Environment template (REF5)

Institution: University of York
Unit of Assessment: 35B - Music, Drama, Dance and Performing Arts: Theatre, Film and Television
a. Overview The Department of Theatre, Film and Television is relatively new and highly interdisciplinary. Founded in 2007, this is the first time it has submitted to RAE/REF. Our research activity takes various forms, including creative practice and professional production; theoretical speculation and historical investigation; technological innovation; and analysis of production, technologies, texts and reception. Much of the department's research draws on arts/humanities perspectives, some is social science-based, an increasing amount is science- and technology-based, and some is practice-based. Academic and research staff have increased from 6 to 20 in the REF period, so most colleagues are relatively new; there are 6 professors, covering film, interactive media and theatre, and 10 ECRs. There are also 25 registered doctoral students, including several undertaking PhDs by Creative Practice. The department is set to expand further until 2017, most notably in the area of interactive/digital media. The department is located in an extensive £30m state-of-the-art production and performance facility, opened in 2010, which is also hired by industry clients for production activities. This provides a rich, high quality environment for research and related activities, facilitates a strong link between research and teaching, and enables impact through public engagement, the showcasing of practice as research, and collaboration between the department and industry.

b. Research strategy

The department appointed its first Chair of Research Committee in 2009 and since then a comprehensive research strategy has been developed from scratch, a process led and overseen by the Research Chair and the Department Research Committee (DRC). The chair has worked closely with the Head of Department to ensure that research activity is a major priority in the Department's annual forward planning process, and that sufficient funds to support such activities are ring-fenced in the financial four-year plan. In this context, the strategy has five primary aims:

(1) To establish a strong interdisciplinary research community by developing a ten-year staffing plan, the key elements of which are:

- The recruitment of staff from a range of disciplinary and professional backgrounds (appointments made since 2008 include specialists in film and TV studies, scriptwriting, theatre history and practice, television production, audio engineering, interactive media and computing)
- The recruitment of senior staff with strong research track records, international networks and the ability to lead significant research developments and build strong links with teaching (4 such appointments at professorial level made since 2008).
- The recruitment of highly experienced industry professionals with extensive links to film and television (4 appointments made since 2008).
- The recruitment of ECRs with significant academic potential (10 appointments made since 2008).
- Further appointments enabling expansion until a steady state is achieved in 2017 (in process).

(2) To create a distinctive research identity embracing theatre history and practice; film and television production; interactive media; and film and television studies. Within this broad field, certain thematic clusters have been identified and prioritised:

- The theory, practice and pedagogy of acting and performance (exemplified by the theatre staff, notably Luckhurst and Cordner, with Cantrell and Cornford developing this further)
- The development, application and reception of theatre, film, television and interactive media production practices, technologies, creative activity and aesthetics (Mateer in film production, Cordner in Theatre, Kearney and Pauletto in sound design and audio. To be developed by Ursu and Ng in interactive media).
- The institutional and industrial organisation, cultural relevance and social engagement of theatre, film, television and interactive media (Higson and Petrie in film, Gorton in TV and

interactive media)

- Theatre, film, television and human rights (Luckhurst in theatre, Hickman in film production).
- The historical development of theatre, film and digital media practices, genres and thematic concerns (Higson, Petrie and Andrews in film, Gorton in Television and Interactive Media, Ng in interactive media, Cornford, Cordner, Poore and Peschel in Theatre).
- Growing our interactive media research has already led to new projects advancing 3D sound and image research (led by Holliman and Kearney). This theme is developing further research links in perception science and the engineering and application of these technologies, building on pre-existing collaborations of new staff.

(3) To develop a strong, dynamic, cohesive and sustainable research infrastructure and culture in a young department with a high number of ECRs. This has been led by the DRC which has since 2009:

- Established a generous research leave programme, individual research expense accounts, and departmental budgets for pump priming and conference organisation (which has helped develop the research activity constituting the clusters noted above).
- Created systems for mentoring and research performance review of all academic and research staff.
- Ensured that staff are able to take advantage of research training and development support provided through institutional programmes and courses (in particular, support for grant writing provided by the Humanities Research Centre has helped boost the number of grant applications from 2012.
- Grown research income via mentoring and through strategic use of pump priming funds, to increase the number and size of external grant applications and awards, including collaborative grants where appropriate. (Two substantial knowledge transfer grants and one major research grant from HERA have been secured since 2009, three significant grant bids have recently been submitted and five others are currently in development.)
- Improved visibility via international networks and collaborations and the organisation of conferences and symposia (four conferences, ten symposia, three Postgraduate Conferences hosted in the department since 2009)
- Developed a vibrant community of research students, through recruitment, bursaries, AHRC awards, departmental support and an institutional training programme (more than 30 doctoral students recruited since 2008).
- Developed collaborations and partnerships with media professionals and businesses (notably a multi-faceted collaboration with Green Screen Productions, including a KTP grant, discussed below).
- Capitalised on the opportunities offered by our building and its facilities to generate research and creative practice (these have facilitated two major plays adapted and directed by Cordner, and supported film projects by Hickman and experiments in audio technology by Kearney).

