

Institution: University of the West of Scotland

Unit of Assessment: 36

a. Context

Our research within UoA36 generates original insights into creative social practices, ranging from the visual and performing arts to journalism, communication, social networking and cultural events. Our findings contribute crucial discoveries about humanity's social, political and cultural life; the research also foregrounds new & imaginative subjects and forms of creative expression & practice.

Our main non-academic user groups, beneficiaries and audiences

We have fostered relationships with creatively engaged professionals (e.g. curators, artists, event organisers, media professionals) and policy makers. Our impact activities typically engages with the general public and we estimate that the total number of people attending and participating in activities informed by our research since 2008 is in excess of 1.5 million, based on figures associated with the Abandon Normal Device Festival, Edinburgh International Science Festival, Wellcome Trust exhibition, and citizen journalism projects of Vancouver 2010 and London 2012.

What types of impact have we achieved?

Since 2008 we have achieved impact in:

- *Civil society*: involvement with artists, galleries, curators, festivals and mega-events (e.g. London 2012) to influence and contribute their strategic development (e.g. FACT Liverpool, Cornerhouse Manchester) and the specific content of exhibitions and novel festival programmes (e.g. Wellcome Trust, Abandon Normal Devices (AND), We Play, Edinburgh International Science Festival).
- *Cultural life*: we have partnered with, and our research has informed the realisation of new artistic works, designs and other forms of expression (e.g. artists and designers), including opportunities for the public to co-create new experiences that have enriched their lives (e.g. citizen journalism research).
- *Economic prosperity*: the exhibitions, shows and other creative productions inspired by our research generate economic activity (ticket sales, associated event materials, attracting visitors to venues). The AND Festival generated an additional £3 million investment in the North West of England.
- *Policy-making*: we have contributed research-based evidence to national and European policy discussions, for example the European Parliament's inquiries and policy development in the areas of digital strategy and human enhancement.
- *Public discourse*: the creative production generated by our research, and its subsequent media coverage, have stimulated and provided robust arguments in discussions and debate on topics ranging from bioethics to the role of science in society.

b. Approach to impact

Our research activity is often intrinsically linked with our impact, as our involvement in mega-events, cultural, media and artistic projects are frequently also the subject of our inquiries. We observe, analyse and recommend changes in practice; these are then adopted by our creative collaborators, and we are able to study the influence and outcomes of our ideas and recommendations.

Since 2008 our approach to impact has focused on building strong working relationships by: a) supporting individual researchers to build strong networks with creative professionals and drive innovative collaborations for impact; b) developing long-term, cross-school relationships with partner institutions. Since 2008, dedicated new funding has been invested by UWS to support public engagement activities and impact development.

Although much of our work naturally focuses on our immediate region, researchers use their networks and relationships to develop impact at all levels, including through international partnerships, such as our work with the International Olympic Committee and nationally with our involvement in London 2012 and Glasgow 2014.

The Creative Futures Institute (CFi) has formalised this approach by developing guidelines for funding applications, which cohere with the impact pathways of research councils. The CFi therefore prioritises funding proposals for internationally excellent research & impact activities from across the School of Creative and Cultural Industries (CCI) & nurtures growth through monitoring.

Developing pathways for impact through researcher-led relationships

Since 2008 the typical pathways to impact for our research have been through established relationships and the involvement of creative practitioners in the research process. These partnerships demonstrate our practice-led approach to research and impact, whereby research insights and impact are achieved when researchers from a range of subjects are brought together with creative professionals to develop knowledge. This process is exemplified by Professor **Miah's** work on technological culture, which drew from such diverse areas as art theory, bioethics, and science and led to working with artists and curators on realising new work (exhibitions and art).

Staff appointments are made partly on the basis of their track record in generating impact within the creative and cultural sector, especially those who have expertise in co-curating work and delivering experimental public engagement activity. For example, **McPherson** and **McGillivray** (events and festivals), **Tessler** (music industry) and **Higgins** (film making), each brought with them established impact relationships. The CFi has helped maintain these, either through funding ongoing relationships at the end of core project funding, or by establishing event programmes with the partners to sustain interactions and exploit potential, subsequent or unanticipated impact. For example, **McPherson's** role on Creative Scotland's board has been a catalyst for developing new projects around the London 2012 and Glasgow 2014 cultural programmes.

To assist our research leaders in developing new relationships and opportunities for impact, UWS established the UWS Creative Media Academy in 2010 to promote interdisciplinary practice and engagement with the creative and cultural sector. The Academy plays a crucial role for CFi researchers to nurture impact relationships. Additionally, the Media Academy Knowledge Exchange (MAKE) space was launched in 2012 to bridge the Academy and the CFi. The two entities are resourced by: the MAKE manager, an administrator and the Academy Professorial lead (**Prof Higgins**), providing an optimal infrastructure to support impact development.

