

**Institution: University for the Creative Arts**

**Unit of Assessment: 34 Art & Design: History, Practice and Theory**

**a. Context**

As a specialist institution, the University for the Creative Arts is committed to demonstrating the economic, cultural and social impact of the creative arts. We understand the benefits of our creative research, practice and enquiry to include economic impact for businesses, communities of practitioners and cultural organisations; cultural enrichment for partner organisations and their diverse constituent audiences; and creative impact for specific sectors of cultural industry.

To this end, we are committed to research that effaces the boundary between the university and wider world; that offers a vital route to sustainable innovation; and that ensures the relevance of the university as a whole.

**b. Approach to impact**

In 2009 UCA took the strategic decision to merge the separate offices for Research and Knowledge Transfer activities, which it inherited following the merger of the Surrey and Kent Institutes in 2005. Over the past four years the Department for Research & Enterprise has focused upon developing an integrated approach to the facilitation of research and knowledge exchange initiatives. Building on a strong track record of knowledge exchange, recognised by RAE2008 particularly in the area of sustainable design, and on our proven expertise of community and business engagement in the South East region, we have continued to build and nurture working relationships with a diverse range of external regional, national and international partners and stakeholders.

These include the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO), Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP) in the South East of England; cultural institutions such as V&A, Tate, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, Turner Contemporary (Margate), the Creative Foundation, Folkestone Triennial and Whitstable Biennale, as well as the International Center for Photography in New York, the Daiwa Foundation, the Center for Craft, Creativity and Design, University of North Carolina, and the International Centre of Lace and Fashion, Calais.

UCA has placed project-based partnership at the heart of its Research and Enterprise strategy. Together with British Design Innovation, UCA has been a lead partner in setting up the University Design Industry Partnership (UDIP), a network of 13 selected HEIs dedicated to promoting knowledge transfer and innovation between private sector industrial design companies and discovery-led research universities. In 2012 UCA and Brunel University worked through UDIP to win JISC funding for the *Creative Open Innovation Network for Excellence in Design (COINED)*, a project to create and operate a new workflow for fashion and product designers which brings together academia and industry to produce new processes and ways of thinking that effectively link research and development with entrepreneurial efforts.

The promotion of impact from research in the cultural domain has been evident in UCA's leadership of the HEFCE/HE Cultural Forum funded Creative Campus Initiative (CCI), a consortium of 13 HEIs in the South East of England. CCI contributed to the Cultural Olympiad by opening up the cultural resources of its campuses and providing wider access to world leading, practice-based research in the creative and performing arts exploring the relationship between the arts and sports and the values of the Olympic and Paralympic ideals. Working in partnership with SEEDA, the Arts Council England South East, Culture South East, MLA South East and PODIUM, and with funding from HEFCE, the consortium projects received a total of 15 London 2012 Inspire marks, attracted 990 participants directly involved in commissions and programme development, and established 305 new working partnerships with schools, FE Colleges, arts organisations, community groups, disability organisations, local authorities, foundations and development

## Impact template (REF3a)

agencies.

Building upon its experience of the *Crysalis* project, in 2012 UCA and partners won a further three Interreg awards for projects that bring together higher education, key cultural institutions, and local and regional authorities from the coastal regions in the South East of England, Belgium and France. Focusing on research-oriented cross-cultural, cross-sectoral and intergenerational learning and knowledge exchange, these projects provide strategic focus for further research and knowledge exchange in culture-led and creative regeneration.

To this end, Prof. Millar's EU Culture Programme project *Transparent Boundaries* builds on an extensive body of research and culture-led models of exchange and collaboration in the arts. It brings together institutions from Greece, Italy and Denmark to explore the social and cultural implications of an aging population, and opportunities for collective textile and cloth-making practices as a means of addressing the isolation and social marginalisation often felt by the 'Elder' in European society. The project has been identified by the EU as an exemplar for HEIs engaging in cross-cultural initiatives that affect people's sense of community and well-being. (<http://transparentboundaries.com/>).

