

Institution: University College London

Unit of Assessment: 29 – English Literature and Language

a. Context

The UCL English Department enjoys a significant and multifaceted public profile. It has a longstanding commitment to reaching beyond academia to share research findings and expertise with the widest possible audience. That commitment was developed by previous Heads of Department, including Sir Stephen Spender, Sir Frank Kermode, Karl Miller (founder of the *London Review of Books*), and John Sutherland. The Department particularly contributes to the cultural life of the nation and to the preservation, conservation, and presentation of its cultural heritage. We also make a significant contribution to the promotion and reinterpretation of important sources of cultural capital, and to public engagement with and debate about these cultural and artistic resources. Key beneficiaries include members of the public with interests in English language and literature from the Anglo-Saxon period to the present day, or in the history of film. Media professionals, especially those working in radio, television and print journalism, make frequent use of our research expertise, particularly in relation to the contemporary novel. Beneficiaries therefore include the producers and researchers – as well as the audiences – of numerous television and radio programmes, and the editors as well as the readers of broadsheets such as *The Guardian* and *The Telegraph*, and literary papers such as the *Times Literary Supplement*, *London Review of Books*, and *New York Review of Books*. In addition to its broad public significance, our research has had important impacts on certain aspects of secondary education, notably the teaching of English grammar in secondary schools, through our novel use of mobile platforms. Our provision of expert advice to the exam boards Edexcel and OCR allows us to expand the range of our research beneficiaries to include those responsible for UK curriculum design. We deliver these impacts through the approaches detailed below, capitalising on our central London location, illustrious tradition of literary journalism, and strong links with media partners, as well as on UCL's commitment to sharing research findings with the broadest possible non-academic audiences.

b. Approach to impact

The Unit's approach to delivering impact focuses particularly on knowledge transfer activities, the centrality of which is reflected in their incorporation into the assessment criteria used for all staff members' biannual appraisals, and as a vital component in applications for promotion. The Department's Research Committee, which meets termly and oversees its overall impact strategy, recognizes the need to foster good relations with editors in all fields; it encourages research explicitly aimed at popular markets, and supports staff engagement with the media as a means of connecting a wide public audience with our research. Relations with editors are established and maintained on an individual basis, but media contacts are also shared within the Unit to ensure that our research is made as visible and available as possible.

The publication of research-based books specifically intended to reach out to a popular audience is a striking feature of the Department's approach. Mullan's *What Matters in Jane Austen*, for example, has sold a total of 25,000 copies since its publication in 2012; and the paperback edition of his *How Novels Work* has sold more than 12,000 copies since 2008. The many editions of classics published by members of the Department in series such as New Penguin Shakespeare, Arden Shakespeare, Penguin Classics, Oxford World's Classics, Fyfield Books, Faber Poet to Poet, BFI Film Classics and The Library of America likewise testify to our shared belief in the importance of making the highest standards of textual scholarship available to the book-buying public, including those studying for GCSE or A Level qualifications. Editions published since 2008 include Weis's Arden *Romeo and Juliet* (11,000 copies sold since publication in 2012) and Horne's Penguin Classics edition of Henry James's *The Portrait of a Lady* (10,000 copies sold since publication in 2012). Horne's 2003 Penguin Classics edition of *Oliver Twist* has sold over 70,000 copies in the reporting period. Aarts's grammar textbook *English Syntax and Argumentation* has sold nearly 20,000 copies since 2008, and his *Oxford Modern English Grammar* 12,000 copies. These publications show the Department's importance to the publishing industry, as well as its success in making scholarship in English relevant to a broad spectrum of readers.

