Institution: Middlesex University

Unit of Assessment: 34

1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy

Context, structure and leadership

The researchers in UoA34 reside within the Faculty of Arts and Creative Industries [ACI] and the Faculty of Professional and Social Sciences [PSS], and are located mainly in the Department of Performing Arts and the Department of Media, along with two staff members from the Department of Sociology and Criminology. ACI, where most UoA34 researchers are based, was created as a result of the merger, in 2016, of the School of Art and Design with the School of Media and Performing Arts. ACI is led by Prof Upton, Executive Dean and Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research, providing strategic leadership across the University. In ACI, research is led by the Deputy Dean for Research and Knowledge Exchange [Igweonu]. The Deputy Dean was appointed in 2019 when all three faculties similarly invested in this key role, enhancing coordination across faculties. In ACI, the Deputy Dean works closely with the Director of Research [**Cobley**] and Director of Research Degrees and Chair of Ethics Review Group [Midgelow UoA33] to facilitate and manage research processes, including PGR. At a University level, all Faculties are underpinned by the Centre for Academic Practice Enhancement (CAPE) for staff development and are supported by the Research and Knowledge Transfer Office (RKTO) [pre- and post-award functions] and the Research Degrees Administrative Team [maintaining PGR systems and data]. The Faculty reports to University level Committees: Research and Knowledge Exchange [Chair: Upton], Research Degrees and Research Ethics.

Research objectives and Impact strategy

Central to the objectives for research in this UoA is the investigation of media and communications as *practice*. That is, considering media and communication not just in terms of their political economic dimension or with reference to their place in a policy landscape, but as practices involving agents, economics, professionalization, content, form and knowledge production. This will be particularly evident in REF2 in respect of work on the film industry, journalism, the popular music industry, digital writing, the classical music industry and other creative industries. Such work on the practice of media in respect to film and journalism is not unknown in the field, yet its combination with cognate leading work in popular music, digitality in writing and the classical music industry is unique. It is complemented by the strengths in media and communication theory research, with strong showings in philosophy of communication and biosemiotics that are also unique, such that research into practice is not merely 'applied research' but is alive to issues of production, industrial constraints and affordances, policy, consumption patterns, critical readings of texts and the role of the act of mediation in human consciousness.

The University's strategy, projected to 2031, has placed an emphasis on practice and practice-led approaches in research as well as enhancing the relationship between research and teaching. The merger creating ACI has been crucial to the investigation of practice in media and communication, pooling the erstwhile Schools' strength and traditions in *practice* and *practice-based research*. All the departments of this Faculty are located in the same building. This has allowed the development of mutual research concerns such that, for example, research into the classical music industry (previously associated with the current UoA33) has realized its affinities with research into journalistic practice and practice in film production. It has also increased coherence and parity in respect of facilitating and monitoring research through such bodies as the Faculty Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee and the Ethics Review Group, as well as the Faculty Peer Review Group.

The Middlesex University environment statement for the former UoA36 of the 2014 REF indicated future commitment to aligning research, teaching and external-facing activities, generating research with enhanced impact (by further strengthening collaborative partnerships with industry professionals and activity in the public realm), as well as supporting early career and doctoral researchers, through funding, training and mentoring. In the first – aligning research, teaching and

external-facing activities – staff research strengths have been foremost in designing new programmes during the census period, such as BAs in Music Business and Arts Management, in Digital Media, in Visual Effects and BA/BSc Games Design, so that researchers' time has not taken away from specialisms by service teaching. Service teaching has also been alleviated by the employment of Graduate Academic Assistants in technical and teaching roles. Masters programmes developed in the period, such as the Classical Music Business MA, the MA Novel Writing and MSc Digital Journalism, have been facilitated with the same imperative in mind, also enhancing the research environment by nurturing potential PhD students, particularly those with practice projects. A number of external-facing events growing out of the teaching/research alignment are mentioned in section 3, below.

Secondly, the key impactful projects in the UoA during the census period, including those submitted in REF3, have been brought to fruition by funding, close mentoring and the encouragement given to researchers to develop collaborative partnerships beyond the University. Both ICS developed out of initially modest Faculty funding and were gestated through numerous meetings of the Director of Research and the research team. Regular reports on the research preceded further Faculty funding, especially for external-facing events – e.g. the Blockchain conference or the Multimodal Writing Symposium – which brought collaborative partners within the environs of Middlesex University.

The third aspect of the 2014 strategy, support for early career and doctoral researchers, through funding, training and mentoring, is detailed in section 2, below.

One of the ways in which the unit's post-2014 strategy has been met is through the organisation of research into a number of research clusters (for example: Language and Communication; Promotional Cultures; Film and TV Research). These clusters fulfilled the aims of specific research projects and/or, in some instances, endured (e.g. the research colloquiums and fortnightly seminars of Language and Communication). The clusters comprise endeavour in film, television, digital media, public relations, media management, social media and digital communication and media and cultural/social theory and philosophy. The flexibility of research clusters has meant that shorter-term projects could be supplemented or superseded by longer-term aims to coincide with the University's 2031 strategy and with emerging research projects.

