

Institution: University of Sunderland

Unit of Assessment: 27 - English Language and Literature

1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy

Over the period since REF2014, the Unit has followed three strategic imperatives to maintain and extend the research culture. These are:

Aim 1. To build on the existing research culture within the Unit;

Aim 2. To expand existing networks of researchers within the University and beyond, and develop new ones;

Aim 3. To build on and expand links with the local and wider community beyond academia to engage with issues of contemporary relevance and create impact.

These aims materialise throughout this Statement, sometime more explicitly (as in the case of Section 1.2.d), and at other times woven throughout the activities and culture of the Unit.

1.1.a. English at Sunderland comprises seven full-time members of academic staff: one professor (**Smith**, female), one associate professor/reader (**Mandala**, female), and five senior lecturers (two female – **Dobbs** and **Younger**, three male - **Gomes**, **Lockwood** and **Pearce**), with two leavers (**Nash** and **Fallon**, both male senior lecturers). All staff are research active and hold relevant PhDs. The professor (**Smith**) is the Humanities research lead. Since REF2014, three ECR researchers have left (Fallon plus one other have moved to other institutions as part of their career progression; one has changed to a career outside academia) and four members of staff have retired.

1.1.b. From 2014 to 2019, the English team was based in the School of Culture, Faculty of Education and Society. Since September 2019, the team has been based in the Faculty of Arts and Creative Industries. Although relatively small, the team has been responsible for innovative research carried out in relation to post-colonial theory, gender in language and literature, regional dialect, Anglo-Saxon literature, science fiction writing, and environmental writing. The English team has developed a strong research base in the areas of factual creative writing, politeness theory, gender, regional cultural history, and eco-writing. The unit staff also contribute to the Humanities research culture in relation to local history, and **Smith** leads the institution's Gender Studies network (SunGen) (see Section 3, paragraph 3.c). In addition to publication in books and journals, the unit's research is recorded and publicised in a research blog, run by **Pearce**.

1.1.c. During this REF audit period, the Unit has published the following outputs (Aim 1):

Monograph	Edited collection	Book chapter	Journal article	Encyclopaedia entry
4	4	22	27	3
Novel	Short story	Edited collection (CW)	Blog	
3	3	3	2	

1.1.d. As REF requirements for Open Access became clearer and more detailed, all members of the unit were briefed by the Library staff in charge of the University's research repository, SURE, and thus made familiar with both the principles and the technical aspects of the new system. In addition, REF briefings organised by the Humanities research lead reminded staff of the OA requirements, and followed this up with details that included hyperlinks on the Humanities research page. In encouraging all staff to have their research promoted on the Humanities research blog, publications are also offered there as a hyperlink to the SURE entry.

1.1.e. All staff in the Unit are involved in research networks outside the University where fruitful interdisciplinary relationships have developed over the years, making Sunderland's English department one that is well known both nationally and locally (Aim 2). For example, Professor Karen Boyle from Strathclyde University is Visiting Professor for English.

1.f. Since 2014, the Unit has continued to expand its research-active curriculum with the publications listed above all being relevant to the Unit's teaching, from Foundation level up to PhD (Aim 1). For example, **Smith's** *Language of Journalism* (Bloomsbury, 2013, second edition 2020) is a core textbook for a module at Stage 1 and at Stage 2. The book is used internationally across a range of media and communication and journalism programmes, as well as sociolinguistic programmes. **Pearce's** work on regional dialect is directly linked to a Stage 3 module. The Creative Writing edited collections include the work of academics as well as students, and form part of a Stage 3 module, Creative Writing and Publishing, that is open to all English students (see also Section 2, paragraph 2.h).

1.g In line with the research strategy from REF2014:

- existing links with the wider research community have been strengthened, and new links made (see particularly Section 4, paragraphs 4.k, 4.l and 4.m);
- more applications for external funding have been submitted, and there are plans in place for more (see Section 3);
- our postgraduate research provision has been strengthened through investment in three fully funded PhD studentships (see specifically Section 2.e);
- all research-active staff in the unit have been submitted to REF2021.

2. Research strategy

Since REF2014 the University has taken a much more active approach to the support of research.

