

<b>Institution:</b> University of Aberdeen
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 18 (Law)
<p><b>1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy</b></p> <p><i>Context and structure</i></p> <p>The Law School of the University of Aberdeen is a research-intensive unit committed to fostering world-leading and impactful research that makes high-quality contributions to professional, policy and societal development. The School, well integrated into University frameworks, provides a stimulating environment with a supportive structure of specialist centres. The School's research builds on the autonomous intellectual curiosity of colleagues in combination with the University's strategic goals identified in <i>Aberdeen 2040</i> (see <b>REF5a</b>). The School encourages collaborative and interdisciplinary opportunities in local, Scottish, UK and global contexts and challenges colleagues to grow their research trajectories and resulting contributions through individual and collective endeavour.</p> <p>The School's areas of excellence are reflected in its Research Centres: Energy Law (Aberdeen University Centre for Energy Law – AUCEL), Scots Law, Private International Law, Constitutional and Public International Law and Commercial Law. Under this umbrella, the School has consolidated and grown a strong international reputation notably in Energy Transition, Environment and Natural Resources (reflecting its location in Europe's Energy Capital), Family Law, Legal History, Intellectual Property and Information, Public Law (reflecting the new questions arising from devolution, Brexit and Scottish nationalism) and International Trade. In so doing, the School builds on and fosters its interdisciplinary links throughout the University, such as with GeoSciences, Education, Social Sciences and Biological Sciences; externally in Aberdeen in its links with organisations such as the James Hutton Centre and the National Decommissioning Centre; and at Scottish, UK, European and global levels with the legal profession.</p> <p>The School has a rich mix of colleagues and postgraduate research students (PGRs) from diverse ethnic, health/ability, geographical and professional backgrounds. The School's community ranges from highly experienced researchers to early-career researchers (ECRs), long-term colleagues to new members. All make complementary contributions, from single-scholar high-quality articles and books to interdisciplinary funded projects to knowledge transfer. Colleagues are supported in leading, extending and challenging established paths, for example by taking feminist, disability and global south perspectives.</p> <p>Future allocated research funding will be used to enhance the School's research delivery and community and its contributions to the academy, profession and society. The following sections outline the School's strategic aims and strategy for research and impact. They focus on successes in these areas and the School's aims for the future.</p> <p><i>Strategic aims for research</i></p> <p>The School's primary research <b>objective</b> is to be a leading international law school engaging in first-class research. The research <b>strategy</b> was developed and articulated by the School Research Committee, approved by the School Executive and shared with the School at a research away day. The strategy is reviewed annually in the School planning process and implemented and adapted in a partnership approach with colleagues.</p> <p>The strategy's themes include: increasing the quality of <b>outputs</b> (including interdisciplinary work); encouraging the submission of <b>research grants</b> (including for collaborative and interdisciplinary projects); facilitating and encouraging collaborative work, within and across Research Centres; and organising and presenting at <b>international</b> conferences and events to provide opportunities for new intellectual pathways, collaboration and funded projects across the</p>

School's areas of excellence. There was a step change from the approach taken in REF2014, particularly in the visibility of the strategy and its greater focus on research structures (such as centres and champions). To enhance inclusion and equality, a decision was made to support the research development of all colleagues, including those who were not submitted to REF2014.

The School also affirmed the importance of knowledge transfer and engagement with research users, notably the legal profession, industry, students, governments, policymakers and civil society at local, national and global levels. These activities enhance the School's reputation, research base and impact potential through dissemination platforms, generating leads for future collaboration.

To **deliver** high quality **outputs**, the main requirements are time and access to first-class resources. The teaching and research contract accords 40% of time to research. Beyond this, the strategy confirms the School's commitment to, and investment in, research through its long-established and generous research leave policy (colleagues on leave do not engage in teaching or administration). All research-active colleagues can apply for one half session's research leave every three academic years and, in some cases, do so for two half sessions after 6 years. The Research Committee determines applications in a fair and transparent manner in the light of submitted plans, whether funding has been sought (expected but not essential) and previous performance on research leave (building on reports which colleagues submit at the end of their leave). The School will continue this approach during and in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. To provide more time for research on an ongoing basis, the School has increased its focus on the streamlining of teaching and assessment and the delivery of research-led teaching.

Complementing this, the School strategy introduced systems for **internal and external review** of completed **outputs** from a qualitative perspective. There is also annual discussion of individual research plans and, as appropriate, regular meetings and milestone setting. Colleagues are encouraged to publish in freely available **open access** online journals when this is appropriate in their field and to explore digital identifiers for their work, have their own ORCID identifiers and engage with appropriate platforms (e.g., Google Scholar, ResearchGate) to provide enhanced opportunities for feedback.

A further output delivery strand is the **Research Centre structure**, supporting activity across Energy Law, Private International Law, Scots Law, Constitutional and Public International Law and Commercial Law. The Centres provide communities for the sharing of ideas, output and project plans, for driving collaboration and supportive opportunities such as writing boot camps and for constructive challenges to evolving work. The Centres are springboards from which colleagues can choose their own path to contribute, individually and collectively, to questions of key intellectual and wider importance at local, national and more global levels. Support is provided to individuals by Centre leaders in making decisions on how to prioritise activities and opportunities. Research Centres also hold research seminar series for eminent guests from the legal profession (who are often associate members), industry and the academy – again at all geographical levels.

The Research Centres have their own budgets (see section 3) which they can use to fund events, projects and speakers. They determine their own operating and governance frameworks in a collaborative manner within parameters established by the Head of School and the Director of Research. This framework has led to Research Centre leadership comprising colleagues at different levels of seniority, allowing for the development of leadership skills with the opportunity for support from more experienced colleagues as appropriate. The Centres meet regularly, with online meetings continuing throughout the COVID-19 crisis.

Research Centres have online working paper series that provide an invaluable opportunity for colleagues to share research quickly through **open access** publications. All colleagues are encouraged to explore means by which publishers would be open to work being shared prior to, and in some cases alongside, more traditional forms of publication.

Colleagues and PGRs are expected to belong to at least one Research Centre, and more than 50% have chosen to participate in more than one. This reflects the School's commitment to enabling high-quality research in areas of strategic importance that cross legal and other disciplinary boundaries. Colleagues are also encouraged to develop **interdisciplinary** research opportunities by growing their networks and engaging with University support structures (such as the Research Deans, Public Engagement in Research Unit and the Research and Innovation Office) to develop opportunities and to identify colleagues and areas of enquiry. This is particularly so regarding the University *Aberdeen 2040* strategy and its interdisciplinary challenges (see **REF5a**).

To foster a new **wider practice of making grant applications**, the strategy creates a champion role and committee to develop new cultures. This encourages the sharing of successes and failures and builds on some important established trajectories and achievements. Research Centres provide forums to identify funding opportunities (**individual, collaborative, interdisciplinary**), and to review applications before submission. Colleagues also work closely with the Centre for Academic Development, the Communications team and the Events Team (see **REF5a**).

