

Impact template (REF3a)

Institution:	University of Northumbria at Newcastle
Unit of Assessment:	29 - English Language and Literature
<p>a. Context</p> <p>The UoA is strongly committed to undertaking research relevant and beneficial to a variety of stakeholders and to building a culture in which impact is seen as integral to the operation of all of our research groups. We can already demonstrate significant impact activity across the three main subjects encompassed by the unit: Literature, Creative Writing and Linguistics. The types of impact generated include the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preserving, conserving and presenting cultural heritage, specifically through engaging with regional heritage attractions. 2. Changing modes of creative practice (including poetry and music) and stimulating a wider public to engage in new forms of reflection concerning the evaluation of culture. 3. Improving the services provided by practitioners in areas such as second language teaching and the clinical treatment of depression. 4. Fostering amongst the general public new levels of self-awareness in relation to mental wellbeing or the effect of routine-based activity on the formation of personal identity. <p>During the REF period, these impacts have benefited a range of users and audiences, including: the British Council, the National Trust, the creative writing community in the North, ELT professionals, medical practitioners and health service user groups, the Laurence Sterne Trust at Shandy Hall, the Shipley Art Gallery (Gateshead), the Wordsworth Trust at Dove Cottage, the Sage Gateshead and the Star and Shadow Cinema, Newcastle.</p>	
<p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>The practice of developing research projects in collaboration with partners, allowing for a flow of benefit in both directions, has become fundamental to our approach to impact, with most of our case studies arising out of partnership activity. This model is one in which we work with partners towards the realisation of agreed and pre-conceived public benefits based on planned or existing research outcomes, with the beneficiaries of our research often being identified at an early point. This approach has meant that the generation of the research and the resulting impact have often occurred nearly simultaneously, with the research in some cases being shared with and used by partners even before it has been published through conventional academic channels (see, for example, 'C18 Literature and Heritage'). Over the last few years, we have built links with a wide range of partners over and above those represented by our case studies, including the regional writing agency New Writing North, the Tyneside Cinema, Theatre Royal, the 'Lit & and Phil', and the People's Theatre (all in Newcastle). This general policy aligns with Northumbria's institutional mission to be a business-facing university, with a particular remit to support the professions and with a civic commitment to creating and fostering a range of 'entrepreneurial, social and cultural collaborations throughout the North East of England'.</p> <p>Although most of our case studies involve regional partnerships, the reach of our impact transcends the regional. For example, the art exhibition on '18th-Century Blues: Exploring the Melancholy Mind' at the Shipley Art Gallery (2008), forming part of the 'Culture and Disease' case study, which displayed paintings and other artefacts drawn from the British Museum, the V&A, the National Portrait Gallery, Tate Britain and other major institutional lenders, was a national exhibition hosted by a regional gallery. Another example is Hall's case study, which grows out of a relationship with the British Council and demonstrates impact on ELT professionals in 65 countries.</p> <p>A prominent aspect of our approach to impact is the presentation of scholarly research through a variety of media in ways that maximise its impact. For example, Tony Williams' AHRC-funded project on 'The writer walking the dog: creative writing practice and everyday life', which uncovers the role of routine-based activity in shaping social and creative identities, involves practice-led research, creative walks for the public and a video-poem. Similarly, Hansen's case study 'Litpop', brings together music and literature, while 'Culture and Disease' and 'C18 Literature and Heritage'</p>	

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both involve literature, performance and art. This use of a variety of media across our impact activities has enabled us to engage a more diverse range of audience types, including school parties and young people.

The way in which impact has been managed as an aspect of our research culture has changed during the REF period. Initially, such work was developed through central direction from the Faculty, via an impact committee (chaired by Terry, a member of this UoA), meeting twice a semester, on which each UoA was represented by an 'impact champion'. The role of the champion was to support colleagues in exploring ways of developing impact from their research, while the committee helped draw down support for impact projects and to advise on appropriate impact pathways and methodologies for evaluating impact. Since 2012, however, we have managed and supported impact at UoA level. The impact champions work with the Research Leader on allocating workload support for specific impact projects. Other costs generated by impact-related activities are met out of the standard research budget, though researchers are encouraged to apply for institutional or external funding. The University has a public engagement and impact fund (based on HEIF income) managed by Research and Business Services (RBS), which has provided support for much of the impact reported in our submitted case studies. Impact objectives can also be included in sabbatical applications. For example, Wetherall-Dickson, Ingram, Hansen and Hall have all benefited from recent sabbaticals that included not just time for research but also for the planned generation of related impacts.

