

Institution: Brunel University London
Unit of Assessment: 19 – Politics and International Studies
1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy

The Division of Politics and History within the Department of Social and Political Sciences is a vibrant, research-intensive community of 27 academics in Brunel's College of Business, Arts and Social Sciences.

We have hired nine world-class researchers to strengthen our strategic focus on selected priority areas. Thus, we increased our permanent research-active staff by 29% and met our core aims of: 1) building on our existing strengths in intelligence, elections and public opinion, and 2) consolidating our strengths in conflict studies and quantitative methodology.

Other key achievements include:

- **Quadrupling our PhD awards:** as we broadened our research expertise, we recruited more UK and foreign PhD students, including those with overseas government funding who chose Brunel because of our research quality. We enhanced our supervision and monitoring arrangements, and so boosted our completion rates.
- **Winning an Open Innovation Partnership** with government departments for whom academics conduct analysis and develop new thinking. Since 2019, there have been six Whitehall consultations with our staff. More are planned.
- We now offer **AHRC-funded PhD studentships** as Brunel is a member of the TECHNE doctoral training partnership.

Our research is structured into the three well-established thematic clusters detailed in REF2014:

- **International Relations:** Professor Davies provides strategic leadership in his role as Director of our world-renowned Brunel Centre for Intelligence and Security Studies (**BCISS**). In the past, research in this cluster focused on security and intelligence, with a secondary focus on conflict. Five new hires since 2014 have enabled us to build critical mass in conflict studies and further develop our strong profile in security and intelligence. We will expand our research strengths by hiring a new lecturer in international relations in 2022.
- **Comparative Politics, Public Policy & Political Thought:** our high-profile Magna Carta Institute (**MCI**) supports the activities of this cluster. Under the leadership of Professor Fisher, scholars carry out cutting-edge research into public policy, elections, and public opinion, while our highly respected theorists tackle questions of justice, inequality, and sustainability. Three new colleagues have broadened our expertise in comparative politics, public policy, and quantitative methodology. We will build on these strengths by hiring a new lecturer with expertise in quantitative methods in 2022.
- **International History:** under the strategic leadership of Professor Morgan, research in this cluster focuses on the role of identity in the modern age through prisms such as religion, ethnicity, and gender. The cluster has since 2014 aligned itself more closely with that in International Relations, as reflected in our decision to hire an expert on insurgency on a permanent post. Colleagues have shaped their research to the history of conflict over borders and ethnicity. We envisage even closer alignment with our conflict scholars, with a new 'Conflict Past and Present' cluster to supersede the International History one. This will enable us to provide more focused support to our conflict scholars and ensure better targeting of resources.

Interdisciplinarity is the DNA of our division, which comprises political scientists, political theorists, and historians. Bringing together diverse academic skill sets is vital to achieving our research objectives of enhancing research quality and situating our scholars at the leading-edge of

contemporary debates. Thus, Davies organised a 2014 BCISS conference on the highly topical issue of cyber-security together with Brunel Engineering and Law scholars. BCISS continues as a major interdisciplinary hub bringing together political scientists, historians, economists, and legal scholars. Our strategic emphasis on interdisciplinarity has meant the development of wider networks enabled by Brunel's support infrastructure: six of our staff have joined Brunel's Global Lives Interdisciplinary Research Centre to work on a project on 'Crossing Borders'; two have joined Brunel's Africa Group that forges synergies among the university's Africa scholars. There will be more projects like this as we use our knowledge base to broaden our interdisciplinary networks and pull in colleagues from other institutions: thus, the 'Crossing Borders' project will culminate in a major 2021 AHRC networking grant application.

Facilitating **impact** is a cornerstone of our research strategy. Our research – particularly in our core areas of intelligence and electoral politics – benefits wider society, public policy, and the environment. BCISS and the Magna Carta Institute promote networking with end users and publicise our research to wider audiences. We have over the last seven years broadened our relationships with government stakeholders. Our future strategy is to intensify them:

- We expanded **BCISS'** role as a world-leading intelligence studies centre that delivers impact nationally and globally. Our significant links with the UK intelligence community are a noteworthy feature of our research into security and intelligence. Davies and (reserve Army officer) Gustafson have boosted these links utilising their outstanding expertise, high security clearance, and past work with intelligence doctrine, itself the subject of a REF2014 Impact Case Study. BCISS now networks with the Cabinet Office and Ministry of Defence bodies such as Defence Intelligence Counter-Intelligence. Davies and Gustafson provide analysis and practical training for said institutions. We will deepen these relationships, above all with Defence Intelligence Counter-Intelligence, through planned war game simulations (Gustafson, Wagner) and through research fellowships. We are incorporating newer BCISS faculty (Richterova, Wagner) into our networks with the intelligence establishment to ensure the vitality and sustainability of the BCISS impact strategy.
- The **MCI's** mission is to analyse the best ways to create and maintain just societies that balance personal freedom and authority. By building networks with end users and promoting our findings on electoral administration, public spending, and policy design, the MCI has been instrumental in shaping the strategies of government authorities. Examples of how our research promotes good governance include the Australian Electoral Commission using Karp's work on electoral integrity. The UK Cabinet Office, Home Office and Parliament, the Canadian federal government, and an Australian Senate Committee have done the same with Uberoi's research on multiculturalist policies. The MCI's role in celebrating the 800th anniversary of Magna Carta, which brought our scholars together with government officials and voluntary organisations, showcases MCI's enduring success in supporting exchanges with public and third sector bodies. MCI networks are expanding, notably through the Open Innovation Partnership. Consistent with our impact strategy, we will deepen them by involving more of our scholars in the Partnership. One newer MCI member (Savani) has already been included, along with Davies, Fisher and Uberoi, as will more in the future.

