

**Institution: Royal Conservatoire of Scotland**

**Unit of Assessment: 35 Music, Drama, Dance and Performing Arts**

**a. Overview**

Research at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland operates through the agency of *The Exchange*, an autonomous unit within the Conservatoire, distinct from its two Schools, employing six members of staff and led by the Director of Research and Knowledge Exchange, Professor Celia Duffy. The *Exchange* encompasses several spheres of activity:

- Institutional policy and strategy for research and knowledge exchange
- External research and knowledge exchange collaborations and projects
- Promotion of and support for staff research (including staff development and funding)
- Research degree provision (validated by the University of St Andrews)
- Research office functions

*The Exchange* therefore integrates a range of academic and administrative functions that in larger institutions might be distributed across faculties and be divided between academic and administrative staff. Its role is to lead and facilitate the Conservatoire's vigorous research culture and manage its distinctive research profile.

As a small specialist institution, the Royal Conservatoire's research resides squarely within Unit of Assessment 35. The unit and the institution are, therefore, one and the same for the purposes of this submission.

**b. Research strategy**

In RAE2001, when we entered the research assessment process for the first time, we received positive feedback from the panel, strong endorsement of our particular approach to research, and encouragement to sustain our efforts, but the overall result of 3b meant that no new funding from the Quality Research (QR) grant was forthcoming. As a consequence, we focussed on securing external funding, often for applied research and consultancy, while continuing our efforts to support the developing research trajectories of our staff despite the challenging financial context.

In RAE2008, our result was significantly stronger and a vindication of the support of the 2001 panel, recognising the work of our excellent researchers and also, for the first time, securing steady income for research through the Research Excellence Grant (REG). The panel noted our particular strengths in performance, commending our 'well documented portfolio of practice as research', and highlighted the impact of our work on the cultural life of Scotland.

Our RAE2008 result prompted a leap forward in the quantity and quality of research undertaken at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, allowing us to pursue a wide range of new initiatives to enhance the vitality of our research environment and ensure its sustainability.

In 2008, the key objective of our institutional planning was the mainstreaming of research within the two Schools (Music and Drama) of the Conservatoire. A range of initiatives since then has seen significant progress towards this objective – research in drama has been specifically targeted, for example, with Birch appointed in 2010 to act as a catalyst for research in the School; appointments across the Conservatoire have been made with the aim of further embedding research, with a number of post-doctoral early career researchers appointed to full-time or pro-rata posts, and the appointment of a senior researcher as Head of Strings. Research is now better integrated into a wider range of academic roles within the Conservatoire. Nonetheless, the consolidation of research as a vital component of our distinctive conservatoire context remains a continuing objective.

During this time, our former National Centre for Research in the Performing Arts has evolved into *The Exchange* – a new branding that better reflects the way we prioritise interaction with the wider world in seeking to develop excellent research that makes a significant impact (see REF3a). Alongside this renewed focus on the external context we have also continued to target the practice-based research that the 2008 panel identified as a particular strength: applied research

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now finds its place alongside, and is more fully integrated with, a more richly developed seam of artistic research (see, for example, the outputs of Steen, Drury, Searle).

There is clear evidence that across both Schools of the Conservatoire, more high quality research is now being conducted by a larger proportion of our staff. Our 2014 submission includes more researchers (both as a headcount and as an FTE) and more outputs than in 2008. Perhaps more significantly, however, the number *considered* for inclusion was very much greater than in 2008. In 2008, only a very small number of outputs were considered and rejected; in preparation for REF2014, the number is very much greater, with 40-50 potential outputs having been considered and then omitted from the submission (and it is worth noting that the majority of these are outputs that would have met our institutional quality thresholds in 2008).

Our most recent institutional research strategy has reviewed progress since 2010 and establishes the following operational objectives for the next six years:

1. Further embedding research as a coherent strand of activity for a wider section of academic staff from both Schools.
2. Capitalizing on our research activities and outputs by better promoting and supporting the impact of staff research, enhancing opportunities to generate and sustain partnerships, and using successful outputs as stepping stones to increased external funding.
3. Fostering a greater number of productive research collaborations with other universities and conservatoires, in Scotland, the UK, Europe, and globally.
4. Supporting staff to generate and follow through more bids for external research funding, seeking both large and smaller seedcorn awards from a range of sources.
5. Increasing research student numbers to exceed the median FTE per researcher for our disciplines and draw in greater numbers of research supervisors.

