

Institution: Queen Margaret University
Unit of Assessment: UoA 36 Communication, Cultural and Media Studies, Library and Information Management
a. Overview

Research outcomes submitted to sub-panel 36 from QMU to REF 2014 address questions that emerge from the interrelation between culture, politics and production. In that respect, research conducted during the census period builds on the themes and topics that formed the submission to RAE 2008, such as culture, industry and economy, culture, policy and politics, communications management, and the production of spaces of culture. Through staff development and appointments the research unit's interests have grown during the census period to include work on media genre and media literacy. The unit's impact case studies have developed from the critical approaches to public relations demonstrated in the 2008 submission and have been consolidated by the appointment of L'Etang as chair.

As with the RAE 2008, the research unit is comprised of staff located within Media, Communication and Performing Arts (MCPA), and Business, Enterprise and Management (BEAM), two Divisions of the School of Arts, Social Sciences and Management (ASSaM). Research is directed by L'Etang, who is responsible for resource and staff development including mentoring. Submitted research has benefited from institutional support in the form of sabbaticals, teaching buy-outs, research visits, teaching support for research-active staff, financial support for conference attendance and for hosting seminars, colloquia, workshops and symposia at QMU. Research has also been supported financially from external sources. The University's Research and Knowledge Exchange Unit supplies administrative support for the research unit.

b. Research Strategy

The unit's strategic research aims have consolidated and developed since RAE 2008 and now include impact (REF 3a). Sustainability has been enhanced through investment, recruitment, and the research activation of existing staff.

Specifically, the strategic aims that have driven the unit's research since 2008 are:

1. To organise research on culture, politics and production into two broad themes that balance focus with interdisciplinary perspectives in order to formulate and investigate questions relevant to Culture, Politics and Economy and Critical Approaches to Communication Management; and to develop new research interests in contemporary film and television genres.
2. To increase the submission of the numbers of research-active staff through the acquisition of new staff, vacancy filling, and research activation of established staff, and to support research through the recruitment of project-specific research staff.
3. To establish and maintain new and existing links, externally and internationally, through hosting and organising research events and publications, hosting visiting academic colleagues and by participating in and contributing to conferences, refereed journals, edited collections and collaborative projects.
4. To apply for externally-funded support for research and to specifically invest in research with impact potential.

Evidence of some of the ways that the strategic aims have been implemented and developed is provided by the following examples:

1. One of the research topics that has emerged from the culture, politics and economy focus has been cultural policy. Both of Stevenson's publications fit that description, as do the outputs of Finkel and Matheson, which emerged from research on the production of spaces of culture. Research on the culture industry is exemplified by outputs such as Percival's work on radio and the music business and Valentine's work on rent. Research on Public Relations established in RAE 2008 has developed in the broader direction of critical approaches to communications

Environment template (REF5)

management, such as Pieczka and Escobar's research on science policy discourse. Zeller-Jacques and Stewart have developed research on contemporary film and television genre.

2. The number of staff submitted to REF 2014 has increased to ten (with an even gender split) from six submitted to RAE 2008. This has been achieved through filling vacant posts, such as the appointment of L'Etang following the departure of Finkelstein, the creation of new posts, such as Stevenson and Zeller-Jacques, and the research activation of existing staff such as Percival and Stewart.

3. In 2011, Sarah Brouillette from Carleton University was a Leverhulme Visiting Research Fellow at QMU working with staff on issues of culture industry and economy. During the visit Brouillette organised a seminar on the postcolonial book, the proceedings of which were subsequently published as a special edition of the *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* (2013, 48,1). At QMU, Brouillette completed a manuscript on *Literature and the Creative Economy*, to be published by Stanford University Press in 2014.

4. The University provided financial support for a research assistant (Escobar) to develop research on the notion of dialogue in public relations, which subsequently gained funding from The Robertson Trust and formed the research base for one of the impact case studies included in this submission.

