

Institution: University of Sheffield
Unit of Assessment: 29 - English Language and Literature
<p>a. Context</p> <p>The School of English (SoE) is a large, diverse academic unit, based in the Faculty of Arts & Humanities. It has an established culture of public engagement arising from socially conscious research projects, founded on the tradition of civic cooperation that is characteristic of the University and its history, and in recognition of which Sheffield was THES University of the Year 2011. SoE specializes in work that reflects on identity and ideas of community, and has a strong tradition of concern for oral history and the role of story-telling in constructing an understanding of self, place, and 'other'. We are situated in a city with a thriving cultural scene (e.g. Sheffield Theatres, Museums of Sheffield, Poetry Business, Bank Street Arts, Showroom Cinema, as well as numerous arts festivals, including Docfest and Off the Shelf) and there are strong links between SoE and these institutions, as well as local schools. Colleagues also work with organisations such as the NHS Sheffield Health and Social Care Trust, national organisations (e.g. BBC, British Library, English Heritage, National Trust, Royal Shakespeare Company), and international organisations (e.g. PEN, World Theatre Festival, Zagreb). All statistics in this document are by FTE of Category A staff (50.9) with the addition of Stone (Professor, by Teaching Route).</p> <p>Our impact is social, cultural, and educational – 31 members of staff (59.7%) have been involved in over 50 different projects with local communities, schools, and almost 40 different organizations in the arts, heritage, social-care, and voluntary sectors – as well as economic, from the help afforded publishers and arts organizations to the £40m Toulmin helped raise to save Blackpool's Winter Gardens (see D29-5). It extends from local community-based projects to the international impact evident in Armitage's poetry (see D29-1) and O'Connor's work with the acclaimed experimental theatre company, Forced Entertainment. Main beneficiaries are: readers of literature; public audiences at live and broadcast events; students and teachers in schools and other HEIs; local communities (particularly marginalised groups, such as refugees, the long-term mentally ill, and residents of areas of economic disadvantage); museums, galleries, and heritage sites; writers and artists; independent presses. To reach these diverse audiences, our impact activities take various forms: festivals, talks, exhibitions; collaborative projects co-creating knowledge with non-academic groups; published books, articles, and web-based resources. These resources and activities generate social, cultural, educational, and economic impact, creating and interpreting cultural capital to enrich and expand imaginations and sensibilities and improving health and quality of life.</p>
<p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>SoE has had a long-standing commitment to public-facing research pre-dating the census period, including collaborations with local heritage sites such as Sheffield Cathedral, for researched undergraduate modules (e.g. Beal's 'Sense of Place', 2003-), or the foundation by McDonnell in 2002 of 'Acting Together', an educational theatre company working with Museums of Sheffield and local primary schools (see D29-4); these initiatives have had social, cultural, and educational impact on students and teachers in local schools, and have aided museums and heritage sites to reach different audiences, including socially and ethnically marginalised groups.</p> <p>Colleagues have worked to produce publications that are accessible to non-academic audiences, as evidenced through Armitage's best-selling poetry volumes (see D29-1), Beal's textbook, <i>Regional Englishes</i> (see D29-2), or <i>Blackbox Manifold</i>, an open-access on-line poetry journal, founded by Piette in 2008. It is now in its 10th issue (100,000 hits and 10,000 unique visitors for 2012). These publications epitomise our approach to impact, which is driven by a belief that engaging widely does not mean diluting the quality of the research or the complexity of the issues. As a forum bringing together established and emerging poets, <i>Blackbox Manifold</i> also exemplifies the ways in which we seek to develop and extend existing networks, and many of the high-profile contributing poets (e.g. Paul Muldoon, Peter Robinson, Sharon Olds, George Szirtes, Peter Manson) subsequently visited Sheffield to give public readings, contributing to the city's cultural scene. In 2008-13, 14 members of SoE (26.8%) have contributed on their research to non-academic publications (including the BBC website, <i>Telegraph</i>, <i>Guardian</i>) and blogs, acting in an educative capacity by communicating knowledge of their field to non-specialists.</p> <p>Over the census period, SoE has formalised impact as part of its expected research culture, focusing on creating opportunities and developing expertise. SoE has a culture of sharing good</p>

