

Institution: Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance
Unit of Assessment: 35 (Music, Drama, Dance and Performing Arts)
a. Context

The main non-academic user groups, beneficiaries or audiences for the research in the unit are identical with those that the HEI, seen as a whole, interacts with on a regular basis. These can be categorized in relation to the three main research groupings within the institution: **Practice-led research** in performance, composition and choreography, and with an emphasis on collaboration in all its forms; **Text-based research** that furthers knowledge of the two artforms of music and dance; **Performance Science** including research that interfaces with Trinity Laban's (TL) large and acknowledged Public Engagement programme. This has entailed interactions across both faculties of music and dance with non-academic beneficiaries in:

- professional dance companies, music ensembles and arts organisations with which the institution has regular contact, such as Random Dance, Candoco Dance Company, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Southbank Centre, and the Institute of Contemporary Arts;
- organisations that promote both the training and wellbeing of young and professional performers, such as the Centres for Advanced Training in Dance, Dance UK, the Association of British Orchestras, The National Youth Dance Company, The National Youth Orchestra, The National Institute of Dance Medicine and Science;
- teachers in both the educational sector and within community settings, often through Continuing Professional Development initiatives;
- organisations linked to the institution through local public engagement initiatives, such as Greenwich Dance, Lewisham and Greenwich councils, Hampshire Dance, North Kent Authority Arts, and Thames Gateway;
- the concert- and dance-going public both nationally and internationally;
- audiences for dance and music festivals and the broadcast media;
- other commercial and third-party beneficiaries in the cultural sectors, such as record labels and some selected manufacturers;
- audiences for public lectures and research-led symposia, which are aimed at non-academic beneficiaries.

b. Approach to impact

TL is a small specialist institution providing advanced training to talented young performers in music and dance. Alongside this, it has built historically strong connections with non-academic beneficiaries in the dance and music sectors, through its wide-ranging public engagement initiatives. In 2011-12 for example, over 16,000 people participated in live music and dance activities as part of Trinity Laban's Learning and Participation programmes. Of these, over 7,500 were children or young people, as part of TL's commitment to widen participation in music and dance education. Recently, these community and outreach programmes have received governmental and national media recognition, including from the Office for Fair Access (OFFA), which is reflected in a high pro-rata FTE institutional HEIF funding allocation (currently **£390k** p.a.). Given this context, there has been a deliberate strategy to prioritize impactful research activity that results from the interaction between user groups associated with **Public Engagement Programmes** and **Performance Science** researchers within the institution, something that is reflected in the selection of Impact Case Studies (see **REF3b** and **d.** below).

This prioritization reflects a strategy that existed prior to the incorporation and specification of impact measures within the REF exercise, and has built on partnerships and networks that were already idiomatic to the institution's everyday activities. In some cases this has involved operating across a national network, such as the national Dance Centres for Advanced Training (CATs), and also with community organisations that regularly use TL's buildings. In other cases, impactful research activity has arisen from a strategy to align research teams with arts organisations in the educational and public sectors with which TL had existing and historical relationships, such as local education authorities and councils. However, once the REF impact criteria had become available, there was renewed focus within the institution on concentrating time allocations and funding on

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specific projects whose impacts could be specified through follow-through activities (such as meetings with research users that were coupled with requests for quantitative and qualitative data, and that are evidenced in the varied media of dissemination outlined in **REF3b**).

A similar argument applies to impactful **practice-led research** that has been undertaken at TL between 2008 and 2013. Many of TL's academic staff are professional performers, composers or choreographers with international reputations, and interactions with the main non-academic beneficiaries in this area (specified above) have proceeded naturally from the idiomatic nature of professional music- and dance-making, and that have existed in some cases well before the assessment period. The institution therefore considered several possibilities for case studies that derived from this particular set of interactions: the following represent specific examples. *Without Warning* was a cross-faculty dance and music collaboration inspired by the author Brian Keenan's experience as a hostage in Beirut, and is based on his memoir *An Evil Cradling*. It was performed and devised in collaboration with a cast of TL alumni, and was led by choreographer Lizzi Kew-Ross and a group of practitioners specialising in cross-media practice-based research. A large-scale work, produced with funding from Arts Council England, was premiered over two weeks at the Old Vic Tunnels, London, in November 2011. The leaders of the grouping pioneered an approach to performance-making that extended the reach of the project into: broadcast media; digital media; e-books, symposia, workshops and public presentations; popular press and public book reading groups. The impact of this has been significant in terms of raising public awareness of certain topical political matters, including issues surrounding the political situation in the Middle East. The project hence aimed at using the medium of performance to raise public awareness of pertinent sociopolitical issues, and was disseminated to a wide-ranging selection of non-academic audiences. In addition, other practice-led research outputs were considered as the basis for case studies, an example being the collected output during the assessment period of the *Smith Quartet* (which includes TL staff member Nic Pendelbury). In this case, a potential case study would have referenced the public and commercial impact of the ensemble's entire output of recordings (for the record labels *Signum*, *Matchless* and *Radio France Editions*) coupled with the public impact of the group's total performance schedule during the period, which has been of benefit to the audiences and organisers of several important music events (such as the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival). In both of these cases, the institution, due to its small size and lack of dedicated personnel, has had difficulty in accumulating relevant evidence and data of suitable breadth for case studies, and this is a goal for the future (see **c.** below)

