

Institution: UNIVERSITY of WEST LONDON
Unit of Assessment: 36 COMMUNICATION, CULTURAL and MEDIA STUDIES, LIBRARY and INFORMATION MANAGEMENT
<p>a. Overview</p> <p>The submitting unit comprises research outputs of three members of staff based within Ealing School of Art, Design and Media (ESADM), and the Institute for Practice, Interdisciplinary Research and Enterprise (INSPIRE): Dr Garin Dowd's research in the area of film studies is strongly influenced by post-structuralist theory; Professor Jeremy Strong's research is located primarily, though not exclusively, in the adaptation area of film studies, and Luciano Zubillaga's research arises from his work as an artist filmmaker whose outputs display a strong affiliation to intellectual and theoretical strands in experimental cinema and the avant-garde.</p>
<p>b. Research strategy</p> <p>Across the Research Excellence Framework assessment period, strategy has been, and continues to be, directed by the University of West London's successive Strategic Plans (2008-2013 and 2013-2018) and by the University Research, Scholarship and Enterprise Strategy (2008-2013, updated October 2010). Both INSTIL (<i>The Institute for Teaching, Innovation and Learning</i>: est. 2009) and INSPIRE (<i>The Institute for Practice, Interdisciplinary Research and Enterprise</i>: est. 2011) have been created by the University of West London in the last five years specifically to support and implement actions embedded within these strategies. Key aims are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and sustain a lively and growing research and enterprise culture across the University that all academic staff engage with; • accelerate the development of research capacity and capability and scholarly activity at the University; • increase the attractiveness of the University to potential students, staff, employers, funding bodies, and other potential stakeholders as an institution known for its pursuit of excellence in applied, pedagogic and practice-based research; • maximise the potential for knowledge generated within the University to be translated into solutions addressing contemporary issues regionally, nationally and internationally. <p>After RAE2008 the dissolution of a faculty structure and its replacement with a devolved School structure led to a period of reconsolidation. INSPIRE performs elements of the role formerly played by faculties, principally as these inform and are informed by research. It now manages the University's Research Degrees Sub-Committee (URDSC), while a School panel (Art Design and Media Research Scrutiny and Development Panel - ADMRSDP) reports to the URDSC on matters specific to research in the School. Research funding is also now administered centrally by INSPIRE, with the School panel acting in an advisory capacity where required. Time, funding and other resources are allocated commensurate with the University Research and Scholarship Strategy (2008-2013) and act as a significant catalyst for an evolving research-base which is core to the recently-launched <i>Ambition: 2018</i> (University Strategy 2013-2018). This makes explicit, <i>inter alia</i>, the University's commitment to producing 'impactful research which can benefit people, society and the economy' (p. 3).</p> <p>The unit and staff contributing to the research environment in which Dowd, Strong and Zubillaga conduct their research has been responsive to University strategies implemented in an incremental manner since the period just before RAE 2008. This strategy, which is now beginning to bear fruit, seeks to encourage, support and appropriately reward research activities deemed to equate to at least a 2* score – based on the scoring system for REF 2014. In addition to the work of the three submitted researchers, several colleagues have produced outputs – peer-reviewed journal articles,</p>

book chapters, artworks, and curatorial work – which meet or exceed that threshold, though they have not achieved the volume of outputs necessary to submit in REF 2014.¹

Early career researchers attend training workshops and advice on how to further develop their research. For example, INSTIL runs a series of 12 seminars and workshops on such matters as writing abstracts, presenting papers and framing a research question. The University established INSPIRE with the ambition, *inter alia*, of developing a synergistic approach to the generation of research projects, funding bids, external and internal collaborations, connections with industry and the wider community. In addition a mentoring structure for early career researchers has been established. In this respect the creation of the Institute was the culmination of plans laid by the University in 2008 to develop the research infrastructure, research services, and a research-active staff base across the university. The INSPIRE team is currently engaged in the furthering of a series of major bids for research funding to (for example) HEFCE, the NHS and EU as well as for KTPs. The September 2013 appointment of a Professor in the unit's area of research will see direct benefits in terms of generating research income and attracting doctoral candidates. The appointment of a research-active Head of ESADM, Dr Anna Gough-Yates, starting January 2014, represents a similar investment in research capacity for the future.