Future strategic aims and goals for research and impact
The strengths of the unit revolve around music industry practices, the digital deficit and writing practices, practices in financial journalism and media/communication theory. Future strategy for the unit will straightforwardly involve developing those strengths while also allowing emergent research. The work deriving from the Blockchain impact case study has developed into collaboration with the International Property Office (IPO) on investigation into creators' earnings that is already being discussed by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport committee in Parliament and is closely related to **Osborne**'s other work in *Music by Numbers* (REF2). In the context of the post-Covid discussion of the government's funding for the performing arts, the University will seek to support the ongoing research with appropriate funding and enhancements to the University's external-facing communications. The investigation into the classical music industry (**Dromey** REF2) is similarly an innovative project in the early stages of developing its impact. It will continue to grow, with its now instituted annual events in collaboration with Wigmore Hall, plus its associated Masters course. Again, the Faculty will support its developing post-Covid impact, also through increased University communications.

The research and impact associated with the multimodal writing ICS continues in the creative writing and journalism provisions for undergraduates and postgraduates, as well as the research of newly-appointed ECRs such as **Dalton**. The work on digital deficit will continue in the ongoing 'digital liberties' project, involving **Drakopoulou**, the University of Westminster and Cybersalon which directly informed the Labour Party's Digital Democracy Manifesto for the December 2019 elections. The Faculty will continue to contribute to the funding of this research with its promise of considerable impact, financing rigorous Gold Open Access research outputs as is appropriate in respect of the equality, diversity and inclusion dimensions of the project.

Impact will also be foregrounded in other emergent projects such as those on the practices of journalism, particularly with the respect to financial reporting, financial literacy and inequality (**Knowles** REF2). As with the digital liberties project, this fulfils the University's 2031 strategic commitment to Social Justice, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. The Faculty will commit to the extension of the already existing research in this project and seek to fund the widest possible dissemination for the research as it develops in the coming years.

The existing strengths in Media and Communication theory (**Cobley** and **Siebers)**, one of whose survey projects is coming to fruition now (*Language Sciences,* March 2021), will be extended with further impactful research into the multiscalar bearing of close reading and media analysis practices in Europe. Themes in biosemiotics, philosophy of language and communication, future studies and rhetoric will continue to be developed, supported by the leadership roles **Cobley** and **Siebers** play in international networks, learned societies, institute boards and editorial boards in these areas (see **Collaboration and contribution to the research base, economy and society**, below).

Other areas of research which will be developed through external funding plus Faculty funding of external-facing events are the practice of political and diplomatic communication on social media *(***Šimunjak,** an AHRC Leadership Fellow commencing January 2021), the practices of recruitment and training in the contemporary creative industries (**Riley**) and the continued engagement project and investigation into 'Grenglish' (**Charalambidou**) with the University of Westminster.

The University's strategy in the latter part of the census period has been focused on improving the utility and impact of our research within a practice- and teaching-led institution (including impact overseas) whilst sustaining and building upon research excellence in areas of strength. Goals arising from this involve facilitating and strengthening the research mentioned in the section above, enhancing the impact of research in existing and emerging areas, formulating a new communications strategy reaching within and beyond the university in order to attain this goal and to further strengthen collaborative research within the university and with external organisations.

The synergy of research and teaching within an overall orientation to the many facets of *practice* has been fostered in the design of new programmes to align with research, along with external-facing events which feature research impacting on teaching. In addition, demonstration of research projects' contribution to teaching will continue to be required in applications for Faculty funding of research and the synergy now features in the current staff appraisal programme. New programmes currently being developed at undergraduate level (e.g. BA Digital Communications and Media) and at postgraduate level (e.g. MA Scriptwriting – already validated 2020 – and MA Creative Non-Fiction) will be guided by this strategy.

Faculty research in the next REF period will have its impact dimension encouraged and developed at an early stage with reference to the research plan for every staff member on the relevant contract. At this stage of the research, an impact strategy will be formulated with the RKTO, Press Office and Internal Communications in the University, as well as other relevant contributors to the marketing and external-facing operation.

Building on cross-Faculty events such as those run in UoA34 on Big Data (Social Media Analytics) and on YouTube (published in *Convergence*), collaborative research will be fostered by the Middlesex University Interfaculty Research Workshops, bringing together scholars to share research interests, methods and data collection/analysis techniques. Collaborative research with the creative industries in general will be furthered by more events modelled on those such as The Creative Industries and Collaborative Production (also published as a book – **Graham** REF2) and the Creative Industries and Degree Apprenticeships event (**Riley**) focusing on future shared endeavour between universities and the creative industries.

2. People

Staffing strategy

Staffing strategy has involved recruitment of individuals with a strong teaching portfolio who are committed to research and capable of delivering research outputs which will strengthen the research/teaching synergy and increase the 2.1% of research grants and contracts that currently contributes to University income. Middlesex has a strong tradition of research in the sector. The strategy for the Media and Communications area has built research capacity through investment in both new and existing staff, with the understanding that high quality staff are often mobile and that this is part and parcel of renewal. Although the subject area has traditionally been associated with the employment of part-time staff who bring expertise from industry – and such staff continue to be employed by the Faculty – the media and communications strategy has focused on trying to ensure a fully integrated team, wherever possible, by attracting full-time staff in favour of hourly-paid teachers. This has entailed provision of fractional posts to replace hourly-paid ones and is represented in the submission by **Dines**, **Lively**, **Murray** and **Riley**. On the back of this, the strategy has been informed by the objective of developing junior staff with high potential and fostering an inclusive approach to staff development to enhance individual and collective research capacities and career prospects.