We selected our three impact case studies as exemplars of our approach. Two (Davies, Gustafson) draw on BCISS' status as a centre of excellence in intelligence scholarship that promotes two-way relationships between our scholars and end users. The third (Fisher) demonstrates the MCI's importance in generating significant impact on electoral authorities in the UK and beyond. To ensure the vitality and sustainability of our impact, we have identified four mid-career and junior staff whose policy-relevant research will have major future impact. By matching them with mentors experienced in establishing impact, and through our new workload allocation model which better credits time spent on developing impact, we will empower them to achieve this.

Brunel has adopted the Universities UK Concordat to support the highest standards of **research integrity**. We nurture a culture of research integrity by training all our staff to conduct their

research consistent with frameworks such as Brunel's Research Integrity Code. This enhances our research quality by upholding key standards such as honesty in presenting research goals and findings, rigour in selecting appropriate methods and adhering to agreed protocols, as well as transparency in reporting data collection methods and disseminating findings. Regular mentoring and divisional reviews of research practice ensure everyone follows the policies for research integrity.

We periodically review our promotion of good research practice and adapt it to evolving requirements. Thus, we are approaching an open research environment: 100% of our nominated outputs fulfil open access requirements. Staff have accessed Brunel's Gold Open Access Fund to publish outputs. All staff were briefed on our strategy to manage and share research data on platforms such as Brunel Figshare by Pickering, who has significant experience in depositing research data in repositories such as the Harvard Dataverse and the Comprehensive R Archive Network. We aim to achieve 100% open data compliance by 2022.

Our **strategic aim going forward** is to build on our strengths in our core research areas. We will pursue this through four objectives:

1) Consolidate our status as a centre of excellence for conflict studies, while building on our existing strengths

We will achieve this by hiring three new lecturers. We will appoint colleagues whose research fits into our core areas of intelligence; elections and public opinion, with emphasis on quantitative methods; and international conflict. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, two of these appointments have been delayed, but we appointed a new Lecturer in Defence and Intelligence who started in September 2020.

2) Build on our outstanding record in securing impact

Our research into the vital international problems of security and intelligence, conflict, and ruptures in voting behaviour has major benefits for the public. We will continue to promote knowledge transfer and user engagement at every opportunity. To build on our stellar impact record, we will carry out a strategic review of our research mentoring system. Adapting this highly successful system to the increasing size of our unit will enable us to achieve our research and impact objectives. Staff members who are developing their impact (Fox, Richterova, Sarmiento-Mirwaldt, Savani) will be matched with mentors with a track record of establishing impact.

3) Increase our external research income

To carry out exceptional research into conflict, elections, and public opinion, we require large grants from major funders. We will increase the number of grant applications and the overall amount of funding applied for. Our enhanced mentoring system will bring together mentees working on large grant applications with mentors experienced in attracting major funding. Our recent hire Professor Karp has a proven track record of winning external funding. His experience, along with Dale's, Fisher's and Morgan's, will be matched with the needs of more junior grant applicants, many of whom have already won small grants, or acted as co-investigators on larger grants (Fox, Richterova, Sarmiento-Mirwaldt, Thomas, Uberoi, Wagner).

We will continue to encourage our staff to apply for small grants from more niche funders such as the Indian Council of Social Science Research or the Polish-German Science Foundation. Schemes from such funders are entirely appropriate for well-defined smaller research projects, and seed new collaborations, major research projects, and impact.

4) Continue to improve PhD outcomes

We will build on our fourfold increase of PhDs awarded. Based on our expertise in areas with broad appeal, outstanding satisfaction rates (in the 2019 PRES survey, 97% of our respondents expressed satisfaction with their supervision, placing us in the top quartile of institutions), and through studentships such as our new TECHNE doctoral awards, we will continue recruiting excellent PhD students. Our supervisory and monitoring arrangements, which we have strengthened significantly since 2014, ensure consistently high completion rates. We aspire to join

an ESRC-funded doctoral training partnership, such as the Grand Union Doctoral Training Partnership, of which Brunel's Education Department is already a member.

We will better prepare our PhD students for a range of career options by expanding our offer of PhD placements in the Cabinet Office and through our far-reaching networks with policy-makers, key pressure groups, and intelligence contractors. For PhD students wishing to pursue an academic career, we will boost their chances of securing an academic position after completion by supporting them with early publishing: in line with Brunel's Research Strategy and Strategic Plan, we will take on more PhD students who wish to write PhD theses as a collection of papers and encourage subsequent co-authorship with their supervisors.

2. People

Staffing strategy and staff development

We are a growing unit. Our strategic focus on building capacity in our core areas has led us to recruit **nine new staff members**. Four of these are women. Two are from ethnic or religious minority backgrounds. All our staff are on permanent contracts. Our recruitment strategy has focused on building talent from the ground up by appointing eight exceptional lecturers (Belgioioso, Fox, Hammond, Pickering, Richterova, Savani, Wagner, Whittaker), and on enhancing our research leadership by appointing a well-known scholar at professorial level (Karp).

Our **International Relations** cluster has been reinforced through the addition of five new colleagues. By appointing two emerging authorities on intelligence, we have ensured the vitality of our intelligence research. Richterova specialises in intelligence and terrorism and fits seamlessly into BCISS. Wagner is an expert on the history of intelligence and will strengthen the links between our International Relations and International History clusters.

Three forward-looking appointments have built critical mass in conflict research. Hammond's work on the British Navy bolsters our expertise in the history of conflict. Pickering specialises in geo-spatial analysis, with an emphasis on war and geography. Belgioioso contributed valuable insights into political violence. She was replaced by a new female Lecturer in Defence and Intelligence in September 2020.

In our **Comparative Politics, Public Policy & Political Thought** cluster, Karp – a world-renowned expert on electoral behaviour – provides strategic leadership in the comparative study of elections. Two additional appointments of rising stars in public opinion (Fox) and public policy (Savani) have further enhanced the cluster's world-leading research.

In our **International History** cluster, we made Whittaker's contract permanent in 2016, reflecting her research excellence. Whittaker's work on insurgency fits into our core strength in the history of conflict.

