

Institution: Ulster University
Unit of Assessment: Law
1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy

Context

Our REF2021 submission focuses on transitional justice, human rights, international law and gender research led by the Transitional Justice Institute (TJI), and the social security and access to justice research of our Social Justice cluster (SJ). Our ambition is to support excellent research in these areas, working with and for communities at local and international level, from women's rights groups in Belfast to social security claimants in Scotland and disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Port-au-Prince and Rio.

Our REF2014 submission centred on TJI's leadership in the field of transitional justice (TJ) – how law deals with the transition from conflict or oppression. As TJ has expanded and diversified, TJI has maintained its **intellectual leadership in understanding and explaining the role of international law in the field**, the **multi-level gender** implications and boundaries of TJ, and the broader relationship of TJ to **peacebuilding, including socioeconomic and cultural aspects**. TJI serves as an **international hub for TJ research**, attracting visitors from across the globe and collaborating with them in their home countries.

Our Social Justice cluster, representing the foundation of a formal observatory, encapsulates our focus on **social and civil rights**, profiling **citizenship and legal participation** as they relate to access to justice and social security. The cluster's work has already distinguished Ulster as one of the UK's leading centres for socio-legal research in this field, producing significant research funding, outputs and impact.

Whilst the different disciplinary remits of TJI and SJ diversify the impact of Law research at Ulster, they share thematic and methodological continuities, evident in their emphasis on **human rights, socioeconomic rights** and **participatory action research**, and in their alignment with the University's strategic theme of Social Renewal. There is a common focus on **research that addresses the real-world challenges** facing communities. Across the unit, we work with people who have been **marginalised, overlooked or silenced**, while consulting with and influencing civil society representatives and policy-makers in international organisations, elected bodies and public administrations.

We pursue **multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research**, evidenced by where we publish, the grants we secure, cross-disciplinary supervisions, and the collaborations we have developed. Our staff engage with audiences and publics beyond academia, including by **innovative use of film and other art forms**. We **collaborate** with colleagues in other departments and universities, and with partners in civil society, the public sector and international organisations. TJI and SJ operations are mutually supportive, including through dual membership (Simpson, Fitzpatrick) and joint supervision of PhD researchers.

Structure

Research is coordinated by the Law Research Director (RD) (O'Connell) and conducted through the work of the TJI (Director O'Rourke) and the SJ cluster (Lead McKeever). The unit includes staff from the Law School and the School of Applied Social and Policy Sciences (ASPS). The RD works with the Heads of School, Faculty (of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, AHSS) Associate Dean for Research and Impact (ADRI) and the Deputy VC for Research and External Affairs (REA). The RD leads the unit and represents it in weekly Law School management meetings, monthly meetings of the Faculty's RDs and of the University's RDs and REF Steering Committee and attends the Faculty Leadership Team. The RD manages the Unit's research strategy (with the

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ADRI) and, working with the relevant Head of School (HoS), discusses research achievements and plans, including targets, for individual staff. These discussions take place in annual formal meetings with each staff member, and more frequent informal meetings. We have supported the sharing of good practice across the unit by developing Researcher, Impact Strategy and PhD Researcher Handbooks. Our Law Ethics Filter Committee (Chair O'Rourke) reviews all staff, PhD or student research involving human participants; depending on the level of risk the University Research Ethics Committee's approval may also be required. All staff and PhD researchers have completed the University **Research Integrity course (100% completion)**.

The Law unit is spread across three campuses: Jordanstown, Magee and Belfast, maintaining our commitment as a civic University across the major population centres.

Research and Impact Strategy 2013–20

For the period 2013–20, our strategic aims were:

- To produce publications which consolidate and advance TJI's academic and intellectual leadership in the field of transitional justice with relevance to Northern Ireland (NI) and other post-conflict sites
- To intensify our research base in law and social justice
- To deepen innovative multidisciplinary research through new partnerships and research collaborations
- To maintain support to staff advancing our research agenda through research support mechanisms and processes for integrating community and institutional praxis
- To support ECRs to develop through the research support mechanisms and encourage external relationships and policy connections for ECR research
- To facilitate staff participation in international conferences and conference/seminar delivery with a focus on under-represented communities and new conflict and transition sites
- To develop other institutional and comparative collaborations particularly with those engaged in policy-oriented research
- To support individual staff members to garner indicators of esteem and further the non-academic impact of their work, particularly through encouraging leadership in community, philanthropic, and institutional entities
- On impact, our aims have been to
 - Influence policymaking in Northern Ireland, Scotland and at UK level
 - Influence policymaking of international organisations
 - Shape the development of relevant legal frameworks and guidelines
 - Develop cultural impacts

We have met these aims, sustaining TJI research while at the same time developing a set of SJ research initiatives. We have strengthened our **funding base**, securing support from traditional and non-traditional funders: £3.8m during this cycle, up nearly 60% from £2.4M in REF2014). We have participated in major multi-centre projects (DfID-funded Political Settlements Research Programme, GCRF-funded Gender, Justice and Security Research Hub).

During this cycle we have graduated **19.24 PhD researchers, a 34% increase on 14.33 in REF2014**. Six of our **PhD researchers have progressed to lecturer or postdoctoral positions at Ulster**, seven to posts at other universities (including Oxford, Bremen) and ten to public sector or civil society positions. One of our impact case study authors was an ECR for most of the cycle (Simpson).

The practical relevance of our research has been recognised by staff appointments to prestigious local, national and international positions in the public sector and civil society (e.g. UN Special Rapporteur, UK Social Security Advisory Committee, Scottish Commission on Social Security, Irish Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Committee on Human Rights).

