

Institution: University of Leeds

Unit of Assessment: 28 Modern Languages and Linguistics

a. CONTEXT

Building on its long-standing traditions of applied social sciences and public engagement, the School of Modern Languages and Cultures (SMLC) has worked hard to embed impact in its strategy of research excellence across its constituent areas. Supported by both Faculty and University in expanding the range and quality of its impact activities, it has a strong portfolio of working relationships with a wide variety of groups and organisations, and has been involved from the start with pioneering Leeds initiatives such as the DARE partnership with Opera North.

Our types of impact are predominantly those that have benefited civil society, cultural life, economic prosperity, policy-making and public discourse. Our research has led to improved social and cultural understanding, it has enriched the cultural life of individuals and of groups, developed and improved professional and corporate practice and contributed to wealth creation in private and public sectors. It has influenced and developed policy-making; illuminated and challenged cultural values and social assumptions, and enhanced public understanding of major issues.

The local, national and international users of research in SMLC are: cultural organisations and their audiences (museums, theatre and opera companies, television companies); government and non-government agencies; charities; private sector industries; public sector organisations; stakeholder groups. Drawing directly on our research in all our main areas of research activity: social sciences, history, language, linguistics and translation, literary studies, cultural studies, film and visual studies, we have engaged with them in a variety of ways, through formal collaborations and partnerships, and through consultancy and public engagement activities with commercial, professional and cultural organisations that have developed into more active collaborations.

b. APPROACH TO IMPACT

Many parts of the School have a strong tradition of translating research into user benefits. In other areas we have been building an impact portfolio more recently.

Given the large scale and diversity of impact and impact-related activities in the School, we have sought to be pragmatic, flexible and resourceful in our approach, building on our expertise and track record as we share good practice and develop more systematic processes. We have created impact leadership roles. We have built up the infrastructure supporting impact activities through our own resources and internal organisation, and through the Faculty and University investments and initiatives that we have played an important role in developing.

We are also building on earlier investments and initiatives. Arts Faculty officers were appointed in 2006 to coordinate KT activity, and 35 KT/Impact Case Studies were then developed as examples of good practice for colleagues across the Faculty. Faculty KT/Impact workshops have been held regularly in the Leeds Humanities Research Institute (LHRI) since 2006 (for example on Arts and Policy Impact in 2008), and in SMLC since 2009. In the Social Sciences, Leeds Social Sciences Institute (LSSI) has responsibility for advising on and supporting the development of partnerships between the research groups associated with the Institute and external partners in the public, private and third sectors, working closely with WREAC (White Rose East Asia Centre) for example.

SMLC actively engages with many communities beyond academia, contributing expertise to inform professional practice, policy debates, cultural activity and cross-cultural understanding. Examples of external partnerships and links include museums, galleries and annual cultural events (Bradford Peace Museum, National Media Museum, Leeds International Film Festival, National Gallery, Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration, York Museums Trust); performing arts organisations (Opera North, West Yorkshire Playhouse, Oxford Playhouse, Hyde Park Picture House, Beijing People's Art Theatre); software industry (Microsoft; Google, TAUS); publishers and translators. Internationally, its links include the Chinese Embassy, APEC, GTZ, the Italian Consulate, Kulturstiftung des Bundes, Theater an der Parkaue, Institut français, cultural and community organisations in France, Lebanon, Italy and Algeria, and EU and UN agencies.

As described below, we develop these links in many different ways: through external networking and conferences, consultancy, the organisation of targeted events, through personal contacts and contacts developed as a result of the reception of our published research. We support colleagues in building external relationships and partnerships through pump-priming initiatives, through match-making and brokering events in the School and the Faculty, through workshops to enhance skills and explore funding opportunities, and through the research time allocation in the workload model. School and Faculty initiatives have provided advice and support which have enabled more researchers to deepen and broaden their engagement with outside partners, to increase the visibility and accessibility of our research by organising stakeholder events, sandpits, user panels, and 'ideas factories'; by supporting academic mobility; by hosting exhibitions, performances and festivals to promote outcomes.

