

Institution: University of Wolverhampton
Unit of Assessment: 27 English Language and Literature
<p>1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy</p> <p><u>a) How Research is Structured Across the Unit</u></p> <p>The Unit comprises 12 staff with significant responsibility for research (9.50 FTE), two thirds of whom are new to the Unit since 2014 owing to strategic new appointments, replacements for those who have left, and researchers who are submitting for the first time. Researchers fall principally within the subject areas of English and Creative Writing, and cover a range of periods from the medieval to contemporary, with research accruing around four thematic groupings: gender, sexuality, and representation; countercultural perspectives; cultures across borders; and language, power, and society.</p> <p>Staff belong to the Centre for Transnational and Transcultural Research (CTTR), directed by Groes, which also includes the Area Studies Unit of Assessment (UoA25). As such, our research benefits from interdisciplinary cross-fertilisation, with shared initiatives, research supervisions, and impact. A steering group (comprising the CTTR director, UoA coordinators, research group leads, and the head of Humanities) manages research policy, research leave, mentoring, the monitoring and implementation of strategies for equality and diversity, and strategic planning. CTTR reports to the Faculty Research Committee (FRC), which oversees ethics, doctoral training, and REF coordination. CTTR also provides an interdisciplinary environment for the Unit's growing postgraduate research community. A Faculty Postgraduate Research Coordinator, reporting to the FRC, administers PhD admissions and interviews, the formation of supervisory teams, annual monitoring, and student progression.</p> <p>Since 2014, the Unit has been located in a newly created School of Humanities, with a dedicated building and facilities, including a Humanities Reading Room. Film studies, formerly part of the Unit, now contributes to UoA33; and pedagogy, formerly a research grouping, has lost critical mass and now plays only a minor role in the submission. Staffing changes like this have both refocused and revitalised our research groupings, resulting in a more coherent and defined research identity and a clearer management structure in which the School and its single research centre have well-defined divisions of responsibility, budgeting, and reporting.</p> <p><u>b) Research Objectives Past and Future</u></p> <p>Since 2014, our strategy has been:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) to build through targeted recruitment professorial leadership as well as enhanced external funding and impact experience; ii) to consolidate and develop peer support within outward-facing themed research groups; iii) to develop regional and extra-regional partnerships, networking opportunities, and impact activities with public and private bodies (including museums, libraries, cultural heritage organisations); iv) to encourage collaborative projects leading to funding bids; v) to consolidate research staff support mechanisms through mentorship and schemes for early career researchers; vi) to grow and enhance our postgraduate research community; vii) to embed equality, diversity, ethics, and research integrity in all areas of our research culture. <p>These strategies refocus and extend those identified in REF 2014, where the Unit's chief aims were to establish sustainability as a new UoA; to create sustainable structures for research management and support; and to develop research capacity in leadership and staffing. Our consolidation of research management into one research centre (CTTR) rather than two, and targeted recruitment of our first Chair in English Literature (Groes) have been key developments addressing these strategies since 2014, as has been the recruitment of early career colleagues of</p>

exceptional promise such as Black, winner of a 2018 AHRC/BBC New Generation Thinker Award, and Francis, an early career researcher and 2019 David Bradshaw Writer in Residence at Oxford University. Groes, Black, and Francis bring with them established track records in community engagement and impact work that will continue to enhance our research environment into the future.

Central to all elements of our strategy in this REF has been the consolidation and extension of research groupings. Continuity with REF2014 is provided by the Culture Across Borders group, which refocuses the Transnational/Transcultural Writing group, while three additional groups combine existing strengths with strategic developments through recruitment. The groups include researchers with different period, genre, methodological, and even disciplinary specialisms; they are inclusive, allowing researchers to contribute to more than one; they create forums for the exchange of ideas, collaboration, and mutual support; and they provide a space for postgraduate research students to develop a collective research identity and to develop professionally.

Gender, Sexuality, and Representation is an interdisciplinary and cross-period group committed to supporting and facilitating research into voices, texts, and histories which have been neglected by the established canon, as well as promoting voices from under-represented classes. The group is led by Black, who has worked with BBC Radio 3 to make a programme on her research project, 'Eating God: Food in Medieval Religious Drama', building on and extending her reassessment of lay theologies during the early Reformation, and women's performance in medieval and early modern Europe. Her research also informs her one-woman storytelling performances and workshops that have reached audiences worldwide. Colbert's ground-breaking open access database of British Women's Travel Writing, 1780-1840 was launched at the Chawton House Library, Alton, in 2014 and featured in a special issue of *Women's Writing* (2017). Archival research in his subsequent British Academy/Leverhulme-funded 'Communities of Authorship' project (2016-18) has cast new light on scores of texts and women authors. Blower, an award-winning novelist and short story writer, explores marginalised women's voices of all ages in the potteries of Staffordshire in her latest novel, *Pondweed* (2020). Allen, an expert in contemporary fiction, has more recently turned to a three-volume book series on the lives and works of the militant suffragettes Lilian Lenton, Olive Wharry, and Nina Boyle, the first of which is set to be published by Palgrave in 2021.