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Staff have published 114 articles in **leading legal and socio-legal journals** (e.g. *International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, *European Journal of International Law*, *Social and Legal Studies*, *Journal of Law and Society*), **interdisciplinary journals** (e.g. *Human Rights Quarterly*, *International Journal of Transitional Justice*) and journals in **other disciplines** (e.g. *Journal of Social Policy*, *Memory Studies*, *State Crime Journal*). Ashe, Chalabi, Moyo, O'Rourke and O'Connell have written **six monographs** (with Oxford, Cambridge, Routledge). Staff have also produced 50 book chapters, as well as research reports and policy papers, and co-produced guidelines, **non-traditional academic outputs and cultural artefacts** such as toolkits, animations and **two research films**. Staff and researchers participate in **open access initiatives** through the PURE system and are encouraged to maintain SSRN individual pages and monitor their Google profiles.

Our TJI staff have pioneered research in:

- **Gender and transitional justice:** O'Rourke published the first major study of the fragmented protection of women's rights in conflict under international law; Ashe's analysis of the NI peace process and transition addresses the position of women, masculinities and sexual and gender minorities; Hamber's work on responses to psychosocial legacies of political violence, including gendered aspects;
- **Accountability for human rights violations:** Wills' ground-breaking and award-winning film *It Stays With You*, made in collaboration with marginalised community in Haiti, highlights human rights abuses by UN peacekeepers; Hansen's work has clarified the accountability obligations of the UK in respect of alleged international criminal law violations in Iraq; Collins's work in Latin America on forced disappearances is grounded in deep in-country and comparative expertise, and the co-production of knowledge with victims and survivors;
- **Human rights protection and promotion:** Smith's work leads NI and comparative expertise in the constitutional protection of rights; O'Connell and others developed a framework for socioeconomic rights obligations in budget work; Chalabi wrote the first major comparative, theoretical and interdisciplinary study on national human rights action plans.

Our SJ staff have brought social citizenship theory up to date in an age of devolution and social security conditionality, shaping policy outcomes in devolved social security and justice, and developing the methodological rigour for innovative research. This has been achieved by work on:

- **Destitution:** McKeever and Simpson's work on access to justice and pathways into/out of destitution;
- **Challenges facing litigants in person** (McKeever, McCord, Royal-Dawson, Kirk, Yarnell);
- **Universal Credit** in NI (Simpson, McKeever, Gray);
- **Embedding dignity and rights in social security legislation:** McKeever, Simpson, Gray's work on the Scottish legislation, Social Security Charter and Social Security Advisory Committee.

Through high-quality research, the development of meaningful collaborations outside academia and production of outputs outside of typical academic outputs, our impact case studies demonstrate how our research impact addresses the gender gap in the NI peace process (examining women's rights, masculinities and LGBTQ+ issues), and embeds dignity and rights in social security legislation and practice in Scotland. Beyond these impacts, our research has investigated accountability for human rights violations in Iraq, Haiti, Kenya, Palestine, Latin America and NI.

Building on previous cycles, Ulster's Law research will consolidate and strengthen the work of TJI and the SJ cluster. Our aims and objectives for the next cycle are:

Overall Law unit

- Maintain our inclusive, supportive, and sustainable research environment for a multidisciplinary community of scholars.
- Increase staffing in areas of research strength.
- Support the development of our doctoral programme so as to enable researchers who produce original and rigorous research, address issues through multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives, and demonstrate commitment to ethics and integrity.
- Develop the sustainability and excellence of our research by targeting diverse research funders, including Research Councils and the Global Challenges Research Fund, Horizon, and charitable funders.
- Disseminate the good practice developed in TJI and SJ across the unit.
- Support ECRs and those disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic's differential impacts.

Transitional Justice Institute

- Consolidate and develop TJI's leadership in transitional justice, especially on gender, social and economic rights, international law and justice, and TJ in global and comparative perspective.
- Support research on inclusive, participatory (particularly gender-inclusive) constitutional change on the island.
- Continue to innovate methodologically and especially to enhance interdisciplinary research and participatory approaches to research, including co-production of research.
- Continue to build capacity around multi-media outputs (theatre/photography, participatory filmmaking, conflict textiles).
- Deepen and expand our use of new media (podcasts, YouTube) to further improve accessibility and dissemination.
- Leverage membership of established (e.g. Association of Human Rights Institutes) and newer (e.g. Irish Peace and Conflict Network) networks to enhance partnerships with scholars and research users.
- Deepen relationships with local and international partners to inform, anticipate and respond to research needs, including with UN Women, Northern Ireland Women's European Platform), and strengthen connections to UN institutions and local peacebuilding, in particular through Visiting Professors.

Social Justice

- Develop a social justice observatory to enable our high-quality research and impact to develop and expand the field, regenerating an academic focus on social security law and stimulating alignment with established scholarly initiatives in social justice.
- Sustain current high levels of grant income generation, profiling innovative and rigorous interdisciplinary and empirical legal research.
- Deepen academic and policy collaborations, to generate significant and original research insight into how legal and welfare systems can support social justice.
- Strengthen synergies with the significant civic engagement of the Ulster University Law Clinic and Legal Innovation Centre.
- Consolidate links with socio-legal studies scholars through hosting the Socio-Legal Studies Association (SLSA) conference in Derry/Londonderry in 2023.

These aims and objectives will be taken forward by the RD, working with the HoSs, and liaising as appropriate with the TJI and SJ Observatory. To ensure the sustainability and vitality of our research, new staff will normally align with TJI or the Observatory (or both).

2. People

Staffing strategy and staff development

Staffing policy reflects **twin needs**. First, to **support and enable world-leading research in areas where we have established and are further developing a vibrant and sustainable research culture**. Second, to discharge **our responsibilities as a university in a society with diverse complex needs**; this requires appointments in areas where there is an important teaching need but limited research expectations.

Our close-knit research community has 14.7 fte staff: 5.7 Professors, 5 SL/Readers and 4 lecturers, representing a **balanced and sustainable career pathway** and our approach to **progression and succession planning**. During this REF cycle, 3 were promoted to professorships (Mallinder, McNamee, McKeever), 1 to Reader (Ashe), and 2 to SL (Smith, Hansen). Of the returned staff, Fitzpatrick is an ECR while Simpson was an ECR for most of the cycle. An Executive Assistant (1.0 fte) supports the RD on impact, open access and REF. The unit facilitates shared appointments or fractional contracts to enable colleagues to work with partners elsewhere (e.g. Collins's links in the Americas). The unit implements the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers with annual opportunities for advancement, regular training and development.

