

Institution: University of Chester
Unit of Assessment: Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies
1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy

1.1 Unit Context

Unit of Assessment 33: Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies is located within the Department of Music, Media and Performance, in the School of Arts and Media and the Faculty of Arts and Humanities at the University of Chester. The Department, is located across three campuses in Chester and Warrington, comprises 19 undergraduate courses, seven MA programmes, a MRes in Arts and Media, and PhD provision. The Department is newly-formed, merged from the Departments of Performing Arts and Media in October 2019, a positive and welcome development bringing together exciting opportunities for new research synergies and collaborations. Research in the performing arts covers applied drama, theatre history, music, collaborative dance, contact improvisation, game design, participatory performance, contemporary performance, and stage adaptation. In media, staff work in the areas of fandom, Elvis, dance music and Hollywood film.

REF2021 builds upon the successes of the last assessment, specifically: Pattie's work on Samuel Beckett, which was awarded a major AHRC grant (2012-2015), **Owens'** international work in Pretext Drama; **Duffett's** publications on fandom; **Morrison's** single-authored book on UK dance music; and **Sproston's** scholarship on the 20th Century composer Roberto Gerhard. In addition to strengthening research established over the last cycle, this submission includes a number of outputs from staff making their first-ever return to the exercise (**Barnett, Harper, Jamieson, and Piasecka**). Overall, the submission is comprised of two impact case studies in Pretext Drama (**Owens**) and anti-extremist Theatre-in-Education (**Piasecka**), three single-authored books (**Barnett, Duffett, and Morrison**), one visually-annotated edited book (**Johnson**), eight peer-reviewed journal articles, nine chapters and one Practice-as-Research (PaR) project.

1.2 University Research Strategy

Staff research is steered by the University's Corporate Plan (2014-2020), which seeks to "provide a clear commitment to the creation and propagation of knowledge that is significant and vibrant and has a recognised impact, supports excellence, has the potential for enriching society and creates opportunities for developing sustainable, cultural and effective communities." The Corporate Plan is reflected in the Unit-level strategy and informs the kinds of research undertaken in the department. For example, guiding principles of *sustainability* and *effective communities* are shown in the Department's focus on applied drama practices and international collaborations, as exemplified in the two impact case studies submitted for the assessment. Another exemplary example, in this instance on developing sustainable 'green' communities, is **Sarco-Thomas's** work on dance ecology and the health-giving benefits of engaging with wild outdoor spaces. Enriching the local context also underpins the Department's approach to research, as evident in our long-standing relationship with Storyhouse (see section 2.5).

1.3 Department Strategic Research and Impact Goals

Aligned to the principles of the University Corporate Plan, and following on from REF2014, the Department established seven key strategic research and impact goals:

1. Foster a sustainable, inclusive and vibrant staff-engaged research environment;
2. Deliver high quality research-informed teaching;
3. Enhance the reputation of the department through successful grant capture;
4. Develop interdisciplinary research both within and outside of the immediate area;
5. Encourage the production of high-quality artistic outputs and artefacts with a research imperative;

6. Nurture impact in the areas of applied performance research with a view to enacting positive change (for people and communities);
7. Promote postgraduate research, which is well-integrated with the Department's research environment.

1.4 Research Groups and Network

To organise research in the Department in response to the seven strategic goals, the Department has four inter-connected research groups, and a well-established Media Research Network. Set-up prior to this assessment cycle, the groups offer focused support, guidance and advice in the areas of (1) Applied Performance Research; (2) Creative Practices and Processes; (3) Ethnographic Practices and PaR; (4) Media Research Network. The Department appointed three research leads: **Dockwray**, **Duffett** and **Piasecka**, to take responsibility for organising research within the groups. Since REF2014, there has been a number of new outputs and projects in the following areas:

1. Applied Performance Research – the work of this group covers applied practices in educational and non-educational settings. Research includes **Johnson's** work in applied theatre in museums and heritage sites, **Owens's** international case study of Pretext Drama, and **Piasecka's** study of countering youth radicalisation through theatre.
2. Creative Practices and Processes - this group focuses on outputs relating to a range of high quality creative and performance work in addition to published books, articles and chapters. Creative projects include intercultural dance projects with young children; dance curation; classical and popular musicology, video game analysis; collaborative song writing; clowning and story-telling. Research includes **Sproston's** publications on the composer Roberto Gerhard; **Johnson's** edited book on the Jasmin Vardimon Company; **Dockwray's** work on video game music; **Sarco-Thomas's** edited books and journals in dance, **Jamieson's** work in creative collaborative dance, **Pattie's** work on Samuel Beckett and popular music, and **Waite's** work on the Marie Duval project.
3. Ethnographic Practices and PaR - this research strand gathers together ideas, models and reflections on performance ethnography within the broader discipline of performance studies. Research in this category includes **Duffett's** work on fandom, which has gained in research significance and reputation following the last REF; **Sarco-Thomas's** work in dance ecology; **Piasecka's** stage adaptations and **Harper's** work in game design and participatory performance.
4. Media Research Network (MRN) – the network seeks to consolidate and promote multi and inter-disciplinary research across the institution, with a specific focus on media-based research in film and screen studies, print and digital media. The group has established links with a wide range of universities and research partners, in countries such as China, Spain and the USA. Outputs include **Duffett's** single-authored book on Elvis; **Barnett's** single-authored book on the representation of fathers in Hollywood Films; and **Morrison's** single-authored book on dance-music.

