

<b>Institution:</b> University of Ulster
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 28A Modern Languages and Linguistics – Celtic Studies
<p><b>a. Overview</b></p> <p>The Irish and Celtic Studies Research Institute (ICSRI), in terms of quality output, research income and research environment is regarded as one of the leading centres for the study of Celtic languages and literatures in Ireland and the UK (see RAE 2008 report).</p> <p>The University of Ulster has ensured the future health and sustainability of the discipline by affording Celtic Studies high priority status within the University's strategic plans and investing heavily in the UoA. The Irish and Celtic Studies Research Institute has been established as one of 15 Research Institutes within the University; it has a core staff of 14 researchers and it is provided with an annual recurrent budget managed by the RI Director. The Institute carries out research in all the core areas of the discipline, including Early and Modern Irish, Scottish Gaelic, Welsh, Cornish, Breton, Folklore and Ethnology. The Institute has, furthermore, developed an extensive network of international collaborations and its members play an important role in the development of the discipline both nationally and internationally (see <a href="http://arts.ulster.ac.uk/icsri/">http://arts.ulster.ac.uk/icsri/</a>).</p>
<p><b>b. Research strategy</b></p> <p>Central to the ICSRI strategy is our mission statement which aims '<i>to develop and maintain a world-leading Irish and Celtic Studies Research Institute at the University of Ulster producing cutting-edge research, with demonstrable impact, in an environment that unlocks creativity and will significantly advance the discipline</i>' (see ICSRI website).</p> <p>In order to provide a clear vision of the strategic direction of the institute, we have identified immediate and long-term strategic aims; these are underpinned by a set of principles which have informed our strategy and guided its implementation.</p> <p>Among our guiding principles are, firstly, that the RI must produce first class research and secondly that the Research Institute must build upon outstanding research to deliver demonstrable benefits to the community.</p> <p>As a fundamental part of our strategy we have identified key strategic objectives relating to the areas of Output, Impact and Environment and determined a number of actions which have been implemented in order to achieve these objectives.</p> <p><i>Research Outputs</i></p> <p>Our Key Strategic Objective is the completion of world-leading outputs published in internationally recognised outlets. Key Actions have included developing individual three-year plans with each member of the Institute, making a detailed assessment of each proposed output against the REF criteria of originality, rigour and significance and implementing individual performance indicators. In addition, we have targeted specific international journals and other internationally prestigious outlets for the publication of our work.</p> <p><i>Research Impact</i></p> <p>Our objective in relation to impact has been to maximise our influence locally, nationally and internationally. In order to achieve this objective, we have taken the decision to concentrate our collaborative energies on three key areas which we feel have the potential to generate significant economic, social and cultural impact, these being (1) <i>Language Policy and Planning</i> (2) <i>The Irish Language in an Urban Setting</i> (3) <i>Language Learning Tools</i> (the first two being chosen as case studies). Key features of our impact strategy are the following (see Impact Statement): (1) giving particular support to research projects capable of having an economic, social and cultural impact (2) prioritising funding applications aimed at establishing and developing research in high impact areas (3) setting aside a proportion of our funding to support public events at which our research can be disseminated (4) fostering links with community organisations and in particular with the Irish language sector (5) establishing and developing collaborations with industry and commerce and (6) developing our links with government with the aim of influencing public policy. We feel that we have successfully implemented each of these strategic measures.</p>

### *Environment*

Strategic objectives in relation to Environment include maintaining our current level of staffing, increasing the numbers of research students and maintaining our record in attracting significant levels of research income. Key actions include providing incentives for staff to make funding applications, providing guidance in making applications and the stipulation that where possible funding applications should include research studentships. Other strategic objectives that we have achieved include the development of international research networks, the establishment of collaborative projects with industry and commerce, the setting up of research projects with senior colleagues from Ireland, the UK and Europe, the organisation of major conferences and the development of a series of lectures given by key scholars within the field.

