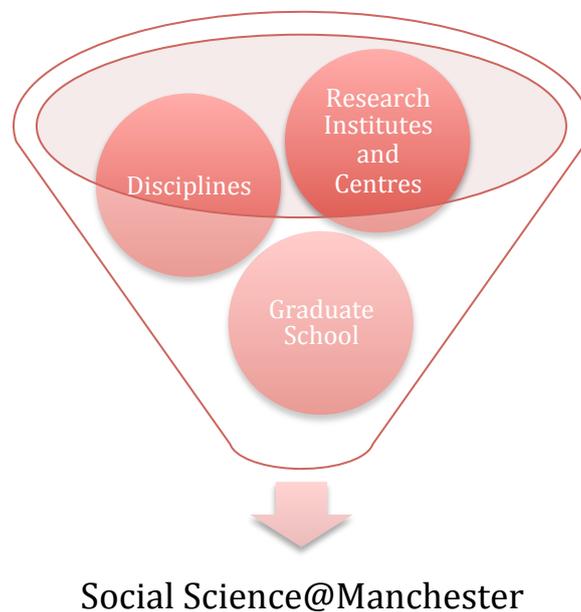


Report of the Review of Research in the School of Social Sciences University of Manchester



Professor Sue Scott

March 2016

Contents

[Acknowledgements](#)

[Forward](#)

[Executive Summary](#)

[Section One: The School of Social Sciences Research Culture and Research Strategy](#)

[Section Two: Section Two School Research Structures, Governance and Administration](#)

[Section Three: Preparation for REF202?](#)

[Section Four: The Discipline Areas](#)

[Section Five: Summary of Recommendations](#)

[Annex 1: Review Remit and Terms of Reference](#)

[Annex 2: The Discipline Reviewer's Reports](#)

[Annex 3: The Report of the University of Manchester External Reviewers](#)

[Annex 4: The School of Social Sciences Strategic Plan 2015](#)

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Chris Orme and Brian Heaphy, in particular, for the friendly but professional way in which they dealt with me and with the review overall, and for the open discussions that I was able to have with them. I am also grateful to the other members of the School and the University with whom I held one to one meetings: Fiona Devine; Colette Fagan; Alan Warde; Dale Southerton; Chris Phillipson; Gillian Whitworth; Claire Alexander; Tarani Chandola, Rachel Griffith; and Yoram Gorlizki. I am grateful to Gillian Whitworth and others in the Research support office and to Catherine Tansey and her team, who put together all of the information for the Review. I would like to offer particular thanks to Gillian Whitworth who was a superb secretary to the Review and a great support to me in the process.

Thanks are, of course, also due to the two internal University assessors Professor Nicola Glover-Thomas and Professor Neil Pendleton and by no means least to the six discipline assessors: Professor Alexander Bird; Professor Shirin Rai; Professor John Scott; Professor Peter Smith; Professor Jonathan Spencer and Professor Frank Windmeijer their individual reports are at Annex 2. Without them this Review would not have been possible. They worked hard and offered many important insights, not only into their specialist areas but also in relation to the School more generally. I have drawn on the Assessors views in writing the report (especially in Section Two), as well as on their collective REF experience (all were either chairs or members of panels). I have also utilized on my own knowledge and experience, and drawn on the additional information that I gathered in interviews and discussions in the course of undertaking the Review. I must therefore take responsibility for the views expressed and the recommendations offered here.

Forward

I was invited to chair this review on the 8th of September 2015 because of the previous Chair being unable to continue with the task for personal reasons. I was very pleased to be able to undertake the task, albeit at short notice, having, since gaining my first lectureship at Manchester in the 1980s, watched the progress of social science in the University with interest and much goodwill.

I chaired the Review and produced this report in a spirit of constructive criticism and collegiality. It is in the interests of all Social Scientists in the UK that UK social science is represented at the top end of the World Rankings. In my view, Social Science at Manchester has the capacity to be the best in the UK and to attain top 25 status. I use the word capacity deliberately as it is my view that overall the academic staff in the school are excellent and need to be supported to attain even more. This capacity must be retained, refreshed and extended with the continuation of the strong and imaginative appointments in which the University has invested in the past.

Individual discipline assessors have taken a close look at the six academic areas in SoSS, focused discussions were had in the review meetings with discipline representatives, and our assessments will be reflected in this report. This was however, not a simply review of UoAs and their readiness for whatever the next stage of the REF process has to offer, it was to be a review of the School and I have taken this aspect of the remit very seriously (See Annex 1). In my view it is essential, if the School is to be something more than an organizational and administrative convenience in the complex structure of a very large University, that it is clearly more than the sum of its parts, indeed it must be both the showcase for social science at Manchester and the framework which supports it. Manchester Social Science does not have a high enough profile internationally and a serious process of internationalization needs to take place, alongside the development of a strong brand image for SocialSciences@Manchester. In the context of a very large University and in the global context the social sciences need to stand together in order to maximize their visibility and hence the possibilities for engaging in world class disciplinary and interdisciplinary research. As Professor Amann pointed out in his 2010 Review Report - Social Sciences at Manchester needs to be focused not only on raising its REF scores but also its international profile if it is to represent the best of UK social science to the world.

I will in the course of the report make some recommendations for how I think this can be achieved: my suggestions will not be exhaustive, but they are meant to act as an injunction against modesty and an encouragement to think creatively about ensuring that whenever and wherever the best social science in the world is being discussed and rated Social Science@Manchester is central to the conversation. Responsibility for this profile raising cannot lie solely with the School however. The University at the highest level needs to engage fully with the promotion process, taking and creating opportunities to 'showcase' and discuss the importance and impact of Manchester Social Science. It is unfortunate, in my view that the social sciences are under the umbrella of a Faculty named 'Humanities'. I am sure that much thought went into this and I acknowledge (having been Dean of a joint Faculty myself) that there are very good reasons for not having separate faculties of Arts/Humanities and Social Sciences. However, 'The Humanities' are not generally understood to include the Social Sciences and there is a danger that any too cursory search would give the impression that the Social Sciences are not seen to be important within the University of Manchester. I appreciate that a change of name for the Faculty may not be deemed appropriate, but the current hierarchical configuration does make it even more

important that action is taken at all levels to raise the profile of these disciplines which should be at the heart of any great University.

Professor Sue Scott

January 2016

Executive Summary

The School of Social Sciences at Manchester is made up of some very strong disciplinary areas and others where there is a great deal of excellent research, but some room for improvement. There is a good deal of very exciting research and a very strong research environment. With good leadership, resources at least at steady state - staff replacement and some strategic interdisciplinary appointments, and with increased confidence there is no reason why Manchester Social Science can't be the best in the UK at the next REF and move steadily towards the top 25 globally.

The review found the School to have a less fully developed identity than might be hoped for by this stage, but the disciplines, which make up SoSS, are long established at Manchester with strong identities. It is my view that these disciplinary strengths can, and should, be retained while developing a stronger sense of Social Sciences at Manchester as a whole, which has the potential to be much more than the sum of its parts. The major recommendations at the School level are: that it should go through a branding exercise with as much staff engagement as possible; that it should establish a Social Science Graduate School and an overarching Research Institute. The report has also stressed the importance of a more fully developed internationalization strategy and international benchmarking.

This report encourages the School leadership to be more proactive in bringing staff together, building cohorts, and developing leadership, especially at professorial level. It recommends high but discipline appropriate expectations in relation to outputs for the next REF – pointing out that the aspiration for **all** of those submitted to have two 3* and two 4* publications is probably not realistic for most social science disciplines – and encouraging an inclusive approach. The report recommends immediate action in relation to developing Impact Case Studies. It also recommends strong School level involvement in the appointments process, not only in order to ensure that they are clearly REF focused but also, to encourage and understand potential links and to foster cross-disciplinary opportunities. Very importantly, in relation to major funding applications high expectations should be set for submissions such as ESRC Centre bids, alongside realistic expectations about individual grant profiles. Time needs to be allocated **and** protected for the planning and preparation of all applications.

In relation to the Disciplinary areas the devil is in the detail and the discipline reviewers have explored this and made specific recommendations (see Annex 2) that sit alongside the key points that have been flagged for each discipline in Section Four. Here I offer a very brief summary of the DAs (in alphabetical order). **Economics:** is clearly not performing as well as would be expected and made some strategic errors in relation to the last Ref submission. Lessons have been learnt, but the DA needs more strategic focus, clear goals in relation to research funding and a greater will to collaborate, careful attention will need to be paid to future appointments. **Philosophy:** the review team was convinced that Philosophy should remain within SoSS, but sustaining it as if it were a large generalist Department in an Arts Faculty simply may not be either feasible or fair to the staff and it may need to be re-conceptualized as a more specialist unit – rather as Social Statistics currently. There is a need for stronger links with the other disciplines across the School and this needs to be considered in making appointments in the future. **Politics:** This is a strong DA, but one which could maximize its potential by engaging more with the School and developing a more collaborative research strategy. There is something of a silo mentality, which in turn is mirrored within the research clusters – the time is right for

some strategic culture change. **Social Anthropology:** This is a strong DA, but with the potential to be even stronger with a clearer strategy for research grant capture, more ambition with regard to publications and a greater commitment to collaborative working. The staff profile will need to be reviewed if, as seems likely, there is a further reduction in senior staff before the next REF. **Social Statistics:** the newest and smallest of the DAs in SoSS it needs to be supported to develop as centre of excellence in statistical methods while maintaining strong relationships with Sociology and CMIST. Staff need to be encouraged to see the value that their work produces. **Sociology:** The strongest Discipline in the School and at the top of the RAE/REF rankings since 2001. Sociology is currently 14th in the World Rankings the highest in the School and second highest in the Faculty. Given this position sociology seems to be somewhat undervalued in the University and to undervalue itself. The DA needs to think bigger, promote itself more, and to be more even more strategic about making appointments as well as continuing with its strong track record of collaboration.

In order for it to be possible for the School to engage fully with the recommendations of the Review it will be necessary to create spaces and opportunities for staff to come together to build a more collaborative ethos and make opportunities to discuss the 'big issues' for the future of world class social science research.

Section One: The School of Social Sciences Research Culture and Research Strategy

Introduction

The University aims to be in the top 25th in the World Rankings. The School also aims to make the top 25 and the Social Sciences, at Manchester, are currently listed as 35th under Social Science and Business, and 45th under Humanities in the QSWR. The only DA in the School in the top 50 is Sociology at 14th, which is currently the highest score in the University apart from Development Studies which is ranked third. I would suggest that there are lessons for the whole school in relation to the success of these two social science disciplines.

The School's Strategic Plan 2015-20 lists six Key Strategies (see Annex 2) under the Core Goal of 'World Class Research' and I will engage with each of them in the course of this report, although not in order or, in exactly, the same form. First I want to turn to areas which often fall outside of the terms of research reviews and REF planning, but which are actually central to creating the best possible environment for research excellence: The status and visibility of the social sciences at Manchester, Communications within the University and across the School, and the physical environment within which the School operates. I realize that some excellent social science research has been undertaken by lone scholars with no international network, no funding and in places more akin to a cupboard than an Research Institute, and while there should still be space for individual research and scholarship within the Social Sciences, even lone scholars benefit from discourse with others and from wider support and appreciation.

The Social Science 'Brand' at Manchester

If SoSS is to be really successful as a School and in promoting Social Science at Manchester then it needs to attend to its image as a matter of some urgency. This is not a matter of competing with the reputation of the individual disciplines. Research institutes and centres, which also need to have strong, international identities in their own right, rather it is about ensuring that the image and reputation of the School both adds to these *and* promotes social science in its broadest sense. SoSS must be seen as an attractive and creative context within which to work and undertake doctoral research and the 'go to' place for a wide range of stakeholders. To say that the website is unappealing and uninformative would be putting it mildly. I understand that there is current work in progress on the University website and of course the SoSS site and DA pages must be congruent with the wider University brand, but this doesn't mean that they can't also display their own identity as well. Bringing in expertise with understanding both of the front end of websites and of the context of the School and the disciplines would be enable a strong platform to be built for communication at all levels. It is of course also crucial that the pages are both kept up to date with regard to information and the images refreshed and support for this would, again, be a small amount of resource put to very good use. There is strong evidence that international students looking for the best place to undertake their doctorate study websites closely as do potential international applicants for academic posts. The website needs to be strongly branded and vibrant. This also applies to the internal staff portal, which should give colleagues a positive sense of the University, the School and their place within it.

In addition, the School and its sub areas need to be much more present on social media. Some, such as The Morgan Centre, the SCI Sociology and The Granada Centre, already make

good use of Twitter but the Social Sciences at Manchester, more generally, have no presence. I have seen tweets recently from individuals in the School 'advertising' doctoral awards and, while I am sure that this was done with the very best of intentions, it sends the wrong message about the organization and professionalism of social science at Manchester. Promoting doctoral awards via Twitter is a good idea if it is undertaken by the School, the DA, the DTC or, by a Graduate School. The handle Social Sciences@Manchester could be a profile, which is widely recognized and respected across the UK and internationally.

This process should be integrated with the development of the School's Internationalization Strategy, work on which has already begun. This should include an international benchmarking exercise as a matter of some urgency. While, in the main, the Discipline Areas had selected appropriate UK comparators to benchmark against when asked about international equivalents they appeared not to have given it much thought. It is also important that the School itself begins to build relationships with strong Schools of Social Science in the US, Europe, and Asia.

Recommendations:

- **A Branding Exercise for Social Sciences@Manchester**
- **A fully developed Internationalisation strategy to include International Benchmarking**

Space and Place

The School has the advantage of being housed, primarily, within the Arthur Lewis Building, which has brought the majority of DAs and Centres together alongside the School of Environment, Education and Development. However, observation and discussions, in the context of this review, have revealed that the physical space is less than ideal and that the School has outgrown it. The fact that CMIST is in the Bridgeford Building and the SCI has been fully consolidated in Waterloo Place means that, while it is beneficial for all RI staff to be close together, the rest of the School is, as a result, deprived of routine contact with significant areas of research. These are not easy matters to resolve but, if the social sciences at Manchester are to develop the strongest possible identity and further capacity for large scale interdisciplinary research then the possibility of greater co-presence should be considered in the context of the Estates Strategy.

Meanwhile, in my view, more could be done within the Arthur Lewis Building to promote a stronger identity for the School. Currently there is a lack of designated space for colleagues to either 'bump up against each other' or to meet more formally and the open plan nature of much of the building makes passing conversation difficult. I suggest a review of space and an exploration as to whether it would be possible to designate some school 'seminar space' so that DA, RI/Centre and School seminars can have a regular home. It seems likely that in a School of this size any such space would be in regular use and therefore would not present a problem in the context of timetabling economies. This would mean that colleagues would know where and when seminars would take place and it may even be possible to create some 'coffee' space there as well. On the subject of coffee the coffee stall on the ground floor, while much better than nothing, provides little opportunity for interaction. My experience, and that of colleagues, of the changes which have been made in the School of Social Science building at Edinburgh -designated seminar/common room space and a new café - reinforce my long held view of the benefits to be found in creating spaces for colleagues to come together. I will risk one further

suggestion in this context which is that the ground floor of the Arthur Lewis Building could offer a much stronger representation of the two Schools housed in the building. I would suggest a rotating poster exhibition representing the work of different disciplines and research groupings. These need to change frequently enough to avoid them becoming wallpaper and meet the researchers sessions could take place at lunchtimes around the posters. I realize that these suggestions might be seen as trivial in the context of looming economic and REF pressures, but I contend that they are worthy of consideration in the context of building a stronger identity for the School and encouraging interdisciplinary conversations.

Recommendation:

- **Consideration of space utilization on order to create more opportunities for interaction**

Research Institutes, Centres and Research Funding

In general, attempts to force academics into research groupings and collaborations are doomed to failure so I am, based on experience, treading carefully here. Having said that there does seem to be too much complexity and proliferation with regard to research Groups, Clusters and Centres, both within DAs and across the School as a whole. With regard to Groups and Clusters (and all similar configurations). It is important enable researchers to come together outwith more formal research structures, especially in order to foster new ideas and initiatives. However, such groupings should not be overly formalized or allowed to dominate in DA and School strategic discussions, bids for posts etc. Rather they should be facilitated in relation to meetings and seminars and supported with regard to research bids and cross DA 'Clusters' should be encouraged.

I would recommend an internal School review of all the Research Centres, which have neither external funding nor a strong external identity to build on, with a view to rationalizing some of them out of existence. It is sometimes the case that the existence of a particular Centre can get in the way of developing research in a related area. Here I would take the example of the Political Economy Centre. This is an important field, which is currently underdeveloped in the UK context and where, I think Manchester could make some impact if Economics and Politics worked together. This would entail 'disbanding' the current Political Economy Institute, which clearly isn't and Institute anyway and reformulating it as a Centre, while retaining, the important aspects of its work and reputation. This Centre would then be expected to apply for external funding to sustain itself.

The School is home to three very different and highly successful Research Institutes (CMIST, The SCI and MICRA) and should be commended for the part it plays in fostering and supporting research at this level.

I have had discussions with the Head of School and others about the possibility of creating and overarching Research Institute for the School, which would include all the research centres, (but not the SCI or MICRA) with the most likely way forward being to extend the remit of CMIST in this regard. CODE, which is an ESRC funded Centre appears to sit largely under the CMIST umbrella already. On balance, I think that this is good idea and I would recommend further discussion across the School, and within the Faculty, with a view to the emergence of the Cathie Marsh Institute for Social Science Research.

However a number of issues need to be considered: There are undoubtedly advantages to having a strong and concentrated focus for bringing together research in across the School and for making sustainable links with cognate disciplines in other Schools. Not least would be the increased capacity for developing major funding applications. It would also enable better utilization of resources and facilitate the short-term continuation of research staff contracts between grants in order to retain high quality career your researchers. It would also enable better use of administrative, events and social media capacity across and between grants and provide a clear focus of research support across the school. In addition, such an Institute could provide a strong focus for early career researchers, for research development opportunities, and well as for cross-disciplinary seminars and conferences. Such an institute would be at the heart of raising the profile of Social Sciences at Manchester both nationally and internationally, in line with other major institutes world-wide. In this context name and branding very important. It is already clear, reinforced by the development of the Social Statistics DA, that CMIST is about more than quantitative methods, although excellence in methodology is at its core. This means that it has, to some extent, lost its identity and is evolving a broader one, making the timing right for further development. It would however be crucial that Social Science appeared in the title of the Institute – CMIST is in any case a rather odd name as it is not an acronym. The current brand could be maintained by the acronym CMI – followed by ‘for Social Science Research’. Such a development would support The Morgan Centre, which has been highly successful for a number of years, but which does not currently have a strong stream of research income. Locating it within an Institute would offer some administrative while the Centre develops further major funding bids – perhaps developing a more international flavor to its work. In turn the qualitative expertise for which the Centre is known would add to the reputation of the Institute. An Institute would also provide a wider context for The Mitchell Centre, which currently appears to be more of a research grouping than a Centre as such. This would add a further methodological dimension.

However, there are negative aspects to such a development not least being resistance from academic colleagues who would see it as a threat to disciplinary research identities. It is also seems likely that the next REF will see the continuation of a, primarily, disciplinary focus, although serious discussions are going on about finding better ways to accommodate and reward interdisciplinarity with the assessment process. As well as the likelihood of a greater focus on the interdisciplinary work in the next REF it is clear that interdisciplinarity is, and will continue to be, central to the majority of major funding opportunities. These concerns can be ameliorated, not only by ensuring that all colleagues understand the importance of interdisciplinary work but also through continued strong support for the disciplines and for the discipline based research which is essential to provide the strong base from which to develop the very best kind of interdisciplinarity A somewhat more problematic issue relates to the structure of the school more generally. While it would be important, as mentioned above, to retain and develop disciplinary research within the DAs as well as in the RIs there is a very real danger that the DAs would increasingly feel like teaching entities and the implications of this need to be considered carefully. With regard to the leadership of the School there would need to be a review of roles in the context of the creation of a more significant role for any Director of CMRI than is the case for CMIST. How would such a role sit with the role of Director of Research – would they become one and if so where would School level leadership sit for research based outside of the CMRI? A further potential complication is the existence of social science research elsewhere in the University, most notably in SEED. It seems to me that there are many overlaps between Development Studies in particular, which historically had strong links with Sociology and is currently in the same UoA as Anthropology, but also

with other groupings. These connections should be encouraged and a Social Science research institute would provide a positive context for such developments.

On balance I think it is worth seriously considering establishing a Social Science Research Institute in order to create an umbrella for the existing Centres and a context in which to foster new collaborations and major funding applications especially in relation to big issues where Manchester is well placed to make a significant contribution. I can't see any insurmountable problems, but a number of issues need close consideration and there should be an evaluation of successful models in comparable Universities.

The two other Institutes associated with the School appear to me to be highly successful in different ways. The Sustainable Consumption Institute is an excellent example of sociologically led, but interdisciplinary social science, which will increasingly be able to build strong connections with other disciplines both at Manchester and beyond. There appears to have been a long evolution with regard to the research funded by Tesco, but the recognition by the University of the central role of social science in the field of sustainability and consumption appears to be reaping benefits via a strong vision, research programme and appointments. The SCI is an excellent example for the rest of the School with regard to both its research programme and its research culture. MICRA, while also very successful is a loser network of research and other activities crossing disciplines within the University – primarily the social sciences and health and medicine and connecting with number of professional areas and bodies within the city region. Of course such an entity needs to be sustainable in the longer term, but it also provides an excellent model for more policy and practice focused research.

Future Research Developments

During the course of the Review I was asked to make suggestions about possible future research developments in the School. While I don't have a crystal ball, it seems to me that there are some obvious possibilities. I have already mentioned Political economy so I won't discuss that again here, suffice to say that it could connect to what is an obvious area of development for the School – researching the development of the concept (and reality) of the Northern Powerhouse. I was surprised to see only one mention of this in the papers I read – a brief reference by the Sociology DA, although in discussion with Professor Phillipson it transpired that MICRA was thinking about this as well. I understand that there is some work going on in the context of the Cities@Manchester project based in SEED and I see this as a positive opportunity for collaboration across the two Schools. There is potential here for a multi dimensional, as well as multi disciplinary research programme, and for working closely with the city and the Northern region more generally. There should also be opportunities for collaboration with the SCI and with the STEM areas in the University.

I think there is a great deal of scope for collaboration with the fields of health and medicine within the University and, that the School should consider ways in which it might take the lead here, aside from MICRA's links and a small amount of work in Anthropology, and Health Economics there seems to be very little connection. I would suggest that the School think seriously about developing a strand of research focusing on the social science of illness and wellbeing - health inequalities is an obvious area for development. This would entail some joined up thinking in relation to future appointments, but it could prove extremely fruitful in the medium to long term as it is a vibrant area and the funding opportunities are good.

The other aspect, which, I think the School should consider, is the Social Science of social policy. Of course there is policy related research in the School – public policy in politics, and research on the effects of policy on everyday life in the Morgan Centre as well as the SCI's engagement with environmental policy, but there is no clear focus for policy related work which is a significant difference between Manchester and its competitors in the UK. I am not suggesting that Manchester re-establishes Social Policy as a DA, nor that it turns Sociology into an applied area (as a number of other Universities have done to the detriment of strong sociological research), but rather that attention is given to both existing policy related work and to future possibilities. This is a strand of work that could be badged within the Social Science Research Institute. In the meantime the disciplines within the school could develop a much stronger presence on the Policy@Manchester website.

Recommendations

- **Strong consideration should be given to establishing a Research Institute for the Social Sciences based on CMIST**
- **Insufficiently active Research Centres should either be disbanded or re vivified**
- **A series of events should be organized to enable cross-school discussions about 'big issues' for future research**
- **Serious thought should be given to coordinated intra and inter School collaborations in the areas of Health and Wellbeing, Social Science analysis of Policy and 'the Future of the North'**

Doctoral Training and Recruitment

Some of the DA Assessors and myself were surprised that there is no Social Science Graduate School, nor it seems any plans for one, although I believe this was discussed some time ago. I would recommend most strongly that, at the very least, the School gives the 'Graduate School' name to its PGR activities and that it also gives serious consideration to the establishment of a more formal organizational structure along the lines of the Graduate School in the School of Arts, Languages and Cultures. This is especially important in the context of the joint DTC with Liverpool and Lancaster, which I understand is expected to continue to be led by Liverpool, assuming ESRC recognition for the DTP. I was surprised to see that when one clicks on The University of Manchester link in the context of the current DTC website one lands on the top level University webpage and has to work quite hard to reach social science research.

In the context of the existing DTC it would appear that Manchester has not been as successful in gaining ESRC awards some in key areas as it was before. It has been a matter of some surprise in the ESRC that Manchester did not lead the DTC so it may be worth considering this rotation in the DTP application.

The development of a cohort is understood to be crucial to the positive development of post-graduate researchers and this needs to be enabled within the University and well as across the DTC. However, this is by no means the only reason. Increasingly international students are seeking an interdisciplinary context for their PhD research and also the support and development opportunities that a Graduate School enables. This makes the Graduate School model attractive to international students who may not understand the concept of a DTP and in any case are considering choosing Manchester, because of its reputation and location, and not the North West. Therefore if Manchester wishes to be seen a one of the very best places, not just in the UK, but in Europe, to undertake social

science research and especially interdisciplinary social science research, then it needs a strong Graduate School brand. This development would, in my view enable the School to more easily meet its fifth key research strategy.

In addition to the above benefits the creation of a Graduate School based within SOSS would create a neutral fertile zone for new collaborations through cross DA supervision and other interactional opportunities. It would contribute to the School's identity and create a supportive context for both supervisors as well as students. Such a development would not need very much in the way of additional resource and in any case, any business plan would offset this against increased international student numbers. There is currently both administrative support at School level and academic support in all the DAs, for PGR students, and this would need to be refocused and a Professorial Director appointed. There would of course need to be clarity with regard to this role and the Associate Dean position in the Faculty, but these problems would seem to have been navigated in relation to the Graduate School in the School of Arts, Languages and Cultures.

Recommendation:

- **That very serious consideration should be given to the establishment of a Social Science Graduate School**

Section Two: School Research Structures, Governance and Administration

Identity

As has been clearly stated already if Social Sciences at Manchester are to make the necessary impact – in all senses of the word – then the School needs to both embody and facilitate this process. It also means that a more collaborative and collegial culture needs to be inculcated in the School. This is not to say that the School is an unfriendly place more that it doesn't have a strong identity and colleagues don't seem to have a sense of belonging to it. Given the need for an interdisciplinary culture, from which all could benefit, alongside the need for profile raising then thought needs to be given to working towards a cultural shift alongside the developments in communications described above. The School is large, but not impossibly so and so events designed to bring the whole School together are worthy of serious consideration. Just being in a room, albeit a large one together can help to create a sense of belonging to something. As can making the range of research going on in the School more visible. Holding 'sand-pit' style events for potential research developments; asking staff for suggestions for research areas; engaging new staff and building a cohort and hosting Big Ideas events in collaboration with outside bodies can all contribute. These activities have to have real content and in order to facilitate this a research development team could be set up involving individuals from all of the DAs who have an important contribution to make, but are not currently in a formal role. The ability to enthuse colleagues is key here.

Leadership

If Manchester Social Science is to be the best in the UK – which it could be – then strong disciplinary leadership is also crucially important. The review process revealed that some members of the professoriate are less engaged than is ideal. This is not uncommon in the UK HE sector in the context of the development of more formal structures at School level and the shift from a focus on single discipline departments. Many Professors are unclear as to what their role should be whereas others see their own funding applications and publications as the absolute priority. There are many different ways of being a professor, but a commitment to leadership and the development of the discipline and junior colleague is a very important part of the mix. We were surprised to find that not all HODAs were Professors. This is not to in anyway denigrate the excellent job being done by those non professorial colleagues who undertake it, rather it is to make the point that in a University such as Manchester and in the context of the Schools ambitions it is a less than satisfactory situation. Leadership should, of course, be encouraged at all levels, but, in my view, the HODA should always be a Professorial research leader.

Internationalisation

I realize that work has begun in the School relation to the University's evolving internationalization strategy, but it is not, as yet, very advanced. A Lead for Internationalization has been appointed, but there was surprisingly little discussion at DA level about international collaborations, links and benchmarks. While, of course, there is activity which I do not know about if it is not apparent to me or to others via the website then SoSS and its Disciplines will appear much more parochial than they should be. I understand that the University has focused on China, India and South America to forge high -level links, but I would suggest that one size does not fit all and a more nuanced approach, in relation to ensuring that links and collaborations are both appropriate and sustainable for particular disciplinary areas, is needed. Thus it may be that stronger links

in Europe and North America may be more fruitful for SoSS at this stage especially with regard to Doctoral and Post Doctoral developments

Research Support and Research Governance

The almost universal view from the DAs and other areas of the School was that pre award support was very good and that colleagues had good working relationships with Gillian Whitworth and her team. We got some indication that expertise in relation to AHRC was not as easy to access as for ESRC and other funding bodies. I am sure that this is available within the Faculty Research Office, but it is important that academics understand where they can locate the most specialist advice for any given application. There seem to be more negativity about Post Award support, which is not unusual in my experience. It is difficult for me to assess the nature of any problem so I am simply stating that this is an issue which may merit further investigation.

While I don't think that it is essential that each DA has the same research support structure, especially given variations in size, I confess to being somewhat confused by the range and variation of roles and would suggest that the Director of Research ascertain that these are all fit for purpose in the context of the strategy and preparation for the REF, at School and DA level, with the business of informing, discussing and responding to directives from outwith the School. This is, of course, necessary but it is also crucial that time is spent on more creative discussions about research developments across the School and within individual DAs and that ideas flow up as well as down. Ensuring space for this is a challenge, but essential if creativity is to be engendered and responded to.

