

<b>Institution: Oxford Brookes University</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: 29 English Language and Literature</b>
<p><b>a. Context</b></p> <p>The UoA has a long-established record of engaging with non-academic users of its research, and a strong commitment to connecting our excellent research with those outside academia. These activities have been continued in this period, with collaborations with cultural bodies, learned societies, local and regional businesses and schools. Media coverage, particularly through channels with large audiences, also helps our work reach non-academic audiences. Four particular areas of impact have been developed: <i>The Poetry Centre</i> (<b>Clanchy, Flannery, S. White</b>), <i>Practice as Research</i> (<b>Craik, Lowe</b>, Bartleet), <i>Therapeutics</i> (<b>Craik, Lea</b>) and <i>Civic Engagement</i> (<b>Goody, Hawes, Hill, Kövesi, Lalwani, Potter</b>, Roe). In these areas the UoA has been actively engaged in impact and knowledge-exchange undertakings based on high-quality, internationally-recognised research.</p>
<p><b>b. Approach to impact</b></p> <p>The primary approach of the UoA to developing the impact of our work has been to situate excellent research in a range of contexts that extend well beyond academia. Staff have generated research which is of use to a range of users and bodies, and as a result have fostered relationships with organisations at local, national and international level. A particular strength of the UoA's work has been its interdisciplinary approach to research and its dissemination and impact. The efficacy of this approach to developing relationships within the public sphere can be seen in the impact that our work has had on a range of non-academic parties. The UoA has developed close links in Oxford with Pegasus Theatre [<a href="http://www.pegasustheatre.org.uk">http://www.pegasustheatre.org.uk</a>], with Arts at the Old Fire Station [<a href="http://www.oldfirestation.org.uk">http://www.oldfirestation.org.uk</a>] and with the Oxford Literary Festival. The innovative approach of the UoA to public engagement and impact is perhaps best exemplified by <b>Craik's</b> project <i>The Quicken Tree</i> (March 2011) which was an opera based on Book II of Edmund Spenser's <i>The Faerie Queene</i>, commissioned by the Scottish Arts Council, written in collaboration with composer Dee Isaacs (University of Edinburgh), and performed in promenade in Edinburgh's Royal Botanic Gardens. The project brought professional singers and students together with 90 children from three primary schools in areas of significant deprivation, giving them the opportunity to develop new creative and social skills through a programme of music-based Continual Professional Development for six primary school teachers. The UoA's development of its research for end users outside academia can be usefully grouped under four headings: the Poetry Centre; Practice as Research; Therapeutics; Civic Engagement.</p> <p><i>The Poetry Centre:</i> The Poetry Centre is led by <b>Flannery</b> and <b>Clanchy</b> and is an internationally recognised centre of research and creative excellence. Its initial focus was on academic research into twentieth-century poetry but it has broadened its remit during the census period to encompass a broad historical span and to include creative poetry writing. During the census period it has engaged in a number of public engagement projects that have sought to make the research on poetry undertaken in the UoA useful for a range of users including schools, local community groups, charities and businesses. The intention throughout has been to find ways in which the UoA's expertise in poetry can be deployed to enrich the cultural lives and understandings of non-academic users, to provide tools with which they can explore and realise their place in the world, and to generate skills pertinent to the working of public and private sector organisations. With Oxford City Council, the Poetry Centre co-sponsored the appointment of <b>Clanchy</b> as Oxford's first <i>City Poet</i>. <b>Clanchy</b> organised a wide range of poetry-themed events and since arriving at Oxford Brookes has played a key role in the Poetry Centre. Relevant Poetry Centre projects include: Science Writes to Life pairing poets and scientists and the associated Science Bazaar collaboration with local school children; the Oxford Poets and Refugees Project; <b>Clanchy's Other Worlds</b> project with the Oxford Story Museum and <i>First Story</i> work with Oxford Spires Academy. <b>Flannery</b> is producing, in partnership with the Faculty of Business, a Risk, Recession and Recovery HEIF funded project which works with members of the local business community using poetry to identify strategies for improving the performance of their companies and organisations. <b>S. White's</b> AHRC Early-Career Fellowship enabled him to complete the research for a monograph entitled <i>Romanticism and the Rural Community</i>; one of the developments of this research was White's workshop at Oxford Brookes with the Oxfordshire Rural Community Council (2013). This event brought together stake-holders from academia, local government and the charity sector and</p>

was supported through the departmental devolved QR funds.

