

<p>Institution: University of Oxford</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: 29</p>
<p>a. Context</p> <p>The main non-academic beneficiaries of research by members of this Unit of Assessment are (a) school teachers and students and the organizations that support them (because English Language and Literature are core curriculum areas for UK schools), (b) literature and language professionals working in related areas, e.g. trade publishers and editors, media producers and researchers, and (with respect to language particularly) psychologists, speech therapists, and makers/publishers of dictionaries, (c) the general public. There is a perennial public appetite for new ideas and research findings about the history, use and theory of the English language, fresh interpretations of major writers or schools of writing who may be attracting public attention for topical reasons (as with the Dickens bicentennial), and research on less canonical writers and schools of writing where specialist knowledge can satisfy the public curiosity and support the ongoing development of a literary culture. A more localised, steadily strengthening pattern of activity over the review period has been (d) close engagement by some members of the Unit with public policy advisory groups on broader social or cultural issues where research expertise in literature or language can make a contribution. The most prominent areas of involvement to date have been the gender politics of language use, the social implications of an ageing population, the cultural consequences of immigration to Britain, and the public value of Humanities research. The main types of impact are, accordingly, educational benefits to school students and teachers in aiding delivery of the curriculum; the enhancement of public understanding of literature and language; improvements in the quality of public debate through the dissemination of historical, literary and linguistic knowledge and enabling sound interpretations; facilitation of high quality broadcasting in the UK and beyond; creation of new forms of artistic expression; and contributions to public policy development.</p> <p>The extent and reach of the Unit's impact are assisted by the English Faculty emphasizing in all its self-descriptions a globally exceptional retention of research expertise from Old English to the present. Consistent emphasis on breadth encourages literature and language professionals and other interested public and private organisations to treat the Faculty as a ready store of expertise and opinion. Impact achieved accordingly ranges from enriching public understanding of Old Nordic storytelling through to creation of new cultural capital in the form of theatre commissions such as the Edinburgh Fringe and Off-Broadway play 'I Wish I Had a Sylvia Plath'. The amplitude of the research base and the historic commitment to public engagement have fostered a climate in which researchers expect to take their findings beyond the academy, and have well-developed practical support for doing so. This climate helps to explain the high visibility of Oxford English in public arenas of debate about language and literature. Indicatively, Lee and Douglas-Fairhurst served as Man Booker judges during the review period; many early career researchers trained or employed at Oxford were appointed AHRC/Radio 3 New Generation Thinkers (Alexandra Harris, Corin Throsby, Rachel Hewitt, Zoe Norridge, Eleanor Barraclough, Gregory Tate).</p>
<p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>The English Faculty warmly supports the endeavours of researchers looking to deepen the public benefit derived from their work. To that end, part of the formal remit of the Research Strategy Committee is to ensure that practical, financial, and intellectual support for impact is known to be available. The Deputy Research Strategy Co-ordinator (currently Small, appointed May 2011) is also Impact Co-ordinator, responsible for overseeing impact and representing the Faculty at Divisional level on impact policy and implementation. The Impact Co-ordinator and Committee have since 2009 reviewed all applications for external research grants with significant impact elements, providing feedback on the effectiveness of the public engagement models envisaged. Research 'away days' organised by the Committee give dedicated space to discussing recent impact and disseminating good practice (e.g. special sessions with Williams and Sutherland).</p> <p>The impact achieved to date falls into three broad categories: impact achieved through proactive approaches to beneficiaries (primarily, schools); impact achieved synergistically by maintaining ongoing relationships with communities (especially professional groups); and contingent impact, not foreseen at the point when the underpinning research was pursued. A longstanding component of the Faculty's ability to use its research proactively in helping the delivery of school curricula</p>

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has been the quarterly magazine, *The English Review (ER)*, which has functioned since 1989 as an effective interface between English at Oxford and secondary education. Established by six members of the Faculty led by John Carey, its mission is to deliver scholarly but accessible articles on literature and language. The magazine now offers free online access to its archive with additional supporting material for teachers and students (the 'e-review', often covering topical subjects between issues). Teachers can use the material in the classroom via fixed-text layout e-textbook versions for whiteboard and VLE. There is a student tablet edition for iPad. UK print circulation (paid for by subscription) stands at c. 4000; online usage is far higher (Hodder Education's A-level magazine site had 199,984 visitors between September 2009 and 1 July 2013). Since 2008 three Faculty members have served on the editorial team: Gerrard (1989 -); Ballaster (2008 - 2011); Ratcliffe (March 2013 -). The board has always involved colleagues from other universities (presently including the OU and Oxford Brookes) and schoolteachers. Over the years numerous Faculty members have disseminated their research to schools via *ER* (e.g. Achinstein's on Milton in 21.1, Smith's on tragedy in 22.4, Stern's on Shakespeare's playhouses in 10.1 and 10.2); many Oxford research students have seen their first publications there. *ER* has helped to host conferences for 6th form students under the auspices of its publisher Philip Allan, now Hodder Education, at which Faculty research is presented (average attendance c. 200). A recent initiative to build on *ER*'s work has been the Great Writers Inspire (GWI) project, detailed in one of our case studies. GWI provides free online research content targeted at students and teachers in secondary schools, further education, lifelong learning, and universities. Combining tailor-made podcasts, curated eBooks, audio talks, videos, and scholarly essays, it bridges the gap between secondary and tertiary study by helping students and teachers to make appropriate use of up-to-date research. 37 members of the Unit contributed podcasts during the assessment period.