1.5 Interdisciplinary Research

Given the inter-connectedness of the research groups, interdisciplinary research is a feature of this submission. Staff have conducted work in the intersections between graphic comics and performance, dance and ecology, game design and participatory performance, and theatre and science. Examples include **Johnson's** work on the intersections between theatre and science, **Dockwray's** work on surround sound in Formula One video games, and **Morrison's** work on the UK dance scene. **Owens** publishes widely outside of the subject domain and **Piasecka's** study of anti-extremist TiE is published in an interdisciplinary journal in the field of Terrorism Studies.

1.6 Impact from Research

As stated in the above (1.2), research “[which has] the potential for enriching society and creates opportunities for developing sustainable, cultural and effective communities,” has informed the submitted case studies. The Department’s impact narrative is strongly connected with the idea of drama and performance as a process and method by which to explore social justice, action and interaction. Applied drama projects have been undertaken in Western and Eastern Europe, Scandinavia, Japan and the Middle East. Projects and cooperation have been established with theatre in education companies delivering counter-terrorism strategies in schools, political organisations, the European Parliament in Brussels and community groups in the UK and abroad.

The first impact case study concerns **Owens’s** work on fostering creative democracy through Pretext Drama. Owens’s research, which shows a demonstrable impact on international teaching practices across the European Union, Scandinavia, Palestine and Japan, is based on a number of key publications, including a co-authored book *Creativity and Democracy in Education: practices and politics of learning through the arts* (Adams and Owens, 2016), Routledge.

The second impact case study draws on **Piasecka’s** research collaboration with the European Parliament Anti-Racism and Diversity Intergroup (ARDI), on combatting racism and Islamophobia in the work of the European Parliament. The underpinning research is published in a peer-reviewed journal, *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, Taylor & Francis. As an indicator of esteem, editorial board-members for the journal include: Richard Jackson - University of Otago, New Zealand (Editor-in-Chief); Noam Chomsky - MIT, USA; Charlotte Heath-Kelly – University of Warwick, UK; Louise Richardson – University of St Andrews, UK; Michael Stohl - University of California, Santa Barbara, USA.

1.7 Artistic Outputs and Artefacts

Artistic outputs undertaken in this period includes **Sarco-Thomas’s** performance on *MESH*, a participatory choreography dance with Vanessa Grasse, *GħaNasori: Unity in Diversity*, a music and dance heritage project funded by *Valletta 2018, Heritage Malta, Arts Council Malta and the EU Japan Fest*. **Piasecka’s** stage adaptation of *Moby Dick* was selected by Kings College, London and the Melville Society for a public talk on artistic responses to the novel at the British Library, London (2017) and *Flight to Arras* was shown at international festivals in the UK and abroad, including *High Fest International Performing Arts Festival*, as part of the special memorial programme to the centenary of the Armenian Genocide (2015), and the Université Catholique de Lille, France (2016). In 2018, Piasecka collaborated with academics from MMU (Dr Bunting and Dr McCabe), on a HEFCE funded youth engagement project (MMU), to mark the centenary of the Legal Assent of the Representation of the People’s Act. This resulted in a series of “pop-up performances”, based on the writings of the Suffragist Ada Nield Chew. Other examples include **Bugeja’s** PaR project on *Medea*, and **Jamieson** and **Spies** work in dance. A focus for the next five years will be to develop, through support for research (funding, resources, facilities), the production of artistic outputs, as exemplified by **Kerrigan’s** emerging research in contemporary performance.

1.8 Research-informed Teaching

A commitment to providing an ‘outstanding student experience’ and the pursuit of excellence in teaching is at the core of the University’s Vision Statement and underpins the Corporate Plan (2014-20). Research-informed teaching is central to these and the department’s aims. Staff research feeds directly into the curriculum, influencing module content and curriculum design, as well as leading to the validation of new undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in Acting for Camera, and Film and Television. Examples include the revalidation of MA Dance to reflect **Jamieson’s** research in dance. **Barnett’s** research on the representation of family informs postgraduate modules in Film and Screen, and the Department’s collaboration with the BFI and Storyhouse on 360 filming has led to new undergraduate provision in Film and Television.

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

1.8.1 Staff, Student Collaboration

Research-informed teaching has led to greater focus on staff, student collaboration. Undergraduate and postgraduate students have been involved in staff research projects in collaborative dance, stage adaptation, and contemporary immersive theatre. For example, MA students contributed to a research paper for the *Modes of Capture* conference at the University of Limerick (**Jamieson**, 2019). In theatre, postgraduate students and alumni co-presented two research talks for PaR project, *Moby Dick*, at Liverpool Hope University and the University of Chester (**Piasecka, Harris, Slater, Thomas, Wiseman and Wright** 2018). Alumni student **Harris**, co-presented a scholarly conference paper on the suffragist Ada Nield Chew for *The Drama of the Suffrage* Movement, Manchester People's Museum (**Piasecka and Harris** 2018). **Bale**, an undergraduate student from Performing Arts, participated in *Beyond Text* - an Erasmus + project, and is credited in the acknowledgments of the accompanying Ebook (**Owens** 2019).

1.9 Grant Applications

A key strategic research goal for this cycle sought to enhance the reputation of the Department through successful grant capture. Departmental funding (and support for teaching), helped **Owens** to secure a number of grants and awards to support his Pretext Drama work in the UK, Europe, Scandinavia, and Palestine. A successful AHRC bid was also awarded to **Waite** for a two-year project on the 19th Century female cartoonist Marie Duval (2014-2016). Prior to this cycle, the department supported a reduction of teaching for **Pattie** to write his successful AHRC bid. **Pattie** was in receipt of a major AHRC grant for the period 2012-2015.

To support her work on combatting Islamophobia in the European Parliament and PaRs outputs, **Piasecka** secured funding in-kind (for travel, accommodation, and venue hire), from the European Parliament, Liverpool Hope University, HEFCE, and the Tall Ship Zebu.