Cultures Across Borders investigates regional and cross-border writing, including Black Country linguistic and literary cultures, Welsh writing in English, American literature, travel writing, and ethnography. Border research also includes the psycho-social terrains of consciousness, the links between sensory perception and place, creativity, and physical and mental wellbeing. This group is led by Byrne, who specialises in working class and political fiction and has contributed to the *Cambridge History of Working Class Literature* (2017). He regularly organises symposia with the Association of Welsh Writing in English, and is currently working towards a monograph on 1930s Welsh working class fiction. His work as a founding co-organiser of the Wolverhampton Literature Festival, now in its fourth year, is augmented by a Writing the Black Country impact initiative involving McDonald (retired), Groes, and Francis (see ICS). Several projects extend well beyond regional concerns. McDonald has written a series of short monographs on American writers, including Phillip Roth. Travlos (Miller) has built upon her longstanding creative and critical work with the Jul'hoansi people in northern Namibia by developing a radio concept ('Soap in the Sand') in conjunction with the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation. Follow-on work in 2019 funded by the Association for Progressive Communications, South Africa, involved a partnership with the International University, Namibia, to develop a community networking scheme using sneakernet/mule technology to connect isolated people (elderly, disabled, and remote village dwellers) to the wider Jul'hoansi community. Colbert co-edits the world-leading journal, *European Romantic Review*, and publishes regularly on nineteenth-century travel writing. He has recently completed a dataset of nearly 4,000 travel writings published in the British Isles between 1780 and 1840 that will extend his pilot database on Women's travel writing to include all works published in the period.

Countercultural Perspectives is a cross-disciplinary research group that hosts research expertise in culture that is suppressed, neglected, or rejected by the mainstream, with particular strengths in popular culture, 1960s writing, digital futures, and disinformation. The group is led by Groes, who has established an international reputation for his work on the changing nature of cognition and memory in the digital age, including his current book projects, *The Prosthetic God* (MIT Press) and *Brain Attack: A Cultural History of Stroke* (John Murray). More recently, he is PI of a consortium analysing public responses to the BBC's *Novels that Shaped Our World* (NOSOW) engagement project (2019-21), set to segue into a major AHRC project in the next three years, *Novel Perceptions: Towards an Inclusive Canon*. Responses to the 1960s are also a major focus in this group, with Groes's monograph, *British Fiction of the Sixties* (2016), and a series of collaborative articles on responses to 1960s in popular culture and music: from Allen and Carlin's chapter on U2's 'exorcism' of the decade (2018), to Jones and Carlin's chapter on Charles Manson's reading of the Beatles (2019). Other collaborative work—encouraged in this group—looks at film and television: Jones and Byrne on Doctor Who and Star Trek in *Journal of Popular Culture* (2018); and Carlin and Jones on Manson and the snuff film phenomenon. During his tenure with the group in 2014-17, Griffiths published his retrospective genre-bending poetry collection, *Red Roar: Twenty Years of Words* (2015), and began the research for his portrait of social failure and redemption in the digital age, *Broken Ghost* (2019).

Language, Power and Society explores the construction of power relations through philosophical theory, religious practice, discourse analysis, and literature, with reference to migration, multiculturalism, faith, caste and political dogma. Led by Dhanda (Areas Studies), our researchers include Bailey, whose work re-evaluates the philosophical consensus on David Hume's radical scepticism and philosophy of religion; Byrne, co-winner (with Allen) of the 2015 AHRC / Cheltenham Festival competition, who has continued the work curated at the Festival on *Politicians' Novels* by developing a database of the genre from the nineteenth century to present that will develop public understanding of the relationship between parliamentary politics and fiction. Orpin, who completed a PhD in 2015, researches corpus-based public policy discourse, most recently concerning criticism on the MMR vaccination initiative that had such far-reaching effects on public health. She also contributes to C-TRUTH (The Rhetoric of Untruth), an Anglo-Dutch project that investigates the impact of mis- and disinformation during the pandemic.

In the next five years, our aims and objectives will be:

- i) to refresh and consolidate staff base, exploring innovations in Creative Writing and Digital Humanities/Digital Literary Studies;
- ii) to develop research group profiles through outward facing events, projects, and impact opportunities;
- iii) to maintain and extend regional, extra-regional, and international partnerships;
- iv) to focus on and increase project grant capture;
- v) to further grow PGR student research culture, enhancing group identity and professional training through annual student-led seminar series, workshops, and conferences;
- vi) to continue prioritising an inclusive research environment, good practice in equality and diversity, and research integrity.

These plans build on and will follow the models of recent successes in establishing high-impact externally funded projects such as the recently awarded AHRC *Novel Perceptions* project (Groes, PI; Byrne, CI). *Novel Perceptions* will bring two new Post-Doctoral Research Associates over the next three years, and involves collaborations with the BBC, Libraries Connected, the British Library, and literature festivals across the country, a major step change from our largely regional impact focus hitherto. The cross-fertilisation in this project between English Literature, Computational Literary Studies, Psychology, and Computational Cultural Sociology will also underpin our developments of other digital projects, such as the expansion and analysis of Colbert's British Travel Writing database or Byrne's *Politicians' Novels* project. Regional impact partners (see below) will continue to be important to the Unit and the recent appointments of Francis and Blower have strengthened the role Creative Writing will play with community engagement. Planned and approved further staff recruitment in Creative Writing will also provide a significant opportunity to develop the subject breadth, increase research supervisory capacity,

and extend the subject's international impact profile. Plans are also in place for establishing an MA programme in Creative Writing as a stepping stone to increased PhD recruitment, helping to further develop a postgraduate research community which is at present heavily weighted towards English Literature.

