

<b>Institution: University of Reading</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: 27 English Language and Literature</b>
<p><b>1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy</b></p> <p><b>1.1 Summary 2014-20</b></p> <p>Reading has strengthened its long-standing reputation over the cycle by pioneering innovative ways of thinking and working collaboratively. To these ends, we have taken two specific actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have created three new <b>Research Clusters</b> which offer trans-historical platforms for all researchers within the UOA - Archives, Texts, and Materialities; Creativity; and Identities.</li> <li>• We have taken a leading role in developing <b>inter- and cross-disciplinary research</b>. Specifically, we have led the establishment of three new <b>Interdisciplinary Research Centres</b> which promote exciting opportunities for research which crosses boundaries and genres, including in digital research. These are the <a href="#">Samuel Beckett Research Centre</a>, the <a href="#">Centre for Book Cultures and Publishing</a>, and the <a href="#">Centre for Health Humanities</a>.</li> </ul> <p>We have enhanced the reach and efficacy of our research, engagement, and impact events through the evolution of these Clusters and Centres, which have also enriched the environment for collaborative projects and partnerships, and current and future applications to external funding sources.</p> <p>Through restructuring and recruitment, we have taken the opportunity to embed a freshly distinctive, sustainable culture. This is a culture which is now more attuned to our strengths in <b>archival recovery and analysis</b>, in <b>cultural, gender, and racial identities</b>, and in <b>creative publication and creative approaches within critical and cultural debates</b>. We are at the forefront of <b>digital presentation of scholarly editions</b> through our collaborations in national and international partnerships, whilst across our work sustaining focus upon the materiality and aesthetics of the text.</p> <p>Our collegial environment, peer mentoring, and work-in-progress advice through the new Clusters and Centres has produced a more intense and supportive context for completion of major outputs. Our output selection has been made from a pool of <b>30 single-authored monographs and scholarly editions</b>, as opposed to 20 in 2014 – now over one monograph per staff FTE. This advance is a consequence of our annual planning and support mechanisms, and their connection to the improved University infrastructure put in place during this REF cycle – particularly within our Heritage and Creativity Research Theme (hereafter <b>H&amp;C</b>).</p> <p><u>Staffing</u>: With innovation, diversity, and sustainability in mind, we have proactively diversified and rejuvenated our profile through a strategy of recruiting staff <b>earlier in their careers</b> (Abram, Byrne, Clanchy, Harris, Scholar, Shamma, Skuse, Wilson). These new colleagues research through the perspectives of race, gender, migration and medical history. In several areas, their work intersects with that of new colleagues who have arrived through our additional recruitment in <b>Creative Writing</b>. This latter aspect of our strategy signals our ambition to develop existing potential as a prominent part of our research and impact in the future. We have also in this cycle significantly harnessed the emphasis on <b>creativity</b> which runs across several aspects of our activity.</p> <p>The vibrancy and sustainability of the Clusters informs our staff planning. We have recruited colleagues to all our Clusters since 2014: 'Identities' 1 FTE; 'Archives, Texts, Materialities' 2 FTEs; 'Creativity' 2 FTEs, including 2x0.5 FTE. We have also seen recognition of outstanding research and impact leadership through the promotion of two colleagues to Personal Chairs, and six to Assistant Professorships.</p>

**Postgraduates:** We are ambitious in our recruitment of postgraduate students and have improved our levels of successful completion. As with our Staffing, our postgraduate student body now displays considerably more diversity in terms of gender, race, and age-range than previously, together with a higher proportion of overseas students. We have successfully **supervised to completion 34 PhDs** across this period, in comparison with 23 last time.

**Income:** We have sustained our levels of external income at **£900k+**. At the same time, we have diversified our sources of funding. We have also across the cycle put in place through our new infrastructure a fresh system of bid support, which we are confident will enable us to raise our income levels in the next REF cycle. Through the contexts and new structures delineated below, we have received **over £80k investment from competitive funding schemes in the University** for our research initiatives, partnerships, and impact activities. These funds have been instrumental in building sustainability into our environment through the Clusters and Centres.

As signalled above, our positive progress has happened in two defined ways:

### **1.2 Research Clusters**

In 2015 we reorganised disciplinary research around three Research **Clusters** to ensure critical mass, provide basis for partnership and collaboration, and to implement specialised mentorship. These are trans-historical groups, planned both to foreground the distinctiveness of colleagues' ambitions, and also to mirror new institutional support foci where appropriate. Each Cluster has a designated Leader whose activity is recognised through workload planning. Each has a dedicated funding stream from our School (see 1.5) which has averaged £15k p.a. across this cycle. Cluster Leaders are responsible for audited annual planning and delivery of research and impact activities.

In each Cluster we have achieved positive, attentive, and supportive environments, some of which specifically link to our local infrastructural resources, including the rich archives held at the [University of Reading's Special Collections](#). Our Clusters provide intellectual space for sharing of work in progress; for development of new collaborative projects; partnerships; funding bids and mentoring; and delivery of informed advice, and best practice.

Each individual member of staff belongs to one (and in a few cases, two); our postgraduate students attend and present at the dedicated seminars, workshops and events most appropriate to their area of study.

Two distinctive features run across all of our Cluster activities. These are a focus upon **archival and textual recovery work**, and an emphasis upon **diversity and gender**. Examples of the ways in which our research combines both elements are Abram's work on Black British Women's Theatre, with its concern to gather and archive unpublished and ephemeral materials; and Robinson's role in the acquisition for Special Collections of the archive of the neglected mid-twentieth century poet, Mairi MacInnes, which underpins an edition of MacInnes' writings.

Specific activities planned and co-ordinated from each Cluster, 2015-20, are included in **Section 4**. Here we describe the drivers behind them:

#### Archives, Texts, Materialities (Leader P Bullard)

Work in our largest Cluster is underscored by recovery research that derives from conflict zones, and from writers whose work has been hitherto overlooked within cultural heritage. The Cluster's activity has involved providing specialist expertise and close collaboration, for instance, with Sutton's war-zone recoveries, beyond his initial involvement with the 'Caribbean Queer' AHRC-funded project (-2014); work which has recently been supplemented by colleagues' interests in migrant and refugee writing outlined below. Researchers are active in discovering and disseminating **original contexts of textual publication** through history.