The unit has successfully sought and benefitted from financial and infrastructural support from INSPIRE. Availing of this dual support, the unit aimed to have a presence at key conferences and events (for example Dowd's papers at conferences in Lisbon and Bordeaux) in the respective fields of the research active staff likely to produce outputs, the latter judgement being arrived at via a combination of track record, stated research ambitions (drawn up by staff as part of appraisal) and discussion with their line manager in respect of support for research initiatives though the strategic use of workload distribution. In other cases (e.g. Strong's conference participation in Sweden, 2013) this has been externally funded. Where staff research was not embodied in the form of publication or conference participation – that is when research outputs were typically realised as performance, art-works or curatorial endeavours – there was a parallel School strategy to encourage staff to aim disseminate their work seeking out avenues governed by rigorous selection processes, and likely to maximise reputation, exposure, economic benefit, critical reception and public engagement. Looking forward to 2020, the submitting unit aims to have six more PhD-qualified staff capable of supervising research degrees, 15 doctoral students and 10 permanent staff members with at least 4 high quality research outputs in the next assessment period.

c. People, including:

i. Staffing strategy and staff development

The University adopted a new *Academic Employment Framework* in August 2013. The Framework clarifies staff roles and responsibilities in relation to teaching, academic leadership and research. Its 'career family' approach to academic contracts enables all academic staff to have support ie. 'balancing their outputs according to their development, duties and responsibilities for each academic year' (p. 23). The introduction of the new Framework supports the key performance indicators outlined in *Ambition: 2018* (University Strategic Plan 2013-2018). Fundamental to supporting the development of a culture supportive of research is the integration of local (School) and University-wide (INSTIL/INSPIRE) knowledge, expertise and resource.

Over the assessment period, the University has rationalised to ensure all activities and staff appointed to support this meet with a whole University approach. A significant advantage of creating INSTIL and INSPIRE has seen the accessibility of central resource to support all

¹ Including: Stevenson, L. (2008) 'Sister Arts or Sibling Rivalry: Cézanne and the Logic of the Senses', *Word & Image*, April-September.

Smith, P. (2010) 'Attractive Labour and Social Change: William Morris Now,' in Phillippa Bennett and Rosie Miles, eds. *William Morris in the Twenty-First Century*, Oxford: Peter Lang.

academic areas. For example the 22+ permanent academic and support staff, including seven professors (all new appointments since 2008), also hold embedded roles within each of the academic schools (e.g. Professor Strong for Art, Design and Media) whilst *vice versa* all members of University academic staff hold affiliate positions aligned to a research interest in INSTIL and/or INSPIRE.

The School of Art, Design and Media's Research Scrutiny and Development Panel support staff and doctoral candidates. Staff are supported by their Head of School in the establishment of workloads to accommodate research. Staff draw up targets with their Head of School and are appraised annually on the basis of these targets and in the light of actual workload commitments.

In a strategic attempt to capitalise on strengths in the school in the shape of its many artist-practitioners, the School plans to invest in the area of practice-as-research. An away day was held in 2012-13 to signal this intended future direction, where the joint head of the University of Kingston's Research Practice Unit addressed staff. In May 2014 a symposium on the theme of Practice as Research will be held, with a combination of internal staff embarked upon PhDs and novice researchers presenting alongside authorities in the field of the practice-research continuum and external PhD candidates. This will be the first in a series of annual events hosted by the School and funded by INSPIRE.