c) Impact from the Research and the Link to Impact Case Studies

The REF2014 subpanel commended our commitment to a programme of local public outreach, and part of our strategy in this REF has been to establish and develop strategic regional partners for sustained collaborative impact projects. Byrne's research in working-class fiction and regional writing guided his organisational and programming work in piloting the inaugural Wolverhampton Literature Festival (2017), sponsored by the University, Wolverhampton City Council, and the Express and Star newspaper. This has been a key development, as has the working relationship between our researchers and the Black Country Living Museum and the Dudley Canal and Tunnel Trust. Projects here include the 2018 AHRC/BA-funded Being Human Festival project, "Snidge Scrupin": Mapping Smell and Memory in the Black Country', led by Groes and Mercer (Psychology), which included participatory experiments on the 'Proust Phenomenon' (linking smell to place) at the Wolverhampton Literature Festival, Dudley Council's inaugural Black Country Festival (Summer 2019), and a pop-up exhibition in Wolverhampton as part of eBay's Global Impact Program (2019). CTTR fielded five events in 'Wolverhampton Unscene' as part of Being Human Festival 2019, culminating in a multisensory walk. These are expanding and durable networks that have brought our research closer to community interests and cultural events planning. Festivals, including Being Human, the Wolverhampton Literature Festival, the Birmingham Literature Festival, and the Faculty's own ArtsFest have proven effective in integrating work by Allen, Black, Carlin, Francis, Griffiths, Groes, McDonald, and Travlos (Miller), as well as five PGR students, in a variety of public forums and research networks. The Impact Case Study, 'Writing the Black Country: Changing Perceptions', emerges directly out of our contribution to and creation of networks and the positive contributions these have made to public perceptions, well-being, and prosperity both within the region and beyond.

A second strategic aim for enabling impact has been to widen impact planning beyond the region via investment in international partnerships. For example, CTTR funded Travlos (Miller)'s two trips to Namibia (2016, 2019) to lay the groundwork of her 'Soap in the Sand' mobile radio project by developing working contacts with Jul'hoansi village leaders, the Kalahari People's Network, and the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation. This pump-priming has enabled a subsequent funded community networking partnership with International University, Namibia, for which Travlos's contacts were crucial. In 2019, Groes and Byrne received CTTR funding to meet with BBC and international partners in Amsterdam and London in order to develop analytic tools for the BBC Novels that Shaped Our World programming series and to develop the major AHRC supporting bid ('Novel Perceptions'). The Wolverhampton team gathered letters of support from the BBC, the British Library, Writing West Midlands, the Being Human Festival, the Wellcome Centre for Cultures of Environment and Health (University of Exeter), and CILIP (the UK library and information association). This international aspect of impact research is more dependent on large grant capture, but the success of the Novel Perceptions project in attracting major AHRC funding (GBP290,000 starting 18 October 2020) is an early indication that this approach will yield benefits and grow research income and opportunities going forwards.

A third strategy is related to staffing (see section 2 below), as impact profiles have been key considerations. Groes's appointment as Chair was in part a result of his strong track record in leading the AHRC-funded Memory Network, a project he has continued at Wolverhampton through such avenues as a PGR student Memory Network conference on 'Immortality and Memory' (June 2018) and his work in building an international consortium to research disinformation (C-TRUTH), bringing together researchers in the humanities, social sciences, and information technology with the goal of developing DIY-tools deployed at local and regional political levels for societal projects that enhance civic engagement. Black's appointment took into consideration the connections already established between her research in medieval drama and her work as a playwright and performer of contemporary adaptations. This research and its performance applications have been

further developed at Wolverhampton, benefiting the general public, but also museum curators, women's groups, churches and congregations. Black's work comprises the focus of the Impact Case Study, 'Performing Medieval Gender: A Storytelling Project'.

d) Supporting Interdisciplinary Research

In line with institutional objectives, we have developed the already interdisciplinary nature of English Studies research. Groes in particular has forged cross-disciplinary connections in this Memory Network project and related publications, including his *Memory in the Twenty-First Century: New Critical Perspectives from the Arts, Humanities, and Sciences* (2016). His interdisciplinary outreach work has been supported at institutional level through the University's International Research and Innovation Scheme (IRIS; see Institutional Environment). Through devolved QR funding, CTTR has helped him and colleagues from the department of psychology team up with Computational Linguistics at Huygens Institute, Netherlands, for projects on olfaction, disinformation, and the novel. Similar support for collaborative conference papers and writing projects have encouraged other staff to pursue interdisciplinary research, including Byrne, who has published (with Allen) on jazz in literature and (with Mangan [U Bristol]) on neoliberalism in business management; Travlos, whose work combining creative writing and ethnology in Namibia is described above; and Francis, who is launching a new project on creative writing and geology in the Black Country, in conjunction with the region's successful bid for UNESCO geo-park status (part of Francis's ERAS funding bid for early career researchers [see 2.a. below]).

e) Progress towards an Open Research Environment

We aim to make as much research available on the Wolverhampton open access repository (WIRE) above and beyond compliance requirements for REF. For example, Black and Byrne have deposited articles pre-dating the REF open access policy start date; Jones has a gold open access article with a CC BY licence, the most permissive of Creative Commons licences, which allows the creation of derivatives such as translations to allow for a wider audience; Orpin and Travlos (Miller) have deposited book chapters, not currently required by the REF. There is also a strong culture of making data open access and using data sharing repositories in the form of databases and project websites, such as Colbert's Women's Travel Writing database and Jones/Carlin's Helter Skelter WordPress site, Byrne's Politicians' Novels database (under development), and CTTR's blog, 'transculture', which has published recovery scholarship associated with the travel writing database as well as lectures and op-eds from visiting researchers. Colbert's analyses of the database published in *Viatica* (2016) and *Women's Writing* (2017) rely on data freely available on the database website, allowing users to check and update the research, and include data in the apparatus (a checklist of collaborative women's writing in the former journal). *Viatica* itself is an online open-access journal and we have advised on new European open-access journals such as *Anglosphere* and *VTU Review*, or serve on Editorial boards of other longer standing open-access journals (e.g. *Romantic Textualities*). In the longer term, we will continue to emphasise making research data publically accessible as we advance and expand our digital humanities and outward facing web projects. In addition, as we turn our strategy from building income infrastructure to grant capture, we will follow closely the recommendations of UKRI and other signatories to Plan S for open access publishing of monographs and book chapters, areas which are likely to be particularly challenging for Humanities publishing models.

