

Institution: Leeds Beckett University

Unit of Assessment: 27: English Language, Literature and Creative Writing

Section 1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy

Overview and context

The English Literature and Creative Writing (**ELCW**) unit at Leeds Beckett University (LBU) is represented by 13.5 Full Time Equivalent staff (Headcount 14) in the **School of Cultural Studies and Humanities (CSH)**, one of the university's 10 schools. ELCW's intellectual background ranges widely over the historical and geographical fields of English literature with a strong cultural studies flavour, and includes creative writing as both an academic practice and a creative discipline (many colleagues straddle the apparent divide between criticism and creativity). Our mission is strongly associated with the values of interdisciplinary research, with an interface of the creative and the critical, and with an ethos which is focused on research which has the potential to act positively on the world beyond the page. Much of our work is concerned with modes of representation which have effects on equality and diversity in society, and with the creative reimagining of our world, concerns derived from the intellectual and the ethical commitments we embrace.

Our team works closely with colleagues in History and Media across disciplinary boundaries. All unit colleagues are also members of the **Centre for Culture and the Arts (CCA)**, which oversees CSH research development activities. The CCA's remit is to build our research environment and to organise research around 5 interdisciplinary research strands:

- Practices of Writing;
- Cultures of the Body, Gender and Sexuality;
- Cultures of Environment, Space and Place;
- Colonial and Postcolonial Cultures;
- Cultures of Stigma, Deviance and Dissent.
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The strands were developed in consultation with colleagues across the three units in the School, and all are led by at least two colleagues from different disciplinary backgrounds. ELCW is relatively small; clustering research around wider concerns helps to foster a community of researchers and to develop interdisciplinary activity. Both of our impact case studies derive directly from work in the strands: the strategic organisation of our research in this way resonates with the concerns of the broader public, and creates opportunities to connect research and impact.

Leadership

The School is led by its Dean (Cooper) supported by a leadership team which comprises the Director of Research for the School (DoR) (Robbins), the CCA Director (Watkins) and three heads of subject for our key domains in English (Burroughs), History and Media. A key concern of the leadership team has been to foster a supportive research environment.

An environment of collaborative colleagues

ELCW is submitting to REF2021 for the first time, having previously submitted work as part of UoA 36 (2014) and 66 (2008). In establishing our strategy, we responded to feedback at institutional level, which suggested English research was strong enough to stand alone. We have focused on developing a research environment that explicitly promotes a unifying ethos of collaborative colleagues who are willing and able to work across disciplinary and organisational boundaries. ELCW's home in the CSH has resonance for the work that we do, and much of the current submission is located at the borders of English Literature, Creative Writing and History – it is a cultural studies version of English Literature and Creative Writing, a definition developed by the English team rather than imposed on them from above.

Research strategy

Originally discussed in 2014, we return to the strategy on an annual basis to ensure that it still meets our needs, can respond to a changing climate, and still speaks to the needs of our various constituencies. The strategy focuses on the following aims:

- Recruitment of highly-qualified staff in creative writing/practices of writing research in order to build our research in new forms and genres at the intersection of creativity and criticism, and to develop our capacity to supervise creative research.
- The implementation of a mentoring system for all our staff to encourage colleagues in their ambitions to publish high-quality research, to bid successfully, and to build this new unit's impact capacity.
- To support existing excellence and build on emerging talent.
- The development of a combined staff/PGR student programme of professional and academic development to create an inclusive community of researchers – PhD students are the future of the subject and have to be part of the context in which it develops.
- Continued development of the CCA to manage the achievement of quality research and publication outcomes, to provide a focus for research impact and engagement activity and external partnerships, and to provide an internal architecture to manage, and a public face to disseminate, research in ELCW alongside History and Media research.

Impact Strategy

The key ways in which research in humanities subjects achieve impact are through the development of relationships which enable people and organisations to engage with the research, to shape and be shaped by its findings, and the maintenance of those relationships that make co-creation possible. Our impact strategy in ELCW is founded on the following principles:

- To engage with publics that standard academic publishing does not reach by taking our research to those publics and inviting them to our spaces. (Examples include the Cultural Conversations series, close working with Leeds West Indian Carnival, Leeds Autistic Diagnostic Service, Leeds City Council, Palgrave's Campaign for the Humanities, local Literature and Cultural festivals, charities such as First Story and the Leeds Library.)
- To build relationships which last and provide benefit to our communities, evidenced by the sustained co-working that has led to our two impact case studies.
- To discuss with local communities what they need and want from us as part of our mission as a Civic University and Anchor Institution for the Leeds City Region.
- To train ourselves to do this work – by learning to use social and mainstream media more effectively, and being open to approaches from outside our institutional walls.
- To build impact into all of our activities and regard benefit to our communities as integral to our research design.