Impacts from **text-based research** have tended to fall into categories excluded by REF criteria, such as the impact on academic disciplines, and the institution has been happy to encourage this, particularly in relation to the emergence of a strong PhD cohort, currently comprising 23 students within the HEI, a development that brings with it additional responsibilities regarding appropriate research-led teaching. The institution recognizes that its researchers come in different varieties, and text-based research has been supported primarily in the cases where there are outputs of suitable quality that meet the criteria for **REF2**. However John Irving's recently released DVD for the ensemble Denote, and contributions to an iPad-based Mozart application, demonstrate how text-based research, in this case in historical performance practice, can have demonstrable impacts, particularly pedagogic impacts, on non-academic beneficiaries such as amateur musicians.

Institutional support for impactful research has been focused in two main areas. Firstly, the **performance science** grouping has received considerable infrastructural investment, resulting in a sector-leading Dance Science laboratory that houses specialized equipment, including for cardiovascular fitness testing. There has also been a considerable investment in staffing in this area, from graduate interns to postdoctoral researchers, through to senior appointments, such as the Head of Dance Science. Impactful practice-led and other research has also been supported through investment in personnel, coupled with the provision of dedicated time allocations, and periods of reduced teaching. As an example, many professional performers have contractual clauses that encourage time out of the institution to maintain public profiles through concert giving. Researchers involved in possible or potential impact case studies have also been supported through the provision of mentoring on funding applications and research methodologies by

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members of the senior research faculty, including the Readers and the Head of Research. In some cases, fieldwork and data gathering has been facilitated through paid work offered to graduate interns and postgraduate students. The institution has also provided seed funding and production support to a number of projects that have been highlighted as potentially impactful (the *Without Warning* project mentioned above is a good example of this).

c. Strategy and plans

The submitting unit (and HEI) has two main goals for the future regarding its impact strategy. The first goal relates to the further consolidation and integration of the research department with TL's knowledge exchange, outreach, and education and community programmes. This reflects a deliberate decision to consolidate what are perceived to be strengths in this area. Progress on this objective is already ongoing through the appointment, in 2012, of a postdoctoral researcher positioned precisely in this interface, and whose remit includes the evaluation of current TL public engagement projects, and with an eye to potential future funding applications: a particular focus will be TL's varied work with the elderly. Future aims involve the enhanced provision of scholarly evidence to key non-academic partners, such as local councils and health organisations, schools, and the national Dance CATs scheme, to stimulate further impactful research about the beneficial nature of music and dance activities on health and wellbeing, and the consolidation of CPD activities. The joint award to TL in 2013 of **£810K** for the AHRC 'Musical Impacts' project will no doubt lead to future underpinning research in this area, as it specifically targets non-academic beneficiaries within the music profession. This key objective for future impact strategy will deliberately dovetail with an important evaluative report, authored in 2012 by Nikki Shepherd for the institution, which recommends five key strategies for TL's future public engagement programmes, including two that are particularly relevant to the intersection with research activity, namely a) the development of a structured programme of communication to help funders, strategic bodies and a range of sectors benefit from the learning captured across all activities, and b) the development of cutting-edge community partnership projects to understand how, why and when sustained participation and progression in dance and music will lead to transformational social, education and economic outcomes. The second goal relates to improvements to how the institution both fosters and measures impact with regard to the activities of its practice-led researchers. As indicated above, a goal is to improve evidence gathering via a combined strategy of a) continuing professional development and training for such researchers to raise awareness of the importance of public impact and b) institutional initiatives to improve interactions and evidence gathering with key partnership organisations, such as the Southbank Centre and the Institute of Contemporary Arts.

d. Relationship to case studies

The two case studies selected are examples of both a) planned and direct impact and b) diffuse and nonlinear impact on research users and non-academic beneficiaries. Both were generated idiomatically through the strategy outlined in a., namely to prioritize impactful research activity via alignment between research teams and TL's public engagement and participation programmes.

The **Performance Science: Talent Development and Training** case study was an example of the first type of impact, and resulted directly from the existing DfE sponsored CAT scheme at TL. The presence of such a large cohort of young dancers within TL, and the established links with the other eight CAT schemes in the UK enabled a case to be made for a large funding award from The Leverhulme Trust/DCSF in support of the research. Impacts were planned and direct, and are outlined in the relevant case study.

The **Dance for Health and Wellbeing** case study can trace its origin similarly to existing links to non-academic beneficiaries provided to researchers through existing public engagement contacts. Impacts in this case were diffuse and nonlinear. The first robust study of the effects on health and wellbeing of dance training was a contributing factor to an enhanced awareness of the importance of the health benefits of the performing arts more generally, and this has led indirectly to a number of unforeseen impacts, such as the augmentation of public funding initiatives for dance, and the replication of the relevant research methodologies by others.