

<b>Institution:</b> York St John University
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> English Language and Literature (UoA 27)
<p><b>1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy</b></p> <p>This unit contains some of York St John University's (YSJU) most ambitious critical and creative research, with a global scope and reach that integrates with the university's Strategy for 2026. Staff are engaged in individual research projects and in a range of collaborative research networks within the UK and internationally. This diverse, creative, and ambitious research reflects a research culture and environment that is established and growing, and which is well-embedded into the university. It has become increasingly sustainable through successful bids for university and school funds, including quality-related (QR), catalyst and external engagement funding. One of the key characteristics that distinguishes the ambitions of this unit is its emphasis on the relationship between critical and creative practice, and the various ways it is in dialogue across key political and environmental concerns, particularly those relating to gender, climate change, sustainability, and social justice. It is characterised by its innovative and integrated approach to research, writing and creativity.</p> <p>Over the past few years, the Literature and Creative Writing programmes have undergone considerable expansion. Strategic developments include the creation of the York Centre for Writing (YCW, 2017), the introduction of YSJU's first Masters in Fine Arts in Creative Writing (2018), the establishment of the York Research Unit for the Study of Satire (2019), the development of MA Publishing (2020, also with Creative Writing and Literature), as well as a continuing collaboration with the popular York Literature Festival (YLF), New Writing North and the Northern Fiction Alliance. These developments, building on existing staff expertise, have allowed us to consolidate our efforts in developing a new focus on research and research-related activities.</p> <p>Since the Research Excellence Framework 2014 (REF2014), our Literature and Creative Writing UoA has been devolved from its former pairing with Language Studies, and this means that comparing REF2014 with REF2020 is complex. Overall, we have increased our submission of research outputs from 29 in REF2014 (16 from Literature and Creative Writing) to 44 in REF2020, chosen from a collection of over 65 potential outputs. We have also gone from entering eight staff in 2014, to submitting work from 21 of our colleagues in the current period (including three former staff). Our last REF submission was graded at: 4* = 13.8%, 3* = 27.6%, 2* = 48.3%, 1* = 10.3%. The scope and variety of outputs has also considerably developed: colleagues have produced 23 journal articles; 25 book chapters; seven monographs, six edited collections, four poetry collections, four novels, one short story collection and one textbook. In 2014, the impact case studies for unit 29 were graded at 50% 3*. For the current cycle, we are submitting two impact case studies, one for each area of our practice, which also reflects the growth of Literature and Creative Writing as disciplines.</p> <p>Our number of full-time equivalent (FTE) staff has grown from 11.6 in 2014 to 17.7 in 2020. We have benefitted from YSJU's achievement of research degree awarding powers (RDAP) in 2015, as well as the creation of the central Research Office (RO) in 2018 to facilitate and support staff research. This has helped the evolution of a wide range of research projects including work on northern writing (Booth and Beaumont), a creative-critical Pollination Project (Curtis), Music, Memory and Memoir (Edgar, Mann and Pleasance), Literary Cities (Evans and Kramer), Satire and Culture (Smith and Waugh) and Speculative Fiction (Booth, Curtis and King). These diverse research projects have all emerged in the years following REF2014 and have all produced research outputs included in our current submission.</p> <p>During 2014–20, our research aims have been focused on helping to support staff research productivity (e.g., through the introduction of annual research away days for the Literature team) and colleagues are encouraged to reflect on their research as individuals, as well as how their work might connect to the wider university strategy. Another research aim was to increase</p>

the number of postgraduate researchers (PGRs), and we have grown from having two PGRs in 2014 to 14 in 2020. We have worked to develop our PGR community by careful consideration of our postgraduate taught (PGT) programmes; we have two popular MAs in Contemporary Literature and in Creative Writing, and these are intended to help students prepare for a PhD. By targeting student numbers at PGT level through several bespoke recruitment events and offering a clear trajectory from MA through to PhD, we have continued to grow our PGR community, which also helps to sustain our research activity more widely across our programmes.

Our consistent approach to research-informed teaching is demonstrated in our investment in all staff members with significant responsibility for research, who are fully engaged with teaching at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. For example, in the Research Now modules (Level 6), staff can bid to run a specialist strand that directly relates to their current research. This dedicated teaching time on a highly specific topic can help members of our team to develop work for publication (for example, Lawson Welsh's monograph on Caribbean foodways), while allowing students to gain from the experience of participating in real-life research projects. At our Music, Memory and Memoir conference (2018) MA students were able to present their research and interview one of the keynote speakers. This sense of co-production with students is integral to our research ethos and strategy to grow our research culture. Across all levels, our students can learn from the insights and experience of our cutting-edge and innovative research.

