Institution: University of South Wales

Unit of Assessment: D35

a. Context

1.1 Since 2008, we have exploited our new base in the Welsh capital to increase collaboration with UK and international creative industries. These vibrant relationships provide us with a vital route to impact for our research. We are aided in this by having several researchers (see REF5) who are active practitioners and advisers in their fields and who maintain excellent relationships with their peers outside academia. For example, Blandford and Hand adapt, write and produce public plays; Dennis has been recruited by Mercedes Benz to use applied theatre methods in transforming corporate practices; and Noonan leads business workshops for media professionals for SkillsetAcademiPlus. We are proud that the Atrium has become an important landmark in the capital, providing non-academic users with a place for dialogue and debate with researchers who are committed to investigating and safeguarding the future of excellent artistic and critical production in the creative industries. We achieve impact with our research because we consistently work with others who share this commitment and who, in turn, help ensure that our work is informed by the needs, aspirations and problems facing creative industry practitioners, policy-makers and users.

1.2 The main non-academic user groups, beneficiaries and audiences for our research are:

- **the creative industries**, including media organisations, policy makers, and audience groups, e.g. BBC Audience Council Wales; United Nations Development programme in Laos
- **museums, galleries, festivals and their publics**, e.g. Butetown History and Arts Centre; Experimentica Live Art Festival; London Horror Festival; National Museum Wales; Tate Modern
- **professional practitioners in theatre and music performance**, e.g. Molotov Theatre (US), National Theatre Wales, Wales Music Foundation, Thrillpeddlers Theatre (US).
- **community groups** and sports bodies whose work encompasses cultural activity geared towards building participation in civic life, e.g. Voluntary Arts Network; the Foster Care Association, YMCA, Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC).
- **education & health organisations**, e.g. New Horizons adult learners with mobility difficulties.

1.3 The main types of impact created by the unit are apparent in:

- **the arts and cultural life** – e.g. Hand and Wilson have enriched the horror theatre repertoire through their Grand-Guignol research publishing previously forgotten and untranslated plays which have subsequently been staged in theatres internationally
- **community development** – e.g. the George Ewart Evans Centre for Storytelling (GEECS) has used its expertise in diverse storytelling forms, including digital narrative, to help marginalised groups such as the homeless to gain a voice and express themselves to civil society at large
- **public services** – Blandford et al have helped improve the quality of the BBC's public service to the regions and nations via their research on the impact of BBC Wales' TV drama production
- **economic prosperity** – e.g. Carr's music research has lead the case for Wales Government support for the music performing industry and for its adoption of sustainability models
- **cultural heritage** – e.g. Hand's AHRC-funded radio drama research led to his appointment as the sole Welsh representative on both phases of the British Library Archival Sound Recordings User Panel (2005-09) which enabled development of the Library's audio digitisation project
- **media policy** – e.g. Traynor's expertise in community radio (see REF2) lead to her being a consultant for the United Nations Development Programme on strategic radio development in Laos, helping build capacity and skills for community radio in the country
- **education and innovation** – e.g. Challis' Octonic Project with New Horizons adult learners group (see REF2) lead to the design of novel, accessible electronic musical instruments.

1.4 The range of our impact reflects the breadth of our expertise in theatre and music (Blandford, Carr, Challis, Dennis, Hand, Lacey); broadcasting and media (Jachimiak, Noonan, McElroy, Traynor, Williams); and storytelling and oral history (Fyfe; Jordan). It also testifies to the Unit's collaborative and outward-looking research environment (see REF 5). Our research centres and groups facilitate dialogue and interdisciplinarity which – through a diverse range of knowledge, skills and methodologies – consciously engage with the world beyond the immediate academic context. This commitment is evidenced in the Unit's two research Centres – the Centre for Media and Culture in Small Nations (CMCSN) and the George Ewart Evans Centre for Storytelling (GEECS) – which have engagement with non-academic users built into their constitutions through

both the election of non-academic representatives to their steering groups, and their strategic role in facilitating public discussion of their research findings with key non-academic stakeholders.

