expert and stakeholder groups for the World Health Organisation (WHO) which have resulted in major WHO reports and collaborations on peer reviewed papers (2014-2020). **FAIRBURN** chaired the expert group for the first WHO (2012) *Environmental Health Inequalities in Europe Assessment Report*. In the assessment period, **FAIRBURN** led a formal systematic review on air quality and social inequalities in the WHO region. The systematic review used PRISMA reporting standards (**Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses**), including a review of the studies of the exposure to multiple environmental risks in the home and residential context. **FAIRBURN** and the WHO technical officer summarised the development of environmental indicators and reviewed the incorporation of environmental data into indices (especially into the English IMD), as well as progress across Europe in this study area.
- As outlined in **FAIRBURN'S** case study, his collaboration with the Environment Agency and other stakeholders has shaped the Living Environment component of the 2015 and 2019 Index of Deprivation (England) releases.
- **JONES** has served as Research Advisor to the United Nations, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, Economic Governance and Planning Section, contributing to political and policy debates in the links between region institutional-building, Sustainable Development Goals, and democracy in the Arab region (2019). Throughout the REF period, he has served as an assessor of promotion cases to Professor at National University Singapore, Oulu University (Finland), Trinity University (Dublin), Helsinki University, and Oslo Metropolitan University; Research Advisor Group Member, Royal Society of Arts, for the Inclusive Growth Commission (2016-2017); as a member of the ESRC's Impact Accelerator Account Commissioning Panel; and as a Visiting Professor at Oulu University.
- **MAHESHWARI** has been Visiting Professor at the University of Sao Paulo, Brazil since 2015.



## Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

- **PUGH** – External Expert for the EU's "European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions" (April 2018).

### *Conferences, Keynotes and Invited Lectures*

- SBS hosts **The Global Business Directions** conference as a regular one-day annual event. It was first held in 2014 and last hosted in February 2020. Key audience participants include students, local, and national attendees. Key speakers in 2020 included Tony Evans, the Head of Financial Services, UK Amazon Web Services, and Luke Bracegirdle, the Director of Virtual Health SHED Ltd.
- **JONES**: European Triple Helix Congress on Responsible Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Thessaloniki, Greece, keynote speaker; Morgan Academy/WISERD event, Delivering City Deals on Wales, in September 2019; two Westminster Forum events in 2020 ('City and Growth Deals in Wales' and 'Next Steps for Improving Social Mobility'). **JONES** chaired the Inside Government event 'The Next Steps for Devolution and the Northern Powerhouse', held 27<sup>th</sup> September 2017, which influenced policymaker debate on the Northern Powerhouse.

### *Public engagement*

- From May to July 2020 **FAIRBURN** organised a series of 10 webinars to support Micro and SME businesses during the COVID pandemic. The webinars were attended by over 150 attendees and delivered by SBS researchers and three Entrepreneurs in Residence.
- The Business School Blog averages over 1000 views per month. The blog has been in the Top 20 Business Education blogs since 2018. It is a regular channel for both staff and students to publicise research and other activity. Publications in *The Conversation* media outlet have achieved 135,000 reads in the REF period.

### *Grants Committees*

- **FAIRBURN** has been an evaluator for the Newton Grants since 2017.
- **JONES** was a Research Assessment Panel Member, Social Sciences and Natural Sciences, University of Helsinki, Research Assessment Exercise, coordinated alongside the Academy of Finland, 2018-19. This Exercise is equivalent to the Research Excellence Framework, but undertaken on an individual HEI base, on a 5-year cycle, and linked to Academy of Finland funding.
- **PUGH** was peer reviewer for the German Ministry of Education and Research (2016) and the Economic and Social Research Council (UK) (2017).