f) Supporting a Culture of Research Integrity

We support a culture of research integrity, and ensure that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal, and professional frameworks, obligations and standards, including the Researcher Development Concordat (see 2.a. below). As a relatively small Unit, we offer opportunities for early career researchers to contribute to policy development and progress their research careers. Accordingly, we have structured our research management and groupings inclusively. Two of the research groups are facilitated by early career staff and, as group leads, these members sit on the CTTR Steering Committee; in turn, the group leaders provide the transparency between research management and professional development that we value most.

2. People**a) Staffing Strategy and Staff Development**

Since REF 2014, 1 fixed-term fractional Professor of Creative Writing has left at the expiry of his contract (Griffiths); 1 part-time Reader has left to pursue other career opportunities (Miles); and 2 full-time members of staff have also left: Ellis took up a senior managerial post at Oxford Brookes and McDonald retired. In addition, 2 members of the Unit from Film Studies (Pheasant-Kelly and Hockenhull) have moved to UoA33. The 4 core departing staff (2.95 FTE) were replaced by 4 new staff (3.0 FTE), 2 permanent full-time posts in English Literature and 2 permanent half-time posts in Creative Writing. In addition 2 staff (Byrne and Orpin) are entered into their first REF and 1 (Bailey) joins the Unit from Philosophy.

Our recruitment strategy has been to balance senior with early career appointments, while carefully considering fit with our research groupings and subject disciplinary coverage. Senior appointments develop depth and provide continuity in research and subject leadership. Following our Unit's launch in REF2014, we secured University Research Investment Funding (RIF) to establish the 50th Anniversary Chair in English Literature (Groes), providing professorial leadership for CTTR and building on Groes's track record in securing collaborative AHRC funding and in leading impact projects. A second senior appointment to lead Creative Writing, Blower, provided continuity after the retirement of her predecessor (McDonald). Early career appointments refresh research and provide new synergies. In English Literature, Black has expanded the Unit's range to include medieval drama and has developed the Gender research group. Through her career as storyteller and playwright, she also contributes to our Creative Writing and impact profile. Francis joins Creative Writing as a poet and novelist rooted firmly in Black Country culture, further solidifying our links with regional institutions and contributing to the Cultures across Borders research group.

Fully aligned with University policy, the Unit implements the Concordat for Supporting the Career Development of Researchers at all stages. All new staff, particularly early career scholars, are given reduced teaching as part of the School's workload allowance and assigned a mentor to discuss publications, funding bids, and developing an impact profile. Once staff are embedded, we encourage applications to the University's Early Researcher Award Scheme (ERAS), which provides up to GBP5,000 alongside a tailored mentoring and action learning programme to facilitate research career development of ECRs: both Black and Francis (for 2020-21) have been successful in securing ERAS funding. A key aspect of this award is its applicability to recent PhDs at any stage of their career pathway, a proviso that has helped staff who have returned to research after career breaks. In 2017, for example, a Senior Lecturer (Orpin) received ERAS support to continue work developed in her PhD (2015) on a Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies approach to discover the ways in which debates about vaccine safety are constructed on Twitter. During this REF census, the Unit was also successful in bidding for Research Investment Funds for promising early-to-mid-career researchers on the basis of research activity and likelihood of progressing to Readership and eventually Professorship. Byrne received funding and a mini-sabbatical under this scheme for his 'Aesthetics of the Political Novel' project (2014-15), following his AHRC/BBC curation at the Cheltenham Literature Festival. The RIF work has led in turn to his role as Co-Investigator on the AHRC Novel Perception project that is set to make a major contribution to the Unit in the next REF period.

While ECRs receive special focus, CTTR administers a Research Mentoring Scheme for researchers at all stages of their careers. Mentoring is designed to be a supportive approach to furthering individual career ambitions, helping staff set annual and longer-term objectives for boosting the quality of publications, public engagement and impact projects, and developing individual and group bidding strategies for external funding. Mentoring meetings follow a semi-annual self-audit of individual research activity, and mentors continue to provide support at other times. Agreed individual research plans feed back into strategic planning for research support, including teaching buy-out and sabbaticals.

