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| Institution: Canterbury Christ Church University |
| Unit of Assessment: 23 Education |
| <p>1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy</p> <p>Our submission to the UoA 23: Education, comprises multidisciplinary research driven by a focus on work that is rooted in a commitment to the notion of education as a vehicle for social change. Our submission collectively represents research in the areas of the sociology of education, curriculum change, marginalised voices and education policy. At the census point, the Unit comprised 22 Education researchers (19 FTE). 12.5 FTE are based in the Faculty of Education, 2.5 FTE are contracted to the School of Language and Linguistics, 1FTE colleague (SC) joins the Unit from the School of Psychology, Politics and Sociology and 1FTE (JA) has a post in the Department of Enterprise, Employability and Research Development. Seven are Senior Lecturers, two Principal Lecturers, three are Readers (PD, KH, RR), and six are Professors (BB, RB, TC, AH, LR, LW). One Senior Research Fellow (AC) is attached to the National Institute for Christian Education Research (NICER).</p> <p>The Faculty in which the Unit sits has been restructured since REF 2014. Before 2020 the Unit was situated in the Faculty of Education but from August 2020 the Unit was resituated within the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Education. Going forward, the new Faculty structure offers opportunities for interdisciplinary research activity and the development of initiatives to invigorate research. During the assessment period, the context and internal structure of the Unit materially changed. As a consequence of changes in personnel combined with reflections following the results of REF2014, the Unit took the opportunity to realign its research strategy and redefined its ambition. During the first years of the assessment period, the strategy focused on developing research expertise within a discrete Research Directorate and capacity-building was linked to established research themes. To reinforce this approach, the Unit made further investment in a Professoriate to lead the next stage of research development. The future strategy outlined in REF2014 reflected a vision for education research of strong leadership in discrete research 'themes' and an 'apprenticeship' model for capacity-building. During the middle years of the assessment period, eight Professors retired or left their posts and three moved to part-time contracts. The impact of these departures was significant and necessitated a radical reimagining of the strategy. The revised strategy introduced in 2018/2019 positioned research expertise and development as an integral part of the work of the Unit and specifically addressed the practitioner nature of our work and the professional backgrounds of colleagues. Supported by an organisational restructure which reconsidered the function of research and sought to bring research overtly into the life and core activities of the academic Schools, the last two years has realised a systematic and strategically important realignment of the Unit's aims and goals. It has focused research more evidently into curricula and redirected resource to enable the integration of the principles of the <i>Vitae</i> Researcher Development Framework (VRDF). Between 2014/2018 and from 2018 to 2020 the strategy was based on the following aims:</p> <p>SA1. Nurturing inexperienced researchers and capacity-building with the aim of creating a sustainable research culture. This aim includes working to increase the number of colleagues with doctorates and a parallel increase in doctoral students in our priority areas (see also SA2).</p> <p>SA2. Conducting research that influences curricula and is linked to impact, particularly in the priority areas of religion and education, language and education, inclusion and work</p> |

with babies and young children. This aim includes a focus on research that enables us to work alongside stakeholders as collaborators and partners.

SA3. Increasing external grant and enterprise income in the priority areas of religion and education, inclusion, and work with marginalised groups.

The research strategy of the Unit is now framed by the core features outlined in the Institutional environment statement (REF5a, 2.1). The wider benefit of embedding research within the academic schools is evident in the development of new research networks, a substantial increase in supervisory capacity, and a resultant growth in income and in the postgraduate research community.

The core goals of the REF2014 strategy have not changed but their enactment is more transparent, egalitarian and inclusive. To this end, the revised strategy has been enacted through (1) the physical relocation of Professors and Readers from the Erasmus Building (which housed the “Research Directorate”) – aim SA1, SA3, (2) the explicit integration of the principles underpinning the *Vitae* Researcher Development Framework into the Unit’s development and staffing strategy – aim SA1, (3) the creation of a ‘Tiered’ approach to support and mentoring that is focused on building research capacity from the ground up – SA1, SA2, SA3, (4) rebuilding centres of research excellence around the issues and values of our partners and stakeholders – aim SA2, SA3.

The new strategy has seen growth in collaborative and multidisciplinary research, greater opportunities for cross-sector collaboration, and a sustained increase in the number of colleagues in the Faculty of Education able to supervise doctoral candidates. Post-2021, we will pursue these objectives with increasing vigour. We will draw on the very best pedagogic and practice-based education research to reconnect with regional regeneration and social isolation agendas, while always aspiring to make our research accessible and meaningful to our constituent communities of schools and educational settings.

Between 2014 and 2020, the Unit achieved its aims in the following ways:

SA1 Nurturing researchers from professional backgrounds and creating the basis for a sustainable research culture.

