

**Institution:** Faculty of English, University of Cambridge

**Unit of Assessment:** UoA 29 English Language and Literature

**a. Context**

The Cambridge English Faculty has long taken the view that its members should be encouraged and enabled to engage with a broad range of non-specialist publics. We seek to disseminate our research findings as widely as possible, to ‘broadcast’ them in the original sense of that rich metaphor — via writings, public appearances, radio, television and the new digital media, and relations with other cultural institutions, both nationally and internationally — in the conviction that making our work as widely available as possible is in itself a public good, as well as leading to more specific forms of impact. In its inception, therefore, much of our research has not been targeted at particular user groups but at this wider public. However, within this generally open-ended framework we do direct our research towards more specific beneficiaries, most notably those involved in literary and cultural life (editors, reviewers, directors, producers, publishers, policy-makers), and, above all, in education itself: these latter include secondary school-teachers and their pupils, those engaged in life-long learning, education administrators, and the HE sector beyond Cambridge, throughout the UK and indeed the world. Thus, the main types of impact at which our research is aimed are those described in Panel D’s guidance as Cultural Life, Education, and Public Discourse.

For this, the Faculty is able to draw upon an extremely broad range of research activity: from the study of medieval manuscripts to the most immediately contemporary writing, from the interactions between law, literature and theology to the ongoing transformations of spoken English, from the editing of scholarly texts to the relations between technology, media and the senses. With regard to the current submission we have not sought to predict from the outset the ways in which these forms of research will eventuate in impact but the Faculty is able to provide advice, encouragement and financial support for ways in which impact may be achieved. The structures for providing this support include (in ascending order of authority), the Faculty’s mentoring system, the Research Groups (see further below, section c), the Research Policy and Support Committee (RPSC), and the Faculty Board (FB). The Faculty’s strong relations with the Centre for Research in Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (CRASSH) also ensure ready access to significant forms of advice and support, including the development of funding applications and the organization of conferences and symposia.

**b. Approach to impact**

The RPSC has identified a number of **pathways to impact** for research activities within the Faculty: 1) Research leading to publication of written work without explicit intent of impact beyond an academic readership or audience; 2) Research leading to publication of substantial written work, normally a monograph, intended for a more general readership or audience; 3) Research leading to publication of shorter written essays or articles intended for a more general readership or audience; 4) Research leading to speaking engagements, appearances and performances on television, radio and digital media; 5) Research leading to speaking engagements, appearances and performances at live events, such as literary festivals, public debates and summer schools; 6) Research leading to connections with organizations or institutions, newly formed or established, as for example in the case studies involving Chirico and Waithe.

In practice, these pathways are of course far from mutually exclusive but they serve to categorize the early conditions in which potential impact can be identified. The formula of ‘research leading to ...’ is also a simplification: we recognize many kinds of symbiosis between research activity and forms of public engagement. Though most of the projects that have developed into full case-studies began on pathway 1, Collini’s and Macfarlane’s case studies led promptly to pathways 2 and 3 (and beyond, to 4, 5 and 6), Svendsen’s practice-led research followed pathway 5 from the start, as did Waithe’s on pathway 6. The remainder began on pathway 1 before diversifying on to 4 (Wright), 5 (Beadle and Cooper), or 6 (Chirico). We envisage more research projects largely or wholly determined *ab initio* by their potential for impact, such as would bring pathways 2–6 into more active consideration at an earlier stage.

