

Institution: University of Oxford

Unit of assessment: 25 Area Studies

1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy

The mission of Oxford Area Studies is to foster ***the highest quality interdisciplinary research on the politics, economies and cultures of non-Western societies characterised by literate traditions from antiquity to the present.*** These include South, Inner and East Asia (societies historically engaged with the literary and cultural traditions of China, Japan, and the diverse languages and societies of Inner and South Asia), and the Middle East (societies historically engaged with Arab, Turkish, Hebrew or Persian literary and cultural traditions). Our remit corresponds to broadly shared self-perceptions of cultural continuity within the regions we teach and research. These regions have long histories of complex interaction with each other, a fact that Oxford Area Studies foregrounds through its unique institutional architecture.

Oxford Area Studies supports individual excellence in research with reference to four interlinked dimensions: (1) a **historical** dimension extending through the full scope of the self-defined continuities of Middle Eastern and Asian societies; (2) a **geographical** dimension covering the changing geopolitical connections of the Middle East and Asia with each other and with contiguous regions through history; (3) an **interdisciplinary** dimension encompassing a comprehensive range of methodological approaches to research in the social sciences and humanities; and (4) a **linguistic** dimension enabling research in the fullest possible range of languages required for a given research project. By embedding individual research in these four research dimensions, Oxford Area Studies maximises the potential for collaborative research both within Area Studies and within Humanities and Social Science disciplines.

The Structure of Area Studies

Area Studies spans two divisions, Humanities and Social Sciences, within the University. In the Humanities Division, staff are based in the **Faculty of Oriental Studies (OS)** and Museums (hereafter **Gardens, Libraries and Museums—GLAM**). Most GLAM staff have appointments in the Ashmolean Museum (one is based in the History of Science Museum), and some have contracts split between OS and a Museum. In the Social Sciences Division, staff are based in the **Oxford School of Global and Area Studies (OSGA)**. We refer to both OS and OSGA as departments in this statement. This cross-divisional structure is an advantage as it enables colleagues to be rooted in different disciplinary cultures, while maintaining an overarching unity of research, with rich potential for collaboration across regional boundaries.

The size of the UoA is 88.05 FTE category A staff: 51 in OS, 19.05 in OSGA, 11 in Colleges (six attached to OS and five to OSGA), five in GLAM, and two from the departments for Politics and International Relations and Development Studies. In comparison to REF2014, this number represents an increase of 31 members of staff specialising in East, Inner and South Asia and the Middle East. The UoA also intersects with staff in both departments who are not part of the Area Studies REF submission. The 27 OSGA staff who specialise in Latin America, Africa and Russia/Eastern Europe are submitted through the History UoA and a variety of Social Science UoAs. In OS, 4.33 members of staff have expertise in ancient Near Eastern language and culture, including Egyptologists, and are submitted via the Classics UoA, and three members of staff have disciplinary expertise that fit best with the expertise of the Linguistics UoA.

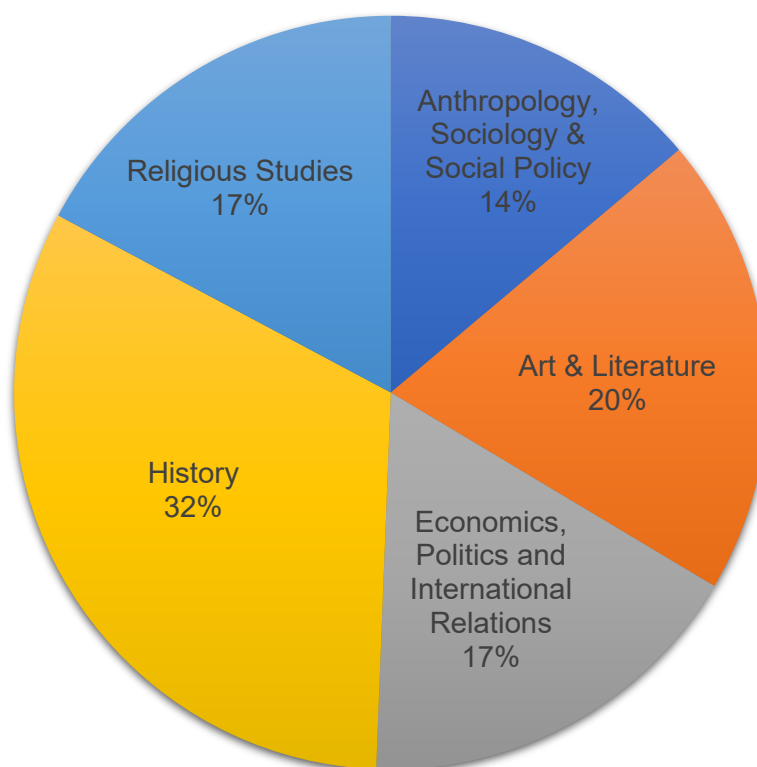
In terms of regional specialism, staff in the Area Studies UoA are distributed geographically as follows:

- East, Inner and South Asia (45.7 FTE)
- Middle East (42 FTE)

They cover both the pre-modern (41 FTE) and modern (47.05 FTE) periods, and they approach analysis from a broad range of disciplinary perspectives in the humanities and social sciences (see Figure 1):

- History (28.3 FTE)
- Art and Literature (17.35 FTE)
- Religious Studies (15.2 FTE)
- Economics, Politics and International Relations (15 FTE)
- Anthropology, Sociology and Social Policy (12.2 FTE)

Figure 1: Disciplinary Breakdown of the UoA (%)

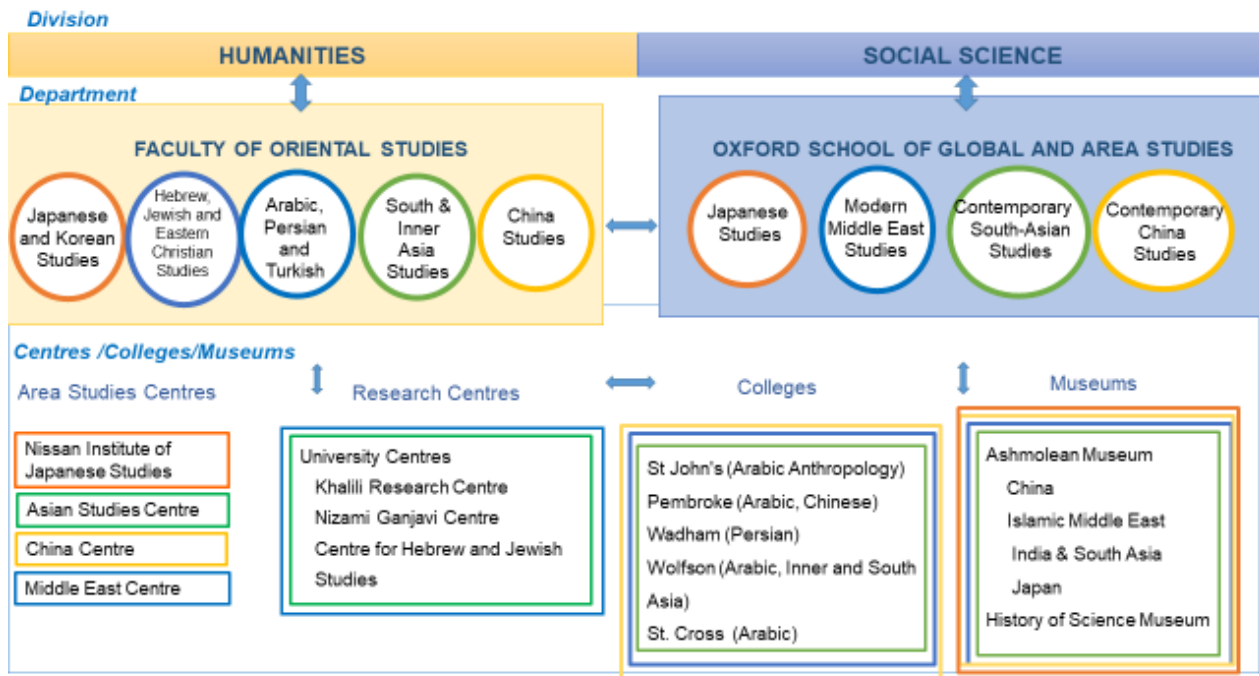


One quarter of the staff employed by OSGA in the UoA hold joint appointments with Social Science departments: Kariya with Sociology, Konishi with History, Mathur with Anthropology, and Sullivan de Estrada and Thornton with Politics and International Relations.

We connect the diverse research interests of staff and students in this UoA through combined programmes and research centres that cover each region. Staff from both departments teach on programmes in Chinese Studies, Japanese Studies, Contemporary South Asian Studies, and Middle Eastern Studies. GLAM staff engage more directly with the public than department-based staff by virtue of their curatorial briefs, which include education at primary, secondary, and adult levels, as well as for students of the University and researchers. Several of the GLAM staff have joint museum-OS contracts, which put them in the rota for teaching and departmental administration. Our staff and research students also take the leading role in research centres linking expertise in Asian and Middle Eastern Studies across the entire University. They include Area Studies centres and University research centres based in different Colleges and University sites (all hereafter referred to as centres - see Figure 2). These centres provide platforms for engagement between researchers specialising in Asian and Middle Eastern studies across

disciplines, periods of history and countries, and we return to their activities in more detail in later sections. Furthermore, several Colleges have significant concentrations of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies staff, library holdings, and resources, which enable them to organise high-level academic events. Our staff and students play a leading key role in their activities.