The main changes to the RAE 2008 research plans have arisen through staff departures and arrivals. Finkelstein, who participated in an AHRC research project with colleagues at Napier University, transferred to Dundee University. Dunn, who contributed work on the production and representation of cultural space, retired. Artt, an early career researcher on adaptation, moved to Napier. These changes have allowed the enhancement and consolidation of existing research interests. L'Etang, who transferred from Stirling to take up a professorial appointment at QMU, has continued to develop innovative critical approaches to public relations in collaboration with Pieczka. The research activation of Percival and Stewart contributed work on culture industry and melodrama respectively. Finkel's work contributes to the themes of cultural policy and the production of spaces of culture. In 2013, Zeller-Jacques arrived from York to contribute work on adaptation and popular genres, complementing Stewart's work on melodrama.

The unit's plans for the next five years (2014–19) build on the previous strategy and will focus on research sustainability, strengthening research areas with clear potential for significant disciplinary contributions, and integrating research impact. These plans have been formulated as the following objectives:

1. To increase participation in collaborative research projects and networks internally and externally to develop research grant applications.
2. To develop existing research on culture and policy through a focus on management of cultural institutions and organisations, cultural policy in relation to changes in state and government structure and action in terms of multi-level governance and the differentiated polity.
3. To develop existing research on culture and economy that addresses the characteristics of culture industries in Scotland and of the relations between cultural production and political economy.
4. To develop research that engages critically with communications management, including processes of professionalization and the production of expertise and its connections with policy making. The Centre for Dialogue will consolidate existing international partners through collaborative research applications and exchanges that focus on contributions to policy formation.
5. To continue to support the research activation of established staff, to disseminate research through publications and conferences and to organise and host research events. The research unit intends to establish an online journal for research on culture, management and policy and to

Environment template (REF5)

develop its two working paper series, one located within the Centre for Dialogue, the other broader-scope *Synthesis*.

In developing those objectives the research unit aims to sustain its interdisciplinary and collaborative character, evidenced by its research outputs for REF 2014, and research that will be disseminated after the census period. For example, Valentine's work on political thought, contingency and democracy was published in edited collections that include contributions from political scientists and philosophers. Work on rent draws on political economy and the theory of the firm. Matheson and Finkel's work is informed by social and cultural geography and combines quantitative and qualitative methods. A distinctive aspect of L'Etang's work is its aim of introducing issues derived from history and political science into the analysis of public relations. Based on papers presented at a conference on cultural policy at QMU in April 2013, Stevenson will be editing a special issue of *Cultural Trends*. Pieczka is co-editing, with Roper from the University of Waikato, a special issue of the *Journal of Public Affairs* based on papers presented at an ICA pre-conference at QMU in June 2013 on 'Challenging Communication Research: stakeholder engagement, dialogue and sustainability'.

c. People, including:**I. Staffing strategy and staff development**

During the census period the research activation of established staff has been prioritised and will be further developed through regular individual mentoring and development meetings. These will include Personal Research Plans, annual individual reviews and planning sessions, opportunities for the presentation of work-in-progress in supportive environments, buddying on research grant applications and collaborative writing of strategic aims and priorities.

Strategic teaching buyouts enabled Percival and Stewart to become research active. The University supported Percival for periods of research activity in Auckland and Wellington in 2011 and 2012, which provided data for published and ongoing publications comparing cultures of popular music production in Scotland and New Zealand. The appointment of Martin Zeller-Jacques and David Stevenson as early career researchers has been accompanied by light teaching loads. Valentine and Matheson each took sabbatical leave for a semester.

c. II. Research students

Currently there are 14 PhD students registered in the research unit. During the census period five have been awarded PhDs. The University provides support for PhDs through studentships. Allocation of studentships to the research unit increased during the census period, totalling seven. The research unit has also attracted seven PhD students supported from other sources. All PhD students are allocated a supervisor and/or supervisory team. A full research proposal and evidence of research activity is submitted to a probationary panel which interviews the doctoral candidate at the end of the first year of registration. PhD students and supervisors submit annual progress reports to the Research Degrees Panel, part of the University's Quality Enhancement Unit, which reports to the University's Research Strategy Committee.

