

Institution: Bath Spa University

Unit of Assessment:

UoA 36 Communication, Cultural and Media Studies, Library and Information Management

a. Overview

At Bath Spa University, research in this Unit of Assessment comprises outputs and research strategies which are interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary and which in some cases, challenge bordered areas of knowledge. In this respect our submission is characteristic of the UoA36 field nationally and internationally. The distinctive reference frame for this submission is **cultural experience, creative practice** and **social context**. Thematically, research within this frame explores the mediation of lived experience through the practice, representation and consumption of creative forms, products and narratives. The research takes place in the contexts of cultural transformation, social contexts and heritage and is participatory, involving engaged research with audiences, research subjects and public bodies.

This submission draws on research from two University Departments. Research in the Department of Film and Media Production is co-ordinated through the Media Futures Research Centre in the School of Humanities and Cultural Industries. Submitted staff are Ashton, A. R. Brown, R. Brown, Feasey, Newman, Nicholls (*REF3b only*) and Soyinka. The Centre supports inclusive research in media theory and practice, distribution and reception and encourages collaborations within and beyond the University. Research in the Department of Social Sciences in the School of Society, Enterprise and Environment is managed through the Communities and Social Identities Research Centre. Submitted staff are Devadason and Smart.

The focus of our research includes games studies and digital preservation, popular music cultures, cultural work and practice, media pedagogy, gender and media audiences, work and social mobility, and race and identity. The submission also includes outputs of practitioner-based **creative digital media** (R. Brown and Soyinka). We will develop this area further in the next REF period, benefiting from recent major investments by the University in our digital and broadcast media infrastructure (*see Section d.*).

Acronyms used throughout the submission are: **CaSI**: Communities and Social Identities Research Centre; **DSS**: Department of Social Sciences; **FMP**: Department of Film and Media Production; **HCI**: School of Humanities and Cultural Industries; **MRFC**: Media Futures Research Centre; **SEE**: School of Society, Enterprise and Environment

b. Research strategy

Bath Spa University's research strategy prioritises research quality and reputation, postgraduate research and teaching, and public engagement and knowledge exchange. Responsibility for delivering the strategy and associated key performance indicators lies with the Vice-Provost for Research and Graduate Affairs. Within the Unit, our strategy is to further develop areas of interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary research strength (including practitioner-based and digital research) within the reference frame of **cultural experience, creative practice** and **social contexts**. We will develop people-orientated and project-orientated strategies and work within an inter-Departmental research infrastructure and collaborative culture to achieve this.

Achievements against RAE 2008 strategic goals:

- Identify and develop a more distinctive Unit research output (10 per cent listed 4* in 2008) and culture: progressed towards this goal through the development of our research reference frame: **cultural experience, creative practice** and **social contexts** (see Newman and Nicholls *Ref3b*).
- Targeted teaching relief for staff: all FMP research-active staff have been awarded annual teaching relief through a combination of external and internal funding. In two cases (Newman and Nicholls *REF3b*) annual sabbatical relief was awarded and funded externally.

- Developing Newman's national and international standing in digital games research: since 2008 Newman has published three books and numerous articles in the field of videogames and digital archiving. Newman's public recognition is evidenced in *REF3b*.
- Developing the research profiles and outputs of early researcher and mid-career staff: the former is reflected in the submissions of Ashton and the latter in the submissions of A.R. Brown, R. Brown, Feasey and Nicholls (*REF3b*).
- Increased external funding bids for research support: £147,185 has been generated during the RAE period, an increase of 85 per cent on the previous research assessment point.
- Increase the number of research students through new MA provision and direct PhD recruitment: FMP now has an MA in Feature Filmmaking; it contributes to an Integrated MSc in Creative Technologies and Enterprise and has three media PhD students and one in film/cultural studies. In addition two members of staff (A.R. Brown and Newman) supervise PhD students in other Schools.