The Department is proud of its engagement with the world of literary journalism and regularly contributes reviews (ranging from 400-word notices to 5,000-word scholarly assessments), articles

Impact template (REF3a)

on books and films, and extracts from forthcoming books to high circulation papers and magazines; in turn, many of our research outputs have received widespread coverage in the mainstream press. Since 2008, writing by Department staff has featured prominently in the *Times Literary Supplement* (Ashton, Atkinson, Beaumont, Bowlby, Ford, Dart, Davis, Hackett, Rennie, Sayeau, Shell, Smith, Woudhuysen, and many PhD students); *The Guardian* (Dart, Ford, Horne, Irvine, Mullan); *The New Statesman* (Bowlby, Sayeau, Smith); the *London Review of Books* (Beaumont, Bowlby, Ford, Hackett, Mullan); the *New York Review of Books* (Ford); *The Telegraph* (Boddy, Horne, Mullan, Swaab); and *The Observer* (Horne, Mullan, Sayeau). We have also written for *The Independent*, *The New York Times Book Review*, *The Evening Standard*, *The Daily Mail*, *The Times*, *The Financial Times*, *The Spectator*, *Bookforum*, *The Economist*, the *Times Higher Education Supplement*, *Metro*, *Time Out*, *The Big Issue*, *Frieze* and *Sight and Sound*. Our use of popular media as a means of enhancing public awareness of and engagement with the subjects of our research extends, too, to contributions to numerous radio and television programmes. Since 2008, members of the Department have appeared on Radio 4's *In Our Time*, *Saturday Review*, *Front Row*, *Today*, *Poetry Please*, *What's So Great About...?*, *Open Book*, *Things We Forgot to Remember*, *Word of Mouth*, *Click On*, *Thinking Allowed*, *Woman's Hour*, and *A Point of View*; on Radio 3's *The Verb*, *Radio 3 Essay* and *Nightwaves*; on the World Service's *London Chronicles* and *Click*; on BBC 2's *Newsnight Review*, *Review Show*, *The Culture Show*, and *Unfinished Masterpieces*; on BBC 4's *How Reading Made Us Modern* and *The Century that Wrote Itself*; and on Sky Arts's *Mariella's Book Show*. Many of these reach large audiences: *In Our Time* which has featured Ashton, Swaab, Hackett and Mullan, is one of BBC radio's most successful programmes, reaching more than two million listeners and achieving monthly downloads in excess of 350,000.

To extend the reach of our engagement with and impact on non-academic audiences, we also make key strands of our research available online. The most significant and popular examples of this approach comprise sites pertaining to: the Centre for Editing Lives and Letters, which has a growing international following on its social media (a recent Facebook post reached over 1,000 people); the Colonial Film project (32,000 hits per month); the Internet Grammar of English (17,000 hits per month); and the Bloomsbury Project (3,500 hits per month). Podcasts of UCL Lunchtime Lectures given by members of the Department are available through iTunes U and YouTube: Rosemary Ashton's lecture, 'John Bull vs Stinkomalee' (9 February, 2012) has been accessed more than 2,000 times on YouTube. The Unit also seeks, where possible, to make use of digital technologies to share teaching and learning resources. Examples include our recent development of a web-based platform for the teaching of English grammar in secondary schools, and of the Internet Grammar of English (IGE). The related interactive Grammar of English (iGE) was made available in August 2011 as a purchasable app for smartphones and tablets (see UCL29-AAR).

Between 2008 and 2013 we launched or participated in a wide range of public engagement events creating significant pathways to impact. Notable examples include Bloomsbury Day (12 March, 2010, attended by over 300), set up to share the findings of the Unit's Bloomsbury Project (UCL29-ATK); and the One Day in the City project. The latter, sponsored by the Man Booker Prize, centred on a one-day festival of London (15 June, 2012, attended by over 600) bringing academics, writers, filmmakers, school-teachers and schoolchildren together to discuss, perform, and reflect on life in the capital and the art it has inspired. First Story, an organization promoting creativity, literacy and talent in UK schools, supported the participation of 60 children from underprivileged local schools, who worked with professional writers on compositions based on artefacts from the British Museum. Participating writers included A.S. Byatt, Alan Hollinghurst, Will Self, and Iain Sinclair. In partnership with the Bartlett School of Architecture and the UCL Art Museum, the Department also curated a 6-month exhibition (June-December 2012) of books and artworks linked to our urban research interests; this attracted 2330 visitors and generated four pop-up talks. An earlier exhibition, *Word and Image* (15 September-16 December 2011), co-curated by Hackett, received 1,337 visitors and generated six pop-up talks and a joint event with Christies Education. An online video of the exhibition was viewed 1,649 times. Dart and Weis have together contributed 20 essays to Royal Opera House programmes disseminated to some 120,000 operagoers. Swaab and Horne have communicated key facets of their research specialisms in cinema to wide public audiences through their respective curation and introduction of a season of 44 screenings of *Screwball Comedies* at the NFT in January 2013, and a season of the films of Thorold Dickinson at the Lincoln Center in New York (March 2008) and the Barbican (November 2008). Swaab, Ford,