There is a strong emphasis on student experience within the unit, with resource directed towards research-led teaching, co-creation of knowledge and creative outputs. An example of this is the new Master of Fine Arts degree, which was launched in 2018 and offers a direct progression route grown from the highly successful MA in Creative Writing. Projects explore issues of gender, historical narrative, psychology, and visual art, for example, while students engage with the world of publishing through meetings with agents, editors, and presses. Staff have produced ground-breaking and high-quality research outputs and they continue to find ways of facilitating research. Several Leverhulme and Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) bids were made in the past two years (though not successful) and the university now provides a much stronger research support infrastructure.

UoA 27 has successfully achieved the institutional strategic aims for research and impact covering the 2014–20 period. These were:

**1. Promote research as a key form of learning**

We have actioned this by increasing research-informed teaching opportunities and research-led events at both programme and school level for undergraduate and postgraduate students and staff, and a dedicated focus on PGT and PGR recruitment.

**2. Ensure that high-quality research and scholarly activity contribute to exceptional learning and teaching in all subject areas**

Through the introduction of several brand-new modules focusing exclusively on staff research interests we have worked to maximise the connections between research and teaching. Applied pedagogic research is also present in the production of textbooks developed from staff research applied to modules; for example, with Adaptation and Film Language as applied to adaptation (Marland and Edgar). These texts promote and disseminate pedagogic research with these texts being used at other higher education institutions (HEIs) locally (University of Leeds) and internationally (Tisch School of the Arts, NYU, USA).

**3. Create a critical mass of sustainable research and increase the percentage of staff with doctorates**

Since the last REF, we have actively recruited ECRs with doctorates and developing research portfolios.

**4. Achieve RDAP, with increasing numbers of research students and high completion rates**

This was awarded to the university in 2015.

### 5. Engage with and influence users of research, locally, nationally and internationally

Being part of our local York community is a huge component of both programmes. We run multiple public-facing events, including partnership with the YLF, our annual “Words Matter” lecture and our events for International Women’s Day and Black History Month. These are routinely attended by our local alumni and help to build a sense of community.

### 6. Increase research productivity

We have worked continuously to help support staff and enable them to increase their time for research through the introduction of research showcases (events for both students and the public) and a clearer focus on research-informed teaching. The increased number of outputs for this UoA illustrates that this multi-tiered approach has been largely successful.

At the outset of the current REF period, the strategic aims for our UoA were to:

1. Establish research as an integral part of the work of academic staff and ensure opportunities for development of research skills.
2. Maintain a sustainable research culture including opportunities for researchers to discuss and develop their work internally as well as developing vital external links with stakeholders and end users.
3. Promote collaboration between colleagues, disciplines, and departments in order to recognise and fully develop critical and creative networks.
4. Ensure that research is recognised and nurtured through performance development reviews (PDRs).

Several measures were put in place to achieve these aims. Staff have organised informal peer-review groups to help support each other in preparing work for publication. There has been more focus on staff having opportunities to develop their own research knowledge, understanding and skills. More opportunities for staff development such as funded creative writing courses for Literature staff (Bradbury) has helped to develop new skills and foster new publications. Colleagues now have the opportunity for annual (or more frequent) conversations with our school research and knowledge transfer lead (SRKTL) and can request a research mentor from within the school. We have actively looked for ways to foster interdisciplinary research in our unit. The Music, Memory and Memoir project, for example, works across several disciplines to develop a brand-new theoretical approach to reading and analysing music memoirs. The edited collection *Time, the City, and the Literary Imagination* (edited by Evans and Kramer, Palgrave, 2020) features chapters by colleagues from both Literature and American Studies as part of the volume.

Looking ahead, the university strategy 2026 has three priorities: inspiring learning, impactful research, and enabling our students to be clear about their careers. The research strategy emphasises interdisciplinary working, demonstrating greater research excellence through external recognition, and wider dissemination of research as key goals. Within this context, the unit will look to further embed the four aims listed above to drive increases in research quantity and quality.

## 2. People

### Staffing strategy and development

We have 19 staff members (17.7 FTE which includes two part-time 0.5 FTE and 0.7 FTE) within our unit. We are submitting research by 21 of our team (with three former members of staff), including those whose research falls within the unit remit but who work in cognate areas of the university, such as American Studies and the Foundation Year (Enstone, Trott, Wylie). All but one (Klaces) have doctorates, in line with school and university strategy for this research period. As part of our research and staffing strategy, during the period 2014–20 nine researchers in the early stages of their careers (Bradbury, Enstone, Klaces, Mann, Reece, Smith, Stock, Tamas and Trott) were recruited based on their promising research outputs and the research impact of

their external engagement projects. This staffing strategy has sought to build upon and facilitate a range of overlapping areas of writing and research interests between ECRs and longer-standing colleagues, and, in alignment with the school research strategy, it enables internal collaboration and a rich research culture of interchange and activity across and beyond subject areas. New appointments have been strategically focused on developing the range of research produced by the UoA (e.g., in African American literature, poetry, eighteenth-century writing and creative non-fiction), which has also helped us to develop new modules that are more obviously research-led (e.g., Bradbury's module, *From Harlem to Hip-Hop: African American Literature and Culture*). We have sought to appoint ECRs, supporting them in developing their own research profiles to enable application for internal promotion; two members of staff (Bradbury, Mann) have successfully completed their own PhDs during the assessment period.