During this cycle, the unit appointed lecturers with strong research profiles in transitional justice (Hansen), human rights (Chalabi), and law and social justice (Simpson, Fitzpatrick), building on our research base. The unit maintains links with **emeritus staff** (McWilliams, Rooney, Rolston), providing them with space and facilities. Staff have received University or Faculty **Distinguished Research Fellowship Awards** (Ní Aoláin, Hamber, O'Rourke) and a **Supervisor of the Year** award (Rooney).

Our selection processes ensure research quality and respect equality and diversity requirements. Selection panel members undergo regular training that includes an equality and diversity component. Applicants for research-relevant posts are expected to have a PhD. The RD sits on all research-relevant selection panels to assess the applicant's research and strategic fit. Applicants must **submit copies of published work in advance of interview**, for consideration during the selection process. Research targets are set during probationary periods.

All staff, including ECRs and those with a teaching-only role, have access to a suite of research training activities in our University's RIGOUR (grant income), SOARING (outputs), Impact Development Series and Doctoral College programmes. The RD organises discipline-specific events such as grant writing and writing for research, where staff share insights and external speakers facilitate a discussion.

Staff workload is managed through a **transparent and detailed workload model** that distinguishes between staff with significant research responsibility (SRR) and those without. Staff with SRR are allocated a **minimum of 40% of their time for research** (maximum of 6 hours teaching per week). Our model also recognises the time needed for **PhD research supervision and work on grants**. The workload model accords **ECRs** extra time for research – their teaching load is reduced by approximately 25%; the model also recognises the **leadership and mentoring role of professors**. We match teaching responsibilities to the research interests of staff and encourage research-led teaching. As important members of our community, we support our staff on teaching only designations with a developmental scholarship allocation to support them if they show **potential to transfer** to a teaching and research profile. Staff in this position receive advice from the RD and may request funding for research development.

Research plans are monitored formally in **annual 'trilateral' meetings** involving staff member, RD and Head of School (HOS)/Associate Head of School. These meetings review the previous year and set goals for the next, considering research outputs, income, supervision, impact work and

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research leadership, in a 360-degree review of research, teaching, administration and civic contribution. At intervals the RD holds informal meetings with staff.

We have provided **sabbaticals for 40% of our unit** (six staff) during this cycle; this is a competitive process requiring staff to provide detailed plans for research projects to be developed during their leave. For example, O'Connell and O'Rourke's monographs with Cambridge were facilitated by sabbaticals. Where possible, we have in addition adjusted workloads to accommodate requests to **concentrate** teaching and administration in one semester to enable focus on research in the other.

We use **Visiting Professorships** to strengthen links with key stakeholders e.g. Allamby is former Director of the Law Centre (NI) and Chief Commissioner of the NI Human Rights Commission; Kilmurray, former Director of the Community Foundation NI, is on the executive of the Social Change Initiative and the board of Conciliation Resources. Dolan is Director of the Refugee Law Project (Kampala) and a leading expert on masculinities, gender, and refugees.

PhD researcher cohort

PhD researchers are core participants in our research culture. During REF2014 we graduated 14.33 PhD researchers; **in REF2021 we have graduated 19.24 (34% increase)**. Our selection process stresses excellence of the project, excellence of the applicant and fit with the unit's research priorities. All shortlisted applicants are interviewed by a panel which reviews their commitment, competence and methodological sophistication.

Our PhD researcher cohort is **international and interdisciplinary**, including researchers from Venezuela, Liberia, Tunisia, Egypt, Uganda, Kazakhstan, Turkey, South Africa (reflecting our focus on post-authoritarian and post-conflict societies), the US, the Netherlands, Iran, Italy, Spain and Germany, as well as the UK and Ireland. These researchers examine challenges both local (e.g. social security, dealing with past conflict) and global (e.g. victims of male sexual violence in Uganda, transitional justice in a Lebanese refugee camp).

Thanks to the profile of TJI and SJ, we attract high-quality applicants in these areas. The emphasis on fit with research priorities ensures a vibrant and supportive research environment for both researchers and staff, as well as generating imaginative interdisciplinary and empirical research. Researchers are supervised by panels of two/three staff, usually with different levels of experience to build supervisory capacity, and often from multiple disciplines.

PhD researchers are included in our research staff meetings and planning. We encourage and support them **to organise research events reflecting their own interests** e.g. the Postgraduate Symposium on Occupation, Transitional Justice and Gender (2015), Postgraduate Conference on Masculinities, Violence and (Post-)Conflict (2016), PhD conference on Designing Gender Research (2017), and PhD Workshop on Remembering During Conflict (2019). We support our researchers with University monies for those with studentships (£900 annual research travel and support grant), and all researchers have benefitted from the unit's research budget. Funds for conferences and field trips are important as our researchers have undertaken fieldwork in Colombia, Lebanon, Israel/Palestine, Tunisia, Ukraine, Uganda, the Balkans and Russia. The unit has facilitated a PhD writing retreat as part of a comprehensive support system for researchers. We run weekly mindfulness sessions led by O'Rawe; all researchers can receive support from the Doctoral College, Student Wellbeing and the Chaplaincy.

Our PhD researchers organise our lively **internal brown bag seminar series** [*What's the Craic?*](#) for staff, PhD researchers and LLM students in our unit and Social Policy: during 2019–20 there were 15 talks, seven of them online after March 2020.

