

<b>Institution: Newman University, Birmingham</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: History</b>
<p><b>1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy</b></p> <p><b>Unit Context</b></p> <p>History at Newman University, Birmingham, sits within the Department of Arts, Humanities, and Human Sciences in the Faculty of Arts, Society, and Professional Studies (FASPS). The UOA has evolved from submitting just one scholar to RAE 2008, 2.4FTE in REF2014, to 6.0FTE in this REF cycle. The UOA moves from having around five years of postdoctoral experience at RAE2008 and twenty years combined postdoctoral experience in REF2014 to sixty-five years at the point of submission for REF2021. Members of the UOA evidence a wide range of career stages of the historical profession, with one associate dean, two readers, three senior lecturers and one lecturer submitted. The increasing maturity of the History UOA at Newman University has resulted in a greater research footprint within the institution, greater demand for institutional structures and procedures relating to research, as well as a more significant outward-facing profile.</p> <p>Research activity in the History UOA covers two millennia and crosses disciplinary boundaries between history, classics, political science, sociology, and theology. The Unit's growth since REF2014 necessitated the need to consolidate the disparate interests of the UOA into discrete areas of activity. At the point of submission to REF2021, the UOA's research addresses three distinct areas of expertise:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Poverty and Welfare</li> <li>2) Religious Cultures</li> <li>3) Power and Representation</li> </ol> <p>Colleagues in the UOA contribute to one or two of these themes that deliberately cross traditional temporal and geographical boundaries. Visiting Scholars and colleagues elsewhere in the Department (from Drama, English, and Theology, in particular) also collaborate on these topics.</p> <p>To facilitate this interaction, all colleagues in the UOA are members of the University's Humanities Research Centre that was established in 2015. The Centre grew out of the successful Humanities Research Group and acts as an umbrella for activities throughout the Department of Arts and Humanities, from Continuing Professional Development, grant-writing workshops, and public lectures. At the heart of the Centre's activity is a programme of internal research seminars and invited public lectures that attract scholars from across the UK, as well as promoting research projects occurring within the University. Opportunities for internal collaboration are fostered by the Humanities Research Centre's annual celebration of research and internal research bulletins.</p> <p><b>Research Strategy</b></p> <p><b>i) Research Strategy and Achievement, 2014-21</b></p> <p>The University's Strategic Plan following REF2014 included a commitment to direct investment towards growing and securing a 'critical mass of academic staff who are engaged in research, practice, or other forms of advanced scholarship and demonstrate achievements that are recognised by the wider academic community to be of national or international standing'. The History UOA is the clearest example of the fulfilment of the University's goals in growing a mature and sustainable research culture.</p>

The UOA's activities between 2014 and 2021 have been built on a number of principles developed at Faculty, Department and Subject level, and expressed in the UOA's targets in REF2014:

- (i) To increase and sustain both the volume and quality of printed outputs
- (ii) To increase the number of applications made to external funding bodies
- (iii) To increase the number of academic and public-facing events and collaborations
- (iv) To develop a larger PGR cohort in Humanities

Building on these targets and responding to feedback from REF2014, the UOA has succeeded in driving growth and achievement in almost all of these areas. All staff in the UOA are research active. This has resulted in a significant increase in the Unit's research power from REF2014, growing the number of printed outputs across the census period. This has also led to a twenty-fold increase in the amount of research grant applications submitted by the UOA. The UOA has succeeded in its aim of attracting external research funding with notable successes in applying to the British Academy, the Fulbright Commission, the National Endowment for the Humanities (USA) and the Wellcome Trust.

Our aim to organise more outward-facing events and collaborations has resulted in eleven conferences being held and/or organised by colleagues in the UOA since 2014. These events have attracted a large number of people to the Newman University campus or to collaborating institutions.

#### **ii) Research Strategy and Achievement, 2021-25**

The UOA appreciates that the landscape of UK HE post-2021 will be challenging. However, we view the next research assessment cycle as another opportunity for the UOA to mature its research culture from its embryonic submission to RAE2008. While it is not envisaged that the UOA will grow significantly in size in the next census period, our strategic goals revolve around the development of structures of research management and increasing the size of the UOA's external research footprint (in terms of impact and partnerships, grant capture, and outputs). The UOA is particularly committed to improving links with external organisations in the next five years.