b. Approach to impact

2.1 The Unit's approach to impact is informed by a commitment to sharing our work with fellow citizens and creative professionals. This means nurturing meaningful links between researchers and the creative and cultural industries to ensure our research is made available to media, educational and arts organisations. Knowledge transfer has been integral to this approach, with GEECS having built a track record in AHRC-funded knowledge transfer/catalyst activities with numerous charitable and cultural organisations. We debate the problems identified in our research with practitioners and policy-makers directly. For example, in 2008 CMCSN capitalised on Barlow et al's earlier ESRC-funded media research to host a Community Radio Symposium with invited community radio station staff, volunteers, and policy-makers, which in turn lead the Unit to facilitate a professional network of community radio stations. Its members subsequently worked with the Welsh Government in 2011 to create the Welsh Community Radio Cluster, the UK's only body devoted to supporting community radio and its training needs.

2.2 Our approach to impact entails integrating and reflecting on our research design so as to include and assess the viewpoints of non-academic stakeholders. Practically this means we do not simply wait until the research has been published and then disseminate our findings but instead seek to influence both policy and practice by engaging non-academic users in the research process itself. This can be exemplified by Carr's research on the Welsh music industry where he conducted 4 workshops across Wales (co-organised with Welsh Music Foundation) geared towards key music industry stakeholders (musicians, record companies, the National Library Wales), in order to debate initial findings and to reflect critically on these debates in the research as it progressed. Hand's commissions in the reconstruction of historical theatre performance practice were developed from their instigation in close liaison with the clients' (Tate Modern; Abertoir Horror Festival) interests and demands with regard to public reception and audience engagement.

2.3 Our strategic approach has been actively to seek frameworks and partnerships for impact. For example, Jordan's career-long research on ethnicity and cultural identity underpins his directorship of Butetown Arts Centre (BAC) which achieves impact through its oral history and cultural research, making active, collaborative interventions through exhibitions and educational resources that promote public awareness and understanding of Cardiff's heritage as one of the UK's oldest ethnically and culturally diverse cities (see REF 2 and 5). Meanwhile, Fyfe is project director of Creative Exchange Wales Network, an ongoing joint AHRC and A4B/Welsh Government initiative to support knowledge exchange in the creative economy in Wales. Fyfe also co-led Beacons for Wales, one of six pilot Beacons for Public Engagement funded by the Higher Education Funding Councils, Research Councils UK and the Wellcome Trust. Staff in the Unit have developed relationships with key users and beneficiaries of our research by participating in non-academic networks (e.g. membership of professional organisations such as BAFTA Wales, Royal Television Society); by serving as board members for arts organisations (e.g. National Theatre Wales; Zoom Cymru) and by being creative consultants for professional theatre, radio and film companies (e.g. Molotov Theatre; The Drama Pod; and Hammer Films). Relationships established in these contexts facilitate collaborative routes to develop impact. For example, in 2012, CMCSN collaborated with the National Union of Journalists to mount a symposium, 'The Future of the Press in Wales', which facilitated debate on academic research exploring alternative models of sustainability for local news. CMCSN also brought together BBC commissioners, independent producers and academics from across Wales to debate the specific challenges faced in making a new television series, *The History of Wales*. By drawing upon the research of McElroy and other scholars at the event, a meaningful impact was made on television producers' own thinking about the series' representation of the nation and its cultural heritage.

