

<p>Institution: University of Oxford</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: 30 (History)</p>
<p>a. Context</p>
<p>Greater understanding of a wide range of periods of history is increasingly seen as foundational for modern culture and we aim to foster this understanding at the local, national and global levels by reaching out to four wider audiences: (1) the educational sector, through the close collaboration of members of the Faculty UOA with schools, with educational publishers, and with a wide range of “outreach” educational activities, notably through Oxford History’s central role in the flourishing History programme of Oxford’s Department for Continuing Education; (2) the institutions of the expanding cultural history sector, through the participation of Oxford Faculty members in the conception, development and presentation of radio, TV and web-based broadcasting, the collaborations between members of the Oxford History community and museums, galleries and exhibitions; (3) public policy-makers, through the involvement of members of Oxford History in offering advice, research and expert guidance on public issues ranging from educational and heritage policies to the conduct of defence and social policy, to the countering of epidemics, and the quest for a stable political regime in Afghanistan; (4) a wider public, both nationally and internationally, through the engagement of members of Oxford History in a broad range of public activities, including lectures and public debates, advice to publishers and film makers, and the publication of works of history aimed at the larger public.</p> <p>All of this is assisted by the size of the Faculty and above all the quality of its research expertise. The most important single factor in shaping external demand and audiences for Oxford History is quality. Therefore, by prioritising research quality, and ensuring that impact is embedded into the conception and execution of projects, we aim to ensure that Oxford History has the power to speak to actors and audiences beyond its academic constituency. Moreover, History at Oxford encompasses 105 historians employed in the History Faculty and a further 30 historians employed in Colleges, Continuing Education and Museums, making it the largest research concentration in the U.K (FTE of 130.05). With a depth of individual and collective expertise in all periods of History from 300 AD to the present and across all the inhabited continents, this permits Oxford History to offer a huge diversity of public expertise and engagement, as well as to redirect some of its existing strengths to support new research initiatives with a wider public profile. Its major strategic research initiative in the REF period has been the launching of a Centre for Global History, bringing together new and existing postholders to collaborate in shaping a new approach to understanding the past, and thereby the present, in a global context. Within these priorities, the History Faculty works very hard to nurture colleagues’ research and to help them to embed future impact into their research from the inception of projects. This impact is evident across a wide range of areas of post-Classical History, as well as in an unusually diverse range of societies across the globe. In these various ways we believe that Oxford History emphatically does have a considerable and measurable impact outside of academia, and is also an active participant in public debates about understandings of the global historical past in all of its diversity.</p>
<p>b. Approach to impact</p>
<p>The diversity and quality of Oxford History research promotes many specific areas of impact. Since 2008, we have developed pathways to impact through collaborations (both individual and collective), working with a wide range of partners outside academia, as well as through an intense and diverse programme of public engagement. The main pathways we have used are as follows:</p>
<p>(1) <u>Fostering public understanding of History</u></p>
<p>Much historical research is, by its nature, both accessible and of wide public interest. Throughout the REF period, Oxford Historians have therefore been active in conveying their understandings of the past to varied non-academic audiences. Some of the methods used are ones that are relatively familiar. Thus, Oxford historians such as Foster, Mitter and Priestland have been active as</p>

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participants in public debates, both about particular historical controversies and as commentators seeking to bring a historical perspective into contemporary debates, nationally and also globally (such as Foster on the relationship between Irish nationalism and British culture, Mitter on the legacies of the Second World War in China, and Priestland on the adoption of neo-liberalism in post-Communist Russia). The expansion in historical publishing aimed at wider non-academic markets during the last decade has enabled Oxford historians to publish a number of books that have brought the fruits of their historical research to substantial audiences of readers. Prominent examples of these include John Darwin's *Unfinished Empire* (2012), Ruth Harris' *The Man on Devil's Island* (2011, winner of the Wolfson Prize, 2012; Harris also advised Robert Harris for his popular thriller on Dreyfus), Faramerz Dabhoiwala's *The Origins of Sex* (2012), and Susan Brigden's *Thomas Wyatt: the Heart's Forest* (2012, winner of the Wolfson Prize, 2013). Richard Carwardine's major new biography *Lincoln: A Life of Purpose and Power* (2006) served as a basis for a touring exhibition on 'Lincoln: a Man of His Time, a Man for All Times' which has been shown in 40 U.S. states, and for Kushner's 2013 Oscar-nominated film, *Lincoln*. Taken together, they demonstrate the considerable and diverse impact that Oxford History has on how people understand and think about the past. This also extends to the broadcast media. A number of public intellectuals, such as Melvyn Bragg and Dan Snow, were educated in the Oxford History Faculty and retain close links with Oxford historians; and members of the faculty have also been active as advisors to film and documentary-makers or, as in the case of Jane Humphries' *Childhood and Child Labour in the British Industrial Revolution* (2011), have inspired film-makers to turn their books into successful documentaries; while Pietro Corsi's work on evolutionary theory before Darwin drew him into acting as the historical advisor to two TV documentaries and a new Italian encyclopaedia. Oxford historians also regularly give high-profile public lectures to non-academic audiences (e.g., Abrams, Jarrow lecture; Archer, Guildhall lecture; Stargardt, Holocaust Memorial Day, London, Dublin and Glasgow).

