

Institution: University of Greenwich

Unit of Assessment: (UoA 29) - English Language and Literature

a. Context

The impact strategy of the Literature and Drama Research Group (LAD) is driven by our belief in community which is based on shared critical processes that contribute to civic well-being on local and international levels. We aim to open out literature as a space for ethical debate and dialogue between communities of informed citizens, united through a shared critical commitment that maintains and respects diversity. We enhance quality of life by influencing school curriculum design and delivery, by contributing to tourist and local residence experience, and by making our research findings freely available. To achieve our aim we engage with five main classes of beneficiaries:

1. the local and national publics
2. specific groups of community theatre practitioners and senior citizens
3. international educators and school pupils
4. the small-scale publishing industry
5. a generalised on-line public.

b. Approach to impact

LAD, consisting of 13.5 members of staff, is located in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. Having refreshed its academic base after RAE2008, it comprises largely staff appointed within the last five years. A School Impact Champion (the School Director of Research) was appointed in 2011; since 2012 the group's newly-appointed Research Co-ordinator (**King**) has developed its impact strategy to focus activities around the broad theme of 'community and its limits' to engage a wider range of publics and organisations in its ethical and aesthetic research.

A decision was taken in 2012 that university funding (£7,400) should be used to promote beyond academia activities that derived from published and on-going research. In 2012-13 the Research Co-ordinator ran five dedicated training meetings for the whole group to define impact in REF terms in order to explore and formalise activities that appertained to it. There were also three meetings with the [new economics foundation](#) for the case study leads. In addition, at least four meetings were held each term to monitor and progress specific projects. By May 2013, impact was so embedded that it was ready to enter the general agenda of the group's termly research meetings, after having already been introduced into the termly research mentoring meetings with individuals since 2012.

It is important to the group both ethically and practically to be as inclusive as possible. We fully recognise that members of staff who do not generate outputs appropriate for REF submission can make an important contribution to the group's impact on society. Two such staff have facilitated one of the projects in the impact case studies while all other members of the group contribute to one or more of the events and outputs described below.

To ensure sustainability and transparency, the Research Co-ordinator maintains an intranet, available to all members, which records relevant plans, finance documents, processes, updates and contacts.

While five categories of beneficiaries were identified in the Context section, here we discuss only types 1, and 4 combined with 5. Types 2 and 3 relate to the two case studies and are accordingly discussed in more detail in REF 3b.

Engagement with local and national publics

LAD had previously been engaged in generic impact work through its involvement with the

Impact template (REF3a)

Greenwich Theatre, the Camden and Edinburgh fringe, and public poetry readings, workshops and lectures in a variety of national and international venues.

LAD continues to be involved with the Greenwich Theatre through the annual staging of public performances directed by staff there, as well as at the dedicated drama facilities in Bathway, Woolwich. In 2013 there were in addition two free public performances of *A Winter's Tale* at the Queen's House of the Greenwich Maritime Museum, to which the Museum gave time, staff, space and marketing. These performances promoted the Museum by attracting new audiences and raising its profile, stimulating tourism and contributing to the quality of the tourist experience.

With similar effects, **Smyth** continues her nationwide and international readings, workshops and lectures on creative writing and on art, at venues such as Tate Britain and the Tate Modern, where her principal areas of debate are the politics of sexuality and gender: in 2012-13 she gave 12 such public engagements (see her [staff profile](#) for details).

The ARTA case study specifically targets local senior citizen audiences but also in the process trains volunteers in the practice of Reminiscence Theatre (see REF3b).

Engagement with online publics

While LAD began to blog in 2012 to advertise its engagement with various publics, its principal motive was its shared commitment to open access and public debate. **Lee**, for example, contributed play reviews to <http://yearofshakespeare.com/> in May 2012 and **Jones** is Online Reviews Editor for the [British Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies](#) (whose membership includes the general public). The main online organ for the research group is the [Greenwich English blog](#) to which most members contribute. This is run and its quality monitored by a designated Moderator who is appointed on an annually rotating basis (**Jones** 2012-13, re-elected 2013-14). Here we not only make many of our research findings freely available but also publicise and comment on the other kinds of public research events we run. As is usual with blogs, space is made available for the public to interact.

