

Institution: Newman University										
Unit of Assessment: Unit 24 Sport and Exercise Sciences, Leisure and Tourism										
<p>1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy</p> <p>The Unit is situated in the Sport and Health subject area within the Department of Social Science, Sport and Business, one of two departments in the Faculty of Arts, Society and Professional Studies. Unit membership has grown by 125%, from submitting four scholars to each of the previous two exercises (RAE2008 and REF2014) to currently submitting nine scholars (8.6 FTE), comprising seven members from within the Sport and Health subject area along with two members from outside the subject (one from within the same faculty and one from the Faculty of Education). Given its size, and the size of the University it belongs to, the Unit carries out research in a wide range of disciplines which are strategically framed into research groups around a combination of well-established (e.g., 'Physical activity and health' and 'Sport performance') and emerging areas (i.e., 'Sport in Society'), based upon staff expertise. Research is themed into four areas:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Research areas</th> <th>UoA members</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Physical activity and health</td> <td>Dr Birch, Dr E.Powell, Dr Woodfield</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sport performance</td> <td>Dr Akubat, Prof. Myers*, Mr A.Powell</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mental skills training</td> <td>Dr Holland</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sport in society</td> <td>Dr. Benkwitz*, Dr Lawrence</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>* Prof. Myers' and Dr Benkwitz's outputs are presented here in Sport performance and Sport in Society respectively, although they have both also co-authored outputs in 'Physical activity and health'.</p> <p>This growth has resulted from Unit and University strategies of staff formation and retention of research active staff, and the appointment of staff with research profiles and potential. For example, expertise in 'Sport in society' has been developed through the appointment of Benkwitz and Lawrence (both since REF2014); Birch, appointed lecturer in Health Social Care in 2019, and E.Powell, a long serving lecturer in the Faculty of Education who gained a PhD in 2017, both contribute recognised expertise in 'Physical activity and health' alongside Woodfield (entered REF2014); and Myers (entered REF2014) has developed internationally recognised expertise in quantitative analysis across disciplines within the sport and exercise sciences, and physical activity and health and is now a Professor in Quantitative Methods. Researchers in this cross-department Unit comprise the now well-established Sport, Physical Activity and Health Research Centre (formed in 2010).</p> <p>The Research Centre contributes to the wider university research culture within a comparatively small, single-campus academic community. As outlined in the institutional statement, Newman is a modestly sized but diverse University in south-west Birmingham, with approximately 2,800 students, including over 40 research students, taking a range of subjects at undergraduate and postgraduate level. Originally a Catholic teacher training college, Newman attained University status in 2013 and maintains a strong reputation for student support and socially oriented research. The University's Catholic ethos underpins the strategic plan which seeks the advancement of research for the benefit of the public and is 'dedicated to the construction of the common good, the transformation of its members' lives and of the world they serve and engage with'. The University's vision for research is underpinned by its core values and mission to make a positive difference to individuals and communities through the contribution of its staff, students, and graduates.</p> <p>The Sport, Physical Activity and Health Research Centre shares the institutional mission to</p>	Research areas	UoA members	Physical activity and health	Dr Birch, Dr E.Powell, Dr Woodfield	Sport performance	Dr Akubat, Prof. Myers*, Mr A.Powell	Mental skills training	Dr Holland	Sport in society	Dr. Benkwitz*, Dr Lawrence
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make a difference to people's lives through high-quality research which increases understanding of and provides potential solutions to a range of issues relevant to physical activity, sport and health. The work of the Research Centre is dedicated to advancing knowledge, impacting on the broad fields of sport, exercise and health and meeting the needs of users and interest groups. The Centre also aims to contribute to the health and well-being of the local community and society at large. Its strategic approach to research related activity has been achieved through a variety of scholarly activities which uphold the University's Catholic ethos and which have produced outputs of internationally excellent quality and have enabled considerable and long-standing impact across a range of communities and groups regionally, nationally, and internationally. The research published has met the Centre's target to contribute knowledge to: develop effective practice across a range of settings (from educational to elite sport environments), enhance performance in sport and exercise, and promote health and well-being. Since 2015 the Research Centre has had a strategic focus on securing more external funding to support our environment, and subsequently external funding has increased by over 9000%, from £15,000 in 2014 to £1.4 million in 2021. Our capacity for field and laboratory based research is also a key factor in the Centre strategy, allowing us to bring participants in but also conduct our research projects in applied settings. Research-informed practice has been developed and disseminated through various knowledge transfer, training and consultancy activities. Examples of these activities are illustrated throughout this submission.

The growth of the Research Centre since REF2014 demonstrates its evolution. Newman University's and specifically the Centre's reputation has attracted new staff and also PGR students (discussed in greater detail in section 2. People). Liverpool Hope University currently validates Newman's research degrees, but during the next REF period Newman will seek Research Degree Awarding Powers (RDAP), which is a key part of the University's strategic aim to become 'recognised nationally and internationally for the integrity and quality of our research and scholarship'. The Centre has made and continues to make a major contribution to this strategic aim. The University's systems and policies and the Research Centre's long-standing research culture all come together to support staff development and the pursuit and diversification of research interests.