Staff development, mentoring and support

Staff development strategies in the University are informed by the *Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers*. New staff at all grades are assigned a mentor. All staff must complete probation and undergo annual appraisal; both these processes always include customised research objectives, supported by development opportunities. In line with the Concordat principles, we have clear working practices that support and provide sustainability for research careers.

From strategic decision-making through to implementation, Middlesex ensures best practices via: i) recruiting high quality academics and committing to permanent appointments through fair and equitable processes, ii) ensuring all staff are equally valued, and recognised through development and promotion processes, iii) offering career development and training, across the key areas outlined in the Vitae researcher development framework, iv), empowering researchers to succeed and providing personal development activities, including research leadership development opportunities, a peer support network for grant applications and a research mentor system, and v) ensuring diversity and equality as outlined in the institution-wide strategy whose principles are enshrined in the Equality & Diversity Policy statement. The university has generous policies on maternity and paternity leave, flexible working, study leave, alongside a clear progression and staff development strategy (see REF5a).

Staff development is provided centrally for all staff, in teams and as individuals, and includes a specific and detailed programme of researcher development managed by CAPE, in addition to the specific Faculty researcher development events/workshops (see below) particularly aimed at ECRs. Ongoing staff training requirements are identified in annual appraisals but can be signalled throughout the year. In particular, the Ethics Review Group and the Faculty Peer Review Group provide a training ground for researchers. In addition, all departmental and subject-area 'away days' feature research, often by way of Departmental, University or external presentations and workshops.

Formal mentoring of staff has been instituted since the Director of Research took up his post in September 2013, with **Cobley** opening research dossiers on over 120 staff in order to mentor article drafts, book proposals, book manuscripts, internal funding applications, external funding applications, drafts of plans for research projects, responses to peer review, book contract evaluation and so forth. This evolved into the Faculty Peer Review Group which is co-ordinated by the Director of Research and split into two bodies: one for output mentoring and one for external grant applications and development of larger research projects. The Group is divided into subject-specific senior academics but also features, significantly, some ECRs who gain peer review experience by being shadowed by more experienced staff, an initiative that constitutes part of the

Faculty's succession planning in research. In addition to supplementing this kind of mentoring with "corridor coaching", non-ECR staff partake in some of the initiatives aimed at ECRs and PhD students (see below) and the researcher development that is offered by the Faculty Research and Knowledge Exchange workshops.

The Faculty supports staff to undertake Doctorates both in the University and at other institutions. **O'Dair** (REF3), for example, enrolled for and completed with a fee waiver a Middlesex PhD by Public Works in the census period (graduating 2018); Warren completed with a fee waiver a standard Middlesex PhD in the period (graduating 2020); while others (Klika, Heinemann) enrolled for currently ongoing PhD study at other institutions.

Apart from projects that have won external funding, financial support for staff research comes, principally, from the Faculty Research Fund which has comprised an average annual division of the budget of c. £35-£40k p.a. for the UoA34 subject area since 2014, with an enlarged pot of c. £180k potentially available since 2017 following the formation of ACI. It is administered by a team of senior researchers from across the Faculty, including the Dean, Deputy Dean for Research and Knowledge Transfer, Faculty Director of Research Degrees, Director of Research and the Professor of Contemporary Art. The Fund targets research staff and ECRs/PhD students (see below). It accepts applications from established research staff for funds to enable networking and presentation of research at public events nationally and internationally. Its chief concern during the census period has been to foster applications to fund pilot research projects which will be followed up by external funding. Applications have led to successful, large externally-facing events (e.g. 'Instagram Conference 2018: Studying Instagram Beyond Selfies' - Caliandro and **Graham**) and larger ongoing projects such as in REF3.

Whole sabbaticals or periods of research leave for staff incumbent in the Faculty for longer than three years, negotiated between the Dean of ACI, Heads of Department and Human Resources, have been approved for staff in the UoA, usually for the completion of a book (e.g. Shaw 2015-16, Gibb 2016-17). **Osborne**'s period of leave (2019) to pursue research for his forthcoming book, *Sound Investment: The Story of Sound Recording Copyright* (May 2021), also fed into the research required for the *Music by Numbers* volume (REF2) and the IPO project on creators' earnings.

Training and supervision of PGR students
Given the dominance of interdisciplinary and practice-led study, as well as Public Works, supervision of PhD students is shared across the ACI Faculty and sometimes between ACI and other Faculties. This means the subject area for each PhD in UoA terms are often difficult to determine definitively. Among the staff submitted in REF2 more than half of them are currently supervising numerous PhD students and a number of those staff have completions during the census period. Over the census period, the PGR community has remained stable. Of these, none are externally funded and 2 have received internal studentships in the form of full studentships (Basu graduated 2018; Jenkins, corrections 2021).

Ensuring the quality of research and support of the PhD students are paramount in the Middlesex system. Entry processes require a two-stage review, firstly of the application and then through interview, which is typical enough. However, interviews are designed to mirror the registration process that foreshadows the MPhil to PhD transfer viva which, in turn, is a blueprint for the final viva. Progress, from interview onwards, is facilitated by an impartial but supportive team tasked with the review rather than an impersonal panel. Students successful at interview are assigned a supervision team of at least two academics (often featuring an ECR and an established researcher). ECRs will usually have attended the University's Research Supervisor training in their first year in post, a training that covers both regulatory expectations and reflections upon effective supervision; the established academic on the supervision team will always have experience of seeing a research degree to completion. Most supervision sessions take place with both members of a supervision team present. The individualist and potentially isolating experience of PhD study is countered at all stages by Middlesex's emphasis on collaboration, joint endeavours and teams. This ethos also suffuses the **Support mechanisms for PGR and ECRs**, below.