All PhD students receive research training provided by the Centre for Academic Practice. PhD students in receipt of studentships are allocated funds for research expenses and conference attendance. Non-studentship PhDs may also apply to the research unit for conference attendance support. In order to obtain experience, and to contribute to the research ecology of the unit, studentship PhDs are provided with professional development opportunities that includes a requisite two years of teaching experience; non-studentship PhDs are provided with paid teaching experience within the research unit's Division. As part of their career development PhD students are encouraged to publish at the earliest suitable opportunity with the help of mentoring from supervisors. The destination of PhD students is not necessarily academic. Although Williamson has not entered a full academic career, having returned to working for Belle and Sebastian's management group, he continues to publish on the music business, for example in collaboration with Simon Frith. Similarly, Taraneh Dadar, currently working at the BBC Monitoring Unit, publishes on melodrama and women in contemporary Iranian film. Stevenson's publications are submitted to

Environment template (REF5)

REF 2014 due to his appointment as Lecturer in Cultural Management and Policy, as a consequence of which his registration has transferred to part-time.

d. Income, infrastructure and facilities

The Centre for Academic Practice runs the QMU Research Skills Training (RST) Programme. In addition to an extensive range of online journals, citation research tools and other dedicated research resources, the Learning Resource Centre (LRC) and Research Support Librarian provide information retrieval advice and repository of data sets. The Research and Knowledge Exchange Unit (RKEU) supports the development of research policy and strategy through the Research Strategy Committee, provides individually-tailored support for staff seeking funding opportunities or submitting research grant applications including the pricing of research, and facilitation of knowledge exchange and impact.

QMU supports research through a variety of institutional, national and international initiatives, for example achieving recognition for HR Excellence in Research from the EC through involvement in the national Researcher Development Scheme (RDS); the Athena Swan award (bronze); the EURAXESS network; equality and diversity initiatives; ECR integration and career development strategies. QMU has an established mentoring scheme for staff that has been under review and development. In particular attention has been given to the needs of novice researchers, those on fractional contracts and women to address the imbalance in REF representation from those groups. There is dedicated support for Research & Knowledge Exchange and Public Engagement. All staff have access to research.com and Research Professional. QMU is a member of the Beltane Public Engagement Network (Beltane), which is supported by four Edinburgh universities: Edinburgh, Heriot-Watt, Napier and QMU. The Beltane follows on from, and builds on, the work of the Edinburgh Beltane Beacon for Public Engagement project, which was one of six UK Beacons for Public Engagement funded by Research Councils UK, the Funding Councils and the Wellcome Trust.

The University has invested in the growth of research, including funding the Centre for Dialogue, the project that underpins Case Study 1, and the funding of two RA 0.6 FTE posts that underpin both case studies and an RF 0.2 FTE post that leads into Impact scoping and strategic planning for 2014 onwards. Since 2008 the university has also invested in nine doctoral bursaries in the UoA.

Institutional Research Strategy is formulated by, and in consultation with, members of the Research Strategy Committee and reviewed by the Senate. The key strategic institutional research policies were to invest in areas of excellence, named as flagships in early 2012 as part of planning, implementation and reflection processes (including open staff consultation sessions) that followed organisational re-structuring. These processes and practices have underpinned operational planning 2011–15. Planning cycles are being extended to include five and ten-year periods. Financial planning and allocation is flexible to permit the ability to respond to strategic opportunities within and outwith the institution.

e. Collaboration and contribution to the discipline or research base

Submitted research outputs share a common concern with the production of culture and its economic context and with ways in which the political aspects of culture can be conceived and demonstrated. The research is grouped thematically in terms of culture and economy, including the culture industries, cultural policy and critique of communication management. The research unit has also developed work on contemporary film and television genres and their refraction through questions of gender and sexuality. The outputs reflect the fact that staff are not confined to one theme and that some research topics overlap. Because of its interdisciplinary character the research necessarily pushes at the limits of thematic confines. For example, the research unit regards public relations as a core culture industry, not least because it is engaged in the production of symbolic texts and is conditioned by cultural contexts. The research unit's critical work on public relations and the larger field of communications management stems from that approach. The disciplinary contributions of the submitted research and the collaborative relations that have sustained it are laid out below.

The unit's outputs that focus on the core activities of the culture industries share a concern with their political and economic dimensions. Thus, Percival's research, based on practitioner

Environment template (REF5)

interviews, contributes to the revision of established views on the power relations between popular music radio and the record business (MP4) which is complemented by historical research on the relation between Scottish 'indie' music and BBC Scotland's *Beat Patrol* programme (MP2). Focusing on the relationship between publishing and the film industry, Zeller-Jacques' work on the adaptation of the *X Men* superhero franchise locates the process within the industrial context of media conglomeration (MZJ2). At a more theoretical level but drawing on examples from the film industry, Valentine uses the economic category of rent to explain the political economy of work in culture industries, with a particular emphasis on the entrepreneurial phase of production, in order to address the issue of cooperation under conditions of uncertainty (JV1).

