

Institution: University of Leicester	
Unit of Assessment: 21	
1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy	
<p>Now approaching its 70th Anniversary, Leicester remains a prominent group of Sociology scholars. Underpinned by a rich tradition of pioneering theoretical, substantive and methodological work, our innovative research addresses priority societal issues relating to: civic engagement and social movements; diversity and identity; individual and social transitions; problematised consumption and production; and health, life-satisfaction and wellbeing.</p> <p>The UoA embraces a diversity of conceptual and empirical approaches to sociological work, centring on a commitment to achieving positive social change. Our scholarship enhances public understanding of major social concerns — child sex tourism, discrimination of black footballers, long-term impacts of youth training schemes — and influences the policy and practice of key professional groups: notably, practitioners in the fields of mental health, sports government, and public health/harm reduction.</p> <p>Positioned within the College of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities (CSSAH), the Unit comprises 81 individuals (12 Category A staff, 6 emeritus/visiting professors, 2 associated/honorary researchers, and 61 PGRs). Our researchers have met the challenges of scale and scope presented by being a relatively small UoA through extensive collaboration with colleagues undertaking sociological research across the University of Leicester (UoL). We share an interdisciplinary ethos, working as a hub for pan-disciplinary scholarship spanning the interfaces between the social, health and natural sciences, arts and humanities. A merger in 2016 formed a new School of Media, Communication and Sociology (MCS) that augmented the administrative and technical support for staff development, grant capture and PGRs, and generated a critical mass of research activity.</p> <p>In REF2014 we set three objectives, aligned to University and College strategy, to develop and enhance our research environment. All have been met:</p>	
Research and impact objectives 2014	Achievements
Building networks and increasing collaborative working to support impactful research	Unit of Diversity, Inclusion and Community Engagement (DICE) established in 2015 to promote and celebrate inclusion and diversity institutionally, by engaging with local and national communities
Building citizen and civil society group and health and wellbeing group through ongoing projects	Expansion of citizen and civil society group to the 'Belonging' cluster and inauguration of DICE Expansion of the health and wellbeing group to the 'Exchange' cluster Inclusion of research from both groups in additional clusters, 'Becoming' and 'Knowledge' (see below)
Work with interdisciplinary groups	Inauguration and development of interdisciplinary groups at and beyond Leicester including: Leicester Migration Network Leicester Artificial Intelligence Network Leicester Microbial Sciences and Disease Network Leicester Judgement and Decision Making Research Group

	Group of Research on Activism, Protests and Social Movements Language and Interaction Research Assembly Leicester Centre for Mental Health Research
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Research and Impact Strategy

Since REF2014 we have enhanced our research environment through a concerted effort to grow the range, scale and impact of research activities in the UoA via: expanding interdisciplinary collaboration and scholarship; diversifying research income; expanding our contribution to the discipline; increasing international reach; and enhancing impact through embedding research within communities.

This has included significant investment in the School's outward-facing research activity, approximately £225k. Impact-led activities are central components of our research, wherein sociological questions can inform different actors engaged in public debates and policies, which can subsequently lead to new innovative research. Beneficiaries of our research include non-governmental organisations, schools, government bodies, health authorities, NHS patients, and a diverse range of industry sectors. Moreover, we are regularly engaged in impactful public engagement activities through DICE (see section 4). As demonstrated by our two Impact Case Studies (bridging Sociology with Health Science and Criminology respectively), interdisciplinary and international collaboration is a crucial dimension of our impact strategy. In addition, we boosted our outward-facing research through the creation of a leadership role specifically dedicated to supporting impact activities in 2017, and through the collation and sharing of best-practice on impact. Recent UoA impact-related activities are supported by, inter alia: the ESRC's Impact Accelerator Awards (ESRC IAA) (e.g. **Hughes'** work on e-cigarettes and youth); the Wellcome Trust Institutional Strategic Support Fund (WTISSF) (e.g. **O'Reilly's** work on resilience and child mental health); and international research bodies (e.g. **Monforte's** work on blood donation within ethnic minority communities).

Core to our research strategy since REF 2014 has been consolidation and expansion of four research clusters. These clusters are key drivers of our research strategy, enabling the production of high-quality outputs, developing impact activities, and expanding grant capture.

Belonging: Migration, Diversity and Social Movements

This cluster reflects well-established research programmes exploring how: people cross social boundaries in sport (**Campbell, Williams**); migrants achieve membership and inclusion (Bassel, **Bartram**, Misztal, **Monforte**); individuals drive social change (especially through protest) (Bassel, **Monforte**); and citizens build solidarity with people in minority groups (**Monforte**). Notable grants include: Bassel, **Monforte**, **Bartram** and Misztal's 'Understanding Immigrants' Experiences of the UK Citizenship Process' (ESRC, 2013–2017, £431k), cited in the House of Lords Select Committee on Citizenship and Civic Engagements (2017); **Monforte's** (in collaboration with University of Nantes) 'Exploring the Frames of Altruistic Action in Britain and France' (ESRC, 2017–2020, £410k); and (in collaboration with Ghent University) 'The Transformative Capacity of Blood Donation Among Ethnic Minorities' (FWO, 2020–2024, £330K). This grouping has generated prize-winning publications, such as **Campbell's** Philip Abrams Memorial Prize-winning *Football, Ethnicity and Community* (2016), and has been at the forefront of significant community initiatives through the Migration network and DICE. The group has also facilitated the construction of a university-wide research network on social movements and collective action

(GRASP) and generated post-doctoral fellowships (e.g. Khan and Maestri).