Our institutional research strategy is the context for the development of research and impact in ELCW. This strategy is focused on three areas of strength in our University, namely Culture, Health and Well-Being and Technology and Society. The strategy presumes that these priorities intersect.

ELCW research sits firmly in the Culture section of the Institutional strategy, but its reach also extends to health and well-being (McGrath) and to sustainability (Herbert, Connor and Watkins). LBU's mission to be a 'civic university', and a regional anchor institution, is mirrored in our own efforts to reach different publics with our research, and with our engagement with local, national and international communities (see Section 4). The development of the CCA strands directly responds to the university's strategic priorities and its equality, diversity and inclusion policies.

In developing ELCW strategy we have been mindful of the intellectual and practical needs of the unit across all our academic activity – the sustainability of the dual roles of teaching and research, which affects all our colleagues, and which requires us to be flexible rather than

dogmatic. Nonetheless, ELCW research at LBU develops from the following **research principles**, derived from the ELCW staff through a series of consultations:

- Literary writing in all its forms is political and demands sustained critique and interrogation.
- The literary text is a socially symbolic and significant object because words have real-world effects. Our responsibility as researchers is to chart the relationships between texts and the worlds they at once create and reflect, and to help create new (different and better) worlds.
- The intersection between creativity and critique is fruitful terrain for new and important insights where those new worlds might be partially constructed.
- Literary study and literary writing are by nature interdisciplinary.
- Literary critique and creation can lead to progressive social change by linking literary and historical inquiry to contemporary struggles for equality and citizenship; our understanding of literary culture and our willingness to communicate it can bring positive change to present-day problems.
- Speaking to and writing for many publics is central to making our creation and critique valuable and relevant.
- Dialogue with those publics – hearing what they have to say to us – can (and sometimes should) modify academic critical practices.
- It is an ethical responsibility for all ELCW researchers to take seriously the real-world effects of representation in symbolically powerful texts and contexts.

Strategic objectives

The building of our research environment is a process not a product, but we believe that we have created a research culture that is bearing fruit and is sustainable. A major part of building that culture has been a focus on enabling staff to achieve the following objectives:

- **to develop and to publish high-quality research, with the above principles and the university's priorities in mind:** in the current REF period 13 colleagues have produced 65 outputs in a range of academic locations, including 7 research monographs, more than 30 refereed journal articles and contributions to essay collections, and 4 edited collections. This represents c. 35% increase in outputs from the ELCW team from 2014. The majority of these major publications have been presented to the public via the Cultural Conversation series, which has an afterlife via YouTube.
- **to support and enable the public impact of this research by sustained engagement with communities and with other partners and stakeholders.** In the current REF period, we have delivered 10 public lectures in the Cultural Conversations series of the CCA and other fora and have run community events for the Leeds West Indian Carnival, the Leeds Autistic Diagnostic Service and the Leeds Inspired (City Council) series. We have participated in 1 publication which is community focused – *Through the Pages: Fifty Years of the Leeds Library* (2018) co-edited by Robbins, and helped in the dissemination of another (*Celebrate! 50 years of the Leeds West Indian Carnival* was launched at an ELCW-hosted event in 2018).
- **to secure external funding to sustain and broaden our research and its reach.** At the start of this REF period there was very limited bidding and grant capture activity. Over the REF period, from this low base, we have seen many more bids (a 60% increase in bidding), including successful awards from the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research and Leverhulme (Burroughs); the ISRF (Connor and Watkins); the Being Human funding stream (Col Herbert in one year, PI Watkins in another); and the Arts Council (Burnett and Zobel Marshall). Although the sums are relatively small, the increase in grant capture activity has created a base from which to develop.
- **to encourage the further development of a community of postgraduate research students** who can contribute towards and develop this research for the future of our subject domain. At the start of this REF period, the School of Cultural Studies as a whole had 18 PGR students, mostly part-time and mostly retired professionals. That group

continues to join us and remains important to us. In addition, via engagement with funds from our former faculty (3 students), the AHRC funded Heritage Consortium programme (1 student in English) and its sister programme NECAH (currently 3 students in English), we have recruited 7 full-time, fully funded students. Along with the students in other parts of the School, we are well on the way to a vibrant community of doctoral students (32 across the School, of whom 13 are ELCW students). Our appointments in creative writing have also made it possible to develop Creative Writing as a stream in the doctoral programmes.

Our future strategy is concerned with supporting the further development of high-quality and innovative research. Our single biggest practical aspiration for the future is to be in a position to institute a consistent research leave scheme so that major projects can be supported in a planned way. We will do this by recalibrating our QR spending, to tilt in this direction, while continuing to support doctoral study. Projects we support will require external bidding activity to take place alongside any internal bid for leave, or will be required to show collaboration and co-creation as elements of the research design.