1.10 Research Objectives Post REF2021

A consideration of the assessment period shows that the UoA is continuing to grow in research significance, international reputation and vibrancy. This is evidenced in the number and quality of outputs produced in the cycle, the 'reach' of the two submitted case studies, staff and student research collaborations and research income. The range of produced work is also impressive, spanning across disciplines, in different forms, and in countries inside and outside of the UK. Over the next five years, we intend to build on these strengths in alignment with the University's Research and Impact Strategy, which focuses on four key themes: (1) Health and Wellbeing; (2) Culture and Society; (3) Sustainability and Environment; (4) Regional Economy.

With these core themes in mind, the department research objectives for 2021 onwards will look to:

- **Large-scale external grant capture** – to enable a new generation of researchers to take on significant research projects. This will be achieved by a new department research group, which will focus on providing dedicated time, support and guidance from within the Faculty and the Research and Knowledge Transfer Office (RKTO). Ideally, for mid-career staff wishing to apply for grants above £100,000
- **Small-scale grant capture** – to support staff to begin or strengthen research careers through the successful capture of small-scale grants, from £1000 upwards. This will include funds from external sources as well as internal grants available from the department QR, Faculty and University. This will be achieved through peer-to-peer mentoring, dedicated research time and guidance from RKTO.
- **Artistic outputs** – to encourage staff to develop new and imaginative ways of recording and documenting live and recorded PaR projects. This will be achieved through dedicated space(s) on the Department's webpage as well as exploring remote digital platforms.
- **Impact case studies** – to nurture impact from the onset of the period. This will be achieved with a dedicated research group looking at the social and political significance of impact alongside the artistic, empathic and aesthetic qualities of arts-based research.

- **Student Citizens** – to encourage a new generation of researchers from the ground-up, through the University's 'Citizen Student Strategy.' This will be achieved through student as active collaborators in staff research projects, diversifying the student body, and student representation at conferences and symposiums in and outside of the immediate area.
- **Open Access** – to uphold the principles of open access and research transparency through the Chester Open Research Alliance (CORA).

1.10.1 Sustainability Post 2021

Over the next five years we are committed to securing a research culture that is sustainable, vibrant and shared by staff and students alike. Following REF2014, there were a number of staff departures due to job relocation and retirement. A priority for this assessment cycle, therefore, was to develop a new generation of researchers and promote mid-career staff into senior positions; and this will continue post 2021. Above all, we seek a research environment that places student and staff happiness, health and wellbeing at the heart of its research activities. To echo Concordat, "equality of access to research in an inclusive and supportive environment" has been a guiding principle since the last REF, and will be for the foreseeable future.

2. People

2.1 Staffing

Ten category A staff are submitted to the UoA – nine full-time and one fractional (0.5). Outputs include work from **Pattie** and **Bugeja** who left the institution before the census date. It is worth noting that only four staff were submitted for RAE2008 and of the ten staff submitted in 2014, six have either retired, found employment at other HEIs or have stepped down from contracted-teaching (**Njaradi** 2014; **Quigley** 2014; **Harrop** 2015; **Pattie** 2017; **Emslie** 2018; **Waite** 2019). It is pleasing, therefore, that this submission includes four members of staff making their first return to the exercise. In all, there are two professors, one reader, two associate professors, two mid-career and three early career researchers. The female-to-male ratio for outputs is 50%; as too for the impact case studies. This is a significant step-forward. Males, holding senior lectureships and professorial titles, accounted for 70% of the 2014 submission. In RAE2008, 100% were male (Senior Lecturer and above). The Department takes seriously the advancement of gender equality in academia (in addition to racial equality and diversity), and the work of the UoA has contributed to the renewal of the Athena Swan Award (Bronze).

2.2 Support for Research

Common to the sector, staff tend to start their research careers once artistic identities are established, as dancers, actors, musicians, film-makers etc. This means that while staff bring a wealth of subject expertise and knowledge to their work with students, often doctoral-level study is completed once in post. In the period 2015-2019, the Departments of Performing Arts and Media supported six PhD completions: **Southall**, **Layton**, **O'Sullivan**, **Jamieson**, **Morrison**, and **Spies**. With the exception of Spies, all were supervised by colleagues from within the Department(s). Two full-time members of staff and one VL are currently undertaking PhDs, also supervised within the Department.

2.2.1 Early and Mid-Career Researchers

Post PhD completion, staff are supported with peer mentoring, with targeted advice on internal funding, bid-writing, open access and publishing. This has resulted in new and exciting outputs in the forms of single-authored books, chapters and peer-reviewed journal articles (**Barnes**, **Barnett**, **Bugeja**, **Harper**, **Jamieson**, **Morrison**, **Sarco-Thomas**). Newly appointed staff are further supported with an induction programme and probationary period. Outputs produced by early and mid-career researchers account for 50% of the submission and is illustrative of the department's commitment to developing a new generation of researchers and leaders.

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

2.2.2 University Mentoring

In addition to the above, the University has well-established formal mentoring schemes in place for all staff. These include (1) Leadership Mentoring, (2) Aurora Mentoring, (3) Technician Mentoring, (4) Researcher Mentoring, (5) Apprenticeship Mentoring and (6) Personal Academic Tutor Mentoring. The importance of mentoring, particularly of the cascading kind, cannot be overstated for teaching-focused universities (as we are), where effective time-management is essential. Mentoring supported **Dockwray** and **Piasecka's** application to Associate Professorship; **Jamieson's** application to SFHEA; and **Barnes** application to FHEA.