RSC's approach to the more **synergistic relationship with other professional beneficiaries** has evolved over the review period. It has always been the case that researchers are actively sought out on the grounds of individual reputation (e.g. Douglas-Fairhurst's work on Dickens, Lee's on literary biography) or because the university hosts or provides the personnel for centres of expertise such as the Oxford English Dictionary team at OUP, the English Faculty Centre for Early Modern Studies, and the Life Writing Centre at Wolfson College. Several components crucial to our impact approach have been in place for a long time, such as the '30 day rule' (permitting research staff to undertake that amount of paid consultancy) and strong IT support. Increasingly, however, research activity has been planned from the early stages to identify potential beneficiaries and generate conditions for impact. All internal funding application forms now incorporate the opportunity to direct grants towards impact-generating activities. On a conservative retrospective account £113,300 of Faculty and University funds spent on research within the period have helped to foster impact (in addition to £2,399,586 of Research Council funding with the impact requirement built in, from 2009). Faculty Allowance claims totaling £24,200, have supported underpinning research, dissemination, website development, collaboration with artists, and podcasting lectures or public talks on research for free public use. The Faculty's News International Fund, providing focused support for work relating to language and class, language and gender, and the use of English in advertising and the media, has given support totaling c. £5840 for research assistants, travel monies, website and technical aid enabling impact. The Fund has been vital to developing the 'Examining the OED' website, a scholarly project independent of OUP that investigates the dictionary's principles and practices (extensively used by secondary and tertiary students and by lexicographers). Larger grants from the John Fell OUP Research Fund have provided seed funding totaling £83,260 supporting much of the research dissemination and re-interpretation productive of ongoing impact. This includes the initial development of the Digital Miscellanies Index, the mounting of numerous free public exhibitions, the commissioning of 'A Love Like Salt' (Perkins), 'I Wish I had a Sylvia Plath' (Bayley) and 'The Fairie Queene Now' (a play and pilot film in development by Palfrey), and a new cross-disciplinary project 'Constructing Scientific Communities' to be led by Shuttleworth. External grants from the BA and Leverhulme have played a crucial though non-directive role in enabling more **contingent** impact, fostering major projects from 1993 onwards that went on to generate public benefits.

Targeted **technical and administrative support** is available to assist free publication of research findings for the benefit of external users. A designated administrator manages links from individual

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Faculty members' pages to external online and broadcast material (e.g. McDonald [St Hugh's] links to BBC podcasts and The Literature Police blog). The website advertises events at which research is presented to the public, including conferences for schoolteachers and open lectures across the collegiate university. The Faculty has been active on Twitter since early 2012, tweeting information on events. The specific cluster of technical expertise captured by the Oxford Digital Humanities group has been critical to the development of digital work such as the Digital Miscellanies Index. Core technical support is provided through the IT Services. This includes recording, editing and uploading podcast recordings on Oxford iTunes. Total downloads of English Language and Literature research podcasts for the period are 1,686,629. We have a close relationship with two full-time employees of IT Services, S. Lee and Robinson—both Faculty members. Robinson has been vital to the success of the Faculty's development of open resources, not least by working with Google to ensure a high search ranking, and promoting the resource platforms via Apple iTunes. Lee has made considerable contributions in the schools sector and beyond through his development of two large-scale digital research resources: the First World War Digital Poetry Archive (FWWPA) and the Great War Archive (GWA). FWWPA brings together key primary and secondary source material related to WW1 poetry. Drawing from archives across the UK, US, and Canada it has made core research collections freely available to the public, accompanying the material with educational resources for use across all sectors. GWA, a digital international community collection project focusing on WWI, has been rolled out in stages across the UK, Ireland, Germany, Luxembourg, Denmark, Slovenia, Cyprus, Belgium, Italy, with plans to take it to France, Slovakia and Romania. These projects have created numerous spin-off projects and open source software applications assisting impact far beyond Oxford; they have helped to shape funding strategies for JISC and Europeana. Since March 2011 they have generated 1,109,295 visits; 2,646,153 page views with a 20.2% return visit and average time on site of 3.02 minutes; they have 1293 Facebook likes and 3426 followers on Twitter. The projects have given Lee valuable experience of large scale, information rich Digital projects, enabling him to provide informed assistance to other members of Faculty in maximising their on-line research impact.

