

## Environment template (REF5)

<b>Institution: Birkbeck</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: 29 English Language and Literature</b>
<b>a. Overview</b>

The unit of assessment coincides with the department of English and the Humanities in the School of Arts: it contains diverse modes of research, but is an administratively coherent structure. As evidence of the vitality of English since RAE2008 we have:

- maintained an intensive, inclusive research environment which has resulted in a REF inclusion rate of 89%
- organised 50 stand-alone conferences and 15 ongoing seminar or conference series
- given over 100 invited international lectures or keynotes
- have been awarded £1.9 million in research council and charity grants in the current REF period, with an average research expenditure of £178k per year, but also diversified our sources of research income to the Heritage Lottery Fund, Arts Council England, and the Olivier Foundation.
- hosted international critics, artists and theorists through its five research centres and other research networks, and the four Birkbeck Institutes.
- currently supervise 118 doctoral students (53 full-time, 65 part-time), an increase on 2008. There have been 88 PhDs awarded to students between 2008 and July 2013.

Research in English is organised through research centres, seminar series and graduate teaching clusters. These are often period based, but Birkbeck English is all about collaboration across divides. Researching across the University of London is also typical. The **Medieval** cluster includes the Old Norse Reading Group, the Birkbeck Medieval Seminar, the London Old and Middle English Research Seminar, and the MAs in Medieval Literature and Culture and Medieval History. The **Early Modern** group has the Renaissance MA, with colleagues in History and the History of Art, and forums run by Birkbeck: the London Renaissance Seminar and EMPHASIS (Early Modern Philosophy and the Scientific Imagination Seminar). The **Eighteenth Century** is grouped around a research seminar, an MA, and a host of collaborative symposia with museums and other institutions. **Victorian Studies** is organised around the Centre for Nineteenth Century Studies, the Birkbeck Forum for Nineteenth-Century Studies series, the electronic journal *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, and the MA in Victorian Studies. The **Modern and Contemporary** cluster has two MAs, the Centre for Research in Contemporary Poetics and the Centre for Contemporary Literature. We have emerging 'practice as research' areas in **Theatre** and **Creative Writing**, with three MFA programmes, and activities organised through the Centre for Contemporary Theatre and forums like *Writer's Hub*. All areas are involved in supervising 118 doctoral students. Funding for students is geared to maintaining a critical mass for a research culture in all areas.

Cross-period collaboration comes through **Material Texts Network**, focused on the history of the book from Medieval to contemporary. The **Centre for Medical Humanities** includes work from the Medieval period to contemporary study of the value of the humanities to NHS care. The unit's research is interwoven with the Birkbeck institutes, co-funded by all the Schools: the **Birkbeck Institute of Humanities**, the **Birkbeck Institute of the Moving Image**, the **Birkbeck Institute for Gender and Sexuality**, and the **Birkbeck Institute of Social Research**. Colleagues are involved in the **Pears Institute for the Study of Antisemitism**. The Institutes' research and seminar programmes have included visits by Etienne Balibar, Judith Butler, Hayden White, J-L Nancy, Julia Kristeva, Sander Gilman, Rosi Braidotti and the annual summer schools and seminar series of Slavoj Zizek.

<b>b. Research Strategy</b>
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The department supports a broad-based research culture from Old Icelandic to twenty-first century literature. In a selective research culture, we still expect every member of staff to be research active and support them with sabbatical leave, annual research monitoring and mentoring. We

## Environment template (REF5)

have achieved nearly 90% inclusion of staff for REF2014. Long-term developmental research support has ensured this goal.

The strategy has been to provide a research environment which embraces new projects and innovation at any level, from post-graduates to senior staff. From the post-graduates who gained an AHRC Student-Led Initiative grant to set up an e-journal *Dandelion* to the prestigious visiting fellowships of senior colleagues, this structure has made for an inclusive research culture. This commitment is underwritten by the College Research Strategy, which emphasizes the principles of inclusion and support for all forms of research.

The department's strategy is directed by a research committee, which nurtures staff development by organising annual monitoring interviews, research-focused away-days, and mentors new and junior staff. This committee nestles inside a School of Arts Research Committee, led by an Assistant Dean who has an annual budget to provide seed-funding for research across all units (£20k). Overall research strategy is directed by a Pro-Vice Master, who updates the College Research Strategy to be responsive to changes in funding and policy. The administrative centre provides support through the Research Grants Office, with specialists dedicated to support applications to arts research councils. All staff are encouraged to submit at least one research grant application per assessment cycle. Post-graduate and early career strategy is supported through Higher Education Innovation Fund and Generic Skills Fund grants. An Impact and Knowledge Exchange officer consolidates the impact and exchange strategy. Since 2010, the Birkbeck Institutional Repository Online (BIROn) archives research publications and makes it available for free where possible.

