

Institution: St Mary's University College

Unit of Assessment: 36: Communication, Culture and Media Studies, Library and Information Management

a. Context

The Irish Studies and Popular Gothic clusters of the Unit illustrate the mechanisms by which public engagement has led to impact as defined by the REF criteria. The reach and significance of the impact for this new unit of research can be considered in **three** main ways.

Firstly, the primary beneficiaries of the research are the individual members and organisations of community, cultural and social nature, including charities and not-for-profit companies, principally but not exclusively based in London and the south-east. Specifically it includes work with the Irish Cultural Centre in Hammersmith (ICC), the Irish Literary Society (ILS) in London, public lectures hosted at the St Mary's University College's Centre for Irish Studies (CIS), the Federation of Irish Societies (UK) – now 'Irish in Britain' - and Irish Arts Foundation (IAF) in Leeds, and the non-academic members of the British Association for Irish Studies (BAIS). Impact has been enabled typically via talks/lectures, seminars, film screenings and discussions. The research of the Unit is thus disseminated to inform, illuminate and challenge the cultural values and social histories of the individuals and user groups in the above organisations or those attending events hosted by them. The net benefit to the cultural lives of user groups is also seen in the generation of greater cultural capital and confidence in participation in formal/informal educational programmes. This is exemplified both in the successful recruitment of students to community classes, funded by a grant from the Irish government (2012-13), mature associate students taking modules on the BA Irish Studies and ICC (Irish Cultural Centre, Hammersmith) members enrolling on conferences such as 'Ireland Astray' (2011).

The **second** category of impact from the Unit includes that imparted to journalists, professional commentators, organisers of cultural programmes, advisory boards for organisations or specific, annual cultural events (film festival, writers festivals, history month, Irish Rights in Britain) and in newspapers and other media, including new media. Members of UoA 36 have been subjects of interviews (press, radio and TV), and have authored newspaper articles and edited non-academic books based on their research and subject expertise. For example Mellins has given invited lectures for the London Vampire Community, Soho (2008); Gothic Fashion and Morbidity, Elixir Bar, London (2011), the S7 Consortium of FE Colleges in Surrey to teachers of film/media students, the BFI bookshop talk and BBC world service TV (all in 2013). Hickman was interviewed by the *Irish Post* (12 December 2012) on Irish migration issues.

Thirdly, other forms of impact include paid and unpaid research consultancies by academics including those not being returned in the UoA 36 REF submission - by users such as the Nuffield Foundation, the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC), the BBC, the British Universities Film Video Council (BUFVC). This also includes the shaping of policy through the All Party Parliamentary Committee on the Irish in Britain (in the case of Hickman and Hopper). These kinds of impact typically follow a pattern of dissemination after the event of research and publication, and normally collaborations are formed with partner organisations based on personal and professional contacts, rather than pre-emptive research collaborations per se.

The planned consideration of impactful research, and its monitoring and development, will be a feature of the future strategy for both clusters within UoA 36.

Impact template (REF3a)**b. Approach to impact**

The approach to impact in the period 2008-2013 has taken on a more organised, systematic and planned form since the institutional decision to enter the UoA in the latter part of the REF assessment period, as it focused strategically on research-based activity, and QR funds have been allocated to facilitate this. Research impact was in evidence in the earlier period but has been galvanised since 2011. As noted in published criteria (REF PC&WM 3D: para 83), impact can be of a “diffuse and non-linear” character. Individuals within the UoA are engaged on committees/directorates of boards as Trustees (for example in the case of Gibbons ICC; Hickman, London Irish Centre, Camden, Chair - Votes for Irish Citizens Abroad and member of Immigrant Council of Ireland, Dublin, a leading NGO; in the case of Pettitt IAF, BBC/BUVFC, and they have been influential in setting organisational agendas, directing schemes of activities and so on. Here the impact’s geographical domain is defined by the link organisation’s membership, user group reach or stake-holder interest; significance may be gauged by audience attendance and qualitative indices such as testimony and follow-up activities.

National and international reach has been achieved in the case of Hickman, Pettitt and Hopper: they have been consultants for ICC, BUVFC and the Irish national organisations for citizens’ rights, social and educational policy, and the Irish Government’s Department of Foreign Affairs in the UK, Brazil and Argentina based on their known expertise and specific research knowledge.

In the case of Richards, he has been engaged internationally with a commercial theatre company in Sao Paulo, Brazil – Ciu Ludens – to advise on translated performance works. Pettitt’s engagement with the archival curation/interpretation and DVD publication at the IFI in Dublin makes a direct contribution to a national heritage institution’s cultural development and an economic impact through projected sales.

