

Institution: Aberystwyth University
Unit of Assessment: 29 English Language and Literature
<p>a. Context</p> <p>Historically, our impact activities have concentrated on two main user groups. The first group belongs within the broad theme of <i>cultural life</i> and comprises those who attend literary festivals, visit museums and art galleries and buy or borrow novels and books of poetry. The second group is involved in <i>education</i> and includes those teaching and learning in other sectors of education, especially (but not exclusively) at A Level. More recently, we have attempted to expand this approach by engaging in novel partnerships to reach new audiences. An example of this is the long-term collaboration with the scientific community described in the 'Remembering the Land' Impact Case Study which led to our development of impacts relating to <i>Public Understanding</i>, as are detailed in that case study.</p> <p>We have, during the 2008-13 cycle, undergone a process of movement from a departmental culture that encouraged impact activity to one in which impact is a formal element in our strategic planning. While we have expanded our approach to enhance our impact- types (to include, for example Public Understanding), Cultural Life and Education remain our two key main types of impact. Our strategy, 'Framework for Impact' (which underpins our approach to impact and is, therefore, delineated at the outset of this document), identifies four key principles which guide our impact activities in our key impact domains:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collaborative and interdisciplinary research is likely to maximise impact 2. Planning for Impact must be built into research projects, especially where two or more colleagues are working together on a project, 3. An Impact culture is further developed into our research infrastructure, so that (for instance) it features in the foregrounding of impact in the regular monitoring of individuals' research, in the remit of our Research Centres and in postgraduate training 4. Communication strategies should be developed to reach the wider audiences that are key to successful impact
<p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>The approach to impact is based on the four principles of our 'Framework for Impact' focusing on the key domains of Cultural Life, Education and Public Understanding. The department's current approach to (2) ('Planning for Impact') includes monitoring and development of the impact element in grant applications and the fostering of collaborative initiatives. The department Research Committee is a key locus for assessing and encouraging the impact elements of staff members' research plans. In particular applications for research leave, considered at Research Committee, are assessed with attention to the impact of the proposed research projects. Additionally the newly introduced annual Staff Development and Performance Review process provides an opportunity to raise staff awareness of the importance of developing impact strategies for proposed research projects. An important element in implementing our approach is spreading awareness of existing 'best practice' on matters of impact, by using the Department's research bulletin <i>Research Matters</i>. The success of our strategy is seen in the department's two current Leverhulme-funded projects ('Devolved Voices' and 'Women's Poetry') both of which are interdisciplinary and collaborative and both of which are in the early stages of their funding period during this REF cycle. For example the 'Devolved Voices' project (DV) had two distinct strands of publication built in from the beginning, these being described, respectively, as 'Outreach' and 'Scholarly'. In the project's first year its website has a wide audience with 2,112 views so far, 171 being the greatest number on one day. The blog has had 1,329 views and its best day was 60. The Twitter presence is building, with nearly 200 followers, and DV has a growing community on Facebook, with 116 members (made up of established and new poets, academics, readers). Impact is built into the aims and objectives of the project 'Women's Poetry' through audio-visual resources, school visits, media and social promotion, a blog, exhibitions in museums and musical performances of the extensive oral poetry in the corpus. Both of these</p>

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projects therefore contribute to the cultural lives of a wide range of audience type, as well as making specific contribution to education through targeting of selected material for schools audiences.

Department Research Centres are key to our Framework principle of (1) collaborative and interdisciplinary research. Each Research Centre Director is responsible for enhancing its impact. Two postgraduate representatives (elected annually) assist with specific responsibilities for the practical application of this. The Centre for Women's Writing has a link with Honno Press which supplies material for a Book Club, that is facilitated by postgraduate representatives, for example, and which aims to enhance the cultural lives of its members through the activities of reading and group discussion. In the case of 'Contempo' (the Centre for Contemporary Poetry), the postgraduate representative facilitates the innovative 'Poems in Progress' section of its web-site in which poets volunteer to compose in 'real time', posting on-going drafts of a poem as it develops, commenting on the problems and issues encountered, and encouraging dialogue and postings from readers and other poets, thereby enabling an educative process through this online forum.

Two of our Research Centres hold annual conferences which are specifically designed to engage the wider community, using a venue in the National Library of Wales [NLW]. The Centre for Women's Writing and Literary Culture utilises its creative aspect to engage students and the local community in public readings of, for example, poetry; providing education through the dissemination of critically informed poetry, as well as the culturally vital entertainment which such events supply. We are also embedding the infrastructure of impact into our postgraduate culture; encouraging postgraduates to seek a wider audience for aspects of their work which have impact potential, and providing funding for associated research trips. [Framework for Impact, Aims 3 and 4] An example is a talk on a previously-unknown poem by David Jones about the Suez Crisis: the poem was discovered in the NLW by a PhD student and described in a paper at the launch of the David Jones Centre. Subsequently, departmental funding was provided to interview the wife of a former Prime Minister, it was developed into a 'Commentary' article and published in the *TLS* in 2013 which also discussed the poet's close relations with 10 Downing Street.