Staffing

There needs to be a strategic balance between discipline driven appointments within DAs, appointments which arise via Institutes and Centres and the possibility of cross-disciplinary appointments driven by a wider School research strategy. Appointments should always be made with two clear research considerations in mind: Which UoA is the appointment linked to and what is the potential for future research developments which might extend current areas or enable the development of new ones? The relevant DA/DAs should always be fully involved, but having said this I consider it to be crucial that there is a strong School overview of appointments at all levels. The involvement of the HoS in the interview and appointments process, as is currently the case, is crucial in relation both to REF and to the longer term research vision. I realize that SoSS is a large School, but my experience tells me that there is great value to the (Head of School or Research Director) chairing non professorial interview panels and the HoS chairing or being a member of all Professorial Panels. This level of involvement ensures that there is a clear overview in relation to the School's most important research resource – its staff. It would also ensure that there is a strong knowledge base in relation to areas of expertise across the School which enables connections to be made between discipline areas. This approach coupled with ensuring that new staff meet each other and are encouraged to network will provide a strong basis for future cross-disciplinary developments. I was encouraged to learn that the School does have the flexibility to make more than one appointment where there is a particularly good field. I would also recommend that the School reserve a strategic pot for appointments in new areas where creating connections across areas of expertise could enable research developments such as applications for major targeted awards. This has clearly worked very well in relation to the development of MICRA and this model should be reproduced.

Administration

I have experience of establishing a centralized, function led, administration, and entirely appreciate the value of this form of organization in terms of efficiency and effectiveness, especially in relation to the student experience, and in relation to administrative careers. However, when every DA reports a lack of administrative support, after several years of a School and Faculty based system, the matter seems worthy of investigation. Of course most academics would prefer to have dedicated administrative support readily available and preferably in the next office, this is not feasible or sensible, however neither is it a good use of resource for academics to be undertaking routine administrative tasks and organizing their own travel. I am unclear as to what extent the quantum of administration in the School has been reviewed and whether the problems which were reported to myself and the DA assessors could be dealt with by clarifying procedures and practices and managing expectations, or whether something more major needs to be done. What I am clear about is that such resentments get in the way of for building a School ethos and need to be addressed.

Recommendations:

- **Thought should be given to holding occasional ‘whole School’ events, led by the Head of School, to help to inculcate as sense of identity.**
- **A programme designed to engage the Professoriate in relation to leadership**
- **A strong School Staffing Strategy and level engagement in the appointments process**
- **A programme designed to build a cohort of ‘new’ staff across the School in order to foster identification with the School as well as with a DA and RI or RC**
- **A light touch internal review of research governance structures**
- **A light touch review of administrative resources and processes across the School and the DAs**

Section Three: Preparations for REF202?

Developments since this review was established have made matters relating to the next REF less clear and we must await the outcome of the Stern Review and the Government's response. The Green Paper professes a positive view of the dual support system while hinting that RCUK, or possibly RUK might take some overarching responsibility for the next REF if HEFCE is indeed wound down. This putative separation of teaching and research is troubling as is the prospect of losing the knowledge developed within HEFCE over the numerous research assessments. If the result is some kind of collaboration between RUK/RCUK and another organization then does this make a move to metrics, at least in the longer term, more likely – despite Wilsden's advice?

It seems unlikely that the 'light touch' interim exercise mooted in the Green Paper will happen between now and the next REF, in part due to the cost, but especially given the professed commitment to continuing with peer review for the next full assessment. Two processes using very different methodology would cause confusion to say the least. We are left with the likelihood of the next REF being on much the same lines as the last one, but with more weighting given to impact – probably 25% and perhaps impact and Environment being wrapped up together. What we don't know is when it will be as the Green Paper is rather vague on this - talking about a peer review process by 2021. This could mean a submission date in either 2019 or 2020 – or possibly even later depending on what happens with HEFCE.

Outputs

While the Review group was clear that raising the standard of publications was an important target across the DAs we were concerned to learn that the University had set an expectation that all those submitted in the next REF would have at least four 3* publications with an 'aspiration that two should be 4*'. We consider this unrealistic in the Social Sciences. All of the DA assessors had been either chairs of or members of UoA Panels for REF2014 and therefore hold this view based on a good deal of experience. We are in agreement that across all the disciplines involved Manchester's expectations are out of line with the 2014 grading profile. We very much hope that the University will review this position and put forward a set of expectations which is demanding but achievable in non science disciplines.

Across all of the REF2014 panels represented in this review the number of individuals submitted who had four 4* publications was extremely small, and many individuals, even in the strongest submissions had a profile which included one 2* item. Much excellent Social Science Research simply does not have the global reach necessary to attain a 4* rating, under the current REF rubric, and it is very important that the university compares like with like in this context and does not adopt a one size fits all policy. This would be likely to result in demoralized staff who feel that they are struggling to attain the impossible and getting little recognition for the what they do achieve. It is also likely to create a less collaborative climate where individual academics feel the need to be in control of their own destiny rather than take risks working with colleagues. It would be unfortunate if Manchester were to view all such profiles in the Social Sciences in negative terms. 2* publications are 'international' in quality and the low standing accorded to them is a consequence only of the funding formula. With a large submission, a relatively small 'tail' will have little effect on overall QR funding and these will be outweighed by the reputational advantages of inclusivity in staff submission. Inclusivity is especially

important in relation to Early Career Researchers. ECR staff, might be expected to have relatively more 2* publications are important elements in any REF submission and as they are clear indicators of the attention given to questions of succession in research capacity. In the Social Sciences ECRs are much less likely than in the Sciences to be publishing with more senior research leaders which makes it less likely that they will be able to attain a high star rating across the board.

While we would fully expect the University to have a system in place for ensuring that the best outputs are submitted we feel that it would be extremely risky to attempt to second guess the REF panels assessment to this degree and could result in the exclusion of much excellent work and smaller than necessary submissions. A small tally of 2* publications, especially in the larger submissions will have little effect on QR, whereas an inclusive strategy would have a considerable reputational advantage.

In my view the best strategy for raising the quality of publications is for staff to be encouraged to designate a sub set of their publications as REF relevant and to spend a lot of time on them. This is especially important in the context of responding to referees comments. There is a concern that under pressure to 'get things out' academics are spending less time on polishing papers at this stage. If the minimum is done to satisfy the referees a paper will be published, but may not be as good as it could be. This issue needs to be discussed across the School and a strategy put in place to ensure that staff at all levels, but especially early career colleagues, have the time and support they need to engage fully with this process. There is time to further develop the School's strategy in this regard and to take the advice of discipline experts so that the outputs across every submission are as good as they can be in the context of that discipline.

Impact

There is no doubt that the assessment of social and economic impact will form a key part of future REF exercises and the weighting is likely to increase. Overall the social sciences met the impact challenge and according to HEFCE analysis contributed to high levels of impact across the whole range of UoAs not just those within Main Panel C -there is a message here for the University in terms of encouraging the Science disciplines to work with social science colleagues in partnership. This will become an increasingly competitive aspect of the REF, as Researchers and Universities get better at tracking the impact of their research, which means that if the Social Sciences at Manchester are going to do well then a good deal of attention needs to be paid to this area. While I have little doubt that research in SoSS is having impact, I am not at all sanguine about preparations for selecting Impact Case Studies, and nor were the discipline assessors. The School has set expectations but the DAs need a stronger steer and more support if they are to be REF ready.

Environment

Overall the social sciences at Manchester provide an excellent research environment, but there is always room for improvement. It is important to strengthen the School as an interdisciplinary context for research and both an overarching Research Institute and a Graduate School could be important developments in this regard. The mentoring system seems to work, in the main, but reinforcing it alongside the development of a DA and cross-School leadership strategy would be helpful. PGR recruitment needs to be encouraged across all areas, as does the development of Post -Doctoral programmes. The School already does much to support research, but it is worth considering how to encourage more

creative events, which both strengthen colleague's sense of working in a vibrant research environment and open this up to other stakeholders.

Income

Despite the rhetoric of 'steady state' ESRC has had an effective cut in non-ring fenced money and the success rate seems to hover at around 9%. This is of course dispiriting. Alongside this there is a view amongst many academics that demand management is a problematic development and leads to risk aversion. However, demand management is necessary in the context of scarce resources and needs to be dealt with at the DA and School level through supportive mentoring and internal peer review processes for staff at all levels. There is evidence that this does occur, but it is a stronger process in some DAs than others and is an area where the Director of Research could play an even stronger role. It is important that the School of Social Sciences at Manchester is successful in large grant capture – not just for the 'income' involved, but of course for the significant reputational, output and impact benefits involved. I would expect the School to always have one ESRC research centre, which means that plans need to be developing now for the next one. Of course the School should be involved in as many Europe 20/20 bids as is feasible – as long as this option continues to be open – and the structure of the call affords an opportunity for new interdisciplinary initiatives from across the School and the University. In my view there is a serious opportunity for a major centre focusing on 'The Future of the North', funded from multiple sources and probably sitting across SOSS and SEED. The School is exceedingly well placed to apply for large-scale quantitative awards and to design conceptually driven longitudinal studies – both quantitative and qualitative. These are difficult to get funded, but it is important to aim high and to impress upon funders the intellectual and methodological capacity, which Manchester Social Science can bring to bear. It is also important the ECAs are supported to apply for smaller award and for those in the 'Future Leaders' programme, but equally that expectations are realistic – there is no point in setting unrealistic targets. Manchester Social Science can expect a significant share of major research funds, but there are not enough to go round and it is important the colleagues are not set up to fail, while being clear that no application is a sure way not to gain an award!

In my view the School could do more to encourage research applications from collaborations across the School and also with other Schools – setting up competitions may be a way to do this, with development money for putting strong bids together.

It is often the case that top Universities like Manchester discourage staff from being co-Is on projects where the funding is held elsewhere, but if these are excellent projects then researchers will gain valuable experience and also insight into working with a wider range of funders – research income is very important, but it is only one chapter in the story.

Recommendations

- **Negotiation with University leaders in order to ensure that REF strategy, policy and practice takes full account of disciplinary differences**
- **Clear guidance and support for the next REF which is *appropriate* to the discipline mix in the School and which allows for strong disciplinary engagement alongside co-ordination and the sharing of experience and exemplars at School level especially in relation to Impact Case Studies and Environment Statements**
- **A clear planning process for major funding applications e.g. ESRC Research Centre bids with time allocated to support these**

- **A cross- School understanding of and commitment to flexibility in relation time for research**

Section Four: The Discipline Areas

Introduction

In this section, I offer a brief commentary on each of the Disciplinary Areas and point to the key issues that have arisen in relation to each of them in the course of the review. In many cases these issues will chime with those highlighted by the DA Assessor and in some cases by the DA itself, however, I have also made some points which have become clear to me in the course of the Review overall and in places these may differ from the view of the DA Assessor based on their review of one discipline. The full reports from each of the DA Assessors are available as Annex 11. The aim of my commentary here is to highlight the overall context and the strengths and weaknesses of each DA.

Social Anthropology

Background

Social Anthropology at Manchester has a long and significant history and should be in a position to build on this further and to maximize its potential. This is a relatively small DA in the context of the School, but not in relation to Anthropology more generally and it should also be remembered that unlike the large players such as Oxford and Cambridge, which include Physical and Biological Anthropology Manchester's focus is solely on Social Anthropology. After a disappointing RAE result in 2008 (12th out of 19) when it was the 4th largest submission to the UoA (24.33) the DA had a good result in REF2014. It moved away from its inclusive strategy for submitting 15.4 FTE and coming second overall, but 16th in size in the UoA. This FTE reduction was out of line with submissions generally however and is in large part explained by the reduction in the submission of Early Career Researchers (ECRs) – 10 in 2008 and 5 in 2014, with 3 ECRs not submitted in 2014. This meant that although the output and environment scores were high and that for impact was good the reduction in power led to an 18% reduction in QR income. This drop in income notwithstanding the 2014 result was impressive.

However, while the DA is clearly much better placed than at the last review there are some issues, which need to be addressed not only as preparation for the next REF, but more generally.

Key Points

1. There seem to have been problems in the past with the mentoring of ECRs as it is essential that this does not recur if the submission size is to increase in 2020/21
2. There appears to have been a tail-off in grant income since the REF2014 submission, especially with regard to RCUK awards, collaborations and interdisciplinary projects. A serious review is needed of the current tendency to 'lone scholar research', which when it results in Leverhulme Professorships is all to the good, but Manchester is lagging behind comparators when it comes to Joint research Council awards ERC grants and FRL and TSS awards. Manchester Anthropology has pioneered cutting-edge collaborations in the past and attention needs to be given now to greater attempts to gain this type of FEC bearing funding in order to refresh and extend and support the DA as a whole. There are clearly

issues in a small unit in relation to undertaking lengthy ethnographic fieldwork – which is the heart of much Anthropological work – but relying on individual scholars taking research leave is not a sustainable strategy, on its own, so some thought needs to be given to what is feasible.

3. While we appreciate that staff in the DA do work with colleagues elsewhere in the University a greater focus on collaborations with colleagues in the School is recommended – especially in existing areas of common interest. Anthropology was centrally involved with CRESC, but this doesn't seem to have translated into current collaborations. There would seem to be potential for collaboration with The Morgan Centre, particularly in relation to kinship where Anthropologists could bring a more international approach and in turn benefit from being involved in larger research applications and projects. The DA could also give consideration to what kinds of cross-school collaborations could be developed which Anthropology could support and benefit from.
4. Current publication plans appear not to be as ambitious as they might be, so while there is excellent work being done this is not the case across the board and focus needs to shift, in some cases, from edited books to international journals
5. There is cause for concern that the good impact performance in REF2014 has not yet been carried forward into the current REF cycle. It is crucial that individual impact plans are developed with all staff and that there is also a collective approach to developing and tracking impact in the DA. This can be done to good effect by taking seriously the broad steer given by Panel C which chimes with the broader and less economic engagement common in the DA and especially that found in the work of the Granada Centre.
6. The staff profile comprises 6 Professors, 5 senior lecturers, 9 lecturers (one on long term leave) a 0.5 temporary lecturer and a postdoctoral fellow. 3 professors have left since the REF submission and 1 lecturer and 1 researcher have also left and been replaced by 2 lecturers. In addition 2 professors have long-term research buyout. It would seem wise to review staffing levels at both the top end - as it is possible that there will be professorial retirees before the next submission deadline – and at the ECR level especially given the comparative paucity of Post Docs.
7. There is a sense in the DA that they lack control and, while teaching loads may well be high they need to give some thought to the organisation of the work.

Economics

Background

This is a relatively large DA with 53fte permanent academics a third of whom have been recruited since July 2012. This pattern of turnover offered an opportunity, which makes it more disappointing that the REF2014 result was not better. It also makes the gender balance in the DA even more surprising, it is very low even for what has always been a particularly male dominated discipline by social science standards. Manchester Economics submitted 35fte staff in 2008 and was ranked 10th and 33fte in 2014 and ranked 15th. The key issue appears to have been a far lower percentage of 4*/3* outputs than predicted and the SoSS clearly strategy highlights this and sets out ways to address it. Economics differs from the other disciplines in the School in having an accepted list of top ranked journals and a direct relationship between publication in these journals and rating in the REF. Of course, it is still early in the REF cycle with regard to publications, but because of the pressure on these journals, securing a place in them will become harder as the REF

deadline gets closer. It is a cause for concern therefore that the DA Assessor estimates that of the 93 publications out since the last REF deadline only 11% and 31% would be rated 4* and 3* respectively lower than the 11.4 and 53.5 actual scores in 2014.

Key Points

1. It is crucial that Economics develops as a strong research area within the Social Sciences and to this end it needs to be drawn closer into the School and encouraged to collaborate more with other disciplines
2. The DA has clearly understood what went wrong with regard to outputs for REF2014 and is addressing this
3. Economics needs a clear research funding strategy rather than the laissez faire position it seems to have at present. This should include aiming for a funded research centre within the pre REF period. In this context the future of the Centre for Growth and Business Cycle Research would need to be evaluated. It has one current research grant – can it develop or should it be a research theme rather than a Centre?
4. Income from teaching in Economics if of course important and should continue to be acknowledged as such and the DA needs to be supported appropriately, but this is not an alternative to research funding
5. Further consideration needs to be given as to how to support staff to reach the necessary research threshold and to strategies to deal with the situation should this not be possible. A distinction between research active and teaching only staff should not be a long term strategy in a University such as Manchester

Philosophy

Background

This is the smallest DA in the School with only 13.1 FTE permanent staff. In the context of this Review there was the obvious discussion to be had about whether Philosophy is located in the right school, as it is more usually classified an Arts and Humanities discipline and located with History, English and Languages. However, by the end of the process I was satisfied that it was in the best place and this seemed to be the settled view of the DA representatives. The DA was placed 19th in REF2014, up from 25th in 2008 while this is a clear improvement. There seems to be a view that the University saw the 2014 result as bad and does not recognize the degree of improvement. It is important for moral and thus for productivity that this is recognized, however, without significant investment it is likely to prove extremely difficult, if not impossible for the DA to get into the top 5 (or even the top 10) in the Philosophy UoA in 2020/21. The top submissions in REF2014 were, in the main large. Essex was a notable exception, but it is highly distinctive and has a longstanding world leading reputation in continental philosophy. Manchester on the other hand is small and broadly focused. The DA does have strengths in aesthetics, metaphysics and the history of philosophy, but has not promoted itself in these areas. Any small unit is vulnerable to marginal decisions by assessors – this is not special pleading, simply a statement. It is worth noting that there was bunching around Manchester's position in the REF rankings meaning that small positive differences could have led to a significantly better ranking.

There are also greater pressures in relation to teaching as a broad curriculum is delivered by a small number of people and substitution is not always possible.

Key Points:

1. If Philosophy is to remain within SoSS, and it is my view that it should, then it needs to be reconceptualised as a small specialist unit with strong relationships across the rest of the School – rather as Social Statistics is currently. There would seem to be untapped opportunities for this approach – for philosophers to work more with colleagues in politics in particular, but also with sociologists and anthropologists contributing to philosophical debates and methodological implications. One example would be philosophers of consciousness working with those in sociology interested in phenomenology and subjectivity. Philosophers could also make an extremely useful contribution to aspects of PGR research training, but it seems this has never been considered.
2. In the context of the School sustaining a general Philosophy DA as if it were a large department in an arts faculty is not feasible in the long term and some refocusing needs to occur both for current staff and in relation to any appointments.
3. There is overreliance on one Professor who has built a strong interdisciplinary reputation and strongly enhances the reputation and impact of Philosophy at Manchester. While this work is admirable and should be encouraged and supported, it is not sustainable and a more collective strategy is needed.
4. The DA would benefit from mentoring at both DA and individual level in relation to grant capture, especially from those both in and outwith SoSS who have AHRC experience, which is more relevant to the discipline than ESRC.

Politics

Background

Politics at Manchester does have a longstanding and very positive reputation, especially for election studies, and the fact that it hosts the ESRC funded British Election Survey is very important both to the DA and to SoSS. The DA is relatively large with 52fte staff on permanent contracts and a return in REF2014 of 37fte. Overall the submission was ranked 19th, compared with 12th and 46.4 fte in RAE 2008, which was obviously disappointing, although the REF score on outputs was higher than in 2008. There have been a number of strong new appointments in recent years but a number of senior colleagues – major figures in the discipline more widely - have retired and careful thought will need to be given to ensuring strong appointments in future. Any appointments need to fit with a DA wide research strategy rather than simply reinforcing existing research groupings as seems to have happened to some extent heretofore.

Key Points

1. The Politics DA seems try function much as it did before SoSS existed which means that School matters may seem like an intrusion. The DA needs to be encouraged to see the positive potential for collaboration and creative discussion across the School rather than seeing the School primarily as a source of administrative burden. This can be achieved through more open dialogue with the School and also through discussions with other DAs. There needs to be some strong encouragement for the DA to be more part of the School.
2. This quest for autonomy seems to be mirrored within the DA in that we were given the impression that the research clusters tend to operate rather separately from the DA. While research needs to be supported where it happens research clusters should not be allowed to ossify. A strategy needs to be developed - perhaps with

external advice – for developing research across the DA and in collaboration with other area of the School and beyond. If it is decided to retain research groupings (clusters), which seems likely in a large DA, then questions need to be answered about which ones and the development of new ones as well as how to nurture cross group activity. It seems that these issues have already been raised within the DA so that the time is right for some strategic cultural change.

3. There seems to a rather low level of involvement with the research institutes and centre so possibilities should be explored as should ways in which the DA make more (and successful) bids for funded research centres and large grants.
4. The current research organisational structure in the DA is complex and diffuse and needs to be reviewed in order to deliver to a new strategy and forward plan for the next REF across the DA
5. If Politics is to improve its ranking in the next REF it will need to focus on the quality of the outputs perhaps by developing further its mentoring and support strategy so that colleagues at all levels are concentrating on quality rather than quantity. A new research strategy will enable the development of the research environment, but work needs to accelerate in relation to impact especially if the aim is to be more inclusive for the next REF for which more case studies will be needed.
6. The Politics DA should maximise the advantages entailed in hosting the BES and work to raise its profile both within the UK and internationally

Social Statistics

Background

The Social Statistics DA is the newest in the School having been launched in 2009 and further restructured in 2014 with the establishment of the Cathie Marsh Institute for Social Research (CMIST). It is also the smallest DA with 11 permanent staff amongst whom there has been a fairly high level of churn with six leavers and six replacements since 2010. For REF purposes Social Statistics was submitted, with the Sociologists to the Sociology UoA and there seems to be no desire and, in my view, no reason to change this arrangement which serves the DAs, the School and the University, extremely well. Social Statistics contributed to 3 of the 6 Impact Case Studies and is likely to be in a position to improve this aspect of the next REF return which is important as this is where Manchester did slightly less well than its comparators. Social Statistics has played a part in ensuring that Manchester continues to be one of, if not *the*, leading UK centre for quantitative sociology. This position could be strengthened this position further and the DA should be encouraged and supported in this. Because of the paucity of top quality, quantitative social science in the UK this focus at Manchester has a real opportunity to develop although it is important to note that it is too small to be really comparable with some of the best Centres in the US.

Key Points

1. The Social Statistics DA is relatively new and needs to be supported to develop its identity, as an international centre of excellence, while maintaining strong relationships with Sociology and with CMIST as well as developing them further with other areas of the School. This includes creating a strong brand for work on the development of high level statistical methods and modelling and also research into statistical education and literacy
2. The above point notwithstanding it may be useful to consider the possibility of sharing some roles, with sociology, especially for research and administrative

- purposes. It creates a very heavy burden on a small staff group if they have to fill all the roles and attend all the meetings required by the School
3. Social Statistics staff need to be encouraged to see that value of the impact that their work produces
 4. While Social Statistics at Manchester is a long way from the, all too common, handmaiden role which statisticians often have in relation to research applications and projects, it is important to recognise the part the discipline plays in securing funding even when not leading applications.
 5. While this review does not cover teaching it is worth pointing out that as a new DA Social Statistics has been under some pressure to move to a position with regard to SSRs more in line with the rest of the School. While I understand the thinking here it is important that the staff don't spread themselves too thinly in the context of short course provision and that they are encouraged to concentrate on high level recurrent and sustainable provision
 6. Given the turnover of staff and the general shortage of high calibre social statisticians in the UK job market, it is very important that the profile of the discipline is raised and that staff are well supported and encouraged to develop their careers at Manchester

Sociology

Background

Sociology at Manchester has a long established history as one of the leading sites of the discipline in the UK. It was ranked first in RAE2001 and RAE2008 and came second to York (by 0.01 GPA) in REF2014. Sociology is 14th in the QS World Rankings, in the Manchester context second only to Development Studies which is ranked 4th, and a long way ahead of the other Disciplines in SoSS. This is testament to the all round achievements of the DA. Sociology is a sizeable DA with 34 permanent academic staff although a larger group of 52, including staff in Social Statistics, was submitted in REF2014. The DA has a strong collective identity, which clearly transcends the research groupings, and Centres linked to the DA. Sociologists have taken a lead, if not *the* lead in a number of influential and interdisciplinary research Institutes and Centres in the past e.g. CRIC and CRESC and currently: The SCI; CMIST; MICRA; CODE; The Morgan Centre and the Mitchell Centre. This is in no way to decry the excellent research undertaken in the other DAs or the importance of other centres such as the British Election Study, but Sociology should, nevertheless be seen as a model for the development of large scale, often interdisciplinary, ventures which have raised the profile of sociology and of social science at Manchester more generally without undermining the disciplinary integrity of the DA.

The DA reports some difficulties drawing applications for posts at Professorial level. This seems surprising given the status and ranking of the discipline and the reputation of the DA as a good place to work. It is fair to say that these difficulties have been experienced by sociology elsewhere in the UK and are in part explained by the contraction in the discipline in the 1980s – although this has more or less worked it self through now. The DA has clearly been extremely successful in recruitment at more junior levels.

Methodology is clearly a key strength across the DA and, in combination with CMIST and the Social Statistics DA, gives Manchester Social Science the ability to lead the UK in methodological development and training as well as in producing world leading, empirical research. Many members of the DA work on the some aspect of inequality and as such are

involved in research that is potentially at the heart of one of the University's research beacon 'Tackling Global Inequalities' and yet this work is not visible on either the University or the Faculty websites relating to the beacons.

It may be that overall lack of visibility has led to the DA not being as confident as it should be. Alternatively, on the other hand, it could be that the lack of self- promotion on the part of the DA has rendered sociology relatively invisible despite its impressive position in the rankings. Whatever the explanation we gained the impression that the DA was very anxious about the next REF and on improving its position at the expense of taking creative risks in relation to the development of future research.

Key Points

1. The DA needs to be more confident. It has been consistently at the top of REF rankings on a range of measures over three assessment cycles. It has a very strong research track record and there is no reason to think that this won't continue into the future.
2. Given the above the DA could perhaps engage in more self promotion
3. The DA needs to better understand the issues around recruiting at Professorial Level and how these can be addressed
4. The DA needs to further develop its research funding strategy and how this links to Centres and Institutes
5. Consideration could be given to ways of creating space for colleagues in the DA to think creatively about future research ideas
6. Given the reputation and ranking of Sociology at Manchester more consideration should be given to international benchmarking

Section Five: School Level Recommendations

Profile and Identity:

- *A Branding Exercise for Social Sciences@Manchester*
- *A fully developed Internationalization strategy to include International Benchmarking*
- *Thought should be given to holding occasional 'whole School' events, led by the Head of School, to help to inculcate a sense of identity*
- *Consideration of space utilization in order to create more opportunities for interaction*
- *A programme designed to engage the Professoriate in relation to leadership*
- *A strong School Staffing Strategy and level engagement in the appointments process*
- *A programme designed to build a cohort of 'new' staff across the School in order to foster identification with the School as well as with a DA and RI or RC*
- *A light touch review of administrative resources and processes across the School and the DAs aimed to focus support and increase transparency*

Structure:

- *Very serious consideration should be given to the establishment of a Social Science Graduate School*
- *Strong consideration should be given to establishing a Research Institute for the Social Sciences based on CMIST*

Research Strategy and Planning:

- *Insufficiently active Research Centres should either be disbanded or re-vivified*
- *A series of events should be organized to enable cross-school discussions about 'big issues' for future research*
- *Serious thought should be given to coordinated intra and inter School research funding bids in the areas of Health and Wellbeing, Social Science analysis of Policy and 'the future of the North'*
- *A light touch internal review of research governance structures*
- *Negotiation with University leaders in order to ensure that REF strategy, policy and practice takes full account of disciplinary differences*
- *Clear guidance and support for the next REF which is appropriate to the discipline mix in the School and which allows for strong disciplinary engagement alongside co-ordination and the sharing of experience and exemplars at School level especially in relation to Impact Case Studies and Environment Statements*
- *A clear planning process for major funding applications e.g. ESRC Research Centre bids with time allocated to support these*
- *A clear cross-School understanding of, and commitment to, flexibility in relation to time for research*

Annex 1

Review of Research in the Social Sciences, University of Manchester

Remit and Terms of Reference

Purpose

This is a strategic review of the research activities of the School and its Discipline areas, to follow up the 2006 and 2010 Reviews by Prof R. Amann. It is not a review of individuals but will require some individual level data to inform parts of the review.