The broad areas of research expertise set out in both the RAE2008 and REF2014 (i.e., 'Physical activity and health', 'Sports performance', and 'Mental skills training') remain at the core of the ongoing work within the Research Centre, however, through the appointment of research active staff, and staff formation in a supportive research culture, the Centre has continued to move forward and to expand in size and scope from REF2014, and now includes additional expertise in 'Sport in Society'. The growth and diversification has resulted in increased research collaboration both within the Centre and beyond. Several published outputs are co-authored by members of the Centre and are interdisciplinary in nature, with each contributor bringing their own expertise to the research as well as to postgraduate research (PGR) student supervision. Also, through our networks beyond Newman University, external collaborations with colleagues at other academic and professional organisations has resulted in additional opportunities including research student supervision, funding bids, and published outputs. For example, **Myers's** ongoing collaboration with academics in the UK and Portugal is producing multiple outputs (Towlson, et al 2020 is included in this REF submission) and a successful funding bid, and **Akubat, Holland, Myers and E. Powell** have been invited to join doctoral supervisory teams as external advisors, which have and are resulting in the publication of co-authored outputs.

The University's Research Committee takes as its remit a strategic role in all aspects of developing and sustaining a successful research culture and research performance. Its major function is to protect and enhance the University's areas of research strength and comparative advantage, to nurture research potential, and strategically target resources to build an externally recognised research presence. The implementation of the University's research strategy is underpinned by support from the Research Office and Graduate School, including: the maintenance of a University-wide repository and research database; the preparation and provision of up-to-date information on research performance in the University for the Research

Committee; coordination of all matters relating to PGR students; oversight of the establishment and operation of the University's research centres; organization of a seminar programme bringing together researchers with internal and external speakers to debate research findings, discuss methodologies, and share academic insights; coordination of the University's links with relevant research networks; and support for the administration of the University's forthcoming submission for Research Degree Awarding Powers. Members of the Research Centre embrace and play an active role in this University strategy, not only through their involvement with research and scholarship carried out through the Centre and PGR supervision, but also through their strategic positions. The Centre is represented on the Research Committee (**Myers, E.Powell and Woodfield**), Research Ethics Subcommittee (**E.Powell and Woodfield**), Research Degrees Subcommittee (**Akubat and Woodfield**) and Professoriate (**Myers**), as well as supporting the Graduate School as Postgraduate Research Coordinators (**Akubat and Woodfield**).

Newman's institutional research strategy for the coming five-year period 2021-2025 will build on the current research plan while focusing on specific areas of implementation: an attainment of Research degree awarding powers, research integrity, Open Research compliance, and the equal promotion of disciplinary, cross-disciplinary, and interdisciplinary research. The Research Centre will continue to make important contributions to the University's strategy and reputation for research. Through ongoing internal collaborations and external networking, the Centre expects to consolidate the progress made since REF2014. Aiming to continue to develop in size and research scope by recruiting new research active academic staff from within the University, through new appointments, and by attracting more PGR students who will further diversify and enhance our research. The Centre will continue to uphold the University's commitment to staff formation by supporting colleagues in the early stages of their academic careers and to foster new talent, as this has been an effective strategy over recent decades as is evident from our development and the production of higher quality of research which affects people's lives.

2. People

Unit staffing strategy and development

Fundamental to Newman University's Strategic Plan is its commitment to the formation of its staff and students, and this commitment to human flourishing is expressed in its People Strategy 2015-20 "The University is committed to advancing equality of opportunity and eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, to foster good relations between people from different groups which embraces and celebrates diversity in line with our values and principles". In line with the institutional strategy of staff formation, the Research Centre has sought to retain research active staff, providing support and opportunities for their development as researchers, whilst appointing new members of staff with developing research profiles. As a result, alongside retaining the four scholars (two of whom were early careers researchers) submitted to REF2014 (i.e. **Akubat, Holland, Myers and Woodfield**), another three colleagues appointed to the Sport and Health academic team have joined the Research Centre (**Benkwitz, Lawrence and A. Powell**), along with another two staff from beyond the Sport and Health subject area; **Birch** from Health and Social Care academic team (within the same faculty as Sport and Health; appointed in 2019) and **E Powell** from the Faculty of Education (who was initially supported by the Centre as a research student and graduated in 2017). The Centre's disciplinary research expertise continues to include 'Physical activity and health', 'Sports performance', and 'Mental skills training' (as entered into REF 2014), whilst evolving and diversifying through the appointment of additional scholars to the Research Centre to include expertise in 'Sport in society'.

The University's research environment, community, and culture is supported by the Graduate School which has the primary responsibility for PGR student training and social and intellectual integration, while playing a key role alongside Faculties, Subject Areas, and Programmes in developing career pathways for researchers. The Centre is part of a longstanding culture in Sport and Health subject area which supports the research activities of all staff including those

registered for research degree, whose interests are aligned to physical activity, health, exercise and sport in order to grow and diversify. Members of this submission have been both supported by, and supportive of, colleagues within and beyond the Centre. Several published outputs are co-authored by research teams within the Centre, with early careers researchers and PGR students publishing alongside more experienced researchers. For example, **A.Powell** and **E.Powell** have, alongside studying for their doctorates, published jointly with their supervisors **Myers** and **Woodfield**, who themselves studied Newman research degrees.