The well-established **School research seminar** series supports this strategy. The series showcases and challenges the work of high-profile guests and colleagues, inspires new ideas and thinking and creates a base to develop collaborations in the short and longer term. Moreover, the School is committed to supporting the organisation of at least one conference with **international** participation each year, including provision of budget and administrative help. The School also commits to attracting international visiting scholars and ongoing engagement with them (including honorary and emeritus staff worldwide).

The School is committed to ensure delivery of the highest standards of research ethics and integrity through training, roles and support for wider structures across the University.

#### *Achievements in delivering strategic aims for research*

Feedback from internal and external reviewers and from Research Centre colleagues is regularly and proactively provided on the quality of outputs, to assist in development of the outputs in question and in future work. **Open access** has enabled colleagues to make their publications quickly available free of charge to raise their profile and that of the School in an inclusive and accessible manner, including outside the academy and in areas of digital inequity.

**Research leave** has provided a sustainable pathway for the development and delivery of future outputs and project development alongside the other responsibilities held by colleagues. Notable results from research leave are monographs (including one that was awarded the runner-up position in the University Principal's Outstanding Research Award 2020, **McKenzie-Skene**), the delivery of research projects (e.g., **Trimmings**, three funded research projects 2019/20 on surrogacy, child abduction and private international law funded by the Clark Foundation, British Council (for Sri Lanka) and European Commission: GBP540,000).

The School has built on opportunities to conduct **interdisciplinary** research across the University and with institutions worldwide and in funded projects at the local, European and international levels. Two of the included impact case studies have strong interdisciplinary elements (Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, in collaboration with Economics and Hydrology, and Marine Biodiversity and Intellectual Property, in collaboration with Chemistry). The School has engaged successfully with the Principal's Interdisciplinary Fund and the University "Conversations On" (see **REF5a**).

The School has embraced the University's 2040 Strategy's **interdisciplinary challenges**. The School has a theme champion (**Muinzer**) for the energy transition challenge, AUCEL works

closely with the University Centre for Energy Transition and the School has nominated colleagues to the interdisciplinary team for the environment and biodiversity challenge. For data and artificial intelligence teaching and research, collaboration has been enhanced between Computer Science and Philosophy, notably by colleagues from the Centre for Commercial Law (building on the LLB in Law with Computing Science). For health, nutrition and wellbeing, a structured dialogue led by the Heads of School is ongoing to identify opportunities for interdisciplinary medico-legal projects on assisted reproduction and research ethics and Scottish governance regimes.

Other key **interdisciplinary** achievements, in addition to those noted elsewhere are: projects with University colleagues from History and Computer Science on the Aberdeen Burgh Records 1398-1511 (in UNESCO's UK Memory of the World Register, 2016-19, **Simpson** co-investigator, funded by the Leverhulme Trust to transcribe and produce a dynamic edition of the records); involvement in the Expert Network of the NERC/UKRI Constructing a Digital Environment Strategic Priorities Fund (**Yuksel Ripley**, fellowship awarded 2019/20 UN NERC, GBP10,000, funds formally awarded outside the REF period); Consortium of Researchers and Experts in North and Arctic Marine Ecosystems (CRENAME)'s exploration of oil pollution impacts on the Russian Arctic and tundra, involving lawyers, biologists, engineers and oceanographers (**Soliman Hunter**); collaboration on the Arctic with Anthropology colleagues from Finland (**Shapovalova**, funded by the British Academy); and exploring the Horn of Africa governance crisis with University of Cape and Addis Ababa University academics (**Gyorfi** and **Yihdego**, funded by UKRI/GCRF).

Details of **grant income** successes are noted in section 3. Colleagues are encouraged to target key funders such as the Aberdeen City Region Deal (particularly in relation to energy), Carnegie Trust, UK Research Councils, and the EU and EU Commission. The Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) is a focus for research on the climate change crisis, water governance, food and energy insecurity, social injustice, developing country perspectives, gender inequalities and the digital economy. The new approach has been reflected in responses to COVID-19, with seven colleagues joining the Scottish Parliament's Framework Agreement for COVID-19 research services and submitting applications to the AHRC and the British Academy for projects that explore the sustainability of dance and legal implications of emergency remote teaching. Regarding **equality and diversity**, funding has been sought for personal assistance for colleagues with disabilities (**Brown**, Wellcome) and for translations, including into British Sign Language (**Brown**, Wellcome) and African languages (**Adebola/Wifa**, AHRC).

The School and Research Centre **seminar series** have all succeeded in welcoming eminent and diverse guests in different fields of expertise from Scotland, the rest of the UK and worldwide. Overall, there were 26 School research seminars in 2014, 24 in 2015, 22 in 2016, 19 in 2017, 15 in 2018, 18 in 2019, 6 in 2020 – with the fall reflecting the increase in Research Centre seminars. Colleagues are encouraged to attend all events, even outside their specific area of interest, to carve out time to focus on research.

Guests to the School series from the UK include Ibbetson (Cambridge, 2014), Edward (Edinburgh, 2016), Bhuta (Edinburgh, 2019) and Smith (Leeds, 2019). Invitations have led to collaboration in funding applications (e.g., Gill (Northumbria)/**Slater** and **Brown** regarding a GCRF bid). The School's commitment to these seminars is reflected in their continuation virtually (due to COVID-19 restrictions) in 2020/21. All Research Centres also held guest seminars. Notably, in 2018 the Centre for Scots Law held, with colleagues from Edinburgh and Warwick, a Feminist Judgments event and student workshop; and in 2019 the Centre for Commercial Law held a workshop on Trade Wars and the Future of Trade Negotiations including Zapata, Permanent Representative of Mexico to the World Trade Organisation and Gonzalez Garcia of Matrix Chambers, London which was also attended by UK government officials.

The School is committed to **gender balance** in inviting speakers, building on its successful Athena Swan Bronze submission. This has been more effective in some years than others (2017/18 was a 9/8 split in the School series) and the Athena Swan team continues to focus on



achieving this balance. In our commitment to **widening access**, research seminars are often recorded for those who are unable to attend. Seminars are covered by live Tweeting (with speaker consent) which is particularly valuable for external colleagues. Undergraduate and postgraduate students and colleagues from across the University are invited to attend (e.g., colleagues from Chemistry to hear Mossop (Victoria University of Wellington) regarding the marine biodiversity treaty).

Successes in enhancing our **international** reputation can be seen in colleagues from the Centre for Private International Law building the European Union Private International Law: Legal Application in Reality (EUPILLAR) Project with a network of over 65 distinguished academics, practitioners, judges and government officials from 27 countries (**Beaumont, Trimmings**, funded by European Commission, see section 3) and delivering projects exploring the evidentiary effects of authentic instruments in cross border succession (**Beaumont, Fitchen**, funded by European Parliament GBP55,000). Colleagues from the Centre for Constitutional and Public International Law are involved in the interdisciplinary Decision Analytical Framework to explore the water-energy-food Nexus (DAFNE) Project on the governance of transboundary water basins in the Zambezi and the Omo-Turkana, involving 15 European and African universities, private companies, governments and civil societies and 35 researchers (**Yihdego**, EU Horizon, see section 3); and in an empirical analysis of the decisions of the Hungarian Constitutional Court (**Gyorfi**, project host University of Debrecen, funded by the Hungarian National Research, Development and Innovation Office). Colleagues from AUCEL, in conjunction with the University's Institute of Energy, engaged in interdisciplinary capacity building in oil and gas in Tanzania (**Paterson/Usenemez**, funded by the European Commission).