Exchange: Health, Wellbeing and Environment

This cluster coalesces research on problematised consumption in late-modern life: from the exploitations and rewards of sex tourism (**Sanchez-Taylor**), to the pleasures and markets for second-hand goods (**Chattoe-Brown**), and the social uses of e-cigarettes by young people (**Hughes**). Research in this group links to the fields of health and wellbeing (**O'Reilly**, **Monforte**, **Hughes**) particularly through work on substance use (**Hughes**), happiness (**Bartram**), and mental health/wellbeing (**O'Reilly**). Cluster researchers have engaged stakeholders locally (Leicestershire NHS Trust, Leicestershire Police), nationally (Public Health England, NHS, The Health Foundation, the NSPCC), and internationally (WHO; Johns Hopkins Medicines USA; ASEC, Brazil; Hussaini Foundation, Pakistan). The grouping has developed significant cross-disciplinary/cross-institutional networks and collaborations, notably with the SAPPHERE (Social Sciences Applied to Healthcare Improvement) group. The latter has generated critical insights and novel approaches that have tangibly improved the reach and significance of healthcare improvement efforts, informing UK Government healthcare policy, NHS and WHO guidelines, impacting clinical practice globally serving as the basis for one of the UoA's Impact Case Studies. **Hughes'** UKRI-funded Study 'Raising Community Voice for Future Health Research' under the Enhancing Place-Based Partnerships in Public Engagement scheme (2019, £19k) based on a collaboration with University Hospitals Leicester (UHL), University of Leicester (UoL) and Citizens UK, is now informing a major review of University's engagement strategy.

O'Reilly's (£4,160) Wellcome Trust-funded study of 'Social Media and Adolescent Mental Health' (2015), involving collaborations between sociology, education, media and psychology colleagues has produced written evidence for Parliament on *Mental Health in Schools* (2017).

Sanchez-Taylor's (£500k) ESRC-funded project 'Sun, Sea, Sand and Silicon' (2013) fed into the development of the UK Breast and Cosmetic Implant Registry, contributed to medical ethical debates on the regulation of cosmetic surgery, and underpinned a subsequent British Academy project 'Revisiting Child Sex Tourism' (2018, £200k) which has informed debates relating to children's rights taken up by ECPAT, Save the Children, and UNICEF.

Becoming: Youth, Work and Transitions

Work in this cluster explores the interplay between individual and broader social transitions: of young people in education and the labour market (**Goodwin** and **O'Connor**); STEM graduates (**White**); women entering science (**O'Connor**); black footballers through retirement (**Campbell**); and age-related life transitions (Misztal). A further cognate focus relates to experiences of work through social transition, encompassing: sex workers (**Sanchez-Taylor**, Sanders); men in 'dirty' occupations (**Hughes**); and the shifting materiality of dirty work (**Hughes**). This research — funded through projects such as **White's** 'Employment trajectories of STEM graduates' (Nuffield, 2016-2018, £46k) and **Goodwin** and **O'Connor's** 'Youth opportunities' (British Academy, 2016-2018, £9K) — has generated world-leading, prize-winning publications. **Hughes'** 'Beyond the symbolic' won Sage's Innovation Prize (2018), Pilcher's 'Names, bodies and identities' was a runner-up for the same prize in 2017; **O'Reilly's** study of 'Discursive Approaches in Family Therapy' won the US Anselm Strauss Award for Qualitative Family Research (2019). **O'Reilly's** work on engaging young people and mental health — developed into training resources for practitioners working for Childline UK, and Centerstone clinicians in the US. Sanders' work on transforming the online sex industry regulation, policing and safeguarding practice, which forms the basis for the second of the UoA's impact case studies, has directly informed guidelines adopted by the National Crime Agency and has fed into APPGs and Home Affairs Select Committees to shape and inform government policies relating to sex work (ICS2).

Knowledge: Theory and Methods

Work in this cluster builds upon Leicester's long-standing reputation as a leader for developments in sociological theory, including: figurational sociology (**Hughes, Goodwin, O'Connor, Dunning**); critical realism and Actor Network Theory (Carter); and Multiple Normalities (Misztal). The grouping also encompasses a range of studies of innovative social research methods encompassing Qualitative Secondary Analysis and restudies (**Hughes, Goodwin and O'Connor, Dunning**); critical conversational analysis (**O'Reilly**); paradata and marginalia (**Goodwin and O'Connor**); statistical inferences (**White, Bartram**); and agent-based modelling (**Chattoe-Brown**). Highlights include **Chattoe-Brown's** work on agent-based modelling and simulation, which has underpinned a series of significant research awards including the (2017) 'Antimicrobial Resistance as a Social Dilemma' (ESRC, £205k) and (2019) 'Realistic Computational Models of Social Influence' (ESRC, £302k). **Dunning's** work on figurational sociology has likewise contributed to the successful capture of a (2018) ESRC Festival of Social Science Award, 'Return to Winston Parva', and a (£260K) CEC-funded award for the project 'DigiGen' (2019).

In sum, the Unit has established itself as a nexus of interdisciplinary research with: a diversification of national and international funding streams resulting in >80% increase in total grant capture since 2014; every member of the Unit successfully attracting external research funding; prize-winning outputs; and impactful research used as government evidence and informing the work of practitioners nationally and internationally. PGR support enhancements have resulted in a tripling of PhD completions, and a six-fold increase in supervisions to doctoral award compared to REF2014.

Research Integrity and Open Research

Our achievements since 2014 are underpinned by inclusive research governance ensuring the integrity of our research and facilitating open research. Review, development, and implementation of our research and impact strategy is the responsibility of the unit's Research Committee, comprising a cross-section of representatives from PGR to Chairs, as well as representatives of the research clusters. The Committee is also responsible for promoting a culture of research integrity, ensuring that all researchers understand and practice according to the expected standards and obligations, as outlined in the Concordat to Support Research Integrity. In addition, the Research Committee is responsible for the development of an open research culture, ensuring wider distribution, engagement, and impact. It ensures that all colleagues observe requirements for open access deposit (Institutional Environment Statement (IES), section 2.6). We have also made conference papers, PhD theses, and project reports openly accessible via our institutional open access archive. In addition, many of our researchers are editors and/or editorial board members of open-access peer-reviewed journals, and our School has supported the development of a new online OA PGR journal, 'for(e)dialogue', published via the University Library. Finally, UoA members are conducting projects where data are made open access, specifically through the ESRC UK Data Service, and through external collaborations (see section 3).

