Impact template (REF3a)

Institution: University of Sheffield

Unit of Assessment: 28A - Modern Languages and Linguistics: Languages and Culture

a. Context The School of Languages and Cultures (SLC) comprises 4 departments (French, Germanic, Hispanic, Russian/Slavonic) and enjoys a diverse, interdisciplinary research culture engaging with non-academic beneficiaries in Sheffield and beyond. The principal SLC activities encompass research from the 6 cross-language research clusters (Literary Studies & Cultural History; Gender Studies, Identity & Sociology; Visual Cultures, Film & Performance; Linguistics; Intellectual History & Politics; Migration, Culture & Community). Key beneficiaries include:

- **international governments**, e.g. our research informs and influences social policies in Mexico through lobbying to challenge assumptions (D28A-4 below). Researchers have also advised the Luxembourg government on language-in-education policy addressing issues of social inequalities in Luxembourg schools (Horner).
- **local Sheffield communities**, e.g. our researchers work with asylum seekers to improve language skills and social/cultural awareness (Small), and with deprived communities near the University, including with MP David Blunkett in his constituency (D28A-1).
- **educators**, e.g. our research promotes the local and international educational possibilities of sport by collaboration with the Vice-President of the FC Barcelona Foundation and member of the FC Barcelona Board of Directors (PL Johnson). Other researchers have worked with international museums to develop bespoke software for multi-lingual critical editions of medieval manuscripts enabling educators to view and read difficult-to-access texts (D28A-3). Researchers on linguistics and multilingualism have published textbooks widely used worldwide (Bermel, Horner).
- **arts & philosophy practitioners and audiences**, e.g. our researchers have worked with Czech National Heritage sites to prepare multi-lingual translations of museum information materials, in situ and on websites (Bermel, Knittl), benefitting museums and public audiences alike. Others have teamed up with community theatre groups in France to co-produce performances of plays (McCallam, Walker), improving the accessibility of stage productions to non-traditional arts audiences. Research into aesthetics and philosophy changed public perceptions of atheism via widespread media dissemination, notably through a regular column in *The Guardian* (D28A-2).

The types of impact achieved by SLC are centred around two key areas of activity:

(1) Policy-making and public discourse (providing expert advice to governments, NGOs, charities and the private sector in the UK and internationally) - lobbying (including work with Amnesty International); policy-making (especially language policy); international publications (including online publications in a range of languages); (inter)national media appearances (including *Al-Jazeera* and *Radio Algérienne*)

(2) Socio-cultural impact with embedded economic impact (generating new ways of thinking to influence creative practice and contribute to economic prosperity) - public exhibitions (in Sheffield, nationally and abroad); international film series in collaboration with art house cinemas (predominantly Sheffield); public lectures (at museums and concert halls across the UK and internationally, as well as in less 'institutional' venues, e.g. local cafes, pubs, galleries); urban regeneration projects promoting civic engagement (D28A-1); web editions and resource databases of difficult-to-access historical texts; (inter)national media appearances (including regular *Guardian* column, BBC Radio 4, ABC)

b. Approach to impact

To establish relationships with external organisations and partners, SLC enables individual staff to develop their own external contacts, integrating impact activities into individual research support meetings (with HoDs and the Director of Research and Innovation), the planning of funding proposals, and annual Staff Review & Development meetings. Recognition for impact activities is embedded in School promotion procedures and workload balance reviews. The University's commitment to public-facing research activity is governed by the Impact, Innovation and Knowledge Exchange (IIKE) Advisory Group, working through the Faculty Research & Innovation and External Relations (ERC) Committees, on which SLC staff sit. ERC administers HEIF funds via a dedicated Arts Enterprise (AE) scheme of small-to-medium sized project grants to support work with external partners, for which all staff are eligible. In 2012-13, 8 SLC projects were funded via this scheme (Bermel, Crawley Jackson x2, McCallam, Michallat, Small, Walker, Wood). Key support is coordinated through the Faculty marketing team who hold weekly drop-in sessions in the SLC building, with emphasis on national media contacts. SLC staff are trained through the

