

Institution: Liverpool Hope University
Unit of Assessment: 29 - English Language and Literature
<p>a. Overview</p> <p>English research is housed within the Department of English in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities. The Department is relatively small: there are fourteen permanent members of staff, with expertise in both English Language and English Literature. In July 2013, there were five staff members teaching English Language: Salman Al-Azami, Manel Herat, Ruth Kircher, Linda McLoughlin, Marije Van Hattum. The other nine taught English Literature: Alice Bennett, William Blazek, Guy Cuthbertson, Trish Ferguson, Cynthia Hamilton, Elaine Hartnell-Mottram, Zoe Kinsley, Ros Powell, Will Rossiter. Ria Cheyne was a member of the Faculty of Education but joined the Department of English in September 2013. The Head of Department is Cynthia Hamilton. All of the permanent staff are research-active and hold PhDs.</p> <p>The Head of Department has overall responsibility for establishing priorities and supporting applications to the Dean and Pro-Vice Chancellor for remission from teaching in support of particular research projects. Workload is designed to enable staff to teach largely on courses directly related to their current research interests. Promotion recognises achievement in research as well as in teaching. The Head of Department shapes the research culture and establishes the strategic direction for research within the broad field of English, primarily through the appointment of staff able to enrich research in relation to the established areas of focus. It should be understood that the majority of staff currently in the Department, including the current Head of Department, have been appointed since the RAE 2008. Research within the Department is supported and informed by the Faculty Research Strategy and by the funding available, primarily for conference attendance, from the Faculty Research Committee. The Faculty Research Committee, in turn, reports to and takes direction from the Research Committee of the University, a sub-committee of the Senate. Members of the Department are also members of the Desmond Tutu Centre for War and Peace Studies and the Popular Culture Research Group (interdisciplinary research centres within Liverpool Hope that facilitate and disseminate research, and allow for collaboration between departments).</p> <p>The Department has hosted a number of important events, such as the Julian Barnes Conference (2008) with the author reading from and discussing his work, Michael Slater's bicentennial lecture on Charles Dickens (2012), the Borders and Crossings travel-writing conference, and symposia on topics that include religion in the media and the fiction of Edith Wharton. The Department also hosted a number of events in association with other Liverpool organisations. The Department hosted a series of ten lectures on Irish Literature from October to December 2012, which was launched at the Liverpool Irish Festival, and the Department hosted a lecture series on 'Time, History, and Memory' as part of the Liverpool 'In Other Words' city-wide literary festival.</p>
<p>b. Research strategy</p> <p>Staff turnover within the Department has enabled significant shifts in the research strategy of the Department as new members of staff have been appointed to complement existing expertise and build a focused research portfolio. All the staff appointed have strong research profiles; and with the exception of the appointment of a senior academic as Head</p>

of Department, the appointments have been of young academics of considerable talent, achievement and potential. A stronger research focus has been established: research undertaken by Literature staff is largely focused on the historical contextualisation of literature, with a considerable amount of archival research undertaken, and on the examination of the canonical in relation to the popular. Research by Language staff focuses primarily on socio-linguistics, but with a strong component of interest in popular culture. An interest in translation within particular historical and literary contexts also links those researchers in Language and Literature. At postgraduate level, these interests are reflected in the taught MA programmes and in the areas of research pursued by our PGR students. In 2009, the University gained PGR Degree awarding powers, and although PGR numbers remain low, the Department is carefully building numbers with an emphasis on quality rather than quantity. In 2012-13, the Department appointed its first University-funded Graduate Teaching Assistants. These studentships are funded on a par with those supported by the AHRC.