Future Strategic Aims

Our current and future strategy centres upon expanding research that harnesses the sociological achievements of Leicester as an institution through exploring issues and concerns expressed by Leicester as a place, while further broadening the international scope and reach of our research. Accordingly, we will:

Strategic Aims	Plans and Initiatives
Expand Collaborative and Interdisciplinary Scholarship	<p>Augment our interdisciplinary collaborations particularly with colleagues in: media and communication, psychology, health sciences, criminology, law, business, education and geography. Key here are applications already submitted/in development for major multi-centre awards exploring diversity and health, including: the impact of COVID-19 (UKRI); health communication; spatial, cultural and geographical divides in long-term perspective; integrating clinical scientific work on contagion and resilience; and epidemiological work from health sciences (Wellcome, ESRC).</p> <p>Building upon our existing research on problematised consumption, we will establish a new pan-University network for interdisciplinary work on social division, substance use and harm reduction, working with colleagues in criminology, law, psychology, health sciences, economics, and clinical researchers from UHL.</p>
Enhance Engagement Through Embedding Research in Communities	<p>Form a core part of the University's mission to foster <i>Citizens of Change</i> (IES, 2.8). Accordingly, the UoA aims to be at the forefront of how, through our Civic University Agreement (renewed 2019), UoL can redefine its relationship with the city of Leicester by developing innovative strategies to build meaningful and enduring engagement between UoL, UHL and marginalised communities.</p> <p>Scaling up existing UKRI-funded research and working through DICE and the University's Institute for Inclusivity in HE, we will lead a transformation of the University of Leicester's practices and policies on community engagement and become a leader in sector-wide debates relating to civic university partnerships. Relatedly, we will lead institutional and sectoral work on decolonising teaching and research, inclusion, access, outcomes, and achievements in Higher Education.</p>
Extend the International and Comparative Reach of our Research	<p>Increase capture of substantial awards with an international dimension. A key aim for the UoA will be to develop work exploring the local/global interface through the prism of Leicester and contrasting contexts both nationally and internationally. Drawing from our research clusters, projects in development include: migrant experiences of civic engagement and citizenship; altruistic actors; and experiences of migrant labourers in industries linked to the re-sourcing of production. Additionally, recent University GCRF-QR funded projects — such as O'Reilly's study of child mental health provision in Dhaka-based low-income communities — will form the basis for larger comparative, international studies.</p>
Expand our Contribution to the Future of the Discipline	<p>Strengthen Leicester's long-standing reputation as an incubator of leading sociological figures and a pioneer in research training, methods, and theory. We will expand cross-disciplinary supervision utilising new sources of funding made possible through structural transformation (e.g. NIHR/CLAHRC, AHRC Midlands4Cities, and ESRC Midland Graduate School Doctoral Partnership schemes). Relatedly, we will lead in the development of discipline-wide research training and strategy through our contributions to ESRC's Future of the PhD group, Strategic Advisory Network, our chairing of</p>

	the ESRC's Advisory Group on Methods and Data Infrastructure, and the Managing Group for the NCRM.
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2. People

Staffing Strategy

For a Unit of our size, changes to staffing have major significance for the composition and character of our research community. Accordingly, staff recruitment, development, retention and promotion are treated as matters of central strategic importance. Core to our strategy of recruiting outstanding staff at all career levels are three central principles:

- recruiting staff in areas that develop established Unit strengths (defined in the clusters above), particularly through extending these to growth areas;
- fostering/recruiting staff committed to interdisciplinary/collaborative working and globally-reaching research and impact;
- enhancing the diversity of our staffing profile.

Early in this REF cycle, the retirement of Professors Misztal, Carter and Hutchby, spurred a review of the shape and direction of the Unit. These departures occurred in tandem with a University-wide structural transformation, including the creation of MCS, affording opportunities to transfer-in staff from other areas. Accordingly, **O'Reilly** (then in Psychology) was transferred into the UoA. Her work has proven pivotal to the development of the 'Becoming' and 'Exchange' clusters. Likewise, Professors **Goodwin** and **O'Connor** (both formerly in the Business School) brought further expertise relating to youth and generation and developed long-established strengths of the UoA relating to the education, training, and life transitions of young workers.

Reflecting the global reputation of Leicester sociology, several of our staff (Demir, Bassel and Pilcher) have been recruited by other institutions. Consistent with our staffing strategy, departures have been used as opportunities for strategic review. **Campbell**, who joined the Unit early 2019, was successfully recruited as part of a conscious push to diversify our staffing body and enhance our strengths in the sociology of sport, ethnicity, and career transitions. **Dunning** (recruited mid-2019) bolstered existing strengths relating to figurational sociology, extending this through work on terrorism, identity and belonging. Additionally, our Emeritus and Honorary Professors (Ashton, Carter, Layder, Mennell, Misztal) continue to make a vital contribution to our research culture, with writing collaborations, reading and discussion groups, and PGR supervision among their ongoing activities.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Our substantive sociological commitment to equality, diversity and social justice is reflected in the Unit's staffing strategy which centres on principles of transparency, consistency, accountability and inclusivity, highlighted by the University's *A Culture of Equality: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion* — a strategy developed through consultation with DICE, housed within our Unit. Indeed, our staff are at the forefront of institutional policies and practices relating to diversity. For example, **O'Connor** is PVC and Head of CSSAH, championing women in leadership for International Women's Day, and institutional initiatives targeting education transitions, including the introduction of a series of BAME scholarships for PGT and PGR. **Campbell** is leading a QR-funded (2020, £25k) project developing a decolonising the curriculum toolkit and is undertaking research for Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in Higher Education (TASO) (2020, £75k) to explore 'Approaches to addressing the attainment gap for BAME students'.

Within our current staff profile (Figure 1) two staff identify as BAME, one as from the LGBTQI+ community; and two self-identify as disabled. All but one Category A staff are full-time. Although we are above sector averages in the proportion of BAME/LGBTQI+ staff, we recognize the need to diversify our staffing profile further, particularly to improve gender balance, and address the under-representation of BAME staff at professorial level within British Sociology (BSA 2020).