Figure 2: Description of the UoA



Our Strategic Aims for Research and Impact

Our overall aim is to foster the highest standards of research excellence in interdisciplinary Area Studies. Key elements of the research strategy are:

- supporting a flexible research environment that sustains **individual research excellence**;
- promoting **interdisciplinary and collaborative research** projects within and across areas of regional expertise;
- attracting and supporting **early career researchers**;
- investing in **language-based research**.

Since REF 2014, we have delivered on this strategy by:

- creating **new one and two-year Master's courses** across both OS and OSGA in Chinese Studies, Japanese Studies, Modern South Asian Studies, and Modern Middle East Studies, which integrate staff and research students from OS and OSGA through collaborative and interdisciplinary research programmes;
- creating a **new doctoral programme in OSGA**, which complements the existing doctoral programme in OS; doctoral students from both departments can now access combined training in vernacular languages and methodological courses covering the ethical and professional frameworks in all relevant disciplines;
- establishing **thematic research clusters** within OS and OSGA, which promote collaborative, comparative and interdisciplinary Area Studies research, and seek to create synergies between Area Studies researchers within the University and beyond; in

OSGA these clusters cover global themes – such as health, gender, nationalism – whereas in OS they engender cross-regional collaboration along disciplinary lines – Anthropology, Art, History, Language, Politics, etc;

- putting in place more dynamic systems for the effective early identification and targeting of funding opportunities for researchers, which has **delivered GBP12.9 million** in external funding;
- maintaining a dynamic community of early career researchers (ECRs); the **UoA attracted 49 ECRs** from August 2016, substantially augmenting its size;
- **strengthening capacity in language expertise** by creating posts and resources in existing and new fields, including:
 - a long-term commitment to Hindu religion and Sanskrit language: a new appointment in Sanskrit (Lowe), and extra funding for the Spalding Professorship of Eastern Religions and Ethics (Acharya);
 - permanent endowment of the Laudian Professor of Arabic (renamed the Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain Laudian Chair), the oldest Arabic literature position in Europe;
 - substantial investment in Arabic instructorships, which will prepare our graduate and postdoctoral students to work with archival sources by adding capacity in Arabic colloquials (Levantine and Egyptian), and palaeography;
 - new bridging posts to develop research linkages between modern and pre-modern Arabic, Persian and Turkish cultures: the Bahari Associate Professor of Sasanian Studies (Vevaina), which provides research specialisation in early Islamic Persianate Culture, and a new post in Ottoman History (Niyazioğlu);
 - new research opportunities for scholars working on the South Caucasus, a region previously neglected within the University and the United Kingdom more generally. Staff from OSGA and OS have worked together to launch new programmes in Georgian Studies and the Nizami Ganjavi Programme for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Azerbaijan, which provide new opportunities for Georgian and Azeri language learning.

Our impact strategy dovetails with these research aims by promoting and embedding research combining local cultural engagement with interdisciplinarity. The impact case studies submitted to REF2021 provide clear instances of this synthesis of regional expertise and multi-disciplinary analysis, for example:

- Kariya's research on the sociology of education in Japan and its influence on public debate surrounding higher education in that country;
- Leoni's curating of a museum exhibition on Islamic occult practices (divination, amulets and other forms of material culture) that spurred public debate on Islamic culture and spirituality, drawing in young adults, Black and Minority Ethnic groups, local, national and international visitors.

Other notable examples include:

- research on domestic violence, which has been used in the training of counsellors who operate a help-line for Tibetan women who are victims of abuse (Rajan).

And, both departments generate impactful work by staff whose interdisciplinarity means that their outputs are submitted with other UoAs, for example:

- research into issues of transitional justice in Latin America by Payne (Sociology UoA) and Lessa (postdoctoral fellow) was used in criminal prosecutions against the South American military dictatorships of the 1970s by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and Rome's First Assize Appeals Court. The Operation Condor (Lessa) project made the final shortlist of the Vice Chancellor's Innovation Awards in 2020.

Since REF2014, we have sought to achieve this impact strategy through:

- contracts that allow staff to work up to 30 days p.a. as consultants in the business and policy spheres;
- department and University-based research-support officers;
- the appointment of communications officers and consultants to provide regular dissemination of impact stories through departmental websites and other social media;
- the appointment of research impact facilitators to assist the UoA to develop impact activity;
- participation in workshops that facilitate knowledge exchange between researchers and practitioners from government agencies and NGOs. Examples include:
 - the Hammamet Conference Series, organised by the Middle East Centre at St. Antony's College (Willis), which provides a platform for dialogue between academics, journalists and diplomats specialising in relations between the UK and North Africa;
 - the Sudanese Programme, co-founded by the Middle East Centre, which provides one of the few neutral meeting grounds for politicians, NGO workers and academics from both North and South Sudan;
- the creation of thematic research clusters involving policy makers, professionals, businesses and civil society in their work – e.g. the research network *Climate crisis thinking in the Humanities and Social Sciences* (Mathur), which provides a forum for interdisciplinary collaboration with climate scientists and external participants;
- visiting fellowships for practitioners from policy and business: e.g. the creation of the Rangoonwala Visiting Fellowship for Pakistani journalists, members of the judiciary, policy makers and politicians;
- University support for Knowledge Exchange Champions and a digital humanities network; the Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities (TORCH), which supports networking, external partnerships and public dissemination; and University support for outreach initiatives like Public Engagement with Research, and the Policy Engagement and Business and Partnerships networks:
 - For example, research documenting the experiences of Nepalese pupils affected by the 2015 earthquake was funded by the Public Engagement with Research Seed Fund (Pradhan).

The impactful success of this research has been recognised by prestigious awards:
International Booker Prize (Booth, 2019)
Auckland University Research Excellence Award for impact (Whittaker, 2017)

Our Future Research Objectives and Impact Plans

Over the next five years we will sustain our main research goals in a number of ways:

- we will commit to **individual research excellence** by:
 - maintaining and enhancing research support for staff seeking external research funding;
 - committing to an annual research allowance for each member of staff for use on conference attendance and fieldwork trips;
 - departmental support for researchers accessing internal University funding for both large and small research projects (e.g. the University's Strategic Research Fund);
 - attracting funding for new posts from diverse sources both within the UK and internationally;

- using trust funds to augment research funding: there are 47 designated for a variety of purposes, including travel and research grants, and support for research positions.
- we will promote **interdisciplinary and collaborative research** by:
 - introducing a new master's degree in Global and Area Studies in 2021, which will strengthen cross-regional and interdisciplinary ties in Area Studies, and will consolidate the disciplinary identity of Area Studies within the University;
 - creating shared Middle Eastern Studies posts with other departments (Sociology, Geography, Politics), which will provide research and integrated courses in computational sociology, urbanism and human rights;
 - creating a new Southeast Asian Studies Centre within OSGA, which will have posts focusing on contemporary issues facing the ASEAN countries, such as digital economy, environmental sustainability and public sector reform;
 - opening the new Stephen A. Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities, which will support interdisciplinary research by enabling new activity at the interface between traditional disciplines.
- we will facilitate the progression of **early career researchers** by:
 - embedding and expanding the new doctoral programme in Area Studies, which was introduced in 2017;
 - continuing to support and host large numbers of postdoctoral fellows (postdocs);
 - improving the working environment for postdocs, including new office space in a proposed building for the future Southeast Asian Studies Centre, which all OSGA postdocs will be able to access (one floor for postdocs with 40 desks and social space);
 - creating a separate working group forum for contract researchers (postdocs and non-permanent staff) to voice their opinions as a group, which will feed into departmental and divisional structures (e.g. the Social Science Research Strategy committee);
 - supporting applications for external and internal funding, such as applications to the John Fell OUP Research Fund, which is an important source of seed funding for young researchers;
 - maintaining a strong track-record for the promotion of early career researchers to positions within Oxford and other HEIs.
- we will invest in language-based research and enrich the regional expertise of the UoA by:
 - creating a new post in Tamil language and culture;
 - introducing a post in classical and Qur'anic Arabic, complementing the existing teaching provision in modern and spoken Arabic;
 - offering language training in Azeri through the newly established Nizami Ganjavi Centre.

Moving forward, we seek to **embed the impact of the UoA's research** by

- prioritising research impact in staff appointments and internal promotions, such as the University's Recognition of Distinction exercise;
- employing a research impact facilitator beyond the REF deadline to:
 - support researchers to develop new impact activities, helping them to shape their engagement with external partners and audiences and maximise the impact of their research;
 - ensure that researchers consider how best to evaluate and measure their impact on an ongoing basis;
 - feed into the development of impact activities for UKRI Research Councils and other research funding proposals requiring an impact component;
 - work closely with existing research facilitation teams within both departments and divisions and the new University-wide Strategic Research Development Team;

- help departments to shape and implement their research impact and engagement strategies;
- enhancing public engagement through further investment in media communications, and the University's Public Engagement with Research initiative;
- developing tools for measuring public engagement, which will feed into media coverage of the UoA's research activity;
- drawing on the University's digital strategy to share research on rare manuscripts and artwork;
- working closely with the Oxford Policy Engagement Network in areas where our research has policy implications;
- encouraging staff to apply for the Knowledge Exchange opportunities funded by the UK Higher Education Innovation Fund;
- accessing the resources available in the Ashmolean and History of Science Museums by GLAM staff, and the new Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities for impact-relevant events in Area Studies.