The University's Workload Allocation Model ensures that all members of the Centre get time for research, which is evaluated as part of the annual appraisal scheme. The University and the Centre has supported **Akubat** and **Holland**, previously early career researchers for REF2014, to pursue their research interests and to collaborate internally and externally. This has resulted in published outputs, applied practice, and eligibility to supervise research students. For example, **Akubat** has been assisted to progress his research through the support of colleagues and the University's sabbatical scheme, which provides a Semester of paid research leave. **Benkwitz**, **Lawrence** and **A.Powell** have also taken advantage of the scheme; all have been successful through the competitive process and in meeting the targets of their sabbatical. Moreover, since REF2014 the Centre has been successful through the University's academic promotions scheme, which affords Readers and Professors with additional research time. **Myers** first achieved the title of Reader in 2016, and in 2020 was promoted to Professor in Quantitative Methods. In 2020, **Benkwitz** was awarded the title of Reader in Sociology of Sport and Health.

The University's appraisal scheme and Workload Allocation Model also supports Centre staff to become active members of academic bodies and professional organisations through the allocation of time for such activity. **Akubat** and **Myers** have substantial involvement with BASES. **Akubat** is currently BASES board director and Chair of the Sport and Performance Exercise Division while **Myers** is the founder and Chair of the Sport, Exercise and Health Analytics Special Interest Group. Since REF2014, and until recently, **Akubat** was the BASES CPD rep (2016-2020). **Benkwitz**, through his research for their recovery college and his membership of the Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health Foundation Trust since 2016, is now Chair of the Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health Foundation Trust's Recovery Steering Committee (2018-present) and has been the Chair of the Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health Foundation Trust's Recovery College Advisory Board (2016-2020). This involvement points to the Centre's commitment to support the activities of instrumental national organisations using the disciplinary expertise of staff. Since 2019, both **Benkwitz** and **Woodfield** have been members of, and contributors to, Birmingham City Council's 'Creating a Physically Active City' Forum, with **Benkwitz** also contributing to the Council's 'Creating a Mentally Healthy City' Forum. Through these involvements the Centre contribute expertise which makes a difference to the strategic direction, implementation and evaluation of local and regional physical activity projects.

The Research Centre has further strengthened its academic leadership since REF2014. As well as the internal promotion of **Myers** to Professor and **Benkwitz** to Reader, we have continued to utilise Newman's long maintained Visiting Professor and Fellow scheme for distinguished scholars. One part of the Research Centre's strategy to support the development of the research environment has been to seek external knowledge and skills which contribute expertise and help to develop early careers researchers. Visiting academics have had a pivotal role in developing the research and scholarship potential of staff through appropriate forms of advice, training and support, and the Centre has continued to take a strategic approach to appointing and renominating a number of eminent Visiting Professors and Fellows. Visiting Prof A. Nevill (visiting Prof for REF2014) has been renominated and has co-authored several publications with Benkwitz, Myers, E.Powell, and Woodfield, and contributed to the supervision of five of our PGR students since REF2014, three of whom have successfully completed and two have successfully defended their research at viva voce. Visiting Prof. S. Mellalieu has joined the supervisory team of A.Powell, contributing expertise and collaborating on future publications, and has supported the Unit in its development, including preparations with this

REF submission. Visiting Prof M. Hesselink (University of Maastricht) was a member of the supervisory team for an international student who successfully completed their PhD in 2018. Furthermore, Visiting Research Fellow, Dr Grant Abt, as well as supporting the supervision of another successful PhD completion, has collaborated on research publications with both Akubat and Myers, and Dr. Abt and Myers have a number of ongoing collaborative projects including externally funded research. The expertise and experience of these visiting academics has provided support and advice, and made a significant contribution to the Centre's evolution since 2014.

Research Students

The University's commitment to formation and to human flourishing includes the community of our research students, and our approach to supervision is characterised by individual support and high-quality supervisory teams. The Research Centre creates an environment that develops our supervisory capacity and enables our doctoral and MPhil students to reach their goals and realise their potential as early career researchers. Working with partners, as individuals or external supervisors, we aim to work within the Researcher Development Framework to enable our researchers successfully to make their own significant contribution to knowledge and to advance their own professional and career opportunities.

The Graduate School provides institutional development and support for research students, while the Postgraduate Research Coordinators provide pastoral support and mentoring. In their current roles as Postgraduate Research Coordinators with responsibilities for training and development and student experience and liaison respectively, **Akubat** and **Woodfield** make significant institutional contributions to the central programme overseen by the Graduate School. The Centre also makes substantial contributions to the PGR training programme with **Akubat, Benkwitz, Holland, Lawrence, Myers** and **Woodfield** all contributing workshops and training sessions on topics such as quantitative methodology, undertaking literature reviews (including systematic reviews) and research ethics. The University offers training to PGR students preparing for a career in teaching in Higher Education. While the Graduate School has the primary responsibility for the training and development of research students, Research Centres and Faculties also contribute to this. The Centre offers training to its PGR students to support their career aspirations (for example, research collaboration opportunities and providing students to gain in-class teaching experience). All students are eligible to apply for an annual financial contribution to research training activities, printing is free, and supervision takes place in teams to ensure a range of expertise and continuity. Through our partnership, research students also have access to the facilities, virtual and physical, available at Liverpool Hope University. All research students have access to a dedicated PGR room for facilities on-campus and to help build community cohesion, and in Sport and Health research students have benefitted from their own dedicated room for on-campus study which has helped build a supportive environment and foster working relationships with fellow PGR students, researchers in the Centre and the wider University community, which has ultimately contributed to successful doctoral completions.