The impact significance of these examples is in the enrichment and influence exerted on cultural gate-keepers of organisations and practitioners (archivists, programmers/curators, artistic directors). Systematic data gathering in the form of audience questionnaires and use of social media and the University College’s press and media service will provide greater quantitative evidence in the future.

c. Strategy and plans

The strategy for maximising impact will be shaped by a realistic appreciation of the size of the institution, its Mission and aims, and the strategic aims of the School within which this unit of assessment is situated. Building from these the Unit’s strategy will have three main elements.

Firstly, the Unit will continue to develop its relationships with existing organisations and grow audiences through joint enterprises, e.g. ILS and CIS. This will lead to developing the significance of its community, educational, civil society and cultural impacts. The Unit is committed to organise annual public lectures, conferences and seminars in its two main constituent elements – Irish Studies and Popular Gothic, but will be more proactive in targeting and engaging community, educational and policy groups across cultural identity, cultural heritages and creative practice. Its plans include the targeting of non-academic user groups to have access to and participate in the following events: Irish Literary Society/CIS annual lecture from 2014-2019; Irish Cultural Centre, Spring lecture series 2014 - focus on Ireland and WWI; MA Researching Modernities day conference Nov 2014- and annual; Hosting BAIS annual conference 2015; Hosting EFCAIS annual conference 2017.

Secondly, the CIS will seek to target funding for research projects with impact outcomes. Indeed the strategic decision to appoint Research Fellows to the unit was made with future impact plans in mind and one (Hopper) has provided a case study. To this end, researchers in the Unit will prepare one KT partnership bid, two British Academy bids, one AHRC networking bid and continue with

Impact template (REF3a)

arts funding bids for screenings and performances, such as Culture Ireland and the Arts Council UK particularly in relation to key commemorative dates, e.g. 2016 - the centenary of the Easter Rising in Ireland. CIS has committed to hosting the 2015 annual conference of BAIS whose membership combines academic and non-academic users. It will seek to be a key academic partner in establishing a new Irish arts institute and museum of the Irish in London; an annual Irish Studies summer school, educational programmes delivered in partnership with the ICC as part of the open college network, and a distance learning initiative in the north-east of England. This will be organised in London and in Leeds.

Thirdly, Mellins' links with the S7 group of FE colleges around dress/fashion and sub-cultural identities will be developed; continued radio interview (2013) and other media outlets will be sought to include Cherry and Ayiku's work as it matures and other developing researchers (Hackett, Murphy, Mills, Paull) not returned in this submission. Popular Gothic will host a conference in 2014 with non-academic delegates. Barr's work in popular Irish and British film, dovetailing Irish material, notions of popular British identities and history in cinema will continue to find outlets in film societies, festivals and cultural organisations like the BFI and the John Ford Summer School, as well as fan networks like those for Hitchcock and Hurst.

Finally, greater involvement by the unit will be sought in archive curation, digitalisation and interpretive presentation in the future. This will emerge from the establishment in 2014 of a physical archive and visiting researcher/study space for the School of Arts and Humanities based on the Conrad Archive, *Irish Studies in Britain* (ISIB) journal and the Irish Rights Watch Archive (IRWA) papers acquired by CIS which will apply for funding to digitalise both to host on its own website. Individual expertise (Pettitt) will continue to work with the Irish Film Institute Dublin to develop its existing DVD series and RTE's online viewing capability for drama archive output. This will be based on the 'Ireland into Film' series established by Pettitt/Kopschitz in 2011 with *The Uncle Jack*, then *The Woman Who Married Clark Gable* (2013) and will roll out its third title in 2015 in association with RTE which is committed to making its content publicly available.

To conclude, this strategy and its plan of activities for CIS and Contemporary Gothic will be managed within the School of Arts structure, including its reporting systems and its budget, outlined in REF3 'Environment'. The strategy will be reviewed and refined accordingly by the University College's procedures and longer-term strategy to develop research impact towards 2020.

d. Relationship to case studies

The case studies submitted refer only in part to the strategy outlined in b) and c) since the two case studies focus primarily on work of individuals employed by the institution since 2011 and 2012 respectively. As noted above, impacts in humanities, arts and social sciences may be indirect, non-linear and take place over a time frame that extends back beyond the REF assessment period.

In the case of Pettitt, his work has been impactful for the institution back to the mid-1990s in a previous role (whose work was submitted in RAE2001). Hopper's 'Counter realism in Irish literature and film' case study also draws on a long, accumulative body of research that was accelerated on appointment to the current HEI (2012-13).

Up until 2011, impact from research has been largely unforeseen and informally observed, but the case studies illustrate how the broader impact strategy for 2014-2019 is structured and generative, anchored in projects and collaborations whose impact metric will be designed into the research as it is undertaken and following its publication and dissemination.