practice: colleagues with deep experience in this area make themselves available for advice, e.g. Stone as Director of Teaching and Learning (Civic Engagement) and Toulmin as the University's Head of Cultural Engagement; show-casing activities are included at the annual Research Away Day; and there is a genuine School-wide celebration of – and invitations to – public engagement events, so awareness is high and the collegial nature of SoE means that contacts and experiences of working with external organisations are routinely shared. The University provides media training, and staff are encouraged to attend master-classes run by the University's Public Engagement with Research team, which works alongside the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement. Impact activity is rewarded in the promotions round and is integral to the Staff Development Review Scheme (see REF5ci); it is also recognised in workloads and the recruitment of new staff, helping foster the School's outward-facing ethos.

Public-facing research activity is further enabled by the **University and Faculty framework**. It is built into the University's 2010 mission statement, and strategically governed by the University's Impact, Innovation and Knowledge Exchange Advisory Group, working through the Faculty Research & Innovation Committee and the Faculty Committee for External Relations, both of which are chaired by members of SoE (Linn, Hodson). The Faculty's Engagement Projects Officer and Marketing & External Engagement Officer help co-ordinate public-facing projects and develop relationships with external partners, for example by organising regular networking events. These have led to the establishment of new projects and partnerships, such as the HEIF5-funded 'Sonnets in the Park' (Shrank), which produced an exhibition of creative responses to Shakespeare's sonnets in collaboration with an arts charity (Art in the Park), poets, an artist, the long-term mentally ill, pensioners in sheltered accommodation (all of whom left school at 14), and participants in the youth criminal justice scheme.

The **support and training** available mean that colleagues are eager to get involved in impact activities. For example, in September 2012, nine colleagues showcased their research in either the Festival of the Mind (funded by the University and Sheffield City Council) or at the first annual Arts & Humanities Researchers' Night, and during the census period 11 colleagues have curated or contributed to 20 different exhibitions arising from their research, at venues including the British Library. These public events generate cultural and educational benefits. To help consolidate Sheffield's place on the creative map, in 2011 Gavins and Armitage founded the 'Sheffield Lyric Festival', a 3-day annual event whose past speakers have included renowned poets Carol Ann Duffy, Tony Harrison, Jackie Kay, Linton Kwesi Johnson, Jo Shapcott. SoE has also enriched Sheffield's cultural scene through helping found, fund, and organise the week-long Sheffield Poetry Festival (founded 2012, with Armitage as patron), featuring local, national, and international writers, and providing a valuable opportunity for independent presses to promote their writers (with economic benefits). Collaboration with independent publishers is also evidenced by a long-standing relationship with the Poetry Business, which printed *The Sheffield Anthology* (2013), a collection of 101 poems (ed. Lehoczky/Piette), and the anthology *YSP* arising from the Creative Writing in the Community project (2010-11), organised by Gavins *et alia* in collaboration with the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, and involving local reading groups, secondary school teachers, and Y10 and Y11 school children.

Commitment to outward-looking research is further indicated by the **external funding** obtained by SoE staff during the census period for projects with substantial public-facing elements, including over £1m from AHRC (Babbage/Steadman-Jones, Co-Is, 'Archives of Exile', £154,939, 2009-11; Hodson/Steadman-Jones, Co-Is, 'Language as Talisman', £31,739, 2012-13; Ladkin, 'Against Value', £26,671, awarded 2013; Linn, 'Ola Nordman', £160,204, 2011-13; Moore, 'Scilly Voices', £160,246, 2011-13; Nevitt, Co-I, 'Participating in Search Design', £160,477, 2011-13; Steadman-Jones, PI, 'Writing in the Home and in the Street', £31,930, 2010-11, and 'Translating Performance', £23,993, 2012; Steadman-Jones, Co-I, 'Transmitting Musical Heritage', £78,223, 2012, and 'Communicating Wisdom', £31,956, 2013-16; Toulmin, 'Admission All Classes', £173,731, 2007-10); and almost £175,000 from HEIF3 (2008), HEIF4 (2008-11) and HEIF5 (2012-), for projects including (i) 'Sheffield Voices' (Hodson) and (ii) 'Sheffield Studies Film' (Forrest/Rayner), both of which worked with local primary schools from socially disadvantaged areas of the city. The first project increased pupils' understanding of the relationship between language and identity; the second developed visual literacy (in line with Sheffield City Council's 'Every Sheffield Child Articulate and Literate' scheme) and pupils' awareness of how communities interpret cityscapes and construct urban identities.