Staff are encouraged to apply for sabbatical leave to complete major projects, and are entitled to one semester's leave every five years. Not counting recent arrivals, seven of nine researchers in the Unit have successfully applied in the REF period, and two have been granted mini-sabbaticals of 6 weeks. Research staff bid annually for teaching remission based on mentor-agreed research plans. Staff may also apply for up to GBP600 (national) and GBP1,200 (international) to support participation in conferences and research visits. Those working on impact case studies are supported by a Faculty-based Impact Officer, particularly for evidence gathering. Timetabling allows research staff at least one research day per week to maintain momentum during teaching terms.

b) Research Students

Recruitment Strategy

The number of PGR student registrations in the Unit has grown from 3 in 2014 to 13 in 2020, with 3 completions during the assessment period. The majority of PGR students are part-time and female, though not always both; BAME students represent around 25% of the student body. Without access to AHRC block funding, our strategy has been to attract PGR students from the region with particular emphasis on our own MA English students, and not surprisingly the diversity of our students reflects this. To effect this strategy, MA students are offered a 20% home student discount towards their PhD fees and are encouraged to take an active part in CTTR research seminars, workshops, public lectures, and conferences alongside their PGR student comrades. Six of the current cohort are former MA students, and 2 more have read for other postgraduate degrees at the University. International students form a smaller proportion (23%), but we have enriched our PGR culture by hosting visiting PhD students funded by the ERASMUS+ Research Training Scheme, DADD German exchange scholarship, and the Chinese Scholarship Council. We have also successfully bid for University (RIF) bursaries for full-time study and 2 of our 3 completions are in part owing to this type of support. Two current students have Faculty bursaries, and an international student is fully funded by a Niger Delta Development Commission Foreign Post-Graduate Scholarship, a scheme directed to benefit an economically disadvantaged region of Nigeria.

Monitoring and Support Mechanisms

PGRs are supervised by a named Director of Studies (DoS) and an additional supervisor, ensuring expertise and successful completion experience on teams. Mandatory training is required to act as a research supervisor, as is regular CPD via the Doctoral College's Research Supervisors' Development Programme. The DoS plays an active role in the admissions process, consulting with students as they develop their full research proposals. Supervisors meet with PGR students once a month (FT) or bi-monthly (PT). As the majority of PGR students are PT, often with other work and/or family commitments, supervisors take a flexible approach, often meeting in the evening. Upon entry all students enter the Annual Progress Review which uses independent assessors to ensure that targets are being met, students are receiving the right kinds of support, and diversity and equality commitments are being applied. Progression from MPhil to PhD level occurs before 21 months (FT) and 42 months (PT) and comprises an updated research proposal, methodology, and timetable; a portfolio of written work; and a presentation of research to an audience of staff and peers in a mini-conference format.

PGR students are accommodated in the Faculty's postgraduate space, with desks, networked PCs, and informal meeting spaces. The School of Humanities also offers informal work and meeting spaces, as well as the Humanities Reading Room, including a small but well-appointed reference collection, and staffed by a student intern. The main Harrison Library offers 24-hour opening times and quiet rooms for individuals and small groups.

Research Skills Training

Our PGR students are full members of CTTR, which emphasises research training, collaboration, and experience for future professionals. PGRs attend research seminars and public lectures, research training events, and writing workshops, and participate in fora for presenting their own

work to peers and the scholarly community at conferences and symposia, both those hosted by the Centre and University as well as externally.

To support a student's transition into postgraduate research and participation in the research community, the Faculty offers incoming PGR students specific welcome and induction activities, and a safe working environment with training in all relevant health and safety issues. To support researcher development, each PGR student receives development opportunities in subject specific theory, methodology and skill expertise, and the opportunity to bid for funding up to GBP600 per annum to attend external research conferences, or expenses for reasonable and justifiable research-related travel and project development. PGR students beyond their first year of study also have the opportunity to gain teaching experience on undergraduate modules, under supervision from module leaders, typically in team-teaching environments.

PGR students simultaneously have membership of the University's Doctoral College (DC). The DC provides a comprehensive and holistic Postgraduate Researchers' Development Programme and works in collaboration with other University services, including Careers and Employability, Learning Information Services (both of which have dedicated PGR Advisors), and the Students Union to enhance the postgraduate experience and encourage research student community. Annually, the DC runs a PGR Employability Conference, including workshops on preparing applications and mock interviews.

Career Development

PGR students join one of the four research areas within CTTR, present their work alongside staff colleagues, and share ideas. This extends and formalises an ethos of staff/student collaborative work and has helped PGR students become part of outward facing public engagement and impact projects. One PGR student, for example, contributed a chapter on Helen Maria Williams and translation to Colbert's edited volume *Foreign Correspondence* (2014) while another, part-time, co-authored with Byrne an article on Erotic fan fiction published in *The Journal of Popular Culture* (2018). Francis (now staff) and another PGR student with an emphasis on Black Country writing, have joined Byrne and McDonald in organising events at the Wolverhampton Literature Festival (2017, 2018, 2019) and Francis and three other PGRs participated in Groes's Memory Network initiatives, including the Being Human Festival event, 'Snidge Scrumpin', as well as 'Immortality and Memory', a postgraduate Memory Network day conference (2018).

PGR students also participate in organising research seminars and conferences and are supported with funding for presenting papers outside the institution. One PGR student, working on eco-criticism, invited Jay Griffiths to speak at a CTTR research seminar (2016) and recorded an interview with her for the University YouTube channel. Another helped run a postgraduate student research conference within CTTR and has organised a similar event at Faculty level, bringing multiple disciplines together (2019). Other PGR students have amassed distinction in publishing work related to and alongside their research. Francis (now staff) published 3 poetry chapbooks (2015, 2016, 2016), while another published her second novel, *Gamble*, with Salt Press (2018). Another PGR student published articles in *Writing Visual Culture* (2015) and *Gothic and Racism* (2016), and his blog, 'Mr Hanson's English: Discovering English and Film', reprises his dissertation work for the benefit of English 6th form students and their teachers. A further PGR student's work on Mary Prince, similarly, informs a workshop event she has performed for Black History Month at the University (2018). Three PGR students aided Groes in the organisation of the international conference 'Twenty-First Century Perspectives on Kazuo Ishiguro' (1 Feb. 2020).

c) Equality and Diversity

The University of Wolverhampton is committed to the advancement of equality and the elimination of unlawful and unfair discrimination, and appoints new staff according to robust Equality and Diversity specifications and processes (see Institutional statement). PGR students are recruited openly and reflect the social and ethnic diversity of our region and the wider University community: our current cohort of 13 PGR students has a female/male ratio of 9:4 and includes 2 BAME, 1 disabled, and 3 international students.