As a result of these developments, the research plans and aspirations of the Department have been re-examined since RAE 2008. The Department has retained links with the International Anthony Burgess Foundation (IABF), with two active members of the Department on the IABF Board of Trustees. Residual funding from a donation to Liverpool Hope from Leana Burgess is currently supporting one PhD candidate, co-supervised between Literature and Music; another PhD student funded by the Foundation and supervised wholly within the Department graduated in 2012. However, with the retirement of the member of the Department who had acted as IABF Director, and with the appointment of staff with interests in literature of an earlier period, the centrality of the Foundation to research activities in the Department has ceased. The Department was also strongly involved with the International Institute for Transcultural and Diasporic Studies and staged a successful conference in Lyon in 2009, but activities have shifted to other arenas in more recent years. These changes should not be seen as a sign of artificially conceived research structures, but as an indication of a research culture that has matured to the point where multiple initiatives by individuals looking outward toward national and international associations and networks has taken the place of internal frameworks for research (which were focused on creating the research culture that is now flourishing).

The aspiration of attracting greater research funding into the Department from external funding bodies has met with only modest success, but a culture is growing in which applying for external research funding is encouraged, supported, and indeed expected. Although the gross income from external funding bodies has diminished when compared to RAE 2008, the diversification of funding applications, as against a reliance on a single source, is symptomatic of a maturing research culture, and one with greater sustainability in the medium and longer term.

Plans for the next five years are aimed at building on our research strengths: interdisciplinary research that is informed by archives; and an interest in the intersection between the demotic and the canonical in relation to drama, poetry, prose fiction, and non-fiction. The increasingly important role played by individual researchers within the Department in national and international organisations and networks will continue to develop over the next five years, enhancing both the reputation of the Department and the richness of the conferences, symposia, and projects developed with Liverpool Hope as a partner. Such connections have, over the past few years, led to a number of important publications, and the richness and range of publications will develop over the next five years as a result of the impetus of these collaborations.

The nature of the research undertaken means that the Department will become increasingly involved in projects involving a digital component. One example is Marije Van Hattum's current work, compiling a corpus of Irish nineteenth-century poor-relief petitions for a project on the language of the poor in the nineteenth-century. The Department aims to develop large digitisation projects, especially those that make use of the University Library's Special Collections.

A measure of the sustainable, outward-looking research culture that will continue to develop over the next five years is the relationship being established with local institutions, particularly the National Museums Liverpool, the Bluecoat arts centre and local schools. The development of these links will enable research done in the Department to have greater impact within the local community. We are also developing links with two libraries in the region, the library of the Athenaeum in Liverpool and Gladstone's Library at Hawarden; and the Department continues to have productive connections with other universities nearby, especially Liverpool University and LJMU.

c. People, including:

i. Staffing strategy and staff development

The University has made a strategic decision to fill vacant posts, and posts established as a result of the expansion of the Department, by appointing early career post-doctoral teaching fellows and lecturers with strong research interests, inculcating a research-intensive team of scholars who teach within and through their specialisms in order to apprise our students of the latest developments in academic research, thought, and practice. This strategy builds a research culture into every aspect of the Department's activities. The diversity of nationalities among staff in the Department is noteworthy, for it contributes to the rich range of perspectives engaged. As well as British nationals, the Department houses scholars from Germany, The Netherlands, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Ireland, and the United States.

Although there is not a rotational sabbatical policy operated by the University, the lively research culture within the Department has been materially acknowledged by providing increased staffing. This has enabled release from teaching for specific research projects for both early career academics and established researchers.

New staff and early career researchers are given a mentor within the Department and are encouraged to attend staff development and staff training sessions. The Head of Department also monitors their progress and ensures that teaching responsibilities are lighter for new staff. Staff are also expected to become fellows of the HEA, and many study for a postgraduate teaching qualification at Liverpool Hope, with the support of the Head of Department, who will ensure that their teaching workload is reduced appropriately so that research activity can be maintained.

The University policy on Staff Probation and Annual Staff Appraisal provides staff with the opportunity to reflect on their progress against agreed targets and to develop realistic targets for the next year. Staff are also required to reflect on feedback from students, and there is peer-reviewing of teaching within the Department on an annual basis – feedback from both colleagues and students has proved to be very helpful to staff, especially those at an early stage of their career, and it can have an impact on research. It is noteworthy that those appointed as post-doctoral teaching fellows have often been given permanent contracts on the basis of their performance in both research and teaching.