From our small research seeds we aim to grow our research income, both from the Research Councils, and from local and regional organisations, including both commercial and third-stream organisations who have (or who would like to develop) an interest in matters cultural and literary. We are training our colleagues at School and Unit level to write effective bids, and we will continue to support their work with internal peer reviews of works-in-progress, and further training.

2. People

Staffing strategy

ELCW consists of 13.5 FTE (Headcount 14) Category A staff who are all employed in the School of Cultural Studies and Humanities. Of the staff base in ELCW, one is Professor and Dean of School (Cooper), one is Professor and Director of Research (DoR, Robbins), one is Professor and CCA Director (Watkins), one is Professor and Head of Subject (Burroughs) and 2 are Readers (Lawson and Zobel Marshall). Burroughs, Lawson, Robbins, Watkins and Zobel Marshall were all internal promotions, and four colleagues in English were promoted during the current REF period (Burroughs, Shaw, Watkins, Zobel Marshall). Of the remaining staff, two are Lecturers (Lee, 0.5FTE and McGrath), and two are Course Directors (Connor and Zobel Marshall). Remaining colleagues are Senior Lecturers. We have no colleagues on fixed-term contracts.

Our strategy over this REF period has been to grow the complement of FTE staff, particularly in Creative Writing (Practices of Writing research), which we identified as a strategic area of growth aligned with our intellectual commitments to explore the intersections of creativity and critique, and connected to the University's strategic priorities in 'Culture'. Since 2014 the staff base of the ELCW has grown from 11.5 FTE to 14.5FTE, with five new appointments in creative writing (Burnett [now left], Connor, Hussain, Lee, McGrath). Since REF2014, Zobel Marshall has also become a published poet, making the connection between practice and critique even clearer.

Staff Development Processes for Research

The successes we have so far enjoyed have been underpinned by the following actions, investments and processes, designed to make a supportive and constructive research environment:

- As an investment in research ELCW has **appointed** highly-qualified research-active staff, especially at the intersection between creativity and critique.
- To support staff in their research development we instituted twice-yearly **research mentoring**. This is connected to LBU's Performance Development Review process. All

members of the School participate in this activity and there is consensus that staff have derived benefit from opportunities afforded them by talking in detail about current research and future plans. The mentoring scheme has also been a location for discussions about **research-led promotions**, including advice about the criteria and the means by which they might be met.

- To support research development in ELCW, the School (and previously the Faculty) has made available a number of different **opportunities to apply for research funding** on a competitive basis. The focus of these schemes has been to provide buy-out time for the completion of major projects, and to act as the basis for larger grant applications (Burroughs, Herbert, Herron and Shaw all benefited from this scheme).
- In addition, the School runs **whole-school away days** (2-3 times per annum) where research is a focal point, combined with twice-yearly English subject away days where we consider the same issues from our subject point of view.
- To **enhance research grant capture**, ELCW has instituted **specific mentoring through the bidding process** for both local funds and for external grant capture. This is in addition to **the organisation of 'critical friends'** who read bids and support drafting activity via our central research service. These activities in combination have led to the 60% increase of both grant submissions (11) as well as awards (6).
- As part of our impact aims, **CCA provides an architecture** for internal management and a public face to help us to engage the public with research.
- To ensure that our research can face outwards and have impact, we have undertaken a range of **training** across ELCW to reach different groups (e.g. media training, writing for different audiences, social media training). We have used Quality Research (QR) funds to support **a range of public-facing activity**, via a competitive bidding process, which has included funds to buy out teaching time. Examples include two Caribbean Carnival conferences in 2014 and 2018, a conference on Crime Heritage (2017) organised by one of our PhD students with support from ELCW staff, and the Stigma, Deviance and Dissent strand of the CCA, and the Cultural Conversations Series.
- **Local and institutional recognition for activity** is supported by the School's fortnightly Newsletter, which details publications, public engagement and impact work, emphasising its value to our local communities.

Our commitment to equality and diversity

As the ethos of the CCA implies, and the published records of ELCW suggest, equality and diversity are central to our activities and core to our beliefs. We act proactively and reflectively to live the equality policies of our institution, through all the elements of a research career.

The process of staff recruitment is mindful of the need to foster equality in all our practices, from classroom to board room. Shortlists and appointments are monitored for equality data and we are accountable for anomalies. We are Disability Positive employers, hold institutional Athena Swan accreditation, have received Stonewall Top 100 employer status, and are members of the pilot group of universities for the Race Equality Charter Mark. The DoR was a long-standing member of the Equality and Diversity Committee, and her role there has now been taken over by Burroughs. We sought departmental Athena Swan accreditation in 2018, and the process of preparing that application was fundamental to developing unit ideals, and hugely beneficial to our thinking across school and unit. We were not successful in our application but the action plan from that application remains part of our School's research plan, and is nearing completion – we will resubmit in the near future. The current ELCW team has an even gender balance (seven female, seven male, headcount). Of the senior staff, two professors of four are female. Of the readers, one is male, and one is female.