PhD researchers have access to an extensive array of Researcher Development Programme workshops and training events (approx.160-200 per year) organised by our institutional

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Doctoral College: 22 of our PhD researchers have attended 118 training events, on average more than five per researcher. The RD works with senior staff members who act as PhD coordinators (Collins, Hansen). They arrange induction sessions and bespoke local training, determined in consultation with the PhD researchers. Training events have included bespoke workshops on interviews (with a focus on post-conflict and sensitive contexts), research ethics, designing research questions, preparing for assessments and mock vivas. These include guest speakers (e.g. Landman's Academic Magician workshop, Judge Harhoff on international criminal law). Researchers also regularly audit specialist LLM classes.

To foster interdisciplinarity we collaborate on PhD training events with Social Policy. Most PhD researchers have shared office space in dedicated rooms in Dalriada House (home to TJI), which holds a library of texts on research methods in law and social sciences, human rights and transitional justice. Law and Social Justice PhD researchers share office space with Social Policy PhD researchers to promote interdisciplinarity.

Our PhD researchers participate in University initiatives like the University's Annual PhD Festival and the 3MT. Our PhD researcher regularly win competitive University **Broadening Horizons** Prizes (Campbell, Schulz and Yarnell won three of five prizes in 2016; more recently Aliçi and Durdiyeva won this prize) as well as Santander Mobility Scholarships (McGill 2015, 2016). Sobout was named Ulster Postgraduate student of the year (2017) and McKeever won the Faculty Best Thesis award (2018).

With support from supervisors, they have had phenomenal success in securing internal and external prizes and awards:

- Modern Law Review Scholarship (Drummond);
- Seven Socio-Legal Studies Association (SLSA) fieldwork grants (Simpson, Drummond, Afana, Chaban, Schulz, Ketelaars, Durdiyeva);
- SLSA grant: 'In-work Conditionality and the ageing Worker in Northern Ireland' (Fitzpatrick, £2600);
- Feminist & Women's Studies Association grant to host the 2015 workshop on 'Occupation, Transitional Justice and Gender' (Afana, Chaban);
- Fieldwork Grant, French Institute for Research in Africa (Schulz, €1000)
- Travel Grant, Foundation Scotland (Schulz, £1000)
- Fieldwork Grant, British Institute in Eastern Africa (Schulz, £1000)
- Two scholarships to attend a British Council Researcher Links Conference in Bogota (Alvarez, McGill)
- Social Policy Association grant to deliver a Imagine Belfast Festival roundtable event (Fitzpatrick, £500);
- Peace Research grant from the International Peace Research Association Foundation (Aliçi, \$4535);
- Conflict Research Society Smith Prize for best research paper in peace and conflict research (Schultz);
- Honourable Mention for submission to the 2018 British Society for Middle Eastern Studies Leigh Douglas Memorial Prize for the best PhD dissertation on a Middle Eastern topic (Sobout);
- Letter of Commendation from Architecture Sans Frontières (Sobout);
- Network on Research and Teaching in EU Foreign Affairs bursary (Ketelaars);
- Best Paper prize at the Justice and Dignity under Challenge conference, Cork 2014 (Simpson);
- Scholarship to attend an Oxford Centre for Socio-Legal Studies Law in Context Early Career Workshop (Fitzpatrick);
- Rouse was admitted to the Peace Research Institute Oslo Research School on Peace and Conflict;
- Durdiyeva appointed Global Dialogues Fellow at the Transregional Center for Democratic Studies, NY.

Our PhD researchers have gone on to distinguish themselves as **lecturers** (Page, Simpson, Fitzpatrick at Ulster, Alvarez in Navarre, El-Masri in Gloucestershire), in **postdoctoral positions** (Drummond at Ulster and QUB, Rouse and Yarnell at Ulster, McGill at Oxford, Hearty at Warwick and QUB, Schulz at Bremen, Sobout at Manchester), in civil society (Abernethy, Bollaert, Chaban, Sobout, Fitzpatrick, Roberts, Palli-Aspero, Taylor) and public sector (Magill, Cabinet Office; Drummond, Commission for Victims and Survivors; Ketelaars, BBC and Dutch Ministry for Foreign Affairs). Our PhD researchers have published in journals, including the *International Journal of Transitional Justice*, *Journal of Law and Society*, *Constellations*; during this cycle PhD graduates Moyo, Swaine, Bollaert, Schulz, McKeever have published their PhD theses as monographs.

PRES surveys testify to outstanding PhD researcher satisfaction with their environment: in PRES2019, with a 100% return, **95.4% of our unit's PhD researchers mostly or definitely agreed they were satisfied** with their experience of the programme.

Equality and Diversity

Equality and diversity are central to our strategic research agenda. Staff are committed to advancing these values in their research e.g. O'Rourke, Ashe, Hamber, emeritus staff McWilliams, Ní Aoláin and Doyle on gender; McKeever, Simpson, Fitzpatrick on social justice; Moyo, Rolston, Ní Aoláin on postcolonial issues; O'Connell, Smith on anti-discrimination and equality law.

The unit has a strong outreach ethos, with staff working out of the Magee (Derry/Londonderry), Belfast and Jordanstown campuses across NI. Much of the unit's research addresses the need of deprived and marginalised communities e.g. Ashe's research has highlighted the experiences of **LGBTQ+ people in Northern Ireland**; the **access to justice work** of the SJ cluster (McKeever's work on litigants in person; Simpson, McKeever, Gray on social security and dignity); the work of Rooney (emeritus) with community organisations, especially **women's groups**, on the TJ Grassroots Toolkit and Constitutional Conversations; and O'Rourke's collaboration with academics and activists on **Gender Principles for Dealing with the Legacy of the Past**. We have hosted speakers from **Scholars at Risk**, providing support for international academics living under threat of harm.

All staff undergo mandatory equality and diversity training. Those involved in REF management have had specific **REF equality and diversity training**. Staff have also undergone optional training (e.g. neurodiversity training), and the unit has provided reasonable adjustments in cases of disability or specific learning differences (eg specialist computer software, office equipment, etc). Equality and diversity is a standing item on the Law School Board agenda. Law and ASPS will apply for Athena SWAN accreditation in 2022, working with the Faculty Athena SWAN coordinator. O'Rourke is an active member of the University EDI steering group, and is Law SWAN lead, for which she has buy-out of 200 hours to support the submission.