(4) To make a positive contribution to the disciplines, professions, industries and users with which we engage, by embedding impact in all of our research activities, in the form of:

- Industrial partnerships to exploit technological innovations (exemplified by the KTP collaborations established with Green Screen Productions and Mercedes Benz Formula One Team)
- Pedagogical and training activities within both the academy and the creative industries (exemplified by Luckhurst's HEA-funded project on actor training).
- Engagement with both academic and non-academic audiences, readers and users (led by public performances of two major plays, numerous public lectures and master classes by visiting professionals, participation in the University's annual Festival of Ideas).
- Development of policy reviews and initiatives (in development, e.g. through Higson's HERA-funded project).

(5) To foster a research environment with productive and mutually-reinforcing links with teaching and commercial activities by:

- Using teaching to identify and develop new research questions about creative processes, technologies and vocational training.
- Developing programmes and modules in line with thematic research clusters.
- Developing collaborative initiatives and projects with industry, including KT Partnerships and CPD opportunities.
- Developing consultancy activities involving both staff and postgraduate students.
- Ensuring strong links between commercial activities attracted to the department and existing and potential research projects.

c. People
i. Staffing strategy and staff development

The department has recruited a diverse body of staff, embracing a range of disciplinary areas, some from orthodox academic backgrounds and others from previous careers in industry. This mix is essential to the strategic aims discussed above – and in particular the serious commitment to interdisciplinarity, impact, professional engagement with the creative industries, and the building of sustainable, mutually reinforcing links between research, teaching and commercial activities.

During the REF period the number of research active staff has grown three fold, and there is now a strong foundation to research in film, television and theatre. We are currently moving into the field of digital/interactive media, and are set to continue to expand until 2017. We have appointed two new professors and an Anniversary Research Lecturer to lead this initiative, and they will develop their work on video-mediated interactive technologies and narratives, 3D computer imagery and digital culture, thus building on the department's existing work on the relationship between new technologies and creative practices, and developing the science and technology strand of our interdisciplinary mix.

While all research-active staff are assigned a mentor, particular emphasis is placed on mentoring, supporting and training ECRs, including staff who have joined us from industry. ECRs also benefit from training provided at University level, through the Post-Graduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PGCAP), and by their inclusion in research clusters. Staff members with industry experience are encouraged to capitalise on this experience to frame and develop research projects – hence the commitment to work on production practices and technologies.

In order to develop a vibrant and sustainable research culture, we have introduced various procedures to support all research active staff, guided by our strategic aims. These include:

- Adopting the University timetabling policy to ensure that research-active staff have one day per week during term that is clear of other commitments; designing departmental workload allocation models to ensure adequate time for research; and providing a light teaching load for staff at all levels in the first year of their appointment wherever possible.
- ECRs are normally subject to a three year probationary period, required to undertake the PGCAP, and assigned a mentor who undertakes a regular appraisal process involving the analysis of training needs and the formulation of a Professional Development Plan. This support will be extended to our first Post-Doctoral researcher who will begin in autumn 2013, in accordance with the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers.
- Academic staff on research contracts are eligible for one term of research leave out of seven. This involves an application process with a clear set of criteria, with all applications considered by the Departmental Research Committee (DRC). Applicants are required to discuss their plans in advance with their mentor and/or the Chair of DRC. This is particularly important for early career staff.
- An annual personal research allowance of £1,000 is provided to all academic staff, to support research activities such as conference attendance, specialist software and equipment purchases, visits to archives, libraries and industry partners, research assistance etc. The use of this resource is monitored by the DRC.
- Staff can bid for departmental pump priming funding and support for conferences related to research projects (currently £8,000 in total). The former is to enable the development of larger-scale research projects involving major external funding applications, the latter for events with