International **network generation and professional engagement** have been effective. Examples include the involvement of colleagues from the Centre for Commercial Law in revising international arbitration rules through the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) Working Group III on Investor-State Reform (**Alvarez**) and the establishment by **Shaw** of the Centre of Scots Law of the interdisciplinary Justice Without Retribution Network with colleagues from the United States and Belgium. The School has **invested in its international reputation**, for example, by supporting Fulbright scholars such as Centner (2015, energy) and Ringhand (2019, elections, leading to collaboration with **Couzigou**), and by creating the External Officer role (currently **Couzigou**). This post holder leads a transparent application process and supports scholars in their contributions to the School, notably by joining a Research Centre and participating in the seminar series. Scholars from Law and other disciplines (such as Philosophy) have joined the School from South Korea, Iran, Poland, Mexico, China and the United States, leading to edited collections on energy and free will scepticism. There have also been return invitations (for example, to Halle-Wittenberg).

Our international reputation is also built by welcoming high-profile external international scholars to the seminar series. Notable examples for the School series are Scharenguivel (Colombo, 2015), Malaguti (Università Cattolica Sacro Cuore, 2017) and Orr (Queensland, 2018); Centre examples are the Principal Legal Adviser for the UN Economic Commission for Africa on COVID-19 (2020, Constitutional and Public International Law); Herrera-Anchustegui (Bergen, 2020, AUCEL); and Symeonides (Willamette, 2020, Private International Law).

As with UK-based guests, these seminars have led to further collaboration. These include a blogpost and working paper on blockchain and cross-border judicial cooperation and the publication of a working paper on digital assets (**Yuksel Ripley**, with Heindler), and working with the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group Meeting at the International Plant Treaty Secretariat on farmers' rights (**Adebola**). Colleagues are invited to visit, collaborate and present at overseas institutions and are encouraged to do so. Details are provided in section 4.

The School has succeeded in supporting colleagues in organising a diverse range of international conferences. These include conferences involving Legal History (Aberdeen 2015), Energy Law (Jakarta 2016), the Nile and International Water Resources Association (Cancun

2017) and Private International Law (Rio de Janeiro 2018). In the light of COVID-19, **Brown** took a leading role in moving the 2020 international British and Irish Law Education and Technology Association conference online, from Tilburg.

The importance of research ethics and integrity has been embedded through the School Ethics Officers (**Trimmings, Shaw**) and training and communication, considered in section 3. In this REF period colleagues have served in leading roles in the Arts, Social Sciences and Business Ethics Committee (**Trimmings** was Chair).

#### *Strategic aims for impact*

The School's strategy includes the theme of developing an enhanced focus on high-quality impact and public engagement in comparison with REF2014. The strategy creates a champion role and committee to support colleagues in identifying opportunities and in generating and nurturing activities. This includes help in developing methodology, engagement with the profession and reflecting industrial, policy and societal needs. Particular attention is paid to the University's strategies, including the energy and environment themes from the 2015-20 strategic plan and the *Aberdeen 2040* focus on interdisciplinarity, sustainability and inclusion (see **REF5a**). The Research Centres also explore impact opportunities and support their development.

The Director of Research and Head of School regularly address the importance accorded to impact for colleagues at all levels and the mentoring and financial support available from both the University and the School. The School also provides workload allocation support. Generating impact trajectories (in the short and longer term) is discussed regularly at School meetings and the School impact champion meets with colleagues to explore opportunities. In annual reviews, colleagues are encouraged to report on impact generating activities and are reminded that these activities are recognised in promotion and probation.

#### *Achievements in impact strategy*

The School has a diverse range of successes across its portfolio and in a range of sectors and locations. For REF2021 and as previously noted, **impact case studies** have been chosen that reflect the School and University's commitment to **interdisciplinary** research, the School's strategic theme of international reputation and the importance the School accords to engagement across a diversity of geographies. The selected case studies also represent the spectrum of the Research Centres, reflecting the different research activities within the School. These case studies have received funding support from the School Research Committee (see section 3) to support attendance at the United Nations in New York (**Brown**) and research assistance (the PGR Amponsha to support **Yihdego** in data gathering).

Colleagues have succeeded in **diverse strands** of impact generation. Key successes include the CRENAME interdisciplinary projects noted previously; a successful and ongoing collaboration with Biological Sciences and Social Sciences in the Cooperative Participatory Evaluation of Renewable Technologies on Ecosystem Services (2014-16, **Slater**, NERC GBP84,000 with James Hutton Institute, Marine Scotland Science and Scottish Association for Marine Science, including a University impact case study for Biological Science, UoA 5); and "Resilience and Inclusion – Dancers as Agents of Change" funded by the AHRC (2016-7 follow on from "InVisible Difference" 2012-5), which included policy briefings, a film and an online toolkit to engender new attitudes towards disabled dance within the dance community, new approaches to commercial opportunity and cultural policy making (**Brown**, 2012-17, part of the team gaining a Coventry University Research Team award 2017).

**Open access** approaches have facilitated opportunities for increased impact. For example, **Yuksel Ripley** was contacted by the Department for International Trade in response to a blogpost on digitalisation and mitigating COVID-19 impact, leading to commitment to assist in

future work/policy developments. Two of the papers underpinning the submitted case studies are Research Centre working papers. Further, from the long-standing working paper series of the Centre for Private International Law, papers by **Beaumont**, and by **Beaumont**, Holliday and Walker, influenced the proposed reform of EU legislation law concerning child return in intra-EU cross-border parental child abduction cases.

Opportunities for **future impact** have been identified, reflecting the interdisciplinary challenges of the University's *Aberdeen 2040 Strategy*. These opportunities include building on the Aberdeen Burgh Records discussed previously and the constitutional consequences of Brexit (**Wilson and Taylor**), for both social inclusion and cultural diversity, as well as energy decommissioning (**Paterson, Gordon**) and climate change litigation (**Muinzer**), both of which are relevant to energy transition.

#### *Future strategic aims and goals for research and impact*

Looking forward, the School will continue in its aims to be a leading international law school engaging in first-class research and contributing to scholarship and society within an inclusive, structured and supportive community. It will pursue the dual strategy of encouraging the autonomous intellectual curiosity of colleagues while promoting co-operative and interdisciplinary work that advances the University's strategic goals. The School's plans for delivery against these objectives include a review of the research leave policy (with a view to incentivising the pursuit of external funding and of otherwise encouraging and rewarding excellence); revising the content of individual research planning meetings to encourage long term research planning; the further promotion, through awareness-raising, of workload recognition and other forms of incentivisation of funded research, in which area the School's need to grow is recognised; developing the research seminars to provide robust feedback; according continuing priority to equality and diversity and to open access; further contribution to the University's interdisciplinary themes; increased engagement with empirical research; enhancing collaboration; investment to bring conferences and small workshops to Aberdeen as a base for funded projects; and internal and external communications of achievements and the promotion of research outputs.