All academic staff are on contracts requiring research, scholarship and teaching, and this forms part of our fair and inclusive approach to REF. With the exception of one member of staff (Wylie) all members of the unit are employed on permanent contracts. This provides a degree of stability and security for implementing the research and impact strategy. Several colleagues have successfully applied for promotion during the assessment period, based partly on their research successes (e.g., Curtis was promoted to professor, Booth and Edgar were promoted to associate professor and Beaumont, Bradbury, Pleasance, Smith and Stock were all promoted to senior lecturer). Evans and King were both promoted to associate head of school roles in 2019. Buoyant student recruitment has allowed Creative Writing to grow staffing substantially since REF2014. The establishment of YCW and an expanding portfolio of postgraduate provision are reflections of growth and success.

Staff have an annual personal development review (PDR), with research as an integral part. Topics discussed include reviewing progress, setting objectives for outputs, research engagement (grant applications, PGR supervision, scholarship, knowledge exchange) and research development (external visibility, conference attendance, networking). YSJU is a signatory on the Vitae Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers, which directly informs our staff development approach. Our centralised research CPD programme (over 40 sessions) is aligned to the four core Vitae competencies and recognises staff individual development needs while also acknowledging that a common set of requisite personal and professional skills are needed for success. CPD delivery is mainly delivered by our professoriate and by external speakers (e.g. Professor Mark Reed delivered our impact workshop). Our new open data repository service (RaYDaR) and research repository (RaY) will further increase the impact and transparency of research at YSJU and support researcher development.

The RO provides support and events specifically tailored to ECRs and postgraduate researchers. The YCW provides staff and students with the opportunity to engage with high-profile writers (e.g., Michel Faber, Simon Armitage, Daljit Nagra, Sarah Hall) and industry professionals (agents, publishers and editors) and links the university to a wider community.

At school level, research seminars are often convened by members of the UoA (Lawson 2014–19; Curtis, King 2019–present) and are open to all staff and students. We have a strong programme of external speakers and guest writer events, including Professor Sara Ahmed, Professor Matthew Feldman and Professor Alison Donnell. The school holds an annual research conference to which members of our UoA regularly contribute. At programme level, the English Literature annual “Words Matter” lecture (2017–present) is open to everyone and is an opportunity to showcase diverse, current and impactful research from the team (Beaumont 2020, Mann 2019, Waugh, 2018, Kramer, 2017). Within the unit, we have introduced several initiatives to help support colleagues find time to write during a busy semester, including regular writing retreats (King) and the introduction of research away days, held off-campus, to encourage collaboration and research strategy discussion (Evans). Staff also benefitted from paid attendance at specialist leadership courses including Diversifying Leadership (Bradbury).

### **Equality and diversity**

Equality, inclusivity, diversity and social justice are at the centre of everything we do and we are committed to creating a diverse staff and PGR community. Across the institution, 78.9% of the associate head roles are filled by women and 51.6% of new senior lecturer appointments were women. A significant portion of our research addresses issues relating to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) (Bradbury's work on passing; Lawson Welsh's work on Black and British Asian writing, and the Caribbean; creative and critical interrogations of patriarchy and gender construction by Campanello, Evans, Mann, Tamas). On a practical level, staff have been integral in organising a wide variety of public events centred around social justice. In October 2020, the Literature team invited Jeffrey Boakye as a guest speaker for Black History Month (interviewed by Mann) in what became the university's biggest ever online event, with over 450 tickets booked and over 180 subsequent views on YouTube. Professor Sara Ahmed was invited to speak for International Women's Day in March 2020 in an event co-organised by staff from the unit (Evans) with an audience of over 300. We have organised multiple events in the last REF period for Black History Month, International Women's Day, LGBTQ+ History Month and the Holocaust Memorial Day. Our longstanding prioritisation of decolonisation of the curriculum positions the unit well to make substantial contributions to current institution-wide initiatives on decolonisation and racial justice; a key strategic priority for YSJU. All staff in the UoA regularly participate in unconscious bias and equality and diversity training. The university is a Stonewall Top 100 employer (49<sup>th</sup>), a Top 20 Trans employer, a Disability Confident employer and is currently applying for the Bronze Award for the Athena SWAN Charter for Gender Equality. Evans has been an invited member of the Self-Assessment Team for the last two years and is the school's Athena SWAN Champion. Stock works as the academic representative on the university's Trans-Inclusive Support Network and two colleagues (Bradbury and Curtis) were featured in the YSJU Women Role Models staff campaign in 2018. A YCW Poetry Series launched in 2019–20 focuses on inviting poets of BAME, LGBTQ+ and working-class backgrounds to speak. It has featured Vahni Capildeo, Will Harris, A. K. Blakemore to date and has had more than 230 bookings.

