

<p><b>Institution: University of Westminster</b></p>
<p><b>Unit of Assessment: UoA 27; Area (Asian) Studies</b></p>
<p><b>a. Context</b></p> <p>Attention to impact is a key aspect of Westminster’s Asian Studies research. With collaborative links with diverse organisations, including NGOs, charitable and religious organisations, media and advertising outlets, UK primary and secondary schools, museums and cultural heritage practitioners, medical and health practices, and professional networks, the Asian Studies research staff actively apply their research to bridge academic and non-academic interests. Drawing on high-quality internationally recognised research on topical aspects of modern and contemporary China’s transformation, our approach to impact seeks to stimulate debate and promote critical awareness about key issues and practices concerning gender, legal, and religious rights, cultural heritage preservation and medical care, and to encourage greater attention to the importance of China in the UK’s national school curriculum.</p>
<p><b>b. Approach to impact</b></p> <p>Encouraged by Faculty and Departmental support to explore opportunities for impact across diverse UK and international bodies, and under the coordination of the Contemporary China Centre, our approach to impact has been to 1) focus on the capacity for reach to non-academic audiences, both nationally and internationally; 2) consolidate and develop collaborative engagements that promote non-academic dissemination and impact, and 3) exploit funding opportunities to enhance impact. This approach has been sustained by the active commitment of all the Asian Studies research staff to exploring the impact potential of their scholarly research and, crucially, by the support of the Department of Modern Languages and Cultures and the University’s Research and Enterprise Services. The latter granted seed funding (£2500) to Hird and Evans to pioneer the first of a series of gender training workshops for UK based NGO’s working on or in China, in September 2011. Hird was granted a Strategic Insights Placement with Ogilvy &amp; Mather Advertising (Shanghai), in October 2011, to apply his work on white-collar masculinity to exploring new avenues for advertising campaigns.</p> <p>The thematic pathways to impact that we have pursued follow our key research themes: gender and sexuality (Hird and Evans), visual culture of the Mao era (Evans), Christianity and political change (Wielander), local cultural heritage initiatives (Evans and Wang), transnational migration and diasporic identities (Wang and Wielander), and health and medical practices (Scheid). Our established record for high quality research on gender and sexuality and Mao era visual culture, and our long-term engagements with relevant non-academic interests have determined this submission’s selection of its case studies. However, our research outputs on other themes have attracted the attention of diverse public and professional outlets, promising significant impact in the future.</p> <p>Asian Studies research staff have numerous connections with diverse networks of academics and professionals in many fields and places, extending the reach of our research to NGOs (Ford Foundation, Marie Stopes International, Handicap International, Mother’s Bridge of Love), the UKFCO, BBC Radio and TV, London primary and secondary schools, Chinese state and civil organisations (All China Women’s Federation, Shaanxi Research Institute for Women and Family), and charitable and professional organisations (The Rights Trust, London Chinese Medical Centre). Formal networks set up by Evans (Co-Reach, ‘Changing Trajectories, Changing Tasks: Cultural Heritage in China’, 2009-2011) and Scheid (AHRC, ‘Traditional East Asian Medicine Research Network’, 2009-2011) have further contributed to the reach of our research through collaborative links with museums (V &amp; A, Menghe Museum (Changzhou, Jiangsu)), Overseas Chinese Museum (Beijing), Museum of Ethnography (Anren, Sichuan), Jianchuan Museum (Anren, Sichuan), heritage bodies (UNESCO (Beijing), Beijing Centre for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage and Chinese medical practitioners across Europe and East Asia.</p>

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These contacts and networks have greatly enhanced the reputation of our Asian Studies research and in so doing have established the basis for its impact. Although inevitably uneven across the different themes of our research, the routes to impact have typically taken the form of invitations to act as consultants, advisers, and coordinators of specific projects. Wielander, for example, was invited to give a consultancy presentation on Christians in China at an FCO workshop in 2011. Evans was invited to act as consultant on gender inequalities in Chinese business in China by Deloitte's (London) in 2010, and on young women's leisure activities in China by Flamingo London (2011), an international market research and branding company. Scheid has frequently acted as adviser and consultant to Chinese medical practices in the UK and abroad.

