

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)**Institution: Newcastle University****Unit of Assessment: 27: English Language and Literature****1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy**Introduction

Our Unit works at the intersection between Literature and Creative Writing. What unites our critical and creative research is an overarching interest in how literature is produced, circulated and consumed. We work across periods, genres and regions, but our work is particularly informed by:

- a distinctive understanding of **archives** as historical formations capable of informing future modes of engagement with ‘text’.
- the use of **digital** and **scholarly editing**, **book history** and **print culture** to explore how literary objects move, change and translate across time and place.
- a focus on **reception** and **performance** locally and transnationally, both to understand the social and historical impacts of literature, and as part of our commitment to taking writing into the world today.

We are pioneers in new models of research impact and collaborate, often at a very foundational level, with a range of regional, national and international partners. In 2015 we were awarded the first **Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP)** to be held by an English department, one of three such awards from InnovateUK in this REF cycle (See Section 4). A core aim of our research is the co-production of outcomes with partners that bring direct benefits to a wide and diverse range of stakeholders, communities and institutions, including archives and libraries, publishers and production companies, cultural organisations and the creative industries.

The Unit has grown from **32.1FTE** at REF2014 to **46.9FTE** at REF 2021. This **46%** increase in our research capacity is the result of a programme of strategic investment by the University, building on the UoA’s strong REF2014 performance. Research informs everything we do in the Unit, including teaching, and we have recruited new Teaching and Research (T&R) colleagues in successive staffing rounds. Additionally, we have secured over £2m from the University’s competitive funding schemes to invest in staff and infrastructure in areas of strategic priority. This internal investment includes the **Research Excellence Academy** (REA; £735k, 2016-2021; see REF5a, 3.2.2), the **Research Investment Fund** (RIF; £832k, 2015-2021; see REF5a, 4.1.3), and the **Newcastle University Academic Track Fellowships** scheme (NUAcT; see REF5a, 3.2.4) through which we appointed a tenure-track postdoctoral fellow in 2019 (c.£300k over five years; Hone).

External grant income totalling **£2,700,569** in this cycle has further extended our staff base, bringing **2 Leverhulme Visiting Professors** (with 2 more awarded for 2021); **2 Leverhulme Early Career Fellows**; **2 Marie Skłodowska-Curie postdoctoral fellows**; a **British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow**; a **British Academy Global Professor**; and 24 postdoctoral project researchers to the Unit, significantly enhancing our research environment and capacity for impact and innovation.

Structure

Our Unit is based in the School of English Literature, Language and Linguistics (SELLL), which forms one of nine Schools in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (HaSS). School staff who research linguistics are returned to UoA26 but we benefit from the connections between our disciplines, and a combined School-level Research Committee allows us to share ideas and best practice. The Unit is home to a University Research Centre, the **Newcastle Centre for the Literary Arts** (NCLA). Established in 2009 under the direction of Anderson OBE, NCLA is a world-class centre of excellence in creative writing, with a mission to enhance the

cultural life of the North-East via a regular programme of readings, performances and outreach work. With extensive links to the regional, national and international literary arts scene, NCLA helps to maximise wider literary engagement, particularly through its annual Newcastle Poetry Festival (see Section 4).

The Unit's research is well integrated within the wider interdisciplinary architecture of the Faculty and University. Our staff have been central to the foundation of the first wave of **Newcastle University Centres of Research Excellence** (NUCoREs; REF5a, 2.2), bringing together researchers from across the entire University in areas of world-leading strength and depth (See Section 3). Grenby sits on the steering committee of the Centre for Heritage, Whitehead's expertise in medical humanities has led to a role with the Centre for Cancer, and Cummings and Richards lead the 'Text' strand in the Centre for Data. Pearson is co-lead on the developing NUCoRE in Childhood and Youth. These roles increase the Unit's capacity for interdisciplinary research while broadening funding opportunities. Colleagues also convene the University's Medical Humanities Network and Performance Research Network and Faculty cross-disciplinary research groups, including Medieval and Early Modern Studies (MEMS), the Gender Research Group (GRG), and the Postcolonial Research Group (NPRG). Cross-disciplinary research is supported by the three **Research Institutes** (REF5a, 2.2.3): for Creative Arts Practice (NICAP); Social Science (NISS), and Humanities (NUHRI). The founding and current directors of NUHRI are both based in the Unit. Working with the British Academy's SHAPE policy team, the Institutes fund, support and promote our pioneering cross-disciplinary collaborations.

Our staff play key leadership roles across the University: Sanders (HaSS Pro-Vice-Chancellor 2015-18; Deputy Vice-Chancellor 2018-); Grenby (founding Director of NUHRI, 2014-18 and HaSS Dean of Research and Innovation 2018-); Chedzoy (HaSS Director of EDI, 2017-); Richards (NUHRI Director 2019-); Morrissey (Director of NCLA, 2017-); and Gillis (Chair of NU Women, 2019-22 and UCU Equalities Officer 2019-2021).

Research and Impact Strategy

Our overarching strategic objective has been, and remains, to provide an environment in which all colleagues can achieve their full potential. All staff, as well as student representatives, are involved in the Unit's development of strategies, including those relevant to research, impact and engagement. Policy is made at the School's Research Committee (meeting 6 times a year), comprising Director of Research (Chair), School Research Administrator, Head of School, Director of Research in Linguistics, Research Centre Directors, Director of Impact, Subject Heads, EDI Chair, PGR Director and Early Career Research (ECR) staff. Our mission is to foster an enabling and resilient research culture that has the confidence to embrace creativity and innovation, including risk-taking where appropriate, and to understand failure openly as an inevitable and *productive* part of the research process (recently this has included 'How to Fail Well' workshops). We recognise further work is required to ensure the diversity and equality of our Unit. An Athena Swan award in 2016 (the first English department to be awarded Athena Swan status) has provided a welcome first step in this context, enabling us to reflect upon and begin revising our structures (see Section 2).

At REF2014 we identified three core aims: (i) to integrate critical and creative work; (ii) to deepen our scholarly focus on the contexts of literary production; and (iii) to use and develop archival sources. In the period since 2014, these aims have become central to our ethos, have guided our strategy for investment, and have been successfully embedded in our activities (see research clusters below). Building on this, our strategy for the next five years is as follows:

1. To diversify our staff base while responding to the uneven impacts of the pandemic on research to ensure all colleagues are given equal opportunity to recover from interruptions to active research.
2. To fully embed our research within an increasingly interdisciplinary landscape while promoting work across sub-disciplines within English studies at a national level.

3. To scale up our research by working in larger teams on collective, cross-disciplinary challenges that are grounded in, but capable of reaching beyond, English studies. 'Engaged English' is central to our vision for the field's future (see Section 4).
4. To extend our commitment to social justice over the next decade as a defined pathway into postgraduate research and future doctoral work. Social justice is a cross-cutting theme that unites all of our 5 clusters of research strength below.
5. To expand our work on the life cycles of 'texts', their composition, production, and reception, including through performance and reading, and the technologies on which they rely: the voice, hand, printing press, electronic media using digital design to engage new audiences.

