

Institution: Leeds Trinity University

Unit of Assessment: Communication, Cultural and Media Studies, Library and Information Management

a. Overview

Leeds Trinity is a new, small University with approximately 135 academic staff and a student population just over 3,000 FTEs (full time equivalents). The student population is predominantly undergraduate, and there are currently 136 taught postgraduate and 7 postgraduate research students. This small size enables us to work across discipline boundaries, which is particularly seen in our flagship interdisciplinary research centre, the Leeds Centre for Victorian Studies. The institution is committed to the 'creation of a strong research culture' while being 'student-centred at all levels' (Strategic Plan, 2013/14). It has a record of sustained engagement with Research Assessment Exercises from 1992 onwards.

The period 2008-2013 has been one of dynamic and rapid institutional change. At the point of the RAE 2008 the institution was still a College of Higher Education, and its undergraduate and postgraduate degrees were awarded under the aegis of the University of Leeds. The institution received Taught Degree Awarding Powers in 2009 and gained University status in December 2012. During this period the institution has remained committed to sustaining research excellence and to its primary aim of developing the breadth of research activity (Research and Scholarship Strategy, 2006). As a result, there are 2 new Units of Assessment being submitted for REF 2014 (which did not submit in 2008), an increased number of individuals being submitted, and more than twice as many registered doctoral students (7 as compared to 3). During this period the University's research culture has been enhanced, enriched and expanded within the wider context of a community characterised by inclusiveness and the commitment to being student-centred. Research is the institution's 'intellectual capital' and that capital is for the 'benefit [of] our students in the wider community' in an institution that aims to contribute to local and international community partnerships (Strategic Plan, 2013/14). Its academic provision, which has always been characterised by a particularly high level of vocational focus underpinned by professional practice, is now also to be 'research-led and research-informed' (Strategic Plan, 2013/14).

The submitting unit comprises the two subject areas of Media, Film and Culture (hereafter MFC), and Journalism, both distinct academic teams within the Department of Journalism, Media and Business. The research strategy has been developed for both, but with some synergies across these two areas. The research output from both teams has increased since 2008, from a position of not entering into the previous RAE to creating a coherent submission with a headcount of 5 staff. Within both subject areas there are a number of practitioners, current or former media professionals, whose teaching is informed by their currency, but some of whom lack a formal research background or training. The unit is in the process of ameliorating this, as a key priority, utilising the expertise of the Director of MFC, Professor Graham Roberts (appointed November 2012) and providing further mentoring and development training for these staff. The team have also recently recruited research active staff to all new positions advertised.

b. Research strategy

As a result of the institutional change described, Leeds Trinity has undergone a degree of restructuring, which has necessarily impacted on some of the roles described in the institution's Research Strategy 2006-2011. During this process, research became embedded within the staple business of the institution. For example, Heads of Department gained responsibility for aspects of research leadership that had previously resided solely at senior management level, in the Director

of Research, while the Faculty Research Champions created by the Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund became Research Leads within Departments. The submitting unit has utilised this devolved structure and worked towards creating a submission for REF2014. Staff research outputs have substantially increased since Jan 2008 and following the appointment of the Director of MFC (Nov 2012), two new research active members of staff have joined the team.

Since gaining University status, the institution has appointed a Vice-Chancellor (from Jan 2013) and a Pro-Vice Chancellor (Academic) (from Sept 2013). These appointments have led to a revised Strategic Plan (2013/14) and a bold and ambitious ten-year research strategy (to 2022). A stated objective of the Strategic Plan (2013/14) is that the institution's research capacity will be increased. This is supported by the Research Strategy's overarching aim to create a strong, vibrant and sustainable research culture that underpins our teaching, enables research excellence and enhances our academic reputation and credibility. Projected plans in the Research Strategy are to stimulate research partnerships and networks regionally, nationally and internationally, create research leadership and co-ordination roles and, subject to clear procedures and protocols, establish new research groups and centres. A key objective of this strategy is to lay the foundation for the application for Research Degree Awarding Powers by 2022, plans and targets for which are outlined in 3-4 year periods (the current period being 2013-16). Details of how the institution will work towards this over the next four years include: revision of academic staff appointment procedures to ensure only research-active staff are appointed to academic roles; providing funding (level of which will be agreed on an annual basis) to recruit and support the progression of postgraduate research students; seeking at least one externally-funded PhD research studentship for each internally funded studentship; and creating the position of Research Officer to provide institutional support for grant support administration.