It will focus on (i) the period since the last external review (2010), (ii) REF14 and (iii) external threats and opportunities (e.g. University strategic objectives; economic factors and funding streams)

Aims: To identify what we need to do to significantly increase the standing of

- (i) our DAs in their respective subjects, and in relation to the university departments they are currently benchmarked against
- (ii) improve significantly the standing of the School in the UK and international rankings

Assessors and Panel Members

Chair: Professor Sue Scott

Discipline areas assessors:

Prof John Scott CBE, *Sociology*

Prof Alexander Bird, *University of Bristol, Philosophy*

Prof Shirin Rai, *University of Warwick, Politics*

Prof Frank Windmeijer, *University of Bristol, Economics*

Prof Peter W Smith, *University of Southampton, Social Statistics*

Prof Jonathan Spencer, FRSE, *University of Edinburgh, Social Anthropology*

Two UoM members external to SoSS:

Prof Neil Pendleton, *Institute of Brain Behaviour and Mental Health*

Prof Nicola Glover-Thomas, *Faculty AAD Research, School of Law*

Secretary to the Panel: Gillian Whitworth

School Representatives

Professor Chris Orme, Head of School and Professor Brian Heaphy, Director of Research

DA Representatives:

Dr Wendy Bottero, *Head of Sociology*

Prof Julian Dodd, *Head of Philosophy*

Prof Dave Richards, *Research Director, Politics*

Prof Antonio Nicolo, *Research Director, Economics*

Prof Natalie Shlomo, *Head of Social Statistics*

Prof Maia Green, *Head of Social Anthropology*

DA Representatives Role

- To provide a brief '5 year Planning and Strategy' document for the DA, taking into account the 2010 Review, REF14 and the UoM, Faculty and School 2020 research objectives
- To liaise with PSS staff in making sure all the relevant documentation is available to the external assessors
- To identify and communicate any specific areas of advice/feedback that require the Assessor's special attention
- To attend introductory and information meetings with the Assessor as appropriate
- To attend two meetings during the school review: a discussion with the panel, and the reporting meeting of the panel

DA assessor's role

To provide a short written report on the DA informed by the documents listed below, and on meetings with the DA Representative, which will be used to inform the Chair's written report

The questions that should drive the DA assessors report are:

- What does a top and high quality social scientist look like in this particular discipline (in terms of publications, grant capture, supervision norms, impact, esteem measures and so on?)
- How does this DA stand relative to top institutions and those selected for benchmarking
- How well does the structure and support for research work in the DA
- Which is any comparative international institutions might be useful for the DA to benchmark itself against?
- What are the key issues for discussion at the school review level

DA reviewers will submit their written report to the Chair, who will meet them as part of the two-day main panel meeting

Chair's Role

To chair and write a review of research in the School, and against the University's 2020 vision, that assesses

- (i) the progress that has been achieved (or otherwise) since 2010
- (ii) the significance of the REF2014 results
- (iii) the probable trajectory of SoSS in the light of evidence that has become available since the cut-off point for REF2014
- (iv) the future policy implications of all this evidence and to provide a strategic steer

Timetable

Sept	Briefing meetings with Chair, current and previous HoSs and RDs, DA assessors and non-SoSS panel members
End Sept	Chair and assessors to receive relevant documentation
End Oct	DA Assessors submit brief reports
End Nov	Chair reviews documentation
Dec	2-day Panel Meeting

Documentation provided to inform review

DA Assessor:

- Previous external review & follow-up assessment briefing
- REF subject submission
- REF subject profiles: UoM, LSE, Oxford, and UoA relevant benchmarking institutions
- Responses to REF
- DA SWOT analysis
- 2015, 5 Year Planning and Strategy Document, including structure and support for research
- CV proformas for DA staff
- Relevant School/Faculty/University documents (research objective and strategy documents, 'Foresight', SWOTS)
- DA staff listing, members of current staff and turnover since 2010 review
- DA Research Income, broken down by sources and other KPIs for OPR of School's research performance
- DA Business and Other Research Income
- DA research applications made/successful and earnings per FTE over last 3 years
- PG research training at DA total

Chair

In addition to above, as appropriate:

- School briefing on action taken to the results of 2010 review and REF14 (including any major interdisciplinary initiatives/collaborations initiated after 2010 review)
- School briefing on research centres (current profile, trajectories, roles in School's research strategy)
- School staff listing, members of current staff and turnover since 2010 review, by DA
- Research Income, broken down by sources and other KPIs for OPR of School's research performance, by DA
- School Business and Other Research Income, by DA
- School research applications made/successful and earnings per FTE over last 3 years, by DA
- PG research training total at School, by DA (numbers, FT/PT, UK/EU/ROW; UK funded scholarships ESRC/AHRC/Other, Internal Funded)

The Chair could also conduct one-hour meetings over 2 days in October, with:

Chris Orme (HoS and previous RD SoSS) and Brian Heaphy (School perspective)

Colette Fagan (Vice Dean for Research, Previous RD SoSS) (Faculty perspective)

Fiona Devine (Previous HoS)

Alan Warde (REF panel, Sociology)

Rachel Griffith (REF panel, Economics)

Annex 2

Economics Discipline Area: *Professor Frank Windmeijer*

What does a good Economics department look like?

The research activities of a good department in economics are characterized by:

1. 3*/4* outputs.

The aim of any research project should be to achieve a 3*/4* publication. This often means a substantial time investment, both to produce the paper and to get it published. A good economics CV can therefore be quite short, with quality, i.e. articles in the top tier of journals, being more important than quantity, if the quantity is in lesser quality journals. In Economics, there is a general understanding and consensus of the ranking of journals.

Teaching and admin tasks are organised in such a way that research time is protected.

2. A research culture.

There is a general understanding that high quality research output is the expectation for any research active member of staff. Promotion and retention decisions are primarily based on the quality of research output. Successful scholars are remunerated well. Members of staff actively engage with the general research activities of the department, like attending the weekly external and internal research seminars. Interactions at these seminars enhance the quality of the output of individual members of staff, as do general interactions in a well- attended staff common room.

There is an active visitor programme, with visitors coming from the UK and overseas, adding impetus to the research culture. Staff members visit other institutions. Research active staff present their research papers at national and international conferences and at institutional seminars both in the UK and overseas. There is enough funding in place for all staff to engage in these activities, but staff also obtain research funding from third party funders.

3. Esteem

The more senior members of staff are editors/associate editors of 3*/4* journals, deliver invited keynote lectures at prestigious national and international conferences, actively engage and are involved with professional bodies and funders like the ESRC.

4. Visibility

Some of the research groups within the department have a strong international reputation. Often such groups are organised in funded research centres, resulting in some kind of branding of the department.

5. Mentoring

Senior members of staff actively engage and mentor junior staff. They interact with the juniors about their research, help getting papers into shape for submission to good journals, and stimulate and assist grant-writing proposals.

6. PhD programme

There is a good, internationally respected, PhD training programme in place, with the aim of good placement of the graduated PhD students. A (senior) placement officer guides the students through the job market process.

The department

The Economics department is a relatively large department. It had the 7th largest FTE return in REF2014 at 33.2, a similar size to Nottingham (35) and Essex (33.33). The largest return was 83.9 (Oxford), the smallest 13.7 (City U London) and the median return was 23.98.

There are 53 permanent academic full-time members of staff, 14 Professors, 3 Readers, 12 Senior Lecturers and 24 Lecturers. Fixed-term appointments are one .3 Professor, one full-time Research Fellow and one .18 Research Associate. Of the total, 18 members of staff, or 32%, have been recruited since July 2012.

The research is organized in 5 core Research Area Groups (RAGs), *Macroeconomics, Growth and Development; Microeconomics and Mathematical Economics; Econometrics and Applied Economics; Environmental and Resource Economics; and Development Economics.*

The department is situated within the School of Social Sciences and currently occupies 2 floors of the Arthur Lewis Building, sharing both floors with others DAs within the SoSS.

REF2014 results

The REF2014 results were as follows

Table 1. REF2014 results for Economics DA Manchester

	4*	3*	2*	1*	GPA
Outputs	11.4	53.5	30.7	4.4	2.72
Impact	40.0	50.0	10.0	0.0	3.30
Environment	12.5	87.5	0.0	0.0	3.13
Overall	17	58	22	3	2.89

There are many ways of summarizing the REF results and different methods produce different rankings, but for the purpose of this review which focuses on the quality of the research I think it is appropriate to focus on GPA, 4* and 3*/4* outputs. Particularly, the key-performance indicator in the SoSS strategic plan 2015-2020 states explicitly an increase in 4* and 3*/4* publications.

On GPA for outputs, Manchester was ranked 20th out of 28, and on GPA for the overall profile, Manchester was ranked 16th. The average, min and max GPA for outputs was 3.00, 2.15 and 3.68 respectively. Those for the overall results were 3.04, 2.20 and 3.78. For percentage 4* outputs, Manchester was ranked 22th and for 3*/4* it was ranked 20th. The medians, min and max for those percentages were 19.95, 2, 69.7 and 79.2, 24.5 and 97.9%.

These rankings may not be a completely fair reflection, as different institutions have different policies of inclusion for submission, and Manchester does better on the so-called power rankings. When multiplying the GPA by FTE, Manchester was 7th in the overall score. Of course, the latter measure would equalise a 2* department with a 4* department if it is twice the size.

The Economics DA Review and Strategy Document states that the benchmark competitors for Manchester are Nottingham, York, Exeter, Glasgow and Sheffield. Focusing on outputs, the REF results for these competitors are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2. REF2014 results for outputs of benchmark institutions.

	4*	3*	2*	1*	UC	GPA
Manchester	11.4	53.5	30.7	4.4	0.0	2.72
Nottingham	19.7	65.3	14.2	0.0	0.8	3.03
York	14.4	59.6	24.1	1.9	0.0	2.87
Exeter	13.3	57.8	19.3	9.6	0.0	2.75
Glasgow	18.1	61.4	18.1	2.4	0.0	2.95
Sheffield	8.0	56.0	36.0	0.0	0.0	2.72

With the exception of Sheffield, all the benchmark institutions had higher percentages 4* and 3*/4* outputs. The 3*/4* score was 64.9% for Manchester against 64% for Sheffield, 71.1% for Exeter, 74% for York, 79.5% for Glasgow and 85% for Nottingham.

The top 5 departments in terms GPA for output were UCL (3.69), Cambridge (3.47), LSE (3.36), Warwick (3.36) and Oxford (3.27). For % 4* they were the same five institutions, UCL (69.7), LSE (56.3), Cambridge (54.5), Oxford (42.6) and Warwick (42.6). For % 3*/4* they were UCL (97.9), Cambridge (93.9), Warwick (93.4), UEA (91.8) and LSE (89.6).

There was a striking difference in the actual output ratings and the expected ratings for Manchester, with the expectation being 94.7% 3*/4*, which would have put them second in the table. Clearly, the quite high proportion of 2*/1* rated outputs is a key cause for concern. The strategy document highlights these problems and sets out ideas of how to improve the research output, as will be reviewed below.

Current outputs

One of the strategy proposals to improve the research outputs of the department has already been put in place and that is the production of a list of journals rated A1-A3, B and C and linked to the possible REF star ratings. A1 and A2 are very likely to be 4*, A3 is 3* and perhaps 4*, B is 3*/2* and C is 2* perhaps a 3*.

Using the information given in the pro-formas of members of staff created for the SoSS internal research review, I have counted the number of published and accepted journal articles in the post-REF period, i.e. any paper published after 2013. If a researcher published more than 4 papers in the period, only the top 4 are counted, and I allocated within the department joint work to only one of the authors.

For the 53 members of staff reviewed, there were thus a total of 94 published papers. Of those, 53, or 56%, were published in journals on the list. The breakdown of those 53 papers in the subcategories on the list is given in Table 3. 47% is in the A1-A3 category, 21% in the B category and 32% in the C category.

Table 3. Categories for 53 published papers post 2013 using new journal list

A1	A2	A3	B	C
0.04	0.15	0.28	0.21	0.32

I also made an indication as to the star ratings of all 94 published papers. These are only based on journal ratings, as the papers have not been read. These ratings are given in Table 4. Using this indicative rating, 42% of current output is 3*/4*.

Table 4. Indicative star ratings for 94 published papers post 2013

4*	3*	2*	1*
0.11	0.31	0.51	0.07

Grant income

As indicated in the feedback from the REF2014, grant income is lower than at comparable institutions. This is well recognized by the DA and addressed in the strategy document. However, it is expected that securing grant income will be more difficult in the future, as the current spending review may well lead to substantial reductions in QR and research council funding, especially for the social sciences. Therefore, income from teaching will become even more important. The Economics DA is very successful in generating income from teaching and the University, Faculty and School of Social Sciences should allocate to the Economics DA more resources in line with the teaching surplus for enhancement of the research.

Esteem

The REF2014 environment rating was good, with 12.5% 4* and 87.5% 3*. There were 8 departments with a higher 4* rating, and Cambridge, Nottingham, Queen Mary and Surrey had the same 4* score. As also mentioned in the previous review, whilst the esteem profiles for some senior staff members are excellent, on the whole the profile could be stronger. Of course, a necessary, but not sufficient condition is excellent output, so the aim of working towards a department of excellence in research will create the conditions for higher levels of esteem indicators.

Aims and Strategy

The main target mentioned in the strategy review is a REF 2020 output profile of 20-25% 4*, 60-65% 3*, with the remaining 10-20% 2* or less. This is commendable target, but as can be seen from Table 4, the current outputs are far from this profile.

In order to achieve this aim, the department has already put in place various measures: The creation of new posts within the DA, that of Head of Research and Head of Recruiting; a change in the way the work allocation model is presented to staff to enable the HoDA to directly discuss research outputs with staff; a linking of sabbatical leave to 3*/4* output; and the appointment of a Professional Tutor to free-up research time.

These are all sensible measures directly affecting the organizational structure in order to improve the quality of staff and outputs.

Other changes have been put in place to enhance the research environment. This includes the creation of the list of journals, giving clarity about where one is expected to publish; the establishment of an internal seminar series and a departmental seminar series over

and above those of the RAGs; increasing the level of publications as a requirement for progression for junior probationary staff; encouraging mentors to take their role very seriously; promoting the participation at the most important international conferences and meetings; supporting the organization of workshops and participation to international research networks. Again, these measures and intentions will enhance the research environment and address my points in the introduction.

Recommendations

In order to enhance the research profile of the Economics DA, I would like to make the following observations and recommendations:

REF selection and teaching contracts

In order to reach a high REF 2020 output score, a strong selection of staff/papers need to be made, i.e. only staff with 4* and 3* papers (and then an occasional 2*) should be submitted. Research active staff that can already be identified to not being able to produce output of the required quality should be given teaching only duties/contracts.

Salary scales

The market for economists is international and in order to recruit good staff competitive rates need to be paid, also at the junior level. Standard university scales are too low for this market and they need to be adjusted upwards for economists at every level, both for recruitment and retention.

Probation period

The Economics DA has been active on the recruitment front. As stated above, 32% of members of staff have been recruited since July 2012. Some of the junior recruits came straight from their PhD, and from the documented material, it is not clear, yet, what level their outputs will be at. The probation period is currently 3 years, and a candidate progresses with 1 top publication or 2 good publications (at least 3*). Given the often very slow process of getting papers accepted by economic journals, the probation period of 3 years for somebody straight out of their PhD is too short. A short probation period will lead to submission to lesser journals in order to diminish risk and to get a quicker acceptance. A probation period of 4-5 years for 2 journal acceptances seems much more appropriate and I strongly suggest this to be implemented.

Conference budget

Individual members of staff are allocated 2000 pounds per year for attending conferences, including travel and subsistence. This is a low budget and does not enable researchers to attend at least two major overseas conferences. The School should aim to increase this budget for research active staff to at least 4000 pounds.

Joint location

The department is currently located over two floors, whilst sharing space on the floors with other departments from the SoSS. This situation fractures the department and is detrimental to its identity and vibrancy. To enhance interactions between the members of the Economics DA I recommend strongly for the Economics department to be co-located on one single floor of the Arthur Lewis Building.

Seminar room

Space should be allocated for a dedicated seminar room. Currently, no such dedicated room exists and seminars are held in different locations, varying on a weekly basis. This has a detrimental effect on seminar participation. A dedicated seminar room will improve the attendance to the seminars, enhance the important research interactions between members of staff and external visitors, and help create a stronger identity.

Common room

The current office space setup does not have a dedicated space as staff common room. There is an open plan space provided, but this is mainly taken up by PhD students and hence does not accommodate staff interactions. Space should therefore be allocated for a dedicated staff common room.

Professionalization of teaching and student related administration

The DA has appointed a Professional Tutor in order to free up research time by reducing many mundane administrative tasks. Many of these tasks are actually not best done by academics, as they may not have the required skills and/or knowledge, leading to a very inefficient system and staff and student dissatisfaction. More professional support staff like this should be appointed. This will lead to a higher productivity of research active staff, and better student (and staff) satisfaction scores.

PhD programme

As highlighted in the review and strategy document, there is an annual inflow of about 12-14 students. Whilst the document states that this is relatively low, it could be the right size for a high level PhD programme. There was no information on placements of PhD students. I strongly advice the DA to start monitoring these placements, but also to start targeting them. Strong quality control should be exercised both at entrance and at the point of upgrade, to ensure that PhD graduates are of the highest calibre. A placement officer should help students getting the best position possible, thus enhancing the international reputation of the Economics DA.

Research Centre

The review mentions the creation of research centres, in particular it mentions the Stanley Jevons Centre for Economic Theory. I strongly recommend that resources get allocated to achieve this goal, including some teaching and admin relief for those that are leading the bid.

Benchmarking

Whilst it is clear why Nottingham is part of the group of benchmark competitors, this is much less the case with Sheffield, which is a much smaller, and perhaps less ambitious department. Given the social science status and aims of the SoSS, a more ambitious competitor that should be considered is Essex.

Philosophy Discipline Area: Professor Alexander Bird

What does a top and high quality social scientist and department look like in this particular discipline (in terms of publications, grant capture, supervision norms, impact, esteem measures and so on?)

A high quality philosophy department is large, c. 20 or more FTEs. (Birmingham, which had a high REF GPA, looks like an exception. However, it achieved a high GPA by hiring in six top-flight North American professors on 0.2 contracts. Without them, Birmingham would have been very average.) Some smaller departments did well. These tended to specialise or at least have an international name for certain sub-fields (e.g. LSE for philosophy of science, Essex for continental philosophy). In the REF units showed a correlation between highest output and environment scores on the one hand and high impact scores on the other, a correlation that broke down for units with good output/environment scores but not the best. This suggests that excellent impact did not detract from excellence in outputs. Since, however, these departments are also larger, it may be that the burden of pursuing impact case studies was less than for smaller units or could be delegated more effectively to those with an interest. It should be said that the best case studies were those where the individuals were clearly motivated by the impact activity in itself; it was far from being true that these came exclusively or even predominantly from areas of philosophy that were more clearly 'applied' in nature. Good departments had strongly recruiting graduate programmes. These were not always large—some excellent graduate programmes were specialized in nature and took a relatively small number of excellent students who were looking for a programme specializing in a particular area. An important measure of an excellent graduate programme is the ability of the department to find jobs for its completing students, so a good placement record is a mark of a strong department (and the REF sub-panel took it as such). This point extends to the quality for the environment more generally as marked by the success of fixed-term staff in moving on to permanent posts or prestigious research posts and such like. Grant capture is of course high in strong departments, and in the best departments this is not pursued exclusively by a small number of research stars but is an activity engaged in by all, with different kinds of grant being pursued by many researchers, relating to their career stages.

A high-quality researcher in philosophy will publish predominantly in article form. These will be mainly in well-known journals. While often these journals will be internationally acknowledged general philosophy journals, depending on her area, she may well also publish in journals specializing in a sub-field of philosophy. Articles need not be published exclusively in the 'best' journals. The REF sub-panel noted high-quality outputs in less well recognised journals and in edited collections, etc. Equally, not everything published in the top journals was 4* or 3*. While monographs are less frequent in philosophy than in other humanities subjects, a top-quality researcher may well have produced a monograph in the REF period. Often that book will be based on a long-term research project that has had some elements published in journal format along the way. However, many of the best researchers did not have a book for the REF, though a proportion of these may be working towards one that will appear in the next REF period. Hardly any researchers had a full complement of 4* research. So the best researchers will be producing some 3* or even 2* work for the REF. (It should be noted that this has consequences for a sensible REF inclusion strategy. An individual's submission with some excellent work, gaining one or two 4*s might also have rather less good items. For example a double-weighted 4* monograph might be accompanied by rather slighter 2* articles. It would be misleading, in

Philosophy, to think that there are 4* researchers who always produce 4* work, 3* researchers who produce 3*, etc.. Most individuals' submission included a range of quality, very often spanning three * ratings.)

How does this DA stand relative to top institutions and those selected for benchmarking?

The most obvious difference between Philosophy at Manchester and the top departments is that the latter are all larger (I exclude Birmingham from the list of 'top' departments for reasons given above.) Given its size, UoM Philosophy is simply unable to compete with the top 5 institutions in most respects, and comparisons are probably not very helpful. (E.g. the threat is recognised that UoM depends heavily on one or two individuals for impacts ICSs; this is a threat much more easily mitigated in a large department). However, above it is noted that some smaller departments did well (e.g. Essex). These had distinctive offerings and are 'branded' and recognized as being specialists (and world-leading) in certain areas (e.g. continental philosophy for Essex). UoM does have particular strengths (e.g. aesthetics, metaphysics, history of philosophy), but does not particularly promote itself around those strengths. It may be worth reviewing that approach (e.g. with a specialist MA or MA pathway, a research centre etc.). It should be noted, nonetheless, that Essex has had a very long established reputation in its field, and that kind of track-record is not quickly emulated by re-branding. In any case UoM would probably not want to be an exclusively specialist department in the way that Essex is (which is why they can be successful with a small number of FTEs). A better model would, for example, be one of the benchmark departments, Bristol, which like UoM has a broad base but with particular emphases.

Starting from its current position and size, UoM can reasonably aim to move upwards within the 11–20 placed departments, helped with some investment. It would not be realistic to hope to move into the 6–10 bracket without considerable further investment, though this might well be a reasonable medium term aim, if there is a strategy for investment. Three of the five benchmarking departments fall within the 11–20 bracket and two below this bracket. They are mostly of a similar size. UoM Philosophy research income is middling for the group. Sussex and Birkbeck are like UoM also small but are placed some places higher than UoM in the THE rankings.

The notable difference with Sussex and Birkbeck is that UoM has a lower outputs score in REF2014, especially at 4*. The DA has recognized this and is revising its priorities and advice regarding publication, in particular as regards publishing in the top journals, particularly general philosophy journals. The DA clearly pursued this strategy successfully—many articles were published in the very best general journals (*Philosophical Review*, *Mind*, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* etc.) as well as the best specialist journals (e.g. *British Journal of Aesthetics*, *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science*). Given its success with publishing in these journals, it is not surprising that the DA was disappointed in its result. It might reasonably conclude that it was perhaps unlucky—maybe a number of borderline decisions by REF readers went on the lower side of a 3*/4* or 3*/2* boundary (for a small unit such as this, only a modest number of such decisions would have a significant effect on the result). Above it is noted that publishing in a top international journal is no guarantee of 4* or even 3*. One danger of taking a top journal to be sufficient for a good REF score is that a busy researcher might aim, when revising a paper in the light of referees' reports, at doing the minimum to satisfy the referees. To push into the 4* bracket a researcher should instead aim to produce the best possible paper, informed by the referees' reports. In some cases, when considered reflection (and

perhaps advice from colleagues) tells the researcher that meeting the referees' (sometimes conflicting) demands will actually reduce the paper's quality, then they should consider simply trying a different journal rather than compromise on quality. The DA rightly identifies significance as a key desideratum. Originality and rigour are necessary but not sufficient for a top score—it is significance that will make an article stand out and merit a 4*. The writing of papers may wish to reflect this, in that they should articulate clearly why they are important contributions.) It might be suggested that the DA should not abandon its strategy of aiming to publish in the best journals (which can impose a useful discipline and benchmark) but should instead modify it. There may be room for improving an article accepted even by a top journal, and to get a larger proportion of 4*, effort should be put into that. The DA rightly recognizes that having a coherent project, perhaps leading to a monograph or series of papers, is the best way to achieve *significance*, which they rightly identify as the key to getting 3* and 4*. (They also rightly recognize that focussing on REF outputs should not preclude other kinds of outputs that are valuable to the individual's career and/or to the profession.) If UoM spends resource on external advice on *selecting* published outputs for the REF, it might consider using that resource instead at an earlier stage to assist in maximising the quality of research *before* publication. Many of the mechanisms that researchers use to improve their work (e.g. presentation at conferences) gives useful feedback on the quality of key ideas, arguments etc. But often what makes an important difference is how those ideas are deployed, whether the paper is structured optimally, whether it articulated its significance adequately, etc. and the DA/School should ensure that there are mechanisms for obtaining feedback on such issues.

UoM also has the opportunity to improve its REF environment score, which although strong is where UoM falls down in comparison to Bristol. Some relevant factors have been mentioned. Size certainly helps here. Emphasizing certain research specialisms helps make a department's environment look distinctive and are a focus for a strategy. (If a small department isn't especially distinctive it is difficult for it not to be thought run-of-the-mill and so receive a run-of-the-mill score.) The DA rightly recognizes the importance of PGR placement as a strong indicator of an excellent research environment. As noted above, this extends also to fixed-term staff whose contracts end during the REF period. Although respectable, there is room for improvement on research income. Individuals' research grant plans should be kept under review and the DA should have a rolling programme of grants under development, under submission, in progress (rather than leaving it to individuals just to make their one application in the period). Success with ERC grants is a promising sign and should be exploited further. As mentioned a good model for internal review of grant applications is that the DA advises on disciplinary content while reviewers from outside the DA comment on other aspects of the proposal (noting that large grants are decided by committees whose membership is largely beyond the discipline in question). The use of reviewers from outside the DA also makes for more robust reviewing, especially when the DA is small as this one is.

The drafting of UoM's environment statement for REF2014 (sub-panel 32) may not have maximized the score from the DA's achievements. The template lists and emphasizes five very general objectives (p.1). But since these will have been shared by almost all submitting units, they do not say anything distinctive about UoM unless, for example, linked to evidence of their being achieved in a particularly effective way or to an unusual degree (referring forward to the evidence in following sections might have helped this). By contrast, the distinctive areas of research strength were mentioned, but not emphatically (given in a single sentence form, not bulleted, nor for the most part discussed in any detail). It was difficult to gain a clear sense of the strategy from that section. The

People section (as regards both staff and PGRs) were probably judged to be the strongest and included good evidence (e.g. publications by PGRs) though information on placement (as mentioned above) was limited or lacking. The collaboration/contribution section had very limited information on collaborations, while there was redundant information (e.g. invited keynotes) that appears to be a hangover from the old RAE Esteem element. In that section and in the environment template generally there was too much emphasis on individuals (emphasized by putting every name in bold) rather than the department collectively. (For the most part names could have been removed without loss.)

How well does the structure and support for research work at the DA level?

The DA notes that because of its size it does not have a formal research structure. It is however considering how best to exploit its areas of particular research strength. It can seem invidious to pick our areas of strength in a small department. However, this may be necessary for the good of the department as a whole, and good leadership and communications are required to ensure that all members of the DA know that their research is valued. In particular it needs to be emphasized that Manchester is committed to remaining a broadly based department with some expertise in all or at least a wide range of sub-fields. Specialisms might be advertised as research clusters or such like on the DA's website. These could attract funding for particular activities (conferences, seminar series) that will promote Manchester as a centre for such sub-fields. The PGT programme is important for feeding the PhD programme. It may be worth considering whether specialism-specific pathways could be developed (probably more efficient than a stand-alone specialist MA).

Pre-award support for research grants consists of the following elements:

1. Expertise and advice concerning the grants available and the requirements of the funders. This should be provided at a level or two above the DA (school or faculty) by dedicated research development managers. The latter should be well-known to researchers—and vice-versa—so that researchers know whom to approach, they are able to receive timely advice, and opportunities are quickly seen and responded to.
2. Specialist professional advice on financial and technical aspects of applications. Provided by specialists who work in collaboration with the research managers.
3. Discipline-specific feedback on the intellectual content of the grant proposal. This should be provided by the DA itself at an early stage of developing a grant.
4. Broader (out-of-discipline) advice on the intellectual content of the grant proposal. This is sometimes ignored, but is strongly recommended, as decisions on grants (especially larger ones) are typically made by committees on which discipline specialists are a minority. So a good application is one whose significance and quality is perceptible, at least in outline, to non-specialists.

The UoM School of Social Sciences has an internal review system. It is good that this meets both points 3. and 4. The significance of the non-specialist advice from another DA should not be underestimated and this should be a key part of the process if it is not already. This mirrors the fact that decisions may be taken by people largely from outside the discipline, and so a good proposal needs to impress non-specialists. It also allows for a more objective decision or set of comments, which may be less easy among colleagues in a small DA.

High quality pre-award support, referred to in points 1. and 2. above is crucial. Is what is available suitable for the Philosophy DA? In particular, is the fact that Philosophy will often apply to a different funder (e.g. AHRC) from most of the remainder of the school a disadvantage to the DA.

In addition to pre-award support, good post-award support is important to encouraging applications. The logistics of running a large project can be daunting and experienced management support at this level can make the difference between a project that promotes the PI's research and one that in fact hinders it. While this may seem a potentially expensive investment, in the long run dedicated research project managers are an effective use of resource.

Which, if any, international institutions might be useful for the DA to benchmark itself against?

Philosophy at Manchester has international recognition. A biennial report based on the assessments of philosophers worldwide has given high placings for UoM with respect to certain sub-fields: History of Philosophy (top 15), Philosophy of Action (top 18), Philosophy of Art (top 18), and Metaphysics (top 37). While the DA is right to be sceptical of these rankings as measures of research quality, they do give some indication of international recognition. This may be the best that can be done as regards benchmarking against overseas institutions. There are no non-UK philosophy departments against which it would be straightforward and productive to compare UoM. The high international reputation of UK philosophy means that improvement against UK benchmarks will be a good proxy for any international comparison.

What are the key issues for discussion at the School level?

Is the Philosophy DA at all disadvantaged by being in a school of social sciences, while it is not itself standardly classed as a social science (although it can have considerable interdisciplinary connections with the social sciences)? For example, is research grant focus towards ESRC and not AHRC?

Do the school and faculty provide the right kind and quantity of research support, both pre- and post-award?

What is the development plan for Philosophy? Clearly the Philosophy DA needs to grow in order to compete and have a chance of entering the top 10–12 UK philosophy departments or better, and the school should consider investment as a priority. At the same time, such an investment needs to show that it is fruitful before a further phase of investment. This in turn invites the question, what targets should the DA meet in order to merit further phases of investment?