## **2. People**

### *Staffing strategy*

#### Overview

To deliver its objective of being an international law school engaging in world leading research, the School aims to be an attractive destination of choice for colleagues of all backgrounds and characteristics worldwide, at all career levels. The School has experienced changes in its membership and leadership in this REF period; within this evolving framework, it has focussed and deepened its research culture and grown its feeling of **community and inclusiveness** to encourage colleagues to remain and give of their best to the School, the University, the local environment and more widely. At the census date, the School has 41 full time equivalent (FTE) Category A staff.

#### Recruitment and retention

The School has a two-stranded approach of recruitment and retention to staffing, aligned with its strategy noted in section 1 regarding enhanced outputs, interdisciplinary projects, increased grant submission and high-quality impact and public engagement.

The School **recruited** 25 new colleagues in this REF period: 14 women (1 Reader, 12 Lecturers, 1 Research Fellow) and 11 men (2 Readers, 1 Senior Lecturer, 8 Lecturers (one recruited on fixed term then attaining a substantive contract, counted once)). These colleagues were

recruited in the light of their research excellence and potential (with outputs reviewed as part of the process) alongside their envisaged contribution to the Research Centres, the delivery of the University's strategies and the School's research objective. The School has recruited in areas of strength (e.g., Legal History), in evolving areas of opportunity (e.g., International Commercial and Economic Law, Tax) and with the support of the University's strategic investment posts fund to contribute further to the University's *Aberdeen 2040* Strategy. Through this path, appointments were made in: Information Technology and Regulation; Environmental Law and Natural Resources; Environmental, Climate Change and Natural Resources Law; Comparative Law; and Law and Economics.

The School prioritises **retaining, developing and promoting** colleagues at all levels of experience. In this REF cycle, 25 colleagues (15 men and 10 women) were promoted at all levels, including nine to Chair and 13 to Senior Lecturer positions. The overall success rate (including repeat applications) was 50% for men and 56.25% for women.

In relation to **equality and diversity** metrics, over this REF period, through its recruitment and retention successes, the School has moved from being below the sector average in terms of gender balance per FTE to exceeding it and to frequently exceeding the sector average with respect to colleagues younger than 34 and older than 50.

#### Community and support and recognition

Of the colleagues contributing to the research environment, the School has a great majority on substantive full-time contracts, and at the census date five colleagues are on a variety of substantive part-time contracts. Working away from the University for research or personal reasons is facilitated in a flexible manner whilst acknowledging responsibilities to colleagues and students. This has enabled the School to respond well to the challenges of COVID-19 in terms of research, PGR supervision and maintaining a sense of community.

Reflecting the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers and the University's HR in Research Excellence Award, the School sees early-career researchers (ECRs) as integral to the delivery of its research goal and celebrates ECRs' important successes - for example, **Alvarez** leading the School's contribution to UK-Mexico Strategic Alliance on Hydrocarbon: GBP1million (currently on hold due to the political situation in Mexico).

The community is reflected in the School's effectiveness in supporting the career progression of PGRs (discussed further in a separate section) with five former research students and one former postdoctoral research fellow appointed in this REF period as lecturers on open-ended substantive teaching and research contracts. Collaboration continues with former colleagues (for example, an AHRC application regarding ecological approaches to conflict intersections (**Adebola/Wifa/Woolley**) and an AHRC/GCRF Nahrein network application (**Couzigou/Janaby**)).

In this REF period, the School welcomed back colleagues who have served in University senior management and as Head of School and has supported them in energising their research careers, including through the granting of research leave.

The School ensures that it celebrates all research successes and encourages further collaboration through regular internal bulletins, sharing at School meetings and on School and Research Centre social media and websites, nominations for University awards (see section 1) and by holding inaugural professorial lectures. To drive these processes, there is a School Research Communications Champion role (**Couzigou**). Book launch celebrations are held every few years (2015,2020) at Blackwell's in Old Aberdeen to celebrate all books published by colleagues in the previous years.

#### *Equality and diversity*



The School is committed to developing all colleagues throughout their careers. Alongside University level induction, all new colleagues receive an **induction** into the School's research leadership and governance and the structures for support and expectations regarding publication, impact and funding. Details are also provided in the School Staff Handbook which is updated regularly in a collaborative manner as part of the Athena Swan Action Plan. Colleagues are also encouraged to consider participating in the University Equality Networks (Parents, Disability, LGBT, Menopause, Women and Senior Women (in which **Ross, Slater** and **Brown** have been active). These networks provide the opportunity for support and wider networking, leadership and collaboration opportunities.

In response to COVID-19, the Head of School engaged directly with the prospect of gender inequality, particularly from a research perspective and offered support for colleagues experiencing difficulties as a result of factors such as caring responsibilities. As part of the Athena Swan Action Plan, the School reinforces from induction onwards that parental leave is a right for parents and that University policies ensure that such leave will not impact on their career progression; colleagues with caring responsibilities such as looking after children are encouraged to apply for financial support to enable them to attend research events. When academic and professional services colleagues take time off work for health or personal reasons, support is provided, and phased returns are arranged. This includes working with the University's Human Resources and Occupational Health and Safety colleagues.

The School has the Athena Swan Bronze Award and has an action plan to work towards a Silver Award in 2021. The School is also considering its **equality action plan** to better support staff with other protected characteristics, building on the University's signature of the Advance HE Race Equality Charter.

Materials related to all new posts highlight the School's commitment to equality and diversity. Interview panels include representatives from Research Centres and are a balanced representation from an equality and diversity perspective to make them fair, participatory and transparent. Panel members undergo training in equality and diversity, interviewing and unconscious bias. All School colleagues are encouraged to participate in presentations by applicants and to provide feedback prior to panel interviews.

Selection decisions on outputs forming part of this REF submission were made on the basis of internal and external qualitative feedback and equality and diversity, working with University Research Leads and following the institutional Code of Practice. The School took a transparent, community-based and inclusive approach, particularly with ECRs. The diverse spread of the submission in terms of subject matter and number of outputs per colleague reflects the equal value accorded to, and quality of, colleagues at all career stages.

#### *Staff development*

Every colleague has an **Academic Line Manager** who provides effective and supportive challenge, mentoring and direction across the full academic role, including through annual reviews. Academic Line Managers are trained centrally by the University and through School peer training. Colleagues are encouraged to take part in the University-wide mentoring system as mentors and as mentees and in more external systems (such as Women in Renewable Energy Scotland).

Colleagues are encouraged to undertake University **training and career development** for research from and through the Public Engagement in Research Unit, Research and Innovation Office, the Grants Academy, the Postgraduate Research School and the Centre for Academic Development. These opportunities include project management, funding applications, media, PhD supervision and being the Principal Investigator on a funded project. Training is provided by Library and information services specialists, and also by law colleagues, for example regarding the use of Google Scholar, the ORCID system and the new Westlaw UK platform (see **REF5a**).