2.2.3 Staff Development

The Department aligns itself to the principles of Concordat for research development, particularly as health and wellbeing are caught up within notions of professionalism – creative, artistic and otherwise. First and foremost, staff are encouraged to take on projects of genuine interest to them – we seek research that has personal, emotional and professional connection. To support the initial stages of research, the department provides staff development funding for conference attendance, training days and travel for exploratory study. For conference attendance, financial support is not dependent on the presentation of a scholarly paper – the intention of the staff development fund is to inspire and encourage research.

2.3 Recruitment

In the wake of staff departures from the University following the last assessment (see section 2.1), the Department of Performing Arts appointed a mid-career researcher in dance (**Sarco-Thomas**) and four early career researchers with developing research profiles in acting for camera (**Barnes**); adaptation and contemporary performance (**Kerrigan**); game design and participatory performance (**Harper**), and contemporary British harpsichord music (**Lewis**). The Media Department appointed **Barnett**, with a specialist interest in representation and constructions of gender family on screen, and **Waller**, who has an emerging profile in the field of literary journalism. We intend the work of these members of staff to feature strongly in the next research exercise; indeed, **Barnett**, **Sarco-Thomas** and **Harper** all have outputs included in this submission and in the case of **Barnett**, a single-authored book.

2.4 Research Promotions

Since REF2014, the department has supported staff progression to senior lectureship and deputy-headship roles. There were also three research-focused promotions: one Readership and two female Associate Professorships; associate professors are invited to apply for full professorial title after a three-year period. This is of particular significance – the Head of Department, the Director of School and Executive Dean are all male, and so the appointment of female staff to senior roles is extremely positive; and further supports the work of Athena Swan in effecting cultural and systemic change towards gender equality.

2.5 Postgraduate Provision

Postgraduate provision is overseen by the senior postgraduate research tutor (SPRT), for the School of Arts & Media. The SPRT oversees all matters relating to postgraduate provision: the application process, ethics, annual reviews for students, suspensions, and thesis submission. The SPRT for Arts and Media is **Piasecka**. To build supervisory capacity, staff with newly completed PhDs are mentored in supervision by established Principal Supervisors. For example, **Jamieson** and **Spies** currently supervise doctoral students and **Barnes**, **Barnett**, **Harper**, and **Kerrigan** supervise MRes students. To support the viva process, **Duffett**, **Johnson**, **Piasecka**, **Roberts** and **Sproston** are University-approved Chairs and **Piasecka** attends the Postgraduate Research Forum and Faculty Board of Studies for postgraduate matters on behalf of the department.

Postgraduate provision is further managed through a dedicated PGR Office. All supervisors are obliged to undertake mandatory Online training every three years. Regulatory and procedural issues are published in *Handbook G: Postgraduate Research Degrees* (Academic Quality Standards), and updated on an annual basis. The University's *Supervisor Development* Moodle page, provides

information on all PGR matters, such as administrative and regulatory issues, supervisor training, interview training, and PGR research COVID 19.

2.5.1 Postgraduate Students

Postgraduate provision has grown in strength and student numbers over this cycle. In the period 2008-2013, there was just one PhD completion. Between 2014-2020, there were seven PhD completions and 12 MRes completions. There are currently 12 doctoral and four MRes students in the Department, which in turn has exponentially enriched its research culture.

2.5.2 Postgraduate Bursaries

Our postgraduate research students (PGR) tend to be part-time and all are self-funded (with the exception of staff, who are funded through the Department). This is because, as explained earlier, students tend to arrive at doctoral-level study once artistic identities are established. Since 2017, the University has offered a competitive postgraduate bursary of a partial-fee discount for students on MPhil or PhD programmes. The scheme offers a discount of £2000 for full-time students (£1000 for part-time students). So far, the scheme has supported three PGR students from the department - £5000 in total (2 full-time and 1 part-time student). The University also offers the following bursaries:

1. The *International Research and Field Study Travel Grants for Students* offers support for students to undertake research in one of countries in the Santander Universities Scheme (up to £1000 per student).
2. The *Sustainable Futures Studentship Scheme* offers half-funded studentships for research projects aligned to the UN's Sustainable Goals on 'net-zero' carbon target for 2050.
3. The *PGR Conference Attendance Fund* supports PGR students in attending a high-quality conference relevant to their studies.

2.5.3 Facilities and Resources

At the Creative Campus, Kingsway, research students have a dedicated office space, computing facilities and subject library. They also have access to performance and music production studios, specialist equipment and technical support. The Parkgate and Padgate Campuses provide specialist media studios and libraries. Postgraduate Research Development, a centralised University Moodle page, offers an annual programme of workshops and seminars covering a range of topics, such as careers and employability, quantitative research design, endnote, writing a literature review and viva preparation.

2.5.4 Postgraduate Activity

PGR students have an active role in the Department as independent learners and researchers. For example, PGR students lead the school-wide research reading group, which meets regularly over the academic year and is into its fifth-year running. The research reading-group is attended by full-time and part-time students from Art and Design and Music, Media and Performance. The group offers opportunities to discuss and test key reading (articles/journals/chapters) in a supportive and inclusive environment. Arts and Media students regularly present papers at departmental research seminars, School Symposiums and University-wide research conferences and co-convene the Faculty of Arts and Humanities Research Symposium.

Our postgraduate provision is enhanced through our relationship with Storyhouse - a multi million-pound theatre, library, cinema, community hub and restaurant. Opened 2017, under the Artistic Directorship of Alex Clifton, Storyhouse offers theatre workshops for postgraduate students, opportunities for students to present their research to wider audiences, and studio space for research festivals. **Wright and Wiseman** acted on the main stage in the inaugural production of *Julius Caesar*. **Wiseman** also had a professional internship as a trainee director for the same production - Wiseman is now a VL and full-time PhD student in the Department. **Escobedo** presented a workshop on collaboration through theatre at Storyhouse for the *Educating Creatively Conference* (2019). MA students have performed in main-house productions and regularly lead drama projects at Storyhouse for the wider community.