Responding to the institutional research strategy, the unit, over the next five years plans to increase the number of research active staff, successfully bid for research funding, and increase external partnerships to develop research and impact. Central to these plans is the creation and subsequent development of a subject area centre for learning and teaching, research, and partnerships, entitled the Centre for Creative Media. The Centre will concentrate particularly on media production and media culture, two overlapping research foci. All research related activities will focus around these areas. An open access peer-reviewed online journal will be launched, hosted by the proposed centre with the provisional title of *Creative Media Cultures*. To achieve this, staff will first gain experience by editing a special issue of a relevant peer-reviewed online journal or a research driven professional association blog. We have also applied to take over editorship of the *Journal of Media Practice*. We will identify and enlist external 'associates' for the Centre's advisory board and the (proposed) journal's editorial board.

The Centre for Creative Media will be the foundation for increasing collaboration. Such collaborations will be within the unit, across Leeds Trinity (ensuring opportunities for interdisciplinary research), and with other institutions nationally and internationally. Alongside these academic collaborations, the unit will increase external partnerships to develop research and impact. The Centre will build on relationships that have already been developed by individual colleagues with partners based in the North of England but with national and international profiles i.e. Leeds International Film Festival, Yorkshire Screen Archive, Salford Media City, and Sheffield International Documentary Festival. Practice-based researchers will be encouraged and supported in developing (or continuing) collaborative research with partners within the relevant industry. Opportunities for specific research projects with these bodies will be investigated, with the research centred on media cultures (encompassing audiences, festivals and cultural gatekeepers, production cultures) and media production and practice, and the overlap of these.

Increasing the research income is a key priority for the unit. We will utilise new administrative support (from the recently appointed Research Officer, October 2013) and training within Leeds Trinity to develop funding and grants bids, with the aim of one significant bid per year per research active staff member. In line with the institutional Research Strategy and to increase the number of successful bids, the unit will expand the proportion of research active staff, aiming for 30% by 2019. This will be achieved by providing research training (from internal and external sources) and requiring each member of staff to produce at least one research output per year appropriate to their research experience. More staff within the unit will produce suitable outcomes for inclusion in the next REF, particularly within highly rated refereed journals to increase the percentage of internationally excellent research.

c. People, including:

i. Staffing strategy and staff development:

The Leeds Trinity HR Staff Development Strategy identifies Research and Scholarship as one of its priority areas. This includes the objective 'To support the Strategy for Research and Scholarship by increasing staff expertise and experience in research and scholarship', elaborated in three actions: '(I) Ensure that academic staff who are involved in research are supported in carrying out this role effectively, by providing a programme of staff development activities designed to build research competencies. (II) Establish a mentoring system for early-career academic staff. (III) Provide support for staff undertaking research degrees through the provision of partial funding.'

The institution is committed to equal opportunities in the recruitment and support of research staff. The HR Staff Development strategy addresses equality and diversity in objective 2: to embed the principles of equality and diversity, which underpin the institution's vision and values, into all actions of the institution's work. The institution works towards achieving this through three actions: I) increase the capacity and confidence of staff, especially those with managerial or supervisory responsibilities, to manage increased diversity within the staff and student bodies, by providing a range of development opportunities aimed at raising awareness of equality and diversity issues; II) facilitate legal compliance by providing mandatory threshold-level equality and diversity training for all staff; III) ensure legal compliance in recruitment by providing mandatory equality and diversity training for all members of recruitment panels.

