

Institution: University of East London
Unit of Assessment: 23 Education
1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy

Context

The Education UoA at the University of East London champions open research through its emphasis on co-research, co-production and participatory methods whilst conducting socially engaged research that has high local impact (in Newham, London and the UK) and global reach (through many national and international partnerships and networks). Through this co-research with stakeholders at all levels we constantly strive to generate original knowledge that embodies and represents the “voices that are usually unheard”. These arise from collaborations with groups including vulnerable young people (at risk of criminal exploitation), autistic young people and teachers, young men with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy (DMD), prisoners and children and young people experiencing severe economic disadvantage generally (e.g., in local areas of social deprivation or through being in marginalised communities such as child refugees).

Through our Professional Doctorate in Education in particular, we engage broadly and deeply with the schools and teachers in our local community, to co-research and embody impactful research through the Continuing Professional Development of our local teaching community.

Summarising, Education research at UEL has *real-world impact in changing people's lives for the better* through its prioritisation of tackling ‘epistemic injustices’, through co-production and collaboration with marginalised, disenfranchised and challenged groups.

i) Improving our ‘research trajectory’ since REF2014

In REF 2014 we were ranked 39 overall and were the *fifth highest ranked Education UoA for a ‘Post92’ university*. Although we are aware that a direct comparison between REF performances isn’t straightforward, our strategy has moved us in a strong upward trajectory since 2014. This has been achieved through increasing our number of active researchers, securing an amount of external funding higher than the sector average and carefully using our relatively small QR funding from this previous performance through targeted investments.

ii) Operationalising our mission through aligning to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs)

To fulfil our mission operationally our research, impact and innovation is aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Our Education research and innovation addresses in particular, Quality Education (SDG 4), Reducing Inequalities (SDG 10) and Good Health and Well-Being (SDG 3).

iii) The importance of our location

The broader context and stimulus for our impactful research orientation is that the University of East London School of Education and Communities (EduCom) is located in the London Borough of Newham, which is one of the most demographically mixed and socioeconomically challenged areas of the UK. This context and our collaborations within it strongly shape our research culture and feeding this back through our research informed teaching, that fulfils our School’s mission.

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iv) Embracing change

Although there has been continuation in most key areas of research over recent years, through our four international research centres (Centre for Critical and Inclusive Education, CRIE; International Centre for the study of the Mixed Economy Childcare, ICMEC; Teaching Practitioner Research Group; and, Continuum Centre for Widening Participation, *see b below*) newer and developing members of staff have brought strong new disciplines and areas of excellence to Education at UEL, that aligns with our research 'DNA' and core mission. Most of these reinforce a strong existing theme of equality and inclusivity in education (SDG 4), through focusing on teaching and learning of Autistic people and young men with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy (DMD), along with innovations focusing on a better understanding of children's rights, links between school exclusion and youth crime and more equitable Physical Education pedagogy.

Structure

At an **organisational level**, our research and impact focus were more strongly supported since 2011 when Education combined with Social Policy and Social Work to create the new School of Education and Communities (EduCom), that was later joined by Social Sciences in 2018. This has provided an organisational foundation that better supports our research plans, recognising interdisciplinary research as a mainstream activity, and strengthening our academic core to support our socially engaged research strategy. Through this organisational structure - *our education research is also a core part of the UEL impact and innovation priorities - that includes tackling inequalities in health, education, and communities in general, through promoting greater inclusion, and growing a more inclusive digital economy.*

Summarising, our structure facilitates a long tradition of impactful, practitioner and policy focus, and a strong record in knowledge transfer, all closely aligned with our teaching and postgraduate study. To realise this, we will:

- I. Align our research with each Departmental Cluster through a Professor leading research and impact aligned to curriculum development and innovation for each cluster (see below);
- II. Harmonise the activities of Research Centres and Research Groups within and across these teaching clusters; and,
- III. Integrate our PhD and ProfDoc programmes with the clusters and research centres and groups

In 2020 the school underwent a strategic alignment to improve synergies between teaching, research, impact and innovation. In the realigned structure, courses are grouped together into **four course clusters**: Early Childhood and Education, Social and Community Work, Initial teacher Education and Training, and Global Development Politics and Sociology. Each of these programme clusters has an assigned professor leading research related teaching aligned to that area. These clusters, with the oversight of the aligned professors provide a structure that allows us to coordinate our impactful and socially engaged interdisciplinary research within and across them.

Our **three International Research Centres** are:

- the Centre for Critical and Inclusive Education (**CRIE**) (previously the International Centre for Public Pedagogy - ICPuP) has been developed to make our research more socially responsive through exploiting our strengths in inclusive education
- the International Centre for the Study of the Mixed Economy of Childcare (**ICMEC**)
- **Continuum** Centre for Widening Participation and Policy Studies

Our **two Research Groups** are:

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- the Higher Education Research Group (**HERG**); and,
- the **Practitioner Research Group** (previously the Teacher Education Research Group – TERG);

In addition to these established research centres and groupings that are described below, we have two developing research groups in Autism and Early Childhood and Children's Rights that are described Section 2.

i) The Centre for Critical and Inclusive Education (**CRIE**)