Further afield, **Erzan-Essien** presented a paper in Paris at the 5th World Journalism Conference (2019), which was subsequently published in the peer-reviewed journal *Journalism Education* (2020). **Layton** presented a paper at IJade Conference, Liverpool (2014) and has produced a number of publications on durational performance post PhD. Similarly, **Southall** presented a research paper at the 7th International Conference on Arts in Society, Liverpool (2014), and now publishes widely on Jazz and Dance-Hall Bands. **Slater** co-authored a research paper for *Performing Process: Sharing Practice Symposium*, Centre for Dance Academic Research Coventry (2014) and is now a dance lecturer at the University of Plymouth. Postgraduate students (including MA students), have gone on to secure Arts Council Funding (**Slater** 2017, 2018; **Harrison-Lord** and **Slater** 2019), and to secure VL teaching positions in HEIs (**Butler**; **Goss**; **Lyon**; **Langton-Sneyd**; **Morris**; **Young**; **Taylor**; and **Wiseman**).

2.5.5 COVID 19

In response to COVID 19, the University facilitated a move to online supervision, via Microsoft Teams. The University also updated regulations to enable annual progress reviews and viva-examinations to go ahead Online; this was positively received by students and supervisors. To support students' academic progression during these difficult times, the Department hosted an online academic-exchange day and book launch for staff and PGR students (June 2020). Arts and Media students also contributed to an Online drama and theatre studies symposium in collaboration with the Universities of Birmingham, Lincoln and Staffordshire (October 2020).

2.6 Equality and Diversity

The Department aligns to the Principles of Equality and Diversity in the University's Research Code of Practice: "to embed equality principles throughout the University's learning and teaching, research and scholarship, outreach and other University activities and practices, and to enhance participation of staff and students in equality events, programmes and initiatives." These principles can be seen in **Johnson's** co-edited, visually-annotated book on the Jasmin Vardimon Company; **Piasecka's** critique of the UK PREVENT Strategy and the impact of Islamophobia on young British Muslims; **Waite's** contribution to the Marie Duval project, an overlooked but important nineteenth-century female cartoonist; **Owens's** work on Pretext Drama with Palestinian colleagues in the Occupied Territories and **Piasecka's** stage adaptation of Ada Nield Chew, a tailoress and suffragist from Crewe, who campaigned for female rights and equal pay. **Barnett's** monograph on the representation of fatherhood in Hollywood films is another illustrative example.

The appointment of a new Vice-Chancellor in 2020, **Professor Eunice Simmons**, has furthered the University's commitment to equality and diversity, illustrated in the introduction of the Race Equality Challenge Group, which has 'produced a positive change in the use of language in the institution, as well as a set of interview competency interview questions.' The University was awarded a Navajo Charter Mark (2019), and is a member of the UK Government's Disability Confident Scheme. Department staff have delivered workshops and talks for the University's Diversity Festival, and its female associate professors were invited to deliver research papers at a special conference to mark International Women's Day (2018). To advance understanding of gender inequalities in an inclusive and non-binary way, the Department representatives for Athena Swan are male: **Molony**; **Sproston**.

2.7 REF Preparations

The University REF Steering Group was responsible for driving-forward the preparations for REF, and to advise on the aforementioned matters of equality and diversity. **Dockwray** and **Piasecka** were members of the steering group and their contribution informed actions on Open Access for practice-based outputs, specifically Online platforms to archive videos and photographs of performances and live events. **Professor Wayne Morris** (Deputy Dean of Arts and Humanities), oversaw the Faculty submission, and under his leadership instigated a Faculty Research Advisory Group. The group met on a regular basis to provide peer-to-peer feedback and support for Unit Co-ordinators, and authors of impact case studies.

2.7.1 Selection Process

The selection of outputs has been transparent and compliant with all relevant equality legislation. The selection was based on internal and independent external appraisals and with full oversight from the Director of School and Executive Dean of Faculty. All eligible outputs were considered for inclusion. (It is worth saying that a significant number of publications, particularly from researchers in media, fall outside the scope of UoA 33). The Unit Co-ordinators ensured that all outputs were appraised fairly and consistently; the latter being of particular importance as the submission is varied and includes PaR documentation of live performances. As a matter of principle, all eligible staff were invited to consider making a Declaration of Individual Staff Circumstances, without prejudice. While inclusion in the return will be beneficial for most, we recognise that the process may not be favourable to all and in some cases may cause undue stress. For this reason, the selection process has been fair, transparent and supportive from the outset.

3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

3.1 Internal Income

Researchers have access to a number of Internal grants, available through the Research, Knowledge Transfer Office (RKTO), the Learning and Teaching Institute, individual faculties, and departments. For example, RKTO offers grants of up to £100,000 (per project), for 'knowledge-transfer' projects. They also offer the *Academic and Professorial Conference Attendance Fund* and *Early Career Researcher Conference Attendance Fund*. These are grants of up to £500 (per researcher), to support staff conference attendance. The Learning and Teaching Institute (LTI) offer grants for *Teaching Innovation* and *Retention and Success* research projects. **Piasecka** and **Quigley** secured a LTI grant in 2014, for a collaborative pedagogic research project exploring experiential learning in theatre.

At Faculty and Department level, research is supported through the University's QR allocation. Applications are overseen by the Dean and RKTO. For the period 2014-20, the Department did not fund research/impact leave and leave sabbaticals. It did, however, support a reduction of teaching—up to £2000 (per project). Additionally, departmental QR grants have supported conference attendance, research travel, and the purchase of specialist equipment. For example, **Desmond, Duffett, Erzan-Essien, Harrop, Owens, Piasecka, Morrison, Spies, Waite, and Whaller** received grants for conference attendance and travel in the UK and abroad. QR paid for gaming headsets for **Harper's** PaR project on game design, and a professional video trailer for **Piasecka's** stage adaptation *Moby Dick*. The Department also purchased two Macbook Air Laptops and hard-drives for researchers to use when travelling abroad.