Early-career researchers

As of the census date, eleven colleagues are ECRs under the REF2021 definition. In this REF period, ECRs of high quality and potential have been recruited (10 women and 6 men on open-ended substantive contracts, plus 2 woman and 1 man on fixed term contracts). Eleven ECRs (7 women, 4 men) have completed probation.

The thirteen colleagues (6 women and 7 men) noted previously who have been promoted to Senior Lecturer include five who exited probation in this REF period (2 women and 3 men). There is an overall success rate at this level (including repeat applications) of 38.89% for men and 42.85% for women, and support (including from peers) is provided to ensure that this can increase. ECRs are members of at least one of the School's Research Centres and Centre leads help ECRs develop their research portfolios.

The University and School recognise that additional support and structures can be beneficial. The University has a **probation** system that usually lasts three years. Throughout probation, there is a decreasing reduction in the annual teaching load to 80/100/120 hours and a further number of workload hours is not to be allocated each year (140/100/60). All probationers have a formal mentor who supports them in planning their career development, including regarding research ambitions and funding (with applications a probation requirement). The Head of School ensures that different colleagues deliver the mentoring and Academic Line Management roles to provide a variety of perspectives.

Building on the School's survey leading to its Bronze Athena Swan Award, a School **early career group** was re-established. This group provides peer support and challenge for those who self-identify in this category and choose to participate. The coordinators have invited other colleagues to discuss experiences regarding research grants, transforming PhD theses into monographs (which led to ECRs pursuing this path) and producing high-quality research outputs. Group updates are shared in the School's Athena Swan Newsletter.

*Postgraduate Researchers*Context and structure

The School strives to provide a creative, innovative, and diverse PGR community that produces high-quality original contributions, guided by expert supervisors. This community is, as noted in section 1, integrated into the School Research Centres, University frameworks (notably, the Postgraduate Research School) and is provided with a stimulating and supportive framework of training and opportunity. Our PGR community has members from around the world, including on-campus and off-campus students. In the 2020 PGR cohort of 54 students, four are studying off-campus. Details of international collaborations are presented in section 4.

The strategy for outreach and marketing expresses the School's **positive engagement with diversity** and fostering new research voices. Recruitment is undertaken based on merit, equality, cultural respect and the expertise of colleagues. The School supports diverse candidates, many of whom will be from outside what are considered traditional pathways to a research career.

For this REF period, 248 students were enrolled: 128 identified as female and 120 as male. According to University data, of the male cohort, 50% identified as Black African, 29.17% identified as White, 10.83% as Asian, 6.67% as Arab, and 3.33% as Chinese. Of the female cohort, 37.5% identified as White, 25.78% as Black African, 19.53% as Asian, 6.25% as Arab, 4.69% as Indian, 3.12% as Mixed Other and 3.12% did not share this information.

The School welcomes funded research students (for example from governments and/or development associations, Ghana, Indonesia, Kenya, Nigeria, Oman, Kuwait, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Thailand). The School supports PGRs in applying externally (such as **Shaw** for

Yada, receiving the Anglo-Thai Society Education Award) and for the University's and School's internal opportunities, with students benefitting from University fee waiver, Elphinstone awards and alumni discounts. The School regularly reviews how best to use its financial resources to best support PGRs, and offers some support through the CBD Davidson Trust. The Centre for Private International Law has secured scholarships for PGRs with the Max Planck Institute, Luxembourg.

**Interdisciplinary** projects are particularly encouraged, reflecting the *Aberdeen 2040* Strategy and the School's priorities. Particular successes are the work of MacDonald, University of Aberdeen Energy Studentship (**Slater**/Geoscience and Biological Sciences); Tung, Curtin Alliance PhD Scholarship (**Paterson**/Business School, Curtin); and Jennings, health and safety in oil and gas (**Gordon**/Engineering). Five School colleagues are involved in the Politico project of the University's Centre for Citizenship, Civil Society and the Rule of Law (CISRUL), with **Gyorfi** as Deputy Head. The project is funded by the Marie Skłodowska-Curie COFUND (€1.8million total 2018/21) and hosts 12 PhD students from various disciplines.

#### Training and supervision

PGRs have two supervisors. The relative roles of the team are agreed upon at the outset from 90/10% to 50/50% with the PGR made aware of this, and this can change over time. The School is transitioning to a dual-first supervisory model to provide more diverse guidance. Progress is reviewed at scheduled points, particularly at the end of year 1, to enable challenges to be identified and addressed in a timely manner.

The School has an established framework of training for PGRs and for supervisors that is reviewed regularly. A new three-year programme has been developed for PGRs to complement project supervision. This programme provides: training in being a researcher and scholar in substantive legal areas; methods and methodology of research and teaching; funding applications; preparation for the viva; and developing professional skills such as public speaking, conference presentations, and interviews.

This framework and programme complement the support provided for supervisors (new and established) by the University's PGR School and its online handbook and masterclasses for supervisors on issues such as mental health and wellbeing. This is supplemented by the PGR School's generic skills training for students and its support for accreditation in teaching by the Higher Education Academy/Advance HE. This forms part of the University's commitment to HR in Research Excellence. The School draws on the expertise of **Gyorfi** (Deputy Lead of Law Disciplinary Catalyst Scottish Graduate School for Arts and Humanities), **Ross** (University Lead on AHRC Doctoral Training Partnership 2018 and cross institutional successful bid for the second Doctoral Training Partnerships) and **Wilson** (winner of University PGR supervision teaching award, 2019).

#### Support and development mechanisms for PGRs

Academic and pastoral support is provided by PGR supervisors, the Postgraduate Officer, the Deputy Postgraduate Officer and the School Administrator (Postgraduate Programme and Support). This support continues during the COVID-19 period, with direct engagement (pastoral, community and educational) increasing with all PGRs. Designated office space is provided for PGR students who choose to use it.

As noted, PGRs form a valuable and integrated part of the Research Centres and are invited to join the Centre(s) that best fit their interests (see section 1). PGRs are an important part of the School's governance, with representatives attending School meetings and the School PGR Policy Committee.

The long-standing, active and independent student-led Legal Research Society receives financial and other support from the School. The Society holds annual conferences including in collaboration with Robert Gordon University, and holds an annual summer speakeasy with the large LLM dissertation community. The March 2020 conference (transferred online due to COVID-19) had a developmental focus with presentations from School colleagues. The student-led peer-reviewed *Aberdeen Student Law Review* (launched in 2010) provides valuable opportunities for student publication. A well-publicised and well-attended annual launch is attended by members of the legal profession and sponsors.

In addition to the former PGRs who obtained permanent positions in Aberdeen (see previous section), examples of others who have achieved posts within the academy are Melon (Pompeu Fabra), Pappa (Nottingham), Glover (Curtin), Chamroonlarp (Chulalongkorn), Ahmed (Lancaster), Holliday (Stirling) and also Momoh as a research assistant on a child abduction project with **Trimnings** (see section 1).

The School is committed to providing PGRs with the opportunity to gain teaching experience, with training from the University's Centre for Academic Development. Care is taken to ensure that PGRs are not over-burdened. The School has prioritised offering this and funding has been ring-fenced, with the support of the University's senior management.