The University's institutional research strategy for the coming five-year period 2021-25 will build on the current research plan while focusing on specific areas of implementation: an attainment of Research degree awarding powers, research integrity, Open Research compliance, and the equal promotion of disciplinary, cross-disciplinary, and interdisciplinary research.

Our goals for the period after 2021 are:

1. To continue to develop public-facing projects that involve staff, students, and external partners
2. To develop the Humanities Research Centre as a way to continue to develop an inclusive research culture in the UOA, while also acting as a point of contact for external relationships
3. To explore the implementation of the Researcher Development Concordat
4. To manage pathways to impact more effectively, particularly through the use of institutional methods of gathering data and sharing best practice

We will evidence these changes by pursuing the following outcomes:

1. An increase in the number of external-facing relationships between members of the UOA and relevant third parties

2. To increase the number of external-facing events hosted by the Humanities Research Centre and to attract more external scholars at Centre events
3. To establish a working group of colleagues from across the Humanities to explore ways to develop researchers' skills who are already a part of the UOA
4. To work with the Faculty and Graduate School to develop ways to effectively share best practices on data collection around impact: this may include training sessions, as well as the creation of specific workflows and systems to capture impact activities

This strategy will serve to consolidate the UOA's rapid growth from its first submission to RAE2008 to its much broader profile in 2021, while also using the UOA's expertise to develop a far more outward-facing and impact-driven agenda.

### Impact Strategy

The UOA took very seriously the comments from the RE2014 Subpanel 30 report that History UOAs had not sufficiently explored 'collaboration with schools and...the development of school curricula' as part of impact activities. We have also sought to build on our clear commitment to impact evidenced in REF2014 to a more direct form of engagement with educational stakeholders and beneficiaries of our research.

At the heart of much of our impact activity is using contacts nourished by the University's history as a teacher-training college. Ensuring our research has an impact in education at all levels is a critical component in the way we disseminate research. We actively collaborate with History teachers at secondary schools and colleges to provide CPD, especially when teachers move to new institutions or when a new component is introduced into their curricula. In 2015, the UOA held a Visit Day with Heads of Sixth Form centres at the Black Country Living Museum. In 2019, we held a History Learning Day where colleagues explored concepts of rulership by provoking students and teachers with the question 'Should Historians Rule the World?'

The UOA is home to a new and vibrant Applied Humanities undergraduate course that will set the tone in how the UOA will engage with external organisations in the future. Partnerships developed as part of the Applied Humanities agenda will offer greater opportunities for external collaboration, but also offer students the chance to be actively involved in research projects. Developing our Applied Humanities agenda will be a priority in the next five years.

## 2. People

Since 2014, the Unit's staff recruitment policy has been aligned with contributing to the Unit's three main clusters of research expertise. The rate of growth has been gradual but steady over the census period: **Langley** was appointed in 2014, **Folwell** in 2015, **Lewandowski** in 2016 and **Reid** in 2018. These appointments extended the temporal and geographical spread of the UOA's research interests while building significant research strength in our 'Poverty and Welfare' and 'Religious Cultures' research themes.

During the census period, three lecturers were promoted to Senior Lecturer status (**Folwell**, **Harrisson**, **Langley**) while one was promoted to Reader in 2020 (**Langley**). The Unit actively seeks to make those who are initially employed on fractional contracts up to full-time members of the team (**Harrisson**, **Langley**).

Staff participate in an annual appraisal process with the Head of Subject where research, writing, and grant applications are discussed. The UOA Research Coordinator meets separately with colleagues to discuss pathways towards achieving significant milestones in colleagues' research careers. Colleagues are given the opportunity to embed research ideas into team-taught teaching content.

Research time is protected under the University's Work Allocation Model (WAM). The WAM also provides colleagues with blocks of clear time in which to complete grant applications. New members of early career staff are appointed a research mentor with whom they meet once each semester to discuss their wider plans. All colleagues have input into the UOA's spending priorities and direction through Subject meetings each semester.