1.2.a. Institutionally, research active staff are supported through the automatic allocation of 10% workloading for research and/or scholarship activities, with the offer of additional resources, such as extra research time and financial support, available on an annual application basis.

1.2.b. The research strategy for the unit was refined post-REF2014 and has been guided by the common elements of Faculty of Education and Society (from 2017) and the Faculty of Arts and Creative Industries' Research Institute strategies (from September 2019).

1.2.c. To promote and sustain a lively and inclusive research culture, providing a supportive framework and a sense of collective purpose for those academic staff and postgraduate students in the faculty (Aim 1).

1.2.c.i Staff have been supported in their research with central funding via the annual individual research plan scheme. This allows research-active academics to request additional time for research activities, as well as more immediately financial resources such as funding to attend conferences, archive visits, subscriptions, and teaching-buy out to allow for time to complete publications. All staff in the Unit have been supported in this way. (See also Section 2, paragraph 2.d.) For more *ad hoc* research support that may arise during the academic year, the Faculty has supported all seven staff in the Unit. At both institution and faculty level, the application process is subject to robust internal peer review, and is followed up through the annual staff appraisal system. This has led to all the academics in the Unit receiving support over the last three years. (Faculty funding was £1300 in 2017/18, plus £600 to support hosting the Humanities research seminars, and £225 to support PhD students going to conferences; and £60 in 2018/19, plus £900 for research seminars and £750 for PhD student conference attendances.) The Faculty has also given financial support to the postgraduate research conference, which started as an annual event in 2015 and is organised by some of the Unit's PhD students. It includes papers by the postgraduate students as well as keynotes by the unit's

academics. PhD students also take part in the university's annual research conference (see also Section 2, paragraph 2.f).

1.2.c.ii. The online student journal, *Codex*, was launched in 2013 to publish the "best" undergraduate dissertations from English Language, English Literature, and History (Aim 1). This is edited by **Pearce** and a colleague from History. It is publicly accessible, and offers other students the chance to see the best work in their subject area whilst also giving them something to strive towards.

1.2.c.iii The development of the Creative Writing specialism (Aim 1) led to the appointment of an early career researcher, **Dobbs**, in 2015. This has allowed the Unit to expand its creative writing remit. **Dobbs'** developing research interests are in the creative possibilities of aerial narrative performance, in which she transposes poetic narrative into aerial hoop performances. This has already been successful in reaching the wider community with workshops being fully subscribed. **Dobbs** and **Lockwood** have also been supported by the Faculty in 2019 for a joint book launch event, held at Waterstone's book shop in Sunderland, and attended by members of university staff as well as members of the wider public.

1.2.c.iv Mentoring is provided across the Unit according to need (Aim 1). The online site for the Humanities Research Hub has a list of academics across the specialisms who are able to offer help in terms of expertise in academic writing for specific output destinations (book chapter, journal, etc), bid writing, conference presenting, and so on. This form of mentoring allows academics to seek help for specific areas of expertise rather than being tied to just one mentor (see also Section 2, paragraph 2.b). **Smith** also acts as mentor more specifically for those who are considering academic promotion within the institution.

Future Plans

1.2.c.v To forge new links with the creative industries and further interdisciplinary research through the university's Co-Lab initiative (that seeks to bring together the Arts and Humanities with Health Sciences). The intention is to create an ever-stronger research environment for our staff and postgraduate students (Aim 2).

1.2.d To develop and support research initiatives via collaborative research projects and collaborations with other institutions and organisations (Aim 2).

1.2.d.i As a small Unit of Assessment, academics in the team recognise that it is essential to develop research links with colleagues in the wider academic community, both in the University and in the wider academic world.

1.2.d.ii **Pearce** has close links with colleagues in Newcastle University in respect of their research on North East dialect, and has been invited several times to present his work at their Centre for Research in Linguistics and Language Sciences' one-day symposia (in 2015, 2016, 2018, and 2019).