In common with many universities, the Faculty of Education is staffed largely by professionals who had successful careers as practitioners. The strategy to foster and sustain a thriving research culture acknowledged that the majority of colleagues entered higher education without doctorates. Our aim has been to increase the proportion of academic staff who are research-active and engaged in high-quality research, who can win external funding and supervise doctoral students to completion. In line with the university commitment to extend the principles of the Concordat to all staff on Teaching and Research contracts (REF5a, 3.2), our strategy involved creating a framework to address the needs of all colleagues from professional backgrounds. According to individual needs, colleagues can access mentoring, ringfenced time for research, funding for attending conferences and a programme of workshops for academic writing. Notwithstanding the challenge of progressing colleagues without doctorates to a position of independent researcher and doctoral supervisor, the number of colleagues with doctorates has risen steadily (see Section 2: Staff Development) and all academic staff without doctorates are encouraged to enrol on the EdD or on a PhD programme. Between 2014 and 2020, eighteen colleagues registered for a

doctorate and eight have completed. Since REF2014, supervisory capacity across the Unit has tripled and we anticipate that an additional fourteen colleagues will join the Unit as independent researchers in the next academic year, an increase of 73%.

While researcher development remains an important strand of our capacity-building work, the embedding of experienced researchers into the academic Schools has heightened the expectation that research both drives curricula and is conducted in an openly collaborative way. Colleagues with backgrounds as educational practitioners have a sharp understanding of our partner institutions and much of our research speaks directly with these audiences. Research on teacher practice and identity, and on students' voice and agency employs inclusive approaches by researching, where ethically justifiable, with participants. Frequently working in sensitive areas to better understand social complexity and social exclusion, the Unit's strategy drives forward work that upholds values of transparency and open communication, as well as care and respect for those involved in research. In support of this, all colleagues are required to upload their published outputs to *ResearchSpace*, the university's institutional repository. To enable access to our research findings by our constituent communities and stakeholders, we encourage the use of social media and other open outlets.

SA2 Conducting research that influences curricula and is linked to impact.

A bedrock of the Unit's work is the critique and development of curricula in a variety of environments from baby rooms to multiagency sites. This work aims to influence the development of curriculum (**BB, RB and TC**), it includes research that expands the definition of curricula to include the political and cultural environment in which it sits (**CB, LR, PD and AH**), and the identity of professionals who enact it (**SP, ID, AC, MK**). This work underpins the work of the Unit's centres and research networks and is integral to both Impact Case Studies in REF3.

The Unit is home to three research centres each engaged in a systematic programme of research, capacity-building, and impact generation around their substantive interests and methodological concerns. The Unit is also home to networks that have built successful research profiles or aim to contribute to new research trajectories. While the research centres have made, in different ways, a strong contribution to developing expertise, sponsoring the research networks has strengthened the key areas of research impact: social impact, policy influence, impact on health and wellbeing and improving the life chances of children and families.

The largest research network is CLIER (Culture, Language, and International Education Research), currently comprising three researchers with significant responsibility for independent research and a PhD community of over thirty students. CLIER initially brought together several researchers working on the cultural politics of English language education and who shared interests in exploring teaching, learning, teacher education or supervision as complex social experiences. The research network has been instrumental in supporting the development of emerging researchers at postgraduate and early-career level. During the REF assessment period, colleagues within the network have supervised 50 FTE PhD students, including 42 funded international students. Outputs from network members include peer-reviewed publications on paradigm-shifting methodologies on discourse analysis (**AH**) and on international students in Higher Education (**AH, SH**). The network has also generated research on primary school language education (**PD, AH**) and the learning experience of child migrants (**AH**). **Holliday** has been invited to contribute to the Horizon 2020 European 'Child-up' project, **Hoult** has acted as

consultant for the Australian BEST (Basic Education Sector Transformation) project in the Philippines, and **Driscoll** is a member of the AILA (International Association of Applied Linguistics) research network in Early Language Learning.

Two other research networks, the interprofessional 'Action for Collaborative Transformation (ACT) Project' (led by developing researcher **SS**) and 'Education for Sustainable Futures' (developing researcher **NK**) hold regular seminars and public engagement events. ACT has held a regular annual conference which attracts GPs and specialists from health and education and has a Visiting Senior Research Fellow attached.

The National Institute for Christian Education Research (NICER) was founded in 2006 as a Cathedral Group initiative to establish a centre of research excellence in the area of Christianity and education. Over 15 years, NICER has gained critical mass and international recognition through securing the support of several external funders, and has fulfilled the strategic aims of income generation, capacity-building and public engagement. Led by **RB** and previously by Cooling, NICER's activities are supported by a professorial research associate (**LR**), one senior research fellow (**AC**), one senior consulting research lead (Hulbert), three senior research associates (**JR**, **CT** and **MW**). NICER has played an instrumental role in increasing external grant capture, increasing the volume of outputs in internationally peer-reviewed journals, involving more partner schools in research projects and increasing the PGR community. The centre has led three specialised cohorts of the EdD programme with a focus on Christianity and Education (27 students). In partnership with Liverpool Hope University, it has organised six annual international PGR conferences on Christianity and Education and plays a leading role in extending the Unit's international reach.