- clear links to existing research projects or to the development of new projects. All applications are considered by the DRC.
- Regular departmental research seminars are organised by the Chair of DRC, and provide a forum for both staff and graduate students, alongside occasional visiting speakers, to present aspects of their research and creative production activities.
- All academic staff are assigned research mentors who are normally members of DRC, and whose role is to advise and support staff on research or creative activities.
- All research active staff formulate a research plan with the assistance of their research mentor, and to have an annual meeting with the Chair of DRC to discuss current activities, future plans, opportunities and challenges.
- Regular updates on internal and external funding opportunities are circulated by the Chair of DRC and by research support staff in the department and at university level, through e.g. the Humanities Research Centre and the Research and Enterprise Office.
- Training and career development is provided by the University's Researcher Development Team, by the Learning and Development Team, and through the PGCAP. Career development at departmental level is provided through the mentor and performance review schemes, and by helping early career staff to apply for pump priming support to organise conferences, develop projects and establish networks. Staff members who have joined us from the film and television industries are given special mentoring and support to enable them to develop their professional experience and activities into research careers.
- To ensure equal opportunities, all academic and research staff have access to the support schemes described above. In addition, our recruitment policy has generated not only a productive mix of academic and professional backgrounds but also a mix of genders, ages and nationalities including British, American, Italian, Singaporean Chinese and Romanian. The building and its research facilities have full disabled access.

In order to encourage researcher mobility and exchanges between the academy and industry, we have established and are making use of an ERASMUS exchange scheme with links to the Portuguese Catholic University in Porto, IUAV University of Venice, Aalto University, Finland (staff exchange); we support colleagues making applications to external funders such as the AHRC, Worldwide Universities Network, COST, HEA, Leverhulme and the British Academy to enable international research visits and the establishment of networks (see section 5 below for more information); and we encourage industry professionals to continue their production activities, maintain professional contacts, undertake consultancies and receive professional training (augmented by the research leave scheme noted above) .

ii.   Research students

Given its newness, the department has been successful in recruiting doctoral students, with 25 currently at various stages of registration. Their projects cover theatre, film and television studies, sound design, interactive media and, following the introduction of a PhD by creative practice in 2010, playwriting, screenwriting and film production projects. Several PhD students have been recruited from our Masters programmes in Theatre: Writing, Directing and Performance; Cinema, Television and Society (now rebranded as MA in Contemporary Cinema and Television); and Post Production: Sound Design.

The department has had some access to doctoral student funding, including some AHRC BGP1 scholarships, university teaching scholarships, department bursaries, and fellowships from the Humanities Research Centre; further research student funding will flow from the new AHRC Doctoral Training Centre, the White Rose College of the Arts & Humanities. Of the six PhD students we have graduated, three now hold Lectureships, with a fourth due to take one up in January 2014, and one has developed a successful career as a filmmaker. The department is strongly committed to the integration of doctoral students into the departmental research culture and to providing the next generation of researchers with high-quality training, and received outstanding feedback through the 2012 Postgraduate Research Experience Survey. Our doctoral students also participate in wider University fora such as the Humanities Research Centre.

PGR students are actively supported in a number of ways:

- On arrival they are assigned a supervisor and receive further support from the departmental Director of Graduate Studies.
- They also have a thesis advisory panel (comprising the supervisor and one or two other advisors) which meets twice a year. Their progress is subject to a formal confirmation process around the 18 month mark which is carried out by their thesis advisory panel.
- They are given access to two well-equipped PhD study rooms and a common room.
- They are provided with a modest research expense allowance of £250 per annum for full-time students, £125 for part-time students, to support the cost of attending conferences, visiting archives and libraries, undertaking experiments, purchasing software etc.
- They receive both university- and department-level training directed at developing a range of research and other skills. New students receive a comprehensive induction from the University, including two centrally-run sessions with students from cognate disciplines. All students are encouraged to participate in training workshops run by the Researcher Development Team and the Humanities Research Centre or its equivalent.
- They are also encouraged to present their work at departmental research seminars (alongside academic staff), at the annual departmental postgraduate conference – organised and run by the PhD students, and funded by the DRC – and at other conferences.
- They are eligible to apply for the Post-Graduates Who Teach (PGWT) training scheme which involves training and on-the-job experience as undergraduate teachers and instructors. They are supported at departmental level by the PGWT Co-ordinator. They are also eligible for the University-run programme Preparing Future Academics, an enhanced version of the PGWT scheme which provides a qualification toward future certified teacher training once they are in a permanent academic post.
- Some PGRs become directly involved in professional and industry activities via on-going research projects, links with local theatres and theatre companies (such as the York Theatre Royal) and the use of the building and facilities by commercial clients (such as Green Screen Productions).

d. Income, infrastructure and facilities

The university has invested heavily in the development of the department, including the £30m building itself, and its extensive range of state of the art equipment. This infrastructure is also central to the design and delivery of teaching programmes and so provides a laboratory in which the interface between teaching and research is facilitated, with research informing teaching, and teaching occasionally raising new research questions, particularly in relation to creative processes and training, production techniques and technologies.