The Centre has made and continues to make a substantial contribution to the University's preparations for RDAP and is a leading centre for PGR student provision and supervision with a track record of successful completions. Five PGR students have been awarded PhDs since REF2014 and another two students successfully defended their theses at viva in January 2021. Currently, the Centre has a further five students registered for research degrees, all at various stages. Many of these students have undertaken research in the most well-established multidisciplinary area of 'Physical activity and health', with five students undertaking or having successfully completed research in 'Sports performance'. Staff in the unit, through their, international reputations for research expertise and quality of research supervision, are attracting applications from a range of students wishing to undertake PGR degrees at Newman University. In addition to attracting self-funding students, the University occasionally offers research studentships through a competitive bidding process, funded at the level of Research Council stipends. Previous and current students attached to the Centre include international

students from Saudi Arabia, The Netherlands, and Malta, full-time and part-time registrations, and self-funded, charity funded, university bursary and shared funding arrangements. For example, A.Al-Nuaim completed their PhD in 2016 on the 'Physical activity and health related behaviour of young people in Al-Ahsa Governorate, Saudi Arabia: An investigation into environmental factors', which was funded by the Saudi Arabian Government and supervised by **Woodfield** and Emerti Prof. Al-Nakeeb; D.Sanders (Dutch) received a full-time University bursary, supervised by **Akubat, Myers** and Visiting Prof. Hesselink, and successfully completed PhD research titled 'Monitoring the training process in competitive road cyclists' in 2018; in 2017 **Myers** secured a PhD Scholarship (£10,000) from the Parliamentary Secretariat for Research, Innovation, Youth and Sport Ministry for Education and Employment in Malta/SportMalta for R.Argento, a current part time research student; and another current student L.Scoles is registered full-time with supervisors **Benkwitz, Holland** and **Myers** on a three year project titled 'Moving lives, healthy minds' which is funded by a grant awarded by Comic Relief. In addition, the university and Centre have a commitment to staff formation and the expertise within the Centre contribute to PGR supervision of university staff, including some of those included in this submission (i.e., **A.Powell** and **E.Powell**).

Staff in the Centre also contribute to the supervision of research students across Newman University or those registered at other Universities. **Woodfield** supervises doctoral researchers across both PhD and EdD programmes at Newman, and **Benkwitz** and **Lawrence** supervise students registered in Health and Social Care and Psychology areas respectively. Involvement with PGR supervision beyond home registered students highlights the reach of our expertise, experience and reputation to the academic community beyond Newman University. **Akubat, Holland, Myers** and **E. Powell** have supervised or are currently supervising external research students at the following universities: Edge Hill University, Leeds Beckett University, University of Bedfordshire, University of Birmingham, University of Stirling and University of Strathclyde.

Equality and Diversity

The University's values, as clearly expressed in the People Strategy 2015-20, underpin the work of the Research Centre. All members of staff are required to complete mandatory Equality and Diversity training every four years, and the University has an Equality and Diversity Committee, with an LGBT Group established in 2018, an Athena Swan working group in 2019, and a Race Equality Group in 2020. Unit members contribute to supporting the University's commitment to equality and diversity. In 2015, **Myers** analysed University data to produce a report highlighting the influence of subject, entry qualifications, disability and ethnicity on success and achievement as part of a funded HEA strategic excellence initiative project 'Enhancing retention, progression and achievement through student partnership'. This resulted in changes in practice in different subject areas. For example, one subject area - identified as having a comparatively low percentage of students graduating with first or upper second-class degrees – completely changed their grading criteria. **Lawrence's** contributions to the Race Equality Working Group are informed by his published peer-reviewed research into diversity, equality and inclusion in sport which focuses mainly on matter of 'race' and ethnicity and how they operate at various intersections with other social identities. His work and knowledge in this area has been acknowledged, recognised and utilised by Aston Villa FC, Kick It Out, The Football Association, Sporting Equals, European University Cyprus, BBC News, Sky Sports News, ITV News, The Athletic, The Guardian and COPA90.

All the collaboration and support outlined here has resulted in staff in the Centre producing in excess of 120 published outputs, conference presentations, edited books and book chapters, a substantial (300% approx.) increase upon the research activity demonstrated through the REF2014 exercise.

3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

Oversight of research sits in the University Research Office and Graduate School, which provides research administration and postgraduate coordination. The Research office organises

and runs the central Research Committee, Research Degrees subcommittee and Research Ethics subcommittee. With representation from researchers across the Faculties, UoAs, and Research Centres, the committees provide an infrastructure for disbursement and delegation of funds, research strategy and policy coordination, oversight of the PGR environment, and policies for, among other aspects, ethics, open access, and research integrity.