**c. Strategy and plans**

The use and benefit of research beyond the academy has been embedded within the UCA Strategic Plan, its Research & Enterprise Strategy, its Research Degrees Programme, and the business planning and monitoring at School, Faculty and Departmental levels. It also permeates the development and delivery of the curriculum at all levels as research-directed teaching and learning, supported by entrepreneurial and leadership education in close collaboration with external partners in the creative economy and beyond. Strategic consideration of 'pathways to impact' forms a core criterion for the competitive award of internal research funding. In addition, the internal funding scheme for research has been expanded to include an impact and enterprise category to support specific measures that enhance the effectiveness, application and benefits of research endeavours.

School-based and Research Institute workshops, seminars and exhibitions have focused on enhancing awareness of research impact, and this area has also informed the themes of our recent annual student and staff research conferences and respective publications. For admission to our research degrees programme, applicants are asked to outline how impact can be given consideration from the research design stage through to the completion of the project and its afterlife, and to consider what potential impact might be generated by their inquiry for the wider society and the creative economy.

The successful development and implementation of an externally-facing Consultancy Register, *edge: creative expertise and technical services*, in 2011, has been a significant step to foster our expertise-based and research-informed staff engagement with public and private sectors: businesses, communities and statutory and voluntary bodies. *edge* has also taken on an advisory role for our Research Centres, projects and resources with regard to promoting knowledge exchange and exploitation of intellectual property.

**d. Relationship to case studies**

While we would argue that a breadth and range of impacts result from UCA's overall research, we have chosen to offer three focused case studies that demonstrate specific impact for specific beneficiaries as a consequence of distinct bodies of research. The case studies testify to the impact of UCA's three internationally recognised research centres – the Centre for Sustainable Design (est. 1995), the Crafts Study Centre (est. at Farnham 2000) and the Anglo-Japanese Textile Research Centre (est. 2004) – and demonstrate the manner in which these centres operate as research-led platforms within their respective disciplinary and thematic sectors.

**Lost in Lace** offers a case study of a single large-scale exhibition project curated by Professor Lesley Millar, Director of the Anglo-Japanese Textile Research Centre. *Lost in Lace* was the inaugural exhibition of the Crafts Council's Fifty:Fifty partnership programme and was commissioned by the Crafts Council and Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery for presentation in 2011–12. Drawing upon an independently commissioned evaluation of the exhibition the case study demonstrates numerous impacts of the work for multiple stakeholders. However, the case study focuses upon the impact of the exhibition on its two co-commissioning partners, the Crafts Council and Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery. In surpassing the stated aims and ambitions for this project, the case study contends that *Lost in Lace* positively impacted, furthered and enhanced the strategic aims and ambitions of the Crafts Council and Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery.

**Eco-Design and Eco-Innovation into Business** demonstrates the impact of Professor Martin Charter's sustained enquiry into eco-design and eco-innovation under the auspices of the Centre for Sustainable Design (CfSD). Since the 1990s Charter's research has established him as an international expert in the area of eco-design and innovation and led to his involvement in numerous international projects. In recent years this research has underpinned a number of EU/ERDF funded collaborative projects which have focused on business-facing aspects of eco-design and innovation. These projects have included a substantial degree of knowledge transfer and exchange with SMEs, and, considered alongside Charter's work with the International Organisation for Standardisation, demonstrate the extent to which his research has found application within industry. As such, the case study demonstrates those partner SMEs to be the specific beneficiaries of this research.

**Communities of Practice in Contemporary Craft** demonstrates the positive impact of the work of Professors Simon Olding and Lesley Millar, Directors of the Crafts Study Centre and Anglo-Japanese Textile Research Centre, respectively. As a specialist institution committed to creative practice, industry and economy, UCA argues that its research in the area of craft positively impacts specific craft practitioners in terms of their personal practice, the contexts of their disciplines, and their access to audiences, as well as impacting on the broader context of education, scholarship and research. Primarily collaborative and exhibition-focused, the research that underpins this impact has been developed through extensive external funding and awards, and demonstrates a sustained engagement with contemporary craft practice and practitioners.