**c. Strategy and plans**

The University has placed great emphasis on innovation and impact – on 'research with a difference' – and the 175th anniversary celebrations of the institution gave a key place to profiling the impact of Westminster's research, including that of this submission (see <http://www.wmin.ac.uk/impact>). We have drawn on the opportunities and resources the University's Research and Enterprise Services offer to build up our research impact by 1) strengthening our capacity to reach to non-academic audiences through consolidating existing collaborative contacts and networks; 2) fostering new contacts and networks to disseminate our research, enhance our research reputation and hence the opportunities for impact, and 3) drawing on the assistance of our Faculty Research Development and Business Development Officers to explore funding opportunities to underwrite the links between our research and its impact.

Our plans for future impact are to embed and develop the strategies noted above. We shall give particular attention to enhancing the impact of research not included in this submission's case studies, and which already give evidence of considerable impact in the future, under the following themes:

- Christianity and political change in China: Since Wielander's organisation of the Contemporary China Centre's inaugural conference on Religion and the Charitable Society in 2010, attended by members of non-academic bodies and leading international academics, she has been invited to give radio interviews, public talks and a presentation to the FCO.
- Transnational migration and London's Chinese community: Wang's 2010 co-organisation of a conference with London-based Chinese artists and gallery curators initiated a shift in his research interests from mainland-Hong Kong migration to the broader Chinese diaspora. He is now involved in fieldwork with members of London's Chinese community as part of a Departmental research group on diverse diasporic experiences in London, and involving collaborative links with film makers, curators, and representatives of community and charitable organisations.
- Chinese medical practices in Western contexts; Scheid's cross-disciplinary research network has brought together researchers and practitioners to discuss the integration of East Asian medicines into contemporary healthcare in the West. He is closely connected with clinicians across Europe and China, and his research has significantly contributed to the revitalization of the 'traditional' Menghe current and museum in Changzhou, Jiangsu.
- Localities and cultural heritage: Emerging out of Evans' international network (Co-Reach) on cultural heritage in China, Evans' and Wang's recent work has led to a range of connections with museums, heritage practitioners and policy personnel, and local heritage sites in China. Evans was invited to act as expert consultant to the Beijing office of UNESCO in 2011. Most recently, her research has led to a large three-year grant from The Leverhulme Trust (£201,000), a significant component of which addresses the immediate, practical needs of communities in south-western China to give material and visual form to their own understandings of heritage.

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Regular group meetings of the Asian Studies staff will focus on enhancing the impact potential of these research themes, all of which already indicate rich impact potential. Throughout, primary attention will be given to the quality of the research underpinning the impact and to the coherence of the links between the research and its impact-related activities, in order to maintain Westminster's reputation for 'research that makes a difference.'

**d. Relationship to case studies**

Our two case studies well exemplify our approach to facilitating impact in the period leading up to this submission. In the first instance, they demonstrate the importance of encouraging staff to take an active approach to applying their research to non-academic interests and needs. On this basis, our approach has centred on disseminating our research among targeted outlets whose work and interests overlap with those of our research, and establishing, developing and maintaining sustainable relationships with stakeholders. Evans, for example, has numerous ties with networks of academics and professionals, as well as with individuals working in NGOs, China's state and mass organisations, charities, UK schools, and more (See above and REF5). Despite the brevity of his research career, Hird has developed many important links with individuals and networks in China that can disseminate his work and thus its impact value. The Director of Renmin University's Institute of Sexuality, for example, has introduced Hird to many professional individuals and groups working on issues of sexuality in China, thereby enhancing his research reputation some time before his first scholarly publication. In both cases, dissemination of their research among targeted professionals and groups, and the pursuit and maintenance of relationships with them have been crucial to strengthening their research impact on public debate, professional practice and education.

University support at all levels has been essential to facilitating the activities and pathways to impact, as is demonstrated in the two case studies. For example, the Research and Enterprise Services supported Hird to undertake consultancy work for Ogilvy and Mather in Shanghai (2011), and Hird and Evans to hold their gender training workshop (2011). Generous support from the University and Faculty enabled Evans' curation of the exhibition 'Poster Power' (2011).