Future research strategy

Building on our success in developing a clear research reference frame of **cultural experience, creative practice and social contexts**, and an effective research management culture as outlined above, our strategic objectives for the coming REF period are:

Research quality and reputation

- To further enhance our areas of research strength (research centres and individuals) within the reference frame of **cultural experience, creative practice and social contexts** and to build our reputation for excellence through research outputs in line with the University Research Strategy. This will be enabled through workload models, teaching relief and external mentoring. Target: each centre to produce at least one 4* output (measured by an external advisor against REF2014 criteria).
- To further promote collaboration within and between research centres within FMP and DSS and across other Schools/Departments in the University, and to develop mechanisms to support interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary work. This will be achieved through joint departmental research seminars and funding bids. Target: each research centre to develop at least one interdisciplinary/cross-disciplinary project involving staff from other Schools.
- To build on existing collaborative research relationships with other Universities (e.g. Nottingham Trent, Cardiff University, The University of Glamorgan and the University of West England) and public bodies (see *Newman, Soyinka and R. Brown REF3b*).
- To continue to develop engaged research within the frame of **cultural experience, creative practice and social contexts** (see *Newman, Nicholls, Brown and Soyinka REF3b*). This is reflected in current activity for example Newman's work on digital archiving, Ashton's work on media education policy and Devadason's work on migration and policy.
- To strengthen the reputation and impact of our research through strategic alliances with national and international research organisations. This will be achieved through personal contacts and targeted approaches to prospective new partners. Target: Media Futures Research Centre and CaSI to bid for research funding in collaboration with another nationally recognised centre of excellence.
- To expand areas of FMP research in the field of **creative practice** (including feature filmmaking). This will be achieved by establishing a creative digital enterprise research cluster within MFRC and using the MA in Feature Filmmaking as a platform for practitioner-based research and future digital media and cinematic outputs (see *R. Brown and Soyinka section e*).
- To grow research income from public and private sector funders through targeted applications and strategic research applications. This will be achieved through developing capacity and expertise in grant application preparation in conjunction with the University

Research Office. Target: £40,000 external funding per year.

Postgraduate research

- To recruit and develop PGR students to generate critical mass in our cognate areas of research priority, existing: **cultural experience, creative practice and social contexts** and future: **creative digital enterprise**. This will be pursued through improved web presence and international marketing. Target: recruit five new PhD students attached to the Media Futures Research Centre and/or CaSI.
- To enhance the postgraduate student experience through the development of research methods training in conjunction with the Department of Social Sciences.
- To secure funding for PGR studentships attached to research projects organised by the MFRC and CaSI. This will be pursued through developing strategic partnerships to enable timely collaborative responses to emerging PGR funding opportunities.

Public engagement and knowledge exchange

- Building on the achievements and legacy of Newman and Nicholls (see *REF3b*), develop further the profile and activities of our research centres as instruments of knowledge transfer and public engagement. This will be achieved through the organisation of conferences, public talks and interaction with the regional and national media and collaboration with other partners in the delivery of events such as the Bath Digital Festival. <http://2013.bathdigitalfestival.com/>
- Building on the work of R. Brown, to continue to develop further the profile of our research into challenges of feature film making within contemporary national and international creative economies.
- To support staff whose research particularly lends itself to public engagement and knowledge exchange, such as Newman's collaborative work with the British Library (AHRC Creative Economies Knowledge Exchange Project), the National Museums of Science and Industry and Games City <http://gamecity.org/> (see *REF3b*) and R. Brown's films of social comment http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1588395/?ref=fn_tt_tt_1
- To communicate the excellence and impact of our media and cultural research to a broad professional and public audience. This will be pursued by enhancing our web presence and through press, broadcast media, social media and the hosting of/contribution to events where we make an input, such as Games City and IMDb, Script to Screen, and the Bath Film Festival Award <http://bathfilmfestival.org.uk/award/script-to-screen-award/>
- To continue to work with the University's Public Engagement Steering Group (link-person Newman) to take up and follow through on engagement initiatives and associated funding opportunities.

c. People, including:

Staffing strategy and staff development

Bath Spa University was awarded the HR Excellence in Research award in January 2012 and this award reflects the University's current and on-going commitments to maintaining an active research portfolio. Our recruitment objectives for academic staff are:

- To recruit staff with a track record of research and publication and/or practitioner-based outputs (or evidence of the capacity to undertake research, publication and/or practitioner-based research).
- To recruit staff whose research is aligned with the Unit's existing research frame of reference, **cultural experience, creative practice and social contexts** and new areas, e.g. **creative digital enterprise**. Recent appointments against these criteria are Davadason, R. Brown and Soyinka.

Full-time academic staff in the Unit receive 35 days research day per year (or pro rata equivalent). Both FMP and DSS operate a system of teaching relief for research and this is undertaken at the end of each academic year through a bidding system. In addition, the

timetables of staff are managed in order to ensure a minimum of one research day per week during undergraduate teaching periods. The Unit has also been successful in accessing the University's Early Career Researcher Fellowships, for example Ashton in 2008-9. Staff are encouraged and supported at Departmental and School level in applying for external funding to support larger scale projects, with assistance from the University's Research Office.