To further enhance PGRs' ability to progress successfully in the academy, colleagues provide opportunities to gain relevant wider scholarly experience, in addition to the funding support to attend conferences noted in section 3. Examples are:

- editorial support in journals and edited collections (*Ethiopian Yearbook of International Law*: Okwori, Roberts and Abubakri, supported by **Yihdego**)
- assisting in research projects (Emedosi on floating charges covering over 30 countries, supported by **Macpherson**; Dropuljic on Neuroscience in Criminal Cases, project funded by the Clark Foundation, supported by **Shaw** and **Callander**; Mulyana supported by **Partain**, on connecting Indonesian folk law with contemporary international environmental law)
- attending international conferences with the supervisor (Okwori at University Côte d'Azur, supported by **Couzigou**)
- MacDonald receipt of Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe) Scottish Parliament Fellowship for fishing law in the post-Brexit environment (supported by **Slater**).

### 3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

#### *Income pertaining to research and research Impact*

While obtaining funding remains competitive, the School has brought about a change in research culture, with the **development of funding applications a much more central part of the School's mindset**. Support for new colleagues in developing their funding portfolio, particularly those at early-career level, should provide improved research income, focussing on the key funders noted in section 1.

Details on gender data and research funding are shared in the School Athena Swan Newsletter.

As noted in section 1, grant successes have been achieved across all Research Centres and areas of excellence of the School, including in relation to interdisciplinary projects. Particular funding successes are the following:

Horn of Africa governance crisis (2020-23) (**Gyorfi** and **Yihdego** UKRI/GCRF GBP127,137: total award GBP587,000);

DAFNE Water-Energy-Food nexus project (2016-2020) (**Yihdego** EU Horizon EUR5.5 million);



Cross-Border Litigation in Europe: Private International Law Legislative Framework, National Courts and the Court of Justice of the European Union (EUPILLAR) (2014-6) (**Beaumont, Trimmings** EU Commission EUR730,000);

Conflict of EU Courts on Child abduction (2014-16) (**Beaumont**, Nuffield Foundation, GBP88,000);

Aberdeen Burgh Records (2016-19) (**Simpson**, Leverhulme Trust GBP32,578: total award GBP310,455); and

Protection of Abducting Mothers in Return Proceedings: Intersection between Domestic Violence and Parental Child Abduction (2014-2020) (**Trimmings, Callander** European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme EUR432,218).

*Infrastructure pertaining to research and research impact*

#### Leadership, management and support frameworks

The delivery of the School's strategy is led by the Director of Research who works closely with the Head of School and the School Administrative Manager. The Director sits on the University's Research Policy Committee and convenes the School Research Committee, which meets at least once a term. In addition to the Research Centre leads (see section 1), it comprises of the research seminar/communications lead and an elected colleague representative and is clerked by the School Administration Assistant (Marketing, Events and Research). Reports on research are made at School staff meetings once a term.

The committee reviews research achievements individually and collectively and considers how best to support and enhance delivery of the objective and strategy noted in section 1, paying particular attention to opportunities for interdisciplinary projects and contribution to the University 2040 Strategy. The Director works closely with the University research leadership team, particularly the Vice-Principal for Research and the Dean for Cultural Strategy and Research Governance through the University Research Policy Committee and the University Research Culture Task and Finish Group. There is a School marketing committee, including a Marketing Officer, a Deputy Director for Internationalisation and Partnerships and the Administrative Assistant (Marketing, Events and Research), which disseminates and promotes research achievements.

The Head of School and Academic Line Managers (discussed in section 2) emphasise the importance of funding and the wider benefits in terms of time, resources and reputation. Guidance is provided on funding's alignment with probation and promotion processes, and how this can be balanced with other commitments (academic and non-academic, such as the pressure of child and other caring commitments, ill health and family overseas). To enhance the prospects of success, draft applications receive anonymous review from two colleagues and a research ethics checklist is completed and followed by the School Ethics Officer and the Arts, Social Sciences and Business Ethics Committee. There is workload allocation for applications and for management and post-funding work, and the School has committed funds to buy-out teaching where this is not covered by a grant.

Colleagues at all levels of experience have been nominated to attend University/Research Council boot camps on funding and to attend Aberdeen Grants Academy workshops and **interdisciplinary** discussions (see Section 1 and **REF5a**). Details are then shared. The School is supported by a Business Development Officer in the University's Research and Innovation team who regularly attends School meetings to inform and remind colleagues of the diverse nature of funding available (from individual fellowships to international interdisciplinary projects) and details of the processes.

Investment

Over this REF period, the School has invested over GBP120,000 in buying-in teaching support and in funding research assistance, to provide time and support for colleagues to engage in research while delivering other roles. The School allocates GBP4,000 annually to support the School research seminar series (see section 1).

The School provides **annual funds** to its Research Committee and to the Research Centres. As examples, for the Research Committee in 2018-19 GBP33,000 was allocated, and in 2019-20, there was GBP30,500 to reflect separate increased funding for Research Centres. In 2019-20, the overall Research Centre investment was increased to GBP10,500 (from GBP5,000). In 2018-9, GBP8,000 was allocated for research development and grant writing, with these funds later subsumed into a wider pool to provide greater flexibility to meet needs. The School also commits annual funds (previously GBP4,000, increased in 2019-20 to GBP5,000) to support PGRs in attending conferences. This support is awarded following an application process.

To ensure inclusive and sustainable delivery of the objective and strategy, the School commits to funding, from the Research Committee budget, conference attendance and caring costs (as noted in section 2) and administrative support for holding international conferences (as noted in section 1). The School also provides expertise and structures for **marketing** to deliver strategic advice and operational support to share successes and details of research seminars, public engagement and impact generation, including through webpages and social media (see section 2).

In allocating these annual funds, the Committee operates in the most fair, inclusive and transparent manner possible and shares details of the funding awards it makes. Colleagues submit an application to the Director who can award a small sum for a specific purpose (now up to GBP300 annually for each colleague). Applications for larger sums are considered by the Committee. High awards are frequently made, and in addition to those noted in sections 1 (impact support) and 2 (caring costs support), these include funding to hold and attend conferences overseas and in the UK. Examples and successes include the *Routledge Handbook on Energy Law*, which built on travel to and participation in conferences in Brazil and Mexico (2018, 2019 – **Alvarez**) and a seminar exploring defamation and choice of law (contributing to an impact case study included in this submission, **Borg Barthet**).

Open access, ethics and integrity

Open Access is a priority for the school, and colleagues are encouraged to further engage in open research. Journal destinations of choice are frequently those that have a **Green** open access approach or those that are **freely available online**. As a result, investment in “Gold” open access charges has not been a priority for the School, however, colleagues have allocated project funding to render outputs open access when appropriate (DAFNE/Brill). The School follows the University Open Access strategy and colleagues are regularly reminded of this by School and University research leads (see **REF5a**). The School research leads work closely with the scholarly communications team based in the library, and colleagues are made aware of the importance of open access when making decisions on publication venues, including evolving approaches to publication of monographs.

