

Institution: UNIVERSITY of WEST LONDON
Unit of Assessment: 35 MUSIC, DRAMA, DANCE and PERFORMING ARTS
<p>a. Context</p> <p>The University of West London formally adopted its present nomenclature on 06 April 2011. That change may be seen as symbolic of a rebirth - and a change also of direction from the macro-institution of the past. Far-reaching changes included elimination of the Faculty system and devolution to eight distinct Schools, with their own directors but without a middle-management hierarchy of Deans and Vice-Deans. This process has enabled strategic regeneration and consolidation. Already a major corner has been turned, with the numbers of research-active academics on the increase and with significant investments in a number areas including infrastructure to support research.</p> <p>A strategic decision has been taken significantly to focus the REF return, in a way that acknowledges depth and impact in specific areas. In the light of much reflective consultation, this acknowledges RAE 2008's finding that insufficient clarity then attended LCM's distinction between 'creative practice as research' and 'professional practice'. The submission signals also a leaner, more coherent and more purposeful outlook that embraces clarity on where LCM as a School currently sits, along what it has reason to see confidently as a continuum of steady but sustainable growth.</p>
<p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p><u>Internal:</u></p> <p>At School level, LCM is committed to enabling and nurturing research activity that is sustainable in its strategic growth, to enrich the research culture and create impacts beyond the University. The School also makes every effort to embed benefits of individual researchers' work and special expertise within the student experience throughout Levels 4-6, as well as at L7. In practical terms this is reflected in the following indicative ways, <i>inter alia</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chair in Composition co-manages a weekly, non-assessed programme of Composers' Workshops', delivered partly by distinguished visiting practitioners and partly by resident academics. This has entailed his giving periodic critically-reflective presentations on his own work over the past several years. REF5 provides fuller details of this prestigious series, which is open to undergraduate, postgraduate and MPhil/PhD/DMus students. • The Reader featured in the second impact case study disseminates best practice and research outcomes from his work in seminar programmes and teaching, and is extensively involved in supervision at MPhil/PhD level. He has also convened a one-day internal conference on 'Practice as Research', with three guest keynote speakers, breakout groups and round table discussions, and is planning further such events. He is centrally involved in an annual Electric Music Week, a highly successful performance event which is open to the general public and well attended, and a weekly series of Master Classes on areas of Record Production, Music Technology, the Music Industry and Career Development. • Both Chair and Reader (featured as the two contributors to the first impact case study, document 3b) are active as lead and/or secondary supervisors at MPhil/PhD level, and in nurturing promising applicants toward graduate research. Both, and two further colleagues, have been centrally involved in successful development of a new, parallel DMus programme facilitating a stronger emphasis on research founded in creative practice.

External:

Research activity is encouraged and supported through pragmatic management of a 25-day annual entitlement to leave of absence for scholarly purposes, such as conference presentation, attendance at recordings of own work or of concert performances entailing interviews and/or guest lectures. Researchers understand their own corresponding obligation to highlight their affiliation to LCM and the University of West London in all appropriate and available public contexts.

At an institutional level, INSPIRE, the University's overarching Research Institute, under directorship of the Senior Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise), stewards seed corn funding to facilitate development of research or creative practice where clear and measurable public outcomes are associated and appropriate internal criteria (including adherence to ethical best practice) are demonstrably met. This funding is matched by a discretionary fund within LCM itself, allocated by the Director of LCM and overseen by the Head of Research.

INSPIRE recently appointed two Professors within musical disciplines, whose key role of income generation plus regional, national and international liaison sits alongside a School-facing brief to interact with LCM. Both are active in a diverse range of research activity and creative practice, including composition, use of interactive media, study of performance-related phenomena and forms of musicology. These posts promote synergy between LCM and the wider research framework within which it sits, also the distinction to the University's musical profile.