We are committed to the support of our substantial ECR community both as an ethical imperative, and for our future sustainability. These values both shape and are shaped by the intellectual agendas of the Unit, which has cross-period research strengths in decolonisation and issues relating to race, slavery, sexuality, gender, and childhood. Recent research projects and publications have made direct interventions on decolonising School and University curricula in ways that are shaping ongoing research, teaching and impact across and beyond the Unit (see ICS 3&4). Likewise, Unit staff played a prominent role in 'Freedom City 2017', a programme of events marking the 50th anniversary of Martin Luther King's 1967 visit to Newcastle to accept an honorary degree, including the launch of a major new poetry anthology edited by NCLA poets addressing the themes of his speech: *The Mighty Stream* (see Section 4).

We take an organic approach to impact and engagement activity to accommodate relatively long gestation periods, supporting work that has the capacity to evolve over 10+ year cycles. By adopting a holistic approach to impact, our research strategy allows for the capture of impact in a sustainable, inclusive manner, while remaining alert to the often unanticipated opportunities, and consequences, of public-facing research. Our impact strategy is underpinned with the appropriate resources to support the communication, recording, evaluation and delivery of impact. We have created a new Director of Impact role (part of the Director of Research role until 2018) and work closely with the Faculty Impact Officer to offer best-practice training on recording impact.

We recognise that our research benefits from reproducibility and the importance of our role in sustaining this practice. As such we operate an **open research environment**, one that is underpinned by the values of integrity, accessibility and transparency. We are fully committed to publishing via **Open Access**. We embrace FAIR principles and open data via data.ncl (REF5a, 2.33) alongside discipline-specific considerations for responsible research.

Core to our ambition is the value that we place on the *variety* of our research activity. We have distinguished researchers producing pioneering research across 8 centuries, covering subjects from early English drama (Cummings) to African American literature and cinema (Durkin); from critical theory and contemporary British fiction (McLaughlan; Whitehead) to cultural histories of regional theatre (Haslett); from James Hogg and Romantic literary networks (O'Halloran; Orr) to fin-de-siècle modernism (Gillis; MacLeod). Increasingly, our researchers are engaged in literary research that is simultaneously working at the cutting-edge of cross-disciplinary approaches. For example, in Victorian literature, colleagues work variously on nineteenth-century economy (Dzelzainis), ecocriticism and science (Mershon), and ageing in relation to empire (Jewusiak).

Other multi-disciplinary projects, such as Grenby's AHRC-funded **Eighteenth-Century Political Participation and Electoral Culture** (ECPPEC; 2020-23 £948,383), work at the intersections of Medical, Environmental and Digital Humanities. ECPPEC puts the 'big data' of parliamentary election votes into correspondence with the cheap print, sermons, songs and ceremonies that accompanied early elections, and has brought to the Unit the work of Packham on electioneering literature and Harris (returned in UoA28) on electoral politics. Nafde's AHRC-funded **Manuscripts after Print c.1450-1550: Producing and Reading Books during Technological Change** (2019-2020 £177,474) challenges successional models of book production in order to consider the ongoing significance of handwriting in a digital age so as to examine the future of

book production. Facilitated by the Unit's **Animating Text (ATNU)** cluster (see below), which helps to turn ideas into digital pilots, and to build projects through disciplinary translation with data scientists and software developers, Nafde's new knowledge informs our ambition to strengthen our links with Data Science, and the case we are making for the social value of collaboration with English studies to the sciences more generally. This ambition manifests itself through the development of bespoke training for future researchers – ATNU's series of workshops titled 'Coding for Humanists', available online to anyone with digital access – or the new MSc module that our Unit will be offering to computer scientists in 2021-22: 'Data and Truth'. The Unit is poised over the next 5 years to redefine English as an interdisciplinary partner that can work across the critical, creative *and* scientific interfaces.

Our strategy identifies five cross-period clusters of strength which have been, and will remain, important to our planning, particularly in relation to our ambition to continue to drive the development of our discipline internationally. Three of these (1, 2 and 3) are now well-established in our Unit; the fourth unites established period-based clusters around a particular and distinctive approach; the fifth is an emerging strength. Each cluster has benefited from significant archival acquisitions (see section 3) during this REF period, either as the result of internal investment or major donations that recognise the substance and sustainability of the Unit's research. Our clusters do not operate in isolation but seek to foster further cross-pollination. This is particularly true at the intersection between our critical and creative work: for instance, in Whipday's uses of creative writing alongside archival research to recover lost female voices of the sixteenth century; Hewitt's critically-acclaimed **A Revolution of Feeling** (2017), which adds to our long-established expertise on the Godwin-Wollstonecraft-Shelley circle (Coffey, Grenby, Kirkley, Rossington); or Hone's **Paper Chase** (2020), which turns eighteenth-century bibliographical research into an adventure story of politics, philosophy and printing from the age of Queen Anne.

Research Clusters

1. Poetry

This cluster exemplifies both the Unit's commitment to integrating critical and creative practice research and our wider interest in archives as cross-disciplinary sites of investigation. The AHRC-funded **Poetics of the Archive** (Anderson: 2013-2015 £475,919) paved the way for rethinking archives as an artistic resource that connects critical and creative research in all clusters (see ICS1). The Unit is home to some of the most celebrated poets of our generation: Bergin (T.S. Eliot Prize, the Forward Prize, and *Irish Times* Poetry Now Award shortlisted); O'Brien (three-times winner of Forward Prize, and T.S. Eliot shortlisted in 2015 and 2018); Forché (National Book Award Finalist, 2019; Windham Campbell, 2020; James Tait Black Prize shortlisted); Herbert (Dundee Makar, 2013-18); Kay (The Scots Makar, 2016-present); Morrissey (winner of T.S. Eliot Prize, 2014 and Forward Prize, 2017); Polley (winner of T.S. Eliot Prize, 2016). We also nurture leading critical work on poetry ranging from Ben Jonson (Connolly), Alexander Pope (Hone), Percy Shelley (Rossington) and Gerard Manley Hopkins (Dubois), to modern poets including Elizabeth Bishop (Anderson), Basil Bunting (Niven) and Charles Olson (Byers), Una Marson and Louise Bennett (Procter).

Funded projects in this cycle are transforming translation practice, as in the case of **Poetry Translation in Poet-Advisor-Poet Trios** (Herbert: AHRC 2016-18 £332,145) which in collaboration with the Dutch Foundation for Literature combines the skills of bilingual translators, critics and creative practitioners. Others are rethinking how we tell family history through creative non-fiction that fuses poetry, prose, personal recollection and socio-political analysis, as in Morrissey's **Seeing Red: An Anatomy of an Irish Communist Childhood** (Leverhulme 2019 £54,943). Our work has led to substantial impact (see ICS 1&2) but is also embedding poetry as a central plank of the University's larger Research Strategy. The appointment of Imtiaz Dharker, one of the most celebrated Bloodaxe poets, as Chancellor of the University in January 2020 forms part of a longer history of institutional support, including the award of £832k through the University's Research Investment Fund in 2015 to develop our poetry archives strategy (see

Section 3) and secure NCLA's future leadership: appointing Morrissey in 2017 to succeed Anderson.