Our commitment to an open research environment and research integrity

The UoA is committed to the University's Open Scholarship policy. All outputs submitted in REF2021 are available through the Oxford Research Archive. Our research officers monitor the University's Act on Acceptance reports, and we encourage staff to make data and other research material available through Researchfish and other platforms.

UoA staff are actively involved in data-sharing and digitalisation. Examples of digital databases include the Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative, the Josephus Project, the Online Corpus of the Inscriptions of Ancient North Arabia, and the Semantics of Ancient Hebrew Database, a collaboration between the universities of Amsterdam, Bonn, Cambridge, Edinburgh, Florence, Oxford, Leiden, and Rome.

We expect high standards of research integrity, and require staff to adhere to ethical, legal and professional frameworks that operate University-wide. Since REF2014, the University has become a signatory of the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA), as part of a movement towards the responsible use of research metrics. Every piece of research involving human participants and personal data is subject to review by the Central University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC).

Over 300 CUREC applications have been submitted by both students and staff conducting research on Asia and the Middle East during the REF period.

2. People

Our staffing strategy and commitment to staff development

Our goal of achieving individual research excellence is an essential component of delivering on the University's strategy of career development by attracting, recruiting and retaining the highest calibre staff. We also remain fully committed towards achieving a diverse staff profile, and to supporting staff in their personal and professional development.

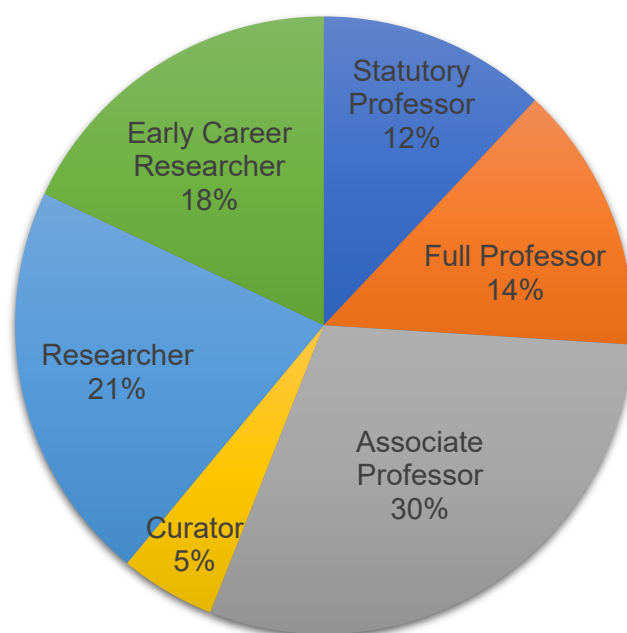
This strategy is central to staff recruitment:

- all posts are approved by the management committees of both departments in conjunction with their research priorities; notable new positions that augment existing disciplinary capacities include Erie (anthropology of law in China and Chinese studies broadly), and Niyazioğlu (Ottoman history);
- they are advertised nationally and internationally to maximise the pool of research excellence; distinguished appointments since REF2014 include Booth (Khalid bin Abdullah Al Saud Professor for the Study of the Contemporary Arab World, replacing Holes), and Olszowy-Schlanger (Director of the Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies and President of the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies);
- selection panels provide an appropriate balance of gender and diversity;
- we use standardised recruitment materials, reviewed annually by our Athena SWAN Self-Assessment Teams, and emphasise our family-friendly policies and commitment to gender equality.

As can be seen in Figure 3, almost one-third of REF eligible staff in the UoA are recruited to the unified academic grade of Associate Professor. In the first instance, this appointment is for a five-year probationary period. During this period, staff are:

- assigned a research mentor with whom they can discuss current and planned research;
- assigned a teaching mentor to familiarise them with our teaching procedures and ethos, and give constructive feedback;
- exempted from major administrative and examining roles;
- invited to both an interim and formal review of their research achievements.

Figure 3: Academic staff categories in the UoA (July 2020)



On their successful completion of their probationary period, research activity is supported through:

- sabbatical leave: staff are eligible after six terms for one term's sabbatical leave, which is assigned specifically for research work;
- teaching buy-out: staff are entitled to a buy-out from teaching when leading research projects, or to leave of absence as recipients of residential fellowships outside Oxford; examples are Booth (fellowships at New York University-Abu-Dhabi and at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton), Jacobs (recipient of a National Endowment for the Humanities award from the US);
- an annual research allowance; for OSGA staff, this was increased from GBP1200pa to GBP1700 pa over the REF period;
- the Returning Carers Fund, which supports the research of staff who need to take a break from their research work because of caring responsibilities;
- a designated Self-Assessment Team, which operates under the Athena Swan Charter to monitor the implementation of practices which ensure career development, flexible working, management of career breaks, and the department's organisation and culture.

Research excellence is central to progression and promotion through the University's Recognition of Distinction exercise, in which all heads of department in each division draw on external assessments to award the title of Professor. Of the staff appointed as Associate Professors in the UoA, 14% had achieved the title of Full Professor by Spring 2020 (see Figure 3); of this number, six staff members achieved the award in the REF period (Ambrust, Melchert, Murphy, Omri, Roesler, Salvesen). These posts are distinguished from 'Statutory Professors' or named chairs which come with appointment. The UoA includes 11 of over 200 such posts within the University.

As can be seen in Figure 3, early career researchers (ECRs) form 18% of the UoA. They are hired as departmental lecturers (e.g. Mittelstaedt, Bongianino), typically on twelve-month contracts, or on postdoctoral fellowships funded by UK and European institutions such as the Leverhulme Trust (e.g. Pradhan), the British Academy (e.g. Lord) and the European Commission's Marie Skłodowska Curie Fellowships (e.g. van Dijk). There are also many postdocs who started their independent research career before 1st August 2016; they are included in the 'researchers' category. This category includes staff employed by Colleges on fixed-term contracts (e.g. Matthiesen, Wordsworth).

In the same manner as new academic hires, we provide postdocs with mentors who have appropriate expertise and act as a source of information and an interface with the entire department. The University's Code of Practice for the Employment and Career Development of Research Staff, offers guidance to mentors. It also sets out guidelines for early career researchers, career development and researchers' responsibilities, and provides links to the Careers Services, the Oxford Learning Institute, the University and Colleges Union, and the University Club (a hub for social activities designed for all University staff, but particularly for researchers who lack a College affiliation).

Since REF2014, the research environment for postdocs in OSGA and OS has expanded significantly through:

- the introduction of clustered office space to foster networking;
- a new research seminar specifically for postdocs in OSGA, which is open to OS researchers;
- funding for conference attendance in OSGA (in OS, most ECRs and postdocs are funded by schemes that provide access to conference and research funding);
- extensive training opportunities within both departments;
- the creation of a support network for ECRs;

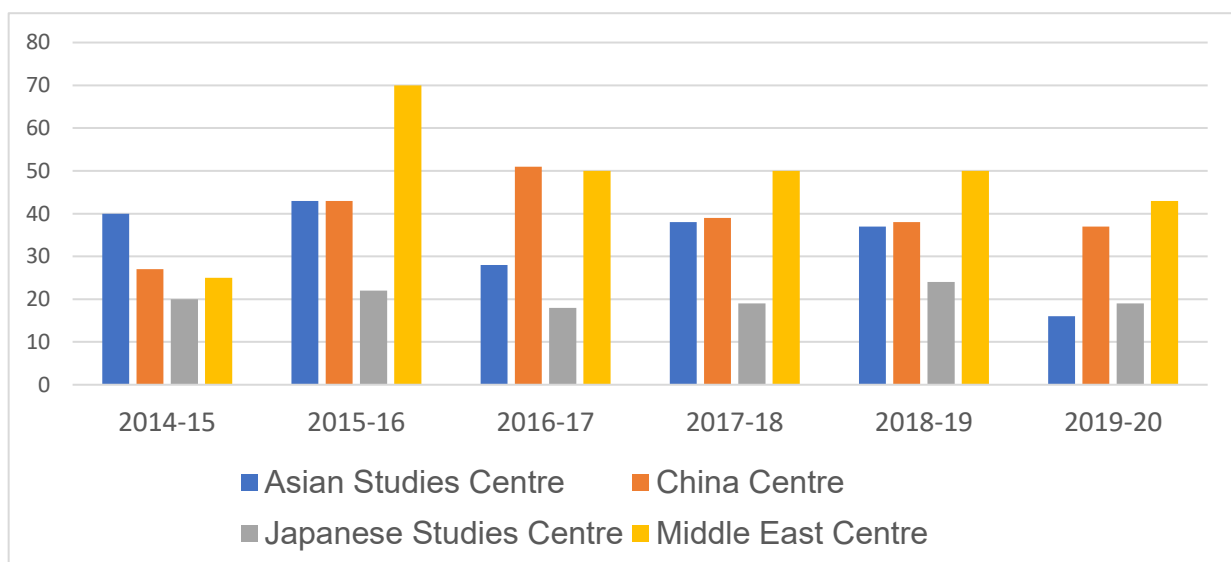
- the introduction of research clusters to facilitate collaborative research projects between postdocs and tenured staff.

