

STATEMENT BY THE DEAN

The Robert Gordon University's mission is "to inspire and enable the transformation of individuals, economies and societies". Aberdeen Business School works extensively with businesses and organisations in the wider community to bring this about. Our work in the public sector includes:

- Applied research relating to public and social issues
- Research for public sector agencies
- Service to the community in the North East of Scotland
- Consultancy on the cost-effective implementation and delivery of public policy
- Work at national and international levels to improve the quality of public services
- Teaching public sector managers, leaders and professionals, and
- The development of academic and professional knowledge through the dissemination and publication of our work.

The work is characterised by its diversity, and its application to practical issues. This report is a testament to the strength of the Business School's commitment to work in this area.

Professor Rita Marcella
Dean, Aberdeen Business School

WORKING FOR THE PUBLIC SECTOR

Research and consultancy

Aberdeen Business School undertakes applied research, consultancy and evaluation of public sector activity in Scotland and beyond. Our clients in this period since 2004 have been local, national, UK and international agencies, including, for example:

- The Scottish Executive
- Scottish Enterprise
- NHS Education for Scotland
- Aberdeen City Council
- Aberdeenshire Council
- Aberdeenshire Community Safety Partnership
- Aberdeen Harbour Board
- Children First, Moray.
- Glasgow Council
- The University of Leicester
- Cairngorms National Park Authority
- The Commission of the European Communities
- The South African Ministry of Social Development
- The Department of Transport

Service to the community

In addition to our commissioned work, ABS is also actively involved in service to the wider community, with a particularly strong commitment to national activities in Scotland and services to the North-East of Scotland. The Grampian Chair of Public Policy is sponsored by Aberdeen City Council, and the Centre for Public Policy and Management acts as a resource for public sector agencies.

WORKING FOR SCOTLAND

Aberdeen Business School is one of the largest research institutions in Scotland. Its role in applied policy research means that most of its work is directly focused on meeting the needs of agencies.

Access to the knowledge base to support interdisciplinary models of healthcare delivery and clinical priority areas. This study was an in-depth qualitative study examining current practice and impact of information within Managed Clinical Networks (MCNs), and to indicate ways in which information and knowledge support can be improved.

Contact: Simon Burnett.

Audit Scotland: Development of Integrated Overview Reporting.

In early 2005, David Gray led a team of academics charged with evaluating the performance and effectiveness of Scottish Executive transport policy. This report assisted Audit Scotland to develop an integrated overview report on transport in Scotland, the first such report of its kind.

Contact: Professor David Gray.

Civil partnership registration. The Scottish Executive conducted a consultation on the sensitive issue of Civil Partnership Registration for same-sex couples, and the management of the process of legislation. The CPPM was commissioned to analyse the results. Their report, *The consultation on Civil Partnership Registration: Analysis of the responses*, was published by the Scottish Executive in January 2004. Contact: Professor Paul Spicker.

Dumfries and Galloway Regional Transport Strategy. Professor David Gray is part of a team advising Dumfries and Galloway Transport Partnership on the development of their statutory Regional Transport Strategy. The team assisted the Partnership in writing its draft strategy in advance of public consultation.

Contact: David Gray.

Evaluation of the Regional Development Initiative, NHS Education for Scotland. NHS Education Scotland has attempted to adapt its structures and procedures to allow for a regional response. The CPPM evaluated this initiative, using a combination of interviews, feedback from stakeholders and examination of records.

Contact: Paul Spicker.

Identifying user requirements: an e-learning pack for NHS

Scotland Library Staff. InfusionS, the Dept of Information Management's CPD element are developing an online learning pack for paraprofessional library staff within NHS libraries to develop reference interview and communication skills, from Jan 2007 - Mar 2007. Contact: C.Whitehead

Local lettings initiatives. The CPPM undertook an evaluation of the operation of local lettings initiatives for Albyn Housing Society. Local lettings initiative have been an attempt to balance the pressures on local housing stock in rural areas with the need for fairness and openness. Albyn's work has involved extensive engagement with local communities and this aspect of the work has been taken as the basis for a new emphasis on community needs. Contact: Professor Paul Spicker.

Developing Managed Knowledge Networks for NHS Scotland.

The Centre for Knowledge Management has been commissioned to undertake a two-part project to help define the future development pathway for MKNs, as a core element of NHS Education for Scotland's strategic framework for knowledge management. Contact: Simon Burnett.

Money Advice. A report was prepared for Glasgow Council and the Scottish Centre for Public Policy on alternative approaches to the provision of money advice in the UK. Contact: Paul Spicker.