Students report a high degree of satisfaction with their supervision, with 92% reporting good contact and 85% reporting supervisors give helpful feedback and the specialist knowledge/skills to support their research (PRES survey 2019). Robust milestone assessment processes are in place including an external reviewing process and assessment of research ethics for all projects through the Research Ethics Review Group. Student progress is monitored twice yearly through supervisor and student reports, compiled at two progression Boards (November and May), that assess engagement and achievement against expected milestones. These progression processes have, through the census period, become ever more robust, supported by improved tracking methods maintained by Research Degrees Administration Team [RDAT].

The ACI PGR community is based centrally in the Grove building in a modern, sizeable PGR 'base room' which offers desk, computing, wireless, projection, presentation and printing facilities, as well as sofas and coffee facilities for social and research meetings. As a creative faculty, ACI PGR students are able to access technical support and high-quality specialist spaces and equipment, particularly for practice research, and they have been allocated a named technical manager. Accordingly, the PGR programme features relevant technical planning as a feature of core milestones. Much investment for PGR has been focused on the provision of laptops, particularly during the pandemic; however, in addition to the Faculty's general commitment to the space of a base room, investment has also been made in the maintenance of subsidiary spaces e.g., equipment cabinets for practice research.

Covid-19 has meant that ACI provision for PGR has moved online for 2020 and the near future. While acknowledging the issues that arise from this, it has also enabled increased support of students, drawing on the experience of staff who teach distance-learning Masters courses and a number of distance-learning PhD students in the Faculty. In addition, the new modes of supervision were able to build upon the Faculty's existing asynchronous research weeks and research blog exercises, promoting greater collaboration and attendance at postgraduate events, albeit online.

PhD students are ultimately overseen by the Faculty's Director of Research Degrees [Midgelow] who administers each student's programme, being present as Chair at the majority of interviews and PhD milestone events. Ultimately, at University level, committees for PGR progression and graduation, as well as research supervisor training, are led by the Director of Research [Comley] In collaboration with RDAT which oversees all PGR administration and support but, particularly, registrations, transfers and vivas.

Once accepted onto a programme, PhD students enter a researcher development programme which is run centrally with thirty sessions per year offered both in person and at a distance. Students also regularly participate in wellbeing sessions plus a teaching and learning short course – specifically designed for those wishing to teach at Middlesex alongside their studies. An academic shadowing scheme matching students with colleagues from across the university to broaden the students' understanding of a wide range of aspects of academic life provides career and research-enhancing opportunities [see REF5a].

Students are encouraged to follow mobility opportunities via Erasmus. In addition to this collaboration with other universities for postgraduate supervision, two staff in the UoA (**Cortese**, **Siebers**) are responsible for the joint PhD programme which Middlesex runs in partnership with the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies (OCMS). One of them is also involved in doctoral supervision for the programme. The Centre exists to provide education for Church Leaders from the non-Western world. In the census period, 60 PhDs and 1 MPhil were awarded: in the areas of Religious studies, Global Mission studies and Theology. Middlesex University and OCMS run a regular research seminar for staff and students and, in 2018, Middlesex held a joint colloquium on Social Justice, in which doctoral students from both institutions, across the Social Sciences, Cultural Studies, Religious Studies and Law, participated.

Among the PhD students who completed their studies within the UoA during the census period and continued a career in the academy, are Maitrayee Basu, now a Lecturer in Communication

and Media at London College of Communication and Giannina Warren, who now leads the BA in Advertising, PR and Branding at Middlesex. **Barnard** (REF3), Associate Professor in Creative Writing, De Montfort University, completed her PhD whilst a member of staff in the UoA at Middlesex, as did Marcus **O'Dair** (REF3), Associate Dean of Knowledge Exchange and Enterprise at University of the Arts London (UAL).

Support mechanisms for PGR and ECRs
From a teaching and research staff base of 25.4FTE (28 actual colleagues) with research in their contract in the Media department, where most of the submitted researchers are located, there are also 10FTE (12 colleagues) on practice routes, and 4.8FTE (6 colleagues) who are Associate Lecturers without research/practice duties. The subject area has seen a turnover of 35 staff since 2014. It has tapped a steady stream of able and promising recruits such that the current submission, featuring 18.6FTEs, contains five ECRs (4.2FTEs) who, with the exception of **Riley**, were recruited in the last two academic years (**Dalton, Dines, Murray, Ntalla**). In 2014, five ECRs (4.7FTEs) were also submitted in UoA36. Of those, one remains in this UoA and has been an important mentor, researcher and Director of Programmes (**Graham**), another is undertaking a PhD and thus not submissible and the remaining four have continued their career progression outside this University.

The successful nurturing in research of ECRs is derived from a number of Faculty and University initiatives during the census period. The Faculty has sought to develop in-post ECRs alongside PhD students whose experience, learning and research career objectives are frequently aligned. So, the weekly *Research Common Room* event, mainly for ECRs and PhD students but attended by other academics, has been conducted on Zoom during the pandemic; it provides a space for regular discussion among ECRs of topics in research which are generic rather than subject specific (e.g. How can we decolonise research? How does your practice constitute research? etc.)