College centres bring together postdocs from both departments, developing ties and providing access to shared office space and conference funding, thereby augmenting the resources of both departments. The centres organise events for postdoctoral scholars and new hires. For example, the Middle East Centre at St. Antony's College convenes once-a-term meetings for all Middle East-related postdocs.

St. Antony's College, which is home to many area-specific research centres, is a **key hub** in connecting early career researchers and new hires from OS and OSGA. It extends College membership to postdocs from both departments, incorporating them into communities of like-minded scholars and students. It also gives postdocs an opportunity to act as advisors to graduate students.

The scale of the activities provided by a selection of the Area Studies centres is summarised in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Number of Centre activities: outside speakers, conferences, film screenings, exhibitions, book launches



Of the four centres in Figure 4, three are based at St. Antony's College (the **Asian Studies Centre**, the **Nissan Institute of Japanese Studies**, and the **Middle Eastern Centre**), and the fourth is based at St. Hugh's College (the **China Centre**). These centres organise seminars, conferences and other activities (film screenings, exhibitions, book launches) on a weekly basis (approximately **850 events over the REF period**). They are an invaluable resource for young researchers to present their research, and to establish contacts with the leading authorities in their field. Over the last five years, the centres have been home to distinguished academics from universities in each region (e.g. Doshisha University, Tel Aviv University, Tsinghua University). The China Centre, for instance, holds a Mandarin Forum, a fortnightly seminar in Chinese with papers given by visiting scholars from China. The centres also organise conferences on a regular basis. Some highlights include:

- The Revival of Ideologies in Contemporary China* (China Centre, 2015);
- Transnational Histories of the Left in the Middle East* (Middle East Centre 2016);
- New Directions in Research on Myanmar* (Asian Studies Centre 2017);
- Understanding Institutional Change in Asia: A Comparative Perspective with Europe*, the third INCAS conference, which is an EU RISE-supported network aimed at fostering researcher exchange and mobility (Nissan Institute 2018);

- *Neither Near Nor Far: Encounters and Exchanges between Japan and the Middle East* (joint Nissan Institute/Middle East Centre event 2019);
- *Thinking Globalisation in the Middle East* (co-sponsored by the Middle East Centre and the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute 2019);
- *Is it Madness to Keep Negotiating with North Korea?* (China Centre 2019).

OSGA, OS and other University departments, such as the History Faculty, co-sponsor these events, as well as University bodies such as the Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities (TORCH).

The Centres also provide an opportunity for postdocs to organise their own conferences and seminars involving academics, policy practitioners and experts. Examples include:

- *Policy Reform in China's Health, Environment and Welfare* (China Centre, 2015);
- *Ecologies of Knowledge and Practice* (Nissan Institute, 2017);
- *Rethinking Nationalism, Sectarianism and Ethno-Religious Mobilisation in the Middle East* (Middle East Centre and Pembroke College, 2018).

This focus on ECRs and postdocs during REF2021 has contributed towards the vitality of UK Area Studies in a number of ways:

- **appointment to new academic positions during the REF cycle**, including to new positions in Oxford (e.g. Driessen, Lord, Wordsworth, Jabb and Screnock), and to other universities in the UK and overseas, e.g. Cambridge University (Jones, Duquette), Northumbria University (Hill), Durham University (McCarthy), Goldsmiths (Sadeghi-Boroujerdi), the University of Amiens, France (Benbabaali), Azim Premji University, Bangalore, India (Wielenga);
- **publication of high-quality research outputs**: the ECRs included in the UoA submission produced 10 single-authored book monographs. These publications were in leading University Press series, including four published by Cambridge University Press, and two published by Oxford University Press. In addition, several ECRs who went on to secure positions at other universities, produced top-quality monographs during their time at Oxford. We have included three of these books in our submission, all published by Cambridge University Press (Ghiabi, Hill, Sadeghi-Boroujerdi). This research also received distinguished prizes, e.g. Hunt's postdoctoral research was honoured with the 2016 *British Association of Chinese Studies Early Career Researcher Prize*;
- **contribution to teaching and supervision** within their own subject areas and on the joint programmes organised by OS and OSGA.

Our determination to enhance the impact of Area Studies research is an increasingly important factor in both recruitment and staff development. Impact achievements are a desirable criterion in the selection of candidates for posts, and the outreach achievements of staff feature in the University's Recognition of Distinction exercise. Both departments in the UoA facilitate the development of research impact through bids for external impact funding, and support secondment to public bodies. Our staff have been:

- the successful recipients of multiple **Knowledge Exchange Fellowships**, funded by the UK Higher Education Innovation Fund (e.g. Kiaer, Sullivan de Estrada);
- consultants to major museums:
 - Johns, for example, worked with the British Museum, the Museum of Islamic Art in Doha, Qatar, the Royal Palace of Palermo, and the Reiss Engelhorn Museum, Mannheim;
 - Leoni (Curator of Islamic Art in the Ashmolean Museum) has consulted for the Smithsonian Travelling Exhibition Service;

- Rajan's research on Tibetan women informed the Smithsonian Institution's Centre for Folklife and Cultural Heritage exhibition on Tibetan women in 2017.

Area Studies centres provide an important platform for our staff to raise the public outreach of Area Studies and to enhance their contacts with leaders from the policy world and business. Events involving representatives from government, business and the arts take place on a regular basis. During the REF period, Area Studies centres facilitated many impact activities, including:

- **regular hosting of ambassadors and diplomats** from the Middle East and Asia: Barbara Woodward UK Ambassador to China (China Centre, 2015); Moroccan and Tunisian embassy delegations (Middle East Centre, 2016); Alastair Morgan, British Ambassador to North Korea (China Centre, 2019);
- **talks by influential business and political leaders and cultural figures:** Kaiser Kuo, Chief Communications Officer for Baidu.com, one of China's most influential internet companies (China Centre, 2016); the Chinese film director Lu Chuan (China Centre, 2016); Hiroto Saikawa, President and CEO of Nissan (Nissan Institute, 2018); Stan Shih, Chairman of Acer, speaking on Taiwan's role as the manufacturing centre of the global Information and Communication Technology industry (China Centre, June 2018); Moncef Marzouki, President of the Republic of Tunisia, 2011-2014 (Middle East Centre, 2018); Sir John Chilcott speaking on the Chilcott Inquiry (Middle East Centre, 2019); Saeb Erekat, Secretary General of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (Middle East Centre, 2019); Rebecca Fanin, Founder of Silicon Dragon Ventures, a media and events platform (China Centre, 2019);
- **exhibitions and performances by leading artists:** e.g. master Noh mask carver and maker, Hideta Kitazawa, one of Japan's finest artists, gave demonstrations complemented by a photographic exhibition of the detailed process of Noh mask making (Nissan Institute, 2017);
- **regular screenings of films** in conjunction with lectures by filmmakers and academics: e.g. films from the BBC Arab Film Festival (Middle East Centre, 2016); Tibetan film screening (China Centre, 2019).

The Ashmolean Museum plays a role analogous to the Area Studies Centres in the fields of material culture and the art of Asia and the Middle East. In addition to fulfilling an educational brief to teach primary, secondary and adult members of the public, the Ashmolean features regular academic lecture series serving the Oxford community. Some highlights include:

- the annual Barlow Lecture on East Asian ceramics;
- the annual May Beattie Lecture on the history of carpets in the Islamic world, in conjunction with the May Beattie Visiting Fellowship in Carpet Studies;
- *The Silent Traveller: Chiang Yee in Britain, 1933-55*, an international symposium featuring experts, authors and academics specialising in the work of Chinese writer and painter Chiang Yee (2019)
- *Cai Guo-Qiang: Gunpowder Art Symposium*, an international symposium featuring experts on the modern Chinese artist Cai Guo-Qiang (2019)

Integrating doctoral students into the UoA's research environment

Since REF 2014, a key priority of Area Studies has been to strengthen research energies generated within our doctoral community. We have accomplished this starting in 2017 by introducing a three-year programme of doctoral study in OSGA for students undertaking research into a specific country or region, or more than one country or region in a comparative context. The OSGA doctoral programme complements a longstanding counterpart in OS. Both programmes seek to sustain our commitment to interdisciplinary study.

Over the REF period, we have graduated 185.73 doctoral students in the UoA, an increase of one-third on REF2014. This includes students supervised in Oriental Studies and in a wide range of other departments: Archaeology, Anthropology, Classics, Geography, History,

International Development, Law, Linguistics, Politics and International Relations, Sociology and Philosophy. This demonstrates the large footprint of Area Studies across the breadth of the Humanities and Social Sciences Divisions. Moreover, the capacity for supervision has increased with the initiation of the OSGA doctoral programme. Over 30 students have been recruited for OSGA doctorates since 2017; they will begin graduating in the next REF cycle.

Doctoral students are well supported by a variety of funding sources. In addition to support from students' own national funding institutions (such as the governments of the United Arab Emirates and Norway for Middle East studies students in OS), many students secure external or internal scholarships. The most prominent external sources of scholarship funding are the Arts and Humanities Research Council, and ESRC Doctoral Training Partnership, while many students also receive internal funding from the Clarendon Fund, the Rhodes Trust, the Oxford Islamic Centre, and the Ertegun Scholarship Programme.