Considerable effort is also devoted to developing **sustainable relationships** which respect the institutional cultures of our partners, their needs, and constraints. The longevity of many of our partnerships is testament to the success of this approach. For example, Banks Street Arts began as a partner in the AHRC-funded 'Archives of Exile' project; it is now a regular host of well-attended public poetry readings run by SoE; is a beneficiary of impact projects such as the Creative Writing in the Community Project, Sheffield Lyric Festival (hosting readings and related exhibitions), and Festival of the Mind; it has Armitage as patron and Piette as trustee. Other on-going partnerships include Blackpool City Council, Sheffield City Council, Museums of Sheffield, Sheffield Theatres, and Sheffield Health and Social Care NHS Foundation Trust (see D29-3, D29-4, D29-5).

The reputation of SoE staff as **skilled communicators** of high quality research means that colleagues are regularly approached to share their expertise, with cultural and educative impact. In the census period, 24 colleagues gave over 50 discrete public talks in almost 40 different locations, including the Barbican (Rayner), Virginia Woolf Society (Regis), Freud Museum (Vice), Prince's Trust (Wright), and – locally – Sheffield Theatres, Showroom Cinema, and at the city's arts festivals, such as On the Shelf and Grin up North; this figure does not include the numerous public appearances by our creative writers (Armitage, Lehoczky, Miller) and Professor of Performance (O'Connor). Thirteen colleagues have discussed their research on radio and television, including high-profile channels such as BBC Radio 3, Radio 4, 5Live, and BBC TV. Colleagues have also acted as consultants for external organisations, in the media (e.g. BBC (Hollo, Williams), Shine Limited (on CBBC's *Merlin*, Faulkner)), the heritage industry (e.g. Bolsover Castle, English Heritage (Nevitt)), education (e.g. AQA (Beal), EDEXCEL (Barton, Gavins), National Holocaust Memorial Day Trust (Vice)), and the theatre (e.g. RSC (Rutter), Sheffield Theatres (Rutter, Shrank)).

Colleagues in SoE play an important role in helping organisations develop their **informational resources** to allow them to engage with the public in a meaningful way: e.g. from 2008 Moore has collaborated with the Isles of Scilly Museum and community members to develop an open-access, on-line oral history database, consolidating the islanders' sense of connectedness with place, as well as providing a teaching resource used nationally by GCSE teachers of English language. Other examples include the 'Nostell Priory' project (Bray/Mathison, 2011-) to archive and improve public access to, and understanding of, the 18th-century collections at this National Trust property; and Nevitt's collaboration with Derbyshire Records Office (2011-) to develop a wikisite so that disparate users of their collections can share knowledge relevant to the material.

Many of these projects draw on the expertise of colleagues in HRI Digital (see REF5d) and make **innovative use of technology** not just to disseminate knowledge, but also create it; e.g. 'Ola Nordman' traces the experience of transatlantic migration through an interactive website which is also used to gather information from the descendants of Scandinavian migrants. SoE employs a technician with specific responsibility for developing web-based communication, including a series of podcasts about feminism (7600 hits in the three months to 31.7.13) and a blog (9500 hits since its launch in March 2013 to 31.7.13). Our approach here is to utilise the most appropriate forms for engaging the public, be they web-based or live forms, as in Steadman-Jones' work with Rotherham schools and Children and Young People's Services for Rotherham, which makes creative use of film-making, discussion, craft, music, and story-telling activities to foster resilience and cultural agility in areas of socio-economic disadvantage (see also D29-3, D29-4, D29-5).

