

<p><b>Institution: Middlesex University</b></p>
<p><b>Unit of Assessment: UoA35</b></p>
<p><b>Context</b>        This unit of assessment brings together music, theatre arts and dance. Middlesex has a long tradition of high quality academic and expert-practitioner research through co-creation with non-academic audiences. Our research has, historically and today, had impact in arts practice and reflexive creativity; cultural policy; cultural life. Our focus on practitioner research means that the beneficiaries of our research outside academia are found within arts milieux across the world and the UK: policymakers, professional arts organisations, practitioners, emerging artists, and children and the general public. In short we seek to maintain research that changes lives and challenges perceptions in meaningful, creative and productive ways.</p> <p><b>Approach to impact</b>  <b>Two mediating modes</b> of impact characterise the research tradition in the unit at Middlesex – <b>expert-practitioner research</b> and impact related to performance, and a commitment to <b>public realm and collaborative activity</b>. Impact from the unit has been generated by supporting expert practitioner-researchers, building sustainable relationships with partners, direct engagement with publics, participation in special interest groups/projects, and educational work beyond the UK.</p> <p><b>(i) Interaction with users, beneficiaries and audiences:</b> We have a long-term commitment to <i>expert-practitioner research</i> as a mode of interaction, exemplified in ResCen (Centre for Research into Creation in the Performing Arts (<a href="http://www.rescen.net">www.rescen.net</a>), founded in 1999 and led by Bannerman. This mode entails investigating and producing performance with direct impact on audiences. Our practice in music provides an example here. Dwyer, Impett, Fribbins and Wallen all contribute to the public understanding of new musical possibility as part of their research. Their creative research is performed in prestigious venues in the UK and Europe - for example, Fribbins' recent commissions (Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Swiss Embassy, Austrian government) reached a wide audience, and Wallen's work reached millions in the London 2012 Paralympics opening ceremony.</p> <p>Some of our research reaches transnational, or transcultural, beneficiaries. The ArtsCross series (see case study) developed a framework of cultural diplomacy and artistic dialogue, enabled by our partnerships with Beijing Dance Academy, Taipei National University of the Arts, Queen Mary, University of London, University of Exeter, Step Out Arts, The Place, and the Confucius Institute, Goldsmiths College, London. <i>Fostering of collaboration</i> beyond the institution has also been progressed for example, through the work of Dogantan-Dack in her ongoing collaborative work with the Marmara Piano Trio, and addressed by the 'On Collaboration' Symposia (2012, 2013), curated by early career scholar in theatre arts Sachsenmaier (with PhD candidate Colin) for both academics and artists – fostering a mutual exchange between spheres.</p> <p><b>(ii) The nature of relationships and interactions:</b> Informed and developed through wide-ranging activities in the <i>public realm</i>, impacts also develop through researchers working in <i>collaboration</i> with: funding bodies (eg. NESTA, EU, British Council, Arts Council); professional organisations (e.g. The Place, Dance4, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Paralympics 2012, ISTD and Dance Umbrella); Governmental bodies (eg. British Council, Chinese agencies, and Boddington with government think-tanks); and community/education groups (eg. Beijing Dance Academy). These formal relationships frame the context, and support generation, of impact of our work.</p> <p>Characteristic of our relationship with beneficiaries in performance research is a willingness to engage with 'performance as transformative act' (both personal and collective), allowing the research benefit to become an apparent additional, unforced feature of participation. A good example of centrality of developing practical working relationships is to be found in the work of Lee (see case study), whose inclusive dance practice benefits participants and, at the same time, constitutes the research project. Lizzy le Quesne noted that Lee's Square Dances were "[n]ot over-tested or delineated... the work was left naked and available, to take from it what we will. Quietly subversive and disarming, Square Dances enacted gentle freedoms: freedom to move, freedom to be still, and freedom to watch'. Enabling participants and views to feel comfortable in/with the research and enabling their understanding of the research nature of the public acts in which they are involved.</p> <p><b>(iii) Follow-through from these activities to identify and elaborate the resulting impacts:</b> We</p>