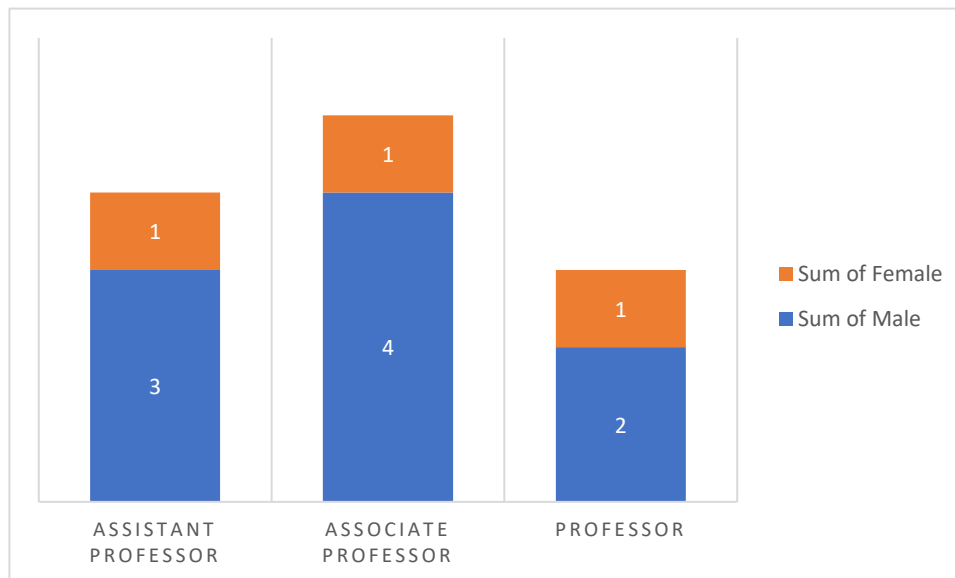


Figure 1 Staff Profile

Our Athena Swan coordinator (application to be submitted mid-2021) and Self-Assessment Team (SAT) work actively on staff diversity, as does our Director of Equalities — an institutional role we inaugurated. In our ongoing self-assessment, we are guided by the University's four-year EDI strategy to recognise and value diversity, ensure quality of opportunity, and enable all staff and students to flourish in an inclusive and respectful working and learning environment (IES, 3). This has informed our recruitment process that explicitly encourages applications from women, disabled, and BAME candidates, and mitigates against homogenous appointment panels. These policies have diversified shortlists for our two most recent posts and have led to the successful appointment of a BAME candidate to an open-ended lectureship.

All staff complete the University's online training courses on EDI and unconscious bias annually. This is a mandatory requirement of annual Performance Development Discussions (PDD). Building upon the University's flexible working policies directed at enabling gender equality, staff can apply to work flexible hours to accommodate caring responsibilities (three staff have done so in this cycle). Additionally, work adjustments and significant resources (specialised desks, software, etc.) have been provided for staff within the Unit with disabilities and to support home working during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Induction, Mentoring and Staff Development

New staff follow a comprehensive induction programme ensuring the best support from the School, College and University. New lecturers receive a reduction in teaching hours of respectively 50%, 30%, and 10% for years 1–3 of employment. During probation, staff work with a senior mentor to monitor and encourage professional development. This scheme is supplemented by staff and PGR Peer Mentoring Groups, who meet regularly to focus on such issues as promotion, support for staff with caring responsibilities, and publication strategy.

Additionally, staff hold bi-annual one-on-one meetings with the Director of Research to discuss research-related goals, progress, and opportunities.

All staff have utilised multiple developmental opportunities in this cycle such as institutional programmes covering project management, coaching and mentoring, leadership development, planning and transformational change, supplemented by in-house research training utilising staff expertise on grant capture, impact, engagement, peer review and REF preparation. Further developmental opportunities are supported financially through individual allocations for external training, conferences, symposia, and workshops, notionally £500pa, but often exceeding this to cover international travel (e.g. approximately half of the UoA attended ISA, Yokohama in 2014; a third at Toronto 2016). Over £32,000 has been allocated to support research in this way since 2014. Staff are also supported in senior leadership roles (e.g. **O'Connor**, PVC and Head of College; **Goodwin**, Deputy Head of College) through University buyout. Additionally, staff are eligible to apply for research leave for one semester in seven, rigorously vetted at School and College level against agreed criteria. Staff have successfully used study leave to secure external funding (e.g. **Sanchez-Taylor, Monforte**), develop major outputs (e.g. Pilcher 'Names, Bodies and Identities' *Sociology*, 2015), and develop crucial impact and engagement work (**Williams; O'Reilly**).

In 2016 we introduced a Staff Development Committee to improve transparency and collective decision making in relation to promotion cases, merit awards, administrative role allocations, and study leave. Such processes build upon College/University processes and resources, for instance in our adoption of the Leicester Academic Career Map (IES 3.2) and structuring promotion feedback to applicants. In this cycle, 6 colleagues (4 female, 2 male) have applied for promotion, 3 successfully to Associate Professor, another 2 successfully, 1 unsuccessfully, to Professor. In the latter case, structured mentoring has been provided to support and develop a future promotion case. Support measures have paid dividends, with effectively half of all UoA staff promoted in this cycle.

As an illustrative case of our staff support provision, **Monforte** received mentorship, pump-priming and study leave (2015) that underpinned both his promotion to Associate Professor (2016), and his successful capture of an ESRC award The Frames of Altruistic Action (2017, £410k) — a project which funded a research assistant, Maestri, who, after extensive early career development support, successfully secured a Lectureship at Aston (2019).

Research Students

We host a substantial cohort of campus-based (45), distance-learning (15), and practice-based (1) PGRs attracted by our long-standing reputation in areas delineated through our research clusters. Building on our international standing, we attract more than a third of our students from overseas. Registration numbers at the census point are 52.5 FTE students (45FT/15 PT) aged between 24–72, with 62% female and 38% male, and 27% BAME.