Led by **BB**, the Centre for Learning about Science and Religion (LASAR), established in 2017, has built a strong national and international reputation for projects investigating the relationships between science, religion and the humanities. LASAR's work is supported by four research associates and a further five senior lecturers contribute to embedding research carried out by LASAR in taught programmes across the Unit. Its research projects fall into two main areas: learning about science and religion, and 'epistemic insight' (how students, student teachers and in-service teachers understand the Big Questions raised by science, technology and engineering within a multidisciplinary arena). Both areas have been supported by grants from major funders and LASAR has achieved significant success in applications for bids including responsive-mode research grants. LASAR has a sustainable programme of research projects which engage school students from disadvantaged backgrounds and its team works across quantitative research projects, educational interventions, school improvement and professional development. It has proved to be a vital and enduring capacity-building platform, supporting and developing academic colleagues with limited experience of publication through processes of co-writing, participation in bid writing and public engagement events, so that all members of the team who are not experienced researchers are jointly named on recent articles or bids. The wider Faculty has benefited from LASAR's pioneering approach to embedding research into taught programmes and involving students in enquiry methods.

The Research Centre for Children, Families and Communities (RCfCFC) (active until 2018) played an important role in maintaining the Unit's relationship with local communities and influencing public policy on the rights of young people, children and babies. Under the leadership of **KG**, **SP**, and **RR**, the Centre built an international reputation for innovative research in Early Years provision

and on the experiences of socially marginalised young adults. During the assessment period, colleagues working within the Centre produced 40 outputs, hosted 10 annual Baby Room conferences and organised regular research seminars. It has secured externally funded income to the value of £499,930, including grants from the Froebel Trust, as well as supporting the work of 8 PhD students attached to the Centre. The outward facing nature of the Centre's work is reflected in the ICS, *Improving policy and practice within early childhood, education and care (birth to two), through raising the status of the early years profession, improving specialist training and increasing investment*. The Unit's revised research strategy prompted a review of research roles wholly dependent on non-renewable external income and led to the transition of the Centre to a new research network, Children, Families and Communities, facilitated by **RR**. It is comprised of new research clusters that affirm the agency of underrepresented groups, for example, 'We Need to Talk about Class' (**PS**), 'Early Childhood Community of Practice' (**HW**) and 'Marginalised Voices in Early Childhood' (**KS**).

SA3. Increasing external grant and enterprise income.

The Unit's twin ambitions of supporting research that has tangible social and economic impact and of creating frameworks where less experienced researchers can be nurtured rested on ambitious goals for external grant and enterprise income. This strategy was relevant for a teaching-intensive university where less resources are available for study leaves and sabbaticals and where research development is tied into appraisal conversations and staff development procedures. The Unit focused on supporting grant capture in the areas where our research has impact on curriculum development particularly in the intersection of faith and curriculum development (**RB, AC, TC, BB, LR**) and in the area of young children and marginalised voices (**SP, RR, KG** and **DV**). The focus on increasing income generation in these areas was crucial in developing both Impact Case Studies. Between 2014 and 2020 the Unit has achieved considerable success through targeting funders whose vision and mission align with ours and where success would enhance the impact of our research and support the sustainability of impact into the future. Income from external grants and agencies has 1) facilitated a range of public engagement events (Section 4), 2) involved Unit members in collaborative projects with stakeholder groups in the co-creation of knowledge and in the evaluation of educational interventions, 3) supported researcher development by freeing colleagues from teaching responsibilities, and 4) enabled greater reach. The success of the Unit's bid strategy has additionally supported the career development of researchers who were brought into research projects through funded backfill. A total of £2,068,800 has been secured during the assessment period from a range of prestigious funders. Looking to the future (therefore not captured in REF4), and in direct alignment with our impact strategy, is the award to LASAR of £99,732 from the ESRC (COVID-19 Research and Innovation) and £47,761 for NICER from the Sir Halley Stewart Trust for a project that has a special interest in pupils disproportionately disadvantaged by COVID-19 disruption.

Future strategic aims and goals for research and impact

The new Faculty in which the Unit sits hosts five other Units of Assessment and this provides rich opportunities for meaningful cross-disciplinary work and for less experienced colleagues from Education to work alongside more experienced researchers. The Unit will continue to focus on the potential of education as an inherently interdisciplinary subject. Our previous success in establishing a thriving PGR culture – building reputation in the area of religion and education and

in developing the foundations for sustainable research – means that we are in a strong position to consolidate our research base and to extend our research expertise in emerging areas. Our future strategy will consolidate our recent gains and include additional goals centred on our commitment to challenging inequality, celebrating connectivity, and exposing the causes of marginalisation and isolation. We aim to:

1. Maintain and evolve the ‘Tier’ framework (see Section 2), informed by the principles of the Research Development Concordat and the VRDF, geared towards colleagues from professional backgrounds to support career progression in relation to research. As a result of participating in this process, colleagues will take part in a bespoke mentoring program, receive ring-fenced time for research and engage with a programme of development.
2. Capitalise on the work and networks established by LASAR and NICER to extend our international research profile in the intersection of religion and education, and in the connections between scientific and religious knowledge. The current research centres will maintain a key role in defining the research environment and sustaining the Unit through income generation and capacity building.
3. Create relationships and establish links with stakeholders and regional players so that research is an integral part of our practitioner/partnership activity. We will do this in two ways. First, through privileging projects that are Close-to-Practice research so that research relationships are embedded with local, regional and international policy communities. Secondly, through developing a two-way relationship with practice through growing EdD/PhD registrations among practitioners and co-creating impactful research. This practitioner network will facilitate an organic relationship with partners and enable us to draw on the experience of practitioners to inform new ways of working.
4. We will capitalise on the interdisciplinarity of the research centres and networks and build new networks in arts-based, and heritage education, while strengthening and supporting interests in sustainability marginalised voices and children’s experiences of the natural environment.

2. People

Staffing

As an inherently multidisciplinary research area, the Unit benefits from drawing in colleagues from other areas of the Faculty and beyond, and this broad-church approach has enriched the ‘family’ of Education researchers and stimulated the research environment. The staffing profile of the Faculty of Education has been determined by the dominance of the Initial Teacher Education portfolio and thus on recruiting outstanding teacher educators with recent and relevant experience in schools. This has meant that capacity-building is central to the Unit’s development plans (**SA1**). The 2018 review of the research strategy involved appointing a Faculty Director of Research who was tasked with implementing the Researcher Development Concordat and embedding the four domains of the *Vitae* Researcher Development Framework (VRDF) within our research support initiatives. To this end, the Unit introduced a **‘four-tier’ system for research development**, each linked to principles that underpin the VRDFs domains alongside specific expectations, recognition and rewards. Colleagues who wish to privilege applied scholarship and enterprise are ‘Tier 1’ and they have access to funding and mentors who support them in developing expertise in relation to enterprise and professional activities. ‘Tier 2’, colleagues are expected to engage with at least one of the VRDF domains and are paired with a mentor who they meet every six weeks to discuss

their progress and refresh development targets. They are supported to attend national conferences, apply for periods of study leave and encouraged to register for a doctorate. Colleagues with doctorates and who are beginning to publish in peer-refereed journals are placed on 'Tier 3'. They receive regular mentoring and are eligible to apply for financial support for international conferences and longer periods of study leave. Working alongside a mentor, colleagues develop a research plan which identifies how they intend to extend their engagement with all VRDF domains. 'Tier 4' matches the REF criteria for having significant responsibility for independent research and aligns with the research allocations across faculties and across the Unit. The Tier system has introduced transparency, accountability, and created a process where colleagues with no previous experience of research can visualise progression and make the stepwise transition to fully research-active status. The Tier system and the research career pathway 'trajectory' is open to all colleagues - the Unit does not employ any fixed-term staff and the development of part-time staff is the same as for full-time staff.

The **Research and Innovation Funding Unit (RIFU)** provides strategic and targeted support to academic staff in seeking and securing funding for their research activities. In addition, the Faculty of Education offers the Professional and Academic Development programme to all academic staff at all stages of researcher development. With a primary focus on academic and researcher citizenship, training workshops provide support for technical aspects of research, such as getting an ORCID identifier, advice on promotions, writing abstracts, presenting posters and strategies to develop multidisciplinary research.

UoA-focused Staff Development

The Unit has further embedded the underlying principles of the VRDF through creating an Academic and Professional Development programme. This programme, comprised of workshops and forums, provides opportunities for all colleagues to develop their skills and aptitude through their engagement with aspects of the VRDF domains. All colleagues work with their line managers and the Faculty Director of Research to identify the sessions/workshops that will most effectively align with their career trajectory.

In line with university policy (see REF5a), the Unit provides support for career development across the entire range of academic grades. Within the REF period, the Unit has supported 20 Early Career Researchers in attending the SPARC programme (Supporting Progression in Advance Research Careers) and 6 colleagues to attend Aurora leadership training, Advance HE's leadership development initiative for women and those who identify as women.

Our strategy in building an inclusive approach to conducting research has prioritised the creation of a comprehensive mentoring system targeted at inexperienced researchers. All colleagues in the Unit who aim to become research-active or who are already active independent researchers are required to mentor or be mentored. Mentors are expected to meet once a month and to review ongoing work around publication, writing or making bids to funders. A parallel strand has concentrated on growing supervisory capacity. The Unit has devised a bespoke programme of developmental sessions to support new supervisors that complements the programme of events run by the Graduate College focusing on the specific needs of supervising EdD students. These run every month and include an annual supervisors' conference. Attendance at a minimum of two developmental sessions and the conference is mandatory for all inexperienced supervisors.