There is also a [blog by King](#) devoted mainly to Victorian popular fiction and publishing history that draws attention to now marginalised but once central Victorian texts and their communities. **King** has made the [Victorian Fiction Research Guides](#), of which he is general editor, freely available online in a knowledge exchange partnership with the publisher Victorian Secrets. Like the *Guides*, this publisher specialises in promoting neglected works, cultural activities and authors: the publisher gives webspace on its site, maintains and promotes it, benefitting from additional web visibility and traffic. The *Guides* thereby contribute to the economic prosperity of the independent publishing sector (contact the Managing Director [Catherine Pope](#) for detail).

The projects outlined in the two case studies, **Activating the Reminiscence Theatre Archive (ARTA)** and **Shakespeare in Hong Kong**, have their own dedicated websites and online fora (see REF 3b).

c. Strategy and plans

The aims of the LAD research group 2014-2019 are:

- 1) to consolidate and extend its extant engagements with specific communities beyond academia both locally and internationally, especially through Shakespeare and Reminiscence Theatre;
- 2) to create a new centre of excellence exploiting extant expertise and research outputs in the group on the interactions of literature, journalism and the professions in a European context.

To achieve these aims, university funding will be spent on growing extant impact activities 2013-14, along with external funding. Mentoring and internal guidance on impact activities will continue as before with, from 2014-15, gradually diminishing intensity and frequency as the Research Group

grows in experience.

We shall:

- a) consolidate relations between Hong Kong theatre and schools and the group by bringing over a Hong Kong director to work with local schools on performances of transnational Shakespeare in the Queen's House (June 2014). We shall also return to Hong Kong to assess progress and procedures before extending the project into mainland China (2014-16);
- b) acquire and digitise the archives of the European Reminiscence Network, a research resource that will significantly expand the training opportunities for Reminiscence Theatre practitioners on an international level. Every year we will organise at least two, two-day training events involving European partner organisations. In June 2014 we shall hold a conference ("Remembering Yesterday, Caring Today") to coincide with the launch of the new archive, creating fresh networks to generate innovative ideas and disseminate extant good practice;
- c) secure specialist training in external funding bids 2013-14, with a view to submitting major bids 2014-15 in all three areas of focus;
- d) train all PhD students in the setting up, running and monitoring of impact projects, especially those engaged in collaboration with professional organisations;
- e) bid for a COST project (March 2014) in collaboration with at least four European partners (Macerata, Ghent, Radboud (Nijmegen), Galway) on *Public Wellbeing and the Communication of Finance in Europe: What the Nineteenth Century Can Teach Us*, preparatory to a Horizon2020 bid on the same topic involving journalists, economists, educationalists, SMEs and literature specialists. The aim will be to learn from the great age of the public communication of finance, when many literary works across Europe as well as the press examined the place of finance in society. Investigating commonalities and differences, the resultant European dialogue will create an enriched narrative from which new solutions can emerge and new communities can be reached. The project contributes to the longer-term aim of the research group to create a centre of excellence on the historical relations between literature, the press and professional communities of practice.

d. Relationship to case studies

Both **Shakespeare in Hong Kong** and **ARTA** derive from the group's commitment to realising in very concrete ways the value of literature to "community", exploring at local and cross-national levels the value of literary and dramatic heritage for an exploration of ethical issues. Both case study projects have been granted university funding to enable their activities. Both involve external collaboration: with Hong Kong schools, curriculum designers and theatre groups in the one case; with local senior citizen care homes and day centres and theatre practitioners in the other.

Both projects have been designed not only to effect and measure change in external communities but, in the spirit of inclusivity valued by the group, to advance the possibilities for development of the community which is the group itself. The projects offer developmental opportunities for staff and opportunities to generate long-term cross-disciplinary research outputs: **ARTA** exploits the skills of staff to develop teams of volunteers; the planned extension into mainland China of the pilot project **Shakespeare in Hong Kong**, currently involving a literary historian, will involve also the group's performance practitioners.

The case studies have highlighted the need for careful monitoring and specialist training as well as the time, planning and resources required to achieve successful targeted benefit. With thorough planning, and dedication by staff of their time, we have been able with a budget of only a few thousand pounds to improve the quality of life of hundreds of people in only 12 months (around 200 in the case of **ARTA** alone).