The Director of Research and Innovation (**Silverman**), supported since 2010 by an Impact Director (Thomas), is responsible for the coordination of all our work in this area and for overseeing our interaction with Faculty structures and initiatives. Each Research Group has an impact co-ordinator, and the Impact Director works closely with them on identifying the potential for impact and innovation in their own research and supporting its exploitation.

In *Literary Studies*, long-standing interactions with contemporary writers in German and in Italian have grown, with the help of pump-priming funding, into major programmes to improve trans-national cultural understanding and enrich cultural lives: 'Livltaly: Bringing Italian Culture to Yorkshire' (**Sulis**) and the 'International Writers in Leeds' (**Hibbitt, Finch, Treherne**) series in collaboration with Leeds Central Library hosting Swiss, French, Italian and Dutch writers in 2012-3. Other examples include the support of the Camões, Cervantes and Ramon Llull Institutes for research-based events (**Cleminson, Dennison, Green, Wheeler, Frier**) addressing members of the public as well as researchers, and **Taberner's** work, linked to his BA-funded project on confronting the Nazi Past and the legacy of apartheid, with the South African Holocaust and Genocide Foundation at the Cape Town Holocaust Centre to initiate a discussion with the SA heritage sector.

The *Film and Visual Culture* group have worked regularly with the Leeds International Film Festival, presenting programmes and involving PGR students in its work; *World Cinemas* colleagues have brought internationally renowned directors (Mereilles, Tsai Ming Liang) to be introduced and presented at both Leeds and Bradford film festivals and in 2012, **Cooke** joined the Steering Group of the Hyde Park Picture House in Headingley. **Strukov** has worked with the BBC World Service and the Academica Rossica Film Festival in relation to his research into the role of digital media in social change in contemporary Russia.

In *Language, Linguistics and Translation Studies*, **Heselwood's** AHRC-funded Research Network includes two members from the largest commercial forensic phonetics and linguistics company in the UK, JP French Associates, based in York, and the head of Leeds NHS Trust Speech & Language Therapy service, and the head of the Clinical Audiology service in Leeds are external members.

In *Social Sciences*, WREAC staff (**Ampiah, Liu, Rose**) are involved with a large number of

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stakeholders including government ministries and agencies (e.g. FCO, UKTI), local authorities (e.g. Derby, Leeds, Sheffield), as well as national (British Academy, RCUK) and international funders (German Research Council, JSPS). Impact is also illustrated by its work with the China-Britain Business Council in promoting opportunities for British business in second tier Chinese cities, and with the Japan Local Government Centre and UK local authorities in analysing the comparative implications of regional depopulation. **Seeger's** publications on Thai Buddhism have produced widespread public debate in Thailand on the way his research has led to reinterpretation of key texts; together with his study of the roles of women in Thai Buddhism, he has influenced social and religious values. **Dent** is in high demand as an advisor, consultant and speaker due to the benefits that corporate and other agencies derive in these ways from his ground-breaking research.

The *Cultural Studies* group have hosted speculative lunches with non-academic partners such as the West Yorkshire Playhouse and the National Media Museum to deepen understanding of the benefits sought by cultural institutions and groups and discuss their experiences of public engagement and partnerships. Other public engagement activities included workshops with film critic/blogger of Ultra-Culture, and a Franco-Lebanese rap artist.

In *History*, the 'Legacies of War' project (**Fell, Sharp**) is a First World War Centenary Project (2014 – 2018) working with people and organisations in Leeds, the UK and internationally to explore its cultural and historical legacy. Under the AHRC Connected Communities Research for Heritage Research, £150k was awarded in 2013 for two projects in this strand.

c. STRATEGY AND PLANS

Research in SMLC has the potential to influence, inform and enhance cultural values and understanding, civil society, professional and corporate policy, practice and training in many different and far-reaching ways. Working within the framework of the Faculty of Arts Impact and Innovation Strategy, our aim is to realise our full potential by seeking to:

- Embed impact as a driver of research excellence in all our research activities;
- Raise awareness among colleagues of the benefits of impact intrinsic to the research agenda in order to address our uneven track record across the school and bring all parts of the school to the level of the most experienced;
- Ensure colleagues are supported with time and pump-priming resources to build the externalisation of their research;
- Ensure colleagues are supported in applications for external funding;
- Ensure particular attention is paid to the training and development of ECR and PGR in relation to impact;
- Establish an effective communication strategy;
- Maintain and expand the local, national and international networks in response to opportunities identified through our mapping of current relationships.