After RAE 2008, as part of an initiative to maximise staff research engagement, the annual Professional Development Reviews (PDR) was revised to incorporate focused coverage of research and scholarship plans in place of the optional individual Research and Scholarship Plans used before. This process also highlights staff development needs with regards to research. These reviews are reported back to HR via line managers. There are clear procedures for career progression of staff, including clear criteria for applicants seeking a Professorial title or Readership.

Mentoring has been provided within the unit by the Director of MFC (5 staff within MFC, and staff within Journalism), and by the research lead (2 early career researchers within MFC). New members of staff in the UOA, who are often also early career researchers (with a practitioner background), receive mentoring for all aspects of their academic role including research. Early career researchers have some remission from teaching load, particularly for undertaking ULTRA2 higher education teaching training, which includes pedagogical research and subject specific practices.

The policy for research leave is that every member of lecturing staff has an automatic right to 20

research days a year organised by the individual member of staff but accounted for in the PDR process. This might include researching and writing conference presentations, writing up for publication, revisions, and impact activities. Staff can 'block' research days for particular projects – including in preparation for conference presentation or for publication deadlines. In addition, Leeds Trinity operated a competitive scheme for research leave (known variously as the Research Leave Scheme (pre-2010); Research Support Scheme (2010-12); Research Fellowship Scheme (since 2012)), and two members of the UOA have successfully applied for funding: Dr Jason Scott AY2009/10 and John Poulter AY2010/11.

Within the UOA, biannual research day training workshops, and continued regular use of subject area research seminars will be used to support/train academic staff, encompassing research methods, collaborative research, dissemination and impact. Research seminars for methodological approaches, interdisciplinary research, and identifying/developing potential collaboration will be publicised across Leeds Trinity and to relevant subject associations/partner organisations. The PDR process mentioned above will utilise the Vitae Researcher Development Framework to identify developmental needs, as well as strengths within the unit where experienced researchers can assist others (individually, or with developmental sessions, either in biannual Research Day or Department Away Day) and any need for external training. In line with the institution's Research Strategy, all research active staff will be offered a professor or reader as a mentor. Staff within the unit receive financial support and encouragement for presenting at, or attending conferences, and having involvement in professional/practitioner bodies.

ii. Research students

Research degrees undertaken at Leeds Trinity University are currently awarded by the University of Leeds. Leeds Trinity's monitoring and support mechanisms therefore follow guidelines set out by the University of Leeds. Equality and diversity training for all those involved in recruitment and support of research students is mandatory. The Research Committee at Leeds Trinity has overall responsibility for the internal quality for Research Degree Programmes and considers reports on enrolments and progression of postgraduate research students. An important initial stage of student progression is the 'transfer' process. Research candidatures which are intended to lead to a Doctoral award are subject to a process whereby the student is formally assessed and, if successful in the assessment, is 'transferred' to a specific degree category after an initial, provisional stage. The assessment at 'transfer' stage is intended to identify whether the individual student and the research project have the potential for research at Doctoral level and also whether completion of a thesis within the standard period of study for the programme concerned is a reasonable expectation. Students are required to submit reports, which should include a planned schedule of work and a synopsis of work already carried out or a sample chapter, within 10 months of commencement for full-time study (22 months for part-time students).

The monitoring of research students is undertaken through the supervisors. Supervisors are required to provide regular written reports on the student's progress which are presented to the Research Committee. Leeds Trinity's reporting processes require reports on admission, transfer and examination, in addition to interim 6 monthly reports. The committee considers the reports and where there are matters of concern arising, recommends the appropriate action to the Postgraduate Research Tutor and supervisors.

All students enrolled on a Research Degree Programme at Leeds Trinity have access to the training courses provided by the Staff and Departmental Development Unit (SDDU) at the University of Leeds. A wide range of training is available through the SDDU including personal

skills development (such as project management) and research specific skills (such as ethical issues in research, methodology, and writing and publishing).