CRIE is an interdisciplinary centre that combines world-leading research into critical pedagogy with innovative educational intervention with socially excluded and marginalised groups and communities. It is led by two Co-directors, **Professor Andrew Ravenscroft** and **Dr Janet Hoskin**. It has 15 members from education, psychology and performing arts. It was developed from the International Centre for Public Pedagogy (ICPuP), with its new incarnation giving greater emphasis to how original critical conceptualisations in educational research can be applied through participatory and co-production methods. Realising innovative inclusive education with a range of marginalised groups, including disadvantaged young people, young men with Duchene Muscular Dystrophy and children with autism.

ii) International Centre for the Study of the Mixed Economy of Childcare (**ICMEC**)

Inadequate early childcare can have a devastating influence on the development and life chances of children, and more equitable early childhood education and care (ECEC) systems contribute to achieving the UN's Sustainable Development Goal 10. This encourages the reduction of inequality within and between countries, and **ICMEC's** research influences policy and public debates and informs policy makers and the early education and childcare sector. To realise the ambitious mission **ICMEC** is a multi-disciplinary research centre set up in 2007 by **Professor (now Emeritus) Helen Penn** and **Professor Eva Lloyd** and now led by **Lloyd**. ICMEC produces policy-relevant research evidence about the impact of marketisation of early childhood education and care systems.

iii) Continuum, Centre for Widening Participation

The **Continuum** centre for widening participation policy studies was established as the first research centre of its kind in the UK in 2003 and is led by **Professor John Storan** (now Emeritus). The aim of Continuum is to provide a focus for critical understanding of widening participation policy and practice. **Dr Iona Burnell** conducts research into the experiences of students deemed to be from 'non-traditional' routes into HE, such as Access to HE Courses. Iona, Tony Hudson (Research Manager at Continuum) and David Murray (Lecturer on New Beginnings) have also been involved in research on the lived experiences of students entering HE from the New Beginnings course.

iv) Practitioner Research Group

The **Practitioner Research Group** (previously the Teacher Education Research Group) is led by **Professor Czerniawski** and incorporates staff in ITE and CPD and is committed to research-informed professional practice and widening participation in research. It has developed a conceptual language for understanding teacher educators' work and new knowledge on the group's professional identities. Since 2014, the group has presented nationally and internationally at conferences, developed conceptual frameworks for work in teacher education, increased the number of successful research bids, developed writing and publication expertise (through its journal [Research in Teacher Education](#)) and increased its already strong inter/national networks (such as the Info-TED project, see info-ted.eu)

v) Higher Education Research Group (**HERG**)

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The Higher Education Research Group (**HERG**) is an interdisciplinary research group led by **Professor Terri Kim** (now Honorary). **HERG** brings together academics with multi-disciplinary interests in higher education, broader education philosophy, politics, and policy sociology, and continuing Professional development (CPD). The research interests of this group cover the following four themes, drawing on comparative international and transnational perspectives: Changing policies of HE; Urgency of Teaching and Learning in HE; Social and philosophical foundations of HE; Equity in HE - in collaboration with Continuum: Centre for Widening Participation (see above).

Coordinating and supporting research, impact and innovation across the UoA and School

Research is coordinated and supported through a School level strategy aligned with the School's ethos and aims (see above) and implemented through a **Director of Impact and Innovation (Ravenscroft)** and formally through the Research, Impact, and Innovation Committee (**Impact and Innovation Committee**), and more organically through a Research, Impact and Innovation working group (**Impact and Innovation working group**).

Impact and Innovation activities all involve collaboration with the individual UoA REF Co-ordinators, so that these activities: catalyse the visibility and interdisciplinarity of research within the School; support coordinated income generating activities led by a school-level Research Income Champion; provides financial support, through QR funding from REF 2014, to support conference attendance, bid preparation and other scholarly activities (e.g., mini-sabbaticals to support teaching 'buy-out' to enable research output production and income generation).

Research and impact strategy

Our research and impact strategy combines established and emerging areas and focuses on **research that is relevant to the local community, supports social change, develops a digital presence, and gives voice to marginalised groups.**

Our research strategy aligns with UEL's core mission and values (see above) and aims to:

- I. Perform socially engaged research that has *high local impact and global reach*.
- II. Tackle 'epistemic injustices': through continuing to develop partnerships with local organisations, services and stakeholders to ensure that marginalised voices are heard on different levels, from policy to practice.
- III. Support research through harmonising resourcing approaches: securing significant *external income* and through innovative *research-led or research-informed teaching*.
- IV. Support the development and *expansion* of our research Centres and Groups.
- V. Increase our *international profile* through active quality dissemination, the creation of networks and further interdisciplinary work.
- VI. Create a vibrant research environment which contributes to building *researcher skills*.
- VII. Increase levels of *doctoral expertise* in our staff base and increase support for and *size of our PGR cohort* to improve the *completion rate*.
- VIII. Responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

How each of these aims is addressed is expanded upon below.

i) Perform socially engaged research that has high local impact and global reach

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Part of the 'DNA' of Education Research at UEL is enabling social engagement and innovation through collaboration and performing participatory methods with a variety of non-academic partners – community organisations and charities, local government, prisons, pre-school organisations, local schools, mental health services and local businesses and social enterprises. These sorts of collaborations embody research that has high local impact and national or international reach. Examples are given below:

- Using participatory radio (RadioActive101, led by **Ravenscroft**) as a complex intervention for 21C learning and employability with over 220 socially excluded young people and their support workers in London and over 650 throughout Europe, through collaborating with 49 non-academic partners and 5 European partners (including the Journalist Anchor for the Portuguese TV Station – RTP).
- Investigating into and informing about the marketization of childcare, and its influence on local, national, and international policy and early years systems (led by **Lloyd**).
- Proactively promoting the rights of people with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy internationally, e.g., through **Hoskin's** membership of the International DMD Care Considerations working group (which recently published its advice in three Lancet papers. March 2018).
- Promoting the understanding and adoption of children's rights (led by **Zanatta**).
- Supporting the role of evidence and research in Initial Teacher Training for example **Czernawski's** work in The DfE ITT Core Content Framework meetings has led to the framework being implemented for all ITT providers in England from September 2020.
- Problematizing public pedagogies of hate and fascism (e.g., related Trump and the alt-right in USA), and offering public pedagogies of socialism as a response (led by **Cole**).
- Investigating the corporate and performative framing of school governance nationally and internationally (led by **Wilkins**).
- Using participatory methods and co-productive approaches to facilitate engagement with autistic groups of all ages and providing input to national autism charities for their public-facing activities. Disseminating research findings in accessible formats e.g., articles in online media (Times Education Supplement, BERA blog, Leadership Focus, amongst others), Facebook Premier presentation (on behalf of Scottish Autism), blogs and Twitter (led by **Wood**).

ii) Tackle 'epistemic injustices': Through continuing to develop partnerships with local organisations, services and stakeholders to ensure that marginalised voices are heard on different levels, from policy to practice.

Our location in Newham in East London allows us to work with participants from an unprecedentedly diverse range of demographic and socioeconomic backgrounds. For example, **Ravenscroft** led a cross-disciplinary team recently working alongside Newham's Youth Justice team to develop interventions to reduce knife crime locally through evaluating and developing a complex intervention supporting successful school transition. His work on RadioActive101 with Youth clubs and socially disadvantaged young people has supported young people who have been excluded in school to find their voices through radio, and some of his workshops have replaced therapeutic sessions run by Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

Zanatta's research in Children's rights has led her to work with organisations such as Hackney Pirates and Whitechapel Art Gallery along with her digital presence in the twitter group that she co-facilitates @ChildRightsChat.

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At the school level, **Robson** has explored the ways in which pre-school managers have implemented the Prevent Duty into their practice and policies, and **Lynch**, ITT teacher for PE, is co-founder of the international social change movement BAMEPE that promotes social justice in PE teaching.

Wood's work in Autism gives voice to autistic young people and adults in schools and her recent funding success is enabling her to develop the Autistic School Staff project in collaboration with national and international partners.

Hoskin continues socially engaged research with disabled young people, building on her work establishing the charity for families affected by Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy, based in Shoreditch East London.

iii) Support research through harmonising resourcing approaches: Securing significant external income, targeting internal funding and through innovative research-led or research-informed teaching

Our income generation strategy combines activities that are organised at the University, School and Centre or Group level. The University's REDS (Research and Development Support team) identify funding calls, support grant writing directly or through using Grantcraft workshops. Grant capture workshops are organised at the School level, to target and collaborate on bid writing and provide a natural opportunity for proposing interdisciplinary research projects. In addition to these, all research Centres and Groups have expertise in identifying and responding to calls in their areas.

During the period we have been supported by several significant grants that are described in Section 3 a.

Central to our research strategy is to maximise and acknowledge the impact of our internally funded and unfunded research, whilst maintaining and increasing a diverse portfolio of external funding. Much research has been supported through research-led and research-informed teaching or through curriculum and community innovations, with much of our research in Special Educational Needs and Inclusive Education is achieved through a combination of curriculum innovation and partnership activities, including volunteering.

iv) Support the development and expansion of our research centres and groups

The constitution and activities of all Research Centres and Groups is reviewed at least once a year at the University and School level, through conferences and workshops. During these events, the Centres and Groups harmonise their activities with the developing research priorities of the University and proactively develop new interdisciplinary collaborations. These collaborations operate in funded projects, PhD supervision, publications, and research-informed teaching.

Our recruitment strategy is aligned with the Research Centres and Groups, so that new staff seamlessly add to our existing or developing strengths and play a significant role in conducting interdisciplinary research that is embodied by our structures.

v) Increase our international Profile through collaborative projects, active quality dissemination, the creation of networks and further interdisciplinary work (including conference organisation)

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)International collaborations

We have developed a range of active, productive, and prestigious international collaborations in the UK, Europe, Middle East, and the US, particularly through our funded international projects, that lead to the establishment of networks, further funding, and joint publications. Examples of this include: the RadioActive101 project where UEL led (**Ravenscroft PI**) an EU consortium with Universities and SME partners from Portugal, Germany, Romania, and Malta; the Info-TED project where UEL is a partner (**Murray CI and Czerniawski CI**) within a consortium with partners from Belgium, Ireland, Scotland, Norway, and the Netherlands; and the Digging by Debating project (**Ravenscroft, UK PI**) with partners from the US and Canada.