In addition to these longstanding institutional sources of funding, new and augmented funding for postdoctoral students is actively sought from donors and alumni. Some examples of new sources of student support initiated over the course of the REF period are as follows:

- Aso Group Scholarships, introduced in 2014 for students in any subject whose first language is Japanese;
- Daiwa Scholarships in Japanese Studies, introduced in 2015 for UK citizens to study in either the UK or in Japan;
- John P. Clay Graduate Scholarship in Manuscript and Text Cultures: Sanskrit, introduced in 2018;
- Pachachi Scholarship, a longstanding award that was augmented by a GBP500,000 bequest in 2019 for doctoral students in Middle East studies.

Area Studies admit doctoral students with a pre-commitment by a member of staff to act as their supervisor. On arrival, both departments provide induction weeks, and devise a programme of training in consultation with their supervisors. This may involve dedicated doctoral research and methodology seminars, specific lectures, and language tutorials. Training that is flexible and targeted is open to students across departments:

- research methodology seminars (both qualitative and quantitative) are convened by OSGA, and are also available to OS students;
- language tuition is provided by OS, which is open to OSGA students;
- training modules are offered by the Social Sciences Division in topics such as research integrity, research methods, and writing and communication;
- programmes of training delivered by the Humanities Division's Researcher Development team, which introduce doctoral researchers to issues such as research collaboration, time management (e.g. juggling family life), and safe fieldwork;
- courses, also provided by the Humanities Division's Researcher Development team, which cover career development, digital skills, business and entrepreneurship, heritage sector knowledge exchange, preparation for academic practice, and working with the creative industries.

Research students also benefit from greater investment by the University in formal training of doctoral supervisors. The Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) offers training courses specifically in doctoral supervision, as well as a broad course in Developing Teaching and Learning (to be replaced in 2021 by the Advanced Teaching and Learning programme), and a one-year Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (PGCert). CTL also provides a range of other training modules on relevant topics such as implicit bias, admissions, and harassment.

We seek to maximise the contribution of doctoral students through:

- institutional representation: e.g. in OSGA the interests of doctoral students are represented through a designated Tutor for DPhil students;
- giving opportunities for students to present their research at centre and departmental research seminars, e.g. the Postgraduate Research Showcase, which is organised by the Asian Studies Centre on a termly basis;
- funding conferences and other dissemination events.

In Humanities, funding provided by Ertegun House supports an increasing stream of doctoral students, and offers dedicated graduate workspace and programmes of events that enhance the graduate experience. Beyond the current REF cycle, the new Schwarzman Centre will also enhance and expand graduate training and work facilities.

Doctoral students are required to pass through two assessment thresholds: first Transfer of Status (ToS) within the first four terms after matriculation, then Confirmation of Status (CoS) within the first nine terms. The ToS and the CoS are not formal examinations, but each threshold is subject to a pass/fail standard, and students cannot proceed with their research until they have passed each stage. They are feedback exercises designed to give students a wider perspective on their research. ToS ensures that students have viable topics in terms of scope and disciplinary standards, robust methodological training, and sufficient linguistic skills before they embark on extended field or archival research. The CoS is an assessment of two draft chapters of the dissertation in order to ensure that the work meets the high standard of doctoral research and scholarly presentation prior to completion of the full dissertation.

The structure of doctoral research achieves a balance between **rigorous assessment** and **expert input**, and **timely completion** of the students' dissertations. In the REF period up to October 2020, well over 90% of doctoral students enrolled in both departments conducted the ToS and CoS assessments within at most three months of the specified completion dates.

Doctoral students are provided with teaching and training opportunities in both departments:

- the *Preparation for Learning and Teaching at Oxford* course is open to all graduate students;
- graduate students are also advised to take advantage of programmes offered by the Centre for Teaching and Learning, which offers courses on *Developing Teaching and Learning* given over the course of a full term as well as a *Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*;
- since 2015, OS has featured a *Graduate Teaching Scheme* that offers substantial teaching opportunities to doctoral students in the department. In this scheme, supervisors work closely with their doctoral students, devising their own syllabi from which they deliver up to four hours of lectures within existing undergraduate course modules.

This training has contributed to the field of Area Studies in a variety of important ways:

- Our students have been the recipients of distinguished prizes: e.g. Jones, winner of the 2017 Khyentse Foundation Award for Outstanding PhD Dissertation in Buddhist Studies;
- Their theses have been published by top University presses: e.g. five PhD theses were published by Cambridge University Press during the REF period;
- The majority of our doctoral students go on to secure academic positions:

Of the 125 doctorates that were awarded up to October 2019
 21.6% secured **tenure-track jobs**
 7.2% were employed in non-tenure teaching jobs
 24% were awarded **high-quality postdoctoral fellowships**

Furthermore, these data understate the high success of graduates in securing permanent academic jobs. This is because relatively few new PhDs move directly into tenure-track positions. The percentage of doctoral students who hold tenure-track positions rises from the aggregate figure of 21.6% to 41% for those who finished in 2014 and 2015.

- Many of our former doctoral students also go on to deploy their Areas Studies expertise outside academia. 16% pursued careers in foreign ministries and other government posts - e.g. Muneera Al Khalifa (2016), Bahrain Foreign Ministry; Michael Bonner (2014), Ontario government; in the media, e.g. Emilie Francois (2017), filmmaker; in risk consultancy companies, e.g. Naysan Rafati (2014), Iran analyst Crisis Group; human rights and international law organisations; museums and auction houses, e.g. Thomas Wide (2014), The Smithsonian Museum.

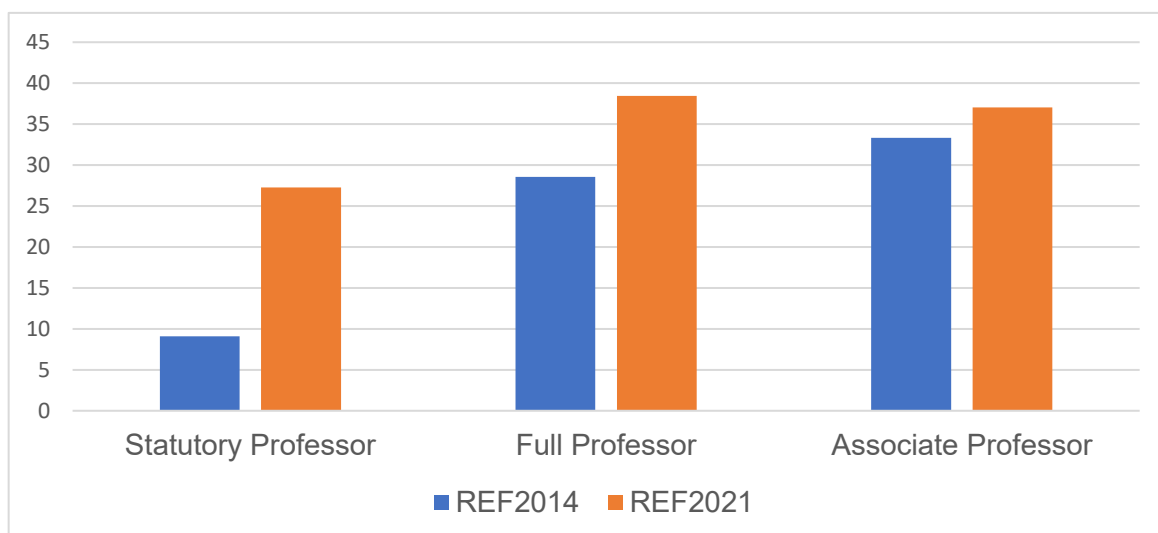
Equality, diversity and inclusion

The commitment to equality, diversity and inclusivity is central in our approach to the recruitment, development and retention of staff.

Both departments in the UoA have made a determined and successful effort to improve the female-to-male staff ratio during the REF period:

- the percentage of women in tenured positions has increased across all categories since REF2014 (see Figure 5);
- equal numbers of men and women achieved the title of Professor** in the Recognition of Distinction exercise;
- the number of female Statutory Professors increased from one to three over the REF period (Bray, Booth, Harrison).

Figure 5: Percentage of Tenured Positions held by Women



We aim to provide a research environment with a diverse cultural mix of staff:

- we prioritise the recruitment of tenured staff (including the most senior positions) from universities across Asia and the Middle East. Examples during the current REF period include: Yadgar (Stanley Lewis Professor in Israel Studies), appointed in 2017 from the Bar-Ilan University, Tel Aviv; Niyazioğlu (Associate Professor in Ottoman History) who joined Oxford in 2017 from Koç University, Istanbul; and, Acharya, who took up the Statutory Spalding Professorship in Eastern Religions and Ethics in 2016, following posts at Kyoto University, and the Nepal Sanskrit University;

- we also provide opportunities to ECRs and postdocs from the regions we cover (this is described in more detail in the next section);
- over one-fifth of academics in the UoA are originally from the regions that we study.