There is also an important relationship between research and our partnerships with industry. Academic staff were involved in the post production of a feature film, *The Knife That Killed Me,* produced by Green Screen Productions for Universal Studios, with the visual and audio effects being done in the department. This relationship has generated a Knowledge Transfer Partnership worth £125k on digital post-production for film-making. As a commercial client, Green Screen also uses our facilities and this model of identifying and developing research opportunities with industry through our commercial activities is emerging as a significant part of our overall strategy. The commercial relationship also generates significant income that is reinvested in departmental facilities. A further KTP worth £53k was secured in 2013 with Mercedes Benz and supported by Technology Strategy Board to develop audio simulators for the company's Formula One racing team.

Our facilities also underpinned a major £266k Higher Education Academy-funded project, Understanding and Performing Classical and Modern Play-texts (2009-12) led by the department and involving five other HE partners on the training of actors for theatre. The facilities have also made possible the revival, re-interpretation and production of Early Modern Theatrical works (Thomas Middleton's *A Mad World My Masters* and John Marston's *The Dutch Courtesan,* each of which was supported by a £10k grant from the Shepherd Trust). This research-related work has been supported by sponsorship from charitable trusts, and has been furthered through a dedicated website on Early Modern Theatre.

The department is also home to a large-scale project, Mediating Cultural Encounters Through European Screens (2013–16), supported by a €1m HERA grant, with Higson as Project Leader and PI and the collaboration of University of Copenhagen and Vrije Universiteit Brussel. The project examines the co-production, distribution and reception of films and television programmes across Europe, and has a strong policy dimension, with numerous industry and policy figures at both national and European level on the Advisory Board.

Other external funding has included Higson's AHRC Research Leave Award and Luckhurst's HEA International Scholarship, and smaller projects supported by the British Academy, the European Science Foundation, the Worldwide Universities Network and COST.

The university has also invested heavily in the REF period in the adjacent new building of the Department of Computer Science, which allows for significant collaboration around digital and interactive technologies and their uses; in an extensive re-furbishment of the university library facilities; and in the Humanities Research Centre, housed in a new £11m building.

The departmental research environment has been further enhanced by our active role in acquiring major archival collections of papers of theatre, film and television writers in the Samuel Storey Writing and Performance Collection. This includes the papers of Charles Wood, David Storey, Peter Whelan, Julia Pascal, Laurence Marks and Maurice Gran, and Sir Alan Ayckbourn. A Heritage Lottery Fund Grant of £280k was secured in 2011 to support the Ayckbourn archive, including the hiring of an educational outreach officer. Further planning is underway to generate external research to exploit the potential of the archive.

The department's operational infrastructure supporting research includes a seven-strong technical team who are closely involved in production and performance work and in supporting technology innovation. The department also has a dedicated research administrator and a Commercial Manager and assistant, responsible for developing partnerships with industry.

e. Collaboration or contribution to the discipline or research base

Collaboration: The Department strongly promotes collaboration which is relevant to research and creative production in theatre, film and television, and now interactive media. Regionally, collaboration is fostered through the White Rose University Consortium (York, Leeds and Sheffield), with the most recent involvement being in the Mixed Cinema Network (2009-12). Most research-active staff are currently involved in collaborative initiatives, with several developing networks alongside research projects. The most developed of those to date involve senior staff: **Luckhurst**'s HEA-funded project (2010–13) on the enhancement of the practice and research of actor training involved national collaborators from RADA, Central School, the Theatre School at MMU and the University of Bristol, and international collaborators from CUNY, Fordham University, University of Sydney and the University of Melbourne. Follow-on activities involving these American and Australian partners were carried out in 2012/13 funded by the BA and HEA; **Higson**'s HERA-funded project (2013–16) on the cultural encounters facilitated by European film and television involves collaborating with the University of Copenhagen and Vrije Universiteit Brussel, and has a Europe-wide academic and industry advisory board; **Cordner**'s *The Dutch Courtesan* project involves collaborations with scholars from the UK, USA, Australia and New Zealand; Petrie's history of Film Schools Project involved collaboration with colleagues at NUI Galway and Lingnan University, Hong Kong, generated symposia in York (2009) and Galway (2010), and fed into a conference in Hong Kong (2012); **Mateer**'s Knowledge Transfer Partnership and other links with the film production company Green Screen Productions. Other significant collaborative activity for the period includes **Pauletto**'s membership of two EPSRC networks: "... towards Real Virtuality" (2008-09), and Creative Speech Technology (2011-13), and Management Committee membership of the EU Action on Sonic Interaction Design IC0601 (2007-11); **Kearney**'s on-going collaboration with the Audio Research Group, Dublin Institute of Technology, Ireland and the SIGMEDIA group, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland; and **Peschel'**s networks funded through the Worldwide Universities Network and the White Rose University Consortium.