Conference organisation

Notably, several staff have also organised national and international conferences, e.g., **Czerniawski** was an organiser for the British Educational Research Association Annual Conference (London 2014 and Belfast 2015). He has also organised and chaired conferences for the British Curriculum Forum in London and Birmingham in 2017, 2018 and 2019. **Maisuria** co-organised the 8th International Conference on Critical Education held in London in 2018.

vi) *Creating a vibrant research environment which contributes to building researcher skills.*

We continue to enhance our active and vital research culture within EduCom and the university through ongoing delivery of meetings, seminars, workshops, and conferences (see below), and a strong focus on the development of research skills and support for research staff, actively building our researcher base. Activities have included:

1. A weekly pan-school research seminar series, where every member of the Education UoA is invited to present along with invited external speakers, designed to showcase and discuss research at any stage of development
2. Each Research Centre and Group organising their own seminars, workshops, talks and invited talks, sometimes aligned with 1) above, monthly
3. Several visiting scholars including Dr Damian Milton (University of Kent); Dr Georgia Pavlopoulou (University College London); Professor Runswick-Cole (University of Sheffield)
4. An Annual EduCom School Research Conference and proactively participating in the central UEL annual Research Conference
5. An annual conference (jointly run by the students on the Masters courses in Special Education and in Early Childhood Leadership and Practice) features external keynote speakers and offers Masters students the opportunity to present their own research
6. Setting up two internally edited journals, [Research in Teacher Education \(RiTE\)](#) and the Journal of Impact Cultures, to particularly provide a forum for student and staff development in academic writing
7. Regular workshops on essential researcher development areas, such as Income Generation and REF. These are organised in collaboration with central UEL research support services, such as the Researcher Development and Support team (REDS) and Research Excellence Team, respectively.

vii) *Increase levels of doctoral expertise in our staff base and increase support for and size of our PGR cohort including to improve completion rate*

Our doctoral completions in REF2021 are significantly higher than the last REF period, with 16 since 2014 compared with 3 in the former REF period, of which 7 are Education staff members. We currently have 21 PhD students, 21 Professional Doctorate students at Stage 2 (thesis) stage, and 31 Professional Doctorate students at Stage 1 (taught stage), 73 in total.

viii) Responding to the COVID-19 pandemic

We have been able to adapt our research, impact and innovation focus in *response to the COVID-19 pandemic*. This has created an unprecedented change in all Education provision, created and exacerbated educational inequalities, and emphasised the necessity to conjoin wellbeing and positive mental health with academic performance. All these themes are being addressed by a raft of COVID-19 response projects.

a) Future strategic priorities

In addition to our existing research, impact and innovation strategy, this UoA has set forward looking priorities that have been developed with reference to the University's recent strategic objectives and the over-arching aim to be the *top modern university for research impact*. In line with these the strategic future facing priorities we have identified for our UoA are:

- i) Harmonise with UEL's Vision 2028, developing research that focuses on tackling inequalities in health, education, and communities in general, through promoting greater inclusion and growing a more inclusive digital economy.
- ii) To maximise the future impact of our work we will continue to increase engagement with external stakeholders including policy communities, school networks and support services, businesses, charities, national and local governments (e.g., Newham and Tower Hamlets), mental health services and charities.
- iii) We will continue with our success in seeking funding for all aspects of our work. We would anticipate that from 2021 onwards we will continue our recent success and aim to gain a minimum of four grants per year so that our research is not dependent on recurrent QR funding and can be sustained over the long term. We will also be developing the skills of our early and mid-career staff to increase success rates for external grant writing.
- iv) We will develop even stronger dissemination channels for our research. All projects, both internally and externally funded, will improve their communication planning to increase our engagement with academic networks, as well as practitioners/policy makers and the public. We will make greater use of social media for public and civic engagement and link this to methods for monitoring and improving our metrics of impact (e.g., citations, reads, downloads, views etc.).

2. People

In addressing our mission, we have significantly increased the amount of research that is conducted through the increased number of people who have a significant responsibility for research since REF 2014. In 2014 we submitted 11 members of staff (8.4 FTE), where 64% of their outputs rated as world leading or internationally excellent. In REF 2021 we are submitting 16 members of staff that represent 14 FTE, nearly doubling our number of research active staff

- i) Research staff as members of research centres and groups and proactive influencers in teaching clusters.

Our research active staff are influencers in each of the five departmental clusters (Education and Communities, Initial Teacher Education, Early Childhood and Education, Social and Community Work and Global Development) and members of our Research Centres and Research Groups. This is a straightforward and effective organisational approach to implementing our research strategy that is aligned with our core teaching areas and linked to specific research centres and groups that overlap these core areas. For example: CRIE overlaps and aligns with Education and Communities

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and Social and Community Work; ICMEC overlaps and aligns Early Childhood and Education and Global Development; and PRG/TERG overlaps and aligns with Initial Teacher Education.

We have selected some examples from our centres and groupings to illustrate the research, impact and innovation that is being undertaken.

Example staff research activities from the International Centre for Critical and Inclusive Education (CRIE)

Using participatory radio (RadoActive101, led by **Ravenscroft**) as a complex intervention for 21C learning and employability with over 160 socially excluded young people and their support workers in London and over 650 throughout Europe, through collaborating with 49 non-academic partners and 5 European partners (including the Journalist Anchor for the Portuguese TV Station – RTP). Other teaching colleagues at UEL have supported this work through input into youth services and developing projects with disengaged young people, those with Learning Difficulties and a Black Girls Group in Central London. Related and other recent impactful research (led by **Ravenscroft**) involves collaborations with the London Borough of Newham and related community groups. For example, evaluating and assisting the development of complex interventions to reduce youth crime, and particularly knife-crime, through supporting school transitions.