Since 2014, there have been 41 new registrations to our Sociology PhD and 22 FTE (20FT/5PT) completions, with staff having also co-supervised to completion a further 12.5 FTE (2FT/21PT) cross-disciplinary PGRs for psychology, management, education, modern languages and neuroscience. The 22 FTE for sociology marks a tripling of completions in the UoA compared to REF2014 (7.5FTE). The total of 48 awards (including 19 DL completions) marks a 6x increase in PGR supervisions to award, securing our position as a vital cross-disciplinary PGR training hub. The effectiveness of our support environment is also apparent in student destinations, with our PGR graduates successfully taking up roles in organisations such as The National Archives, The

Ministry of Justice, and Norwegian Centre for Human Rights, plus academic posts at Bath, Liverpool, Loughborough, KCL, York, Wolverhampton, Lincoln, Greenwich and Leicester itself. Their published work includes outputs in journals such as: *Sociology of Health and Illness*; *Health*; *Sociological Research Online*; *Sport, Education and Society*; and *The Sociological Review*.

A key focus since 2014 has been the expansion of cross-disciplinary PGRs via co-supervision with colleagues in media, health sciences, management, criminology and psychology. As part of MCS, we now have a student funded through NIHR, and another funded through cross-College studentships. Since 2014, 7 College- and Cross-College-funded studentships have been awarded to PGRs in the UoA marking a major institutional investment of (£321,000) into PGR in Sociology.

Our Unit promotes a strong, supportive PGR community through a robustly monitored system of supervision involving all UoA members. All PGR students have ≥ 2 supervisors. Student training needs are identified upon first supervision, and a tailored programme for meeting these agreed using University, College and School resources. Transferable skills and research training is provided by the University's Doctoral College (IES 3.2), including courses on: research design and methods, ethics, time and project management, career development, media writing, managing supervisors, viva preparation, grant proposals and publication.

PGR representatives raise concerns and provide feedback through a regular PGR Forum, part of the MCS committee structure. Feeding into this is a 'Teams'-based platform, serving as an online space for discussion of PGR issues, allowing for the full integration of DL PhD students and a continuous dialogue with/in the PGR community. Additionally, up to 3 PGR students per year from the UoA are supported (financially, with staff co-attending as programme mentors) in joining the Prato PGR writing workshop in Italy (with counterparts from Warwick, Newcastle, Kent and Monash). PGRs also receive an annual allocation (up to £500) of financial support from both the School and College to present at conferences, attend workshops, undertake fieldwork and receive training.

Students within the School organize an annual NDiMS (New Directions in Media and Sociology) international conference, financially supported by the School. PGR students are also supported in organising events such as the 2019 symposium 'Doing Things Differently' (40 participants). PGR collaborative research activities have become sufficient to support the development of a new online OA PGR journal, '*for(e)dialogue*'.

These enhancements to PGR support are reflected in PRES survey score improvements since 2013 with, for example, a 25% increase in reported regular contact with supervisors (94% in 2020); 27% more students felt equipped with requisite research skills (94% in 2020); and 9% more students felt they would complete in time (94% in 2020).

3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

Income

In the current census period, we have diversified and significantly increased our grant income. Compared to REF2014, external grant income has increased by more than 80%, with every member of the UoA successfully attracting external research funding within this cycle, bringing £1.2M to Leicester (compared to £663,131 in the previous cycle). The increase in our grant

income has been fuelled by 21 new grants awarded since 2014 from 13 different external funding bodies, including research councils and charitable trusts (e.g. ESRC, AHRC, British Academy, Education Endowment Foundation, Cancer Research UK, Leverhulme, Wellcome, Carlton Hayes Mental Health Charity). Many of these projects are ongoing: they will underpin future outputs and impact and contribute to the School's Research Development Fund into the next period.

Grant Capture Strategy

This has been achieved through:

- Supporting staff through the whole cycle of developing funding bids, from early ideas discussed at mentoring meetings, to applications for small grants for pilot projects, through to large collaborative bids;
- Strategic use of institutional support via Leicester Institute of Advanced Studies (LIAS) (IES 2.2), pump-priming from institutional pots (e.g. block grants from Wellcome, ESRC IAA, GCRF-QR) and School funds derived from grant overheads for pilot projects and impact activities (see examples below);
- Improving application quality through robust peer-review processes and targeted investment in grant writing support;
- Fostering collaboration outside of the Unit, particularly interdisciplinary work, including the development of pan-disciplinary networks to support and strengthen applications (e.g. the Migration network). This has made for stronger applications which speak to an increasingly post-disciplinary funding environment, and opened the way to a greater diversity of funders (e.g. Cancer Research UK, Health Foundation, TASO);
- Building successful multi-institutional applications (e.g. to the ERC and ESRC), with partners at other UK (e.g. Bristol, Cardiff, Leeds, Manchester) and International HEIs (e.g. Babes-Bolyai, Girona, Ghent, Nantes, Paderborn, Panteion, Tallinn, Vienna);
- Incentivising success in grant capture by, since forming MCS, allowing PIs a share of the grant overheads allocated to the UoA (10% for awards \geq £200k, with potential for further flexibility for larger grants) to further develop research and impact activity and grant income generation.

In addition to the research strategies and support measures outlined above (also IES 4.1), School, College and LIAS workshops are held regularly to promote funding schemes, highlight calls, develop interdisciplinary networks/projects, establish teams, and provide grant writing retreats. Additionally, the University's Research and Enterprise Division provides targeted support in the development of research projects, the organisation and administration of funding applications in the School, as well as cross-departmental bids. Successful applications are available as models, with applications for awards of less than £150,000 reviewed by the Director of Research and another member of the School Research Committee. Larger grant applications receive review at College and University level by members of Key Funder Working Groups (AHRC, ESRC, Leverhulme Trust and Wellcome Trust). Finally, staff are supported in obtaining external reviews before submission.