The Department makes extensive use of University initiatives and provision for our infrastructural enhancement of impact which is central for the implementation of the department's strategy. For example: the Research Development Officer dedicated to supporting the Arts and Humanities is consulted and attends Research Committees, while the newly appointed Professor of Public Engagement for the Arts and Humanities (which is Marggraf Turley, a member of staff in the English Department), advises on engagement opportunities. The University Research Skills Training module 'Ways of Reading', demonstrates the interpretive practices of several disciplines within the Institute and beyond (including art, performance studies, history, and English and Creative Writing), and the long-established PhD 'Writing Event', organised bi-annually by the University's International English Centre, now places considerable emphasis on fluency, readability, and the extension of access to research findings. Along with the University's Royal Literary Fund Fellows, our Department has a major involvement in the Writing Event, and learning to write for a wider-than-academic audience is now a key aspect of it. We thereby educate our postgraduates on the issues of wider communication that are central to the Department's own impact strategy. Marggraf Turley's involvement with engagement has helped the Department to broaden our approach to impact, by enhancing our awareness of how more strategically to employ the University's structures for communications, marketing and media releases.

c. Strategy and plans

Our 'Framework for Impact' (delineated in Section a) is a strategy based on the evidence of successful, funded, research projects. Although in the early stages of this REF cycle our impact strategy was not formalised, we have always recognised the significance of engaging with wider audiences (for example through our established Annual Schools Conference targeting A level students). Since then, we have built impact issues into the Department's infrastructure as outlined in (b). We see the next REF cycle as crucial to the forward development of our impact strategy. This will include enhancing staff awareness and knowledge of impact through a series of designated research seminars; and Department involvement in the

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production of a cross-Institute impact-awareness strategy. Our Research Centres continue to act as a hub for connecting to the users, beneficiaries and audiences of our research, and as key structures for the implementation of our strategic aims 3 and 4 ['impact culture' and 'communication' see (a)] through their role in maintaining awareness of the significance of creating impact pathways and communicating the impact of our research to the wider community. In the Department's new alignment as the Institute of Literature, Languages and Creative Arts we plan to enhance the impact profile of our existing centres by, for example, diversifying their inter-disciplinarity to attract new members and audience groups. We will also be collaborating on the foundation of multidisciplinary, collaborative Research Centres which have a clear agenda, utilising our Framework for Impact and the new Institute-wide strategy for enhancing the impact of our specialist research in the three key domains identified, that is in a) Cultural Life; b) Education and 3) Public Understanding.

Individual and collaborative research takes time to grow into a centre of expertise. The Department is developing project areas, which we envisage will become centres of excellence underpinned by an attention to impact during the next cycle. An example of this growth process is The Mostyn Project, which entails research on the substantial literary, material and historical archives of a major landholding family in Wales. The project is an initiative of the Institute of Medieval and Early Modern Studies (IMEMS) led by Salter. It was funded by an AHRC Cultural Engagement Award (2012/13). Its launch in 2009 was a public lecture with representatives present from the Mostyn family, and the Mostyn Estate, as well as the public, academics, postgraduate students and representatives of archives, libraries and archaeological trusts. Since then, there have been numerous Mostyn Project Local History Society talks. A colloquium (2011), 'Opening the Vaults': Researching Welsh family archives c. 1500-1850', was held at Gloddaith Hall (St. David's College), Llandudno. This was organised by the then Mostyn PhD student Dr Shaun Evans (graduated 2013), and by former Aberystwyth PhD student Dr Mary Chadwick. The focus was on Mostyn, plus other North Wales family archives, the audience being academic and local history society in about an equal mix. This building research expertise and impact activity on the literary and historical archives of major landholding families in Wales is now set for expansion to a multidisciplinary research group, and associated funding bids, on the history and sustainability of landed estates, taking up the Aberystwyth University strategic agenda of 'learning from our past for the future', and building on and developing the expert knowledge and collaborations of current Department research, such as, for example, the 'Remembering the Land' project. This research enhances the education of the community concerning, for example, the historic usage of locations particularly relevant to an individual's village or community; knowledge of cultural heritage; appreciation of the creative activities (including Eisteddfods) that occurred in a place. This knowledge enriches and expands the cultural life of individuals locally as well as those nationally and internationally who may have historic connections with the locality.

d. Relationship to case studies

Our Framework for Impact strategy is exemplified in the 'Remembering the Land' case study (on *Lear* and Keats) through its collaborative and interdisciplinary scope and the inclusion of an impact agenda as a starting concept for this project. It is exemplary in reaching new audiences by disseminating different versions of the same material to progressively wider audience groups, a method we identify in our Framework's strategic aim 4. Material related to this project has appeared in academic monographs, academic journal articles, and in the *TLS*. As a result of the play's Director reading the *TLS* account of the research, aspects of the findings were incorporated into The Donmar Theatre production of *Lear* in 2010-11 (with Derek Jacobi). The 'Contempo' case study also exemplifies aspects of our strategic approach to widening audiences: for instance, securing a preface from the then Poet Laureate for the key underpinning research monograph to that case study, *Poetry Wars*, was a way of widening the potential reach of a piece of work beyond the academy. An event at Earls Court, London, celebrating the 1970s avant garde that is described in *Poetry Wars* gave a platform for a performance by a group of contemporary postgraduate students and experimental poets whose work derived its impetus from their sense of being in dialogue with the earlier generation of experimentalists in the same place thirty-five years before.