A staff development programme is provided at University level in relation to publishing, applying for funding, and supervising postgraduate research students. There is also a University-wide forum for those supervising research students. A dedicated advisor for funding applications is also available to those developing bids. At Faculty level, funding is available for conference attendance, with those applying for money required to reflect on the relationship between the paper offered, that individual's research programme, and publications that will be placed in targeted journals, collections, or within a developing monograph.

Within the Department, staff are encouraged to engage with significant professional organisations to develop networks, to give papers at conferences, to develop a public profile and to connect with other scholars in their field. As a consequence of this policy, there has been a high level of conference attendance. The fortnightly Research Seminar sponsored by the Department enables staff to showcase papers and work-in-progress within a supportive forum where constructive feedback is provided. These research seminars also allow invited speakers from around the country to present their research to the Department.

ii. Research students

The Department has a growing postgraduate research culture, with five MA programmes, four of them running for the first time in 2013-4 (of which two are co-taught with Education). The longest standing of these MA programmes is the MA in Popular Literatures, which benefits from both the Department's research focus on historical context and its interest in the relationship between the canon and the popular. Although small, the MA in Popular Literatures has attracted students from beyond Europe. Additionally, the Department has a growing number of research students who play a key role in the pedagogical and intellectual life of the Department. Even undergraduates are encouraged to produce fresh research and they take part in an internal final-year conference.

PGR students benefit from a University-wide training programme that uses the Vitae model and is accompanied by a Moodle designed specifically for PGR students. Each Faculty has a Student-training co-ordinator to develop and deliver this programme. The co-ordinator for the Faculty of Arts and Humanities is a member of the English Department. PGR students undergo an annual monitoring process that ensures adequate progression, both in relation to the development of high-level personal transferable skills and in relation to their progress toward the completion of their individual project. Documents relating to this monitoring process are presented to the Research Degrees Sub-Committee.

Within the Department, PGR students are monitored and best practice shared through a forum that takes place toward the end of each of the three academic terms. The meeting in the summer term is chaired by an experienced supervisor from outside the Department and acts as the panel to review annual monitoring documentation for PGR students within the Department.

Our PhD supervisees are encouraged to attend conferences and to present papers. There is a small budget for supporting such attendance through the Faculty Research Committee as well as through Departmental support. One part-time PhD student has given papers at international conferences in Ireland and France; another has delivered a paper at an international conference in Birmingham; and a full-time PhD student has delivered a paper at an international conference in Rome. There are opportunities for PGR students to

become involved in the committee structure of the University; an English PhD student sits on the Faculty Research Committee as a PGR representative.

d. Income, infrastructure and facilities

The University and Department have prioritised research funding as a key area for future development. To this end, all members of the Department are encouraged to refine the personal funding alerts that they receive from Research Professional. All staff at Senior Lecturer level and above are now expected to make at least one external application for funding per academic year. Staff have access to a dedicated Research Funding advisor for assistance in this regard.

Thus far, success has been modest, but awareness of funding opportunities and a developing culture of enterprise in this regard are bringing some early success. William Blazek was awarded an Everett Helm Fellowship in 2013 from the Lilly Library at the University of Indiana to pursue research on Edith Wharton's papers, and he received symposium sponsorship from the Edith Wharton Society. Linda McLoughlin secured a Leverhulme Small Grant in March 2013 for work on 'Multivocal expressions of identity in a women's network'. Ruth Kircher has been awarded funding by the Québec Government Office for a research visit to Canada in the summer of 2013. Will Rossiter was awarded funding from the British Academy and from the Society for Renaissance Studies. In 2009, Ria Cheyne received funding from the Wellcome Trust for the 'Transforming Bodies: New Directions in Medical Humanities and Cultural Disability' seminar series (a joint application with Stuart Murray of Leeds and Clare Barker of Birmingham). Trish Ferguson received funding from the British Association for Victorian Studies, in addition to funding provided by Trinity College Dublin and Liverpool Hope, for her conference on 'Lesser Victorians'.