National Transport Strategy for Scotland. David Gray was seconded (50%) to the Scottish Executive for a year to advise ministers on, and assist in the preparation of, Scotland's National Transport Strategy, which was published in December 2006. Contact: Professor David Gray

NHS Education for Scotland's (NES) Library Support

Development Group. An interim evaluation of was undertaken to investigate the effectiveness of this new framework for communication and collaborative working within NES Knowledge Services, from Nov 2006-Jan 2007. A final evaluation has been commissioned for May-June 2007. Contact: Professor Dorothy Williams

Scottish Ambulance Service. Laura Illingworth and Professor David Gray carried out research for the Scottish Ambulance Service looking at the potential for, and the practicalities involved in, using the Service's trip allocation software to co-ordinate all non-essential health care travel in Orkney.
Contact: David Gray.

Scottish Institute of Policing Research. RGU is a participant in a national initiative to undertake research, teaching and consultancy on issues relating to policing in Scotland.
Contact: Norman Bonney.

Strategy for library and knowledge services for NHS Scotland: a preliminary analysis of user needs. Funded by the NHS Scotland Library, Information and Knowledge Service, the aims and objectives of this study were to provide a preliminary analysis of user needs; to identify issues, barriers and methodological considerations which would be taken into account in a fuller needs analysis.
Contact: Simon Burnett.

Supporting Information Literacy Skills via the NHS Scotland e-Library. Infusions, the Dept of Information Management's CPD element, have been commissioned to develop a series of online tutorials as guides to the use of the NHS Scotland's e-Library for all NHS staff, Feb-May 07. Contact: C. Whitehead

Tourism policy. The Scottish Centre for Tourism has influenced successive Tourism Ministers and MSP's from across the political divide on the development of national Tourism policy. The SCoT hosts activity with academics and students and have recently welcomed Robert Cook, Chief Executive Officer of Malmaison and Peter Lederer, Chairman of VisitScotland to the Aberdeen Business School.

Public engagement. Staff have contributed to seminars on community planning, homelessness strategy, Scottish social policy, socio-legal studies and knowledge transfer. Professor Mahendra Raj is, a Commissioner with the Accounts Commission for Scotland. Professor Norman Bonney is a Board member on Edinburgh City Community Planning Partnership.

WORKING FOR THE NORTH-EAST OF SCOTLAND

The Robert Gordon University makes a significant contribution to the North East of Scotland, working extensively with local agencies and community organisations. Projects have included:

Aberdeen Harbour Board. The Robert Gordon University carried out a customer evaluation and scenario planning exercise on behalf of Aberdeen Harbour. It was based on three separate pieces of work conducted between June and September 2005: secondary data from published sources and web sites on ports traffic, economic conditions and competitor information; telephone interviews with small users, non-users and others with interests in sea freight or harbour issues; and face-to-face interviews with major customers and users. The report assisted in the strategic and tactical planning of the operations of Aberdeen Harbour Board.
Contact: Professor Bill Donaldson.

Aberdeen City Council Citizens's Panel. The Centre for International Labour Market Studies have conducted analysis of data from the Citizens Panel since 2003 and have produced 8 reports to date. Centre staff are members of the Panel's editorial board and are assisting in the development of an electronic version of the panel.
Contact: David Gibbons-Wood.

Aberdeenshire Advice Services Network. A study into the information and advice needs of citizens in the South Aberdeenshire area, commissioned by the Aberdeenshire Advice Services Network. This project aimed to identify citizens' information and advice needs in the North East of Scotland. Over a period of 2 months, one hundred and thirty-two individuals residing in South Aberdeenshire were questioned by an interview administered survey in various rural locations throughout the area. Contact: Simon Burnett.

Community safety for minority ethnic groups in Aberdeenshire. The CPPM has been working in partnership with Grampian Racial Equality Council to consult the views of people from minority ethnic groups living in Aberdeenshire. A series of focus groups and interviews were held across Aberdeenshire, in one of the leading studies of minority groups in rural Scotland.
Contact: Professor Paul Spicker.

Consultation processes in Aberdeenshire, undertaken for Aberdeenshire Council. The Standards and Audit Committee of Aberdeenshire Council conducted an investigation into the Council's consultation, communication and engagement strategy between March and June 2004. Peter McLaverty acted as an external expert adviser on the investigation and contributed to the final report. Contact: Dr Peter McLaverty.

Digital inclusion. Through a Knowledge Transfer Partnership with Pathways Services plc, ABS is promoting, monitoring and evaluating digital inclusion initiatives in the Aberdeen area. A Research Associate has been employed. Contact: Norman Bonney.

