

**Institution: Falmouth University**

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

**a. Context**

The impact from the unit's research activity falls into four main areas: cultural; social; economic; policy; and across four main user groups: communities (especially rural communities); the creative sector; other business sectors (especially high-growth, technology-oriented businesses); policymakers.

Researchers within this unit have traditionally been well-networked within and across the creative sector, especially within the performing arts and media industries, and this has led to numerous collaborations resulting in impact of a largely cultural nature for those collaborating organisations. For example, the research of Mercedes Kemp (see Impact Case Study) on the use of theatre as a site for community engagement and democratic participation in respect of her work with WildWorks has led to cultural impact for both the company and the communities with whom they have worked.

The development of impact over the census period has also been supported by the EU economic convergence agenda in Cornwall, which has provided £39.5m for the institutional research infrastructure in recent years. The university strategy has two cross-cutting themes of Digital Economy and Sustainable Design, this unit contributes to both but is skewed towards the Digital Economy in order to grow its collaborative work with non-academic partners and develop its impact agenda. Falmouth staff hold senior roles within the RCUK Digital Economy Programme - on the Programme Advisory Board (Wilson) and review panels (Stenton) and the ongoing collaboration with BT around the Superfast Broadband agenda has enabled a number of pilot and larger projects to take place with businesses and communities that have drawn in researchers from across the unit.

**b. Approach to impact**

The unit, supported by a strong, clear institutional strategy and policy, has been pro-active in developing its approach to impact and external engagement over the census period. There have been two main factors that have driven the transformation of the impact agenda in recent years. Firstly, much of this has been driven and enabled by European convergence funding, which has supported the building and staffing of AIR and several PhD studentships with local businesses. Whilst this has been an investment that has benefitted the whole of the institution, this Unit has also benefitted specifically from the building of the new Performance Centre. These investments have brought with them the obligations to deliver on a number of measurable targets in relation to business engagement' (business assists'), job creation and contribution to the growth of the Cornish economy. This has inevitably led to researchers from the unit actively engaging with a much broader range of external partners, in terms of sector and business type, than had previously been the case. It has also led to a particular focus on working with Cornish businesses. To date AIR and the Performance Centre have generated an additional £136.5m GVA to the Cornish economy through 229 business assists. Secondly, the unit has taken advantage of the roll-out of superfast broadband in Cornwall to increase its level of business engagement in the digital economy. Superfast Cornwall represents a £132m investment in bringing broadband speeds of up to 100Mbps to Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, making it the best connected rural region in Europe. Members from across the unit have worked in partnership with BT, local communities and businesses on several projects exploring the creative use of enhanced broadband capability for social and economic impact.

One example of this is 'The University of the Village', a collaborative project with the Universities of Surrey and South Wales and BT, funded by the AHRC through the Connected Communities Programme. The project sought to harness the use of superfast broadband to reimagine the relationship between universities and their rural constituencies in creative projects. Members of the unit developed a relationship with a local business in the village of St Agnes, the Driftwood Spars Hotel, Restaurant and Microbrewery. As a direct result of the engagement, the Hotel has

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developed a series of 'superfast wine dinners', which provide live links between the dining room in St Agnes and a winegrower in their vineyard who will talk live to the dinner guests to introduce the wines that they are drinking as part of their dinner. The hotel is now building on this to provide broadband-enabled beer-tasting sessions to grow their export business.

In order to support this we have instigated a number of initiatives within AIR. These include: the development of a 'Sandpit' programme to bring business users together with academics from the unit to explore issues of mutual concern around the digital economy theme and to develop research collaborations; the development of the AIR Studio with a residents' scheme, whereby businesses can base themselves within the Academy in order to work on a particular project or pre-incubation business activity and draw upon the expertise and resources of the University; the funding of a number of R&D Pilot Projects in collaboration with BT and Superfast Cornwall that bring together local businesses with academics from the unit to develop and test new business ideas; the recruitment of a new Knowledge Transfer and Collaborative R&D Manager to develop knowledge exchange partnerships and lead the development of the KE/KT strategy. We have also focussed our own internal Research and Innovation Schemes on the development of impactful research, by supporting staff-led projects that seek new engagements with Cornish businesses.

At an institutional level the development of policy impact has been supported by the Vice-Chancellor's membership of the Local Enterprise Partnership Board for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly and her leadership role on both the Cultural and Creative Industries Reference Group and the Innovation Board, chairing both groups. This has ensured that 'Creative Industries' has been included as a priority area in 'smart specialisation' terms for the LEP Structural Investment Funds plan as it goes forward. The institution is also engaged on LEP instigated steering groups for Smart Cornwall and e-health/Well-being. Through the AIR residents scheme we will continue to bring together key individuals and build networks of expertise. This period we hosted Nema Hart of Arts Council England who built links between Cornwall's LEP and ACE and established the Cultural and Creative Reference Group to bring together policymakers, practitioners and researchers to inform LEP, university and funding strategy.

