

Impact template (REF3a)

Institution: London South Bank University
Unit of Assessment: Communication Culture & Media Studies Library & Information Management
<p>a. Context</p> <p>This unit of assessment is based on the work of the Centre for Media & Culture Research (CMCR), which incorporates staff from two academic departments within the Faculty of Arts & Human Sciences: Arts & Media, and Culture, Writing & Performance. Staff collaborate closely across the two departments, and both are represented in the impact case studies.</p> <p>The main beneficiaries of our research are organisations, businesses, professional associations and individuals within the creative and cultural sectors. As detailed below, examples include galleries such as Tate and The Photographers' Gallery, professional bodies such as the International Game Developers Association, charities such as the Wellcome Trust, and broadcasters such as Radio Romania International and RTE. Some of our work also addresses non-academic audiences in less directly-measurable ways, including through research on particular issues such as war and conflict, or ethnic and sexual identity, where beneficiaries include policy-makers and other stakeholders, and members of the public.</p> <p>The areas of impact of our research include influencing civil society and cultural policy-making in the arts and media sectors. The types of impact involved include interpreting cultural heritage, helping organisations adapt to changing cultural values, and indirectly contributing to economic prosperity via the creative sector. Our work includes practice-based research, which is also highly relevant here, whereby the impact of our research can be understood in terms of creating new forms of artistic expression and generating new ways of thinking that influence creative practices beyond the academy.</p>
<p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>We recognise that different pathways to impact and approaches to engagement with non-academic audiences are appropriate for different sorts of research and to different stages of the research and dissemination process. Rather than a single approach, we would identify three distinct, though not mutually exclusive, dimensions of impact which are applicable to our work:</p> <p>1) <u>impact through dissemination and public engagement</u></p> <p>Although it may be intended and planned as part of the research design, this type of impact activity is usually <i>post-hoc</i> in the sense that it generally involves the engagement of mainly non-specialist audiences in the dissemination of completed research. The types of impact involved here are difficult to quantify, but include extending and enhancing public understanding of major issues and challenges through contributing to public discourse; and creating and inspiring new forms of creative practice. Examples include:</p> <p>Hammond's research on the media and war, which sought to inform public understanding of contemporary war and conflict via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – media interviews: <i>Die Zeit</i> online, 2008; Radio Belgrade, 2009; <i>Glas Srpske</i> (Bosnia), 2009; Lusa news agency (Portugal), 2010; CBC (Canada), 2010; Worldbytes online film 'Comedy and the War on Terror' based around Hammond's research (2013). – participation in public debates: 'What is the point of British foreign policy?' panel debate with Charlie Edwards (Demos), Ian Kearns (IPPR) and Bruno Waterfield (<i>Telegraph</i>), sponsored by the Institute of Ideas and <i>Time Out</i>, LSBU, 2008; producer and chair of 'Crimes against humanity and international law' panel debate with Jonathan Cooper (Doughty Street Chambers), Nick Donovan (Aegis Trust), John Laughland (Institute of Democracy and Cooperation), at the annual Battle of Ideas festival, Royal College of Art, 2010; 'Has the war on terror failed?' panel debate with Daud Abdullah (Muslim Council of Britain), Carol Gould (<i>Current Viewpoint</i>), Paul Eedle (<i>Out There News</i>), Queens' School, Bushey (part of the Research Councils UK's <i>Global Uncertainties</i> programme), 2010. – contributions to specialist policy discussions: invited participation in <i>Responding to Insurgencies in the Third Millennium</i>, Royal United Services Institute, 2008; invited panellist at the <i>Humanitarian Intervention: Past, Present and Future</i> conference, Royal Institute of International Affairs, Chatham House, 2008; invited participation in Royal United Services

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Institute/Centre for Foreign Policy Analysis conference, *Prosecuting Presidents*, Royal United Services Institute, 2009.

Sawdon-Smith's practice-based research which has challenged cultural values and assumptions in public discourses around sexuality and health. In particular, the work has problematised and questioned the effects that medical and scientific discourses about HIV/AIDS have on our relationship to our own bodies. Pathways to impact have included engaging with constituencies such as artists, critics and art audiences, NGOs and campaign groups concerned with HIV/AIDS, and other stakeholders including the AIDS community, via:

- wide exhibition of the work, including at the International Museum of Surgical Science (Chicago, 2010), the Royal Academy (2012), the 'Transgression' exhibition at Beers Lambert Project Space (2011), the 'Queer Self Portraits Now' show at Fred International (2011-12), the 'Round Hole, Square Peg: Queer Identity in the 21st Century' exhibition at the Smart Clothes Gallery (New York, 2013), 'The Solitary Body: Self-portraiture in Contemporary Photography' exhibition at the Ticino Contemporary Art Museum (Switzerland, 2013); and solo shows in Mexico City (2008), Belgrade (2008) and RISE Berlin (2012).
- media interviews and appearances, including *CNN.com* (2011), the Chicago-based *Streetanatomy.com* (2011), *Out There Magazine* (2012), *Uncertain States* magazine (2013), and *BBC Newsnight* (2013).

