

Institution: Staffordshire University
Unit of Assessment: UoA34: Communication, Cultural and Media Studies, Library and Information Management
Note: All names of people submitted in this UoA34 are in bold.
1. Unit context and structure research and impact strategy

CONTEXT AND STRUCTURE

This unit, together with its research centre, is the home of the University's interdisciplinary research in and with the creative and cultural sectors. Our research focuses on co-creation and co-production, socially engaged practices, everyday creativity, and art and society, and investigates and applies innovative new methodologies. We are guided by and support the University's vision for civic engagement as The Connected University, in line with our institutional strategic plan (<https://www.staffs.ac.uk/about/corporate-information/strategic-plan>).

Our REF2021 submission includes researchers from two Departments: a) Media and Performance and b) Games and Visual Effects. The University responded to the increasingly interdisciplinary challenges facing economy and society by uniting creative and technical subjects, first in 2016 into two Schools and, then, in 2020 into one large School. The structural focus on interdisciplinarity benefits our research and the teaching environment by supporting cross-school collaborations that address complex challenges through a cohesive university structure. As part of this cohesive structure, Media and Performance and Games and Visual Effects now sit together in the School of Digital, Technologies and Arts.

The **C3 Centre: Creative Industries and Creative Communities** Research Centre (<http://blogs.staffs.ac.uk/c3centre/>) provides a single overarching structure for academics working in this unit (as well as UoA32 and other UoAs). The Centre attends to the creative and cultural economic and creative society. It undertakes research "not 'about the arts' but 'through the arts'" by using arts methodologies in civic, industrial, and social contexts. The Centre provides a structural framework for research that reflects the search for new conceptual and critical insights into practices used by individual artists, collectives and creative thinkers who are passionate about engaging, interacting and co-creating with their surrounding communities.

The C3 Centre includes three interlinked research themes covered by this unit. These themes enable interdisciplinary research collaborations with staff from other units. Many staff in this unit of assessment also contribute to more than one theme. Research in the areas of philosophy and cultural studies provide a critical dimension to this activity, which extends through engagements with a variety of problems in society, culture and cultural production. Our research themes and their contributing staff are:

- Creative Practices in Film, Music and Media and Games:
ESTIBEIRO, GRAHAM, MACCALLUM-STEWART, MCKENNA, PAYLING, WEBLEY;
- Creative Economy (including creative industry):
BOEHM, MCKENNA, MACCALLUM-STEWART, RUDGE, STUBBS, FAIRBURN (UoA17), POWER (UoA32);
- Culture, Society and Communication (including philosophy):
BOEHM, CHRISTIE, ESTIBEIRO, BURNHAM, GRATTON, MANSELL, SPEED, WEBB, PAYLING, BROWNSWORD (UoA32), FRANCIS (UoA32), NICHOLDS (UoA17), STURDY-COLLS (UoA15).

We have made considerable progress in our development as a sustainable research environment. We have achieved a fourteen-fold rise in research income, going from GBP54,899 in the REF2014 period to GBP795,033 in the current REF period. We have doubled PhD completions from 12 in the REF2014 period. 24 students have completed PhDs (including three based overseas and thus outside the scope of the HESA return). In the academic year 2019-20 staff in this unit supervised 41 PhD researchers.

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

In the REF2014 period, we supported interdisciplinary research through two Research Centres, focusing on applied creative thinking and on media, arts and technologies. These Centres brought a wide range of expertise and creative thinking from across Art, Design, Humanities and Social Sciences to bear on “solutions for social, community, cultural and business issues within our city and beyond” (REF2014 REF5, UoA36). Their success led to our establishment of the overarching C3 Centre. We have used the Centre to develop an environment conducive to thematic arts and culture research and that supports diverse researcher-practitioner communities. Research by staff associated with the unit includes work on creative methods supporting hardship communities, creative industry co-production business models, emerging film clusters and their partnership models, and the underpinning scholarly work on the co-production turn of the creative economy.

RESEARCH STRATEGY

Collectively, the Unit’s research spans and critically questions cross-thematic boundary concerns, with interdisciplinary collaborations providing the synergies needed to address real-world challenges.

- Creative Economy: How is our cultural engagement evolving to emphasise co-production? Co-creation, co-production and co-ownership are central to this Unit and to the C3 Centre. We explore the theory and practice of widening access to the arts and allowing our innate need to be creative to drive social and economic resilience. **BOEHM’s** work (Outputs 3185, 3982) on arts-academic partnerships makes use of Sacco’s Culture 3.0 conceptual framework focusing on co-creation and everyday creativity, exploring the evolution of cultural engagement towards the co-production turn of the economy. The work applies ensuing critical insights in an Arts-Council funded leadership intervention. **RUDGE** (Output 3741) applies Etzkowitz’s triple-helix partnership models (state, industry, academia) to film-based production-practice to establish new models for creative industry clusters in second-order cities such as Stoke on-Trent. **GRAHAM** (Output List74) applies her model of film-production practices within civil society. She uses heritage-related filmic practices to enable people to gain personal attachments to places. **STUBBS** (Outputs 5233, 5329, 6117) explores all of these phenomena in his scholarly and critical work on the modern film industry.
- Culture, Society and Communication: How can we use personal narratives more effectively for advocacy? THOMASON (Output List36) worked with local communities to co-create new knowledge of local heritage related to modern day circus, and to co-curate exhibitions showcasing this knowledge’s national and international significance. **SPEED** (Output List82) uses photography to investigate and document activist communities, drawing attention to diverse narratives within protestor communities who are often otherwise stereotyped. In **GRATTON’s** work (Output 3145), between 2013 and 2020 Staffordshire University supported five participatory action research projects using her novel creative methods to explore ways of involving diverse communities in formal academic research (Get Talking, see also Impact Case Study). **GRATTON’s** research was co-created with 79 community-based researchers.
- Culture, Society and Communication: What is the role of knowledge in the aesthetic appreciation by society? **WEBB** (Outputs 3658, 2991, 3654, 6133) examines the philosophy of communication in the work of Michel Serres. He considers how this philosophy changes the ways we understand knowledge, information, and the temporal and spatial characteristics of identity and belonging. **BURNHAM’s** work (Outputs 3456, 3458, 4454) investigates the deeper transdisciplinary nature of aesthetics as a way of explaining the influence of knowledge and context on our appreciation of culture. **WEBB** and **BURNHAM’S** work shares an interest in how we understand the local and the global in view of the connection between social, political and geographical environments. **MANSELL’s** work (Output 2195) combines theory and practice to explore how verbal and typographical expression can generate a sense of place, for example by translating knowledge specific to the local practice of ceramic glazing into a poetic form.
- Creative Practices in Film, Music and Media and Games: What are novel digital solutions for immersive audience engagement? **ESTIBEIRO** (Outputs 3559, 4794, 4881) and **PAYLING** (Output list70) are producing more immersive experiences through interactive sonic / visual