*The submission of music and drama research to a single UoA*

The presentation in this submission of research in drama alongside our longer established research in music has highlighted for us the small but crucial differences between the unfolding discourses of practice-based research in these two disciplines. The inclusion of both with a single UoA is an initiative that we welcome and, in selecting and contextualising the outputs in the present submission, we have recognised synergies between the disciplines while acknowledging that each has its own distinct knowledge traditions and expectations for practice-based work. This chimes with major curricular work we have undertaken over the past 5 years to reform our curricula and facilitate the inter-disciplinary collaboration that we are uniquely positioned to support.

**c. People, including:**

**i. Staffing strategy and staff development**

Our staffing profile is typical of the conservatoire sector, with a smaller number of full-time and pro-rata staff working alongside a much larger number of part-time hourly paid staff. Research is undertaken by academic staff right across this spectrum, as evidenced in the number of small-fraction part-time staff included in this submission. All academic staff (including early career and part-time staff) have equal access to the staff development opportunities described below, and we take full advantage of our small scale in the individually tailored support we provide to researchers at all stages of their careers.

The receipt of REG funding from AY 2009-10 has allowed the Conservatoire to establish a range of targeted staff development initiatives in research that have had a demonstrable impact on the quantity, breadth and quality of research undertaken.

REG funding allowed, for the first time, the creation of a research and knowledge exchange leave scheme for Conservatoire staff. This scheme, badged as the *Athenaeum Awards* in reference to our institution's founding name, is open to all academic staff (part-time and early career included) by open competition, and makes awards that pay for teaching buy-out to allow uninterrupted focus on research or knowledge exchange activities. Recipients also benefit from a designated mentor to support their work for the period of the award. Examples of *Athenaeum Awards* in the assessment

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period (AP) include an award towards a visiting research fellowship at Princeton (Guillaumier, 2010) and awards supporting the completion of research outputs (Steen, 2011; Dickson 2011).

Supplementing these major awards, the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee receives applications for small individual research grants that may contribute to project or publication costs, as well as travel and conference attendance.

In the AP, the Conservatoire has established the award of Professorships, and six senior researchers have been conferred with the title of Professor of the Conservatoire.

For ECRs and researchers embarking on PGR supervision for the first time, a year-long programme of training and staff development has been developed in the AP, with a designated mentor assigned to each new supervisor and special attention paid to managing the demands of a research portfolio.

The Conservatoire has used its programme of research events to enable staff development by carefully targeting our early career researchers (Drury, Bissell, De Simone etc.) as speakers for our weekly Exchange Talks, alongside senior researchers and guests. To supplement these (fairly traditionally conceived) research seminars, we have also introduced informal interdisciplinary 'CAKE' (Creativity And Knowledge Exchange) sessions – a less structured round-table conversation for developing research ideas, hosted by the Head of Research, open to all staff and lubricated by tea and cake.

Research has also been prioritised in wider staff development and management processes, with sessions on researcher development, funding, and the REF at our annual Learning and Teaching Conferences, and an action research project forming a part of our HEA-accredited PGCert in Learning and Teaching in Higher Arts Education. Research is also now explicitly considered in our career review processes, and in the annual activity planning of staff.

The success of these staff development activities can be measured by the increased volume of research undertaken in the AP and the inclusion, for the first time, of drama research in this REF submission.

**ii. Research students**

*Evidence of development of an integrated research culture.*

With 8 PhD completions in the AP (cf. 2 in RAE2008) and sustained recruitment of high quality students, our RPG cohort has consolidated its position, contributing greatly to the intellectual vitality of teaching and research across the Conservatoire. Research students at the Conservatoire are energetic in promoting their research and the ethos of *The Exchange*. In particular, they contribute actively to the Exchange Talks series, both as speakers and as active members of the audience, modelling the critical rigour developed through research for the Masters students who also attend these talks within their taught programmes. RPG students have played a vital role in promoting research at the Conservatoire, through speaking about their research externally and in Pecha Kucha presentations for Masters students, and through their teaching (especially in the School of Music). Key staff with responsibility for research students (Broad and Birch) also lead research modules in the Conservatoire's UG and TPG programmes, contributing further to the integration of the research culture.

Our approach to research skills training helps to ensure that our students feel part of a coherent cohort that is well integrated with staff research: in addition to smaller 'bespoke' training for individuals or small groups of students, our students work together in four study days each year – supervisors, and those taking our supervisor training, are also invited to two of these days. This 'vertical integration' contributes greatly to the richness of these events, and ensures that students and staff feel part of a single research community.