Our institutional arrangements have been designed to **maintain and improve all levels of inclusivity**:

- The University of Oxford is a founding member of the Athena SWAN Charter, which recognises good practice in promoting gender equality in higher education. OSGA are applying for the Athena SWAN Bronze award; they have a specially assigned Self-Assessment team, and the Athena SWAN lead is part of the department's senior leadership;
- We uphold the University's commitment to promoting equality in the workplace, and strive to promote a working and studying environment that fosters awareness of discrimination on grounds of sexuality, race, gender and disability. Our staff development programmes recognise the importance of communicating an inclusive philosophy, and we provide induction information tailored for specific staff groups, including clear signposting about HR policies/procedures on equality and diversity, flexible working and other family-friendly policies. Staff have reported that they value our induction information;
- Both departments are supportive of staff with caring responsibilities:

The OSGA initiative to recognise carers during the COVID-19 crisis was adopted by other departments across the University

- Support was provided for staff affected by the issues of racial inequality raised in 2020 by the death of George Floyd, and academics within Area Studies had an important voice in the University-wide discussions and consultations – e.g. Mathur contributed to the Social Science Division event *Stolen Works, Stolen Lives: Racial Erasure, Exclusion and Dispossession in Academic Publishing* (September 2020);
- OS initiated a comprehensive review of its equality and diversity policy in July 2020, and of its departmental practices in many areas. In terms of staffing, it proposed equality and diversity training as part of staff induction, and the introduction of similar training for existing staff;
- We enthusiastically endorse recent University-wide initiatives such as the *Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority Postgraduate Training Studentships in the Humanities*.

We prioritised issues of equality and diversity throughout the REF process:

- On all selection panels, we maintained a fair gender balance among the assessors whose grades formed the basis for selection. Our external panel of reviewers had equal representation of men and women, and the internal panel that approved the final submission included men and women from both departments;
- All staff involved in REF decision-making are required to undergo equality, diversity and inclusivity training. The course focuses on the duties required of all staff under the Equality Act.

3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

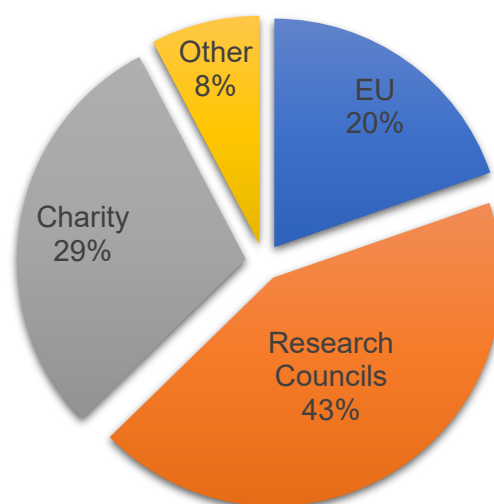
Research funding and strategies for generating research income

Our strategy is to broaden and expand the resources for research in Area Studies. This focuses primarily on national and international funding bodies such as the British Academy and, should this remain possible, the European Research Council.

For the REF period, external research income amounted to GBP12.9 million. This represents an increase of GBP1 million on REF2014.

An additional balance of GBP5,024,129 in financial year 2015/2016 is reported in the Research Income data submitted, due to a deferred capital grant.

Figure 6: External Funding during the REF2021 Cycle



Note: 'charity' includes EU, non-EU and UK charities; 'other' includes EU, non-UK and UK industry, plus UK Public Sector and other sources

As these data show, we continue to secure most of our funding through UK Research Councils and EU agencies. Bodies like the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), the British Academy (BA), and the European Research Council (ERC) were the main source of funding. Notable examples include:

- *Quranic Commentary: An Integrative Paradigm* (Sinai, GBP1,582,386, ERC);
- *The History of the Jewish Book in the Islamicate World* (Olszowy-Schlanger GBP284,315, AHRC);
- *China, Law, and Development* (Erie, GBP1,364,437, ERC);
- *TEXTCOURT: Linking the Textual Worlds of Chinese Court Theatre, ca. 1600-1800* (Tan, GBP1,772,681, ERC);
- *Invisible East – On the Trails of Lapis* (Azad GBP1,308,380, ERC; GBP644,726, AHRC);
- *The Children of China's Great Migration and Urbanisation* (Murphy, GBP96,488, BA).

Much of this funding has supported projects led by postdocs. Examples include:

- *Techno-social Eugenics and the Biopolitics of Humanoid Machines in Japan* (Kovacic GBP129,510, BA);
- *How Religious Minorities Develop Transnational Consciousness: Mapping Alevi Mobilisation since the 2011 Middle East Upheavals* (Lord GBP70,646, BA).

We have also sought to **diversify research income**. UK, EU and non-EU charities comprise the second largest external source of income received, and register an increase on REF2014. Fundraising from charitable, private and government sources outside the UK and the European Union has been particularly important in developing underdeveloped research areas and capacity building in the regions we study. Examples include:

- the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies, an independent charity, funded an extensive programme of research in Hebrew and Jewish studies, as well as providing the financial support for the majority of the University's staff and related costs in this field (GBP1.48 million);
- the Sasakawa Middle East Islam Fund, established by the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, funded Japanese researchers who work on the Middle East to study in Oxford (GBP429, 922);
- the ZVM Rangoonwala Foundation created Visiting Fellowships and enabled up to three senior academics or professionals, who are ordinarily resident in Pakistan, to undertake a short working visit to Oxford with the aim of broadening their research experience, sharing their professional knowledge, and developing networks;
- the Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation under the aegis of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Georgia, established visiting one-year research fellowships for Georgian scholarships, and supported the development of Georgian language learning within the University (e.g. GBP390,000, 2016-19);
- the British Foundation for the Study of Azerbaijan and the Caucasus funded the Oxford Nizami Ganjavi Programme for the study of the languages and cultures of Azerbaijan and the Caucasus.

This funding includes projects initiated to launch collaborative research projects, which we detail in the next section.

Researchers from the UoA have also successfully raised almost GBP600,000 in funding from internal sources, notably the John Fell OUP Research Fund. This funding supports our research strategy for excellence and early career research support through main grants and small grants that support:

- pump-priming: e.g. Zeynep (GBP43,378), Johns (GBP39,193), McNamara (GBP58,290), Murphy (GBP30,613), McCartney (GBP30,694);
- start-up funding for early career researchers: e.g. Hirschhorn (GBP4,715), Foster (GBP5,660), Dudney (GBP4,000), Hasmath (GBP4,012), Sullivan De Estrada (GBP7,484); Yamaura (GBP6,255)
- matching funds for external bids: e.g. Smith (GBP80,133), Herzig (GBP60,000); Lord (GBP7,295)

23% of all internal funding was allocated to **early career support**

Organisational infrastructure supporting research and impact

Underpinning our strategy for **generating research income** is an organisational infrastructure and administrative capacity, which supports staff to achieve their research goals. We support full buyouts from administrative and teaching duties for PIs, and are flexible where possible for staff involved in project bids. We also support staff who are recipients of residential fellowships outside Oxford, as detailed above.

The infrastructure of both departments provides support for these research activities through:

- a Research Director and a Research Committee tasked to develop grant applications (119 applications in OSGA alone between 2014-2019). This has significantly raised the quality of submitted applications, and has contributed to the greater success of postdoctoral applications – e.g. over the course of REF2021, OSGA was successful in applications for Newton International Fellowships (3), British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowships (4), Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowships (3), and Leverhulme Early Career Fellowships (5)
- regular and targeted updates on funding calls, especially in areas germane to the UoA;
- dedicated webpages for ECRs and the funding schemes available;
- presentations of grant funding opportunities on a regular basis (e.g. in OSGA termly mock proposal workshops open to all staff run by the Research Officer and Director of Research).

The same structures also support impact activity, which has been further enhanced since REF2014 by:

- the employment of support staff charged with the task of publicising research impact - a dedicated communications post in OS, and funded external support for communications and public engagement in OSGA;
- the support of impact through dissemination, both web-based podcasts and other online media (especially important during the COVID-19 lockdown), and live events that bring end-users into the University (see the Centre activities in Section 2);
- division-based resources, which are accessed by both departments;
- senior impact facilitators hired to cultivate a sustainable culture of research impact in departments;
- research impact facilitators who act as the primary contact for support and advice on research impact and engagement; they provide technical expertise on undertaking and recording impact, maximising its reach and actively assisting in the development of impact narratives used in REF2021 and in departmental outreach;
- research facilitation teams which provide one-to-one support for researchers on impact design, including proposals by early career researchers;
- funding through the John Fell OUP Research fund for essential pump-priming funding of impact-focused research (see below);
- Knowledge Exchange programmes aimed at fostering external partners (Knowledge Exchange Champions) supported by the UK Higher Education Innovation Fund;
- a digital humanities network, which advises researchers on digital tools, techniques and opportunities aimed at enhancing the public availability of research, culminating in the creation of a new interdisciplinary hub, DiSc@Ox, supported by a GBP2.4M grant from the University's Strategic Research Fund;
- the Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities (TORCH), which funds networks, hosts visitors, and creates University-wide programmes showcasing research;
- the Heritage Seed Fund, which is an internal grant scheme to support research, knowledge exchange and public engagement with research projects with UK and/or international heritage organisations;
- the Policy Engagement team, which supports researchers' engagement with local, regional, national and international policymakers;

- the Public Engagement with Research initiative;
- the Business and Partnerships team, which builds capacity among researchers who wish to develop mutually beneficial relationships or optimise their engagement with external partners, and manages Oxford's ESRC Impact Acceleration Account and the Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) Knowledge Exchange Fellowships programme.

