

## Impact template (REF3a)

<b>Institution:</b> Plymouth University
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> D29 English Language and Literature
<p><b>a. Context</b></p> <p>As a unit, we actively seek wider dissemination of our research through a range of pathways, including University supported organizations such as Innovation for the Cultural and Creative Industries (ICCI) and Peninsula Arts (the University's umbrella organization with the remit 'to promote culture in the Southwest'). Public engagement and knowledge transfer are achieved through public lectures, podcasts, websites, popular publications, exhibitions, consultancies, interactions with the media, and archive enhancement. The reach of the unit's research stems from our four creative writers, who are active makers and promoters of their own poetry and fiction in public, culturally significant venues, and our writers and scholars with expertise in regional literatures, rhetoric, Shakespeare, and American literature amongst other topics. Staff act as critics, reviewers, curators, and editors to external bodies to extend their contribution to civil society and cultural life.</p> <p>The main users, non-academic beneficiaries and audiences for the unit's research are local literature societies and libraries (such as Plymouth Language Club, LIT, Dartmoor Society, Charles Causley Trust, Plymouth Public Library, Plymouth Proprietary Library, Athenaeum Club, and Plymouth City Museum), readers of poetry and fiction, the publishing industry (including presses in the UK, Ireland, USA, and Canada such as Granta, Faber, Forward, Cinnamon, Salt, Shearsman, DC Books, Book Thug, University of New Orleans Press, and University of Plymouth Press), journals and newspapers such as <i>Times Literary Supplement</i>, <i>Sunday Times</i>, <i>Poetry Review</i>, <i>Denver Quarterly</i>, and <i>Agni Online</i>, local, national and international festivals and reading series (Bodmin Poetry Festival, The Poetry Project of St. Mark's Church, NYC, Passa Portal Festival in Brussels), schools and academies (such as Plymouth and SW Devon, Moorsway Federation Schools, 'Faber Academy' (Dublin), psychotherapists (British Association of Counsellors, Westcountry Association of Counsellors, Exeter College Counsellor Training Courses), and government and public arts organizations (Plymouth City Council, Launceston Town Council, Arts Council England, and the Cultural Olympiad).</p>
<p><b>b. Approach to impact</b></p> <p>The unit has sought to build a strong culture of impact across the team by proactively creating and taking advantage of University, Faculty, School, and subject-level initiatives. Staff have attended impact training and workshops organised nationally and within the University, such as Plymouth's HEIF-funded <i>Innovation for the Cultural and Creative Industries</i> unit (ICCI, formed 2008), which provides a central point for the development, communication and project management of creative and cultural activities, external projects, and related academic research. ICCI supported ventures include Moore, Hinds and Bautz work on the Cottonian Collection, a public collection of 18<sup>th</sup> century art and documents of the Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery, Lopez's production of his 'Material Poetries' for exhibitions, and Donovan's continued professional development as an international writer fostering dissemination of his works. 20,000 copies of sections from Donovan's novel <i>Julius Winsome</i> were distributed during World Book Night, April 2013.</p> <p>Peninsula Arts, the University's cultural umbrella organisation (founded 2004) is vital to the dissemination of the unit's research to non-academic audiences and to fostering links with local literature groups and societies such as the Athenaeum Club, The Language Club, LIT, the Plymouth Proprietary Library, as well as interfaith religious groups through the aegis of the University Chaplaincy. Unit members chair programming series such as the annual Literature Series (including 'Great Writers and Influence', 'Literature and Science,' and 'Shakespeare and Performance'), present their own research during such series, and help organize major events/outputs such as the <i>Moby-Dick Big Read</i> (<a href="http://www.mobydickbigread.com/">http://www.mobydickbigread.com/</a>), an international phenomenon with over 2.5 million website hits managed and administered by Pen Arts with academic support from Caleshu and the curation of Philip Hoare (Leverhulme Artist in</p>

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Residence).

The unit's writers have proactively sought (and been sought by) organizers of festivals, and public venues to read/perform their work as an intrinsic element in high impact creative writing outputs. These include Donovan at Passa Porta Festival in Brussels 2013, Dublin Literary Festival 2012, and Guadalajara International Book Fair 2009, Caleshu at Bodmin Literary Festival 2013, and as keynote at the 'First International Conference on Creative writing in Education' in Greece (organized by Athens College secondary school and University of Western Macedonia Greece, 2013), and Lopez at The Poetry Project (St. Mark's Church 2012), Edinburgh International Book Festival 2012, and the Hay Poetry Jamboree 2012. Extending Lopez's reach has been his recent work in 'material poetry' (visual works), which have been on increasing display since 2008: to tens of thousands as part of the the 'cultural olympiad' (Weymouth 2008), as part of the permanent Irwell Sculpture Trail (2012-ongoing), and as featured in group exhibitions such as 'Visual Poetics' (Southbank Centre, 2013), 'Time, The Deer is in the wood of Hallaig' (Belfry Gallery, Bethnal Green 2013), 'Light Night' (Bury Art Museum, 2013), and 'Dark Would' (Edinburgh, 2013).