Hoskin's research focuses on the rare genetic neuro-muscular impairment Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy and highlights the little-known educational and psycho-social difficulties that accompany this life-limiting muscle-wasting condition. Since beginning her work in this area Janet was invited to be part of the Psycho-social working party for the International Care Standards for Duchenne that is used by all neuromuscular clinicians, and she has edited a book for schools and families 'A Guide to Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy: A Guide for Teachers and Parents'. Janet is also co-convenor of the Inclusive Education Special Interest Group at British Education Research Association (BERA).

CRIE has another thirteen members, who are: Paul Adams, Camelia Baugh, Iona Burnell, Silhouette Bushay, Maria Castro Romero, Mike Cole, Nigel Godfrey, Gordon Kerr, Terri Kim, Evgenia Theodotou, Meredith Terlecki, Tracie Trimmer-Platman and Ian Tucker.

Example staff research activities from the International Centre for Mixed Economy Childcare (ICMEC)

Eva Lloyd's research, for which she was awarded an OBE in 2014, focuses on policy, practice, and theoretical links within ECEC provision in the UK, adopting a comparative perspective with other Northern European countries, particularly the Netherlands, and recently in the Middle East (Lebanon)

Dr **Jenny Robson** and Dr **Estelle Martin** have conducted research with pre-school providers in England regarding how they deliver the Prevent Strategy in their organisations.

Example research activities from the Practitioner Research Group

Czerniawski (Group leader). Czerniawski's research has focused on teacher and teacher educator's Continuing Professional Development (CPD); prison education and the experience of teachers in prisons and, more recently doctoral student development. As chair of the *British Curriculum Forum*, Czerniawski has brought together schools, colleges, and universities across the UK to build research capacity, research funding and collaboration. To support developing and early

career researchers he is also the founding Lead Editor of *The BERA Blog* and the lead editor of the school's journal *Research in Teacher Education* (RiTE).

Dr **Shrehan Lynch** is co-founder of the organisation BamePE which is a social justice network to support a more equitable physical education and representative profession. Dr Lynch research areas include critical pedagogy, and she was recently awarded Paper of the Year by the journal *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy* for her paper on transformative Physical Education pedagogy in schools

Higher Education Research Group (HERG)

Kim leads HERG. Her scholarly interests centre on the relations of territory, mobility, knowledge, identity and network; established-outsiders' relationship; ethnic nationalism, diasporas and internationalization; transnational academic mobility and identity capital; meritocracy, mobility and elite formation; comparative historical sociology of knowledge and identity capital; epistemic (in)justice; the interface between internationalisation, interculturality, and EDI policy and practice; state-university relations, the academic profession and leadership in HE. She co-led the UK Advance HE-funded project on 'Tracking Impact of Diversifying Leadership in HE' as a two-year longitudinal study (2017–18).

Other members of HERG are Corinne Squire, Gerry Czerniawski, Jean Murray, Tony Hudson, Warren Kidd and Akiyoshi Yonezawa.

Developing research groups:

In addition to the established research centres and groupings above we have two other developing research groups focusing on Autism and Early Childhood and Children's rights.

The Autism Research and Discussion Group

Dr Rebecca Wood began working at the University of East London in October 2019 and her book 'Inclusive Education for Autistic Children' was published in 2019 and this continues to support families with autistic children and school staff. Rebecca's work highlights the importance of listening to autistic young people and using a strength-based approach to support their inclusion in the classroom. In 2020 she successfully achieved funding from the John and Lorna Wing Foundation to explore the experiences of autistic teachers, which is called The Autistic School Staff project.

Early Childhood and Children's Rights Research Group (ECCR group)

The ECCR group is a dynamic group of researchers, many of whom are developing or early career researchers. For example, **Zanatta's** research focuses primarily on the development and implementation of transformative Children's Rights Education pedagogies, aimed at enhancing understanding and realisation of children's rights and children's participation in policy design, education, and care of children, as identified in Art 42 of the UNCRC. **Robson's** research has focused on the ways in which ECEC practitioners navigate, interpret, and implement policy in their practice. Jenny has researched the implementation of the Prevent Strategy in childcare provision. **Theodotou** has developed the Play as You Learn (PLAY) programme which focuses on creativity in the foundation years, and which has been implemented in 13 Early Years settings in UK and Greece and introduced to 120 children/Age group: 3-4 (some 2.5yrs) and 5-6

Early Childhood staff consistently use their research to inform their module teaching of Early Childhood Studies at UEL. They also research their pedagogical practice to support students as independent learners

Staffing strategy

As outlined in our past and future strategic aims, we have sought to recruit high calibre research active staff (e.g., Robson, Zanatta, Wilkins, Lynch, Wood). There have been several significant promotions to further strengthen our research culture, such as Wilkins being promoted from Senior Lecturer to Reader and Czerniawski and Kim being promoted from Readers to Professors.

Staff members are supported to make applications to the University's annual promotion round for Reader, Professor and Senior Research Fellow. The development of researchers at all stages of the career cycle is recognized and promoted, as consistent with the third principle of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers.

i) Annual staff development reviews

During annual staff appraisal through our Performance and Development Review (PDR) process all staff reflect upon, construct, and evaluate annual research plans with their line managers. This is done with input and consultation with the School Director of Impact and Innovation to inform the on-going School Research Strategy, which is made responsive to the developing staff research needs and aspirations.

ii) Support for Early Career Researchers (ECRs)

A range of support mechanisms are provided for colleagues new to research. Wherever Professional requirements for ITE permit, the appointment of colleagues with PhD qualification or equivalent and an active programme of publications is pursued as desirable.