2. Children's literature

The Children's Literature Unit (CLU) is a major centre for the study of children's books, with research spanning Renaissance and eighteenth-century childhood reading (Chedgzoy, Grenby, Marazzi, Richards), illustrated books (Tancini), children's theatre (Freshwater), modern and contemporary writing (Pearson, Reynolds, Sheeky Bird), black British children's literature (Sands-O'Connor), and global children's literature (Murphy), as well as creative writing (Coburn, Cooper). The vitality of the CLU's research is sustained through its unique and long-standing partnership with Seven Stories, The National Centre for Children's Books, the first UK museum and archive dedicated to children's books (see ICS 3, and Section 4). Funded projects in this cycle include two Marie Skłodowska-Curie fellowships: 'Nineteenth-Century European Picture-Books in Colour' (Tancini, 2018-21, €195,455) and 'Children and Transnational Popular Print, 1700-1900' (Marazzi, 2019-21, €212,934). Another postdoctoral fellow (Gribling, returned to UoA28) works on Grenby's 'Children and Heritage' project, funded through NU's Research Investment Fund (2018-20) to develop a new history of young people's engagement with the built historic environment. Since REF2014, the cluster has diversified its range through the appointment of Sands-O'Connor, a world-leading authority on black British children's literature, first as Leverhulme Visiting Professor (2015-16), then British Academy Global Professor (2019-2024). An AHRC/NPIF-funded six-month postdoctoral fellowship in an associated project on 'Networked voices, connecting BAME activism in children's literature' (2018) augments these interests. In 2021, the CLU will be further enriched by the arrival of a second Leverhulme Visiting Professor, Kristen Bluemel, whose work on rural modernity as manifested in children's culture will deepen links between the Unit and the new National Innovation Centre for Rural Enterprise (REF5a, 2.2.4). In 2020/21 the work of researchers in Children's Literature (Pearson and Sheeky-Bird) with Seven Stories featured prominently in the British Academy policy team's submission to government on the social impacts of Covid-19; this will shape the future direction of the CLU, and their work with Seven Stories, using literature to improve the lives of young people.

3. Postcolonial and Black Atlantic

The Unit has a distinguished record of research in postcolonial and diasporic literatures, with particular expertise in African (Kay; Newell), Caribbean (Procter; Webb), South Asian (Srivastava; Taneja), black Atlantic and black British writing (Durkin; Kay; Procter; Sands-O'Connor; Sweeney; Webb). Work in this cycle has yielded a series of high profile discoveries on African slavery and the Windrush generation (see Section 4 and ICS 4), and has produced major research outputs, including Durkin's book on Josephine Baker and Katherine Dunham; Newell's work on histories of dirt in West Africa, Procter's Leverhulme-funded research (2013-14 £44,962) on West African and West Indian writers at the BBC; Sands-O'Connor's work on black British publishing; Srivastava's Leverhulme-funded (REF2014 cycle) monograph on Italian colonialism (2018); Sweeney's Curran-funded work on black Abolitionists and the periodical press 1840-65; and Webb's on Haiti and the British imagination, 1847-1915. A distinctive feature of this cluster's research into the legacies of empire and slavery, is its inter-medial emphasis on archives and audiences across different forms and media, notably cinema, music, periodicals and newspapers, radio, and visual culture. The cluster established the 'Postcolonial Print Cultures' International Network with New York University in 2016 to recover the ways in which print and intersecting media negotiate a literature of decolonisation. Supported by awards from the University's **Research Excellence Academy** (Research Associate, Webb; 2018-20), and a **Leverhulme Visiting Professorship** (2019 £146,813) to bring Newell, the foremost international scholar on African print culture, from Yale in 2019, this additional capacity is now shaping a new initiative on 'the black archive' which brings our collective expertise to bear on both transnational repositories and Newcastle's own Special Collections. These include the papers of Malawian writer, Jack Mapanje; Pakistani poet Moniza Alvi; and Anne Walmsley, editor of African-Caribbean literature at Faber and Longman and amanuensis of the Caribbean Artists Movement.

4. Book History, Scholarly Editing and Animating Texts

The Unit has established expertise in book history and scholarly editing (Byers, Connolly, De Rycker, Grenby, Hone, Kirkley, MacLeod, Nafde, Niven, Pearson, Richards, Rossington, Sanders). Research for the following externally-funded projects was undertaken in this cycle and will culminate in major new editions of Thomas Nashe (De Rycker, and Richards (PI), **AHRC-funded** (2015-2020 £750,180); the poems of Alexander Pope (Hone); Volume III of the letters of William Godwin (Grenby); Volume 5 of *The Poems of Shelley* (Rossington, funded by the **Modern Humanities Research Association** (2014-15 £23,000); poems of Ben Jonson (Connolly); Tom Raworth (Byers); and Basil Bunting's letters (Niven). Coffey's British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship is looking at **The Reception History of Percy Bysshe Shelley 1851-1922** (2020-23 £257,442).

Common to many of these projects working at the intersection between editing and book history, is a re-conception of texts as mobile, lively, dynamic, and a shared ambition to explore the opportunities of the digital to demonstrate this. This insight led to the establishment in 2016 of **Animating Texts Newcastle University** (ATNU), funded by £476k from the University's Research Investment Fund. ATNU began as a collaboration between scholarly editors, data scientists, and software developers; it has expanded to include creative writers. ATNU members provide mentoring and networking opportunities for researchers building projects with a digital component (see Section 2). Pilot projects experiment with new ways of visualising literary composition; working with environmental scientists to create interactive digital books of Renaissance bees to protect today's endangered pollinators; mapping the history of feminism and its books in eighteenth-century Europe; tracing transatlantic intellectual networks in the Romantic era. Funded projects include Nafde's AHRC-funded '**Manuscripts after Print**' project (see above) and Cummings' Mellon-funded contribution to the Digital Edition Publishing Cooperative Project based at Brown University (£42,310). A **Leverhulme Visiting Professorship** (£144,527) will bring **Prof Bruce Smith, University of Southern California** to Newcastle in 2021-22. His input will allow us to co-design an ambitious training programme for the next generation of researchers, extending the material turn in textual scholarship to encompass digital books as '3D' experiences. The inclusion of ATNU in the University's Data NUCoRE in 2020 has brought scholarly editors and book historians into the heart of Data Science, enabling new approaches to 'data' and its interpretation.

5. Theatre and Performance

This emerging cluster comprises award-winning playwrights (Cooper; Polley; Whipday), dramaturgs, script consultants, and researchers working on a wide range of contemporary and historical performance, including regional and community theatre (Haslett), eighteenth-century acting theory (Harriman-Smith) and vocal delivery (as in Richards' AHRC-funded Research Network, **Voices and Books 1500-1800** (2013-15 £28,485). Research areas range from digital editing of medieval performance records (Cummings), the cultural geography of early modern drama (Sanders) and analyses of audience response to contemporary theatre (Freshwater, **Understanding Audiences for the Contemporary Arts** project (2017-20 £342,831) with Sheffield University). The appointment of four new colleagues in the current cycle, along with Robinson (from February 2021), all with major strengths in theatre and performance, now gives this cluster the critical mass to make significant interventions in the field.