Major Awards

Since 2014, major research awards to the UoA include funds from: the ESRC, £410k for **Monforte's** (PI) *The Frames of Altruistic Action*, (2017–2020); £205k for **Chattoe-Brown's** (Co-I)

Antimicrobial Resistance as a Social Dilemma (2017–2018); £812k for **Chattoe-Brown's** (Co-I) 'The Social and Psychological Underpinnings of Commercial Arbitration in Europe', (2018–24); £302K for **Chattoe-Brown's** (Co-I) 'Towards Realistic Computational Models of Social Influence Dynamics', (2019–2022); from Cancer Research UK, £278k for **Hughes** (PI) Adolescent Vaping Careers, (2017–2020), and £102k for **Hughes** (Co-I) 'The Regulation of E-Cigarettes in and Around Organisational Lives', (2017–2020); from the British Academy, £9k for **Goodwin's** (PI) 'Youth Opportunities? The Long-Term Impacts of Participation in Youth Training Schemes during the 1980s', (2016–2018); £200k for **Sanchez-Taylor's** (Co-I) Revisiting Child Sex Tourism: Rethinking Business Responses (2017–2020); from the Nuffield Foundation, £46k for **White's** (Co-I) The Employment Trajectories of STEM Graduates, (2016–2018); from UKRI, £35k for **Hughes** (PI) Raising Community Voice for Future Health Research (2020); from TASO £75k for **Campbell's** (PI) Approaches to addressing the attainment gap for BAME students; from the Health Foundation, £196k for **O'Reilly's** (Co-I) 'Public Sector Failure Lessons for Healthcare Policy Makers' (2015); from the Home Office, £29.5k for **O'Reilly's** (Co-I) 'Evaluation of Prevent Innovation Projects' (2017); from Sporting Equals, £36k for **Williams** (PI) 'BAMEs into Sports Governance' (2017–2019); from Erasmus, £68k for **Williams** 'Sport and Fairness in Europe' (2016–2018). International funding awarded with colleagues in other European countries has included **Dunning's** (Co-I) (£260K) CEC award for 'The Impact of Technological Transformations on the Digital Generation' (2019–22); and **Monforte's** (Co-I) FWO award for The Transformative Capacity of Blood Donation Among Ethnic Minorities, £330k (2020–2024). We also received awards ranging from £2k–£12k from the ESRC, Wellcome Trust, Home Office, Health Foundation and Carlton Hayes Mental Health Charity. Overheads from larger, FEC projects continue to be used to support (through pump-priming and other School-level mechanisms identified above) growth areas in the UoA, in line with the research strategy outlined in Section 1.

Funding awarded in 2008–2013 has supported outputs and impact in the current cycle. For instance, Bassel's (PI) ESRC grant on The UK Citizenship Process, £441,684 (2013–2017) has led to outputs in *Sociology* (2019, **Bartram**), *British Journal of Sociology* (2019, **Monforte**) and a Special Issue to be published in *Ethnicities* (accepted for publication in 2021). This project has also led to significant dissemination and impact activities (see section 4). **Sanchez-Taylor's** (Co-I) ESRC project Sun, Sea, Sand and Silicone: Aesthetic Surgery Tourism in the UK and Australia (2011–2013) has led to a paper in *Gender, Place and Culture* (2015). The project also enabled **Sanchez-Taylor** to become a consultant at the Breast and Cosmetic Implant Registry (NHS). **Goodwin's** (PI) ESRC grant 'Making the 'Precariat': Unemployment, Insecurity and Work-Poor Young Adults in Harsh Economic Conditions', £178k (2013–2015) has enabled the publication of the monograph, *Young People in the Labour market: Past, Present, Future* (2018, Routledge). Furthermore, Demir's AHRC Fellowship 'Diasporic Brokers: Reviving and Translating Kurdish Culture in London' (2012–2013) has led to publications in *Critical Discourse Studies* (2017) and *The Global South* (2017).

Institutional Investment

Significant institutional investment has also supported our research activities. The College research management team administers a funding scheme to which members of the Unit have successfully applied to fund travel, seed projects, and to develop international partnerships, enterprise and public engagement. Separate funds exist for developing Impact, complementing funds available through the School. To date 4 colleagues have received a total of £16,000 in awards from the College RDF. For example, Pilcher was awarded £1150 to fund a symposium on naming practices, one of the outcomes of which was a *Sociology* paper shortlisted for the 2017 Sage innovation prize. Similarly, Carter was awarded £1650 to host a two-day symposium entitled 'The Animal Challenge to Social Sciences', an event that underpinned the publication of

papers in *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* and *The European Journal of Social Theory*. Support has also been provided for impact and engagement activities, with colleagues Sharma and **Williams** in DICE receiving £64,000 of College support for projects involving local BAME communities (see Section 4). Further support has been provided from University-level sources, including £16k from WTISSE and £38.5k from ESRC IAA — both block grants awarded to Leicester to facilitate cross-disciplinary working and impact, for example: **Sanchez-Taylor's** £3k ESRC IAA award to develop impact relating to her BA-funded project 'Ending violence against sex workers'; **Hughes'** £7.5k award to extend the impact of his CRUK-funded work on adolescent e-cigarette use. Additionally, **O'Reilly** received support from the Global Research Challenges (QR) Fund (GCRF): a £4.5k award for work on 'Resilience and mental health in street children' (2020); £10k to inform the transformation of child mental health services through child participation (2019); and a further £6k to inform an exploration of child mental health provision in Dhaka low-income communities (2019).

Research Infrastructure and facilities

The Research Committee also acts as a forum for discussions and decisions on strategy, research infrastructure, funding opportunities and collaborative working. The Director of Research represents the UoA at College and University level committees and fora, ensuring sharing of strategy and practice.

MCS has a Research Development Fund (RDF) financed from FEC overheads to support research development for all colleagues, including PhD students and RAs, spreading the benefits of the Unit's grant capture beyond PIs. Each research cluster holds a budget (notionally £15,000PA) and can allocate a maximum of £2,000 per applicant. Recent examples include: grant writing support; grant/publication planning; pilot research expenses; transcription; specialist equipment/software; impact/KE including evidence capture. Priority is given to early career staff, first-time applicants for substantial grants, and applicants leveraging additional funding externally. School support is also provided for the organisation of research events, workshops and international conferences aligned with cluster themes.

Open Access (OA) is integral to our research strategy, supported by the University's ambitious OA Policy, enhanced by the research repository hosted through Figshare. We are conducting projects where data are made open, specifically through the ESRC UK Data Service (Bassel, **Bartram**, Misztal and **Monforte**), and through external collaborations, utilising archives such as *Timescapes* (**Hughes** with the University of Leeds). The Unit's research benefits from extensive digital resources curated by the University Library (IES 4.2). Researchers benefit from targeted training on: the latest enabling technologies (devices, software, services); enhancing digital creation, innovation and scholarship; using centrally provided repositories and digital services; accessing data in a flexible, yet secure environment on and off-site; digitally streamlining the grant funding application process; and generating higher research impact. This approach has benefitted a range of high-profile research activities and digital projects, for example, **Hughes'** study of e-cigarette use by young people has involved the use of such resources to create a digital repository of participant-generated materials.