The university has clear procedures and criteria for promotion to Reader and conferment of the title of Professor. During the census period, two staff members have been promoted to Professor (**RB** in 2019 and **LR** in 2020) and two members have been made Reader (**KH, RR**). The opportunities for staff to gain promotion are supported by central staff development guidelines. Colleagues have access to regular workshops to promote research as a viable career path, which includes long-term support for Readership applications.

Equality and Diversity

Canterbury Christ Church University is fully committed to equal opportunities in both its recruitment processes and in the training and development of researchers. Staff with recognised/declared disabilities are provided with support to enable them to progress their research careers and are supported in accessing funds from the Government's *Access to Work* scheme. CCCU has been an Athena SWAN Charter Member since 2015 and attained an institutional bronze award in November 2016.

The Unit's commitment to diversity and inclusion is particularly important in a Faculty where the majority of colleagues are women and join us without a research degree qualification. The Faculty pays particular attention to enabling staff from practitioner backgrounds to develop research skills to become independent researchers. As part of the Faculty induction process, new colleagues are inducted into the tier system and are assigned a mentor who supports their development with a specific focus on research.

Women constitute 58% of this submission. This figure indicates a slight levelling of the gender balance of REF entrants compared to REF2014 (69% female). In noting this shift, the Unit is sensitive to the fact that all Readers are women while four of six Professors are male. To address this imbalance, we are providing extended mentorship for those colleagues who wish to be supported and we have initiated a project to scrutinise the mechanisms by which colleagues access support for researcher development in relation to gender. Mentoring for 'Tier 4' colleagues includes advice and support for aspiring Readers; for Readers, mentoring is tailored around research plans, personal development plans, external profile and impact. Where structured mentoring for all Unit colleagues builds on annual appraisal objective setting and is provided by senior researchers within the Unit, Readers and Tier 4 colleagues can draw on additional mentoring from Professors external to the Faculty and from the Visiting Professor.

Research students

The Faculty offers a PhD programme alongside the long-standing Education Doctorate (EdD). For a Unit of this size, we have consistently attracted strong cohorts of international students onto the PhD, while most UK-based Education research students are largely in-service professionals, studying part-time. In the preceding REF period (2008 – 2013) 21 students completed doctorates; in the period between 2014 and 2020, 103 students gained a doctorate, representing a more than 300% increase on the preceding assessment period.

In line with the university's objective to increase the number of doctoral completions, we have focused considerable energy on creating structures to sustain PhD students through their course of study. As outlined in Section 1, several colleagues each year are enrolled on doctoral programmes and our awareness of the pressures on in-service professionals informs our

approach to student support. Our strategy to increase both registrations and completions has been to use a targeted approach to the support of all students and the creation of spaces (both physical and virtual) where students, colleagues and supervisors share ideas, and which strengthen the supervisor/student relationship. The EdD was recently revalidated to increase the number of formal opportunities for students and supervisors to monitor and evaluate progress and suggest interventions where necessary. The revalidation also changed the balance between level 7 and level 8 modules so that students were better prepared for the thesis stage.

The university's Graduate School issues an open call for applications for three years' full funding (fees and maintenance). The Unit is awarded two of these funded scholarships every year, at least one of these is an open call and the other offered to an applicant wishing to study in an identified priority for the Unit. Between 2014 and 2020, 12 Education doctoral students received full university scholarships.

Alongside the open call, our plans to broaden the research student demographic and increase the number of full-time students has been successful on two fronts. First, we have pursued a strategy of recruiting students in our priority areas (**SA2**) for PhDs, which include 40 students in the area of curriculum and teacher development, 17 in inclusion, 7 in early years and 4 in Christianity and Education. Secondly, we developed themed cohorts for the EdD focused on the Unit's key areas for research, which have included leadership and education, special educational needs and inclusion, and Christianity. Tutors worked with cohorts to generate a community practice where students formed networks to support their learning and to share their work.

Thirdly, the Unit was successful in its bid to support the 'Algerian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research Doctoral Scheme' (2014) which saw cohorts of 100 joining a four-month pre-doctoral programme. More than 50 students elected to progress to PhDs in English literature, linguistics and language teaching. The Ministry's aim of building capacity in English in Algerian universities, and to diversify its international partnerships into the Anglophone world, aligns with the Faculty's successful capacity building and professional development work in Malaysia and in Palestine (funded through the World Bank), the excellence of the latter recognised in the Times Higher Education award for International Impact (2018).

A major expression of our commitment to Equality and Diversity is our offer of doctoral pathways to students who may not have previously considered the opportunity at this level attractive. The Unit will continue to promote 'themed' EdD opportunities, focused on the areas of values education and marginalised voices. Through organising doctoral cohorts in this way, we have been able to attract students from under-represented groups, including, in the three years in which we targeted those with interests in Christianity and Faith, five students from Pentecostal and black church communities.