SoE also encourages the **next generation** of scholars to consider the relationship between academic research and the wider public, through the MA module 'Language and Literature in the Work Place', the 'Practical Public Engagement' module for PhD students, and involving PGRs and post-doctoral researchers in public-facing projects and activities, including the SoE blog.

c. Strategy and plans

Since many of our external partners are from the voluntary and/or arts and heritage sector, public-funding cuts mean that the environment in the immediate future is a testing one. To meet this challenge, we have developed structures to achieve **greater oversight of impact activities**, enabling us to be more strategic about the investment of time and money whilst nurturing a research environment that is genuinely outward-facing. Since September 2013 there has been a SoE Impact Committee, chaired by the Director of Impact, comprising representatives ('impact officers') from each of SoE's research clusters. It reports to the School's Research Strategy and Executive Committees, and thus feeds into overall School planning. Every researcher in SoE will

be asked to provide an impact plan for the next 1-3 years. These individual plans will be updated annually, discussed by research clusters to ensure a co-ordinated and collegial approach, and reviewed by the Impact Committee; this information will be collated and made available to all staff through shared on-line storage space. Research clusters will also be asked to identify and develop plans around significant anniversaries (e.g. 500 years of *Utopia*).

Existing activities will be consolidated: public-facing events such as Lyric, Researchers' Night, and the city's arts festivals will form a necessary part of our annual calendar, and impact activities will continue to be an integral part of discussions at the annual individual research meetings and Staff Development Reviews. Impact activity will be further supported by capitalising on **existing networks** which SoE has set up to encourage research impact, including the Sheffield Arts & Wellbeing Network (see D29-3). September 2013 also saw the launch of the interdisciplinary MA in Public Humanities, in which SoE staff will play a major role; this programme provides further opportunities for strengthening relationships with external partners.

Beyond these on-going activities, the Impact Committee will develop research impact through:

(i) **extending our range of partners** by identifying new institutions and areas with which we need to build relationships: e.g. developing projects in conjunction with colleagues in Medical Humanities Sheffield (established 2012) will reach new audiences and open up other sources of funding (e.g. Wellcome); working on a more formal footing with the National Association for the Teaching of English (NATE), based in Sheffield, will increase the potential reach of our educational impact by tapping into nationwide networks of teachers;

(ii) **exploring ways of maximizing the impact of the scholarly monograph** (e.g. through more effective, proactive, and imaginative liaison with the University's media team);

(iii) facilitating the **accurate measurement and recording of impact** through logs and feedback;

(iv) working with the directors of **research centres** in which colleagues are key stakeholders (see REF5b) to capitalize on their capacity for creating and co-ordinating impactful research;

(v) **developing new centres** which have the dissemination of research outside the academy as part of their key mission (e.g. a Centre for Gothic Studies will engage with the development of school curricula; the Centre for Poetry and Poetics will aim to encourage the impact of poetry on the general public).

The Director of Impact will also liaise with the Director of Research, the experienced Faculty External Engagement and Projects Officers, the chair of the Faculty's External Engagement Committee, and the Faculty-facing Research and Innovation team (see REF5d) to ensure that there is appropriate **support for colleagues** when applying for funding and developing and managing impactful projects. The Faculty also provides resources for larger, interdisciplinary projects; e.g. in 2013, it funded a postdoctoral researcher at Chatsworth House to consolidate relationships with curatorial staff there and scope out potential projects. Three major projects involving SoE staff (on 17th-century collections, Paxton letters, and Lady Georgiana's papers) are currently in development and will form a key part of our impact strategy over the next 5 years. Using a research assistant to identify multiple potential projects for a range of academics is also an efficient way of using seed money and will form part of our future strategy.

d. Relationship to case studies

The 5 case studies represent a small but important part of our wider activities and all exemplify the public engagement ethos of SoE, which is to marry socially-conscious research with public events or interventions that stage research questions in a manner that informs the public, benefits external partners, and provides potential for sustainable future collaboration. The key traits of SoE's approaches to impact are clearly delineated in the case studies: namely an interest in identity and community, and the value of arts and humanities research in recovering, preserving, articulating, or re-evaluating experience, particularly of marginalised sectors of society, e.g. through story-telling, archival recovery, or creative processes (writing, performance). D29-1 makes a powerful case for the continued relevance of poetry and imagination, be it as a means of sustaining Northerners' sense of identity at a local level, of combatting prejudice, or of communicating across national and cultural boundaries; D29-2 focuses on the public understanding of the social role and place of dialect and its place in the curriculum; D29-3 uses life-narrative as a means of making space for the frequently side-lined voices of minority groups; D29-4 works with multicultural communities, using drama to explore their sense of self, place, and relationship with 'elite' cultural spaces; D29-5 recuperates an undervalued working class culture and has saved Blackpool's Winter Gardens, benefitting an economically disadvantaged area both culturally and financially.