1.2.d.iii **Smith** is one of the founder members of HASTEN: NE (Humanities, Arts, Social Sciences Equalities Network: North East), which is an Advance HE Network involving the five regional universities. This network was launched in November 2019 and seeks to develop and share good practice in equality issues, and is linked to the work of the SunGen network, including the *Gender Equality in Changing Times* collection (see 1.2.d.vii below). Events planned for 2020 are being re-arranged for 2021. (See also Section 4, paragraph 4.u) This has meant that a research project linked to exploring the experiences of academics with declared disabilities has been deferred for a year.

1.2.d.iv **Dobbs** has established links with the regional performing arts, and has set up an aerial performance company, Uncaged, that employs the performance of creative writing pieces. This is in conjunction with local creative writers and the University. **Dobbs** is

working with colleagues in Dance to develop an innovative undergraduate module to engage students in creative writing and aerial performance. This will also help her develop new ideas to feed into her research.

1.2.d.v **Smith** is co-convenor of the Ross Priory Broadcast Talk Group, an international interdisciplinary group of academics who specialise in the uses of language in broadcast media. This group meets annually in various locations across the world. She is drawing on this network in a funding bid to explore conflict culture in a transnational context.

1.2.d.vi **Lockwood** has been able to develop links nationally between colleagues at Sunderland (by leading the university-wide sustainability project), and other universities (eg the Spectacular Environmentalism network) and with the wider community (Animal Policy Consortium). This is demonstrated through his collaborative research publications.

1.2.d.vii **Smith** has run the university's gender studies network, SunGen, since 2015. This network brings together academics, postgraduate students, and members of the professional services who have an interest in gender and sexuality. Events staged at different times of the year allow for networking, including contacts with the wider academic community in the regional universities. Informal discussions after one such event led to the first edited collection of papers following the British Library's digitisation of *Spare Rib* magazine. This collection included contributions from established and less experienced academics, and PhD students from across the region's universities. The launch event was hosted by SunGen at the University, and attracted an audience that included those who are interested in equality issues in the wider community. The Gendered Worlds conference that **Smith** organised for SunGen in summer 2019 included a keynote from visiting professor, Karen Boyle. Other speakers included England rugby captain Tamara Taylor, Aderonke Apata from the African Rainbow Family, and DIVA magazine's deputy editor, Roxy Bourdillon. (See also Section 3, paragraph 3.c) An edited collection similar to the *Spare Rib* one, *Gender Equality in Changing Times*, was published in 2020. A joint online launch event was conducted with Prof Alison Phipps of Sussex University, whose book *Me, Not You: the trouble with mainstream feminism* reflected several of the chapters in the edited collection and was attended by about 100 people, including a wide range of academics and interested members of the public from across the country.

Future Plans

1.2.d.viii A cross-faculty project will mark the 150th anniversary of *Through the Looking-Glass* in 2021, to highlight the links to Sunderland. This project also involves Sunderland Libraries, Sunderland Culture, and local creative writing groups and will comprise a series of community-focused events throughout the summer of 2021. This will link with **Dobbs'** work on aerial performance, and is part of an ACE bid generated by the SunGen network (Aim 3).

1.2.d.ix **Smith** is working with colleagues in Scotland, Sweden and Italy to submit an AHRC funding bid to explore conflict culture in its transnational contexts, which will build on links already established with OfCom in the UK and comparable organisations in Sweden and Italy (see 3.f) (Aim 2).

1.2.d.x **Lockwood** is lead author on a major study for the Vegan Society to produce a plant-based food system policy for the UK (to be launched at re-arranged COP26 in Glasgow in November 2021). His work with the Animal Think Tank which will be used to help train a range of organisations in the UK and US in the delivery of animal advocacy messages (see Section 4, paragraph 4.t) (Aim 3).

2. People

2.a The University Research Strategy embeds the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers into the various policies relating to training programmes and

courses for academic staff. The provision of both equal opportunities and diversity in recruitment, support and pay is underpinned by a holistic approach that takes account of individual researchers and their aims (the comprehensive 'institutional practice' as described on Vitae's website). For example, in keeping with the university's staff development strategy, all new academic staff are offered the chance to study the Cert. Ed. HE qualification to lead to Higher Education Association Fellowship. Since 2014, Dobbs has benefited from this opportunity. An extensive range of such opportunities are open to all staff, and range from skills development and training, and more general courses as part of continuing professional development. There are also workshops to mentor those who are considering applying for promotion. **Fallon** and **Dobbs** benefited from this in their applications to gain promotion from Lecturer to Senior Lecturer.