The Sport, Physical Activity and Health Research Centre meets regularly, and once a month during University semesters. Centre meetings provide the opportunity to disseminate University policy and wider research issues, guidance and practice, which is used strategically to guide our research and its dissemination. Meetings also offer a space for members to update and present on internal research projects and to discuss and explore potential future collaborations, including research bid development, a Centre priority since 2015. The Research Centre provides a supportive environment for early career researchers and PGRs to discuss and develop their own research and researcher skills, and to contribute to the Centre's research culture.

Research funding

The number of successful applications detailed here points to the maturation of the Research Centre, from a position of very low income for REF2014, to a recent track record of successful bid applications. The Centre has been successful in securing external funding for a variety of research projects, amounting to £1.4 million, with many of these being collaborative projects involving various members of the Centre and external partners, and making a significant impact upon local communities. For example, **Benkwitz, Holland** and **Myers** have recently secured £424,457 from the Comic Relief 'Ahead of the Game' fund. The project, "Moving lives, healthy minds" project (May 2020 – May 2023) will run in partnership with collaborators Sport Birmingham and Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health Foundation Trust, and includes a funded PhD student who started in 1st October 2020.

The Centre has also made successful collaborative applications with other HEIs and organisations to produce research in the vital area of physical activity and sport participation for physical and mental health. In partnership with collaborators at Nottingham Trent University, **Benkwitz** has been successful (£30,000) with a Rethink Mental Illness & Sport England: Movement For All Tender (September 2018-December 2021). And, working with sponsors at Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health Foundation Trust (BSMHFT), **Benkwitz** secured funding (£34,579) for Research Evaluation of the BSMHFT Recovery College (November 2015-January 2021), which funded a PhD student to undertake research. **E.Powell** is part of a successful research grant (£150,000) with the University of Exeter from the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) for a two-year programme, that will develop a novel family focused intervention to promote physical activity among children with Cystic Fibrosis. More recently, as part of a collaborative project with the University of Hull, **Myers** has recently secured £12,000 worth of Apple watches through the Apple grant program for a PhD into the efficacy of a novel app to measure physical activity.

Holland has been involved with a number of research related programmes involving St.Basil's, a Birmingham organisation that works with young people to enable them to find and keep a home, grow their confidence, develop their skills, increase opportunities and prevent homelessness. This longstanding relationship with St.Basil's and colleagues at University of Birmingham, has secured the following funding for projects to produce positive change for young people in the West Midlands:

- 2014-2015. Mental Skills Training for Disadvantaged Young People: A Pilot Program for St Basils (Newman University, University of Birmingham, St Basils, £14,000)
- 2014-2017. Mental Skills Training for St Basils (Newman University - University of Birmingham - St Basils, £240,000)
- 2016-2018. Parenting Young People: A Psychologically Informed Programme (Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust. Newman University - University of Birmingham - St Basils, £85,189)

- 2017-2020 Physical activity and health in homeless young people (ESRC DTP Collaborative Studentship, Midlands Graduate School. Newman University - University of Birmingham - St Basils, £58,000)
- 2017-2020 Advancing MST for St Basils young people and staff. (Monday Trust. Newman University - University of Birmingham - St Basils, £310,000)

To seed-fund research and impact, the University's Research Committee has operated a number of schemes during the REF period which Centre members have taken advantage of. The University's sabbatical support scheme, which requires applicants to demonstrate clear and measurable targets to be achieved at the end of the sabbatical period, has been accessed by four members of the Centre (**Akubat**, **Benkwitz**, **Lawrence** and **A.Powell**) and has contributed to the publication of outputs, research dissemination and impact. The University has funded PhD bursaries for research students in Sport and Health, and tuition and registration fees for members of the Centre (**A.Powell** and **E.Powell**) to undertake their research degrees. A proportion of QR funding has also been devolved to the UoA on an annual basis (over £41,000 in total) to support research eligible for the REF. The Centre have used the funding allocated to support a variety of activities including research expenses, dissemination of research and supporting the delivery of impact (especially for the case study on Active learning time in physical education by E.Powell and Woodfield), open access publication and conference presentation.

From 2014 to 2018, a research bid writer, commissioned by the University, supported funding applications, since 2018, research funding support has been outsourced on a consultancy basis. This provided information on grants and support for external funding opportunities as well as assistance to academic staff in preparing research applications, including advice on costing and pricing, meeting funding eligibility criteria, and submission of bids. Researchers in the Centre have accessed this support to help them with bid writing. The Graduate School and Finance Department also support bid writing, providing a system for full-economic costing, review and quality control, authorisation, and submission also supported.