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

installations. MA's research (Output 4471) has advanced design methods for mixed reality applications. **MacCALLUM-STEWART** (Output 3596) addresses the role of play in our digital economy. ZIOGA's work (Output 4289) used innovative digital solutions to widen access to arts and culture by producing new research and use methodologies in the area of brain-computer cinematic performance.

Our research is central to the strategic direction of Staffordshire University as a Connected University. We target interdisciplinary collaborations to support institutional strategic priority areas, such as health and wellbeing, economic development, creative and cultural industries and the applied social sciences.

To continue the C3 Centre's sustainable development, a key strand of our impact strategy is to form close partnerships with the region's cultural actors. We develop research toward impactful culture-led regeneration. Our staff base has long-standing partnerships with external creative and cultural organisations and has had substantial successes in attracting both enterprise and research funding.

Our five-year strategic plan is closely aligned to the University's vision to support the creative economy and cultural engagement of Stoke-on-Trent with its heritage-rich spaces. As part of this strategy, we have been heavily involved in strategic regional partnership activities that use our research to support culture-led regeneration, benefiting our total impact.

Strategic projects and ongoing initiatives for the next 5 years include:

Culture, Society and Communication:

- Using research to support regeneration of areas of Stoke-on-Trent through creative and cultural engagement: **GRATTON** will continue in her work on participatory methods (see Get Talking Impact Case Study) and will focus on applying creative methods to our Connected Communities Framework and our Civic University mission. **GRATTON** leads our work on establishing the institutional civic university agreement, in line with the UPP Foundation Civic University Commission.

Creative Economy:

- Regeneration through innovation-led growth by working in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce and City authorities to strengthen the creative economy: The European Regional Development funded Mentoring Growth / Factory project (2014 – 2022) uses **BOEHM's** current work on Culture 3.0 co-production models. The project empowers creative industry SMEs to consider and strengthen their economic resilience through their own business models and skill sets. **RUDGE's** work continues to support the growth of our creative film cluster in the region, as inaugurated with the establishment of the academia-industry PLATFORM group in 2016 (<https://www.platformstaffs.com/>).
- Placemaking and the Creative Sectors: **BOEHM's** work provides the critical foundation of a three-year ACE funded Leadership Programme, Create Place (2019 – 2022, <http://blogs.staffs.ac.uk/createplace/>). This programme ensures that in the post-COVID recovery we have a growing number of confident cultural leaders drawing on co-creation and placemaking methods to support regional communities and the creative and cultural sector.

Creative Practices in Film, Music and Media and Games:

- We are developing several creative research projects with the intention of foregrounding the region's culturally unique placemaking practices. Projects include work to plot, for the first time, the lifecycle of Peter Cheeseman's socially engaged theatre practice, drawing also from the unique special collection of original manuscripts and recordings held at our library (see resource section). This work will help us to understand the role of Cheeseman's practice in influencing the region's cultural life to be predominantly participatory. **BOEHM** and **NICHOLDS** (UoA17) are co-leads on an ERASMUS+ funded project that applies their research to allow emerging creative practitioners to devise intentional identities as part of their professional career development, using film-making and audio practices.

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

Over the next five years, we are on track to achieve:

- a 25% increase in average annual income (from GBP113,576 to GBP141,970).
- a 20% increase in HESA-reportable PhD student completions over the 5-year period (26 completions by 2026)
- growth in FTE of 25% (to 18.25 by 2026).

IMPACT STRATEGY

Our C3 Centre vision drives our impact strategy: “Our aim is to be instrumental in allowing our research to inform and influence local and regional policies to ensure creative economy and creative potential of individuals can drive regeneration of the city”.

We frequently focus our research activity on providing support for regionally impactful creative and cultural practices. This has been recognised nationally and internationally as providing transferable models of creative and cultural practices for regeneration, economic, and well-being agendas.

Creative Practices in Film, Music and Media and Games:

- **GRAHAM’s Production House**, which works with communities in France and the UK, has international reach as a distinctive film-based co-production practice bringing stories from WW1 and WW2 to new audiences using different media approaches. It has been featured on the BBC, The History Channel and ITV.

Creative Economy:

- **RUDGE’s** partnership work on the creative economy and creative clusters (PLATFORM) has received international recognition, as evidenced by an invited membership of the United Nations Creative Economy Expert Group (Geneva, 2019) and by an invitation to address the EU Cluster Conference (Bucharest, 2019).
- **BOEHM’s** work on economic co-production as part of a new type of cultural engagement has led to her being a founding member of Stoke-on-Trent’s Cultural Compact, which supports culture-led urban regeneration.