## **c. People, including: i. Staffing strategy and staff development ii. Research students**

### **Staffing strategy**

Our staffing policy is designed to ensure the production of international quality research and the provision of excellent research training. Our strategy also entails recruiting and sustaining sufficient researchers to ensure critical mass within the discipline and to cover as much as possible of the broad scope of Celtic Studies. To this end, over the past number of years we have recruited staff with expertise in the areas of Scottish Gaelic (MacPherson), Welsh, Breton and Cornish (Wmffre), and European Folklore and Ethnology (Kockel).

The UoA attaches great importance to the appointment of young researchers as essential to the sustainability and future development of the Institute and during the cycle two RCUK Fellows (MacPherson and Ó Domagáin) have been appointed to permanent positions within the Institute and are being returned in the REF, the latter as an Early Career Researcher. As part of our capacity building strategy, teaching staff in Irish Studies who are not members of the Research Institute join us in research activities, in particular at the Institute Seminar Series and at research symposia, and one member of staff (Mac Cathmhaoil) has transferred from a teaching-only contract to a research contract and is being submitted in the REF as an ECR. All new appointees are mentored by an experienced researcher, and attached to a particular research group.

### **Staff development**

Well established and equitable arrangements are in place to support staff in their research and in their personal development. These include staff induction and an appraisal system entailing annual meetings with the Research Institute Director and the Head of School. At these meetings particular emphasis is placed on providing advice on individual research strategies and giving assistance regarding publishing possibilities.

Individual and collaborative research is supported by a system of research leave. Staff are expected and encouraged to apply for external funding in order to extend their period of leave and since 2008 Hughes, Smith, de Brún, Fomin and Wmffre have been granted periods of research leave. In addition, teaching relief is assigned with the aim of reducing the teaching loads of members of the Institute.

Members of staff are encouraged to take part in international exchanges and to present their research at conferences, and generous subventions from the RI budget are made available to allow staff to attend conferences and make other research trips. Guidance in the preparation and submission of funding applications is also provided by senior members of the RI and by the Research Office. Staff in general, and in particular junior members of staff, share their work with colleagues by presenting lectures as part of the Institute Seminar Series.

Less-experienced members of staff are supported by research clusters, by the RI director and by a mentor drawn from more senior members of staff. Financial support from the RI is directed towards raising the profile of early career researchers and increasing the international quality of their research. Specific and realistic objectives guide them towards submission in the REF. Opportunities are afforded to staff on teaching-only contracts to develop their research profile to such an extent that they will be in a strong position to be considered for inclusion in subsequent research assessment exercises.

Internal research clusters have been refocused in line with current staffing and their research interests. Each cluster is led by a senior member of staff with a proven track record in that field.

**Environment template (REF5)**

Members of research clusters collaborate on funding applications and joint projects/networks, and are required to organise seminars and conferences/colloquia, and to develop a web presence. Research achievement is, furthermore, an important element within our strategy regarding personal promotion.

**Research students**

The Research Institute liaises closely with Research Office and Research Graduate School (RGS) in the recruitment and training of postgraduate students. A rigorous process of postgraduate selection is overseen by RGS and there is strong competition for local government awards, AHRC awards and internally funded awards. The RI has been successful in attracting 14 scholarships since 2008.

New students are provided with induction and an extensive programme in generic research skills training. Each student is provided with at least two supervisors and with an advisor if necessary. Supervisors and students meet regularly and a record of these meetings is maintained in the RI and copies lodged with RGS. Students are required to report on their project at a 100-day viva and again after a period of ten months in order to confirm their registration for a PhD. They are also required to give an open seminar in the final year of their research. Postgraduate students are given generous annual grants by RGS in order to allow them to attend conferences or spend a period of time researching abroad. A recent important development has been the introduction of a one year Masters of Research program (M.Res) which students complete before proceeding to the doctoral level. Between August 2008 and July 2013, staff supervised a total of 7 M.Res and 14 PhD students to successful completion, with a further 7 PhD students currently enrolled.

Our policy is to ensure that we have the requisite expertise to provide the highest levels of supervision to our research students. Consequently, the majority of our doctoral students work on projects related to the main areas of research within the RI, in particular Early and Modern Irish Literature, Irish Language, Irish and European Folklore, and Language Policy and Planning. A number of annual prizes are available to Celtic Studies researchers including the Richard K. Degenhardt Award. Current PhD projects include Dialect Studies, Bardic Poetry, Folklore and Folklorists, The Irish Song Tradition, 17<sup>th</sup> Century Texts and Post-conflict Peace Building.