What steer might particular DAs (and the School itself) be given to develop their research activities in line with the University, Faculty and School strategic vision, and to extend their national/international reputation for research excellence?

Overall, the Philosophy DA is working towards achieving the University, Faculty and School strategic aims in a variety of ways relating to research in Philosophy. Even if the publications did not achieve as high an output score as had been hoped, the fact that these publications are in very high profile journals does mean that UoM philosophers and their

ideas are highly visible at the top end of philosophy publication. This adds to the international reputation referred to above. Impact is strong though needs to be more broadly based.

Clear communication between the various layers of the institution is important, in both directions. This is important in order that researchers feel engaged with the research strategy of the institution rather than that this is something that happens to them. An important example of this is the relationship between REF inclusion and the standards of adequate performance of the job. There is no reason to expect these to coincide and strategic decisions about REF inclusion criteria should be divorced and be seen to be divorced from what we expect researchers to achieve. For example, a researcher might produce a double-weighted 4* monograph but have only one additional article of quality. REF inclusion criteria might lead to the non-inclusion of such an individual (though sensible criteria might decide otherwise); but it would be wrong to suggest that such a researcher was not performing well. In any case, if a researcher is not performing adequately good management policies should pick that up quite independently of the REF process.

To ensure that the DA meets the UoM strategy for Impact and for wider social benefit, it is important that it develop a wider base for impact, which at the moment looks overly dependent on one or two individuals. A greater number of individuals needs to be engaged with this part of the strategy. On the other hand this will be counterproductive if researchers are unwilling to do this. So leadership is required to show how good impact and engagement activity can be rewarding and in some cases can enhance the research base itself. Exemplars from elsewhere in UoM may be helpful. Likewise ICSs submitted to the Philosophy REF panel provide good examples of worthwhile impact pursued in a way that is satisfying also for the researcher. Thinking specifically about the next REF, the DA needs not only to plan its ICSs right now, but need to engage in concrete activity, starting with the development of relationships with potential beneficiaries.

What would make this DA/School into a more attractive place to work?

The importance of good communications has been mentioned above. Suitable support for core activities (such as grant writing and project management) has also been mentioned. A good general rule is that leaders should check that the total sum of demands placed on staff is tolerable. Often the path to hell is paved with good intentions, which in this context means policies that in themselves are good ideas may nonetheless make academic life unattractive if they are all implemented, since the total burden is too much. The sum of several good policies may not itself be a good policy. Human resources are not infinitely extendible. With finite financial resources, resourcing one project may mean delaying or not implementing another project. Likewise a good manager does not add to the responsibilities of and requirements on staff without removing other burdens elsewhere.

Following a visit to the Philosophy DA at Manchester on 30 November, I have the following comments to add to my earlier report:

1. While staff were grateful for the help received from the school research office in preparing grant applications and in managing successful ones, the overall impression I got was that the research office staff were thought to be overworked and/or had a high turnover of staff, and that the service provided was felt to be a bit haphazard. It was consequently thought to be somewhat impersonal and a close relationship between

researchers and research office staff was lacking. More specialist advice on technical appendices and the like would be helpful. However, other DAs report having received excellent support. There may be a difference in that the research office staff are more familiar (it is suspected) with ESRC than AHRC. I advised the DA to be more active in establishing relationships with the research office, not just waiting until they have an application they advice on. (E.g. invite research office staff to a DA meeting.)

2. We discussed the fact that in the REF2014 results the units around Manchester are closely bunched and that a small positive difference could have led to a significantly better ranking. This reinforces my point that Manchester may well have been unlucky — a few adverse borderline decisions that could easily have gone the other way might easily have a noticeable negative effect on a small unit such as Manchester. In any case, a trajectory of improvement from RAE2001 is clear and ought to be noted.
3. There is some concern that the institution isn't clear what it thinks about 2* research — or that if it does have a view, that view is that Manchester researchers should not be producing any 2* research. This would seem a somewhat strange view, since 2* research is internationally recognised. Furthermore, the institution's interests might be best served by a researcher whose efforts led to a profile such as 4* 3* 2* 2* than four 3*s. I note than uneven profiles such as this were more common than not in philosophy, and that the price paid for the additional effort required to produce a 4* output or two (or a 4* double-weighted monograph) is that one or two outputs will be 3*. Perhaps the institution needs to be clearer to research staff about what exactly its objectives in the REF are and what strategy is being pursued to achieve them. In my view institutions should also be careful to keep REF inclusion/exclusion as far away as possible from issues such as promotion, performance management, etc. If the former infect the latter this will lead to less reliable internal scrutiny of a REF submission that may harm the institution. (E.g. when an internal assessor is making REF predictions in state of uncertainty, their judgment might well be affected by knowledge that it would affect the career of a colleague.)
4. We discussed the pros and cons of emphasising certain research specialisms while continuing to be a broad-based department. It seemed to me that the general feeling was that this could be done without implying the devaluation of the work of individuals not within such specialisms.
5. There is concern over the future of the masters programme, which is an important source of doctoral students for the DA.
6. Most DAs, Philosophy included, need to be more active and advanced in their Impact activities, including establishing relationships with potential beneficiaries or intermediaries.

Politics Discipline Area: Professor Shirin M Rai

Key Messages

- Whether we like it or not, REF is structuring our analysis of this DA; the SoSS is aware of funding and reputational issues aligned to this. In terms of organizing for REF 2020, *REF preparation at the SoSS and the DA levels can be improved.*
- Research excellence through the REF system is delivered at DA level but research structures and resources are concentrated at the level of SoSS and the Faculty. *The principle of subsidiarity needs to govern research organization between SoSS and the DA.*
- the focus needs to be on *how the Faculty and SoSS can support the DA better in order to achieve the collective research excellence goals of the university.*
- While new systems of research organization introduced by the RD are important, because the DA is so large, *some strengthening of the current research organizational structure needs to be organized in order to deliver timely and cross cluster research.*

Introduction

I conducted this review in October 2015 in response to the invitation by the School of Social Sciences (SoSS), University of Manchester. I was asked by SoSS to address the following questions:

- What does a top and high quality social scientist and department look like in this particular discipline (in terms of publications, grant capture, supervision norms, impact, esteem measures and so on?)
- how does this DA stand relative to top institutions and those selected for benchmarking?
- How well does the structure and support for research work at the DA level?
- Which, if any, international institutions might be useful for the DA to benchmark itself against?
- What are the key issues for discussion at the School level?

The process of the review has included discussions with colleagues from the School and the DA Politics and with other reviewers for the different DAs that comprise the School at a pre-meeting to establish the parameters of the review.

Together with Prof Vivienne Jabri (King's College and co-REF panel member) on 21st October, 2015, I also met with the Head, the Research Director, cluster convenors of and colleagues in the DA Politics (see joint report for the DA). Finally, the review has, of course, involved examining the all the strategy and statistical documentation from Faculty, SoSS and the DA submitted by the SoSS.

Institutional Aims

As Prof Amann's report stated in 2010, 'Manchester has chosen a specific criterion by which it wishes its performance to be judged: that of becoming one of the world's 25 strongest research universities according to the Shanghai Jiao Tong Academic Ratings of World Universities'. Currently, Manchester lies in 41st place in this league table.

The **Faculty of Humanities** has translated the University's ambition to mean the following:

- To ensure that least 85% of Faculty research outputs rated 3*/4* at the next REF assessment (expected in 2020); Improvements in our citation performance so that we meet the University KPI and target for citations which is 'to ensure that 27% of Manchester publications fall in the top 10% of cited papers in their field by 2020'.
- Expand our portfolio of impact cases from the REF2014 baseline
- To double total research income by 2020 (baseline 2010-11) by increasing income from Europe and other international sources, government, charities and industry.

The Faculty aims to deliver these targets through leadership and performance management strategies, high-quality and efficient academic and Professional Support Services' (PSS) management in the context of reduced resource; health and safety. *Given the rather layered system of governance of teaching and research – University, Faculty, School and DA - it would be useful to know more about how this programme of support is to be delivered and monitored at different levels such that colleagues in the DA feel engaged with and work towards delivering the ambitions of the University.*

While the review suggests enhancement of *Research Support Services*, I would have liked to have seen more on the scope and depth of this support. It also mentions mentoring, training and performance review (P&DR), workload allocation models, academic leave, internal peer review of major research applications and of publications, implementation of the policy on research centre governance and the research concordant, but again, *given the complex management systems, a clear understanding of division of labour among these would be helpful to know about. The threat of perception of research leadership through dictat needs to be taken seriously.*

The targets that **SoSS** has set for itself to meet the University's and Faculty's aspirations are

- Improvements in quality of output in annual School/Faculty Research Reviews leading to REF2020, with an increase in 4* ratings (20% in RRE 2016/17, 30% in 2019-20) and 4*+3* ratings (75% in RRE 2016/17 moving towards 85% by 2020/21).
- Year-on-year improvement in league tables in which social sciences feature.
- Year-on-year improvement in citation indicators, where appropriate: 25% in 2015/16 and achieving 27% by 2020/21.
- Year-on-year increase in the volume of our research available through Gold or Green Open Access to be fully REF compliant by 2019/20.

How these targets will be achieved could be better spelled out. While there is a lot on general aspirations for improvement, I would like to see more specifics here such that the focus is how SoSS will work together with Faculty and the DAs to deliver on its ambitions. In particular, I would like to know more about the *communications of these ambitions to the DA colleagues and the measures that might be taken by the SoSS to ensure that all colleagues are on board with delivering them.*

Review of Politics the Disciplinary Area

Overview

The Politics DA has an excellent research and teaching reputation. In the last REF period, Politics secured major prestigious grants including the British Elections Study and the ERC Advanced Grant; 17 Academic Prizes for research excellence and it launched two new specialist journals. In terms of research funding and research centres that raise the profile of the DA, Politics hosts the British Election Survey, which is funded by the ESRC and which has made a significant place for itself in the election studies landscape in the UK. Individual large grants (Waylen, ERC) also raise the profile of the DA. Politics implemented a policy in 2005 to foster an inclusive research environment for women and people with caring responsibilities. This is particularly pleasing as the REF panel did consider UoAs' diversity policies when reviewing the Environment template. The DA is a collegial and good place to work in.

The REF results place it as 6th in research power and 19th in GPA. The 2008 RAE placed it as joint 12th. However, as Prof Amann's report outlined after the 2008 REF results, 'the research output profile of the Politics DA was rated by the RAE panel as follows: 16% at grade 4, 22% at grade 3, 38% at grade 2, 21% at grade 1, and 3% unclassified. Our

specialist subject assessor Mick Moran interprets this result as a “reality check” for the department. ...’. Given the results in the 2014 REF, my starting point is that improvement REF scores – particularly an increase in 4* and 3* work and a sharp decrease in 2* is the aim for the DA.

Manchester Politics Return¹

Overall	20	54	24	2	0	FTE CAT A 36.66
Outputs	14.0	48.3	35.1	2.6	0.0	
Impact	16.0	76.0	8.0	0.0	0.0	
Environment	50.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	

As we can see, Manchester Politics DA scores are excellent in Impact and Environment, and improved from the 2008 REF scores. In part this might be put down to the decreased (but still respectable) FTE submission – 2014 – 37 FTE’s - 70%, compared to 2008, 46 FTEs – 90%. In terms of its self-evaluation before REF 2014, it seems that the issue lies at the 3*/2* boundary and the 4*; the pessimistic model produced by the DA was very close to the final result in terms of 4* but not in terms of 3* and 2*s (48.3 and 35.1 respectively). So, an improvement in 4* and 3* scores and a decrease in the number of outputs rated at 2* has to be the strategic aim of the DA. This is particularly the case because Politics has been active in appointing a talented cohort of new colleagues at every level. So, a key issue for Politics has to be to how further to nurture and retain these colleagues such that they perform to the best of their abilities. At the same time, the DA has lost some senior figures in the discipline. Recruiting the best possible colleagues to replace those lost, must be a priority.

The development of a coherent DA research strategy is essential.

A. Benchmarking:

If we consider what does a top and high quality departments look like in this particular discipline (in terms of publications, grant capture, supervision norms, impact, esteem measures and so on), and benchmark against it, we find that the top departments – Essex, Oxford and LSE – had GPA scores of 3.42, 2.96 and 3.30 on Outputs respectively; Manchester had a score of 2.74 up on 2.50 from the previous REF. In terms of impact, the GPA for the top universities noted above, were 3.70, 3.87 and 3.61 respectively. Manchester’s score was 3.08. *Both these scores need to be improved.*

While Manchester should be benchmarking against the top departments noted above, Politics DA, quite rightly, has benchmarked itself against some top and some middling universities in terms of overall scores – 3rd - Sheffield [3.40]; 6th -Warwick [3.19]; 8th – York [3.16]; 9th - Exeter [3.13] and 32nd - Birmingham [2.78].

If we take my university, Warwick (6th GPA; 3rd Power) that in size and breadth of research and ambition to improve is similar to Manchester we find that both are large departments, with research clusters that reflect the breadth of the discipline – political theory, international political economy, comparative politics; both departments have a DTC award, and Q-Step.

However, Warwick is administratively very different from Manchester – there is a relatively flat administrative structure, with the Faculty enabling some research support, but the department (as opposed to a Disciplinary Area) being where decisions about research are taken and implementation organized (the other excellent Politics departments – Sheffield, York and Exeter – also have strong Departments).

¹ From the Politics DA Review and Strategy

So, while we can confidently benchmark Manchester against these institutions in terms of quality, it needs to be underlined that the administrative structures to address issues of research performance are quite different in these benchmarking institutions. What we need therefore is to address *how the Faculty and SoSS can support the DA better in order to achieve the collective goals of the university.*

B. Structure and support for research work at the DA level

There seems to be a tension at the heart of research organization at Manchester – research excellence through the REF system is delivered at DA level but research structures and resources are concentrated at the level of SoSS and the Faculty. While research resources provided by SoSS – both financial and administrative – are impressive, *SoSS could perhaps further facilitate and strengthen the autonomy of the DA in order to effectively support research excellence.*

The research organization and teaching delivery at Manchester are rather complex – you have the University, Faculty, Schools and DAs, which then have research clusters and research centres, the latter being sometimes wholly placed within the DA and sometimes across DAs. This structure of administration, it seems to me, does pose challenges for delivering the University's ambitions. The key issues here are:

- Ownership – who owns the strategy and who monitors it?
- Leadership – where is it situated and how is it exercised?
- Resources – where are they held, how are they disbursed, with whose input?
- Communication – how is communication channelled between the SoSS and the DA and how are the communicative loops closed?

Having reviewed the DA – through paperwork and through speaking with colleagues in the DA – I am of the view that while *the department is a really collegial space, where teaching and research thrives*, it could consider the following suggestions as it moves towards the next REF.

1. Research Organizational and governance structures

I will address the issues of research organization and governance by taking in turn what the SoSS might consider, the DA – in particular HODA and Research Director (RD) might consider and what the cluster convenors need to consider.

- 2. Research Support Services** rest at the SoSS level with some strategic funds available from the Faculty, rather than the DA level; this creates issues of consultation, communication and administration.

A. Consultation with DA

The principle of subsidiarity needs to govern research organization between SoSS and the DA.

The impression given in my consultations with most DA colleagues is that the SoSS is seen as a 'faraway' place, out of touch with colleagues' concerns on the ground. That the SoSS sends out decisions that are arrived at without consultation and handed down for implementation – there is little evidence of ownership of decisions affecting research organizations at the level of the DA. *It would be useful for the DA to feel consulted before decisions are taken and communicated.*

What was noticeable in reading the SoSS Strategy Document was an absence of the presence of the DA, improvement in its organizational structures, the relationship between SoSS and DAs (rather than the University and Faculty). What was also noticeable was a lack of emphasis on consultation between the DA and SoSS. More could be done here such that colleagues in the DA find the SoSS an approachable, consultative and supportive resource – *strengthening mechanisms for regular consultations with DA heads, research directors, and when possible through attending staff meetings, with colleagues working in DA.*

At the DA level, the issue of consultation also arises. Research organization in the DA needs to be more consultative, transparent and imaginative. This is important if the DA doesn't wish to become a unit of administration, rather than an intellectual and research hub. The research director and a research committee can play an important part in this (see below).

Recommendations:

- a) *strengthen relations between SoSS Research Support Services and the DA* by
 - The DA representative going to the DA to meet with clusters, centres and individual colleagues putting together grant applications etc.; this will allow the DA rep in the RSS to, as far as possible, send out DA specific information on grants etc., rather than generic ones
 - Carry out the peer-review for grants in consultation with colleagues so that they feel supported and not disciplined by the process
- b) *Strengthen the DA ownership of decisions made at the SoSS level* by
 - 'Translating' decisions to make them DA specific
 - Consulting with colleagues how this might be done, particularly through involving the professoriate, research committee staff meeting and cluster meetings.

B. *Communication* – between Faculty, School and DA – and colleagues in the DA

Communication is a key issue here. There seems to be a perception of a rather top down approach to communication of decision between SoSS and the DA. Ownership is also an issue here – the lack of which undermines the engagement of colleagues with the research organization at both the SoSS and DA levels. This issue is compounded by the nature of communication, with each level – SoSS, DA DARG and Clusters – representing research decisions as taken elsewhere in the hierarchy of the university. Such a communicative strategy suggests a distance from decision-making that undermines robust implementation of the decisions taken.

Recommendations:

- a) *Improve communications between the SoSS and the DA* by
 - Ensuring consultation with the Research Director and HODA on matters of principles as well as practice regarding research initiatives.
 - Communicating with colleagues in the DA in person – the SoSS Chair could visit the DA more often and discuss (rather than simply communicate) any planned initiatives by the School with DA Staff Meeting, Research Away Day or cross-cluster events
- b) *Improve communications between the DA and Clusters and DA colleagues* by
 - Using the DARG not as a node for passing on information from the SoSS to the DA but to discuss how might the broad policies be made to fit the ethos of the DA
 - Using the Staff Meeting to discuss issues of research concerns with colleagues in order to nurture a collective engagement with the REF agenda
 - Using the DA Research Away Days to discuss (rather than simply inform) research policies with colleagues

- Introducing professorial meetings to inform discussion on research policy for the DA

C. *Administrative Support for HODA*

The HODA, in my opinion, urgently needs administrative support to carry out the entire task that she has. In terms of research, the School requirement that the HODA conduct the PDRs personally, which I do not agree is necessary, means that the HODA cannot possibly do the strategic work of liaising with the Research Director and Committee without administrative support.

Research leadership comes with responsibilities that take time, which cannot be adequately given if there is little administrative support for the HODA and the Research Director. I would strongly urge the SoSS to address this issue in consultation with Prof Gains.

Recommendation:

- a) Adequate administrative support be provided to the HODA as a matter of urgency.

3. Research organisation at the DA level

Whether we like it or not, REF is structuring our analysis of this DA; the SoSS is aware of funding and reputational issues aligned to this. So, in terms of organizing for REF 2020, I would suggest a review of the way in which the provision for support for REF preparation can be improved. The DA could strengthen its research administration at three different levels – the DA, the Research Director and Research Committees, Impact Work and the Clusters.

A. *The DA Level:*

From my review of the DA it seems that cross-DA research culture is not a sufficient priority for colleagues. It would be a pity if DA became only an administrative unit, devoid of any research culture of its own. The view from the ground is that there is a lot of top down communication of the Faculty, SoSS and DA policies, but little consultation and deliberation. Several colleagues mentioned that the Staff Meeting is like a lecture class rather than a deliberative body. While the current RD is making strenuous efforts to address this issue, the DA needs to demonstrate that it is taking control of the process of REF preparation in consultation with colleagues in the different clusters as well as at different levels – to do and to be seen to be doing are equally important here. This, of course, brings up the issue of the role that HODA plays in research organization – I would like to see the HODA more involved in this critical aspect of DA's work.

Recommendations:

- a) The staff meeting needs to be a place of consultation with colleagues – more open, discursive and consultative, where decisions can be taken. I understand that the HODA is committed to this already and I am sure this will produce rewards.
- b) It is important that the DA continues its programme of public lectures.
- c) That the HODA is seen to be batting for the troops on the ground in terms of research, and not just as a conduit for passing on SoSS research initiatives. This means that the HODA has to 'translate' into DA-speak the SoSS initiatives, and sometimes this might mean disagreeing with SoSS or suggesting different ways of more effectively pursuing SoSS policies.
- d) DA Research Away Days could be organised such that cross-cluster research conversations are made possible; research thematic workshops could be one way to encourage this.

B. *The Role of the Research Director:*

The role of the RD is critical to the organization of research in the DA. The current RD seems to be carrying an inordinate amount of responsibility, without sufficient support. The current RD was seen by colleagues to be extremely supportive. While all agreed that new systems of research organization that he has introduced were needed, it was felt that because the DA is so large, timely and cross-cluster work on research needs to be organized through a broader committee structure. The RD needs to be the bridge between the DA and the SoSS, and to ensure that the communications between the two are strategic, robust and appropriate for the task at hand – the improvement of the DA’s REF profile. However, one person (the RD) cannot cope with all that needs to be done to effectively prepare for the next REF.

Recommendations:

- a) The strategic role of the RD is strengthened by an appropriate organisational structure to support his/her work.
- b) The RD continues to improve communications between the SoSS and DA colleagues by effectively working with DARG and the REF Review Committee – to create an ‘ownership’ of policies decided on in these committees.

C. *The Research Organisational Structure:*

Currently, as far as I understand it, REF work is organized through the **REF Preparation Committee** also called the **REF Review Group** which includes the Research Director, the deputy RD, the HODA, and some professors; there was also a peer-review group that read all the output submissions but doesn’t exist now. Then there is **DARG** – the DA Research Group which is led by the Research Director and includes the cluster coordinators and the deputy RD. In my opinion, this structure is not very effective and could be made more robust. There also is the **Politics Leadership Team**, which is the administrative hub supporting the HODA, but did not appear much in discussions about research. While the RD is part of the PLT, I am unclear about the role that this body plays in supporting research in the DA and its relation with DARG and the Clusters.

While DARG is new (established by the current RD in 2014) and therefore it is difficult to judge its effectiveness at this stage, it could be further strengthened to address the next REF challenge – in terms of *outputs, impact and research culture*. This would then bring all three areas of research and REF monitoring under one umbrella, making sure that there is no duplication of effort and increase cross-cluster conversations about research best practice. REF results show that ECRs are performing really well; including ECRs in the research organization of the DA can also increase the buy-in for DARG.

Recommendations:

- a) **DARG – Research, Impact and Research Culture**– The DA needs one body, which coordinates research in the DA, with a three-pronged remit – *Outputs, Impact and Research Culture*.
 - The refashioned DARG should be chaired by the RD, but he/she needs deputies who support the Research Director in these three areas;
 - The Committee should include senior professors who have research/grant income experience, cluster representatives, and ECRs.

D. *Outputs Review Process:*

The DPR and Research Plans review process, as currently practiced by the SoSS and the DA, appears to generate some resentment among colleagues in the DA. The view was that the electronic submission of their outputs, and communication of their scores to them was really not an effective way of incentivizing them. While filling in forms outlining the state of play in terms of output is fine, most colleagues felt that electronic reviews were not optimum and could be better tailored to the needs of individuals. The RD offers to see colleagues individually, however, he/she is not the one who has scored the papers, so their meeting with colleagues cannot be as informative and supportive as is needed.

I am not sure that sharing output scores with colleagues is a good idea in any case – it can generate a negativity and anxiety (we do not do this at Warwick, for example). Also, these scores are about already published pieces; surely going forward papers being prepared for submission should be the focus of an annual review? Scores might be shared with those who the SoSS decides to exclude from the REF – as explanatory data.

Face to face meetings with colleagues discussing their work are critically important – these can be helpful and provide a better communication arch between the SoSS, DA, Clusters and individual colleagues. This would make for a less bureaucratic and alienating, more inclusive and effective research review process. However, the HODA cannot be expected to do all the DPRs; professors in the department need to support the HODA in this important task.

Recommendations:

- a) The professoriate in the DA can be organised into panels of two, from different clusters, to discuss colleague's research plans with them, face to face, in a spirit of inquiry and encouragement. *The professorial panels should be trained to do this work, with agreed norms and processes of review.*
- b) The form, filled by colleagues about their research, should form the basis of this review and mentoring should be provided to colleagues to address their needs.
- c) The review report can then be sent to HODA, who can review and analyse these with the RD and report back to the SoSS.
- d) As the REF preparation progresses, it might be worth having cluster related external reviewers to review all outputs; internal reviews can be problematic.

E. *Impact Preparations:*

Impact work at the DA level, while taking place, could be further strengthened. Of course, the DA has some big hitters in that area – the British Election Survey and the work of Rob Ford; however, as we know, a large department means developing more Impact case studies than the DA might easily identify. Even those such as the BES need to be 'worked up' into strong/outstanding case studies for a 4* score. Impact coordinator on the R&I Committee needs to be working with the RD and HODA on this increasingly important area of the REF **now**.

Recommendations:

- a) Identify areas of impact strength and nurture them with resources (IAA, Faculty and SoSS impact funds) and through regular monitoring as well as mentoring.
- b) Ensuring that evidence trail for the impact case studies are put in place early and kept updated. IT provision would be really important here.
- c) Mobilise the resources of the DA as well as the SoSS to enable individual colleague to improve their impact networks – sharing contacts, making introductions, inviting impact related sources to the DA to discuss research.

F. *The Place and Role of Clusters in the DA:*

Clusters form a critical part of the research architecture of the DA. Clusters are where the business of research is conducted, through peer-reviews of papers, internal and external seminars, and input into the DA's organization, development, appointments etc. Most colleagues I spoke with associated their identity within Manchester with these clusters. They felt supported within the clusters and thought about their work within the cluster parameters. The clusters are allocated £1000 per annum for their research activities. However, this focus on clusters means that the DA level processes are not always taken as seriously, or as in appointments; clusters see themselves as protecting their own research area rather than taking a broader view of the DA's needs. Better consultation, rather than simply communication (which could also improve) between the SoSS and the DA and the DA and the clusters is needed to address this important issue. The DA wanted Prof Jabri and I to address the cluster issues by answering key questions raised by the DA in its Strategic Review:

- is there a tendency to default to clusters [what is our strength, may also be our weakness] – reflect on being less insular?
- is the current cluster configuration the most appropriate?
- Is there a need for a more integrated approach and sense of agency/ownership at DA level in shaping our collective research strategy [particularly moving towards REF2020?

I do think that broadly speaking the cluster configuration is appropriate. At least no colleague said otherwise to us. However, cluster-DA relations could be strengthened.

Recommendations:

- a) More cross-cluster activity should be encouraged through more DA level events (continuing with the DA annual lecture, introducing other public events, REF related seminars) as well as involving clusters in the organisation of Research Away days (as suggested in 2A.(c) above;
- b) Cooperation on research grant applications across clusters could be encouraged through appropriate information being circulated within the DA, with encouragement to apply for Faculty's strategic innovation fund and the SoSS research support funds.
- c) Cluster convenors could be encouraged to meet to discuss and develop stronger cross-cluster links and also to engage with the RD to develop cluster led research agendas within the DA.
- d) Some clusters need more support than others – this should be provided positively; no cluster should feel that they are part of the problem rather than solution to the issue of enhancing research excellence. In this context, research and teaching balance needs to be reviewed.
- e) ECRs, including postdoctoral colleagues, should be strongly inducted and supported by the clusters; indeed, they should be involved in the running of the cluster's work.

G. Individual Mentoring

Individual mentoring is an important way of supporting and incentivizing colleagues to engage with the SoSS and the DA in meeting institutional ambitions for excellence. Currently, many colleagues are feeling demoralized and disengaged with the REF process. A gendered approach to mentoring would be particularly beneficial. Mentoring can work only if there is a relationship of trust between the mentor and the mentee. Mentoring does not need to be confined to ECRs – all of us could do with mentoring at different levels. Mentoring can also support REF related conversations and advice.

Recommendations

- a) New entrants – lecturers as well as postdocs – should be provided with clear induction; this is particularly important for *temporary* lecturers, who do not seem to have SoSS provided induction meetings.
- b) All colleagues – junior and senior - should have access to a mentoring scheme.
- c) Colleagues should be allowed to choose their mentors from across clusters, if they so wish.

Conclusion

In sum, Politics in Manchester has a great future, but it needs reorganizing its research structures to be more effective, supportive and forward looking such that it can deliver the its own and the University's well-placed and legitimate ambition for it.

Social Anthropology Discipline Area: *Professor Jonathan Spencer*

Overview

Manchester social anthropology is a relatively small and cohesive unit and is home to one specialist unit, the Grenada Centre for Visual Anthropology. After a series of recent departures, there is a good balance of junior, mid-career and senior staff. There are very few post-doctoral fellows and no teaching fellows. PhD numbers have been strong in recent years. Teaching loads are relatively high, but NSS scores are good and show an impressive improvement in recent years. The department has bounced back from a disappointing result in the 2008 RAE with a much stronger performance in REF 2014. For overall GPA Manchester ranked second in Anthropology and Development Studies, and first among Anthropology submissions.

The department is clearly in a much better place collectively than it was immediately after the 2008 RAE, but there are a number of worrying aspects of the current state of affairs. The Manchester submission was the most selective across the anthropology submissions to the REF, consequently dropping in research power and losing QR income. The need for selectivity in the REF indicates problems in the past with mentoring and supporting early career staff. Grant income in the REF period was comparable to other top social anthropology units, but there has been a tail-off in the past couple of years, especially in RCUK grants and collaboration in large inter-disciplinary projects. Current publication plans across the department are uneven in quality. There is some excellent work coming through the pipeline from staff at all levels in the department, but many individual profiles are unambitious, with too much energy focused on low profile edited books, and insufficient attention to getting work placed in top international journals. A good impact performance in the REF has not carried forward as yet into robust planning for impact activities in the current REF cycle.