Post-pandemic theatre presents fresh challenges and opportunities for engagement. This was demonstrated recently by Craddock's (REA-funded RA) pioneering work with the **Gateshead International Festival of Theatre (GIFT)** to bring a wider variety of performances to the North-East by creatively repurposing the 2020 Festival for online delivery during the pandemic: described by the *Guardian* as 'a solid blueprint for transitioning to digital in this strange and scary limbo'. Building on a programme of ongoing archival acquisitions initiated by Haslett (e.g. **Northern Stage, Live Theatre, Open Clasp**), and co-produced research with local arts organisations such as **November Club, the People's Theatre, Sage, Darlington Operatic Society** and the **Amber Collective**, this cluster is particularly well-placed to lead the next phase of our Unit's impact strategy.

2. People

Staffing Strategy

The Unit's commitment to an ethical and inclusive research culture begins with our recruitment strategy which takes a holistic, long-term approach to planning while reducing reliance on precarious contracts (18% of new appointments were converted from fixed-term contracts during the current cycle, with 95% now on open-ended contracts). The Unit has moved towards the provision of training and investment that fosters a level playing field for researchers. Decisions around new appointments are informed by our research clusters' future research ambitions and place a renewed emphasis on the mutually constitutive character of the 'T' and 'R' in T&R contracts. **22** researchers have joined the Unit as additional strategic appointments since August 2013 (15 female; 7 male; comprising 16 lecturers, 3 SL/Readers and 3 professors), representing a **46%** increase in our research capacity. **75%** of our new appointments are ECRs, ensuring a dynamic Unit that properly represents the future of our discipline.

Many of our recent appointments have already held prestigious fellowships and awards. Hone held fellowships at Harvard, Yale and London before joining the Unit in 2019 as a NUAcT fellow (REF5a, 2.2); both Hewitt and Taneja arrived as AHRC New Generation Thinkers and Leverhulme ECFs; Mershon was formerly an A.W. Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow; Whipday was a further Leverhulme ECF. We are working simultaneously to improve the diversity of our staff and student body. 10-15% of NUAcT awards are intended for BAME groups: our Unit has identified this as an opportunity to target under-represented staff, while international fellowships will be proactively targeted to diversify our current demographic. We introduced a BME PG studentship in 2020, and our commitment to staffing diversity is written into our School Strategic Plan for 2020-25, and our Athena Swan renewal application (due Nov 2021). New research and teaching appointments are made on the basis of open, international searches with all staff networks utilised to ensure a wide and varied pool of applicants. All colleagues are encouraged to participate actively in the selection process, including PGRs whose presence at the presentations both informs the collective decision-making of the Unit, and provides students with valuable professionalisation opportunities. Recruitment panels are convened to ensure gender and career balance, and members are required to take unconscious bias training. Adverts are scrutinised for bias while promoting our values of inclusivity. There is full parity of esteem between T&S and research staff, with equal promotional opportunities and flexibility to transfer between 'Scholarship' and 'Research' depending on staff motivations at different career stages.

Staff Development

From induction to mentoring and training, we invest heavily in developing the future potential of our research community and the Unit has robust processes in place to identify the skills, knowledge and experience needed to sustain colleagues throughout their careers. Induction includes orientation; available support structures (e.g. Colleague Support and Wellbeing; Research Support) and integration into the wider academic community through, for example, the Faculty researcher network. It is the University's policy to treat all people equally (REF5a, 3.4): all new staff are informed of the University's policies and code of practice and are expected to complete training in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion as part of their induction programme. The mentoring programme is recognised in workload planning and involves a minimum of 6 hours of meetings in the first year. It aims to support the development of a mentee's goals and pathways to achieve these. We have had staff (Richards) contribute to the Oakleigh Report (AHRC 2014) on the issues facing Arts and Humanities researchers immediately following completion of a PhD, and we ensure mentors understand the situation ECRs currently face. Developing the research career and leadership potential of each member of staff is part of the Unit's mission, a commitment that extends beyond ECRs to include the full lifecycle of staff at all career stages.

For the first 3 years, new staff are afforded an extra allowance (equivalent to 4 weeks) in the School's workload model to take up research training opportunities, including the **Faculty Futures** and PI Development courses, workshops and sandpit events organised by the

Organisational Development Unit. Other Faculty programmes support diversity such as **Race Equity Charter**, **Stone Wall Champions**, and **EEA Settlement Scheme**. Staff networks, including **NUWomen**, **NUParents** and the **BAME network**, provide more informal support structures. We adhere to the **Concordat** (REF5a, 3.2.3) to support the progression of fixed-term researchers, for instance providing ten days per year (pro rata) for career development.

The School runs **Performance and Development Reviews (PDR)** for all staff on an annual basis, with a mid-year review available to new starters. The purpose of the PDR is to recognise staff achievements, identify future training and development needs, and to agree a set of priorities for the year ahead. A confidential, two-way exchange designed to foster collaborative development, the PDR process is underpinned by the University's vision of diversity and inclusion to ensure that everyone is given the freedom and opportunity to succeed and reach their full potential (REF5a, 2.1.2). Additionally, all staff engage in the annual **Personal Research Planning (PRP)** process, which unlike PDR, is dedicated entirely to research. PRPs involve one-to-one conversations with the School's Director of Research and form an integral part of our mentoring strategy. PRPs are used to agree support mechanisms required to achieve longer term research ambitions; set realistic priorities for key research objectives, discuss opportunities for external funding and advise on bid planning and preparation. Meetings are also used to encourage more speculative blue-skies research ideas that build in an element of risk. Rather than a discrete event in the Unit's annual calendar, PRP is used to join up individual researchers with wider cross-disciplinary networks, training programmes, workshops and initiatives as appropriate. For example, the PRP process generates a list of impact and engagement activities across the Unit which are arranged into 'established', 'emergent' and 'early' stages of development. This list guides our priorities around investment and future support for the year ahead through dedicated support from the Unit's Director of Impact. Bi-annual 'work-in-progress' sessions invite colleagues to discuss impact-related elements of their research conducted during sabbaticals. Such activities help ensure that colleagues at all stages are engaged with impact and see it as integral, rather than supplementary to their research.

Sabbaticals are core to the support we offer staff. In this cycle, a larger percentage of colleagues have secured sabbatical leave than ever before. Since REF2014 we have supported 60 separate requests for a full semester of leave. Sabbaticals are based on a flexible rota to ensure equitable distribution, but are awarded by application via the Research Leave Committee. This ensures oversight of sabbatical plans so that colleagues can make the most productive use of their time informed by PRPs and PDRs. On returning from sabbatical, colleagues present on the progression of their work, fostering an organic, developmental understanding of research, beyond end-driven outputs, and providing an opportunity to openly share wrong turns as well as successes.

The Unit's introduction of a Workload Allocation Model (WAM) in 2008-9 has been regularly updated in order to deliver benefits to researchers and manage research priorities. The Unit recognises that time is key to all excellent research in our field, where extended forms such as the monograph remain central. Our WAM helps us manage the balance between colleagues' research time (40%) and other commitments, and ensure fair distribution of load. Work to ensure parity between Professional Services, PGRs, T&S and T&R staff continues, most recently through having PS colleagues attend School meetings not as facilitators, but as key contributors. In addition to paid parental leave and the University's **Returners Programme** (REF5a, 3.4.2), colleagues with caring responsibilities have been supported during the pandemic by the University's Emergency Leave and Dependency Leave provision (REF5a, 3.3.1). We support colleagues with additional needs and disabilities through the Government's 'Access to Work' scheme, and through the University's employee assistance programme and Occupational Health (REF5a, 3.3.1). The Unit's establishment of a Research Response Fund during the pandemic provides further support to mitigate Covid's uneven effects, with particular focus on, for example, carers, ECRs, and women.