The integrated care framework in Moray. Professor Spicker has been advising Children First on the conduct of research evaluating the operation of the integrated care framework. Contact: Paul Spicker.

Tourism policy in the North East of Scotland. The Scottish Centre for Tourism plays an important role with regional tourism development.

- Recently it chaired a breakfast meeting of hoteliers and VisitScotland representatives to plan future regional marketing activity. Through a central role as part of the Aberdeen Hotels Association SCoT has influenced the "Destination Aberdeen City and Shire" initiative. This has brought together all the key stakeholders in tourism development, and effectively supports new routes into Aberdeen airport.
- SCoT publicly supported the extension of Aberdeen Airport opening times and the runway, making representation to the Aberdeen City Council Committee.

Public engagement. Susan Moulton is a Board member of Grampian Board Young Enterprise and of the Education Board of the Scottish Institute for Enterprise.

WORKING BEYOND SCOTLAND

Aberdeen Business School is also a national UK and international institution, engaging in work beyond the boundaries of Scotland.

Benefits and incentives in South Africa. Professor Spicker acted as a international expert consultant for research conducted in South Africa concerning incentive effects on families in the South African benefit system.

Contact: Paul Spicker.

Developing the Knowledge Society. Improving the flow of information between the industrialised countries and the developing world will integrate the efforts of their Universities and research Institutes in solving global problems, as well as contributing to the development of higher education. Professor Ian Johnson has led or supported several projects in Latin America, Russia, and Syria concerned with enhancing electronic publishing and e-learning.

Contact: Ian Johnson.

The European Union Consultation on external cooperation with China. This is an analysis of methods of EU public policy consultation for the EU-China Project, which will ultimately be used to support the development of public consultation in China. It has been commissioned by the Project Management Unit of the EU China Programme, which offers support to China's integration into the world trading system.

Contact: Professor Justin Greenwood.

Immigration. Researchers at the University of Leicester, working with international partners, have undertaken a survey of the circumstances of immigrants in Leicester. Linda Strangward, of the CPPM, has been preparing and analysing the data.

Contact: Linda Strangward.

Making Connections. A series of ongoing research studies undertaken by the Department of Information Management examining the state of Information Literacy in UK schools. Recent projects include:

- Untangling Spaghetti? The Complexity of Developing Information Literacy in Secondary School Students. (Funded by Scottish Executive Education Department, January-June 2006).
- Teachers' Conceptions of Information Literacy in relation to Classroom Practice. (Funded by the Society for Educational Studies, 2004-2005)

Contact: Professor Dorothy Williams.

Public attitudes to climate change. In early 2006, Dr Jillian Anable carried out a major evidence base review on attitudes to transport and climate change to feed into the Department of Transport's research and development strategy.

Contact: Jillian Anable.

VocMat – Leonardo da Vinci Pilot project. The VocMat project is developing new, innovative, flexible personal development for senior management working in the European tourism industry. It brings together partners from a range of organisations involved in professional development in the UK, Estonia and Iceland with Tourist Board Training being the lead partner. This contemporary funded activity demonstrates an ability to collaborate with European partners to develop human resource materials that meet the needs of both the private and public sectors. Contact: Andrew Martin.

UK National Industrial Symbiosis Programme. Industrial symbiosis is part of the emerging field of industrial ecology. It is concerned with the flow of materials and energy through local, regional and national economies and aims to increase business performance whilst reducing pollution and waste. RGU is evaluating the effectiveness of the National Industrial Symbiosis Programme (NISP) which is a government funded business opportunity programme. Contact: Dr Peter Strachan.

SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

Staff in ABS are engaged with public policy issues nationally and internationally.

Climate Change. Dr Jillian Anable has been appointed Strategic Advisor to the Commission for Integrated Transport's Climate Change Working Group. CfIT is an independent government advisory body. The group is due to report mid 2007 on the potential of the UK transport sector to contribute to the UK's climate change targets.

Human rights. Members of ABS's Department of Law have been working on international comparisons of human rights law, in collaboration with colleagues in South Africa and Canada.

Poverty. Professor Spicker has been working as co-editor on the second edition of the *International Glossary on Poverty*, for the International Social Science Council's Comparative Research Group on Poverty. He has also been involved in work about poverty in Aberdeenshire and Scotland.

Public participation. Dr Peter McLaverty has become a member of an Academics' Panel for a Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust and Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust Enquiry into Power. This is an investigation into how political participation and involvement in Britain can be increased and deepened.