Since 2010, the unit has been re-positioned in a School of Arts and rehoused in rooms in Gordon Square, once the intellectual centre of the Bloomsbury Group. This constellation has generated new formations, research clusters combining elements of the history of art, art and culture curating, film, journalism, media, creative writing and modern languages with English study. Cross-fertilisation is engineered in our Forum for the Arts, a gallery, cinema, Keynes Library seminar room, a cafe and studio space, which opened in 2012.

**Future Plans.** In RAE2008, under 'Future Work' we identified commitments to expand areas of creative writing and theatre studies and to consolidating our position as a leading centre for graduate research. These we have achieved, expanding staff and student numbers in these areas. The unit needs to be flexible in a changing funding environment and will need to be responsive to government and funding council developments. With these caveats, we have identified several strategic areas to develop:

- We have a concentration of research staff and centres in contemporary literature, drama and culture, and increasing doctoral numbers in the area. The activities of the Centres for Contemporary Literature, Contemporary Poetics and Contemporary Theatre are designed to cut across practice and research, and have become the focus for addressing how to marry the creative and critical elements of the discipline. Recent appointments of Anan, Edwards, Hamblyn, Hartnell, Owen, Strauss, Walsh and Williams consolidated this area. If we can grow capacity, a strategic plan is to aim for a separate submission to a Performing Arts in the next REF.
- Building digital research communities. The department was a pioneer in the digitisation of research, as evidenced in the *Nineteenth Century Serials Edition* project (led by Laurel Brake) and the funding received for developing a digital poetry archive (led by Watts). The department wants to think about how to disseminate humanities research and use technology to generate new communities and audiences through online platforms that underpin commitments to inclusiveness and non-hierarchical access. The department houses the e-journals *PORES*, *Readings*, *19* and *Dandelion*, as well as the *Writers' Hub* resource for creative writers (founded and edited by Bell). The appointment of Edwards brings the open access e-journal *Alluvium* and an internationally recognised campaigner and co-founder of the *Open Library of the Humanities* into the department. We are well placed to think about digital platforms for research and to respond to the open access agenda.
- Medical humanities. In 2013, College approved the Centre for Medical Humanities. This builds on Winning's work on illness and her collaboration with the Kent Surrey and Sussex Deanery to

**Environment template (REF5)**

set up an MA. The department has also strategically invested in using AHRC-funded doctoral students working in the area of medical humanities from the Medieval period to the nineteenth century. In 2011, Winning organised the symposium, 'The Language of Illness and Pain', which included an art installation by the Irish Museum of Contemporary Art. As a follow-up, our British Academy Post-Doctoral fellow, Heather Tilley, secured funding from a combination of the Heritage Lottery Fund, the RNIB and the Wellcome Trust to develop an exhibition and symposium on the theme of touch in 19<sup>th</sup> century art and culture. Luckhurst and Watts have also worked with the Wellcome on specific events. There is a carefully orchestrated plan to build grant bids with the Wellcome Trust and to respond to the 'health and well-being' agendas of both the AHRC and Horizon 2020 EU funding.

- External collaborations. The College conceives of the university in a broader ecology, in a symbiotic relationship of HE with London's public sphere and private businesses. Within this framework, the unit has a commitment to extending collaborations beyond the HE sector through the new Arts and Humanities doctoral programme, a revised version of the London Consortium. We have established relations with small-scale historic London institutions, and aim to develop collaborative doctoral awards and other research schemes to help formalise relationships (an example is conversations of Bown and Parejo-Vadillo with the Salvation Army to catalogue and research its archive). We also aim to shift the role of the Impact and Knowledge Exchange Officer away from reactive REF duties towards a responsive programme of securing new partners and collaborations in the next few years.