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The **methods** by which the RPSC promotes and supports the development of impact are as follows: 1) Individuals and groups notify the RPSC of all their research activity; 2) They are asked to inform the committee of all existing and prospective activities that fall under pathways 2–6 above, even if the element of ‘research’ involved in them is not yet, or not obviously, substantial; 3) We consider the potential of these activities for impact, and provide advice about possibilities for their development, including the pursuit of one or more pathways; 4) We invite applications for Faculty funds to assist in the development of impact, and provide advice and support in the pursuit of external funding; 5) We monitor, advise and support their progress towards and achievement of impact. Recent initiatives that have enjoyed these forms of support explicitly to develop their impact potential include Svendsen’s practice-as-research performance project, *3<sup>rd</sup> Ring Out: Rehearsing the Future*, and Waithe’s *Ruskin at Walkley: Reconstructing the St George’s Museum*. In addition, Lyne’s interdisciplinary project on the psychology of ‘attention’, especially in the theatre, received grants of £1850 from the Judith E Wilson Fund and £850 from the PRC in November 2010 to support interdisciplinary workshops, one outcome of which was the approach adopted by Svendsen as dramaturge for the Young Vic’s production of ‘The Changeling’ in 2012.

The great majority of the engagements we undertake along pathways 2–6 have not (or not yet) led to fully developed impact projects, but we regard them as **essential infrastructure for the possibilities of impact**. We encourage participation in public events such as the Hay Festival to which since 2009 several Faculty members have contributed in the Cambridge Series of public talks, including Beer, Collini, Macfarlane, Poole and Wallace. Many further examples could be adduced of public speaking engagements and related activities that have not yet been developed to the point where they could provide a full case study. Other instances involve a mixture of media and institutions. For example, Maddison’s research for and co-organization of the exhibition ‘“Rooms of their Own”: The Female Academy from Margaret Cavendish to Lucy Cavendish College’ (17–31 October 2009), with which a week-long Radio 4 feature on Virginia Woolf and a debate involving sixth-form pupils were tied in (the headteacher of one school, Northampton Academy, said that the exhibition ‘had changed’ the school’s ‘thinking’); this resulted in the substantial online resource ‘Rooms of Our Own’ ([http://www.artichokewebdesign.com/roomsourown/woolf/woolf\\_essay.html](http://www.artichokewebdesign.com/roomsourown/woolf/woolf_essay.html)). Wallace’s contributions as writer/researcher to the work of an interdisciplinary team investigating the threat to ancient Adivasi culture in India (2005–6; 2010), resulted in a 6-minute multimedia film: (<http://www.tinyurl.com/jharkhandmultimedia/>) and a major exhibition at Brunei Gallery, SOAS, 14 April – 25 June, 2011, sponsored by Changing Ideas, the Gandhi Foundation and the Helen Hamlyn Trust: ‘A Disappearing World: Ancient Traditions Under Threat in Tribal India’.

A further form of more general public engagement is represented by the many individual contributions to radio and television, such as the talks on ‘The History of London English’ at the heart of Wright’s case study, the various radio and television programmes through which Macfarlane’s work has been disseminated and discussed, and Hrebeniak’s contributions to series II and III, programmes 5–12, in Channel 4’s educational series on English poetry from the sixteenth century to the present day, ‘Arrows of Desire’: (<http://www.channel4.com/learning/main/netnotes//sersecid710.htm>) (<http://opticnerve.co.uk/ArrowsofDesire.htm>). Many Faculty members draw on their research to contribute to radio and television programmes on topics of cultural, intellectual and political importance, including for example Gopal to a BBC Radio programme on Rushdie’s *Satanic Verses* (5 Feb 2009): <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00h4dcc> and an Aljazeera TV programme on ‘Empire’, 26 May 2010: <http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/empire/2010/05/201052610045881344.html>; and Tate to ‘The Charge of the Light Brigade’ on ‘In Our Time’, 10 January 2008, for which she prepared a further reading list available on the BBC website: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b008md8x>. Further examples of research that informs engagement with the general public include articles and reviews for print broadsheets and online platforms (Boddy, Collini, Connor, Gopal, Trotter and many others), the curating of art exhibitions (Mengham, at White Cube and elsewhere), collaboration with artists (e.g. Trotter: <http://www.thewhitereview.org/art/techno-primitivism/>), multi-media collaborations (e.g. Mengham <http://www.youtube.com/user/SOUNDINGPOLEFILMS?feature=watch>), and the design of the