This civic and public form of impact has been facilitated by the electronic revolution. Many Oxford Historians now have their own web-sites and social media presence (including pod-casts), which they use to communicate their research and participate in open debates about research with diverse communities of users (e.g. Todd, Williams and Nowakowska). The History Faculty website hosts the Oxfordshire local history website (with content written by Kate Tiller and Shaun Morley) which is widely used by the general public, including many local history organisations. In addition, the expansion of public access (through, for example, the subscription of public libraries) to electronic resources such as the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (ODNB) has enabled unprecedented numbers of users, reaching 1.3 million in 2012, to access Oxford historical research. This democratization of access to historical research is as much global as it is national, and a feature of the last REF census period has been the involvement of Oxford historians in communicating with audiences beyond academia in South Korea, China, India and the USA as well as in Britain and Europe (e.g. Devji on Gandhi, Harrison on epidemics, Mitter on WW2 in China, Gerth on consumption in contemporary China, Carwardine on Abraham Lincoln and Offer on social policy and consumer choice).

(2) The enrichment of teaching and education

Historians are fortunate in that their subject remains highly popular, both within the formal structures of education, and in other forms of educational activity. Oxford History has therefore consolidated its long-established role as the provider of advice to teachers and other education professionals. During the census period, the work of Oxford historians has directly influenced the **school curriculum** (e.g., Robert Service for the Russian Revolution and Soviet Union) and been widely read within secondary schools (e.g., Tyerman on the Crusades, Roy Foster on Ireland), and advising on the development of **new curricula** and educational textbooks (e.g. Watts, Wars of the Roses). In addition, through branches of the Historical Association 93 historians have given at least 115 talks on their research to audiences, often of schoolchildren, across the U.K.; in addition, a number of historians also speak at conferences for 6th formers, (with Service, Forrest, Holmes and Gajda particularly prominent contributors). The Faculty has a Schools Liaison Officer who facilitates this communication through our flourishing structure of open days, each of which includes several research talks, as well as more targeted outreach activities (e.g. Tuck directed a

two-month project on the U.S. civil-rights movement conducted with A-level students in London). This is further supported by the active engagement of many Oxford historians in the local structures of outreach that the Oxford Colleges have developed collectively with designated regions of the U.K. in recent years. These have provided new pathways for Oxford historians to convey the fruits of their research to sixth-formers and to launch a range of public history activities. At a more local level, the Faculty is active in a new oral-history project involving pupils at three ethnically diverse schools in East Oxford called 'Capturing Histories of our Elders' (see below). In addition, Oxford History has an active policy of wider educational outreach. This has long been focused on the History programme of Oxford's Department of **Continuing Education** (directed by Buchanan). During the census period the department delivered approximately 100 weekly classes per year (both face to face and online) and 27 study days and lecture series on historical subjects per year in Oxford (and the surrounding region), while its online courses draw in a global audience. In addition, Continuing Education runs a very successful part-time Certificate course in History, which has enabled a wide range of mature students to develop the skills to engage with historical research and enable them to study History at Oxford and at other British universities.

(3) Engagement with the cultural industries

Oxford historians actively contribute to less formal structures of public education, through their involvement in print and broadcast work (see above), through their participation in museums, galleries and exhibitions, and in public archaeology.