Colleagues are encouraged to apply for a semester of research leave (plus the vacation period that falls either side) every three years. This scheme is administered centrally by the University in accordance with its Strategic Plan. Colleagues in the UOA agree in advance with the UOA Research Coordinator when their period of leave would be most useful and are then encouraged to submit an application to the University's Research Committee. During the period under review, several colleagues have been granted research leave (**Langley, Plack**). Due to the size of the UoA, colleagues' teaching loads can be intelligently managed so certain modules can be shifted around with the agreement of the rest of the team to suit pressing research needs and open up space to complete projects.

In tandem with the University's Directorate of Learning, Teaching and Scholarship, members of the UOA can participate in on- and -off-site writing retreats during semester to give them another environment in which to write, away from the bustle of teaching commitments. Several colleagues in the UOA have benefitted from writing retreats on campus and at the nearby Woodbrooke Centre, Birmingham. An annual celebration of research run by the Humanities Research Centre gives colleagues a chance to discuss successes in research projects and grant capture, as well as exploring opportunities for collaboration across disciplines.

Researchers in the UOA benefit from the culture of seminars and conferences in which all levels of staff and PGRs can participate. The Humanities Research Centre Seminar Series has hosted seventy-two presentations in the census period, including scholars from Durham, Hull, Leeds, Łódz, Nottingham, South Wales, UCL, Warwick, and York (Canada). These events were shifted online from March 2020, initially focusing on offering space to colleagues to discuss internal research projects and broadening to include several external scholars from the first months of 2021. The HRC Seminar Series has also hosted presentations from research managers and grant bid writers to encourage colleagues to apply for external funding and to familiarise them with the processes to do so.

Members of the UOA also enjoy access to conferences and symposia organised by members on campus, with the most significant being: 'Rethinking Poverty in Medieval and Early Modern Europe' (2015); 'Imagining the Afterlife in the Ancient World' (2016); the Ecclesiastical History Society Postgraduate Colloquium (2018); 'Victorian Fears Colloquium' (2018), 'Building the Fortress: Catholics in English Towns, 1778-1840' (2018); and the European Reformation Research Group Annual Meeting (2019). Each of these events has included a significant collaborative element, with external scholars and organisations.

### Research Students

In 2014, the University entered into a new arrangement with Liverpool Hope University as the validating partner for all of its research degrees. This has resulted in a more mature support structure for PGR students. PGR supervision teams have increased in sophistication, now including a Director of Studies, a Primary Supervisor, and a Second Supervisor, allowing students access to subject specialists as well as senior colleagues in the Faculty. The Graduate School's Postgraduate Research Student Coordinator (until 2020: **Plack**) is based in the History UOA and provides an additional layer of pastoral support for PGR candidates.

Since the last census period, we have encouraged the growth of our PGR community. A new MRes programme was designed in 2015 to provide a more coherent pathway from undergraduate study to advanced postgraduate work. This programme has produced several doctoral candidates, some of whom have continued their studies in the UOA and others who have moved elsewhere to pursue doctoral research. The University offered a number of full

scholarships for doctoral candidates of exceptional quality between 2014 and 2015, has provided fee waivers for MPhil and PhD candidates since 2016 and offers fee discounts to alumni. 11 candidates in Humanities subjects have been in receipt of full scholarships or fee waivers between 2014 and 2020, two of whom are based in the History UOA.

The University Graduate School runs a regular programme of training and skills workshops, equipping PGRs with the skills needed for their doctoral work and after they graduate. Since their introduction in March 2015, the Graduate School has run 74 doctoral workshop sessions. Members of the History UOA often lead these workshops, including sessions on 'Presenting a Conference Paper' and writing for publication. The University's annual Celebration of Doctoral Research has hosted a number of humanities PGRs, including several from History. Postgraduates are encouraged to publish thought pieces and research on the Newman History blog (<https://newmanhistory.wordpress.com>).

Since 2019, £150 from the History UOA is allocated to each PGR as a way to contribute towards speaking at conferences or to support visits to archives or other repositories. The Humanities Research Centre introduced an annual call for postgraduate funding in 2020 that encourages PGRs to develop collaborative, external-facing events, with PGRs at other institutions. This scheme offers up to £200 per year to a collaborative venture of this kind.