*Practice as Research:* A central pathway to impact that has been developed during the census period has been the engagement with non-academic research users through performance practice and site-specific performance. The work with Historic Royal Palaces undertaken by Betteridge underpins one of the impact case studies submitted in 3b and is exemplary of our activities in this area. **Lowe** continues this mode of institutional engagement, embedding performance practice in her research and generating impact as a result. **Lowe** has worked as a consultant for the RSC on the production of Thomas Middleton's *A Mad World My Masters*, both at the workshopping stage of the production (2011) and again at the immediate pre-production stage (2013). In addition she is a participant in the 'Scholar's Pitch' project in which four leading academics in the field of early modern theatre studies workshop a number of neglected English renaissance dramas which then form the basis of a pitch to the artistic director of the RSC, Greg Doran. On the basis of the pitches one play will be selected to be performed by the RSC in the forthcoming season. **Lowe** is also the early Tudor drama expert for the BBC2 series 'Tudor Monastery Farm' for which she directed a version of the York Cycle's mystery plays *Harrowing of Hell*. **Lowe's** work is complemented by **Craik's** continued work on opera and location-specific opera performance, basing her libretto writing on her research in the Early Modern period. She is following the success of *The Quicken Tree* with a new libretto project entitled *Watching*, based on the seventeenth-century science of sleep, to be performed, in collaboration with Edinburgh's Department of Music, by twilight in the Glasshouses of Edinburgh's Royal Botanic Garden.

*Therapeutics:* Staff in the UoA are engaged in different ways in research on medicine and science and emerging from this has been an impact strategy to engage with the medical community and explore the possible therapeutic implications of our research into literature and drama. The Oxford Bibliotherapy project led by **Craik** and **Lea** explores the therapeutic potential of reading in the treatment and aftercare of patients suffering with forms of cancer. The project aims to make a number of real-world and cost-effective benefits to the quality of life of patients with cancer through reading groups in healthcare settings, but it also seeks to raise awareness of the therapeutic benefits of literature in the practice of healing through creative projects involving creative practitioners and academic partners. The project has established links with the Oxford Radcliffe Hospital group and is currently in discussion with the Arts Administrator at the Churchill Hospital to bring poetry into waiting areas in the Cancer and Haematology Centre. The project team also has links with the Sobell House Hospice where, during the summer of 2012, they led a 6-week poetry reading course for those in end-of-life care. The Oxford Bibliotherapy project has been supported by the Faculty Research Fund in employing a research assistant in the year 2012-13 and by HEIF funding in 2013-14. Bartleet's emergent Practice as Research work on madness, maternity and performance, including her involvement in the Theatre and the Asylum network of practitioners and stakeholders, expands the impact potential of our engagement with therapeutics.

*Civic engagement:* Staff in the UoA are actively engaged in contributing to civil society, cultural life and public discourse beyond the academy through their civic engagement and communication activities. **Kövesi** works closely with the registered charity of the Oxford Literary Festival, to set up sessions with writers and thinkers across a spectrum of interests related to English and Drama. Speakers at sessions organised by **Kövesi** have included Patience Agbabi, Paul Farley, Joanne Harris (in a session with Pope), Philip Hensher (in a session with **Hawes**), Alan Moore, Declan Kiberd (in a session with **Flannery**), Josie Long, Richard Mabey, Jonathan Meades, Alan Moore, Philip Pullman and Iain Sinclair. **Kövesi** also hosted a public lecture by Nick Cohen on Freedom of Speech at Oxford Brookes in September 2012. **Goody** is a regular speaker on cultural and literary issues on BBC Radio Oxford's Malcolm Boyden show. **Hill** has spoken to non-academic audiences at the Tricycle Theatre with Zadie Smith, the Hay Festival and King's Place with Iain Sinclair. Similarly **Lalwani** has spoken at Asia House ('Busting Stereotypes: The Changing Face of Asian Fiction'), and at the Hay Festival, Southbank Festival and Edinburgh International Book Festival. **Hawes'** work has led to numerous BBC (radio and television) programme appearances including Newsnight. **Potter** is on the Academic Steering Committee of the First World War in the Classroom project (<http://ww1intheclassroom.exeter.ac.uk/>) and spoke about Wilfred Owen on a BBC Southampton programme on Netley Hospital (June 2013). Roe has appeared in a range of

