

Institution: University of Westminster

Unit of Assessment: UoA 30 History

a. Context

The University is committed to high-quality, practice-informed research with global impact. Our framework for research provides facilities and support for early career researchers, and pump-priming for early stage research. International activity is driven mainly by reputation of individuals with some institutional level collaboration. The Graduate School provides a focal point for all staff, doctoral researchers and post-doctorates engaged in research activity, offering a range of developmental activities, including seminars and networking events to facilitate sharing of best practice. It supports the personal and professional development of doctoral and early career researchers. A professional doctorate scheme operates at the interface between academia and practitioners to influence research.

Our open-access policy provides an institutional fund as a top-up to RCUK funds with selection rules designed to encourage critical mass, to target and grow early career research, and support non-traditional outputs. Each Faculty is supported by a research development officer (RDO) with primary responsibility for horizon scanning and bid preparation.

Operating within this institutional context, History at Westminster is comprised of a small team of established academics and early career researchers. The four full-time staff being entered for REF2014 are well-established scholars who have been researching for several decades within their research specialisms. Each has been entered in previous Research Assessment Exercises. Additionally, since 2009 we have recruited a number of promising early career researchers and visiting lecturers with a view to developing their research and impact potential up to and beyond the forthcoming REF2014.

The communities, organisations and individuals reached by our work, and whose perspectives and practices are altered or impacted by our research, are diverse and make some significant contributions to society. Our reach is evident in a number of arenas, notably local and national heritage; local history and town planning history; and contemporary British, European and international policy groups. Our broad focus is modern and contemporary British and European history, and present and planned development of our subject area is expanding within these two areas.

While traditional publications remain the major form of dissemination for impact, History at Westminster reflects the university's use of electronic media as a means to impact. The WestminsterResearch repository, alongside the online research pages for staff, is an online open access databank, which will be easily accessible from Google and other search engines, hence allowing for greater awareness and impact potential of our outputs.

b. Approach to impact

History at the University of Westminster has adopted both a permissive and proactive approach to maximise impact through three distinct pathways:

- 1) Taking up unsolicited invitations from the media: this has resulted in television and radio appearances, and citations in print media and online sources. We also encourage early career researchers to engage in dissemination of their research, thus extending the reach of History at Westminster beyond those media activities given in the case studies:
 - In 2012-13 Catterall appeared in *Heir Hunters* (BBC) in many showings on the Profumo Scandal; his article on the lack of opposition in contemporary Northern Irish politics was published in the *Belfast Newsletter*, 9 October 2013
 - in 2012 Clapson contributed a segment on the football pools in the programme 'A bit of a

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flutter', the title of which was drawn from his book of the same name (published in 1992) to the Radio 4 series *Sport and the British*, introduced by Clare Balding, on 17th February (this was also available on BBC iPlayer Radio)

- in 2011 Patrick Smylie, a fractional lecturer and early career researcher, contributed to a news broadcast item on the opening of the Communist Party of Ireland archive: RTE1, 31 August.
- 2) Our second strategy is to engage with a variety of public-facing organisations to increase the reach of our research: in addition to the organisations with which Clapson, Harding and Lynch are involved, the appointment of Catterall in October 2012 offers further potential to exploit his links with a number of local, national and international organisations to maximise our general impact as a subject area. The organisations are given in REF5.
- 3) Our third broad pathway, and a very traditional one, is the researching and writing of publications increasingly oriented toward public and policy engagements, or debates around those engagements: This can be seen in the following areas: Catterall on the political process and opposition politics in Britain and the Middle East; Catterall on Conservatism in postwar Britain; Clapson on housing and the British new towns and lessons for policy; Harding on the application of the lessons from naval history for defence policy, and Lynch on the historiographical debates about the development of the EU and their relevance for the future direction of Europe. The work of Seidel also complements Lynch's work, as well as possessing its own impact potential beyond REF2014.

c. Strategy and plans

Our support for impact is based on the development of new or further links with key disseminating organisations; encouraging engagement with the media; mentoring for research funding, and developing research with London-based, national and international relevance.

Continued development of links with disseminating organisations: as noted, historians are financially supported in their engagement with a number of British and European organisations and institutions for the purposes of networking and dissemination indicated in REF5.

Media training: Historians are encouraged by the University of Westminster, and the Department of Social and Historical Studies, to engage in media work, and to address public lectures and meetings, or to use other media to grow awareness of our research activities.

The University encourages media training. For example, in October 2009 Dr. Lynch attended a one-day ESRC funded training course which was designed to help academics interact with the media. She was taught skills of handling radio or TV interviewing, responding to telephone calls and other aspects of dealing with the world outside academia. Opportunities for media training will continue to be available from 2014.

Mentoring for research funding: we currently aim to secure external funding on the basis of research expertise of established staff or promising early-career activities of more recently appointed staff, with a view to increasing a longer-term impact potential. We have recently introduced a research mentoring element within the Performance Management model introduced in the Department of Social and Historical Studies in 2012-13.

Historical research from the local to the global: the History Subject Area has also taken up the Vice Chancellor's vision for a London-orientated research culture to run alongside research of international standing. Our historical research has local, national and international influence, and indeed dovetails each of these spheres. This will become evident in the two case studies. Moreover, the recruitment of a Research Fellow is designed to enhance focus both in London and internationally.

Impact template (REF3a)**d. Relationship to case studies**

History at the University of Westminster is submitting two case studies, as required by the number of Category A staff entered.

The general strategy for impact and its context, outlined above, has enabled the historians of both case studies to develop their research, dissemination and impact within the local, national and international spheres. Each area of research is quite different, namely social and planning history (Clapson) and the organisational history of navies (Harding). Moreover, as outlined in REF1, the authors of the case studies are not based within the same departments. This has necessitated a permissive or non-descriptive but closely-managed approach to the development of impact. It will be clear that the role of the media, the necessity of public engagement, the dialogue between research and policy, and the local, national and international impact of the research are clearly evidenced in both case studies.