- All new staff are allocated to one of the School's research centres or groups.
- Research Group Coordinators, Readers and Professors act as mentors for developing researchers.
- Members of staff, especially those recruited from schools and/or other practice settings and without previous research experience, are strongly encouraged to undertake doctorates.
- All staff members are invited to attend researcher development sessions.
- New colleagues can also improve their research skills by attending the School's masters-level advanced research methods modules.
- A weekly pan-school "Research, Impact and Innovation Seminar Series" gives all staff and external speakers a weekly platform to present and influence research in the School.

We give more specific details of our strategy in Sections "b" to "d" below.

b) Developing and supporting staff in their research

Many academics in Education are new to research and we are actively increasing PhD and Professional Doctorate (EdD) training with thirteen members of staff studying for either their PhD or EdDs. Staff are offered extensive training opportunities: The UEL Researcher Development Programme offers a suite of skills development workshops and online resources designed to meet the needs of research-active staff and postgraduate research students as part of the research development framework designed by Vitae to meet UK Concordats. All new ECR academics are allocated a mentor, and are fully integrated into a research group, and resourced to develop their external research networks (through equipment, seed-corn funds conference funds or meeting costs).

Education staff and students are encouraged to attend University seminars and the annual internal

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research conference, centrally organized research-related development workshops and seminars, and there is support provided to attend inter/national conferences and for competitive bidding for annual QR funds to employ research interns.

c) Equality and diversity:

The University is an Athena Swan bronze award holder. The School's application for a bronze award is under way but has been delayed because of the pandemic. In the meantime, several members of staff are engaged in Athena Swann cross-university mentoring schemes as mentors and initiatives to decolonise the curricula.

The University also has a 'Black Academy' that has been set up to develop students and staff at university and offers special focus for issues of social justice, racial equity, anti-racism, and BAME representation.

d) Research students and supervision**i) Support activities for research students**

Our PGR students are a core part of our research culture and fully integrated into our Teaching Clusters and Research Centres/Groups, taking part in seminars, planning sessions and invited speaker talks. PGRs are encouraged to participate in the annual School and UEL research conferences. We fund our PGRs to deliver posters and oral presentations at national and international conferences and support them to attend training workshops (for example, ESRC Research Methods).

ii) Spaces and facilities

Dedicated spaces for PGRs within the School and the Library enable social and study opportunities. Within the EduCom building, research now takes place in a purpose-built environment where there are facilities for all PGR students.

iii) PGR student training

The University offers a comprehensive series of research workshops, training, and support for all PGR students, including its staff on doctoral programmes through the University's Graduate School and its Research Development Programme. Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) results showed a particularly high satisfaction rate for our PGRs, being 83.64%.

iv) Supervision and monitoring

The *School Research Degrees Leader and EdD Programme Leader (Czerniawski)* supports and monitors research students via the School Research Degrees Committee (RDSC) which meets three times a year and reports directly to University Research Degrees Committee. Induction procedures, expectations for Annual Reviews of student progression, Transfers and associated student trajectory points are clearly identified and communicated to students on both PGR routes via handbooks, dedicated Moodle sites and Graduate School training sessions.

3. Income, infrastructure and facilities**a) Income**

Below we describe our external income and that received through REF 2014 QR income.

i) External research income

Our external research income so far has nearly doubled compared with REF 2014, being £1,785,241 compared with £1,000,000. This also represents an average third higher amount per annum compared with REF2014, currently being £297,540 per year compared with £212,617 per year.

ii) Strategic use of QR funds from REF 2014

Our impressive performance in REF 2014 (fifth ranked Post92 University) has provided us with a small but significant amount of QR funding that has been invested in:

- Buy-out of Senior research staff, allowing them to play leading strategic and developmental roles, such as Research Group Directors.
- Conference attendance for all staff, particularly developing and early career researchers.
- Supporting the activities of research centres and groups (e.g., seminar series, invited speakers, workshops and conferences).
- Targeted teaching 'buy-out' to support strategic activities such as writing high quality outputs (e.g., books and journal articles) and bid preparation.
- Purchasing equipment and software to support research activities.

iii) Support for income generation

Grant capture support is provided by the UEL Research Development Support (ReDS) team which is part of the central Research and Enterprise office, and staff have access to GrantCraft for specific support to author research bids. Most of the Unit's research active staff have participated in grant capture seminars and workshops.

b) Infrastructure and facilitiesi) Our building

The Education UoA is in one large, modern, purpose-built building, the 'EduCom Building' that houses all education staff apart from members of the Continuum research centre. It has a combination of open-plan and individual offices along with informal meeting areas. This setup is ideal in fostering a highly collaborative and collegiate research environment.

An advantage of our location, which benefits from our compact campus, is that it is close to other schools and Institutes that we collaborate with, such as Psychology, Institute of Health and Human Development (IHHD, now the Institute of Connected Communities), Performing Arts and Criminology and Law. This practical advantage is a significant support for interdisciplinary collaboration, and 'getting things off the ground', sustaining interdisciplinary research activity, and hosting joint dissemination and impact events.