Much of the research carried out is based on analysis of primary written sources and the published written outputs of others (hence, see below regarding the importance of the online and physical library). For doctrinal and theoretical research, it is an unquestioned assumption that there will be the highest integrity in the use, conservation and referencing of primary and secondary sources. The quality of outputs is assessed by peer review from diverse sources, rather than by citations or other metrics, reflecting the Declaration on Research Assessment (which the University signed in 2020). Colleagues are encouraged to participate in events, such

as those of the UK Reproducibility Network, regarding publishing questions relating to data and reproducibility. School research leads are involved in the University's open science working group and the University's Research Culture Committee.

A growing amount of the School's research is empirical, including in funded projects. As part of our commitment to integrity, in addition to the Ethics Officers (see section 1, **Trimmings, Shaw**) who share best practices regarding confidentiality, consent and information sharing. In line with this, an information champion who works with the University's Information Governance team to create and circulate information about data protection has been appointed. Colleagues are regularly reminded by the Research Dean of the importance of ethics approval and of the University's online training in research ethics and governance. In response to colleague requests, the School developed formal and peer-led training on ethics and research integrity together with Social Science colleagues.

#### *Facilities pertaining to research and research impact*

**Library resources** are at the heart of most of the research conducted by colleagues. The School has a dedicated and high-quality digital and physical law library and is supported by University specialist research funding services.

The University allocates library funds to the School annually and the School library committee strategically allocates these to pursue teaching and research needs in response to colleagues' requests. The School adds to these funds annually, and in this REF cycle, this amount ranged between GBP8,000 and GBP29,000, depending on colleagues' needs and School funds. Further, colleagues have successfully applied for University Subject Development Bids (including for International Trade and Finance, Oil and Minerals for Good, Civil Law and Food Law and also to the Aberdeen Humanities Fund (**Taylor, Paisley**)). Research committee funds have supported archive visits, for example, to the United States (**Ford**) and to the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies (Masiyakurima).

These resources complement those of the University's Sir Duncan Rice Library and its Special Collections (of particular use for legal history and legal theory). Colleagues use the opportunity for inter-library loans including from the National Library of Scotland, notably the collection of the Faculty of Advocates. Future research investment in the School will be used to further enhance the library in physical and digital form for all researchers. The Library is our laboratory.

**Physical space** is highly relevant as nearly all colleagues choose to spend a significant amount of time at the School, reflecting, enabling and continuing its community environment (see section 2). The School invests in this by allocating a staff room for all colleagues, which also enables the informal discussion and cross-fertilisation of ideas, physical space for Centre research assistants and shared offices for PGRs. There is a dedicated shared office for visiting researchers and for honorary staff, which enhances opportunities for wider connection and future collaboration, outputs and funded projects. Visiting researchers also have full use of library and IT facilities.

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

Collaboration and contribution to the research base (in Law and in connection with other fields, nationally and globally) and to economy and society are embedded in the School's strategy. This is evidenced through its commitment to public engagement and in the importance it accords to knowledge transfer and engagement with research users. This empowers colleagues to engage directly with the communities they seek to influence, lead and serve; to bring about new approaches to thinking and practice outside of the academy; and to learn of challenges and areas for further enquiry. All of this in turn provides an ongoing base for further research and impact as discussed in section 1.

#### *International and national research collaborations, networks and partnerships*

Collaborations, networks and partnerships provide diverse and disruptive lenses to address problems. Successes include a collaborative insolvency project funded by INSOL International (a worldwide federation of national associations for accountants and lawyers, 2016-20 **McKenzie-Skene**) and support for international colleague development, as part of a visiting professorship in Thailand to support publishing in English (**Duff**).

Colleagues are encouraged to contribute to and lead **edited collection** projects including **interdisciplinary** ones and those that consider **equality and diversity** and career development in their author selections. Particular successes include Scottish Criminal Evidence (a collaborative output of the Royal Society of Edinburgh grant, **Duff**); a landmark book on oil and gas (now in two volumes and a 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, **Gordon/Paterson/Usenemez**); leading a collection on Intellectual Property and Creative Industries (with global contributors including from dance, philosophy and cultural heritage, **Brown**); and a practical commentary on the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) Convention (70 authors including policy-makers, lawyers and government officials) that is used in World Bank training (**Alvarez**).

**Co-creation** with research users and partners, at the local and international levels, has been effective. **Trimmings** (funded by the Clark Foundation) developed the “Principles for Better Protection of the Human Rights of Children in Cross-Border Reproductive Arrangements”, (which are informing legislative change through engagement with the Scots and English Law Commissions) in a consultative process with interdisciplinary research and workshops involving over 40 experts/researchers worldwide. AUCEL colleagues work in partnership with the Oil and Gas Technology Centre (**Paterson, Gordon**) and have influenced new planning guidance (Circular 1/2015, **Slater**).

Colleagues have **leadership** roles in established scholarly **networks** such as the Ius Commune (**Partain, Macpherson**), the European Society of International Law (**Fromageau**), British and Irish Law Education and Technology Association (BILETA) (**Brown**) and Chair of The Stair Society (Scottish Legal History, **Ford**). Colleagues have also established and led newer bodies to respond to emerging and previously unaddressed challenges such as the African Natural Resource and Energy Law Network (**Wifa**), MetaLawEcon (Law, Economics and Philosophy, **Cserne**), the Scottish Universities Legal Network on Europe (established in the light of Brexit, **Borg Barthet**) and the Scottish Law and Innovation Network (**Ducato, Brown, Couzigou, Ng**).

The School’s **PGR programme** builds on well-established **international collaborations** with institutions such as Addis Ababa University, University of Bergen, Curtin University and Wuhan University. It has strong frameworks for welcoming lecturers to the School as PGRs on a funded programme who then return to their first institution with tenure (with Kobe University, Japan; Thammasat University, Thailand; and Padjadjaran University, Indonesia).

#### *International and national engagement with research users, beneficiaries or audiences*

As noted in section 1, the School is committed to engagement with the legal profession and also with governments, policymakers, civil society, the private sector and students at local, national and global levels.

The School continues to build on its long standing reputation and links with the **legal profession**. This provides the School with opportunities for mutual learning and to influence the adoption of research suggestions. Ten colleagues sit on committees/boards of the Law Society of Scotland, the Scottish Law Commission, the International Bar Association, the International Association for Contract and Commercial Management and the International Academy of Dispute Resolution. Colleagues are invited to provide training to the profession, including to the judiciary and court staff in Scotland (**McKenzie-Skene, Auchie**), Thailand (**Duff**) and to the EU (**Yuksel Ripley**). Continuing professional development is delivered by the Centre for Scots Law (**Paisley, Property**) and the Centre for Commercial Law (Yuksel, international trade



negotiations). Colleagues present at the Law Society of Scotland Conferences in relation to, for example, rural law (**Combe**), and technology and climate change (**Brown**).

Colleagues' research has been engaged with by key **legal decision makers**, notably the Scots Law Commission, the House of Commons Library, the EU Commission and courts in Scotland and the Advocates General of the Court of Justice of the European Union.