With strong ties to **museums and galleries**, they act as advisors for public exhibition sites (e.g., Geraldine Johnson on redesigning the 'visitor experience' at Windsor Castle), and for developing the knowledge and skills of staff (e.g., Brockliss undertook eight sessions on history of childhood for the Museum of Childhood staff). Major exhibitions have a long gestation time and depend on both inspirational key concepts emanating from the reception of new research and the high international reputation of individual researchers. Therefore, they often depend on specific pathways and networks: e.g., Roper's work inspired, 'Witches and Wicked Bodies', National Gallery of Scotland, 2013; Archer, 'Elizabeth I and her People', National Portrait Gallery (autumn 2013).

At a more local level, historians have also worked closely with **archaeologists** and local communities: e.g., Wickham's South Oxfordshire Project brought together around 50 members of local archaeology societies and other volunteers to work on a range of activities, including test pitting, vernacular buildings surveys, GIS digitisation and probate record analysis in 2011-12; Blair's work has inspired a large community-based archaeology project in Bicester, which is currently seeking Lottery funding. The work of the Oxfordshire **Victoria County History** (VCH, Editor Dr Simon Townley) has its base within the Faculty. This multi-disciplinary local history project includes work with amateur groups and volunteers (numbers ranging from 6 to 40), and gives regular presentations to community groups (10 or more a year).

(4) Provision of public-policy advice

The knowledge and skills of Oxford historians are in considerable demand by a wide range of public and private institutions, providing a means by which the Faculty is able to contribute to the making of public policy both nationally and internationally. Some of these forms of impact have been essentially *ad hoc*, developing from the research activities of individual historians, such as the way in which Conway's work on Belgium since 1940 has led to his involvement in the Belgian-British Conference (meeting of government/civil society experts from Belgium and the UK); or Harrison's work on epidemics led to his being invited in August 2012 to lecture to the South Korean National Assembly, with members of parliament, the media and people working in the NGO sector in attendance; or Offer's 2010 article on obesity was taken up by two Danish politicians, Benny Engelbrecht (MP) and Christel Schaldemose (MEP), as the basis for a new policy initiative. Other kinds of policy input stem from longer-term partnerships: for example, Hew Strachan advises the UK government both on defence needs, and on the image of the military in British public life; he is currently also a member of the committee advising the Prime Minister on the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War (4 August 2014). Strachan is also developing a research project

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based on the anniversary, demonstrating the ways in which wider public engagement can also further boost scholarly research. Robert Johnson advises the MoD and British Army on security in Afghanistan. Other kinds of involvement stem from participation in public debates: e.g., Jackson on Labour Party policy; Wickham, Roper and Humphries have played an important role in the debate on Open Access journals publishing and given advice to U.K. government on it. Occasionally, however, the wider impact of Oxford History research has been entirely unpredictable, as in Nie's study of the role of the war of resistance against Japan in the development of Chinese online computer games.

c. Strategy and plans

In order to implement our impact strategy, Oxford History has adopted five key policies: (i) to encourage diverse modes of research output, including both specialized and popular publications, in the belief that high-quality research provides a springboard for impact opportunities in a wide range of cultural and economic areas within the UK and internationally; (ii) to foster the development of long-term relationships between scholars and their institutional interlocutors in the cultural industries, such as trade publishers, documentary programme-makers for TV and radio, curators of galleries and exhibitions; (iii) to support research projects which have an importance beyond the historical community, by contributing to the formation of public policy; (iv) to promote knowledge of history in schools and communities, including those in economically disadvantaged areas, by continuing to foster long-term regional initiatives; (v) to ensure that the full range of the educational and research activities of Oxford History are outward-facing, though support for public lectures, open-access study-days and partnerships with non-academic institutions. Particularly important in this respect is the way in which we encourage our large community of doctoral students (and post-doctoral researchers) to communicate their research to non-academic audiences, through poster sessions and talks at open-access events. In the same way, we intend that our new part-time doctoral programme will further break down the barriers to the understanding of History among the wider public.