Impact template (REF3a)

Mullan and Hackett also presented events based on their research at the UCL Festival of the Arts. Two pioneering members of staff, Stevens and North, have capitalized on training offered by UCL's Public Engagement Unit to deliver stand-up routines based on their research at UCL's monthly comedy night, Bright Club. Hackett oversaw the production by her PhD students of Samuel Daniel's rarely performed *Tragedie of Cleopatra* at Goodenough College before an audience of 250 on 3 March, 2013, a project funded by the UCL Grand Challenge of Intercultural Interaction and the UCL European Institute. The performance was recorded and is now available on DVD.

We also enjoy working with our partner schools, UCL Academy and City and Islington (CANDI). Hackett delivered a workshop based on Daniel's *Cleopatra* for 30 Year 12 students at UCL Academy (May 2013). In collaboration with Michael Stewart (UCL Anthropology) and supported by £5,000 from UCL's Grand Challenges Sustainable Cities initiative, Shepley ran eight workshops entitled *Storyboarding the City* for 24 Year 12 pupils at UCL Academy (10 June-19 July, 2013). In May 2013 Weis delivered a seminar based on his research on *King Lear* to 30 students at CANDI.

c. Strategy and plans

As well as sustaining the wide range of activities and impacts outlined above, we intend to build on existing initiatives and partnerships and to identify new audiences for our research and new ways of ensuring and maximising the benefits we are able to deliver.

- Internal assessment, drivers and support: The Department's Research Committee will continue to emphasize the importance of factoring impact into all research projects. An Impact Adviser will be appointed to the Research Committee in 2014, and Peter Florence, founder of the immensely successful Hay Festival, will be appointed as external Impact Adviser. All staff will be required to record their impact activity through UCL's Institutional Research Information System (IRIS). Teaching relief will be granted to those heavily involved in impact activity.
- Maintaining significant projects and partnerships: We will expand our contributions to the UCL Festival of the Arts and maintain our One Day in the City initiative. The Unit also intends to broaden its engagement with our two partner schools. From September 2013 we will be presenting two visiting enrichment seminars per term to students at the Academy, and running an annual seminar for Academy English teachers on the A Level texts that they are teaching. In addition, 6-10 2nd-year UCL English undergraduates will act as academic mentors for 20 of the Academy's A2 A Level candidates. This programme will be extended to CANDI in 2014.
- New partnerships: As well as expanding the range of benefits we deliver to existing partners, the Unit intends to increase the range of its impacts by developing productive new partnerships, including with the Hay Festival and the London Review Bookshop: from September 2013 the bookshop will host our Frank Kermode Seminar, an annual panel discussion for general audience.
- Using new technologies to connect with non-academic audiences: In partnership with UCL's Open Docs School (supported by HEIF), work will soon begin to develop a downloadable app offering an interactive, immersive and engaging form of MOOC-type research sharing platform. In the first instance this app will feature Mullan's work and make use of BBC archive footage. This partnership is intended to engage new audiences through state-of-the art technology; if successful, it will be expanded to feature research by other members of staff. Forthcoming apps include *UCL Spelling and Punctuation* and *UCL Academic Writing*.

d. Relationship to case studies

The four submitted case studies exemplify our commitment to finding and targeting non-academic audiences for our research; they also illustrate the diversity of means by which we engage those audiences. Impacts described in UCL29-MUL are achieved through the traditional media of newspapers, radio and television, whilst those in UCL29-AAR derive from the development and use of new technologies. The Colonial Film Project and Ashton's Bloomsbury Project (UCL29-GRI and UCL29-ATK) exemplify the Unit's use of websites to make archival material publicly accessible. They also indicate the importance we place on developing partnerships with organisations from the cultural heritage sector, and on staging public events. The reach and significance demonstrated in all four case studies suggest the effectiveness of the Department's approach to impact; they have provided useful models that have significantly shaped – and will continue to shape – our strategy and plans for future impact.