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media as an expert witness on the Pre-Raphaelites (BBC Radio 3 'The Verb' Dec 2011, BBC Radio 4 'Front Row' Sept 2012, Resonance FM 'Lit Bits' June 2013) and her appearances have included addressing non-academic audiences in unusual places (Highgate Cemetery Chapel, June 2012).

*Institutional support mechanisms:* The UoA has created mechanisms to support the development of our research's impact in parallel with institutional mechanisms and support provided by the University. The Faculty has appointed a Faculty Lead for Impact and has encouraged the conceptual understanding of, and practical tools for, impact including a JISC funded pilot project within Law, to create an Excel-based toolkit to track and evidence impact. Central to the UoA's impact strategy has been to make explicit that staff research time can be used to enable individuals to undertake public engagement and impact enhancing activities. As part of their five-year research planning, all staff in the UoA are encouraged to propose activities designed to engage a range of users with research outputs, such as participation in conferences, seminars and workshops aimed at both academic and non-academic audiences, blogs, podcasts, press releases etc. Financial resources have been allocated by the Faculty and University to help staff engage in impact-generating activity with the University making strategic investments using HEIF funding in business-facing knowledge-exchange opportunities. QR money, successfully bid for from Central Research Funds and Faculty Research Funds have been used to support the impact activities of **Craik, Lea, Lowe, Roe and the Poetry Centre**. Training and support for those engaging in impact related activities are also available: staff have mentors to help support their research activity, both by supporting staff in planning for impact as well as supporting the production of research outputs.

### c. Strategy and plans

The UoA's system of five-year personal research plans already encourages staff to think about pathways to impact for their work. This process will be continued, with funding and time made available for staff to engage with non-academic end users of their work. Funding will also continue to be available to enable the costs of developing impact, such as travel, to be met. The university's work on Knowledge Exchange has been used to enhance the impact of our research, and this will continue with new developments such as 'impact' scholarships for PhD and early career staff, the appointment of Knowledge Exchange departmental champions for specific types of impact (public discourse, cultural life, economic impact, policy making) and the creation of public engagement fellowships and support for academics to take short sabbaticals to work with NGOs, charities, think tanks, local and national government departments. Longer term the UoA will continue to support events, like *The Quicken Tree*, which combine excellent research with innovative public engagement and impact on audiences beyond academia. In particular, as with the Poets and Refugees Project, the UoA will develop a range of public engagement projects that seek to take our research beyond its existing audiences. The Poets and Refugees Project had a profound impact on the refugees who took part. For many it was the first time that they felt they were being given a voice and listened to in England. But it also had an equally profound impact on the poets who participated. What enabled the project to take place and to generate such significant impact was its location within the research excellence generated by the Poetry Centre. It is for these reasons that the Poets and Refugees Project, like *The Quicken Tree*, embodies the values that will inform the UoA's future impact strategy.

### d. Relationship to case studies

The case studies submitted in 3b are drawn from the two most significant areas of our impact– the Poetry Centre and Practice as Research. The Poetry Centre case study articulates in detail how research in the UoA has been linked to a wider community of users (individuals and groups) and how beneficiaries have been identified through the public engagement activities generated by the Centre. This case study demonstrates how impact has been produced from the collective research into poetry in the UoA. The Drama and Historic Royal Palaces case study exemplifies how a specific set of projects, based on performance practice, have planned for and resulted in a significant impact for a high profile cultural and heritage organisation and all those who visit it. These case studies highlight the different methods by which our approach to impact has produced substantial results, and embody the way that we see our research having meaningful consequences for a diversity of possible users, from new members of our local community, to schools and hospitals, to tourist sites of global significance.