**c. People, including: 1) Staffing strategy and staff development**

The staff development strategy addresses all with a research active career, from doctoral students up through our research assistants and interns to the two RCUK research fellows, Early Career Researchers, and senior staff. Birkbeck follows the key principles of the *Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers*; Birkbeck's own Research Strategy 2010-13 also outlines commitment to support all research careers with equal opportunity. All recruitment panels attend equality and diversity training. The college conforms to legal principles on flexible working, caring responsibilities, maternity leave, and disability rights. Sabbatical leave policy is uniform within the School of Arts: 1 term for every 9 full-time terms served (adjusted for fractional appointments). Staff are encouraged to apply for external funding when their project will most benefit, not on an imposed schedule, providing replacement teaching and administration are costed. Within the department, all research staff members can claim up to £500 p.a. for research expenses and bid for support from the School's £20k research budget. Every member must have a compulsory annual research appraisal conducted by two members of the department research committee to support research productivity, seek solutions to problems and help set realistic targets according to individual staff circumstances. All staff are offered the chance of formal appraisal through annual Professional Development Review, to address the balance of teaching, administration and research, and which can raise issues and further training needs. The success of the English department has been reflected in internal promotions since 2008, with 6 colleagues promoted to Senior Lecturer, 3 to Reader and 6 to Professor.

Since RAE2008, retirements or departures of senior staff (Connor, Dobson, Healy, Ledger, MacCabe, Segal) and the growth of new areas in creative writing and theatre has meant a transformation of the unit. 17 have retired or moved, but we have made 20 new appointments. These have been made with a view to maintaining the unit's reputation for interdisciplinary work, whilst trying to secure coverage across period.

A new generation of Early Career staff have arrived at Birkbeck since 2008. New staff are given a personal mentor during their probationary period who introduces them to the research culture in the college and helps forge links with staff in cognate research areas. Probation for Early Career staff lasts three years; annual interviews are conducted with the mentor, producing an agreed document of targets for administration, teaching and research, seen by the head of department and dean. Those new to HE are expected to complete their PGCHE course, and to become fellows of the HEA.

Birkbeck English department remains resolutely non-hierarchical. It is expected that all research active staff, from the most junior to the most senior, participate fully in the teaching, administration

**Environment template (REF5)**

and research of the department. All staff, regardless of length of service, have their teaching peer observed and outline their research plans annually.

We continue to support the activities of our august body of emeritus professors, many of whom continue to play a significant role in the department, including Michael Slater, Isobel Armstrong, Laurel Brake, and Colin MacCabe. Our oldest member is Victorianist Barbara Hardy, who continues to publish critical work in her nineties; a launch of a book on her work and influence was held at Birkbeck in 2013.

**c. 2) Research students**

We are particularly proud of our commitment to training postgraduate researchers, reflected in our growing student body of 118 registered PhD students. Between 08-13, 88 students have successfully completed their PhDs through examination. 21 English and 9 Consortium students were funded by the AHRC (with completions consistently above the required success rate). Many of our students have gone on to academic posts in this period, at UEA, Birmingham, York, Amsterdam, and elsewhere.

We have developed an array of support structures and training. Each PhD student is given a primary and secondary supervisor to ensure continuity (staff on sabbatical are expected to continue with supervision). Students can apply to a budget of up to £300 per student p.a. to attend conferences where they are giving papers. All new research students must attend our Graduate Research Skills classes and attendant 'Theory' seminars in their first year. Any student wishing to teach at Birkbeck must attend our 10 week 'Teaching the Arts in British Higher Education' seminar. We provide publishing advice, with external advisors from the academic publishing industry. Our students are also offered subsidised places on the annual Critical Theory Summer School, two weeks of intensive classes around a specific theme, organised by Slavoj Žižek, with internationally renowned guest teachers. We are developing support programmes at the School of Arts level, in recognition of growing level of interdisciplinary and practice-led research work. This training is backed up at College level by the award of generic skills funding and by tailored courses provided by the College Graduate School on 'Fundamentals of Teaching.' In recognition of our concern for training post-graduates in the discipline, an English student was selected in 2013 to become a member of the HEA national student advisory panel.

We benefit from proximity to the British Library, which runs HE training, the Institute of English Studies programme and University of London Library specialist training programmes, e.g. in palaeography and the history of the book. English benefits from support from a Generic Skills fund, a centrally-allocated fund for training. From this fund, Fraser gained funding for salaried internships with training for students who manage the e-journal, *19*, and more to help fund interns to run the Forum for 19<sup>th</sup> Century Studies and to work in-house with the Dickens Museum. Watts got funding for the digital archiving work of the Poetics Centre and interns to maintain the Centre's journals and web-pages. Wiseman received support for Medieval and Renaissance Summer Schools.