c. Strategy and plans

Strategy in the review period

Planning for the Faculty's impact in **schools** has been deliberately strengthened over the period. Since 2009 the longstanding commitment of research staff time to editing *ER* has run in tandem with the inauguration of the *GWI* project. In early 2013 the RSC invested an additional £5000 in the scheme (originally JISC-funded) to enhance its usefulness for secondary schools – paying for the technical work involved in gathering more of the existing and forthcoming Faculty podcasts under its umbrella, and matching podcasts to reading lists that aim to assist transition between secondary and tertiary-level study. An RSC decision led to a Faculty conference for teachers in June 2013 incorporating live work with the website, exploring possibilities for its use in the classroom and gathering user feedback. With respect to **other beneficiaries**, we have focused on providing a strong framework for enabling public engagement and dissemination, so that when opportunities for impact arise the UOA is able to respond with appropriate support. RSC has identified significant areas of existing impact, nurtured those likely to benefit from targeted support (financial, technical, and intellectual), and tracked the funding paths that have led to impact previously, subsequently revising the criteria for the regular research allowance and setting terms for a more visible impact policy in the future. This is in keeping with the evolution of wider Divisional and university strategic planning, including an increased use of John Fell funding to support impact.

RSC has raised awareness of the impact agenda by arranging for the Divisional Research Facilitator to address research staff at away days and regular Faculty meetings. The Committee recently requested and obtained revision of divisional guidance for mentors to make explicit mention of their role in identifying and assisting potential impact. In practice mentors have already often been fulfilling this function. New Generation Thinkers associated with the Faculty (trained or in early career posts here) have commented on the importance of Oxford mentoring to their success in achieving impact beyond academia. Zoe Norridge (Junior Research Fellow of New College, 2009-11), featured as one of RCUK's examples of Excellence in Impact, credits her Oxford mentor (Boehmer) with being instrumental in encouraging the outward-facing aspects of her career; Barraclough cites her Faculty and college mentors, O'Donoghue and Beasley, as crucial

influences (Beasley urged her to apply for the NGT scheme; O'Donoghue formally mentored her through her Leverhulme fellowship, covering the NGT appointment).

Future Plans

The Faculty plans to appoint a Research Facilitator to be in post by January 2014, providing dedicated support in co-operation with the Divisional Facilitator. The role will include 'encouraging all post holders and post-doctoral researchers to think in practical terms about the public benefit of their research: helping to identify potential beneficiaries, recommending ways and means of achieving impact, and pursuing funding sources that would enable delivery'.

The Unit has a longstanding commitment to meeting the external requests for its research expertise regularly received from schools, radio and television researchers, library and museum directors, and organisers of cultural festivals such as the Oxford and Cheltenham Literary Festivals. More can be done to assist external users in identifying current areas of research expertise relevant to their needs. We plan to develop our web presence in order to offer the expertise in more targeted ways: identifying common user groups and better reflecting the Unit's especially strong involvement in shaping the availability of high quality research-based editions of texts for schools and general readers. We aim to make more of the work done in the schools sector by our 15 English Association Fellows and to expand our presence on Twitter and other social media. This will require a more substantial investment of money and time in our web systems, their daily operation and maintenance than we have previously budgeted for. A Fell Fund grant application for £10K, recently approved, will allow us to greatly improve the research sections of our website, create new pages devoted to research themes/clusters (e.g. science and literature, cognitive work, material text) and include short films and podcasts. We also plan to record podcast interviews with external partners – a theatre director, journalist, publisher, database developer – talking about how their work interacts with ours. Thereafter we calculate that we will need to fund maintenance and regular updating of the materials to a sum of £2000 p.a.

The recent emergence of a number of researchers engaged in public policy debates where their expertise is of relevance (Bate, Boehmer, Cameron, MacDonald, Small) was noted in section (a). This distinctive outward-facing aspect of the Faculty stands to benefit from more targeted support. RSC can assist by giving practical and financial assistance outside the standard individual research grants, since the impact tends to continue and deepen or expand well beyond completion and initial dissemination of the underpinning research. The role of the newly appointed Divisional Knowledge Exchange Fellow, currently an appointee from English (Williams) is already proving of direct help here, targeting individuals for high profile external invitations received by the University or Division rather than the Faculty. Williams, Boehmer, Shuttleworth, and Sutherland have all been active in similar ways, even before this new KE role—Boehmer owing to her longstanding involvement in policy debates relating to national, international and migrant literatures, Williams and Sutherland because of their close involvement in the development of digital technologies that are changing the role of media in textual conservation and interpretation, Shuttleworth in her role as Head of the Humanities Division (2006-11).