The success of our support structures is evident in the outstanding record of promotions since 2014, a process supported in this cycle by a senior colleague in the Unit who sits on University

Promotions Committee (2014-20). The Unit has successfully supported 12 internal promotions (83% female), 4 to Personal Chairs, 2 to Readerships, and 6 to Senior Lectureships.

Postgraduate Research

60 PGR students have graduated since August 2013, down from 78 in REF2014. This reduction was carefully planned, reflecting the Unit's desire to improve the student experience by giving graduates the best possible preparation for an increasingly diverse and fast-changing workplace. It also aims to support the sustainability of the sector by reducing a culture of casualisation through over-supply. While a relatively high proportion of our graduates (43%) have gone on to secure open-ended academic posts as University lecturers and senior lecturers in UK and internationally (India, Japan, Thailand, United States, China, Malta), we recognise that an academic career is not necessarily the main destination, or driver, for our PGRs. Of our remaining graduates in this REF cycle, 7% went into University management and professional services positions, while 25% went into the creative industries where they work variously in journalism, editing, publishing, and as freelance writers. Other PGR destinations include school teaching, the Civil Service and social work (4%).

Our Unit's distinctive bridging of critical and creative research has proved a particularly fertile environment for the diverse directions of our PGR community, including an already distinguished group of PGRs who are not pursuing conventional pathways into academia, but seeking to enrich and extend their chosen careers as practicing artists and poets. Examples include prize-winning poets such as Malika Booker (2020 Forward Prize winner); Hannah Lowe (Michael Murphy Memorial Award (2015) for Best First Collection); Linda France (appointed New Writing North/NU Climate Writer in Residence post-PhD); Toby Martinez de las Rivas (shortlisted for Forward Prize); Olivia McCannon (Carcanet poet, translator from the French for Penguin Classics); and Jake Morris-Campbell (AHRC/BBC New Generation Thinker).

We believe that humanities research is crucial to the future of the UK social and cultural economy, and we take seriously our responsibility to both support and guide our PGRs on their futures, providing opportunities for placements in a range of sectors. The Unit places a strong emphasis on developing outward-facing researchers through a variety of external partnerships, placements and international networks. The **Northern Bridge Consortium** gives students access to placements of up to six months with non-academic partners in the UK or internationally. Arranged with a strategic partner or by PGRs in consultation with the Academic Directors, these opportunities strengthen, and widen, students' future career prospects. Our **Renwick Scholarship** supports a PGR residency at the **British School at Rome (BSR)**, and our students have been the recipients of awards from the **AHRC International Placement Scheme** (e.g. to the Huntington Library), and **Fulbright** (Duke University). Others have undertaken placements at **Keats-Shelley House, Rome**, with an emphasis on researching archival holdings and outreach work with schools in Rome and other parts of Italy. The partnership with Seven Stories has been significant in attracting doctoral students: funded projects include two Collaborative Doctoral Awards with Seven Stories, and a third awarded jointly with Architecture to analyse new child-centred exhibition possibilities (Goodricke). Two **National Productivity Investment Fund/AHRC** awards are supporting PhD projects as part of the Government's Industrial strategy: 'Children, Heritage and Digital Technology' (Wilson, 2017-) and 'Creative Digital Interventions into Poetry' (Hebden, 2017-).

At the same time, our first priority remains to provide our PGRs with a firm intellectual and scholarly foundation that is informed by the example of world-leading researchers in the students' chosen field. Each student has a supervisory team which comprises the main supervisor and at least one other member of academic staff from the School (or, in cases where expertise from a different field is required, another School). A rigorous scrutiny process at each stage of the doctoral programme (from Learning Agreements and Project Approval to Annual Progress Reviews) works to support timely completion. All of our students receive comprehensive training with both core/compulsory and optional elements to meet more specialized needs. Training provides both core transferable skills required by *all* researchers

while promoting interdisciplinary research across the arts and humanities in particular. 9 of our PGRs in this cycle were funded through the University's competitive **REA** scheme, with a further 24 receiving doctoral awards through the **Northern Bridge Doctoral Training Partnership** (NB) with Durham and QUB, and from 2019, Northumbria, Sunderland, Teesside and Ulster. NB gives students access to tailored training and placements, and an evolving suite of specialised courses delivered face-to-face and online. The partners collaborate in offering a series of annual cohort development events (including an Autumn Conference, a Summer School and a Completion and Leadership Workshop for final year candidates). These opportunities encourage staff and students to share best practice and acquire key professional skills.

The School's PG Student-Staff Committee (PGSSC) has always been a dynamic forum in this context. In response to PGR feedback, the School established a **Postgraduate Culture Group** in 2019. By definition student-centred, this group works to foster a diverse portfolio of research collaborations across the Unit with the aim of deepening our connections, and ensuring cross-pollination and platform-sharing between students and academic staff (e.g. writing groups and professional development sessions). PGRs are encouraged to play a full part in the academic and social life of the School by, for example, nominating speakers for our regular programme of visiting lectures (held within core hours to be inclusive of those with caring responsibilities), sitting on School committees, and working in close partnership with academic leads on cross-disciplinary research groups and networks. Together these interactions work to promote a sense of shared ownership across the Unit and foster students as future leaders within and beyond academia.

The Unit has a dedicated PG Suite occupying an entire floor of the Percy Building including a fully accessible Computer Cluster, and mixed social and learning spaces. All PGRs get support with travel and research expenses, Organisational Development training and conference funds. The School awards over £20k annually to its PGR students in order to help promote their research, including conference attendance, archive visits, and engagement work with non-HEI partners. Separate funds support PGR placements with research partners (two £500 bursaries p.a.) and writing up for those in financial need. To ensure parity, the School's **Research Training Support Fund** offers self-funded students the opportunity to attend Northern Bridge training events and other national training events, run for example by the British Library. PGRs are entitled to 50 inter-library loan tokens per year. The School's **Royal Literary Fellows** offer intensive one-to-one support with writing and presentation skills while the **Writing Development Centre** in Newcastle University Library provides further PGR support and guidance on academic skills. The University's Careers Service provides career advice and support to PGRs while they are studying, and for three years after graduation.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Working with all members of the Unit to build an aspirational and collaborative culture, one based on fairness and equality is fundamental to our strategy. EDI issues are considered at every level and we work closely with the newly established Inclusive Newcastle Knowledge Centre (INKC) to tackle inequities in access, success and progression in Higher Education. Since our **Athena Swan bronze** award in 2016, the Unit has:

- Instituted an EDI committee with full terms of reference and a statutory membership (by role) with a flat and open structure that allows any member of the School to attend meetings or table items. EDI is now a standing item on all committees.
- Introduced formal exit interviews to understand the reasons for colleagues leaving the School and to consider the data at intervals at School Executive Committee (SEC).
- Attended carefully to the composition of interview panels by seeking an appropriate mix of staff, while ensuring the wording of advertisements are open and inclusive.
- Undertaken biennial reviews of data on promotions, staff turnover and gender, nationality, ethnicity and protected characteristics of all staff to identify any patterns and to track the impact of EDI initiatives.

