

Institution: University of South Wales

Unit of assessment: D28 History

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

Context and Structure

History has been taught at the University of South Wales (USW) and its predecessors since the 1970s. The formation of USW, through the merger of the University of Glamorgan and the University of Wales Newport in 2013, brought together two institutions with significant research traditions.

The [History](#) Unit of Assessment (UoA) has 7.0 FTE staff, six of whom (**Atherton, Croll, Durrant, Evans, Hill**, and **Lock-Lewis**) map directly on to the History Division teaching unit. A seventh member of the UoA, **Finucane**, Academic Subject Manager for the Humanities since 2017, is an early modern historian who remains research active. The UoA also has two Professors Emeriti, Gray and Williams, who are a source of sage advice and mentorship to younger colleagues. Indeed, **Gray**, who maintains particularly close contact with her former colleagues, leads one of the UoA's Impact Case Studies. Restructuring within the Faculty of Business and Society, in which History then sat, led to the departure of some experienced members of staff in 2017. The appointment of two new lecturers (**Atherton** and **Hill**) in 2019, however, makes for a more balanced age profile within the History team.

Temporally, USW historians research the world since 1450. Spatially, they write upon These Islands, continental Europe, the Atlantic World, and aspects of global history. Historians in the UoA are also involved in inter-disciplinary centres, notably the Centre for Gender Studies in Wales (where **Lock-Lewis** is co-director) and the Centre for the Study of Media and Culture in Small Nations (where **Hill** has assumed a leadership role).

Successive University-wide restructurings have seen History within a Humanities and Social Sciences Research Institute (2013-2016) and then a Humanities Research Institute (2016-17), both under the aegis of the Faculty of Business and Society. Since 1 August 2020, however, History has been part of the School of Design and Digital in the Faculty of Creative Industries, and enjoys close links with the English Division, which facilitates regular research collaborations – particularly through the Centre for Gender Studies. Within History, research governance is the responsibility of the UoA leader **Evans**, who sits on the USW REF Working Group and Faculty Research Committee.

Research and Impact Strategy

The UoA's five main **Aims** over the period 2014-2020 have been:

1. To support outstanding individual research, recognising that the small size of the History team can inhibit meaningful collaborative work *within* USW.
2. To encourage engagement with networks *beyond* USW that can leverage colleagues' research effectively.
3. To forge links with cultural institutions beyond USW in order to raise the profile and extend the reach of the UoA's research.
4. To invest in research that will deliver impact beyond the academy.
5. To support a number of postgraduate researchers appropriate to the size of the teaching team and to ensure that achieving a postgraduate qualification is an opening in the profession rather than an end point.

Despite much time being lost to structural reorganization in 2013-14, 2017 and 2019-20, and some shrinkage in the teaching team, substantial progress has been made in meeting each of the five **Aims**.

1. USW historians have published critically acclaimed monographs with front-rank academic publishers (such as The Johns Hopkins University Press) and reported on their research in world-leading journals (such as *Past & Present*). Judicious application of the Academic Workload Model and the deployment of QR money to buy-out time for ambitious researchers has led to high-quality publications.
2. UoA historians have been centrally involved in academic networks locally, nationally and globally. Some have been formal and well-established scholarly bodies, such as the Ecclesiastical History Society, of which **Atherton** is a committee member. Others have been more recently established bodies that seek to bridge the scholarly-activist divide, such as Our Chartist Heritage, which **Lock-Lewis** convenes. Other networks have a more ad hoc quality, such as the network of scholars researching the early modern copper industry in Europe, with which **Evans** is affiliated.
3. UoA Historians have taken advantage of closer links with institutions such as the National Museum of Wales (with which USW signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2018) to establish research partnerships with curatorial staff. One of the UoA's REF 2021 impact case studies – "Wales and Atlantic Slavery: redressing historical amnesia" – has drawn heavily on the Museum's resources and will inform the Museum's treatment of slavery and Black History.

4. To maximise impact, History at USW, in conjunction with English, used QR funding to appoint a Research Development Advisor (2015-16) and an Impact Research Assistant (from 2018). Impact planning has been embedded into the planning process for all new research projects.
5. Nine research degrees (PhD, MPhil, MRes) have been awarded – an increase on the number awarded in the previous REF cycle – with several of the successful candidates progressing to research posts within USW or at other institutions.

The success of our research strategy is evidenced by the fact that over the current assessment period members of the UoA have published four single-authored books, three edited volumes, 24 refereed journal articles, and 14 book chapters, together with a host of shorter contributions, blog pieces and journalism.