**c. Strategy and plans**

Impact-related activity has grown significantly across the unit over the past three years. The full impact of much of this work has still to come to fruition, but it is our intention to maintain our current relationships and partnerships across the creative sector, build on our developing linkages within the cultural sector relating to museums and tourism and other business sectors through continued engagement with the LEP and European convergence programme, now that the next tranche of funding for Cornwall has been confirmed. We will continue research with Superfast Cornwall and host Superfast Cornwall Labs to maximise the impact of the roll out.

The Cornwall and Isles of Scilly LEP aspires to leverage R&D throughout the supply chain in the next EU funding period 2014-2020 (SIF). The county is developing a smart specialisation strategy with potential for investment in research relating to e-health and wellbeing, and Digital and Creative Industries. This has strong inter-connections with our research areas moving forward such as digital gaming, interactive technologies, digital making and SMART technologies. The wraparound of our research areas with SIF investment priorities guarantees impact within the local community encompassing both social and business innovation.

One area that has been identified for future development is in the multi-disciplinary area of Digital Games, where members from across this unit will play a key part. This has been recognised as a potential area for development and growth in Cornwall, which has the infrastructure to take advantage of the changes currently being experienced within the industry (eg, an increasingly distributed model of employment where individuals, supported by high speed broadband, work on collaborative projects on a freelance basis). The University has already appointed Tanya Krzywinska as Professor of Games Design and has recently secured €2.5m of European FP7 funding to establish a Digital Games Technology Institute with an additional research professor and associated team to leverage convergence and Horizon2020 synergies. The strategic focus on digital games is further strengthened by £1.5m ERDF funding for Alacrity Falmouth, a pilot

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programme to incubate new businesses in the games sector. We have also established an international partnership with Gothia Science Park (Sweden) linked to games innovation.

The institution has also recently established a Graduate School, headed by a Dean of Research and the Graduate School, supported by two Associate Deans. Part of the remit of the Graduate School is to provide leadership and support to all researchers in developing their research activity in line with the university's strategic direction. This role of the Graduate School, over the coming census period will be to further promote the impact agenda across all members of the unit, which is spread across a number of academic departments.

The researchers in the unit are all located on the University's Penryn Campus, which it shares with the University of Exeter. The recent opening of Exeter's Environment and Sustainability Institute has already opened the door on new collaborations. ESI is itself also funded through the convergence programme, so collaborative work with Exeter colleagues will lead to further interactions with local businesses and impactful research. Current collaborative projects in preparation include: new non-invasive coral scanning 'Camera Trap' technology from AIR resident and film-maker Matt Walsh from Visual Persistence. Joint ESF PhD supervision between Exeter's ESI and Falmouth (Frears) in looking at locative media, storytelling and the connection to landscape. A proposal has been submitted with ESI (DeSilvey) to NERC to combine narrative and drought science to enable communities resilience.

**d. Relationship to case studies**

There has been a large growth in the past three years in the amount and range of research in collaboration with non-academic partners, yet the full impact of this work, which will shift the balance of the unit's activities to include economic and policy impact, has yet to come to fruition. The submitted case studies, therefore, focus more upon the cultural and social impact (with some policy impact in the case of *The Organ of Corti*) on the communities and creative professionals and companies with whom we have collaborated, eg WildWorks, Lone Twin, Performance/Live/Sound Art practitioners and their audiences. We will maintain these types of impact over the coming period. Indeed we have ensured that the infrastructures that we have put in place to support collaboration (for example, the Sandpit and the AIR Studio residency programmes) continue to support and develop our relationships with our partners in the creative sector. We have been able to support engagement by Miracle Theatre a local SME with emerging technology from our European FP7 Vconnect project by securing an AHRC/NESTA R&D project enabling them to explore the technology for their own business needs. WildWorks are regular visitors to campus and participants in workshops and their work is well represented in the Cornish Theatre Archive, which is held by the University. Furthermore, the Performance Centre is now an established touring venue and supports a range of companies and individual artists by providing a performance venue, rehearsal space and technical support. We are helping Kneehigh to make their first locative performance apps and this year ACE funding resulting from a Sandpit in AIR helped them create their Rambles app [www.kneehigh.co.uk/page/rambles-app.php](http://www.kneehigh.co.uk/page/rambles-app.php)

We have invested in creating a sustainable infrastructure to optimise the potential for impact and to support its place as a key priority for the university. This is already beginning to create tangible results (see impact case studies).