The impact strategy of Oxford History is the responsibility of the Faculty's Research Committee, which assesses applications for funding of outreach and impact activities. Key here is that colleagues are encouraged to develop an impact strategy at the planning stage of new research projects. The Faculty devotes time, resources and expertise to working with colleagues to develop their impact agenda, and this has involved setting up clear structures which are sufficiently flexible to adapt to future developments, and are practical in their close engagement with individual colleagues' research. One relatively new development is the way in which we have used the History Faculty's Research Forum to promote the understanding of impact as an intrinsic aspect of research. The Research Forum involves regular half-day workshops on research strategy and they explicitly include discussion of planning and delivering impact and involve experts from outside academia who might offer advice on 'impactful dissemination'. We plan future sessions to include discussion of trade publishing, outreach activities, and building relations with cultural industries. The History Faculty has both an academic Research Director and a full-time Research Development Officer to offer advice and guidance on research funding, and it is able to draw on the expertise of the Research Officers and the Knowledge Exchange Officer of the Humanities Division to strengthen partnerships with the burgeoning cultural sector. Drawing on this expertise, the Faculty also builds impact into the individual Career Development Reviews, in which each post-holder discusses her/his research and publication plans with two other subject specialists. By taking a pro-active and co-operative approach to career development, Oxford History can encourage best practice and facilitate the development of the impact dimension of colleagues' research agendas, whilst remaining flexible enough to adapt to a continually changing landscape.

Some of the pathways to impact depend on long-term partnerships within policy-making fora or within the cultural sector, in which the high individual reputation of the researchers remains the gold standard. Oxford History's prime contribution here is a facilitating one, from the selection of new academic staff, through support for research (sabbatical leave and funding) to support (and opportunities for training) for media work. They depend on stability and often have a relatively long gestation: e.g. future impact in this area includes Clunas, co-curating 'Ming: Courts and Contacts,

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1400-1450', British Museum, September 2014 – January 2015).

The fruits of the Faculty's active nurture of impact as a specific dimension of research are visible in a number of new projects, ranging from Catherine Holmes' AHRC-funded 'Defining the global Middle Ages', one of the aims of which is to bring an understanding of global communications and trade into how the period is taught in schools to Ward-Perkins' ERC-funded project on 'The Cult of Saints', which will develop a free-access, fully searchable data-base of the development of Christianity. A number of new project applications have also been submitted which have considerable potential to develop impact, including McDougall's 'Modern worlds of Islam' and Gildea's 'European Resistance, 1936-1948: Histories and Memories', both of which address areas in which there is great public interest. Other, more specialised projects, such as Beeley and Stedall's 'Mathematical culture in Restoration England', have the potential to connect to curators and documentary-makers by making new connections, between the increasing numeracy of London merchants and artisans and the mathematical breakthroughs in late 17th-century England. Brockliss' ESRC-funded project on the professions in 19th-century Britain is intended to appeal to those interested in family and local history, as well as the history of particular professional groups. The Faculty's work will remain embedded in the local community as well. In September 2013, it hosted the inaugural workshop for the new oral history project called 'Capturing Histories of our Elders in East Oxford', being carried out by pupils at three ethnically-diverse local schools, in which academics provided training in the practical and interpretative skills needed, and the Faculty will host a follow-up conference at which the pupils will present their oral-history findings.

Thus, by taking an inclusive and diverse view of the likely development of impact, and by targeting help and offering advice, Oxford History aims to provide a basic structure within which research and impact can be part of an integral programme.

d. Relationship to case studies

The case studies are representative, rather than exhaustive, showing a number of different routes to impact: the public understanding of history, education in schools, or formation of policy. They also demonstrate impact across a wide range of different contexts, from the local and regional, to the national and international, as well as ranging in time from Anglo-Saxon England to contemporary China. We began with the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*: this huge collective project, made easily available on the web, is a genuine resource for all, and is extensively used as such. We remain committed to a forceful web presence as a result, as with Gunn's continuing project on accidental death in Tudor England. Developing these case studies has however shown us how much can be done to facilitate the impact of other projects too, such as Mitter's Leverhulme project on the Sino-Japanese war. Other case studies demonstrate the way in which individual research often also encompasses an impact agenda. Some of these arose from single-authored books, which reached a wide readership (e.g. Foster on Yeats and Ireland, Service on Lenin, Stalin and Trotsky). In some cases, it was a documentary film (e.g. Humphries on child labour in the industrial revolution) or an exhibition (Kemp's identification of works as Leonardo's) which acted as the major vehicle for scholarship that started as a monograph, articles or a database. In other cases, a scholarly monograph became the basis for specialised training and policy work in areas where more expertise was being sought (e.g., Johnson's training for British officers posted to Afghanistan; or Harrison's *Pandemics*). In other cases, it was a conceptual or methodological insight which attracted attention (such as that of Offer in understanding the role of government action in shaping individual choice). What the range of case studies illustrates is that the forms of impact are changing and diversifying: and Oxford History will continue to devote time, resources and imagination to encouraging them all.