Future Plans

The UoA's **Aims** for the future (2021-2030) are:

1. To enhance postgraduate provision through the development of a MA in Public History and by contributing to allied programmes, such as the cross-faculty MSc Global Governance.
2. To ensure that appropriate support is available to staff at all career stages, especially staff with relatively recent PhDs.
3. To prioritise applications to UKRI and other front-rank funders.
4. To cement closer links with the heritage sector in Wales and beyond.
5. To strengthen the UoA's advisory capacity, linking to the Welsh Government, NGOs, and charities.

The fulfilment of many of these aims is already underway. Our PGR community continues to grow (Aim 1), with fourteen students registered for the 2020-2021 session (two for PhD, twelve for MA by Research). Almost all of them are the product of our undergraduate programme and are overwhelmingly drawn from the communities we serve in the economically disadvantaged South Wales valleys. They are testimony to the energy that historians at USW devote to nurturing research ability in students who are often the first of their family to attend university. We have also become more self-consciously ambitious in our approach to funding (Aim 3). It is an approach that is already bearing fruit. In 2021, **Hill** will take up an AHRC Early Fellowship on [Nuclear imperialism and the British Empire](#) in the 1950s and 1960s. Meanwhile, **Evans** is the principal investigator in a funding application to the AHRC's [Towards a National Collection](#) programme. The £3.5 million bid is a collaboration with the British Library, English Heritage,

Historic England, Historic Environment Scotland, National Museums Liverpool, the National Trust, and Tate.

Our advisory capacity (Aim 5) has been significantly enhanced and will continue to be enhanced in the period to come (see below, Section 4).

Section 2. People

Staffing Strategy and Staff Development

All UoA historians hold PhDs and all are research active. As outlined in the institutional level statement (REF 5a), the USW Academic Workload Model ensures that staff with significant responsibility for research (SRR) have 20 per cent of their time protected for research. From 2018-2019, professors have had 30 per cent of their time protected. The UoA leader (**Evans**) is allocated additional time within the workload model for research leadership. In addition, timetabling is managed to allow one clear day for research per week and, when appropriate, to allow for 'light' teaching terms. There is no sabbatical scheme. Research is a key element of USW's Development and Performance Review Scheme which includes an annual review in June-September and a mid-point review in January-February. In addition, the UoA leader meets regularly with unit members and offers individual mentoring where appropriate. A strong research portfolio and the ability to develop research leadership is a requirement of all new appointments to the History Division.

Research Students

The UoA's postgraduate community is not large in absolute numbers, but it is substantial in relative terms. Moreover, it is conspicuously diverse in its interests and remarkable for its energy. The topics of recent postgraduate students include Iron Age landscapes, early modern medicine, the Poor Law in nineteenth-century Wales, and film and the Left in twentieth-century Britain.

History postgraduates are integrated into our research culture as fully as possible. They are encouraged to present papers at the University's annual postgraduate conference and at internal seminars, as well as at external fora. Students can apply for conference funding (up to £1000) via the University's Graduate School.

Support mechanisms for postgraduate students have been made more robust, in part through the introduction of 'PhD Manager' (a postgraduate research management system), and the

establishment of a new Graduate School (see Section 3). The Graduate School runs Induction workshops and a research skills training programme which is mapped on to *Vitae's* Researcher Development Framework. The programme includes sessions on academic writing, literature review, social media skills for researchers, employability, public speaking and engagement, online skills, the transfer report, and the viva. The Graduate School also runs an annual postgraduate conference. Each student's supervisory team is required to provide an annual report on their progress. The new procedure for transfer from MPhil to PhD, which includes a viva (usually with an external examiner), introduced during the last audit period, has now bedded in.

Equality and Diversity

The UoA is fully committed to the principles of Equality and Diversity (E&D) which are supported by the University – as detailed in the institution-level statement. USW holds an Athena SWAN Institutional Bronze Award and became a Stonewall Champion in 2016. In 2020 the University rose 19 places to 24th in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index and was named a Top Trans Employer. Ray Vincent, convenor and founder of Spectrum, USW's LGBT+ Staff Network, was celebrated as Stonewall's Gay Role Model of the Year in 2019. Calls to 'decolonise' the curriculum have been eagerly supported by UoA members, with **Hill** taking a leading role on a University-wide commission seeking to link decolonial research to new pedagogical practices. Mention must also be made of the 'Women in Academia' development programme set up at USW in 2014 to raise the profile of women academics. **Lock-Lewis** has been a contributor to and beneficiary of this scheme. Promotion opportunities and research support are equally available to part-time and full-time staff. More broadly, the UoA's research contributes to debates and awareness around gender and diversity particularly through the Centre for Gender Studies, the contribution of **Lock-Lewis** to the Women's Archive Wales, the work of **Hill** on British imperialism in the twentieth century, and the research of **Evans** on slavery and race in the Atlantic World. The wider importance of **Evans'** research has been recognised in his appointment in June 2020 to a Welsh Government 'task and finish' group to conduct an [Audit of Public Monuments, Street and Building Names associated with Atlantic Slavery](#).