Meetings with staff in Manchester have helped identify recurrent problems in support and organization at both School and University level that may hold back research performance. There is a need for reflection at all levels of the university on ways in which a combination of high teaching loads and low administrative support for undergraduate teaching impact upon future research plans. University level initiatives arrive without apparent concern for their workload implications. Research support is usually good at the pre-award level, but uneven and sometimes frustrating post-award. There is a general sense that academic staff lack appropriate administrative support for both teaching and research.

In what follows I first assess the 2014 REF performance, using submissions from the London School of Economics and the University of Edinburgh for comparative purposes, before reviewing the current state of play on the basis of individual questionnaire returns from all staff in the unit.

REF 2014

The submission. Manchester's submission to the 2008 RAE was relatively large and inclusive: 24.33 FTE, the 4th biggest in the Anthropology UoA. The 2014 REF submission was significantly smaller, 15.94 FTE, 16th for size in the UoA (or 10th among anthropology submissions). In the THES intensity ranking, Manchester was joint 18th out of 25 in terms

of proportion of eligible staff submitted.² The majority of submissions in the UoA (14 out of 25) were bigger than in 2008. Manchester's reduction in FTE (34%) was the second biggest reduction in FTE between the two exercises. (Manchester Development Studies had the 3rd biggest cut in staffing. Presumably there is an institutional story.) In 2008 the submission included 10 Early Career Researchers (ECR); in 2014 there was 1 ECR. This was the second lowest figure across the UoA. Of the 10 ECRs submitted in 2008, 2 had left the university by 2014, 5 were submitted to REF 2014, and 3 were still in the department but not submitted.

The results. The 2008 RAE result was felt to be disappointing. The GPA of 2.6 ranked 12th (out of 19) in the UoA. Manchester ranked 5th in terms of research power. The 2014 result was much better. The GPA of 3.12 placed Manchester second in the UoA, but only 16th by research power.

At the heart of the 2014 success was a much stronger output profile. The output GPA of 2.93 was second highest in the UoA. Although some of this is a product of selectivity in the submission, there is also a significant increase in the *quantity* of 4* outputs. In 2008 a relatively weak Environment profile contributed to the low overall ranking by GPA. The Environment GPA was 3.3 (joint 13th out of 19). In 2014 this increased to 3.5 (joint 5th in anthropology submissions). A similar result in 2008 would have been enough to move Manchester into the top 10 for the UoA for overall GPA. The 2014 impact performance was good. The overall impact GPA was 3.5, 7th in the UoA (4th in anthropology). One case study was judged as 4*, the template and another case study were both 3.5, and the final case study was 3*.

In 2008, despite the disappointing GPA score, the strong research power showing brought an increase in HEFCE QR funding from £379k to £428k p.a.. This time the post-REF QR allocation has dropped from £381k in 2014/15 to £314k in 2015/16. This represents a cut of £67k or 18%. In a small unit with high teaching loads, this is not a trivial reduction in funding.

Initial analysis. The 2008 results were disappointing but were explained internally as a result of an over-inclusive strategy, and specifically by the effect of the ECRs "dragging down" the overall GPA. The 2014 strategy seems to have been based on that diagnosis. The submission was smaller and less inclusive, with minimal return of ECRs. The impressive GPA result seems to vindicate the strategy, but the loss of QR funding reminds us that this success was not without cost.

I am sceptical of the ECR factor as a full explanation of the 2008 performance, not least because it over-values the effect of small numbers in one component of the exercise (output scores) and under-values scores elsewhere. Two other factors strike me as equally important. One was the low level of 4* outputs in 2008; the other factor was the relatively low Environment score in 2009. Had Manchester scored the same for Environment in 2008

² A word of caution on the use of HESA staffing figures to calculate intensity. As with other HESA data, the figures released immediately after the REF results are inconsistent and subject to considerable variation from HEI to HEI. Some institutions (e.g., LSE and UCL) reported only full-time lecturing staff as research-active in the HESA return; others (e.g. Oxford) took a more expansive view, including postdocs and other research fellows. At least one anthropology department which reported a 100% REF return according to the HESA data, in fact excluded around 30% of its permanent staff.

as in 2014, it would have moved up to equal 8th (alongside most of the previous 5-rated departments from 2001).

Nevertheless, the 2014 result is impressive. Of the anthropology submissions which elected to be selective in their strategy, Manchester's was easily the most successful. Overall, the submission was better prepared and presented than in 2008 (thus the good scores for impact and environment) and there was real growth at the top end of the outputs.

Comparators. Although, anthropology was assessed alongside development studies in the REF, I will contextualise the Manchester outcome primarily in terms of other anthropology submissions. I will also concentrate on comparisons with departments that only cover social anthropology, rather than bigger units like Cambridge and UCL which combine social and biological anthropology.

In what follows I use two institutions for comparative purposes: the London School of Economics and the University of Edinburgh. The LSE is a traditional department with a strong internal ethos of commitment to long-term fieldwork projects. Edinburgh is part of a School of Social and Political Science which is in many respects highly comparable to Manchester's SoSS. At the time of the 2008 REF submission the three departments were of roughly comparable size. Manchester is now smaller as a result of retirements and departures, LSE slightly bigger, and Edinburgh significantly bigger.

In REF 2014 LSE had a 100% return of permanent academic staff, including 5 senior professors rehired on 0.2 short-term contracts for REF purposes (which would have significantly raised their GPA). Edinburgh had a 93% return, but this included significant numbers of postdoctoral researchers and others on temporary contracts, as well as a group of development studies specialists from the Centre of African Studies. The Manchester submission (15.94) was 34% smaller in FTE than in 2008; LSE was 12% bigger (19.05 FTE), and Edinburgh 91% bigger (34.45 FTE). Changes in size are reflected in post-REF funding distributions: Manchester's post-REF QR funding is currently £314k, LSE's is 327k, Edinburgh's is £664k.

Outputs. In REF 2014 LSE had the highest output profile across the UoA, but was badly hit by low marks for both environment and impact. Edinburgh had a significantly lower output GPA than Manchester, but slightly higher marks for both environment and impact. In terms of raw numbers, Manchester had 18 outputs judged to be 4*, Edinburgh had 19, and LSE 23. The figures for 3* are Manchester 28, Edinburgh 40, and LSE 30. The biggest difference is at 2*, where Edinburgh had 50 outputs, compared to 20 at Manchester and LSE.

The Manchester 2014 submission included a relatively small number of monographs (7) and relatively high numbers of book chapters (16) and edited books (10).³ The 32 journal

³ N.B. To some extent, the fieldwork-based research monograph remains the gold standard in judgements of quality in anthropology. After that, certain journals (American Ethnologist, Current Anthropology, JRAI) tend to publish higher-quality articles overall. Nevertheless it is important to note that there is no stable hierarchy of journals in social anthropology, such that publication in any specific journal guarantees a high grade in REF assessment. On the whole, chapters in edited books are less likely to achieve strong REF scores than articles in high-quality journals, but there is no hard-and-fast rule: peer-

articles were spread across a broad range of journals. For comparison, the highest scoring submission for outputs, from LSE anthropology, had 13 monographs, 20 book chapters, 34 journal articles, but only 3 edited books. Edinburgh's submitted 17 monographs, 17 book chapters, 65 journal articles, but only 3 edited books. Edinburgh and LSE submitted similar numbers of outputs from the highest profile journals – JRAI (8 LSE, 9 Edinburgh), *American Ethnologist* (1 LSE, 3 Edinburgh). Manchester had relatively few outputs in these journals (2 in *American Ethnologist*, 1 in JRAI).

Impact. Manchester submitted 3 impact case studies. One case study was graded at 4*, another at 3.5*, and the other at 3*; the template was also graded at 3.5*, providing an overall GPA of 3.5*, which was joint 4th for anthropology submissions. (The highest rating Manchester case study was - I have been told - rated as unclassified elsewhere in the University before the exercise, which if nothing else should remind us of the fallibility of predictive judgements.) Edinburgh with a GPA of 3.6 was 2nd. LSE badly under-performed in this section and their GPA of 2.27 was second lowest in the UoA.

Environment: Manchester's environment GPA of 3.5 was joint 5th for anthropology submissions. Edinburgh's 3.63 was joint 3rd. LSE again under-performed relative to their strong output profile with a GPA of 3.00. Manchester reported healthy numbers of PhD awards in its REF return: 44, which is on the same level as LSE (43) and Edinburgh (47). Manchester research income over the REF period was £2869k; of this 72% came from research council sources. LSE's income was £2503k, of which 74% was research council-derived. Edinburgh income was £4442k, also 74% research council derived. The only apparent stand-out here is Edinburgh's higher income total, but this is partly explainable by the inclusion of a small number of highly successful grant-winners from African Studies.

Post-REF: Staffing

The department (including the Granada Centre) has 6 Professors, 5 Senior Lecturers, 8 Lecturers (9 including one on long-term leave), a 0.5 temporary Lecturer, and 1 postdoctoral Research Fellow. Two Professors are currently on long-term buyout. Since the REF submission, there have been 3 professorial departures (2 of whom were 0.2 FTE in the submission itself) and 1 lecturer and 1 researcher have left. Two new lecturers have joined. The staffing profile is relatively youthful. Of the 19 members of academic staff, 10 have been appointed in the past 10 years, 2 since the 2014 REF submission.

Of the current staff only two professors look possible retirees before the next REF exercise, but otherwise it would be reasonable to assume the current group of staff would be eligible for return in 2020. The small number of post-doctoral fellows is significant.

Comparators. LSE currently has 5 Professors, 7 Senior Lecturers (or equivalent) and 4 Lecturers, plus an additional 13 postdoctoral fellows, of whom 4 are LSE Fellows on mixed teaching and research contracts. Edinburgh has 6 Professors, 8 Senior Lecturers, and 13 Lecturers, plus 2 Teaching Fellows and 3 Postdoctoral Fellows. These figures will become more relevant in the discussion of teaching and research (below).

reviewed journal articles can get very low scores, excellent book chapters can get 4* scores. *It follows that predictions of possible grades are inevitably more imprecise than they are in disciplines with a strong sense of which journals count as "top" journals, and too tight an enforcement of the 2*/3* boundary will always lead to the accidental loss of work which the panel would have judged to be of 3* - or even 4* - quality.*

Current Readiness

I have internal self-review documents from all permanent members of staff. They are helpful – up to a point. The format could be friendlier: the forms do not encourage colleagues to say much about future plans, and some of the terser returns suggested high levels of review fatigue.

Outputs. Before starting it might help to reflect on the impact of recent departures. The 5 who have left since the REF submission included some of the biggest hitters in the submission – my *guess* is between them they were responsible for between 6 and 9 of the 18 4* outputs. There is, therefore, a gap to be filled at the top end of the outputs.

Having said that I have made a tentative division of the profiles into three categories

- **Strong.** Colleagues with new books already out and/or other strong publications in hand in good journals. Maybe 6 or 7 at all career stages (including the 2 newest appointments)
- **Probably fine.** Colleagues with some publications in hand, and sometimes other outputs potentially in the pipeline, but not enough or not enough definite as yet to be complacent. About 6 in all.
- **Unclear.** Colleagues with some publications, but apparently little in the pipeline, and possible quality issues in what is already there. About 6 in all.

Some general points in light of the 2014 submission. There seems to be rather more energy being invested in edited books or book chapters (esp with publishers like Berghahn) than the outcome always deserves. Similarly there is relatively little being aimed at the highest impact (in the old-fashioned sense of more people reading them) anthropology journals, which like it or not tend to be American. If all the promised and contracted monographs – of which there appear to be a good number in the pipeline - see the light of day, there's a good chance of improving on 2014. If all the promised or contracted edited collections come out – of which there seem to be even more - I doubt they will make much difference.

Grant activity. A high proportion of FEC income in recent years has been through anthropology's involvement in the ESRC CRESC centre, which has now run its funded course. At first, the School's figures for anthropology over the past 5 years look quite impressive:

Social Anthropology	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Grand Total
01 Research Councils	904,717	770,794	679,595	730,973	313,835	3,399,915
02 UK-based Charities	182,224	163,097	157,798	22,995	49,036	575,149
03 UK Government/ Local Authorities/NHS			6,787			6,787
04 UK Industry			25,821	-25,821		-
05 EU Government	28,310	2,034	858			31,203
06 EU Industry			361			361
07 EU Other	30,360	20,240	-14,545	8,752	877	45,684
08 Non-EU Other	27,015	30,217	-7,632	1,984	20,340	71,924
Totals	1,172,625	986,382	849,044	738,883	384,088	4,131,022

There is a quite significant drop in the final year, but the totals earlier in the cycle look quite healthy. A deeper dig seems to reveal that these internal figures capture quite a bit of

Sociology grant income, presumably from CRESC activity – the REF figures for Research Council spend in the first three years are between £160k and £316 lower than the figures supplied by the School.

The information on grant activity in the individual questionnaires from members of staff paints an altogether more worrying picture. (There may be omissions in the questionnaires so what follows should be read with caution.) The department has one quite large ESRC award ending in 2015, and a smaller ESRC impact accelerator award just starting up. The only other significant grant in hand from a research council source is a non-FEC 3-year BA/Wolfson professorship. There are no other active FEC grants either in hand, or in process, as far as I can tell. Nor are there any ERC grants at any level, although I know there has been at least one unsuccessful application for these in the recent past.

There are 2 other significant awards currently held within the department, and one awaiting decision from Leverhulme. Of the two currently running, one is a 3-year Leverhulme Fellowship (£141k between 2014 and 2017), and the other is a collaborative award from the NSF, held with the University of Alaska, for £214k over 5 years.

Over the past 15 years, UK social anthropology has adjusted to a more generous, but sometimes more demanding, external research funding regime. The ESRC, traditionally the most important funder, has moved towards bigger, more collaborative awards, supplemented by a number of quite specific schemes targeted at particular fields or particular kinds of researcher: ESRC-DfID awards, Future Research Leader awards, Transformative Social Science awards. Manchester has received no awards in any of these schemes. (In comparison, Edinburgh currently has 2 ESRC/DfID awards, 1 Future Research Leader and 2 Transformative Social Science awards.) The arrival of European Research Council funding is starting to have a significant impact on research in UK anthropology. Starter, Consolidator and Advanced awards are usually around €2m each and last for 5 years. Goldsmiths has had 2 of these, LSE has one (supplemented by a large ESRC grant for the same project), Sussex has 2, Edinburgh has 2, Goldsmiths has 2, SOAS has 1, and UCL has had 5. Manchester has none.

How much does this matter? Although the REF panel is provided with figures for external research income, these figures do not by themselves drive quality decisions about the research environment. Social anthropology remains for many researchers essentially a “lone scholar” pursuit, for which little support is needed beyond time and a certain amount of money for travel and subsistence. Manchester’s current preference for individual awards from non-FEC funders like Leverhulme is therefore in itself not necessarily that problematic.

But the absence of large grants in the current department profile does bring possible problems. Most researchers in the unit are well beyond their first doctoral research, and many will inevitably need new field material if they are to maintain existing publishing records into the future. Only new projects can bring in new material. In the past Manchester has been something of a pioneer among anthropology departments in exploring cutting-edge collaborative research, while many of the most exciting developments in anthropology are on the cusp of different kinds of inter-disciplinary activity - medical anthropology, anthropology of development, etc. Large grants allow a unit to expand its staffing, bringing in new postdocs or PhD students, and they can support workshops and conferences. FEC overhead in theory can provide better support for all researchers.

There is quite a bit of interesting collaborative activity going on in the department, much of it unfunded, or else funded through quite complex but low-budget projects - in energy terms, possible the research income equivalent of the low-profile edited volumes that are so prominent in the current publication plans.

Impact. The Manchester REF submission was one of the best in the UoA which should bode well for the future. It demonstrated strong institutional commitment to engagement beyond the academy that goes beyond the necessities of the REF process. It was noticeable, however, that the section on the REF impact template on “strategy and plans” was almost entirely aspirational – things that would be introduced in the near future. Some of these clearly have been introduced as promised, but the staff questionnaire returns suggest rather low levels of engagement with the impact process (although the accounts of research and publication indicate considerable potential for such engagement). Of the 20 questionnaires I received, 10 list nothing at all under “impact since 2010”, a further 4 list nothing since the 2014 REF cycle. The REF submission promised to “develop individual impact plans for staff” but this does not seem to have happened so far.

It may be that much of the reticence about impact is due to misapprehensions about what counts and does not count as impact. It is worth bearing in mind the more expansive steer provided by Panel C in the REF criteria. For example:

The main panel particularly acknowledges that there may be impacts . . . which take forms such as holding public or private bodies to account or subjecting proposed changes in society, public policy, business practices, and so on to public scrutiny. Such holding to account or public scrutiny may have had the effect of a proposed change not taking place; there may be circumstances in which this of itself is claimed as impact. There may also be examples of research findings having been communicated to, but not necessarily acted upon, by the intended audience, but which nevertheless make a contribution to critical public debate around policy, social or business issues. The main panel also recognises that research findings may generate critique or dissent, which itself leads to impact(s).

Manchester anthropology from its foundation has deployed its research findings in “critical public debate”. Its current research activity focuses on topics of broad social importance. Engagement with museums and visual media provide a hub of existing good practice from which new colleagues could learn, especially if it is recognized that the REF panel welcomed evidence of impact that went beyond the more obviously utilitarian or economic understandings of the word.

The bigger context

Research does not take place in a vacuum. SoSS in Manchester is a large School with heavy undergraduate teaching loads. A subject like Social Anthropology derives a high proportion of its core income from undergraduate teaching and necessarily has to prioritise teaching in its balance of activities. In meetings with colleagues, I heard about the problem of having to respond to top-down initiatives – raising thresholds for the amount of student work to be assessed per course was a recent example – that were introduced without any sense of what other aspect of a heavy load could be reduced to make space for them. I also heard a great deal about the ways in which everyday teaching and administrative responsibilities crowded out time to think about research and writing

Some of these complaints are familiar from my own institution, but it does strike me that Manchester does have a more serious problem with the teaching-research balance. From workload and course data it does seem that loads are heavier: Manchester colleagues teach more courses than those in Edinburgh, the courses are generally big in terms of student numbers, and permanent academic staff carry a higher proportion of the small-group assessment work for each course. I do not possess equivalent insider knowledge of the LSE teaching set-up, but my strong sense is that it is closer to Edinburgh than to Manchester in terms of the load. Edinburgh has more PGT students, and somewhat fewer PGR students per member of staff, but not so many as to seriously affect the comparison with Manchester. LSE devolves responsibility for much of its small-group teaching, and some of its assessment, on its cadre of LSE Fellows, who have teaching and research contracts. Edinburgh currently supplements its core academic staff with two Teaching Fellows on teaching-only contracts, but is actively exploring ways to move towards the more developmental, teaching and research model employed by the LSE.

Planning ambitious new research projects takes time, but the combined teaching and administration load does not leave adequate time for the more expansive planning that leads to large research grants. Large grants themselves disrupt the delicate balance between teaching and research and need thoughtful integration into the cycle of activity in a relatively small unit. A number of staff complained about poor support for award-holders, especially for awards involving international collaboration beyond the global north. Support with finance management was mentioned as a particular problem. A high turnover in support roles in the School is a problem, as is the difficulty of finding out who is responsible for help with issues that extend beyond the school into the wider university.

Social Statistics Discipline Area: *Professor Peter W F Smith*

Purpose

This is a strategic review of the research activities of the School of Social Sciences and its Discipline Areas, to follow up the 2006 and 2010 Reviews by Professor Amann. It will focus on (i) the period since the last external review (2010), (ii) REF14 and (iii) external threats and opportunities (e.g., University strategic objectives; economic factors and funding streams).

The review aims to identify what the School of Social Sciences needs to do to significantly increase the standing of:

- (i) its Discipline Areas (DAs) in their respective subjects, and in relation to the university departments they are currently benchmarked against;
- (ii) improve significantly the standing of the School in the UK and international rankings.

The questions that drive this DA assessors report are:

- What does a top and high quality social scientist and department look like in this particular discipline (in terms of publications, grant capture, supervision norms, impact, esteem measures and so on)?
- How does this DA stand relative to top institutions and those selected for benchmarking?
- How well does the structure and support for research work in the DA?
- Which, if any, comparative international institutions might be useful for the DA to benchmark itself against?
- What are the key issues for discussion at the School level?
- What steer might particular DAs (and the School itself) be given to develop their research activities in line with the University, Faculty and School strategic vision, and to extend their national/international reputation for research excellence?

Process

In order to gather information to complete this report:

1. I attended a pre-meeting on 23 September 2015 with members of the School of Social Sciences and the Assessor for the Economics DA, Professor Frank Windmeijer, University of Bristol. Following this meeting, I also met with Professor Tarani Chandola from the Social Statistics DA.
2. I read and analysed the documentation provided by the School of Social Sciences and Social Statistics DA, including:
 - a. the Faculty of Humanities Strategic Plan 2020;
 - b. the School of Social Sciences Strategic Plan 2014-2020;
 - c. the Social Statistics Discipline Area Review and Strategy Document;
 - d. the Second Review of Research in the School of Social Sciences, University of Manchester;
 - e. the Social Statistics Research Income, PhD Supervision, Applications, Awards, New Starters and Leavers 2010-2015;
 - f. the CV proformas for DA staff;
3. I visited the Social Statistics DA on 22 October 2015 and had meetings with:

- a. the Head of DA, Professor Natalie Shlomo;
 - b. the DA's Leadership Team;
 - c. some early and mid-career staff;
 - d. the research group leads;
 - e. some PhD students from the DA.
4. I consulted the websites of the School of Social Sciences, the Social Statistics DA, the Cathie Marsh Institute for Social Research, REF2014 and other Social Statistics Departments and Groups.

Overview of the Social Statistics Discipline Area

The Social Statistics DA was launched in January 2009. However, there was further restructuring in 2014 with the establishment of the Cathie Marsh Institute for Social Research (CMIST) and the allocation of all the academic staff members of two previous centres (the Cathie Marsh Centre for Census and Survey Research and the Institute for Social Change) to DAs in the School of Social Sciences, primarily, but not exclusively, to the Social Statistics DA. My initial impression is that this restructuring has been successful and has laid the foundations for Social Statistics at the University of Manchester to establish its own distinct identity as one of the world's leading groups of Social Statisticians.

The Social Statistics DA currently has 11 permanent full-time academic staff, a 0.5 FTE fixed-term lecturer and 16 research fellows or research assistants working on various projects and research grants. Of the staff on permanent contracts, 4 are at professorial level, 4 at senior lecturer level and 3 at lecturer level. The DA is supported by a part-time administrator. The size of the DA staff has remained pretty constant since 2010. However, with six staff leaving and six new staff joining, there has been a considerable amount of change in the DA staff, which is not unusual given the high demand and limited supply of academic Social Statisticians.

While the focus of this review is research, it needs to be noted that there has recently been a large growth in the number of teaching programmes that the Social Statistics DA contributes to and this is expected to continue. The DA runs the MSc in Social Research Methods and Statistics and is also home to the University of Manchester Q-Step Centre. The recent growth has increased the DA's staff-student ratio to be more in line with those of other DAs as required by the School of Social Sciences. However, the impact on the DAs research activities needs to be monitored to ensure that insisting on more equality in staff-student ratios across the School does not negatively impact on the School as a whole, given the contribution Social Statistics staff make to research across the School, Faculty and University.

Research Environment

Research in the Social Statistics DA is based round three interrelated themes: 1. Advanced quantitative methods, 2. Inequalities and 3. Social Dynamics. The first theme being more methodological and the other two more applied. All staff in the DA are members of CMIST and belong to one or more of its research groups:

1. Survey Methods and Analysis
2. Statistical Modelling
3. Confidentiality and Privacy
4. Data, Services and Skills

5. Ethnicity, Religion and Migration
6. Lifelong Health and Wellbeing
7. Social Mobility and Labour Markets
8. Democracy and Elections

The first seven are led by Social Statistics staff.

Each research group has some administrative support and a website, and most have members from outside CMIST and the Social Statistics DA. While the age, size and activities of these research groups differ, they all appear to be very active, organising seminars and conferences, supporting the research in the Social Statistics DA and beyond, including applications for funding and peer reviewing of papers prior to submission. It was pleasing to hear that all the early to mid-career staff and PhD students I met were active members of one or more of the research groups.

Members of the Social Statistics DA also contribute to many other research centres and institutes, including: the National Centre for Research Methods (NCRM); the Administrative Data Research Network; the Mitchell Centre for Social Network Analysis; MICRA (Manchester Interdisciplinary Collaboration for Research on Ageing); and CoDE (the Centre for Research on the Dynamics of Ethnicity and Inequality). The research of the DA is closely connected with that of the Sociology DA, particularly through some of these research centres.

The Confidentiality and Privacy research group leads the UK, if not the world, in this area. Its work will help inform initiatives to widen the access to individual-level data collected by central and local government, and third sector and private organisations. While there are many groups of Social Statistician undertaking statistical modelling around the UK, the University of Manchester has unique strengths in social networks, another area which continues to grow in importance with both methodological and application challenges. Members of the Data, Services and Skills research group indicated that they were primarily involved in educational activities and did not undertake much research. However, they appeared to be undertaking research in the areas of statistical education and quantitative methods training given the initiatives to enhance statistical literacy, e.g., Q-step, a programme designed to promote a step-change in quantitative social science training in the UK, and NCRM. However, in order to facilitate this, education-focussed staff need to be given sufficient time to undertake research, including sabbaticals.

There has been a substantial increase in the amount of methodological research undertaken by members of the Social Statistics DA over the last five years, and this is the focus of the Survey Methods and Analysis and Statistical Modelling research groups. The two recent appointments will further strengthen the DA's methodological research. The focus of the Ethnicity, Religion and Migration, Lifelong Health and Wellbeing, Social Mobility and Labour Markets, and Democracy and Elections research groups is on using quantitative methods to answer substantive social science research questions. CMIST is well placed to make major contributions in the areas of ageing and elections given its collaboration in two of the UK's major social surveys: the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing and the British Election Study.

There is an excellent research culture in the Social Statistics DA and CMIST. Staff commented on the really good administrative support for research they receive, particularly from finance for grant applications, and thought that the Personal Development Plans and Personal Research Plans processes worked well. Furthermore, new members of staff are given reduced teaching loads to ensure they can devote time to research and applying for funding. Overall staff morale is currently high and this needs to be maintained.

The relationship between the Social Statistics DA and CMIST no doubt enhances the research in Social Statistics at the University of Manchester. However, if the University is to obtain the recognition it deserves for its Social Statistics DA, some thought is required on how to delineate their separate identities, so that both can have distinct international profiles in their areas of expertise. One option is for the DA to take ownership of the methodological research and training, and CMIST the more applied and interdisciplinary research. However, note that I am not suggesting a change in the day-to-day working, just how the outputs and activities are badged.

Research Income

Total research income from 2010 to 2015 for the Social Statistics DA was £2.9M with 71% from UK Research Councils. The corresponding figures for each year are given in Table 1 below and clearly show that the DA has increased and diversified the source its research funding, particularly since 2012-13. There were concerns that there was less opportunity for methodological research to be funded under the European Union’s Horizon 2020 as was funded under its Seventh Framework. However, CMIST is well placed to apply for Horizon 2020 funding.

Table1: Summary of Research Income (£1000) for the Social Statistics DA

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Total
UK Research Council	483	424	348	337	422	2014
Percentage of Total	80%	85%	80%	56%	59%	71%
Total	602	501	432	607	714	2856

Source: Research Income 2010-2015

All of the current academic staff who were in post at the beginning of 2015 have successfully applied for funding since 2012, with major grants (> £200k) from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), the Leverhulme Trust, the Medical Research Council and the Nuffield Foundation.

Postgraduate Research Students

The Social Statistics DA is a member of the North West Doctoral Training College (DTC) (with Lancaster and Liverpool). The Social Statistics staff are currently engaged in supervision of over 30 PhD students, which includes joint supervision across DAs and Schools. Research topics include both substantive research and methodological research. There has recently been an increase in the number PhD students in the DA and the supervisory load is evenly distributed across the academic staff. In 2014, the current Professors had on average 3.5 PhD students and the current lecturers and senior lecturers that were in post had on average 3.0 students, with all of them supervising at least 2 students.

While the Sociology REF2014 sub-panel feedback noted a relatively low number of PhD completions during the assessment period, the DA’s Leadership Team informed me that the Social Statistics DA submission rates were good. The PhD students reported good support and supervision from friendly staff within the DA as well as good facilities, although dealing with the wider University administration was confusing. The reputation of the University of Manchester was mentioned as a reason for choosing to study at the University. The PhD students were activity engaged with the CMIST research groups and had good opportunities for career development including training and experience of teaching.

The DA's Leadership Team recognised the need to enhance the quality of applicants for the Social Statistics DA for DTC studentships and are actively engaging in identifying suitable undergraduate and PGT students. The increase in quantitative methods training at undergraduate level, both at the University of Manchester and elsewhere, should increase the pool of suitably trained students.

UK and International Comparators

There are very few departments or groups of Social Statisticians in the UK. In addition to the University of Manchester, the two most prominent are:

1. The Department of Social Statistics and Demography at the University of Southampton (<http://www.southampton.ac.uk/demography/index.page>). For REF2014, staff from this department were returned to either the Mathematical Sciences Panel or the Social Work and Social Policy Panel. Of the 60 staff returned to the Mathematical Sciences Panel, seven are currently members of the Department of Social Statistics and Demography. Of the 46 staff returned to the Social Work and Social Policy Panel, 16 are currently members of the Department of Social Statistics and Demography.
2. The Social Statistics Group in the Department of Statistics at the LSE (<http://www.lse.ac.uk/statistics/research/Social-Statistics/Index.aspx>). Seven members of this group were returned to the Mathematical Sciences Panel in REF2014 out of 32.