Our ethnic mix is not yet fully representative of our local community. In ELCW, two colleagues identify as BAME. Future staffing strategies for research careers will turn to the full range of equalities, and will restate our commitment to inclusion in all its many meanings.

We have sought to be as inclusive as possible in this submission. All colleagues who declared they were independent researchers via the protocols of our institutional **Code of Practice** have been included. (The Code of Practice asked colleagues to identify themselves as independent researchers, and panels of experienced academic colleagues met to endorse those self-identifications. In ELCW, all colleagues who self-identified as researchers were endorsed and are included in this submission.)

One colleague has taken maternity leave during this REF period; one has taken paternity leave; and other colleagues have had other periods of health or other kinds of leave without compromising their inclusion. In making our output selections, where work of equal quality from different sources has been considered, we have selected positively to ensure that protected characteristics have been considered and we have taken the view that the future of ELCW is with the work of those at earlier stages of their careers, selecting that work in preference to the work of senior colleagues where a choice is possible. We are proud of supporting all our colleagues to be able to continue their research, even in sometimes difficult circumstances.

LBU's staffing strategy is concerned with enabling all colleagues to achieve the best they can for themselves and for our university. This founding principle has been at the heart of our local activity to support colleagues. In addition to LBU's People Strategy, at unit level, we undertake the following activities specifically related to research. The overarching aim of these activities is to foster a collegial environment in which research can flourish, and be sustained, in a context of complex competing demands, to make the measures of success as transparent as possible, and to learn from success as a team.

Research mentoring to support research

All staff in ELCW take part in twice-yearly formal research mentoring, where agreement is reached on research objectives, publication plans, impact and engagement activity and objectives for applications for external income. Agreed objectives and plans feed into the annual Performance Review process and are recorded on the University's online PDR system and signed off by a senior manager. This is not as bureaucratic as it might sound; the ethos of its delivery is supportive and tailored to individual needs and career stage. We recognise that at a lot of humanities research is organic and iterative, which means that objectives can – and sometimes should – change across the course of a project. Our mentoring system is alive to those possibilities and can adapt to altered perspectives which derive from the encounter with new thoughts, materials or issues.

Mentoring of external funding applications

The University's Research Service operates an internal peer review process for supportive commentary on applications for external funding and helps all applications to be costed via the University's internal financial management package, Research and Enterprise Management System. The Research Service offers personalised one-to-one support and advice on applications for particular schemes and calls, as well as a regular schedule of workshops on topics (e.g. Proposal Writing, Impact and Benefit, Networking and Mentoring). This programme is regularly updated, with new programmes coming on stream in in each academic year. Drafts of applications have to successfully pass through an internal peer-review process, including feedback from a senior colleague and a member of the Service with experience regarding that scheme or call. Within ELCW, this process is supplemented by critical friends' reading of draft applications. During 2014-21 Burroughs has benefitted from this process and secured external funding of €48,000 from the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) and £45,000 for a BA Leverhulme Fellowship. Watkins and Connor also received c. £1000 from the Being Human Festival, supported by the mentoring of the School as well as the Research Office, Connor has won a further sum of £4117 from the Independent Social Research Fund in 2020 and Burnett received a £10,000 Arts Council Grant in 2016.

Research students

In ELCW and across the School we have worked hard to create **a community of scholars** who are integral to the research environment as a whole. The numbers of staff and students in each

of the School's subject groups are relatively small, so elements of our activity have been constructed at School level so that all students have a peer group for mutual support. Our work with students also supplements the work of our central Graduate School. We have grown our student numbers in ELCW (from a base of 0 in 2013 to 13 in 2020). We have worked hard to build an inclusive research culture that is open to their needs. The establishment of a PGR forum - where students meet regularly with the Dean, DoR and postgraduate tutor to discuss their place in the School, raise concerns or bring ideas to the table – is the direct outcome of a student request. Results from the most recent PRES survey (2019) at School level show that this work is bearing fruit, and high levels of satisfaction were expressed, especially relating to supervisory support (100% of our students were satisfied with their supervision). Given how many of our students are part-time and how many have reasonable adjustment plans for disabilities or other issues, their completion rates are evidence of an environment that meets their needs and builds their skills and confidence. In the current period 5 students have completed their programmes.

