Institution: London South Bank University

Unit of Assessment: 34 - Communication, Cultural and Media Studies, Library and Information Management

1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy

In our submission to REF2014, we set out four key strategic goals: (1) to enhance our national and international reputation as a centre for innovative work, particularly around the area of convergent networked media; (2) to maintain and extend a shared culture of research and scholarship, consolidating existing areas and developing emerging themes and practices in the areas of performance and curation; (3) to build the financial sustainability of the centre; and (4) to ensure a vibrant research degree cohort in the centre.

We aimed to address these objectives by: (1) increasing the number of active researchers with REF-ready outputs by 50%; (2) supporting research-active staff in organising both internal and externally-facing conferences and other events, to build academic and professional networks; (3) increasing the number of researchers achieving external funding and increasing our total research income by 50%; and (4) working to increase the number of doctoral students by 50% and to enhance effective PhD training.

We have met or exceeded all of these goals. This submission returns 20 staff, or 16.4 FTE – an increase of more than 50% on the 10.2 FTE in our 2014 submission. This growth reflects both new appointments and our on-going efforts to support the organic growth of the School's research culture via funding, training and other initiatives as discussed in Section 2 below. As part of this growth, we have also supported staff in network-building and engagement activities, as described further in Section 4. Grant income has grown nearly threefold, from the £324,368 reported in REF2014 to £934,000. We have also exceeded our objectives in terms of growth in the number of postgraduate research students: from a low base of 3.6 PhD completions for REF2014, we can now report 10 completions in the current REF period, and 26 currently-enrolled doctoral students. This growth has been supported by significant investment at university and school level, and an on-going commitment to establishing collaborative PhD scholarships with arts organisations. Taken together, these are not merely incremental gains but represent a step-change in the vitality and sustainability of the School's research culture.

1.1 background and context
The overall mission that underlay the goals described above was to secure and nurture the research culture of the UoA and our wider staff group. We sought to use REF2014 as a springboard for growing this research culture in order to: support staff development and build capacity; to strengthen research-informed pedagogy, including via postgraduate research; to increase our visibility by forging links with potential collaborators and partners; and to support the sustainability of our research area by increasing our external income.

This mission was a bottom-up one, driven by the scholarly interests of staff and our ambition to carve out a space for intellectual development and growth. The progress we have made in realising these objectives during the current REF period, though, also owes much to a change of senior leadership at LSBU soon after REF2014. Since then, the university has undergone a major reorganisation, restructuring from faculties into schools, and our UoA now sits in the School of Arts & Creative Industries (ACI), established in 2014. This reorganisation has encouraged a move away from former, faculty-based models of research organisation in favour of a more focused and dynamic model, and also one that makes our work more visible within the university.

The change in senior leadership also entailed renewed commitment to research, introducing a university-wide model for establishing a new structure of research centres and groups. We have responded enthusiastically to this initiative and have embraced the opportunity to establish two research centres: the Centre for the Study of the Networked Image, and the Centre for Research in Digital Storymaking. Around two-thirds of our QR funding and internal university/school support

is now largely directed to supporting these centres, subject to annual auditing and progress-reporting. In addition, around a third of our funding goes to support a number of more informal and flexible research groups, designed to foster collaborative work which can either feed-into the work of centres or develop emerging areas of interest in a more dynamic and responsive way. As part of the same reorganisation, the university has also invested substantially in research support, including infrastructural improvements such as a Centre for Research Informed Teaching and a Doctoral Academy for postgraduate researchers, and direct support via an annual sabbatical scheme.

The strategic orientation of the university's overall research strategy — emphasising applied research and encouraging engagement with business and enterprise — has been a very good fit for us, since part of our own strategy was to seek to establish collaborations and work with external partners. This was a model pioneered, for our UoA, in **Dewdney**'s 2007–2010 AHRC-funded *Tate Encounters* project, which worked collaboratively with Tate Britain; and in our long-standing partnership with The Photographers' Gallery, driven by a former member of staff (Sluis, now at the Australian National University) who also worked half-time as the gallery's first curator of digital programmes. As detailed further below, we have been able to build on these early achievements in ways that have allowed us to address the university's strategic orientation and to benefit from its targeted funding initiatives, particularly through fully- and part-funded PhD scholarships.

