

<p>Institution: Edge Hill University</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: 30 - History</p>
<p>a. Context</p> <p>The research interests of individual staff focus on African American history, British crime history, diplomatic history, French politics and society since 1945, medieval religious orders, the Middle East since 1914 and transatlantic popular culture. The subject area has identified three principal research user groups:</p> <p>1. Education – secondary school students/teachers, undergraduates at other HEIs. Specifically:</p> <p>i) Schools and sixth form colleges, mostly, but not exclusively, in the North West with which History staff have developed and maintained close working relationships over a number of years.</p> <p>ii) The predominantly national readerships of journals targeted at teacher/school audiences, for example, <i>Teaching History</i> or <i>New Perspective</i>, in which History staff have been published and which influence the development of pedagogy in the discipline.</p> <p>iii) Readers/users of websites and on-line resources and research-informed student textbooks written by members of the group or websites and other online resources to which History staff have contributed, for example <i>Milestones Documents in African American History</i>. The composition of such beneficiaries is both national and international and ranges from secondary school students to undergraduates at other HEIs.</p> <p>Impact – Regular lectures/workshops, tailored to the needs of individual schools, designed to enhance student performance in coursework assignments they are required to complete as part of the national curriculum or ‘A’ level syllabus; improving teacher/students awareness of recent historiographical developments; enhancing knowledge and understanding of specific topics that relate to research undertaken by History staff.</p> <p>2. Museums and the Heritage Industry – These include museum professionals, for example the Director of the International Slavery Museum (ISM) in Liverpool and curatorial staff at Lincoln Castle, as well as other targeted groups with a vocational interest in the research being undertaken by staff, such as prison governors and the <i>Prison Service Journal</i>. Secondary users include visitors to museum/heritage sites and local communities that benefit economically, socially and cultural from their development.</p> <p>Impact – Enhancing the work performance of professional contacts, for example by enabling museum staff to incorporate the latest research findings in public exhibitions and displays; improving the visitor experience to museum/heritage sites and contributing to the effectiveness of their work in economic development and urban regeneration.</p> <p>3. Public Audiences – These include a wide variety of local, national and international outlets for example, readers/listeners/viewers for the <i>Times</i> and the <i>Guardian</i> newspapers, <i>Radio Lancashire</i>, BBC radio/television, <i>al Jazeera</i>, online publications, like <i>New Democracy</i> and <i>the Conversation</i>, readers/users of blogs, <i>Twitter</i> feeds as well as more traditional audiences at public lectures and talks to local History societies. Beneficiaries are local, national and international in composition.</p> <p>Impact – Improving public knowledge/understanding of historical debates or the historical context of present day conflicts and controversies, for example in the Middle East; engaging in dialogue with user groups focussing on the issues of greatest interest to beneficiaries themselves.</p> <p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>Since RAE 2008, in which 15 per cent of research outputs submitted by the History Group at Edge Hill were assessed as world leading, staff have made sustained efforts to enhance public knowledge and understanding of their research. The Group seeks to maximize active involvement in non-academic networks, such as the prison service, and thus promote dialogue about their research. At departmental level this approach is encouraged, enabled and supported through mentoring, recruitment and progression, training events and individual Annual Academic Returns and staff appraisals during which opportunities for impact are discussed with line managers.</p> <p>Staff take advantage of Departmental and University funding, which is available to support all types of work with research users groups at all stages of the research cycle, to cover the costs of teaching relief, travel and research. All staff seeking internal funding for research submit details of the impact potential of their work, identifying non-academic beneficiaries. Where appropriate, they are required to develop an impact action plan as a condition of funding. All applications are reviewed by the Head/Associate Head of Department (Research) to assess impact potential.</p>

Impact template (REF3a)

At institutional level the Research and Enterprise Support Office (RESO) provides funding for impact work and runs related research capacity building workshops, for example in media training, new media, to better enable staff and research students to disseminate their research findings to non-academic beneficiaries. Corporate Communications and Marketing promote awareness of research and related public events in the wider community. Edge Hill provides state of the art learning resources, conference and lecture facilities, reflected in a £180 million investment in University infrastructure and facilities over the last decade.

Staff recognize that impact is a two way process. They benefit from contact with users which better informs their future research, such as in the ongoing scholarly debate on the public role and responsibilities of museums and the heritage industry. Impact is developed and delivered through a variety of pathways:

Workshops/events for research users – Guest lectures, on-campus conferences, provision of teaching materials. ‘A’ level students have actively engaged with research produced by the Group on black civil rights in America, conflict in the Middle East and crime and punishment in England.

Collaborations – with colleagues in the Faculty of Education have led to contacts with ‘A’ Level teachers who include crime and punishment in their teaching. **Brown** also works closely with Alana Barton, in the Department of Law and Criminology (UoA 20), to organize public events and enhance public and media awareness of their shared research interests in the prison system.

History-focused media – Staff have contributed numerous articles for widely read and influential journals aimed at school audiences, for example **Brown**, **Renton** and **Verney** have published in *Teaching History* and/or *New Perspective*. **Brown’s** work on Dartmoor Prison was published in the BBC *History* magazine.

Mainstream media – a range of links has been established with leading media outlets, for example **Renton** with *al Jazeera* and *Haaretz*. **Verney** writes for the online newspaper *The Conversation*. Launched in the UK in 2013, its sister publication in Australia has a proven record in bringing together scholarly researchers and journalists to co-author articles that enhance public understanding of news stories, as evidenced through online ‘hits’ and reader comments. **Brown**, **Renton** and **Verney** are members of the Cambridge University based History and Policy Network which seeks to improve policy making/public awareness through a better understanding of History and regularly issues press releases and publishes online articles to this end.