Membership of Research Councils has been limited to senior staff with **Higson** a member of

AHRC Post-Graduate Peer Review Panel, Visual Arts and Media (Panel 2) from 2005-2008; and **Petrie** appointed to the AHRC Peer Review College in 2012.

Editorial positions: Once again senior staff have led here with **Cordner** General Editor of the OUP series *Oxford English Drama*; **Higson** a corresponding editor for *Northern Lights. Film and Media Studies Yearbook* (University of Copenhagen Press), and series co-editor 'European Film and Media Studies' (Palgrave Macmillan); **Luckhurst** series co-editor for Routledge Modern and Contemporary Drama; and **Petrie** co-principal editor, *Journal of British Cinema and Television* (Edinburgh University Press). Junior colleagues benefit from this expertise through mentoring.

External Examination of doctorates: Staff at all levels are regularly asked to examine doctorates with examples during the REF period including assignment sat at the Universities of Kent, Birmingham (Cordner); Nottingham, Western Australia, Essex (Higson); Cambridge, Ulster, NUI Galway (Luckhurst); Plymouth (Pauletto); Exeter, Institute of Education, London, Warwick (Petrie)

Organisation of conferences and scholarly encounters: The department's facilities and outward facing engagement with industry have helped to facilitate events and so enhance our relationships with both scholars and creative professionals. Events include the International Workshop on Sonic Interaction/Film & Theatre Sound Design, April 2009; symposium on Film Schools, Sept 2009; White Rose 'Mixed Cinema' Symposium, May 2011; international conferences on 'Theatre and Ghosts', June 2011, and 'Theatre and Human Rights', Oct 2011; the international Digital Audio Effects (DAFx) conference, Sept 2012; 'Playing the Small Screen' symposium, June 2012; 'Renaissance Reincarnations' symposium, March 2013; 'Neo-Victorian Villainy' symposium, May 2013; 'The Place of Public Service Broadcasting' symposium, July 2013; 'Perspectives on Sound Design' Symposium July 2013; and the Digital Humanities Conference, July 2013. An annual Postgraduate Conference was inaugurated in 2000 and each of the four events to date have brought together students from the department with their peers from the the wider University and other UK universities.

Refereeing academic publications and research proposals: Around half the research-active members of staff referee proposals and submissions for leading academic publishers including Blackwell, Methuen, Palgrave Macmillan, Routledge, Sage, University of Manchester Press, University of Illinois Press, University of Indiana Press and Logos Verlag; and journals such as *Shakespeare Bulletin*, *Studies in Theatre and Performance*, *Feminist Media Studies*, *Journal of International Communication*, *Feminist Theory*, *Feminist Review*, *Screen*, *IEEE, ACM SIGGRAF, International Journal of Human Computer Studies* and *Logopedics Phoniatrics Vocology*; senior staff have reviewed research proposals for the AHRC, the Irish Research Council and the Estonian Research Council.

Scholarly awards and fellowships: Luckhurst was Visiting Professor, Latrobe University, June-August 2009; HEA International Scholar 2012-13; Cuny Martin E Segal Scholar, Sept-Dec 2012; Inaugural Visiting Professor for Performance Studies, University of Sydney, Jan-April 2013, McGeorge Fellowship, University of Melbourne, May-August 2013; **Gorton** was an Anniversary Research Fellow, University of York, 2011/12.

Invited keynotes and lectures: Staff at all levels are regularly invited to give lectures and presentations. Invited keynotes shave been given by **Gorton** at Hamilton College, New York, 2011; **Higson** at Humboldt University, Berlin, Johannes Gutenberg University, Mainz, University of Strathclyde, all 2010, University of Leeds and Birkbeck College University of London, both 2012, Universities of Istanbul and Leeds, 2013; **Luckhurst** at the University of Sydney and City University New York, both 2012, and University of Sydney, 2013; and **Petrie** at the University of Aberdeen and University of Lund, Sweden, both 2009, University of Southern Denmark, Odense, 2010 (Petrie).

Industry partnerships related to research activity: this is a key area for development, and links have already been established with Green Screen Productions; RealD; Mercedes Benz; Dash Films; Transmission Films; Screen Australia and the Australian Film, TV & Radio School; York Theatre Royal; CereProc Ltd; and Enterprise Integration Group.