Scafe's impact activities around her research on Black British writing, which have included: participation in a panel discussion at the National Theatre organised by the Black Theatre Archive (2012); interviewing Doreen Lawrence, Diana Evans and Patricia Cumper at the Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust, Deptford, for a public event titled *Total Recall: Black Women and Autobiography* (2010); working with the Black Cultural Archives Oral Histories project to launch a touring archive entitled 'Heart of the Race: Oral Histories of the Black Women's Movement', funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, and giving interviews and talks at various public events held to launch the archive at venues including the Feminist Library and the London Metropolitan Archives (2012-13).

2) impact through specialist user engagement

A second dimension of impact involves the direct involvement of end-users, specialist non-academic audiences and other stakeholders, usually as part of the research process. The University's support for enterprise and knowledge-transfer activities, via specialist Business and Enterprise staff and a dedicated KTP unit, encourages researchers to pursue this type of impact, which includes seeking to inform professional practices, encourage innovation, and contribute to economic prosperity in the arts, media and cultural sectors. Examples include:

Sluis's work on a KTP project developing a social media strategy for Tracc films, optimising their website using digital marketing principles, and understanding what products were on the market in terms of packaging video production services with social marketing, and how they could break into this area of video analytics (2011).

Thomas's work with the International Game Developers Association and the Writers' Guild of Great Britain, to convene industry panel discussions with games writers at LSBU and BAFTA in 2011 and 2012.

Roush's organisation of a series of shows and talks by visiting artists, including the ABC Artists' Books Cooperative (2012) and the P.A.R.A.S.I.T.E. Institute (2011) to support the impact of her research on artists' books.

3) impact through collaborative research

Research which involves collaboration with organisations outside the academy often also offers clear opportunities to extend collaborative work to ensure that the research has impact, both in terms of directly benefiting collaborative partners, and also in reaching wider audiences. We have explored different models for achieving impact in this way: undertaking commissioned research; building impact activities into the design of funded collaborative research projects; and drawing on the dual researcher/practitioner identities of our staff to exploit opportunities for impact. The two case studies exemplify this approach, but other examples include:

Alexander's research on brain collecting, which was commissioned by the Wellcome Trust. The work was disseminated and exhibited in 2012 as part of the *Brains: The Mind as Matter* exhibition at the Wellcome Collection which, with over 100,000 visitors, was the most popular ever staged at the museum. Alexander's work, focussing on the practice of collecting, was important both in contextualising the overall exhibition and in highlighting the ways in which the brain has been constructed as an object of scientific knowledge. Follow-up impact activities enabled by the collaboration included further exhibition of the work at the Museum of Medical History in Berlin and the Museum of Science and Industry in Manchester, and the publication of photographic essays both in the book which accompanied the original exhibition and in the online journal *Wild Culture*.

Sluis's combination of academic research on networked digital media with professional practice as curator of digital programmes at The Photographers' Gallery. Her 2012-13 exhibition, *For the LOL of Cats: Felines, Photography and the Web*, which attracted over 54,000 visitors, combined a programme of academic work with creative digital curation, exploring the relationship between the circulation of the networked image and traditional forms of photographic exhibition. Online dissemination included both an edited collection of scholarly articles and spontaneous sharing via social media. Indicators of impact include positive reviews in generalist media (*Independent, Guardian, Time Out*) and in specialist publications such as *Design Week, Creative Review* and *ARTINFO*. Follow-up impact activities addressed both academic and non-academic audiences, particularly curators and new media practitioners, via presentations of the research at the *International Symposium on Electronic Art* (Sydney) and *The Photographic Universe II* (New York).

c. Strategy and plans

In line with our overall post-REF2014 research strategy, our impact strategy is driven by the goals of raising the profile of the centre, building capacity, and achieving financial sustainability. Our plans revolve around raising staff awareness of the importance of impact in planning, conducting and disseminating research, and improving procedures for follow-up and evidence-gathering.

These objectives will be addressed by:

- (1) providing staff with training in impact monitoring and assessment;
- (2) aligning the guidelines for internal university funding bids with those of RCUK schemes by requiring the inclusion of impact strategy planning;
- (3) helping research-active staff to maximise the visibility of their research by supporting public-engagement events both at the university and with collaborative partners;
- (4) pursuing further opportunities for collaborative research with relevant organisations with whom we have well-established links, such as Tate, the BFI, the Imperial War Museum and The Photographers' Gallery;
- (5) monitoring evidence-gathering in relation to impact via the CMCR management committee;
- (6) working with the university to move towards an open access publishing model to ensure the public availability of our research.

d. Relationship to case studies

As noted above, the case studies indicate the potential, in both traditionally-framed academic research and in creative practice-led research, to achieve impact via collaborative with partners outside the academy. Significantly, both projects have built on this success by securing further funding to develop the research, in the form of AHRC studentships which progress particular aspects of the Tate Encounters project; and in Arts Council funding for further research and innovation to advance the gains of The Works project.

The case studies indicate the importance of public engagement – theatre audiences, in the case of **Banatvala's** work, or the programme of public events and freely-available online research reports which formed an integral part of **Dewdney's** Tate Encounters research. They also demonstrate the potential for engaging specialist audiences and developing new professional practices in these areas – whether in terms of innovating new forms of radio drama, or rethinking the role of the museum in the digital era.