Funding has also been available from the Faculty and University for conference attendance, conference organisation, indexing, and for release from teaching for the completion of particular research projects. Thus, for example, William Blazek received £1,064 in funding in 2008, £1,755 in 2009, £975 in 2011, £1,760 in 2012, and £1,185 in 2013 from the Faculty Research Budget for the presentation of papers at international conferences on Wharton, Fitzgerald, and Hemingway; all of these papers were subsequently developed for publication. In both 2011-12 and 2012-13, the Faculty Research Committee committed its annual budget of £30,000 to support conference attendance and other research related activities. Additionally, hourly paid support at University level has funded the release of staff from teaching for the completion of particular projects such as Guy Cuthbertson's forthcoming book on Wilfred Owen. University level funding also enabled the appointment of a post-doctoral teaching fellow to support the development of impact case studies by Zoe Kinsley and Will Rossiter.

Members of the Department are encouraged to enhance the library collections related to their specialisms, and extra funds have been made available from the University research budget for this purpose, particularly for new members of staff. It is not unusual for new members of staff to be allocated £1,000 in the first year of their appointment for the purchase of library resources central to their individual research interests. The Department has been successful in its campaign to secure an impressive array of electronic databases for research, including EBBO, the Seventeenth Century Collections Online, Nineteenth Century Periodicals, and the American Periodical Series.

The acquisition of two special collections by the University Library provides significant

resources for researchers within the Department. The first, the Gradwell collection, is an excellent resource for Catholic studies and especially the study of nineteenth-century Catholicism. Given that the Department is developing the study of nineteenth-century religious literature as a research strength, the Gradwell collection is a very useful acquisition. In connection with the collection, the Department has been investing in library resources relating to G. M. Hopkins, who was a priest at the University's Creative Campus site. And the Radcliffe collection will be of particular interest to staff and students working on Early Modern literature. Radcliffe aimed to buy exemplars of every book printed for liturgical use in England during the Tudor and Stuart reigns, both Roman Catholic and Anglican, to be brought together alongside medieval manuscripts to document and observe the liturgical transition during this period. The collection houses Missals dating from the pre-Reformation era, some fifteenth century European manuscript books of hours, sixteenth and seventeenth-century Bibles and early commentaries, hymn books and ecclesiastical music, and a large number of early printed books chiefly of liturgical and scholastic interest.

e. Collaboration and contribution to the discipline or research base

Individual researchers within the Department contribute to a wide range of organisations and initiatives. William Blazek has been a member of the Executive Board of the F. Scott Fitzgerald Society since 2005. He is also founding co-editor (since 2002) of *The F. Scott Fitzgerald Review*, now in its twelfth annual volume. Along with Pennsylvania State University, Hofstra University, and Troy University, Liverpool Hope co-sponsors *The F. Scott Fitzgerald Review* (\$2,000-\$4,000 per year). William Blazek and Zoe Kinsley have served on the Board of Trustees of the International Anthony Burgess Foundation since 2006.

Zoe Kinsley is co-founder, with Professor Charles Forsdick (University of Liverpool), of the Liverpool Travel Seminar, which has been running annually since 2007. This is a collaborative forum which provides a cross- and inter-disciplinary research infrastructure, permitting cross-institutional dialogue and research collaboration in Liverpool itself.

Will Rossiter was recently asked to join the Textual Ambassadors research group, which is based in Oxford and Cambridge. He spoke at the first workshop in Keble College, Oxford, in August 2013. He is also a member of the Chaucer Studies Editorial Board for Boydell and Brewer Press.

Cynthia Hamilton has served on the Board of the Collegium for African American Research (CAAR) and has acted as Secretary to the organisation (2009-13). She is currently co-editor, along with Professor Alan Rice (UCLAN), of CAAR's FORECAAST Series, published by Liverpool University Press. As a result of her involvement in the organisation, CAAR will be holding its 2015 conference in Liverpool, hosted by Liverpool Hope University.