2.b The Humanities Research Centre offers writing workshops which are open to all staff and postgraduate students (Aim 2). These are held twice a term. There are also writing-for-a-journal workshops run by **Smith** and **Mandala**, which again are open to all staff and postgraduate students. The central web site for this Centre is used to coordinate such events, and to record outcomes where appropriate. In addition, the Unit has a dedicated web page which offers a list of "expertise" in the School, relating to specific areas of academic life. This list allows anyone (including postgraduate students) considering developing their research profile to seek out the most appropriate person to contact in the School (see also Section 1, paragraph 1.2.c.iv).

2.c In line with university policy, **Dobbs** was allowed a three-month career break in 2018 to pursue a course that would expand her creative potential in the longer term (see 1.2.d.iv). **Nash** was allowed two weeks' leave in term time to pursue a visiting professorship in India (2018), and **Smith** worked 20% of the year in Örebro University, Sweden (2018/19) as guest professor. **Lockwood** has been able to work flexibly in order to develop his links with the wider community of animal rights activists and policy makers, and environmental networks. (Aims 2 and 3)

2.e The Faculty supported the appointment of three fully funded, full-time PhD studentships from 2014. Through open competition, three students were appointed (two female; one male). Both female students studied within Unit 27 (one male student completed his PhD in History). These included one student whose research into the trans community proved very timely and has informed the institution's HR policy on trans positivity. All PhD students and staff have had the opportunity to be supported financially to attend conferences, including travel and accommodation. PhD students regularly present their research at academic conferences, and several have published their research with the help of their supervisors (see section 3, paragraph 3.c).

2.f PhD students have also been supported in other expenditure, such as paying for the purchase of specialist computer software licences (£220). Staff have also been supported financially in paying for society memberships as part of small-scale research projects (**Pearce** £522); open access (**Nash** £203); and conference organisation (various conferences, £1,800). Through the Culture Beacon, which managed research funding for the Humanities until 2016, a Writer in Residence was also employed for one year (£9,602). The Beacon also subsidised specialist library databases until 2016, at around £16,700 per year. This is now funded from central resources. The library has also invested in discipline-relevant books to a value of about £10,000 per year since 2014.

2.g There have been 14 successful PhD completions supervised in the Unit in this audit period. There are core modules dealing with research skills, including ethics, and online materials for more specific aspects of student life such as conference preparation, and an online hub on Canvas (see also section 1, 1.2.c.iv and section 2.b) for students to exchange ideas and good practice, as well as the annual postgraduate research conference (see section 1, 1.2.c.i). All PhD students complete a course on "Preparing to teach", which is run by the Graduate Support Office, and is intended to prepare doctoral students for careers in academia. Where possible, PhD students are given experience of teaching in a supported environment through ad hoc and

paid teaching at undergraduate level. One of the PhD students had four months' maternity leave, which was fully supported by the Institution.

2.h The Creative Writing undergraduate programme's innovative final year module, Creative Writing and Publishing, has proved to be a springboard for several students, including those who go on to post-graduate study. In 2019, one such English PhD student guest edited a special issue of the journal, *Revenant*. This involved attracting submissions from established as well as emerging academics and postgraduate students beyond Sunderland University and will appear in a special issue of the journal in early 2021.

2.i Unit members' research into post-colonial literature (**Nash** and **Younger**); non-standard English voices (**Pearce** and **Dodds**); and gender (**Pearce** and **Smith**) has been disseminated throughout the various programmes housed in and contributed to by the Unit, sustaining the decolonialisation of the curriculum from Foundation to PhD level.