Much of the research undertaken during this cycle was made possible due to the support of internal funding. Illustrative examples are **Barnett, Duffett's** and **Morrison's** single-authored books, **Duffett's** edited books and publications on fandom, **Bugeja's** work on Pina Bausch; **Jamieson's** study of creative collaborations in dance; **Spies's** practice in feminist performance curation; and **Piasecka's** publications in educational drama and PaR projects *Moby Dick* and *Flight to Arras* (this list does not include research in the Department falling outside the scope of the UoA). Research projects initiated at the end of the assessment period (and to be developed), include **Harper's** work on game design, **Kerrigan's** performance research, and **Barnes's** work with Education and Children Services on Homelessness.

3.1.1 Support for Impact

QR grants supported the two impact-case studies submitted to the assessment. **Owens** secured support for international research travel to Denmark and Europe- £2930 total. This helped Owens to set up pathways for his Pretext Drama work. An initial grant of £1868 (followed with £1782), supported the underpinning research stage for **Piasecka's** study of the UK Prevent Strategy and the impact on young British Muslims - £3650 total. To further support the case studies, the Department facilitated time away from teaching with a flexible timetable for **Owens**, and teaching cover for **Piasecka**.

3.1.2 Support for the Environment

QR also supports the Department's research seminars. Guest speakers have included to the department have included: Dr David Fligg, Royal Northern College of Music, on the music of the Jewish composer Gideon Klein, who was murdered in Fürstengrube, a Nazi concentration camp; Dr Benjamin Halligan, Director the Doctoral College, University of Wolverhampton; Chris Lawrence, Publications Officer for National Drama; Dr Karen Quigley, University of York, Dr Beate Peal, MMU; Dr Melissa Avdeeff, Coventry University; Dr Nedim Hassan, Liverpool John Moores University; Professor Allan Moore, musicologist and Emeritus Professor at the University of Surrey; and Professor Helen Newall, Professor of Theatre Praxis at Edge Hill University.

3.2 External Grants

Research income during the period under review was in excess of £232.000 – a significant indication of the upward trajectory for the Department. As noted in section 1.10, **Pattie** received a major grant from the AHRC for *Staging Beckett*, a three-year project undertaken by the universities of Chester and Reading and the Victoria and Albert Museum. The project ran between 2012-2015. Outputs include an international conference hosted at the University of Chester: *Staging Beckett at the Margins* (2014), an Online Database, and scholarly publications. The grant also funded a post-doctoral research fellow, based at the University of Chester, for the duration of the project. **Waite** was awarded a AHRC grant as co-investigator for *Marie Duval presents Ally Sloper: the female cartoonist and popular theatre in London 1869–85* (2014-2016). Outputs include an International Touring exhibition, in partnership with Tate Britain and Illustrative Berlin, an Online Database, and two co-authored books. **Owens** received several grants from the British Academy, the British Council and Erasmus + (among others; 2013-2018). Owens, whose substantive post is in Education and Children's Services (0.25% post in Performing Arts),

secured £215,811.17 in total (£44,851.31 for UoA 33). Outputs include a co-authored book, an E-book, peer-reviewed articles and chapters, and international arts-based workshops and events.

3.3 Research Infrastructure

The Research and Knowledge Transfer Office has overall responsibility for the promotion and development of research, scholarship and knowledge transfer across the University. They offer advice and guidance on internal and external funding, Erasmus +, research costing, publishing, ethics, intellectual property, Open Access, Codes of Practice, and research post COVID 19. RKTO convene an annual research festival and staff in the Department have presented scholarly papers, seminars, workshops on the themes of practice-as-research, fandom, popular music, and digital story-telling. Staff also regularly present pedagogic research projects at the University's annual staff conference

3.3.1 Chester Centre for Research in Arts and Media (CCRAM).

Research in the School of Arts and Media is enhanced through the Chester Centre for Research in Arts and Media (CCRAM). The centre offers grants for staff research as well as financially supporting conferences, workshops, training events and a yearly postgraduate symposium. Following REF2014, there were plans to develop a dedicated performing arts research centre. However, upon reflection, and with sustainability in mind, it was felt that CCRAM offered more effective opportunities for dialogue and inter-school collaboration rather than a discrete research centre. This decision led **Dockwray** and **Piasecka** to convene a national conference on behalf of CCRAM on the theme of 'Research Narratives.' The conference, *Narratives and Alternative Stories* (2017), brought together scholars from eleven different institutions and keynotes from Edge Hill University, De Montfort University and Liverpool Hope University. It also included papers from early career and postgraduate researchers from within the University and further afield, with the aim of inspiring the next generation of researchers. CCRAM has also promoted inter-school research, as exemplified with **Waite's** collaboration with **Grennan** on a two-year AHRC project.

The true value of CCRAM, however, is not limited to financial support for research. At its heart, the centre promotes a genuine sense of research community and belonging, which in turn has had a positive impact on staff health and wellbeing. Post COVID 19, CCRAM has continued to support

research through online conferences, symposiums and events in order to support staff research in unprecedented times. These are qualities that cannot be over-estimated nor under-valued in the current global context.