Research student recruitment

LBU's research strategy charged us with increasing research student numbers to contribute to both local and institutional environments. With support from our Research and Enterprise Service we planned expansion of our numbers by our participation in a successful bid for an AHRC-funded Centre for Doctoral Training (The Heritage Consortium) and by joining the CDT's sister organisation, the North of England Consortium for Arts and Humanities (NECAH) – see below. We were also successful in bidding for internal funding for 1 fully funded bursary student and for 3 part-time fees-only bursaries. While these funding streams are now closed, we will continue to invest a proportion of our local funding in doctoral studies when current students have completed. We are very aware that our subject area tends to be both very white and middle-class, and if our subject's future is to be more inclusive, we have a role to play in redressing demographic imbalances. (Two of our recently completed students come from ethnic minority communities - 40%.) Our local funding is one of the ways in which we have done this in the past and plan to do so again in our next funded recruitment round.

Investment in PhD bursaries

Over the period 2014-21 the University and School have offered several opportunities, by competitive application process, for students to study funded PhD programmes, whether via full-time bursary with living costs, or on a full or part-time fees-only basis. Bursaries are aligned to School and CCA priorities. There is currently 1 student (completed October 2020) on a fully funded bursary as a result of this investment in ELCW, and there have been 3 further students (now all completed) on part-time fees-only bursaries. Our part-time bursaries are especially important because they help us to broaden the constituency that can apply for doctoral study.

Equality, Diversity, Inclusion – the PhD journey

We work hard to ensure that our ethos of equality and inclusion underwrites our interactions when potential students inquire, apply and enrol, with a supportive application process. Applicants are encouraged to share draft proposals with us for advice on how to sharpen or shape their ideas. The CCA strands provide clarity about the research we pursue and defines an equality context in which students apply to us. Additionally, the Graduate School collects information about protected characteristics, and we monitor that data for fairness. Any student who declares a disability will be assessed by central services for a Reasonable Adjustment Plan, and their supervisory team takes appropriate actions to support them based on that assessment.

AHRC Heritage Consortium

The AHRC-funded Heritage Consortium is coordinated by the University of Hull and consists of Bradford, Huddersfield, Hull, LBU, Northumbria, Sheffield Hallam and Teesside universities working in strategic partnership with 8 regional, national and international heritage organisations and networks, as well as with a wider network of over 70 partner organisations, to deliver doctoral training and to promote research in all aspects of heritage. The Consortium was established in 2013 and is supported by £1.85 million of postgraduate funding from the AHRC and £1.11 million provided by its 7 member HEIs. Although numbers of students based within

ELCW from the Heritage Consortium are small (currently 1) the School currently has 5 such funded students who form a supportive environment for each other and for the larger PhD community. LBU's lead for the Consortium is from ELCW (Robbins).

NECAH

ELCW has 3 fully-funded PhD students in the Heritage Consortium's sister organisation: NECAH. Founded by the same HEI partners, NECAH was established in 2014 to deliver doctoral training, widen access to doctoral education to students who came from outside traditionally research-intensive universities, to build a distinctive community of scholars, and to promote research across all arts and humanities disciplines. All consortium students benefit from a tailored research training programme delivered at Hull with support from the member institutions and from a greater cohort of student peers than any single institution can provide. The events and some elements of the programme are also open to the wider PhD community from participating HEIs.

PGR supervision, mentoring and training

Participation in a University **Induction programme** is compulsory for all candidates accepted for a place on a research award of LBU. The intention of this activity is to ensure that all students are oriented in a large organisation right from the start of their studies, and that they begin with a peer group who can be mutually supportive during the PhD journey. In the School, we also run a local induction event and social, to which all new and returning research students are invited, with the purpose of giving the whole community the chance to get together and to foster conversations and working relationships across the years of study.

In preparation for their Confirmation of Registration (CoR) students complete a **Training Needs Analysis** which forms the basis of an individual training plan that they undertake across their programme. The competencies that students are required to develop and evidence are based both on the needs associated with their individual doctoral research and on the Joint Statement of the UK Research Councils' Training Requirement for Research Students. Central sessions which meet key PGR criteria (ethics, research methods, theories and concepts, publishing, giving a conference paper, etc.) are provided by the Graduate School in block sessions at least twice a year. This offering is supplemented in this Unit by a range of other activities which are more subject or domain oriented. These include research seminars; the Cultural Studies seminar, where both work in progress is presented and specific problems in research are debated; and the Cultural Studies PGR Reading Group, which tackles a particular scholarly article, theory or method in a seminar setting. Students are also invited to the CCA's lunchtime series of 'Top Tips' for research (some of which have been generated by their requests).

Students are supported a **supervisory team** which includes a DoS and a supervisor. Within 4-6 months of beginning their project, research students at LBU are expected to undertake a CoR, where they discuss their project with senior members of the School and their supervisory team. Progress is monitored further by an annual progression meeting, chaired by senior colleagues from the School where students report on their progress before being permitted to re-enrol. These are supportive meetings designed to uncover any problems and to support students to get back on track if required. Actions arising from progression meetings are monitored.