The EDI committee and our Athena-Swan self-assessment team have responsibility respectively for leading on EDI agendas and on tracking the impact of initiatives designed to improve equality. They consult and work in co-operation with University staff networks (REF5a, 3.4.2) to establish best practice and policy for the School's research environment, including for example, the constitution of the Research Committee membership. In conjunction with REF2021, colleagues were supported to report circumstances that had impeded their research in compliance with the REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel process; although remaining confidential the anonymised themes are informing our future policies and practices.

The School has established pathways to ensure these policies inform all decision-making processes in the School. The statutory membership of the EDI committee includes the Head of School, Director of Admissions, Director of Impact, the School's Athena-Swan Chair, and a nominated EDI representative from the PGR Staff-Student Committee. The Athena Swan Self-Assessment team includes the Head of School, the School Manager, Research Director and the chair of the EDI committee as statutory members, and has representatives of colleagues working on all grades and contracts across the School.

This range of representation is designed to ensure that all communities in the School are able to contribute to policy and development on EDI, the agendas and processes of which inform decision-making at the highest level by providing a clear route for the referral and examination of policy in both directions. All of the School's key decision-making groups are fully integrated into EDI networks. UoA staff determining ICS and output selections undertook EDI training and complied with NU's Code of Practice (REF5a, 3.4.1), ensuring that decisions were based on the principles of collective excellence and EDI guided adjustments. Peer review scores and feedback were shared with authors and ICS leads to ensure transparency.

Strong **staff retention** (just **4** permanent staff left to take up new academic posts in the current cycle) suggests that these processes, and the inclusive culture they foster are widely recognised in the Unit. **4** colleagues have retired in the current cycle, while **6** moved onto fractional contracts, a fact which embodies our ethos of supporting colleagues' life choices where possible through flexible/phased retirement.

3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

Income

During the census period the Unit's **external grant income** has increased from £1,052,928 in REF2014 to £2,700,569 in REF2021 (average income per FTE (46.9): £57,581). The total value of these awards is substantially higher (in excess of **£5.5 million**), reflecting both the limited capacity for expenditure during the pandemic, and a sharp increase in award values in recent years (£1.8million and £1.2 million in 2018 and 2019 respectively):

Value of awards by Funder	Number	Value
AHRC	16	£3,800,001.02
Arts Council England	2	£60,000.00
British Academy	6	£927,175.18
Clore Duffield	1	£7,000.00
ESRC	1	£17,369.20
European Commission	3	£388,752.34
Folger Library	1	£1,410.00
Huntington Library	2	£3,921.00
Leverhulme	7	£569,073.00
Modern Humanities Research Association	1	£23,000.00
TOTAL:		£5,798,001.74

Our application success rate stands at 36% with over **50 externally funded awards** secured since August 2013. While **70%** of these awards are derived from the most recognised funding sources in our field (AHRC, Leverhulme Trust, British Academy) we have also significantly diversified our funding sources over this period in ways that help ensure sustainable growth. These diverse sources now include awards from InnovateUK (**Knowledge Transfer Partnerships**); EU Horizon2020 (**Marie Skłodowska-Curie**); the Clore Duffield Foundation; Mellon Foundation, and the National Productivity Investment Fund (British Academy **Global Professorships** funded through the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy).

Research Support and Infrastructure

All research staff in the Unit are allocated an annual allowance from Research Support Funds (**RSF**), increased from £900 to £1400 in 2019/20. It is used to support conference attendance, archival visits or other research costs. RSF is partly funded from research grant overheads to build a sense of collective benefit flowing from external awards. During the pandemic, when libraries closed, this was extended to include the purchase of books and journals critical for current research projects. Additionally, an annual **Research Response Fund** (£10k) was introduced to allow staff in the School to bid competitively for further support, helping the Unit to remain agile in responding to unanticipated research opportunities within the context of Covid-19. The **overall budget** our Unit allocates to research has more than doubled from £50,175 in REF2014 to £104,230 in 2019-20.

Academic staff receive research support from the School Manager (0.2 FTE dedicated to research) and Research Administrator (0.4 FTE). PGRs in the School are supported by a dedicated Professional Services colleague. The NCLA research and impact is supported by a further member of the Professional Services team. The Director of Research is a senior academic who receives release from other duties via the School's workload model. Research applications are further supported by two **Research Funding Development Managers** based in the HaSS Faculty, who provide one-to-one surgeries, regular drop-ins and bespoke training responsive to particular funding opportunities. The Faculty's **Impact Officers**, **Ethics Officer**, **Business Development Team**, and **Knowledge Transfer Partnership Unit** help the Unit realise the public-facing potential of its research through external partnerships and other impact-related work.

At Faculty level, several schemes exist to catalyse and support research projects. The **Faculty Research Fund** is a competitive scheme offering up to £5k to produce outputs or pump-prime new projects (£29,977 awarded to the Unit since 2014); the **Bid Preparation Fund** offers up to £10k as seed-corn funding for major grant applications (£43,071 awarded since 2014); and the **Faculty Impact Fund** offers up to £20k for work with non-HEI partners (£74,807 awarded since 2014); the Faculty Institutes' **Pioneer Award Fund** to support collaborative, interdisciplinary projects (£16,646 awarded since 2014). These opportunities have proved particularly effective in nurturing ECR research ambitions, giving them enhanced capacity to build intellectual networks and external partnerships in advance of bid submission, or to trial untested ideas and demonstrate proof of concept. The base of external funding applicants has broadened substantially since 2014 to include 30 different award holders (65% of our FTE), one third of them ECRs.

Other subject-specific groups bring together PGRs and staff from Newcastle and other Universities in the region: the North-East Forum for 18th-century and Romantic Studies, the North-East PG Research group for the Long 19th Century (NENC), and the Postcolonial Reading Group. Led or co-led by students, these groups provide research seminars, host blogs and run events. Student-led conferences are an annual highlight of our calendar and typically focus on shared research interests across the staff-student body, e.g. 'Anonymity Unmasked: Identity, Agency, Responsibility' (2017) and 'Sex, Death, Disease & Conflict: The State and Morality, 1864-1964' (2018).

Facilities

The entire School is housed in the Percy Building on the main University campus, supporting our cohesion as a community, and cross-fertilisation of research. The four-floor building contains offices for academic and professional services staff; common rooms for staff and students; a whole floor dedicated to postgraduate study, storage and meeting space; the NCLA office and a student-led café as well as lecture halls and seminar rooms.

Newcastle University Library is a member of Research Libraries UK, a consortium of the leading research libraries in the UK. We have a dedicated Subject Librarian with whom we work closely to ensure that book and periodical purchase corresponds to developing and established research activities. All our University Libraries operate a carefully considered Disability Policy to ensure that their collection of 0.8 million print books, 0.5 million e-books, 42,000 e-journal titles and 300 online databases (including *JSTOR/MLA International/OED/Scopus*) are as accessible as possible to all researchers. Since 2014, the Library has considerably enhanced its textual resources by the purchase of audio-visual and data collections such as *Box of Broadcasts* and *Mass Observation Online* which particularly support the Unit's research in aspects of culture, film and social history. The Unit's research environment also continues to benefit from the expert and dedicated involvement of the Library staff, notably of the Arts and Humanities Liaison Librarian who is, for example, heavily involved with the Researcher Development Programmes for our PGR students which are offered at both Unit and Faculty levels.

