Institution: Staffordshire University

Unit of Assessment: 36 – Communication, Cultural and Media Studies, Library and Information Management

a. Overview

Within the University, Research is overseen by the Research, Enterprise and Advanced Scholarship Committee (REASC), chaired by the Vice-Chancellor, which reports directly to the Academic Board. The Research Degrees Sub-committee and the Academic Ethics Sub-committee both report into REASC.

Research and enterprise activities are supported by a central Enterprise and Commercial Development Unit (ECD), particularly in relation to help with finding research funding, building and consolidating cross-university collaboration, facilitating impact through knowledge exchange, consultancy, applied and collaborative research. ECD plays a crucial role in linking academics with external organisations, businesses and funding bodies and in aligning the strategic direction of research activity with government and European Union policies. One member of ECD staff is tasked with liaison with each Faculty, and this arrangement has been enormously important in disseminating targeted funding information. Moreover, ECD distributes Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) resources to maximise the impact of the university's applied research activities through knowledge exchange, innovation and technology transfer.

Research activity is organised within 10 Applied Research Centres (ARCs) and 3 Research Centres. The researchers cited in this submission are based mainly within the Faculty of Arts and Creative Technologies (FACT), which operates two ARCs: the Institute for Applied Creative Thinking (I-ACT) and the Centre for Media Arts and Technologies (C-MAT).

I-ACT (Institute for Applied Creative Thinking) brings together scholars, researchers and practitioners across a range of Art, Design, Humanities and Social Sciences disciplines, with a view to the application of this wide range of expertise and creative thinking to the provision of solutions for social, community, cultural and business issues within our city and beyond. The membership of I-ACT consists of professionally active academic staff in the following areas: English and Creative Writing; History, Politics and International Relations; Sociology; Philosophy; Fine Art; Design (in Graphics, Illustration, Product, Transport, 3D, Ceramics and Surface Pattern); Photography; Drama, Performance and Theatre Arts and the Creative Communities Unit.
For further information on I-ACT, see http://i-act.staffs.ac.uk

C-MAT (Centre for Media Arts and Technologies) brings together creative design processes and the latest digital technologies in Film, Media, Music, Radio Production Technology and Games Development for the benefit of businesses, third sector organisations, communities and individuals. The membership of C-MAT consists of professionally active academic staff in the following areas: Film, TV and Radio Production; Animation; Visual Effects; Games Design; Media Studies; Journalism and Music Technology.
For further information on C-MAT see http://c-mat.staffs.ac.uk

b. Research strategy

Following the strategic path laid out in our 2008 RAE submission, cross-disciplinary collaboration is a key theme for the university and faculty, and the ARCs are highly "porous" vessels, in that colleagues frequently work across their boundaries (to the extent of funding work by colleagues in other ARCs and/or faculties, where that work is carried out in collaboration with I-ACT or C-MAT members). Hence, some researchers included in this submission belong to other ARCs, and some members of I-ACT and/or C-MAT are included in other Units of Assessment, for REF purposes.

Research work in this UoA is organised around four overlapping thematic strands:

i. The practices and technologies of communication or media, with an emphasis on historical or contemporary studies. Staff whose work falls under this theme are Paul Barratt, Ellis Cashmore, Tony Craig, Mick Temple, and Allan Watson. This theme incorporates part of the 'visual cultures' strand described in the RAE2008 submission, and brings it together with the 'Contemporary Politics, News and Journalism' strand. This results in an excellent research community concerned with the reciprocity between social, political and geographical environments with media practices and communicative strategies.

ii. The theme of communication's role within the constitution or sustaining of cultures. Staff whose work falls under this theme are Emma Dawson Varughese, Mark Brown, Peter Kevern, Douglas Burnham and Mike Ball. This theme is clearly related to traditional 'humanities', but often has a tight focus on problematic contemporary case studies, such as the role of English in non-English cultures; communities of faith in their relation to health care or the class politics of wine language. Alison Pope's work in information literacy is also closely related to this strand.

iii. The theory underpinning the study of culture or communication. Staff whose work falls under this theme are Mike Ball, Douglas Burnham, Peter Lamb, Angus McDonald, David Webb. This theme takes part of the highly theorised element from the 'visual cultures' strand and integrates it with colleagues new to UoA 36. The result is a strong research group looking at the theory of culture from legal, socio-political, ethical or aesthetic angles. These first and third themes are closely related. For example, Dr. Barratt's work on the embodiment of media technology, Professor McDonald's work on protests, or Professor Burnham's on sensual cultural practices – all these demonstrate the links between theoretical work and analyses of contemporary communication, cultural or media practices.

iv. Library and Information Management, where the focus is on theoretical models for, and practical applications of, information literacy (Alison Pope).