1.2 research centres and groups

The Centre for the Study of the Networked Image (CSNI) brings together a group of researchers seeking new knowledge and understanding of how network and computational culture is changing the production and reception of art and photography. Initially inspired by a seminal 2008 article on the 'networked image' by then-LSBU researchers Sluis and Rubinstein, the centre was established and led by **Dewdney**, who now co-directs the centre with **Cox** (appointed in 2019) and **Dekker** (a former postdoctoral researcher in the centre, and now at the University of Amsterdam but also working as a researcher on a number of funded CSNI projects).

Current research specialisms in CSNI include art theory, art practice, art history, curation, photography, the sociology of culture, software studies, and cultural and media studies. Projects include **Dewdney**'s theoretical work on post-critical museology, developing new perspectives on museums in networked cultures; **Cox**'s research in software studies and contemporary aesthetics, including on ways of machine seeing; **Dekker**'s work on digital curation and the philosophical, aesthetic and cultural implications of computation-based media technologies; **Alexander**'s practice-based work on visually communicating scientific information to the public; **Roush**'s research on artist photobooks and experimental archival practices; **Brown**'s work on the digital representation of architectural space; and **Terrill**'s work on the relationship between urban architectural spaces and those who inhabit them, along with the creative 'reanimation' of archived material.

CSNI collaborations:

Co-funded PhDs	Visiting Researchers
Ben Uri Gallery	Cayo Honorato, University of Brasilia
FotoMuseum Winterthur (Switzerland)	Jacob Lund, Aarhus University
Gasworks Gallery / Royal College of Art	Juan Martín Prada, University of Cadiz
Hammersmith United Charities	Daniel Rubinstein, University of the Arts
The Photographers' Gallery	Katrina Sluis, ANU, Canberra
Rhizome (New York)	Nayia Yiakoumaki, Whitechapel Gallery
Serpentine Galleries	Remedios Zafra, University of Seville
Tate	Ioanna Zouli, University of Thessaly

CSNI places a strong emphasis on embedded, collaborative and co-creation approaches to research, and seeks methodologies to connect policy, practice and theory. The centre has active collaborative partnerships with several arts organisations, and, through **Cox**'s on-going projects, works in collaboration with the transmediale festival for art and digital culture in Berlin. The centre

also includes active members based at other universities, who collaborate as visiting professors and researchers.

CSNI is developing a new three-year programme focused on the automation of culture, involving two related areas of investigation. Firstly, research on ways of machine seeing, which will involve exploring visual and algorithmic literacy, the implications of machine learning on imageability, massified image production, machine curation and planetary-scale image-circulation. Secondly, investigation of the automation of knowledge and cultural value, focused on the condition of cultural value in public cultural institutions, alternative knowledge production through experimental publishing, curation and online art practices. In honing these new research interests, CSNI will identify and develop a specific networked methodology with current and new partners as a means of furthering collaborative and embedded research as a contribution to transdisciplinarity. The emphasis on articulating reflexive methodology will allow CSNI to make a wider contribution to research models and pedagogy.

The Centre for Research in Digital Storymaking (CRDS) focuses on how stories are constructed, remediated, and hybridised in contemporary digital culture. Established by **Chatzichristodoulou** (now Associate Dean for Research & Enterprise at Kingston University) and **Marchevska**, since 2019 the centre has been led by **Jackson**, who has continued CRDS's emphasis on practice-based, applied and creative work as expressed in the notion of 'story*making*'. CRDS investigates the impact of digital technologies in disrupting and remaking established narrative media, such as film, broadcasting and literature; and seeks to explore the potential of the digital for enabling the emergence of new forms of imaginative, immersive, and often socially-engaged, narrative media and story events, such as interactive and mobile fiction, games, sonic environments, XR (expanded reality) experiences, branding events, performance and live art practices.

CRDS is designed as an interdisciplinary research hub that brings together researchers from theatre and performance, sound and music, film, advertising, fashion, games, journalism, design, English and creative writing in order to foster cross-fertilisation of ideas. The centre's projects include **Tarrant**'s work on experimental documentary, which creates a dialogue between digital and analogue filmmaking technologies to explore the pastness of people and place; **Jackson**'s funded international research on innovations in the non-linear dissemination and reception of public service media, which demand new modes of collaborative production and governance; **Powell**'s analysis of the shifting relationships between promotional culture and the social, cultural and digital contexts in which it is received; **Van Den Beukel**'s work on games and interactive fiction; **Betsworth**'s research on the spaces and places of modernist art and literature; and **Marchevska**'s Marie Curie fellowship grant on displacement and gentrification, exploring socially engaged art and housing issues, and her Creative Europe-funded practice-based work on displacement and live art practices in hostile political environments.