The library also supports the Unit in ensuring Open Access eligibility, enabling free online access to research publications to maximise the visibility and impact of our research, while meeting research funder requirements, and archiving publications in ePrints. Since REF2014, the library has responded to changes in website accessibility legislation (2018) as well as the information landscape, opening the Marjorie Robinson Library in 2016: a truly digital library. Simultaneously it continues to build on a rich heritage of rare book, manuscript and archival collections. The latter are managed by a team who in 2018 achieved Archive Service Accreditation, a UK-wide quality standard. Working with NCLA and ATNU on digitisation projects, and building on its leadership of the NE Archives Partnership (consisting of 10 active and accredited members from local authority, University, and specialist archives in the NE), the library's Special Collections are currently doubling the capacity of its digital suite, with the ambition to become a regional digital hub.

The Unit continues to be at the forefront of the Faculty's Archive Strategy and has been proactively involved in the acquisition, use and development of a range of archival sources, including the appointment of a literary archivist (supported through RIF until July 2020). Acquisitions in the REF2021 cycle include the papers of individuals (e.g. Sean O'Brien, Jack Mapanje, Moniza Alvi, Selima Hill, Anne Walmsley) and organisations including Bloodaxe Books (ongoing since 2013), Northern Stage, Live Theatre and Open Clasp Theatre Company (accessioned respectively in 2016, 2017 and 2020). Our researchers benefit from access to Seven Stories' internationally significant collection which has been developed in tandem with Newcastle's own significant research holdings in children's literature, which range from the 19th century to the present day. They include the BookTrust deposit collection of UK children's books, and the collection and archive of noted bibliographer, collector and critic Brian Alderson (held jointly with Seven Stories). The Unit actively supports doctoral research on archives e.g. through the National Productivity Investment Fund (NPIF) for work on the Bloodaxe Archive, and our ongoing programme of archival acquisitions is helping to shape our future research. Current PGR projects include: Joicey's AHRC-funded PhD research on the Northern Stage Archive; Hebden's practice-based research investigating how the presentation of poetry through digital media affects the audience's encounter with the text, and Kate Sweeney's REA-funded PhD exploring video practice in literary archives.

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

Our Unit has a long track record of collaboration, working closely with partners who share our commitment to improving lives through literature. Co-creating with organisations over time ensures our research evolves organically with users and beneficiaries in order to address real world challenges. Uniquely within the discipline, colleagues have secured three **Knowledge Transfer Partnerships** in this cycle (**KTPs; total value £253,856**). Funded through InnovateUK, KTPs help organisations grow by providing new skills and the latest academic thinking to deliver specific, strategic goals. With leading poetry publisher, **Bloodaxe Books**, this has involved developing digital capability that allowed the company to publish in new formats and media, while re-animating Bloodaxe's major poetry archive to position it within a range of professional development activities (ICS 1). With house-building company **Bussey & Armstrong** we embedded text-based creative practice as core to the arts strategy of residential property development in the North-East (ICS 2). The **Seven Stories** KTP developed a research-led exhibition and collection management strategy, and won the Times Higher Education Award for Knowledge Transfer of the year in 2017 (ICS 3).

This latter partnership, between Seven Stories and the CLU, was recognised in 2015 through the **Vital North Partnership** (renewed in 2018 for a further five years), a strategic collaboration uniquely funded by Arts Council England (£25k annually), and match-funded by the University REF5a, 4.2.2). Through an emphasis on co-production, the VNP has supported innovative research and impact initiatives, often cross-disciplinary in nature. For example, our Unit has collaborated with researchers in cultural heritage who have supported the development of Seven Stories' galleries, and with colleagues in architecture who have worked with Seven Stories to ask children how they see the future of their cities. The partners share the ambition that Newcastle becomes a centre for excellence in children's literature, for outstanding research, learning, collections, engagement and professional practice.

We are committed to the University's Engagement and Place Strategy (REF5a, 2.1.2) which, in line with our EDI commitments and civic mission, ensures our research remains inclusive and directly engages diverse audiences. In addition to the Unit's prominent collaborations with two of the North's most celebrated cultural events during the last decade – **Hull City of Culture** (2017; see ICS 1) and the **Great Exhibition of the North** (2018; see ICS 4) - Newcastle's own reputation as the "UK Capital of Poetry" was consolidated during this period by NCLA's extensive live literature programme which, between October 2014 and March 2020, hosted over 150 events with combined audience figures of 11,560. In 2015, NCLA founded the Newcastle Poetry Festival, currently one of four main UK poetry festivals (alongside StAnza, Ledbury Poetry Festival and The Verve), attracting growing audiences of over 5,000 across 5 years.

The Newcastle Poetry Festival has an established reputation for internationalism, for showcasing work in translation, and for the diversity of its programming which is reflected in the range and reach of NCLA's partnerships. For example, in collaboration with Bloodaxe Books, NCLA has contributed to the ground-breaking **Complete Works** project designed to help younger poets from BAME backgrounds into print. Between 2013 and 2020 Herbert mentored Inua Ellams, Sarah Howe (winner of the T. S. Eliot Prize 2015), Yomi Sode (published in *Ten: Poets of the Next Generation*, Bloodaxe 2014), and Seraphima Kennedy, thus playing an influential role in the current diversification of UK poetry publishing. A successful ACE application in 2020 has seen NCLA and Bloodaxe establish **The James Berry Poetry Prize** (after the pioneering Windrush poet): the first national poetry prize for young BAME writers to include mentoring and book publication. The launch of NCLA's Bloodaxe anthology, *The Mighty Stream: Poems in Celebration of Martin Luther King* (eds. Kay and Forché) in November 2017 as part of 'Freedom City' marked the 50th anniversary of Dr King's visit to Newcastle to accept

his honorary degree. A city-wide event that was also livestreamed around the world by The Space and BBC Radio 3, the launch attracted an audience of 100,000.

The Unit's wider and long-established commitment to questions of decolonisation, race, gender/sexuality and childhood means that addressing societal and global needs is foundational to all five clusters of research strength (see Section 1). An underlying commitment to social justice and widening participation drives all of our partnerships, which are informed by an understanding of collaboration as constitutive, rather than supplementary to research, from Hewitt's AHRC-funded **Women in the Hills, 1800 to Present** (2020-22 £36,322) partnerships with the **John Muir Trust** and **Pelvic Roar** which are informing her forthcoming monograph, *In Her Nature*, to our track record in the preservation of archives, which is informed by co-production with regional theatre communities. For example, **Live Theatre**, which celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2023, is the subject of ongoing community-based research by Haslett supported by a Catherine Cookson Award (£2,073) as is our collaboration with **Open Clasp Theatre Company**, which has received international acclaim for its participatory 'theatre for social change' work with women and girls, enhancing its work with disempowered communities to deliver social and economic benefits while shaping approaches to theatre practice nationally. Along with **Northern Stage**, these collaborations focus on developing preservation and access strategies for archives to enable their use as a living resource for researchers and creators. This ongoing work is exemplified by one of the Unit's AHRC-funded CDA projects: '**Engagement, Place and Identity: the Social Value of the Arts in Newcastle, 1968-2015**' (co-supervised by the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape).