Likewise, the *weekly writing retreat* for PhD students and staff, 'Shut up and write', also moved to Zoom, with the continued simple remit: to work in the same virtual space with co-writers on individual writing projects for two hours, without interruption, but reconvening for mutual support. The Faculty has also held annual *Research intensives* over three to five days in which ECRs and PhD students are invited to focus on particular issues (e.g., this year, 'Kick-starting your research degree' [for PGR candidates], 'Research Methods in the Arts', 'Insider and Participatory Research', 'Writing as thinking - Language in/as research'). Again, this has continued by Zoom during the pandemic period, with synchronous and asynchronous modes offering ECRs the opportunity not just to focus on the topics but also to foster skills in collaboration (including remotely) and conference presentation. More explicitly juxtaposing ECRs and more established researchers are the Faculty's *Winter Conferences* which feature short-form presentations of research in progress as well as poster sessions, both designed to induct ECRs into a community of researchers. Termly *Bid-writing Workshops* run by members of the Faculty Peer Review Group facilitate ECRs (and other staff) interested in developing a research funding application by putting them in a peer-support group, with a co-generative approach to taking a bid from idea to submission. Open to all academic staff, but generally taken up by ECRs, are the general *Research and Knowledge Exchange Workshops* run in the Faculty (2-3 per year) which present topics such as 'conceiving impact in research', 'using social media in networks', etc. and usually feature senior researchers or colleagues from RKTO. Integral to all of these Faculty events is the ACI's commitment to, and analysis of, *practice* and, in the case of UoA34, the study of media practices as multi-faceted and having material consequences.

At a University level, an annual two-day, University-wide PGR conference offers students the opportunity to network and present their research *across disciplines* in a matter not dissimilar to that of the Interfaculty Research Workshops for staff.

In addition to these formal events, ECRs are encouraged to collaborate with more established colleagues within the institution to produce external-facing research events or outputs (e.g. **Graham** and Gandini, **Šimunjak** and Caliandro, etc.). Particularly successful for ECR development has been the succession planning which sees ECRs included in University

committees or research bodies such as the Faculty Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee, the Faculty Peer Review Group (see above) and, indeed, the REF UoA Working Groups (e.g. **Ntalla**). Similar succession planning is evident in the encouragement of ECRs to join supervision teams or lead supervision with more established researchers. ECRs with large, ongoing research projects have received particularly close mentoring (**Dalton** on commercial genre writing, **Riley** on creative industries – by **Cobley**; **Dines** on punk scholarship and **Murray** on creative cultural mapping – by **Osborne**), as well as meetings with the Director of Research and the general mentoring conducted through the probation and appraisal processes.

The Faculty Research Fund has supported ECRs by promoting the possibility of applying for funds for networking and presentation of research at public events nationally and internationally. Conference participation is actively encouraged in ECRs, but they are also invited to seek funds to run their own externally-facing events, as well as applying for funding for pilot research projects which will be followed up by an application to external funders for the financing of larger projects. PhD students can apply to up to £750 per year to support activities related to their research, including public presentations. Their applications take place on the same basis and with the same procedures as those for established academics and are mentored by supervisors or the Director of Research as a training for future external applications for funds. Applications during the period have included numerous successful bids for conference presentations, archival work, screening or presentation costs, production design materials, exhibition costs.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

The UoA reflects the University's profile regarding gender balance, age distribution, ethnicity and disability. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) are at the heart of Middlesex University's' values-driven culture. Middlesex has a long history in driving progress in creating equality, social justice and a more inclusive society. Middlesex was the first UK university to receive Corporate Gold/Embedded Charter Mark from UK Investor in Equality & Diversity. The University is currently working towards the Race Equality Charter and operates an Anti-Racist network. The University is steadily rising in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index (165th of 503 in 2020).

The subject area staffing strategies reflect the EDI strategy: 21 of the total 33 staff in the UoA's subject area have significant research responsibility (SRR) and are hence returned in REF2. Of the overall staff, 3 self-identify as BAME, 30 as white; 11 as female, 22 as male (no other gender / non-gendered reported). There are three professors (2 male, 1 female) at Senior Manager Academic and sector Grade 9, 2 at Grade 8c, 10 at Grade 8 and 6 at Grade 7, with one professor represented in REF2.

3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

Funding for research

REF4b lists the total research income for the UoA since 2014 as £111,221.00**.** Much of the funding for research during the census period has come from external bodies and is targeted at relatively small, focused projects. However, many of these projects have also received matching or top-up sums from the Faculty Research Fund. Some very successful projects have gained traction through Faculty funding alone. Among the external funding for projects received is £10,000 from the Institute of New Economic Thinking for research into media and economic inequality (**Knowles**). This was supplemented with £5,000 from the Faculty for the 'Media and economic inequality' symposium in late 2019. The Grenglish research and engagement pilot project (**Charalambidou**), 2018-19 was joint funded with the University of Westminster (£3,660 + £3,660)**.** Similarly, the York Impact Accelerator Fund (AHRC-Aligned) awarded £998 to start the 'Diversity that we can hear' project (**Charalambidou** and Loukopoulou) with the Universities of York and Northumbria which was superseded by an award from the Faculty of £3,711 in 2018-2019.