Social security benefits. Professor Spicker has contributed to expert discussions on disability and incapacity, social security fraud, the social fund, and complexity in social security benefits, where he was invited to contribute to a seminar at the National Audit Office and has worked as Specialist Adviser to the House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee. His media contributions include material on inequality and benefit administration.

Public service. Professor Mahendra Raj is a Member of the Reporting Panel of the Competition Commission for UK and a Consultant for the Commonwealth of Nations.

STUDYING THE PUBLIC SECTOR

The Aberdeen Business School is internationally and nationally recognised for its corporate and management education. It offers a range of courses relevant to the public sector.

THE MASTERS IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (MPA)

The MPA programme here at RGU represents an exciting new development in the world of public administration. It is the first course of its kind in Scotland to specifically cater for the needs and career aspirations of policy makers and managers working in the public domain. Our MPA offers a vibrant learning experience, with the programme being heavily student-centred, and involving the use of group discussion, analysis and presentation. As is appropriate for an executive programme at this level, we make extensive use of case study and simulation materials drawn from the current international public administration environment.

The MPA programme combines an in-depth study of the key academic disciplines informing the study of contemporary public administration with the practical application of professional skills to the workplace environment. In particular, students develop the necessary knowledge and skills to enable you to meet the challenges of 21st century government.

The subjects taught in the MPA include:

- Multi-level governance
- Financing Public Services
- Contemporary Public Services
- Policy Analysis
- Leadership and Strategic Management
- Applied Policy Research
- Values and ethics in a democratic context
- Social welfare, and
- Managing Change.

The course is available by full time study, part time study and distance learning. For details, contact Kirsteen Close.

THE MASTERS IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

The MBA Programme develops quality leaders. The MBA, accredited by AMBA, has been developed to ensure that it meets the highest international standards, is of high quality and of direct relevance to the real world.

The MBA has four key elements:

Stage 1 - Core Management Modules, which focus on operational and strategic aspects of decision making within the key functional areas of organisations.

Stage 2 - Specialist Modules. These modules provide the opportunity to study an aspect of management in depth. Students choose three “themed” modules from a portfolio of options that allow them to match their studies with career needs or aspirations.

Stage 3 - Strategic Management. This “double” module provides practical skills in analysis of complex corporate situations and generation of effective and innovative strategies for organisational success.

Stage 4 - Project. The final ‘project’ stage provides the opportunity to apply the knowledge skills and understanding gained from the taught elements in an applied business context. For full-time students this can involve a period of placement with a local organisation.

Contact: Andrew Turnbull.

THE DOCTOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

The Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) has been created, in consultation with public and private sector leaders, to recognise and encourage future leaders to enhance and further their professional careers. The Aberdeen DBA has been designed for senior professionals looking for a challenging continuing professional development opportunity. Academic and professional coherence is driven by the student, with advice and support from the Principal Supervisor. Every student establishes a portfolio that is appropriate to their professional and/or specialist path, and underpins their chosen research topic.

Students take 4 taught modules. The modules include e.g:

- Policy analysis
- Leadership and Strategic Management
- Human Resource Management
- Knowledge Management
- Operations Management
- Financing public services

To provide a strong foundation in advanced research methodologies, students are also be required to complete 3 modules in research methods:

- The Principles of Research Methods
- The Presentation and Communication of Research
- The Evaluation of Research

For details, contact: Dr Peter Strachan

POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN LEADERSHIP FOR SOCIAL SERVICES

“Leading to Deliver” offered a leadership development programme targeted at first line and middle managers providing social care or integrated services. The programme was based on research undertaken by the Scottish Leadership Foundation on behalf of the Scottish Executive which looked at the training and development needs of managers in the sector and the challenges they face in providing and managing services.

The course is delivered by the Taylor Clarke Partnership with assessment and accreditation by Aberdeen Business School. There has been no government decision about a fifth cohort, but RGU has developed expertise in this field and the courses may yet be available in other formats. Contact: Vicky Stewart.

RESEARCH DEGREES

ABS is a vibrant research community undertaking a wide range of externally funded research and committed to furthering research opportunities in our various disciplines. We have a strong and

dynamic group of research students who, in tandem with over 120 academics and professorial staff, contribute to the School's active research community.

THE DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PHD)

The PhD is awarded to a candidate who, having critically investigated and evaluated an approved topic resulting in an independent and original contribution to knowledge and demonstrated an understanding of research methods appropriate to the chosen field, has presented and defended a thesis by oral examination to the satisfaction of the examiners.