To support PGR development, the NewmArts postgraduate network was established in 2017 and is led by PGRs from Humanities subjects. The network brings together PGT and PGR students in Humanities subjects to organise academic and social gatherings. Newmarts also edit and administer the postgraduate journal *Critical Commentary*, which accepts submissions from PGR students. A member of NewmArts is appointed as PGR representative on the Humanities Research Centre steering group, allowing social events at the start and end of each semester.

### Visiting Scholars

Visiting scholars augment our three core areas of activity. Over the census period, the UOA has hosted four visiting scholars: Professor Martial Staub (Sheffield), Dr David Brown (Independent), Dr Marie Rowlands (Emerita) and Professor Dilwyn Porter (De Montfort). Visiting Scholars are given access to the University's Library resources and contribute research papers and other expertise through the Humanities Research Centre.

### Equality and Diversity

Efforts to enhance staff understanding of issues of equality and diversity have been interwoven through the University's structure: from the top level, through Faculty and Department and into the individual UOA. All members of academic staff across the University are required to complete mandatory Equality and Diversity training every four years. The UOA has actively engaged with the Royal Historical Society's 2018 report 'Race, Ethnicity & Equality in UK History'. In 2020, the UOA was at the forefront of a University-wide 'big conversation' around race in the University and wide community. This resulted in several Zoom conferences on the subject and a radical reframing of the history undergraduate degree. Driven by members of the UOA, an equality and inclusion committee was established at Departmental level. The University Research Ethics Committee addresses issues of gender and racial bias within research projects at both design stage and in their execution. In 2018, the University established a LGBT discussion group.

## 3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

### External Grant Capture

The Unit has widened its portfolio of external funding since REF2014 by encouraging colleagues to apply to a greater range of grant schemes and supporting them with a more developed

approach to submission. A research bid writer was appointed by the University in 2015 who liaised closely with the University Finance team to cost bids more effectively. A new workflow for grant bid submissions was developed across the census period and introduced in 2019. The Humanities Research Centre collates relevant funding calls and distributes them periodically to colleagues as well as holding events with bid writers and funders from across the country to encourage colleagues to develop grant-worthy projects. The Humanities Research Centre has also developed a repository of successful and unsuccessful grant bids to a range of UK-based funders.

The UOA has submitted twenty bids to funders including the British Academy, Gerda Henkel Stiftung, the Leverhulme Trust and the Wellcome Trust since 2014. In line with this growth in applications for external funding, the Unit has succeeded in securing funding from the Fulbright Commission (**Folwell**), the National Endowment for the Humanities (**Langley**) and the Wellcome Trust (**Langley, Reid**). The Unit has also experienced success with a litany of other, small, funders in mainland UK.

### **Internal Funding and Support**

All members of the UOA have access to internal research funding to facilitate the creation, progression, or completion of projects (individual or collaborative). Each year, this budget is set to around £5,000 which is distributed proportionally to each member of the Unit with a small pot of £1,000 side aside to allow colleagues to develop public-facing components of their research projects. Over the census period, around £40,000 has been made available to Newman's historians in this manner, of which around £30,000 has been spent. The use of these funds must be explicitly tied to an activity or output that will contribute to the UOA's REF2021 submission and has facilitated the purchase of print resources, attendance and organisation of conferences, the costs of reproducing copyrighted materials for publication, and the organisation of impact events.

The wider institutional structure to support research has matured significantly since the last census, despite significant changes to the landscape of British HE. Seedcorn funding, distributed by competitive process, by the Faculty of Arts, Society and Professional Studies (FASPS) and its predecessor (the School of Arts and Humanities), has allowed for the purchase of equipment and research assistance (including the development of undergraduate and postgraduate student involvement in staff research projects). The Humanities Research Centre, established in 2013, also provides small funding particularly aimed at facilitating collaborations between graduate students.

In addition to this, the University Research Committee offers a competitive scheme to support internal and external collaborations, particularly through the organisation of conferences. To help these funds go further, the University Facilities Team allows events taking place on Campus to waive any booking fees for rooms or equipment. This has allowed the UOA to host a wide range of local, national, and international conferences in the census period (outlined in Section 4). The CREST consortium of universities also provides funding for postgraduate conferences that cross university boundaries and foster collaboration between postgraduates across member institutions. Colleagues running events on campus receive support from the FASPS Faculty Office. This resulted in a conference booking workflow being created to reduce friction in the organisation of on-campus events.