University's Public Engagement Masterclasses, and have access to an online public engagement toolkit. Bespoke training is also available. The administrative support for impact activities is coordinated at Faculty level, including evaluation via feedback postcards at public/external events. SLC's approach to impact, in line with the University's IIKE Strategy, develops relationships with external partners, including one-off project work (especially scoping projects for early-career scholars) and long-term collaborative projects. Impact is also fostered directly through staff working with PG students on a Faculty-wide 'Practical Public Engagement' Doctoral Development Programme module, feeding into a blog for both staff and students. Strategically, SLC's strong, long-standing relationship with the Humanities Research Institute (HRI) enables impact-related grant capture as the HRI provides dedicated space for public-facing, collaborative and interdisciplinary events and sector-leading expertise in digital humanities (including the development of new software, supporting web-based dissemination, see D28A-3).

The crucial relationship between support at Departmental, School, and Faculty/University levels is coordinated via the External Engagement Coordinator (EEC - Abbott, a member of academic staff). This 2012 appointment helped bridge issues arising from the diversity of activities across research clusters, and the challenges of public-facing activities in languages other than English. The EEC role is to coordinate and consolidate activities, promoting ways of sharing best practice across research subjects and language areas. A key focus is the mentoring of early career scholars by mid-career and senior colleagues, with emphasis on cross-disciplinary expertise. With these administrative and academic support mechanisms, staff can build strong relationships with external partners, approaching them directly and developing the relationship over time.

The approach to work with international governments has been to foster advisory and consultative roles, leading to wider impact activities. For example, Horner's collaborative research with the University of Luxembourg examining social approaches to multilingualism (the resulting world-leading publication is used globally) led to work with educational ministries in Luxembourg on language-in-education policy. This contributed to the expansion of the Centre for Luxembourg Studies at Sheffield, e.g. Horner invited the Luxembourg Prime Minister to Sheffield, raising profile and broadening opportunities to share her research expertise. The ongoing relationship remains an advisory one, embedded within collaborative research processes. Lobbying work by Watt (D28A-4) led to Watt developing a relationship with *Guardian* journalist Ed Vulliamy to promote his work more widely. Integral to SLC's approach is how PhD students contribute to impact activities, such as Wigglesworth-Baker (supervised by Bermel) who has advised the Tatarstan Government (Russia) on language policy as a key component of her research. These examples typify SLC's approach to international policy level work.

Working with local communities has long been a part of the University's civic engagement approach, supported in particular by AE funding. In SLC, long-standing relationships have been built up within networks of local communities with an interest in how SLC research can influence their daily lives. For example, Small's research into discourses of identity led to an AE grant to set up a collaboration with national and international community organisations (Africatime, City of Sanctuary, and Learning for Life Enterprise). Small coordinated the three external partners to set up a Community Rendez-vous programme 2012-13 engaging members of the refugee and asylum seeker community in Sheffield with SLC students, building community cohesion and links with the University. Small's role in the project was both leader and influencer, using expertise to build confidence amongst members of disadvantaged community groups. See also D28A-1 for further examples of urban regeneration community work.

In work with educators, we facilitate research projects which emerge from outreach and teaching activities (e.g. 'Routes Into Languages' and a student-led 'Languages in the City' project, coordinated by Banwell, Bland, O'Neill, and Simons). Another key relationship with educators is via language textbooks based on research in linguistic variation. For example, a research-related project begun in 2002 to develop an intermediate Czech language package co-authored by Bermel with Ilona Kořánová of Charles University, Prague, was published in 2012 and presented at the Association of Teachers of Czech as a Foreign Language. In 3 months it sold out its print run of 500 copies. Bermel's research activities continue to influence the design and delivery of the Czech language curriculum internationally (including via the non-academic press). This ongoing cycle of research feeding educational practices, in turn feeding further research, is key to SLC's approach.