Students engage with the wider Unit through their involvement in activities designed to create a culture where PGR students and colleagues share their work, including a well-attended programme of Faculty-based seminars, postgraduate conferences and scholarship days. Many of these sessions are developmental and students are expected to present the findings of their research in both formal and informal peer-led sessions, facilitated by Professors and Readers. International students are offered cultural immersion classes and additional writing workshops. International students join with all others in the induction to the doctoral process. In addition, full-time students are supported financially to participate in conferences, including at overseas events.

Our expectation that all students engage in these development activities is supported through objective-setting during mid-year and annual reviews. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the year-round programme of workshops and events have moved online, with additional online research skills training provided to offer greater flexibility for students managing challenging work and home-schooling demands.

The university established a Graduate College in 2019, superseding the previous Graduate School. The Graduate College co-ordinates the central training of PGR students and the appointment and training of all PGR supervisors.

3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

The sharp focus on income generation supports the Unit's wider strategy for building and strengthening the research environment and culture and maximising the impact of the Unit's research (**SA3**). As a teaching-intensive, research-active university, the benefits of securing external funding for research projects is vital in underpinning our capacity-building plans and for co-creating rich and impactful research with stakeholders and partners. External income has supported both research and knowledge exchange and the latter income stream sustains our policy of embedding research into projects which are primarily aimed towards educational improvement. During the census period, £3,372,771 was generated from a variety of national and international funders, of which £2,068,800 is research income.

The Unit aimed to build capacity and expertise in bidding for external income with new researchers by creating developmental opportunities for colleagues to establish a bidding profile with smaller projects (**SA1**). Colleagues were provided with mentors who supported them in every stage of the process, from identifying areas for bidding, exploring potential funders and crafting the bid (see section 2). The Unit has seen fruition from this strategy leading to smaller awards and knowledge exchange partnerships, for example Kent Highways Evaluation **WS**, (£17,673) in 2016, Stephens, Quality Audit tool for School Leaders, (£24, 734) and **NK**, Outdoor Provision for Babies 2018 (£20, 651).

The three research centres have pursued in different ways the strategy of building upon close relationships with key funders whose interests align with the Centres' established areas of expertise. The Research Centre for Children, Families and Communities (RCfCFC) focused on applications to funders that encouraged research on babies and young children alongside research focusing on vulnerable young people. Since REF 2014, this generated over £499,930. Our long-standing reputation for research in faith-based education has seen growth and development through successful grant capture initially by NICER which was then added to by the achievements of LASAR in the latter part of the REF period. Both LASAR and NICER developed their capacity to meet the requirements of funders through expanding their research expertise and infrastructures to support bid activity within their centres. Both research centres have received grants from the prestigious Templeton World Charity Foundation and since the end of the REF assessment period, a further £99,732 has been awarded by the ESRC to a consortium led by CCCU in relation to the Covid-19 Rapid Response call.

NICER's strategic appointment of two research associates as well as a senior consulting research lead with expertise in quantitative research methods (**SH**) expanded its ability to respond to bids that demanded different types of data. These include: *Faith in the Nexus* (£403,000) and *Ten*

Leading Schools: the spiritual influence of Christian-ethos Secondary Education (£270,000) both from the Douglas Trust and the *What if Learning Character Intervention* (42,930) from the Department for Education. The investment in involving colleagues from the wider Unit with expertise in science (**CT and JR**) enabled NICER to secure funding for various projects on the science/religion classroom encounter including, *The Beginning Teacher in the Science/Religion Encounter* and *Being Human* (£635,000) from Templeton World Charity Foundation.

Similarly, LASAR has employed researchers from different disciplinary backgrounds who strengthen the team's ability to address and roll out the 'Epistemic Insight' project (see Section 1) across a broad range of curriculum areas. Including colleagues with expertise in engineering, science, and religious education has contributed to their capacity to achieve grants from All Saints Education Trust (*Big Questions in RE Classrooms: £27,830*) and *Thinking Like a Physicist* (£13,497) from the Science and Technology Facilities Council. LASAR has uniquely influenced the next stage of the Templeton World Charity Foundation's major worldwide research scheme. The £5.5 million fund made available by the Templeman Foundation for the BQIC (Big Questions in Classrooms) initiative is modelled on the previously funded *Epistemic Insight* project (£1,200,000). Every LASAR grant has involved collaboration and interdisciplinary approaches and has played a vital role in capacity-building. The work carried out by ECR (**PS**) exemplifies this approach. She gained her doctorate in 2018 and worked within LASAR to develop research projects with teacher educators. She has submitted a single authored article to a refereed journal and has just submitted her first bid for external funding.