Research activity of students in the graduate school is supported through the e-journal and information hub *Dandelion*, established with AHRC Student-Led Initiative funding. It publishes essays, gives editorial experience to interns, and creates hubs (it currently has 52 reading or discussion groups). Since 2008, we arrange an annual graduate Work in Progress conference, where students try out research papers to peers. We house and support many seminar and conference activities (e.g. the Contemporary Fiction Seminar) that are run by graduates. Since 2008, sixteen graduate conference ideas have been supported by the department, some financially backed by the School Research Committee (from 'After the War' in 2009 to 'Victorian Body Parts' in 2013). Students have won funds from a wide range of bodies, including AHRC, British Association of Victorian Studies, Society of Renaissance Studies, Royal Historical Society and Heritage Lottery Fund.

The passage from doctorate to first job is difficult and we have worked to create ways to house our valued researchers, from funded post-doctoral posts to informal Honorary Research Fellows. The contribution of these post-docs is impressive, with an array of conferences and publications emerging. Eliane Glaser and Owen Hatherley, doctoral graduates, have become public intellectuals, publishing on the opinion pages of the *Guardian* and producing renowned books. Peter Forshaw was a post-doctoral researcher on Early Modern Magic (05-08), becoming a regular

**Environment template (REF5)**

contributor to Radio 4's *In our Time* before gaining a post in Amsterdam. In the Victorian period, Ella Dzelzainis was a British Academy post-doctoral fellow until October 08. A visiting post-doctoral fellow Adrian Wisnicki and post-doctoral researcher Deborah Harrison were the Birkbeck partners of the David Livingstone Spectral Imaging Project, which received global coverage after deciphering Livingstone's last journals. Anna Jorngarden was funded by the Swedish research council to be a post-doctoral fellow from October 13, a recognition of the strength of nineteenth century studies. Heather Tilley staged the conference and exhibition 'Victorian Tactile Imagination' in July 13. Justin Sausman has co-edited an anthology of the Victorian supernatural with Luckhurst. Tony Venezia founded an annual comics conference four years ago and with Zara Dinnen runs the Contemporary Fiction Seminar, through the Centre for Contemporary Literature. Student-poets are instrumental to the activity of the Poetics Centre. Stephen Mooney acted as RA to Voiceworks, before securing an academic post. Interns have run the Poetics journals *Pores* and *Readings*. Holly Pester won a Cultural Engagement award from the AHRC to create a Text/Art archive at the Museum of Art in Bury.

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

The international standing of research in English at Birkbeck has been recognised by research council awards that extend across the whole range of our work, from Bale's project on Medieval Jerusalem to Anna Hartnell's work on Hurricane Katrina in the twenty-first century. Between 2008-13, English colleagues won awards to the value of £1.9m in RCUK and charity funding. Major highlights include: **Salisbury** and **Freshwater**, 5 year RCUK Fellowships (now in permanent jobs elsewhere); **Bale**, a Philip Leverhulme Prize (11) and an AHRC Network Grant (12); **Bauer**, Wellcome Trust Symposium Grant (12); **Brake's** British Academy funding for the Nineteenth Century Serials Edition (to June 08); **Brooker**, AHRC fellowship (ended Feb 08); **Burdett**, Leverhulme Research Fellowship (12-13); **Davis**, Leverhulme Research Fellowship (11-12); **Fraser** arranged for British Academy Visiting Scholarship for J Wawrzinek (10-11); **Luckhurst**, AHRC Fellowship (11); **MacCabe's** 'Colonial Film' project was funded by the AHRC (07-10); **McLoughlin**, British Academy Mid-Career Fellowship (13); **Strauss**, Wellcome Trust Symposium Grant (13), **Watts**, Leverhulme Research Fellowship (08-09) and an AHRC Digital Equipment for Database Enhancement for Impact grant for Voiceworks song/text project (10-11), **Winning**, AHRC Dorothy Richardson letters (13). Research expenditure has averaged £178k per year, 2008-13.

The international standing of staff was recognised with awards from overseas funders. Highlights include: **Bale's** National Humanities Center fellowship (12-13), **Cale's** Visiting Fellowships at Huntington Library (08), and Yale Center for British Art (10), Lewis Walpole Library and Paul Mellon Centre (10), **Senior's** Huntington Library conference grant, **Vadillo's** awards from the Toepfer foundation in Germany (12) and Centre for British Studies, Humboldt-Universitaet (12), and **Wiseman's** support from the Australian Research Council (12-14) for her Renaissance women project.