We have also reinforced our methodological credentials. By hiring five colleagues who are highly skilled in quantitative methods (Belgioioso, Fox, Karp, Pickering, Savani), we increased the proportion of political scientists who regularly use such methods from one quarter to nearly half. Some are leaders in quantitative methodology: Pickering has developed new software and databases to analyse spatial data, while Fox is an associate editor for the SAGE Research Methods Foundations project. Far from being an end in itself, enhancing our methodological expertise is crucial in our core areas of contemporary conflict, elections and public opinion. Boosting this expertise ensures that we remain at the cutting edge of research in these areas and enhances our potential for further grant capture.

Our staff development strategy is instrumental in achieving our research objectives. Only by helping all staff achieve their full potential can we develop our research strengths, generate impact, win grants for innovative research projects, and recruit excellent PhD students. Thus, in line with

the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers, we promote the development of our staff at all career stages.

Staff on probation are given a light teaching and administrative load, enabling them to lay the groundwork for excellent research by building networks with their new colleagues and honing pioneering research ideas. They have a personal development mentor – on top of a research mentor – to help them to fully benefit from Brunel's research opportunities. One such opportunity is our College-level ECR development series, which trains early career researchers such as Savani on impact and research funding.

Our strategic objective of increasing our external research income can be achieved by exploiting all staff members' potential for grant capture. Following briefings on Brunel's pump-priming resources, our staff have successfully applied for these competitive funds. Belgioioso, Pickering and Savani were awarded Brunel Research Development Funds to kick-start new research projects leading to major grant applications. **Brunel Research Initiative and Enterprise Fund (BRIEF)** awards for junior staff are key to our grant generation strategy of preparing junior colleagues for future grant capture. Carrol, Hansen, Pickering, and Sarmiento-Mirwaldt all obtained BRIEF awards. Based on his BRIEF award, Hansen, for example, is drafting an application to the Leverhulme Trust.

Brunel boasts three research leave schemes to promote impact, the production of excellent outputs, and equal opportunities. All are awarded competitively based on peer-reviewed applications. Our staff have an excellent record of obtaining these:

- 1) **Knowledge transfer leave** facilitates the two-way transfer of knowledge and strengthens long-term relationships between Brunel and its user community. Sarmiento-Mirwaldt was awarded knowledge transfer leave in 2017-18 to fulfil a contract from the Polish-German cross-border region 'Euroregion Spree-Neisse-Bober'. She evaluated the region's use of EU funds to foster lasting cross-border networks and was awarded a follow-up contract in 2020.
- 2) **Sabbatical leave** has enabled ten of our scholars – most of them mid-career – to complete large research projects and convert their rigorous research into outstanding outputs. Del Lucchese's sabbatical leave allowed him to finish his monograph *Monstrosity and Philosophy* (Edinburgh University Press). Others have used their sabbatical leave to conduct research abroad, and to develop collaborative networks: Thomas visited Australia and Brazil during his sabbatical to build networks and launch new research projects, which subsequently led to the publication of a special issue and his forthcoming monograph.
- 3) Brunel's **Athena SWAN Research Awards** enable staff returning from parental leave to hit the ground running when resuming their research. Carrol, Sarmiento-Mirwaldt and Whittaker were all awarded Athena SWAN funding. Whittaker obtained a period of teaching relief, during which she drafted an article and an application for a British Academy Mid-Career Fellowship.

We will carry out a strategic review of our research mentoring system to empower all staff to achieve their full research potential. It will continue our fundamental principles, such as the requirement that staff at all levels of seniority meet with their mentor twice a year. However, we will inject a stronger strategic focus by asking staff to formulate a five-year research strategy. Mid-career academics will be recruited as mentors, to draw on their strengths in producing high-quality outputs, securing grants, and demonstrating impact.

Our strategic objective of developing our far-reaching and significant impact rests on promoting knowledge transfer and user engagement. We do this through mentoring and by drawing on university support. Research mentors encourage mentees to identify potential beneficiaries of their research at its inception and follow up on user engagement activities with regular reviews. Staff experienced in establishing impact share best practice, supported by our Strategic Planning Directorate. The crucial importance of impact is recognised in our recruitment and promotions

criteria. Furthermore, Brunel celebrates and recognises staff who have generated impactful research through its **Research Impact Awards**, awarded to scholars from across the university: in 2020, Gustafson and Dornan won the Environmental and Public Engagement Impact Awards respectively, while Fisher was specially commended in the Policy Impact category.

Extensive collaborative networks are a cornerstone of our research strategy because they generate innovative ideas, research income, and world-leading outputs. We have fostered collaboration by hosting six research fellows from the UK and overseas, who chose Brunel for our research quality. Three came on scholarships (Hu, Martín, Radai). Research fellows pursue their own research programmes. We support them by providing office and computing facilities, and appointing a research mentor for them. Through fellowships we facilitate exchanges with practitioners: based on our networks with UK intelligence services, we regularly host research fellows from the Armed Forces. Most recently, in 2019, the Chief of the Air Staff selected Brunel for Wing Commander Steward who conducted research on counterintelligence regulation under a prestigious Trenchard Fellowship. Our fellows in turn enrich our research environment: collaborating with Steward enabled Davies to embark on new lines of counterintelligence research. Davies and Steward are drafting two articles that will be submitted to peer-reviewed journals in 2021.

We use divisional funds to support networking and research activities that lead to new or intensified collaborations and higher-quality outputs, such as conference attendance or archival visits. These funds have enabled our staff to present their work at conferences such as APSA, ISA, ECPR and PSA. They amount to £800 per colleague annually but are allocated competitively, where a proposal's strength determines funding success. We introduced this requirement after 2014 to ensure that spending yields maximum benefits. This allowed us to fund colleagues' fieldwork or conference attendance in Australia, the US, and the Caribbean. Additionally, strategic funds are available to enhance our research strengths: the division funded Sarmiento-Mirwaldt's attendance at the Essex Summer School, and Savani's costs of interviewing Universal Credit recipients.

