

<p><b>Institution: University of Manchester</b></p>
<p><b>Unit of Assessment: 35b (Drama)</b></p>
<p><b>a. Context</b> The strategic orientation of Drama research at Manchester has long been to prioritise engagement with communities beyond the academy (e.g. in the 1980s-'90s, the department pioneered research-based theatre practice in prisons and educational settings). Rather than adopting a one-way model of “disseminating findings to achieve impact”, we encourage staff to understand their research, teaching and service to be integrally connected to a diverse ecology of external partners. We aim <i>both</i> to enhance public understanding of the forms and practices of theatre and screen arts, <i>and also</i> to explore the potential social benefits of arts-based research. The main non-academic user groups benefiting from our research are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. General publics</b> (<i>cultural life; public discourse; education</i>): Drama researchers regularly work in public contexts as artists (theatre, film, fiction), as curators of exhibitions and festivals, and/or as expert speakers in public fora. Such activities either represent forms of practice-based research in their own right, and/or function to further disseminate the researcher’s existing knowledge base.</li> <li><b>2. Professional and community artists</b> (<i>cultural life; public discourse; civil society</i>): Arts practitioners and companies actively benefit from drama researchers’ critical evaluations of their work, and seek our collaboration in representing them in appropriate contexts (talks, publications, commissioned evaluations, etc.).</li> <li><b>3. NGOs, policy makers, and voluntary organisations</b> (<i>civil society; policy making; public services; education</i>). Drama research at Manchester emphasises social engagement, and is often designed so as to benefit partners/users in the governmental or third sectors: e.g. by analysing and/or developing creative interventions responding to particular social-cultural questions; by gathering and disseminating examples of best practice in artist or facilitator training, etc.</li> </ol>
<p><b>b. Approach to impact</b> Drama’s strategic approach to impact has been to develop it as a core aspect of our research mission. This is achieved by both (i) designing research projects that involve direct engagement with and impact on a broader, non-higher education contexts, and (ii) seeking innovative means to enable public engagement with areas researched within the department. Drama’s approach to extending the impact of its research is based on the conviction (based in experience) that a focus on external engagement will further improve the quality and relevance of our research—not least because the iterative process of sharing our work with diverse audiences is itself a source of further learning for us. Key to our approach are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Building sustainable relationships.</b> Over a period of many years, we have worked to develop lasting relationships with key research users, from prisons to museums to overseas NGOs. This strategy often involves an integrated use of teaching and learning opportunities for students: e.g. a student placement with a given organisation might operate as the first step in an emerging relationship that subsequently presents opportunities for collaborative research. Similarly, Drama colleagues maintain ongoing relationships with a number of organisations through membership of steering groups and advisory boards. <b>Thompson</b> is Chair of Trustees for People’s Palace Projects (London); he and <b>Gale</b> are on the board of Water’s Edge Arts (M’cr); <b>Parry</b> is on the board of Contact Theatre (M’cr), chairs its Artistic Evaluation Group, and oversees the theatre’s strategy for links with higher education; <b>Gale</b> and <b>Jeffers</b> are board members for the TiPP Centre (M’cr); <b>Bottoms</b> for Red Ladder Theatre Co. (Leeds); <b>Dudrah</b> is on the steering group of 'South Asian Whispers', a Black Screen Heritage Project part-funded by UK Film Council. Such organisational affiliations are complemented by the sustained development of personal relationships with practitioners: see for example <b>Gale</b>’s ongoing commitment to documenting the work of Jill Greenhalgh’s Magdalena Project, or <b>Bottoms</b>’ development of critical dialogues with solo performers including Tim Crouch, Diane Torr, Penny Arcade (see Outputs).</li> <li><b>2. Responding to need.</b> A key element of Drama’s approach is to avoid the assumption that the trajectory of “impact” will always be from research conceived within the academy to audiences beyond. Rather, we actively seek to be responsive to the stated needs of external partners. During this REF period, for example, <b>Hughes</b> wrote evaluative reports for the New Charter Housing Trust, on its 3-year collaborative project with the Royal Exchange Theatre (2012-15), and for St. Vincent’s Housing Association and the TiPP Centre on their Enviz Project (2010); <b>Jeffers</b> evaluated the Exodus Onstage refugee theatre festival, for the Arts Council and the Big Lottery Fund (2010);</li> </ol>