CRDS has close working relationships with researchers from the Schools of Business, Engineering, Law & Social Sciences, and Health at LSBU, and regularly hosts visiting professors and researchers from other universities. It also provides a home for independent scholars: CRDS is the UK base, for example, for *The S Word: Stanislavsky and Contemporary Theatre*, an international research project co-founded in 2015 by CRDS visiting professor Paul Fryer to explore the influence and legacy of Konstantin Stanislavsky's work and teaching. We will be hosting the next *The S Word* conference, on the theme of Stanislavsky and the Media (originally scheduled for 2020, but now postponed to 2021).

CRDS collaborations:

Research bid partners	Visiting Researchers
BBC R&D	Sean Albiez, Bloomsbury Academic
California State University, Northridge Canterbury Christ Church University	Thomas John Bacon, Middlesex University
Creative Folkestone Furtherfield	Marco Benoît Carbone, University College London
Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta	Elinor Carmi, Goldsmiths

Globe Theatre Goldsmiths College LASALLE College of the Arts, Singapore Maidstone Television Studios	Stephen Colwell, institute of Education, University College London Gonzalo Parrilla Gallego, University of Madrid
National Theatre National Theatre of Wales	Hyojung Kim, South Korean Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism
Pinewood Studios Royal Shakespeare Company Ryerson University, Toronto Screen South	Alessio Kolioulis, University College London Iñigo Guerrero Martín, University of Salamanca
Technical University of Cologne UK Screen Alliance	Lina Srivastava, Creative Impact and Experience Lab
University of Huddersfield University of Warwick Victoria & Albert Museum	Ana Vilenica, Marie Curie Fellowship researcher

CRDS foregrounds public and industry engagement through delivering applied research working with Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), arts and media organisations and other institutions, both at the centre level and in terms of specific projects. In January 2018 CRDS established a partnership with the Victoria & Albert Museum's digital programmes department, and launched this on-going collaboration with a performance by the Chicago-based ATOM-r collective (Anatomical Theatres of Mixed Reality).

In 2019 the centre established a knowledge-transfer partnership, funded by the AHRC and Innovate UK, with Footprint Scenery. The project centred on enabling the business to prototype interactive spaces and immersive experiences through a process of co-design and co-creation with clients. Outcomes included an immersive installation using 360 filming and projection mapping, set up at Footprint's studio for an audience of clients and prospective clients; and an exhibit for the Victoria & Albert Museum's exhibition *Opera: Passion, Power and Politics*, which was then displayed at the Opera House of Muscat.

Also in 2019, CRDS embarked on a co-funded three-year initiative with Lambeth Council, *ELEVATE*, as an evaluation partner to address diversity in the creative workplace with a focus on BAME representation and access to the cultural economy. The centre works closely with Lambeth Council in an iterative evaluation process that shapes the long term goals of the programme designed to address barriers to engagement for underrepresented groups (low-income, disabled, BAME and women) accessing employment and training within the creative and cultural industries.

In addition to the two research centres, our research groups provide a way to encourage (though not to require) colleagues to move beyond a 'lone scholar' approach where possible, via informal collaboration with like-minded colleagues. The centres-plus-groups model was introduced as part of the university-wide reorganisation of research, but also fits with our own longstanding recognition that collaborative working is important for growth. At the same time, the more flexible and informal idea of research groups (some of which may be only temporary, while others may grow into future research centres) accepts that not every researcher needs or wishes to join larger consortia or to scale-up their individual research ambitions.

The work of many of our research groups aligns with the concerns of CRDS, while others pursue themes that cut across both centres or develop independent areas of interest. The Digital Performance Research Group includes **Marchevska**'s research on creativity, the maternal and intergenerational practice in art and performance; **Foster**'s practice-based research into bilingual theatre adaptation as both process and performance; and **Barnard**'s experimental work on how using digital technology to facilitate an interactive performance in the absence of live performers can prompt different understandings of audience agency. The Games Research Group encompasses **Hammond**'s AHRC-funded research network on war and videogames; **Van Den Beukel**'s work on narrative games; and **Rietveld**'s research on the gender politics of music production in the games industry. The Journalism Futures Research Group includes **Hammond**'s

work on data journalism and on post-political communication; and **Jackson**'s work on new models of public media management. The <u>Practice as Research Group</u> incorporates **Tarrant**'s investigation of the portrait film genre alongside his materially-minded investigations of montage and memory; and **Hawkins**'s experimental documentary work exploring affect-as-practice. The <u>Sonic Research Group</u> includes **Parkinson**'s work on participation, artifice and authenticity in computer music; **Milburn**'s work on music and urban cultures of modernity; and **Rietveld**'s research on musical responses to technoculture.