Responding to **consultations** in Scotland, the UK and internationally provides an opportunity to influence policy change and stimulate action. In this REF period, colleagues, individually and through Research Centres, responded to over 20 consultations by the Scots Law Commission (and were cited in reports), the Law Commission, the Scottish and UK governments, parliaments and their committees, HMRC, Scottish Human Rights Commission, the EU Commission, the Australian Productivity Commission, the Australian Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources and the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law – Food and Agriculture Organisation -International Fund for Agricultural Development.

Colleagues also led **proactive engagement** to influence decision making through letters, briefs, NGOs and media engagement. Presentations were made to Rape Crisis Scotland and the Scottish Trans Alliance (**Cairns**), and there is ongoing engagement with local and UK media regarding Brexit (**Taylor**) and oil and gas (**Paterson**). Successes include collaboration with Greenpeace regarding offshore petroleum drilling on the Great Australian Bight (2019-20, **Soliman Hunter**), an effective campaign on up skirting (2017, **Callander**) and a Friends of the Earth (Northern Ireland) brief on climate change litigation prospects (2020, **Muinzer**).

The School encourages private and public sector **consultancy** to enhance research development, dissemination and impact, supported by the University's Research and Innovation team. Notable achievements are with the Scottish Parliament on marine spatial planning (**Slater**, as a Marine Alliance for Science and Technology for Scotland collaboration), Australian National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management and the Western Australian Government (**Soliman Hunter**), University of CapeTown/OPEN AIR (**Adebola**), Pen International (**Borg Barthet**) and Xynteo (approaches to innovation, **Brown**).

As noted in section 2, **social media** showcases achievements to research users and to influence thinking. The School blog (c.500 views in 2020 worldwide) provides a platform for creative, timely and concise dissemination and provocation, for example in response to COVID-19 regarding criminal justice and domestic abuse in Scotland and contract law (by **Cairns** and **Callander** and by **Styles**). Complementing this, ten colleagues have their own social media feeds (followed by School accounts) and colleagues edit and contribute to Afronomicslaw.org (c.10,500 hits/month, **Adebola**), the Kluwer Arbitration Blog (c.80,000 hits/month, **Zivkovic**) and the Philosophy of Brains blog (c.15,000 hits/month, **Shaw**).

Further platforms to share and develop research come from appointments to lead and participate in **policy action** at the Scottish, UK, European and more global levels. Colleagues have developed new training, policy and practical approaches such as: through the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service, Evidence and Procedure Review – Child and Vulnerable Witnesses Project (**Duff**, 2016-7); the NHS Scotland Public Benefit and Privacy Panel and its predecessor (the release of health data to researchers, **Brown** since 2013, and of the Expert Group of Scottish Government Online Identity Assurance Programme, **Brown** since 2018); the European Commission expert group on cross-border family law (**Beaumont**, 2017-19) and Chair of the Hague Conference on Private International Law expert group on family agreements (**Beaumont**, 2015-9); the UN expert group on firearms (**Yihdego** since 2009) and consultant to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (**Yihdego** since 2012); and the Scottish Government roundtable "Civil justice measures in the context of Brexit" (**Fitchen**, 2017).

*Wider contribution to research base: nationally and internationally*

The School believes that **case commentaries and textbooks** can provide bases for future legal scholarship and are an important means of thought leadership, enhancing the reputation of the School in the academy, with students and in the legal profession at the Scottish, UK and more global levels. Colleagues have been invited to author existing works (a considerable mark of esteem) and have created new ones. Important examples are *Scottish Legal History* (2017, **Wilson** and **Simpson**), *Cheshire's Private International Law* (15<sup>th</sup> ed. 2017, **Trimmings**); *Walker & Walker, The Law of Evidence in Scotland* (4<sup>th</sup> ed. 2015 5<sup>th</sup> ed. 2020 **Ross** and **Callander**), and an appointment as General Editor/ member of the Editorial Board of *Stair Memorial Encyclopedia* since 2016 (**Gordon**).

Colleagues are engaged in **peer review** activities for highly respected journals and/or for funders at the Scottish, UK, European and global levels. Colleagues sit on editorial boards and edit special issues of legal and interdisciplinary journals. Examples are the *Journal of Strategic Contracting and Negotiation on Dispute, Claim and Conflict Management* (**Zivkovic**), the *Edinburgh Law Review* (**MacPherson**) and *Geopolitics, History and International Relations* (**Couzigou**). Colleagues are in leadership roles in high-quality **open access** peer-reviewed journals that are freely available online, such as the *European Journal of Law and Technology* (**Brown**) and in Conflict of Laws.Net (an online forum, **Fitchen**).

The ongoing contribution of colleagues and their recognition can be seen in awards from their peers of fellowships, prizes, visiting roles and keynote invitations. Colleagues have been appointed as **Visiting Fellows and Professors worldwide**, such as at the UK Energy Research Centre, funded by Engineering and Physical Sciences (2018-20, **Alvarez**), and at universities in France (2016, **Couzigou**), China (2018, 2019, **Gordon** and **Partain**), Singapore (2014, 2016, 2020, **Gordon** and **Paterson**), Japan (2018, 2019, 2020, **Partain** and **Yiallourides** (Yiallourides funded by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science)), Hong Kong (2018, 2019, **Paterson**) and Italy (2020 **Ducato**). External fellowships were awarded by the Society of Antiquities Scotland (2014, **Wilson**), Royal Society of Edinburgh (2017, **Duff**) and Early Career Fellow US National Science Foundation (2019, **Shapovalova**); and **Green** was externally nominated for the Peter Gonville Stein Book Award of the American Society for Legal History (2019).

Thirteen colleagues were invited to give **keynote** addresses, such as Stockholm Water Week attended by 40 government officials, journalists and members of civil society (2016, **Yihdego**); Rami Makhzoumi Chair Lecture Series, American University of Beirut (televised live) (2017, **Paterson**); the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (2018, **Trimmings**); and "Public Prosecutor's Role in Women's Rights Protections in Criminal Justice" Bangkok sponsored by UN Women, the Attorney General's office and the Thai Institute of Justice (2019, **Duff**).

#### *Wider contribution to economy and society*

The School recognises the importance of **engaging with the public** to disseminate research and to stimulate interest, which can be the first step to change. The University's May Festival provides a valuable forum and colleagues are frequent contributors, for example, regarding climate change (2018, 2019 **Shapovalova**) and Land Reform (2018, **Slater** and **Combe**).

In conclusion, the School looks forward to its next phase. Future research funding will support it in continuing as a strategic, structured and supportive community in which individual and collective excellence is stimulated and flourishes. This is enhanced by its growing and successful PGR cohort that will make its own contributions and take advantage of dual degree and networking opportunities.

This will be delivered through long-term planning and agile responses to events, including through funded and interdisciplinary projects, in areas of interest and importance to individual scholars, to the University 2040 Strategy and to Aberdeen, Scotland and more widely. The School will continue to engage beyond the academy, particularly with the legal profession, the private sector, industry, civil society and policymakers, to influence the development of law and

related areas. The School will challenge its colleagues and future generations and enhance its impact on society as a whole.