Building on these existing physical attributes to support interdisciplinary collaborations we have further extended these collaborations since the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting lockdown. Using digital collaboration tools to sustain existing collaborations and extend these to create enhanced interdisciplinary collaboration networks (e.g., to respond to the range of impacts of COVID-19 on schools and children in Newham).

ii) Research administration and support

Our pool of Administrators supports all research activity on an ongoing basis. This is coordinated through the Schools Director of Impact and Innovation (**Ravenscroft**) who sits on the Schools Senior Management Team (SMT) to setup and oversee the research admin support.

iii) Open to our stakeholders and local community

An essential aspect to our facilities, is that they are 'open' in terms of our collaborations with local stakeholders, as they are a hub for co-research and participatory research with collaborators such as schools, youth organisations and other local third sector organisations (such as Newham Citizens, Barnardo's, and Hackney Literacy Pirates). This opening-up and sharing of facilities with our community-based co-researchers is an essential practical element of our research, impact and innovation strategy, as we provide the practical space and facilities that many marginalised and underrepresented groups that we work with are unable to provide for themselves. So, our facilities support our 'living laboratory' with our local collaborators and co-researchers. We also host an annual research festival co-organised with our local networks of schools and alumni ProfDoc students.

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

Journal and book editing and funders peer-review processes

All members of staff within this UoA make strong contributions to education research, and have strong, collaborative networks upon which their research can draw.

Editorships and Editorial Boards include:

- **Murray** is the Deputy Editor of the Journal of Education for Teaching (JET) and
- Other staff included here are members of editorial boards for other SSRI listed journals e.g.,
- **Kim** is on 10 Editorial Boards including: Comparative Education, International Journal of Bias, Identity and Diversities in Education and International Studies in Widening Participation.
- **Wilkins**: Journal of Education Policy, Critical Studies in Education, British Journal of Sociology of Education.
- **Preston**: 'Race, Ethnicity and Education', the Journal of Vocational Education and Training and Journal of Critical Education Policy Studies.
- **Murray**: European Journals of Educational Research and Teacher Education, as well as JET.
- **Ravenscroft** on the International Editorial Board of Journal of Computer Assisted Learning.
- **Czerniawski** is a Member of the Editorial Advisory Board of [The Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies](#).
- **Hoskin** is a Scientific Board member for the Asia Pacific Journal of Developmental Differences (APJDD). She reviews for the Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities, the European Journal of Child Neurology, The Journal of Early Childhood and Society and is Review Editor on the Editorial Board of Educational Psychology, part of the journal Frontiers in Education and Frontiers in Psychology.
- **Lloyd** is editorial board member of the Journal of Families, Relationships and Society and of On Education
- **Wood** is a reviewer for journals including 'Autism', 'Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders', 'Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research', 'Educational Review' and 'European Child and Adolescent Psychiatry'.

Prestigious keynotes have been given by Education members that provide impactful narratives of our mission to empower people, from disenfranchised groups to developing researcher's. Three exemplars are:

- **Ravenscroft** gave a keynote (2019, Western Universities Widening Participation Conference) on 'Digital poverty and vulnerable young people in the context of COVID-19';
- **Czerniawski** gave the opening keynote (2017, British Educational Research Association Annual

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

Conference) on 'becoming and developing as an Early Career Researcher';

- **Wood** gave a keynote at the Scottish Autism Conference in 2019 and organised her own conference on autism and communication - 'How I Communicate' - in London in 2019.

All submitted staff in this unit regularly participate in peer-review activities for over 100 international journals, the vast majority SSRI listed.

Reviewing for funders includes:

- **Preston, Ravenscroft, Wilkins, and Murray** review grants for the ESRC on a regular basis.
- **Preston** reviews for the EPSRC.
- **Wilkins** reviews for the Israel Science Foundation.
- **Murray** has reviewed grants for the Australian, Canadian and Swedish Research Councils.
- **Ravenscroft** reviews nationally and internationally, including the Leverhulme Foundation, Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) and Singapore National Research Council.
- **Lloyd** reviews for ESRC and the Nuffield Foundation.

Fellowships and awards

- **Preston** is an ESRC Global Uncertainties Leadership Fellow, spanning the previous and this REF period (2012 - 2015).
- **Murray** and **Czerniawski** are National Teaching Fellows for the Higher Education Academy (now 'Advance HE').
- In recognition of their socially engaged research that benefits society three members of staff are active Fellows of the Royal Society of Arts – FRSA's (**Ravenscroft, Murray, and Lloyd**)

Effective collaboration and integration with external bodies

- **Hoskin** is co-convenor for the Inclusive Education SIG at BERA. She is also on the Patient Advisory Board for Duchenne UK a user-led charity, a member of the Duchenne working group for Pathfinders Neuro-muscular Alliance and was co-founder of the charity Action Duchenne
- **Murray** has held many advisory/consultancy posts since 2014 including for the European Commission teacher education unit, and the Higher Education Academy. She is a member of the Scientific Advisory Board for the University of Vienna (teacher education) and a consultant for the Norwegian Doctoral School (NAFOL).
- **Preston** has advised the Department of Homeland Security, Cabinet Office, Home Office and three city Emergency Planners on disaster education. He has also advised the EU on vocational education and social inclusion.
- **Lloyd** is a member of Council of the New Visions for Education Group and was elected as member of the Management Board in 2017. She has advised the Social and Economic Council of the Netherlands on Dutch early education policy and is a member of an Expert Group advising the Irish Government on a funding model for its early childhood education and care system
- **Czerniawski** (elected) and **Murray** (co-opted) are both members of BERA Council. Murray co-leads the Teacher Education SIG (2009 – to date), **Czerniawski** is the founding and Lead Editor of [The BERA Blog](#) (the largest international blog in education); Chair of the British Curriculum Forum (BCF); Chair of BERA's Membership and Engagement Committee (MEC); and a member of BERA's Leadership Committee.
- **Kim** is Co-Convenor of the Society for Research in Higher Education Policy Network.
- **Ravenscroft** is a founding member of Jisc senior technology-enhanced learning working group