In our unit, 57% of staff are women; this breaks down as 44% of professors, 80% of SL/Readers, 50% of lecturers. The slightly lower percentage of women professors reflects the recent departure of two female professors. During this cycle, two-thirds of promotions to professorships (2 of 3) and two-thirds promotions to SL/Reader (2 of 3) were of female staff. The unit includes staff of diverse national origin including Iran, Australia, Denmark, Zimbabwe, South Africa as well as the UK and Ireland. The Department for Research & Impact, working with the Equality Unit, equality-proofs REF submissions. Approximately 65% of the outputs selected for REF2021 are by female staff. Our University Code of Practice stresses equality, inclusivity and participation and it has guided our REF processes.

We accommodate requests for **career breaks**, leave for caring purposes (including beyond that legally required), and **flexible working**. The unit has facilitated requests for staff to vary their contractual commitment to less than 1.0 fte to facilitate other commitments, and for extended (unpaid) leave for caring responsibilities. These local decisions complement legal requirements

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and University policies e.g. the Return from Carers' Leave policy which provides funds supporting the return to research.

3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

Income

During previous RAE/REF cycles we generated research income significantly above the sector average per fte (RAE2008, £1.8M research spend; REF2014: £2.2M research spend). During this cycle we have increased this to **£3.769M, an average of more than £256K per fte**. This is significantly in excess of the sector's income per fte in REF2014 and reflects our commitment to interdisciplinary research, collaboration, internal research strategy and support, and University support. Our staff participate in **grants collectively worth more than £10.6M to the University during this REF cycle**.

Our research is supported by grants from diverse sources including **ESRC, AHRC, Nuffield Foundation, DfID, Open Society, Interface, EPSRC, Legal Education Foundation, Special EU Programmes Body, Framework 7, Horizon2020, Higher Education Consortium, Department for the Economy, Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, Royal Irish Academy, British Academy, Equality and Human Rights Commission, Society of Legal Scholars, Socio-Legal Studies Association, the International Criminal Court, Allen and Overy, Baker McKenzie, Irish Department of Foreign Affairs, US Institute of Peace, and Leverhulme Trust**.

Many of these grants demonstrate our core approach to research and impact. The Nuffield Foundation-supported initiative on 'The Impact of Litigants in Person on the NI Court System' (McKeever, McCord £216,169) was a **collaborative** project, working with the NI Human Rights Commission and using **empirical legal studies** methods to understand systemic barriers to access to justice for litigants who have no legal representation, and to **develop specific policies for judicial and public sector bodies**. This project was followed by a £354,578 Nuffield award for a two-year project on the participation of litigants in person (McKeever, McCord, Potkewitz). These projects demonstrate our commitment to **interdisciplinarity**: McCord is with the Built Environment unit while the second grant draws on Potkewitz's Legal Innovation expertise. The DfID-funded Political Settlements Project (Ní Aoláin, O'Rourke, Rooney, Mallinder, £658,587 award to Ulster) involved **collaboration with Edinburgh University** and leading nongovernmental organisations (e.g. Conciliation Resources). It incorporated insights from law, gender studies and sociology in policy-relevant research that underpinned proposals to address continuities in gender-based violence post-conflict and to **reform relevant international legal frameworks**.

We strategically **develop links with other excellent research units**. In addition to the Political Settlements Project, led by **Edinburgh's Global Justice Academy** (PI Bell, a former TJI Director), O'Connell and Rolston work on the **LSE-led GCRF Research Hub on Gender Justice and Security**, a £15M five-year project involving more than 40 researchers worldwide (share to Ulster £418K). Hamber works with LSE on an AHRC project 'Communities as constructs of people and architecture' and with Newcastle on another AHRC project 'Screening Violence'. Simpson's work on Universal Credit is based on collaboration with Social Policy & Social Work at York. O'Connell worked with Harvey and others (QUB) on BrexitLawNI, an ESRC-funded project examining the constitutional implications of Brexit for NI; Mallinder collaborated with McEvoy and others (QUB) on ESRC- and AHRC-funded projects. Wills has worked with McLaughlin (QUB) on AHRC-funded projects to produce the films *It Stays With You* and *Right Now I Want to Scream*.

These grants also evidence our policy of **linking senior PIs with more junior colleagues** (McKeever with McCord, Potkewitz, Simpson, Fitzpatrick; Ní Aoláin with O'Rourke, Mallinder) to develop research grant profiles and build successful internal as well as external collaborations. The Nuffield Litigants in Person project also involved Visiting Professor Allamby, (Chief Commissioner, NI Human Rights Commission).

Funded research projects support our **impact case studies**. The DfID-funded Political Settlements Project supported Doyle and McWilliams's domestic violence work, while Simpson (then an ECR) McKeever and Gray (Social Policy) secured an Equality and Human Rights Commission grant that supported their engagement on social security in Scotland.

Our income generation strategy is outlined in our TJI-developed **Researcher Handbook** (a model of good practice shared with other RDs across the University) which includes details of grant and training opportunities. Our University has extensive support for grant work, including training events. We collaborate with Research and Impact staff working on research grant development (horizon-scanning and application support) and research grant management. The Development and Alumni Relations Office helped secure the **£3 million endowment for Hamber's Hume-O'Neill Peace Chair**. Seventy-five % of our staff have participated in University research training programmes including the University Mentoring scheme.

Research meetings and away days provide an opportunity to discuss collaboration on new ideas and consider the potential for grant applications. We share examples of research applications, and funding and impact advice. At staff research meetings we discuss income generation plans, opportunities and possible collaborations. Staff present draft applications in our in-house 'What's the Craic' **brown bag seminar series** to receive feedback from peers and share good practice. Our Research Peer Review policy requires all staff to submit large applications in draft to the RD for **peer review** by professorial colleagues. At university level, Research and Impact work closely with applicants on their proposals and arrange for strategically important applications to be externally reviewed.