## Impact template (REF3a)

maintain it is essential for recipients to recognise the *extended* benefit from the articulation of performance as *research* if the full impact of the research is to be harnessed. Midgelow's direction of the Choreographic Lab and undertaking dance-writing with audiences (NottDance festival) exemplifies this approach and places it within the public realm. Care is taken to enable beneficiaries (artists and publics) to understand the wider benefits of such reflective research practice, such that the individuals involved are both participants and, at the same time, form the basis of the ongoing research. Her critical reflections (like those of Lee, Butcher, Brandstrup, Jeyasingh and many others in this unit), in turn inform her development of toolkits, resources and other practice/writings which have an impact upon the profession. Reaching into the public realm, Wallen's work, for example, has included several public (including broadcast) reflections on her work to coincide with performances, intended equally to reflect upon their reception (listed at <http://www.erollynwallen.com/calendar/archive>). Other examples include: 'On Taking Care' by Lee/ResCen and 'Miniatures Festival' by Butcher, while Dwyer's research-led performances (as guitarist and composer) have included *dialogue* with a live audience on the act of musical composition and performance. This integration of research with performance and (public) exchange is a strong characteristic of our orientation toward extending the benefit of research. Our researchers also extend the reach of such impacts via interactive websites/blogs (such as [www.Rescen.net](http://www.Rescen.net), [www.robotsandavatars.net](http://www.robotsandavatars.net) and [www.choreographiclab.org](http://www.choreographiclab.org)).

Professionally focused research has also been developed in dance pedagogy by Main, Donnelly and Bannerman. One aspect of this research activity is the accruing of archival materials documenting Robert Cohan's teaching mastery, while a co-funded PhD with Dance4 will investigate the government-funded Centre for Advanced Training as a model of innovative training for young people.

**(iv) Supporting staff to achieve impact from their research and, (v) Use of institutional facilities, expertise or resources in undertaking these activities:** Impact is driven and supported by the University and School research strategy. The staffing strategy for the unit includes the appointment of Creative Fellows (Butcher and Brandstrup), expert-practitioner researchers in ResCen (Boddington, Jeyasingh, Miller, Lee, Wallen and Layzell) and Professorial and Reader posts that emphasise professional practice (Bannerman, Dwyer, Midgelow, Impett). Indeed, across the University, high-profile senior figures from public life have also been appointed as fractional Professors of Professional Practice, as a conduit for impact between academic research and professional/industry fields. All staff are supported to understand and follow the 'pathways to impact' promoted by this unit and underpinned by training offered by The Research and Knowledge Transfer Office (RKTO) - providing specialist support in knowledge exchange to underpin our work. New facilities (Grove Building), skilled technical staff and equipment enhance the potential impacts.

**(vi) Other mechanisms deployed by the unit to support and enable impact:** Understanding creative processes anew and offering CPD type activities and publications has also been a key feature of our work: For examples projects by Butcher and Brandstrup (through mentoring), Jeyasingh (via BBC broadcasts, mentoring, educational resources), and Boddington (through NESTA funded investigations into technology and education). The demystification of creativity is also evident in the work of Melrose, Dogantan-Dack and Impett. The impact of Melrose's research into doctoral programmes has led to the development of PaR doctoral awards in a number of overseas HEIs and the innovative DArts at Middlesex. We are also members of 'The Cultural Capital Exchange', which serves to enhance our collaborations beyond HEI's and increase the visibility of our impact.

### c. Strategy and plans

**Our strategy:** The relationships between research, teaching and impact in performing arts are complex and rarely linear – with research and impact often being interwoven. This fact is central to our strategy for impact, which consists of three main elements: (i) consistent efforts to identify audiences and approaches to those audiences; (ii) providing high quality support for our staff to experiment in the creation of impact; and (iii) ensuring that research evolves in both of our mediating modes (induced above) in ways that allow impact activity to reinforce and develop research.