We cannot always guarantee to have paid teaching opportunities for those students who wish to take up academic careers. If such opportunities do arise, we check that the student is making appropriate progress on their study, mentor new teachers, facilitate their attendance at central training provided by the Centre for Learning and Teaching, and peer observe to check that they are doing well and enjoying the process. When no paid opportunity is available, students who wish to can request to 'shadow' an experienced member of the team, to ensure they get some classroom experience.

Between 2014-16, PhD students in ELCW were accounted for in UoA34. Since 2016, 5 students have successfully completed their programmes by the census date. These completions represent major progress from a base of 0 in 2013-14.

3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

QR Income

In 2018/19, the University took the strategic decision to disburse 66% of QR funds to the areas which had earned them to enable those areas to own the strategic direction of their spending; and in 2019, that sum was increased to 100%. For ELCW, this is a share of the REF2014 funds for Unit 36 – roughly a third of c. £165K per annum. A substantial proportion of these monies is currently committed to supporting doctoral students. The relative security of this income stream speaks to LBU's commitment to research and gives ELCW the means to plan activity attached to the School and Centre priorities for the next period. As the match-funding elements for doctoral students run down from current levels, we plan to use part of this money to support a targeted research leave scheme, alongside some specific activities to support the LBU's 'civic university' mission through public engagement work to build and broaden our impact..

Current income

At the start of this REF period, there was almost no bidding activity in ELCW and, consequently, almost no external income generated by this group. As noted above, it was a priority for ELCW to begin to bid – to build confidence, gain bidding expertise, and learn the resilience needed to make this happen. Through training and a range of support for individual bidders – from central services and local colleagues – income from external sources has grown from nothing to c.£100,000. The small successes are clearly breeding greater ambitions and new bids are in progress at the time of writing.

Facilities

ELCW is housed, alongside colleagues in History and Media, on the second floor of the Broadcasting Place Humanities Building. Completed in 2009, Broadcasting Place is a modern development of open plan offices, classrooms, social learning and collaboration space and individual or small shared offices. The research undertaken by ELCW colleagues is not resource-intensive in terms of facilities. Desk space, storage, up-to-date IT as well as good and improving library services are what most colleagues need and have. Our aspiration is to develop a creative writing studio – a space in which 'research as practice', particularly in spoken word creative writing practices, can be developed.

PGR students also have office space in this area. This is shared, hot-desking space, though in practice, all individuals who want to use it can make a desk and space their own. The advantage of co-location with our student community (in the Pre-Covid world) is that we can answer their needs quickly, and have sociable discussions as well as formal supervisions. Students report they are really an embedded part of the School's culture.

Research is also supported by our **Library and Learning Innovation Centre**. The School of Cultural Studies has three subject librarians who help with the Information needs of all our PGRs, both individual needs and training sessions. The library is open 24/7/365. Alongside its book stock, it has excellent e-resources. It subscribes to a range of specialist databases relevant for English research (Project Muse, British Library Newspapers Online, LION etc.). Its own internal offer is supplemented by a partnership with the Leeds Library which has unique historical collections, and, by its membership of the SCONUL+ access arrangement with multiple other university libraries. PGRs and staff are both permitted extensive rights via interlibrary loan – very few people ever manage to outrun their allowances in a given year.

Research Infrastructure and Governance

Overall responsibility for Research in our University is under the remit of the Deputy-Vice-Chancellor (DVC) for Research and Enterprise. The DVC is supported by the Director of Research and Enterprise Services who leads the different research-related teams (the Graduate School for PGRs, The Research Service which supports bidding activity and the development of impact, and the Enterprise Service which has oversight of the institution's academic enterprise

activity). Directors of Research provide the interface between these central services and the Schools.

The work of the Research and Enterprise Services is the core business of our University's Research and Enterprise Committee, which reports directly to Academic Board, and which also has oversight of the work of the University's Postgraduate Research Degrees Sub-Committee, and the Research Ethics Committee. The Research and Enterprise Committee scrutinises policy, procedure and practice relating to research in all its guises, and makes recommendations to Academic Board for implementation. All DORs are members of this committee, alongside representatives from Research and Enterprise Services, the Library Service and the PGR student body. The specific policies relating to Ethics, Open Access, Research Concordance, the HR policies that attach to HR Excellence in Research, and the policies deriving from UKCGE for PGRs have all been debated and defined by this Committee structure, and implemented at Unit level by the Director of Research, postgraduate tutor and Local Research Ethics Co-ordinators.

Ethics infrastructure

All research projects, whether staff or student, must ethical approval before they begin. All researchers are required to undertake training in ethics to ensure that they understand their obligations. Research Ethics Online provides a simple one-stop repository for all ethical approvals. Simple approvals for desk-based research which does not involve human subjects are approved locally, by the research supervisor for students, or the Local Research Ethics Co-ordinator (LREC) for staff. More complex cases are considered by LRECs, and where they feel that there are particular issues that arise from the project, it may be referred to the University Ethics Committee for final decision. Annual audits of research ethics compliance are undertaken to ensure that we are meeting our ethical obligations to all human participants, and to the general ethos of good governance across the whole of our activity. Ethics approvals are also the location of our 'risk assessments' where a given research project may involve risk to the researcher, the participant, or the university.