In total, over GBP12,000 of internal funding was awarded to knowledge exchange and impact. Examples include:

- Heritage seed funding: e.g. Foster's *Understanding Authenticity in China's Cultural Heritage* (GBP2,400);
- Public Engagement with Research seed funding: e.g. Pradhan's *For the Better Future* project (GBP4,000), which created a repository of poetry, stories, cartoons and songs created by school children during the 2015 earthquake in Nepal.

As the institutional-level environment statement explains, the University provides infrastructural support for research through its many libraries and museums. Area Studies requires unusually diverse resources in this regard. Important collections include:

- **Ashmolean Museum:** extensive collections in the material/artistic culture of Asia and the Islamic world;
- **History of Science Museum:** collections of early Islamic instruments relating to astronomy and mathematical measurement;
- **Oriental Institute Library:** 55,000 volumes covering history, religion and culture pertinent to the Islamic World, Hebrew and Jewish Studies, Eastern Christianity, and East, South and Inner Asia;
- **Middle East Centre Library:** unique and specialised holdings of publications on Humanities and Social Science subjects related to Turkey, Iran, Israel, and the Arab world, covering the period from the late 17th century to the present day;
- **The Bodleian Japanese Library and Nissan Institute Library:** extensive holdings of collections relating to Japan;
- **China Centre Library:** 50,000 volumes covering all aspects and periods of Chinese history and culture;
- **Wadham Persian Collection:** titles in Persian history, literature, philosophy and theology;
- **Oxford Institute for Islamic Studies Library:** a comprehensive range of topics relating to Islam and the Islamic world.
- **Bodleian Manuscript Collections:** Middle Eastern Manuscripts and Rare Books; collections in the Christian Orient and Islamic world (Arabic, Persian and Turkish); South and Inner Asian Manuscripts and Rare Books; manuscripts and early printed books starting mainly in the 19th Century, covering Sanskrit, Gujarati, Hindi, Tamil, Prakrit, Marathi and Pali; the main Georgian archive in Europe (the Wardrop Collection); Mongolian and Tibetan materials, Chinese Manuscripts and Rare Books;
- **Sackler Library:** collections in classical, art historical and archaeological works; extensive coverage of Asia and the Middle East;
- **Social Science Library:** extensive collection of social science literature in Area Studies.

These libraries made a concerted effort to provide **electronic resources during the COVID-19 pandemic**.

In the period after REF 2021, the planned Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities will house a Humanities library that will serve an analogous purpose to the Social Science library.

This research infrastructure supports collaborative research with other universities in both the UK and overseas. Notable examples include:

- *Documenting Multiculturalism: Coexistence, Law and Multiculturalism in the Administrative and Legal Documents of Norman and Hohenstaufen Sicily* (Johns): the project is based at both the University of Oxford and the Università degli Studi di Palermo; its advisory committee consists of scholars based in Italy, Germany, and the United States, and the seven-member project team includes four members based in Italian universities;
- *The India-Oxford Initiative* (chaired by Kumbera Landrus): this project seeks to develop equitable partnerships with Indian organisations and institutions, leading to collaborative academic research of mutual benefit; funded since 2018 by the Global Challenges Research Funds at Oxford, IndOx's projects include a collaborative (including the Ashmolean) project titled *Heritage and enquiry-based learning in urban primary schools in India*, led by the Department of Continuing Education.

In Section 4, we detail other collaborations.

Addressing equality and diversity issues in research funding

Research funding enhances cultural diversity within the UoA by creating:

- an international cohort of postdocs, with researchers from both the regions that we study (e.g. northern Kurdistan [Turkey], Israel, Japan) and from elsewhere (e.g. France, Italy, Germany, Russia);
- programmes that enable postdocs from across Asia, Eurasia and the Middle East to study in Oxford and collaborate with Oxford postdocs. Examples established during the REF period include:
 - the Georgian Programme: facilitates collaboration between Georgian scholars and Oxford researchers, and provides language training in Georgian for Oxford research students;
 - the Sasakawa Middle East Islam Programme: funded by the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, this programme facilitates collaborative research on the Middle East between Japanese and Oxford postdoctoral researchers.

And, with the support of the UK government's Global Challenges Research Fund, our staff have conducted research that addresses challenges faced by societies in the Global South:

- *Innovation and Firm Growth in the Pakistani Textile Sector* (McCartney, GBP45,401);
- *Visions of Education: Education, development, and state in Nepal* (Pradhan, GBP14,041);
- *Sustainable Lives in Scarred Landscapes: Heritage, Environment, and Violence in the China-Myanmar Jade Trade* (Sadan, GBP99,413).

These projects are described in the next section.

We foster a supportive research environment that has been successful in encouraging gender equality in research funding, especially among early career researchers:

- of the FTE included in the UoA, the number of women with at least one successful application for external funding was equal to that of men during the REF period, and similar numbers of women applied for internal University funding;
- OSGA ECRs appointed during the REF period were overwhelmingly women (75% in 2019), in OS it was closer to parity, and 53% of ECRs included in the unit of assessment were women;
- funding was awarded for research on issues of gender inequality: e.g. Rajan's *Communal Conflict and Inherited Trauma on the Tibetan Plateau: The Impacts of Social Upheaval on Gender and Family Relations* (GBP135,470, British Academy);

However, gender inequalities remain in funding for tenured staff. Both the amounts of research funding received, and the success rate of applications is lower for women. Our investment into research support is an attempt to mitigate this problem, as are resources like the Returning Carers Fund (referenced above).

Sullivan de Estrada's impact case study showcases research promoting diverse cultural perspectives on UK foreign policy towards India

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

Research collaborations, networks and partnerships support

Research collaboration between staff within and across regional specialisms and disciplines is a central component of our research strategy:

- one-quarter of OSGA staff in the UoA are joint appointments with other departments – these appointments contribute towards collaborative research, and provide a direct link between the Humanities and Social Science Divisions;
- OS and OSGA share research interests and research training (notably language training) with Anthropology, History, Classics, International Development, Linguistics, Medieval and Modern Languages, and Politics and International Relations;
- we offer extensive opportunities to visiting scholars: during the REF period, we hosted many scholars, e.g. from the Chinese University of Hong Kong; the Çukorova University, Turkey; Hebrew University, Israel; Jawaharlal Nehru University, India; Seoul National University, South Korea; Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, China; Tohoku University, Japan;
- we organise pump-priming collaborative events through departments and UoA networks, which are embedded in the Area Studies centres: e.g. a 2016 workshop on *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in the Middle East* (Rogan and Matthiesen), which was a collaboration with the Project on Middle Eastern Political Science and George Washington University (GWU), resulted in an open access publication produced by GWU;
- we foster collaboration through the creation of thematic research clusters; e.g. the OSGA cluster in Economic Growth, Industry and Development resulted in the publication of one research monograph during the REF period: *Compressed Development* (Whittaker).

A major achievement of both departments is the way in which they have supported academic staff in leading **large-scale collaborative research projects**, funded by national and European funding bodies such as the Wellcome Trust, the Leverhulme Trust, the AHRC and ERC.

Research partners have included leading national and international universities, cultural institutions (museums and heritage organisations), governments, and private foundations.

Outstanding examples include:

- *Quranic Commentary: An Integrative Paradigm* (Sinai, ERC): this project delivering the first historical-critical commentary in English on a sizable portion of the Qur'an involves the University of Tübingen;
- *China, Law, and Development* (Erie, ERC): this project studying the impact of Chinese investment, trade, and financing on the legal modernisation of developing or fragile states involves the National University of Singapore, the Graduate Institute Geneva, Monash

University, Vrije University Amsterdam, and the Australian National University College of Asia and the Pacific;

- *Nizami Ganjavi Programme for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Azerbaijan and the Caucasus* (Herzig, British Foundation for the Study of Azerbaijan and the Caucasus): this programme founded as a joint initiative with the Baku branch of Moscow State University, provides resources for students and scholars from all over the world to investigate collaboratively the pre-modern history of Azerbaijan and the Caucasus;
- *Understanding Institutional Change in Asia: A Comparative Perspective with Europe* (Whittaker, Horizon 2020): this project creating an advanced training network on institutional change in Asia involves the School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences, France, Free University of Berlin, and Waseda University;
- *Sustainable Lives in Scarred Landscapes: Heritage, Environment and Violence in the China-Myanmar Jade Trade* (Sadan, British Academy): this project exploring the diverse life experiences of people mining, trading, gambling, processing, and consuming jadeite across this region, involves Yunnan University and the Kachinland Research Centre, Myitkyina, Myanmar;
- *Building Sustainable Peacetime Economies in the Aftermath of War* (Sadan, ESRC): this project seeking policy solutions to transform drug economies into peacetime economies in the aftermath of war, involves collaboration between Oxford, SOAS, and universities and research centres in Myanmar (the Kachinland Research Center and Shan Herald Agency for News), Colombia (National University and the University of Los Andes), and Afghanistan (the Organisation for Sustainable Development and Research and the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit);

Several of these projects include training components that have facilitated capacity building:

- *Building Sustainable Peacetime Economies in the Aftermath of War* has contributed to the strengthening of research organisations in Afghanistan, Colombia and Myanmar by developing a suite of training, collaboration and shared learning initiatives with research partner organisations;
- *Knowledge Exchange Fellowship in Eastern Art* (Kumbera Landrus, Higher Education Innovation Fund): in collaboration with the Lead Curator of the Wales National Trust, this project developed new display material on the global history of the Powis collection (one of Europe's largest and most important collections of objects from South Asia, held at Powis Castle in Wales); the project created training and interpretive materials for volunteers and staff to present this South Asian collection to the general public.