Our staff's career progression proves the success of our staff development strategy. Their excellent achievements, of which research forms an integral part, have been recognised by the university through 17 promotions. Five of these were of women, and one staff member from an ethnic minority background was promoted twice. The careers of former fixed-term staff also demonstrate our commitment to research excellence. Four scholars on research-and-teaching contracts benefited from the same staff development policies as permanent staff. Aslam, Lees, and Peña subsequently secured permanent positions at the Universities of Bath, Liverpool, and York respectively. Whittaker's Brunel contract was made permanent in 2016.

Support for PhD students

Our strategic objective is to build on the **fourfold increase in our awarded PhDs** based on our research expertise, excellent PhD satisfaction rates, and through studentships such as our AHRC-funded TECHNE awards. Our PhD recruitment is based on the criteria of merit and fit with our research strengths. We give special consideration to applicants with protected characteristics. This, and the increased diversity of our staff, has resulted in a diverse community of PhD students: 38% of our PhDs were awarded to women, and 24% to ethnic minority students (both up from 20% in REF2014). We play our part in making the discipline more diverse by encouraging students from our diverse PhD community to consider, where appropriate, an academic career.

We follow the Brunel Graduate School's best practice guidelines to keep our PhD students on track and provide them with professional development opportunities. We have radically improved our progress monitoring by introducing an electronic monitoring system (eVision) and scheduling bi-monthly supervisory meetings. Every PhD student has two supervisors, and supervisory meetings are recorded on eVision. Regular progression reviews involving an independent reviewer take place at 9, 12, 20, 30 and 40 months. Since 2014, every PhD student has also been assigned a divisional Research Development Advisor (RDA). RDAs ensure that students' personal and professional development needs are met by analysing their skills profile and suggesting ways of

filling gaps. As a result of our enhanced supervision and monitoring arrangements, none of our PhD students have exceeded their maximum period of registration since 2014. When PhD students must suspend their research, we offer them every support in doing so. Upon their return, supervisors coordinate closely with the students to ensure that the resumption is productive: one PhD student took a period of abeyance due to health reasons, before returning and successfully completing his PhD.

Skills development is writ large at Brunel. We introduced Brunel's 3D Researcher Development Tool which enables PhD students to create an individual cocktail of workshops on topics such as research management, engagement, and impact. Reflecting our burgeoning strength in quantitative methods, many of our PhD students have taken methods classes on statistical analysis using software such as R.

All PhD students are members of a research cluster and attend divisional seminars. We are particularly proud of our annual PhD Symposium where all students present their work to all staff and fellow students. To foster future talent, we provide research funding of about £300 per student annually for expenses such as conference attendance. Larger requests are considered on a case-by-case basis. Thus, our students have presented their work at important conferences, such as ISA and PSA.

Our PhD careers are manifold, reflecting our signature approach to promoting research skills that enable PhD graduates to pursue academic careers, as well as practical experience and networking opportunities, enabling them to pursue careers as high-ranking professionals. For example, our female graduates Wood-Donnelly and Mocca obtained academic positions at the Universities of Cambridge and Edinburgh respectively, while Krul embarked on a research fellowship at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology. Other male and female PhD graduates accepted academic positions in their home countries (Colombia, Turkey). Yet others are pursuing careers in the areas of their research: Arditti as a senior Firearms Licensing Officer for the Metropolitan Police, Brunatti as liaison officer for the Canada Border Services Agency, and Klos as a lobbyist for the German Steel Federation.

By expanding work placements and by enabling students wishing to pursue an academic career to start publishing early, we are building on our immense improvement in PhD outcomes and further strengthening our PhD students' employability. Several of our students have published with their supervisors (Abdalla, Arditti, Fabry, Farquharson, Krul). We will empower more of them to do so by pursuing PhDs as a series of papers. We will also encourage supervisors to make publishing an integral part of PhD supervision.

Equality and diversity

Brunel as a research-intensive university is submitting 100% of all eligible academic staff. We followed the processes set out in our Code of Practice for the fair and transparent identification of independent researchers and to ensure that the submitted outputs provide a balanced and unbiased representation of the work of our diverse academic community, their characteristics and contractual positions (age, disability, race, sex, part-time workers and fixed-term employees). Outputs selection was monitored through regular Equality Impact Assessments.

Our Equality Impact Assessment indicates that our submitted outputs are a well-balanced representation of protected characteristics. The 37% of staff aged 50-59 contribute 44% of the outputs, reflecting the fact that most of our Professors fall into this age group. 22% of female staff contribute 19% of the outputs. As they are all at lecturer or senior lecturer level, and three took parental leave during the REF period, these figures suggest that our female scholars are punching above their weight.

We know that well-balanced demographics motivate staff and attract potential PhD students, so a building block of our research strategy is strengthening the equality and diversity of our division. Women and ethnic minority staff, though well-represented in our outputs selection, are under-represented among our staff. We recognise this as a problem – one that afflicts much of academia

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

– and are addressing it genuinely from the bottom-up. Four of the eight lecturers we hired are women. Our proportion of minority staff has increased from 4% to 11%. Among the more junior ranks of our division, there are promising indications that we will be able significantly to improve our unit's diversity at all levels of seniority: women have been over-represented in our promotions. Ethnic minority staff have been represented proportionally. Six out of 14 granted leave periods went to women, including three Athena SWAN awards that enabled staff returning from parental leave to produce high-quality outputs, apply for funding, and develop their impact.

We are proactive in identifying pathways for junior staff to build their careers. Two of the three lecturers who will be mentored regarding impact generation are women (Richterova, Savani). As part of our succession planning, we have given junior and mid-career staff with protected characteristics roles that will prepare them for future research leadership (Sarmiento-Mirwaldt, Wagner).

All staff benefit from the same support structures. When there is competition for resources – such as competitive calls for grant applications, finite research funding, or a limited number of PhD places – we carry out equality impact assessments to ensure that we give due regard to candidates with protected characteristics.