Open access

One of the ethical considerations that is new for REF2021 is the obligation, where possible, to make our research accessible to the public. The university has a fully searchable open access repository, the Leeds Beckett Repository, which is an online collection of Leeds Beckett research outputs. The Open Access Research Policy can be accessed via our library's information pages. ELCW, in line with its commitments to engage with its various publics noted above, is strongly committed to making work available wherever possible. The institutional Open Research Policy, which encourages staff to deposit, where copyright allows, any output type, will increase the volume of other outputs openly available. Although out of scope of the REF 2021 Open Access policy, most of the ELCW book chapters are available in the repository subject to minor period embargoes. We look forward to the policy discussions on this element of our work in the future, and to the new mechanisms that will be required for open access to all research.

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

In ELCW, we look outwards, collaborate with others, contribute to the infrastructure of our discipline, and engage with the world beyond the University. We recognise that we have many communities to serve. All colleagues are encouraged to engage in service that supports our academic subject communities, our local, regional, national and international stakeholders and the people of Leeds and the Leeds City Region.

Contribution to the discipline

Alongside the quality of our published research, ELCW has made a significant contribution to research base of our disciplinary fields. Our research outputs include monograph publications, peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters, a poetry collection and short fiction. The books open new ground in both subject (Banister's *Military Masculinity*, Chaplin's *Millennial Vampire*, Lee's *The Food Plot*, McGrath's *Naming Adult Autism*, Watkins' *Contemporary Women's Post-*

Apocalyptic Fiction, Zobel Marshall's *American Trickster*) and method (Burroughs' *African Testimony*). In addition, they can all make some claim to an interdisciplinary focus, pushing at the boundaries of what 'English' might mean in the future.

Beyond our own work we support our discipline by editorial service on the boards of journals including *Victoriographies*, *Critical Survey* (Robbins) and *Doris Lessing Studies* and *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* (Watkins – who also-co-edited the latter title until 2015). Robbins and Watkins are also the General Editors of the University of Wales Press's Literature and Science series, which published its first title in 2018 with its second title now in press.

Colleagues have also been invited to be keynote speakers at a range of conferences and other events during this REF period (Robbins was an invited keynote at Reassessing Women's Writing of the 1900s and the 1910s, Centre for Women's Writing, Canterbury Christchurch University, July 2017, and also addressed the annual Arnold Bennett Society conference as an invited keynote in October 2014; Watkins was an invited keynote speaker the Doris Lessing Conference at the University of Plymouth, September 2014). Hussain has also been a writer in residence at the University of Windsor, Ontario (January 2019) – a prestigious appointment with international reach.

Amongst the publications that have not been included in this submission, there are a number which are broadly pedagogic in aim, suggesting the ways in which we contribute to our discipline not just by way of new discovery, but also by thinking hard about how to bring those new ideas to new audiences.

Engagement and impact beyond the academy

LBU is a 'civic university' with a mission to improve the lives of local people. For ELCW, the following activities help to honour that commitment. The CCA runs a monthly series of Cultural Conversations in partnership with Leeds City Council and the publisher Palgrave, to bring our research to new publics. In this REF period, Chaplin, McGrath, Lawson (twice), Burroughs, Watkins (twice), Robbins (three times) and Zobel Marshall have all participated in this project, usually attached to Leeds City Council's commitment to the equality calendar (i.e. events for Black History Month, LGBT history month, International Women's Day, Disability Month). Where possible we have filmed these talks and they are available via the CCA's website. Over 2000 local people have attended these events. Two of the talks from this have been so oversubscribed that they had to be hosted in Leeds Town Hall's main auditorium. Hussain was also an inaugural speaker at our university's first TEDx talks series (January 2020).

We also expect to work for our communities by taking our subject expertise to where it can have practical use. For instance, Robbins is a trustee of the Leeds Library, a local charity and also one of the oldest circulating private lending libraries in the country. Watkins and Robbins served on the Leeds Library's 250th Anniversary Committee for its international conference, held in 2018, when ELCW partnered with the library for its delivery, and Robbins edited the commemorative book, *Through the Pages*, for the library. Zobel Marshall, Herbert and Robbins have also been panellists at local literature and film festivals (Ilkley, where Zobel Marshall interviewed Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie in 2014, Headingley, Bradford Film and Literature Festival) and at events for the bicentenary of Charlotte Brontë's birth (with Salley Vickers, Blake Morrison and Sarah Perry, Robbins participated in the Jane Eyre v. Villette debate at the West Yorkshire Playhouse). Zobel Marshall is also a member of a *mas* troupe at Leeds West Indian Carnival, taking practice as research to one of its logical conclusions. She has worked in partnership with Chapeltown Arts, an arts organisation located in Chapeltown, Leeds who promote a wide range of arts and creativity encouraging participation and engagement with residents, artists and supporters of the arts.

