

Institution: UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM
Unit of Assessment: D30 - History
<p>a. Context</p> <p>Impact of historical research at the University of Birmingham derives from a long established practice of research activities across all chronological and geographical areas and has wide-ranging, measurable and sustainable impact. Benefits to the target audiences and user groups have been in the following broad areas of impact:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) cultural life (e.g. exhibition visitors) 2) public discourse (e.g. media engagement and targeted public interventions) 3) economic and social prosperity (e.g. CPD activities for heritage professionals) 4) education (e.g. through advice and provision) 5) public policy and services (e.g. policy papers and collaboration with third sector partners) 6) international benefits (e.g. digital collaborations and communications). <p>Research is connected directly to outreach/public engagement by linking appropriate research outcomes with impact-generating mechanisms (e.g. research in material culture impacting on heritage sector) or specific research outcomes underpinning inter-sectoral consultative work with strong policy implications (e.g. contemporary social and political history research translated into NGO/public policy advice). Key target groups are the general public (public lectures, blogs, websites, exhibitions, day schools, public broadcasts), sixth-form students (lectures, accessible archives through CENDARI, historical re-enactment), local heritage organisations such as Birmingham Museums and Art Galleries (BMAG) or Shakespeare Birthplace Trust (SBT) (exhibitions), policy makers (history and policy network, FCO, German Bundestag, HoC Select Committees, Cabinet Office Strategy Unity), advisory and consultative bodies (Research Information Network), NGOs and charities, professionals engaged in the provision of continuing education and the media (consulting on historical documentaries and other historical programmes).</p>
<p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>History at Birmingham is a large department having impact through a number of areas of activity. Due to this diversity the following indicative examples are organised around the mechanisms used to achieve the impact, which cut across the 6 types of impact listed above. During the current REF period impact has been achieved via:</p> <p>i) Public lectures, day schools, round-table events and public conferences aimed at expanding the lives, imaginations and sensibilities of individuals and groups. (Impact areas 1,2,4,6 above)</p> <p>All Research Centres organise public events which disseminate research outcomes to wider non-academic audiences. This includes engagement on topical events informed by research of Birmingham historians such as a panel discussion on the Crisis in Syria (White, 2012), a Round Table on Imperial Humanitarianism (Hilton and White, 2012), or a cross-chronological multidisciplinary seminar series (convened by Dick and Müller, ongoing) 'People, Places and Things' aimed at members of the public, historians as well as heritage professionals.</p> <p>ii) Websites: these preserve, conserve and present cultural heritage; inform policy makers; impact on the tourist experience. (All impact types)</p> <p>Research-based websites allow non-academic audiences to draw on research findings on local history, genealogy, public policy or heritage engagement, e.g. through</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Chinn's Birmingham Lives Project (case study (CS) 3), the world's largest on-line database on the history of working class lives in a specific local context, containing oral histories, letters, photographs, memoirs and other materials generated or donated by the public. (over 630,000 hits) b) The Database of Archives of Non-Governmental Organisations (CS5) with information on the archival holdings of a huge range of NGOs, such as Relate, CAFOD, Friends of the Earth, The Children's Society, an invaluable public research resource. c) Hamling's Shakespeare's World in a 100 Objects website and associated blog (CS1) developed in collaboration with the Shakespeare Institute explaining the material world of Shakespeare's England and impacting on public perception of the Tudor period (around 900 page views per

month).

d) **Lucas'** EA WorldView (www.eaworldview.com), based on academic research but written for non-academic stakeholders as a leading website for news and analysis of issues relating to US, Iran, North Africa, the Middle East, Afghanistan and Pakistan. Its readership of more than 3 million per year demonstrates its reach.

iii) Exhibitions and commemorations, working with museums, art galleries and other public bodies. Sustained academic research in collaboration with heritage professionals enhances their working practices and the impact on the public of museum and archival collections (Impact areas 1,2,4,6)

Jones and Dick's (CS2) collaboration with BMAG on a range of AHRC-funded activities including the conference 'Where Genius and the Arts Preside': Matthew Boulton and the Soho Manufactory, 1809–2009 (3–5 July 2009), a series of public engagement talks and presentations, translated academic research on cultural heritage and made it accessible to diverse audiences. **Gumz's** contribution to the Collaborative European Digital/Archival Infrastructure (CENDARI: <http://www.cendari.eu/>) situated in the 'knowledge triangle' of research, education and innovation, provides online resources ideally suited to draw a wide audience (currently 7,350 primarily in Europe, but also US and India) into the study of history, and give all citizens a platform to expand their understanding of their place in the European Community.

iv) Advisory work: In order for our research to contribute to policy debate and practice we engage with policy makers and various advisory and consultative bodies. (Impact areas 3,5,6)

Hilton has been invited to advise government bodies such as the Cabinet Office Strategy Unit and NGOs such as Consumers International on the history of consumption and the 'Big Society' agenda. The NGOs in Britain project has sponsored a series of 'witness seminars' to engage with policy makers on topics such as 'Voluntarism in the 1980s' and 'Environmentalism in the 1980s'.