The UoA complied fully with the YSJU institutional code of practice in selecting research outputs. The UoA lead also undertook Advance HE training on equality and mitigating bias as part of the role. Due to the small size of our submission, it is not possible to report a profile at UoA level here while also complying with HESA guidelines on anonymous reporting when presenting Equality and Diversity data (e.g., all our percentages would be based on less than 22.5 FTE). However, equality and diversity data for the UoA was reviewed internally following the completion of output selections and reported to both the School Academic Leadership Team (SALT) and Athena SWAN development groups as part of promoting greater diversity and inclusion at UoA, school, and institutional levels. Our data was also included as part of an equality and diversity impact assessment at institutional level.

### **Research centres and units**

The intersection of creative practice and literary research and criticism are key approaches in our unit. The establishment of a research centre and a research unit have been a natural progression in strategically formalising and supporting specific shared strands of staff research and writing activity.

The YCW supports and promotes a range of important initiatives and activities, which makes it unique in this region. YCW was established in 2017, drawing on existing and emergent work within the Literature and Creative Writing teams. The ethos of the YCW is one of 360-degree research-informed activity where there is a fundamental interrelationship between critical research, creative practice as research, research-informed curricula, students as researchers, external community engagement and industrial partnership. The relationship between critical, research-informed writing and creative outputs include novels, short stories, poetry, novellas and creative non-fiction, with staff working across both critical-theoretical and "creative" modes of writing. The YCW supports a cohort of c. 40 taught MA students, runs one of the only MFA in Creative Writing programmes in the country and has an increasing number of critical and practice-based PhD students. Examples of the different forms of activity can be seen in Section 4, all of which demonstrate the approach underpinned by the YCW: all projects have a direct

connection to the curriculum, all will involve undergraduate and/or postgraduate students beyond module activity, all will have a mode of dissemination within and beyond the academy and all will have a clearly identified measure of impact. The YCW works most directly with Valley Press, who produce our annual student creative writing anthology, *Beyond the Walls*. This established partner plays an influential part in the economic and creative growth of Scarborough and we support and promote its mission statement. YCW is now partnering with York's new publisher Lendal Press and has been able to support graduate publishing house Greenteeth Press. Overall, there is a thriving writing and research community, supported by several collaborations and events, and strong links to the local community (including work with the York Art Gallery, Fairfax House, Bar Convent) and further afield (Wellcome Trust and York Museums Trust) that fosters a sense of social justice, originality and critical and creative thought.

The York Research Unit for the Study of Satire (launched 2019) links satire-related research and impact activity. This development capitalised on staff expertise in eighteenth-century satire and provides an opportunity for staff across the school who research satire and comedy to collaborate. The unit provides a distinct identity for funding applications and a platform for attracting and collaborating with external stakeholders. Smith and Waugh's existing work on the Satire: Deaths, Births, Legacies project falls under this remit, as does Hind's (UoA 33) work with Laurence Sterne's Yorkshire house, Shandy Hall. In 2020, the unit collaborated on an exhibition called Satire and Celebrity at eighteenth-century Fairfax House, York. The unit podcast *Smith & Waugh Talk About Satire* has provided a vehicle for accessible dissemination of academic discussion of satire and has drawn on practitioners with guests including Janey Godley and Andrew Doyle. There have been 16 guests on the podcast so far, with 3,928 listens.

### **Interdisciplinarity**

Our focus on staff recruitment and strategy has allowed us to develop clear research synergies across the UoA. One important feature of our approach is a shared interest in, and commitment to, research and writing across different disciplines. For example, several colleagues are working on projects involving intersections with politics (Beaumont, Stock), utopian and dystopian studies (Booth, Curtis, King, Stock) and the environment (Curtis, Booth, King, Waugh), with other colleagues focusing on theorising gender (Evans, Mann, Bradbury, Lawson Welsh), parenthood (Curtis, Booth, Klaces), material culture of different kinds (Evans, Lawson Welsh, Pleasance) or international food studies (Evans, Lawson Welsh). The edited collection *Music, Memory and Memoir* (Bloomsbury, 2019) brings together colleagues from both Literature and Creative Writing (Edgar, Mann, Pleasance) and the project continues to grow and evolve. We also work with our colleagues from across the School of Humanities. Lawson Welsh is a member of the QR funded cross-school social justice project Flood Futures York: Risk and Social Justice, as well as an invited member of the AHRC network Caribbean Coastal Resilience. Evans worked with colleagues from other UoAs in 2018 to direct the Beyond the Vote Festival, a three-day event hosted at YSJU in collaboration with institutions across the city offering a range of free events for the local community to celebrate the centenary of women gaining the vote.

