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<p>Institution: York St John University</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: 36 Communication, Cultural, and Media Studies, Library and Information Management)</p>
<p>a. Context</p> <p>This Unit of Assessment represents an emerging area of research at York St John University, drawing primarily upon researchers in the Faculty of Arts, but also involving collaboration with the University's Business School. Underpinning the work as a whole is an alliance of research interests and methodologies across Cultural Studies, Media Studies, Film Theory, the Social Sciences, Visual Culture, Heritage and Tourism Studies. Impact has tended to focus upon an engagement with matters of civil society, cultural life, education, and the touristic experience. Research has also had a close connection with curriculum development within the Faculty of Arts, particularly with provision for visual culture, social media and 'media geographies'; areas that have foregrounded – often through ethnographic means – the experience of those encountering arts, culture and heritage. The use of cultural studies and sociological approaches to research, shared by a number of the researchers in the Unit, has meant that the approach to impact within the Unit has targeted discrete groups of end users – television researchers, professionals in the tourism industry, local civil society groups, migrant and refugee artists, and undergraduate and graduate students in a range of HEIs.</p> <p>The two case studies present work undertaken in cultural heritage, tourism and engagement (Watson) and power, identity and difference in Caribbean and Black British contexts (Lawson-Welsh). In addition, across the UoA, research carried out by Rovisco (on asylum and refugee artists in Yorkshire & Humber) and by McKeown (on the internet of things) also contributes to impact in situated contexts.</p>
<p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>The key approaches to impact within the UoA have been defined across three areas as follows:</p> <p>1. Partnerships and Collaborations</p> <p>The approach to impact over the period 2008-13 has not only been to secure and sustain partnerships, but also to embed research into the nature of the partnership process and develop strategies to evaluate impact. These collaborations have been initiated through individual research projects and include regional partnerships, for example, with 'Arts on the Run: the Yorkshire & Humber regional hub of Platforma Arts & Refugees Network' (Rovisco), Visit York (Watson) and York City Council (Watson). Other collaborative projects include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • McKeown's membership of 'The Internet of Things International Think Tank'. • the engagement in and/or curating of public events – which, for example, has included a major international conference (organized by Rawle) devoted to the collaboration of Alfred Hitchcock and the composer Bernard Hermann which attracted an audience from outside of academia as well as higher education (it was attended by over 30 local 6th Form students, among others) • participation in mainstream media – generally limited to regional outlets, but members of the UoA (Lawson-Welsh and Watson) have participated in local radio shows (e.g., BBC Radio York), and worked with researchers on series 10 of the popular BBC Series, <i>Who Do You Think You Are?</i> (Lawson-Welsh) <p>These collaborative projects recognise, explore and consolidate new research potentialities with regard to enabling: (1) sustained partnerships with regional arts and culture organisations; (2) contribution to innovation and entrepreneurial activity in the region – notably with respect to the presentation of heritage and tourism; (3) an approach to impact that ensures that research directly</p>

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informs practice through changing understanding, delivery and policy within partner organizations and groups of end-users.

2. Participatory processes

Participatory processes are integral to the methodology whereby research activities involve direct engagement with participant groups. A number of researchers in the Unit are involved in research activities that include work with disadvantaged social groups and/or communities – for example, with migrant and refugee artists (Rovisco) and diasporic groups (Lawson-Welsh). Over the period, researchers in the Unit have been trying to develop new methodologies to re-shape the restrictive dynamic between researcher and participant. This approach to research seeks to strengthen the impact of research activities involving cultural methodologies and participatory action research methodologies. There is a recognition that qualitative methodologies (e.g., interviews, questionnaires), which rely on clinical ways of extracting and analysing ‘data’ from human research ‘subjects’, are cause for concern, not only for ethical reasons, but also because the process itself limits insight and impact (see Sinha, S. and Back, L. (2013) ‘Making Methods Sociable: Dialogue, Ethics and Authorship in Qualitative Research’, *Journal of Qualitative Research*, published online on the 24 June 2013, DOI: 10.1177/1468794113490717).

3. Financial support

The Faculty of Arts Research Committee has the responsibility to ensure that funding decisions recognise the importance of impact. Applicants for internal funding are required to make explicit their approaches to impact as a precondition of funds being made available. This approach has ensured an increasing awareness of the importance of impact in the research process, supported through staff development opportunities.

c. Strategy and plans

UoA36 plans to maximise impact from its current and future research in the following ways:

1. Led by senior researchers, the Faculty of Arts is in the process of creating a Research Framework, which will continue to foreground, document and demonstrate the impact of research in communication, media and cultural studies;
2. By providing research training and staff development to support colleagues in understanding the documentation and evidence base for impact within research design and its relevance to the Faculty of Arts’ strategic aims for research;
3. By strengthening the reach and significance of impact in developing new methodologies and an inter-disciplinary approach to research across the social sciences and the humanities. This involves working together with key beneficiaries and participants of research in mutually invested partnerships;
4. By developing a database to capture the reach and significance of impact, and by monitoring the effectiveness of impact against impact indicators appropriate to the context and nature of the research (e.g. partnerships, numbers involved in partnership events, feedback from participants, development of new audiences);
5. By developing impact through digital and online presences.

d. Relationship to case studies

The submitted case-studies provide snap-shots of two key areas of research relating to questions of power, identity and difference in transnational contexts and cultural studies and sociological studies of heritage and tourism. These are significant areas of interest for the members of this UOA, which broadly cohere around the areas of visual culture, heritage, globalisation, and

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postcolonial studies.

What the case studies are intended to exemplify is a shared engagement with a globalised culture where issues of self/other, private/public, inclusion/exclusion, literary/vernacular are bound-up in ways that have a significant potential for dialogue with a range of beneficiaries of research both within and, more particularly, beyond HE.