Conference activity at Birkbeck was supported externally in many cases. These include British Academy Conference Support for **Bauer** (08), **Cale** (09), **Monks**, (08), and MHRA Conference grants for **Cale** (13) **Luckhurst** (13), **McLoughlin** (12). Support also came through the London University's Central Research Fund scheme to **Bauer** (09), **Hartnell** (12), **Monks** (08). Tilley gained Heritage Lottery Funding and a British Association for Victorian Studies grant for the Victorian Tactile Imagination conference (13). We recognise the intense competition for external grants and use our internal funds to seed projects to ensure everyone has access to research funds. The School Research Committee or Birkbeck Institute of Humanities funds for conferences or seminars were given to **Bauer** (08, 09, 12), **Brooker** (10), **Cale** (08, 10, 12), **Hartnell** (10), **Jones** (11), **Leslie** (12, 13), **Litt** (13) **Luckhurst** (12, 13), **McLoughlin** (12), **Owen** (12), **Vadillo** (11, 13), **Wiseman** (13). **Wiseman** supported the Renaissance Summer School with a grant from Birkbeck Alumni Fund (12).

The creative writers and theatre practitioners have diversified research income. These include: Arts Council grants to **Bell** for the *Writer's Hub* website and **Jones** for completing his novel, *The Ninth Wave*. **Wood** was the stipendary Writer in Residence in Istanbul for the British Council (13). **Litt**

**Environment template (REF5)**

won a Blundell Trust Grant for research (08), and **Teevan's** script for a dramatisation of the life of Charles Haughey was at the centre of a 1m Euro award to fund the making of the programme from the Broadcast Authority of Ireland (12). **Luckhurst** and **Brake** with British Library raised private funding from digital research companies ProQuest and Cengage Learning to subsidise a conference (12).

Research in the department benefited from grants from the Higher Education Innovation Fund. **Bell** received two years funding (12-14) to support *Writer's Hub*; **Monks** and **Swain** have financed activities of the Centre for Contemporary Theatre, including their visiting fellow scheme, through HEIF; **Cale, Fraser, Watts** have all successfully bid to help fund internships for postgraduates on e-journals. The appointment of the Impact Officer was part-funded by HEIF. The completion of the new School of Arts Forum, with gallery, studio, cinema and café, was built with a substantial private donation, and matched by £100k HEIF money.

Scholarly and Organisational Infrastructure

The department supports and encourages research grant applications, with administrative support from a dedicated Assistant School Manager and Birkbeck Research Grants Office, with a specialist in arts funding. The Impact officer writes or advises on 'Impact Pathway' statements. We have built a database of successful applications and conduct internal peer review as part of our demand management of grants at School level. Reading and reviews of grant applications are conducted by an internal group of readers. Annual research meetings always address grant application processes, with specialist advice from grant bodies including the AHRC and UKRO and colleagues who have worked on selection panels for AHRC, Leverhulme and Wellcome grants.

This department and school work is underpinned by institutional commitment to research outlined in the College Research Strategy, which explicitly details the commitment to the equitable and productive distribution of responsibilities between research, teaching and academic administration. The Pro-Vice Master for Research chairs a College Research Committee, which supports the research agenda. The College Research Strategy is reviewed cyclically by a working party of Assistant Deans in Research, which allows for reaffirmation of core principles but responds to changes in research council and government policy. The current cycle of revision began in 2013, with a particular interest in improving the strategic and service roles of the College Research Grant Office in order to become more responsive in policy areas. We are enhancing the role of Research Ethics Committee to ensure the robustness of research integrity across all units of assessment.

The College has continued to support the Birkbeck Institutes, designed to foster cross-college research. These produce extremely active and diverse research activities, from research training, to internal Birkbeck seminars for staff and graduate students, to public events like the massive conferences headlined by Zizek. The Birkbeck Institute of the Moving Image has already become a hive of activity for the dedicated cinema spaces of the School of Arts, including events ranging from events about directors Patrick Keiller and Chris Marker to avant-garde engagements with the Gothic. This investment in the estate of the School to support our impact and knowledge-exchange agenda has been crucial.