Our commitment to collaboration and interdisciplinarity has significantly enhanced the UoA and allowed us to forge national and international partnerships with associations, presses and historical sites including Urban Buzz (Curtis), Northern Fiction Alliance and Valley Press (Booth), the Barbados Museum and Historical Society (Lawson Welsh), the Montgomery Theatre Sheffield and the York Castle Museum (Smith), and Fairfax House (Smith and Waugh). It has also resulted in research-related media appearances on BBC TV (Smith on *The One Show*) and multiple appearances by members of the unit on local and national radio: Beaumont on Radio 3's *The Word*, Booth and Bradbury on Radio 4's *Woman's Hour*, Curtis on *Open Book* on Radio 4, Tamas on *Short Cuts*, Smith's interview on Radio Sheffield, and appearances by Edgar, Evans and Lawson Welsh on Radio York. Research from the unit has also produced several articles in *The Conversation* (Lawson Welsh, Evans, Waugh, Smith) which have been read over 60,000 times and reprinted in multiple news outlets. Colleagues have also contributed to

journalism in other ways, including publishing articles in *The Guardian* (Bradbury, Booth, Smith and Tamas) and *The I* (Tamas).

### **Postgraduate researchers**

Our PGR community continues to thrive and grow. We currently have 14 PGRs enrolled for Literature or Creative Writing, and we have five successful completions over the past REF period. Successful PGRs have gone on to write for national radio (Dr Linda Marshall-Griffiths) and to hold academic posts in other universities (Leeds Beckett, Nottingham and Salford). All our PhD students have the opportunity for some teaching practice.

We now have four members of staff with sole supervisor status as opposed to one in the last REF, and at least a further four members of staff (Beaumont, Evans, Smith, Waugh) set to achieve this within the next two to three years. Less experienced members of staff are included in supervisory teams to gain valuable experience and enable them to attain supervisor status. Staff are strategically engaged in PhD reviews and transfers, with support from experienced supervisors.

YSJU has well-established processes for induction, training, and monitoring of PGR students. Formal reviews of PGR student progress are conducted every six months by academics external to the supervisory team. Progress is monitored centrally four times a year (by Research Degree Committee). All supervisory meetings are logged. Supervisory teams are made up of multiple academic staff from the PGR student supervisory register. To be added to the register, staff are required to meet stringent criteria for PGR supervision eligibility pertaining to engagement in research, continual professional development and formal YJSU training. Endorsement from Heads of School or School Research Leads is also required. Applications are assessed by a central committee of senior research staff (again, by Research Degree Committee). It is mandatory that all supervisory teams have at least one member of staff with experienced supervisory status (have previously supervised a PhD student to successful completion). In addition, all PGR students have a PGR tutor who is available to provide support outside of the supervisory team.

All students undertake needs analysis periodically and an individually tailored training programme is created. The needs analysis is based on competencies in the Vitae Researcher Development Framework. Support is provided by supervisory teams and via a centralised PGR training programme that includes core and supplementary workshops at each year of study. Like our staff training programme, our PGT training programme aligns with the Vitae Researcher Development Framework. Core parts of the programme include Research Ethics and Integrity, General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) for Research, Data Management, and Copyright and Intellectual Property rights. These sessions are compulsory for all PGR students. A range of other central and local support is available to PGR students that include (1) access to centralised services (e.g. Student Services, Chaplaincy, Library and Learning Services, Careers); (2) access to a stipend of up to £900 (£450 part-time) to support travel and consumables associated with their research and professional development; (3) access to the YJSU Graduate Centre providing study space and remote access to a range of specialist software; (4) opportunity to complete a postgraduate certificate in academic practice to achieve associate fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (HEA); (5) administrative support provided by the School and Research Office and (6) various PGR events held throughout the year (e.g., Three Minute Thesis (3MT), Bake Your Thesis, and the annual PGR conference).

As a UoA we have benefitted from the alumni fee remission scheme that provides a 10% discount on all PGR degrees undertaken by YJSU alumni, and as of 2020–21, MA students can also receive a scholarship that reduces fees based on YJSU undergraduate performance. This has helped to increase our MA (PGT and PGR) intake significantly (from 11 students in 2019 to 17 in 2020) and we aim to support some of these students through further study. To this end, we have introduced annual PhD information sessions, open to all students, alumni and the public, as a way of demystifying research and explaining what PGR study entails. The first of these was

held in April 2019, and out of the 13 attendees, three have now successfully applied and been admitted to the PhD programme in English Literature; another is applying to Creative Writing.

### 3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

The YCW run a series of events that promote and disseminate creative and critical research and practice. This is funded through the School of Humanities and through central university sponsorship of the York Literature Festival.

- YLF events have drawn on and disseminated staff research including events on environmental writing, speculative fiction and satire. This vital partnership for furthering research and for dissemination of practice and critical outcomes to an audience is sponsored by the university at a current rate of £5,000 plus access to space and staff support, making YSJU the lead academic partner. This UoA benefits from the YLF's ability to bid for external funds via partnership working.
- The school funds talks from creative practitioners who come through staff research connections and who feedback into staff research. The 2019–20 Poetry Series received £800 funding and has reached an audience of c. 270. The Music, Memory and Memoir project hosted writer Jason Williamson with an audience of 50, plus additional attendees on the day. This event also had a national audience profile.