There is also the Social Surveys and Social Statistics research group, based in the School of Applied Social Science at the University of Stirling (<https://www.stir.ac.uk/social-science/research/research-areas/social-surveys-and-social-statistics/>). Four members of this group were returned to the Social Work and Social Policy Panel out of 35.

The comparable figure for the University of Manchester is 9 of the current members of the Social Statistics DA were returned to the Sociology Panel out of 52. Other UK universities with Social Statisticians include Essex, Lancaster and UCL.

Two international comparators are:

1. The Center for Statistics and the Social Sciences (CSSS) at the University of Washington (<https://www.csss.washington.edu/>). Six members of faculty are designated as CSSS core faculty members, while close to 100 others are affiliated with CSSS.
2. Social Statistics at Cornell University (<https://www.ilr.cornell.edu/academics/academic-departments/social-statistics>) with six academic staff.

As noted in the Amann review and still the case 'Southampton is a major rival, and may in fact have a definite lead in some areas of pure social statistics, but Social Statistics at the University of Manchester has more strengths in application ...', particularly in the area of sociology.

Attributes of High Quality Social Statistics Departments and Top Social Statisticians

As noted above there are very few departments or groups of Social Statistics around the world. However, top Social Statisticians can be found in the few departments that do exist (e.g., Manchester and Southampton), in departments and schools of statistics (e.g., LSE), mathematics, social sciences, and in centres and institutes (e.g., Washington). Many of these successfully bring together social statisticians and social scientists. For REF2014 their staff were returned to the Mathematics Panel, the Social Work and Social Policy Panel or the Sociology Panel.

Just as there are considerable differences in the structure and focus of Social Statistics groups, it is difficult to define a Social Statistician and near impossible to provide norms for publications, grant capture, supervision, impact and esteem measures. In general, top and high quality Social Statisticians use or develop advanced statistical methods to tackle problems emanating from society. They publish in top statistical journals and/or top social science journals. In the UK, they secure research funding from the ESRC and European Union and are often Co-Is on large grant applications where quantitative work is to be undertaken. They are usually involved in collaborative work with Social Scientists. They work in collaboration with national statistics agencies, central and local governments and survey organisations. They are invited to present at international statistical conferences (e.g., the World Congress of the International Statistical Institute and the Joint Statistical Meetings) and subject specific conferences. They are editors, editorial board members and associate editors of statistics, survey methods and social science journals.

The Social Statistics DA has the attributes of a high quality Social Statistics department and its senior members those of top Social Statisticians. All its staff are frequently publishing in top statistics journals (e.g., the *Annals of Applied Statistics*, *Computational Statistics and Data Analysis*; the *Journal of the American Statistical Association*; and the *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society, Series A*), survey and research methods journals (e.g., the *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*; *Sociological Methodology*; *Sociological Methods and Research*; and *Survey Research Methods*) and social sciences journals (e.g., the *British Journal of Criminology*; *Population, Space and Place*; *Public Opinion Quarterly*; and *Social Networks*). Senior members of the DA are on the editorial boards and are associate editors of statistics, survey and research methods, and social sciences journals (e.g., the *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*; *International Statistical Review*; the *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society, Series A*; and *Sociology*). They have been invited to speak at international conferences (e.g., an Isaac Newton Institute Workshop; the Public Health England Conference; and the Royal Statistical Society Conference). They also serve on advisory and scientific committees of funders (e.g., the ESRC Peer Review College; the Newton Fund Grants Board; and the Programme Grant Review Committee for the Academy of Finland), government departments and organisation (e.g., Ministry of Justice Data Lab Advisory Board and the UK Statistical Disclosure Advisory Committee) and professional bodies (e.g., the Royal Statistical Society, Social Statistics Committee).

REF2014

Members of the Social Statistics DA were returned with the Sociology DA to the Sociology Unit of Assessment (UoA). As for RAE2008, this strategy was extremely successful with the UoA being ranked second (to York) on Grade Point Average (3.26), just missing out on retaining their top spot by 0.01 points. The UoA was also ranked second for research power (to Edinburgh). The Social Statistics DA contributed to three of the six impact case studies submitted by the Sociology UoA.

While it is difficult, and probably unwise, to disentangle the performance of staff from the two DAs, the contribution of the Social Statistics DA to this success should not be under estimated. Manchester continues to be one of the UK's leading Universities for Quantitative Sociology and with the recent appointments in Social Statistics is well placed to strengthen its position. It is also difficult, and again probably unwise, to compare the contribution of the Social Statistics DA to the REF2014 with that of the other Social Statistics groups since, as noted above, these groups are disparate and each university adopted a different strategy when returning their Social Statisticians.

The measure where the Sociology UoA did less well compared to its comparator institutions is impact, and steps are rightly being undertaken to identify the impact of the UoA's research. The work of the Social Statistics DA has the potential to have large economic and societal impact, which is possibly not fully recognised by all of its staff. The Social Statistics Discipline Area Review and Strategy Document lists many areas where impact is being made and these should be nurtured. Members of the DA commented on the excellent support provided by the Impact Officer who I understand is leaving the role. If not already in hand, a replacement should be found as soon as possible.

Meeting the strategic aims of the University

The Social Statistics DA is well placed to help the School of Social Sciences, Faculty of Humanities and the University of Manchester meet its three core goals: world class research, outstanding learning and social responsibility. All its staff are publishing in international journals relevant to their specialisms, applying for and secure research funding from a range of funders, supervising PhD students and undertaking research that has the potential to make a significant economic and societal impact. The DA runs the MSc in Social Research Methods and Statistics, is home to the University's Q-Step Centre and contributes to quantitative methods teaching across the School. Social responsibility is fundamental to its research on ethnicity, religion, migration and data privacy. The DA has all the attributes of a high quality Social Statistics department. However, it has only relatively recently been formed and needs to work on its identity.

Challenges and Issues for the Social Statistics DA and School of Social Sciences

1. To delineate separate identities for the Social Statistics DA and CMIST, so that both can have distinct international profiles in their areas of expertise.
2. To recognise and to facilitate pathways to impact.
3. To support the research on statistical education and literacy.
4. To balance the desire for more equitable staff-student ratios across the School with the need to use the strengths of the Social Statistics DA to help the School meet its strategic goals.

As the considerable change in the DA staff demonstrates, there is considerable demand for Social Statisticians at all levels in academia and beyond. Therefore, a challenge is to retain and recruit high calibre Social Statisticians, recognising their diversity.

Sociology Discipline Area: Professor John Scott

The Sociology DA is a large and cohesive group, currently numbering 34 staff (though a breakdown by seniority adds up to only 31). The members of the group are highly productive and they have established and maintained a strong collective identity and recognition. One thing that does not come across in the Review (and this may reflect the way in which its criteria were established) is any feeling for the character of the DA as a unit: is it, in fact, a cohesive academic unit with a strong sense of cohesion? The emphasis is rather more on internal structures (see the discussion below).

Throughout the DA Review there is considerable attention given to comparator institutions in assessing strengths and weaknesses. The comparators are generally appropriate. However, there should not be an undue reliance on small differences in rank order. The REF scores nationally are such that the distribution across institutions is relatively flat and so quite small variations in scores, in any of the three elements, can produce quite large shifts in rank order. I would not, therefore, place too much emphasis on the particular metrics. I therefore agree with the more nuanced adoption of eight comparator institutions. While there may be good institutional reasons for seeing a high ranking within the 'top 9', rankings are determined by such a variety of factors that enhancing any one of them will have unpredictable consequences, especially as the other eight universities will each be attempting to do the same thing. It is far better to pursue a strategy of substantive goals than it is to aim simply at improving ranking in the league tables.

The DA Review correctly notes the problems that are inherent in a 'more of the same' strategy for REF, where the key issue is not to give the impression of complacency. I do not think there is any real sense of complacency in the DA, but there is a difficulty in presenting an on-going successful strategy without *implying* complacency. It is suggested that a refresh of Research Centres may help, but this should not be a mere cosmetic exercise. If there were no reality to the change, the ploy would be all-too apparent. What would be more useful is a review of research governance (discussed more fully in the following section), producing a refined and more clearly articulated structure able to produce development in the desired direction.

Issues of Disciplinary Strategy and Structure.

- The Disciplinary Area identifies three 'main strategic aims' that are relevant to the REF submission and on-going work. These are clear and desirable goals, but there is no reflection on the extent to which the members of the DA feel that they have been achieved. What mechanisms are in place for monitoring moves towards these goals? How do the outcomes from any such monitoring affect policy and practice within the DA?
- There is little consideration of the specific mechanisms that ensure the achievement of aims and strategic goals. For example, goals relating to staff progression and internationalization are outline, but there is no indication of how these are pursued. In relation to the issues raised on page 4: how is emphasis on impact and engagement incorporated into staff and student training, and how is achievement monitored; how is work towards strategic goals recorded and monitored in staff, and how does this feed into recruitment?

- There seems to be a lack of clarity (which may be structural or presentational) concerning the relations between the DA(s), the Research centres, and the ‘Research Clusters’. What is the logic of distinguishing ‘clusters’ from ‘Centres’, especially where they seem to coincide? Are the strategic aims pursued at the level of the DA or the RCs? If the latter, how are these articulated and coordinated at the DA level? There are also confusions in the boundaries of the particular Research Centres, especially in relation to methodology: there are a number of methodological Centres that coexist with two DAs (Sociology and Social Statistics), there are two methodological clusters (linked together for some purposes such as impact). It is difficult to see how the methodological Centres are brought together. I think that there needs to be some consideration of overall research governance, as the existing structure appears to be an organic growth of ad hoc arrangements that results in a thicket of intersecting relationships and may imply a lack of overall coordination in relation to strategic goals. There is perhaps a need for some reflection, across DAs, about research governance arrangements.
- For the purposes of the REF, a larger group of 52 staff were submitted, bringing together staff in Sociology with staff in Social Statistics. The DA Review comments that these two areas were split from each other after RAE 2008 but that they continue to be closely related. This raises the question of the rationale behind the separation—which is not elaborated in either of the DA Reviews—and the precise mechanisms through which coordination is ensured. The Social Statistics DA originated in the Cathie Marsh Centre and ISC, and its Review shows its links with Sociology are at the level of substantive research. This highlights questions about the roles of the various Research Centres involved in methodological research and research on Inequalities. I would like to have seen more reflection on the intellectual purpose and value of the separation and the problems (if any) of divided responsibilities between two Disciplinary Areas and three (or more) Research Centres. It may be worth considering the intellectual aspects of this relationship in relation to the argument of the forthcoming book by Goldthorpe on *Sociology as a Population Science*: to what extent do the existing arrangement imply or deny an alignment with the argument of that book.
- The DA Review notes the importance of continuing university-level support for the area, and tends to imply that action is more important at that level. While I can see the advantages of such a bid for resources (for example in relation to Research Centre funding and support), this should not be taken as minimising the need for reflection and action at DA level.
- The DA Review notes difficulty in recruiting professorial staff but does not reflect on the reasons for this rather surprising fact. The reasons need to be explored.
- The need to strengthen international links is noted, but no indication is given of *how* this might be achieved: more cooperative bids and research visits are suggested, but what mechanism can be put in place to motivate and monitor these?

Issues concerning REF performance

- There is a discussion at a number of points concerning the ‘tail’ of 2* publications, or of staff with one or two such publications. I think it would be wrong to see this in negative terms. 2* publications are ‘international’ in quality and the low-standing accorded to them is a consequence only of the funding formula. With a large submission, a relatively small ‘tail’ will have little effect on overall QR funding and these will be outweighed by the reputational advantages of inclusivity in staff submission.

- The issue of the inclusivity of staff in the REF is important in relation to the issues of career development and continuity for Early Career Researchers, which are raised in the DA Review. ECR staff, who might be expected to have relatively more 2* publications (though this is not necessarily the case) are important elements in the REF submission (through the Environment statement) as they are clear indicators of the attention given to questions of succession in research capacity.
- In relation to publications strategy, the use of metrics and journal rankings are noted, but it is not clear that these are, or will, be important. Metrics will not be important for outputs, even as general indicators. They will, however, be very important as indicators in the assessment of environment and impact. It is also not clear why a review of journal rankings is considered important. This is a matter of no importance whatsoever in a sociology submission to the REF. Neither the Sociology panel nor the Social Work and Social Policy panel (which may be combined in the future) made any use of journal rankings.
- The DA Review suggests that the proposed increase in the weighting of impact may make the effects of any weakness more apparent in the overall score. However, it is not clear, yet, that the intention to raise the percentage will be carried through. In the feedback discussions with HEFCE there has been quite a strong push to leave the percentage weightings at current levels but to transfer the 'Impact Statement' into the 'Environment' section of the submission. The outcome of these consultations will need to be watched carefully.
- It is clear from the national REF results that any weaknesses in case studies can have a major impact on the impact profile and the 'lumpiness' in an impact profile (a consequence of the scoring system used) can give impact scores an apparently disproportionate effect on the overall profile when it is combined with the generally 'smoother' output and environment profiles. This makes the whole issue of the number of case studies submitted highly important.
- There is a discussion of the strategic issue of whether to submit a large number of case studies or to be more selective in the inclusion of staff and so to submit fewer case studies. This is a difficult issue as it involves second-guessing the decisions that might be made by competitor universities. It is clear that many universities were highly selective, often using a 3.0 or 3.5 GPA cut-off in staff selection. The Manchester DA followed the HEFCE steer of being inclusive and giving full representation to the range of staff. To have achieved such a high ranking on this basis should be regarded as a significant achievement. It seems clear that, in one way or another, measures of staff inclusion are likely to be important in REF 2020, if only in the presentation of the results, and a high score on the basis of inclusivity will be something that figures centrally in published league tables. Increased selectivity could strengthen the impact profile but weaken overall performance.
- There is also a very clear drive within HEFCE and among the various panels to devise a more 'granular' assessment of the case studies so that areas of strength (and weakness) *within* particular case studies can be better represented in the scores. (So reducing the 'lumpiness' in the profiles). This is linked with the search for metrics that can serve as indicators in assessment (the Wilsdon Review). Such metrics would be guides to panels that will help to avoid any problems of judging the overall quality of the cases studies and producing impact profiles. Attention will need to be given to recording and reporting evidence against these indicators if scores are to be maintained or improved.

Issues related to the impact of research

- One of the stated strategic aims of the DA is to strengthen the social impact of research. This recognises that an area of *relative* weakness in REF 2014 was the area of ‘impact’. The DA Review identifies a number of pathways that it is its intention to strengthen. There is a useful discussion of the mechanisms through which staff will be encouraged and supported on these pathways and it is good to see these in place. However, there is no discussion of the ways in which the impact actually achieved is recorded and monitored. This is essential in gauging the success of the various mechanisms and in building up the evidence base from which impact can be reported in REF 2020. What is said on this is rather general and vague.
- It is suggested that one of the ‘threats’ to the development of impact is that the political climate may be running counter to the work on inequality in which the members of the DA have their particular strengths. I am not at all certain that this is the case. Inequality is going to be central to the agenda for the coming period: anti-austerity ideas are growing in strength and the Conservative Party has begun to define itself as the ‘Party of Labour’. So long as government and political parties continue trying to pursue evidence-based research, the opportunities for achieving impact (positive or critical) will remain.
- It is correctly noted that the ‘Northern powerhouse’ could offer possibilities for achieving impact. Although the DA Review is hesitant about its likely introduction, it is clear that there will be a strong move to more autonomous policy-making at metropolitan and county level and it is right to recognise this as an opportunity that can counteract distance from central government. It would perhaps be wrong to see Edinburgh and Cardiff as singularly strong competitors in this respect.

Issues of the External Environment

- Demand Management at RCUK is said to be a challenge for the DA. In what respects is this the case? The DA Review wrongly emphasises, in my opinion, bid submission. It is not submission that is important but success. Indeed, a high level of submission of unsuccessful bids could result in penalisation by funders. Staff have to be encouraged and supported to make successful bids, and so stronger internal mechanisms of evaluation are required. Demand management should be seen as an ‘opportunity’ not a challenge.
- The DA Review gives great emphasis to an issue of the small number of ‘big hitters’ in securing grants. However, it should not be forgotten that many areas of social research are relatively ‘cheap’ and so small grants (or even no grants) are quite typically associated with highly rated outputs.
- There has been great success in recruiting high quality staff. This might be linked to the particular role of the Doctoral Training Centre/Partnership in supporting regional institutions, as these may be ‘feeders’ for staff recruitment. The DA and its RCs might be more proactive in relation to regional institutions, as ESRC wishes for the DTPs, giving it a leading regional role in staff and student development.
- The proposed Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) is a big challenge that is not noted in the DA Review. It is likely that there will be intensive preparation for this at precisely

the point at which the REF 2020 submission is being finalised. This will put considerable strain on administrative systems and on staff time. This is also, of course, an ongoing problem, though the timing and cycle of the TEF has yet to be determined.

This Report is a brief follow-up to my original Report, following a discussion of key issues with the Head of Discipline in Sociology.

My discussion confirmed the evident impression, from the paperwork supplied and from external observation, that the Discipline Area of Sociology at Manchester is highly successful and one of the leading, if not the leading, of sociological research. Its reputation is recognised both nationally and internationally. The DA Review clearly presents this case in terms of identified comparator institutions on the basis of REF performance and an equal case could be made in terms of reputation. The sociology group has immense strengths across the discipline, perhaps most notably in inequalities and methodologies, its members demonstrating a strong grasp of both quantitative and qualitative approaches to the subject. I do not think that any sociologist in the country would demur from a judgement that the Manchester DA has built and maintained a strong position for itself at the peak of the discipline.

I would make the following additional points in qualification and/or amplification of points raised in the original Report:

- Strategic planning issues have been established at a Faculty/School level, with the DA being concerned with implementation. Mechanisms of the kind that I alluded to have, indeed, been established at DA level, but much monitoring and action are located at School level. This limits the ability of DAs to influence movement towards strategic goals. To this extent, the view expressed by the DA that continued support from the university centrally is crucial is very well founded. The DA can deliver on desired goals only if empowered to do so through effective delegation and resourcing.
- Governance structures are complex, but I am assured that they work effectively at School level. This does, however, mean that there is little autonomy for the DA to determine its own priorities and practices. For example, the DA has very little ability to determine its overall staffing levels and patterns, as many staffing decisions are taken outside of the DA (e.g., within Research Centres). A DA cannot expect to be accountable for resources over which it has little or no control. The very effective School-level decision-making procedures must be combined with an effective role for DA decision-making and responsibility.
- While the DA clearly recognises that complacency is not an option, it is very evident that the DA is working very successfully and has achieved its international prominence on the basis of the ways in which it currently works. Any attempt to impose new structures or to homogenise procedures across the School must be aware of the dangers inherent in trying to 'fix' something that is not 'broken'.
- I am satisfied that the procedures in place for funding bids are robust and that policy is not to encourage the submission of bids at all costs. It is clear that there should not be a policy of rewarding bids *per se*, but I have been convinced that there is a determination to submit only strong bids. The Head of DA does, however, recognise the need to build up grant income from across the unit. This is likely to be especially important if the role of HEFCE is reviewed by Government and, in consequence, QR income is distributed on a basis other than REF performance.

- Linked to the above, it is important to bear in mind the current uncertainty over not simply the timing of the next REF but also its future. A School strategy aimed exclusively at REF may not be appropriate if the quality assessment and QR distribution system is changed before 2020. There needs to be strategic thinking at university and school level about strategies in relation to possible alternative funding and assessment systems.
- The difficulty in recruiting Professors was explained as a difficulty in attracting suitably qualified people to the North of England and the impossibility of matching US professorial salaries. I discussed with the Head of the DA whether this was linked to the question of the research/impact opportunities available and so to the issue of the university's relationship to the evolving 'northern powerhouse'. However, if recruitment difficulties are generic to the School or University, and not a problem only for sociology, then it is something to be addressed at University level.

I have been satisfied through discussion that many of the other issues raised in my Report (such as impact monitoring, training of staff, and the role of the Doctoral Training Centre/Partnership) are appropriately considered and handled, within the framework imposed by the structure of governance.

Annex 3

UoM External Reviewers Report:

Professor Neil Pendleton and Professor Nicola Glover-Thomas

Introduction

This is a strategic review of the research activities of the School and its Discipline areas (DA) from period 2010 (the last external review by Professor R Amann). This report is written by the two external UoM reviewers, Professor Nicola Glover – Thomas (Law, HUMS) and Professor Neil Pendleton (Professor of Medical Gerontology, FHMS). Both reviewers are actively engaged in research of an interdisciplinary nature and are well placed to offer an objective view on the SoSS and its research objectives, its activity and its wider research environment.

Our role is unique to that of the DA representatives, external reviewers and other members of review committee. We are providing a largely strategic overview to support the Chair of the review committee (Professor Sue Scott) in producing her report to the Professor Chris Orme, Head of School and Professor Brian Heaphy, Director of Research. We are asked to address the following points in our review to support the Chair's report:

- (v) the progress that has been achieved (or otherwise) since 2010
- (vi) the significance of the REF2014 results
- (vii) the probable trajectory of SoSS in the light of evidence that has become available since the cut-off point for REF2014
- (viii) the future policy implications of all this evidence and to provide a strategic steer

Professor Scotts' report will inform the senior management team of the School of Social Sciences shape their strategic plans to achieve the Faculty of Humanities ambition to achieve the 2020 research objectives. These focus on Key Performance Indicators in the areas: Research grant and contract income; Outputs; Knowledge Exchange and Impact; Citations; World Ranking; PGR (see Faculty of Humanities Strategic Plan 2020 Page 9-15).

In the document we will start by summarising key features of each disciplinary area, followed by important points collated from either the DA representative or reviewers reports. We will conclude by bring these themes together and suggest some issues for consideration going forward.

DA Politics

This DA is relatively large with total number permanent staff of 52 and in REF14, 37 returned. The Unit of Assessment (UoA) returned was in Politics and International Studies.

Research in five research clusters: Analytical Political Theory, Comparative Public Policy and Institutions, Democracy and Elections, Global Political Economy, and Critical Global Politics. However does have connection with other centres and institutes HCRI, CMIST, Brookes World Poverty Institute.

Strengths are funding income British Election Study, Brookes World Poverty Institute core funding and calculated from information provided that inter REF period income is approximately 12.8M. In terms of relevant education contribution this includes 48 doctoral students' supervision within the North West Doctoral Training Centre (ESRC), teaching delivery in the MSc social statistics and Q Step programme.

The Grade Point Average - GPA overall was 2.92 (19th position). Clearly this is culmination of number of measures. To consider outputs first the 4* outputs were 14% with GPA 2.74 (21st position) and combined 3*/4* outputs of 62%. The impact results show GPA 3.08 (position 30th) and environment position 12th.

The DA is benchmarked against the following institutions: Sheffield; Warwick; York; Exeter; Birmingham. The results were for overall GPA: 3rd - Sheffield [3.40]; 6th - Warwick [3.19]; 8th - York [3.16]; 9th - Exeter [3.13] and 32nd - Birmingham [2.78]. Outputs: 4* GPA: 3rd - Sheffield [3.28/43%] 7th - York [3.00/27%] 8th - Exeter [2.97/22%] 10th - Warwick [2.91/26%] 21st - Manchester [2.74/14%] 42nd - Birmingham [2.47/10%].

The DA external reviewer makes consistent comment on the organisational structure of the DA, commenting in the benefits of a devolved structure supporting research delivery (which may come from their own institutional experience). They comment on the need for improved communication between School and DA. They comment on the need for clarity on how the structures that exist (themes, clusters and centres) interact with each other, especially in context REF preparation (this includes the REF preparation committee and REF review group). The external reviewer also notes reflection may be needed on the research clusters purpose. Perhaps key point made is the need to improve the output profile to reduce the 36% below 3* returns. In fact my observations are there is need to improve the impact GPA position and to learn from their better performance in environment category.

DA Philosophy

This is by comparators in the School a smaller DA with 13.1 FTE permanent staff. Of these 12.7 returned in REF14. The UoA for return is Philosophy. In the inter REF period they have achieved 3.6M which puts them at about same income for FTE level to benchmarks.

The DA does not explicitly identify any specific sub-sections, but does have recognised focus on aesthetics, metaphysics, and history of philosophy. In terms of relevant education contribution this includes 14 doctoral students' supervision. The DA overall GPA is 2.86 (position 19th). For outputs 16% were 4* and 64% 3*/4* note (position 28th). The benchmark institutions for comparison are: Birkbeck, Bristol; Nottingham; Sussex and York.

The external DA reviewer makes a number of points about the organisation of the DA. He notes the DA relies on administrative support structures for the School rather than within DA. There may be dilution of the research management support for the DA which is felt to contribute to income generation. He makes a comment about the external visibility of the DA, where should Philosophy be seen and should it be in School of Social Sciences? There is agreement that the DA needs to improve the output performance for REF 20 and reduce the 2* and below number from its current 30%. It is also notable that 3 benchmark institutions had substantially higher 4* outputs (Birkbeck 38%; Bristol 21%; Sussex 33%). There is a point made that institution led output performance management systems like the Research Review Exercise will help but this can be added to by DA specialist guidance. The reviewer also supports the idea that out of DA advice on publication output grades should be considered. Finally, there may be a need for the DA to consider supporting its staff on engagement and impact, believing the DA needs promotion in this area.

DA Economics

This is relatively large area with 53 permanent staff REF14 FTE returned 33.2 (7th largest). We note that 18 staff have joined the area since 2012. The UoA used for REF14 return is economics and econometrics. Income in inter REF period is noted as lower than comparator organisations.

The research is organised in 5 core Research Area Groups (RAGs), Macroeconomics, Growth and Development; Microeconomics and Mathematical Economics; Econometrics and Applied Economics; Environmental and Resource Economics; and Development Economics.

In terms of education the doctoral student numbers are said to be 10-12 admissions per year on Economics studentships, with 15 current. There seems to be significant contribution to undergraduate teaching by the area which is relevant to research strategy. The DA REF14 returns overall GPA is 3.00 (position 16th) but for outputs 4* 11.4% (position 22nd) and 3*/4* 64.9% (position 20th). Manchester impact scores were 40% 4* and 90% 3*/4* which was reasonable, but environment scored low in 4* category with only 12.5%.

Benchmark institutions were: Nottingham, York, Exeter, Glasgow and Sheffield. Looking at the output performance of Manchester against all the benchmark institutions, excluding Sheffield, all performed better with lowest 4* outputs were Exeter with 13.3% and highest Nottingham with 19.7%. All institutions, except Sheffield again, performed better in 3*/4* outputs with lowest Exeter at 71% and highest Nottingham at 85%. GPA for outputs for Manchester is 2.72 with only Sheffield scoring same result all others were higher value. Some post REF14 publication internal review scores are presented but these do not seem to be changing the trend in 3* and 4* outputs, 11% and 31% respectively.

A simple point is the benchmarking choice of institutions would seem to be against using Sheffield. The external reviewer recommendations start with the point which is echoed in the DA strategy document of the importance of improving output quality as measured by REF 4* and reducing the outputs below 3*. This is a challenging but necessary aim. The internal review process must not only provide leadership in supporting staff to improve the output quality, but be rigorous in the selection process for future returns. This, as the DA strategy document notes, may mean changing individuals' performance management deliverables considering teaching.

There must be with this a consideration that student satisfaction can be affected by enforced teaching contracts and staff moral issues re: promotion. The external reviewer makes a point about salary comparisons linked to attracting best staff. Whilst this is interesting, the idea of salary increases to match competitors in a department that has limited performance needs careful thought. This surely must be considered against contribution to strategic aims. Similarly, the point on conference budgets is interesting and again, if the amount is to be increased this must be linked to output. The reviewer mentions the issue of feasibility of new appointments delivering on probation aims of 1 top and 2 good papers within a period of 3 years. There is some logic in having a longer probation period, but with annual appraisal of being on target. Likewise, there is a need to consider how such an approach would marry across the School and Faculty and the impact of such a distinctive approach would have elsewhere in the School.

The reviewer mentioned a number of space related points (Economics on one floor; seminar and common room) which can be considered, but in the context of the space allocation model of the University. Whilst using one floor for economics and common room possible, would having a specific seminar room be feasible? In terms of doctoral student performance it seems a key point made by external is the importance of placements is worth considering. There proposition of the creation of centre within the DA is interesting which will need careful thought to link this to strategy for REF2020 delivery.

A final important point which relates to education is this. If the DA strategy sees this as an important income generation direction for the future this has implications for any research developments. There is a need for School level dialogue to determine how this can best be integrated into an ambition for research.

DA Social Anthropology

This is a relatively small DA with 19 full time with 1 part time staff. The number of staff returned in REF14 was 15.9 FTE (this is a reduction on previous submission and 16th sized institution). The UoA used for REF14 return was anthropology and development studies. Income in inter REF period was 4.1M of with RC percentage 82%.

The DA is an integrated research group with one specialist unit, the Grenada Centre for Visual Anthropology. In terms of doctoral students, the DA has 17 with noted popular studentships in Visual Anthropology due to reputation.

The DA REF14 results mixed, largely due to size. The GPA overall was 3.12 improved on previous (2nd position), but the numbers returned small size meant 16th position in research power (significant effect on funding). There was also only 1 early career researcher submitted, low in comparison to previous return. There were substantial successes in output performance with GPA 2.93 (second place for outputs) with 27% at 4* and 69% were 3*/4*. The results for environment and impact were good with 100% at 3*/4*.