For English scholars, Birkbeck's proximity to the unique concentration of London's research libraries and institutes cannot be underestimated. Our research is underpinned by these internationally significant research libraries and specialist collections at the British Library, the University of London Library, the National Archive, the Warburg Institute, and the Wellcome Institute and Bloomsbury's rich terrain of smaller archives. We work in direct collaboration with these cultural institutions and with the concentration of museums in the vicinity. Interaction with University of London colleagues is furthered through the Institute of English Studies in the School of Advanced Study, Birkbeck's neighbour.

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

Staff from across all research clusters participate around the world in the English discipline, in formal and informal networks, keynoting at conferences, organising symposia and events, contributing their expertise to editorial and other consulting work. At home, the English department at Birkbeck hosts many centres, conferences and networks.

## Environment template (REF5)

As a mark of international standing, fellowships won by staff include: **Bale**'s Frankel Fellowship at the University of Michigan (09) and Walter Hines Page Fellow of the Research Triangle Foundation, National Humanities Center fellowship (12-13). **Clucas** won a University of London School of Advanced Study Fellowship (08), **Hartnell** has been a Visiting Scholar at Tulane University (in 2011 and for a semester in 2013); **Luckhurst** was a Visiting Research Fellow, Department of English, Birmingham University (09) and Visiting Research Fellow, Flemish Academic Centre for Science and the Arts, Brussels, joining their trauma studies research cluster (09). The department is keen to plug in to international circuits by inviting visiting fellows and professors, often through a Birkbeck Institute of Humanities scheme to generate interdisciplinary work. Fellows sponsored by the English department have included Iain Boal (affiliated with UC Berkeley), Sander Gilman (Emory) and Rita Copeland (Pennsylvania). Of the more than 30 Visiting Fellows elected to the department, these have included Stef Craps (Gent), Eva Holmberg (Helsinki), Molly Murray (Columbia), and Christina Scholz (Graz). This reciprocity is crucial to foster links.

Prizes won by colleagues include: **Bale** won a Philip Leverhulme Prize (11) and the Beatrice White Prize of the English Association, for outstanding scholarly work in the field of English Literature before 1590 for *Feeling Persecuted*. **Jones** won the Weishanhu Award in China for Best Foreign novel in translation (09); **Litt** won the Manchester Fiction Prize (09), gained second Prize in 2011 Ilkley Literature Festival Short Story Competition and was shortlisted for the Sunday Times EFG Private Bank Short Story Award (13); **Luckhurst** was short-listed for the Katherine Briggs Award of the Folk-Lore Society (13); **McLoughlin's** *Authoring War* was selected as an Outstanding Academic Title Choice Reviews Online (12) and **Monks** won the The *David Bradby Theatre and Performance Research Association Award* for Research in International Theatre and Performance (12). The award is presented after a day-conference organised around her winning book, *The Actor in Costume*. Our poetics colleague William Rowe was awarded the Peruvian Congressional Medal of Honour (10) and an honorary doctorate from the Pontifica Universidad Catolica del Peru (12); **Strauss** was shortlisted for Stokestown International Poetry Prize (11); **Teevan** had a share in the Liberty Human Rights Award for outstanding achievement in theatre for 'Great Game' 2010 and for an Olivier Award for outstanding achievement for 'Great Game' 2010; his adaptation of *Peer Gynt* won four Critics Awards for Theatre in Scotland. **Williams** was Winner of the Saltire Society Scottish First Book of the Year Award 2011 for *The Echo Chamber*; **Wood** was shortlisted for Costa First Novel Award 2012, the Commonwealth Book Prize 2013 and was a finalist for the Sony Reader Award at the Dylan Thomas Prize (10).

