

Institution: University of Nottingham
Unit of Assessment: UoA32 Philosophy
<p>a. Context The UoA houses a rich and diverse research culture with particular strengths in metaphysics and ethics, and further expertise in a wide range of topics, including: the philosophy of art, agency, feminist philosophy, the philosophy of David Hume, logic, the philosophy of language, the philosophy of Merleau-Ponty, the philosophy of sport and political philosophy. During the assessment period this breadth of expertise has allowed the unit's research to benefit a range of partners across three continents and in diverse domains, including (though not limited to):</p> <p><i>Economic prosperity:</i> Via commercial consultancy, Mumford and Tallant applied research in metaphysics to deliver economic and product-improvement benefits for two software companies (<i>FACE</i>, in the UK; <i>Time.ly</i>, in Canada). Other consultancies focused on improving the knowledge-base of the partner, including a consultancy with the United States Air Force (2011), drawing on Mumford's research into causation, where he advised on modelling complexity in causation.</p> <p><i>Policy Making:</i> Through (e.g.) Woodard's work as an on-going member of the Ethics Committee of Helen and Douglas House (a children's and young persons' hospice in Oxford) research underpins advice and guidance given to charitable bodies on matters including policy and practice.</p> <p><i>Education:</i> As a consequence of research-informed continuing professional development (CPD) with qualified nurses and mental healthcare professionals, and specially designed workshops for school children, a range of benefits have been delivered, including improvements to confidence and attainment levels for children (Mumford, Currie, Leibowitz), a better understanding of how to make and evaluate moral decisions (Leibowitz), and training in a specific mental-health treatment programme for practitioners in Australia (Currie). In addition to the training, the mental-healthcare programme delivered, itself supported by the research, is taken to deliver very specific benefits.</p> <p><i>Public Discourse:</i> The unit's research has enhanced public understanding of moral, metaphysical and ethical issues. Mumford's research in the philosophy of sport promoted public debate and understanding through a variety of media, including a talk at <i>Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club</i> (October, 2011) and an interview on <i>BBC Radio Leicester's Ed Stagg Show</i> (August, 2011). Currie's research on narrative stimulated discussion through articles in the <i>Daily Telegraph</i> (2011) and the <i>New York Times</i> (2013), and an interview on <i>BBC Radio Nottingham's Drive Time Show</i> (May, 2012). Significantly, the unit also contributes extensively to professionally maintained <i>YouTube</i> channels which collectively have more than 620,000 subscribers, and through which educational effects have been generated internationally.</p>
<p>b. Approach to impact At the heart of the unit's approach to impact is a commitment to research excellence, coupled to a keen desire to maximise the depth and scope of the benefits it can generate. The unit has worked hard to develop a distinctive impact 'philosophy'. Aware of the potential difficulties in articulating the social or economic value of philosophical research to external partners, the unit works with partners to try to identify a need, and, where one is located, then matches research to that need, wherever possible. This optimises the development of sustainable and mutually beneficial relationships, and helps avoid unsustainable and unrewarding one off exercises.</p> <p>Three objectives have underpinned the integrated approach taken to supporting impact in the unit during the assessment period:</p> <p>1. The embedding of impact within research and operational infrastructure</p> <p>The unit has made significant changes to its organisational and operational structure. Since 2011 impact and engagement is a standing item at twice-termly Department meetings, allowing the dissemination of best practice and of successful strategies and approaches. The unit's approach to recruitment has also been adapted and applicants for posts with a research component are asked to demonstrate how they would engage non-academic audiences through their research, with one appointment in the period (Holroyd) made through the revised process.</p> <p>The role of Impact Officer as a separate administrative role for faculty was created in January 2011 following a decision taken by the Research Committee. The role of the Impact Officer is:</p> <p>i) to keep abreast of research in the Department in order to manage, co-ordinate, facilitate</p>

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and support engagement with external partners, using the pathway to impact most appropriate to the context. For example, in 2011 the Impact Officer developed a project that connected UoA staff with local schools and Nottingham City Council. Research concerning character and agency was embedded in classroom activities, resulting in a significant improvement in pupil attainment such that the workshops have now been embedded as an annual activity. (See the case study *Changing Minds Through Narrative*.)

ii) to **maximise exposure for research outcomes** from particular projects, the Impact Officer secures institutional resource to develop 'pathways to impact' for research, including the Impact Officer both working with the communications team to create press releases publicising research findings, and helping secure internal funding to enhance projects. (For details, see section d.)

iii) to **support colleagues in writing funding bids** that include a significant impact component. For example, a successful AHRC bid by **Leibowitz** and **Sinclair** on moral and non-moral explanation drew on existing connections between Philosophy and Nursing established by the Impact Officer to drive forward the creation of a new CPD resource.

2. Utilising institutional resource and support

The unit **supports staff of all levels to achieve impact** in multiple ways. The Impact Officer advises staff on integrating impact into research design. Good practice is shared at Department Meetings, and staff are supported in attending impact-focused training events. For instance, **Tallant** was funded to travel to the AHRC Broadcast Media Training workshop in London on July 8th 2011.

Beyond the unit, significant institutional support for impact has been taken up. The Centre for Advanced Studies in the Arts and Social Sciences (CAS) provides advice and assistance in developing early-stage impacts (and impact generating activities) and engaging external partners. Through collaboration with CAS, the **UoA has developed a CPD resource**, trialled using research on moral explanation (**Leibowitz**). A general 'CPD session template' has been created to help communicate research to partners, and future research can now be packaged into the template. The template was designed with a view to measuring impact through a questionnaire and follow-up work with the non-academic partner, thus providing researchers with useful data.