Zobel Marshall is also Vice Chair of the anti-racist charity the David Oluwale Memorial Association (DOMA) and a Creative Associate of The Geraldine Connor Foundation, a charity which supports the creative development of Black and Asian young people in the region. She regularly organises community and public-facing events with both charities who are committed to

using the arts as a platform for social justice. She was also a consultant for Leeds City Council in its recent audit of public statues, and in her work for the DOMA has been a key player in the Council's recent decision to open a memorial garden in Oluwale's memory, and to commission a statue to be located there. Zobel Marshall has also made multiple media appearances (BBC *Look North*, BBC Radio Leeds) discussing legacies of slavery in our region, and is currently consulting with Harewood House about its representations of its own troubled history of implication in the institution of slavery.

Connor has worked for many years with the story-writing charity, First Story, which takes creative writing to schools in deprived areas, and gives children the opportunity to write and to see their names in print. She also co-wrote the successful Leeds Lit Fest Bid to the British Council, which brought novelist Diane Cook to Leeds in 2019, in collaboration with the city council and the Leeds Library. Our participation in the Being Human Festival (in 2017 and 2019) has engaged with local populations and school children. McGrath has participated in a range of events both for the public and for health professionals in his mission to modify damaging stereotypes of autism. Our principle in all this activity is that we live and work in these communities – we have a role to play in social improvement and social enrichment.

Publicising what we do, and reaching different audiences in the process, is a key part of our impact strategy. The CCA website has current news and an archive of film recordings of Cultural Conversations and other events, which are often picked up by news and other media outlets. Examples include Robbins's interview with the *New York Times on Sunday*, on the genre of the ghost story in 2017; or, her appearance on *The Importance of Being Oscar* (BBC2, 2019), where the producers found her work on Wilde because of that online archive. More recently, in responsive mode, Watkins has written a review for *The Conversation* on Atwood's *The Testaments*, attaching her interests in women's apocalyptic fiction to a major literary news event in September 2019, and has even been retweeted by Atwood herself. Connor's *Conversation* article on 'Swedish Death Cleaning' was one of the most read and cited articles from a humanities subject in 2018.

Our REF2020 case studies have arisen organically from the Centre's clustering of research into strands, and from our strategy of engaging with our various publics as a key element of our work. They are strongly connected to the ideal of social justice, in one case relating to the value we attach to popular cultural forms like carnival, often marginalised because it appears to be a 'minority' interest, in the other, relating to the damage that stereotypes of autism can do, even – perhaps especially – when belief in the stereotype is held in a professional environment. We believe that this work has changed the views of individuals, and has had benefits in changing how institutions and organisations behave. Both studies have a local flavour with broader implications, and both have international reach. Work on these case studies has been supported by financial contributions to events (the Carnival Conference was guaranteed by local funds), and by significant investment of in-kind contributions by the School and the Unit (for example administrative support in the administration and interpretation of feedback questionnaires). Our impact contribution relates to social enrichment and benefit, but we know that these impacts may be broader in time, because inclusive and equal societies tend to have more stable and resilient economies. Our future plans will connect the social and economic benefits of culture to our multiple communities, both academic and beyond the academy.

Interdisciplinarity

For ELCW the value of interdisciplinary research is that it offers new paradigms through which to work and think, and that it helps to underscore the value of humanities subjects. Much of our work already takes place at the borders of our discipline, since so many of the fields of ELCW intersect with other subject domains. The postcolonial thinking that informs the work of Burroughs, Zobel Marshall and Herbert, for instance, demands engagement with histories of colonial interventions and their aftermath, with performance, film, and art. For McGrath, research into autism crosses into domains such as medicine and social science as well as cultural history. Most recently, Watkins and Connor, in collaboration with a media colleague, have begun to consider questions of ageing in culture and in society, questions which focus on the sociology of

media, the business of creative industries, and modes of representation. This has been a productive mode of action for us, and we expect to build on this for the future.

ELCW futures

We have set out to grow our research for the benefit of our various communities from the local to the global. Rethinking representation in the present, and the focused critique of its past operations, are central to what we do. The relationship between critique and creativity is a growing area, with much to offer in terms of community benefits. We believe that we can, and do, make a difference, and that we can make an even greater difference as our research strengths grow. We will continue to grow and develop our work in the intersections of creativity and critique, fostering research connected to real-world concerns, and responding to our various communities' and stakeholders' needs.