### *Awards and Prizes*

- HASHI (was awarded the Presidential Medal of Merit by the President of Kosovo for his contribution to higher education in Kosovo (2015).
- In 2017 and in 2020, Staffordshire Business School was awarded the Small Business Charter.
- **PUGH**, FISEROVA, DIMOS and STEPHENSON (DBA student) won a Best Full Paper award at the British Academy of Management Conference in 2018.
- **ZHAO** collaborated with DENG from RMIT University Australia on the paper 'A multidimensional and integrative approach to study global digital divide and e-government development' (2014), which won a Highly Commended Paper Award in 2015 through Emerald Group Publishing.
- **ZHAO** won Elsevier's 'Outstanding Reviewer Award' in 2018.
- **ZHAO**, MAPUKU, and WAXIN, 'A cast study of collaborative management approach to common-pool resources management' – awarded the 'Highly Recommended Conference Paper Award' by EuroMed Academy of Business in 2018.

*Regional contribution*

As part of our Connected University strategy, Staffordshire University has a strong relationship with the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SSLEP). Our Deputy Vice Chancellor **JONES** is Director of SSLEP and a core member of the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) Steering Group. **JONES's** research has influenced the local industrial strategy for Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire.

**JONES** is a member of the Stoke-on-Trent Hardship Commission, which aims to minimise poverty and its impact and to strengthen support for those who suffer it. GRATTON supports this work via UOA34, with public engagement and community links to local stakeholders. **FAIRBURN** has led the Small Business Leadership Programme at Staffordshire University (part of a GBP20,000,000 national scheme). This programme provides a free 10-week course to small and medium businesses to help them through the pandemic and is funded by BEIS.

**FAIRBURN** collaborates with BOEHM to lead the Arts Council England (ACE) placemaking and co-creation leadership programme, 'CREATE PLACE'. The programme involves 17 partner organisations from North Staffordshire and Cheshire East. It draws upon the region's rich creative heritage to foster a learning environment for experienced and emerging cultural and business leaders.

*Editorial Activities*

- **PUGH** sits on the editorial boards of the *Journal of Central Banking Theory and Practice* (ISSN: 1800-9581), published by the Central Bank of Montenegro (from May 2012), the *South East European Journal of Economics and Business* (ISSN: 1840118X) (from April 2017), and *Economic Systems* (ISSN: 09393625) (from December 2017).
- **MAHESHWARI** is Deputy Editor of the *Journal of Global Responsibility* (ISSN: 2041-2568) and a Board member of the *International Journal of Organizational Analysis* (ISSN: 1934-8835).
- **ZHAO** is currently Associate Editor of the *International Journal of E-Entrepreneurship and Innovation* (ISSN: 1947-8585) and an Editorial Board member of the *Journal of General Management* (ISSN: 03063070).
- **ZHAO** was Associate Editor of the 27th European Conference on Information Systems – *ECIS 2019 Information System for a Sharing Society* - June 8-14, 2019 Stockholm, Sweden.
- **JONES** is founder and co-editor of the journal *Territory, Politics, Governance* (ISSN: 2162-2671), published by Routledge/Taylor & Francis in partnership with the Regional Studies Association. This is an international interdisciplinary social science journal, launched in 2013 but already listed in the Scopus citations indices, where it is in the Q1 impact quartile.
- **JONES** sits on the editorial board of the journal *Local Economy* (ISSN: 0269-0942).

*Books*

- **JONES, M** (2019). *Cities and Regions in Crisis: The Political Economy of Sub-National Economic Development*, Cambridge: Edward Elgar.
- **JONES, M.**, Orford, S. and Macfarlane, V. (2015). *People. Places and Policy: Knowing Contemporary Wales Through New Localities*. This title was the first Open Access book for Routledge/Taylor & Francis in Social Science.
- **PUTTICK, K** (2019). *The Welfare State, Wages and Work: Disintegration or Renewal?* Liverpool: Institute of Employment Rights.
- Lowitzsch, J., Dunsch, S. and HASHI, I (2017). *Spanish Sociedades Laborales – Activating the Unemployed*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.

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

- **JONES** has co-edited two books in this REF-cycle whilst at Staffordshire, underlining the Unit's international influence on business research:
  - a) Paasi, A., Harrison, J. and **JONES, M.** (eds) (2018). *Handbook on the Geographies of Regions and Territories*, Cambridge: Edward Elgar.
  - b) Riding, J. and **JONES, M.** (eds) (2017). *Reanimating Regions: Culture, Politics, and Performance*, London: Routledge.