The vitality of the research student culture at the Conservatoire is evidenced by their vigorous independent pursuit of projects that contribute to the corporate life of the Exchange department. Two examples are the 2009 seminar series 'Connecting Research', curated by four research students who won funding from the AHRC student-led initiative, and an ongoing development, led by four current students, to launch and edit the *Scottish Journal of Performance*

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(<http://www.scottishjournalofperformance.org/>).

*Strong Doctoral Recruitment and Studentships*

Over the AP, RPG recruitment has strengthened, with a greater number and a higher quality of applications from continuing students and international students being particular trends: a strong ‘throughput’ of students has now been achieved. An increasing number of external studentships and internally-generated awards have assisted students to successful completion: our membership of the Institute for Capitalising on Creativity has brought two ESRC CASE studentships to the Conservatoire, while we also invested institutional funds in research student projects that are strategically important to the Conservatoire. The following table gives studentship numbers for each year (actual, not new, studentships each year, FTE), with data from the years prior to the AP provided to illustrate the growth in this area:

Studentships (FTE)	2005-6	2006-7	2007-8	2008-9	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
UK-based charities		0.5	0.5					
RCS Studentships (Leverhulme Trust)	1.5	2.0	1.5	3.0	2.5	3.0	3.0	3.5
AHRC				1.0	1.0	1.0		
ESRC							1.0	2.0
Strategic Studentships (RCS Trust)				1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	2.0
EU/Overseas (charities and government)					0.5	1.0	2.0	1.5
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>9.0</b>

The Conservatoire has strong policies and practices in place for the support of a diversity of research students, with particular successes in working with part-time students so as to allow them to continue to develop their artistic careers while pursuing research studies, and in integrating the large proportion of part-time students into a coherent and supportive cohort. Evidence for the further support of Equal Opportunities in our recruitment of research students may be seen in the Equality Impact Assessment (with associated Action Plan) that was conducted in AY 2013-14.

Knowledge Exchange in its various forms is well-embedded in the research student experience, whether this be through student composers working with professional ensembles, or through studentships that are linked with an industry or policy partner – the two ESRC studentships are examples of such KE partnerships, while our student composers have worked with ensembles such as Psappa, Icebreaker, the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Royal Scottish National Orchestra and the Red Note Ensemble, which is closely linked to the Conservatoire in an innovative KE partnership. One of our ESRC students in drama has also taken a formal secondment during his studies, in which he has worked with a software company to develop an app that will transfer some of the insights developed in his PhD for a much wider market.

PhD students at the Royal Conservatoire are carefully monitored throughout their studies and benefit from being a close-knit cohort with dedicated staff responsible for their skills development and career preparation, in addition to their designated internal and external supervisors. An annual training needs analysis identifies individual needs and this is supplemented by a programme of cohort research training that is coordinated by Birch and includes individual seminars and four compulsory study days (two residential) across the AY. Students also have full access to the research training opportunities offered by St Andrews University through its Centre for Academic, Professional and Organisational Development (CAPOD). Students benefit from a ‘whole cohort’ approach in which new research students work alongside their senior peers, gaining insights and additional perspectives from the experiences of those nearing completion. The result is, we believe, a more explicit focus on researcher development in the round than would be achieved

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through other means.

Each student’s progress is formally monitored annually by the Research Degrees Committee (in conjunction with St Andrews University), and students at the end of their first year FTE also undergo a rigorous Progress Review process before being confirmed in their full registration as a PhD or MPhil student. This careful management is reflected in a strong record of successful on-time completions, and the spread of outcomes determined by examining committees: the table below gives data for graduations from the Royal Conservatoire’s research programmes in the AP. External examiners in the period have included Professors Nigel Osborne; Jim Samson; David Fanning; Dorothy Miell; David Hargreaves; Elliott Schwartz; Simon Morison; Paul Mealor; Piers Hellowell and Niall Keegan.

DOCTORAL GRADUATIONS in the AP	n	%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	
On time	5	62.5
...Within ‘normal period’ (3 years FTE)	1	
...Within ‘continuation’ (3 year FTE + 1 calendar year)	4	
Within an approved Extension (max 1 calendar year)	3	37.5
Outwith an approved Extension	0	
<b>OUTCOMES</b>		
No corrections	3	37.5
Minor corrections	4	50.0
Major corrections	1	12.5

**d. Income, infrastructure and facilities**

In reviewing the data on research income supplied to HESA in the AP, we have noted that it is incomplete and have therefore prepared the statement provided in REF4b direct from our records. In addition to this income, our researchers have benefitted significantly from other funds, ineligible for return to HESA, in pursuit of their research. These funds include commission fees and grants from arts organisations totalling at least £100k for the outputs provided in this submission alone.

