

Institution: University of Portsmouth		
Unit of Assessment: UoA 17: Business and Management Studies		
Title of case study: Standards and Standardisation - National and International Standards Development for the field of Human Resources		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2007-2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Valerie Anderson	Professor of Human Resource Development (HRD) and Education	03/03/2003 - date
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2014 - 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact Standards are a critical feature of contemporary business operations yet, historically, there has been a lack of standards governing professional practise as an emerging field of Human Resource Management (HRM). Valerie Anderson's research has also shown that HRM practitioners currently have a tendency to prioritise responsiveness over process harmonisation and standardisation. Her research argues that as a consequence there is a real need to ensure consistent, coherent and effective HR practices in organisations, and that these objectives can best be accomplished by working with organisations (national and international) to transform standards-setting in the HRM field. Her research has been instrumental in the development of new professional HR standards at both the National (British Standards Institute [BSI] national standards for HRM, the Greater London Authority [GLA] Good Work Standard) and international (International Organization for Standardization [ISO] HR standards development) level (Impact 1). The growing adoption and implementation of such standards across the sector provide further testament to the reach and significance of the impacts resulting from Anderson's research (Impact 2).		
2. Underpinning research Anderson's contributions in the fields of standards, standardisation, HR strategy and practice, and the value of HR have made her a pre-eminent expert in applied research into standards in the HR field. Since her appointment at Portsmouth in 2003 Anderson has completed a range of research projects into features of standardisation funded by both the University Forum for Human Resource Development (UFHRD) and the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), including the value of learning (2007) and the development of online practice-based diagnostic tools (CIPD, 2011). Anderson's research adds to the evidence base that shows the importance of coherent HR standards for labour quality, skill development, and organisational performance (R1 , R2). Yet, many employing organisations do not yet recognise standards as the basis for excellence in HRM practices, her research finding that HRM practitioners choose to prioritise responsiveness over process harmonisation and standardisation (R3). Her principal contribution to standards development is documented in R1 (p.333), where she advocates employing a principles-based approach to standards development. In her view this demands a rejection of calls for a strengthening of audit and regulatory processes in order to identify and rectify areas of non-compliance or 'token compliance' (rules-based standards). Instead she proposes the identification of a smaller, core set of principles, ideas, or values that apply more broadly within a profession but which require professional judgement consistent with the intent and spirit of the standard (principles-based standards). Critically too, her research acknowledges that standards development is only the start, rather than the conclusion, of the HRD project, 'Standards developmentrepresents an opportunity for those in the HRD field to advocate for learning and development as an important feature of work at individual, work-group, organisational, and societal levels' (R1 , p.341). In R2 , Anderson incorporated the research and authored a chapter on Learning and Development that contextualises the potential for learning and development within the framework of existing Standard provision.		

The challenges presented by COVID-19 to organisations and workers have been evident and severe, testing the resilience of firms in all sectors, of all sizes. In an environment that is both increasingly uncertain and rapidly changing, employees are crucial to the resilience and recovery of organisations, particularly smaller organisations. Anderson's research (for example **R4**) critiques assumptions prevalent in larger organisations that regulation and compliance is an appropriate basis for process effectiveness. This links to her earlier research (**R5**) in which she outlines how contextual factors such as organisation size and sector are likely to be important influences on the experience of alignment – alignment 'providing the opportunity for senior managers and HRD executives to share strategic knowledge and information, and for HRD activities and processes to be integrated "horizontally" to encourage, support and direct appropriate action (**R5**, p.264).

In addressing approaches to standards formulation, both nationally and internationally, Anderson's research **challenges traditional, compliance and rules-based approach** to standards-setting. In its place she advances the case for **principles-based approaches** to standards in the HRM field, seeing these as providing a more durable base for both **organisational sustainability and individual health, safety and wellbeing**.

3. References to the research

(R1) **Anderson, V.** (2017). HRD standards and standardization: where now for human resource development? *Human Resource Development International*, 20(4), 327-345. [DOI: 10.1080/13678868.2017.1321872](https://doi.org/10.1080/13678868.2017.1321872)

(R2) Wong, W., **Anderson, V.** & Bond, H. (eds) (2019). Human capital management standards, London: Kogan Page. [Available upon request]

(R3) Short, H., & **Anderson, V.** (2020). Standards formation and the implications for HRD. *European Journal of Training and Development*, 45(1), 74-94. [DOI: 10.1108/EJTD-02-2020-0019](https://doi.org/10.1108/EJTD-02-2020-0019)

(R4) **Anderson, V.**, Garavan, T. & Sadler-Smith, E. (2014). Corporate social responsibility, sustainability, ethics and international human resource development. *Human Resource Development International*, 17(5), 497-498. [DOI: 10.1080/13678868.2014.954187](https://doi.org/10.1080/13678868.2014.954187)

(R5) **Anderson, V.** (2009). Desperately seeking alignment: reflections of senior line managers and HRD executives. *Human Resource Development International*, 12(3), 263-279. [DOI: 10.1080/13678860902982009](https://doi.org/10.1080/13678860902982009)

The references above contain four peer-reviewed journal articles (R1, R3, R4 and R5) and one book (R2). Following peer-review, two articles (R1 and R3) were adjudged as of 2* REF2021 quality. Three articles (R1, R4 and R5) were published in CABS 2* journals.