Brunel's new workload allocation model (WAM) ensures an equitable distribution of staff's time devoted to tasks such as management, teaching, and external engagement. All staff are allocated at least one third of their time for research; through WAM, we ring-fence this time and ensure that no individual or demographic group is overburdened. If it does not conflict with their teaching and administrative duties, staff can carry out their research flexibly and from remote locations. Those with caring responsibilities have benefited especially from this arrangement.

We support the wellbeing of staff and PhD students through our sensitivity to individual needs. Research activities such as meetings are scheduled to avoid conflict with caring duties or religious observance. We make special equipment available to enable staff with disabilities or chronic diseases to research productively. A culture of mutual care and multiple access points (line managers and mentors for staff; supervisors, RDAs, and Graduate School staff for PhD students) ensures that any potential issues are identified and rectified early on.

3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

Income

Our external grant money in the REF period amounts to **£847k**. On top of this, we secured contracts worth **£46k** from sources such as the Dubai police, 'Euroregion Spree-Neisse-Bober', and the major conservation NGO Africa Parks Network, to carry out specified research or training based on our research.

Our grant generation strategy in the past relied on a few individuals winning large grants from funders such as the ESRC, the British Academy and the Canadian and Australian Research Councils. In an ever-more competitive funding environment, we ensured the sustainability of our grant income through two major changes:

- Hiring new staff with a proven record of successful grant capture (Fox, Karp, Richterova). An example is Fox' Understanding Society Policy Fellowship, worth £30k, which links to our core area of electoral behaviour. Fox is investigating whether volunteering increases young people's political engagement, particularly in those from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Enabling more staff at all career stages to apply for grants. Through mentoring, regular information on funding opportunities, and grant-writing support, we encourage applications to big funders such as the ESRC or the British Academy, but also more niche funders, such as the Council for British Research in the Levant, and the Indian Council of Philosophical Research. Schemes from such funders are often well-suited to smaller research projects, which subsequently seed new collaborations, major research projects or impact. For example, Wagner's £2k grant from the Council for British Research in the Levant fed into his

successful grant application to the British Academy (£10k), enabling him to strengthen his collaboration with researchers from Ireland and the US and co-edit a special issue of *Contemporary Levant*.

Thanks to these changes, more staff than previously obtained funds that enabled them to carry out higher-quality research. This led to a significant diversification of our sources of income. We secured grants from major funders such as UKRI and the British Academy and numerous smaller funders such as the Daiwa Foundation and the Marine Corps University Foundation.

In our **International Relations** cluster, awards have been secured to promote interdisciplinary collaboration, leading to more creative ideas and ultimately higher-quality outputs. One highlight is Richterova's £49k share of a UKRI Future Leaders Fellowship. As co-investigator, Richterova is developing a new interdisciplinary framework for analysing counter-terrorism with Dr Bury (Bath) and is contributing towards the launch of a transatlantic counter-terrorism Centre of Excellence through her extensive networks with intelligence practitioners. Another highlight is Hughes' £3k grant from the Marine Corps University Foundation, with which he organised a major 2014 conference on the Pacific War. Between 2014 and her departure in 2016, Krahmann had £167k in support from the ESRC for her research into private security companies.

Through BCISS, we also received benefits-in-kind such as sponsorship. The defence contractor Raytheon sponsored two interdisciplinary BCISS conferences on defence intelligence and cyber-security in 2014. Based on the former, Davies edited a 2016 special issue of *Intelligence and National Security*.

In our **Comparative Politics, Public Policy & Political Thought** cluster, we have secured grants for large-scale data collection, resulting in rigorously researched outputs and major policy impact. Fisher's three ESRC grants are a key example: he was awarded £376k to lead major research projects on the 2015, 2017 and 2019 UK general elections with colleagues from the Universities of Manchester, Bath, and Birmingham. He also received £35k from the Electoral Commission for projects on electoral agents in the same elections and in the 2016 referendum. Based on these large-scale data collection efforts, he produced numerous reports and journal articles. Another example is Sarmiento-Mirwaldt's £10k British Academy grant, which she used to analyse spatial patterns in Polish attitudes through a survey.

Our theorists frequently secure fellowships to facilitate collaborations that lead to world-leading outputs and new research ideas: Dale was awarded a Mid-Career Fellowship from the British Academy (£75k) to produce three outputs and collaborate with colleagues from Brazil and India on a major grant application. This application was successful: Dale received \$40k from the Asia-Pacific Network for Global Change Research, as well as £3k from the Daiwa Foundation, to co-organise a conference on green growth, which led to a major co-edited volume. Del Lucchese was awarded £14k for a fellowship of the Collegium de Lyon to carry out research for the second volume of his book on monstrosity. Thomas received £31k from the Institute of Advanced Studies, Princeton, to produce two journal articles and collaborate with colleagues on an edited volume.

In the **International History** cluster, external funding supports pioneering archival and digitisation work. Morgan was awarded two grants from the British Library's Endangered Archives Programme, worth £30k in total. This enabled him to build digital archives of 18th and 19th Century legal documents in Saint Vincent. Thanks to his work, these documents are now accessible through the British Library website.

As we frequently require funding for collaboration and data collection, our objective is to increase our number of grant applications and the overall amount applied for. In the past, potential grant applicants were sometimes held back by an unawareness of niche funders or suitable short-term initiatives of mainstream funders. Since 2014, we have become nimbler and more mindful of funding opportunities through alerts from Brunel's Research Support and Development Office (RSDO) and Research Professional. We are becoming even more proactive and recommend to individual colleagues funding schemes that match our strengths in intelligence, conflict, elections and public

opinion, as with the Minerva Research Initiative, Kluge Fellowships, and the ESRC's Secondary Data Analysis Initiative.

Through our reformed, strategically focused mentoring, we will encourage more staff members at all levels to apply for grants. Several junior staff have obtained small grants or acted as co-investigators on larger projects. Our support structures will enable them to build on their experience in grant-writing and research management and apply for larger grants as principal investigators. Three colleagues (Belgioioso, Pickering, Savani) have successfully applied for pump priming funds from Brunel's Research Development Fund, which will lead to major future grant applications. Junior staff who are less experienced in winning grants will be mentored by those who have such experience (Fisher, Dale, Karp, Morgan).