**Audience identification** results from close connections with regional, national and international partners and organisations, and our strategy relies upon our extending these - for example, new cooperation agreements are in place with several theatre/performance spaces which includes

## Impact template (REF3a)

scope for joint work with community and other groups. We intend the number of these arrangements to grow, while liaison with regional arts audiences has included exploring the use of new venues for hard-to-reach beneficiaries (for example, in collaboration with Enfield Council).

**Support for staff** to experiment with new types of impact generation within both of our mediating modes include the staffing support described above (section b. iv) but it also benefits from a freshly developed researcher development programme offered by the RKTO, an enterprise development programme (including identifying markets for our work), and UoA-specific workshops on skills for partnership development in knowledge exchange. In addition, we are planning enhanced researcher training for impact, informed by the National Centre for Co-ordinating Public Engagement, and external knowledge exchange programmes, using tools such as the Vitae RDF Planner to identify weakness as the basis for improving the skills of staff in relation to impact.

**Taking steps to allow impact to influence research** is the most difficult of the three elements to structure and plan. We regard this as best achieved by example, and the exposure of younger researchers and research students to the practices exemplified in some of the work discussed in section (b) above is essential to this. Practitioner-researchers use ResCen as a vehicle for this internal dialogue, as well as a means for ensuring their research reaches a wider audience. The School of Media and Performing Arts has plans to expand this 'internal dialogue' role of ResCen.

**Our Goals:** We will seek to build a larger number of partnerships and links to audiences, and find new ways of reaching beneficiaries through performance, including participation and technologies. With that aim in mind a number of projects, with specific target audiences/realms of impact and cross-discipline foci, are already identified for their potential to generate impact in cultural and performative spheres. These build on existing strengths and seek to bring researcher, partners and users together. These projects benefit professionals, organisations and individuals, enabling an enrichment of cultural and civic life through arts research. They also have the potential to influence policy and pedagogy and thereby contribute to wider understandings of the arts and enriching lives. Success in building new partnerships, finding new routes to beneficiary involvement, and continuing success in our projects will be evidence of our having achieved our goals.

**Our Plans:** Plans for the development of our strategy involve several contingent elements:

- Securing financial/physical resources to support impact-generating research and follow on impact activities, 'pump-priming' external bidding processes (inc. using mixed economy funding models), and simultaneously increasing the number of public-facing events on the Hendon campus.
- The appointment of a School 'impact champion', a new RA post for impact, web tools and collaborative working, and facilitating researcher involvement in engagement through activities as diverse as undertaking board membership, consultancy roles and providing formal advice to users.
- Development of an impact evaluation model for internal use at project design stage and on completion, in collaboration with the RKTO.

#### d. Relationship to case studies

The impact case studies are chosen to reflect the breaching of the artist/scholar, theory/practice divide that is a key feature of research within the unit. They encompass significant user groups and areas of impact that accord with the wider interests of the unit. The case studies outline major and multi-faceted research undertakings that are ongoing and have been extensively discussed and evidenced. The projects are founded in, draw upon and in turn contribute to a wide range of Middlesex Performing Arts research, thereby having repercussions beyond the confines of the project itself and providing evidence of the integration of the project in the wider cultures of Performing Arts.

**Bannerman's** work with ResCen is having a considerable impact in the East Asian region, first through an initial partnership with the Beijing Dance Academy for *Danscross 2009* and then the follow-on project, *ArtsCross 2011*, involving artist-practitioner-researchers from China, Taiwan, Singapore, America, Australia and the UK (Middlesex researchers Jeyasingh, Kolb, Johansson and Sachsenmaier). **Lee's** focused work with cross-generational groups has found strong resonances within community dance contexts and with other researchers in the unit exploring aging (PhD candidate Martin), touch (Woodhouse) and community arts (Johansson). Foregrounding benefits in (non-formal) education / CPD contexts, the case study based on research by **Jeyasingh** reflects how the arts can change perceptions of the body and identity.

All three case studies follow complex, non-linear, research-impact models and are based in collaborative action/partnership and thereby reflect and inform the impact strategy outlined above.