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

(founded at the House of Lords, July 2016), advising the HE Sector and the Department of Education. He is the Academic Lead on the Newham Youth Safety Action Team (NYSAT), a collection of community activists including School Headteachers, Community Organisers/Lobbyists, Youth Organisation Directors, UEL experts.

- **Wood** is a member of the trans-European 'Educational Role of Language' research group; 'Pan-London Autism Schools Network' and 'Respect' autism research lab at King's College London. She was Project Manager of the Transform Autism Education project, funded by the European Commission, involving collaborations with partners in Greece, Italy, and the UK.

Interdisciplinary and International collaborations

Our effective mechanisms to promote collaborative research draw on the strong networks of our staff, deploying these to enhance the quality of research at UEL and well beyond. These Professional research networks have been deployed within CRIE to secure grant funding and to develop the career of ECRs, as well as to make substantial contributions to the field of education research through publications. Similarly, within the Practitioner Research Group, **Murray** deploys her inter/national networks and her international profile in research capacity building to broker the collaborative research opportunities for ECRs. Murray was a founder member of the Teacher Education Group (TEG) which led capacity building in teacher education research as part of the TLRP project, in conjunction with BERA, HEA and UCET.

Here we group interdisciplinarity with international collaborations together as the two often occur together. These have led to establishing successful bidding consortia and then funded projects, joint publications, and events organisation. We have systematically developed interdisciplinary work within UEL e.g., **Ravenscroft's** work exploits Technology Enhanced Learning for Social Innovation through incorporating applied psychology and informatics - which links with research in Psychology and Digital Media at UEL. This work led to the RadioActive Europe project – where UEL led (**Ravenscroft PI**) a consortium of six EU Partners. Similarly, the Digging by Debating Project (led by **Ravenscroft**) involved a collaboration with four partners spanning the UK, US, and Canada All these collaborations are ongoing to produce further bidding and joint publications in high quality international journals. **Preston's** work is similarly inter-disciplinary in its use of research methods, drawing on political economy, sociology, cultural studies, and security studies. **Lloyd** is working with Rafik Hariri University on a British Academy funded project investigating early childhood education in Lebanon, including a particular focus on child refugees.

Specifically, Education has developed a range of prestigious national and *international collaborations* including:

- **Ravenscroft** with the Universities of Indiana and Pittsburgh, the Open University of Netherlands, the Know-Centre (Technical University of Graz) and the Institute of Social Innovation (Vienna), Journalism Research Centre (Porto) and Lifelong Learning Observatory (Bucharest).
- **Murray's** collaborative networks both within and beyond the UK are extensive. International collaborators include Loughran and White (Monash, Australia), Swennen, Dengerink and Lunenberg (Vreinuniversiteit, the Netherlands), Smith and Ulvik (Bergen, Norway) and Beck and Kosnik (OISE, Canada). National collaborations include with Menter (Oxford), McNamara (Manchester), Jones (Liverpool John Moores), Hulme (Glasgow) and Clarke (NI).
- **Czerniawski, Murray, and Kidd**, working on the InFo-TED project have collaborated with EU partners (including Universities of Ghent, Lueven, Helsinki, Innsbruck, Limerick, Aberdeen, Amsterdam, and Nijmegen) to create impact that has led to sustainable capacity building locally, nationally, and internationally.

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

- **Lloyd** with the University of Halle, Munster and with HAW, the Hamburg Technological University in the DBR
- Through the Autistic School Staff Project, **Wood** is collaborating with Boston College, Massachusetts (USA) and the Pedagogical University of Krakow (Poland), as well as UK-based universities (King's College London, University College London, and the University of Reading).

Collectively, these research areas have strong synergies with ongoing research council and government agendas, for example:

- **Preston et al.** work on Global Uncertainties (ESRC and EPSRC).
- **Ravenscroft et al.** (EU agendas for social inclusion through educational deployment of innovative technologies).
- **Wilkins** has collaborated with national and international colleagues whose research is focused on global education governance, policy borrowing/transfer and privatisation management of education including colleagues from Spain, Switzerland, Australia, and Slovakia.
- **Lloyd** on inter/national government agendas for high quality ECEC provision and the realisation of SDG 4.2.
- **Murray** and team on EC and English government changes to teacher education.
- **Hoskin** was part of the Working party for the International Care Considerations for DMD In the Lancet 2018. She is currently helping Duchenne UK to develop care guidelines for UK psycho-social health care through the project Care Duchenne. She has collaborated with colleagues from UCL, Columbia New York, UCLA, Baylor College of Medicine to produce 'A Guide to Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy,' and she is also a member of SEND Policy Research Forum that is led by colleagues at Exeter University.