Infrastructure and Facilities

The decision to develop a strategy based around an integrated approach to research development was supported by significant changes in infrastructure. Researchers in the Unit now occupy office space across the university's North Holmes Road campus. With the dis-establishment of the Educational Research Directorate, senior researchers have been relocated to offices among the wider Education community. The redistribution of staff has had a tangible impact on the Unit's ambitions for research-engaged curricula as evidenced by the work of LASAR in embedding opportunities for student engagement with funded projects as part of undergraduate and PGCE programmes. It has also enhanced the development of new research networks reflecting the Unit's commitment to impact in the area of social isolation and deprivation. This is most notable in sustainable education, for example, *Let's Talk about Class, Project 93*, supported by the Unit and the University Sustainability Unit, which brings researchers, teachers and undergraduate students together as a sustainability think tank.

Sitting within the Faculty of Education and as the only Unit of Assessment, research leadership is directed by the Faculty Director of Research who works closely with the Dean of Faculty in managing resource and developing strategy. The Faculty Research Committee (FRC) has increasingly become the engine for strategic planning and monitoring activity and impact against targets. The FRC includes representation from the research centres and a cross-section of researchers including those who are on the journey towards having significant responsibility for independent research. The Committee is serviced by the Unit research administrators (1 FTE: 0.5 research, 0.5 enterprise and innovation) who provide support for colleagues in the administration of projects and bid development as well as organising conferences and seminars. In addition, they support postgraduate students with claims for expenditure. The research centres each have 1 FTE administrative support.

The **Research and Innovation Funding Unit (RIFU)** provides targeted support to members of the Unit who seek to secure funding for their research and knowledge exchange activities. As part of the decision to target specific funders that align with the values base of the centres, RIFU has worked closely with NICER and LASAR in relation to proposal development and in forward-planning for future bids. The recent success in securing bids for research looking at the impact of Covid-19 in their respective areas is a direct result of this support. More recently, RIFU has contributed to the Academic Professional Development Programme through offering bidding clinics where inexperienced researchers can develop ideas in small groups. Award administration is provided by the Faculty's Finance and Enterprise team who work in support of the Senior Management Accountant (based in the Finance Office) on financial reporting.

Unit members conducting research in physical education have access to the facilities at Polo Farm Sports Centre for teaching and research and are supported by a 0.5 FTE technician. All members of the Unit have access to a wide range of print and electronic resources held by the university's Library and Learning Resources service. Research students and staff benefit from the expertise of a dedicated Education librarian. Membership of professional associations provide access to further digital resources, and researchers in faith-based education also have access to the Canterbury Cathedral Archives and Library.

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

Contribution to development of the profession

The focus on practice and practitioner expertise in our work informs our deep commitment to projects and relationships that create opportunities for cross-sector cooperation, and which build the foundation for authentic professional autonomy. Work in this area reinforces our goal to conduct research that impacts on curriculum and which build relationships with our partners (**SA2**). For example, the **Working with Families Hub**, established in 2013 and led by **SC** and **JA**, was open to professionals working with families of children of all ages, or with a research interest in family support and wellbeing. It had very strong ties to local HomeStart schemes and Children's Centres, ran bi-monthly seminars and when it ended in 2019, had over 100 members. Our commitment to the development of the teaching profession is evident in our engagement with local and regional networks and with the wider community of schools, colleges and other HEIs (see Section 1). An example of this is the work carried out by **SC** to develop the teaching of sociology. This included her work as a British Sociological Association trustee for public engagement to raise the profile of Sociology within schools, running regular sixth form sociology conferences and establishing the South East Kent Sociology Teacher Hub. A further example is the **Epistemic Insight** consortium, led by **BB**, which brings together Canterbury Christ Church University, the University of Bedfordshire, Saint Mary's University, University of Chester, University of Leicester, University of Roehampton and the University of Northampton to facilitate the sharing of expertise, skills, research and knowledge.

Our commitment to the development of teacher professionalism and curriculum development (**SA2**) has been sustained and further expanded through targeted partnerships leading to new, tailored, in-service provision for teachers of English in overseas settings. For example, the Curriculum Reform for Civil Education and Promoting Diversity project developed non-accredited professional development for teachers in Israel and Georgia (**LW**). Our success in accessing

funding for designing and supporting initiatives for teacher development in international contexts has provided rich data for longitudinal studies and further research which are in and of themselves impactful and will also build towards future impact analyses. Building on the successful Malaysia BEd in partnership with the Malaysian Ministry of Education (led by **KB**), our work in pre-service and in-service teacher development has grown. Alongside the Algerian Doctoral Initiative (see Section 2), colleagues have been involved in three professional development programmes projects specifically designed to strengthen and sustain the teaching quality in Palestine in collaboration with Universities in Palestine. Both projects focused on the co-creation of solutions and strategies for development in the region. The first project, *Raising the Quality of Teacher Education Programmes in Palestine through technology Enhanced Learning and Teaching Assessment* received 890,000 Euros from the European Commission's Erasmus+ Key Action 2 Higher Education Capacity Building project. The second project received US\$300,000 in funding from the World Bank and expanded a previous World Bank project undertaken in Palestine between 2012 and 2015. The third project in 2019 was an award for research capacity enhancement in two countries. The total, £67,000 a year was split between the Faculty of Arts and Humanities and the Faculty of Education. Colleagues from Education, led by **SH, LR, CB** and **MK** worked with three partner universities in Palestine (including a site in Palestine and in the UK) to develop writing skills, qualitative research methods and bid writing skills.