Our commitment to an open research culture extends to sharing our archives, resources and expertise as widely as possible. As a result, our research is increasingly well integrated beyond the walls of the University in ways that ensure its wider utility and legacy. For example, working in partnership with the **British Library** in 2018, the AHRC-funded **Out of Bounds** project (Procter: 2015-17 £77,380) produced a series of poetry films for an installation for at the Library's celebrated Windrush Anniversary Exhibition, *Windrush: Songs in a Strange Land* (June-October 2018; 154,813 visitors). The British Library's Sound Archive has subsequently acquired the complete Out of Bounds Poetry Collection as part of the British Library's own diversification agenda. The Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA), which sets over half of all GCSEs and A-Levels nationally, is now incorporating the Out of Bounds' teaching resources into its free online course for GCSE English teachers in connection with its drive to decolonise the curriculum (ICS 4).

During the same period, Unit researchers have worked with the British Library and Seven Stories in a series of Knowledge Exchange Workshops to design and curate a major new educational web resource, [*Discovering Children's Books*](#). The resource, featuring essays co-written by Unit staff and children's authors such as Michael Rosen, received 534,000 unique users from February to July 2020, with an unprecedented 55% of UK traffic coming from outside of the South East of England. Across the Atlantic, Durkin's pioneering archival research which identified the last known African survivors of the transatlantic slave trade, has attracted extensive international media coverage. In 2019 she worked with the Discovery Channel to produce a web documentary on slavery for schools and was interviewed in July 2020 by *Historcal Vision Productions*, a non-profit organisation in Alabama that makes short film documentaries highlighting untold African American histories for classrooms. She now serves as an adviser to the Alabama Historical Commission.

Research base

We see ourselves as citizens of the discipline, and create space in our workload model to support service and advocacy work. We are committed to national advocacy, and ready to pivot

our work in support of the discipline. Most recently Sanders and Richards launched a series of events in 2021 with the English Association, University English and IES to support current and future leaders at a time of uncertainty: 'Speaking for English Studies'. We have been fully engaged with national debates, and in advocacy for English studies within funding bodies like the AHRC (5 Peer Review College Members since 2014, plus an advisory board member) and our subject associations for many years (e.g. Richards is the Chair of the English Association HE Committee, 2015-). We co-hosted the first English 'Shared Futures' conference in Newcastle in 2017, with 600 attendees drawn from nearly every UK Department of English, over 150 panel sessions, workshops from sixteen scholarly societies, and a vibrant cultural fringe (including readings from three poets laureate).

In addition to regularly peer reviewing for journals and publishers, and external examining both nationally and internationally, colleagues are editors of major monograph series' (e.g. *Early Modern Literary Geographies*, *English at the Interface*, *Studies in the Eighteenth Century*) and international journals (e.g. *Renaissance Studies*; *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*; *International Research in Children's Literature*). At a national and international level, we contribute to the research base both across the discipline, and beyond the HE sector (see below):

Indicative examples of service beyond academia

Sector	Organisation	People	Date	Role
Government	Scottish Parliament	Kay	2016-20	Scots Makar (national poet of Scotland)
	Dundee City Council	Herbert	2013-18	Dundee Makar
Charities and Learned Societies	Globe Theatre	Sanders	2020-	Trustee
	RSA	Sanders	2020-	Fellow
	Royal Society of Literature	Anderson Herbert; Hewitt; Morrissey; O'Brien; Polley	2020- 2015- 2018- 2019- 2007-	Fellow
	Royal Society of Edinburgh	Kay	2016	Fellow
	Seven Stories	Grenby	2016-	Trustee
	Northern Stage	Sanders	2016-	Trustee
	Forward Prize	Bergin	2019	Judge
Publishing and Literary Prizes	T.S Eliot Prize	Herbert Morrissey	2017 2019	Judge (Chair) Judge
	Caine Prize for African Writing	Kay	2014	Judge (Chair)
	Stephen Spender Prize	O'Brien	2016-18	Judge

Looking Ahead

Developing new collections, exploring literature as dynamic and mobile across multiple editions, locations and communities, and working with new audiences, will continue to define and shape our research identity over the next decade. Building on RIF Funding (£832k; see Section 1) to

develop our archival and digital strategies, and the additional capacity provided by a recently awarded fellowship (Leverhulme Visiting Professor: Smith, 2021), will build on our determination to be at the forefront of digital scholarly editing. Another Leverhulme Visiting Professor (Prof Bluemel, 2021) builds on our ambitions to lead the development of the emerging rural humanities field. Along with our new Head of School (Robinson) who works on rural touring theatre, Bluemel will catalyse our relationship with Newcastle University's new National Innovation Centre for Rural Enterprise (REF5a, 2.24). More broadly, we will extend our long-standing interests in the relationship between text and technologies (from voice to the digital) as we work increasingly across disciplines to better understand literature's place in the world; how it touches people's lives today, and how it might better tell their stories in the future.

As we develop our vision for 'Engaged English' that is embedded both across and beyond our Unit, we are collaborating with the Humanities Research Institute on the **City of Literature** project. Centred on literature and literacy, and the cultural practices associated with them (reading, writing, publishing, performance, digital, libraries, learning) City of Literature aims to work with writers, promote festivals, research and teach literary and social history, in order to support literacy in children and adults. The ambitions of this partnership go beyond the operational aspects of literacy and literature into quality of life, work and employment, culture and community well-being. Over the next two years, the project will assess the potential for coordination in city-wide Open Forums, while also exploring opportunities for collaboration between our Unit and the School of Education, with projects linking the history of reading with the scientific recovery of the internal voice of readers; and the exploration of social science methodologies, especially 'participatory research', for our work on children's archives.

At Newcastle, strategic investment and careful planning have built an environment that encourages and supports a very wide range of research and impact activity. Our aim has been to ensure that *all* the UoA's researchers can flourish, whether working individually on highly specialised literary scholarship or in large teams on cross-disciplinary and cross-sector projects. The critical research we are producing puts us at the forefront of current global research agendas, across a full range of periods, genres and regions, with specialisms in still developing fields like digital scholarly editing, postcolonial studies and children's literature. Our creative work is read and valued by readers around the world, both for the pleasure it brings and for its capacity to change the way we think and act. All our research advances in tandem with our work to reach and benefit users outside academia: our impact drives our research, just as our research drives our impact.

Integral to this is our determination to use creative, critical and historical approaches to explore the life cycles of texts, from composition and production through to reception, performance and influence. Locally, nationally and internationally we have built a series of sustainable and balanced partnerships with organisations such as Bloodaxe Books, Seven Stories, Northern Stage, British Library and the British School at Rome. Our conviction is that these, and other partnerships now in development in theatre and other areas, will enable us to continue to provide leadership for our discipline by showing how research in English can be innovative, relevant to today's concerns, and of very significant benefit to individuals, and institutions, and to society as a whole.