The unit has no current research students but is aiming to significantly alter this position in accordance with the University's 2013-16 Research Strategy which includes the objective to 'Increase the recruitment, progression and completion of postgraduate research students from the UK and overseas'. This is part of a longer-term aim to pursue Research Degree Awarding Powers (RDAP) after 2016. Leeds Trinity plan to fund 10 PhD studentships (at the same level as Research Council funding) across the institution to be advertised in January 2014. The unit plan to expand postgraduate research provision by developing progression pathways. An MA in Media Cultures (provisional title) is being developed to align with the research focus of the proposed Centre for Creative Media. MA students will be included in seminars, colloquia and conferences organised by the centre, and in the planned online journal (in the form of published contributions where the standard is of significant quality, and in administrative roles). A research assistance bursary will be used to provide fee waivers to encourage high-achieving MA students to continue to PhD study. Experienced researchers within the team will bid for Leeds Trinity studentships in addition to seeking external funding.

The UOA will develop Trinity Vision (the University's 'in house' production company) as a site of practice-based research for 2014-19. Co-ordinated by Professor Roberts (as research lead and CEO of Trinity Vision) we will be devising protocols and support mechanisms within the company and will work to expand these to other (partner) organisations. Similarly, we will utilise links with our wide network of partner employers (including through our Employer Advisory Board). We will develop a scheme for the secondment of research students and enable the utilisation of employer's (including Trinity Vision) as 'case studies' within our Masters programme(s), particularly where related to practice/production cultures. The unit has a strong track record of secondment of practitioner lecturers in journalism which enables 'coalface' practice based research by expanding on on-going short-term professional updating (provided to 4 members of journalism staff within the REF period). The unit employs several staff who maintain industry roles, which will aid further development of such secondment activities.

d. Income, infrastructure and facilities

During the REF assessment period, oversight of research has been vested in the Research Committee, who were responsible for the development and enhancement of activities relating to research and scholarship. It ensured that there was a supportive and proactive environment for these activities. The Research Committee was one of the primary standing committees of the Academic Board, the main University forum for establishing policy on academic matters, as such it advised the Academic Board on matters of policy relating to research. Among its membership there was a research student nominated by the research student community. The Research Committee was chaired by the Director for Academic Enhancement (Research) who was responsible for the development, coordination and implementation of institutional strategies for research. Since the appointment of the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Academic) a new deliberative structure has been implemented (October 2013). The purpose of the Research Committee has been revised and now operates under the title of Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (RKEC). The Committee retains its status of reporting to the Academic Board on research activity. The activities of the RKEC will be supported at the operational level by the recently appointed Research Officer (October 2013) who will support the implementation and promotion of Leeds Trinity's research strategy. In addition a sub-committee of RKEC, the Research Degrees Committee, will be established to monitor the recruitment and progress of Post Graduate Research

Students and develop relevant policies and procedures.

A recently formed Professoriate, comprising of Professors and Readers within the institution, also contributes to the organisational structure supporting research. Having regular meetings since June 2013, the Professoriate aim to contribute to informing future policy and strategy for research, and to generate research ideas and initiatives to enhance the relationships, reputation and impact of the University. The Professoriate meets at least once per semester and report their activities to the Pro-Vice Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor.

A notable success in generating research income within the submitting unit is the small grant O'Neill received of £1500 from Association of Journalism Education for 2012/3. This was one of three such awards, for investigation into how female politicians are portrayed in the British press. This is research to be jointly undertaken with Heather Savigny, Bournemouth University, Co-convenor of the Politics and Media Group of the Political Studies Association.

e. Collaboration or contribution to the discipline or research base

Both subject areas within the submitting unit have made significant contributions to the discipline through their regional, national and international collaborative research projects, numerous conferences organised, and editorial positions. Deirdre O'Neill, for example, has collaborated with Tony Harcup (Senior Lecturer, University of Sheffield), analysing scholarly and practitioner accounts of news selection. This produced a canonical piece of journalism research and theoretical framework on the basis of a study of British newspapers. She has also carried out joint research with Samantha Lay (University of Salford) concerning Regional Television News that expanded on the frames and focus of local news, but applied to local Public Service/BBC broadcast journalism and considering how this compared to audience expectations and preferences for kinds of news. Key insights of the research outlined the challenges and changes facing regional television journalists, contexts and drivers for change, and the disparity between audience expectations of local news and the programmes themselves.