4. Details of the impact

Anderson's research has had a significant **impact upon the development and adoption/implementation of national and international standards in HRM professional practice**.

Impact 1: Development of new National and International Standards

In January 2014 the BSI invited Anderson to contribute her academic expertise in standards and standardisation to help the BSI Human Capital Standards (HCS) Technical committee formulate HRM practice standards. In recognition of her particular expertise Anderson was appointed to the important 'drafting sub-committee' charged with formulating the first HRM standard. **Anderson's research provided an initial and highly distinctive contribution to the articulation of the HRM standard as it was agreed by the sub-committee at the outset that a principles-based approach, rather than a traditional 'rules-based' approach, would be adopted.** Her central role in establishing the overarching framework that would be employed for the development of the HRM standard *BS 76000 - Valuing People in Organisations* (**S1**) is acknowledged by the other committee members. [Text removed for publication], for example, indicates that Anderson "*made an immediate impact on the discussions concerning the creation of these standards. She was an influential member of the drafting committee for BS 76000 and led the group that developed BS PD 76006*" (**S2**). [Text removed for publication] states Anderson "*was a key member of the drafting committee for the first UK principles-based people management standard – BS 76000 which set out the principles and requirements for organisations who valued their human capital and wished*

to demonstrate and evidence to their stakeholders that their people practices were both principled and sustainable” (S3).

This work was expected to be forward-looking as standards, by their nature, need to exhibit longevity. HR standards of practice that provide the basis for ethical practise, values workers ‘voice and discretion’ in all workplace contexts, CIPD. (2019), retrieved from <https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/strategy/hr/standards-factsheet>) and ensures business continuity through multidisciplinary, multi-sectoral and multi-professional cooperation in the face of emerging social and economic pressures are extremely valuable management tools.

Nevertheless, Anderson’s early research into coaching and strategic alignment (R5) cautioned against a ‘one size fits all’ approach in framing the standard. Her advocacy of the need for the ‘horizontal integration of HR activities and processes’ (R5) was instrumental in ensuring BS 76000 provided a framework for “an organisation to create an individually-tailored management system, or to align existing systems, to realise the full value (actual or potential) that people provide to the organisation through their capabilities, knowledge, skills, networks, experience, behaviours and attitudes” (S1, p.1). **Similarly, her insights into the importance of dialogue/bartering between senior managers and HRD practitioners in influencing strategic thinking and practice** within the organisation (R5, p.275) found further and wider resonance in BS 76000: *“By establishing a dialogue between the organisation, its people and stakeholders, mutual respect can be fostered to acknowledge the diverse contributions these bring to the organisation and to its shared values and social sustainability” (S1, ibid).*

Following publication of BS 76000 in July 2015, Anderson was appointed as **chair of a BSI committee responsible for developing the Learning and Development guide** (Published Document [PD] 76006) underpinning BS 76000. The guide was intended to provide ‘useful tools to help tackle organisational learning and development more effectively’, BSI, (2017) retrieved from <https://shop.bsigroup.com/ProductDetail?pid=000000000030350673>), and drew heavily upon the principles-based approach espoused in Anderson’s research. [Text removed for publication] acknowledges that Anderson’s *“leadership was crucial to the development of the content of BS76006 (Learning and Development)”*, content that was directly linked to *“her expertise and research-informed knowledge”* and which *“was recognised by other committee members and provided the basis from which to progress the construction of the standard quickly” (S4).* Anderson was also invited to scrutinise the drafts of **BS 76005 (Valuing people through diversity and inclusion: Code of practice for organizations** - the ‘Diversity and Inclusion standard’) and recommend revisions and content prior to its publication in April 2017. The media release preceding the release of BS 76005 explicitly acknowledges the principle-based approach advocated by Anderson - *‘BS 76005 is informed by and supports the principles contained in BS 76000 Human resource - valuing people - management system - requirements and guidance, an existing standard which specifies high-level strategic requirements for a management system for valuing people’* BSI (2017). Retrieved from <https://www.bsigroup.com/en-GB/about-bsi/media-centre/press-releases/2017/june/British-Standard-for-diversity-and-inclusion-launched/>) - and its direct lineage to the HRM BS 76000 panel on which Anderson participated.

The centrality of Anderson to the development of BS 76000 and PD 76006 led to her being invited to support CIPD in helping develop the **Mayor of London’s Good Work Standard (GWS)** in February 2018. The brief was to draft a capital city standard that would enable London based organisations to (i) attract, recruit and retain the best skills and talent; (ii) reduce absences and sick leave; and (iii) maintain higher levels of employee engagement and motivation, outcomes which would manifest themselves in increased productivity, cost savings and reputational gain. **Her role was to help develop the standard from ‘where it is now to where we would like it to be’ by creating an initial draft, leading an internal workshop with the Greater London Authority (GLA), producing and testing a second version with employers and other key stakeholders, and then developing a final version (S6).** The GWS was launched in July 2019, establishing a benchmark that the Mayor wanted every London employer to work towards and achieve. Aimed at employers of all sizes across public, private and voluntary sectors, the GWS Employer Guidance (S7) produced by Anderson and the CIPD team is linked to an online self-assessment tool, enabling organisations to seek accreditation and recognition so that they might stand out as exemplary employers.