Participation in the global network of English studies can be measured by activity in funded networks. These include: **Bale**, PI of the AHRC Research Network, 'Remembered Places', about conceptions of the Holy Lands in the Medieval period, with 2 international workshops (12) and 2 sessions at the International Medieval Congress (13). **Bale** was member of 'William of Norwich' AHRC network (09-10). **Watts** was PI on Voiceworks AHRC digital project, with colleagues from Guildhall Music School and Wigmore Hall. **Bauer**, was a member of AHRC network 'Havelock Ellis' (Exeter, 2011-2013), **Hamblyn**, participated in the AHRC network on 'Data Landscapes' (Westminster, 11), and **Luckhurst** was a member of AHRC network 'Spiritualism and Technology' (Westminster, 2008-09). **Cale** co-organised the international Network on 'The Disorder of Things: Predisciplinarity and the Divisions of Knowledge 1660-1850' with Adriana Craciun (University of California Riverside, formerly of Birkbeck), colleagues at Chicago, and curators from the British Museum. This held 2 conferences in Birkbeck (2009) and 2 in Riverside (2009, 2011), 1 at the British Museum (2010), a symposium in collaboration with the V&A, the Yale Center for British Art and Lewis Walpole Library at Yale (2010). **Finlay** is involved in the Jónsvíkinga saga project, a collaboration with colleagues from universities in Poland, Finland, Russia, Czech Republic, Sweden, Iceland and Norway, and the Egils saga project, with colleagues from Iceland, USA, and Canada to produce a re-evaluation of this saga and its place in world literature. She is also involved in the Skaldic Poetry editing project, an international project to edit the corpus of medieval Norse-Icelandic skaldic poetry, with funding from the AHRC, Australian Research Council; Joint Committee of the Nordic Research Councils for Humanities, NEH, and Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft. This holds conferences and issues publications. **McLoughlin** is co-director of WAR-Net (with members from over 100 institutions globally), a network devoted to cultural representations of war and is on the steering committee for the Group for War & Culture

## Environment template (REF5)

Studies' network programme for the First World War centenary years, working with the Imperial War Museum, the Royal British Legion, the French Union Nationale des Combattants. **Owen** is a member of the 'Inside/Outside Europe Research Network', exploring writings on theatre and performance practices in the context of the European crisis. **Vadillo** is a member of the 'Europe 1900' network, involving the Centre for British Studies at the Humboldt-Universität, Berlin, Leibniz University, Hanover, Oxford University, University of Copenhagen and the University of Paris at Nanterre. **Winning** is a member of the Dorothy Richardson Scholarly Editions Project, with colleagues from Keele, Oxford and Birmingham, producing the AHRC-funded *Collected Letters*, a new Critical Edition of *Pilgrimage* and biennial conferences held at Birkbeck (09, 11, 13). **Wiseman** is a member of the Anglo-Australian Early Modern Women Writers network.

We actively support the dissemination of research through talks, papers and lectures. The statistics for invited talks are: 19 keynotes at conferences overseas; just over 100 invited lectures overseas; and well over 100 national invited lectures or papers. These cover the globe from Norway to New Zealand, and from Yale University to Mzuzu University (where **Msiska** organised the first ever international symposium at a university in Malawi). Members of the creative writing team have participated in literary festivals around the globe, from UK to Ireland, France, Canada and China. Teevan's play *Kafka's Monkey* has been on five world tours in over 20 languages and his other plays have been staged around the world.

At the national level colleagues participate not just in British universities, but also with major cultural institutions, including the British Museum, Tate Britain, Tate Modern, the Wellcome Institute, Gresham College, the Science Museum, the Barbican, the Freud Museum, the Hayward, the National Theatre, the Soho Theatre, South Bank Centre, Birmingham Art Gallery, National Maritime Museum. In addition, staff have participated in literary and cultural festivals, including Hay-on-Wye, Edinburgh, Cheltenham, Brighton, Bury Text Festival, Bloomsbury, Lichfield, Oxford, Cambridge, Norwich and the Vancouver International Writer's Festival and International Festival of Authors, Toronto.

Colleagues do not just work across the world, but concentrate international research activity at Birkbeck. There have been nearly fifty stand-alone conferences organised by colleagues since 2008, from Old Icelandic sagas, Medieval and Renaissance conferences, to 21<sup>st</sup>-century literature events, built around visiting writers. There have been day symposia on Martin Amis, Tom Phillips, China Mieville, Tom McCartney, John Le Carré, and Jonathan Lethem. Major events were also arranged in association with the Man Booker organisation to interview Kazuo Ishiguro (2011) and Sarah Waters (2012) about their Booker winning novels, each attended by over 1000 people. Birkbeck English also houses the prestigious annual Matthews and Orwell Lecture series (speakers have included novelist Philip Hensher and *Guardian* editor, Alan Rusbridger).