Both the UoA and the Faculty recognise the importance of training in order to help staff identify impact opportunities and to provide the skills necessary to exploit them. We also foster the same mentality in our postgraduate research community, encouraging doctoral students to develop dissemination and impact plans alongside their thesis research. We work closely with the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement, partly arising from the election of Helen Williams, a member of staff in this UoA, as an NCCPE public engagement ambassador, with a brief to promote a culture of public engagement. On 15 February 2013, for example, she ran a training session on outreach and impact issues for 20 postgraduate delegates across the region entitled 'Making your Research Relevant – Public Engagement through Partnerships'. In the same month, the consultant Amy Franks delivered two 'Presenting for Impact' workshops for Northumbria ECRs and doctoral students, teaching them how to 'pitch' their research to non-academic audiences.

c. Strategy and plans

We expect the majority of our relationships with key partners to evolve and deepen, with the impact activity reported here providing a building block for the next five years. Our connection with Shandy Hall, for example, began with the award of an AHRC CDA studentship (2009-12), which allowed the award-holder to feed the findings of her own research into exhibitions and outreach events organised by the Hall. In 2012, we worked with the Laurence Sterne Trust on a successful application to the HLF 'Your Heritage' scheme. This is enabling us to run a heritage education and participation project based on a manuscript, owned by Shandy Hall, which paints a fascinating picture of eighteenth-century York. We are already working with the Trust on a further bid to the Digital Research and Development Fund for the Arts, where our involvement will be crucial both at the bidding stage and in the delivery of the project.

One key project, currently at an early stage of development, which can be seen as epitomising our forward strategy, is 'Shakespeare in the North' (2014-17). It illustrates particularly well our interaction with partners and the way that we tend to dovetail research and impact objectives at an early point within the formulation of a project. This project reflects the research interests of Hansen (the cultural appropriation of Shakespeare) and Smialkowska (the 1916 commemoration of Shakespeare's death) and will examine Shakespeare's 'time' in the North, the representation of the North in his plays and the regional appropriation of Shakespeare. It will include a public festival in 2016 and will involve partnerships with Tyne and Wear Archives, which holds numerous playbills relating to performances of Shakespeare in the North; and two theatre companies, the Theatre Royal (home of the RSC in Newcastle) and the People's Theatre. While the project is still in its planning stage, with external bids currently in preparation, these details give a sense of the UoA's

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aspirations for future impact, involving the early identification of beneficiaries and the generation of nationally and internationally significant impact from a regional context. As we develop further as a research unit, we will support each of our groups, through workload allowances and seed-corn funding, to develop impact and public engagement, with their own set of regional, national or international partners.

Over the next five years we will develop the potential of our research to underpin training and facilitation for professional and community groups. Our expertise on the literature of the First World War, for example, underpins Einhaus' AHRC-funded project on the teaching of WW1 in the classroom; Einhaus and Baxter's plans to deliver a workshop (2014) to RAF cadets on the same subject; and our collaborative bid to AHRC to be part of a Centre for WW1 Commemoration, advising community groups on securing funding for their commemorative projects. We intend also to extend our relations with New Writing North, already cemented through a HEIF strategic partnership, to develop skills' training for the professional writing sector, based on Northumbria's expertise in practice-based research. In addition, we will deepen our links with regional and national heritage attractions, producing research that helps them develop their visitor narratives and extends the knowledge-base of their staff. This aspiration links with our membership of an AHRC-funded Centre for Doctoral Training (from 2014) with a specific remit, unique in the sector, to provide world-class training for the heritage sector.

d. Relationship to case studies

The impacts set out in our case studies fall into several discrete areas, but reflect in general our strategic objectives to extend and enrich the engagement of users with cultural heritage; to support the professional reflection and growth of practitioners in the areas of medicine, education and creative practice; and to contribute to the business growth of our partner organisations through increasing public engagement and footfall:

Preserving, conserving and presenting cultural heritage. The 'C18 Literature and Heritage' case study demonstrates the way that Northumbria research has impacted on visitor attractions in their interpretation of heritage. This is both an impact on how these organisations understand that heritage and an impact on visitor engagement with these attractions. The creation of new 'visitor stories' has allowed these organisations to realise their public engagement objectives in fresh ways. We have also changed the horizon of operation of Seaton Delaval Hall and Shandy Hall through co-owning projects and working in tandem to prepare funding bids.

Creating new forms of artistic and social expression. The 'Litpop' case study exemplifies how Northumbria research has impacted both on members of the public and on creative practitioners in stimulating new forms of awareness and reflection. Underpinned by Adam Hansen's research on the relation between literature and popular music, and based on a monthly bookclub and other related public engagement events, 'Litpop' has led to changes in cultural assumptions and creative practices.

Influencing the ideas and practices of professions. The case study on 'Culture and Disease' shows how research conducted at Northumbria on the relationship between patients and eighteenth-century mental health practitioners ('mad doctors' as they were then called) has influenced practitioners today in their attitude towards the clinical treatment of depression. Similarly, Graham Hall's 'Own-language study', based on research supported by the British Council, has spanned the divide between ELT theory and classroom practice, influencing the attitudes and pedagogic practices of teachers on a world-wide scale. As with those that have grown out of our partnerships with heritage organisations, these impacts concern the way that academic research has benefited professional groups through more effective delivery of their services or increased engagement with their audiences.

The case studies presented here reflect the overarching goals of our impact strategy: in particular, engagement with community and professional groups to enable them to change and improve their practices.