The benchmark institutions for comparison are: the London School of Economics and the University of Edinburgh (social anthropology specific). These were both significantly bigger than Manchester. In terms of outputs both performed better than Manchester for 4* although marginal for Edinburgh. In terms 3* outputs Manchester is between Edinburgh and LSE. Manchester equalled LSE with below 3* outputs both significantly better than Edinburgh. Overall one sees Manchester performed well in outputs. Again the three institutions vied for position close to each other for impact and environment which Manchester performed well in.

The external reviewer has commented on a number of points that need further reflection. One concern was the small number of early career researchers in the DA. From this a further point raised was the retirement in current REF period of senior department members with impact on 4* output profile. As already seen in the data summarised, the small department size return leads to significant effects on research power (and funding). This connected with the perceived heavy teaching load of staff impacts on potential to deliver the research aims of School. Some questions were raised about RC or ERC research bids in pipeline to counterbalance the end of significant awards due this year. The organisational management of teaching delivery is raised as an area to develop, with the DA committed to undergraduate education as it is. As for another small DA in the School the research management administration is generic and getting most from this by the area

is important. Systems to improve this would help the smaller DA's without specific resources. Finally, a process to collect and manage impact for next REF was seen as useful, and one could see this having potential to support other DA's.

DA Social Statistics

This DA is a little more challenging to review as it is returned with the DA Sociology under UoA Sociology. However, there are a number of markers that can be used to understand the significance of the contribution of Social Statistics.

There are 11 permanent staff (note turnaround during REF14 period of 6 exits and 6 starts), with 9 returned for REF14 which is smaller than benchmarked comparators Southampton and LSE. The research income to the DA in the inter REF period was 2.9M with 71% RC.

The DA has 8 areas and 3 themes (quantitative methods; inequalities; social dynamics). The Cathie Marsh Centre for Social Statistics (CMIST) houses many from the DA with contribution to a number of external centres (examples NCRM, MICRA, CoDE). The area has strengths in work on confidentiality and privacy or social network analysis. There is good contribution to doctoral students supervised with 30 registered. Teaching delivery includes the MSc in Social Statistics and Q Step programme (with key focus in Social Statistics).

The offered benchmark institutions are difficult with the UoA submission variation and thus simple measures of comparison such as size and externally perceived excellence are some. In size of returned staff it is in middle position with Southampton returning 23 staff but in 2 UoA's and LSE returning less with 7. In terms of external reputation the areas of confidentiality/privacy; social network analysis and advanced social statistics methods are clearly world-leading.

External reviewer's comments are largely complimentary, but some interesting points mentioned. One is how CMIST and the DA connect with each other, and whether integration is a way to improve the size of the DA. Although the DA was created after a former strategic review it may be worth considering the viability of the Social Statistics DA external to Sociology. Another warning is made to maintain the number of staff in the DA to mitigate any effects of the staff/student ratio on research activity. Like other DA external advisers comments, a process to manage impact/pathways to impact to prepare for next REF20 is promoted. Again relevant to all DA's the need to diversify funding capture can be considered. Finally, the positive view taken on the potential to undertake research on education in social statistics is an opportunity with the strengths in delivery of such courses and there may be very clear research opportunities allied to this.

DA Sociology

This DA is one of the larger sized areas with 34 permanent staff (note 6 leavers and 14 starters in REF14 period). The staff were returned with the Social Statistics DA in UoA Sociology which returned 48.6FTE with 90% of these from Sociology. Income in inter REF period was 13.9M of with RC percentage 79%.

The DA is separated into eight clusters: Stratification, Inequalities and Socio-Cultural Change; Social Ties, Networks and Social Movements; Personal Life/Everyday Lives; Cultural Practices, Consumption and Sustainability; Census and Survey Research; Innovations in Qualitative and Mixed Methodologies (note some are synergistic with Social

Statistics). It contributes to European Work and Employment Research Centre, Mitchell Centre for Social Network Analysis; MICRA, CODE and Sustainable Consumption Institute.

The area contributes to supervision of 50 doctoral students and runs Masters in Sociology and Social Research. Undergraduate educational commitment is in delivering BA in Social Sciences plus some joint BAs, contribution to Q Step programme. REF14 results show the overall GPA 3.26 (2nd position) and GPA outputs 3.01 (4th position). Outputs at 4* were 24% (3rd position) and for 3*/4* outputs 77% (3rd position).

Benchmarked institutions were: York, KCL, LSE, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Oxford and Essex. Manchester Sociology positions are indicated above with 1st for GPA overall York, achieving 1st position in income, 4th in 4* outputs (after KCL, LSE, Cambridge) and 3rd in 3*/4* outputs (York and Cardiff but differences 2%).

The external reviewer for DA provided an interesting report. Perhaps the earliest and repeated point was whilst there was an ambition in DA strategic report the systems to manage achievement of these objectives was not transparent. As with many DA's there is strong RC funding percentage which may need diversifying but this was seen equivocal in external eyes. There was note that some centres in DA are either finished or for renewal during REF20 period to consider, with need to perhaps focus on some bids for new large research capture/centres. Again the reviewer pointed to the need for management of impact cases in preparation for next REF. There was a warning about complacency with output performance and fully engaging with processes to deliver submission quality control. The plans for collaborative working between DA in School, Faculty and University were commented on as not explicit. There had been feedback on the PhD completion numbers not being as expected. Perhaps an interesting point worth considering was the challenge felt by departments distant from central government to capture funding from this source. This may have changed slightly with Devolution Manchester and perhaps aims to engage with this are worth exploring. Finally, the reviewer questioned the split of Sociology and Social Statistics into 2 DA's but did not categorically favour synthesis.

Conclusion

To conclude on the detailed summary of reviewing to School of Social Sciences documents including the DA strategy and specific external reviewer's reports, several overarching considerations relevant to the 4 bullet points specified to support Professor Scott's Chairs report can be identified. The School is in good position in terms of national and international reputation following last REF14. The probable trajectory is to remain consistent in its position. However this supports the need to maintain this potential in an evolving national picture of competitors. Other institutions will all be reflecting on REF and achievable improvements. Key issues for further consideration by SoSS:

- Research management
DAs of smaller size (except Social Statistics) all mention potential for better research management administration support. There seems to be view that this could provide better support in both pre and during grant administration with aim to increase income. Reflecting on this by reviewing current research management within the School may be useful.
- Better communication of research strategy and direction
A number of DAs comment on the potential for better communication in the School on research strategy and direction. For the external reviewers this included decisions on REF planning and management. Ensuring structures in the DAs to

support receipt of and can provide input to key decisions that determine direction. Some DA groupings or substructures seemed difficult to integrate for external reviewers, wondering how they engage with each other. Reviewing communication processes within the DA's and the School may provide solutions to some of this.

- Quality control mechanisms

Management of outputs quality in REF20 preparation is a University of Manchester wide objective to both improve both 4* and minimise below 3* submissions. Every DA is engaged in this and it would seem the School will also want timely information on this matter. It would seem important there is transparent communication on this in both directions within the School. Also some externals commented on how external DA advisors could input to quality decisions on outputs in another area in some instances.

- Research impact

Another expressed point in a number of DA's which is relevant to all is the School's processes to manage and collate the pathways to impact relevant to REF20 (which may see an increase in importance). A number of external reviewers made this point which would support delivering the best preparation for this domain in the next REF for the School as a whole (Social Sciences is seen by other Faculties as having greater potential for excellent impact cases).

- Impact of undergraduate education

Managing the impact of undergraduate education delivery on research outputs is indicated as an issue for further consideration in external reviewer comments in some DA's. This is an area not simply for SoSS, but also all Schools and Faculties alike. Although not central to this review, the DA's which have high teaching loads need guidance on how this should be managed from the School. The potential for different KPI's in some instances may need to be considered. Also, it is worth giving further consideration to the point that about potential in some areas for novel research in educational methods (see DA Social Statistics).

Annex 4

School of Social Science Strategic Plan

**SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2020**

v5: 22 May 2015

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. The School of Social Sciences Vision	5
<i>2020 Research</i>	5
<i>2020 Teaching and Learning</i>	5
<i>2020 Social Responsibility</i>	6
3. Executive Summary: Key Strategic Priorities	7
<i>Goal 1: World Class Research</i>	7
<i>Goal 2: Outstanding Learning and Student Experience</i>	7
<i>Goal 3: Social Responsibility</i>	8
<i>Enabling Strategies</i>	8
4. Core Goals	9
<i>World Class Research</i>	9
Key Strategies	9
Key performance indicators and targets	13
<i>Outstanding Learning and Student Experience</i>	15
Key strategies	15
Key performance indicators and targets	18
<i>Social Responsibility</i>	20
Key strategies	20
Key performance indicators and targets	23
Appendix 1: A Summary of KPIs and Targets	25
<i>Goal 1: World Class Research</i>	25
<i>Goal 2: Outstanding Learning and Student Experience</i>	25
<i>Goal 3: Social Responsibility</i>	26
<i>Enabling Strategies</i>	26
Appendix 2: SoSS REF2014 Ranking	27
Appendix 3: SoSS UoA REF2014 Results	28

1. Introduction

The major objective of social sciences is to know the social world and inform public debate with the aim of enhancing the lives of everyone. Social Science meets this challenge by investigating, describing, explaining – and thereby affording an understanding of – human behaviour in all its diverse individual and collective forms. Critical to this enterprise is a perspective that locates human behaviour in a broad economic, socio-cultural and political context that transcends personal experience and explores the nature of action and interaction at all different levels from families to communities to societies.

The School of Social Sciences at Manchester enhances this endeavour through its commitment to theoretically-informed empirical research, which addresses major issues of private and public concern, founded on a unique combination of 6 Discipline Areas (DAs). Alongside the *big three* social sciences (Economics, Politics and Sociology), its strategic ambitions benefit from Social Statistics, as a separate Discipline Area, which affords us a national comparative advantage in quantitative research methods and techniques – research skills that remain in short supply in the UK. The School has an independent Social Anthropology DA which privileges ethnographic techniques and the co-production of knowledge across the globe. Finally, the School is fortunate to include Philosophy which cultivates reasoning and logical thinking which all of the social sciences demand.

This special configuration of Discipline Areas within the School facilitates engagement with a wide range of *theories* including behavioural economics, analytical political theory, phenomenology, social constructivism and more. Researchers draw on an extensive portfolio of *methods* ranging from the secondary analysis of large data sets to in-depth interviews. These theories and methods are applied to pressing *substantive* issues including macro-economic growth and development, global political economy, sustainability and consumption, social inequalities, diversity and cohesion, social and cultural change and moral and ethical behaviour. The breadth of our research is further reflected through our staff being submitted to REF2014 across six UoAs, and that the School is currently home to *four* major research centres, including the ESRC core-funded - CoDE* - and the recently re-configured SCI, CMIST and MICRA institutes which bring fundamental research strengths to the University Research Beacon: “Addressing Global Inequalities”. In addition, we are in national collaborations with ESRC’s: British Election Study (BES), UK Data Service (UKDS), the Administrative Data Service (ADS) and National Centre for Research Methods (NCRM). We also host one of 15 national Q-Step Centres funded by Nuffield/ESRC/HEFCE; a key strategic initiative for the School with the aim of raising the level of quantitative skills attained by Social Science undergraduates. This, in partnership with methods@manchester and NCRM, affording us an opportunity to create a unique “3+1+3” training pathway from UG through to PGR.

It is the strength and depth of our research and teaching in the core disciplines which provides pillars to support these flagship research initiatives. In addition, we contribute significantly to the interdisciplinary agenda of Faculty and University-wide research

* Although ESRC funding for CRESC (in partnership with the OU) ceased in 2014/15, it leaves a legacy of world leading research in social-cultural change that has helped shaped the current School of Social Sciences.

centres and institutes; *inter alia* BWPI, Digital Humanities, Manchester Informatics, policy@manchester and cities@manchester.

The School is committed to an appropriate balance of high-quality research and outstanding teaching and learning activities – *both of which speak to our social responsibility agenda* – paying due regard to demands on staff and its implications for morale. It is imperative that staff morale is high and colleagues are confident about the direction of the School. Social Sciences at Manchester is currently ranked 39th in the THE University World Rankings (moving up from 46th) and 6th in the UK. We need to be move even higher, based on our international excellence across all three strategic goals.

To inform this reputation for excellence, our strategy is outward facing regionally, nationally and internationally, with many research networks, partnerships and collaborations at the individual and DA level including established international engagement in North America, Europe, China and Australasia, through SCI and CoDE. This international outlook is also reflected in both our staff and student population: 21% international academic staff, from 38 different countries, and a 35% international student population which contributes 40% of the School's fee income. This not only provides a vibrant multicultural intellectual environment, but is also key to the School's recent financial health – achieving an impressive financial “surplus” for a number of years (increasing the level of contribution by nearly 25% from 2012-13 to 2013-14). The REF2014 QR outcome together with the current economic climate provides a more sober financial outlook for 2015-20, however.

Notwithstanding this, we remain confident of sustaining a robust financial model on the back of strong UG student recruitment and a recovering (international) PGT market, and the recent years of successful financial control leaves the School well-placed to confront the challenges of the current demanding financial climate and meet our aspirations for attracting and retaining the very best scholars and teachers, increasing our research income, attracting and funding top PhD students, providing the best facilities for teaching and learning and a much more. It is in this economic, social and political context that the School of Social Sciences must address its weaknesses, mobilise its strengths, confront the threats we face and exploit opportunities to the full; being proactive rather than reactive in the pursuit of its ambitions.

The current strategic plan is an evolution that both re-asserts and demonstrates that the School of Social Sciences has high aspirations for the future. It has clear ambitions for the nature, quality and impact of research that is undertaken, the teaching and the learning that is provided and the socially responsible way in which it engages with all its activities. It is not supposed to be a straightjacket from which we cannot deviate. On the contrary, it is written, employed and updated as a guide that *enables* the School to get to where it wants to be in 2020.

Clearly informed by the University and Faculty strategic documents, our strategic plan is also shaped by discipline specific strategies, the School SWOT and Risk Register and annual operational plans. All of these documents have been carefully considered and evaluated by the Head of School and Senior Executive Group, and the evolving Strategic Plan is finalised in consultation with staff and students, so that they make sense to the School and enable it to realise its key goals around research, teaching and learning and social responsibility.

2. The School of Social Sciences Vision

This vision statement sets out the School of Social Sciences 2020 direction and aspirations in terms of three headline goals described in the University of Manchester and the Faculty of Humanities strategic plans. Due regard is given to the changes in the external and international environments that are likely to take place over the next six years. Nonetheless, the following vision and the underpinning principles have driven the School since its inception in 2004 and embrace the values shared by academic staff, professional support service staff and students who are the School. It will be this community of people who will implement the strategic plan, both critically and constructively, towards our preferred future.

2020 Research

To engage in, externally fund and communicate internationally recognised theoretically informed empirical work of an innovative kind that addresses current and emerging major societal challenges of the 21st century; and to maximise the societal (including economic) impact that such research has. These include population change in relation to aging, inequalities, sustainability in everyday lifestyle practices, and cities (including Manchester) with due regard to mobilities and cosmopolitanism. This activity both embraces PhD students, who are part of a supportive culture which facilitates disciplinary and interdisciplinary work, and contributes to the Faculty and University's research priorities. Following REF2014, we have maintained our position in the top 3 social science units, in the UK (behind LSE and Oxford); see Appendix 2. The School has leading research disciplines in Social Anthropology and Sociology (including Social Statistics); and Economics and Politics are in the top 10 for research power. Our ambition is to further enhance our standing and reputation internationally whereby we are naturally considered to one of the top 25 centres for Social Science research in the World.

Key Principles:

- *Support an inclusive research culture that nurtures intellectual enquiry, innovation and entrepreneurship, and that respects and promotes pluralism.*
- *Provide a world-leading environment and infrastructure that attracts and rewards its staff in the pursuit of research excellence and endows them with the confidence to challenge disciplinary and interdisciplinary boundaries.*
- *Internationally recognised as leading research in areas that address major societal challenges for the 21st Century across the social sciences.*
- *Secure investment from a wide variety of funding sources that facilitate research addressing these major research challenges.*
- *Attract top research students and provide both a supportive and challenging research environment in which they strive and grow intellectually.*
- *Communicate and collaborate with diverse research users on research broadly to maximise the significance of economic and socio-cultural impact.*
- *Develop research students to become leading professionals and academics who make significant contributions in their chosen fields throughout the world.*

2020 Teaching and Learning

To provide an outstanding teaching and learning experience, for staff, UG and PGT students, which challenges students to acquire knowledge and understanding of the key

challenges that confront the world in which they live. A key feature of a social science perspective is to teach students to critically engage with theoretical ideas and empirical evidence and the relationship between the two. We are all committed to a learning environment that creates highly employable graduates and embraces the latest developments in e-Learning. Considerable importance is attached to good communication with students and their involvement in teaching and learning innovations. All staff are expected to care about students' progression during their studies at the University, including future employment, after they leave the institution.

Key Principles:

- *Value teaching and learning as a means of sharing knowledge, how to critically engage and appreciate it through reason and reflection.*
- *Stimulate excellent research-led and research-informed teaching across all UG and PGT taught programmes in the School to which students are exposed.*
- *Produce highly employable graduates who are culturally sensitive, socially responsible and are able to employ their skills in an increasingly diverse cosmopolitan world.*
- *Value a teaching environment that meets the expectations and learning styles of different levels of learners in all of its diversity.*
- *Provide an integrated environment for learning and social activities of students and staff to facilitate formal and informal interaction.*
- *Support a personalised, friendly, effective and efficient student-centred administrative service.*
- *Engage students, staff and alumni in curricula and extra-curricula enhancement activity (e.g. employability activity and student societies).*

2020 Social Responsibility

Lies at the core of all of the activities of the School: in research, in teaching and learning and in our shared vision, values and commitment to our communities and wider society. Through our research, teaching and community engagement, the school expects and encourages all staff and students, to engage with, and play a key role in addressing, the key ethical, social and environmental challenges of our generation.

Key Principles:

- *Develop, support, collaborate on and disseminate intellectual and policy relevant research addressing the major challenges of the 21st Century, to make a positive difference to society, at a local, regional, national and international level*
- *Embed an understanding of, and commitment to, ethical, social and environmental responsibility in our students and graduates through programmes which encourage access to, and participation in, leading edge research and teaching, public and community engagement, and employability initiatives.*
- *Seek to engage and partner with external organisations, including the business sector, at local, national and international level across a range of spheres and activities (research, widening participation, cultural institutions, school governors, employability, public events).*
- *Create a positive environment and sense of community through a commitment to equality and diversity and ensuring that all staff and students are treated fairly and consistently in all respects.*

- *Embed environmental sustainability in our everyday values and practices as members of the School.*
- *Seek to communicate the work and vision of the School to an external audience in an accessible and ethical manner*

3. Executive Summary: Key Strategic Priorities

The following summarises the 12 key strategic priorities, across the three core goals, necessary to ensure the School of Social Science will make a significant contribution to achieving the University's 2020 objectives. These priorities, informed by our principles and vision: (i) are supported by strategic planning processes; (ii) designed to strengthen the unique configuration of the six Discipline Areas within the School; and, (iii) help identify and inform new areas for disciplinary and interdisciplinary collaboration *across all areas of activity*.

It concludes with enabling strategies to support the implementation of these priorities.

Goal 1: World Class Research

1. Improve all aspects of the quality (output), dissemination and economic and socio-cultural impact of our research across the Discipline Areas and Research Centres in the School.
2. Invest in areas of existing and potentially world leading research excellence within the School and promote interdisciplinary research within the School, Faculty, University and internationally particularly where this is relevant to the University Research Beacon: "Addressing Global Inequalities" which is informed by our research strengths in aging, class, gender and ethnicity.
3. Maintain diversity and, where possible, grow our level of research funding, and exploiting, *inter alia*, EU, cross research council initiatives and business engagement.
4. Recruit high quality research students provide them high levels of training and provide an environment in which they complete high quality research.

Goal 2: Outstanding Learning and Student Experience

5. Provide a portfolio of undergraduate, masters and related flexible teaching programmes (including appropriate CPD and Distance Learning provision) that are informed by changing market needs and endow students with the unique attributes of Manchester graduates and postgraduates.
6. Substantially improve the UG and PG taught student experience, including quality of teaching/e-learning, staff/student interaction, feedback and assessment, so that by 2020 student satisfaction matches the University's target in our disciplines.
7. Improve overall student staff ratios through enhancing the BA(Econ) and the BA in Social Science.
8. Enhance and promote student engagement with employability skills, training, internships and events.

Goal 3: Social Responsibility

9. Develop strong collaborative research, communication, impact and policy links with cultural partners, local government, business and third sector, and community groups at local, regional, national and international levels.
10. Develop, embed and communicate ethical, social and environmental responsibility in our research, across the curriculum and in the student life of the school and prepare graduates for citizenship, employment and leadership.
11. Engage with local and regional schools and colleges, to widen participation and encourage a vibrant and socially diverse student body, and encourage staff to take on roles as school governors.
12. Seek to create a diverse workforce and sustain a positive environment and sense of community through a commitment to equality and diversity and ensuring that all staff and students are treated fairly and consistently in all respects.

Enabling Strategies

To support our objectives, above, we will:

- (Quality People) Continue to recruit, retain and develop internationally excellent researchers; reward excellence; provide leadership and career development training; and, contribute to the enhancement of those policies through exemplary school-level policy and practice.
- (World Class Estate). Maintain an environment which facilitates and supports research performance of individuals, research clusters and centres and which enhances the student experience.
- (Managing Information). Ensure local compliance with University policy and work with faculty to deliver strategic objectives.
- (International Competitive Funding) Maintain and where appropriate improve contribution, and explore ways of raising discretionary revenue through, (e.g., post graduate training and associated fee structures).
- (A Reputation for Excellence) Engage external audience, and staff, through an accessible and outward facing communication strategy across each area of the School's activities.
- (An International Institution) Ensure international recognition which informs all key strategic priorities (partnerships, staff and students, international benchmarking and post REF2014 review).
- (Quality Processes) Undertake regular review of OP, SWOT and RR, and implement university and faculty PSS priorities at local school level.
- (Environmental Sustainability) Implement the operational aspects of the school sustainability policy and embed an awareness of, and commitment to, environmental sustainability across all aspects of the School's work.

4. Core Goals

World Class Research

We will continue to support, be involved in and lead where appropriate Faculty and University wide initiatives around Social Change, Ageing, Inequality and Poverty, Sustainable Practices and Cities (especially Manchester) which both tap into global challenges around population, climate change and urbanism and directly inform the University Research Beacon: “Addressing Global Inequalities”. We also have claim significant strength in the area of elections, through the prestigious ESRC British Election Study partnership, and research training delivered via methods@manchester, our CMIST Short-Courses and the ESRC National Centre for Research Methods partnership.

Following REF2014 we maintained our standing as a top School of Social Science in the UK. According to REF2014, across our six disciplines:

- 78% of research activity is world leading (4*) or internationally excellent (3*).
- 69% of outputs are judged to be world leading (4*) or internationally excellent (3*).
- 92% of the impact documented in our case studies and statements is classified as 4* (outstanding) or 3*(very considerable) in terms of its reach and significance.
- Every aspect of our research environment is considered to be world-leading (4*) or internationally excellent (3*).

Sociology (including Social Statistics) remains an impressively strong department in the UK and is ranked 1st based on the percentage of overall research activity that is world leading (4*) and 2nd based on Research Power (calculated by grade point average times number of staff submitted). Social Anthropology is also ranked 2nd based on grade point average (within the combined Anthropology and Development Studies panel) but is now first among Social Anthropology Departments. Economics and Politics are both in the top 10 (7th and 6th, respectively) for research power. Appendix 3 provides the full REF2014 results for the School.

The School’s performance against KPIs and our REF2014 results indicate that, overall, we are making steady progress in terms of trajectory. Post-REF we must make further progress to enhance the quality and impact of our research. In particular, our focus will be on increasing the share of research outputs at 4* quality, significantly decreasing the current high proportion of 2* quality research outputs addressing the uneven research performance across and within DAs/UoAs continuing to strengthen impact activities, improving the quantity of RGC and the quality of research and publications that it supports.

Key Strategies

Strategy 1

Improve all aspects of the quality and dissemination of our research output across the Discipline Areas and Research Centres in the School.

We will:

- Use SoSS's REF2014 results, DA strategic reviews and an external post-REF review to identify strengths and weaknesses and inform research planning.
- Ensure that all staff, at all levels, are provided with opportunities to develop high quality research and impact profiles; for example, through training and mentoring opportunities to enhance research methods skills, develop applications for research funding, and support for developing quality research outputs, supported by internal peer review of work, and impact activities.
- Ensure close mentoring of probationary and ECR staff as well as communicating, supporting and monitoring of core expectations relating for all staff through active use of PDRs and Personal Research Plans to advise on research quality, dissemination and impact.
- Maximise the use of, and benefit from, the development of the University's 'e-scholar' repository for disseminating outputs.
- Increase the dissemination of research through Gold and Green Open Access as well as alternative forums such as the policy@manchester blog.
- Improve understanding and utilisation of citation indexes (journal rankings, Google Scholar, etc) and appropriate use for social sciences.

Strategy 2

Maximise the economic and socio-cultural impact of our research activity and establish the best ways of measuring and communicating the impact of this activity.

We will:

- Work with the Faculty to develop and resource School systems for logging and assembling evidence trails for socio-economic impact.
- Where appropriate, involve non-academic research beneficiaries in the development of research applications, as advisors on the research and in the production of targeted research findings.
- Develop ways of effectively communicating our research findings to maximize the impact of the research; e.g. via policy and expert briefings, impact films, policy@manchester, media training and so on.
- Promote, support and incentivise public engagement and dissemination activities as a 'pathway to impact'; e.g. through the ESRC IAA, SoSS impact events and impact funds, as well as through support from the School's Knowledge Exchange and Impact Officer.
- With University and Faculty support, enhance our website presence and other public relations materials so that the impact of our research is more visible beyond academia.
- Work with the University and Faculty on measuring our impact on, and contribution to, the Social Responsibility Agenda.

Strategy 3

To invest in areas of existing and potentially world leading research excellence within the School and promote interdisciplinary research within the School, Faculty, University and internationally particularly where this is relevant to the 'grand challenges' of the research agenda.

We will:

- Continue to invest in top quality appointments from junior to senior level to enhance and extend our internationally leading research where financial circumstances permit.
- Through DA and cross-School themed events, continue to promote and facilitate team working in critical areas of expertise and research clusters in DAs and foster collaboration across them.
- Continue to play a pivotal role in Faculty and University initiatives, most especially in addressing Global Inequalities, through *inter alia* CoDE, MICRA, CMIST, methods@manchester and SCI, and continue to build our already extensive research engagement with other investments including BWPI, Digital Humanities, Manchester Informatics, Institute of Health Sciences and Cities initiative.
- Explore and propose, where appropriate, new research initiatives that fit with Faculty and University priorities (e.g. Initiatives on inequality that link to the Faculty's/University's research and social responsibility priorities).
- Encourage the internationalisation of research partnerships; e.g. through collaborations on research and research funding applications, sabbaticals and exchanges/visits.

Strategy 4

To maintain, and where possible grow, our level of research funding, and find ways of diversifying our funding portfolio especially via EU, cross research council initiatives and business engagement (while not undermining our strong record in RCUK funding).

We will:

- Be alert, proactive and responsive to priorities and developments in the policy and funding framework of the UK RCs, the Horizon 2020 programme, UK charitable trusts and other potential income streams, including business; support CoDE for renewal of core ESRC centre funding towards the end of 2015, and maintain SCI's established strategic, knowledge exchange, partnerships with Tesco and Unilever.
- Enhance peer review and other support mechanisms to increase funding applications, their quality and success rates, and in anticipation of RCUK demands on research application management.
- Integrate new Faculty funding intelligence website in our communication and promotion of funding opportunities, and embed links with the Faculty business engagement office.
- Develop formal and informal 'succession and leadership' training opportunities for early and mid-career staff to collaborate with experienced large grant holders.
- Tailor individual strategies for research funding applications through the implementation of Personal Research Plans.
- Increase collaborations with cognate schools to up-scale the size of research grant applications and develop research initiatives.

Strategy 5

Recruit and develop research students with high levels of training and who complete top quality research and thereby enhance the quality of the School's research output and environment.

We will:

- Provide competitive research studentships to help recruit the highest quality students in good numbers.
- Support the social science pathways in the NWDTC, to enhance the experience of our research students and attract more high quality students who will benefit high levels of training.
- Monitor progression and completions and, where appropriate, strengthen administrative and support processes to maximise timely completions.
- Integrate postdoctoral research students into the activities of research groups and Centres, DAs and the School thus embedding and developing linkages between the doctoral training college and our research activities.
- Support postdoctoral students in planning for publications, research fellowships and future employment, and monitor (via e-scholar and e-prog) how research theses are converted into academic output (e.g. journal articles).
- Exploit Q-Step to develop relationships with external partners and monitor closely the employment of our PgR Alumni.

Strategy 6

To meet the above strategic research objectives by providing an environment which facilities and supports research performance of individuals, research clusters and centres through implementing University/Faculty policies and contributing to the development and enhancement of those policies through exemplary school-level policy and practice.

We will:

- Implement Research Staff Concordat and associated policies for supporting the career development of contract research staff (see also mentoring, probation, PDRs and Personal Research Plans listed above).
- Maximise take up of Gold Open Access and extend use of Green Open Access.
- Implement and review the University guidelines on research ethics and integrity and the University policy on Research Data Management.
- Plan proactively for the reconfiguring of Research Centres whose budget lines are coming to an end and facilitate the emergence of new centres.
- Maintain, and where possible, expand the resourcing of the Research Hub to deliver existing and additional support.