Expanding the scope of the culture industry to include the production of spaces of culture, research on that topic established in the RAE 2008 submission has developed to address the wider political and economic contexts which drive economic and social investment in the value of cultural place. This has been mainly through the development of critical approaches to phenomena such as festivals and managed events. Thus, one of Finkel's outputs explains the emergence of the increasingly-standardised 'combined arts festival' phenomenon through the effects of uniform policy drivers linked to predicted economic impacts (RF4), which is examined further by research on the involvement of business sponsorship of a festival (RF2). The way in which cultural value is established as place is the focus of Matheson's empirical research, which explores the subjective dimensions of emotion and authenticity amongst music festival audiences (CM3). The contested symbolic value of culture and place is considered in Percival's review of the debate over 'tartanry' in popular music (MP3) and through a critical examination of the contribution of Scottish popular music to the Britpop phenomenon (MP1).

Research on the production of spaces of culture also contributes to work that addresses questions of cultural policy. Matheson's research on the positioning of the forthcoming 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow as a contributor to the local economy and social fabric locates policy within tensions between the local and the supranational (CM1). Cultural policy, and the assumptions that support it, is also examined in terms of its formation through state and institutional agencies in Stevenson's outputs, based on his current PhD research. Using methodological approaches developed within the field of Interpretative Policy Analysis in political science, Stevenson analyses the problem of cultural participation which drives decision-making and resource allocation in cultural policy (DS2). By combining statistical data and conceptual analysis, focused on the case of the National Galleries of Scotland, Stevenson suggests ways of addressing the problem of procedures for establishing a 'legitimate' public value for cultural organisations receiving state subsidy that could be beneficial to both cultural institutions and their publics (DS1). Within the research unit the scope of cultural policy is expanded to include media through Zeller-Jacques' paper 'Challenging and Different', which examines issues of gender representation in the context of Channel 4's public service remit (MZJ1). Building on work as a researcher on a three-year ESRC research project (RES-062-23-1292) led by David Buckingham, Powell's co-authored work examines media in the context of educational policy, looking at teachers' and students' media cultures (MPO2) and strategies for teaching media institutions to primary school children (MPO1). Research in the unit also examines the communication of policy and the discursive contexts that shape it, evident in Pieczka's co-authored critical analysis of the development of UK science policy discourse (MPZ4).

The broader political aspects of culture are also addressed from a variety of perspectives. Thus, political issues arising from the production of managed events are discussed in Finkel's chapter on events and political agendas, published in the first book on Research Themes in Events, co-edited with colleagues from the Universities of the West of Scotland and Wolverhampton (RF3). These critical approaches are also supported by Finkel's account of tourism resistance and gender dichotomies in Shetland (RF1) and, with Matheson, empirical research that establishes issues of gender politics around policies aimed at the prevention of sex trafficking at the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver (CM2, CM4). The political dimension of mediation is addressed in three submitted outputs: Stewart traces the representation of 9/11 and its framing in terms of trauma within the 'hypothetical docudrama' genre as a vehicle for an imagined political event (MS1); Valentine's submission on the analysis of the mediation of the death and funeral of Margaret

Environment template (REF5)

Thatcher introduces a critical and political dimension to the debate over the notion of 'media event' (JV2); Valentine's work, building on his contributions to RAE 2008, developing theoretical approaches to the relationship between culture and politics, specifically in the case of an analysis of the philosophical foundations of the conception of radical democracy in the work of the American political theorist William Connolly (JV3 an invited contribution to the first edited collection on Connolly's work which includes a contribution from Connolly) and of the contribution to Claude Lefort's theory of radical democracy to the development of the theory of hegemony in the work of Laclau and Mouffe (JV4) an invited contribution to the first edited collection of Lefort's work in English.

