

Institution: Queen Mary University of London (QMUL)

Unit of Assessment: History (UoA 30)

a. Context

The School of History at QMUL defines the study of history as a broad and flexible discipline which is relevant to public life. It has been our strategic objective for over 20 years to exploit our research findings for the public good. Throughout the REF period, we have adapted our approach to make research impact a key feature of our Research Strategy in three ways: (i) the appointment of historians whose research has gained a high public profile – **Hennessy's** arrival in 1992 was the earliest expression of this policy and **Vickery's** in 2010 is the latest; (ii) the nurturing of individual and group research with public engagement potential, such as the research of **Asbridge** and that of **the Centre for the History of Emotions**, the **Leo Baeck Institute**, and the **Mile End Group**; and (iii) in our policy of engagement with research users, policy makers and the public to ensure that our research has pertinence to, and significance for, non-academic audiences.

The context for our public engagement and research impact activities is informed by three principles: (i) the diffusion of research outcomes in accessible, non-technical forms, especially in the publication of public history and its representation in other media; (ii) the development of settings for encounters between researchers and the general public to demonstrate the significance of our research; and (iii) the creation of defined programmes for sustained public engagement, especially through the activities of our Research Centres (the form, purpose and activities of which are described in our REF5 Environment Template).

The School believes that history is not only a subject for professional academics and has fostered links with public bodies, industries and organisations to develop the interaction between our research, research users and the public. We work closely with archivists and museum curators to offer expert advice in the public representation of the past. We have worked particularly effectively in conveying the significance of our research on issues of public governance and policy through links with government, parliament and the press. We also exploit our scholarly prestige among radio and television producers and executives as a School which produces research that informs and improves public understanding of the past and of the practice of history itself.

Evidence of our impact is provided by our connections with major archives and museums (we have advised the UK's National Archives and worked for major UK and international museums), the esteem with which we are held by branches of the UK government (we have provided research for No. 10 Downing Street, the Cabinet Office, the Treasury and the Houses of Parliament), and in the print media, radio and television (newspapers and magazines, BBC Radio 3 and 4, and BBC2 and BBC4). The success of our adjustment to research impact is reflected in the growth of our research income, especially from charities and industry and also from Research Councils where we have enjoyed particular success in winning seven AHRC CDA awards linking us with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Geffrye Museum, the Greenwich Maritime Museum, the *Institut français*, the Royal Collection and Waddesdon Manor.

b. Approach to impact

The School's approach to impact is defined by a specific objective in its Research Strategy for 2008-14: 'to stimulate research impact not only within but also beyond the academic world, through public history and a variety of forms of public engagement'.

Given the School's pedigree in public engagement, the pursuit of research impact is embedded in our ethos. Leading research impact scholars (**Hennessy, Jackson, Jones, Lowe, Rubin, Vickery**) have encouraged colleagues to pursue impact in their research projects (e.g. **Asbridge, Dixon, Ellison, Frampton, Hayward, Todman**). Spreading good practice on research impact is part of individuals' and groups' research planning and the School's research mentor system (see REF5); it is also a critical aspect of our Research Committee's actions and the management of our research funding (in the writing of applications, their deployment on receipt and accountability on completion); and it is supported by internal resources and external funds, as well as by QMUL infrastructure and finances.

In pursuing impact, the School has been informed by external and internal influences. Externally,

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research council, charity and industry funding bodies have for some time made pathways to impact and impact measurement key elements of research grant application procedures. Consequently, the School has absorbed the new rationale and expectation of these funding providers and has adapted its existing approach accordingly (for evidence of this, note REF5's description of the School's research management system and the rise in its research income, especially from the AHRC and Wellcome Trust, both of which have specific commitments to research impact). Internally, the School's Research Strategy has been led by QMUL's Strategic Plans for 2006-10 and 2010-2015. The current College Plan has two main objectives, the second of which refers to 'the translation of the outcomes of our research to the benefit of our society and economy; by public engagement with our academic expertise; and by providing leadership in areas of public interest'. To enable this aim, QMUL has created an impact infrastructure which supports the School's impact objectives:

- QM Centre for Public Engagement is a major outreach initiative that encouraged engagement with the public, by working with researchers to identify possible impacts resulting from their research, and helping them to maximise their impact (www.qmul.ac.uk/publicengagement/).
- The Business Development Office (www.qmul.ac.uk/business/) and Queen Mary Innovation Ltd (www.qminnovation.co.uk/) are the College's organisations that facilitate two-way interaction between its academics and businesses and the wider community.
- QMUL Media Centre publicises staff research by issuing press releases around significant events (publications, symposia, conferences), and establishing media contacts for staff, using press releases, twitter and RSS feeds, podcasts and a YouTube channel (www.qmul.ac.uk/media/). Media appearances are logged in 'QM in the News' (www.qmul.ac.uk/media/qmnews/). It runs an archive of staff research expertise for use by the media (www.qmul.ac.uk/expert/).
- QMUL Centre for Academic and Professional Development (CAPD) provides media and impact-related training for all researchers (www.learninginstitute.qmul.ac.uk/).
- TCCE: The Culture Capital Exchange (the successor organization to the London Centre for Arts and Cultural Exchange (LCACE), of which QM was a founder) has promoted the exchange of knowledge and expertise by establishing a mutually beneficial network between academia, business, and the cultural and creative sectors across London. TCCE match-make academic expertise and the creative industries, working closely researchers to promote public engagement (www.theculturecapitalexchange.co.uk/).