For all staff and PGR students, we aim to ensure a gender balanced research culture and career promotion. This includes integrating gender and diversity into our research and teaching, promoting a research/life balance sensitive to individual needs; preventing harassment or discrimination based on sex, gender or sexual orientation, and ethnicity; and reviewing continually all materials including our website and blog for gender inclusivity and diversity. New appointments have been balanced in terms of gender, and we maintain near gender balance in our research staff [55% M: 45% F], who also comprise a range of nationalities and backgrounds.

Staff with caring responsibilities and those managing long-term illness have been supported through sympathetic workloads, creative time-tabling, and additional cover when needed so as to free up research time and avoid disadvantaging these staff during periods of particular disruption.

Our staff have also been leaders in promoting University LGBT policy and good practice. Before her departure, Miles was co-Principal Investigator of a University research project, 'Towards an LGBTQ-Inclusive Curriculum at the University of Wolverhampton' (2016-17), and a recipient of Arts Council/Nine Arches Press Dynamo Mentoring Scheme (Summer 2017) placement for West Midlands poets in under-represented categories. Black serves on the Faculty's Equality & Diversity committee and leads the School of Humanities bid for Athena Swan award status. She also promotes gender awareness through her research on women's and queer performance in medieval and early modern Europe, and as a theatre director, performer, and storyteller. Her original one-woman show 'Unruly Women', for example, is an indecorous assortment of medieval tales from around Europe about women who gain the upper hand by finding creative, naughty, and cunning ways to overcome the restrictions placed upon them by their gender and class. In November 2020, Groes has launched a Digital Humanities 2020 Reader Review that involves computational analysis of, amongst other areas, gender and geographical biases in attitudes to literature, and, by extension, life.

3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

a) Research Funding and Strategies for Generating Research Income

The priority during the assessment period has been on building researcher impact profiles, research projects, and, especially, project collaborations from which to launch funding bids, rather than on income capture itself, which will be a key target in the next REF. Income capture totals GBP11,887, but has been supplemented by QR funding devolved to the Unit (GBP198,000); RIF investment in the newly created Chair (GBP179,000); ERAS support (GBP10,000); and conference income in support of keynotes, events, and hospitality. In-kind external grants for media impact training and professional development include an AHRC/Cheltenham Festival Competition Award (2015) and an AHRC/BBC New Generation Thinker Award (2018). The Unit has also attracted external support not classified as research income but which has nevertheless benefitted our research strategy, not least GBP2,000 awarded for the team's contribution to the AHRC/BA sponsored Being Human Festival 2019, and GBP5,040 awarded by the Japan Foundation, Daiwa Foundation, and British Association of Contemporary Literature Studies in support of the *Twenty-First Century Perspectives on Kazuo Ishiguro* international conference (2020).

In addition to supporting people (as explained in sect. 2, above), QR expenditure has helped prepare funding bids by building collaborative teams, ensuring timely project development, and preparing impact pathways. This incremental strategy has seen successful outcomes that open up potential for developing grant capture beyond the current assessment period. Devolved expenditure developed the early prototype for the Women's Travel Writing 1780-1840 database, an example of the CTTR's outward facing research that has garnered over 100,000 page views since its launch in July 2014. Colbert's collaboration with an external digital humanities IT contractor set up the infrastructure that made possible his successful British Academy/Leverhulme small grant bid (2016-18). Post-award QR support helped evidence impact and improved project

visibility via development of a user survey and funded infrastructure for expansion that will underpin future bids for external investment.

More dramatically, QR investment helped form impact networking opportunities (see also sect. 1(c) above) by providing match funding for Being Human Festival bids in 2018 and 2019, as well as supporting researcher contributions to the Wolverhampton Literature Festivals from 2017. This laid the groundwork for the regional and national networks described in the 'Writing the Black Country' ICS. Seed funding for impact pathways was also crucial for Groes (PI) and Byrne (CI) in developing the NOSOW collaboration with the BBC and with international cultural and academic partners. This resulted in a successful bid for the AHRC project worth GBP290,000, starting 18 October 2020—just beyond the REF assessment period. Following these successful models of internal investment, CTTR will prioritise grant capture going forwards.

b) Organisational Infrastructure Supporting Research and Impact

Research income support is provided at University, Faculty, and School levels. At University level, the Project Support Office (PSO) focuses on pre- and post-award project support. The PSO also ran a Grants Academy in conjunction with its Brussels Office, in which research staff receive training in research project development and management, culminating in a presentation of research project ideas before funders in Brussels. Groes and Travlos (Miller) completed the course for our Unit, leading to interdisciplinary projects. Groes developed an international consortium of specialists in literature, language, computers science, and cognitive psychology to investigate disinformation; Miller moved forward her community communications project with the Ju|'hoansi people of Namibia, involving storytellers, ethnologists, and information technology researchers.

At Faculty level, a Faculty of Arts Enterprise Team offers an Arts-Humanities focused service of income generation support, including the e-publication of a regularly updated research grants register specific to the subject areas within the Faculty; help with matching bids to research; help with bid-writing including costings; and follow-on support for successful awards.