Although the external funding sums are relatively modest, some of the projects are extremely important and have the potential for dramatic impact in the future. The aforementioned IPO-funded investigation into creators' earnings (**Osborne**) was invested with £30,000 to be shared between

researchers at Middlesex, the University of Leeds and the University of Ulster. Its steering group has increased from the original Musicians' Union, Featured Artists Coalition, PRS, Ivors Academy and IPO, to now include the Association of Independent Music, the Music Producers Guild and the Music Publishers' Association (i.e. all of the music industry trade bodies bar the BPI which looks set to join soon). The Faculty contributed to the project by reducing the work programme hours of the Middlesex researcher. The IPO recently awarded a further £30,000 to hire a Research Assistant in Leeds for the project.

The nurturing of, and extension of Faculty funds to, the research in the two ICS has already been mentioned, as has the same for projects like the Classical Music Industry. Similar support has been extended to a range of research projects with demonstrable sustainability and vitality, including projects that have led to publications already (REF2), forthcoming publications, and publications by staff who have left the institution.

Infrastructure and Facilities

Meeting objectives since 2014, Middlesex University's Infrastructural investments in the UoA include the opening of the Ritterman Building for Arts, Technology and Dance in 2016 [£18M]. In addition, there has been investment in extensive technology upgrades including: specialist equipment for Media and Performing Arts spaces [£112K], audio and visual equipment [£369K] and editing suites/media spaces [DMW5 404K, Grove digital media 355K, Newsroom and Avid suites 725K]. These investments encourage the interdisciplinary research made possible through the University restructure and forming of ACI in 2016, and have meant researchers and students have access to the most current technologies and high-quality spaces. Projects like Broadcasting Today, for example, would be impossible without the investment in a state-of-the-art Television Studio in the Grove building.

Two areas crucial to the infrastructure of contemporary research administration are the understanding of ethical requirements in research and the ability to use Open Access systems, as well as understanding the need to produce open data in research. This latter has also required comprehensive staff adherence to General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) protocols. The Faculty has initiated drives for 100% use of the Middlesex repository and ORCID registration as well as encouraging and funding Open Access publication (e.g. *Collaborative Production in the Creative Industries* - see REF2).

The University has a well-established and comprehensive Code of Practice for Research, enshrining the highest standards of research conduct and integrity. Its principles and practices are based on the Research Councils' Statement on Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice (2000) and the Concordat to Support Research Integrity (2012). Governance is provided by the Research Ethics Committee (REC) which ensures that high standards of integrity are upheld. The Faculty has led on Ethics training with regular workshops or training events since 2014 to introduce or refresh researcher knowledge in the area. The Faculty Ethics Review Group has also worked with the University's Ethics Committee for the purposes of training staff. The latter launched the Middlesex Online Research Ethics web facility in 2017 with associated University-training in the facility's purpose of embracing all research, including PGR research.

Open Access and OA systems training in the Faculty has been conducted by the Repository Manager (located in Library Services) in association with the Faculty Director of Research. Repository staff have regularly offered briefings at Staff Away Days since 2014, attend Faculty and University Research and Knowledge Exchange Committees and have provided bespoke trainings for the Faculty on more than six occasions during the census period. Along with the Director of Research, they also carry out individual mentoring in Open Access requirements on requests from staff.

As part of the infrastructure, the Faculty has also given support for events that enhance and give leadership to the sector, in particular research fields or topics. The following examples break ground, reach into seldom-charted spheres of research, define and lead a field, allowing researchers in the submission to spearhead collaborative research initiatives:

Multimodal Writing symposium and workshop with the Open University, NAWE and *Writing in Practice* 2020 (**Barnard**)

The Middlesex Roundtables in Signs, Language and Communication 2019-21 (**Cobley** and **Siebers**)

The annual Classical Music Industry conferences 2018 and 2019 (**Dromey** and **Haferkorn**)

The Media and Inequality conference, featuring Joseph Stiglitz, Vince Cable et al., 2019 (**Knowles**)

The Creative Industries and Degree Apprenticeships event and report 2018

Studying Instagram Beyond Selfies: Instagram Conference 2018 (Caliandro and **Graham**).

Twitter diplomacy in the age of Trump symposium/roundtable 2018 (**Šimunjak** and Caliandro)

Close Reading conference 2017 (**Charalambidou**, **Cobley** and **Siebers**)

Anticipation conference 2017 (**Siebers**) with the AHRC, the V&A, Imperial College and others.

YouTube conference 2016 (**Drakopoulou** and Arthurs)

Music on the Blockchain industry launch 2016 (**Osborne**, **Beaven** and **O'Dair**)

The Creative Industries and Collaborative Production conference 2015 (**Graham** and Gandini)

The Role of Curation in Social Media Networks workshop 2015 (Arthurs)

14th Gatherings in Biosemiotics (with the ISBS) 2014 (**Cobley**)

Relevance, Literariness and Style (Workshop on applying relevance theory in stylistics, literary theory and analysis) 2014 (Clark)

Social Media Analytics: Research methodologies and interdisciplinary research project development 2014 (Arthurs)

plus two mini-symposia with Adam Arvidson: 'The ethical economy' 2015 and 'Facebook and Finance' 2016 (Gandini, **Graham** and **Drakopoulou**).

These events demonstrate the Middlesex commitment to researching the multiply-determined, but material nature of media practice.