Our staff have secured many internal seed-fund grants and used them as the basis for larger external grants. The University has provided several such grant opportunities (Challenge funds, GCRF pump-priming) and funds to support impact (Civic Impact Fund) on a competitive basis. TJI staff have secured seed funding for projects on the 'Enforced and Involuntary Disappearance as an Informational Challenge' (Challenge, £20K Collins), 'Socioeconomic Rights and Transition' (Challenge, £10K, O'Connell), 'Nairobi Principles on Accountability' (£10K, Hansen), 'Commemoration and Law: Narratives of Political Violence' (Challenge, £10K, Ní Aoláin and Brown) and 'Use of Force in Haiti' (GCRF pump-priming £44K, Wills), while McKeever (SJ) secured Civic Impact funding for 'A New Vision of Justice' (£4K). We use these opportunities to **develop interdisciplinary links** with other units. Work with Social Policy and Psychology, for example, produced studies with practical local and international application: 'Complex challenges in post-conflict society: supporting civil society, participation, transformation and reconciliation' (GCRF pump-priming £20K, O'Connell, Hamber, Morrow, Rooney, Ketola), 'Mechanisms for Dealing with the Legacy of Historical Child Abuse' (Civic Impact Fund, £4K, Lundy, Hamber), and 'Dealing Holistically with the Past: Mental health, Suicide and the Northern Ireland Troubles' (Civic Impact Fund, £4K, O'Neill, Hamber).

Staff have also used seed-fund grants to create meaningful networks with scholars and practitioners in other universities and countries, e.g. Hamber's 'Resilience, Peace and Development' award (GCRF pump-priming £37K) brought together partners from eight countries for a workshop in Sierra Leone.

These internal grants have led to larger grant-funded projects (e.g. **Collins's British Academy and Open Society work on disappearances, £88K; Wills' AHRC and British Academy projects on Haiti and Brazil, £224K; O'Connell, Rolston and Malagon's GCRF Gender, Justice and Security Research Hub work, £418K**) as well as providing research assistant opportunities for PhD researchers, enabling them to hone their research and writing skills (Schulz, Magill, McGill, Fitzpatrick, Chaban).

External research funding has supported new appointments e.g. AHRC and DfID projects enabled Hansen and Chalabi's appointments; Doyle was a postdoctoral researcher on a DfID

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project; Denvir's post was supported by Baker and MacKenzie, and Allen and Overy; Fitzpatrick's by a GCRF grant.

The RD works with HoSs to ensure that research income is used to **benefit the staff who generate the income** by agreeing teaching buy-out to work on deliverables, through part-time hours or appointment of fixed-term staff. **Fulbright** awards have supported O'Rourke's monograph and McNamee's groundwork for the Legal Innovation Centre.

Infrastructure and facilities

The unit's research infrastructure is headed by the RD, who works with the HoSs for Law and ASPS, Faculty ADRI and Deputy VC (R&EA)). The TJI and SJ cluster are the main drivers for research. The RD chairs meetings of staff and PhD researchers.

The RD has an annual budget (approx. £40-50K), calculated on the basis of the unit's performance in REF2014 and other indicators. This supports collective activities but also individual research allocations to staff of approx. £1200-1400 per year. The unit provides funding for staff members to **develop collaboration and partnerships**, participate in **writing retreats**, and engage audiences for research in novel ways. These allocations facilitated Simpson's attendance (as an ECR) at Social Policy Association conferences, his collaboration with Patrick (York) and involvement in multi-institutional research bids. Apart from individual research needs, the funds support research management activities and collective research engagement including visiting speakers, grants for networking and events. The RD allocates funds to support **TJI and SJ research activities**. A portion is directed to **support PhD cohort activity** such as PhD conferences, writing residencies and computing facilities.

We host numerous **visitors**, guest speakers and Visiting Professors, particularly through the activities of the TJI, SJ, as well as the Law Clinic and Legal Innovation Centre which drive wide reaching stakeholder engagement. During the REF cycle TJI organised more than [100 public events](#) including conferences, seminars and workshops, from Dealing with the Past in Northern Ireland (2013) to Deliberating Constitutional Futures (2020). There have been over 20 SJ-led public events, including a major conference on Litigants in Person (2018) and participatory research workshops on Universal Credit (2019-20). Visitors and guest speakers have included leading public figures such as Melanne Verbeke (former US Ambassador at Large for Global Women's Issues), Nils Muižnieks (Council of Europe Human Rights Commissioner); numerous academics including Lorna Fox-O'Mahony, Gina Heathcote, Alan Norrie, Colm O Cinneide, Aoife O'Donoghue, Ruth Rubio Marin, William Schabas, Olivera Simic, Nigel White and Ulster graduates Mark Bell, Aisling Swaine and Hakeem Yusuf.

TJI has a dedicated building with a well-appointed seminar room, videoconferencing facilities and social space as well as staff offices and two PhD researcher labs, with space to host emeritus staff and visiting scholars.

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

Our TJI and SJ staff are recognised nationally and internationally for their expertise and are regularly invited to contribute to local and international policy-making and practice, as well as playing a leading role in the discipline.

Collaboration and contribution to the research base, economy and society are central to all we do. Our research is action-oriented and we sustain deep collaborations with non-academic users. We have developed an **Impact Strategy**; all staff complete annual impact plans detailing activities

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during the previous year and plans for the future. The RD and Department for Research and Impact provide funds to support impact-oriented activities.

During 2021 the Jordanstown campus (including the Law School and TJI) will move to the **new Belfast city centre campus**, providing even greater opportunities for collaboration with non-academic stakeholders in civil society and the public sector; the new state-of-the-art £365M building will house AHSS staff and researchers together furthering interdisciplinary opportunities.