The key objectives of our strategy as regards research students are (1) to increase the number of new PhD students (2) to enhance the quality of applications and attract a greater number of applications from abroad (3) to ensure 100% postgraduate completion rates (4) to increase the quantity of M. Res and MA students.

To ensure that the above objectives are achieved, we have implemented the following actions. Grant applications are prioritised for research projects which have significant numbers of postgraduate students attached, scholarships are advertised on the University website in order to attract greater numbers of applications from international students and successful candidates are expected to work on topics directly related to the priority research areas identified in the Institute's strategy. In order to ensure maximum completion rates and ensure first-rate supervision, younger members of staff are trained in supervision and introduced initially as second supervisors, thus ensuring excellence in the levels of monitoring and guidance given to students. Links with Institutions in the Republic of Ireland have, furthermore, led to collaboration in specialist research training and this has resulted in our partnership with TCD, NUIM, UCG, UCC and QUB in a Digital Arts and Humanities Structured PhD Programme (with overall funding of €6.2 million from the Irish Higher Education Authority). In addition, during the cycle the Research Institute worked as a partner in the BGP2 bid to establish a consortium of Universities collaborating in postgraduate provision in Celtic Studies. The consortium has since been awarded £1.8 million by the AHRC.

**d. Income, infrastructure and facilities****Income**

The Institute has been successful in attracting substantial amounts of research income. During the period of the REF cycle our total spend was £1,221,220. Of this, over £1 million came from Research Councils and £133,097 came from government sources. AHRC funding was secured for the electronic dictionary of the Irish language (eDIL) and RCUK funding was secured for the

Concise English-Irish and Irish-English Dictionary. Substantial funding was awarded by the Department of Education and Learning (DEL) for research studentships and the Department of Education (DENI) funded the development of the Northern Ireland Languages Strategy (£200,000 plus). Income to the ICSRI over the past number of years includes £165,000 from the AHRC for our Maritime Memorates project, €48,000 from PRTL15 (Higher Education Authority, Republic of Ireland) for the Digital Arts and Humanities Programme, €48,100 from the EU Education, Audio-visual and Culture Executive Agency as a partner in the 'TOOLS' (CLIL) project (January 2012- June 2015), and €76,827 in funding from the European Community *Leonard De Vinci Programme* as a member of the Pools-3 consortium (Producing Open Online Learning Systems).

### Infrastructure

Irish and Celtic Studies is a distinct Research Institute within the University of Ulster, with a Director responsible for strategic planning and the overall running of the Institute. An annual recurrent budget of approximately £35,000 is dedicated to the RI to be allocated on the basis of performance indicators and in accordance with Institute priorities. The Institute provides advice and support for researchers in matters relating to their individual research strategy, guidance in relation to publishing possibilities and financial support for research trips and conferences. The Institute also co-ordinates the submission of grant proposals, each funding proposal being vetted by senior internal assessors. Within the Institute, there are a number of research clusters, including Celtic Philology, Irish and Scottish Gaelic Literature, Brythonic Languages and Literatures and Irish and European Folklore and Ethnology, each cluster having a leader who is tasked with coordinating research activities in that area of the discipline.

At Faculty level, Research Graduate School deals with matters relating to postgraduate students and Research Management Group oversees research within the Faculty in general. At a University level, overall responsibility for the management and monitoring of research and implementation of the University's research strategy lies with Research Office, which reports to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Innovation. Research Office provides support in matters relating to funding and maintains essential data related to research. The Director of each Research Institute meets on a regular basis with the PVC in order to assess progress and identify targets and needs. The RI has a dedicated secretary who works to the RI Director and provides secretarial assistance for RI members.

### Facilities

The ICSRI brings together staff from three campuses of the University (Magee, Belfast and Coleraine). Each campus has extensive research holdings, with special collections of Irish material, including rare books and pamphlets, being available on the Magee and Coleraine campuses. A substantial library budget facilitates the purchase of necessary research materials including all major research journals in the discipline and current research titles.