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

Collaborations, Networks and Partnerships

The Faculty has sought to encourage, strengthen and extend the collaborations and partnerships of staff as part of their teaching and research contracts, with research outputs represented in REF2 and beyond. **Barnard**'s work as a Member of DCMS Digital Skills and Inclusion Working Group is central to her impact case study (REF3). **Charalambidou**'s collaboration with colleagues from Leicester, Trinity Saint David and Exeter Universities as well as the People's Collection Wales and the Institute of Latin American Studies in the AHRC-funded 'Consuming Authenticities' project. **Cobley**'s collaboration with colleagues in the ISBS produced the 14th Gatherings in Biosemiotics (above) and discussions that formed the basis of his 2016 book (see REF2) and the special issue of *TAJS* devoted to his work. **Cobley** and **Siebers** have been collaborating with Hong Kong University to forge a new paradigm in communication studies through the annual Middlesex Roundtables on Signs, Language and Communication, hosted through the Language and Communication research cluster and leading, in the first instance, to the co-edited (with Pablé) special issue of *Sign Systems Studies*. The cluster's ongoing work on close reading methods has led to a collaboration with the University of Southern Denmark in workshops in Odense (2018) and at Middlesex (2019), culminating in the *Language Sciences* special issue on 'reading', co-edited by **Cobley** and Trasmundi (March 2021). **Siebers**' work on the Anticipations project led to two special issues of *Futures* which he co-edited. Middlesex research for the Digital Liberties Campaign arises from **Drakopoulou**'s co-founding of the Cybersalon think tank and its efforts to introduce a Bill of Rights that protects citizens online. This Digital Bill of Rights was showcased by two cross-party events at the houses of Parliament in March 2015 and May 2016, with MPs from all parties, including John McDonnell and James Cleverly, participating. **Knowles**' collaboration with colleagues at the London School of Economics and City University, as well as the Law firm

Harcus Sinclair, on the implications of media coverage for the merger of HBOS and Lloyds, resulted in an expert report written and heard during the court proceedings Sharp v Blank. **Osborne**'s work as reviewer for the Intellectual Property Office (IPO) was continued, with the IPO also funding the research project *Creators' Earnings in the Digital Age* in collaboration with the Universities of Leeds and Ulster. **Siebers** was a project partner (2014-2016) on the Connected Communities Artists Legacy Project, AHRC grant AH/L013185/1/ with colleagues from the University of Sheffield, University of Leeds, Robert Gordon University, Manchester Metropolitan University. All of these projects, except the last, have been assisted by monies from the Faculty research fund as well as mentoring by the Director of Research and others.

Collaborations with Subject Associations
The Faculty and the University encourages and expects its staff to engage with Subject Associations and Scholarly Societies, considering it an important exercise ground for research skills, particularly networking, research ethics and collaborative work. The University maintains institutional memberships of ECREA and MeCCSA, while staff have been supported by the Faculty research fund to take out individual memberships of other subject associations such as IAMCR and IASPM.

Staff in the subject area have also been supported to take on leadership and partnership roles in subject associations. These include: **Cobley**'s work, since election in 2014 and re-election in 2019, as President of the International Association for Semiotic Studies, plus his work as Secretary of the International Society for Biosemiotic Studies (elected 2012 and re-elected 2017). **Haferkorn**'s work as Artistic Director for Trafalgar Square Stage's Chinese New Year Celebrations (run by the London China Town Chinese Association), 2014-19 and as Artistic Director for the British Composer Awards (run by BASCA, now the Ivors Academy) 2014-16. **Knowles**' membership of the media development working group, which is a part of the International Association of Media and Communications Researchers. **Siebers**' work as Founding member and former Chair of the Philosophy of Communication Section of ECREA, European Communication Research and Education Association as well as Vice-Presidency of the Internationale Ernst-Bloch-Gesellschaft, Ludwigshafen. Warren's work on the report for MeCCSA (in collaboration with Prof Natalie Fenton, Goldsmiths, University of London), higher education policy impact media, communication and cultural studies.

Contributions to wider Research Base, Economy and Society
The Middlesex teaching and research contract tacitly facilitates staff contributions to the wider research base, economy and society in the knowledge that this is reciprocated by through networking and valuable experience.

Editorial positions for journals, edited books, special issues: During the census period, **Cobley** has been co-editor of the journal *Social Semiotics* (Routledge 2004-present), Associate Editor, *Cybernetics and Human Knowing* (Imprint, 2007-present), series co-editor *Handbooks of Communication Science* (de Gruyter Mouton, 2009-present), series co-editor *Semiotics, Communication and Cognition* (de Gruyter Mouton, 2007 to present). In 2016 he was the journal guest Editor of *Deely in Review* special issue of *Chinese Semiotic Studies* 12 (3): 269-479, and co-editor of a special issue for *Signs and Media* 12 (Spring): 1-55 (ISBN 9787561493250). In 2020, he was co-editor (with **Siebers** and Pablé) of an aforementioned special issue of *Sign Systems Studies*. **Dines** is co-editor of the series *Global Punk* (Intellect). Ntalla was the co-editor of a special section of *Participations: Journal of Audience and Reception Studies*, 11, (1). **Siebers** is Principal Editor, *Empedocles: European Journal for Philosophy of Communication*, series Editor, *Bloch Bibliothek*, in Historical Materialism Book Series (Brill), series co-editor, *Routledge Research in Anticipation and Futures* and series co-editor, *Studies in Marxism and Religion*, (Lexington).