This strand of our research has benefitted greatly from the £500k University Collections Project supported by the University Strategic Fund. We have received three Fellowships for teaching buy-out towards external funding bids via this route (P Bullard, 'Tangible Histories', 2017; Carville,

'Dying Well: Beckett, Writing and the History of Care', 2018; Wilson, 'Publishing Class', 2019). These Fellowships support dedicated training and development towards the creation of future research- and engagement-leaders. We have also received substantial postgraduate bursary support for our students from the Collections Project, including most recently for a thesis on 'Beckett and the City', (2017-20).

Our commitment to staff sustainability around **Digital Humanities** and archival work is exemplified by our winning funds from H&C for R Bullard to attend the Oxford Summer School in 2018; and H&C pump-priming funding to support BA and Leverhulme postdoctoral applications from Davies (2017, 2019).

#### Creativity (Robinson)

Our collaborations around creativity involve research towards our own practice; research into how creative approaches can reanimate the archive; and also how creativity works to alleviate conditions for those in a variety of traumatic contexts, including migrants, refugees, and those affected by Covid-19 (Shamma, Clanchy).

The Cluster has principally led collaborations through the **Reading Literature Festivals** (2014-17), supported by monies from Arts Council, England (£7k p.a.), the University Arts Panel (£5k p.a.) and H&C. Since 2017, the Festival has evolved into annual themed collaborations with the Oxford Brookes Poetry Centre, and the International Poetry Studies Institute, University of Canberra, which has produced Special Issues of papers and creative work for the online journal *Axon*, edited by Matthews and Robinson (2018-20).

Creativity provides a thread through much of our experimental research activity, as evidenced by the Creative Fellowships programme at the Samuel Beckett Research Centre; and the collaboration in the Health Humanities Centre, exploring the role of creativity in articulating 'Stories of Aging'; and our work in asylum migration studies (see 1.5 b)).

#### Identities (Cheyette)

Our work in this Cluster is characterised by a shared concern to re-consider racial, ethnic, LGBT, and gender interconnections through research which aims better to understand the historical underpinnings of current social and cultural conditions. Particular focus in the Cluster is on LGBT rights (Lesnik-Oberstein, Stoneley), and upon connections between Black British and Jewish Identities (Abram, Brauner). Historical perspective is evidenced in work such as Cheyette's study of the Ghetto. The Cluster is also a significant energiser behind partnerships which disseminate new research around archival holdings to local communities, including work with Berkshire Records Office and Reading Gaol.

The Identities Cluster has provided the impetus for our prominent interest in writing and commemorative agency in refugee and asylum contexts, which involves the gathering of stories from Middle-Eastern camps and encouragement towards creativity as a way to articulate trauma. This aspect is exemplified by Clanchy's educational research engaging creativity with migrant, and asylum support partners, captured in the 2020 Orwell prize-winning *Some Kids I Taught and What They Taught Me* (2019). Also prominent is Shamma's archiving of poems from camps in 'Lost and Found: A Digital Archive of Testimonies of Displacement' (2019), and in the project outcome from her BA Award, the Summer Showcase '[Refugee Tents: Here and Now](#)'. Shamma's project was selected as a BA highlight event at 'Being Human' 2020.

### **1.3 Interdisciplinary Research Centres**

Our **Early Modern Research Centre** (Director O'Callaghan), involving colleagues in History and Politics, is now well-established, through its biannual conferences and projects. The Centre is pivotal in generating international partnerships and external funding (see 4).

We have additionally spearheaded interdisciplinarity since 2014 through our leadership in the establishment of the new **Research Centres** in the last 4 years, providing significant energies and support for **digital, theoretical and methodological innovation**. Over 50% of colleagues are

members of these Centres. Under the recent University-wide review of its Centres portfolio, our Beckett, Book Cultures, and Health Humanities Centres were recognised by becoming three of the institution's ten bodies with 'Interdisciplinary Research Centre status. This will bring **additional investment**, against approved plans, from August 2020. Our Centres each host dedicated international research and impact events, which include one-off major conferences alongside regular academic and public engagement activity.

These Centres, each led by staff in English Literature, include colleagues from a range of other disciplines and departments outlined below, ensuring sustainability but also expansion of capacity and the potential for fresh interdisciplinary collaboration and partnership. Our leadership of the Centres also demonstrates our commitment to career development and research training (see 2.1 below). The Centres have also been successful in attracting both **internal and external funding** (2.3 and 2.5). Each Centre receives £1k p.a. from each participating department, was granted £5k on inauguration in 2020, and has access to targeted competitive University funds for interdisciplinary research.

The activities and outputs from each of these Centres are characterised by an experimental approach to Digital Humanities, and they have created path-breaking and sustainable international partnerships and collaborations in this area. For example, Wilson, Co-Director of the Centre for Book Cultures and Publishing History, acts as co-director for a transatlantic collaboration, the [Modernist Archives Publishing Project](#) (hereafter **MAPP**). This facet of our Centres' work has been acknowledged by funding and awards such as the bi-annual Prize for 'Bibliography, Archive, or Digital Project' from the Modern Language Association in 2018, for the [Beckett Digital Manuscript Project](#). This collaboration with Trinity College, Dublin, the University of Antwerp and the Harry Ransom Centre, is co-directed by Nixon, a colleague in our Samuel Beckett Research Centre.

The **Centre for Book Cultures and Publishing History** includes colleagues from Modern Languages and Typography. Supported by the University's renowned and accredited Collections in book, publishing and printing history, the Centre is distinctive for its multilingual and multidisciplinary focus, and keen emphasis on women's engagement in publishing and printing. The Centre is attentive to the politics of the global and the local, the central and peripheral, and integrates study of marginalised writers and readers. Researchers in the Centre have shared interests in the materiality of text and image (analogue and digital), in how digital methods can enhance scholarship, and the ways in which books are produced, distributed and read in global contexts today and in the past. Several interwoven themes underpin the Centre's work: International publishing; Gender and diversity; Heritage and conflict; Translation; Reading and literacies; and Digital materialities. Activities in the Centre are underpinned by the fortnightly 'Archives and Texts' Seminar Series, with its lively [website](#).

