

## Impact Template (REF3a)

**Institution:** University of Ulster

**Unit of Assessment:** UOA 29: English Language and Literature

### a. Context

Research within the English unit generates multiple impacts targeted at policy makers, the general reading public, school teachers and pupils, and the local community. These impacts extend the international, national and regional knowledge base in terms of significant literary figures, movements, and local literary and cultural heritage. The range of research activity within the unit actively enables these impacts by:

- distribution of interpretative materials on literature and culture for the general reader;
- creation of exhibitions of national and local archival materials;
- delivery of lectures, talks, and workshops to non-HE groups;
- consultation with policy makers in the devolved assembly and local government
- collaboration with cultural institutions, media and creative industries.

### b. Approach to impact

The unit has a long-standing tradition of impact achieved through close engagement with stakeholders at local, national and international level. The following areas have been prioritised:

**Impact on Professional Practice, Education Beyond HEI.** UoA 29 engages with education beyond HE through a variety of initiatives. The UOA's Sixth Form Conference organised by **Jedrzejewski**, **Hancock**, and **Kennedy-Andrews** has run for several years, attracting over three thousand participants. The conference hosted 777 students from 33 schools in 2008; 1107 students from 32 schools in 2009; and 929 students from 26 schools in 2011. Approximately 50 teachers attended each conference. Researchers in the unit have made a wide contribution to this outreach, including significant monographs [**Bradford**] student guides and series [**Jedrzejewski**, **Keanie**], high-ranking journal publications, and scholarly editions of curriculum texts. Since 2010, the Ulster Poetry Project Managed by **Ferguson** and **White** has carried out a series of 15 schools workshops, 2 on-going travelling exhibitions and 20 public library talks in association with Libraries NI and BBC Northern Ireland. The impact of the unit's research on schools extends beyond Northern Ireland. **De Ornellas** has been invited to speak on his work on Shakespeare to pupils at Eton College, present prizes to the school and set and judge an essay on Shakespeare.

**McCracken** is regularly invited to deliver public readings of and lectures on her work throughout the UK, Europe, and North and South America, as well as contribute to critical debates on contemporary poetry. Her creative writing workshops for local schools, organised via her membership of the League of Canadian Poets, also provide the opportunity to encourage public interest in the poet's role in society, and demonstrate and encourage creative writing practice.

**Impact on Public Policy.** The unit helps shape policy in Northern Ireland, the republic of Ireland and throughout Europe. **Jedrzejewski** in his chairing of the Tuning Report (2010-12) has helped shape Europe-wide attitudes to the design and delivery of degree programmes across the continent [http://www.unideusto.org/tuningeu/images/stories/HUMART/Reference\\_Points\\_for\\_the\\_Design\\_and\\_Delivery\\_of\\_Degree\\_Programmes\\_in\\_Literary\\_Studies\\_-\\_Brochure.pdf](http://www.unideusto.org/tuningeu/images/stories/HUMART/Reference_Points_for_the_Design_and_Delivery_of_Degree_Programmes_in_Literary_Studies_-_Brochure.pdf)).

The unit's strength in literary research has been recognised by institutions involved in the delivery of secondary education in Northern Ireland. This impact includes the significant role **Kennedy-Andrews** plays in his current and long-standing position as Chief Examiner for GCE A-Level in English. As well as maintaining a prominent part within the development of A-Level teaching in Northern Ireland, he has advised successive administrations in the province on matters pertinent to literary research and pedagogy.

In his role as Director of CISS **Ferguson** has provided consultancy arising from his research on Ulster-Scots literary, linguistic and cultural matters to the Ulster-Scots Agency, MAGUS, DCAL, the BBC and the Ulster-Scots Broadcast Fund. With Peter Smith he has

worked on a Good Relations Community Project for Derry City Council. Along with **White**, he has provided consultancy for Belfast City Council and the Causeway Museum Service.

**Impact on Creative Practice.** **Bradford's** reputation as a biographer of key twentieth century and contemporary British writers has seen him provide advice to several programme makers, for example he was approached by BBC Radio 4's *Profile* programme (2011) to assist in the development of a programme based on Martin Amis. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b010k3rp>. The CISS has acted as a focus for filmmakers to seek for consultancy and advice in the making of a variety of programmes on the literary, linguistic, social and cultural interactions between Scotland and Ireland. **Ferguson** has provided assistance with four television programme makers, notably Doubleband Films *An Ode To Burns* (BBC Northern Ireland 2013) and Tern TV's *Eddi Reader's Rabbie Burns Trip* where he also appeared on screen (BBC Northern Ireland, 2013) <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01q5257> **White** and **Ferguson** have provided consultancy for *Santer* (**White** presented; Blackthorn Productions, BBC NI 2013) <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p01jb47w>. **Ferguson** and **White** have assisted BBCNI in the writing and performing of a series of *Weaving Words* web broadcasts and online resources based on the lives and work of Ulster-Scots poets <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00y1rqb/episodes/guide>.

**McCracken** has recently diversified her creative writing output and, during 2012-3, has been involved in co-writing a documentary film script for Holywood Films/Michael Beattie productions, titled *A Western Song*, as the archival, field researcher and literary consultant for the film. Her creative work is here clearly embedded in her critical research, which draws on her expertise in literature and culture of the American West.