2.4 The Unit supports staff to achieve impact via Research Assistants in GEEECS and CMCSN who work closely with academic staff to maintain relationships and contact with non-academic users and collaborators, support the development of impact elements of research project design, and offer organisational assistance in hosting events that are geared towards achieving impact through exchange and debate with users from outside the university. The University enables staff to achieve impact through the University's Commercial Services Office and Research Office which support KTP and Knowledge Catalyst projects, and the Welsh-Government funded Strategic

Insight Programme that facilitates staff exchange between HE and arts/industry professionals in diverse organisations (see REF5). The University has awarded funding to Unit members to support collaborative research with clear impact e.g. Challis received a RIS (see REF5) award to develop his Octonic Project, whose principle aim was to design novel, accessible electronic musical instruments. The research process was informed by working closely with New Horizons, a group of adult learners who have mobility challenges; their input fed directly into both design and testing. Prior to the project, New Horizons did not explore novel technologies within their typical musical activities but the experience of working with accessible instruments has encouraged them now to use mobile technologies regularly within their music workshops.

c. Strategy and plans

3.1 We will build on the success of our current approach to impact to ensure the Unit is recognised by non-academic users as a prime source of excellent research that has tangible application and benefits to the creative industries, arts and cultural organisations, and social groups. We aim to maintain and develop our expertise in knowledge transfer/exchange and in collaborative empirical research, offering fellow citizens and creative professionals an open, critical space for thinking. Through our outward-facing research activities, we will foster our international networks with festivals, practitioners, museums and media organisations so as to facilitate a broad reach for future impact for current and future research projects. We will continue to exploit our location in the Welsh capital to ensure that our research informs the nation's bilingual cultural and artistic life whilst ensuring broad reach for small nations' research via the international networks of CMCSN. We will achieve this by:

3.2 Supporting staff to deliver prestigious, national initiatives with substantial impact potential; e.g. Fyfe is one of the consortium leads for the Digital Research and Development Fund for the Arts in Wales, a partnership between the Arts Council of Wales, AHRC, and Nesta to support arts projects that work with digital technologies to expand audience reach and engagement and explore new business models for the arts sector within Wales.

3.3 Building on our research track-record by developing existing collaborations with non-academic users who offer meaningful routes to impact for our research. E.g. the Unit is currently undertaking University-funded research examining the impact of the BBC's new drama studios in Cardiff on TV drama production, which follows on from our earlier Screening the Nation research (see REF 2 and 5). We anticipate the current research will yield findings that will inform industry, trade unions, and civic debate on the cultural and economic value of creative industries.

3.4 Continuing to invest in our research groups and Centres to provide a funded base for expertise in knowledge transfer, public engagement, and research with impact.

3.5 Supporting doctoral students and ECRs (via mentoring and integration into research groups and Centres) so that they understand how to gain impact for their current and future research.

3.6 Integrating impact into the internal mechanisms for securing research funding by requiring all staff bidding for support to articulate the potential for impact which their research offers and the support they need to achieve it. In turn, we will commit to offering continuous staff development, e.g. offering workshops on the use of social media, for example, in gaining impact for research.

d. Relationship to case studies

4.1 These case studies exemplify how the Unit's high-quality research achieves impact and informs our strategic approach. They demonstrate the breadth and diversity of audiences, communities, organisations and individuals benefitting from our research, and the significance our impact holds in enriching several arts, broadcasting, theatre, professional music organisations, and policy-makers in the UK and beyond. Case Study 1, 'Grand Guignol and Popular Horror Performance' provides evidence of how our research, including practice-based research, has made an impact on professional theatre internationally. Case Study 2, 'Creative and Cultural Industries in Wales' evidences how we contribute to Welsh public life through the broad reach of our research impact which has informed public debate, Government policy, and media organisations' development of creative industries in this recently devolved nation. It exemplifies how close collaboration between staff in CMCSN allows us to maximise the range and significance of our research impact. Case Study 3, 'George Ewart Evans Centre for Storytelling' illustrates how our applied, funded research takes storytelling out of the university to a range of social settings. In doing so, it makes significant and enriching contributions to community development by using story to give voice to the social and cultural experiences of a range of people and organisations who have important stories to tell and which merit being heard in public and policy debates.