All staff and postgraduate researchers are provided with IT facilities including web access and each member of staff has personal office space, up-to-date networked computer equipment, and access to audio-visual resources, inter-library loans, and electronic journals via the Library website.

## e. Collaboration and contribution to the discipline or research base

Collaboration is a key element within our research strategy and we have developed a network of contacts through the establishment of a variety of learned societies and national and international projects. Members of the RI also play a key role in national and international committees, on the editorial boards of journals and in organising Celtic Studies conferences.

Since RAE 2008, the institute has consolidated existing collaborative projects while at the same time developing a number of key new collaborative initiatives. The overall strategic objective is to maintain and enhance the quality of collaborative research outputs. This has been accompanied by the provision of an enhanced focus to the work of our international research networks.

Collaborative research is currently organised around a number of key research themes. These include lexicography, language policy and planning; applied language research; and

religion, cosmology and magic. Collaborative research within the institute is also promoted by a number of international networks. In order to ensure the success of these projects, key milestones have been identified for each, the timing of specific outputs delineated and performances within each project closely monitored. In order that existing projects may be sustained, applications have been made for additional funding to a number of relevant funding sources. Members of staff who were not formerly involved in collaborative research have been assigned to specific projects and their performance monitored. Less experienced researchers have been given guidance in a range of activities including the development of external contacts. Major collaborative research networks include the following (Annual Report downloadable: <http://arts.ulster.ac.uk/icsri/>).

***Societas Celtologica Nordica*** (See ICSRI Annual Report 2012-13, p.63)

The ICSRI collaborates with various Nordic universities on Celto-Nordic research matters. Ó Corráin is a founding member of Societas Celtologica Nordica, is Vice-President of the Society and has published many of the conference proceedings. He has acted as Visiting Professor at Uppsala University and edits *Studia Celtica Upsaliensia*; Mac Mathúna is Consultant Editor; Smith has acted as Visiting Professor at Oslo. The *Proceedings of the Eleventh Symposium of the Societas* edited by Ó Corráin and Gordon Ó Riain (Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies) were published in *Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis* and launched at the 12<sup>th</sup> International Symposium in Oslo in November 2013.

***Societas Celto-Slavica*** (See ICSRI Annual Report 2012-13, p.70)

Work on connections between Celtic and Slavic has developed significantly since the establishment by ICSRI staff of Societas Celto-Slavica (2004) and there is close collaboration with research centres in Russia including Moscow State University and the Russian Academy of Sciences (Institute for Linguistic Research) and in Poland including the University of Łódź, the Catholic University of Lublin and Adam Mickiewicz University of Poznan. The President of the Society (Mac Mathúna) and the Secretary (Fomin) edit, with Mikhailova (Moscow) and Stalmaszczyk (Łódź), the series *Studia Celto-Slavica* and proceedings have been published from conferences held in Coleraine (2005), Moscow (2006), Dubrovnik (2008), Łódź (2009, 2 vols.) and Píbram (2010). The proceedings of the sixth colloquium which took place in St Petersburg in 2012 are due for publication shortly and the seventh international colloquium will be held in Wales in 2014.

***Celto-Indica*** (See ICSRI Annual Report 2012-13, p.68)

Staff have been engaged since 2007 in a collaborative research project with colleagues from Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi, India preparing for publication an Irish-Indian interdisciplinary anthology of writing from the earliest times to the present. This work is currently with the publishers and is due for publication in the spring of 2014. A further collaborative research project – *Sacred Places in Early India and Early Ireland* – consisted of an international network of three teams from Ulster, the Russian Academy of Sciences and JNU. It was supported by the British Academy and the Russian Academy of Sciences and the results were published as *Sacred landscape and Water Mythology in Early Ireland and Ancient India* (2010) in the *Journal of Indo-European Studies* monograph series. Staff also collaborated with international colleagues in establishing The Indo-Irish Literary and Philological Society in 2007.