**Outreach and the General Public.** Other major areas of impact activity in the unit have focused on specific regions in Ireland. **Ward** has significantly contributed to the cultural life of a town and region: Trim, County Meath, Ireland. Between 2008 and 2011, **Ward** was a member of the organizing committee for the annual Trim Swift Festival. The Swift Satire Festival Trim was an international cultural festival which featured participants from politics, media, the arts and sports, and was dedicated to celebrating the life, works and legacy of Jonatahn Swift. **Ward** directed the festival's academic strand. **Ward** organised the Festival's annual academic panels (40+ papers over 4 years) The reach of this impact was enhanced by the Festival's coverage in the local and national press, as well as by local and national radio and television stations: in 2010, Professor Joe McMinn (a former UOA member and Swift biographer) was interviewed by RTÉ Radio 1's Pat Kenny show, a national breakfast show of the state broadcaster; and **Ward** was interviewed by the *Sunday World* in the same year. The Festival has also been variously and repeatedly covered by *The Irish Times*, *Irish Independent*, *Irish News*, *Meath Chronicle*, LFMF, Today FM, and multiple new media platforms including Facebook and Twitter. This media dissemination of the Festival also pays testament to the significance of the cultural impact that is generated through the activities in which **Ward** has been involved: RTÉ1's Nationwide did a feature on Trim in 2011, and the Festival was named by Fáilte Ireland as a literary tourist destination. In 2013, as part of the Derry-Londonderry City of Culture celebrations, **Ward** project-managed a book group in association with the Verbal Arts Centre.

**Murphy** launched the Bishop Hervey Summer School in Downhill, Co. Derry in 2013. This community festival provided a non-academic audience with insights into eighteenth-century Irish culture, literature and history, and provided a platform for the dissemination of the research of colleagues such as **Eagleton** and **Ward**.

**De Ornellas** further enhances the transfer of research knowledge to a significant wider public audience, through his frequent engagements with national and local theatres. His introductions to plays at the Riverside Theatre in Coleraine provide an opportunity to enrich cultural understanding of English and Irish drama to a broad theatre-going audience. During 2008-2013, **De Ornellas** delivered 9 public introductions to plays dramatized at the Riverside Theatre in Coleraine, as well as a guest lecture on the short play at the Riverside Theatre Club AGM. **De Ornellas'** research on Shakespeare is particularly significant here. Reframed for a non-academic audience **De Ornellas'** research participates in a much wider

rethinking of Shakespeare’s significance for a contemporary theatre audience.

**c. Strategy and plans**

The UOA recognizes the centrality of creating impact in the carrying out and dissemination of research. To this end the unit will continue to provide encouragement and support to those seeking to develop impact as part of their research.

In the coming years the unit will recognise and assist research-related undertakings which already have generated significant impact such as the projects of **Ferguson** and **White, Ward,** and **Murphy**. Furthermore, funds will be set aside to generate further impact in the work of **Byrne, Ward, McCracken** and **Keanie**. **Ferguson** and **White**, as part of their current MAGUS project will undertake to develop these findings and resources for second stage projects with the AHRC, the HEA, the Heritage Lottery Fund the Ulster-Scots Broadcast Fund and the Fulbright Commission. **Ward** will seek to develop a research network of scholars, organisations and individuals who have been involved in the Trim Swift Festival and apply to the relevant funding programmes within the AHRC and Leverhulme. **Murphy** will develop her work around Bishop Hervey into a Big Lottery Community Project. **Byrne** is in process of developing her research into nineteenth century medicine through an application to the Wellcome Trust, and to develop her interests in literary adaptation into a conference and festival series assisted with a Big Lottery Grant. Colleagues in the unit also aim to extend their research impact beyond the UK and Ireland, **Bradford** and **Jedrzejewski** are exploring separate European-wide collaborative research undertakings with partners in France and Belgium.

The unit will work within the from the University of Ulster’s broader corporate plan to influence the economy and society in general, and to contribute to policy and to industrial, commercial, creative and cultural developments through research activities and outputs. The university is committed to integrating research and innovation and embedding impact into all its activities, and it now provides appropriate impact-related assistance in the form of multiple funding schemes in support of encouraging, identifying, and collecting evidence of impact. The funding is allocated on a competitive basis and both **Murphy** and **Ferguson** have been the recipients of several internal awards in support of their research-based impact activities: **Ferguson** has twice received funds from the Office of Innovation; **Murphy** has received monies from both the Garfield Weston Trust programme, as well as the Academic Enterprise Awards; and **Ferguson** and **De Ornellas** have also been the joint recipients of funding from the Academic Enterprise Awards. The dissemination of the unit’s research outputs through the Ulster Institutional Repository also enhances engagement with research users beyond the HEI and acts as a platform for the generation of research impact.

**d. Relationship to case studies**

The case studies underline the versatility and adaptable nature of the unit’s impact strategy. **Driving Participation in Ulster Poetry: the Ulster Poetry Project** demonstrates the unit’s collective investment in extending the regional, national and transnational knowledge base in terms of local literary and cultural heritage through research collaboration with regional and national partners. **Illuminating the Lives of Modern Writers** signifies how an individual researcher is able to reframe critical and biographical knowledge of key British and Irish literary figures for the general reading public,

They highlight the significant support offered to research from the unit and university and have shown how research impact provides opportunities to involve other members of the unit as well as research students and undergraduates. **Ferguson** has benefitted from teaching relief funded by the internal research budget in order to secure time to make applications for external funding to support the work of his project. Seed funding was also made available in the early stages of the project to maintain its momentum in between the receipt of other externally awarded major grants. **Bradford** has similarly benefitted from internally allocated funding where an early decision was made on the potential impact that his work could generate with the right support, including funding for research trips and public engagements throughout the UK, as well as subvention grants to cover extensive copyright costs.