LCM's approach to impact specifically through the case studies has been periodically to interrogate meeting points between the activities of the featured researchers, as an informal corollary to the work itself; this with the requirements of REF 2014 in mind. Close interaction takes place in any case through the researchers' work as PhD co-supervisors, their discussion of their work with one another and the occasional collaborative opportunities that arise. In wider terms, the approach has been to maximise impact through online dissemination, to promote and advocate 'creative practice as research' and to encourage all members of LCM academic staff to share and disseminate achievements and their public recognition. A newly-formed 'LCM Research Group' has deliberately eschewed styling as a 'committee', and has quickly won a substantial following by promoting a co-operative, wholly democratic and informal self-help ethos whereby all practitioners or researchers contributing to research, scholarship or enterprise in any form can share ideas and news. A key objective has been to distance such a forum from strategic imperatives that dilute the essential element of celebration. The effect of this has been to reveal collaborative possibilities previously unimagined.

c. Strategy and plans

INSPIRE is working to galvanize postgraduate research culture and to embed notions of collaborative partnership between supervisors and research students where published outcomes are concerned. It has successfully funded a series of postgraduate research scholarships in the past year, these resulting in an influx of four new graduate scholars to LCM. A key aim is also to develop the base of academics qualified to supervise to doctoral level. In turn, this lends added weight to the argument for all academics to move towards doctoral qualifications of their own. The process is necessarily slow, but sustainable, efficacious expansion is taking place.

The brief of the new Professors of Music within INSPIRE is beneficial to LCM not only in terms of their expertise, goodwill and support, but also because income generated from their roles will directly support research within LCM as a School. It is too early to predict the extent of this; however, strategic priorities may be characterised as follows:

- Nurture and develop a base of doctoral members of staff who can supervise to PhD.
- Increase scholarships, bursaries and other forms of funding to attract and support postgraduate students.
- Expand and enhance LCM's online presence and profile in line with steps currently being taken by the University as a whole.

Impact template (REF3a)

- Enhance LCM's and UWL's integration into the wider research community of the UK through proactive conferencing onsite, collaborative ventures with other HEIs in London or further afield.
- Develop mentorship of new and inexperienced researchers.
- Develop understanding across the School as to achievable and beneficial forms of contribution to Enterprise.
- Work to promote flexible partnerships with other institutions in industry, academe, the armed forces and different faiths.
- In due course, develop a sustainable sabbatical framework to encourage large-scale research ventures and outputs in the public domain.
- Increase staff numbers again in line with resurgent profile of the University and transformation of its reputation.
- Campus redevelopment (currently in progress), enhancing site provision for research and creative practice within Music.
- Instatement of a permanent LCM ensemble in residence, possibly in 5-year tenure periods

d. Relationship to case studies

The case studies have been underpinned as far as possible by allocation of time and/or funding to support outcomes. In the case of Pott, an important unbroken period of 3 weeks' absence in January-February 2011 was permitted for completion of the *Mass for eight parts*. More generally, his CD output has been supported in the past by partial funding from the University, including the recording of his oratorio *The Cloud of Unknowing* on the Signum label. In the case of Sholl, funding has on occasions supported copyright permissions fees for book projects, attendances to present at international conferences and (courtesy of the RiTE scheme) leave of absence to complete a major research project while his teaching duties were seconded to colleagues. Zagorski-Thomas has been able to present at many international conferences and pursue specific collaborative research interests with Cambridge University. He has also been able to develop the profile and membership of ARP [The Art of Record Production] partially through liaison with colleagues within the LCM department. In 2009 the University also supported Zagorski-Thomas's and Sholl's RiTE study leave. In 2012-13 it contributed the required 20% of Zagorski-Thomas's AHRC funding, plus financial support for the Practice as Research study day (please see section b). Other colleagues received financial support to help them present at conferences.

It is important to stress that, to a greater or lesser extent, professional practice and creativity inform the work of all those within LCM engaged upon research activity. Beyond the confines of the present impact case studies, indicative examples include outputs by a number of further composers, influential work in record production and analysis of sound by member of the Music Technology team, and important contributions to Musical Theatre professional practice by the Head of this discipline within LCM, whose book on the pedagogy of Musical Theatre within Higher Education is due for publication [Palgrave Macmillan] within 2013 and will serve the undergraduate communities of the UK, USA and Canada. (Methods and approaches employed within the book are based within a comparative methodology in order to encompass the various demands that the subject makes upon the student in these contrasting educational environments.) This researcher also contributed chapters to other seminal publications on the emerging academic discipline of Musical Theatre. He delivered a paper at the recent International Symposium for Musical Theatre, and another at the SOAS (University of London) conference, June 2013.