***Digital Arts and Humanities*** (See ICSRI Annual Report 2012-13, p.60)

A collaborative project with TCD, UCG, UCC, NUI Maynooth and QUB in the provision of a Digital Arts and Humanities Structured PhD Programme (Ulster Principle Investigator Ó Corráin) which received significant funding (€48,000 to the ICSRI) from the Higher Education Authority of Ireland (PRTL15). At the launch of the DAH the chair of the consortium Professor Poul Holm of Trinity College Dublin said: “the Digital Arts and Humanities PhD programme opens up new opportunities, forces re-evaluation of existing competencies and trains a new generation of students with strategically important skills.” The Third DAH Institute was held at the University of Ulster, Magee on the 11-14 September 2013 with more than 80 international delegates attending from the other partner institutions and with guest speakers from a broad range of Universities.

## Environment template (REF5)

**Maritime Memorates** (See ICSRI Annual Report 2012-13, p.28)

A collaborative project (established with c. £165K from the AHRC) with Fomin as Principle Investigator and Mac Mathúna as Co-Principle Investigator, along with the National Folklore Collection, UCD and the School of Scottish Studies Archives, University of Edinburgh to collect and analyse material held in the archives relating to the relationship between Irish and Scottish coastal communities and the sea. The project group has convened sessions at major international conferences including the 10<sup>th</sup> SIEF International Congress (Lisbon, April 2011), 14<sup>th</sup> International Celtic Congress (Maynooth, August 2011), 3<sup>rd</sup> AASE Congress (Yerevan, Armenia, October 2011, and organised roadshows in Ireland (Inishowen Maritime Museum, May 2011) and Scotland (Ionad Chalm Cille, Islay, May 2013).

**Tools Project** (See ICSRI Annual Report 2012-13, p.30)

Ó Dónaill is Ulster's representative on the 'TOOLS for CLIL teachers' project which began in January 2012 ([www.languages.dk/tools](http://www.languages.dk/tools)). This consortium won the European Award for Innovation and Creativity in Lifelong Learning in 2009. For Ulster, this Education, Audio-visual and Culture Executive Agency (EU) funded project (with a total of €48,100 for ICSRI) follows on from the foundation established by CEMLL and aims to assist the international community of language learners and teachers through the development of an online service which facilitates the creation and sharing of multimedia language learning materials. The most unique aspect of this service is its bespoke online dictionary interface which supports bilingual combinations of 100+ languages including Arabic and Chinese. In addition, the ICSRI has received €76,827 in funding from the European Community *Leonard De Vinci Programme* as a member of the Pools-3 consortium (Producing Open Online Learning Systems) which will run between 2013 and 2015.

**Religion, Cosmology, and Magic** (See ICSRI Annual Report 2012-13, p.35)

This cluster includes the *Power of Words in Traditional European Cultures* project, an international research network led by Borsje who has received substantial funding from the Netherlands Research Council. The team, including Mac Mathúna and Fomin, is investigating medieval European magical texts using the Celtic languages as a principal source. Meetings and conferences have been held in The Netherlands, England, and Ireland. Partner institutions include UU, Cork, Amsterdam, Helsinki, Lampeter, Moscow State, St Petersburg, and Russian Academy of Sciences.

**History of Celtic Studies** (See ICSRI Annual Report 2012-13, p.34)

In cooperation with colleagues from Scandinavia, Germany, France, Spain, the Netherlands, Ireland and the UK, the Irish and Celtic Studies Research Institute has established a project to develop a history of the discipline. Seed-funding of £10,000 was secured from the University of Ulster's Strategic Fund and Ó Corráin, Mac Mathúna, Borsje and Fomin are members of the Editorial Board.

We have also collaborated successfully with the private sector, in particular with HarperCollins International in the construction and publication of a range of lexicographical products and learning aids (Ó Corrain and Mac Mathúna). The television documentary *Scéal na Fadgíes* (de Brún) was commissioned by TG4 and N. Ireland Screen's Irish Language Broadcast Fund, and the BBC commissioned three documentaries on aspects of Scottish Gaelic (MacPherson). A permanent exhibition on the Irish language was commissioned by Cultúrlann MacAdam-Ó Fiaich and was funded by the N. Ireland Tourist Board (see Impact Case Study 2). Our collaboration with Government has led in particular to our participation in the Review of Irish Medium Education (de Brún) and the development of the Northern Ireland Languages Strategy (Ó Corráin, see Impact Case Study 1).