The university funds a Students as Researchers scheme and our UoA has a strong record of successful bids for students to gain vital experience working with staff as researchers on a range of projects; colleagues including Pleasance, Waugh, Klaces and Smith have benefitted from this initiative.

#### Library resources

There has been significant investment in the library since 2015, including funds specifically for the only Northern Independent Press Collection in the country. The UoA is supported by a dedicated subject librarian skilled in supporting staff research.

- Spending on information resources for English (including database and journal subscriptions and e-book pages) rose from £12,441 in 2016–17 to £30,936 in 2017–18 and then to £50,424 in 2018–19. New specialist resources added to our collections included ProQuest Literature Online and JSTOR Language and Literature packages.
- Spending on individual print and e-books rose from £31,218 in 2017–18 to £38,391 in 2018–19.

#### Research Office and Business Development and Knowledge Exchange Office

To facilitate the achievement of its key strategic aim of research with impact, the university launched its first dedicated RO in 2018. The RO includes a head (1.0 FTE) and a further 5.15 FTE staff. Its remit includes supporting grant applications, monitoring research performance, overseeing research governance and compliance, coordinating staff research training, and managing the PGR student experience. The work of the RO is complemented by a new Business Development and Knowledge Exchange Office (BDKEO). The BDKEO includes a director (1.0 FTE) and a further 13.5 FTE staff. The BDKEO is responsible for supporting staff in increasing the range and scope of applied research, business development and knowledge exchange.

#### QR and catalyst funding:

QR funding is devolved to schools and staff can bid for funds on a competitive basis. Catalyst and external engagement funds are made available centrally based on competitive bids. This UoA has been successful in securing funds for a variety of projects, including:

- 19 QR-funded conferences attendances – £12,081
- Five staff development conferences/events – £2,521



- Seven QR-funded events (including symposia and conferences) - £9,042
- One funded external engagement/knowledge exchange and pedagogy event - £575

Examples of research that has benefitted from QR funding this in the period 2014–20 include Pollination Project (Curtis, 2016), Kitchen Talk oral history project in Barbados (Lawson Welsh, 2018) and the Music, Memory and Memoir project (King, 2018).

Catalyst funding is designed to help fund a new project or hold a research-related event as a means of facilitating research outputs. Recipients include Edgar for *The Convent During Conflict: Stories from the Home Front in WW1 with the Bar Convent, York* (2018) and Smith and Waugh for an inaugural event for the York Research Unit for the Study of Satire (2019). External engagement funds enable research impact-gathering activities to be held, such as the 2018 public engagement event *Beyond the Vote* (Evans, Kramer).

### External bids

Seven competitive external funding bids were made during this REF period. External research income during this period totalled £9860 from UK charity and other sources. In addition to HESA reported income, Curtis gained external funding of £1000 from Urban Buzz in support of her Pollination Project (2016); Smith was awarded £250 from the British Society for Eighteenth-century Studies (2019); and Lawson Welsh gained a Postcolonial Studies Association grant of £1000 for her Culinary Cultures symposium (2017).

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

### Professional research activities

During the assessment period colleagues have presented over 60 conference papers nationally and internationally. In alignment with our growing research reputation colleagues are routinely invited to act as external examiners for PhDs. From 2014 to 2020, five colleagues (Edgar, Lawson Welsh, Stock, Beaumont, Pleasance) examined postgraduate degrees at 14 different institutions (e.g., Nottingham, York, St. Andrews, and Newcastle). Stock is an invited reviewer for the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and is a member of the AHRC Peer Review College (now in his second term, having been appointed in 2014). He has undertaken three peer-review panels in that time as well as reviewing individual proposals.

Colleagues are involved in a wide range of reviewing activities for 27 academic journals. Three members of the UoA are founding members or on the editorial board for academic journals (Beaumont, Lawson Welsh and Smith). Staff have produced peer-reviewed edited journal issues based on their collaborative research, including in the fields of neoliberalism and contemporary writers (Beaumont), utopias and imaginary futures (Stock) and in the interdisciplinary field of food studies (Lawson Welsh) and material culture (Evans). Staff act as specialist consultants and peer reviewers for monograph and edited collection publications including *The Collegium for African American Research (CAAR)*, *Forum for European Contributions to African American Studies (FORECAAST)* series, Liverpool University Press, Manchester University Press, Palgrave Macmillan, Routledge (UK, New York) and Bloomsbury (New York).

Staff have presented at international conferences in Chicago, New Orleans, London, Rome, Gdansk, Craiova, Palma, Prato, Tampere, Łódź, Tarragona, Madrid, Boston, Montreal, Helsinki, Paris, Portland, Cyprus. Six colleagues (Evans, King, Lawson Welsh, Mann, Stock, Edgar) have been invited to give keynotes at conferences or invited speaker talks to specialist audiences. Bradbury has given six invited papers and/or public workshops on decolonising the curriculum.