Lee has advised UNICEF on the development of a toolkit for ethical research with children and on safe data. The Centre for War Studies provides advice to 'think tanks' and the media. **Gray** has advised on the House of Commons Select Committee on Defence 'Balanced Air Power' as part of the Strategic Defence and Security Review (August 2010).

v) Our specialist expertise influences the form and content of secondary school education, both locally and internationally, and provides continuing education for professional groups and professional bodies. (Impact areas 1,4,6)

Purkis has advised a local comprehensive school (2012) on the design and delivery of sixth-form History coursework projects devoted to the ideas and motivations of medieval crusaders. He has also contributed to a project led by the New South Wales Teachers' Association to create multimedia teaching resources on the crusades for use in Australian high schools (2009). **Reinarz** organises school workshops in collaboration with the Repertoire Theatre linking theatre performance with historical context and developing resource packs for KS3 and KS4 students.

Snape (CS4) has taken on responsibility for delivering historical training to the new entry courses for army chaplains with study tours to the Ypres salient leading to substantial changes being made to training manuals. **Lee**, in collaboration with the UK scholars of the Konrad Adenauer foundation, has organised seminars exploring the British education system and its impact on the development of historical and political awareness (January 2012) and Britain's place within the European Union (January 2013).

vi) Engagement with the media (Impact areas 2,3,4,6)

The majority of colleagues have engaged with the media to broaden audience reach, with extensive contributions to television, radio, printed and social media both by consulting for and participating in programmes, e.g. BBC/ITV/Channel 4 documentaries (e.g. **Cust, Lee, van Lottum, Dyer, Willis**), Radio 4 Today/In Our time/Making History (e.g. **Standen, Cust, Hamling**) BBC/WM (**Swanson, Chinn**), *History Today* (e.g. **Hamling, Lee**), various social media (e.g. **Houlbrook, Uekötter, Hewitt, Lucas, Willis**).

Many colleagues have also extensively used international non-English print media to extend their global reach. This has included works such as historical books aimed at the general public, blogs and websites in other languages with works written in or translated into Chinese (**Standen, Swanson, Lukowski**), French (**Prauser**), Italian (**Prauser**), and even Albanian (**Lukowski**) to name but a few.

Impact template (REF3a)

A particular strength of the UoA is impact deriving from large externally-funded research projects, for example: **Lee's** 2011 AHRC-funded Children Born of War network (bringing together academia with international NGOs, charities and commercial development consultancies and policy-makers); **Hilton's** 2008 and 2013 Leverhulme and AHRC-funded collaborative projects on NGOs (see case study); **Standen's** AHRC-funded network Defining the Global Middle Ages (working with 'netizens' in China and the west); **Hamling's** 2010 and 2012 AHRC and Leverhulme-funded projects on Material Culture and Cultural Heritage in Shakespeare's England (see case study). All of these projects emphasise the importance of the **sustainability** with regard to impact, as they **all** create impact mechanisms designed to outlast the initial funding period (e.g. through inter-sector network creation, creation of high-impact digitised resources, consultative work with medium and long-term policy implications). UoB recognised the effectiveness of History's impact engagement by awarding **Hilton** the Founders Award for Policy Impact in 2011.

Institutional support and College/UoB Funding:

The commitment of historians to inter-disciplinary, international and intersectoral work as well as public engagement and outreach, in this REF period, has been enhanced by the creation of college-wide support structures. In 2009, the College of Arts and Law (CAL) set up a Research and Knowledge Transfer Office with dedicated and practical impact support, including for external funding applications with strong impact elements (discussed above). This was strengthened in 2012 with the appointment of a dedicated, permanent full-time Research Impact Officer to support impact development. This clear aim of embedding wider engagement as an element of best practice in research receives further practical support from other areas of the University, in particular the Media and PR office, for example by participating in the Birmingham Brief (**Hilton, Gray, McKay, Lucas**) and Birmingham Heroes schemes (**Gray, Purseigle, Qureshi, Sheffield**).

c. Strategy and plans

Our strategy for the next five years is to continue to use the 6 mechanisms detailed above to pursue a diversity of impact activity, rather than to target certain types of impact. We will also embed and facilitate impact expectations in the research agendas of all staff as befits research in their areas of expertise. We will continue planning around the formal mechanisms, for example:

i) Public lectures etc: The 'People, places, things' seminar series will continue in 2014; additional public events are planned in 2014 as a part of the IAS 'Saving Humans' theme (e.g **Hilton's** co-design of research into humanitarianism with Save the Children); there are plans for witness seminars on contemporary historical events (such as the miner's strike) through the Centre for Modern British Studies.

ii) Websites and blogs: Beginning October 2013 and running until 2018 the Centre for War Studies will be the lead academic advisers for the BBC's WWI centenary coverage and will be working with the BBC to develop a MOOC on aviation; Lucas' EA Worldview website will continue to develop over the period; a modern and contemporary history blog is due to start in 2014 with contributions from the department and aimed at the public; individual blogs by staff members will continue over the period also, including for example **Houlbrook's** *Trickster Prince* blog.