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'Greater Shakespeare' map for the Royal Shakespeare Company's sale of several commercial products (Lees-Jeffries: [http://www.rscprints.org.uk/art/528062/Greater\\_Shakespeare\\_Map\\_poster](http://www.rscprints.org.uk/art/528062/Greater_Shakespeare_Map_poster)). Several Faculty members are also active and prominent figures in the field of contemporary poetry (Jarvis, Leighton, Mengham, Milne, Patterson), including roles as publishers and anthologists as well as authors and performers. Graduate students, too, are encouraged to pursue impact possibilities, as in Stedall's use of her research on Melville to write a programme note for Glyndebourne's 'Billy Budd' (<http://www.theguardian.com/music/2013/aug/21/glyndebourne-2013-billy-budd-and-herman-melville-by-ellie-stedall>).

It is also Faculty policy to encourage more collective initiatives. These have included the range of public events celebrating the 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the birth of John Milton (2008), coordinated by Alexander and featuring other senior staff and graduate students: a series of public lectures, performances of *Comus* and a newly commissioned 'anti-masque' by Australian poet John Kinsella, a complete public reading of *Paradise Lost* (<http://sms.cam.ac.uk/collection/668015/>) and a web-resource for A-level and University students entitled *Darkness Visible* ([www.christs.cam.ac.uk/darknessvisible/](http://www.christs.cam.ac.uk/darknessvisible/)). This has helped to inspire the production of further web-based resources freely available to the public at large, including the site 'Cambridge Authors', devoted to ten writers featured on A-level syllabuses, from Christopher Marlowe to Zadie Smith, developed by a team of colleagues and students led by Lyne and Zurcher, part of the celebrations to mark the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the University's foundation in 1209 (<http://www.english.cam.ac.uk/cambridgeauthors/>). Meanwhile the complete reading of *Paradise Lost* initiated a series of collectively supported readings as part of the University's annual Festival of Ideas (inaugurated in 2008), including a day's reading of Tennyson in celebration of the bi-centenary of his birth (2009), and a complete reading of Wordsworth's *The Prelude* (2010): <http://www.english.cam.ac.uk/multimedia/>. This Festival is the only one of its kind in the UK to which admission is entirely free; in 2011 it attracted over 12,000 visitors of all ages to over 190 events. Members of the Faculty have made substantial contributions, many of which draw on their current research, such as Meer's on Alexander Crummell, the first black student at Cambridge for whom official records exist (<http://www.cam.ac.uk/research/news/the-remarkable-story-of-alexander-crummell/>); this attracted widespread attention in the local and national press and other outlets. A collective project of a different kind is illustrated by the Centre for Material Texts' new (2012) collaboration with the National Trust to develop and enhance the use of the resources contained in the libraries of the Trust's country houses ([http://www.english.cam.ac.uk/cmt/?page\\_id=14](http://www.english.cam.ac.uk/cmt/?page_id=14)).

One such concerted initiative, our active collaboration with the Prince's Teaching Institute, led by Cooper, has already led to a fully developed case of impact. Under her leadership a team of a dozen or so Faculty colleagues have contributed lectures and seminars to the PTI's subject days and residential courses for state-school teachers of English. Almost all these lectures have been directly informed by the individual's research. These colleagues have included Wakelin (Professor of Palaeography at Oxford since 2011), whose lectures and seminars on Chaucer were informed by the research on late medieval manuscripts that led to his major monograph of 2007, and important subsequent essays and articles; Alexander, whose lectures and seminars on poetic form were informed by research-based publications on Elizabethan lyric from 1998 to the present; Parker, whose lectures on tragedy (including Shakespearean tragedy) incorporated research on the nature of evil for his 2011 monograph; Glen, Lees-Jeffries, Lyne, Macfarlane and Poole. On 15 November 2012 Green and Meer contributed to the one-day Continuing Professional Development event on *America: A New Beginning* (<http://goodcpdguide.com/courses/america-a-new-beginning>), and at the Summer School for English Teachers at Homerton College, Cambridge, 24–6 June 2013 (<http://www.princes-ti.org.uk/SummerSchool/2013EnglishHistoryGeographyandMF/>), an event publicised in *CAM*, the University's magazine for alumni/ae (circulation 200,000 per issue), Alexander, Cooper and Poole gave lectures on, respectively, lyric language, Shakespearean tragedy, and Rosenberg's poetry.