The [Centre for Health Humanities](#) (Director Mangham, with co-Directors in History) includes colleagues from Applied Linguistics, Archaeology, Modern Languages, Pharmacy, and Psychology. The Centre showcases and promotes a distinctively holistic and interdisciplinary approach to the study of health and wellbeing, encompassing the study of a variety of states, stages, and conditions, from permanent disability to 'perfect recoveries'. The Centre boasts unusual breadth in both chronology and geography, covering health in historical, national, and global contexts, from medieval England to modern Asia. It makes full use of the University's collections and resources, and specifically the Cole Collection of Zoology and Early Medicine. Work has evolved through four interrelated themes: Bodies, Minds, Sickness; Colonial Medicine; Monsters and the Monstrous; Life Transitions. The Centre runs a regular seminar series; it works closely with artists, doctors, and museum professionals, with the Berkshire Record Office, the Hunterian Museum and the Gordon Museum of Pathology in London. Notable ongoing projects include the partnership with Royal Berkshire Hospital on ['Stories of Ageing: Patient Experience and Patient Care'](#)

The [Samuel Beckett Research Centre](#) (Director Matthews) was founded in 2017 with participation of colleagues from Philosophy, Fine Art, Modern Languages, and Film, Theatre, and Television. Based around the University's world-leading Beckett archives, work by staff has



included major scholarly editions of unpublished Beckett works, and archive-informed inter- and cross-disciplinary writing and impact activity about Beckett's collaborations and aesthetic development. Our impact has included research outcomes studying Beckett's relationship with specific actors, his interests in visual art and music, and his interactions with European heritage. The Centre has attracted over **£290k external private sponsorship** during its early existence, for scoping postdoctoral research towards bids, for its Creative Fellowships (inaugural Fellow Eimear McBride), and for postgraduate studentships. Besides its fortnightly seminar series, the Centre's primary external-facing activity is its annual international 'Beckett Week' programme of events, public workshops, and conferences. This includes activities instigated and hosted by our postgraduates, mentored by the Centre Director, which have led to significant outputs edited by our students (see 2.5 (c)).

#### **1.4 Impact**

As evidenced in our description of Cluster activities, collaboration with non-academic partners forms a central aspect of our planning, including work with community groups, hospitals, refugee agencies, public records offices and museums in the UK and Europe. Our projects are each developed through early consultation with these partners, and **seed-corn funding** for workshops and other events is granted by **Clusters** specifically on the evidence of such interaction. Examples of projects which have recently received mentoring and internal funding include: Abram's training events around representations of sexual violence (with £2k support from H&C, alongside Identities Cluster funding); and Carville's 'Dying Well' project which considers, through Beckett's work, the role of creativity in palliative care, partnering with hospices and clergy organisations.

Our strategy has been to embed and realise the impact potential within all of our projects from their outset. To this end, impact planning, support, and strategy are managed at several levels: a) Mangham, the Impact Lead, works closely with Brauner, the Research Division Lead (hereafter **RDL**) to ensure that annual Cluster Plans highlight the impact within projects; b) Cluster funding acts as the conduit for impact support monies for individuals and collaborations (e.g. from Archives (Bullard, £1k p.a. for the 'Land and Landscape' public seminars at the Museum of English Rural Life, 2018-)); c) Annual Personal Research Plans (**PRPs**) request information about the impact element of projects, with a view to tailoring internal support and enhancing future external bids. Colleagues are encouraged to use rota leave to pursue the impact related to their research; Hutchings is a recent example of someone whose Impact Case Study has benefitted from so doing (2019).

Impact planning is, through these routes, fed into School, and H&C, strategy and management mechanisms. The former provides workload-planning teaching relief for Case Study Leads (100 hours p.a.). H&C provides seed-corn monies to develop specific projects which highlight Impact. Examples include Matthews (£3.5k, 2017-18) and Hutchings (£3k, 2019). The University's Building Outstanding Impact Support scheme (BOISP), under which we are supported by a dedicated H&C Impact Officer, has provided £35k support for our current Case Studies, and £3k for future collaborative work (Clanchy, for her work around Covid, and Shamma for further work on poetry within refugee camps).

#### **1.5 Unit Context**

a) Our UOA, which is congruent with our English Literature Department, sits within the **School of Literature and Languages**, a three-department structure. School-level management, including discussions between each UOA's research leaderships, enables the firm emphasis upon cross- and interdisciplinary research which distinguishes our approach. The School's Research and Impact Committee meets twice per term, chaired by the Head of School and including in its membership our University H&C Theme Officers for Impact and Research Development. The presence of these colleagues sustains dialogue between our plans and institutional priorities and support, whilst consistently updating University knowledge about our activities and ensuring planned resource for them.

This Committee signs off on research expenditure from Personal Research Allocations (2.1), and strategic expenditure to support impact and new project initiatives. Crucially, it receives reports

from our Cluster Leads about events which have taken place, and develops against plans. The Committee, further, receives reports about the progression of external bids towards submission, and reviews outcomes with PIs. Through this reporting and reflection process, individual and collegial activity, impact potential, bids, and our external links and exchanges are discussed and monitored, and best practice shared across UOAs.

b) English Literature is integrated in the University's H&C Research Theme, comprising nine Arts and Humanities departments, and led by a Research Dean. As part of the investment in creating a step-change around research, our UOA has been provided with a supportive and nuanced context which facilitates interdisciplinarity, fosters leadership, planning and development (particularly for earlier career colleagues), and supports our Centres and Impact with mentoring, and seed-corn project funding. Our distinctive **digital archival research and dissemination** has greatly benefitted from external consultancy advice provided through the **H&C Digital Humanities Project**. Investment is made against an annual review process involving discussions between the RDL and our Dean. H&C also has dedicated Research Communications Officers, who support online, blog, and press dissemination.