Section 3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

Income

The UoA has generated £82,125 in income in the period 2013-20. This is drawn from major overseas funders (Riksbankens Jubileumsfond in Sweden) and from scholarly funds in the UK

(the Pasold Research Fund and the Economic History Society). USW historians have also won several stipendiary fellowships at research institutions in the United States worth US\$8,400.

UoA historians have also contributed indirectly to important funding initiatives. **Lock-Lewis**, for example, was a member of the steering committee that developed a Gwent Archives bid for Wellcome Trust funding to catalogue Monmouthshire hospital records from the age of Aneurin Bevan. The project that **Lock-Lewis** helped design – ‘From a “Penny in the Pound” to “Free at the Point of Delivery”’: Cataloguing the pre- and post-1948 hospital records of Monmouthshire’ – was awarded £38,729 in 2018.

Infrastructure and Facilities

Research at USW is supported by the Research and Innovation Services (RISe) team. The UoA has benefitted from major developments in the University’s research infrastructure and facilities spearheaded by RISe during this period. The opening of the new Graduate School in December 2018 brings postgraduate researchers together into one interdisciplinary community and enhances the development opportunities available to them. Research students already benefit from access to the Postgraduate Centre in Ty Crawshay which provides a social learning space, meeting ‘pods’ and access to networked PCs, email, phone, photocopyers, etc. Within the Faculty, full-time postgraduate researchers are supplied with shared offices, including computer facilities, while part-time students can hot-desk in a shared room. The introduction of PhD Manager software has streamlined administration and record-keeping for both PhD and MPhil students.

In addition, RISe has supported the UoA’s prioritisation of Impact activities, building on History’s tradition of public engagement and our strong links with local communities, creative industries, museums, art galleries, voluntary organisations, and the media. As well as its programme of Impact Masterclasses and lunchtime workshops, the Research Impact Team has run bespoke sessions specifically for the UoA.

The UoA issues a regular research bulletin to key individuals with the Faculty and the Research and Innovation Services team. The UoA also organises a variety of events designed to build an internal research culture at USW: bid-writing workshops, “Shut Up and Write!” sessions, PechaKucha research-sharing seminars, etc.

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

Research Collaborations, Networks and Partnerships

The UoA has drawn on a range of established and newly flourishing research collaborations during the assessment period. Our partners range from the Welsh Government to the Anglican Church in Wales, from the National Museum of Wales to local heritage organisations, and from professional bodies to activist community groups. Many of these connections are manifested in our Impact Case Studies. ‘Using Research on Medieval Pilgrimage to Boost Faith Tourism in Wales’, for example, involved working with Christian churches (the Anglican dioceses of Llandaff and Monmouth and the Roman Catholic diocese of Cardiff), tourist agencies (Visit Wales, formerly the Welsh Tourist Board), charities (the National Churches Trust in Wales), and recreational groups (Ramblers Cymru). The outcome was that the UoA played a central role in design of the Welsh Government’s Faith Tourism Plan for Wales. Our other Impact Case Study, ‘Wales and Atlantic Slavery: redressing historical amnesia’, led to cooperation with curatorial staff at the National Museum of Wales, close work with HLF-supported community groups, and a pivotal role in the Welsh Government’s response to the Black Lives Matter movement in the wake of George Floyd’s murder in May 2020 for the Impact Case Study leader.

Activities and Contributions to the Research Base, Economy and Society

Members of the UoA contribute to the research base, economy and society through a range of events, organisations and activities, both nationally and internationally.

USW historians have served the profession in various ways - as officers, as committee members, as editorial board members, or as trustees of a range of scholarly bodies, including:

- Army Records Society
- Church Monuments Society
- Ecclesiastical History Society
- European Reformation Research Group
- Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust
- Historical Metallurgy Society
- *History of Universities* (an Oxford University Press yearbook)
- *Twentieth Century Communism: A Journal of International History* (Lawrence & Wishart)
- Welsh Government Advisory Panel on Medieval Welsh Stone Sculpture
- West of England & South Wales Women’s History Network

- *The International Newsletter of Communist Studies* (Institute for Social Movements, Ruhr University Bochum)

UoA historians also manage important scholarly resources. **Durrant**, for example, edits the internationally acclaimed *Witchcraft Bibliography Online*.