Culture, Society and Communication:

- THOMASON’s Philip Astley project (one of our Impact Case Studies), attracted an audience of 27,000 to view the new knowledge on circus history that we co-created with the local community.
- **GRATTON’s** Get Talking model allowed communities facing hardship to co-produce research alongside academics. It was used in the UKRI funded project 'Enhancing place-based partnerships in Public Engagement' project: How to 'Keep Talking': sustainable research teams in deprived areas (2019). The project’s findings are informing HE sector responses to national priorities around the civic role of universities. **GRATTON’s** research was co-created with 79 community-based researchers, who in turn reached and involved over 2500 participants.

Over the last and current REF assessment period, we supported our artist-researchers to connect to the wider society and economy by developing the Staffordshire University Fringe Festival. This ran annually from 2012 – 2016 (<http://blogs.staffs.ac.uk/fringe/>) with yearly audience figures of ca. 500 (see 2016 University Quarter Impact Report <https://blogs.staffs.ac.uk/fringe/files/2017/05/University-Quarter-Report-Jan-June-2016.png>). In the current REF period, we expanded and morphed our support into creating and contributing to transformational partnerships. Two of our local partners achieved Arts Council national portfolio status in the REF period (British Ceramics Biennial (BCB), Beaver Arts (B-Arts)), joining another longstanding ACE portfolio holder and our partner in several projects, the New Vic. Our longstanding partnerships with creative and cultural institutions, including BCB, The New Vic, B-Arts, Appetite, and The Potteries Museum and Gallery, underline our connectivity with the region. We see ourselves working also in partnership with Keele University’s Arts & Humanities Communities, and its Keele Deal Culture.

By providing consultation on cultural strategies, sitting on trustee boards and co-curating events, we work with our partners to support and co-create the Stoke-on-Trent cultural calendar:

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

- **GRATTON** led on the evaluation of the first four years of Appetite (see our Impact Case Study), contributing to the success of this annual arts festival (<https://www.appetite.org.uk/about/>). In the assessment period, Appetite has engaged more than 400,000 audience members and 50,014 participants, 1189 artists and 1501 volunteers;
- We work in partnership with other city cultural events, including the Big Feast (<https://www.appetite.org.uk/event/bigfeast19/>) and the Keele University led Stoking Curiosity (<https://www.keele.ac.uk/discover/artskeele/stokingcuriosity/>);
- Together with BCB and the North Staffordshire Chambers, **BOEHM** runs the ERDF funded Mentoring Growth Programme that specifically supports the region's creative economy (<http://blogs.staffs.ac.uk/c3centre/projects/factory/>). In 2020, this project adapted SME focused funded knowledge-transfer programmes to support Covid19 resilience and post-pandemic recovery strategies. It reached over 200 individual creative enterprises in 2020;
- Unit staff continue to be significantly involved in strategic initiatives, including the 2017 developments for Stoke-on-Trent's submission to become UK City of Culture 2021 (**GRATTON**) and the city's 2019 strategic Channel 4 regional hub bid (**RUDGE**).

Our work has helped Staffordshire University to become known as a creative force for North Staffordshire and Cheshire East. We support our researchers to contribute their expertise to the region's civil society and creative industries. This support has enabled **GRATTON's** work on the University's Connected Communities Framework; **RUDGE's** initiative PLATFORM - a creative cluster of more than 100 film and media companies in North Staffordshire; and **BOEHM's** leadership of one of the ACE funded Leadership Programmes for the Creative and Cultural Sectors, Create Place (<http://blogs.staffs.ac.uk/createplace/>). The Create Place partnership includes 16 regional and national creative partners, including BCB, B-Arts, Keele University, Cheshire East Local Authority, Stoke City Council, The Audience Agency, Voluntary Arts, Arts & Heritage and others. It implements **BOEHM's** underpinning research into Culture 3.0, co-creation and creative partnership models.

We have supported culture-led change by being researcher-artists and cultural leaders, and by allowing our research to interface with the region. Our work is contributing to Stoke-on-Trent coming to be known for its creative offer and social values. In 2020 we were a founding member of the city's new cultural compact, "Stoke Creates" (<https://www.stokecep.co.uk/stoke-creates/>) and our staff sit on its board (**BOEHM**).

2. People

STAFFING STRATEGY

The Unit includes researchers at all stages of their careers, including eight professors and associate professors, seven senior lecturers and lecturers. One member of staff is an Early Career Researcher (ECR). Since REF2014 five new members of staff have been recruited (**BOEHM**, **MACCALLUM-STEWART**, **MCKENNA**, **SPEED**, and **STUBBS**), one promoted to Professor (**BOEHM**) and four promoted to Associate Professorship (**MACCALLUM-STEWART**, **GRAHAM**, **ESTIBEIRO**, and **PAYLING**).

Progression to Associate Professor and Professor is managed through an annual University-wide conferment process overseen by a Professorial Conferment Committee, chaired by the Vice-Chancellor (see REF5a). Mentoring and advice is provided to support staff in their professional development and specifically for applicants prior to and during the conferment process itself. New members of staff and ECRs are mentored within research groups. Other senior staff with responsibility for research provide further mentoring to junior colleagues.

20 Visiting Research and Enterprise Fellows have contributed to the research environment of this Unit and its outputs. Four were Visiting Professors. Although not returned in REF, the Visiting Fellows produced 39 scholarly outputs, including 12 publications in refereed journals. Through the Visiting Fellows programme, the Unit has established links to leading figures in the creative sectors (e.g. senior management of Games Dragons, DPD Group and BCB).