### c. Strategy and plans

Through our existing structures (see section a) and methods (see section b), we plan to strengthen the means of encouraging and supporting the development of projects with potential for impact,

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including more systematic monitoring of the progress of such projects, both by individuals and groups. To these should be added our Planning and Resources Committee, on the agenda for which the resource implications for the support of activities with the potential for impact now feature as a regular item. We have already begun to commit significant resources to the support (both directly and indirectly) of impact, as for example by seed-corn funding for the inauguration of the Centre of Material Texts, for assistance in the development of Waithe's *Ruskin at Walkley*, and for the development of web-sites for our Research Groups.

While we expect to continue supporting projects initiated by individuals, we also plan for the increased generation of projects deriving from collective and collaborative work. In this respect our Research Groups constitute the most significant aspects of our future strategy. Research groups are designed to bring together researchers in a more structured manner, facilitate the creation, development and delivery of research projects, and enhance the potential for impact. Amongst the many opportunities afforded by these Groups for promoting collaboration and speeding the exchange of ideas, we support the increase in blogging activity and use of other new forms of social media. The Faculty web-site (<http://www.english.cam.ac.uk/research/>) features five such groups: Medieval Research Group, Medieval and Renaissance Research Group, Eighteenth Century and Romantic Studies, Nineteenth-Century Studies, Performance Research Group and Contemporaries. In this connection, the Faculty web-site constitutes a resource for impact in itself and attracts a large number of users from outside the institution. In addition to the materials mentioned above, it also now features the work of the cross-disciplinary Centre for Material Texts: <http://www.english.cam.ac.uk/cmt/>, to which Faculty members make a major contribution and the Research Group in Literature/Technology/Media <http://literature-technology-media.co.uk/>. We plan through the RPSC to monitor the speed and vigour with which these research groups develop, with a view to supporting their potentialities for impact. The most recent example of this is the planned collaboration by members of the Contemporaries Research Group with the Cambridge WordFest in spring 2014.

**d. Relationship to case studies**

The range of research fields, topics and methods covered by members of the Faculty has produced a correspondingly diverse selection of case studies developed along the pathways described earlier. In three cases the underpinning research addresses aspects of language, literature and dramatic performance that stretch back to the middle ages (Wright, Cooper, Beadle); in three other cases the research concerns matters of immediate concern in debates about the nature and direction of higher education and about the future of the environment (Collini, Macfarlane, Svendsen); a third kind of emphasis entails the preservation and enhanced valuation of forms of cultural heritage (Chirico, Waithe). The case studies provided by the work of Beadle and Wright indicate ways in which what starts out as 'pure' research can be applied and made accessible to the public at large through pre-existing channels. Those provided by the work of Chirico and Waithe are good examples of collaboration with museums, art galleries, exhibitions, festivals and new forms of digital distribution, in which many Faculty members are engaged. Similarly, Collini's case exemplifies our widespread participation in public discourse that dissolves the boundaries between the world inside and outside the academy, through writing and speaking across the world on all kinds of platform, including media both established and new. The work of Cooper and others with the PTI is a form of impact in the support for secondary education that we aim to continue and extend.

Several of our impact case studies also demonstrate that the Faculty's desire to conceive of new projects with their impact in mind *ab initio* is bearing fruit. Svendsen's practice-based research project is an example from which we intend to learn about the value in identifying potential impact from the outset. Potential for impact on the world outside the academy has also been evident in Macfarlane's practice-based research, which is as firmly based on the individual experience of traversing the natural environment as Svendsen's on the collective imagining of its future. Waithe's work also falls into this category, in which the collaboration between ideas and practice in the institution of a research project has been essential.