Since his appointment at Leeds Trinity, Professor Graham Roberts continues to contribute to the 'International Cinemas' collaborative research project with the Institute of Communication Studies, University of Leeds. This project explores new forms of practice linked to the opportunities presented by digital production, with a particular focus on: a) how we can write/shoot and produce films more predisposed to cross-national distribution; b) new technological opportunities in independent distribution/exhibition as well as production. This group has recently started work on a long-term research/teaching project looking at the use of digital stills cameras for digital 'film-making'. Roberts is currently working (as co-lead and executive producer) with colleagues in an international consortium consisting of the University of Bologna; Department of Italian, University of Durham; and the Calandra Institute in New York and Kent State University (USA). This is led by Delia Chiaro, Professor of English Language and Translation (Bologna). The aim of the project is to dub (as opposed to subtitle) an Italian screen product and test the dubbed series on English speaking audiences.

Members of the submitting unit have positions in professional subject associations and learned societies. O'Neill has been Secretary of the Association of Journalism Educators from 2012. She is also a member of The Political Studies Association, Women in Journalism, and the Society of Editors. Roberts sits on the board of the Louis Le Prince centre (Leeds) for cinema, photography and television. This centre (which Roberts was the founding Director of) brings together researchers from several universities, museums and institutes across the region, supporting

research into these areas utilising perspectives from history, music, production and interpretation to science and sociology. Several journalism staff have local roles within the Royal Television Society and the National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ). Further contributions to the discipline have been made through various editorial positions held by staff members and their involvement in the peer review process. Roberts is on the editorial board for the journals *Studies in European Cinema*, *Wide Screen* and *New Cinemas*. Dr Jason Scott has reviewed a book proposal for Continuum and papers for the Media Communication and Cultural Studies Association (MeCCSA) network 2013.

The team have also organised numerous conferences and facilitated a successful research seminar series at the institution. MFC have an established research seminar series, since 2009, with on average 3 seminars each year, which has invited speakers from the University of Leeds, University of Birmingham, University of Manchester and the University of York, as well as researchers from the Art Design Media-Open Educational Resources Project, and a speaker from the Ruhr University, Germany. The institution has hosted a Journalism Week annually since November 2008. This provides the opportunity to engage with a wide network and range of professionals. Over the years the event has established a reputation for bringing some of the key figures in the industry to Leeds Trinity with keynote speeches being delivered by BBC Head of News Helen Boaden, the Editor of the Guardian Alan Rusbridger, the Head of BBC North Peter Salmon, and Channel 4 presenter Jon Snow.

Leeds Trinity and the Centre for Journalism has also co-sponsored 'Hacks and Hackers Hack Day', 28 October 2010, held at Old Broadcasting House, Leeds, a local event bringing together journalists and web developers as well as practitioner academics, and hosted 'Royal Television Society's Great Yorkshire Debate' 20 May 2010, involving professionals, students and academics. Making use of institutional facilities, the unit organised a one day conference, for the Association of Journalism Education, 'Doing Journalism Research', 13 January 2012, attended by 25 members of the AJE, including journalism educators and professionals.

During 2012-13, 5 members of MFC presented papers at conferences. Within Journalism, O'Neill was invited to present at the international conference 'What is Newsworthy: re-examining news criteria' at Haifa, which was organised to share ideas about methodological issues and advance theory building on news criteria. O'Neill was also invited to present to the Social History Society, Annual Conference, Leeds University, 26 March 2013 on 'Press regulation'.

The involvement of researchers within the unit at conferences is regarded as a baseline, with planned growth from this. As one means of raising the profile of the unit and Leeds Trinity, staff will increase their conference contributions and present papers at international conferences. This will also aid the development of future networks and the identification of collaborative partners.