Recognition

Since 2014, researchers in the Centre have received recognition for their research and contributions. **Benkwitz** won the national award from Advance HE 'Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence (CATE)' in 2019, for the project on Using Student Engagement Data and Learning Analytics, which included a research evaluation component. The research also sparked interest across Twitter and resulted in publications from members of the team (Benkwitz et al, 2019) and also received positive feedback from academics who focus on student retention, such as Professor Liz Thomas, Professor of Higher Education at Edge Hill University, who commented: "I am very impressed by the work undertaken by staff and students at Newman University." "This work has been facilitated by two key principles, that differentiate it from much of the other work on learning analytics. First, it has been underpinned by a fundamental belief in uncovering and harnessing the 'human-side' of data and analytics. Second, a collaborative grass-roots approach, involving students, teaching staff and technical staff as equal partners, who have developed this work to be truly student-centred, in development and implementation, the student experience, and in researching and disseminating the findings and impact." "The collaborative work of this team is commendable and should be recognised to enable it to be imitated widely." (More info at <https://www.newman.ac.uk/news/team-at-newman-wins-collaborative-award-for-teaching-excellence/>). Furthermore, The research partnership between Newman, BSMHFT, Sport Birmingham and the West Midlands Combined Authority called 'Mental Health Through Sport' had their symposia series officially recognised and endorsed by the Commonwealth Games 2022 as part of their 'United by Birmingham 2022' (see <https://www.birmingham2022.com/united/community-projects/mental-health-through-sport-symposium-series/>)

Specialist facilities and research resource

Sport Science laboratories were built during the previous REF cycle and the University has continued to invest in resourcing these laboratories as well as in developing a specialist postgraduate research room, which have been important for both postgraduate and staff research in the sport performance research area. The University's investment in resources has facilitated and further enhanced both laboratory and field-based research in the 'Sport performance' area, in line with the Research Centre's commitment to both laboratory and settings-based research. For example, the University has invested £100,000 in resources (including purchasing Catapult GPS and a Biosen C Line blood analyser) for current PGR student research to quantify fitness and fatigue to optimise training for elite soccer players. Similar investment in resources (including pedometers) previous for E.Powell's PhD research, has directly resulted in outputs co-authored by E.Powell, Woodfield, A.Powell and Myers (e.g., Powell, et al., 2018), a publication that has since resulted in external collaborations, externally funded research, and dissemination of research to deliver impact (i.e., Active learning in physical education case study). The investment in and development of a postgraduate research office in the same building as the laboratories provides an important space in which research students work, support each other, and be central to the academic team and Research Centre.

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

Newman University is open to partnership with a wide range of organisations. These links create opportunities and funding for research, broaden staff development, build the local community, and generate societal benefit. An emphasis on social enterprise is seen as particularly important to enable staff and students to work with others collaboratively to tackle social problems and improve communities. In terms of local economic impact, the UCU commissioned report by Hatch Regeneris in July 2020 estimated Newman University's Gross Value Added to Birmingham as £30 million (<https://ucu.org.uk/article/10922/New-study-demonstrates-huge-local-economic-impact-of-universities#citydata>). Because the Research Centre aims to contribute to the health and well-being of the local community and wider society, the development of partnerships and the application of knowledge to wider research, policy and practice is strongly encouraged. This has become an important and regular feature of the Centre's work since the last REF census; all members of the Centre collaborate with fellow academics and organisations in order to contribute to scholarship and wider society. Some of the key activities we undertake are summarised here.

Collaboration with and contribution to the academic community

Money devolved down to the UoAs by the University has been used to support presentation at research conferences. Research conducted by all members of the Centre has been presented at a diverse range of national and international conferences since REF2014. Conferences include but are not limited to: World congress on Science and Football (2014-15), European College of Sport Science (2014-18), International Qualitative Research in Sport and Exercise Conference (QRSE) (2014 & 2016), BASES annual conferences (2015-2019), Sciences and Cycling Conference (Caen 2016), European Conference on Mental Health (ECMH) (Berlin, 2017), International Society of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity (2016-17), 6th International Academic Identities Conference (IAIC) (Hiroshima, Japan, 2018), BHF Funded Motor competence in childhood conference (Coventry University (2019) and International Sport Forum of the Strength & Conditioning Society (SCS) and the European Sport Nutrition Society (ESNS) (2020). Presenting research at conferences has supported future publication of the research in peer-reviewed journals and the development of postgraduate research. The money allocated has also been used to support publication in Open Access journals. The Centre has a commitment to publishing in Open Access journals in order to provide those beyond the academic community with access to our research, especially as much of our research has an explicit application to practice.

The Centre contributes to the publication, editing and peer review process for a number of international titles with all members regularly invited to review for a number of journals. This demonstrates the Centre's commitment to supporting the important work of the academic community in the publication of high-quality research. Staff also make specific additional contributions to the publication and editing process, for example: **Akubat** and **Myers** have reviewed abstracts and awards for BASES, **Lawrence** is on the editorial boards of the Journal of the History, Culture and Sociology of Sports and the Journal of Managing Sport and Leisure Journal, and is on the Advisory Editorial Board for Leisure Studies and the Associate Board of Leisure Studies; **Myers** leads the Journal of Sports Sciences Advisory Group (advising the editorial board on statistics matters and contributing to future editorials on statistical methods); **Woodfield** was invited to guest edited a special issue of Sports titled 'Physical activity for health in youth' with **E.Powell** as fellow guest editor (https://www.mdpi.com/journal/sports/special_issues/Physical_Activity_Health_Youth).