*Scholarly infrastructure supporting research*

The scholarly infrastructure at the Royal Conservatoire naturally reflects our focus on practice-based work, and is characterised by performance resources and strong professional networks. Our Whittaker Library is performance-oriented with extensive audio-visual and printed music collections, and takes a particularly pro-active approach to engaging staff and students with new research materials and external research events through its regular WhittakerLIVE blog. In the AP, the range and depth of research resources available through the Whittaker Library has dramatically increased through our participation in the Scottish Higher Education Digital Library (SHEDL) partnership; additionally, research students now also have direct access to the very significant online research resources of St Andrews University Library.

Investment in archives and collections relating to performance have received special investment in the AP, with the appointment of a full time archivist and the development of an appropriate archive space within the Conservatoire’s main building. Such investment has supported and enhanced research at the Conservatoire – the acquisition of the John Webb collection of historic brass instruments and the Robert Minter collection of manuscripts, for example, making a strong and continued contribution to our brass scholarship research cluster, feeding into study days, bids for further funding, and underpinning the appointment of a part-time Senior Research Fellow, Professor Arnold Myers.

*Organisational Infrastructure supporting research (through investment, research clusters etc.)*

In addition to brass scholarship, we have important research clusters around New Work (in music and drama), Scottish Culture, New Instruments and Repertoires, and Historical Performance. Building on the major investments outlined above, and the initiation of our *Athenaeum Awards*, the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee has significant responsibility in awarding and monitoring research grants to individuals and research teams. These grants have supported projects across each of these clusters, and particular attention has been paid in the AP to the

development of a research culture in the School of Drama in readiness for this submission.

#### *Operational Infrastructure Supporting Research*

In the AP, the Exchange department has moved to larger premises within the Conservatoire, including a spacious 'Research Lab' adjoining key staff offices, and equipped with a range of facilities to support research students and staff, such as wireless access, an A3 printer and high-quality scanner. This new study space has further enhanced the sense of community among research students and staff, and the institution's investment in new facilities for our expanded student and staff numbers demonstrates its continued commitment to sustaining a vigorous research environment.

In the AP, we have invested close to £12m in estate, including high-specification rehearsal studios and technical and production facilities at our new Spiers Lock Studio campus, together with the refurbishment of our Renfrew Street building. Within this, our recording and electroacoustic (EA) studio facilities have been totally overhauled, creating 2 new recording studios and 3 new state of the art EA studios. Both our main music venue, the 350-seat Stevenson Hall, and our New Athenaeum Theatre (NAT) have benefitted from front-of-house refurbishment and a complete technical upgrade. In the case of the NAT, we have invested in a state of the art stage automation system from Stage Technologies, which is used in major productions around the world. A number of expert technical staff (such as sound engineer Bob Whitney, formerly of EMI and Sony) are available to support researchers in their use of our technical facilities.

In addition to these facilities, our students and staff benefit from other operational support in pursuing their research projects; we can also offer complete professional production facilities (direction, production including lighting, scenery and costume). Two of the outputs included in this submission were made possible by these facilities – the staging of the original version of Prokofiev's *War and Peace* (McAllister) and the co-production (with Nürnberg Hochschule) of Boyle's *Kaspar Hauser*. Many of the festivals supported and hosted by the Conservatoire are curated by our researchers, and provide an important focus for research outputs. Example include the new music performed by Pavri with Robert Irvine (commissioned through our week-long StringFest); Shorr's research in improvisation (a sustained thread through successive annual Piano Festivals) and, perhaps most significantly, our yearly festival of new music, Plug, which showcases experimental work by researchers and research students alike.

#### *Strategy by which an appropriate balance of scholarly, organisational and operational infrastructures is established and by which these are prioritised and maintained.*

Our small scale makes the achievement of an appropriate balance relatively straightforward. Research is highlighted at the highest level in our institutional strategic plans, which are driven by Conservatoire Senior Management Team and the Academic Board; these same bodies oversee the Conservatoire's scholarly, organisational and operational structures, with the Director of Research and Knowledge Exchange sitting on both to ensure that individual decisions reflect wider strategic concerns. This integrated approach is mirrored in the management of individual staff through our Career Review process. Individual staff members' annual goals – a key feature of that process – are explicitly linked to institutional strategic aims, and activity planning flows jointly from the job description and these annual goals.

#### **e. Collaboration and contribution to the discipline or research base**

We energetically seek out collaborations and partnerships with appropriate research organisations, and with users of research. Over the AP, these relationships have deepened: our partnership with St Andrews University has already been mentioned; in the AP, this relationship has developed from one focussed on the validation of research degrees, to include significant research collaboration, especially through the School of Management and the Institute for Capitalising on Creativity (of which we are a founding member). We are a partner on the £1.5m ESRC Capacity Building in Business Research and Engagement award led by St Andrews School of Management.