### Public engagement

Disseminating research and engaging with the public is an integral strand of our approach to research. This is an outward-looking unit, concerned with ways in which writing might be disseminated. Based on her work for the *Beyond the Vote* Festival in 2018, Evans was public engagement champion for the school from 2018 to 2020 and part of the team that was awarded the Silver Charter mark from the NCCPE.

The YCW has a well-established and ongoing partnership with the YLF. This means that staff research expertise informs aspects of festival programming, which is then tied back to the curriculum. Recent examples include literature and motherhood, speculative fictions, and industry-focused events. There is an interplay between research, student engagement with staff research and external dissemination of research through the school's partnership with the YLF. Speakers who have been part of the YLF and hosted by the YCW include Germaine Greer, Margaret Atwood, Simon Armitage, Sarah Hall, Michel Faber, Daljit Nagra and Jackie Kay.

Colleagues from across the UoA have worked with multiple institutions within the city to provide free, accessible talks and events for the community. Many events connect research with York and its environs, and we have organised a range of annual events for the YLF (many of them taking place on our Lord Mayor's Walk campus in the heart of the city). We have run events exploring York in literature (Enstone and Smith) and developed the *Utopian York Podcast* for the York Festival of Ideas (Stock). Two members of our unit (Evans, Kramer) were involved in the creation of the "Women History in York Map" project, which involved the research and design of a new map of York that highlighted women's history and was shortlisted for the Women's History Network Community History Prize in 2016. Colleagues have welcomed scholars, students and actors to York as part of the York International Shakespeare Festival for several years.

We routinely collaborate with York Explore Library and Archive to co-organise the Big City Read; Mann has interviewed Pat Barker on several occasions (*Regeneration* was selected as the city's novel for 2016). King interviewed Germaine Greer (2014) and Margaret Atwood (2016) for the YLF. Again working with York Explore Library and Archive, several colleagues (Evans, Kramer, Mann, Smith, Waugh) have offered Coffeehouse talks (public events for academics to speak informally about their research) on a range of topics. Colleagues from Creative Writing have hosted many free writing workshops for the local community (e.g., as part of the York Festival of Ideas, the YLF and the Beyond the Vote Festival) as well as organising multiple book launches and reading events on campus and in the city (Booth, Curtis, Campanello, Klaces, Tamas).

### **Collaborative projects**

#### The Pollination Project

The YCW has engaged in a range of interdisciplinary projects. One such example is the Pollination Project (2016–17), an environment and sustainability project with an arts and humanities focus, involving both UG and PGR students and academic staff, on site conservation intended to encourage pollinating insects, and resulting in an archive of critical and creative work. The project attracted both internal and external funding, including from conservation organisation Buglife. It used campus land to create a new wildlife habitat, at the same time engaging students, staff and local residents in an interdisciplinary creative/critical project. Wolfgang Buttress was a guest speaker on campus, inspiring students to engage with science, music, architecture, and visual art as he had when embarking on his million-pound commission. Artist Amy Shelton has work exhibited at the Wellcome Trust and uses various natural materials to represent the pollinator cycle, and award-winning poet John Burnside has written extensively on bees.

New creative work in the form of poetry, prose, art and critical writing were produced and remain part of an ongoing archive. In addition, the living environment remains positively impacted by the activities of the project. Grounds staff at YSJU have seen a significant increase in biodiversity over the last couple of years as a result of the project - birds, hedgehogs, bats and all manner of insects – the highlight being the appearance of tawny mining bees (*Andrena fluva*) in one corner of the site.

#### Terra Two: An Ark for Off-world Survival

Terra Two is creating an archive of critical and creative writing examining the possibility of off-world survival. This project, led by King, draws on the ethos of the YCW and engages with staff research into science-fiction and speculative fiction (Curtis, King, Edgar, Smith). It "commissions" original critical and creative work from YSJU staff and students and the public.

The project engages all participants in the philosophical questions of sustainability via science and speculative fiction. Submissions are housed on a web-based magazine that also functions as an archive and serves as an ongoing dialogue between disciplines. This project has extended the research environment by visiting the Design Museum's Moving to Mars exhibit to respond to questions of sustainability off-world, and through events including a YLF event with a keynote by novelist Temi Oh and a symposium (2017). This latter event included a presentation by novelist Tade Thompson and Dr Caroline Edwards.

As well as an online, living archive, the Terra Two print anthology was published by Valley Press and launched as part of the YCW partnership with the YLF in March 2019, disseminating research and creative practice. The project team have conducted public workshops with a range of different groups (2017 onwards) including the York Festival of Ideas. These interactive workshops elicit contributions to the publications; this has included religious organisations and scientists from other HEIs. The work of the project feeds back into the curriculum through our Science Fiction for Survival module; a practice-led PhD student enrolled as a result of this project, and King received invitations as project leader to speak at other institutions. Curtis and King have subsequently been commissioned to write a volume on speculative fiction for the Routledge Critical Idiom series due for publication in 2022.