Peer review for grant-awarding bodies: **Cobley** and **Siebers** have been members of the AHRC Peer Review College during the census period (Cobley since 2010). The large amount of time required for this has been supported by Middlesex University and has been reciprocated with the mentoring of staff in research applications, based on experience of reviewing, by both members

of staff. **Cobley** has also been a peer reviewer on multiple occasions for the Swiss National Science Foundation, the Estonian Science Foundation, the Estonian Research Council (ETAg) and the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation during the period while **Siebers** has also been peer reviewer for the ERC, DfG and ÖFF; **Cortese** has reviewed for the Israel Academy of Science and Humanities; **Dines** has been a reviewer for the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

Peer review for publications: during the census period **Charalambidou** has undertaken peer review for the journals *Text & Talk* and the *Journal of Pragmatics, Discourse & Communication*; **Cobley** has peer reviewed for 12 international journals (some on multiple occasions) including *Language Sciences* and *Progress in Physics and Molecular Biology*; Cortese has peer reviewed for 6 international journals, including *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* and *Rivista degli Studi Orientali*; **Dines** has reviewed for the *Journal of Popular Music Education*; **Drakopoulou** has been peer reviewer for *Leonardo*, *Convergence*, *Games and Culture* plus the 5th edition of the Routledge book, *Media Today*; **Glynn** has been peer reviewer for *Critical Studies in Television* and the *Journal of American Studies*; **Graham** has reviewed for 12 international journals including *New Formations* and *Postcolonial Text*; **Lively** reviewed for *Writing in Practice*; **Osborne** has reviewed for *Popular Music, Popular Music and Society* and the *Journal of Cultural Ecology*; **Siebers** has peer reviewed articles for 11 international journals including the *European Journal of Philosophy* and *Futures*; **Šimunjak** has been peer reviewer for the *European Journal of Communication*, the *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, *Europe-Asia Studies*, *Media Studies*, the *Journal for General Social Issues* and the *Social Science Computer Review* journal. All researchers in REF2, usually on multiple occasions, have carried out reviewing for the book catalogues of academic publishers.

Leading positions in organisations, Editorial and Advisory Boards: **Beaven** has been a member of the *Frontiers in Blockchain* Editorial panel and the *International Journal of Carnival Arts* Editorial board; **Cobley** sits on the Editorial/Advisory board of 21 journals and book series, including *Semiotica* and *Nordicom Review*; **Dines** sits on the Editorial Board for *Journal of Popular Music Education*, is Reviews Editor for *Punk & Post Punk*, is Chair and co-founder of the Punk Scholars Network and a member of the Scientific Committee for KISMIF Conferences; Dromey is a Society for Music Analysis (SMA) Trustee; **Kerr** is on the Advisory board of *Audiovisual Thinking*; **Osborne** is a Member of the Advisory board for the music Advisory company Sound Diplomacy, the Advisory board of the UK Live Music Census and is Reviews Editor for IASPM Journal; **Siebers** was a member of the Advisory Board of the Institute of Modern Languages Research, School of Advanced Study, University of London, 2012-2017 and one of three members of the Advisory Board of CICANT.

Media appearances: staff have disseminated their research through popular media, including **Osborne**'s interviews for Raidió Teilifís Éireann and Channel NewsAsia, the Grenglish project's coverage by all major Greek community media in the UK, including twice by *Parikiaki* newspaper and in Cyprus (*Phileftheros* and *Politis* newspapers and *Astra 92.8* radio station, and **Barnard**'s (2019) BBC Radio 4 programme, *Digital Future: The New Underclass*.

Prizes/awards: staff in REF2 have been recognized for their research through various awards, such as **Cobley**, winner of the Mouton d'Or Prize, best article of 2018 for 'The communicative wheel'(with Per Durst-Andersen) – see REF2, is 9th Thomas A. Sebeok Fellow of the Semiotic Society of America, 2014-24 (with celebratory special issue of *TAJS*), Distinguished Visiting Professor, School of Foreign Languages and Cultures, Nanjing Normal University (2015-16); **Dalton** was the Winner of the BSFA best non-fiction award 2018; **Knowles** was the ZeMKI Visiting Research Fellow at the University of Bremen in 2019; **Siebers** is an Honorary Fellow of the School of Advanced Study, University of London, leading the Ernst Bloch Centre for German Thought, Institute of Modern Languages Research.

Keynotes/plenaries: **Beaven** delivered a keynote address at the Apino event in Sofia, Bulgaria (2016); **Cobley** delivered 7 keynote addresses and 7 plenary papers internationally during the census period; **Dromey** was keynote speaker at the Brasilia Chamber Music conference (2014);

Kerr presented a keynote on British television documentary in March 2014 at a two-day international symposium on documentary run by the International Federation of Television Archives, at the Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision in Hilversum; **Knowles** was keynote speaker at the 'Political Journalism and the Impact of the Market' conference, University of Groningen, June 2020; in the census period, **Siebers** delivered 2 keynotes and 4 plenary papers internationally.

Projects and collaborations focusing on equality and diversity: as mentioned in Section 2, above, equality, diversity and inclusion are core Middlesex values and the University seeks to promote/support research in this area or research work which may feature this dimension. For example, in this UoA, the Faculty has funded **Riley**'s research into very small media companies and *equal opportunities* in respect of degree apprenticeships; **Knowles**' survey of *gender discrepancies* in economic newsrooms (the results are to be published in *Journalism Studies*) as well as her ongoing research into media and economic inequality symposium following the Middlesex symposium on the topic in 2019; **Charalambidou**'s Grenglish project. The Media department in the Faculty is also home to the Chair of the MeCCSA Race, Ethnicity and Postcolonial Network (Lad), an ECR who is being encouraged to continue research around this role.