### **1.6 Strategy for the next five years**

The reorganisation of our research structures has enabled us to ensure a sustainable future which embeds the following principles: the increasing importance of collaboration, interdisciplinarity, and partnership; the opportunities for innovation afforded by digital technologies; further extension of impact and public engagement across all of our research, individual and collaborative; increasing the number of PGRs and PDRAs to create an evolving and exciting environment; and, crucially, supporting colleagues earlier in their careers to become leaders in their field. To meet these objectives, we will:

#### **RESEARCH**

- Sustain and extend **high-quality, innovative individual research** through i) the annual PRP process; ii) through mentoring and peer-review processes now established in our Clusters; iii) through co-operation with the University's Research and Enterprise Services (hereafter **RES**).
- Enhance significantly levels of **external funding**. We are confident that the quality of our external bids has been strengthened from the previous iteration through the strands of planning and advice which we have now fully embedded in our culture. We will develop our planning and process further in this regard by benefitting from input through the **H&C Grant Development College** (see 3 (a)), and from the support provided by the **H&C Digital Humanities Project** pump-priming schemes.
- In line with this, we will further deploy possibilities afforded by new **technologies and social media** in our activities and bids. The collaborative platforms described above suggest advantages derived from foregrounding digital scholarship in each of our future projects. Emergent examples would be the AHRC-funded extension of MAPP, and an online exhibition of posters relating to European productions of Beckett.
- Expand **collaboration with museums**, and **place-based** research. Further ongoing examples include P Bullard's collaborations with the Museum of English Rural Life, Mangham's with the Cole Collection; and Morrissey's and O'Callaghan's work on Donne and on networks at Lincoln's Inn and the Inns of Court.
- Expand our work on **Identities and diversity**; further innovation includes upcoming events on 'Authenticity' (co-hosted by a postgraduate, Giambona), and work from Walsh on the African Writers Series in the Heinemann archives at the University's Special Collections.
- We will extend the benefits of **international partnerships**. Our experience of building links with colleagues in the UK, Europe, Australasia, and North America provides a basis for further projects. We have achieved considerable partnership funding success already with the Australian Research Council (O'Callaghan); through continuing co-editorship of journals and conference panels (e.g. Brauner's collaboration with Shostak on *Philip Roth Studies*, 'Roth@80'); and the Henslowe Diaries and Beckett Digital Manuscript Projects

(see 4). Such projects, including the imminent extension of MAPP, will enable us further to expand our collegiality and influence.

- We will **increase our PGRs** i) through focused funding applications, and by encouraging our best MA students to consider PhDs with us; ii) add to and nurture PhD student numbers through continued participation in the AHRC SWW Doctoral Training Partnership, and through other funding/bursary opportunities, including the Felix International Studentships (a funding stream available to Reading, SOAS and Oxford to encourage high-achieving students from developing countries), and sponsorships such as that for the Samuel Beckett Research Centre (see 2.5).

### IMPACT

- Further to **embed impact from the outset in all activity**, individual and collective, through i) the annual PRP; ii) annual planning processes for Clusters and Centres, as a required aspect of their activities; iii) as a trialled feature of all external bids through pre-submission and online events.
- Further to resource the Clusters and Centres to **develop innovative impact and public engagement** activities; models include Wilson's ongoing 'Class Matters' initiative, funded by the RETF (see IES); a project to foster working-class fiction (see 4).
- We aim further to **embed diversity** issues in all of our impact. This will be achieved on the model of Shamma's *Making Home Away*, a digital archive chronicling the creation of the concept of home for refugees in Syria alongside academic study of contemporary migrant poetries. Supported by a BA grant, the website will be published in 2021. This has led to a follow-on project through a Leverhulme Research Fellowship, 'When We Talk About Home' (2021-2).
- We will continue to expand the **experimental deployment of creativity** within our impact, as evidenced by the Health Humanities and Beckett Centres' current projects around creativity and care, or Clanchy's continuing work which has already resulted in *England: Poems from a School* (2018).
- Seek to increase and **diversify our sources of impact funding**, particularly through sponsorship for our Centres and the collaborative possibilities from our Clusters. Stoneley's success in securing support from the Heritage Lottery Fund (Identities), or P Bullard's and Robinson's with Arts Council England (Archives; Creativity), suggests that our new contexts for impact and engagement will provide models for obtaining future support beyond the Research Councils.

## 2. People

### 2.1 Staffing strategy and staff development

We believe that staff development around research requires an individually-tailored approach within a responsive and sensitive environment. All colleagues receive a 33% allocation under workload planning for research.

Support and mentoring both from within the UOA and from H&C have brought possibilities for rapid academic growth within our environment. The RDL is included on all recruitment panels to ensure the viability of short-listed applicants' plans, their synergy with our areas of research interest, and the potential for Cluster enhancement. During our induction process, the RDL plans a programme of personal support for new colleagues. As part of our probationary procedures, we allocate a research mentor (usually the relevant Cluster Leader). Staff at earlier career stages benefit through probation and beyond from **training and mentoring schemes** around project management and leadership which are run from the H&C Theme; they receive teaching relief and can bid competitively for funding to support their first external bid. Further encouragement is provided by the annual University Research Theme award for Best Publication from early career researchers.

All staff are required to produce **PRPs** annually, covering publications, bidding, and impact activities across the next year, together with longer-term thinking; each colleague is required and

supported to bid externally every three years. These Plans, reviewed at a meeting with the RDL, link individual activity to the UOA's strategy and vision. They then form part of the portfolio within our annual Personal Development Review process. This calibrated planning, mentoring, and auditing enables staff development support at all career stages and levels to be attuned to individuals' needs, whilst also consistently reviewing contributions to broader groupings and strategy.

All colleagues receive an **annual £500 development allowance** for research expenses and can apply for further funding as required from School Research Committee. Expenditure against this allowance is agreed with the RDL and HOD. Staff can also apply to the University Research Travel Grant Sub-Committee for additional support.

## **2.2 Research Culture**

The conversations in our Centres and Clusters are supplemented by various UOA-wide events, including outside speakers, and regular lunchtime **'work in progress' seminars**. We organise the latter on a rota basis: colleagues present, and receive feedback, in a friendly and supportive context. PhD students are encouraged to attend, and to present in their Third Year. (Seminars have moved online to ensure continuity during the Covid crisis).

**Postdoctoral Researchers** make a significant contribution to our culture and are treated equally with permanent staff. They have termly progress meetings with the RDL. PDRF/PDRAs have benefitted from our Centres (eg Skuse (Early Modern); Bailey and Davies (Beckett Research Centre); Burke (Health Humanities)). The School Research Committee has postdoctoral representation, and all postdoctoral researchers have an annual review with the HOD to ensure that their working conditions comply with the Local Concordat. Our success in providing mentoring and development opportunities for postdoctoral researchers is evidenced by Pollard, who completed 'Lyric Economies' (AHRC, 2012-2015); and Sperling, 'British and Irish Poetry Publishing 1960-2010', (Leverhulme, 2012-2015). The former subsequently obtained a permanent post at Exeter, the latter at QMW.