MAKE focuses on generating opportunities for knowledge exchange with the creative and cultural industry; it also explores new routes for staff members to develop impact around their research by identifying potential research users and responding to tenders for applied research. A project funded by the Scottish Funding Council and the European Regional Development Fund is an example of the kind of relationships that the Academy and MAKE seek to establish. In this case, researchers engaged with over 50 businesses, providing them with insights into social media. As part of the project, our researchers developed a creative methodology (the surgery model) for engaging small and medium sized enterprises. This approach has been successfully adopted by other HEIs and business support agencies.

Our research leaders have also developed influential relationships through secondments and advisory roles with cultural organisation (e.g. **Miah** at FACT Liverpool and **Crawford's** secondment to the Scottish Executive to advise on the Scottish independence vote).

Developing long-term relationships with collaborators and partners

Often the manner in which we follow through to identify the results of our impact partnerships is by building on successful relationships from earlier projects and working together on new initiatives. The impact case study titled "We Are the Media" embodies this approach, describing the continuity of impact from the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Games through to London 2012 and Glasgow 2014. The UK's Media Trust has become an established partner for our citizen journalism research theme. The 2013 Big Lottery funded Digital Commonwealth project allows us to continue working with community media organisations through relationships already established in such projects as #media2012 and #CitizenRelay.

Impact template (REF3a)

Our key collaborators, with whom we regularly work on creative outreach, strategy and policy development include the Centre for Contemporary Arts (Glasgow), the Edinburgh International Science Festival and Creative Scotland. These organisations testify to the significant contribution our research and collaborations have made to their activities and hence their audiences.

c. Strategy and plans

Since 2012, CFI funding policy requires researchers to outline activities and pathways to impact, in line with the relevant research council guidelines. The Academy and MAKE oversee all funding proposals and tender responses. In subsequent years, MAKE will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this policy, in collaboration with the CFI.

Building relationships for impact

All staff have also identified key contacts from their personal networks and we aim to build intelligence around these associations to cultivate a more coherent overview of our impact across various sectors. These relationships are scrutinised and discussed at monthly CFI steering group meetings, where influential or appropriate organisations or individuals are identified for impact-focused collaborations & outreach, at which staff are supported to develop a proposal for collaboration. The implementation of our impact strategy began with the creation of the Creative Media Academy in 2010, which, together with MAKE and the CFI dedicate substantial funds to impact related activities. In year 2012-2013, this investment encompassed such activity as sponsoring events, workshops, meetings, communication campaigns, and seed funding.

This allocation will increase over a five-year period to ensure we frontload investment in this area and have greater scope for demonstrating the impact of our research. The wider CCI investment into resources for supporting research impact is approximately £70,000, a figure which matches the core budget allocated to the CFI for research development.

This strategic investment to drive impact is written into the CFI business plan (a UWS condition of achieving Institute status) and the business plan is developed by the CFI Director in consultation with the CFI Steering Committee. These plans are ratified by the Faculty Executive Board and, subsequently, the University Research and Knowledge Exchange Board. The CFI's impact strategy, which incorporated UWS priorities and initiatives, seeks to embed impact activities into the research programme of UoA36. Along with on-going support for the UWS Creative Media Academy and MAKE – the primary vehicles for driving impact from our research – the vision highlights the needs for embedding impact into all levels of activity (e.g. annual reviews, training, and a new mentoring system for new researchers to cultivate an impact culture).

Over the next five years, the CFI will also establish a dedicated, open seminar series on 'impact,' which will engage UoA36 researchers from around the UK to discuss their 2014 impact case studies in detail, to foster greater insight into developing impact. This will encourage researchers to identify best practice, highlight key relationships to nurture, and inspire research staff to actively seek opportunities and develop relationships that achieve impact from their work.

d. Relationship to case studies

Case study 1 (Bringing Science to Society) shows how an *individual research leader (Miah)* developed trusted, long-term partnerships, within creative communities (England's North West), which led to investment from arts/cultural partners into applying his research. The creation of Abandon Normal Devices festival was measurably influenced by **Miah's** research output, as evidenced by his having led an influential stakeholder consultation and co-curating the festival programme around his research expertise. UWS supported this relationship through financial investment of **Miah's** time and in co-sponsoring events within the programme.

Case study 2 (We Are the Media) highlights the *cross-school* collaboration behind much of our impact. The case study describes how **Miah** and **McGillivray** developed a new strand of research impact activity around citizen journalism, engaging over 15 organisations. The wider involvement of non-REF CCI staff in delivering #citizenrelay demonstrates how our cross-school approach to impact develops around our research agenda.