History also co-hosts, with colleagues in English, the Centre for Gender Studies in Wales. The Centre provides a focus within USW for multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research in gender generally and in relation to Welsh history, culture and society specifically. The Centre hosts the annual Ursula Masson Memorial Lecture, a showpiece event sponsored by the Women's Archive Wales/Archif Menywod Cymru. The Centre regularly hosts conferences and seminars. Its tenth anniversary celebration was held on International Women's Day 2018 at the Senedd (National Assembly of Wales) on the theme 'Women's Activism: Past and present', marking the centenary of women's partial suffrage. Other notable recent events include the 2019 seminar co-hosted with the USW Spectrum/LGBT+ Staff network featuring the historian and heritage consultant Norena Shopland talking about the hidden history of LGBT people in Wales.

Organisation of conferences and scholarly encounters:

- **Atherton** is the annual conference convener for the Society for Reformation Studies (from 2020)
- **Lock-Lewis** has co-convened the annual Chartist Convention in Newport throughout the assessment period
- **Evans** convened 'Clothing the Enslaved in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World', National Museum of Wales, with sponsorship from the Pasold Research Fund (2019)
- **Hill** convened a workshop on the Peace Pledge Union for the AHRC-funded project *Voices of War and Peace: The Great War and its Legacy* (2018)
- **Evans** convened 'Global Copper: Mining, Smelting, Minting, and Manufacturing from the Baroque to the Modern', a panel at the 18th World Economic History Congress, Boston, USA (2018)
- **Evans** co-convened 'Diverse History', a regional symposium of the Royal Historical Society at the University of South Wales (2018)
- **Evans** convened 'Copper from the Baroque to the Modern', The National Waterfront Museum, Swansea (2017)
- **Finucane** co-convened 'Representing the Tudors: an interdisciplinary conference', University of South Wales (2015)

- **Evans** co-convened 'Materials making modernity', a panel at the 14th International Congress for Eighteenth-Century Studies, Rotterdam, The Netherlands (2015)

Editorial positions:

USW's historians have contributed to the editing of journals and yearbooks: *Historical Metallurgy*, *History of Universities*, and *Witchcraft Bibliography Online*.

Refereeing/reviewing for academic publications or research proposals: members of the UoA have provided peer reviews for a wide range of publications and bodies including:

- **Reviewing for journals:** *H-Slavery*, *Itinerario*, the *Journal of Southern History*, *Morgannwg: Journal of Glamorgan History*, *Midlands History*, the *Mining History Journal*, *Quaker Studies*, *Social History*, and *Technology & Culture*
- **Refereeing for journals:** *Agricultural History Review*, the *Canadian Journal of Law and Society*, *Contemporary British History*, *Economic History Review*, *The Extractive Industries and Society*, *Genealogy*, *History Compass*, *History of Science*, the *Island Studies Journal*, the *Journal of British Studies*, the *Journal of Contemporary History*, the *Journal of Global History*, the *Journal of Global Slavery*, *Open Library of Humanities*, and the *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*.
- **Publishers:** Bloomsbury Academic, Edinburgh University Press, Liverpool University Press, Oxford University Press, Palgrave Macmillan, Routledge and the University of Wales Press
- **Funding bodies:** L'Institut d'études avancées de Paris, Israel Science Foundation, and the Welsh Books Council

External Examining and HEI Consultancy:

UoA historians have examined postgraduate dissertations at the universities of Birmingham, Cardiff, Kent, Portsmouth, St Andrews, and Sheffield. **Evans** was an assessor for professorial promotion at Montana State University (2016).

Honours, fellowships and prizes awarded to staff:

UoA historians have been awarded the following competitive fellowships:

- **Evans:** E. Geoffrey and Elizabeth Thayer Verney Fellowship, Nantucket Historical Association (2019)
- **Evans:** Marie L. and William R. Hartland Fellowship, The John Carter Brown Library, Brown University (2016)
- **Evans:** Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Fellowship, The Huntington Library (2016)

They have also been awarded the following prizes:

- **Evans:** the Best Article Prize 2019 of the Forum on European Expansion and Global Interaction for his article "'Voyage iron': an Atlantic slave trade currency, its European origins, and West African impact', *Past & Present*, 239 (2018), 41-70
- **Evans:** the 2016 Douglass Adair Memorial Award of the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture for his article 'The plantation hoe: the rise and fall of an Atlantic commodity', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 69: 1 (2012), 71-100
- **Evans:** the 2014 Abbot Payson Usher Prize by the Society for the History of Technology for his article 'An Enlightenment in steel? Innovation in the steel trades of eighteenth-century Britain', *Technology & Culture*, 53: 3 (2012), 533-560