#### Music, Memory and Memoir

The Music, Memory and Memoir project evolved from staff expertise in popular music and forms of non-fiction (Edgar, Mann, Pleasance). The investigation into the emergent genre of music memoirs led to a collected edition for Bloomsbury (2019) which has been cited internationally as the first in the field, including by *Writing Her Stories* (Spain and Finland). Music, Memory and Memoir developed into a conference, *You're Twisting My Memory, Man* (2018), which was devised to appeal to a public and academic audience to ensure broad impact and involvement from the outset. Following the YCW's ethos of 360-degree impact, public participants in the conference were subsequently published in the collected edition. The methodology employed in working with this new material was disseminated at conferences at Brighton (*Storying the Self*, 2017) and Reading (Subculture Network, 2018) and via an article (*Journal of Writing in Creative Practice*, 2019). Edgar appeared on Turkish network television discussing memoir. Postgraduate research is an integral part of the project, with students interviewing keynotes and presenting; one of these has now started a PhD with us (and has been successful in having a chapter accepted for the *Writing Herstories* book) and another is in the process of applying. Ongoing projects include *Venue Stories*, a collected edition developed in response to the effect of COVID-19 on small music venues at a national level, and *York Music Stories*, a collaboration with local representatives of the Music Venue Trust in a publication to support local venues during the current crisis, and a national collaboration on *Handbook: Writing About Music*.

#### New Writing North/Northern Fiction Alliance

The YCW also has a strong relationship with New Writing North, who provide funding and opportunities for emerging northern writers. We have also worked in collaboration with the Northern Fiction Alliance, hosting roadshows and events in 2018 and 2019, and regularly run events inviting northern presses and writers to showcase their work. Promotion of northern writing has been strong, not only with the unique library of texts, but also through several symposia in collaboration with New Writing North and the Northern Fiction Alliance, all contributing to the cultural economy of the North and raising awareness both nationally and internationally of important North of England writing. The YCW, in collaboration with New Writing North, has created an archive of contemporary Northern Independent Press publications, thought to be the first and only one of its kind, housed within the university library at YSJU, further enhancing a research environment engaged with regional writing.

#### The Fabric Project

The Fabric Project encompasses various creative research activities that examine our relationship to clothes consumption and manufacture and women's needlecraft. For example, *The Here and There Quilt* draws on interviews with garment consumers in the UK and garment workers from across the globe to bring their stories together in one material body (the quilt) and

highlight interconnections. The Unfinished Projects Project brings together oral history interviews and unfinished needlecraft projects in an exhibition to explore women's investment in their needlework activity. The Scrap Bag: Stitching Women and their Needlework into History explores the impact of needlecraft on women's lives from the start of the twentieth century to the present and will result in a full-length book (an Arts Council funding application from Pleasance, the project leader, is pending). The project uses interviewing as one of the main modes of research and involves students in the work through the Students as Researchers fund, as well as archival work at the Singer Sewing Archive and the Knitting Reference Library at the Winchester School of Art, and public textile workshops. The Unfinished Projects Project involved collaboration with cultural studies academics from Leeds Beckett University and Liverpool John Moores University. The oral history recordings from the project will be archived at the Knitting Reference Library and The Here and There Quilt and The Unfinished Projects Project are exhibitions of "storied" textile objects. Pleasance is now working on a full-length creative non-fiction book for a general readership, *The Scrap Bag: Stitching Women and their Needlework into History* (2023).

#### Conference organisation

Staff have continued to contribute to collaborative activities and the wider research base in Literature and Creative Writing through developing, organising and running a number of local and international conferences and symposia in 2014–20.

Curtis's Pollination Project conference (2016) was a major part of the overall project and contributed to the project's online archive. Evans and Kramer organised the Cityscapes: Media Textualities and Urban Visions conference (2016), focusing on exploring representations of the city and urban spaces in literature and other media. This event led directly to the edited collection *Time, the City, and the Literary Imagination* (Palgrave, 2020), which features the work of several academics in attendance at the conference. Lawson Welsh hosted the Global Studies Conference (2014), the Northern Postcolonial Network biennial symposium, Culinary Cultures: Food and the Postcolonial (2017), and the Culinary Cultures: Continuing the Conversation conference (2018), all of which contributed to the publication of her monograph *Food, Text, Culture in the Anglophone Caribbean* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2019). King's directing of the Speculative Futures Conference (2017) helped the development of the Terra Two project and contributed to her current book contract (in collaboration with Curtis) on a speculative fiction title for the Routledge Critical Idiom Series (due 2022). The Music, Memory and Memoir conference (2018) laid the groundwork for their subsequent edited collection (Bloomsbury, 2019). The Uplandish: New Perspectives on Northern England's "Wild" Places conference (2017, Booth, Beaumont and Stock) helped to develop several articles for publication (Beaumont). The Satire: Deaths, Births, Legacies conference (2018) helped to launch the York Research Unit for the Study of Satire and the *Smith & Waugh Talk About Satire* regular podcast.