Dedicated support for grant applicants from RSDO and our College Research Office enables staff to succeed at grant capture – from discovering funding opportunities (through sessions such as a presentation by Leverhulme Assistant Director Dr Henshaw) all the way to managing grants and research data. Staff benefit from grant writing training and a rigorous, constructive peer-review process: two reviewers and the departmental Director of Research provide written feedback. For applications to the British Academy, Brunel additionally introduced 'pitch-to-peers' events, providing researchers with the opportunity to present their proposal and receive immediate feedback from a panel of academics with experience of winning grants.

Infrastructure and facilities

We use our Research Seminar Series strategically to enable networking and then collaboration. We ensure that the series features diverse presentations that address the interests of all research clusters, with a balance of external speakers and internal presentations of our research. Carol, del Lucchese, Fisher, Neocleous, Swenson, and Thomas additionally secured university funding for special seminar series on topics such as 'Comedy, Politics and Populism' and 'Violence, War and Policy'. These have enriched our research environment by bringing in external speakers and expanding colleagues' research networks.

Our staff benefit from excellent facilities, including a well-stocked library alongside specialised libraries and archives. We all have generous personal offices, with special provision for staff with disabilities or chronic diseases. Colleagues with back pain have received ergonomic furniture and specialist equipment such as adjustable monitor stands. Consistent with our burgeoning strength in quantitative methodology, we provide our staff with excellent computing facilities and software such as Stata and NVivo. We also make good use of cross-HEI shared research infrastructure, including the ESRC Data Archive, on which we have drawn, and where we have deposited data, such as Fisher's constituency campaigning data.

As evidenced by our excellent REF2014 results, we have a stellar record of achieving far-reaching and significant impact on policy-makers, parliamentarians and end users. In the 2020 *Times Higher Education* Impact Ranking, Brunel secured the maximum score for working with government (SDG 16), due to the work of the MCI and our Open Innovation Partnership. Our strategy to build on this strong record rests on broad-based communication of our important findings to users and the public, and on targeted mentoring of staff whose research has been earmarked as the basis for future impact generation.

Financial resources to maximise impact include a College research impact fund. Karp received such funding to present his findings on how to build professional electoral management to the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. Our divisional Impact Champion (Sarmiento-Mirwaldt) advises colleagues on developing their impact. Brunel's electronic Impact Tracker enables all colleagues to chart progress, store evidence of impact, and record any impact-related activities. We use Altmetrics to track the attention that our scholarship is receiving.

Our research centres are instrumental in fostering and maintaining two-way relationships with stakeholders. They are hubs from which we organise conferences, public engagement events and research fellowships, and the vehicles through which we disseminate reports and briefing papers.

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

BCISS and the MCI have played a crucial role in initiating new research collaborations (such as Gustafson's research into counter-poaching measures in central and southern Africa) and stakeholder engagement (including Fisher's and Sarmiento-Mirwaldt's outreach activities among policy-makers). They will continue to do so.

Through **BCISS**, we boost our scholars' impact at every opportunity. The centre has enabled Davies and Gustafson to consolidate their profiles as leading intelligence scholars. Their insights have been sought not only by UK intelligence institutions, but also by the Malaysian Ministry of Defence, the European Union's Intelligence and Situation Centre, the UK Home Office, the Metropolitan Police, and the Crown Court. Our more recent appointees are following in their footsteps, ensuring the vitality of our BCISS impact strategy: Wagner, along with Gustafson, has been invited by Defence Intelligence Counter-Intelligence (Ministry of Defence) to train their staff through war game simulations. Richterova has long-standing, enduring links with Slovakia's GLOBSEC Intelligence Reform Initiative, for which she has produced policy reports and created a high-level group of current and former intelligence officials.

Promoted through our **MCI** networks, our research into electoral and social policies has frequently impacted the work of governmental and legislative authorities, as well as key think tanks. Fisher's work on electoral administration and campaigning has delivered important findings for the UK Electoral Commission, overseas commissions, and political parties. Similarly, the use of Karp's work on electoral integrity by the Australian Electoral Commission, and of Uberoi's research on multiculturalism by the Canadian federal government are outstanding examples of MCI members' policy-relevance.

Other academics in the MCI have begun establishing significant policy impact. Sarmiento-Mirwaldt's research into an EU cross-border funding instrument illustrates how our research centres and university schemes interact: Sarmiento-Mirwaldt disseminated her past research into so-called 'small projects funds' widely among regional, national and EU policy-makers through the MCI. This led to her being awarded a contract by the Polish-German cross-border region 'Spree-Neisse-Bober' to evaluate its small projects fund's capacity to foster cross-border networks. For this, Brunel granted Sarmiento-Mirwaldt knowledge transfer leave in 2017-18. She worked closely with policy-makers and beneficiaries, and her recommendations are being implemented. A follow-up project commenced in 2020.

Newer MCI members came with substantial experience in stakeholder engagement. Fox maintains collaborative partnerships with several volunteering charities and sits on a Task and Finish Group for the Welsh Government to support volunteering. Savani has submitted evidence to the UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty, has supported the development of the Food Security Needs Assessment for the London Borough of Barnet, and acts as an advisory board member for Trussell Trust's research project 'State of Hunger'. She also submitted evidence to a House of Lords select committee. These examples show that through strategic appointments and institutional support we have assured the vitality and sustainability of our research impact.

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

Collaboration

Promoting far-reaching and intense collaboration with other scholars is a cornerstone of our research strategy. As an interdisciplinary division, we see collaboration as key to generating innovative ideas, research income, and world-leading outputs.