Members of the Centre have also been invited to and have reviewed funding bid submissions. In 2018, **Benkwitz** reviewed for the National Institute of Health Research (NIHR) Research Funding Board. The projects were: '17/78/11 A three-arm superiority trial comparing high intensity exercise (HIE) and lower intensity exercise (LIE) with an active control for help-seeking adolescents with depression', which sought over £1m; and '17/78/10 The clinical and cost-effectiveness of exercise intervention for depression in adolescents: a phased multi-site randomised controlled trial', which also sought over £1m. Since 2019, **Lawrence** has been an expert evaluator for the "Rights, Equality and Citizenship" funding programme, European Commission, and evaluated six-figure grants. In 2020 **Woodfield** reviewed for a BHF Project Grant, and in 2021, **Myers** reviewed an international funding bid for €538,147.00 on behalf of the Flemish government's Research Council, Industrial Research Council and the University of Leuven (KU Leuven), Belgium, that looked at modelling personalised risk profiling and heart failure prevention.

The Centre works collaboratively across the academic community, with research consortia and networks. Some examples of these collaborations include:

- **Benkwitz** - Member of the international research group called the Bergen Group, a consortium of people across Europe who work in, or have an interest in, projects that use football to deliver mental health interventions. In September 2019 Benkwitz presented in a panel session alongside other Bergen Group members on mental health and football projects (based on the outputs: Benkwitz et al., 2019; & Benkwitz and Healy, 2019) at the international mental health conference 'Recovery in Focus' at the University of Nottingham. In Autumn 2021 Benkwitz will travel (funded by Erasmus) to Drammen (University of South-Eastern Norway) to meet some members of the Bergen Group to discuss research collaboration, research exchanges and future co-supervision of PhD student(s).
- **Lawrence** – Founder of the Digital Football Network which was created alongside the publication of an Edited book (Lawrence, S. and Crawford, G. (eds.) (2018) Digital Football Cultures: Fandom, Identities and Resistances. London: Routledge); Research Expert and Report Writer, Sporting Equals, producing the 'BASPA Call for Action Report' which led to the Sporting Equals Charter in 2019; Research Advisor, The Football Association, 'Bringing Opportunities to Communities – Phase 2: A step change in Asian inclusion', 2019 resulted in a publication in this REF submission (Lawrence and Davis, 2019).
- **Myers** – Multiple regional and international collaborations including: an ongoing collaboration with Christopher McClaren-Towlson and Grant Abt (University of Hull), and Bruno Gonçalves and Jaime Sampaio, (Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro) which resulted in a successful bid to UEFA on maturity-status 'bio-banding' as a tool for ongoing talent (de)selection of academy soccer players, this collaboration has already resulted in one publication (in this REF submission - Towlson, et al., 2020), another is currently under review in Journal of Science and Medicine in Football, and a third is in preparation; another ongoing collaboration with Stephen Strotmeyer (University of Pittsburgh, USA) and Steven Dang (Carnegie-Mellon University), provides ongoing analysis of data exploring psychometric theories to build educational assessments for sport judges, this builds on the submitted REF

impact case study on judging and performance in Muay Thai, and is trying to extend this by identifying why judges find some fights difficult to judge, which should help improve training; and a research collaboration with cardiac clinicians and Visiting Professor Alan Nevill has produced a manuscript currently in review in the European Respiratory Journal Open.

- **E.Powell** - Collaboration with the University of Exeter, as a result of published work and her knowledge and experience of effective interventions amongst primary aged children, E.Powell was invited to be a member of the project management group to develop a novel family focused intervention to promote physical activity among children with Cystic Fibrosis which is NIHR funded; collaborative research with Wolverhampton University which produced published research outputs.

Because of their expertise, collaborations and networking, various Centre members have been invited to give talks at and to support the academic processes at universities, higher education institutes and research groups. **Myers** was invited to present on Bayesian statistical analysis on a number of occasions most notably he presented 'Faster, higher stronger? Determining the effectiveness of sports performance interventions using Bayesian method', on behalf of Human Kinetics Europe/BASES (online, January 2019) and presented on Bayesian Statistics for Sport Science as part of the Sports Biomechanics Lecture Series (online, August 2020). **Myers**, also presented on Bayesian statistic at the University of Hull (January 2019), **Holland** was invited by the University of Birmingham to present on the development and transference of life skills through sport (Feb, 2020) and **E.Powell** was invited to present research on the wider implementation of the SHARP Principles to increase active learning time in physical education to a research group at the University of Exeter (March 2020). As winners of the prestigious Advance HE Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence (CATE), **Benkwitz** and his collaborators were invited to present some of their work (including the evaluation/research aspects) at the annual 'Advance HE NTF/CATE National Symposium', at Aston University (6th March 2020). **Akubat**, **Myers** and **Woodfield** have all acted as external examiners for PhD theses and **Myers** has externally assessed for the academic promotions round at Leeds Trinity University, providing an assessment of Professorial and Reader applications.

Relationships with audiences and contribution to society

The University is an accredited HE member of Social Enterprise Mark, which is externally assessed and internationally recognized. The Mark provides an independent guarantee that an organization has met sector-agreed criteria and is operating as a genuine social enterprise, committed to creating positive social change. It provides clear standards for the social enterprise sector, defining what it means to be a genuine social enterprise. This chimes with the ethos of the institution to support social enterprise in the community that brings benefit to others and works towards a more just society which puts people over profits. In line with the University's core values, the Centre is committed to advancing the common good and transforming people's lives, and since REF2014 members of the Centre have applied their knowledge and skills to the needs of society internationally, nationally and regionally in several ways.