As discussed above, the thematic foci of this UoA have moved on from RAE2008, due to the retirement of several members of staff (including Dr. Kennedy and Professor Richards) and the appointment of new researchers. Indeed, we are pleased to be able to name in this submission no fewer than six new members of staff (Drs. Barratt, Brown, Watson, Lamb, Dawson Varughese, and Professor Craig). In addition, because of the tight coherence of their work with the cultural theory strand of this UoA, Professors Burnham and Webb from Philosophy, Dr. Kevern (from Health), and Professor McDonald (from the critical legal group in the Law School) are submitted here. This is a much changed profile from 2008, but thanks to strong University and Faculty support it demonstrates an active and enthusiastic research culture, and indeed reflects a dramatic increase in inter- and cross- disciplinary ways of working. Every Faculty in the University, plus Information Services, contributes to this submission – an extraordinary testament to the success of the University's strategies to make the most of its staff by bringing them together. The result is a considerably larger submission than in 2008, with greater evidence of cross-disciplinary research work.

To sustain and develop this research activity, a number of University or Faculty strategies and practices are in place. These include:

- Staging a rich series of talks by invited speakers and other such events. In the academic areas represented by this UoA, there have been more than 100 visiting academics over the past five years. Such visits are funded in a variety of ways, including from teaching support budgets where the topic overlaps with the UG or PG curriculum. Given Staffordshire University's emphasis on research-informed or -integrated teaching, such overlaps are common and encouraged.
- In addition, the ARCs in this Faculty have run a series of ARC Exchange events, disseminating research activity, good practice, and encouraging collaboration. There have been 18 such

events in the past two years. The ARCs in other Faculties run similar research-sharing seminars, in addition to their outward-facing events.

- The Faculty has commenced offering its own Fringe Festival, in association with the degree shows, that showcases our research activity to the wider University and to the public.
- A much more dynamic research mentoring programme has been put in place, and research and scholarly activity is now an explicit part of annual appraisal.
- Staff Fest is an annual series of staff-development workshops organised centrally, many of which focus on researcher skills, grant schemes and applications, publishing, or impact.
- Training for new PhD supervisors – this comprehensive training programme has recently been made distance learning to make it much easier for new supervisors to get the support they need, and so that external supervisors (for example, those in industry positions) can partake as well.
- More regular research-related staff promotion opportunities, such as the call for professors that was issued during the 2012/13 academic year, and which will be regularly repeated. Evidence of the earnestness of this promotion process in the rewarding of research and enterprise excellence lies in the fact that three staff submitted here are newly minted Professors or Associate Professors (Craig, McDonald, Webb).

Over the coming years, in line with the University Plan for the period 2012 to 2017, it is intended to increase both the level and quality of research activity in a number of ways:

- A university-wide policy on Advanced Scholarship is in place, aimed at ensuring and supporting the engagement of all academic staff in the production of scholarly outputs. This policy supports the University's stated aim to ensure that "*the academic portfolio is dynamic and responsive, demand-led, underpinned by scholarship and research, in its widest sense as understood by leading practitioners and academics and including practice research, and delivered by qualified, skilled and experienced staff.*" The use of the appraisal system to target and plan "self-managed time" with respect to research or scholarship is one example of this policy in action.
- Support for interdisciplinary and collaborative research will continue to be provided through the university's central Enterprise and Commercial Development Unit and through the Applied Research Centres. A number of key themes is being identified, through which interdisciplinary groups will be able to define broad programmes of research that involve colleagues from across the institution along with strategically selected visiting researchers and specific academic, business and international partners. For example, The Office of Sustainability, located in Enterprise and Commercial Development, has drawn together researchers from across the university (including human geographers; a forensic archaeologist; a social gerontologist; creative practitioners such as fine artists, drama specialists, film-makers and photographers; sociologists; public health practitioners and regeneration experts) to collaborate on a broad programme of work related to a field of interest characterised as "Sustainable Futures for Cities". This programme of interdisciplinary work will involve working with external partners such as Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Urban Vision North Staffordshire to develop an "urban lab" where innovative participatory and action research methods can be used both to improve the quality of life in our own city and to develop models that can be widely shared.
- There is a strategic drive to increase the numbers of postgraduate research students and to create a more vibrant environment for them. This will be achieved through the use of partial bursaries, business sponsored bursaries, Graduate Teaching Assistant posts and the introduction of new research degree programmes, delivered by distance learning, that build on our solid experience and growing reputation in the provision of distance learning Masters courses.
- We intend to continue the work of the past few years to establish a stronger presence and grow our connections in Europe with a view to establishing good, long-term strategic partnerships. To this end the university has engaged the services of the Greater Birmingham and West Midlands Brussels Office. We are already working on EU funded projects with partners in Warsaw; Barcelona; Delft; Harbin, Dalian and Tsinghua in China; Zagreb; Athens; Lodz; Koping; Silkeborg and others. It testifies to the energy behind these initiatives that all of these

partnerships were established after 2008.

- The Vice-chancellor's Teaching-led Research Fund was established during the 2012/13 academic year and this has enabled the creation of twenty smaller research projects, many of which involve students in the co-production of research outputs, with staff. This has proved a very effective means of encouraging staff who are new to research, or who are reluctant to take time away from students, to begin to formulate and execute research projects, and this will now take place annually.

c. People, including:
i. Staffing strategy and staff development

In addition to the strategies, processes and plans discussed above:

- Early career research is of great importance in our research culture and more experienced researchers actively assist in terms of advice and mentoring. Also I-ACT and C-MAT take into consideration the cultivation of early career researchers in terms of funding.
- In order to monitor research in the Faculty, directly support it, and aid in setting up support networks and collaboration, the Associate Dean and Professor Burnham meet all newly appointed staff to talk about their research interests, and how the Faculty or University can assist them. Also, they meet annually with all research active staff.
- Teaching cover for research is provided by I-ACT and C-MAT grants and staff are also encouraged to apply for external funding for their research. In addition sessions are organised by I-ACT and C-MAT on writing funding bids. All research active staff are also sent regular research funding alerts via our External Funding Officer and via Research Professional Ltd. Help with the writing of research funding bids is provided by the Senior Researcher, the Associate Dean for Scholarship, Enterprise and Research and colleagues in Enterprise and Commercial Development.
- Staff are supported to present papers at conferences through the ARCs, and to attend conferences and other events for the purposes of scholarly updating through the Faculty's Staff Development Group. These may include trade fairs, for colleagues whose disciplines rely heavily on advanced technology (for instance, Animation or Games Design), international art fairs such as the Venice Biennale (for colleagues in Fine Art) or Film Festivals for colleagues engaged in film production.
- Expenditure on staff development in the Faculty of Arts and Creative Technologies, during the period under review has increased from £38,447 in 1007/8 to £59,548 in 2012/13.
- Nine members of academic staff are currently being supported, through the Faculty's staff development fund, in their PhD studies.

ii. Research students

- Since 2008 there have been twelve PhD completions for students who were supervised all or in part by the staff in this UoA. In addition, five successful PhD exams took place during the past three months. (These numbers will not correspond to the submitted data, because in that data doctoral students are always allocated to a single area, while in practice they are often supervised across UoAs. Good examples of this are the PhD completions on projects that involve both art or design and philosophy.)
- The number of doctoral students registered (again, supervised all or in part by staff in this area) has rapidly grown throughout this period, outpacing the growth in research active staff, from 11 at the beginning of 2008, to 34 as of the date of REF submission. The majority of research students in the faculty are part-time and many are in full-time work. The use of the university's VLE, Blackboard, has become significant in supporting students who are not able to take advantage of such on-campus facilities as the faculty's Research and Enterprise Hub.
- Two Professors of Philosophy make a significant contribution to the support of postgraduate research students, not only in this faculty but across the university. Professor Douglas Burnham manages the Postgraduate Certificate in Research Methods, which is an essential

component of all MPhil/PhD programmes. This course ensures a thorough grounding in research methods, as well as professional issues such as career development strategies, impact and research ethics. Professor David Webb manages a module within the university's Postgraduate Diploma in Higher and Professional Education that deals with the supervision of research students. He also chairs the faculty's Research Degrees Committee.