## **2.3 Research Leave**

All staff on Teaching and Research contracts are entitled to **one term's leave in nine** against a department rota. An application outlining the proposed research during leave periods is submitted to the School Research Committee for advice and approval. It is required that these plans include external funding bids, and colleagues are encouraged to consider using leave for bid-writing, or to undertake significant impact and public engagement activity. Reports detailing activities achieved during leave are submitted to the Committee so that progress can be monitored. Colleagues on funded leave have termly progress-meetings with the RDL. Leave gained through bids is treated as additional to leave-time normally offered.

In addition to dedicated leave, workload timetabling is geared to ring-fence one 'research day' per week during term-time; in response to Covid-19, the School has encouraged the instigation of two 'email-free' days weekly during non-teaching periods, further to protect research.

## **2.4 Career progression**

We view the creation of our Centres and the development of our Clusters as **opportunities for staff progression and promotion**. For example, Mangham, founding Director of the Health Humanities Centre, was a mid-career researcher who has recently achieved a Chair for his publications, and as recognition of his role in leading the establishment of the Centre; Wilson, Co-Director of Book Cultures, is a former holder of a BA Postdoctoral Fellowship at Reading (2013-16; £244k) who is now an Associate Professor and has gained AHRC funding to lead a major international project.

At the annual PRP meetings, career progression and promotion are discussed. Any training needs are identified and subsequently met from dedicated School funding. Where colleagues have acquired sufficient research profile to be considered for promotion, mentorship is provided by an



appropriate senior colleague. The University's annual Promotion Scheme includes research and impact achievement, plans, and recognition, as one of its three compulsory measures. During this cycle, the University has promoted R Bullard, Cocks, Houston, Hutchings, Nixon and Wilson to Associate Professorships, and Brauner and Mangham to Professorships.

### 2.5 Research students

Under the support mechanisms for our PhD students outlined below, the successful **completion rate** within four years now stands at **100%** (compared to an average 77% -2014) - a significant improvement, and also a rate that includes higher numbers supervised.

#### a) Recruitment and Funding

Recruitment of doctoral students is through networking, and through mentoring of candidates from our PGT programmes. Prospective applicants receive informed advice on their proposals. Offers are made on the basis of academic record, suitable references, the quality of the project, and relevance to our Centres and Clusters. Students continuing from MA constitute an important part of PhD recruitment, and benefit from university-funded fee-waiver scholarships (39% of the cohort on average since 2014).

Our funded student numbers have grown across the census period (for example, via AHRC SWW DTP: Mills, Ryan). We have further diversified our sources of funding through encouraging appropriate students to apply for Felix International Scholarships, Commonwealth Studentships, and Collaborative Doctoral Award Schemes. We also benefitted from the University's strategic investment in studentships for the PhD Programme in Collections-based Research, a RETF-funded initiative that was designed and directed from within our UOA.

Our Centres are proving successful foci to attract monies to support postgraduate work; evidence includes the £250k bequest to establish the **Mary Bryden PhD studentships** at the Samuel Beckett Research Centre. These invested monies provide fees and maintenance support for one student every three years, on the basis that the project is structured around holdings at the University's Special Collections.

Two interdisciplinary Graduate Centres, in Medieval Studies and International Research in Children's Literature, receive strong contributions and support from our students and staff. Both areas have recruited well and delivered an impressive range of completions across the period; see [www.circl.co.uk](http://www.circl.co.uk) and [www.reading.ac.uk/GCMS](http://www.reading.ac.uk/GCMS) respectively.

The University runs an annual awards scheme for the **Best PhD Researcher**, and our UOA has won the best H&C prize twice in the past four years (Davies, 2017; Mills, 2019).

#### b) Training and Review

Every student has a First and Second Supervisor appointed before arrival, and undertakes a Learning Needs Assessment, which is updated annually, as appropriate training is put in place and audited. Students must consult regularly with their supervisors (4x per term if full-time), following the *University Code of Practice on Research Students* and *Good Practice Guide for Supervising PhDs*.

The Annual PhD Review involves prior submission of written reports, and 5000 words of sample work; two reviewers outside the supervisory team assess these at a one-hour meeting. These Reviews form progression points from the Probation Year (end of year One); and from MPhil to PhD confirmation of status (end of Two). Students submit an annual report in confidence assessing their experience of supervision; these reports are received directly by the School Postgraduate Committee, and any issues immediately addressed.

While the most valuable training takes place between the student and their supervisory team, there are other significant layers of training and support provided. The University's **Graduate School** runs generic training sessions, as part of its Researcher Development Programme, and

all students attend at least four sessions per annum. The Graduate School also organises an annual Postgraduate Conference.

All PhD students are entitled to desk and computer access in the Graduate School; those undertaking teaching receive desk space in a dedicated Department office. Students are encouraged to undertake undergraduate teaching in their second year, after a programme of Graduate School training and shadowing of permanent staff in their first year.

### c) Student-Led Activity

PhD students attend a twice-termly work-in-progress seminar series run by the Postgraduate Director. Our Clusters and Centres also provide additional opportunities for **PGR presentation, publication, and networking**. Examples include the postgraduate-organised seminar series on Beckett, and the annual international conference run by our PhD students during Beckett Week each Autumn. Davies and Bailey ran 'Beckett and Politics' in 2017, which has resulted in a conference volume from Palgrave (2020); Mehrabi ran 'Beckett and the Ends of Literature' in 2018, with a collection contracted to Peter Lang; Gambacorta co-hosted 'Beckett and Italy' in 2019. These events are supported by the Beckett Centre, together with £2k p.a. provided by H&C. Our students are also energetically involved in co-ordinating several other regular seminar series, dedicated to James Joyce, and Creative Writing ('Longitude'), funded through the Clusters and with input from external speakers.

We encourage and support all students to become research leaders; in this light, the initiative of the AHRC-funded Mills is representative: he is a postgraduate member of the Board of the British Association of Modernist Studies; he founded and edits its [Modernist Review](#); he co-founded and edits the SWW consortium's journal *Question*; and is an editor of the *Journal of Wyndham Lewis Studies*.