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

Collaboration is a central pillar of the Unit's current and future research strategy and activities. We have created an inclusive and friendly research culture which facilitates teamwork in all aspects of our research. Within the Unit, staff routinely collaborate on outputs (>40 UoA co-

authored in this cycle) and externally-funded projects such as those mentioned in Section 3. Moreover, staff are actively involved in multidisciplinary University-wide networks (e.g. Migration Network, DICE or LIAS). These interdisciplinary networks have led to numerous collaborative outputs; interdisciplinary research projects (e.g. **White's** Employment Trajectories of STEM Graduates); and joint PhD supervisions (e.g. **Hughes** and Tarrant – SAPPHIRE Group). Such cross-institutional collaborations have also provided a major pathway to globally-reaching impact serving as the basis for the UoA's impact case studies, with, for example, medical sociological work undertaken in the SAPPHIRE Group informing NHS and WHO guidelines on healthcare intervention evaluations (ICS2).

In addition, we have a strong record of collaborative projects with academics and professionals in other UK institutions and abroad. These include **Hughes'** project Adolescent Vaping Careers (jointly with the University of Leeds); **Sanchez-Taylor's** Revisiting Child Sex Tourism project (with the University of Bristol); **Chattoe-Brown's** 'Realistic Computational Models of Social Influence' (with Manchester Metropolitan University); and **Goodwin** and **O'Connor's** Youth Opportunities? (with the University of Glasgow). Collaborative projects beyond the UK, include the ESRC project Exploring the Frames of Altruistic Action (led by **Monforte**, with the University of Nantes), the DigiGen project, for which **Dunning** is Co-Investigator (in collaboration Panteion University, Vienna, Girona and Paderborn) and the 2012–2016 European COST Action on transcultural memory in which Misztal was a member (along with researchers from 33 different countries). A further example is the FWO project The Transformative Capacity of Blood Donation Among Ethnic Minorities, in which **Monforte** is Co-Investigator, in collaboration with the University of Ghent.

Collaborations with Stakeholder Organisations

As a core part of our impact strategy, staff in our unit regularly engage with a diverse range of individuals and institutions beyond the academy. This includes third sector organisations such as the Race Equality Centre (**Williams, Campbell, Monforte**), Action on Smoking in Health (**Hughes**), Public Health England (**Hughes**), Refugee Council and Cimade (France) (**Monforte**), Citizens UK (**Hughes**), ASEC, Brazil (**O'Reilly**) Hussaini Foundation, Pakistan (**O'Reilly**), Childline (**O'Reilly**), British Red Cross (**O'Reilly**), Belgian Red Cross (**Monforte**), government bodies such as the House of Lords Select Committee on Citizenship and Civic Engagement (Bassel, **Bartram**, Misztal, **Monforte**), schools and educational institutions (**White, Hughes, O'Reilly**), and the NHS (**O'Reilly, Hughes**). More specifically, staff have presented research plans for a restudy of Elias and Scotson's work to the residents of South Wigston through collaborations with residents' associations and have disseminated findings of their research on citizenship and the 'Refugees Welcome' movement to charities and colleges. Our sustained collaboration with stakeholder organisations resulted in key public events such as: the conferences organised by the Migration Network and DICE (e.g. the talks given by Yasmin Alibhai-Brown in 2016 and by Baroness Sayeeda Warsi in 2018); the end of project stakeholder workshops on the 'Citizenship Test Process' and on The Frames of Altruistic Action (organised by Bassel and **Monforte**).

Contribution to the Research Base

Members of this unit have organised and participated in a wide range of national and international conferences such as ISA World Congress, ASA and ESA Conferences, with UoA staff session organisers for key sections (e.g. **Bartram** for ISA RC31; **Goodwin** for ISA RC33). Members of staff have also organized major international events such as: the 2016, 2017 and 2018 Kurdish Studies Summer School (Leicester and Paris, with scholars, postgraduate students and community advocates from across the world); the conference 'From the Past to the Present

and Towards Possible Futures' (Leicester, 2014, 200 participants); the three-day ISA RC33 International Conference on Social Science Methodology (Leicester, 2016, 500 participants); the CES Conference on the Right to the City (Madrid, 2019, 70 participants). Since REF2014, colleagues have delivered invited lectures and keynote talks at more than 20 international conferences. It is also significant that members of staff have published outputs – or have had their outputs translated – in French, German, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Spanish, Turkish and Italian.

Our contribution to the research base is widely-recognised. The awards that members of staff have received since August 2013 is a testimony of this. **Bartram** was awarded the Editorial Board of Migration Studies best paper prize (2013), **O'Connor** received the Equalities Champion Award and the Advancing Gender Equality Award (2016), **Hughes** received the Sage Prize for Innovation/Excellence (2018), and **O'Reilly** received the Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust award (2018) and the Anselm Strauss Award for Qualitative Family Research (2019).

Leadership in the Academic Community

Our staff serve the interests of the wider research base through representation in numerous national and international research organisations. For instance, **Goodwin** is Chair of both the Data, Infrastructure, Skills, and Methods Expert Advisory Group (ESRC) and the ESRC Strategic Advisory Network. **Hughes** is member of the Board of the Norbert Elias Foundation, the Moral Panics Research Network, and the Figural Research Network. **Bartram** is President of RC31 at the ISA and a member of the Scientific Board of RN35 at the ESA. **O'Connor** is a Trustee of the British Sociological Association. **Goodwin**, **O'Connor** and **Hughes** are elected fellows of the Academy of Social Science, with **Hughes** also an honorary Member of Academia Europea.