Staff development takes place at Departmental, School and University level through a variety of initiatives and through collaboration with external partners, such as media and film related SMEs. The University complies with the *Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers* and all research active appointments are made in accordance with the University's equal opportunities and diversity policy. For all academic staff, research aims and progress are assessed through the staff development review processes of their Departments/Schools.

Staff recruitment processes in the Unit support active researchers and practitioners and both FMP and DSS are strongly committed to participating in and initiating exchanges between academia and the creative and cultural industries and social enterprises through:

- Presentations at industry and professional gatherings.
- Interactions with relevant professional bodies such as Media, Communication and Cultural Studies Association (MeCCSA).
- Formal partnerships with creative and cultural institutions, such as the BBC and independent broadcasters, film festivals, theatres, museums, Citizen's Advice bodies and Charities.

Research students

The University is part of the successful South, Wales and West AHRC Doctoral Training Partnership which has been awarded £14.2M (equating to 200 studentships) for five years from 2014/15. At the commencement of the REF assessment period, there were no registered research students in the Unit. Following the introduction of an active recruitment strategy the number now stands at five. Research topics include Japanese animation, Videogames and culture (Newman) Iterative games development (Newman), and Cultural entrepreneurship in the South West of England (Ashton and Devadson). Research students in FMP are integrated into research centre activities and are funded by the Department to attend academic conferences and other relevant events. Research students have also been given opportunities to undertake undergraduate teaching. Student progress is monitored by the Graduate School and by the School's Higher Degree Tutor and supervisory team in FMP. The Application to Register and Progression Assessment stages include external scrutiny by senior staff not associated with the student projects in advance of the final examination. Bath Spa provides a one-stop shop for PGR support at the Postgraduate Centre at Corsham Court and additional support for international postgraduates through a dedicated international student office. The Graduate School provides training and development for students and staff through development workshops, online resources and termly Graduate Forums.

d. Income, infrastructure and facilities

The two Research Centres have generated £147,185 in external income over the REF period. This included funds for specific research projects, knowledge transfer activities and mid-career fellowships. Examples include:

- Wellcome Trust Broadcast Unit award 2009 £1,800 (share of a total grant of £10,000) (Newman) 'Videogames and Public Engagement'.
- AHRC 2010-11 £30,682 (Nicholls) 'Alcohol and Public Health: Culture, Policy and Delivery'. See REF3b.
- British Academy Mid -Career Fellowship 2011-12 £78,233 (Nicholls) 'The Altered State: Public Discourse and Alcohol in England and Wales since 2000'. See REF3b.

- HEA Teaching Development grant 2011-12 £1,873 (Ashton) 'Creative Contexts: Work Placements, Peer Learning and Professional Practice in Creative Media' and 2012-13 £9,221 (Ashton) 'Industry Intersections: Flexible Learning through Professional Practice'.
- Daiwa Foundation grant 2013 £3,000 (Newman) Japanese Game Development.
- External income for the National Videogames Archive £18,115 (Newman)

QR funding of £97,437 has been spent as follows:

- Funding academic staff to present papers at national and international research conferences (see Section E). This is also extended to research-active part-time hourly-paid staff to promote an inclusive research culture.
- Funding teaching cover for staff to write articles for refereed academic journals.
- Funding to enable the Media Futures Research Centre to run events.
- Staff training (e.g. PhD supervisor training and practice-based research workshops).

Unit staff have also been the recipients of internal funding for a variety of small and medium-sized research projects. Two examples are:

- Bath Spa University Promising Research Fellowship 2009-10 £6,000 (Ashton) 'Media Studies, Higher Education and the Industry-Ready Agenda'.
- Bath Spa University Business and Community Gateway 'Sharing Knowledge and Shaping Practice' grant 2010-11 £5,000 (Ashton and Feasey) 'Celebrity, Risk and the Media' Symposium in collaboration with Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust.

Internal and external funding has also been secured to support outputs by the Unit's filmmakers, notably R. Brown whose most recent film, *Sixteen* was supported by a grant of £25k from the University and over £15,000 by crowdsourcing. The Unit has excellent facilities to support both academic and practice-based research by staff and postgraduate students.