3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

3.a Since 2014, there have been three major funding applications from the Unit. One to the AHRC sought to explore the history, development and application of the "live two-way" in British broadcasting. Another, to the ESRC, sought to explore how financial advice is given to women by public service broadcasters, and was to include engagement with the so-called WASPI cohort of women and activists. The third was an Arts Council bid to engage local schools and creative writing groups in Sunderland's cultural history through various activities around the city. Lessons learnt from these applications are carried forward into current bids. (Aim 1 and 3)

3.b As described in Section 1, paragraph 1.2.c.i, internal research funding is managed initially by the Faculty, and then by the University. At Faculty level, this is organised through the Dean, who is Head of Research for the Faculty for Arts and Creative Industries, and all funding applications are reviewed through the research leads from the three schools in the faculty. At institutional level, the annual invitation to apply for individual research funding (through the submission of an individual research plan – IRP) is heralded by a process that begins two or three months before the application deadline. This allows time for workshops and briefings, which are open to all staff, and are run by the research leads for each school. The research leads also are available to read over drafts of IRP applications prior to them being submitted. Since 2017, these applications were then reviewed at Faculty level by all three research leads, the Head of Research, team leaders (who are responsible for workloading), and the Institutional research support manager. Applications are reviewed in terms of achievability, rigour, clarity, and relevance. All staff who identify as being research active are thus given additional support throughout their application process (Aim 1).

3.c Since 2017, several of the university's existing interdisciplinary research networks have been formally recognised and awarded institutional funding. These include the gender studies network, SunGen, run by **Smith**. SunGen is the longest established of these, having been formed in 2015 to bring together those from across the university who have an interest in gender and sexuality. This includes academics from all five faculties, as well as representatives from Human Resources, and postgraduate students. SunGen has hosted several workshops and events at the request of HR to explore such issues such as aspirational culture, lad culture, and intersectionality, all of which have been used to inform HR policies and have fed into the institution's Athena Swan submissions. In 2018, SunGen was awarded official status as an institutional interdisciplinary network supported by a grant of £5,000 per year. This has largely been used to fund outreach events, particularly the institution's Vote100 celebrations in 2018 that primarily involved Y10 and Y11 local school pupils. SunGen has also brought together academics from across this institution and from other institutions to contribute to two edited collections: *Re-Reading Spare Rib* (2017) and *Gender Equality in Changing Times* (2020), both edited by **Smith** and published by Palgrave. The collections both include contributions by experienced researchers as well as those less experienced, and current or recent PhD students in the unit (see also Section 3, paragraph 3.c). In the case of inexperienced or early career

researchers, edited collections provide a route into publishing that is robust but not as forbidding as external peer reviewing alone can be.

3.d The University supports research through a robust infrastructure. This includes providing dedicated desk space to PhD students in a location close to their supervisory team; up-to-date software and computer hardware for all academic staff and students; and a dedicated support staff for researchers. Several PhD students have benefited from the purchase of technical equipment and software, as well as **Pearce** and **Gomes** to assist in their own research projects. In addition, since 2018 the University has subscribed to the Box of Broadcasting, which has been used extensively by students and academics in research across a wide range of disciplines, from undergraduate teaching to professorial research projects.

Future plans

3.f There are currently two major research bids under review with funding bodies.

Smith (AHRC, Government Communication and COVID-19: Comparison between Scotland and Westminster) and (AHRC – Conflict Culture), and another with ACE to engage the community in celebrations of 150 years since the publication of *Through the Looking-Glass*. (See also Section 1, paragraph 1.2.d.v) (Aim 3)

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

English at Sunderland is characterised by a high level of collaborative activity and is at the forefront of developments in using the subject to enhance and inform the wider community. As seen in Section 1.1.c., unit members are highly productive and have their expertise drawn on for scholarly encyclopaedic entries. **Lockwood, Nash, Smith** and **Younger** have all been invited to give keynote addresses at conferences, both nationally (12) and internationally (5) in this REF period. The intersection of the three subjects within the Unit (Language, Literature and Creative Writing) is found in many of the activities outlined below.