Additionally, University provision allows faculty to spend up to 50 days per annum engaged in consultancy work. This has enabled **Mumford** and **Tallant** to undertake the consultancy that led to the impact described in the case study *Changing Software Through Metaphysics*, **supporting two software companies to improve and refine their products, and supporting a successful promotional campaign**.

3. Dissemination as a pathway to Impact

The primary vehicle for the dissemination of the Department's research is through a professionally-maintained YouTube channel, *PhilosophyFile*, funded by two internal grants. The channel was founded in 2011 and has in excess of 23,000 subscribers.

Films were made about the **Philosophy of Time (Tallant; 75,000 views)**, **Moral Theories (Leibowitz; 28,000)**, and the **Philosophy of Nothing (Mumford; 38,000)**. **Mumford** also made 3 films about the **Philosophy of Sport (25,000; views in total)** and Currie made a further 4 films about **character and narrative (64,000)**. Since 2012, **Tallant** and **Jago** have recorded films about research in the philosophy of mathematics for a sister-channel (*Numberphile*), viewed more than **650,000** times between them. The **Philosophy of Time** film led directly to **Tallant's** consultancy role with a Canadian Software company, *Time.ly*, which plays a significant part in *Changing Software Through Metaphysics*. (For details, see section d.)

The unit has also taken a **pro-active approach to traditional media**. Research by **Currie** into Narrative and Character has been reported a number of times in the REF period, including articles in the *Daily Telegraph* and the *New York Times*. See *Changing Minds Through Narrative*.

c. Strategy and plans During 2013, the unit's strategy for the period 2014-2019 was developed through a series of informal meetings between the Head of Department, Impact Officer and Faculty Impact manager. The overarching aims are to increase the profile of its research (through dissemination), its uptake and use by existing and new user communities, and to develop impacts that deliver benefits both in the domains identified in section a, and beyond. This will be delivered through the following objectives:

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- The unit **will enhance existing projects** that are generating impact, or have the potential to do so. To illustrate: the unit will expand work with schools, collaborating with the **Institute for Mental Health** to offer greater analysis of the benefits to children who engage with philosophical research. **Tallant** and **Mumford's consultancy projects with Time.ly and FACE** will continue to be supported by the University, and will be used to develop further software refinements.
- Future **funding bids** will (where appropriate) be **designed collaboratively, working with new and existing external partners** from the outset, in order to guarantee that maximally efficient and beneficial impact activities are included as an integral part of the project.
- The unit will **roll-out CPD** sessions to partners in healthcare, where, during the internal trial described in section b, staff identified an existing need for support for non-academic colleagues on moral explanation and moral decision making. This work will be supported by the University CPD manager and CAS who will work to engage a range of external partners on behalf of the unit.
- The unit will **disseminate research findings widely** in order to engage new and diverse groups of beneficiaries. In particular, the UoA will develop *PhilosophyFile*, recording further films on additional topics, thereby seeking to increase the subscriber base.
- The work of the Impact Officer has significantly helped the unit consolidate its impact activity and deliver beneficial outcomes to partners. The unit will **continue the role of Impact Officer** as a distinct administrative role to manage and co-ordinate the unit's impact and engagement activities.
- Mindful of their increasing prominence in research careers, the unit will **embed knowledge exchange and public engagement into the PGR training and development culture** of the unit. This will build on examples such as PhD student **Andow's** participation in a talk at the Djanogly Gallery in 2012, where he used images to present his research for a non-academic audience.
- The unit will continue to ask **new appointees** to posts with a research element **to demonstrate how they would engage non-academic audiences through their research**. Where appropriate the unit will use this additional research expertise to develop new working relationships with people and institutions outside academia.

These plans and their effectiveness will be reviewed annually, at meetings between the Head of Department, a representative from CAS and the Impact Officer.

d. Relationship to case studies The approach to impact has been essential to the creation of the case studies, which collectively reflect the integrated approach described in section b.

Changing Minds Through Narrative: Research by **Currie** into agency, with a focus upon narrative and character, led to a range of positive impacts, most significantly impacts for beneficiaries in mental health care, where the research is used to support a mental health treatment programme that gives narrative a central role; a training unit has also been founded to train medical practitioners in this programme of treatment. The reach of the research has been substantially augmented and enhanced in various ways through the work of the Impact Officer, who (in collaboration with CAS and the Faculty Impact Manager) worked with local schools and the local council, using **Currie's** research to generate an educational benefit to children in the local area. Work with colleagues in the Press Office to reach out to media outlets through contacts and press releases added a new dimension to the reach of the project. This ultimately led to research being reported by the *Daily Telegraph*, follow-up articles, and, in conjunction with an article in the *New York Times* and subsequent further follow-up pieces, a demonstrable influence on public debate.

Changing Software Through Metaphysics: Research in metaphysics by both **Mumford** and **Tallant** has been used, through formalised consultancy arrangements, to refine software. Both consultancies have led to a positive change to software and contributed to the generation of commercial value for partners. Research was disseminated to a very broad audience via YouTube (*PhilosophyFile*) and the unit's website. **Mumford** and **Tallant** responded to the approaches from potential partners, making use of University support for consultancy. This enabled the development of the case study to the point where both **Mumford** and **Tallant** are regarded as valuable contributors to companies and products collectively valued at in excess of £8m.