

Institution: Staffordshire University
Unit of Assessment: 34 – Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory
<p>a. Overview</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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 and 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.</p> <p>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):</p> <p>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</p> <p>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</p>
<p>b. Research strategy</p> <p>To sustain and develop this research activity, a number of University or Faculty strategies and practices are in place. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 research-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 Art and Design degree shows, to showcase our research activity to the wider University and 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, and impact.
- Training for new PhD supervisors – this comprehensive training programme has recently been made distance learning to make it easier for new supervisors to get the support they need, and to include external supervisors, for example, those in industry positions.
- More regular research-related staff promotion opportunities now exist, such as the call for professors that was issued during the 2012/13 academic year, and which will be regularly repeated.

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 – 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.

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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 will be offered annually from now on.

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 festivals such as the Venice Biennale (for colleagues in Fine Art).
- 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 three completions of students pursuing visual arts practice-led PhDs. And currently there are three students continuing to pursue Fine Art practice-led PhDs and we plan to increase this number in the near future to at least six in the field of Fine Art alone. Historically visual arts practice-led PhDs have been supported via a liaison with Philosophy who have had a strong research student base. However, given the increased level

of research activity among Fine Art staff since RAE2008 and the addition of two PhDs and an Associate Professor in Fine Art staff we can now grow the number of PhDs supervised within Fine Art.

- Another positive development is the recent expansion of research fields following the re-structure of the university that has led to the old Faculty of Arts, Media and Design becoming the Faculty of Arts and Creative Technologies. This has involved the addition of Film Production Technology, Games Design and Music Technology to create an expanded faculty and has introduced a significant number of staff pursuing PhDs in the fields of sound art and art filmmaking. This expansion of arts related fields will enable the Faculty to grow the capacity for supervising interdisciplinary arts practice-led PhDs. The expansion of the arts in the new Faculty will also allow us to grow and sustain the number of research students pursuing practice-led arts PhDs in sound art and film art that cross the boundary between Fine Art and Music and Film Technology.
- 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 a Professor of Philosophy 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

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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

As noted above cross-disciplinary collaboration is a key theme for the university and faculty and we encourage staff to collaborate outside as well as within the university. Collaboration with researchers and organisations outside the university is supported by the Enterprise and Commercial Development Unit as well as by I-ACT and C-MAT. Funding is provided for travel and to cover teaching commitments. Individual projects are not only supported they are also made available to other researchers in the faculty via ARC exchange events and the EPrints repository.

Instances of collaboration that have been encouraged and supported include Heather Minchin's collaboration with the charities Forward UK and the NIA Project to curate the exhibition 'Representing Refugees' at the Matrix Chambers, Gray's Inn, London (28 February to 30 March 2008). Colette Dobson's collaboration with psychologist Dr Josie Butcher to organize a group exhibition and experiential workshop 'Challenging Communication: Cancer and Sexuality' at Manchester Conference Centre February 2013; Anna Francis' collaboration with the New Art Gallery Walsall to design a professional artist development programme for artists; John Bradburn, Andy Paton and James Fair's collaboration with the UK Film Council and former head of the British Film Institute Roger Shannon to make a short film *The Gloaming*, screened in the London Short Film Festival. And experimental filmmaker James Fair's collaboration with producer Margo Harkin and the actor Stephen Rea to shoot and edit a feature-length film in 72 hours as part of the 2013 Derry/Londonderry City of Culture celebrations.

I-ACT and C-MAT encourage research-active staff to engage as much as possible in conferences, visiting lectures and public lectures. Funding for such activities is also available from the Faculty Staff Development Group. Some instances of the result of such encouragement include presentations on electroacoustic music by Ben Ramsay at the University of Sheffield, 30 January 2013; De Montfort University, 05 November 2011 and 29 February 2012, Leeds College of Music 13 May 2011, and the 'Toronto Electroacoustic Symposium' 2011; Ian Brown lecturing at the California College of the Arts, Nevada City, CA. USA; John Hudson contributing his paper 'The Future of the Responsible Designer' to the Ninth International Conference on Environmental,

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Cultural, Economic, and Social Sustainability, Hiroshima, Japan, 23-25 January 2013; Graham Coulter-Smith's participation as panel member on a two day seminar Terrorist Transgressions: Cultural Representations of the Terrorist, Birkbeck, University of London, 12-13 November 2011. And Ben Ramsay's organization of the NoiseFloor festival at Staffordshire University annually in May. NoiseFloor hosts in the region of 40-50 composers and academics and has included participants from the UK, Germany, Greece, Finland, UK, USA, and Thailand. The Creative Communities Unit (CCU) is constantly engaged with a number of smaller, community-based projects, but its two largest activities, currently, are the evaluation of the Appetite programme (as a member of the consortium that is administering a £3 million grant from the Arts Council's Creative People and Places scheme, for Stoke-on-Trent, over three years), using creative consultation techniques and the delivery of "Residency", funded through the EU's Leonardo da Vinci programme and involving the sharing of best practice in cultural animation among partners in Stoke, Warsaw and Barcelona

Collaborative research with industry is a particular focus for the university and faculty that is encouraged and supported by the Enterprise and Commercial Development Unit as well as I-ACT and C-MAT. Instances of such collaboration include Professor David Sanderson's research based analysis of the role of design in Aynsley China Ltd., which led in 2010 to the establishment of the Flux ceramic design company within Staffordshire University. Partnerships were set up with the Co-Creating Value Collective in Brussels and Duchess China Ltd, Stoke-on-Trent, who manufacture Flux's designs. One can also mention Dr Bobbie Fletcher's Activity Based Learning and Entertainment: Lifelong Learning Challenges in the Digital Age which has received £18,000 from the EU Lifelong Learning Programme, Grundtvig division.