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

From 2019 research in the unit has benefitted from the introduction of Associate Deans for Research and Enterprise (ADRE) in both the School of Creative Arts and Engineering (DODD (UoA12)) and the School of Computing and Digital Technology (SEKER (UoA3)), then coming together in 2020 as School of Digital, Technologies and Arts. With the Deans of School, the ADREs engage at University level with Research Innovation and Impact Services (RIIS) to support and develop the conditions for high quality research. The ADREs represent research interests on School Management Teams and School Academic Committees. Their representation ensures that research is at the heart of all decisions made at School level that concern teaching, support structures, provision for postgraduate researchers, and facilities.

The unit benefits from the University's commitment to fairness and equality in the management of its staff. As detailed in REF5a, there is a flexible return to work policy and staff can move easily between full and fractional posts. From April 2020 a new institutional blended work policy allows staff to work flexibly between home and the University.

As set out in REF5a, research time is ringfenced so that all staff submitted to this unit are allocated a minimum of 20% of their contractual hours for research. Staff in the unit receive financial support from the Schools to attend conferences. They receive regular updates on research funding opportunities in their area from a specialist team in RIIS, which provides support for bid preparation. Periods of cover for teaching and other responsibilities can be arranged to free up staff for bid-writing. Prior to submission, all bids are reviewed by experienced research staff drawn from across the University.

The University (see REF5a) and the unit both emphasise the importance of connections to local and regional businesses and communities. The University has invested in VV Impact Tracker software and a new permanent post of Impact Manager was introduced in 2017. Training is available for using this system to track research impact, and our impact case study authors (**GRATTON**) and key staff (**BOEHM**, **GRAHAM**, and **RUDGE**) have benefited from this support by tracking their projects' impacts. **GRATTON** and **RUDGE** have received impact acceleration funding to further impact activities. Additional targeted support is available in the form of time released from other duties. Assistance in compiling impact evidence can also be accessed via PDRs or through the School Managers.

RESEARCH CULTURE AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT

As described above, the unit's research culture is distinguished by its long-standing collaborative partnership work with the region's cultural and creative actors. This emphasis on partnership work supports a significant number of practice-as-research events for both an academic and a public audience. The unit includes the Music and Sound Research Cluster, led by **ESTIBEIRO** and **PAYLING**; the Film Research Cluster, led by **GRAHAM** and **RUDGE**; the Connected Communities Framework Group, led by **GRATTON**; and the Games Publishing, Production and Artistic Studies Cluster, led by **MACCALLUM-STEWART** and **WEBLEY**.

Staff and postgraduate researchers in Music and Sound collaborate closely and the primary showcase for their work is the annual event NoiseFloor UK: Experimental Music and Moving Image (<https://noisefloor.org.uk/>), led by **ESTIBEIRO** and **PAYLING**. This event, established by staff and PGRs at the University in 2010, has grown into a two-day event combining music, moving image, and academic papers. Each year it features more than thirty theoretical papers and performances by students, staff and participants drawn from across Europe, Asia and the Americas. NoiseFloor participants include such well known academic-artists as Simon Emmerson (UK), Simon Zagorski-Thomas (UK), Ricardo Dal Farra (Canada), Hiromi Ishii (Japan), Antenor Ferreira (Brazil), and Wilfried Jentsch (Germany).

Games Publishing and Production staff hold a bi-weekly research session for all PhD students. The work developed through this programme has led to PGR co-publication with staff and input into funding bids. The Cluster's work into understanding emergent sectoral needs has led to us devising the UK's first E-Sports degree, which is offered at our sites in London and Stoke-on-Trent. This degree expanded our interdisciplinary culture by combining our research into immersive media and the gaming industry with event-based expertise from the University's Staffordshire Business School.

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

The unit also encompasses research in Continental Philosophy, with a well-established base of 10 PGRs. Since the beginning of 2014, staff and PGRs in Philosophy have collaborated in organising four research conferences and a research workshop. These have included a two-day conference on Kant, Judgement and Recent French Philosophy (December 2015, as part of an AHRC funded Research Network based at Royal Holloway) and events on theology and psychoanalysis, and on contemporary philosophy and entropy (April 2014 and May 2016 respectively). In 2020, Staffordshire hosted the annual conference of the Society of European Philosophy as an online event over two weekends with over 100 people attending and international keynote speakers.

We provide all staff with central and School-level training in a wide range of areas including research ethics, GDPR, diversity, digital skills and pedagogical practice. These sessions are delivered as part of the University's annual research training programme, organised by RIIS in conjunction with the Schools. Within the unit, we organise peer-to-peer subject-specific training on topics such as practice-as-research, PhD supervision, and REF skills including writing research statements, submitting portfolios, developing research impact in the arts and humanities, and using social media for research impact.

The School of Digital, Technologies and Arts holds monthly research seminars for staff and PGRs to present their work and to meet informally. These events build an interdisciplinary, collaborative research atmosphere. Recent topics delivered by staff and PGRs from our unit included the legacy of theatre maker Peter Cheeseman's "Stoke documentary method", the role of producer and director in contemporary film making, and layering methods in the contemporary Gesamtkunstwerk. Staff and postgraduate researchers also share their work at the annual University Staff Research Conference, which includes the Postgraduate Research Conference.

Other public facing events connected to the Unit and with a focus on innovative practices often have a research element to them, attracting young creative professionals, early career researchers, practice-as-research practitioners, as well as external audiences. These events include the MA Arts & Design Show, the Annual Comic Con, the Annual Film Festival, and the Annual Theatre Festival.

All these events provide staff and PGRs with valuable experience in presenting their work to others, and in engaging critically in an interdisciplinary setting.

POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH

Over the period covered by REF 2021, there have been 21 PhD completions in the unit, with an addition of three Distance Learning Philosophy PhDs completions. The total of 24 completions is double the completions reported in the last REF period. It is testament to the significant improvements in the research environment and culture within the unit and the wider University.

