

Impact template (REF3a)

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| <p>Institution: University of York</p> |
| <p>Unit of Assessment: 35B, Music, Drama, Dance and Performing Arts: Theatre, Film and Television</p> |
| <p>a. Context</p> <p>The department of Theatre, Film and Television was formed in 2007 with an initial staff of six, two of whom were new to the university. This has grown steadily since then, to 20 academic staff members. The department was established to be outward facing across research, teaching and commercial activities and therefore is strongly committed to generating impact beyond the academy. While significant progress has been made, the relative newness of the unit has however limited the generation of eligible impact case studies during the relevant period.</p> <p>The main non-academic user groups, beneficiaries or audiences for the research undertaken in the department include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The theatre, film, television and interactive media industries; • Creative practitioners and training providers working in these industries; • The general public who are audiences for the products of these industries; • Media technology manufacturers; • Other industries utilising image and audio digital technology. <p>The department's research is organised into defined clusters: (a) The theory, practice and pedagogy of acting and performance; (b) The development, application and reception of theatre, film, television and interactive media production practices, technologies, creative activities and aesthetics; (c) The institutional and industrial organisation, cultural relevance and social engagement of theatre, film, television and interactive media; (d) Theatre, film and television and human rights; (e) The historical development of theatre, film and digital media practices, genres and thematic concerns; (f) 3D Sound and Image research. These research clusters underpin the following types of impact (with the relevant clusters noted in brackets):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct engagement with theatre, film and television industry professionals and creative practitioners in relation to both teaching and research activities (a-f); • Knowledge Transfer projects with theatre, film and television industries (a, b, f); • The facilitation of creative production by external commercial clients (b, f); • Research directly addressing creative production practices and digital technologies in theatre, film, television and interactive media (a, b, f); • Curatorial activities involving public and educational outreach (a, d, e); • Public engagement via theatre performances, screenings, lectures, symposia and other events hosted by the department (a-f); • The provision of skilled labour for theatre, film and television industries via student placements and internships (c, d). |
| <p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>The department was formed to be outward facing and directly engaged with the theatre, film, television and interactive media industries and the general public. This is being achieved through research projects and creative productions & performances (informed by the research clusters noted above), but also through Knowledge Transfer Partnerships, practice-based teaching programmes, Continuing Professional Development (CPD) initiatives and commercial activities. During the period 2008-13 the department developed its address to non-academic users and audiences via research projects on early modern theatre (Cordner), the training of actors (Luckhurst), the development of Film Schools (Petrie), film and the heritage industry (Higson), the development and application of digital audio technologies (Pauletto, Kearney) academic/industry collaboration in film production (Mateer, Kearney) and films on contemporary slavery (Hickman). Impact has also been generated via initiatives which utilised the department's state-of-the-art production, performance and screening facilities, several of which have been supported by the department through its research leave scheme, research pump-priming and conference funding.</p> <p>Engagement with Creative Practitioners & Industry Professionals</p> <p>The focus of both research and teaching on industry practice has informed the department's dialogue and partnership with creative practitioners and industry professionals and our ability to</p> |

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impact directly on pedagogy and practice. Since 2008 a vibrant visiting speaker and master class programme has developed, with industry professionals also participating in conferences, symposia, teaching programmes and other events on a variety of topics. These relationships have also assisted the development of new impactful research projects on the training of TV actors, adapting and performing early modern plays, voice manipulation and sound design for films and games, and industry/academic collaboration in feature film production. The focus on actor training also gave rise to a major HEA-funded Knowledge Exchange project, 'Performing Classical and Modern Playtexts', led by Luckhurst. This ran from 2009 to 2012 with the participation of several national and international drama schools and University theatre departments (RADA, Central School of Speech and Drama, Manchester Metropolitan University Theatre School, the Department of Drama, University of Bristol, City University New York, and the Universities of Sydney and Melbourne). The project set out to impact on current pedagogies and practices in actor training and involved workshops using the department's facilities. Luckhurst spent 2012-13 developing the project further in the US and Australia via HEA and BA fellowships.

Other Industry Engagement

The department's state of the art building and production facilities have attracted external productions to the department as part of our commercial activities remit. This on-going association with industry clients and professional productions has seeded new relationship and created opportunities for more substantial research and knowledge exchange (KE) projects. Since 2010, these activities have been promoted and facilitated by a Commercial Manager, whose post was financed for the first year by the university's Higher Education Innovation Fund. This work has supported new feature films (including *If I Were You* starring Oscar-winner Marcia Gay Harden, *Entity*, winner of the London Independent Film Festival Prize in 2013, and *First Night*, produced by Oscar-winner Stephen Evans), television dramas (including both series of the BBC1 hit, *The Syndicate*), and other productions (including an episode of BBC's *Question Time*, live studio recordings for the Shopping Channel, national advertisements and music videos), creating new companies and jobs in the process. A good exemplar is the Knowledge Transfer Partnership with Green Screen Productions in 2012, which is enabling us to develop new digital workflow and technical systems for feature film. Green Screen are also collaborating with staff and graduates of the department on a slate of feature-film productions (most recently, *The Knife That Killed Me* backed by Universal Pictures and scheduled for release in 2014), a relationship that has enabled us to develop research on industry/educational partnerships in film production and applications of digital audio technologies, and which is supported by the university's Research Innovation Office.