RSC encourages a proactive deployment of the Unit's distinctive research expertise in engagement with wider public policy debates. The University and Division have brokered events attended by government ministers (Willetts, 'Humanities Research Showcase', 2011; Cable's visit to Oxford, January 2013) at which researchers from the Unit have sought to update and challenge government thinking about the nature and value of Humanities research. RSC has had continual presence on the Executive Committee of the Council for College and University English (CCUE) throughout the review period (Gillespie, Perry, Small), and so has been directly represented in lobbying relevant parties on the interpretation and implementation of Impact policy across HE. These efforts run in tandem with the work being done by those serving on the boards of learned societies (see REF 5) who have been closely involved in the development of Impact and Open Access policies. Bate and Small have written in depth on the value of the humanities and have regularly been called on to speak in policy-development and debate contexts on how best to shape accounts of the public good of humanities research. Bate is Vice-President leading the Humanities at the British Academy, guiding the Academy's work on the public value of the humanities,

organising, chairing and participating in high-profile public events, including dialogues with the Minister for Universities and other policy makers. He made a central contribution to a 2012 event in Melbourne on this theme organized jointly by the BA and the Australian Academy. Small has recently spoken alongside the EU Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Skills in Dublin (7.5.13) where the Commissioner repositioned EU policy for the next ten years to reflect a stronger investment in Humanities and Social Sciences, Small's brief being to sharpen the intellectual and political definition given to the public benefit of Humanities research. She performed a similar role at the 2013 conference of the USA-based Consortium of Humanities Centers and Institutes.

d. Relationship to case studies

The strategic plans developed to identify and develop already effective impact have told most directly in case studies where impact is ongoing: the extension and amplification of GWI is a direct result of RSC intervention to further a project that would otherwise have ended with the termination of the original JISC grant. The strengthening of links between GWI and the long-term work of *The English Review* was also brought about through the Impact Co-ordinator's role, leading to a forthcoming feature on GWI in the magazine, and to the employment of the website in the course of the First Folio conference. Almost all the researchers whose work features in the case studies have, in the course of other external work, contributed content to the Faculty's Open Educational Resources, with the result that there are recurrent points of connection between otherwise distinct case studies and the more strategically targeted educational work described in the GWI study. In cases where impact was well established by the time a deliberate strategy was wanted, RSC has worked primarily to identify, and build connections with, the relevant external users. RSC decided at an early stage in the REF process that the Impact Co-ordinator would lead the process of reporting on impact. A benefit of the centralising approach for RSC is that it has enabled not only a gathered understanding of funding patterns, and kinds and extent of impact, but the building of a direct relationship between the unit's strategy directors and several of the partners most likely to have ongoing importance for us: Dan Clayton and Andrew Haine as points of liaison with the English and Media Centre and AQA Examining Board; Oana Romocea and Susan Wheeler at the Bodleian Libraries; Garland Scott at the Folger; Joe Gollner at Gnostyx Research Inc.

In two of the case studies impact was planned through the funding process: the initial public engagement aspects of Williams's work on 18th-century popular culture were worked out in the Leverhulme proposal; Boehmer's contributions to the 'Making Britain' exhibition were planned through the AHRC grant application process; GWI was JISC funded specifically to assist impact in schools. These applications received extensive assistance from the Divisional Research Facilitator and additional vetting from RSC and the Divisional Research Committee; the impact was in each case extended beyond its original remit with support from Faculty and University funds. Internal funding was critical to the success of those case studies involving Bodleian exhibitions ('Enhancing Public Understanding of the King James Bible', 'Informing Public Discourse about ... Migration') and to those requiring technical help from IT Services (the majority). The exceptions to this pattern of internal targeting and aiding of impact are those studies that arose from a researcher's reputation and were directly funded by the external agent or user (thus invoking the '30 day rule') ('Enhancing Understanding of ... St Paul's Cathedral', 'Enhancing Public Understanding of Dickens', 'Informing Public Debate about Ageing'). In those cases the underpinning research and publication received university funding assistance, but the costs of public engagement were met by St Paul's, Belknap Press, Cumberland Lodge and St George's House, Windsor.

Preparing/developing the case studies has in turn informed the Unit's evolving approach to impact. Most vividly, it has done so by making RSC conscious of the nature and extent of the Unit's influence beyond academia, not all of which was previously well apprehended – e.g. McCullough's Lay Canonship at St Paul's having been known primarily to those with particular interest in church matters; the financial value of Gnostyx Research's contribution to the Digital Miscellanies database having been underestimated even by Gollner (the Faculty is now formally recognising that contribution with honorary membership). RSC has accordingly become much more conscious of ways in which it can now assist impact and of the kinds of relationship with external users and knowledge exchange partners that it will want to nurture most actively in the near future.