Impact template (REF3a)

Institution: University of Liverpool
Unit of Assessment: 32 - Philosophy
a. Context: Philosophy in the City Our impact strategy has developed over the last five years under the umbrella of *Philosophy in the City,* a platform for the Department to forge an identity as a hub for networks, debates and partnerships, building on our traditional research strengths in practical philosophy, especially aesthetics, philosophy of religion, and philosophy as a way of life. The *Philosophy in the City* strategy was sustained by two newly-established research groups, *Practical Philosophy* and *Aesthetics.* This created new opportunities for co-ordination between their wide-ranging research projects and communities within Liverpool, resulting in impact that extended beyond the local and national levels. During the REF period, our research impacted primarily on (a) **public discourse** (e.g. influencing public understanding of religious discrimination and what it means to live well with life-limiting illness), (b) **education** (e.g. informing the delivery and design of school curricula and changing the educational practices of museums and galleries) and (c) **cultural life** (e.g. cultivating new forms of engagement with art that enhanced public understanding of the relevance of creativity for our lives). Through participating in research networks and public events locally, interacting with our media output nationally and using our electronic resources internationally, the user-groups that benefited from this impact are: (i) cultural-sector professionals (particularly educationalists); (ii) school teachers; (iii) religious practitioners, faith leaders, religious and secular pressure groups; (iv) legal practitioners and policy-makers interested in discrimination; (v) Marie Curie nurses, hospice workers and representatives of charities concerned with life-limiting illnesses; (vi) children and families; (vii) members of the public with an interest in philosophy.

b. Approach to impact

The strategic priority of our *Philosophy in the City* approach has been to substantiate the intersection between our research, teaching, and outreach activities as an effective means to (a) forge long-term external partnerships with non-academic institutions; (b) systematically increased the number of stakeholders, thus broadening the range of beneficiaries, and (c) continually developing excellent research and impact through user-led methodologies. These strategic goals, set in order to maximise impact, are realised (1) through realigning internal structures and resources, which then allowed us to (2) establish and sustain robust public engagement mechanisms and participatory research models that actively engage non-academic research users, leading to local, national, and international impact of our research.

1. Internal Structures and Resource Allocation

In 2009, we formed the *Practical Philosophy* and *Aesthetics* research groups, especially designed to explore ways in which high quality research undertaken by their members would deliver impact under *Philosophy in the City*. Progress was monitored through monthly meetings, where peer support was provided on the delivery of knowledge exchange (KE) projects, and on funding applications to external organisations and to competitive University schemes expressly intended to stimulate impact. As a result, we were successful in securing four AHRC grants totalling over £90k, three University of Liverpool internal grants totalling £20k and several other small grants from the British Society of Aesthetics, the Mind Association, Forum for European Philosophy, and the Royal Institute for Philosophy for KE projects in collaboration with external partners. Each research group is linked to a postgraduate programme, *MA in Philosophy as a Way of Life* and *MA in Arts, Aesthetics, and Cultural Institutions* respectively, both of which systematically address the links between our academic research and its practical applications through research–led teaching informed by our KE projects. We embed practice-led research both into our graduate and undergraduate study, by designing accredited modules that involved student placements with external partners. During the REF period, partners have offered over 70 placements where students, supervised by departmental staff, delivered practice-led projects aligned with our research and the priorities of the partners. This was instrumental in sustaining a growing network of external partners: between 2009 and 2013, the Department established new partnerships with over 20 external organisations aligned with our research strengths and possessing strong local and national profiles providing access to wide and diverse audiences. These included local schools (e.g. Liverpool College)*,* museums and galleries (e.g. Tate Liverpool, National Museums Liverpool,

FACT), festivals (e.g. Liverpool Biennial, Da-Da Festival), Liverpool's two Cathedrals, and health organisations (NHS, Marie Curie). Uur research in philosophical pedagogy resulted in a partnership with Liverpool College (now an Academy) that informed the delivery and design of their school curriculum. These changes positively affected pupils' and visitors' wellbeing (see Case Study 1).

Through the annual Personal Development Review, teaching and administration load is allocated in ways that facilitate staff's involvement in outreach activities, and a large proportion of internal funding resources were invested in the enhancement of robust dissemination mechanisms, especially public events, websites and social media.

2. Public Engagement Mechanisms

Events: Our approach to design distinct and on-going series of events, aligned with our research strengths in aesthetics, philosophy of religion and philosophy as a way of life, nurtured a continuous interest in our work and built a sustainable public audience. During 2008-13, the Department hosted or co-hosted 75 events, engaging a total of over 2000 participants, marking a significant increase in our audience from 100 p/a prior to 2008 to 400 p/a thereafter. Particularly important to achieving the strategic goal of increasing public engagement, was the public launch of the *Philosophy in the City* strategy in 2010 through the *Festival of Ideas*. This combined a series of events delivered by staff in numerous locations throughout the city over two weeks, increasing the visibility of departmental research within Liverpool and the local media and informing public understanding of key research issues. The dissemination of excellent research through events co-organised with external partners, further impacted on the work of partnering institutions, by effecting changes on their educational programme and public engagement activities. Hence, applications of our research in aesthetics (facilitated by 2010 and 2013 British Society of Aesthetics Small Grants) cultivated new forms of engagement with art that enhanced public understanding of the relevance of creativity for our lives. We actively contribute to the public programmes of major art festivals and leading art organisations (Liverpool Biennial, Da-Da Festival, Tate Liverpool), affecting changes to their community-engagement practice. For the first time in Liverpool Biennial's history, a philosophy department participated formally in their programme of events in 2010 (co-organised, *Touched: Philosophy Meets Art* national conference), a participation that was repeated in 2012 (co-organised *Skin* and *Around Ours* workshops and three *Understanding Art* workshops for children and families). An event run in collaboration with Tate Liverpool during the *Festival of Ideas*, was developed into the *Philosophy in the Gallery* series, thereafter included in the Tate's annual programme (2 talks p/a, 2011-13), marking another long-term strategic collaboration.