### d) Publication and Careers

Our PhD students have been **mentored to publish** their work, both during their registration, and immediately afterwards. Notable journal issues containing work by our postgraduates, and published books, include Baird, *Games and Gaming in Early Modern Drama* (Palgrave, 2020); Baxter, *Textual Practice* 32.6 (2018); Blamires, *Early Modern Literary Studies*, 19 (2017); Burke, *Romanticism and Victorianism on the Net* 70 (2018); Davies, *Samuel Beckett and the Second World War* (Bloomsbury, 2020); Gledhill, *Disability and Society*, 32.1 (2017); Houwen, *Review of English Studies* 65.269 (2014; winner of the Ezra Pound Society best article award); Phillips, *Unknown Translations* (Scalino, 2016); Ravasi, *Modern Fiction Studies* 65.3 (2019); Simmons, *The Country of the Larks* (Bradt, 2019); West, *Louisa May Alcott and the Textual Child* (Palgrave 2020).

Former students who have obtained academic posts include Davies, Postdoctoral Fellow, 'Harold Pinter Histories and Legacies' (AHRC-funded University of Leeds project); Houwen, Tokyo Women's Christian University; Phillips, University of Sofia.

## 2.6 Equality and diversity

Our supportive environment ensures equality through many of the mechanisms outlined above, including mentoring and leave provisions. The HOD operates a flexible working practice which allows workload adjustments to account for family and caring commitments; these include adjustments to rota leave to maximise the effectiveness of allocated research periods. PRPs and Development processes each take into account equality and diversity issues and put in place support mechanisms as necessary.

We operate a 'blind' appointment process for new posts, and all involved in recruitment are required to undertake 'unconscious bias' training. Six out of seven recent appointments of colleagues at earlier career stages have gone to women, raising the overall balance female/male to 52%/48% against 44%/56% in 2014. Forty percent of the professoriat, after the last promotions

round, are female; our female professors include the HOD (O'Callaghan) and Head of Postgraduates (Lesnik-Oberstein). We have raised the non-British cohort amongst colleagues from 15% in 2014 to 24% today; we have also more BAME staff, from 8%/0% (British/ Non-British) in 2014 to 11%/20% now.

Our PhD community has shown similar improvement around diversity: 11% of our UK students are BAME as opposed to 3% in 2014. 87% are now mature students over 25, an uplift of 7 percentage points since 2013/14; 17% of students have declared a disability.

As noted under 1.6, we are committed to increasing equality and diversity, including to address the gender imbalance amongst our postgraduate cohort, through targeted encouragement of our MA students to continue. Our 'Identities' Cluster is key to further promote equality and diversity, including in student recruitment. Notable work undertaken reflected in our outputs submission and environment includes focus on Black British and Jewish identities (Abram, Brauner, Cheyette), together with LGBT, women's writing, ageing, and migration and asylum studies in connection to creativities. Our work on Queer Theory forms a thread through a range of research foci from senior colleagues including Brauner, Stoneley, and Lesnik-Oberstein. These interests are then reflected in colleagues' personal and professional involvements within the institution, including prominent roles in the University's LGBT Plus and BAME Networks.

Our School has a Diversity Officer (Shamma) and Ethics Officer who reviews projects and external funding bids for their adherence to national protocols, against our Quality Assurance Manual. With regard to the REF 2021 submission, the University developed a Code of Practice setting out the steps to ensure it meets its responsibilities and adheres to the principles of transparency, consistency, accountability and inclusivity in the identification of eligible staff and the selection of research outputs. Our output selection process was carried out in line with the Code, and has aimed at optimisation for quality while being mindful of fairness. We have a transparent and uniform internal peer review process (ROSS) that treats all output forms and all types of research equally. All outputs are assessed through self and peer assessment; agreed scores are then reviewed by the output review group, and decisions about which to submit are based purely on the assessments carried out through ROSS. The University's interim Equality Impact Assessment (2020) and bias analysis (2021) identified no statistically significant differences for protected characteristics in our selection.

### 3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

#### 3.1 Income

External: This REF cycle has seen a shift in UOA culture towards more collaborative research and leadership around external funding. There was a period of readjustment and reflection whilst new mechanisms and support were put in place, but we have a) sustained our income of over £900k during this iteration; b) diversified our funding sources; c) already seen **amounts bid for quadruple**, from £533k in 2017/18 to £1,987,000 in 19/20. **Research spend** had also risen substantially beyond mid-cycle, from £25k in 2015/16 to over £167k by 2018. Internal competitions have enabled experience of grant development and supported workshops to develop collaborations. Momentum is building with recent notable grant successes, including a major Leverhulme and an AHRC Networking Grant to Shamma (2020), and a BA award to Carville for 'Room to Rhyme', which received support within our Creativity Cluster, and also from H&C.

Our Centres are fertile grounds for winning **external funding**: significant examples include Wilson, winning as Co-I CAN\$240k for MAPP 2013-15 and 2018-23; and the award to Skuse, initially of a Wellcome Trust Postdoctoral Fellowship (2016-19; £146k), then of a full 5-year Wellcome University Lectureship. Skuse is a member of the Early Modern Research Centre and of Health Humanities who is mentored by O'Callaghan. We have also sought to diversify our sources of income through the Centres to include **sponsorship**; the prominent example being the £32.5k for Creative Fellowships and postdoctoral work won by the Samuel Beckett Research Centre (2017-19). This is an area we intend to expand in the next cycle, with a further £10k already promised, matched by University funding.

Dedicated, Theme-specific support for external funding bids is provided by the Research Development team within RES. This team provides personalised advice and guidance around specific funding sources, from project conception through to development and funding. RES also disseminates Council calls. Expert technical advice for database generation and management is provided by the University's Research Data Manager. Resource and advice are supplied by the Library towards open access publication in relation to grants, and also more generally. Financial support for open access publication is available through specific internal funding, as outlined in our Institutional Environment Statement.

We have mentoring and peer review schemes for all bids against a defined timetable. Bids are initially discussed with Cluster Leads and shared with colleagues in the Cluster, as appropriate, and with the RDL. Major bids go through a review process from an interdisciplinary **H&C Peer Review College** of senior advisors.