Myers has worked on a Maltese government funded project that attempted to address Malta's growing obesity crisis. In 2016, Myers was recruited by SportMalta to evaluate the success of a project they were conducting in collaboration with the Health Promotion Unit, St James Capua Hospital and the Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS). Myers analysed data from the quasi-experiment, and presented and explained the results to the 50 EU representatives at the European Union (EU) Directors General for Sport meeting (March 2017) held in Malta. Myers presented to Nick Pontefract, now the chief operating officer for Sport England, and the Maltese Minister for Education and Employment, Evarist Bartolo, who praised the project as an example of good practice and an exemplar of collaboration between private and public sector services.

Holland has supported the elite youth pathways (including Academy) of Warwickshire County Cricket Club. This aims to support the progression of individuals towards professional player contracts. His research has guided the holistic approach to athlete development focusing on transferable life skills (e.g., resilience, emotional control, etc.) and sport specific mental skills

(e.g., performance imagery). Also, in the world of sport performance and athlete well-being, **Akubat** worked with Professional football teams (Nottingham Forest and Coventry City FC) and Malta FA, Dublin GAA, Turkish Wrestling Federation and Team Sunweb Cycling Team contributing expertise in monitoring training load.

Since 2016, **E.Powell** and **Woodfield** have engaged with the physical education community to improve the quality of primary physical education. Their research resulted in the creation of the SHARP Principles for teachers to apply to their existing planning and teaching to increase active learning time in lessons. This research-informed practice has been shared with student, trainee and qualified teachers through the development of teaching resources, a YouTube video and a series of teacher workshops. To reach schools and practitioners in Birmingham and the wider West Midlands region E.Powell and Woodfield worked with Sport Birmingham to publicise these resources (<https://www.sportbirmingham.org/resources-and-useful-links>). Whilst the SHARP Principles changed teachers' practice, the ultimate beneficiaries of E.Powell's and Woodfield's work are the children who now spend more time practising their movement skills and engage in active learning in lessons taught using the SHARP Principles.

Furthermore, members of the Centre have organised a range of conferences, seminars and network meetings to facilitate the sharing of ideas and effective practice in relation to physical and mental health. Held at Newman and in partnership with Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health Foundation Trust, Sport Birmingham and West Midlands Combined Authority, **Benkwitz** organised 'Mental Health through Sport' symposia in December 2018 and December 2019 which welcomed registered delegates from UK and abroad (185 and 192 delegates for 2018 and 2019 respectively), comprising a mix of academics, practitioners and industry partners. **Benkwitz** chaired and helped to organise a one-day research conference in January 2020 titled 'Supporting parents whose children have autism – what the research tells us', with 103 registered delegates from across the region (parents, organisations, schools, charities, local authorities and local government). **A.Powell** organised the National Cystic Fibrosis and Exercise Network meeting at Newman University in March 2020 attended by health practitioners from across the UK. Similar events have also been organised for the applied sport community. **Akubat** has organised a range of BASES Division Days ('Training Load Monitoring Then & Now'; 'The big debate: Fatigue' and 'HIT Science'), and multiple webinars, with participants from both academic and practitioner backgrounds.

As a result of their expertise and emerging research reputation, various Centre members have been invited to give talks to international, national and regional organisations and applied practitioners. **A.Powell** was invited to present his research on conceptualisation and development of mental toughness in Paralympians at the National Competitive Coaching Science Conference, Wingate Institute, the National Institute for Excellence in Sport and the Ministry of Culture and Sport, Tel-Aviv, Israel (December, 2019). **Akubat** presented at the UKSCA Athlete Monitoring Roundtable (2020) and Playermaker Multidisciplinary Team Conference (2020), and was invited to present on the development of training load monitoring in team sports by Leicester City FC and Nottingham Forest FC (both 2019). **Benkwitz** was invited to present work to Trust employees, based on research in medium secure settings in the local mental health trust at the Secure Research Committee, BSMHFT, Birmingham (15th March 2018), as well as presenting his research at BSMHFT's Allied Health Professionals conference, delivering to 200 Trust employees (15th March 2019).

Members of the Centre are contacted by the media to share their expertise, highlighting that our research not only recognised in the academic community but also interests the media through its cultural relevance. For example, **Lawrence's** published research into football violence and football-related racism have led to appearances on Sky News (12.6 million viewers) four times in the last three years, providing expert comment on football fan-related news. His research on football and Black Country identity also led to a live interview on BBC WM on '[Black Country Day](#)' in 2016 and coverage in the Express and Star newspaper. Furthermore, he was approached by YouTube channel, COPA90 (1.18million followers), to appear in the video '[Why do British Asians never make it Pro?](#)', which to date has over a quarter of a million views and

has generated 3k comments and 7.5k likes. Lawrence has also provided expert comment to ITV News for the article "Why are more female professional footballers openly gay or bisexual than male players?"