4.a Research activities are celebrated and recorded in the Humanities research blog (since 2012). This is managed by **Pearce** and includes entries about the research of colleagues in History, as well as the School's post-graduate community. This central record is drawn on by the institution's media communications team and filters into their promotion of our research more widely via the University's main web site and Twitter feed. In addition, the Humanities team have a research hub online, which is managed by **Smith**, but allows for discussion and sharing of content and news by all members of the Humanities team. This hub is housed on the University's official online learning platform, Canvas, and so is also an archive of such communication that is accessible to all members of the Humanities team. As a small Unit of Assessment, academics in the team often develop research links and work with colleagues in the wider academic community, both in Sunderland University and in the wider academic world (Aim 2, see also Section 1, paragraphs 1.2.c.ii; 1.2.c.iv).

1. Academic esteem (Aim 2)

4.b Members of the Unit routinely serve as PhD external examiners and as external assessors in promotions processes, including professorial appointment panels (**Smith**), nationally and internationally.

4.c All academics in the Unit are called on to review book proposals and journal articles from a range of sources, such as *Social Semiotics*; *Discourse, Media & Context*; *European Journal of Cultural Studies*; *Journal of Language and Politics*; *Sexualities*; *Journal of War and Culture Studies*; *English Today*; *Journal of English Linguistics*, *Multilingua*; *Psychologies*; *Short Fiction in Theory and Practice*; *Environmental Humanities*; *Animal Studies Journal*; *Animals and Society*. In addition, the Unit's academics area also asked to evaluate book proposals for publishers such as Bloomsbury, Edinburgh University Press, I.B. Tauris, Open University Press, Palgrave, Routledge and Sage.

4.d **Smith** founded and co-edits the Bloomsbury International Library of Gender in Popular Culture, which has been running since 2012, with a colleague at Northumbria University. As part

of the contract with Bloomsbury, **Smith** receives several complimentary copies of books published in the series, and donates a copy to the University library. **Lockwood** is on the editorial board of the Animal Publics series (Sydney University Press) and in Associate Editor for *Animal Studies Journal*.

4.e **Nash** and **Pearce** are founding editors of the *Journal of Intercultural Enquiry* which has been running since 2015. **Pearce** is on the editorial board of *English Today*. **Gomes** is on the editorial board of the *Journal of the Spanish Society for Medieval English Language and Literature*. Another member of the Unit has been invited to join the editorial board of *Crime Fiction Studies*, which is a new journal due to have its first edition in 2020. **Lockwood** is a founding editor of the *Journal of Class and Culture*.

4.f **Smith** has guest-edited a special issue of the *Journal of Language and Politics*, exploring gender and sexuality in relation to populism (2020).

4.g Academics in the unit have been invited to submit entries to encyclopaedias and handbooks, based on their internationally recognised research. Such invitations have been levelled at **Smith** (Wiley Blackwell's *Encyclopaedia of Gender, Media and Communication*; Sage's *Encyclopedia of Journalism*), and **Nash** (*The Oxford Handbook of the Arabic Novelistic Tradition* and Wiley's *Encyclopaedia of Empire*), amongst others. A member of the Unit has also acted as Editorial Consultant for a volume of contemporary literary criticism.

4.h **Smith** has produced the second edition of a text book, *The Language of Journalism*, at the request of Bloomsbury. Within the Institution, it is used as a core text on a Stage 2 English module, and is also a recommended text across the Journalism programmes. This book is used in universities across the UK, the United States, Australia and New Zealand, and India.

4.i **Nash** gave the annual Sir Syed Memorial Lecture to the Aligarh Muslim University Alumni Association in 2014 and also gave a keynote address at the International IDEA Conference that year. An invitation to **Nash** to deliver a paper at the Beyond Islamophobia conference in 2014 resulted in a long association with SOAS and in 2019 he was appointed Research Associate at that institution (see also Section 4, paragraph 4.s).

2. Community engagement (Aim 3)

4.j Members of the unit (**Dobbs, Gomes, Nash, Pearce, Smith, Younger**) are regularly called on to present lectures to local branches of the University of the Third Age in Sunderland and Newcastle. Here, their research reaches audiences of around 100 per talk and has led to further invitations to speak about other aspects of their research to such audiences.