In addition to this infrastructure, the College has provided public engagement support to the School from the office of the Vice-Principal (Research and International Affairs), and the Dean for Research in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences through investment in Research Centres that promoted public-facing research dissemination events: the Centre for the History of the Emotions, the Centre for the Study of the History of Political Thought, the Centre for Renaissance and Early Modern Studies, the Centre for Eighteenth-Century Studies, and the Centre for the Study of Islam and the West. The School and College have also supported the History of Modern Biomedicine Research Group, the Leo Baeck Institute (LBI) and the Mile End Group (MEG).

The School's expertise in research impact is particular to three broad areas of engagement with audiences/beneficiaries beyond QMUL: with specific and general audiences through archives, museums and exhibitions; with newspaper, radio and television audiences; and with policy makers, mainly in the British government. In each case, the underpinning research has been proven through established processes of academic peer review before being employed by QMUL historians in the articulation of their knowledge and understanding beyond the academic world.

Archives, museums and exhibitions, online or otherwise: the School has an established tradition of working with local, national and international archives, museums and exhibitions based on its historians' research. Relationships have been established with the National Archives (**Hennessy** is President, Friends of the National Archives), the Ragged School Museum, the Geffrye Museum, the Imperial War Museum, the, Royal Collection, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the National Library, Washington DC, the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Waddesdon Manor. In each case, professional contact with these industries, and impact on their activities, has been forged with **Jones, Lowe, Rubin, Todman** and **Vickery** playing leading roles. As a result, the research of QMUL historians has had impact upon museum practices, users and

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visitors. The School's research is also disseminated and viewed publicly online through blogs and websites related to its research groups and centres.

Newspaper, radio and television: over 20 of the School's historians have written for national newspapers, national and international magazines, and appeared on national radio and television during 2008-14. **Asbridge, Bourke, Denley, Dixon, Dubow, Ellison, Isabella, Hunt, Jackson, Jones, Lowe, McCarthy, Mendelsohn, Questier, Rubin, Smele, and Taylor** have all appeared on Radio 3 and/or Radio 4 history programmes (including regular appearances on *In Our Time*). **Jackson** presented a Radio 3 series on the Franco-Prussian War (2008), on France's Empire (2012) and also a Radio 4 Archive Hour programme on de Gaulle (2010). **Rubin** contributed to Radio 4's History of the World in 100 Objects (2010), Thoroughly Modern Mary (2010) and wrote and presented a programme on medieval Hebrew poetry (2012). **Vickery** has researched, written and presented three landmark series (*A History of Private Life* (2009), *Voices from the Old Bailey* (series 1, 2010 and series 2, 2011) and *Amanda Vickery On Men* (2012).) **Asbridge** and **Vickery** have also researched, written and presented landmark BBC2 television series (*The Crusades*, 2011 and *At Home with the Georgians*, 2010). **Dixon** has presented *The End of God? A Horizon Guide to Science and Religion* (BBC4, 2011) and acted as series consultant for *Ian Hislop's Stiff Upper Lip* (BBC1 2012). Members of the School have also appeared on TV news and other programmes.

Policy-making: the School's modern and contemporary British historians in particular have developed a reputation for expertise in their areas of research with specific relevance to policy debates and policy making. As two of the School's impact case studies show, its historians have had notable impact on aspects of local and national government policy making, and constitutional and parliamentary debate. Beyond those case studies, other historians in the School (**Hunt** and **Skinner**) have been consulted by UK government bodies for historically-informed opinion and **Jones** has been an advocate of history as President of the Royal Historical Society (2009-12).

c. Strategy and plans

As the School's REF5 'Plans and aspirations for developing research, 2014-19' makes clear, we aim to focus energetically on research impact. The School's impact strategy is to continue to build on its researchers' findings and exploit them to maximise its contribution to public life. Its plan for achieving this aim incorporates three elements:

1. Consolidation and extension of the School's research impact: the School enjoys substantial ties beyond the academy across its research themes and is already consolidating and extending them as part of our impact strategy. In Society, Culture and Belief, **Rubin** is assisting curators at the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art in the creation of a major exhibition for 2015 based on her research on the Virgin Mary. **Todman** is deepening his existing association with the Imperial War Museum in their representation of the First World War on its centenary and will also be one of the two historians advising the AHRC and BBC on the 'World War One at Home' project. He will also play a central role in the QMUL2014-2018 research and public engagement events programme, an initiative led by the School. In 2014 **Vickery** will present a BBC2 three-part series on women and art based on her latest research and her institutional collaborations with museums. Historians from Emotions, Medicine and Science, will continue to be significant contributors to public life. The Centre for the History of the Emotions is enhancing its public engagement and research impact policy. **Dixon's** 15-part Radio 4 series in 2014 on the history of friendship will be prominent, as will the continued blogging and outreach activities. The Centre's Policy Director, **Evans**, will bring his enhanced profile to its future impact, especially as one of the BBC's 2013 New Generation Thinkers. **Fitzharris**, a Leverhulme Trust Postdoctoral Fellow at the Centre, is developing the impact of her research on seventeenth-century alchemy and medicine through her already highly successful and award-winning website and blog (thechirurgionsapprentice.com/; winner of the AHA's 'Best Individual Website' Cliopatria Award in 2011) and her print and television journalism (articles in *The Guardian*, *The Lancet* and *The New Scientist*, and BBC and Channel 4 television programmes). **Tansey's** History of Modern Biomedicine Research Group will from 2014 produce further witness seminars from its £1.4 million Wellcome Trust Strategic Award, expanding its contribution to greater understanding of biomedical research through online and print outputs (www2.history.qmul.ac.uk/research/modbiomed/). Historians from the Ideas and Practice of Politics will continue to develop public encounters. Annual public lectures, such as the Centre for the

History of Political Thought's Nicolai Rubinstein lecture, will be used as part of the School's outreach programme to present expert knowledge to an audience of academics and non-academics. The School will develop its ties with the Raphael Samuel Centre and work with its director, **Taylor**, to cooperate with its well established public history events (www.raphael-samuel.org.uk/). Support for **Wildmann** and the **LBI** will continue with greater QMUL involvement in its public engagement series (jewishstudies.history.qmul.ac.uk/). And the School will sustain its major commitment to **MEG** and its highly accomplished seminar series and connections with government and parliament (www.mileendgroup.com/).

2. Further development of the School's impact culture: the School already shares good practice, contacts and advice about maintaining scholarly standards in research impact. It plans to build upon this impact culture. This has in fact begun. **Vickery**, whose 2009 AHRC Knowledge Transfer Fellowship was held up as an exemplar of research impact, brought Janice Hadlow, Controller of BBC2, and Martin Davidson, Commissioning Editor for BBC history programmes, to QMUL in March 2011 for a workshop on historical research and television. **Vickery** also spoke about dissemination of humanities research using TV and radio with a Radio 4 producer at the AHRC 'Arts and Humanities in the Media' conference at Queen Mary in April 2012. The School will continue to use its leading public engagement scholars as mentors to encourage staff to develop their research impact (for example, **McCarthy** was encouraged to apply for her 2013 BBC media training for female experts.) It will also encourage colleagues at all levels, including PGRs and PDRFs, to develop, where appropriate, the public engagement potential of their research. The Director of Research and research mentors now actively and strategically advise and encourage colleagues to cultivate where appropriate and possible the impact potential of their research. **Taylor**, appointed as the School's public engagement officer, will also bring her experience from the Raphael Samuel Centre into the School. Furthermore, all academic appointments will involve consideration of impact potential, as they have done through the REF period.

3. Improvement of impact infrastructure: the School's impact strategy will be increasingly underpinned by College infrastructure. The Centre for Public Engagement's £1m budget to promote QMUL's research impact from 2011 to 2015, and its dedicated staff, will strengthen the School's efforts, as will continued support from other College bodies mentioned above and from improved ICT provision centrally. The School's own investment in administrative support has been made with impact in mind. The recent appointments of an e-learning administrative officer and a media and communications officer are designed to improve our online profile and ICT capabilities. Our immediate future plans include the improvement of methods and systems for gathering information used to evidence impact and to demonstrate it to award-giving bodies, non-HEI institutions with which we work, and to the public.

d. Relationship to case studies

The School's five case studies are products of our Research Strategy and our impact agenda and grow out of our research themes. The first, '**Exhibiting the Past**', from Society, Culture and Belief, springs from the connections we have developed strategically with major international museums dealing with issues of memory in two diverse chronological periods, the early modern and the modern, led by two colleagues from different stages of their academic careers. The second, '**Understanding the Emotions**', from Emotions, Medicine and Science, represents the investment we made in the Centre for the History of the Emotions, its research and its impact, to contribute to greater public understanding of the emotions and to influence the world of arts and culture and offer policy advice. The third and fourth case studies '**Influencing Constitutional Affairs and Governance**' and '**Shaping Public Policy**' rise from the Ideas and Practice of Politics research theme and reflect the long-term engagement of our contemporary British historians and MEG; our aim was to consolidate and extend our reputation as experts in these fields. Finally, the fifth case study, '**The Public Understanding of the Crusades through Television**', also from the same research theme, is an example of how the School has encouraged and enabled one of its mid-career scholars to convey his research findings to a public audience through television, a form of public engagement for which the School is well known.