**Parry** acted as arts & education consultant for Contact Theatre's "Seeking Perfection" project (funded by the Wellcome Trust for Manchester Science Festival) and has been commissioned by Y Touring Theatre Company to co-evaluate their 5 year (2011-2016) strategic Theatre of Debate schools education project. Rather than proving a distraction from "proper" academic research, such commissioned work extends our own knowledge base while also proving directly impactful for users. The digital 'toolkit' based on the Enviz research has, for example, been disseminated to artists and social housing organisations nationally, while **Hughes'** evaluative report for Lancashire Constabulary on Theatre Veritae's touring educational theatre production *Not in My Name* (2010) has been cited by the Association of Chief Police Officers, to inform their response to the national "Prevent" strategy review, combating violent extremism.

**3. Creating new platforms.** The 2009 creation of the Institute for Cultural Practices (ICP; see also Environment statement) as an interdisciplinary hub for research in cultural provision has been key to the development of this profile for commissioned, evaluative research, but it is also consistent with a longer tradition of developing outward-facing entities, which dates back to the formation of the Theatre in Prisons and Probation Centre in 1992 (TiPP has operated as an independent arts organisation from within a base in Drama ever since). Other recent examples include: **Butler's** role in co-founding and co-directing the biannual Insight Film Festival (launched 2007), which facilitates young people in making films exploring inter-faith dialogue and community cohesion (festival partners include the BBC, Co-Exist, and North Manchester Regeneration); **Chan's** as co-founder of Chinese Film Forum UK, a partnership between public sector organisations and academics which regularly screens UK premieres of Chinese films and hosts discussions with the filmmakers. Drama also makes active use of the theatre and conferencing facilities available in its departmental base, the Martin Harris Centre (MHC), to create further opportunities for knowledge exchange with external users. For example, **Jeffers** arranged for MHC to host Platforma's national gathering of refugee artists in October 2013. She also ran a networking day for Community Arts specialists (2011) and co-convened with **Gilmore** a platform event on community/participatory arts for the Paul Hamlyn Foundation's Artworks initiative (2013). **Hughes** made MHC available as a performance venue for the Men's Room (2013), as part of a developing collaboration (since 2011) with this arts and social welfare organisation (serving young men with experiences of homelessness, sex work, etc.). See also Impact Case Study on "In Place of War".

**4. Following connections.** Research activity frequently opens pathways to further impact, and we seek to take advantage of such opportunities wherever possible/appropriate. Recent examples include: **Butler's** consultancy role in the creation of a new sound work by the Kronos Quartet and composer Nicole Lizée, which arose from his work on the Delia Derbyshire archive, and led to his role as a featured speaker in the touring "Delia Derbyshire Day" event (sold out four UK tour venues, 2013); **Bottoms'** creation of the site-specific, flood-themed performance *Multi-Story Water*, in Shipley, Bradford (part of his 2012 AHRC project), led to a commission from Bradford Council to create a city centre performance for the opening of the EU-wide FloodResilienCity conference, as well as an invitation to present at a Think Tank event run by the Environment Agency's national innovations team (both 2013); **Dudrah's** recognised expertise on Indian popular culture has resulted in over 150 media appearances since 2008 (notably on BBC Asian Network, BBC Radio Manchester, etc.) and he has been widely consulted as an advisor, co-curator and guest lecturer for exhibitions on Bollywood and/or Bhangra- notably in Canada (Surrey Museum, BC, 2011-13), in the United States (Tribeca Art Gallery, 2011), and the UK (Contact Theatre, Manchester; Staffordshire Museum, 2008); **Gale's** scholarship on "forgotten" female playwrights of the early 20<sup>th</sup> C. resulted directly in a production of G.B. Stern's *The Man Who Pays the Piper* at London's Orange Tree Theatre (2013), which further prompted public speaking appearances at both the Orange Tree and the National Theatre.