Relationships with key research users and audiences

Engagement with research users has been manifold and has enriched the research environment in numerous ways:

- the creation of visiting fellowships for practitioners. For example:
 - a visiting fellowship funded by the UK Government's Defence Science and Technology Laboratory producing a large collaborative project on multimodal communication involving OSGA (Wilson), the Oxford Internet Institute and the Ministry of Defence;
 - the Charles Wallace Trust Visiting Fellowship for a Pakistani academic or professional to spend three months with the aim of broadening their research experience, professional knowledge and contacts.
- the Rangoonwala Visiting Fellowships open to early-career Pakistani academics and practitioners - journalists, members of the judiciary, policy makers and politicians. Examples include: Salman Choudhry, Peshawar's Deputy Inspector General of Police (2020);
- conferences and workshops have brought together researchers and practitioners. For example, a conference organised in 2017 on *Ethno-Religious Minorities and Mobilisation in the Middle East* (Lord) enabled representatives from the Iraqi Kurdistan government,

Yezidi activists, and regional specialists to assess the challenges facing minorities in the Middle East;

- Open Policy Knowledge Exchange Network (OPEN) Fellowships funded by the UK Higher Education Innovation Fund have facilitated engagement with practitioners in the field. For example, in 2019 Sullivan de Estrada, the recipient of an OPEN Fellowship, spent a week with the Head of Mission of the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) in Mauritius. This placement facilitated knowledge exchange aimed at consolidating a shared understanding of the IOC's maritime security policy priorities and perspectives in their broader regional context;
- economic and societal technology transfer in the UK and beyond;
- McCartney's collaboration with the Technology Centre of the Lahore School of Economics has contributed to policy advice and technical innovations within the Pakistani textile industry and the Punjab and Sindh Bureaus of Statistics;
- Lord's work with minority groups in Turkey has resulted in collaborative dissemination workshops involving journalists and representatives of the most influential organisations of the Alevi movements in the UK, Germany and Turkey;
- consultancy work for the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and risk analysis companies;
- many staff in the UoA from both OS and OSGA serve in consultancy roles for Oxford Analytica (e.g. Herzig), an analysis firm which draws on experts to advise clients, such as the European Commission and World Bank on strategy and performance in Asia and the Middle East.

Public engagement with research

UoA staff have participated in a wide range of public engagement activities underpinned by research. GLAM staff in particular have been prominent in this regard. Some examples are:

- *Power and Protection: Islamic Art and the Supernatural* (Leoni, Leverhulme Trust): the first major exhibition to explore the supernatural in the art of the Islamic world (Ashmolean Museum, 2016-17);
- **Chinese Art in the Ashmolean** (Vainker): Vainker curates three public galleries in the Oxford University Ashmolean Museum - China 3000BC-AD800, China from AD800, and the Khoan and Michael Sullivan Gallery for Chinese Painting; exhibitions curated by her included the work of Chinese painter Liu Dan and Fan Zhaoling;
- **Japanese Art in the Ashmolean** (Pollard): Pollard is the curator of Japanese art in the Ashmolean; her exhibitions included *Hiroshige's Japan: Fifty-Three Stations of the Tōkaidō Road* (2014-15), *Yoshida Hiroshi: A Japanese Artist in India* (2015) (co-curated with Kumbera Landrus), and *Plum Blossom and Green Willow: Surimono Poetry Prints* (2018-19);
- **South and Inner Asian Art in the Ashmolean** (Kumbera Landrus): Kumbera Landrus is the Keeper of the Eastern Art Department; her main curatorial responsibilities are in Indian, Himalayan and Southeast Asian Art, and her exhibitions included *Bengal and Modernity* (2015).

All of these exhibitions attracted large numbers of visitors and were amplified by the scholarship of the curators.

Contribution to disciplinary sustainability

We feel a deep responsibility to support and sustain the development of Area Studies within both the University and the wider UK and international academic communities. We seek to do this through:

- fund-raising **to expand language-based research** within Oxford;
- since REF2014, we have enriched our resource base in Caucasian languages, history and culture; and
- through representation on bodies such as the University's Language Centre, we promote foreign language learning within the University;
- efforts to **enhance the intellectual coherence** of Area Studies at Oxford, which we consider vital for the sustainability of Area Studies moving forward. Important developments towards this goal have been:
 - the creation of the new doctoral programme at OSGA, which welcomed its first cohort of doctoral students in October 2017 and matches the existing programme at OS. This programme will train a new generation of scholars committed to Area Studies;
 - a new master's programme in Global and Area Studies, which is part of a broader initiative aimed at strengthening cross-regional and disciplinary ties in Area Studies, and developing the disciplinary identity of Area Studies within the University;
 - initiatives aimed at **establishing and embedding partnerships** with European Area Studies institutions and other centres outside of the European Union, in response to the UK's departure from the European Union and other challenges that face the discipline;
 - OSGA has taken the lead in creating a network with several Area Studies departments at leading European universities: Charles University, Free University of Berlin, the German Institute of Global Area Studies in Hamburg, Leiden University, University of Warsaw, and the Moscow Higher School of Economics. A conference launching this initiative held in Oxford (2020) has established the basis for collaborative research partnerships and has already enabled cooperation between research students;
 - OS has created networks with universities in Berlin, Doha, Kobe, Tokyo, Tsinghua, Qatar and Vienna.

Indicators of wider influence and contribution to vitality and sustainability of the research base

The achievements of our staff across a range of indicators contributes towards the vitality and sustainability of Area Studies by:

- **sustaining the Area Studies research environment:** members of the UoA play a key role in supporting the organisations and events that are the lifeblood of Area Studies in the UK and globally. They include:
 - membership of The British Academy: three professors were awarded fellowships during the REF period (Harrison, 2014; Rogan, 2017; O'Hanlon, 2020);
 - leadership of the main Area Studies associations: e.g. in 2019, Murphy was elected President of the British Association of Chinese Studies;
 - editorship of flagship Area Studies publications: e.g. R. Goodman's editorship of the Nissan-Routledge Japanese Studies Series is the largest series in the world on contemporary Japan with more than 100 volumes;
 - advising Area Studies funding councils: e.g. Whittaker's membership of the Japan Foundation endowment committee, which provides small grants to support research in Japanese Studies in the United Kingdom;
 - supporting foreign language publications: e.g. Yadgar's role in the editorial board of the Hebrew journal *Theory and Criticism*;

- contributing towards scholarly life in the regions that we study: e.g. Murphy's role as external examiner at City University Hong Kong since 2014 for the MA in Contemporary Chinese Studies;
- delivering keynote addresses: The British Society for Middle Eastern Studies (Rogan, 2015); Nordic Conference on Middle Eastern Studies (Armbrust, 2016); Khyentse Award, University of Hamburg (Roesler, 2018), Thomas Trautman Lecture, University of Michigan (Minkowski, 2019);
- receiving distinguished prizes: International Booker Prize (Booth, 2019), Humanities and Social Sciences Prize of the 74th Mainichi Shuppan Bunka Sho (Kariya, 2020), Middle East Studies Association Nikki Keddie Book Award (Ghiabi, 2020), National Endowment for the Arts Literature Translation Fellowship (Jacobs, 2020), American Ethnological Society Sharon Stephens Prize (Mathur, 2017), the Saidi-Sirjani Book Award, Association for Iranian Studies (Brookshaw, 2020).

Oxford topped the **2021 Complete University Guide**
for East and South Asian Studies and for Middle Eastern Studies

- **making the case for Area Studies in UK higher education policy and overseas:** members of the UoA are passionate advocates for Area Studies in wider policy debates on higher education:
- in 2015, R. Goodman was appointed Chair of the Council and since 2020 President of the UK Academy of Social Sciences, which, through its 45 learned societies, represents around 90,000 social scientists and has over 1400 elected fellows. In this role, he has promoted the importance of Area Studies. He has also contributed globally towards policy debates in education, e.g. keynote lectures at the inaugural event for the Japanese Government's 7.7 billion yen *Super Global University Initiative*, Tokyo, 2014, and the annual meeting of Malaysian Vice-Chancellors, chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education, Kuala Lumpur, 2015.
- **maintaining the vitality of Area Studies expertise outside academia:** examples include:
 - contributions to policy discussions in both Whitehall and Westminster on UK policy towards China (Irwin Crookes), India (Sullivan de Estrada), the Middle East (Armbrust, Cronin, Matthiesen, Mignon, Rogan, Willis) and North Africa (Willis);
 - Sullivan de Estrada was invited to join the UK FCO South Asia Advisory Board as one of four permanent members, and she was named in 2019 as one of 13 *thought leaders* in UK-India relations by India Inc.;
 - commentary for national and international TV and press media (e.g. Dirik, Mathur, Rogan);
 - providing educational programmes for school pupils and adult learners through the Ashmolean Museum: e.g. religious education on Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam; study room visits and gallery tours in the Ashmolean's Jameel Centre for Eastern Art; bespoke training in the History of Islamic, Asian, and South Asian Art; and Continuing Professional Development courses to school teachers (Bhandare, Kumbera Landrus, Leoni, Pollard).