The immediate vitality of conferences is undergirded by networks that are built through seminar series, which can effectively sustain research culture. This is the job of the research Centres, but additional sustained activities include: **Bale** and **Cale**, who co-founded the **Material Texts Network** with Adam Smyth. **Bauer** has been central to multiple activities per term with the Birkbeck Institute of Gender and Sexuality. **Brooker** directs the cycle of symposia connected to the Centre for Contemporary Literature. **Clucas** was co-founder of Early Modern Philosophy and History of Science Seminar (since 03) and co-organises biennial meetings of the Thomas Harriot Seminar at Durham University. **Davis**, ran the annual Birkbeck Medieval Seminar (08-11). **Owen** runs the London Theatre Seminar (09-). **Bown**, **Burdett**, **McAllister**, **Vadillo** have convened the London Nineteenth-Century Research Seminars since 2008. **Leslie** co-organises the annual 4-day *Historical Materialism* conference, which attracts over 1000 people. She has organised 3 *Radical Philosophy* conferences and is organiser of the 'Marxism in Culture' seminar (Institute of Historical Research). **Luckhurst** ran 'The Night Shift' (7 symposia 10-11) and arranged a series of screenings, study days and conferences in association with the British Film Institute to coincide with their Gothic season in autumn 2013. **McLoughlin** co-organised the second and fourth WAR-Net Biennial Conference (09 and 11). **Monks** was co-convenor of the London Theatre Seminar (08-11). **Strauss**, initiated the Pelmeni International Poetry Reading Series (12, ongoing). **Wiseman** co-organises the London Renaissance Seminar. Of now departed staff, Connor and Salisbury ran the London Beckett Seminar.

Contributions to learned societies or research organisations are an essential investment in the discipline. From the unit, these include: **Burdett**, on executive board of the British Association of



## Environment template (REF5)

Victorian Studies. **Davis**, founding member and treasurer for Gender and Medieval Studies Group, and on executive of the Piers Plowman Society. **Finlay**, Honorary Secretary of the Viking Society for Northern Research. **Fraser**, Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities, the International Association for University Professors, and member of the Peer Review College of the AHRC; **Jones** served Management Committee of the Society of Authors (06-09) and was elected to the British Council Writers Directory in 10; **Owen**, committee of Association of Theatre in Higher Education Performance Studies Focus Group; **McKinnon**, New Writing South, Board Member (09 to present) and Deputy Chair (11-) of 'Queer in Brighton' Steering Committee Member (a Heritage Lottery funded oral history project); **Monks**: Member of the Executive Committee of the Irish Society of Theatre Research (10-); **Rowe** was elected Fellow of the British Academy (11), **Walsh**, Founding Member and co-convenor of International Federation of Theatre Research's Queer Futures Working Group (09-).

Editorial positions include: **Bell** for *Writers' Hub*; **Bown**, **Burdett**, **Cale**, **Fraser**, and **McAllister** have all edited issues of the e-journal *19*; **Clucas** is the co-editor of *Intellectual History Review*; **Duncan** was general editor of *Dandelion*, (10-12); **Edwards** is editor of the journal *Alluvium* and co-editor of the *Open Library of the Humanities* project. **Finlay**, Managing Editor of all Viking Society publications and Chief Editor of *Saga-Book* journal; **Leslie** is editor at *Historical Materialism*, *Radical Philosophy*, and *Revolutionary History*; **Monks** is co-editor of *Contemporary Theatre Review* (2010-present, assistant editor 08-10); **McLoughlin** is co-general Editor of Edinburgh University Press's monograph series, Edinburgh Critical Studies in War & Culture; **Msiska**, Corresponding Editor, *The Savannah Review* (10-); **Winning**, Associate Editor, *Medical Humanities* (11-); **Wood**, London Editor, *Joyland Magazine: A Hub for Short Fiction* (08-). In addition, nearly every member of returned staff referees for a global range of journals and publishers, and research proposals from all the major UK research councils and charities, plus grant bids from the ERC, and from national bodies in US, Canada, Ireland, Australia, Poland, Austria, Scandinavia, and the Netherlands.

In terms of professional contributions to the discipline, Birkbeck staff have advised on professorial appointments, principally in UK, US and Australia. Other indicators of standing include: **Msiska**, Member of the RAE2008 African and Middle Eastern Studies; **Fraser**, assessor on the English sub-panel for REF2014; **Winning**, appointed lay member of the Royal College of Psychiatry Exams Sub-Committee, (09-) and member of the Parliamentary Forum on Trans Issues, House of Lords (11-). Perhaps the key indicator of Birkbeck's investment in a sustainable future of the English discipline is that colleagues have examined over 80 PhDs nationally and internationally since 2008.

The depth and breadth of research activity of English has remained at an impressively high level despite a period of challenge for Birkbeck College. We have worked to hone a research strategy and supportive environment for research staff and students that will continue to situate Birkbeck English at the forefront of the discipline in future years.