**c. Strategy and plans** Drama's long-term commitment to external engagement is coherent with the broader objectives of the University of Manchester's Strategic Vision 2020, which drives planning and investment across the institution. This identifies Social Responsibility as one of the University's three core goals, and encourages staff to pursue public engagement in all its forms. Drama staff are leaders in this area within the University: e.g. **Jeffers** was awarded UoM's first Medal for Social Responsibility in 2010. **Thompson** is the Faculty of Humanities' Associate Dean

## Impact template (REF3a)

for External Relations (a role encompassing Social Responsibility and Business Engagement), working closely with the Faculty's newly appointed SR/BE manager, Shanta Aphale, whose role is to prioritise impact activities Faculty-wide. Future impact opportunities will be greatly enhanced by this strategic prioritisation within the institution: e.g. we intend to make best use of new, interdisciplinary "hub" initiatives such as [cities@manchester](#) and [policy@manchester](#), which are developing links with some major external partners.

Drama has for many years encouraged its staff to consider the relevance of their research to external users, from the point of inception. Since 2009, this mentoring principle has been enhanced by the University's annual Research Profiling Exercise, which asks all staff to develop the social/economic impact of their research beyond HE. The University's promotion procedures recognise knowledge transfer activity as one of four key criteria for advancement. Such strategies foster a staff ethos that values outward-facing activities as integral to the development of personal research profiles. Drama is also prioritising the development of a new generation of impact-oriented researchers: in 2013, PhD student Ben Dunn (supervised by **Hughes** and **Thompson**) received one of the University's Research Impact Scholarships, which encourage students to join top-quality research teams in seeking to address pressing social questions.

As a subject area, Drama's performance against targets for research and impact is reviewed annually through the University's Planning and Accountability cycle. Our strategic emphasis in the next five years will be on further developing impact in the following areas. **1. Business development:** pursuant to the successful "follow-on" funding awarded by AHRC to the 'In Place of War' project (specifically to extend its reach/impact internationally), we will be applying for business development grants (AHRC commercialisation; ACE) to explore establishing IPoW as an independent organisation supporting artists from war, disaster and conflict zones. **2. Exhibitions of work.** Building on the success of the Insight Film festival, Chinese Film Forum, etc., we plan to develop further contexts in which to exhibit the creative and curatorial work of researchers to a range of audiences. A particular opportunity at present lies in developing a new, embedded relationship with the directors of HOME, Manchester's latest arts venue (merging the Cornerhouse cinema and Library Theatre), which may result in the shared appointment of a director of film programming. **Lowe** has been consulted by HOME on developing the venue's interface between stage and screen. **3. Public engagements and dissemination.** Various strategies will be employed to engage non-academic audiences with research outcomes. A particular focus will be on sharing best practice with respect to the use of digital platforms: IPoW will continue to expand its online platform, and the Delia Derbyshire archive digitisation project will also research materials available to a broader public. **Gilmore** is currently developing a "Manchester Music Map" app with commercial investors for the geo-annotation of the city's music performance hotspots. Experience gathered through such initiatives will be shared with other colleagues (e.g. **Jeffers**, to support her project documenting the Community Arts movement). Support, training and facilities will continue to be provided to staff to create collaborations with external agencies and organisations as part of our emphasis on knowledge exchange and research development.

#### d. Relationship to case studies

Drama's two case studies exemplify our two main approaches to impact. The "In Place of War" project has worked dynamically with external organisations from its inception (arts groups, NGOs, etc.) to document, share and expand the international knowledge base about artists responding to war, disaster and conflict. The project respects and champions the expertise of its external partners, an approach typical of Drama's collaborative ethos, whereby "impact" is not seen simply in terms of research being transferred for the benefit of the external community, but in terms of close co-working that leads to new insights of benefit to both the research/HE community and to non-HE partners. The second case study examines **Featherstone's** work on popular performance forms in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Britain. This exemplifies our desire to ensure that historiographic research is made relevant to popular as well as academic audiences, thereby providing positive benefits to the cultural life of local and national communities. Featherstone has successfully translated her archival research and historical expertise into contemporary popular fiction. Her novels and research outputs, and consequent media engagements, have extended public understandings of neglected historical performance forms, contributing to a wider appreciation of their significance.