Key performance indicators and targets

Key performance indicator	Target
1. Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements in quality of output in annual School/Faculty Research Reviews leading to REF2020, with an increase in 4* ratings (20% in RRE 2016/17, 30% in 2019-20) and 4*+3* ratings (75% in RRE 2016/17 moving towards 85% by 2020/21). • Year-on-year improvement in league tables in which social sciences feature. • Year-on-year improvement in citation indicators, where appropriate: 25% in 2015/16 and achieving 27% by 2020/21. • Year-on-year increase in the volume of our research available through Gold or Green Open Access to be fully REF compliant by 2019/20.
2. Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constructing and publicising impact case studies as they emerge on all impact-relevant research. • Increase in number of staff engaged in impact related activities and social responsibility agenda. • Continuing to capture and publicise impact case studies. • Ongoing collection of evidence, and measures, of socio-economics and cultural impact arising from both individual and collective research endeavours.
3. Interdisciplinarity and Internationalisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustaining investments, where financial circumstances permit, to improve on REF2014 performance across the School. • Active engagement of research staff in existing strategic investments to ensure follow-up external grant funding on these areas. • Continued collaboration in other Faculty and University initiatives to extend interdisciplinary (funded) research. • Increased number of international partners, strategic collaborations and exchanges.
4. Income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing trends in research income levels (towards 2020 target of £6.2m), volume of grant applications and success rates (including breakdown by funding body and discipline area). • Indicators of individual grant application activity by eligible staff (taking account of discipline, career stage etc. in the interpretation). • Wider spread of research grant acquisition across the School.

5. PGR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year-on-year improvements in PGR applications received resulting in the recruitment of high quality PGR across all DAs. • Year-on-year improvements in submission rates and outcomes, from historic rates of 75% moving towards 90% by 2020. • Increase in PhD publications placed on e-Scholar and evidence academic publications post PhD where available. • Data, collected by the School, on long-term employment of our doctoral graduates.
6. Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Success of staff through probation and when put forward for promotion, together with enhanced support systems for those are not on an upward trajectory. • Improved and structured career development of research staff. • Reconfiguring of Research Centres whose budget lines and intellectual objectives are coming to an end and facilitate the emergence of new centres. • Maintain, and where possible, expand the resourcing of the Research Hub to deliver existing and additional support.

Outstanding Learning and Student Experience

We aim to provide excellent research-led and research-informed teaching across all UG and PGT programmes in the School of Social Sciences, encourage students to be intellectually curious, socially responsible and culturally sensitive, and aim to give them the skills and mental agility to contribute effectively and sensitively to a fast-changing global environment. The School recognizes that we are in a world of economic change in which levels of student demand and teaching revenue remain uncertain. Accordingly, it understands the need to maintain both its core strengths and for flexibility in responding to the challenges that lie ahead. Being home to a Q-Step Centre, and together with the CMIST Short-Courses and our role in the NCRM, we can realise our strategy of bringing the success of our postgraduate training in quantitative social science to a new, and much larger, international student population at all levels; providing much sought intellectual and employability skills as well as CPD opportunities. This will be achieved, primarily, through existing pathways in the interdisciplinary BA degree in Social Science and a planned new Social Statistics pathways in the BAEcon, as well as a new PG Distance Learning course in Social Statistics.

Key strategies

Strategy 1

Providing a portfolio of teaching programmes which are appropriate for changing market needs and that endow students with knowledge, understanding and skills of both a specific kind and more general kind.

We will:

- Deliver courses which provide a broad portfolio of knowledge, understanding and skills which adhere to externally produced discipline benchmarks and are attractive to both home and international students.
- Provide programmes which are consistent with “The Purposes of a Manchester Education” and its commitment to knowledge, understanding and skills which are both subject specific and more general.
- Provide courses to University College where students can be exposed to the contribution of social sciences in facing the grand challenges of the world.
- Continue to provide opportunities on degree programmes for SoSS student participation in University College courses, including the Manchester Leadership Programme, as a way of fulfilling their intellectual curiosity, confronting their personal values and providing skills development opportunities in the community.
- Provide a coherent portfolio of employability opportunities, skills development and events for every student, with increased opportunities for internships and placements offered by the Nuffield Q-Step initiative.
- Continue to develop our range of activities to support widening participation.
- Ensure the integration of the Social Responsibility agenda across all out activities.

Strategy 2

Substantially improve the taught student experience so that by 2020 student satisfaction matches the University’s target in our disciplines.

We will:

- Increase the sense of belonging students have within their programmes (especially joint degrees) and their discipline areas by extending channels of communication and by facilitating opportunities for informal interaction between academics and students.
- Communicate the robustness, fairness and consistency of all forms of assessment across the School transparently and provide timely and appropriate feedback to students on their academic work, thereby enabling students to reflect on their progress and plan their academic and skills development effectively.
- Raise levels of personal development and academic support through the School's Student Support and Student Welfare Officers and the further enhancement of the Academic Advising system.
- Recognise and develop the contribution to teaching made by TAs, ensuring that they are selected, inducted and trained to the highest level and that they are fully integrated into the courses on which they teach as well as School UG committee structures.
- Work with students (through the School's new system of student representation, focus groups and through informal feedback mechanisms) to ensure we are providing what they value and they are part of quality assurance activities.

Strategy 3

Achieve overall staff-student ratio that facilitates frequent personal contact between staff and students to ensure a high quality personalized learning experience.

We will:

- Consolidate the BA in Social Sciences (BASS) degree and its strategic role in: (i) insulating DAs with high student-staff ratios; and, (ii) providing opportunities for the equitable distribution of UG numbers across all DAs.
- Recruit students to a *Quantitative Methods* pathway and course units in the BASS and consider introducing a Social Statistics pathways on the BAEcon.
- Maintain the School's policy on maximum class sizes for tutorials and other modes of small group teaching.
- Maintain compliance with the University's policy on Personalised Learning in workshop/group sizes of 30+ students.
- Encourage students to make full use of the various forms of personalized academic feedback such as meetings with academic advisors, office hours, and correspondence with lecturers and tutors.
- Consider closing non-viable PgT programmes and course units and re-allocating resource to enhanced UG provision.

Strategy 4

To enhance the quality of e-Learning, and the extent of its use, across the School with the School 'e-Learning lead' championing this.

We will:

- Aspire to embed e-Learning within our approach to Teaching and Learning so fundamentally that the divide between Learning and eLearning is redundant, acknowledging that this is an ambitious aspiration.
- Work closely to ensure the success of the re-structuring of the eLearning support team to be more demand-led, meeting the School's needs.
- Work with the eLearning support team to improve our practice regarding Assessment and Feedback, and Communication.
- Work with the eLearning support team to increase students' sense of involvement in, and deepening of, their learning.
- Support staff engaged in activities to develop and/or promote the use of innovative teaching approaches.

Strategy 5

Provide attractive, high-quality masters programmes and courses suitable for research students and those who will pursue non-academic career and maintain high-quality provision in programmes which attract high numbers of students.

We will:

- Monitor PGT provision via portfolio review. In particular, each DA will continuously monitor the academic quality of their programmes.
- Build an understanding of the market for PGT programmes and, specifically, monitoring the increase in PGT fees and its effect on demand across all DAs.
- Promote on-line learning so that students are exposed to interactive online learning materials and this is combined with face-to-face teaching provision.
- Promote innovation in the delivery of Masters' programmes.
- Monitor of the employability of its PGT graduates, specifically asking the university to provide resources to enable this.

Strategy 6

Raising the status and profile of teaching undergraduates among academics/GTAs and ensuring an appropriate balance of teaching and research during and outside of term.

We will:

- Publicise teaching awards and reward the best Unit Survey results across the School.
- Support the parity of esteem agenda by putting forward teaching-focused staff for promotion and taking due account of teaching performance in all promotion cases.
- Directly support the development of teaching with Faculty and DA level peer reviews, as well as through the monitoring of Unit Survey results.
- Monitor and enforce academics' obligations to the students they teach via discussions in PDRs.

Key performance indicators and targets

Key performance indicator	Target
<p>1. Student & Staff Experience & Satisfaction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year-on-year improvements in NSS scores, especially relative to other Russell Group Institutions, achieving overall satisfaction scores of at least 85% in Aug 2016 and 90% by 2020, and achieve PTES scores at or above the Russell Group Average, with improved student satisfaction in relation to personal contact with academics. • Year-on-year improvements in unit questionnaire results on the basis of three-yearly comparisons produced by the Faculty TLO. • Annual “improvements” in staff-student ratios, providing measurable progress towards the agreed and appropriate KPI (approximately 1:20). • A popular general social science degree, the BASS, with Quantitative Methods pathways, maintaining high student numbers year by year. • High levels of student engagement, and satisfaction, with e-Learning materials. • The promotion of academic staff with strong teaching profiles in line with University policies and monitoring of TAs contribution. • The winning of Faculty, University and National teaching awards across the DAs in the School.
<p>2. Programme Portfolio</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The implementation of the outcomes of portfolio review with a financially robust suite of Masters Programmes and courses. • High student retention rates, levels of progression and successful completion across both UG and PGT, with positive evaluations of programmes and courses via external examiners reports. • Increases in numbers of students participating in employability events and skills development year on year • Staff and student participation in University College with year-on-year increases in the number of students enrolled. • Offering an attractive suite of Masters' programmes and course units, including a flexible learning provision, which attract good numbers of students and are financially viable. • From 2016: PG Distance Learning Course (Social Statistics); and, consider Social Statistics pathway in the BAEcon.
<p>3. Employability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements in DHLE positive graduate employment rates, with each discipline will be in the top quartile of Russell Group universities in terms of employability rates 6 months after graduation, and a DHLE graduate employment rate of at least 72% by 2015/16 and 85% by 2020/21. • Successful placement of Masters graduates in graduate level employment in academia and beyond.
<p>4. Widening Participation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements in Lower Participation Neighbourhoods and Lower Socio-Economic Groups rates, with an LPN target of 6.0% by 2015/16 and 8.0% by 2020, and NS-SEC target of 20% by 2015/16 and 20% by 2020/21. • Increasing numbers of staff involved in MAP, school talks, open days,



student numbers, career development strategies,
internships/volunteering opportunities.

Social Responsibility

Our aim is to build on and extend the scope and impact of our research and teaching to provide a broader benefit to society, by contributing to an understanding of key issues and challenges we face in the 21st century. Through innovative and world leading research, we seek to influence policymaking and shape public debate, and to link this to research-led teaching excellence and curriculum innovation which trains our students to critically engage and understand the major challenges facing our world, and become active participants in shaping our future.

Key strategies

Strategy 1

In terms of research, to develop the impact of individuals, clusters and research centres which address key contemporary challenges facing our society, such as economic growth, sustainability and wellbeing; equality and diversity, citizenship, civic and political participation, and contribute to Faculty initiatives around Inequalities, Ageing and Environmental Sustainability.

We will:

- Develop and promote research clusters in and across DAs, and research centres, embedding a consideration of impact and public communication across all activities.
- Promote externally and internationally focused engagement and communication through School and Faculty initiatives (policy@manchester, cities@manchester, CoDE, CMIST, MICRA, SCI).
- Encourage staff to creatively engage multiple publics in their research, developing knowledge exchange around key themes and issues, and making full use of new technologies and social media in disseminating work to a broader audience.
- Target major research grants in areas around key social responsibility themes, developing and sharing School-level expertise in funding bids, and disseminating findings to appropriate organisations through consultation, partnership, increased Business Engagement and supported by the ESRC IAA scheme.
- Exploit SIRF, school research and social responsibility funds and initiatives to develop and support both research and dissemination activities, especially for early career researchers and doctoral students.
- Support CoDE for renewal of core ESRC centre funding towards the end of 2015 for the period 2017-2022. Central to this will be research links and activities in North America, mainland Europe, and Australasia.

Strategy 2

Through innovative research led teaching and curriculum initiatives - School programmes, courses at undergraduate and postgraduate level, University College courses and the Ethical Grand Challenges Programme - to enable our students to acquire knowledge, understanding and experience of the key challenges facing contemporary society, providing opportunities for students to confront and critically engage with personal values and ethical judgement, conceptually, empirically and practically, preparing graduates for citizenship, employment and leadership in diverse global environments.

We will:

- Work with the Careers Service, Alumni Office and employability champions to develop and provide opportunities for volunteering, internships and work experience for undergraduate and postgraduate students; providing career guidance and opportunities to meet employers from a range of relevant organisations, tailored for social science graduates; to develop links with Alumni around mentoring and employability.
- Contribute to and participate in the Ethical Grand Challenges Programme to showcase key research themes and expertise (e.g. inequality and sustainability) in innovative and impactful ways.
- Engage undergraduate and postgraduate students in original individual and collective research addressing key societal challenges, and addressing the social relevance and impact of such work.
- Engage and support staff in embedding SR in the curriculum and in communicating the importance of this work to the students.
- Seek to create a diverse and supportive environment for all students, especially those from non-traditional, BME and international backgrounds.

Strategy 3

To develop a network of Alumni, at home and overseas, and to engage them with the current research, teaching and social responsibility activities of the School.

We will:

- Work with the University Alumni office to establish a record of alumni from the School and combine with local knowledge to create a database of alumni.
- Consult with the Alumni office and other Schools and Faculties to share best practice around engaging Alumni in School activities (notably around career opportunities, internships, volunteering and mentoring).
- Create spaces (virtual and real) to facilitate engagement with alumni with current research and teaching initiatives.
- Actively engage alumni in relevant research through events (conferences, public lectures, launches), access to new research, engagement in governance of research centres, advisory boards, or through partnership work.

Strategy 4

At a local and regional level, to engage with schools and colleges to encourage young people from non-traditional backgrounds with an interest in social science to engage with the School, to take part in research activities and debates, and to widen access to the University, ensuring a vibrant and diverse student body.

We will:

- Encourage academic colleagues, including PhD students, to do outreach work in schools, sixth form colleges, community centres etc to talk to young people about research and about HE participation. Develop collaborative strategies across DAs (i.e. joint visits).
- Develop and support pre-University courses across all DAs in the School to introduce local young people to social science research and study.

- Encourage academic colleagues across the School to take part in the University's WP schemes, including MAP, and to engage with staff and student mentoring schemes.
- Encourage and support staff to participate in local schools through the School Governors programme.
- Forge sustainable links with local Schools and FE institutions over time.
- Develop links with University cultural partners to disseminate research and engage primary and secondary schools in social research and study.
- Develop support for non-traditional, BME and international students, to ensure retention and attainment, and develop a strong reputation for the School externally (amongst schools, colleges etc).

Strategy 5

Develop strong links in Manchester and the North-West with local government, civil society institutions, business sector, third sector and community groups to help support the economic, socio-cultural and political development and wellbeing of Manchester and the region; using research to contribute to the understanding and practical engagement with major issues and challenges at the local and regional level.

We will:

- Engage with local networks, initiatives, authorities and government, in the Greater Manchester context and beyond, and to identify new opportunities, through our research centres and groups to include – CoDE, CMIST, MICRA, SCI, BES, methods@manchester, policy@manchester.
- Develop and utilise internal funds (Hallsworth/Simon visiting fellowships, SIRF, ESRC IAA) as a means to develop and strengthen these partnerships, and build on developed relationships to secure funding, e.g., to address ageing, social and health inequalities in a regional context.
- Strengthen our links and partnerships with local institutions such as the Ahmed Iqbal Centre, the Imperial War Museum North and others.
- Develop a strong external profile for research and partnership activities through communication strategy/website/use of social media.

Strategy 6

Develop strong links nationally and internationally, working with governmental and non-governmental bodies to disseminate research and contribute to public knowledge and awareness, shaping policy making and public debate around the key challenges faced in contemporary global society

We will:

- Develop and strengthen designated School roles for Business Engagement and Internationalisation and work with Faculty to help raise the profile of SoSS research within the European Commission and European Funding Council.
- Facilitate opportunities for collaboration with academics, research students and institutions outside of Manchester through the development of research networks, collaborative bids, fellowships, sabbatical exchange programmes, etc; including Europe, North America, China and Australasia through, e.g., CoDE and SCI networks.

- Facilitate opportunities for non-academics to have contact with and attachments/placements to SoSS through fellowships, secondments, workshops, conferences etc.
- Develop and utilise internal funds (Hallsworth/Simon visiting fellowships, school conference funds, SIRF, ESRC IAA) to also develop links with other academic and non-academic institutions within and outside the UK.
- Explore external monies that may facilitate partnerships, knowledge exchange etc (ESRC, AHRC, Leverhulme).
- Build on existing links/partnerships with national and international networks across research and teaching activities.
- Develop a strong external profile for research and partnership activities through communication strategy/website/use of social media.

Key performance indicators and targets

Key performance indicator	Target
1. Research with Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing and promoting research bids on key research programmes across DAs and research centres, with increasing success at winning SIRF monies to support this. • Developing School wide communication strategy/use of social media/impact films. • Engaging with policymakers, thought leaders and opinion makers. • Developing and supporting impact related activities amongst PGR and early career researchers.
2. Socially Responsible Graduates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging students in SR activities: volunteering, public events, MLP, peer support. • Embedding issues of equality and diversity across the student experience. • Developing alumni links around mentoring and employability. • Contribution to Ethical Grand Challenges Programme. • Recognition of student research engaging SR themes. • Ongoing support of SR in the curriculum initiatives.
3. Engaging with Alumni	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an alumni database and online/offline platforms for engagement. • Engage alumni in School student-focused activities and employability initiatives. • Engage alumni with research through public lectures and events and partnerships. • Develop communication strategy with alumni across all School activities.
4. Engaging Schools and Colleges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to and develop School and DA activities around WP, MAP and mentoring. • Promote research with young people through public events and partnering with relevant organisations/cultural institutions.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and support pre-University courses and student/teacher conferences. • Monitor WP activities and retention and attainment rates for WP students. • Develop a support programme for non-traditional students to raise the profile of the School externally. • Encourage staff to support the School Governor Signature Programme.
<p>5. Developing collaborative links in Manchester</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting and developing collaborations between School research and local partners, business sector, cultural partners, policymakers and community organisations. • Disseminating research to local stakeholders and public through external media profile (e.g. policy@manchester) and public events.
<p>6. Engaging External audiences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting opportunities for collaboration with academic and non-academic partners through fellowships, secondments, workshops, conferences etc. • Developing strong external profile through social media, website etc. • Develop public events profile across range of audiences. • Develop business engagement and internationalization roles to engage new audiences.

Appendix 1: A Summary of KPIs and Targets

Figures in red are 2020-21 targets

Goal 1: World Class Research

	2013-14 (target/actual)	2014-15 (target)	2015-16 (target/20-21)
Total research grant and contract income (£m)	4.9/5.6	5.4	5.5/6.2
International research income (£m)	0.2/0.9	0.8	0.9/1.0
Business R&D income (£m)	0.3/0.0	0.1	0.1/0.1
Proportion of citations in top 10% (%)	12/23.39	24	25/27
% of Research judged as world leading or internationally excellent (RRE/REF)	REF2014 69	REF2014 69	RRE2016 72/85

Goal 2: Outstanding Learning and Student Experience

	2013-14 (target/actual)	2014-15 (target)	2015-16 (target/20-21)
Student Satisfaction %	82/79	83 at Aug2015	85/90
Positive Graduate Destinations %	72/66.9	73	72/85
Low Participation Neighbourhoods %	8.6/8.2	5	6/8
Lower Socio-Economic Groups %	23/26.5	16	20/20
Tuition Fees (£m)	26.5/27	31.3	32.03/35.89
Student Numbers (FT)			
Total Home UG	1764/1840	1747 (1825*)	1932/1833
Total International UG	958/961	911 (908*)	895/869
Intake Home UG	690 (683*)	695 (688*)	665/665
Intake International UG	307 (327*)	307 (312*)	313/323
Intake Home PGT	145/127	145 (140*)	130/150
Intake International PGT	100/114	100 (143*)	140/154

*Actual Student Numbers for 2014/15

Goal 3: Social Responsibility

	2015-16 (target)
Impact of our Research	<i>(i) Support collaborative research activities and engagement across DAs, School and Faculty (ii) Raise the external profile of research through public events, enhanced website, films and use of social media; (iii) Develop and 'roll out' School communications strategy.</i>
Graduates	<i>(i) Enhance student employability through increased knowledge of, and access to, social responsible careers, volunteering and public engagement activities (ii) support ongoing and increased SR in the Curriculum initiatives (iii) support and enhance the experience and attainment of BME students (iv) active participation in Ethical Grand Challenges Programme.</i>
Schools and Colleges	<i>(i) Contribute to the range of initiatives around Widening Participation and develop new pre-University programmes in sociology and philosophy. (ii) Raise the profile of the School Governors' Programme amongst all Staff. (iii) strengthen links with cultural partners to work in schools</i>
Partnerships	<i>(i) Develop strong national and international links and partnerships in research and dissemination. (ii) Engage local, regional, national and international partners and networks in research and dissemination activities and raise the profile of research and collaboration opportunities through enhanced communication strategies. (iii) Develop and exploit existing links with local institutions and cultural partners (iv) develop internationalisation and business engagement strategies</i>
Equality and Diversity	<i>(i) Monitor all appointments and promotions by gender and race and increase the recruitment and promotion of under-represented academic and PSS staff across the School (ii) Contribute to the University and Faculty Equality and Diversity Committee in shaping policy and practice in these areas; (iii) participate in Race Equality Charter Mark Award</i>

Enabling Strategies

	2013-14 (target/actual)	2014-15 (target)	2015-16 (target/20-21)
Financial outcome (contribution: % of income)	45.7/44.5	46.5	47.2/43.2
Compliance %	100/92	100	100/100

Appendix 2: SoSS REF2014 Ranking

Social Science rankings UK

Envelope of UoAs (those to which SoSS @ UoM submitted to)

18: Economics and Econometrics
 21: Politics and International Studies
 23: Sociology
 24: Anthropology and Development Studi A: Anthropology
 24: Anthropology and Development Studi B: Development Studies
 32: Philosophy

Key to Tables below

* submitted to UoA24 as whole
 ** did not submit to UoA24
 ^ Did not submit to UoA 18
 + did not submit to UoA 23

5 UoAs

	#UoAs	% 4*/3*	GPA	RP GPA	RP 4*/3*	Rankings			
						% 4*/3*	GPA	RP GPA	RP 4*/3*
1 Oxford	5	81%	3.25	1184.2634	295.1312	5	4	1	1
2 LSE	5	86%	3.31	650.82955	168.984	1	2	2	2
3 Manchester	5	78%	3.05	529.12722	135.3504	9	9	3	3
4 Edinburgh*	5	79%	3.12	522.7649	131.9267	8	6	4	4
5 Cambridge*	5	79%	3.12	502.99003	127.4744	7	7	5	5
6 Warwick**	4	82%	3.15	453.37548	117.666	4	5	6	6
7 KCL** ^	3	73%	3.03	428.48925	102.414	12	10	7	8
8 UCL*	4	84%	3.32	405.81445	102.5251	3	1	8	7
9 Essex**	4	85%	3.27	393.6435	102.1394	2	3	9	9
10 York**	4	77%	3.03	270.47	74.1259	10	11	10	10
11 Bristol**	4	75%	3.01	228.58	56.66	11	12	11	11
12 Sheffield** +	3	80%	3.08	160.70	41.429	6	8	12	12

As above but including:

19: Business and Management Studies

6 UoAs

	#UoAs	% 4*/3*	GPA	RP GPA	RP 4*/3*	Rankings			
						% 4*/3*	GPA	RP GPA	RP 4*/3*
1 Oxford	6	81%	3.25	1466.0528	366.6209	4	3	1	1
2 LSE	6	87%	3.34	999.59749	259.902	1	1	2	2
3 Manchester	6	76%	3.06	902.53132	225.3566	9	9	3	3
4 Warwick**	5	81%	3.15	782.23548	202.23	3	5	4	4
5 Edinburgh*	6	78%	3.10	679.6289	171.6587	8	8	5	5
6 Cambridge*	6	81%	3.18	636.80963	162.0954	6	4	6	6
7 Essex**	5	81%	3.15	537.9591	60.8708	5	6	7	12
8 UCL*	5	83%	3.29	445.20625	111.6251	2	2	8	7
9 KCL** ^	4	73%	3.03	428.48925	102.414	12	10	9	8
10 York**	5	75%	2.99	335.62	84.5619	11	12	10	9
11 Bristol**	5	76%	3.01	311.63	78.108	10	11	11	10
12 Sheffield** +	4	80%	3.10	268.34	69.374	7	7	12	11

Appendix 3: SoSS UoA REF2014 Results

No. in UoA	UoA name	UoA	incl	excl	return	4*	3*	2*	1*	U	%4*/3*	RANKINGS			
												SGPA	RPGPA	SGPA	RPGPA
35	<i>Economics and Econ</i>	<i>RAE2008</i>	<i>34.8</i>			25%	55%	20%	0%	0%	80%	3.05	106.14	9	9
28	Economics and Econ	18	33.2	12	73%	17%	58%	22%	3%	0%	75%	2.89	95.948	16	7
	Main Panel	C			Outputs 65%	11%	54%	31%	4%	0%	65%	2.72			
		#ICS	4		Impact 20%	40%	50%	10%	0%	0%	90%	3.30			
					Environment 15%	13%	88%	0%	0%	0%	100%	3.13			
					UoA Overall Profile	30%	48%	19%	2%	1%	78%	3.04			
					UoA Output Profile	28%	49%	20%	3%	1%	77%	3.00			
					UoA Impact Profile	36%	45%	14%	3%	2%	81%	3.11			
					UoA Environment profile	33%	49%	18%	0%	0%	82%	3.15			
59	<i>Politics and Interna</i>	<i>RAE2008</i>	<i>46.4</i>			20%	30%	30%	20%	0%	50%	2.50	116	11	4
56	Politics and Interna	21	36.66	12	75%	20%	54%	24%	2%	0%	74%	2.92	107.05	19	6
	Main Panel	C			Outputs 65%	14%	48%	35%	3%	0%	62%	2.74			
		#ICS	4		Impact 20%	16%	76%	8%	0%	0%	92%	3.08			
					Environment 15%	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%	100%	3.50			
					UoA Overall Profile	28%	40%	26%	6%	0%	68%	2.90			
					UoA Output Profile	21%	40%	32%	7%	0%	61%	2.74			
					UoA Impact Profile	40%	44%	13%	3%	0%	84%	3.22			
					UoA Environment profile	41%	39%	17%	3%	0%	80%	3.17			
39	<i>Sociology</i>	<i>RAE2008</i>	<i>49.2</i>			40%	20%	25%	15%	0%	60%	2.85	140.22	1	2
29	Sociology	23	48.6	5	91%	42%	42%	16%	0%	0%	84%	3.26	158.44	2	2
	Main Panel	C			Outputs 65%	24%	53%	23%	1%	0%	77%	3.01			
		#ICS	6		Impact 20%	67%	27%	7%	0%	0%	93%	3.60			
					Environment 15%	88%	13%	0%	0%	0%	100%	3.88			
					UoA Overall Profile	27%	45%	26%	2%	0%	72%	2.97			
					UoA Output Profile	20%	48%	30%	2%	0%	68%	2.85			
					UoA Impact Profile	43%	39%	14%	3%	1%	83%	3.22			
					UoA Environment profile	35%	45%	19%	1%	0%	80%	3.14			

19	<i>Anthropology</i>	<i>RAE2008</i>	<i>24.33</i>												
25	Anthropology	24	15.94	6	73%	20%	30%	40%	10%	0%	50%	2.60	63.258	14	4
	Main Panel	C			Outputs 65%	27%	42%	27%	2%	2%	70%	2.93			
		#ICS	3		Impact 20%	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%	100%	3.50			
					Environment 15%	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%	100%	3.50			
					UoA Overall Profile	27%	42%	26%	4%	1%	69%	2.90			
					UoA Output Profile	19%	39%	35%	5%	1%	58%	2.70			
					UoA Impact Profile	41%	43%	11%	4%	1%	84%	3.19			
					UoA Environment profile	45%	47%	8%	0%	0%	92%	3.36			
42	<i>Philosophy</i>	<i>RAE2008</i>	<i>13.5</i>			<i>10%</i>	<i>35%</i>	<i>50%</i>	<i>5%</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>45%</i>	<i>2.50</i>	<i>33.75</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>18</i>
40	Philosophy	32	12.7	2	86%	20%	53%	23%	1%	3%	73%	2.86	36.322	19	19
	Main Panel	D			Outputs 65%	16%	48%	30%	2%	4%	64%	2.70			
		#ICS	2		Impact 20%	40%	40%	20%	0%	0%	80%	3.20			
					Environment 15%	10%	90%	0%	0%	0%	100%	3.10			
					UoA Overall Profile	31%	42%	24%	3%	0%	73%	3.01			
					UoA Output Profile	26%	43%	27%	3%	0%	69%	2.92			
					UoA Impact Profile	35%	39%	23%	3%	0%	74%	3.07			
					UoA Environment profile	43%	43%	12%	2%	0%	86%	3.27			
	SCHOOL	<i>RAE2008</i>	<i>168.23</i>			<i>26%</i>	<i>33%</i>	<i>30%</i>	<i>12%</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>59%</i>	<i>2.73</i>	<i>459.37</i>		
	SCHOOL	REF2014	147.1	37	80%	28%	50%	20%	1%	0%	78%	3.04	447.49		
					Outputs 65%	18%	50%	29%	2%	1%	69%	2.84			
		#ICS	19		Impact 20%	44%	48%	8%	0%	0%	92%	3.36			
					Environment 15%	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%	100%	3.50			