- Research students are encouraged to present their work in discipline-specific seminars, where possible. In addition, all were invited, this year, to present papers at a joint Postgraduate Research Conference with Glyndwr University. This type of conference has been identified as excellent practice, and plans are well advanced to repeat the event during 2013-14.

- All postgraduate research students complete a monitoring and review form (the RDC 16) every year and the Chair of the Faculty Research Degrees Committee prepares an Annual Monitoring Report on the basis of these, responding also to feedback from meetings with PGR students and information from the national Postgraduate Research Experience Survey. This includes an action plan for improvements that feeds into the overall Faculty Action Plan.

- The university employs the Vitae Researcher Development Framework. The Vitae RDF is used in encouraging reflection on current and future skills, development opportunities, and career goals, among new doctoral students on the Certificate in Research Methods. Likewise, the supervisors' training module incorporates the RDF, as a tool that supervisors can use with their students, and for themselves.

- All research degrees students are members of the appropriate ARC, are invited to and participate in its events, and can bid for funding support for their research.

d. Income, infrastructure and facilities

- Income to support research, knowledge transfer, consultancy and enterprise development was secured from a variety of sources during the period under review and the following table illustrates the broad breakdown of this:

	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Knowledge Transfer Partnerships	50,000	13,000			16,000
HEIF (to develop University/Industry collaboration or work towards spinout companies)	39,000	5,000	102,000	49,000	152,000
Arts Council	55,000	7,000	3,000	35,000	30,000
AHRC	28,000	4,000			17,000
Consultancy	13,000		3,000		9,000
Other research funding	5,000	10,000	1,000		
Local Authority	30,000	47,000	30,000	20,000	5,000
UK charities		22,000			5,000
EU funding			20,000	38,000	108,000
TOTAL	220,000	108,000	159,000	142,000	342,000

(Note: these figures are intended to be broadly representative of income-generating activity in the research environment from which most of the work in this UoA emanates – The Faculty of Arts and Creative Technologies. They include income that has not been recorded in the HESA data because it was not coded to "research" in our financial system, but that relates to projects that contained elements of research, consultancy, knowledge transfer and/or enterprise.)

- Since RAE 2008 there has been a re-structuring of the university, which has entailed the transformation of the Faculty of Arts, Media and Design into a much larger Faculty of Arts and

- Creative Technologies, now including Games Design, Music Technology and Film Technology. This facilitates further the achievement of plans laid out in 2008 for the growth of interdisciplinary research activities and consolidates the work of our two Applied Research Centres, also established since 2008.
- The strategy to increase interdisciplinary activity, outlined in 2008 has been pursued to the extent that collaboration now extends well beyond the boundaries of the Faculty and its ARCs, to include work with colleagues in Geography, Biomedical Sciences, Computing, Engineering, Business and Health Sciences.
- Within FACT, the Associate Dean, Scholarship, Enterprise and Research has overall responsibility for the two ARCs; the Faculty Research Degrees Committee; the welfare of postgraduate students and the support of early-career researchers. Research and Enterprise activity is supported by the faculty's professors (currently five) and associate professors (currently three) with Professor Burnham leading on research; by the two ARC Directors and by a Senior (postdoctoral) Researcher. In addition, the faculty has recently appointed an Enterprise Development Manager, who will support the growth of impact through knowledge exchange and consultancy.
- The Faculty provides two physical spaces for the use of staff and research students: the "Research and Enterprise Hub" providing desks and computers, along with lockable cabinets, for occasional use as well as facilities for small group meetings, presentations and Skype meetings (the Senior Researcher and Enterprise Development Manager are based in this room) and the "Uncommon Room" which offers a variety of spaces for informal meetings or quiet reading.
- To ensure collaboration between ARCs and to offer strategic leadership, a Faculty Research and Enterprise Group has been set up, including the Directors of both ARCs; the Enterprise Development Manager; the Senior Researcher attached to the ARCs; the Professor who leads on Scholarship and Research and representation from Enterprise and Commercial Development, and chaired by the Associate Dean.
- Six Visiting Professors and six Research Fellows, along with five Professors Emeritus, all contribute to the maintenance of a vibrant research culture. These include the Directors of the British Ceramics Biennial; the Strategic Manager for Museums, Culture and Tourism at Stoke-on-Trent City Council; the Director of the Staffordshire Film Archive and the Chief Executive of Epic Games, and all are contributing to a programme of public lectures hosted by the Faculty.
- Fortnightly lunchtime events (ARC Exchange events) are staged, each hosted by a different subject team and providing the opportunity for colleagues to hear about each other's research activities, and all ARC members are invited to two development workshops each year, where they have the opportunity to shape future developments.
- Themed workshops are convened, when either ARC, or the Research and Enterprise Group, identifies a possible theme or funding call. These workshops bring together researchers who may be interested in collaborating on particular topics, or whose work fits well with specific funding calls. This process has proved useful in promoting interdisciplinary collaboration.