Public Engagement/Educational Outreach

The production and performance facilities have also facilitated public engagement and educational outreach, through the creation of new work, and regular public performances and screenings of that new work, which helps build audiences for departmental activities. These activities are also embedded in our teaching programmes, further enhancing the outward facing nature of the department. In 2011 Hickman used the department's editing facilities for his three films in a seven-part series on *Modern Slavery: A Twenty-First Century Evil* for Al Jazeera, English (aired in over 100 countries reaching 130 million viewers). This project had impact at its very core, as these films were part of an initiative to encourage Governments and NGOs to recognise certain forms of human exploitation as slavery. Our theatre facilities led to Cordner's adaptation and production of Thomas Middleton's play *A Mad World My Masters* in 2011, and John Marston's *The Dutch Courtesan* in 2013. Both productions were supported by the Shepherd Trust with grants of £10k for each. In 2013 Peschel adapted and staged the UK premiere of a play written in the Terezin ghetto in Czechoslovakia during World War 2, as part of the University's 'Festival of Ideas'. Cordner also played a key role in acquiring new materials for the Samuel Storey Writing and Performance Collection, including the acquisition in 2011 of the Alan Ayckbourn Archive, which led to the employment of an outreach officer to facilitate visits by local young people to engage creatively with the materials in the archive. This initiative was developed in collaboration with the Borthwick Institute for Archives and supported by a grant of £280k from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

c. Strategy and plans

The close relationship between research, teaching and commercial activities, coupled with an engagement with creative industries and processes has helped the department establish impact

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potential. From this basis, our strategy is to generate more industry and production-oriented research projects, regularly produce ambitious creative productions and performances, and develop more commercial activities and KE projects that both inform and are informed by our growing research expertise and activities. The addition of new colleagues in the field of interactive media from 2013 signifies a broadening of impact to include engagement with games and interactive media companies. Our impact strategy has the following key aims:

- To build in and maximise impact across all research activities, funding bids and projects. This will be achieved via departmental incentives and support for research activities, as outlined in detail in section C(i) of the Environment Template.
- To develop impact in the field of interactive media by engaging industry and users of such media. This is being facilitated by new hires, including two professors of interactive media, from September 2013 (Holliman, Ursu).
- To encourage, identify, nurture and support research projects with high impact potential. Examples include projects on Early modern theatre (Cordner), Actor training (Luckhurst), Actor training and television (Cantrell), 3D optics (Holliman), 3D sound (Kearney), Sound design and education (Pauletto) and Interactive television (Ursu), which are currently in various stages of development.
- To build and enhance public engagement through regular theatrical performances, film and television productions, film festivals and screenings, public talks and other events using our building and facilities. This will be driven primarily by the research clusters, as noted in section 2 above.
- To facilitate greater synergy between research, KTP and commercial activities that use the department's facilities and resources, by identifying opportunities and developing partnerships such as that already in place with Green Screen. This will be facilitated by close collaboration between the Departmental Research Committee and the Commercial Manager. The recent award of another KTP project to Kearney, in partnership with the Mercedes Benz Formula One Team and supported by the Technology Strategy Board, demonstrates the effectiveness of this strategic aim.
- To identify and exploit opportunities for developing new relationships with commercial clients, including CPD provision. This will be overseen by the Commercial Manager.
- To develop student placements within industry – rolled out from 2012 by a placements co-ordinator – building stronger relationships with film and TV companies and other industries bodies.
- To develop appropriate evaluation mechanisms for impact and to establish this as on-going business for the Departmental Research Committee.

d. Relationship to case studies

The two impact case studies exemplify the ways in which our research is informed by creative practice and directed towards audiences and beneficiaries beyond the academy. Research and creative practice of this nature is central to the department's concern with impactful activities. The production of the three films made by Hickman for the Al Jazeera series *Modern Slavery: A Twenty First Century Evil* was directly facilitated by the department, which provided the technological resources for the editing and post production of the films. This case study also illustrates how creative production can generate impact via industry recognition, public engagement (the films were made for an established broadcaster, widely disseminated internationally, and generated numerous reviews and commentary) and direct intervention into social problems and issues (the engagement with the subjects of the films). The films also critically interrogate a 'serious' topic – in this case one that has potential policy implications in the field of human rights (one of our research clusters). The second case study, built around Cordner's scholarly and creative work on Early Modern Theatre, illustrates the way in which historical scholarship and contemporary creative practice can be combined – aided by the department's high quality production and performance facilities – to generate impact through local public engagement (delivered through performances of *A Mad World My Masters* and *The Dutch Courtesan* in the department's scenic stage theatre), to educational engagement involving teachers and students beyond York (delivered via the website resource for *The Dutch Courtesan* and the GSCE teaching resource for *Romeo and Juliet*).