### **Impact**

The University implemented an Impact Working Group in 2019, where UOA coordinators and any colleagues working on an Impact Case Study were invited to share ideas and best practices.

The Humanities Research Centre's annual lecture was established in 2017 as a way to bring a prominent speaker to campus to speak to a wide audience on the benefits of humanities research. To date, Edward Bond, Caroline Lawrence, and Liz Berry have led the annual lecture

and attracted new faces to the University. These speakers were chosen as a way to speak provocatively about often challenging topics.

### Facilities

The History UOA, along with all other Humanities subjects, is based in Oxford Hall at the northern edge of the Newman University campus. Senior colleagues are allocated individual offices, while junior colleagues share one large office per two scholars. Individual work spaces and meeting rooms are located around Oxford Hall if colleagues desire a more private setting. Colleagues each have a networked PC and access to multifunction printing devices that are dotted around campus. Colleagues who prefer to use their own devices for research purposes benefit from improved WiFi installed in the building between 2015 and 2016.

Postgraduate research students are given access to a 24/7 research room that is equidistant from their home UOAs and the University Library. The PGR Research Room contains hotdesks with networked PCs, dedicated printing facilities and a small kitchenette to facilitate interaction.

The University Library holds printed and electronic resources. The UOA has invested in microfilm readers and specialist book stock in the University Library, augmenting the University's small Local History Collection. Members of the UOA are given access to free inter library loans across the academic year and PGRs are also given a quota of free inter library loans to facilitate their research. Members of the Library team liaise closely with the University's Graduate School to ensure compliance with open-access requirements.

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

### Broadening Participation

Originally a Catholic teacher training college, Newman University attained University status in 2013 and maintains a strong reputation for student support and socially-oriented research. The University's Catholic ethos underpins the strategic plan which seeks the advancement of research for the benefit of the public and is 'dedicated to the construction of the common good, the transformation of its members' lives and of the world they serve and engage with'. These ideas sit at the heart of much of the UOA's research activity.

In partnership with colleagues at the Library of Birmingham and Birmingham Archives and Collections, the UOA introduced the Chris Upton Memorial Lecture in 2016. Named in honour of Dr Chris Upton (1953-2015), a genuinely public historian, the Annual Lecture continues Dr Upton's gift of communicating the past to audiences from a range of backgrounds and abilities. The lecture has been given by public historians and heritage leaders from across the region, including Sarah Hayes (Birmingham Conservation Trust), Professor Maggie Andrews (Worcester) and Professor Ewan Fernie (Shakespeare Institute, Birmingham).

The University's commitment to broadening the audience of its work has led the History UOA to contribute to the University Community Day in 2015, as well as the Humanities Research Centre annual lecture. The annual lecture brings a leading figure in arts, humanities, or politics to the area to discuss their work.

This commitment to engaging a wide audience with our research permeates our areas of activity. **Reid** appeared on BBC television programme *Who Do You Think You Are?* in 2020, while PhD graduate, Dr Jonathan Atherton, appeared on an episode in the series in 2017. **Reid** is a regular contributor to *BBC History Magazine*. **Langley** has authored articles in *History Scotland* and *All About History*, appeared on the podcast *Pax Britannica*, as well as giving public masterclasses for the Scottish History Society in 2016 and 2017. The project Mapping the Scottish Reformation (**Langley**) contributes to discussions in the genealogical community, including the *Scottish Indexes* conference in 2020.

### Research Networks

Since the last REF census, the History UOA at Newman University has worked hard to ensure a larger and deeper footprint in research collaboration with partners outside the institution.

**Folwell's** Fulbright Fellowship allowed collaboration in research and teaching pedagogy with colleagues at Elon University, North Carolina. **Harrison** is part of a network of scholars based in Germany assessing the reception of classical texts in modern literature, television, and film. This has led to the podcast 'Creepy Classics' which blends modern storytelling with a core of academic research into afterlife belief and memory. **Langley** is the Co-Director of 'Mapping the Scottish Reformation' a project funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Strathmartine Trust, with colleagues in the United States, Canada, and the UK and regularly contributes to the project blog at [www.mappingscottishreformation.org](http://www.mappingscottishreformation.org). The project website was developed in concert with the Interactive Content team at the University of Edinburgh.