In the **International Relations** cluster collaboration takes place through joint research projects such as Richterova's UKRI-funded collaboration, conference organisation such as Hughes' conference on the Pacific War, and co-authorship. Pickering's co-authorship of an article for the *Journal of East Asian Studies* with scholars from Kobe and Rikkyo Universities is an excellent example. Following this, Pickering organised a 2018 research poster conference with students and

staff from Brunel and Kobe. The event was such a success that it was repeated in 2020 and, virtually, in 2021.

In the **Comparative Politics, Public Policy & Political Thought** cluster, collaboration mainly happens through research projects such as Fisher's ESRC-funded collaborations, co-authorship, and conferences such as Dale's international conference on green growth. Our theorists have won numerous fellowships at other institutions, enabling them to expand their networks (Dale, Del Lucchese, Thomas). One highlight is Uberoi's work on multiculturalism: Uberoi collaborates extensively with Professor Modood (Bristol). Their joint publications have been recognised as a distinct school of multicultural political thought. In 2019, they organised a symposium on this school, published in the leading journal *Ethnicities*. Recently described in a journal article by Dr Chin (Melbourne) as the scholar who has 'done the most to examine the possibility of a multicultural national identity', Uberoi is a sought-after collaborator worldwide. In 2019, he was awarded £7k by two Indian research councils for a project with Dr Kumar (IIT Tirupati) on Indian conceptions of multiculturalism.

In the **International History** cluster, collaboration takes place through visiting fellowships (Carrol, Dornan), co-editorship of major volumes, and conference organisation. One highlight is a 2016 international conference Carrol organised on the twenty-year anniversary of the Channel Tunnel. This event enabled colleagues to establish new contacts with academics and key users such as librarians and EU programme managers. It also led to the publication of a special issue of the *Revue d'Histoire des Chemins de Fer*.

Our strategy to maintain and enhance our collaborations is threefold: 1) enabling staff to develop collaborations by regularly sharing contacts, 2) assisting staff in maintaining and deepening collaborations through strategic funds, and 3) strategic intervention, when colleagues need help in identifying potential collaborators or in initiating collaborations.

In the past, colleagues managed their own networks. We supported this through our seminar series and divisional research funds. Since 2014, we have made better use of university-level opportunities to initiate collaborations. Brunel's Centre for Entrepreneurship and Sustainability sponsored Dale's cutting-edge work on deforestation in Brazil, a major contributing factor towards wildfires in the rainforest. Dale carried out fieldwork with researchers from the prestigious Getúlio Vargas Foundation. An article from this project will likely be published in 2021. We also used our membership of YERUN to win funding that brought Dr Martín (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid) to Brunel to start an ongoing collaboration on campaigning with Fisher.

We have expanded our research collaborations significantly. They now include high-profile researchers from over 30 countries, including at Harvard University, Fudan University, and the British Institute in Eastern Africa, as well as numerous UK institutions, such as Royal Holloway, SOAS, and Warwick University. This has raised our profile: eight staff members have given invited keynote addresses at conferences, and we organised or co-organised nine conferences, five of which were held at Brunel.

In the future, we will focus on enhancing **interdisciplinary collaboration**, which boosts research quality and innovation. We will identify and exploit opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration by requiring cluster leads to set the strategic direction, and by reaching out from Brunel structures that promote interdisciplinary research. Thus, BCISS will continue as a major interdisciplinary hub through which we organise conferences and attract research fellows. Furthermore, Dornan and Whittaker obtained university funding to create a research group on borders as part of Brunel's Global Lives Interdisciplinary Research Centre. The group comprises scholars from three Brunel departments, and is drafting an application to the AHRC networking scheme.

User and public engagement

Engagement with key research users and beneficiaries remains a cornerstone of our impact strategy. We consider it our public duty to communicate our important findings to beneficiaries and the public. We will continue to empower all staff to engage end users through 1) regular reviews of

engagement activities in mentoring meetings, 2) institutional infrastructure and resources, including our research centres, and 3) frequent sharing of best practice. Examples of successful user engagement include Thomas' consultation on the politics of translation for the GUE Grouping in the European Parliament, and Karp's and Uberoi's engagement with Australian, Canadian and UK government bodies. Junior colleagues came with significant experience, ensuring the sustainability of our user engagement. This includes Fox' links with the Welsh Government, Richterova's work with GLOBSEC, and Savani's experience in giving evidence to the UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty, and the House of Lords Select Committee on Food, Poverty, Health and the Environment.

A key example of our wider contribution to government and society is the **Open Innovation Partnership**, which promotes knowledge exchange with the Cabinet Office. Whitehall staff have consulted our scholars on defence spending (Davies), UK statistics (Fisher, Savani), 'Prevent' (Uberoi), trust in the justice system (Fisher), and intelligence in international trade (Davies). In turn, the partnership has enriched our research environment: the Head of the Open Innovation Team at the Cabinet Office gave Policy-Making Masterclasses in 2019 and 2020. Further Masterclasses are planned.

Brunel is a highly supportive environment for staff to communicate their research to the public and a dynamic hub in the west London area. With **HEIF funding** from the university, the MCI played a key role in the national initiative surrounding the 800th anniversary of Magna Carta. Fisher served on the national organising committee, curated a public exhibition (attended by over 5,000 visitors) at Runnymede, created materials for schools, and promoted the event through talks.

With financial and organisational support from RSDO, Dornan and Carrol, along with Dr Maples (Department of Arts and Humanities), organised the Brunel leg of the 2019 Being Human Festival that communicates scholarly research to the UK public. Events at Brunel focused on Dornan's research on slavery and abolition. They included a specially curated exhibition, a walking tour about Uxbridge's connection to slavery, a theatrical production, and a public lecture by Professor Olusoga OBE (Manchester). These attracted over 200 visitors. Subsequently, the Arts Council and the WA Cadbury Trust supported the costs of a UK tour of the theatrical production with £16k. Dornan won Brunel's Public Engagement Research Impact Award for her work on the Festival in 2020.