The immediate future for ESADM centres on the recruitment of staff with current or developing strong research profiles. The University is committed to a staffing strategy in which, where possible, all future appointments in the School will be filled by PhD-qualified applicants capable of PhD supervision and with a strong or potentially strong research profile. In September 2013 the School appointed its first dedicated Head of Postgraduate Studies. Though primarily focused on M-level developments, the remit of the post-holder extends to growing doctoral studies in the School, especially though promoting transit to the doctoral programme via MAs.

The recent streaming by the University of staff into three categories – Research Academic, Teaching Academic and Academic Practitioner – acknowledges the need to sustain the research profiles of those in the research stream. These members of staff now teach significantly fewer hours than hitherto. The University's promotion scheme, and a slate of staff development opportunities, support and encourage the aspirations of staff currently streamed in the other two categories. Staff receive financial support to attend relevant conferences and equivalent events to develop their work-in-progress and to foster networks with other active researchers in their fields.

The university also supports staff undertaking PhDs through a 100-hour reduction in their teaching load. Five members of staff from the School are currently supported by the university in doctoral studies, with two pursuing PhDs at other institutions (supported by contributions to fees and teaching remission) and three undertaking their studies in-house (100% fee waivers). Of ESADM staff studying PhDs in institutions other than UWL, one is in their completion year, and the other in year 2. Of staff studying in-house, one is in their 3rd year, another in the 2nd, and the most recent commenced in Autumn 2013.

ii. Research students

The ESADM ensures the quality of training and supervision of postgraduate research students through adherence to the University's *Code of Practice for Research Students and Supervisors* (approved by the University Research Degrees Sub-Committee, October 2011). The *Code of Practice* is intended to 'provide a framework for research in an atmosphere of scholarship and collegiality enabling students to complete their degrees successfully within the time limits' (p. 1). It makes explicit the responsibilities of students and supervisors and provides examples of good supervisory practice. More formal requirements are provided by the University's Research Degree regulations.

Postgraduate research students are supported academically through the appointment of two supervisors including at least one subject specialist. The appointment of additional external supervision is possible. Pastoral support is provided through the University's central student support services. Students and supervisory staff are supported administratively through the Research Office which is part of INSPIRE. The University has made significant progress in enhancing research training that is now aligned with the *VITAE Researcher Development Framework* thus affording support to students and staff with the development of postgraduate research and employability skills.

During the period covered by this assessment the University has sought to support research activity and provide opportunity to aspiring PhD students through the award of Vice Chancellor's and Graduate Scholarships. ESADM has benefited from the award of two Graduate Scholarships to MPhil/PhD students. One is due to complete this year, just outside the census period. As a result of this funding, the culture of postgraduate research has augmented the depth and range of teaching through the contributions of the graduate scholars. Postgraduate students are fully integrated into the research culture through presenting their work to colleagues in research seminars and at the UWL Annual MPhil/PhD Research Conference held each Spring.

The University now offers 15 funded PhDs per annum across the institution. It is the ambition of the unit to strengthen supervision capacity and to target applicants to work under the supervision of specific members of staff within their research specialisms. The recent professorial appointment of a film studies specialist to INSPIRE is an investment in the future of the unit and a step towards increased sustainability. Equally the new Head of School, Dr Anna Gough-Yates, who will take up her appointment in January 2014, will underpin the trajectory of growth. A fully-funded PhD Scholarship in Adaptation Studies, with stipend, was advertised in October 2013 and another (externally-funded) applicant has just been offered a fee-waivered PhD. Advertisements (intended to attract doctoral candidates to work with Dowd and Stevenson respectively) are also due to be placed for PhD applicants in the fields of Film Studies and Visual Cultures. Future planned appointments in the areas of film practice and the requirement that senior positions in the School be filled by staff with strong research profiles will aid in underpinning the expansion of the research base in the unit/School.

d. Income, infrastructure and facilities

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e. Collaboration or contribution to the discipline or research base

Dowd was Project Partner in collaboration with the University of Birmingham on an AHRC network grant funded project, the Genre Studies Network. He thus participated in the organisation of 7 one-day events between October 2012 and September 2013 held at the Universities of Birmingham, Leeds and London. He taught a week-long seminar at the inaugural Samuel Beckett Summer School at Trinity College Dublin in 2011

Dowd has acted as referee for the Leverhulme Trust. He was referee for the following academic journals: *The Journal of Beckett Studies*, *Deleuze Studies*, *Beckett Inc*, *Genre: Forms of Discourse and Culture*.