Education for Sustainable Futures

In line with the Unit's ambitions for greater social impact, the emerging network in sustainable and environmental education will be key to the Unit's future strategic aims (**SA1 and SA2**). Staff involved in this research network have successfully established multiple relationships across the UK and contributed to policy forums and parliamentary debates. In 2019, **AB** provided case-study evidence for the Barnardo's Scotland 2020 report, *Supervision in Education – Healthier Schools for All* and gave evidence at a Scottish Parliament roundtable on *Supervision in Education*, chaired by Deputy First Minister John Swinney. Swinney has claimed that the *'findings in the Barnardo's report, will contribute to the work we are currently undertaking in partnership with local government and the teacher unions on the development of new professional learning opportunities for teachers focussed on their health and wellbeing'*. Howells has contributed to several workstreams underpinning the *Report by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Fit and Healthy Childhood* (movement, diet, role of supermarkets). **AB** and **NK** have engaged with local (Kent Wildlife Trust) and national partners (Sustainable Food Trust) to support sustainable approaches to outdoor learning, environmental education and conservation.

Contribution to the discipline and the research base

The Unit's contribution to subject disciplines is shaped by our engagement in academic debates through journals, editing and supporting colleagues at other institutions. Staff play leadership roles in learned societies and subject associations: Royal Society of Biology Primary Curriculum Committee (**BB**), Froebel Trust (**DV, SP**). **RB** was President of the Association of University Lecturers of Religious Education between 2015 and 2019. **LR** is co-convenor of the World Education Research Association's International Research Network on Education and Extremism, co-convenor of the BERA SIG on Religion, Values and Education, and assistant secretary for the International Seminar on Education and Values (ISREV). **LW** has been Visiting Professor at Università degli Studi di Milano-Bicocca [2017], Michigan State University (2019), and at Paris West Nanterre La Défense University (2015). In 2019, his book, written with Laura Formenti,

Transforming Perspectives in Lifelong Learning and Adult Education, won the prestigious 2019 American Association for Adult and Continuing Education's Cyril O. Houle Award for 'outstanding literature in education'. In 2020 he was inducted into the International Adult and Continuing Education's Hall of Fame at the University of Oklahoma.

Members of the Unit currently serve on the editorial boards of leading journals in their field, including: the British Journal of Religious Education (**RB, LR**), the Journal of Belief and Values (**LR**), the Journal of Education and Christian Belief (**TC**), International Journal of Christianity and Education (**TC**), SCIREA Journal of Sociology (**MK**), Language and Intercultural Communication and Discourses (**Holliday**). Other colleagues contributing to the activities of the Unit but not returned here have served on the editorial boards of the Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs (JORSEN), (**SS**), International Journal of Art Therapy: Inscape (**AP**), the Journal of Career Education and Counselling (**HR**).

Unit members have peer-reviewed for over 55 national and international journals in the field of education and the related disciplines of language and linguistics, sociology, career development, and health care including the British Educational Research Journal, the Oxford Review of Education and Critical Discourse Studies.

Members of the Unit contribute to the sustainability of the subject disciplines by supporting scholars at other institutions. They have acted as external examiners for PhD vivas including at the universities of Birmingham, Warwick, Gloucestershire, Birmingham City, (**LR**, 2018, 2019, 2020), University of Cambridge (**ID**, 2017), **AB**, (Sheffield, 2019), **RR** (The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, 2018), **TC** (University of Oxford, University of Nottingham), the Universities of Warwick, Birkbeck, Bristol and UCL (**LW**, 2016, 2019, 2018, 2017).

During the REF period, members of the Unit have been invited to give 37 keynotes or acted as chairs at national and international events. During this period, staff organised 39 conferences and 67 research seminars in addition to the annual PGR conference. These events were a significant contribution to generating a sustainable research culture in the Unit. The annual Baby Room conference (2014-2018) received international recognition for raising the profile and status of baby room work and was instrumental in expanding and consolidating the impact of the Baby Room projects (ICS23.01: *Improving policy and practice within early childhood, education and care (birth to two), through raising the status of the early years profession, improving specialist training and increasing investment*). The peripatetic annual conference of the European Society for Research on the Education of Adults (ESREA: Life History and Biography Research Network), led by **AB** and **LW** attracts 80-100 participants. NICER organises a biannual seminar series for schools in the faith sector: its **Faith in the Nexus** conference (2019) (**RB, AC**) which launched the final report of the research project, attracted 70 participants from the UK and 22 international participants.