We will deliver this through the achievement of current plans and, in collaboration with the Impact Director, the identification of key priorities and future goals in each research group, which will be developed through discussion with the Director of R&I and the School Research and Innovation Strategy Committee.

In addition to the continuing development of the projects and programmes described above, **future plans** include:

- Oral histories project: collecting oral stories from immigrants to Leeds in order to examine questions of cultural and community identity with archive, exhibition and

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performance outputs;

- The development of the outward-facing work of the Language@Leeds Research Hub for research-informed advice and consultancy language and (multilingual) communications -- from branding, through exegesis, to systems design;
- DARE partnership involvement in the major Arts Council-funded initiative, Fundraising for the Arts, including a nationwide programme of training, apprenticeships, coaching and digital skills development to promote innovative and effective practice in arts fundraising;

These are supported by 'Arts Engaged' and the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI) Exchange.

'Arts Engaged' is an £800k 5-year University investment in translational research and innovation in the humanities. Five Impact Fellows were appointed from September 2012 to build knowledge of and contacts in key innovation and impact areas: i) Corporate and media; ii) Government and public policy; iii) Museums and galleries; iv) Cultural organisations and industries; v) Community and voluntary bodies/public awareness.

The Arts Faculty took the lead on this joint HEIF-funded project with PVAC that in 2011 created a sector-facing hub, the CCI Exchange, aimed at increasing the value of innovation activity in relation to the cultural and creative industries. It develops and funds strategic initiatives as well as funding researchers with specific projects on a competitive basis. **Li** is already involved with the Exchange in a 2-year cultural exchange project sponsored by the EU and led by the School of Performance and Culture Industries with Opera North, Bregenz Opera Festival, Austria, Sibelius Academy, Finland and Shanghai Theatre Academy. **Strukov** has also benefited from match-making and financial support from CCI in building new collaborations with local creative industries.

d. RELATIONSHIP TO CASE STUDIES

The Case Studies have been selected to exemplify the range of work ongoing in SMLC to externalise our research and enhance its impact, and they come from all parts of the School. They demonstrate the international reach of our impact, and its social, cultural, economic and professional significance.

Social benefits are embodied in both Case Study 4 (**House**), which has proved to be profoundly influential in changing social perceptions and challenging assumptions in relation to the events of October 1961 in Paris, and Case Study 6 (**Kim**, International Aid), influencing the approach and practice of aid agencies to non-traditional aid countries like South Korea. **Cultural** impact, in the enrichment of lives and enhancement of cultural and cross-cultural understanding, is fundamental to Case studies 2 (**Honess** and **Treherne**, Dante), 3 (**Finlay**, Böll Cologne edition), 5 (**Li**, China and the West in performance) and 7 (**Hardie**, Chinese garden history), though each incorporates significant social, economic or professional benefits also. The **professional** benefits evident in Case Study 1 (**Babych** and **Sharoff**, 'Innovative Computational Linguistic Technologies'), one of a wide portfolio of corporate and professional collaborations in CTS, stem from their direct work on the translation of computational research and are facilitated by the specialist infrastructure for such work at Leeds, including the use of dedicated UNIX server space and high-performance computing, and SMLC's eye-tracking equipment and film digitization suite.

Together with the emergent case studies and activities described above, these case studies are influencing our approach to impact as examples, not only of how to work with strategic partners, or how to approach the intricacies of interaction with user groups, but also of the benefits of such rich impact for the future development of the research itself.