We also collaborate extensively with our research colleagues within the University of Ulster. In particular, we have close links with the Arts and Humanities Research Institute and have jointly established a Centre for Irish and Scottish Studies (including Ó Corráin, Smith and MacPherson) which aims to create synergies between researchers in Celtic Studies, English and History. Colleagues in Irish, English and History collaborate on the landmark five-volume AHRC-funded project *Oxford History of the Irish Book*. Sewell is co-editor of Volume 2 while Hughes, Mac Mathúna, Ó Corráin and Smith are contributors.

**Conferences** organised within the ICSRI during the REF cycle include: *Celtic Cosmology* (2008); *The Second Ulster Cycle Conference* (2009); *Bho Chuan go Cuan 1* (2010); *Teangeolaíocht na Gaeilge* (Irish Linguistics Conference) (2011); *The Sixth International Colloquium of Societas Celto-Slavica* (2012); *Bho Chuan go Cuan 2* (2013); The Third Digital Arts and Humanities Institute Conference (2013); *Éigse Cholm Cille* (annually 2002 - 2013); *Éigse Loch Lao* (annually 2010 - 2013). Members of staff have also been centrally involved in organising the Eleventh International Symposium of *Societas Celtologica Nordica* (Uppsala 2010), the 3<sup>rd</sup> Colloquium of *Societas Celto-Slavica* (Dubrovnik, September 2008), 4<sup>th</sup> Colloquium (Łódz, September 2009), 5<sup>th</sup> Colloquium (Brno, August 2010) and 6<sup>th</sup> Colloquium (St. Petersburg, June 2012).

The Irish and Celtic Studies Research Institute also hosts a Research Seminar Series at which internationally respected scholars present lectures. Recent visiting lecturers include Professor Robert Dunbar, University of Edinburgh; Dr. Elena Parina, Moscow State University and Philipps-Universität Marburg; Professor George Huxley, formerly Professor of Greek at QUB; Dr. Alvard Jivanyan, Yerevan State University, Armenia; Críostóir Mac Carthaigh, National Folklore Collection, UCD; Professor Helmut Birkhan, University of Vienna; Professor Pádraig Breathnach, Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies; Gearóid Mac Eoin, Professor Emeritus, University College Galway and Professor Piotr Stalmaszczyk, University of Łódz.

#### **Membership of National and International Boards and Prestigious Scholarly Bodies**

ICSRI staff are currently members of the Council of the Royal Irish Academy; the Austrian Academy; the Royal Society of Arts; the Management Board of the School of Celtic Studies, Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies; the Irish Humanities Alliance; *Coiste Náisiúnta na Gaeilge* (Royal Irish Academy); the Digital Humanities Observatory (RIA); the Irish Board of *Atlas Linguarum Europae*; the Editorial and Management Boards of *Foclóir na Nua-Ghaeilge* (Royal Irish Academy); Academy of Social Sciences; International Society for Ethnology and Folklore; European Association of Social Anthropologists Forum; UNESCO-University & Heritage; American Anthropological Association; Anthropological Association of Ireland; Association of Social Anthropologists; Deutsche Gesellschaft für Volkskunde; Society for Folk Life Studies and the International Society for Folk Narrative Research.

#### **Editorships of Major Journals/Book Series**

Staff are on the editorial boards of the following journals: *Studia Celtica Upsaliensia*; *Studia Celto-Slavica*; *Journal of Celtic Linguistics*; *Seanchas Ard Mhacha*; *Ainm*; *European Studies in Culture and Policy*; *Anthropological Journal of European Cultures*; *European Studies in Culture and Policy*; *Irish Journal of Anthropology*; *Journal of the South Derry Historical Association*; *Ethnologia Europaea*; *Folk Life – Journal of Ethnological Studies*; *Anthropological Journal of European Cultures*; *Studia Anthropologica*; *European Studies in Culture and Policy*; *Progress in European Ethnology*; *Studeyrts Manninagh – Manx Studies* (e-journal); *Studies in European Regional Cultures*; *New Approaches to Celtic Religion and Mythology* and the Consultative Committee for *Peritia*.