SLC's relationships with arts organisations are extensive, and many of them are long-standing. They include local cinemas (The Showroom), international theatre groups (TRAC), classical music

organisations (Music in the Round, Oxford Lieder Festival), art galleries / museums (Estonian Museums, Czech National Heritage, V&A Museum, Museums Sheffield), and national cultural organisations (Pushkin House, Goethe Institute). In some instances, these activities are supported by local businesses, e.g. via a strategic partnership with DLA Piper law firm (D28A-1). In others, consultation work feeds into later grant capture, such as Reid's consultation on the V&A's 2008-9 *Cold War Modern* exhibition focusing on utopian modernist housing, which relates to a successful AHRC Connected Communities consortium bid (£4.2m awarded 2013, of which Sheffield manages £366k). AE funding has also supported research by Michallat into occupied France, leading to the co-production of a documentary on the diary of Madeleine Blaess aimed at a non-specialist audience; it has been widely publicised in the local and national press (*The Yorkshire Post*, *The Daily Telegraph*) and via Twitter (@MadeleineBlaess). Key to SLC's approach with arts organisations is sharing research with the wider public to attract new audiences. Researchers provide expertise gratis through: (a) pre-concert talks and interviews on national and international radio (Abbott, Oxford Lieder Festival, & BBC Radio 4 / ABC Australia); (b) talks and study days centred around film screenings (Dobson, OJohnson, & Wood at The Showroom); (c) public lectures in conjunction with exhibitions (D28A-1). SLC's approach is to promote these via channels from social media to national and international press and radio, inviting engagement and response from new audiences and beneficiaries.

c. Strategy and plans

SLC's impact strategy will function via the systems developed and honed in recent years, via the forward-looking 2012 appointment of an EEC. A 5-year SLC Impact Strategy 2013-2018 (published on SLC website) consolidates existing activities and nurtures future ones, including developing social media. The principal strategic objectives of the SLC Impact Strategy 2013-2018 are to:

- Target public audiences, especially in disadvantaged communities, to share our research in ways that enrich cultural, social and economic know-how by sharing our research expertise in non-academic spaces (e.g. building on small-scale events in local cafes);
- Encourage English-speaking audiences to engage with research in different languages, to promote intercultural diversity via new technologies which enable multilingual transfer, and to tackle the challenges to the discipline from public resistance to language-learning and misconceptions of language-based research (e.g. via new media digital platforms);
- Strengthen established collaborations and partnerships with local, national and international stakeholders via external funding and by expanding our modes of providing research expertise gratis (e.g. more collaborative workshops with non-academic user groups);
- Promote our public-facing research through more varied means (including further developing social media usage), including formalising an annual public lecture series (podcast on website);
- Reinforce feedback and response systems, including further development of the public engagement toolkit for feedback and analysis in different languages.

Recognising that individual researchers develop their own impact networks, the main priority is greater oversight of impact activities to stimulate further projects. Every researcher will be asked to provide an impact plan for the next 1-5 years, collated and reviewed by the EEC. This will entail a commitment to further embed impact via mentoring of early career scholars in particular and developing materials already used in our postgraduate programmes.

d. Relationship to case studies The case studies cover a range of language specialisms. They showcase our research clusters and represent impact activity at all levels (lecturer to professor).

<u>D28A-1. Cultural enrichment for emerging artists and deprived communities through contemporary French art (Crawley Jackson: French)</u> exemplifies individual scholars developing relationships with partners in the local community, promoting long-term urban regeneration.

<u>D28A-2. Changing public opinion on atheism and Marxism through the work of the Frankfurt School (Thompson: Germanic)</u> demonstrates SLC's commitment to cyclical research processes which develop fresh research in response to public comments, directly contributing to public understanding of philosophy and thought via major media channels.

<u>D28A-3. Heritage preservation and medieval manuscripts (Ainsworth: French)</u> demonstrates work with international partners specialising in digital humanities to benefit the wider public, improving cultural and economic impacts in UK and France (via a new SME), and contributing to education.

<u>D28A-4. Legislative changes in Mexico and the War on Drugs (Watt: Hispanic)</u> exemplifies SLC research which has an impact on government policy and legal decisions through lobbying and media pressure.