Online user fora – **Nicholson’s** research blog, the *Digital Victorianist*, has had over 17,000 readers and the associated Twitter feed more than 1,200 followers. **Verney** has contributed essays to the U.S. based *Milestones Documents in African American History* website.

Networking with user groups – Staff have developed collaborations with museum professionals in Liverpool (**Verney**), in Devon (**Brown**) and, more broadly, through networks such as the Social History Curators Group and the Crime and Punishment Collections Network. **Brown** sits on the Advisory Panel for the Lincoln Castle Revealed project. Following **Brown’s** articles in the *Prison Service Journal*, circulated to all 166 prisons in the country, she co-organized a major conference at Edge Hill in March 2013 in collaboration with its editor and joined the journal’s editorial board.

c. Strategy and plans

The impact strategy of the Group has been developed to take account of a variety of factors:

- *Identifying user needs* – working with schools to nurture the study skills they are seeking to develop in students and to reflect changes in ‘A’ level syllabi and the national curriculum.
- *New funding opportunities* - for example projects linked to the centenary of the First World War.
- *Regional Strengths* – the relationship with the International Slavery Museum (ISM) in Liverpool.
- *Maximizing impact for the size of the unit* (7 FT members of staff) – developing links with key user groups, seeking out impact pathways with greatest reach, such as new media outlets.
- *Internal needs* – nurturing awareness of and commitment to impact considerations in postgraduate research students and early career researchers (**Nicholson** and **Tsougarakis**).
- *Internal opportunities* - a Faculty Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA)/PhD bursary scheme introduced in 2012 (see section 5 cii) and a major expansion of research capacity across the University that will enhance the possibilities for collaboration, for example with Law and Criminology and Computing.

Informed by these considerations the History Group has developed a clear impact strategy for the next REF. In addition to building on strengths in *section b* these include a focus on new media;

work with user groups located in the North West and/or linked to the research specialisms of staff; identifying subjects most likely to address public/media interest and funding priorities.

The appointment of **Nicholson**, with expertise in the digitization of historical sources and new media, will take advantage of the growth in impact opportunities in these areas. He will take the lead role in the establishment of a research centre for the study of print culture located in English and History. He will work in collaboration with colleagues in the newly established Department of Computing and Brock University in Canada on the *HistorySpaces* project. In collaboration with National Museums, Liverpool, the project will develop a virtual 3D environment in which visitors to the city can explore the historical events and buildings that shaped its growth.

Brown will nurture relationships with museum professionals established by her position on the Advisory Panel of the Lincoln Castle Revealed Project and membership of several museum networks. Her research on the Dartmoor Prison riot (1932) will inform the content of an exhibition at the Dartmoor Prison Museum. In the context of on-going prison closures and political and public debates on the future of these sites, **Brown** and Barton will continue their work on prison tourism. They will be interviewing and collaborating with museum professionals in a project examining current exhibition space in prison museums in England and Wales. Networking underpinning this research has already been financed by the University's Research Investment Fund, including a planning meeting with the curator of the Dartmoor Prison Museum and 'The Prison and Public' conference.

In 2014 **Verney** and Dr Richard Benjamin, Director of the ISM, will recruit a collaborative doctoral student through the GTA bursary scheme. Based at both the ISM and the University, the student will research comparative portrayals of the African American freedom struggle in museums and heritage centres in the UK and the USA and benefit from work placement experience with museum professionals. The starting date for the project is well timed, as 2015 will mark the opening of the National Museum of African American History in Washington DC. Nearly fifty years since the death of Martin Luther King it is increasingly important that museum representations of the civil rights struggle are historically accurate with successive generations on both sides of the Atlantic having no direct memories or experiences of the events of that era.

Renton and **Verney** have contributed to an AHRC funding bid led by Manchester Metropolitan University to establish a regional centre in the North West to commemorate the centenary of the First World War. **Renton's** contribution will relate to his on-going research on the Balfour Declaration (1917) and the War in the Middle East. **Verney** will collaborate with the Director of the ISM to highlight the contribution of Commonwealth troops to the war effort and the war in Africa in a series of events at both the museum and the University. The Ethnicity Race and Racism Research Group (ERRG), located in the English and History Department, will mark the centenary of the film *Birth of a Nation* (1915) by organizing a series of public and educational events combined with a screening of the film at the ISM. These initiatives reflect the fact that members of the History Group recognize the importance, strategically and tactically, of maximizing the impact opportunities that will come from periods of heightened public and media awareness during the next REF cycle.

d. Relationship to case studies

The case studies reflect and exemplify the History Group's strategy to focus upon work with secondary schools, museums, and media outlets to enhance public knowledge and understanding of their research. In these areas staff have located engaged users and collaborative partners in their research. Both case studies have capitalized on topical subject areas which have attracted public and media attention. The strengths of the studies overlap, but also differ, in that **Verney** has developed long-standing working relationships with schools, locally and nationally, based on both publications designed to be accessible to a young audience and active direct engagement with students in the course of their studies. **Renton** has similarly engaged with secondary school students, but also attracted considerable media attention. He has challenged longstanding popular misconceptions about the origins of the Arab-Israeli conflict through a diverse range of engagements: television documentaries and discussion programmes, national and international newspapers and magazines, online publication and discussion, lectures, talks and the development of teaching materials. Both case studies reflect the commitments of the History Group to external collaboration and the use of electronic media to maximize the potential for impact.