At School level, CTTR's mentors work with individual research staff to identify and develop fundable projects and join staff up with Faculty bid-writing resources. The Unit has also benefited from its bidding for internal investment via the University's phased Research Investment Fund and its ERAS scheme for investing in early career researchers, as described in section 2(a), above.

c) Research Infrastructure

The University library subscribes to a rich range of print and networked electronic resources, full-text databases, and periodical archives, including the JISC Historical Collection (Early English Books Online, Eighteenth Century Collections Online, and the British Library 19th Century Collection); Gale Databases (including 17th and 18th Century Burney Collection of newspapers; 19th Century UK Periodicals, and The Times Digital Archive), MLA International Bibliography, and extensive journal holdings. The Unit benefits from strong specialist collections of the Left Book Club (1936-48) publications and the Yellow Book (1894-97), and research staff are also supported in visits to specialist libraries within the CTTR budget.

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

We value our commitment to impact, public engagement, and our contribution to the sustainability of the field of English language and literature, both in the United Kingdom and worldwide. Mentors work with staff to maximise synergies across the Unit wherever possible, and research leadership and public engagement are figured into workload allocations and in the University's promotion procedures.

a) Research Collaborations, Networks and Partnerships

Members of the Unit have worked to connect up existing research networks with new ones, building synergies and new research projects. With further CTTR funding support, Groes has continued develop the AHRC/Wellcome-funded Memory Network (Feb. 2012-Aug. 2014), for which he was PI. The network brings together researchers, authors, artists, and organisations to provoke and fuel original thinking about memory in the twenty-first century. Since his appointment at Wolverhampton in 2018, he has joined network members from Edinburgh and Roehampton to host the Postgraduate Memory Network Conference, 'Immortality of Memory' (Wolverhampton, 14 June 2018); has developed with Mercer (Psychology) and Francis the 'Snidge Scrumpin' Black Country memory project, the centrepiece of the Unit's contribution to the 2018 Being Human Festival; convened C-TRUTH, an international fake news project with Professor Antal van den Bosch at the Meertens Institute in Amsterdam, Netherlands; and is PI for Novel Perceptions: Towards an inclusive canon (NOPE). Going forward from October 2020 with AHRC research grant support, NOPE involves Co-Is Byrne, Mercer (Psychology), Hanquinet (York), and Karina van Dalen-Oskam (Huygens Institute, Netherlands). The AHRC phase builds on the collaboration of Groes and his team with the BBC Novels that Shaped Our World series in 2019, and includes partnership arrangements with the British Library, the Open University, and Libraries Connected, among others.

b) Relationships with Key Research Users, Beneficiaries or Audiences

Several projects address wide audiences both nationally and internationally. For example, NOPE began in 2019 with a series of interactive public reading surveys posted on the Open University's NQuire platform and linked to the BBC NOSOW panel choices. The surveys were designed to gather readers' view on literary genres and to provide readers with personalised reading recommendations (provided by a panel of experts, including Allen and Black); the most popular of the 10 Novels surveys launched to date include Identity (825 respondents), Love, Sex & Romance (1,222), and Adventure (1,457). In the AHRC phase, these will comprise the largest readers' survey ever undertaken in the UK and provide data for understanding contemporary reading preferences, attitudes, and values. Black's medieval story-telling performances (see ICS) have engaged festivals and workshops across the UK and internationally. Since its launch in July 2014, Colbert's online open access database, British Women's Travel Writing, has attracted over 100,000 page views by over 20,000 users worldwide, and is linked to Adam Matthews Publisher's primary source database, *History of Mass Tourism*. A spinoff project in collaboration with the Department of English and American Studies of the University of Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria, is *Pontus: Writing the Black Sea and Adjacent Regions, 1780-1856*, which aims to describe bibliographically and biographically travel texts and their authors that concern the Black Sea and adjacent regions, with contributions from MA and PGR students at both institutions, supported by the ERASMUS+ Research Training Scheme.

c) Engaging with Diverse Communities and Publics

Impact engagement with the diverse communities of our region underscores our commitment to diversity more generally. Examples include Blower's creative writing work (2019-date) with Loud & Clear Productions, which focuses on building the confidence of adults and young people in prisons, factories, pupil referral units, immigrations removal centres and hostels. Novelists Travlos (Miller) and Francis led the creative writing workshop 'Dementia Dialogues' at Being Human Festival 2019 exploring the impact on participant's lives as family carers for dementia sufferers; and Travlos (Feb. 2019-Mar. 2020) launched a blog for writers and carers, 'Conversations with my Mother', 'bearing witness to memories made and lost. And to the pain and frustration of being dementia kin and/or carer'.

d) Contribution to the Sustainability of the Discipline

Our staff play leading roles in scholarly societies, and in providing opportunities for the professional development of their members. Black serves on the steering committee for the Gender and Medieval Studies Group and Byrne is secretary for the Association for Welsh Writing in English, and is involved in organising its annual conference. As co-editor of *European Romantic Review*

(ERR), the house journal of the North American Society for the Study of Romanticism (NASSR), Colbert plays a key role in administering the joint ERR/NASSR prize for best essay awarded at annual NASSR conference, and in promoting the work of the society in an annual NASSR conference issue. Members of the team also contribute to the discipline as external reviewers for tenure track promotions in the United States. In the UK and Europe, we have examined research degrees at such HEIs as the universities of Aberystwyth, Amsterdam, Birmingham, Cardiff, Gloucestershire, Helsinki, Manchester Metropolitan, Melbourne (Australia), Swansea, and Versailles San Quentin-en-Yvelines (France). We have also refereed grants for such funders as the AHRC, Bibliographical Society, Bogliasko Foundation (New York), ESRC, Houghton Library, and Ransom Centre; and Groes has been a panel member of the AHRC Large Grants scheme since 2012.