1.3 future strategic aims and goals for research and impact
This UoA's research outputs embrace a diverse range of research traditions at the intersections of humanities and social sciences research, reflecting the historical development of the School. Having grown out of a social sciences faculty in the 1990s, our expansion in the 2000s and 2010s was largely imagined on an art-school model of theoretically-informed creative practice, while our consolidation as a School of Arts & Creative industries since 2014 has emphasised industry collaboration and innovation, Knowledge Exchange and applied research, alongside practice-based research. This orientation aligns with the university's overall vision of promoting research that addresses global and civic challenges, that generates critical insights and sustainable solutions, that aims to transform the lives of individuals, communities, businesses and society, and that enhances teaching.

Looking forward, the key concerns which emerge across the work of both our research centres are in the areas of policy and cultural value. Our research addresses questions about how the creative use of technology is changing the arts and creative industries; how arts and cultural organisations cope with migration to digital networks; about how to measure and evaluate the social value and impact of arts and cultural practices; and about the broader implications and impacts of online culture for the creative industries and public policy.

As indicated above, CSNI's future programme will revolve around two related aspects of the growing automation of culture: machine ways of seeing and alternative cultural knowledge production. In achieving this new programme CSNI is extending its collaborations with The Photographers' Gallery and Fotomuseum Winterthur, as well as with the Digital Humanities network at the University of Cambridge and the recently formed Max Planck Center for Digital Visual Studies at the University of Zurich. Developing our work on machine vision is underpinned by the *Unthinking Photography* initiative at The Photographers Gallery and the special issue Ways of Machine Seeing, for *AI & Society* (Springer 2021). These collaborations will lead to a major national collaborative funding initiative and further postgraduate opportunities. The second key theme, the automation of knowledge and value, is based on our extensive cultural partnerships, including our most recent addition, the Whitechapel Gallery, and our on-going editorial work on *APRJA* open access journal (with Aarhus University and transmediale), *The Contemporary Condition* book series (Sternberg Press), and the *DATA Browser* book series (Open Humanities Press). In collaboration with the University of Amsterdam, Aarhus University, Open Humanities Press and transmediale, we will build a funded research network focused on the practices of alternative publishing, and the forms and boundaries of academic online and print publishing, with particular emphasis on the re-combinations of knowledge produced in human-computer networks. Over the next period CSNI will develop its collaborative research networks further, especially internationally, to extend its influence and grow its external research income.

The research impact strategy of CRDS is developing along two main strands. Firstly, the centre is undertaking research around public policy and regeneration, examining existing methods for the evaluation of cultural impact and developing original methodologies for data collection and evaluation. A joint PhD with Lyric Hammersmith, for example, pioneers performance-based evaluative methodologies for Lyric's extensive community and educational offering. Other examples of this type of work include **Marchevska**'s on-going advisory role with the Live Art Development Agency, Counterpoint Arts, Lambeth Council and Lyric Hammersmith, which entails organising workshops with arts organisations and charities and developing research-practice toolkits (for example, for practitioners working with migrants and refugees); and **Van Den Beukel**'s role in 2018–19 as poetry advisor on the *Tideway Project*, consulting on the public engagement

aspect of this major London infrastructure development. **Jackson** has advised the Greater London Authority (GLA) and the Thames Estuary Production Corridor Policy Group on the development of high technology clusters for the creative industries in the south east of England. She is also founding President of the International Association of Public Media Researchers (IAPMR), which represents almost 400 researchers from academia and industry, and is supported by the European Broadcasting Union. IAPMR provides a formal structure to aggregate and support the evolution of public service media worldwide. The Association supports over 20 years of scholarship on public service media located in the bi-annual RIPE conference and Reader, and CRDS supported the publication of the last Reader in the series (*RIPE@2019*). **Jackson**'s work with IAPMR has led to joint bids for funding with BBC R&D and to colleagues being invited to join eleven other organisations to form the proposed BBC *Centre for Public Values, Technology, and Society*. It has also, from 2019, led to the launch of the *Youth Media and Culture Network* with Ryerson University, the Applied University of Cologne, and international industry collaborators.