Anderson's expertise in HR Standards and Standardisation also extends into the international arena following her appointment as Convenor of the Working Group (ISO/TC 260/WG 11) to develop **the first International Standard for Learning and Development in Organizations** on behalf of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) Technical Committee (Human Resource Management) in October 2018. *'Valerie's contribution was not just to lead the development of PD 76006 but to build a firm bridge between applied research in the domain and using that to guide practice by professionals. This has been recognised by the international committee of experts from nearly 30 countries in TC260 who approved the proposal from the UK to develop an international standard in L&D helmed by Valerie'* (S3). This role enables Anderson to lead the process of agenda-setting and prioritisation in relation to the development of a global HR standard (due end 2021) and is further evidence of how her research is helping to shape the **development** of new professional HR standards at the international level.

IMPACT 2: Adoption/Implementation of Standards

The Standards that Anderson has helped formulate have impacted directly at organisational level as a consequence of adoption/implementation. This diffusion has taken place through three principal channels:

First, directly by organisations themselves. Organisations intent on adopting the BSI standards have purchased them with a view to adoption and certification. Reasons of data protection prevent BSI from releasing the names of purchasing organisations, but [text removed for publication] confirms that as at the REF census date BS 76000 Human Resource Valuing People had been purchased by [text removed for publication] organisations. BS 76005 Valuing People through Diversity and Inclusion had been purchased by [text removed for publication] organisations, and [text removed for publication] organisations had purchased BS PD 76006 - Guide to Learning and Development (S5). Three examples, drawn from organisations that have adopted the standards in different parts of the UK, serve to illustrate **the local-level impact and reach of such standards**. [Text removed for publication] acknowledges that: *"the impact of these standards has not just been on the employed workforce ... but reaches across our expanding volunteer workforce"*, going on to state *'Adoption of these standards has impacted positively on our strategic and operational achievement'* and *'There is also a wider social impact of these standards through the expansion we have been able to undertake in developing and empowering volunteers, peer mentors and members of marginalised and overlooked communities'* (S8). [Text removed for publication] (a medium sized enterprise [text removed for publication] specialising in HR support, employment law and employee relations), was the first to implement BS 76005, indicates that it has led to a *'direct business improvement effect'* as *'the range of tasks and client services that we can offer has increased'* (S9).

London-based organisations do not have to purchase the Good Work Standard, they can simply apply for accreditation using the GSW online self-evaluation tool. By end 2020 89 organisations had received accreditation as GWS employers, ranging in size from the Cripplegate Foundation (10 employees) and Jewellery Box Ltd (25), up to the London Fire Brigade (5,992) and the Metropolitan Police (41,862 employees and an annual budget of GBP3.24 billion.)

Second, through their widespread acceptance by HRM professional bodies. The CIPD, the professional body for human resource management and people management with a global membership of 150,000 HR practitioners, confirms that the national Standards developed (and the international Standards under development) with the input of Anderson are strategically important to the CIPD vision. [Text removed for publication], confirms *'Her work PD 76006 was ground-breaking in that it codified evidence-based L&D practices for organisational implementation'* and that these standards *"continue to gain steady adoption" with important impacts on "productivity, managerial capability and enhanced workforce welfare"* (S3).

Third, in facilitating the work of Standards Accreditation and Certification Organisations (SACO). SACO carry out formal, third party recognition and assessment processes of BSI accredited organisations that want independent verification to demonstrate (to their stake/shareholders) that they have met the requirements of any given Standard(s). One of these SACOs, the [text removed for publication], a market leading UK and international accreditation service provider with a portfolio covering more than 2500 companies), has carried out [text

removed for publication] UK organisational HR based audits in sectors as varied as NHS Informatics, legal services, construction, education; security and criminal justice; surveyors, training provision; housing association, and charity. In the view of [text removed for publication] **the work of Anderson is crucial as it serves to “raise the bar’ in people management, drive quality and other performance improvements and helps client organisations to win customers, retain staff and build loyalty” (S2).**

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

(S1) British Standard, 2015, BS 76000 - Valuing People in Organizations, British Standards Institute

(S2) Statement from [text removed for publication], 11/02/2020

(S3) Statement from [text removed for publication], 17/01/2020

(S4) Statement from [text removed for publication], 19/03/2020

(S5) Statement on sales figures from [text removed for publication], 19/01/2021

(S6) Statement from [text removed for publication], 23/03/2018

(S7) Good Work Standard, Accredited Employers Greater London Authority, 11/03/2020

(S8) Statement from [text removed for publication]

(S9) Statement from [text removed for publication]