3.4 Facilities

The Department of Music, Media and Performance is located across three campuses: (1) Creative Campus, Kingsway; (2) Parkgate Road Campus, Chester; and (3) Padgate Campus, Warrington. At the Creative Campus, staff have access to multi-purpose studios, including a large dance studio, black box and white box studios, all with sprung floors, as well as large and small drama studios, recording studios and soundproof rehearsal rooms. The studios are supported with full technical support and equipment. Media resources at the Parkgate Road Campus and Padgate Campus include dedicated, fully-equipped recording and sound studios, cameras and recording equipment.

Access to specialist resources and full-time technical support has enabled staff to develop and test work, critical for the development of practice-based projects, as exemplified by **Jamieson's**, **Sarco-Thomas's** and **Spies** work in dance, **Bugeja's** work in actor-training and mindfulness, and **Piasecka's** stage adaptations. To further promote staff research, the campus has hosted national and international conferences and symposiums, PaR performances and workshops, and three TEDx talks. As an indicator of the quality of the provision, touring companies who've shown work at the campus include: *Fallen Angels Dance Theatre*, *Cheshire Dance* and *NOW Dance*, *Reckless Sleepers*, *Teatro Pomodoro*, Adrian Dakers (*Geese Theatre*), and Judita Vivas. The department also provided rehearsal space at the Creative Campus for Storyhouse's inaugural production of *Julius Caesar*, before the building officially opened in 2017.

To support desk-based research, staff have individual offices and IT facilities and access to extensive library and online resources. Post COVID 19, the department has supported staff with computing equipment, web-cams, microphones and specialist Online resources.

3.5 Library Resources

Resource provision at Chester benefits from an excellent range of physical and virtual library resources. Eight University libraries housed across its campuses hold over 750,000 e-books, approximately 300,000 physical books and 65,000 full text online journals. For staff based at the Warrington Campus, the **Broomhead Library** is open throughout the week and weekend for students to obtain assistance from the Media Subject Librarian and access book resources, PCs, quiet and social learning spaces. Subject-specific electronic databases and journals include BFI InView, Box of Broadcasts, GALE, Screenonline and the Times Digital Archive as well as referencing software such as EndNote and statistical software (SPSS, Nvivo). The **Kingsway Library** is open throughout the week for researchers to obtain assistance from specialist subject Librarian and IT technicians. The Library holds book collections for the Department of Music, Media and Performance and the Department of Art and Design. Researchers also have access to a wealth of virtual resources including Naxos Music Library, Rock's Backpages, Digital Theatre Plus, journal databases JSTOR and Project MUSE and many ebooks and journals. The **Seaborne Library**, Parkgate Road Campus, has a dedicated Research Support Team providing research support to students and staff.

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

4.1 International Collaborations

Duffett is an acknowledged expert on popular music and media fandom. His expertise has been sought by The Discovery Channel (19-8-01) and the BBC World Service (15-9-04), and has been quoted in The New York Times (21-11-14), Rolling Stone (13-9-17) and the *New Yorker* (9-9-19); **Owens's** recognised leadership in educational drama spans over two decades and has a global significance. For example, he was a Scientific Advisor to the ARTSEQUAL research initiative (2015-2020), a multidisciplinary research project funded by the Strategic Research Council of the Academy of Finland. **Owens** is also an International Advisory Board Member for *The Journal of Drama and Theatre Education* in Asia: Hong Kong Drama/ Theatre Education Forum (2008-ongoing); **Pattie** is

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an internationally recognised expert on Beckett and he publishes extensively on contemporary British theatre, Scottish theatre, and popular culture; **Piasecka** was an Expert Contributor for a round-table on youth radicalisation and extremism at the European Parliament and her stage adaptation of *Moby Dick* was selected by Kings College London and the Melville Society for a public event at the British Library on artist responses to the novel. She also reviewed an Associate Professorship appointment for the University of Ghana; **Johnson**, former vice-chair of SCUDD (2007-2010), has established research connections with academic partners in the USA and Portugal; **Dockwray** has a long-established research collaboration with Karen Collins, the University of Waterloo, Ontario, which has produced a number of outputs in this cycle; **Harper** was awarded a Churchill Trust Travelling Fellowship to research the intersection of game design and drama at University of Miami. He has presented LARP performance works at international festivals including Grenselandet in Oslo, Blackbox CPH in Copenhagen and Minsk Larp Festival in Belarus.

4.2 Public Engagement

As noted in section 2.5.4, the Department has a research collaboration with Storyhouse, a multi-million-pound arts venue in the centre of Chester. Researchers in the department have contributed greatly to the work of Storyhouse, acting as a Trustee for the Board (**Owens**), and committee membership for *Chester Reads*, a city-wide reading initiative with Cheshire Libraries, Storyhouse and the University of Chester (**Piasecka**). Since 2017, Storyhouse has programmed *The Christmas Lectures*, a holiday-inspired series of scholarly talks to bring academia to the general public. Department staff who have presented Christmas Lectures are: **Harrop, Dockwray, Piasecka, Sproston** 2017; **Barnes, Lewis** 2018; **Johnson, Piasecka, Sproston** 2019; **Harper, Kerrigan** 2020. Staff have also presented public lectures on the history of 19th Century Actors (**Waite** 2019), *Witches on Stage* (**Piasecka** 2019), and Mapping the Welsh Borders (**Roberts** 2020). Storyhouse has hosted a number of research festivals, including *Educating Creatively Conference* (2019), and *Beyond Text* (2018), an international workshop, convened by **Owens**, and attended by educators and practitioners across Europe, Scandinavia and Palestine. In addition to the above, the Department has long established collaboration with *Cheshire Dance* and *Now Dance*. **Harper** is an active member of the Nordic Larp (live action role-play) community; **Barnes's** (BAFTA winner Scotland New Talent 2013), expertise in film production was sought for *Caliban*, a new feature film by Ian Armer; **Morrison** is one of the organisers of *Louder than Words*, an international festival of music writing, which has been staged each November since 2013.