He acted as examiner for one doctorate (at Queen's University Belfast) within the census period (and a further three before it) and was appointed in 2012 as principal supervisor for a doctoral candidate at Birkbeck College, University of London.

In addition to numerous other conference papers he was invited to speak at the following conferences and events: 'Different Directions' in Galway, Ireland, The David Roberts Art Foundation in London, London Beckett Seminar, The Samuel Beckett Summer School (where he was also a keynote speaker) at Trinity College Dublin, 'Debts and Legacies' at the University of Oxford.

Strong has been the elected chair of his subject association, the Association of Adaptation Studies (AAS; founded in 2006 with funding from the Leverhulme Trust), since 2010. He was Secretary 2007-2010. Strong represents AAS at the Council for College and University English (CCUE). He serves on the editorial board of the journal *Adaptation*, published by Oxford University Press. He also serves on the editorial board of *Critical Commentary*, a peer-reviewed journal published by Newman University that seeks to disseminate high-quality research produced by graduate students. He was external examiner for the MA in Adaptations at De Montfort University 2008 – 2012.

He has acted as a referee for the following journals: *Adaptation*, *The Journal of Adaptation in Film and Performance*, *Shakespeare: The Journal of the British Shakespeare Association*, *Australian Humanities Review*, *The Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics*. He has also been interviewed on BBC Radio Four.

Strong has been an invited/keynote speaker at various events and institutions including: The University of Essex, Newman University, Humboldt University – Berlin, and the *Page-to-Screen* Film Festival at Bridport.

Zubillaga has participated in artist talks at Goldsmiths, the University of Kent, the Barbican, University of Buenos Aires (UBA) and elsewhere. He has collaborated with influential film industry companies providing state-of-the-art camera equipment and finishing services in a manner that amounts to mutually beneficial research and development. Both *Music for a Missing Film* and *Cosas por Venir* have been embarked upon and or finished through such collaborative research and development arrangements with such corporations as Assimilate and Cinecolor Argentina, producing a digital intermediate at a discounted rate.

Through his active involvement in the London art scene Zubillaga has engaged with a wide range of galleries, curators and institutions (for example the IMT Gallery, Filmarmalade, Vierte Welt, Flamin and Gabriela Salgado – former curator of Public Programmes at Tate Modern) which form the infrastructural basis of both dissemination and realization possibilities for the work of moving image artists in the south-east. His immersion in the intellectual and artistic environment of Buenos

Environment template (REF5)

Aires, and connections established with exhibition spaces in Latin America (for example the Buenos Aires Museum of Modern Art) add an international dimension to his exploitation of and exposure to a currently resurgent resource of experimental, artist and independent film art.

Recently this reach has extended to the European mainland with periods of protracted exposure to and exploitation of the moving image practice-as-research resources of Paris and Berlin. Notably, through the casting of renowned actress Hanna Schygulla in the film listed as his RO3, Zubillaga has created, through association, a link to some of the work of renowned film directors of what can be described as the late modernist period, among them Rainer Werner Fassbinder and Jean-Luc Godard in whose films Schygulla starred in the 1970s (for example Fassbinder's *The Bitter Tears of Petra Von Kant* [1972] and *The Marriage of Eva Braun* [1979]) and 1980s (Godard's *Passion* [1982]). The rich heritage of experimentation and engagement with social and political issues which is tapped into by means of this association both deepens and extends the range of Zubillaga's engagement with an area of film practice identifiable by its complexity and level of cultural critique and enrichment.