4.k Academics in the Unit organised and took part in a North-East studies event held at Canny Space, Sunderland in September 2014. This was a public event that looked at literature, poetry and language in the North East, and was attended by an audience of academics, students and members of the public. This proved to be a springboard for the New North East Symposium, organised by **Pearce**, in July 2015. This event featured talks by academics from around the North East as well as local culture industry representatives. Like the Canny Space event, the audience comprised academics, students, and members of the public. The Unit's research in the area of North East culture has expanded further through the Sunderland Literature Festival where various members of the Unit contribute talks on regional identity and workshops on regional creative writing. In particular, **Gomes** has regularly held talks and workshops on Anglo-Saxon Sunderland, in St Peter's Church, Monkwearmouth, which are very popular with the community (often attracting the biggest audience of any of the large number of events that are linked to the Sunderland Literature Festival). **Gomes'** particular research into Anglo-Saxon English in the North East has led to him being invited to give public talks in Newcastle and Sunderland beyond the Sunderland Literature Festival. He has also been interviewed on Spanish radio about his research, thus enhancing both the reputation of the University and the North East of England.

4.l The collective research of the Unit's academics in English Language, Literature and Creative Writing in relation to local studies is drawn together in the Seagull City web site (developed initially by **Smith** and **Fallon**), which offers users a guide to the cultural and literary heritage of Sunderland. The site was used to support the Sunderland City of Culture bid in 2016-18. The site garners in excess of 500 unique visitors per month, and has a global reach with repeated searches from users in South American, Asia and Australia as well as Europe and North America. More locally, the website offers a springboard for community creative writing projects run by the Unit's Creative Writing team in conjunction with local creative writing groups to engage with "flash fiction" and "geo-writing" projects (see also paragraph 4.p). The Seagull City site was also used in 2020 by locals to engage with walks around Sunderland, during the first lockdown when only one 'daily walk' was permitted. This led to one person forming a Facebook group, Hidden Sunderland, with more than 2,000 members taking part by September 2020.

4.m Academics in the Unit have been involved in the Sunderland Literature Festival since 2014. This festival is co-organised with the Sunderland Library Service and has its focus on local artists and creators with a range of activities going beyond traditional book launches. Sessions take place in the community in coffee shops, pubs and local heritage venues, making them more accessible to a wider range of public attendees. English academics routinely contribute workshops and reading groups to this annual festival, offering sessions on "World literature", Islamophobia, Irish literature, local dialectology. In addition, the Creative Writing academics started two writing competitions in 2015: one for local schools, and another for a wider range of authors. The latter has developed into the Sunderland Short Story competition. This is organised by **Dobbs** and has been running since 2017. The competition is sponsored by the local branch of Waterstone's and attracts entrants from around the world. In 2018, there were 1,800 submissions and the international nature of these can be seen from the fact that the runner-up in that year was from the Netherlands. The 2020 event was held online, with contributions from five members of the Unit.

4.n The overlap between the three subjects is found in the fact that several members of the Unit have engaged with the local immigrant community through the auspices of the University Chaplaincy, and the Young Asian Voices network. **Younger** is currently working on a project with these agencies and with colleagues from other parts of the university. This project, 'Vocal, Local and Transnational Voices on Integration: A Participatory Action Research project emerging from the concerns of young British Asian Muslim Mackems', is in partnership with the University of Bedfordshire programme leaders for Community Radio and Youth Work, alongside input from School of Oriental and African Studies.

4.p **Younger** also works with the University Chaplaincy to engage overseas students in local community projects relating to life writing. **Younger's** developing research interests in life writing are enhanced by such engagement, as is the experience of the participants themselves. (See also Section 4, paragraphs 4.k; 4.l; 4.m)

4.q Academics in the unit have been supported by the Faculty to engage in numerous outreach events. In particular, the development of continuing professional development events for secondary school teachers has been very successful, with courses running on topics in English Literature and English Language at various times through the academic year. Of particular relevance has been the innovative research into contemporary gender issues by members of the academic team, which has helped enlighten teachers in several CPD events in 2018 and 2019. Positive feedback from the participants led to requests for repeated sessions in 2020, which were postponed until 2021.

4.r These links with local schools raised the profile of the research of several members of the Unit. In particular, **Smith's** research into gender equality issues led to her being the guest of honour at a local secondary school's awards night (September 2019), where she was asked to speak about equality issues and inspire the students (see also Section 4, paragraph 4.s).