Publications and Media: We reach out to wider national and international audiences through publications aimed at introducing or simplifying complex philosophical research, and active involvement with the media. Publications included Bartley's *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy* (2010) and Dainton's *Time and Space* (2nd edition, 2010). McGhee, Carlisle, and Clark wrote for *The Guardian*; Dainton regularly reviewed for the *TLS* and Hill appeared twice on local radio and contributed frequently to public philosophy debates at Manchester City Library. Sharing our research findings in this way, raises awareness of key cultural, ethical and conceptual issues in public discourse, as evidenced, for example, by the volume and content of public response: Clark's one *Guardian* article generated 177 online comments, McGhee's three articles, 713 and Carlisle's 18 articles (until August 2011), 3877. Publications and networks on religious symbolism (see Case Study 2) and medical humanities (2012-14 AHRC *Living with Dying* Network), influenced public understanding of religious discrimination and what it means to live well with life-limiting illness, thereby contributing to wider awareness of wellbeing and human rights.

Resources: In 2010, the Department invested in a new website for its *Philosophy in the City* strategy, to make its research more visible outside academia. The website was supplemented by a Facebook group, Twitter feed and mailing list, all providing further means for maintaining on-going conversations with our audiences. We also created two additional websites dedicated to the *Lyceum* and *Philosophy and Religious Practices* projects (Case Studies 1&2) and an iPhone/iPad app, *Mind Boggler*, developed internally in collaboration with the University's Computing Services Department, disseminating departmental expertise to the wider public. These resources allowed us to communicate in a sustained manner with an increasing range of stakeholders internationally. For example, the *Philosophy in the City* mailing list originally consisted of 179 local members, but, since 2010, by means of increasing research visibility, has grown to 274. Similarly, its Facebook

page has over 200 'likes' and, between January and May 2013 alone, reached 688 users. This range has become increasingly international: 24% of the 29 daily visitors to the *Philosophy and Religious Practices* website were from North America, for example. Finally, many of the resources actively engage end-users. App-users, for instance, read and respond to research in a gamified environment. This is also true of the interactive lesson plans designed as part of the *Lyceum Project*, disseminated to 4,000 schools Europe-wide through *Open Discovery Space* (Case Study 1).

c. Strategy and plans

We will continue the successful *Philosophy in the City* strategy within cultural, religious and pedagogic contexts by focusing on three further strategic aims:

Up-scaling: We will further engage **international** partners and stakeholders. For example, we are one of 13 partners in an EU *Creativity Research Adaptive Roadmap* project (Oct 2013-15; €50K). Bridging together creative and technology communities, the project will engage over 200 organisations in the cultural sector Europe-wide (including, art, publishing, design etc.), through developing and implementing collaborative strategic planning and knowledge-production methodology (Roadmapping) which will lead to the enhancement of creativity and will feed directly into the EU's *Horizon 2020* policy for innovation in the creative industries.

Sustainability: To secure sustainable long-term benefits from the impact of our research we will offer training opportunities enabling end-users to share and capitalise on our research findings. Following the success of our work with schools and cultural institutions, we are invited to offer training for staff at Tate Liverpool and Turner Contemporary, and teacher training through the National Gallery's *Take One Picture* programme (Walker Gallery, Liverpool). It is our goal to deliver at least five such training sessions nationally before the end of 2015. Internal funding will support new interactive learning resources and meetings to strengthen partnerships. This involves sharing our research expertise with peers as well, e.g. in recognition of the Department's contribution to impact on cultural life, in January 2014 we will co-host with the AHRC a showcase event with three aims: to celebrate the range of UK cultural engagement projects, to train early career researchers in knowledge exchange and to explore future national strategy for external cultural partnerships.

New internal resources: A new post has been created in applied ethics with a three-year reduced teaching load (October 2013) to further develop external networks with non-academic partners and to enhance impact in this field. This appointment reflects an adjustment in recruitment policy to give greater weight to impact, and at School level, the establishment of the External Partnerships Co-ordinator role (Vassilopoulou, September 2013) attests to our continued commitment to fine-tuning departmental and institutional structures in order to maximise impact.

d. Relationship to case studies

The case studies detail impact on public discourse, education, and cultural life as a direct result of the three strategic goals set out in our approach (forging long-term partnerships with external organisations, increasing the range of stakeholders, and deploying user-led methodologies).

The ***Lyceum Project*** case study is a key example of the Department's commitment to fostering sustained relationships with partners (Liverpool College, Liverpool Biennial, the Bluecoat and National Museums Liverpool), that resulted in increases in well-being and cultural capital, and in changes to curricula and education provision, underpinned by research findings in aesthetics and philosophical pedagogy. The partnerships were made possible by co-ordinating teaching, research and outreach resources, particularly by establishing student placement schemes and co-taught modules with the above institutions. On the basis of these strong local partnerships, Vassilopoulou, the *Lyceum Project* Director, was able to participate in Europe-wide projects, leading to the production of interactive electronic resources and the international dissemination of the research.

The ***Religious Symbolism and Discrimination*** case study similarly emerged from long-term partnerships with local communities. The project provided a means to develop outreach activities in philosophy of religion, a traditional research strength of the Department, working closely with an already-established local audience (e.g. the two Liverpool Cathedrals, Liverpool Muslim Society) as well as forging new links with national policy-makers. The impact detailed in this case study was particularly aimed at developing participatory research models in line with the Department's approach. This public-engagement programme of interactive workshops exemplifies the Department's wider commitment to increasing public understanding of human rights.