Academic collaborations, networks and partnerships

We encourage collaboration across the University and beyond. We **collaborate with University colleagues**, especially those working on post-conflict societies, social justice, reproductive justice, grand corruption. We co-author articles with **colleagues in Social Policy** (Rolston, Lundy on apologies for past human rights violations; Hamber, Lundy on institutional abuse; Hamber, Kelly on reconciliation; McKeever, Simpson, Gray on social security). We develop collaborative research projects e.g. McKeever and Simpson worked with Gray (Social Policy) on the 'Social Security Systems Built on Dignity and Respect' project for the Equality and Human Rights Commission; O'Rourke and Hamber worked with Braniff (Social Policy) on the 'Advocacy Victims Survivors' project funded by the Commission for Victims and Survivors.

We encourage **cross-unit PhD supervision, exemplifying our commitment to multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research**. Approximately a quarter of our PhDs have been co-supervised by colleagues in other units including Social Policy, History, and Sports Science. These interdisciplinary links are supported by cross-unit activities e.g. a **shared Law and Social Policy residential** to develop impact case studies and plans.

We **collaborate with scholars in other high-performing research units** on projects, outputs and grants. TJI has extensive collaborations, including with QUB Law (BrexitLawNI, NI legacy issues, Haiti and Brazil research, Bill of Rights), the Edinburgh Global Justice Academy (Political Settlements), LSE, Leeds, Essex, and Universidad Diego Portales. Hansen has worked with Ferstman (Essex), leading to submissions to Parliament's Defence committee and a report on accountability for UK forces in Iraq. Our SJ cluster (McKeever and Simpson) used unit seed money to host a workshop with Patrick (Leeds) culminating in joint publications (e.g. Patrick and Simpson's 2020 Joseph Rowntree report on Universal Credit in NI).

Non-academic collaborations, networks and partnerships

We collaborate extensively with local, national and international civil society and public sector bodies. At local level McKeever's work with the **Law Centre (Executive Director 2001-20) and NI Human Rights Commission** formed the basis for research supported by Nuffield on Litigants in Person. Her earlier research on unmet legal need, and her links with the Department of Justice were crucial in securing support for Ulster's **multiple award-winning Law Clinic**. Simpson, McKeever and Gray's (Social Policy) work for the Equality and Human Rights Commission was instrumental in leveraging their contribution to the **development of Scottish social security law**, including the drafting of the Social Security Charter and creation of the Scottish Commission on Social Security.

Staff and PhD researchers actively support engagement initiatives with non-academic users including policymakers and the general public. These include the **Knowledge Exchange Seminars (KESS)** at Parliament Buildings (Stormont) co-organised with QUB, the Open University and the NI Assembly and hosted by Members of the Legislative Assembly. Nine staff have participated in KESS seminars: Access to Justice (McKeever), Budget Analysis and Housing Rights (O'Connell), Domestic Violence (McWilliams), Gender and Dealing with the Past (O'Rourke), Rights in NI (Smith), Housing Rights (Diver), Dignity and Social Security (Simpson), Revenge Porn (Oriola), Hidden Barriers and Divisive Architecture (Hamber).

ESRC Festival of Social Science presentations have included Memory as a Form of Resistance (Law/SP PhDs), Peacebuilding (Rooney and Sobout), Brexit (O'Connell), the NI Bill of Rights (Smith), Peace Walls (O'Connell). Ashe, Fitzpatrick, Hamber, Rolston and O'Connell have contributed to the **Imagine Belfast Festival of Ideas and Politics**, of which Ulster has been a founding partner since 2014. As part of the Human Rights Consortium-run annual **Human Rights Festival**, O'Connell and PhD researcher Gallagher have contributed to events on law in popular culture (Star Trek, Buffy, Harry Potter) while Collins has spoken on transitional justice in Latin America and Smith on human rights in NI.

McNamee's **network of law firm contacts** led to the creation of the interdisciplinary **Legal Innovation Centre** with Computing. The Centre, having developed links with Belfast City Council, and global law firms, has a portfolio of activity aimed at enhancing the ability of NI's law sector to benefit from the **digital economy and information society**. It works with SJ researchers to develop technological solutions to providing legal advice and assistance as part of the Nuffield-funded research on Litigants in Person.

Contributions to the discipline

Our staff contribute to the discipline thorough their peer review, grant review, editorial and other roles. We pay for individual subscriptions to professional organisations (e.g. Society of Legal Scholars, Socio-Legal Studies Association, Irish Association of Law Teachers, American Society of International Law). McKeever is joint editor of the **Journal of Social Security Law**, where Simpson is book editor. Simpson and Fitzpatrick organised a significant 'Social Rights, Citizenship and the Welfare State' strand **at SLSA 2017–20** (with the UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty contributing via videolink in 2019).

Staff are members of the AHRC (Hamber, O'Rourke, O'Connell) and ESRC (Hamber, Wills) **Peer Review Colleges** and the **Royal Irish Academy Multidisciplinary committee** (Wills). We have reviewed applications for **GCRF** (Hamber), **Nuffield** (McKeever), **Horizon 2020** (Ashe, O'Connell), **British Academy** (Simpson), **Irish Research Council** (O'Rourke, Smith), **German Research Foundation** (Hamber), **Dutch Research Council** (O'Connell). Staff review submissions for over 20 journals including the *International Journal of Transitional Justice*, *Journal of Human Rights Practice*, *Journal of Law and Society*, *Feminist Legal Studies* and *Journal of Social Security Law*, and book proposals for e.g. Cambridge, Hart, Routledge. Staff have acted as external examiners for more than 20 PhDs during this REF cycle.

Wider activities and contributions to the research base, economy and society

The action-oriented nature of our research has paved the way for appointments to civil society, public sector and international bodies, and for work with governments and NGOs worldwide. While Associate Director of TJI, Ní Aoláin was appointed **UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and Counterterrorism**. McKeever was reappointed in 2020 to the **UK's Social Security Advisory Committee** and is a member of the Administrative Justice Council's Academic Panel and the NI Civil Justice Board's Advisory Group. Simpson sits on the newly formed **Scottish Commission on Social Security**. O'Rourke is a member of the **Irish Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Committee on Human Rights**. O'Rawe is retained as Counsel to the **Coroner** in legacy inquests dealing with allegations of a 'shoot to kill' policy.

