

Impact template (REF3a)

Institution: University of Dundee

Unit of Assessment: 32 Philosophy

a. Context

The philosophy unit is highly cohesive and organised around research and teaching in continental philosophy. The size, interdisciplinary setting and specialist focus of the unit determine its impact strategy by encouraging an outward and collaborative focus for all the members of the unit through work with external bodies at programme, school, university, and city, national and international levels. The impact strategy is to bring continental philosophy to a wide audience in order to change views about social and political problems, and to apply continental philosophy to other subjects and practices. Philosophy's broad commitment to impact activities in collaboration with external bodies is evidenced by AHRC's invitation to Professor **Davey** to contribute to their volume *The Public Value of the Humanities*, ed. J.Bate, Bloomsbury 2011. His essay on the impact of philosophy research on the economy drew favourable comment by Chris Patten in the Financial Times (24, Feb 2012). In like vein, see Professor **Williams'** talks on philosophy and contemporary art in such galleries as Dundee Contemporary Arts, on Thomas Hirschhorn and violence, and at the Parasol Unit Foundation for Contemporary Arts, on Navid Nuur and ideas about everyday objects (<http://www.dca.org.uk/uploads/Hirschhorn-leaflet-FINAL.pdf>, <http://events.islington.gov.uk/events/object-as-process-2-lecture-by-professor-james-williams-1745.aspx>). Impact is also achieved through engagement with wider audiences attracted to the Royal Institute of Philosophy funded open seminar series. This is advertised to the general public via website news <http://www.dundee.ac.uk/philosophy/news/> , email lists, the School Arts and Humanities Research Institute, the Scots Philosophical Association and philos-I.

All members of staff address the general public through the medium of public lectures (**Davey, Williams, Lord, Jones, Mei and Woodward**), through radio interviews (**Lord**), through reviews for art journals (Smith for Dundee University Review of the Arts), via international collaborations (**Smith's** 'AHRC speaking my language initiative' with Edinburgh, Glasgow, Strathclyde, Stirling, and St Andrews, and friends of Brazil society), by participating in philosophy schools such as the Melbourne School for Continental Philosophy <http://www.mscp.org.au/> (Woodward and Williams) and by working with museums (**Lord**) and art galleries (**Lord, Davey, Williams**). At school level, impact activity is organised around open lectures given as part of the new AHRI lecture and seminar series and Dundee Arts Café (**Davey, Lord**, <http://www.dundeeartscafe.co.uk/>), both of which organise open lectures and seminars which engage with a wide public, for instance, in our 2011 'Cafés de philosophie de science', which reached a general audience in conjunction with the Dundee restaurant Bon Appétit <http://www.dundee.ac.uk/philosophy/news/2011/philosophie/> .

At University level the activities of the unit and school are supported by effective events management and advertising and by a strongly impact-driven University strategy ('Transformation' and Strategy to 2017 <http://www.dundee.ac.uk/transform/#our-purpose>) The strategy involves the dissemination of life-transforming knowledge. The University accordingly gives support to impact strategies at programme level, offering well-informed feedback on impact events through a series of seminars, specialist assistance and assessment by peers (see above and section c. for details about AHRI, External Relations and the University Research and Innovation Services). The programme impact strategy involves good use of the University website and news pages, as well as an excellent set of new lecture theatres within easy access of the centre of Dundee.

In order to use continental philosophy to challenge widely held views on art, politics and society, the unit has been involved in many events at the Dundee Contemporary Arts gallery (see impact case study: Sexuate Difference). At international level all members of the unit have been involved in open lectures, open summer schools (Melbourne School of Continental Philosophy, Deleuze camps in Amsterdam, Cologne and New Orleans), broadcasts (in France and Australia) and publications designed for a wider public and to bring philosophy into other disciplines and practices (for instance, in Dominic **Smith's** catalogue piece for the artist Phil Braham's 2011 exhibition <http://www.dundee.ac.uk/philosophy/news/2011/still/>). Its work in continental philosophy, with its

Impact template (REF3a)

focus on art, aesthetics, literature and politics allows the unit to focus strongly on impact, by means of public talks on artists (**Jones, Woodward, Williams**), work on political problems around gender, justice and economics, and influential papers and talks on the importance of hermeneutics for the understanding of the role of the humanities in modern societies.

The main beneficiaries of our impact have been (i) audiences for talks and seminars in Dundee, the UK and overseas; (ii) a wide range of participants from other disciplines at conferences, summer schools and workshops (see impact cases): and (iii) non-academic readers and auditors of our wide range of publications and recordings in topics such as art (**Davey, Williams, Woodward**), aesthetics (**Davey, Woodward, Smith**), economics and religion (**Mei**), the role of the humanities (**Davey**), gender and feminism (**Jones**) and the history of philosophy (**Lord**).

b. Approach to impact

Impact is an important part of research in the unit and all members are supported through funding for presenting papers and time allocated to impact events such as seminars and conferences. In addition, staff are supported in preparing publications with impact elements and given time to attend impact events in the UK and abroad such as the Arts Café, summer schools, talks at Dundee Contemporary Arts, work with museums and Research Councils. Our open research seminar is seen as an important opportunity to spread our research to a wider public and it is given extra funding above Royal Institute of Philosophy funding. The School also funds our impact events through the Arts and Humanities Research Institute. Conferences with wider public participation are also funded by the unit and by the school.

All these events are also supported by the University through events advertising, accommodation and events organisation skills. There is further support for impact work by the University research and Innovation Services. They provide important help on the impact elements of grant applications and impact activities, for example, through advice on which external bodies to contact for funding impact events and on where they might be held. This advice was important in decisions on where to hold impact events and how to reach a wider public for our participation in arts cafés and open lectures. Our strategy is therefore to encourage impact where it can be detected and fostered and to be ready to develop it where it may emerge more unexpectedly. It is also to support impact activities with time, advice and funding when they are underway. Finally, it is to aid the dissemination of impact in many different forums and media.

c. Strategy and plans

The unit has long had a dissemination strategy that involved encouraging all members of staff in their efforts to disseminate their research in writing and through talks. It also has standing commitment to the dissemination of research through conferences and seminars. These have now become part of an explicit impact strategy, as defined in section a. This has been extended to fostering grant applications and research activities with strong impact elements. The strategy is to help staff to identify impact opportunities for their research, to build this into grant and presentation and publication activities, and then to develop the impact element explicitly as seen in the two case studies. The School Arts and Humanities Research Institute provides financial backing, communication and sites in support of this strategy. This is supported further at University level through events advertising and dissemination by the Events Office (for instance, through advertising and support of **Woodward's** 2013 conference on philosophy and economics, which drew in a non-academic audience <http://www.dundee.ac.uk/externalrelations/events/http://www.dundee.ac.uk/pressreleases/2013/april13/economy.html>) and expert support and advice by University of Dundee Research and Innovation Services for funding impact-oriented events (this led to the two grants supporting our impact cases) <http://www.dundee.ac.uk/research/main/about-ris/>).

Impact template (REF3a)**d. Relationship to case studies**

The two impact cases grew directly out of the support for grant applications and research activities which brought our research to the general public, interested users and to those with influence over, or charged with, the delivery of services. In one case, this developed into the activities supported by an AHRC grant. In the other case, it became the Royal Society of Edinburgh workshop and conference series. The researchers were supported with funding and leave for these impact activities. Their research has subsequently benefitted from assistance and guidance from University impact committees, from University Research and Innovation Services and from unit funded meetings with specialists on impact from within the University.