e) Indicators of Wider Influence

i) editorial roles:

Two staff have significant editorial roles: Colbert co-edits *European Romantic Review* (Routledge), and Groes is series co-editor of *Contemporary Critical Perspectives* (Bloomsbury Academic) and is on the editorial and advisory board for Palgrave's *Contemporary Comparative Literatures*. Staff also serve on editorial boards for journals, including *Anglosphere*; *American, Australasian Canadian Studies*; *American, British and Canadian Studies*; *Romantic Textualities*, and *VTU Review*.

ii) prizes:

Blower's debut short story collection, *It's Gone Dark over Bill's Mother's* (2019), won the Arnold Bennett Prize (2020), and her fiction has been short listed three years running for the Bridport prize (2015-18). McDonald's poetry attracted prizes and awards including a creative writing residency at the International State Culture Foundation, Latvia (2014) and 3rd prize in the Annual Sentinel Short Story Competition (2015). His work was also shortlisted for the Bridport Prize (2015), the Cro Magnon short story competition (2015), the Bedford International Poetry Competition (2016), and the Retreat West Flash Fiction competition (2016). Black won the Gender and Medieval Studies Essay prize in 2015.

iii) invited keynotes, lectures and/or performances, or conference chair roles:

Invited lectures and keynotes delivered in the UK include Groes's keynote address at the AHRC-funded *Information Overload* conference, Edinburgh (September 2014), as well as his 'Neurofictions', delivered at The Unconscious Memory Network, Oxford (December 2014). Colbert's plenary lecture opened *New Horizons: Reassessing Women's Travel Writing 1600-1900*, at the Chawton House Library and Research Centre (July 2014), and, again at Chawton House, he delivered a keynote lecture for *Reputations, Legacies, Futures: Jane Austen, Germaine de Staël and Their Contemporaries* (July 2017). Black's delivered a keynote at *Temporality and Space in the Middle Ages*, Bristol (2017). Byrne was an invited speaker at the British Academy Conference, *Carol Ann Duffy: the Legacy of the Laureateship* (September 2019).

International addresses include Colbert's keynote, 'Illusion, Immediacy, and the "Vehicle of Description"', at Jan Kochanowski University, Poland (September 2016); Black's and Groes's keynotes at *Food in Culture Past, Present and Future*, Sibiu, Romania (2019); and keynotes by Groes at Lucian Blaga University, Romania (May 2016) and the Royal Swedish Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities (April 2017).

iv) refereeing academic publications or research proposals:

Most staff peer review for academic journals, including: *Ángulo Recto*, *Comparative Literature and Culture*, *Critical Approaches to Discourse Analysis*, *Discourse Context and Media*, *Digital Scholarship in the Humanities*, *Eighteenth-Century Life*, *European Romantic Review*, *Keats-*

Shelley Journal, *International Journal of Welsh Writing in English*, *Modern Jewish Studies*, *Studies in Popular Culture*, *Studies in Travel Writing*, *Text and Talk*, *Textual Practice*, and *This Year's Work in English Studies*. Our staff also peer review book manuscripts for Bloomsbury Academic, Edinburgh University Press, Palgrave Macmillan, Routledge, and Yale University Press. Byrne was academic consultant for the new translation of *The Mabinogion* (Propolis Books); and McDonald peer reviewed the special Global Beat Studies issue of *Comparative Literature and Culture* (2016).

v) Conference, research seminars, and public lectures:

Our annual CTTR Research Seminars have brought notable writers and scholars to Wolverhampton, including: Ludmilla Kostova (Veliko Tarnovo), Scott McCracken (Keele), Natalia Kryzanowska (Örebro), John Hughes (Gloucestershire), Anthony Mandal (Cardiff); Ian Haywood (Roehampton), Jim O'Driscoll (Huddersfield); Annika Bautz (Plymouth), and John Strachan (Bath Spa). CTTR-sponsored public lectures have also been instrumental in bringing the work creative writers (Niall Griffiths, Eimear McBride, Pauls Bankovskis, Catherine O'Flynn, and James Hannah) and high profile scholars (Thomas Docherty, Tracey Hill, Frances O'Gorman, Kate Lister, and Carolyne Larrington, Michael Rosen) to a wider community audience.

We regularly host and co-organise conferences and events, often in conjunction with learned societies and external partners. These have provided opportunities for staff and PGR students as organisers and presenters, and have led to publications and long-term networking partnerships. In February 2016, we hosted 'Victorian Border Crossings' in conjunction with Midlands Interdisciplinary Victorian Studies Seminar and Northern Comparative Literature Network. Also in 2016, we hosted 'Salvage', the 13th Triennial International Conference of the British Comparative Literature Association, with a selection of the best essays published in *Comparative Critical Studies* (2017). Byrne co-organised the 2015 annual Association for Welsh Writing in English Conference at Gregynog Hall, Wales, and, in December 2017, an AWE symposium on 'Four Nations Literature post-Brexit'. Groes's 'Immortality and Memory: a postgraduate Memory Network conference', in which Francis and two other PGR students joined 20 PGR delegates from across the UK and from Belgium and the Netherlands (2018).

With Eastern European partners, Colbert co-organised the 11th Borders and Crossings conference on travel writing held at University of Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria (2014); and Groes joined colleagues at Lucian Blaga University in organising *Food in Culture Past, Present and Future* in Sibiu, Romania (2019).