TJI staff work extensively with civil society and human rights organisations, sitting on the boards/executives of the **Committee on the Administration of Justice** (O'Connell, Smith, and PhD graduates Bollaerts and McGill), **Healing through Remembering** (Hamber), **Impunity Watch** (Hamber), **Relatives for Justice** (Rolston), **the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund** (Rooney). Brown has been a member of the **Ulster Museum 'Troubles' Academic Advisory**

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Group since its inception in 2015. This group advises National Museums NI on its 'Troubles and Beyond' permanent exhibition.

Our collaborations sustain our impact. McKeever's links with the **Law Centre and Department of Justice** support the impact work of the **Law Clinic**. The Law Clinic and our PhD programme have enabled policy and social security appointments to the Law Centre. McKeever has worked with the Department of Justice to establish an arms-length advisory **Litigants in Person Reference Group**. Smith's links with the Human Rights Consortium, Amnesty and CAJ have extended the reach of her Bill of Rights project findings (with McWilliams and later Harvey, QUB). As a result of their expertise, McKeever and Smith have presented oral evidence to the UK, Scottish and Irish Parliaments, and NI Assembly. O'Rourke, with the **Legacy Gender Integration Group**, has presented evidence to the US Congress Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission.

Our work influences the role of **international organisations** including UN Special Rapporteurs, UNDP and UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. TJI has a partnership agreement with the UN's Women Peace and Security Team. Many of Ní Aoláin's Special Rapporteur priorities reflect her research over two decades at Ulster. Hamber, Ní Aoláin and O'Connell assisted the **UN Special Rapporteur on Truth** (UNSR) during his 2015 UK visit, advising on his itinerary, providing administrative support and Hamber accompanied him on visits. **The UNSR's 2016 Northern Ireland report** reflects research by several TJI scholars. McKeever, Simpson, Fitzpatrick's research is cited in the **UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty's** report on the UK.

TJI research has worked with governments, public institutions, international organisations and civil society world-wide:

- UN Women commissioned O'Rourke and TJI graduate Swaine to prepare a *Guidebook on CEDAW General Recommendation No. 30 and the UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security* (2015), the authoritative UN guidance in this area;
- UN Women and the UN Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights commissioned Ní Aoláin, O'Rourke and Swaine to conduct an expert study that informed the UN Secretary-General's Guidance Note on Reparations for Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (2014);
- Collins is a founder member of the **Latin American Transitional Justice Network**;
- In 2017, the Latin American Studies Association invited Collins to join a five-person international fact-finding delegation to study the **impeachment process** against Brazilian president Rousseff. Collins was a key drafter of the final report;
- The **Colombian Search Unit for Missing Persons** asked Collins to assist in creating a 'Friends of the Unit' in 2019;
- The European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights drew on Hansen's research to **urge the International Criminal Court Prosecutor** to conduct a full investigation of UK action in Iraq;
- The Hume-O'Neill Peace Chair builds upon TJI and INCORE's work to share lessons from NI's peace process with conflict zones elsewhere;
- The Dutch government appointed Hamber an expert on a multidisciplinary Task Force looking at **integrating mental health and psychosocial support into the UN peacebuilding architecture**. Hamber presented the Task Force findings to UN member states at the Dutch request (2020);
- Hamber has developed links with the Sierra Leone Government and NGO Fambul Tok to discuss **inclusive local governance and peacebuilding**;
- The **Kofi Annan Foundation** commissioned Hamber and Kelly to provide a case study to shape future reconciliation work. Kofi Annan launched the work in Colombia to influence the peace process;
- Hamber and Kelly's definition of reconciliation has been highlighted in policy forums, e.g. events by UN Department of Political Affairs' Policy and Mediation Division, Office of the

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- UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Catalan Institute for Peace, and by the Irish Government Representative in Colombia during the peace process;
- McWilliams visited Colombia, supported by Interpeace, to support women's role in peacebuilding (2016).

Using imaginative methodologies to work with marginalised and disadvantaged communities

SJ staff have developed **animations** to explain why litigants in person go to court without legal representation. Simpson was one of the UK's first **Instagram researchers in residence**. Patrick (Leeds) and Simpson's collaboration with illustrators and designers helped people talk about their experiences of poverty. Law Clinic staff and students have worked with the Art School to create **animated videos and posters**, an **art installation and a film**. McKeever, Simpson and Gray (Social Policy) have used participatory methodologies to develop claimant-led recommendations to the NI Executive on Universal Credit.

Hamber's AHRC-funded project, with Newcastle and Bristol, on '**Screening Violence**', engages through the medium of cinema with communities that have experienced violence.

Based on **participatory filmmaking methodology**, Wills and McLaughlin's (QUB) film, *It Stays with You* documents the use of violence by UN peacekeepers in Port-au-Prince, highlighting the experience of a **disadvantaged community that has been harmed and silenced**. It has been shown at ten festivals, a UN Human Rights Council Side Event (2018) and has won a prize for Best Director (Belfast Human Rights Film Festival) and four best documentary film awards.

Ashe's AHRC project **LGBTQ+ Visions of Peace** highlights the **previously invisible experience of transgender people in NI**. Working with academics and NGOs, Ashe has co-produced cultural artefacts, including the **first theatre play** and photographic exhibition on LGBTQ+ visions of peace in NI. The exhibition was displayed in the Belfast Exposed Gallery, while the play featured in the Imagine Festival (2018), Being Human Festival (2018), Outburst Festival (2016, 2017), and Outing the Past: Festival of LGB&T History (2019), **exemplify the vitality of our imaginative interdisciplinary work and our sustained engagement with disadvantaged communities**.