We serve our disciplines through editorial work and peer-reviewing applications and publications on a regular basis. Staff review grant applications for different bodies and schemes, nationally and internationally, including the AHRC, ESRC, MRC, CRUK, NIHR, Wellcome Trust, British Academy, and the Finnish Academy. Within this REF cycle staff members have undertaken Editor positions on journals including *Sociological Research Online* (**Hughes**) and *Journal of Youth Studies* (**O'Connor** and **Goodwin**), and Editorial Board positions on *Sociology* (**O'Connor**) *Irish Journal of Sociology* (**Goodwin**), *Belvedere: Hungarian Sociology Journal* (**Goodwin**), *Journal of Happiness Studies* (**Bartram**), *Identities* (**Campbell**), *Human Figurations* (**Hughes**), *Historical Social Research* (**Hughes**). Staff have also made a major contribution to PGR support outside of Leicester, serving as external examiners for many UK universities (e.g. Kent, Sheffield, OU, Aberystwyth, Durham, Lancaster, De Montfort, Essex) as well as in internationally (e.g. Scuola Normale Superiore, Italy; University of Ghent, Belgium; Open University of Mauritius; University of the West Indies, Barbados). Staff have also served as external examiners both nationally (e.g. at Kent, City, Loughborough, Birmingham, Abertay, Edinburgh, Nottingham, Surrey, York) and internationally (e.g. The University of Mauritius, Mauritius Institute of Education, The University of Hong Kong).

Contributions to Economy and Society

Our work has been promoted through extensive public engagement. Staff have made multiple media appearances discussing smoking and vaping, women in science, cosmetic surgery, beauty pageants, football finances, and Leicester City as model of sports diversity (with over 60 engagements with major media outlets nationally, BBC, ITV, Channel 4, and globally, etc. ESPN). **Williams**, for example, has made major contributions to public understandings of sport

and diversity. These include the co-production of a MOOC on English Football which has had over 5000 registered learners since its launch in 2018; a documentary film, *Make us Dream* (2018), and 14 articles for *The Conversation* since 2014.

Additionally, the UoA has used arts-based methods to engage various communities and develop the impact of research. In 2016 we hosted a (£15K) Leverhulme-funded visual Artist in Residence, Kajal Nisha Patel who developed a series of workshops using reflective writing, arts and crafts to document the lives of South Asian women, forming the basis for a public installation displayed at Leicester during her residency. **Sanchez-Taylor's** BA-funded project researching child sex tourism featured an exhibition of posters by sex workers about trafficking, tourism and sex work shown at the British Academy and at Brown University, USA.

A central vehicle for the UoA's contribution to public discourse has been the establishment of DICE: the Unit for Diversity, Inclusion and Community Engagement. This unit, embedded within UoA21, underpins many of our existing research strengths, including our 'Belonging' and 'Exchange' research clusters. DICE was set up as a collaborative venture with **Williams** the Academic Lead, and Surinder Sharma (Honorary Visiting Fellow within the School) the Community Lead. **Williams'** highly influential work on sports, ethnicity and participation is combined through DICE with Sharma's exceptional third sector experience and expertise on diversity, equality, and inclusion, including former roles in the Commission for Racial Equality and as the first National Director for Equality & Human Rights at the Department of Health and the National Health Service.

DICE has attracted funding from a range of sources including Sporting Equals and Sports England in relation to a series of inclusivity, community engagement, impact and dissemination activities. For instance, DICE has worked extensively on promoting sport for BAME women, in basketball, cycling, football coaching and governance. It has also worked with Leicestershire CCC and the Leicester County FA to advise on diversity and inclusion issues. Between November 2018 and January 2019 DICE managed, with *Sporting Equals*, a unique training event for BAME people who have ambitions for moving into sports governance. DICE has also developed a popular Public Lecture series with events attracting among the largest audiences of their kind for the University of Leicester and, crucially, audiences whose members included a high proportion of people who previously had no relationship with the University of Leicester or other HEIs. High-profile speakers have included, Bhiku Parekh, Baroness Warsi, Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, and Herman Ousley— leading BAME voices. In addition, DICE has run a series of workshops and symposia with local community members relating to such topics as policing, mental health, globalisation, and student mothers in Higher Education. Finally, DICE is centrally involved in the University's widening participation work and is a partner on the QR/TASO-funded decolonising the curriculum research project led by **Campbell**.

UoA work has featured in interviews with media outlets nationally (e.g. BBC News, ITV News, Channel 4 News, BBC World News, Radio 4, The Guardian, The Telegraph, The Conversation, etc.) and internationally (e.g. ESPN and news broadcasters in Germany, Japan, Brazil, Italy, Spain, and the USA), plus outputs in journals — from *Sociology* to *Nature* — that highlight the interdisciplinarity and international prominence of our Unit. The UoA has also hosted and organised major conferences and symposia, including the first Kurdish Studies Summer Schools (2016, 2017, 2018), From Past to Present and Towards Possible Futures (2014), and the International Sociological Association (ISA) RC33 9th International Conference on Social Science Methodology (2016).

Conclusion

In this REF cycle, the UoA has made dramatic enhancements to every aspect of its activity: grant capture, increased interdisciplinary and cross-institutional collaborations, PGR completions, public engagement, societal contribution and impact, and scholarly leadership. Our successes have been enabled through a radically overhauled research environment, guided by strategies that have grown organically in partnerships within and beyond UoL. All staff submitted have secured external awards from a range of funders encompassing a broad array of sociological concerns. UoA staff contributions to major disciplinary, academic and sectoral bodies provide a voice for the future of the discipline. Our global reputation has been extended further through field-leading scholarly publications and extensive high profile media engagements. However, most importantly we have aimed to contribute to positive social change, both through enhancing public understandings of major social issues (i.e. immigration, health, consumption life transitions, political participation and protest, race and ethnicity, sport) and through meaningful engagement with vital social groups – civil society organisations, community representatives, local and national political representatives, and professional practitioners.

Our vision for the future is to continue our upward trajectory through the pursuit of a core strategy: to achieve meaningful internationally-reaching research and impact via community embeddedness and collaborative interdisciplinarity. These principles have allowed us to flourish as a distinctively ambitious and inclusive UoA, reflecting a continuation of the tradition of sociology at the University of Leicester, enhanced through the uniqueness of Leicester as a place.