iii) Exhibitions and work with Museums: In 2014, **Hilton** will be collaborating with commissioned artists and the Midlands Arts Centre on an exhibition looking at cultural studies at Birmingham; building on the success of the Matthew Boulton bicentenary, plans are already underway to lead on events around the bicentenary of James Watt's death in 2015, in collaboration with local museums and art galleries (activity to begin in 2014); more generally, the learning and teaching club (informal regular staff meetings devoted to best practice in teaching) has started exploring how public engagement can be embedded into research through collaborative learning projects including the heritage sector (e.g. with SBT and BMAG).

iv) Advisory work: This is harder to make specific plans for given its ad hoc nature, however the UOA's plans for support (below) will include ways of developing these relationships.

v) Education: Work on translation of research into educational material will be further developed. In collaboration with the Repertoire Theatre, **Reinarz** will intensify the development of educational material for the communication of historical and science historical research. **Yarrow** and **Purkis** will be building on links with Lichfield Cathedral and St. Chad's, Birmingham, to make their research on medieval relics accessible to Schools (KS2 and 3) in the form of resource packs to be used in the churches' educational outreach programmes.

Impact template (REF3a)

vi) Media Engagement: We aim to work increasingly closely with the University's Media Relations Manager and the College Marketing and Communications Manager in order to maximise the reach of our research (via Birmingham Briefs and Policy Commissions, as well as by more directly publicising our work to relevant communities).

To achieve these aims and to generate further strong impact activity, we will focus on the following:

a) Institutional, college and departmental support: The department will seek to maximise the potential to deliver impact using a variety of existing and developing mechanisms at departmental, college and university level. This will include: **regular exploration of research impact in research fora** (regular informal staff meetings) to create a culture that considers impact as matter of course in research planning; **research mentoring**, in which experienced staff share best practice with less experienced colleagues; the expansion of a range of **dedicated impact seminars** to identify the full array of **potential beneficiaries** (to maximise the reach of the impact), and to explore innovative thinking on translating research outputs into impact (to maximise impact significance); and the exploitation of considerable **experience of colleagues** as reviewers of funding applications (**Cust, Ross, Hilton, Lee, Callow, Standen, Houlbrook**) through their engagement in training events for all staff. The College impact strategy is currently being revised jointly with the College of Social Sciences in order to create synergies and share best practice. Furthermore, the College and departmental R&KT funds contain provision to support impact activities, and impact is factored into the workload allocation model. Scrutiny and approval of study leave applications will continue to involve consideration of planned Impact.

b) Measuring, monitoring and evaluating: We understand that the systematic recording of our impact activity is crucial to developing our activity in the future. To this end, staff have begun to engage with our research management system PURE, to record their activity in a central location. We will continue to promote and facilitate this engagement through and beyond 2014. A second strand of work is also currently underway to develop appropriate monitoring and evaluation strategies (utilising the data to be harvested from PURE) so we can begin to assess the value of our impact activities, and to understand how these might enhance the benefit for both our research and our beneficiaries.

c) Explorative undertakings: The college has put in place funds for scoping workshops to **engage with non-academic users**, and the department will build on and extend activities in this respect.

University's impact mechanisms aimed at building strategic partnerships in the intellectual, commercial, cultural and policy spheres (Birmingham Brief; Birmingham Heroes; Birmingham Policy Commissions) will be explored further. Increased use of these mechanisms for building commercialisation of research outcomes into funding applications (Alta Innovations - Lee), and exploring enterprise opportunities (Enterprise Birmingham Competition - Lucas) will be a focus of some of the above-mentioned impact seminars.

d. Relationship to case studies

The five case studies (1 Material Culture and Cultural Heritage; 2 Promoting Public Understanding of Matthew Boulton; 3 Co-Creating Community Histories; 4 Using History to inform Armed Forces training and policy; 5 Preserving and Learning from the Past) demonstrate that commitment to impact is found **across a wide chronological and thematic range of research**. They exemplify the departmental approach to impact, namely to create **sustainable impact** on the basis of **excellent research** in the areas of civil society (CS1-5), cultural life (CS1-3), education (CS1-4), policy making (CS2,5), public discourse (CS4-5) and public services (CS1-5). Our approach to impact as detailed above is evident in **all** case studies, with impact significant in terms of reach and sustainable through creation of impacts mechanisms designed to outlast the research (**all** cases). Different CS demonstrate how these impact mechanisms are tailored towards the most effective engagement, dissemination and impact generation. As such, CSs **1, 3, 5** focus on websites as key means of engagement, whereas CSs **2, 3** employ direct engagement with heritage organisations as a means of effecting historical research impact on exhibitions and visitor experience. In contrast, **CS4** demonstrates how historical research has impacted directly on public services of the Armed Forces by providing training and professional development.