Some of our research is concerned directly with the needs of marginalised groups, as with Gustafson's and Whittaker's research that is relevant to livelihoods in Africa, Dornan's and Morgan's expertise on colonial legacies, Uberoi's research on multiculturalism, and Fox's work with young, disadvantaged Britons. We engage with these diverse communities frequently. Morgan's British Library-funded digitisation of endangered documents in Saint Vincent led him to train local archivists, librarians, and members of the Registry Department. He regularly receives and responds to requests for information from people who are tracing their genealogy.

We encourage our staff to take media engagement from Brunel's extensive menu of staff development courses, which trains them to communicate their research to the public. They appear in the media regularly, including numerous appearances on Sky News by Fox and Hughes, Fisher's work on ITV's election night coverage, appearances on the BBC World Service by Gustafson and Hansen, Russia Today by Folly, Radio 5 by Sarmiento-Mirwaldt, and LBC Radio by Thomas. Our research has featured in newspapers such as *The Guardian*, *The Sunday Times*, or *The Daily Mail*, as well as foreign newspapers including the Israeli daily *Maariv*, the Polish *Gazeta Wyborcza*, or the *American Conservative*. Hughes has been a historical consultant for numerous TV programmes such as the BBC's 'Who do you think you are?', and Hammond was interviewed for a new TV series on 'How Factories Changed the World'.

Wider influence, contributions to and recognition by the research base

Evidence of our unit's contribution to the sustainability of the discipline, and recognition by the research base includes the following:

- **Responsiveness to national initiatives:** Fisher's work on election campaigns was sponsored by the ESRC following calls for urgent data collection for the 2017 and 2019 General Elections and the Electoral Commission's analysis of the 2016 EU referendum. Morgan's grants from the British Library's Endangered Archives Programme, and Dornan's contribution to the Being Human Festival are further evidence of our responsiveness to national priorities.
- **Journal editorship:** Neocleous was Chair of the Editorial Collective of *Radical Philosophy* until 2017. In 2018, Fisher, Hansen, Pickering, and Sarmiento-Mirwaldt took over the editorship of the *Political Studies Review*. They introduced new sections, e.g. for early results and theoretically-grounded null findings, that were well-received by authors and on social media. Fox, Richterova and Savani subsequently joined the editorial board, giving junior academics crucial editorial experience.
- Our staff serve on numerous **editorial boards** of leading journals in their field. Examples include *History of Women in the Americas* (Dornan), *Nations and Nationalism* (Uberoi), and *Political Science Research Methods* (Karp). Our staff also serve on book series editorial boards such as Edinburgh University Press 'Spinoza studies' (Del Lucchese), the Brill Historical Materialism series (Thomas), and Routledge Studies in Radical History and Politics (Linehan).
- Our staff hold **leadership positions in professional bodies**, namely the post of Director of the French History Network (Carrol), Council Chair of the Army Records Society (Hughes, 2014-2018), Vice President of the Second World War Research Group (Hammond), Communications Officer for the PSA's EPOP specialist group (Fox), and membership in numerous leading bodies such as the steering committees of the Oxford Intelligence group (Davies, Wagner), the Council and Publications Committee of the Navy Records Society (Seligmann), History UK (Dornan), the British Study Group on Intelligence (Richterova), the Cambridge Intelligence Seminar (Gustafson), the Society for the Study of French History (Carrol), the International Gramsci Society (Thomas), and the Conflict Research Society (Pickering).
- **Reviewing:** we have reviewed numerous grant applications for funders such as the ESRC, the British Academy, the Leverhulme Trust, and the American National Science Foundation. We regularly review article submissions for high-quality journals such as the *American Journal of Political Science*, the *American Political Science Review*, and the *Journal of Politics*, and book proposals for Cambridge University Press, Oxford University Press, and Yale University Press.

Our research excellence is reflected in the many competitive **fellowships** awarded to our staff, including a Visiting Fellowship at the University of Basel (Carrol), a British Academy Mid-career Fellowship (Dale), a fellowship of the Collegium de Lyon (Del Lucchese), a Visiting Fellowship at Mansfield College, Oxford (Dornan), a Fellowship of the Constitution Unit at UCL (Fisher), an Understanding Society Policy Fellowship (Fox), and a Ridgeway Fellowship of the United States Army Heritage and Education Centre (Hammond).

Our strategy to ensure the vitality of our research through strategic hires is evidenced in the numerous **prizes** our newer staff members have received, including the prize for the best 2018 article in the *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* and the Dillwyn Medal for Social Sciences (Fox), the Best Dissertation Prize from UCL, as well as a Green UCL Award for Excellence in Sustainability (Savani), the Moncado Prize for Hammond's article in the *Journal of Military History*, the Corbett Prize in Modern Naval History (Hammond), and the Best Student Paper Award from the Intelligence Studies Section of the International Studies Association (Richterova). Hughes won the finalist 'commended' prize in the Society for Army Historical Research Templer Medal competition for his monograph *Britain's Pacification of Palestine* (Cambridge University Press).

We collaborate extensively with other institutions in postgraduate training. Since 2018, we have been offering AHRC-funded PhD studentships through our membership in the **TECHNE doctoral training partnership**.

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

Brunel has a part-funding agreement with the **Commonwealth Scholarship Commission**. Uberoi co-supervises a PhD student at IIT Indore holding a Commonwealth Split-site Scholarship. We also collaborate with other institutions in PhD supervision: our PhD student Borg is co-supervised from the Norwegian Defence Intelligence School, benefitting from the expertise of scholars at two of the world's top-ranking intelligence institutions. Our staff frequently act as second supervisors for PhD students elsewhere, including King's College London, Goethe Universität Frankfurt/Main, Justus Liebig Universität Giessen, and Osaka University. The success of these arrangements is evidenced in exceptional student outcomes, with PhDs awarded *cum laude* or *magna cum laude*, and students winning prestigious prizes such as Osaka University's Best Doctoral Dissertation Award, and the Elsevier Outstanding Thesis Award. This demonstrates our commitment to research excellence among the next generation of scholars at Brunel and beyond.