Internal: We have been successful in winning **competitive funding within H&C schemes**. Our new **Centres** have each received vital support to establish their programmes (£6.9k 2017-21). Seed-corn funding has been provided for external bids deriving from the Centres (Mangham, £2.6k 2017 and 2020; Matthews £2.8k 2018-19). Extra support has been provided a) for colleagues completing important outputs or grant development whilst carrying extraordinary administrative burdens e.g. Morrissey, our Undergraduate Admissions Officer, £2k (2018); b) for buyout to produce public engagement projects (Mangham £7.6k 2016; Hutchings, £3k in addition to his Case Study work, 2019); c) for Conference support, such as for Wilson, £750 towards hosting the International Virginia Woolf Conference (2017) (along with £1250 from the Virginia Woolf Society and Penguin Random House); d) for exceptional circumstances such as £1815 as a contingency fund to support Shamma complete project outcomes affected by Covid-19. Support to develop future projects includes Stoneley's £1.2k towards 'Out Clubbing in London', which explores queer subcultures from Wilde to Bowery.

There have also been notable successes from colleagues and our Centres in winning support from **University** initiatives to provide buyout for completion of particularly significant and/or complex outputs through the **2020 Research Fellowships** scheme: Mangham (£2.5k 2017) and Morrissey (£2k 2018). We were twice successful in 2019 in winning highly competitive **Research Endowment Trust Open Fund** monies to support development of external funding bids from our Centres: Matthews for postdoctoral support towards three projects from the Samuel Beckett Research Centre, together with impact and partnership funds to build collaboration with Trinity College, Dublin (£29.5k); Wilson £24.5k towards postdoctoral archival work to develop MAPP towards its major (successful) AHRC bid (2021).

### **3.2 Infrastructure and Facilities**

Our work is distinguished by our unique approach to archival research, partly made possible by our [Special Collections](#) holdings. Our outstanding archives include the world-leading Beckett Archive, and the Archive of British Printing and Publishing (most relevantly for us the Hogarth Press, Random House, W.H. Smith, Cape, Heinemann, Chatto & Windus, and Ladybird Books archives). Both the Beckett Archive and the Archive of British Printing and Publishing are designated 'Outstanding Collections' by Arts Council England. The Beckett Archive includes over 600 manuscripts, correspondence, stage files, and production texts; the British Printing and Publishing Archive contains over 15,000 boxes of materials, together with records of the book trade in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

These and other collections provide a strong focus within our individual outputs, collaborative projects, and also our workshops, seminar series (such as 'Archives and Texts' and Beckett), and impact activities (see 4). Colleagues benefit immensely from the professional support and advice of designated archivists at Special Collections. These include the University Archivist, Baxter, who supports the Samuel Beckett Centre in organising pop-ups and international exhibitions (such as 'Beckett in Germany', Marbach 2017) and in facilitating the Creative Fellowships. The Principal



Archivist, Gould, supports and advises MAPP, including postdoctoral training; the project has a designated archivist (Clarkson), as does the Random House Archive (Corfield and Hunt).

We are **actively involved in enhancing institutional infrastructure and profile** around our archival holdings. The RETF- and externally-sponsored postdoctoral Fellows at the Samuel Beckett Centre created new catalogues of the Archive's ephemeral materials, including theatre posters and sound archives. Ryan has, as part of his SWW AHRC-funded PhD, produced annotated relating to our Beckett correspondence. Significant Beckett editions, including Nixon's *Echo's Bones* and forthcoming *German Diaries*, and Matthews's *Philosophy Notes*, were significantly aided by consultation of materials in this archive. Recent further archival acquisition at Special Collections, in areas such as twentieth-century poetry, have been facilitated or generated by Robinson, and have underpinned edited publications such *The Rilke of Ruth Speirs* (with John Pilling, 2015).

We have a strong record of deploying archival research as a feature of our teaching, from undergraduate work, where students can study modules such as *Beckett*, and *Editing the Renaissance*, through to a compulsory archives module at MA. We encourage coursework and dissertations that contain original archival research, and which also provide training for future postgraduate projects; more importantly here, the research of our postgraduates also displays distinctive reflection upon archival materials. We have successfully made applications to the University Undergraduate Research Opportunities Programme to engage students in supporting our projects and encouraging their future research interests; recent beneficiaries have included MAPP, and Walsh's work on the African Writers Series.

All full-time staff have their own offices with access to appropriate computing facilities supported by the central IT structures. Temporary and post-doctoral staff have shared offices with personal computers. Additional equipment for research, including laptops and specialist software, is provided by department funding. The University Library has a ring-fenced annual budget to purchase materials (books, journals, databases) to support research on request; a designated UOA Library representative liaises on current and future research requirements

#### 4. Collaboration and contribution to the research base, economy and society

We are committed to:

- **extending public understanding** of world-leading research, and of archives particularly, in ways that inform **the economy and society**.
- leading, collaborating and contributing to the **research base** to widen knowledge and maintain the highest levels of scholarship.

##### Extending public understanding

We have **contributed to the economy and society** through our **non-academic collaborations**. We have successfully pioneered the use of local archives as a focus for public engagement activities, deploying our knowledge to create events which bring the archives to a variety of audiences and user-groups. This includes, but is not limited to, the 'Ladybird Books and Politics' exhibition and events hosted by Cocks at the Museum for English Rural Life and Reading Town Hall in 2019; the 'Hogarth Press100' activities and three-month public exhibition at the Town Hall orchestrated by Wilson in 2017. We have brokered collaboration with the collections at the Museum of English Rural Life (eg P Bullard's 'Writing the Rural' seminar series, together with the Museum's writer in residence, Johnson, 2019).

We have also created strong collaborative partnerships with both Berkshire Records Office and Reading Gaol. Of note here are Stoneley's successive collaborations around Oscar Wilde's time in the Gaol, including the exhibition 'Oscar Wilde and Reading Gaol' (which received £5k Heritage Lottery Funding support), with Berkshire Records Office, 2014-15; his contributions to the highly acclaimed '[Inside](#)' events by Artangel at the Gaol in 2016; and his exhibition of illustrated editions of Wilde's 'Ballad', 'Colours More Than Sentences,' at the Berkshire Records Office and the

Museum of English Rural Life, 2018-19. Matthews curated 'Reading and the Rising' at the Records Office, reflecting on the Irish writers from Easter 1916 detained at the Gaol, from April-June 2016. We have enhanced public understanding in national and international contexts through **talks and events** that have wider social impact including Abram's Reading Black British Film Festival (2016); R Bullard's 'Robinson Crusoe 300 Jahre/Years' exhibition at the City Hall, Germersheim (May 2019); Cheyette's 'Dreyfus in the UK Then and Now', University of Rome (February 2020); Clanchy's 'Listening to Young People' to UNESCO/Pen Catala International Conference (October 2020); Ippolo's 'Henslowe, Alleyn, and Early Modern Theatre' (March 2016) and series of public talks as 2019 Sam Wanamaker Fellow at the Globe Theatre; Lesnik-Oberstein's 'Neuroscience and Children's Literature' to the Irish Society of Children's Literature (March 2014); Marshall's 'George Eliot at 200' events at Senate House (November 2019); O'Callaghan's 'Law Sports: Revelling at the Elizabethan and Jacobean Inns of Court', at the Inner Temple (March 2019); Walsh's interval contribution on Kipling's *The Jungle Book*, during the 2019 Proms season; Wilson's 'Literature, Judges and the Book Society 1929-69' at Johannes-Gutenberg University in Mainz (November 2019) and 'Writing home, Writing class', Geffrye Museum of the Home, London (May 2017).