3. Individual research continues to feature in the wider community (Aim 3)

4.s Members of the unit have been asked to deliver plenaries and keynote addresses at various conferences, such as **Smith's** keynote to the Swedish Association of Media and Communication

Studies (May 2019), her theme-setting work at the Ross Priory Broadcast Talk network, and **Nash's** work with SOAS.

4.t **Lockwood's** research and activities relating to veganism is drawn on nationally to inform and support organisations such as the British Vegan Society and Animal Rebellion. He is a member of the Vegan Society Research Advisory Committee, and a consultant for the Animal Think Tank. **Lockwood** has been invited to present to Alpro by the marketing agency Blood Global, in relation to developing a narrative for their marketing and branding teams. Since 2018, **Lockwood** has taken his research into the community through talks and presentations at vegan and food festivals around the country. He appears regularly in local, national (including BBC Radio 4's Front Row, LBC, TalkRadio, and ITV News) and international media where he draws on his research into veganism, food systems, and climate change. He has an advisory role in Scottish CND. In 2020, **Lockwood** became lead author on a major study for the Vegan Society to produce a plant-based food system policy for the UK (to be launched at re-arranged COP26 in Glasgow in November 2021). His work with the Animal Think Tank will also result in the production of a narrative playbook for a range of organisations (UK and US based) which will be used to help train them in the delivery of animal advocacy messages.

4.u **Dobbs** has been invited to judge a variety of creative writing prizes, and to give talks at the Leeds Literature Festival, and readings at Edinburgh Waterstone's and New Art Social. The Unit's support of her developing research into creative writing and performance has led to her been commissioned for a performance narrative based on an exhibition about grief at the Washington Arts Centre, Tyne and Wear. Her workshops on creative writing and performance pertaining to female empowerment were initially funded by SunGen, and in 2020 she ran a workshop at the Newcastle Women's Centre. She was also commissioned for a summer residency based on female empowerment through creative writing and performance at Dance City, Sunderland in 2020, postponed to 2021 (see also Section 1, paragraph 1.2.d.iv).

4.v **Smith** is an advisor to the BBC News web team on language relating the reports including trans people, in particular on the use of pronouns. Smith has also appeared on BBC local radio (across the UK), BBC News 24, BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme, and local radio to discuss her research into politeness theory when applied to public participation television, and has appeared in national newspapers (*The Telegraph*, *The Observer*, *The Metro*, *The Sun*, *The Daily Star*) and international papers (*California Sun*, France's *News-24* and Japan's *Asahi Shimbun*) in relation to this. Other members of the Unit have also appeared on BBC Radio 4, Channel 4, France 24, Tencent and local radio to discuss their research at various times. **Smith's** research has also been submitted to the on-going Department of Media, Culture and Sport Select Committee on Reality TV, and has been used to inform feedback to OfCom in response to their proposed revisions of their regulations covering British broadcasting. She is working on a funding bid to explore conflict culture in a transnational context, building on this existing research (see also Section 1, 2.d.ix).

4.w **Nash** was invited to present his research as part of a series of public talks held at the National Portrait Gallery, London, as part of their 2016 William Gifford Palgrave: Master of Disguise display (see also Section 4, paragraph 4.i).

4.x **Smith's** research into British widows of the First World War has led to her being invited to deliver talks to many public events over the period of the commemorations relating to the centenary of First World War during the period 2014-18, and these invitations continue in the case of local branches of University of the Third Age and local history groups. She has also acted as historical advisor for Wall to Wall's *Who Do You Think You Are?* and TwentyTwenty TV's *A House Through Time*, series 3. This series has won several broadcast and history awards in 2020/21.

4.y The Seagull City web site was used to inform the city council's response to Black Lives Matter campaigns, and is the principal source for information leading to the placement of a 'blue plaque' to mark the achievements of 19th century Black activists in the city, unveiled as part of

Black History Month in 2020. There is a second blue plaque to celebrate the long-standing anti-slavery campaigns of the city's Quakers, to be unveiled in April 2021. This will coincide with the opening of buildings renovated as part of the Heritage Action Zone project in that area of Sunderland.