### Contribution to Academy

Members of the UOA frequently contribute to the larger knowledge economy. Colleagues' expertise is evidenced by the number of keynote lectures given by members of the UOA. Some particular highlights include Plack's keynote lecture at the 'Consumption' conference at Edge Hill University in 2018, Reid's opening lecture at the ERC-funded event 'Care after the First World War' conference in April 2018 and Langley's plenary lecture at the Scottish Church History Conference in Edinburgh in 2017. The UOA has been further recognised by an array of invites to give research seminars across the UK and EU. Harrison has given invited papers in Gottingen, Łódź and St Andrews. Langley in Aberdeen, Birmingham, Edinburgh, Leicester, and St Andrews.

The Unit has hosted or funded a large number of conferences during the census period that reflect the Unit's breadth of expertise and are particularly aimed at building capacity in the UOAs three core areas of expertise. All of these events have involved collaboration with colleagues from outside of the institution. Harrison organised the 'Imagining the Afterlife in the Classical World' conference with colleagues at University of Birmingham in 2016 while Langley and emeritus fellow Rowlands organised the 'Building the Fortress: Catholics in provincial towns, 1778-1840' conference in 2018 with colleagues at Oscott College, Birmingham.

The Unit also partly funded collaborations that have bred external conferences such as the 'Clergy in Early Modern Scotland' conference at New College, University of Edinburgh in 2017 and the 'Old Corruption to New Corruption' symposium at Oxford Brookes University in 2019. This is in addition to the Unit hosting the Ecclesiastical History Society Postgraduate Colloquium with colleagues from Theology in 2018 and the European Reformation Research Group colloquium in 2019.

The increasing reach of the UOA's work is underlined by colleagues' increasing presence at academic conferences and symposia. Since 2014, staff in the UOA have presented research papers at over 50 conferences in the UK and further afield.

### Editorial and Professional Roles

Since the last census in 2014, members of the UOA have considerably increased their profile and involvement with scholarly societies and publications. **Harrison** is lead editor of the interdisciplinary *Journal of Historical Fictions*. Colleagues have important roles in national and international scholarly organisations. **Langley** sits on the Ecclesiastical History Society board and holds the role of Publicity Secretary for the Society. **Plack** was a Trustee for the Society for the Study of French History and the Secretary-Treasurer for the Alcohol and Drugs History Society. Since 2015, the University Research Committee agreed to supplement the cost of membership to scholarly and professional societies for across the institution. Colleagues in



History have benefitted from this generosity and are active members of various learned societies.

Members of the unit frequently contribute peer reviews to leading journals in the field including: *French Historical Studies*, *Medicine, Conflict & Survival*, *Scottish Historical Review*, *Studies in Church History*, and *Women's History Network*. Colleagues have also contributed peer review expertise to a range of other journals, including *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, and *Journal of the North Atlantic*. And colleagues contribute to the wider academy by publishing book reviews for leading journals in the field including *English Historical Review*, *Journal of American Studies*, *Scottish Historical Review*, and *The Classical Review*,

Colleagues in the unit have also reviewed monograph proposals for University of California Press, Edinburgh University Press, Manchester University Press, and Oxford University Press, as well as commercial publishers like Peter Lang and Routledge.

### **Prizes, Honours and Recognition**

The Unit's exposure has broadened considerably since the last census period. Newman's History team is one of the only places in the country where all colleagues have earned election to Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy.

Members of the Unit have been invited to hold visiting fellowships at a range of institutions -- reflecting the increasing profile of the Unit. **Folwell** was Fulbright Scholar at Elon University, North Carolina, in 2019 and **Langley** was visiting research fellow at the University of St Andrews in 2014 and the Institute of Advanced Study in the Humanities at the University of Edinburgh in 2018. **Langley's** work in digital humanities in the project Mapping the Scottish Reformation was shortlisted for one of the 2020 Digital Humanities Awards.