In July 2020 there were 53 PhD PGRs based in the unit, including 15 Distance Learning PGRs. We support PGRs from a diverse range of backgrounds and careers. 25% of the PGRs in the unit are EU or international students and 55% are part-time.

The rise in the number of PGRs since REF2014 is in part the result of efforts to widen the pool of active postgraduate research supervisors in the Unit. We encourage our staff to complete the training in postgraduate research supervision provided by the Graduate School. Over the REF period, we have emphasised research supervision skills as part of staff professional development. 53% of our staff act as principal supervisors. Wherever possible all staff are involved in supervision. Since REF2014, staff in UoA34 have made a significant contribution to the research culture of the university through institution-wide roles: **BURNHAM** served as Director of the Graduate School from 2015 to 2019 and ran Induction Days for all PGRs. **WEBB** has led the staff training programme in research supervision since 2012.

The Graduate School provides a comprehensive Induction Day for all new PGRs within the unit as part of the general University induction. Schools and research teams offer support tailored to PGR needs at disciplinary and individual levels. The Graduate School oversees formal procedures for progress review, including three major stages of annual review. These reviews are co-ordinated with the unit and the School. The candidate submits a report on their work that serves as the basis for a progression meeting with a panel of academics.

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

PGRs in the unit have their own places to work fitted out according to their needs. These include work and social spaces shared with other PGRs, computers, and printers. Any specialised technology required for PGR projects is supplied and housed where appropriate.

Each School has a research seminar lead, offering additional opportunities for students and staff to discuss various research projects by both staff and students. We encourage PGR students to take advantage of these events in order to establish connections with researchers in different subject areas. These research connections help to develop communication between researchers in different areas, which is vital to our unit's interdisciplinary research culture. The Graduate School organises weekly socials, and the Student Union has also a PGT and PGR focused programme of activities.

In addition to overseeing the administration of all postgraduate research degrees, the Graduate School provides professional development for PGRs in the form of workshops as live and online events, also available as archived resources and as part of a partnership with University of East Anglia's online researcher training programme. These events support PGRs with their research projects and their wider development as researchers. They include sessions on writing literature reviews, creating methodologies, writing for publication, organising small conferences, networking effectively, and preparing for life after the PhD. As supervisors we enhance this support through project- and discipline-specific researcher development in line with the VITAE Researcher Development Framework.

We have particular strength in distance learning at PGR level. Around 30% of our PhD students study through blended and distance learning supported supervision. The University provides all academic staff with "Staffs Way" training on how to use online platforms and resources to support undergraduate and postgraduate students. Supervision often happens on MS Teams, with document management and video conferencing being a full part of the distance learning experience. Similarly, on Blackboard, supporting materials and resources are available with a permanent meeting room or virtual common room for drop-in social experiences online.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IN UOA34

Diversity	Female	Male	Disability	No Disability	BME	White
	32%	69%	7%	93%	14%	86%

Since REF2014 the gender balance has improved significantly, with a doubling of the percentage of female staff involved in the submission. The number of outputs by female staff is consistent with their profile in the staff group as a whole. In addition, BAME staff make up 14% of the staff group but have contributed 22% of the outputs, indicating that their work has been highly valued.

The unit subscribes fully to the University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Framework, which sets out objectives to embed equality, diversity and inclusion into all aspects of the University life of students and staff (see REF5a). The institution recruited a dedicated lead of Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in 2017, reporting directly to the Chief Operating Officer. Staff from this UoA have engaged with the Head of EDI considerably, allowing co-creation research methods such as Get-Talking (**GRATTON**) to benefit processes around EDI.

The unit contains dedicated projects that have equality and diversity aspects in their remit, such as the ACE funded Transforming Leadership project Create Place (**BOEHM**) aiming at diversifying leadership in the creative sector. The Head of EDI sits on the Advisory Boards of this project to link the university diversity strategy to specific project outcomes. Staff in the UoA were involved in devising University-wide policy and procedures relating to Equality and Diversity. **GRATTON** and **BOEHM** both sit on the EDI working group.

The unit has also made progress on ensuring female academics are supported and encouraged, and 3 of the 5 promotions to Professor (**BOEHM**) and Associate Professor were women (**MACCALLUM-STEWART**, **GRAHAM**). The University has supported the development of leadership skills amongst its female staff through Advance HE leadership training, benefiting

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

BOEHM and **GRATTON**. As mentioned above, **BOEHM** has since won funding to lead a leadership programme herself, specialising in the creative sector.

The University has a number of policies to support staff to maintain a good worklife balance, including managing care responsibilities. In 2020 a blended working policy was introduced, allowing flexible workplace arrangements between home and office. The Unit helps staff returning from long periods of leave are supported to rebuild their research activity. We ensure that any phased return includes agreed portions of research time. Where additional time or training is required to update skills, this is agreed through the School. Staff with protected characteristics are supported in their research via an assessment of their specific needs (e.g., in terms of technology or software required, and appropriate forms of collaboration with research colleagues).

3. Income infrastructure and facilities

INCOME

During this REF period the unit has substantially increased its income, receiving GBP795,033 HESA reported research income, from less than GBP55,000 in REF2014. Awards include more than 30 externally funded projects. Notable research funding successes include GBP135,000 (**BOEHM**, 2019) and GBP13,000 (**ESTIBEIRO**, 2019) from Arts Council England, GBP88,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (**THOMASON**, 2017), GBP38,000 from the AHRC (2014), GBP37,000 from UKRI (**GRATTON**, 2019), and a GBP9,000 Leverhulme International Fellowship award to **BOEHM** (2019). We have secured GBP442,000 from the European Commission within the period, enabling collaborative EU research activities.