Subject-level mentoring on pathways to impact is a key component of research mentoring at all levels (from ECR to senior researchers) and is an integral part of all the personal research plans that are monitored by research coordinator Caleshu and School of Humanities professorial consultant Brown. Internal research funding bids now require staff to give attention to impact related activities. Relationships with external partners have been sponsored by internal funding at university level, which has been directed towards projects between Plymouth University and local non-HEI partners such as libraries and museums. Examples of success include archival support work for the Plymouth City Museum (the Cottonian Initiative, leading to Moore's successful bid for an AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Award), as well as support for Plymouth Proprietary Library (which received subsequent Heritage Lottery Funding to upgrade facilities and provide interpretative materials, consultancy). Staff act as consultants for the Charles Causley Trust and Launceston Town Council on their literary heritage trail and website, Plymouth City Council for Mayflower 2020 organization, and on projects with educationalists (Moorsway Federation Schools, for whom Wild has developed teaching materials, and for whom Moore acts as Governor).

In addition to the above, supporting infrastructures include the University's directory of experts, career and 'professional days', and, at the University level, the 'Plymouth University Enterprise Solutions' gateway, which links academic research to individuals, businesses and the community. University PR specialists act as important conduits for public dissemination of our research, and are able to place it within the local and national media. Outreach mechanisms such as the 'professional days' mentioned, bring external bodies into the University and enable Unit members to venture off campus in order to build relationships with archives, institutions and potential user groups alongside grant applications for research projects. Other supporting University level initiatives include the Vice-Chancellor's annual 'Community Research Awards', designed to help community groups, charities and social enterprises. In partnership with History, ECW staff have participated in the scheme on a project suggested by the Ford Park Cemetery Trust. Further, the VC's annual 'Enterprise Awards' scheme recognizes and supports staff projects such as University of Plymouth Press's '20 Romanian Writers Series' (start-up series editor Caleshu) the aforementioned Romanian organization of the Moby-Dick Big Read (Caleshu), and the Plymouth International Book Festival (launched in 2012 with support of Moore who received Arts Council Funding).

Impact outcomes of activities are monitored at Centre-level so as to inform our development and refinement of our approaches to impact. All staff members are required to record and collect audit data on impact (including communications with other parties and subsequent feedback). This is filed and reported to the research co-ordinator, who reports to the Centre Director. ICCI has facilitated the unit collecting evidence of its HEIF reportable research activities, which has allowed the unit not only to quantify such activities but to use data upon which to make strategic decisions about support of particular kinds of work in the future. Since 2012 Peninsula Arts, in association with Literature Works, has captured for us audience feedback and footfall on public lectures delivered by members of the English and Creative Writing team. An example of this is seen in the

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documentation of the impact of Bautz's Peninsula Arts Lecture 'The Popularity of Jane Austen and Sir Walter Scott' which attracted 87 audience members, of whom 37 completed the survey, with 89% agreeing they had learnt something new from the lecture, and 60% agreeing they would share knowledge with others through discussion. The Plymouth University-based consultancy group, SERIO, is now employed to produce an audit trail of major projects, generating material for report to the Research Centre and for use in Annual Reports to the University Research and Innovation Committee.

**c. Strategy and plans**

The unit's goals and plans for support for impact in the future are fourfold.

(1) To continue to develop the wider dissemination of our research in mainstream forms (such as lectures) and through e-technologies (such as websites and podcasts).

(2) To extend our systematic approach to seeking partners and so to broaden our range of links with external bodies as we identify their research needs. This will be achieved by building a more comprehensive database of external partners, as well as by our appointment of an impact co-ordinator within the unit responsible for liaising with individuals, businesses and communities;

(3) To develop new ways of capturing and recording impact data, taking advantage of university-wide resources and support (ICCI and SERIO), but also embedding audit procedures as an everyday-part of research.

These goals will be pursued through a growing focus on Creative Writing and its transnational and regional impact. Our creative writers' relationships with America, where all have spent considerable amounts of time, means that we are readily placed to extend the 'Transatlantic' exchange forum that was set up through an AHRC grant. This will allow our writers to further impact on artistic cultures across the Atlantic. Growing research expertise in transatlantic literature and culture from 1580 onwards means that we will continue to inform the Plymouth City Council social enterprise venture, Mayflower 2020 (launched 2011), and in particular its museum's and heritage directorate as they prepare for the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Mayflower crossing. More regional impact will be achieved through an investment of resources in a venture projected as 'The Ages through Plymouth', which aims to bring together a range of partners and community groups to create a local and international understanding of the literary heritage of Plymouth and the surrounding area within a British and international context.

**d. Relationship to case studies**

The two case studies have been selected because they reflect two strains of distinctive practice within the unit. Both case studies exemplify our strategic approach whereby our researchers have made themselves available to public organizations through professional networks and through the University's various gateways. Both case studies refer to the work of single scholars, and demonstrate the importance of our emphasis on Personal Development Review, mentoring, and support for significant research activity with impact potential. For example, the development of Wild's 'Making Words Human' project was refined following a PDR meeting with the research coordinator. Moreover, since its start up, 'Making Words Human' has served as a 'template' by which the ECW team have further become engaged with impacting activity (in particular, it has driven our 2013 CDA award for 'The Cottonian Initiative' and buoyed the team's interest in pursuing knowledge transfer to regional museums and archives). Our second case study on the impact of Tony Lopez's poetry has served to enable our development of creative writing as impacting activity (three new hires since 2008 have been creative writers). Further, Lopez's case study has prompted creative writers (and other practitioners within the University) to become members of the 'Transatlantic Exchanges Forum', a priority area for development of our subject team.