Our partnerships around **Digital Humanities** have been instrumental in **promoting and disseminating scholarship** to broad publics. Aside from the projects mentioned above, for example, we would cite Ippolo's collaboration with King's College, London (the [Henslowe-Alleyn project](#)); Morrissey's place-making approach to John Donne's sermons, with public events at Lincoln's Inn (2015) and St. Paul's Cathedral (2017); or the continuing [Verse Miscellanies Online](#) project (O'Callaghan, Project Director). Byrne's co-direction of an online network, [Crossing Borders in the Insular Middle Ages](#), alongside scholars from Zurich, Marburg, Lausanne and several UK institutions, points towards future innovative opportunities in this digital context.

Our commitment to **creativity** as a driver to ameliorate social trauma includes, aside from the projects already mentioned, a new project pioneered by our Health Humanities Centre, which involves Clanchy conducting research into [the possibilities of creativity to support those afflicted by Covid-19](#). Our future engagements with **social issues-led** research include Abram's training events in collaboration with Trust House Reading and the Edinburgh Rape Crisis Centre around representations of sexual violence, supported by monies from the Identities Cluster; and Wilson's 'Class Matters' which involves Reading Public Library, New Writing South, and publishers Holland House.

Further collaborations promoting **creative response to cultural heritage** include Matthews's collaboration with The Wordsworth Trust on a two-month exhibition at Dove Cottage, '[Sounds of Wordsworth](#)', together with composer Paul Whitty in 2017 and as [inaugural poet-in-residence at the Oxford Natural History Museum](#). We are active in support of local creative publishing through Robinson's role as Poetry Editor of Two Rivers Press (2013-).

### **Research Base**

Colleagues have fulfilled important roles nationally and internationally with regard to **literary estates**, including Nixon's as Advisor to the Samuel Beckett Estate; Robinson's as Executor for Roy Fisher with collaboration from the University of Sheffield.

Alongside the **collaborations** mentioned previously, we have extended our influence and impact through our **contribution to significant networks**, such as Brauner's around Roth, or Cheyette's with King's, Birkbeck, and Southampton on Jewish Identities. Such links bring international researchers to the University and support further events across the world. We have obtained significant numbers of **Fellowships**. The most prominent contributions include Hutching's role as 'Profesor Visitante' at the University of Valladolid, Spain (2014 and 2020), working with local teachers and tourist guides; Lesnik-Oberstein's Visiting Professorships at Ocean and at Shandong Universities in China (2018-20), discussing children's literature research and teaching; Nixon's Visiting Fellowship at the Deutsches Literaturarchiv in Marbach (2015-16), towards his public exhibition on Beckett in Germany, and at Basel (2017-18); and Robinson's Visiting Research

Professorship at Kwansei Gakuin, Nishinomiya, Japan, (2017 and 2020), including public events. The **Early Modern Research Centre**'s 2017 conference launched two long-term collaborations: 'Early Modern Women and the Poetry of Complaint' with colleagues at the University of Newcastle, Australia, and 'Woe is Me: Women and Complaint in the English Renaissance', with colleagues from Wellington, NZ. The former event and collaboration relate to O'Callaghan's Australian Research Council project 2017-20; the latter received **funding support** from the Royal Society of New Zealand (£4.5k). International events from the **Centre for Book and Publishing History** have included the two-day symposium on 'Women in Publishing' (2019), and the hosting of the Virginia Woolf Society Conference (2017), which emphasised textual production.

We work assiduously to support research through **contributions to learned societies, and editorships**. These include Abram's period as Vice Chair for the Postcolonial Studies Association (2014-17); Byrne's as Executive Committee member of the Society for the Study of Medieval Languages and Literature, and as editor-in-chief of *Reading Medieval Studies*; Lesnik-Oberstein's membership of the editorial boards of *Asian Women* and *Reproductive BioMedicine*; Mangham's as academic board member of *Merope* and *Victoriographies*; Marshall's as Vice Chair and Executive Board Member for University English (2012-) (Marshall also serves on the REF Sub-Panel); and Nixon's as President of the Samuel Beckett Society (2013-16). Editorships include Brauner's Executive Co-Editorship of *Philip Roth Studies* (2014-19) and as Board member for the *European Journal of American Culture* (2010-); Nixon's editorship of the *Journal of Beckett Studies*, (2013-); and Scott's Co-Editorship of *Symbiosis*, (2014-), and as Reviews Editor of the London Magazine (2010-); Wilson's board membership of *Keywords*. Several colleagues act as editors of major book series or editions: P Bullard, for instance, serves as Advisory Editor to the Cambridge Edition of the Works of Jonathan Swift; R Bullard is Founding Co-Editor for the CUP series 'Elements in Eighteenth Century Connections'; Nixon Series Editor for 'Elements in Beckett Studies' (CUP). Matthews and Nixon are Advisory Board members for two Bloomsbury series, 'Modernist Archives' and 'Historicizing Modernism'.

We have served on a number of important **Boards, Research Councils, and Committees**, including the User Advisory Group for the National Archives (Ioppolo); as reviewers for the European Science Foundation and the Marie Curie Foundation (Lesnik-Oberstein, Stoneley); and as an Advisory Board Member for the 'Virtual St Pauls Cross' and the 'Gateway for Early Modern Sermons Manuscripts' (Morrissey). P Bullard and O'Callaghan serve on the AHRC Peer Review College; Lesnik-Oberstein has served on several AHRC panels during this REF cycle and received a Gold Award for her service to the Council (2016).