In addition, staff in the unit carried out knowledge exchange activities during this REF period to support the development of impact, demonstrating the application of new knowledge in creative sectors and communities. The total value of these projects is more than GBP166,000. Our KE projects include funding from: the Arts Council, GBP136,000 for Appetite Evaluation (**GRATTON**, see Impact Case Study); and the ERDF, GBP22,000 for the Creative Industries Innovation-led training Mentoring Growth/FACTORY Programme (**BOEHM**).

We strategically increased income over the REF period in order to support impact activities and co-produced research. Staff in the unit receive regular updates on research funding opportunities via the institutional subscription to *Research Professional* through RIIS. RIIS also provides regular briefings on funding and policy and access to intelligence on the external funding environment.

As described in Section 2 (People) above, RIIS supports bid-writers, and all bids are peer reviewed prior to submission by experienced research staff drawn from across the University. The introduction of the ADRE role has provided additional support and mentoring. We use a cross-school cohort approach for writing externally-funded research proposals, which provides our academics tailored support from both an ADRE and the pre-award team in RIIS. Following an institutional selection process, three staff from within the unit have received comprehensive bid development support, career mentoring and peer review feedback to prepare research proposal submitted to UKRI and the British Academy.

FACILITIES

We integrate our subject specific facilities into research, innovation and teaching together, drawing on specialist support from dedicated technical services that balances the needs of our learning, researching and innovation communities. This connectedness allows our emerging and established talent to use state-of-the-art prototyping facilities while building contacts and shared opportunities with our research and innovation communities and partners.

Our purpose-built facilities include:

- a suite of music studios of differing size, with interconnecting audio and video lines
- a suite of broadcast studios, both sound and video
- a suite of film studios, live rooms, blue-screen rooms, and post-video production
- a suite of digital media including games, 3D scanning, VR/AR and postproduction
- a suite of 3D printing, laser printing, and high-quality photo printing facilities

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

- a virtual learning environment (including Blackboard, MS Teams, and other software) supporting distance learning, distance PhD supervision and communication for international research collaboration.

Our library holds various special collections that support our research:

The Victoria Theatre Collection is a major resource for Theatre and Social researchers, PGRs, and historians including **CHRISTIE, ESTIBEIRO, PAYLING, and BOEHM**. The collection archives four decades of material from Peter Cheeseman's Victoria Theatre Company, spanning theatre production, documentary research and community work carried out between 1962 and 1998. The documents, photographs and tape-recordings contained in the collection offer unique research opportunities unavailable through other theatre archive collections.

The Iris Strange War Widows Collection comprises personal and official letters and documents relating to the economic and social positions of World War II widows (and some material relating to World War I). This collection has been used in research projects by **GRATTON, EMADI-COFFIN, and GRAHAM**.

The Local Studies Collection includes materials relating to the history and geography of Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire; e.g., parish registers, local history tracts, and gazetteers. This collection has been key to **GRAHAM's** research.

The Ceramic History Collection brings together a variety of materials in the history of ceramics, catalogues, autograph manuscripts, and administrative records dating from industrial British and European ceramics production c. 1860-1930. It supports research by **BROWNSWORD (UoA32)**, and PhD projects by **BOEHM** and **POWER (UoA32)**. The collection is a significant archive of the University's connections to the region's historic ceramics industry.

The Mining Collection, used by staff contextualising their research into a historic regional context (**BROWNSWORD (UoA32)**, **THOMASON**), contains a wide variety of materials including journals, maps, surveys and books that have come down from the early nineteenth century. It contains predominantly UK materials (e.g., records from the Hem Heath and Silverdale Collieries and the National Coal Board), but also includes a number of items relating to the United States, Japan, Australia and Canada.

OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE

The University organises outward facing events such as Profs in the Pav (the Pav being a publicly accessible university café pavilion area on campus, <https://www.staffs.ac.uk/events/webinars/profs-in-the-pav>) and Profs in the Pub where senior researchers present their work to the public. The sessions attract 50 – 150 attendees each. To help with COVID19 lockdown, the #WednesdayWisdom series (<https://www.staffs.ac.uk/news/2020/05/academics-share-wednesdaywisdom-to-navigate-lockdown>) was initiated, linking expert insights to practical advice relevant for various communities. The **BOEHM**-led ERDF funded project Mentoring Growth/FACTORY (<http://blogs.staffs.ac.uk/c3centre/projects/factory/>) links innovation and new knowledge to current creative and business opportunities for the creative industries.

Research works in concert with dedicated marketing support to ensure public appeal and accessibility, and to create relevant supplementary materials. The events support our research impact with ca. 50% public, 50% university community attending.

Presentations by staff in the C3 Centre and UoA34 have included:

- Gamification, Games and Addiction (11 June 2020)
- Is film going completely online? (22 May 2020)
- Photography for lock-down artists (2 May 2020)
- Voice and Presence Workshop (27 June 2019)
- The creative industries are dead... Long live the creative industries (2 May 2019)

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

COLLABORATIONS

Staffordshire University is a leading civic university, connected to and supporting the communities and creative economies in which it is situated. In recognition of our civic role, the University has recently created the role of “civic fellows”. These fellowships complement our visiting honorary professors and academic fellows. They allow participatory projects (specifically under the lead of **GRATTON**) to recognise the work of community researchers and the roles that community members play in our University.

Our staff base is tightly embedded in the creative and cultural networks and economy of the region. Our contribution to the university’s presence as an anchor institution is apparent in our extensive partnership work. Collectively, staff from this unit have links to more than 50 creative, cultural, and civil society organisations in a catchment covering North Staffordshire and Cheshire East.

Local and Regional Partners

Our local and regional partnerships take several forms.