Research on communication management has grown from the research unit's work on critical approaches to Public Relations that challenges narrow functionalist approaches and the self-mythologising that characterises PR practice (MPZ3). As well as addressing the weaknesses of the disciplinary boundaries that stabilise accounts of PR, this research also expands the boundaries of PR practice into the wider field of communication management and is enabled through the development of critical approaches, informed by international relations, to address the notion of cultural diplomacy (JLE1), political science, including theories of deliberative democracy, history (JLE2), ethics and corporate social responsibility (JLE4), anthropology and the sociology and ethnography of professionalization (JLE3). In particular, research has examined the mobilisation of notions of 'dialogue' as a legitimating device through which PR is institutionalised (MPZ2) contributing to the research underpinning Impact Case Study 1.

The research unit's work on public relations and communication management has received positive global acknowledgement evidenced, for example, by the overseas invitations its staff have received. Pieczka has enjoyed a visiting appointment at the University of Orebro, was keynote speaker on 'Diversity and dialogue: trends of development in the field of public relations: 1992-2012' at the 3rd International Public Relations Conference organized by the Professional Council of Public Relations of Argentina, Buenos Aires, 28 August 2012, and keynote speaker on 'The role of dialogue in communication management' at OSCE/ECREA, Covilha, Portugal, May 2011. Pieczka also achieved international recognition for her work in public relations, twice winning a Top Paper Award at the International Communication Association (ICA) conference in Montreal, 2008 and London, 2013. L'Etang gave keynote addresses at the inaugural International History of Public Relations Conference (2010) and at the World Public Relations Festival organised by the Global Alliance in collaboration with the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (2008). Reputations established by the research unit's work have also attracted overseas academics to QMU to work and collaborate from the University of Sydney, University of Murdoch, University of Waikato, Universidade Beira Interior, Catholic University of Louvain, Universitat Rovira I Virgili, Queensland University of Technology, and the University of Wellington.

The research unit's work on public relations and communications management is reflected by staff participation in the infrastructure of research dissemination and disciplinary formation. Pieczka edited *Journal of Communication Management* 2008–2013 and is a member of the editorial boards of *Journal of Public Relations Research*, and *Public Relations Inquiry*. L'Etang is lead and founding co-editor of *Public Relations Inquiry* and is a member of the editorial boards of *Public Relations Review*, *Journal of Public Relations Research*, and *Journal of Communication Management*. In addition to submitted pieces L'Etang had work published in a number of refereed international collections including *The Sage Handbook of Public Relations* (2010), *The Handbook of Communication and Corporate Responsibility* (with Lugo-Ocando Sheffield U. & Ahmad, International Islamic University, Malaysia 2011), *Coming out of the closet: exploring LGBT Issues in Strategic Communication with Theory and Research* (2013 with Edwards, University of Leeds). L'Etang co-edited Special Issues of *Public Relations Review* on ethnography (with C Hodges, Bournemouth U. and M. Pieczka) and on sport (with M. Hopwood, Bond University). L'Etang is co-editor of *The Routledge Handbook of Critical Public Relations* with Professors David McKie (Waikato) and Jordi Xifra (Pompeu Fabra) scheduled for publication in August 2015 to coincide with a large international and multi-disciplinary conference on critical public relations at QMU.

Environment template (REF5)

In addition to work mentioned above the contribution of the research unit's work on contemporary film and television genres stems from the ways in which the question of dominant narratives and generic modes are addressed in terms of their endurance and renewal in the context of increasing convergence across media forms. In this respect Zeller-Jacques' work takes a special interest in serial narration particularly as it manifests in contemporary television series, transmedia franchises and adaptations, all forms which are undergoing rapid change and innovation in response to new digital flows and patterns of media ownership (MZJ2, MZJ3). Zeller-Jacques' developing interest in qualitative audience studies is used to explore the lineaments of narrative desire in relation to serial television narrative, and, in particular, to explore the non-normative desires of audiences in relation to the endings of long-running television dramas (MJZ4). Stewart's work also addresses the issue of film adaptation to show how in the case of *Brokeback Mountain* the process was materialised through melodramatic tropes and conventions, the importance of which weighs on the significance of the film itself (MS3). The analysis of *Red Road* also provides an example of Stewart's larger, ongoing research project on melodrama, which addresses its theoretical and conceptual circumscription in a discussion of a film that has generally been received in terms of its gritty realism in order to demonstrate the development of the concept within contemporary film practice and aesthetics.