Our partnership with the University of Glasgow (with whom we operate an MMus in Historically Informed Performance Practice) has also taken on a stronger research dimension over the AP, with our joint hosting of the Theatre and Performance Research Association (TaPRA) conference in September 2013; MacAulay (ECR in this submission) is working on an AHRC project (Bass

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Cultures) based at Glasgow. Partnerships with the University of Edinburgh are also developing, with SFC (Sistema Scotland Knowledge Exchange) and AHRC funded projects alongside shared performance ventures (Edinburgh Festival 'Oxygen' 2013).

Collaborations with colleagues in Conservatoires UK (CUK, chaired by Principal Wallace), through the CUK Research Forum, have also evolved from a policy focus to embrace significant research collaborations, including a major AHRC-funded project to investigate musicians' health and wellbeing, and an annual research students' conference. A shared process for ethical approval has also been created in the AP, permitting easier research collaborations across institutions.

We are especially well-networked and enjoy active participation in a range of subject or institutional associations such as the National Association for Music in Higher Education (Prof Duffy, Elected committee member, former Chair); the Association of European Conservatoires (AEC) (Principal Wallace, Board member; Broad, Working Group on Artistic Research); the European League of Institute of the Arts (ELIA) (Vice-Principal Kinloch, Board member); the European Platform for Artistic Research (Broad, Working Group on Artistic Research); International Federation of Theatre Research, Performance Research Working Group (Birch, Co-convenor) We also contribute to national funding bodies – JISC (Duffy, Board Member and Trustee from 2011, stepped down due to ill-health in 2013) and AHRC (Duffy, BGP2 Moderation and Assessment Panel, 2008 and 2012).

Editorial positions occupied by our staff during the AP include Contemporary Theatre Review (Birch, special issue editor); Music Education Research (Broad, editorial board and special issue editor); Music and Practice (Duffy and Broad, International Advisory Board); Experiments and Intensities (Birch, Curatorial Advisory Board). Staff have also worked as peer-reviewers for the Journal of the American Musicological Society (Broad); Journal of Artistic Research (Birch); The Journal of Music Performance Research (Kanno); Theatre, Dance and Performance Training Journal (Birch, Bissell); e-Sharp (Bissell); Music Education Research (Broad, Duffy); Organised Sound (MacDonald); Scottish Music Review (Broad); and as reviewers for publishers such as Oxford and Cambridge University Presses (Duffy, Broad).

Our staff have contributed to staff training and research development across the sector, though, for example, memberships of international advisory panels (Duffy, Sibelius Academy and Royal College of Music, Stockholm), MASHEIN events (Duffy, RAE2008 workshop for small institutions); workshops for research supervisors (Broad, Orpheus Instituut); mentoring for colleagues, through ERASMUS (Steen, Luleå tekniska universitet and others).

Our staff are regularly requested to give keynotes, invited papers or invited premiere performances. Examples in the AP include Steen's 2012 workshop for fellows of the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University; Broad's 2008 invitation to speak at the Olivier Messiaen und die französische Tradition conference in Munich; Pavri's guest artist invitation at the Society of Composers Inc. National Conference in Ohio 2013; Smith's invited masterclasses at in Guangzhou, China (2008), Rostov-on-Don (2011), and Lincoln Center, New York City (2012); Kanno's guest leadership of the London Sinfonietta (2009, UK premiere and tour of Benjamin's *Into the Little Hill*), her residency at Banff Arts Center, Canada (2008), her invited premieres at the Gaudeamus New Music Week, Amsterdam (2010 and 2013), and her research fellowship at the Orpheus Instituut.

We have hosted a range of conferences and study days, with our researchers playing key roles in their academic planning: in addition to TaPRA (Birch & Bissell, 2013) we have hosted a conference dedicated to Prokofiev's *War and Peace* (McAllister, 2010), and, in collaboration with the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, a conference on voice training, *Shifting Landscapes* (Steen, 2013). In addition, we have hosted special study days, with a knowledge exchange dimension, on brass performance and the Nadine George Voice Technique. These study days can be major events with (for example) the brass day (led by Principal Wallace) including 5 public performances and some 250 participants (including 4 brass bands).

We will co-host (with the Glasgow School of Art) the ELIA 2014 conference; in 2015 we will host the AEC Congress and the Music in Nineteenth Century Britain Conference; and in 2016 we will host the International Society for Music Education (ISME) conference.