- **Creative Industry Sector Partnerships:** **RUDGE** is founder and chair of PLATFORM (<http://blogs.staffs.ac.uk/c3centre/research-groups/creative-clusters-film/>), the film-cluster sector organisation of North Staffordshire encompassing more than 100 film SMEs. PLATFORM is supported by both Staffordshire and Keele Universities, the City Council and the North Staffordshire Chambers. **BOEHM** is the institutional lead for Mentoring Growth/FACTORY (<http://blogs.staffs.ac.uk/c3centre/projects/factory/>), a Chamber and City ERDF funded partnership supporting the creative SME sector in North Staffordshire.
- **Cultural Sector Partnerships and Heritage:** **BOEHM**, through the ACE funded “Create Place: Leadership Development for the Culture and Creative Sector (North Staffordshire and Cheshire East)”, manages a 16-partner strong consortium including both Stoke-on-Trent and Cheshire East City Council, their respective Chambers, Keele University, regional arts organisations in North Staffordshire (BCB, B-Arts, NewVic, Appetite, and SoT Cultural Forum) and Cheshire East (Cheshire Dance, Spare Parts) and national arts organisations (Arts & Heritage, The Audience Agency, Voluntary Arts Network, and XTRAX). Through **BOEHM**’s role on “Stoke Creates” (see below under Civil Society) we have formed new formal partnerships with the Local Education Partnership and the YMCA. Past project developments have included partnerships with Wavemaker and WEA Adult Learning organisations. Through her work on Production House, **GRAHAM** is in close partnership with national and international heritage and history organisations (including Staffordshire University Centre of Archaeology, Potteries Museum, Royal Tank Regiment Museum Bovington, Cambrai Tank Museum (France), Border Regiment Museum Cumbria, and the Imperial War Museum), and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (MOD) (<http://blogs.staffs.ac.uk/c3centre/projects/film-archaeology-for-holocaust-sites/>). **ESTIBEIRO** and **PAYLING** focus on compositional and audio-visual partnership work, such as the recently commissioned HEATWORKS (<http://blogs.staffs.ac.uk/c3centre/projects/heatwork/>), including partnership work with organisations including BCB, TCTC Group Brass Band, Staffordshire Film Archive, and Middleport Pottery and with municipalities including Stoke-on-Trent and Zurich.
- **Civil Society:** **GRATTON** is the University’s lead for Civic Engagement. She chairs the university-civil society “Connected Communities” partnership working group (<http://blogs.staffs.ac.uk/c3centre/research-groups/connected-communities-framework/>), and is a member of the Cultural Forum (regional creative and cultural stakeholder group), the City of Culture 2021 Bid Working Group (until 2018) and Appetite’s consortium group. She leads the SoTogether Community Advisory Network of 15 - 30 community researchers and is a trustee of the Voluntary Youth Service (until 2015). In this type of work, research is collaborative, engaging communities and community sector partners in identification of local need and research activity. Working with community members as community researchers has strengthened our university-community relationships. It has enabled our staff and wider

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

communities to investigate social issues and pursue new solutions and opportunities. **BOEHM** is a founding member and on the governing board of “Stoke Creates” (<https://www.stokecep.co.uk/stoke-creates/>), a charitable organisation established February 2020 by the city’s key creative and cultural actors to attract external philanthropic funding. “Stoke Creates” seeks to support creative and cultural investment into the city. It has already raised GBP70,000 of seed funding.

National and International Partners

We take part in international academic and industry networks through our creative and cultural research projects. Projects include **WEBB**’s work with the Centre for the Philosophy of Science at the University of Lisbon (Portugal); **BOEHM**’s work with Turku AMK University (Finland) and Aarhus University (Denmark), where she holds Visiting Professorship positions, and **GRAHAM**’s work on film-making with *Production House* in concert with: Somme Tourism Office (France), Thiepval Memorial Museum (France), Arras Tourism Office (France), Albert Tourism Office (France), and Auschwitz Birkenau Education Department & Auschwitz Jewish Museum (Poland).

The C3 Centre and the School are members of the European League of Institutes of Arts in Higher Education (ELIA), a European network of ca. 250 members in 47 countries. **BOEHM** sits on ELIA’s Internationalisation Working Group.

Conferences organised/hosted, Judge panels for awards

In this REF period we have organised/hosted conferences including:

- FAIRBURN (UoA17), POWER (UoA32), **BOEHM**: Interdisciplinary collaborations: Linking Creative Cultures and Business (January 2020).
- **WEBB**, ROSS and PGRs: Deleuze, Entropy and Thermodynamics (May 2016).
- **WEBB**, **BURNHAM**: Kant’s Philosophy of Judgement in Recent French Philosophy (December 2015).
- **WEBB**, **BURNHAM** & PGRs: St Paul in Continental Philosophy (June 2014).

Keynotes and AWARDS

BOEHM gave two keynotes in 2019 about co-production models:

- May 2019, a keynote at ELIA’s PIE (Platform Internationalisation ELIA) Meeting, titled: “Three Challenges for ‘Glocal’ creative partnerships”.
- Sept 2019 at the Group for Learning in Art & Design (GLAD) Conference “Environmental and Social Sustainability in the Curriculum” with the title “From Culture 1.0 to University 3.0: Why we need University-Housed Art Schools”.

GRATTON has presented the Get Talking Hardship project to inform Higher Education policy makers and public engagement practitioners about university civic engagement priorities:

- 2020 – Invited by UKRI to present Keep Talking at the NCCPE Engage Conference
- 2019 – Invited to present Get Talking Hardship as part of NCCPE Engage Conference at its opening plenary
- 2018 – Invited speaker and a panel member at New Horizons: The Arts and Children in Challenging Circumstances.
- 2018 - Invited speaker at the NCCPE Engage Conference

RUDGE is often asked to speak about PLATFORM, and how this model for creative film clusters in North Staffordshire might be applied to other medium-to-small sized city regions:

- 2019 – Invited to join the World Economic Forum and invited to become a full voting member of the British Academy of Film and Television Awards (BAFTA).
- Named in the Creative England 2019 list of top 50 leaders and innovators.
- 2019 – United Nations Creative Economy Expert Group meeting, Geneva, presentation titled “Clusters, Small Island Developing States and the 4IR”.