DOCTOR OF INFORMATION SCIENCE

This Professional Doctorate is an integrated, research-oriented programme in which the student chooses specific fields of specialisation at an advanced level, and then undertakes an original practice-based investigation of a contemporary problem in library services or information management. For the busy professional wishing to enhance their professional practice and career prospects, the Professional Doctorate is an attractive option, offering a structured programme of study that:

- provides high level, assessed Continuing Professional Development;
- provides a flexible mode of study - fulltime, part-time or through the Virtual Campus;
- develops a high level of technical expertise and skills in problem solving; and
- brings a high level of research enquiry to bear within a practical context.

OTHER COURSES IN MANAGEMENT

Many of ABS's other courses offer specialised skills which are relevant to the public sector. They include, for example, courses in human resources management, financial management and information management. There is also a pre-master's Graduate Certificate in Management Studies. Details of all our courses are available on the ABS website at <http://www.rgu.ac.uk/abs/postgraduate/page.cfm?pge=5045>.

RESEARCH UNITS IN ABERDEEN BUSINESS SCHOOL

Aberdeen Business School has a committed culture of engagement in applied and practical research, serving both the private and the public sectors. Its expertise includes specialists in management, law, economics, policy analysis and social research. Its areas of activity cover work on a wide range of areas, including information management, tourism, enterprise and strategic leadership. The Centres described here are only the groups that work most closely with the public sector.

THE CENTRE FOR PUBLIC POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

The Centre for Public Policy and Management (CPPM) is one of Scotland's leading multi-disciplinary research centres. It was created in 1995. The Director is Professor Paul Spicker.

The CPPM undertakes applied policy research in a wide range of fields, relating not only to the public sector but to voluntary, non-profit and commercial agencies undertaking similar patterns of work. The general role of the Centre may be described as:

- policy analysis, understood both as the analysis of policy and analysis for policy,
- research of interest for public policy, and
- research applied to practical problems.

The Centre is based on a large, multi-disciplinary team with detailed knowledge of related areas, as well as methodological capacity, experience and expertise. The staff attached to the centre have backgrounds in policy analysis, social administration, management, planning, law, economics and social research.

Website: <http://www.rgu.ac.uk/publicpolicy/cppm/>

CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL LABOUR MARKET STUDIES

The Centre for International Labour Market Studies (CILMS) operates in response to the growing realisation that organisations concerned with the labour market need to work together and need help in

effectively working together. Over the past few years the centre has worked with government organisations, individuals and both the public and private sectors.

CILMS is a multi-disciplinary research centre with the remit to undertake research and consultancy in the areas of education, training, skills, employment and local, national and international labour market policy. The work of the Centre complements the vocational mission of the University and is integral to the academic specialisms and research programme of the Business School. The principal areas of investigation are:

- unemployment
- under-employment
- skill shortages
- skill requirements
- employment forecasts
- training issues
- barriers to learning and lifelong learning and,
- conducting large-scale surveys of employers, employees and households

The centre is unique as a specialist labour market facility and advises on employment issues both at a local level and nationally across the UK.

THE CENTRE FOR KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

The Centre for Knowledge Management was launched in March 2000 in response to the growing importance and development of the knowledge economy. The primary aim of the centre is to assist organisations in unlocking their untapped potential to achieve competitive advantage through the effective management of knowledge. The Centre's research has included projects relating to the information and advice needs of people in South Aberdeenshire, the knowledge base needed for interdisciplinary work in the NHWS, and strategy for library and knowledge services.

Expertise is drawn from a wide range of experience within learning organisations, and a deep understanding of the way in which information is communicated. We draw too on experience in identifying and measuring competencies and capabilities within organisations, and in offering solutions to more efficient methods of information and knowledge flow.

THE CENTRE FOR TRANSPORT POLICY

Issues raised by transport policy are long term and far reaching. They impinge on every aspect of life - domestic, social, commercial, industrial and environmental. Thus, our research aims are to remain at the forefront in addressing transport issues and to be in a position to advise decision-makers locally, nationally and internationally

The Centre for Transport Policy aims to influence the transport agenda by:

- undertaking research in key policy areas such as congestion charging, road pricing, climate change, rural transport and issues affecting the rail and bus industries.
- building the knowledge base and disseminating best practice through a range of media including a Policy Paper Series.

The Research section also specialises in providing advice to transport policy makers, working along side all levels of government and the private sector. The aim is to analyse transport problems, recommend solutions and improve understanding of transport related issues among decision-makers in the public and private sector, the media and the public at large.

PUBLICATIONS ON PUBLIC SECTOR ISSUES BY MEMBERS OF ABERDEEN BUSINESS SCHOOL 2004-07

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