Ros Powell has been involved in Oxford University's Digital Miscellanies Index Project as a research assistant (digitalmiscellaniesindex.org). Along with Zoe Kinsley, she has been developing eighteenth-century studies as a research strength and has been forging links with scholars at Liverpool University.

Guy Cuthbertson is a General Editor, with Professor Lucy Newlyn of St Edmund Hall, Oxford University, of *Edward Thomas: Prose Writings: A Selected Edition* for Oxford University Press, and he has also edited two of the volumes, one of them with Lucy Newlyn. The first volume, *Autobiographies*, for which he was the sole editor, was a 'Book

of the Year' in *The Times Literary Supplement*. As Helen Vendler recently wrote in the *New York Review of Books*, the series will 'unfold the energetic variety of Thomas's prose work', and the series has been widely reviewed. He is also a committee member of the Edward Thomas Fellowship, and was a member of the Steering Group for the First World War Poetry Digital Archive.

Linda McLoughlin is currently co-organising the British Association for Applied Linguistics Special Interest Group on Language and Gender. She is also working in collaboration with Fazila Bhimji (UCLAN) and Rajinder Dudrah (University of Manchester) on a project entitled 'British Asians in the North West: a new research agenda for examining the nature of intersectionality'.

Ruth Kircher has been involved in an initiative of the Québec Government Office which fosters exchange between, and encourages collaboration by, academics working in the field of Québec studies.

Individual Department members have also served the discipline through regular peer-reviewing and through external examining, particularly at postgraduate level. Cynthia Hamilton has acted as external examiner for PhD candidates at the University of Manchester and the University of Leeds; Salman Al-Azami has examined two PhD candidates in India; Guy Cuthbertson has been external examiner at MPhil/PhD level at Edge Hill University. Zoe Kinsley reviews articles for *Studies in Travel Writing and English*. As Trustees of the International Anthony Burgess Foundation, she and William Blazek serve on an annual international scholarship selection panel. Alice Bennett peer-reviewed articles for *C21 Literature and Culture, Theory and Critique*. Guy Cuthbertson has peer-reviewed academic articles for *The Review of English Studies, Studies in Travel Writing and Orbis Litterarum*. He has also acted as a reader of a manuscript for CUP, and recently acted as reader for a collection of essays. Cynthia Hamilton regularly acts as a book reviewer and peer-reviewer for the *Journal of American Studies*, and has reviewed for the *PMLA* and the University of Mississippi Press. William Blazek has peer-reviewed for, among others, Palgrave Macmillan. Linda McLoughlin has peer-reviewed for *South Asian Popular Culture* and for *Language and Literature*.

Members of the Department have organised conferences and symposia in conjunction with colleagues from other institutions, such as 'Crime, Violence and Culture' conference (in collaboration with Lille Catholic University) – at which a PhD student and MA students from Liverpool Hope presented (15th-16th June 2012) and a conference organised in conjunction with Trinity College Dublin on non-canonical Victorian fiction (12-13 September 2013), both organised by Trish Ferguson. Will Rossiter has collaborated with a number of colleagues in other universities in order to further the discipline of Medieval and Early Modern studies. He has co-edited the collection *Authority and Diplomacy from Dante to Shakespeare* with Jason Powell of St Joseph's University (Pennsylvania, PA), which includes the work of scholars from a variety of UK, US and Italian universities. William Blazek co-directed, with Laura Rattray (University of Glasgow), the symposium 'Edith Wharton and *The Custom of the Country*: Centennial Reappraisals', 22-23 August 2013. Zoe Kinsley was the organiser of Borders and Crossings/Seuils et Traverses: An International and Multidisciplinary Conference on Travel Writing, 22-24 July 2013, at Liverpool Hope University. Such collaborative activities are becoming a hallmark of the Department, and it is our intention to continue to extend our activities in this direction.