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

- 2017 – Transatlantic Creative Networks Conference, Chapman University, Los Angeles. “Digital Creative Clusters and Regional Growth”.
- 2017 – OECS/TEPA Caribbean Expo, St Lucia. “Developing an indigenous film industry and education system through new technologies”.

WEBB is often invited to speak about contemporary philosophy and the work of Michel Serres:

- 2020 (**postponed to 2022 due to COVID**) – “Michel Serres on Politics and the Natural World” – Contracts and Translations, *Michel Serres: Thinking beyond boundaries*. Maison Française d’Oxford
- 2019 – “Open Epistemologies and the Climate: Gaston Bachelard and Michel Serres”, Open Epistemologies, The Centre for the Philosophy of Science, the University of Lisbon
- 2017 – “Technology and Critique in the Work of Gaston Bachelard and Michel Foucault”, Workshop on Historical Epistemology: Technology and Transformation, University of Paris 1, Sorbonne.

Other keynotes in the REF period include: **GRAHAM**’s 2018 public lecture on her *Production House* work on “Hawthorn Ridge” and **WEBLEY** as an expert speaker at the SkyTech Military Flight Training conference (London, 2018), offering virtual reality insights for operations and maintenance funding to solve short-term gaps in military flight capability training.

Creative Commissions

PAYLING’s compositions attract international commissions, often giving talks in conjunction with his performances:

- 2017: “Neon Vibration” at Synchronesis, Program 28. Granada, Spain. XXIV Festival Internacional de Arte Sonoro y Música Electroacústica Punto de encuentro. Also presented at Visual Music Full Dome Festival. Morelos, Mexico (2017).
- 2016. “Circadian Echoes” at fEXiff Experimental Film Festival. Sydney, Australia.
- June 2015. Understanding Visual Music Symposium, Brasilia, Brazil.

ESTIBEIRO’s live music is also performed internationally:

- 2014 and 2015, Klang Festivals, Durham University.
- 2013, fEXiff, Experimental Film Festival. Sydney, Australia

GRAHAM’s film production work often partners with high-profile producers. The entries spanning 2015-2017 were completed in partnership with the BAFTA producer and director Stephen Saunders:

- 2017: *Bristol Scout – Rebuilding History*. Re-creating the Bristol Scout World War One plane in Gallipoli campaign, with screenings in London’s Leicester Square.
- 2016/17: *Unforgiving Peace*. In collaboration with local SME ASA Productions, Decouverte Channel (France); local communities in Stoke-on-Trent, Birmingham, Wolverhampton and London; the Polish Consulate, Stafford Polish Club, and the Imperial War Museum.
- 2015/16: *War Above the Trenches*. In collaboration with ASA Productions, broadcast on UKTV’s “Yesterday Channel” with national audience reach.
- 2014/15: *Channel 5: Britain’s Worst Crimes*. Television series: 6 documentaries broadcast in UK on television and online. In collaboration with UK Police Forces, NHS, BBC, Channel 5, Title Role Productions and UK county and city councils. Television international and UK audience reach/impact - viewing figures of 150-200,000 in 100 countries worldwide per transmission (repeated) and online.

Editorships and Current Editorial Board Membership

- **RUDGE**: Editor of *Journal for New Model Cinema* (online) (2018)
- **WEBB**: Member of the Scientific Board, *Metodo: International Studies in Phenomenology and Philosophy*; Member of the Advisory Board, *Journal of Italian Philosophy*; Co-editor of the series *Material Futures* (Bloomsbury Press) on the work of Michel Serres.
- **BOEHM**: Editorial Board Member of *Journal for Music, Technology, & Education* (2011 -2017).

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

- **PAYLING:** Section Editor and Editorial Board Member: *Dancecult: Journal of Electronic Dance Music Culture* (online), (2017 onwards)
- **MA:** Section Editor-in-Chief, Serious Games section of Elsevier *Entertainment Computing*, (2011 onwards)

Peer Reviewing for Journals, Publishers, Grants and Research Councils

- **BOEHM:** From 2001 onwards: EPSRC College Member and Evaluator, regularly a reviewer for AHRC, RCUK Newton. From 2006 onwards: Expert Panel Member for EU/H2020/MSCA. SRHE Peer reviewer for small and large grants.
- **MacCALLUM-STEWART:** Reviewer for AHRC Network Funding (Games Studies).
- **WEBB:** Bloomsbury Press, SUNY Press, Polity Press, Rowman and Littlefield Press, Acumen Press, Routledge Press, Edinburgh University Press, *Angelaki*, *Foucault Studies*, *The Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, *The Journal of the American Philosophical Association*, *Theory Culture and Society*, *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*, *The European Journal of Political Theory*, and *The Canadian Journal of Continental Philosophy*.

Visiting Fellow / Professorships

- **BOEHM:** Aarhus University, DK (2019 - 2020) and Turku AMK University, Turku, FI (2016 onwards)
- **WEBB:** Centre for the Philosophy of Science, University of Lisbon (CFCUL) (2019 – 2020).

Academic Society Activity

- **BOEHM:** Founding member and communications co-convenor for PaTHES (2019), a new learned society for Philosophy and Theory of Higher Education. Member of ICMA (International Computer Music Association) and SRHE (Society for Research in Higher Education).
- **RUDGE:** British Academy of Film and Television Arts – Full Voting Member. Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts (2018 onwards).