A large investment in our capital infrastructure was facilitated by the award of a HEFCE-funded (£5 million) Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) *Artswork*. This enabled the creation and equipping of two media based teaching and research labs, the Publishing Lab and the Broadcast Lab, both containing high-quality digital and lens-based facilities. In addition FMP was able to establish a third new facility, *Artswork Media* which operates as a focal point for our research into media learning and teaching (Ashton) and a range of public engagement and filmmaking activities <http://www.artsworkmedia.co.uk/awmedia/contact>.

Since 2010 we have also leased a large TV studio facility, the Bath Road Studios <http://www.bathroadstudios.co.uk/> which has significantly enhanced our media practice-based teaching and research activities. Since 2008 the University's Corsham Court campus has been developed as the centre for postgraduate activities. Corsham Court provides the location for the University's Graduate School and staff and students have access to further digital facilities including a fully-equipped editing suite and smaller studio for single camera work. In Spring 2014, FMP will move into a newly constructed Media Centre on the Newton Park Campus containing two fully appointed performance and TV studios, together with appropriate sound and lighting systems, post-production facilities and a small cinema for screenings. <https://www.bathspa.ac.uk/development>.

The University Library, open 24/7 provides a high-quality environment for traditional print based research with digital research tools and databases and online collections of journals and ebooks.

e. Collaboration or contribution to the discipline or research base

The Unit conducts interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary research within the reference frame of **cultural experience, creative practice and social contexts** and in new areas of growth, e.g. **creative digital economies**. Through managed research activity, staff in the Unit working individually and collaboratively have made material contributions to the Unit's disciplinary and research base through scholarly publications, conference organisation and participation, public

and community engagement, consultancies, creative productions and nominations and awards.

Ashton's research explores cultural production, focusing on working in the creative and cultural industries and the associated connections with Higher Education. This is a relatively new area of interdisciplinary research and Ashton's contributions have materially added to the articulation of this field among the media academy and media professionals. He is the co-editor (with Dr Caitriona Noonan, University of South Wales) of *Cultural Work and Higher Education* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013) and his standing is reflected in his membership of the editorial boards of *Media Education Research Journal* and *Digital Culture and Education*.

A. R. Brown's research has explored cultural discourses of class and masculinity in UK popular music review journalism, focused on heavy metal music and fandom; the UK and US metal music tabloid and its female readers; updating moral panic theory to explore the 'failed' moral panic around Emo, and exploring why ethnicity is relatively unmarked in the progressive metal sub-genre of djent. Brown has made a significant contribution to the development of the emerging field of 'metal studies', via his critical analysis of the metal studies bibliography database (MSBD) and through presenting and publishing a number of international conference papers since 2008, including the first international conference on metal studies (Salzburg, 2008), 'Heavy Metal and Gender' (Cologne, 2009), the recent Lottery and Arts Council funded event, 'Home of Metal' (Birmingham City Museum and Capsule Arts Wolverhampton, 2011) and 'Heavy Metal and Popular Culture' (Ohio, 2012), all of which have been widely reported in the broadsheet press and online. He was a founding committee member of the International Society for Metal Music Studies and is on the advisory board of the recently launched journal, *Metal Music Studies*. He has spoken at a number of recent conferences including the Popular Culture Association of Canada annual conference (2013) and the International Congress on Heavy Metal and Popular Culture (2013).

R. Brown's research explores the challenge of representing contemporary experiences of social conflict and disenfranchisement through fictional filmmaking. His work, which engages with themes of homelessness, disability and economic migration, seeks to represent macro social issues at the micro level, i.e. within everyday life situations. Brown's research process involves collaboration with national and international charities that represent vulnerable and marginalised communities (i.e. the National Autistic Society, Human Rights Watch and War Child). His work as a writer/director has brought him national attention as an original, rising talent in the British film industry. His filmography demonstrates growing national and international recognition by his peers and the wider film industry. Brown's most recent film is his debut feature *Sixteen* (2013). Funded by Bath Spa University (£42k) and Kickstarter (£17k), the film was selected for screening at the BFI London Film Festival in October 2013. Brown was nominated for the *Best British Newcomer* award and *Sixteen* was nominated for the Sutherland Award, given since 1958 for the best, first feature film <http://www.bfi.org.uk/news-opinion/news-bfi/announcements/57th-bfi-london-film-festival-programme-revealed>. *Sixteen* was the only British film nominated for the award in 2013. Brown was recently invited to serve on the BAFTA Roccliffe New Writing Forum Script Selection Panel in October 2013.