e. Collaboration and contribution to the discipline or research base

Research staff in this UoA engage in research and professional activity that extends far beyond the work submitted in REF1. All are members of the relevant professional associations, work as paper or manuscript reviewers for international academic publishers or for grant-awarding bodies such as the AHRC, and have been interviewed on topics concerned with their area of expertise. In total, members of staff within this UoA have delivered more than 120 papers, presentations or panel discussions over the past six years. In addition to those submitted in section REF1, staff have published over 50 papers, chapters or books during the period. Moreover, many are involved in collaborative research projects with other staff at the University.

Examples of peer esteem, exemplary contributions to the research in the field, and collaborative research:

- Professor Mick Temple was the Elected Chair, Association for Journalism Education, 2008 -2012, the professional body which represents the interests of university journalism

departments and journalism educators. He was part of the team that compiled evidence on journalism education for the Leveson Inquiry. He is also Co-editor, *Journalism Education,* the peer-reviewed journal of the Association for Journalism Education (AJE) and a member of the Scientific Advisory Board of the Centre for Media & Communication Studies at LUISS University, Rome. He is regularly interviewed by British news programmes on local and national politics. His recent work on communication technology and social aspects of cycling (presented at the Royal Geographical Society) were reported in the Telegraph.

- Dr Paul Barratt has undertaken collaborative research with Muntons PLC concerning supply chain mapping; also collaborative research with Countrywise Coolers Limited, with funding provided by a Yorkshire Forward Innovation Voucher.

- Dr Allan Watson's research is forming part of the Royal Geographical Societies resource pack for GCSE and A-level Geography students. As another example of our success in encouraging collaborative work across disciplinary boundaries, Dr. Watson also received funding for a collaborative project with staff in film production for a cross-disciplinary project involving a series of interviews at the Galway Film Festival.

- Dr Peter Kevern provides the facilitator training, and will write the evaluation of, a project funded by the Archbishop's council of the Church of England to research and propose policy concerning the Church's role in palliative care and the mourning process.

- Associate Professor Tony Craig received an invitation to speak on intelligence policy at Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, and was invited to Japan for a week's lecturing on this topic. He is regularly interviewed or cited in both print and broadcast media.

- Professor Douglas Burnham is chief editor of the Edinburgh Philosophy Guides series. Much of his work is collaborative in nature, including with a colleague in the English Department at Staffordshire, and with colleagues at the University of Bergen, Norway and the University of London Institute in Paris, where he is part of a funded research project on the philosophy of mind and values.

- Professor Ellis Cashmore is frequently interviewed or cited in the national news media on topics from racism and homophobia in professional sports, to the culture of celebrity.

- Professor David Webb held elected post as Secretary of The British Society for Phenomenology from April 2006 to April 2011, and organised five consecutive international conferences at Oxford. He is editor of the Edinburgh Critical History of Philosophy series. Professor Webb is also leading on a project (which includes Dr. Kevern from Health) using contemporary conceptions of character to address regulatory issues in the NHS – this project has resulted in five different presentations to international conferences in the past six months.