For researchers working in media and journalism, notable examples of public engagement include **Ford's** work with **Summers** and **Molony** on 360° filming with the British Film Institute; **Hart** was cited by George Osborne in the Spring 2014 budget for his report on Classic Car hobbyists; **Roberts** is a regular panellist on BBC Radio Wales's *Something Else* Sunday Newspaper Review Show; **Rasmussen** leads the *Food in the Time of Lockdown* project for the University in collaboration with the NoWFood Centre (Chester) and the *Slow Food Movement* UK (North Wales). **Rasmussen** is also a speech-writer and Public Orator for the University. He has written and delivered speeches for many luminaries including HRH, The Duchess of Cornwall, actors Dame Patricia Routledge and David Suchet and the Director-General of the BBC, Lord Tony Hall.

4.3 Fellowships

In recognition of his status as an international expert in educational drama, **Owens** was appointed a National Teaching Fellow of the HEA and a Distinguished Teaching Fellow of the University of Chester; **Sproston** is a Principal Fellow of the HEA (PFHEA); **Jamieson** is a Senior Fellow of the HEA (SFHEA); **Rasmussen, Barnes, Erzien-Essien, Molony and Roberts** are Fellows of the HEA (FHEA); **Johnson** is a Fellow of the RSA; **Roberts** is a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society.

4.4 Research Advisory Membership

Pattie was AHRC Peer Review College Member, 2013-2017 (Commended for outstanding contribution to work of PRC, 2013-2016; Assessment Panel Member - AHRC 2014-2016; Panel member - AHRC PRC Enrolment Panel 2017; **Johnson** is on the Board of Arts Connect (the Arts Council England bridge organisation for the West Midlands); **Owens** sits on a number of advisory boards, including the ARTSEQUAL research initiative; International Journal for Applied Drama and

Theatre Research (Australia); a Board Member & Trustee Chair of the Artistic Policy Sub Committee for *Chester Performs*; and the Editorial Advisory Board for the National Association of Teachers of Drama (NATD).

4.5 Editorial Positions

- **Duffett** is on the Editorial Boards of *Atlantis* (Journal of Spanish Association for Anglo-American Studies), and *Rock Music Studies* (USA), and an advisor to *Profils Américains* (Montpellier). He has reviewed books for Oxford University Press, Bloomsbury, Anthem, Palgrave; and peer reviewer for *Popular Music and Society*, *Popular Music*, *Journal of Media Psychology*, *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, *Religion Arts*.
- **Dockwray** is on the Editorial Board for *Popular Music in Practice Journal*.
- **Barnett** is a former Editor of the academic journal *49th Parallel*.
- **Owens** is a Peer Reviewer and Advisory Board Member for *Applied Theatre Research*; Referee for the *Journal in Drama in Education*; Reviewer for the *South African Theatre Journal* and an International Advisory Board Member for the *Journal of Drama and Theatre Education in Asia*.
- **Pattie** is on the Editorial Board for the *International Journal of Scottish Theatre* and a Manuscript/Book Proposer for Palgrave, Routledge, Cambridge University Press, Oxford University Press.
- **Piasecka** is a Peer Reviewer for *National Drama* (2015-2020); *Research in Drama Education* (RIDE), Special Edition, 2016 and *Power and Education*, Sage 2016.
- **Sproston** is a Peer Reviewer for the publication of conference proceedings of the *Innovation in Music Conference* 2013; 2015; 2017.

4.6 Conferences and Scholarly Encounters

As stated in section 3.3.1, **Dockwray** and **Piasecka** co-convened the *Narratives and Alternative Stories Conference* 2017; **Pattie** co-convened *Staging Beckett at the Margins* 2014. This was an international conference for a three-year collaborative project, led by the universities of Reading, Chester and the Victoria & Albert Museum; **Johnson** is the convenor of the TAPRA Performance and Science group; **Duffett** co-convened an international symposium at the University of Chester on *Popular Music Fandom and the Public Sphere* 2015. He has co-convened two international conferences, *Love and Rock Music* 2014, a collaborative conference between the universities of Chester and Université Paul-Valéry, Montpellier; and *New Perspectives on Elvis: A One-Day International Conference*, Memphis Public Library 2017 and *Balancing the Mix: A Conference on Popular Music and Social Justice*, University of Memphis 2019.

For the University research environment, **Piasecka** convened five Postgraduate Symposiums for the School of Arts and Media 2015; 2016; 2017; 2018; 2019; three Faculty Conferences 2015; 2016; 2017 and an Online Symposium in 2021. **Jamieson** hosted *Cheshire Dance: Now Dance* 2018; 2019 and **Sarco-Thomas** convened the UK Contact Improvisation Teachers Exchange 2019.

4.7 Doctoral Examination and Committees.

Johnson; **Pattie**; **Duffett**; **Dockwray**; **Sproston**; **Piasecka**, **Owens** and **Roberts** are experienced Doctoral Examiners, having examined PhDs on the subjects of music, educational drama, Museums and heritage, science and theatre, drag performance, journalism, composition, and Contemporary British Theatre. For example, **Duffett** has examined PhDs internationally on subjects within the UoA at the Aarhus University in Denmark (on Lady Gaga and performance, 6-11-15) and at Erasmus University in Rotterdam (on boybands and nostalgia, 29-6-16). To support the examination of doctoral candidates, **Sproston**, **Piasecka**, **Duffett** and **Johnson** are University-appointed Viva Chairs. **Piasecka** is Deputy-Chair of the Ethics Committee for the Faculty of Arts and Humanities and advises the Department on research ethics and PaR ethics; **Sproston** and **Johnson** advise the University on Professorial appointments.