Devadason's research explores the intersections between cultural studies and practice-based urban research. Her work centres on analysing the 'fit' between individual aspirations and biographies and available opportunities in relation to the increasing internationalisation of labour markets. Her co-authored book *Globalization and Work* (with Williams, Bradley and Erikson) synthesizes theoretical and empirical material to make a substantive contribution to these topics. She has completed ESRC, EC and British Academy funded projects relating to global cities, labour markets, social divisions and most recently, transnational mobility in global organisations (<http://www.moralmarketentrepreneurs.com/>). Her case study of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees is presently informing initiatives relating to staff wellbeing within the organisation. In 2013 she gave invited papers to the Home Office European Migration Network symposium and a workshop for the Global Studies Association.

Feasey's research on gender and the media is well referenced in the fields of media, cultural studies and gender criticism. This work examines the representations of both masculinity and femininity in a variety of popular media texts including advertising, gossip magazines and Hollywood film. Her book on masculinity and popular television (EUP 2008) offered the first book length textual consideration of masculinities, the male role and the hegemonic hierarchy on the small screen. Her most recent book *From Happy Homemaker to Desperate Housewives: Motherhood and Popular Television* has helped to open up a neglected area of research regarding the mediatization of contemporary motherhood. Feasey is currently working on her new book, *Mothers on Mothers: Maternal Readings of Popular Television*, which considers the ways in which women in the television audience read and respond to representations of motherhood on contemporary popular programming.

Newman's work has been at the forefront of international research on videogames and has been key in defining the study of videogames within media, film and cultural studies and establishing the discipline of 'game studies' (see *Ref3b*). Newman's allied research on media history, preservation and fan cultures has led to collaboration with the international videogames industry, cultural sector heritage partners, notably the National Media Museum, Science Museum, British Library, and Nottingham Trent University. He was a co-founder of the National Videogame Archive, which is the UK's official collection of videogames and gaming ephemera (held as part of the Science Museum's computing collection) and is a member of the Advisory Board for the Institute of Museum and Library Services-funded project 'From Descriptive Metadata to Citation: Building a Framework for Search and Communication in Games Study', led by the University of California, Santa Cruz and Stanford University. In addition to his single-authored and co-authored books, Newman has published articles and chapters on legal aspects of game preservation, transmediality, and fan practices. Newman is currently contracted to Routledge for *The Videogames Handbook* and BFI Publishing for *A History of Videogames in 50 Objects*. Newman has been invited to deliver keynote addresses and papers at numerous conferences in the UK and also in Japan and has given public talks on games, gaming culture, digital heritage and preservation at the British Library, the National Archives, the Barbican, Southbank Centre, BFI Southbank and the Institution of Engineering and Technology. Since 2012, Newman has toured public engagement events throughout the UK (e.g. Bristol Arnolfini; Birmingham MAC; Liverpool FACT) and had a quarterly residency at BFI Southbank to deliver public engagement events on gaming culture. Newman has made numerous media appearances and interviews on radio and written for the mainstream press (See *REF3b*). Newman is also on the steering group and production team for the GameCity international videogames festival now in its eighth year <http://gamecity.org/>.

Smart's research has examined social issues relating to biomedical science, with a longstanding strand of work focussed on race and ethnicity. His work in this area has contributed to academic discussions about the biopolitics of race, and science policy debates about inclusion and representation. He has completed two Wellcome Trust Research Project Grants in Biomedical Ethics (working in interdisciplinary teams with colleagues at Nottingham, Oxford, Kingston and Imperial), and one Dissemination Award in Biomedical Ethics (with colleagues at Nottingham and LSE). He is currently a co-investigator on a project funded by a Leverhulme Trust Research Programme Grant 'Making Science Public' (based at the University of Nottingham).

Soyinka is a director, producer and filmmaker with a background in multimedia production and ethnographic research. Soyinka's research interests include story migration, multiplatform storytelling, remediation and creative collaboration. Her work explores the transformation, translation and transfiguration of cultural texts and processes across networked environments. This involves the design, production and curation of transmedia platforms for collaboration and dissemination. Notable examples include the *Trickster* network and *Book Kernel*. Soyinka's interdisciplinary research has been developed and delivered in partnership with a wide range of academic, cultural, governmental and industry bodies, including the National Theatre Wales, the BBC, Channel 4, The British Council, Wales Arts International, *Beyond the Border* International Storytelling Festival and the *Berlinale* International Film Festival.