Another key example here is *ELEVATE*, the co-funded three-year initiative with Lambeth Council described above. The partnership will last beyond the duration of the project (2019–22) through a continuing Research Assistant post. The aim is to transform the cultural landscape of Lambeth through systemic change and multi-layered intervention in areas such as education, access to space, resources and opportunity, support networks, and changing the way employers work in the creative industries sector. Beyond the local level, we aim to impact central Government agendas through improved working practices and policy development. CRDS supports Lambeth Council to make the case for change – especially in employment practices and the representation of BAME practitioners at senior level – through telling an impactful story.

Secondly, CRDS will undertake research into emerging technologies for the creative industries that is then made actionable through innovation and enterprise. Working with a range of diverse start-ups and SMEs in the creative industries and beyond (e.g. Footprint Scenery, Stories Evolved, Aures), CRDS is encouraging technological innovation. It is also seeking to drive industry innovation through developing new applications for off-the-shelf technologies; developing new immersive tech products, processes and services; and stimulating the creative economy. The overall framework for this aspect of our work is *Accelerating the Creative Economy through Immersive Technologies* (*ACE IT*), a project supported by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and undertaken in collaboration with the London College of Communication (LCC).

ACE IT aims to accelerate investment in research and development by SMEs operating in the creative and technology sectors in London. Launched in October 2019, the ultimate goal of this three-year project is to enable beneficiary SMEs to grow by enabling them to explore the development and commercialisation of innovative products, processes and services in immersive technologies. One example of an *ACE IT* project is 'Bodyswaps', an immersive learning platform that lets employees practice their soft skills by acting out, with their own voice and body language, a range of realistic workplace simulations in VR. Each start-up receives an individual pathway based on their stage and ambitions, allowing the time and space to build key business skills, develop and fine-tune ground-breaking products, and to future-proof their businesses. Start-ups gain access to specialist workshops and one-to-one consultations with experts through long-term research collaborations with academic staff from LSBU and LCC.

The approach of working with SMEs that CRDS is currently establishing through the *ACE IT* project is likely to remain a core component of our strategy going forward. In July 2020 we secured further funding from the ERDF of £6.1m to lead *R&D-4-SMEs*: a 3.5 year project with Screen South, Creative Folkestone, Canterbury Christ Church University and Maidstone Television Studios. This project actions **Jackson**'s funded study with Michal Glowacki, *Organisational Culture of Public Service Media: People, Values and Processes in the Digital Mediascapes* (2015–2019), which focused on the organisational culture of high technology clusters and co-working spaces. The overall aim of *R&D-4-SMEs* is to create a network across the South East Local Enterprise Partnership region based around three editing and post-production hubs (at Folkestone's Glassworks Centre, the new Creative Arts Building at Canterbury Christ Church University, and Maidstone Television and Film Studios). The three

hubs and their facilities will draw together SMEs and university researchers at postgraduate and postdoctoral levels. The hubs will provide three studios, six edit suites, three co-working spaces, cloud-based production for SMEs and researchers to exchange knowledge in virtual production, and a series of emerging workflows that aggregate gaming technologies and datafication with cloud-based production and e-commerce for the moving image. These centres of production in the south east of the UK and the associated cloud-based production network will remain for the use of researchers and SMEs after the project closes.

2. People

LSBU obtained the EU HR Excellence in Research Award in 2014 (reconfirmed in 2016, 2018 and 2020), in recognition of the university's long-term commitment to the principles underpinning the UK Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers. In line with this, the university's Research, Enterprise and Innovation office and Staff Development Unit provide a programme built around the *Vitae* Researcher Development Framework offering training and events for all research staff on a regular basis.

LSBU values diversity across all the dimensions of difference, and has a robust Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy. ACI colleagues are active members of staff networks supporting the university's EDI mission, including the sexual orientation and gender identity network (SONET), the network for black and minority ethnic staff (Equinet) and the staff gender identity equality network (GenderNet). **Foster** represents ACI on the Racial Awarding Gap committee and its sub-group on decolonising the curriculum. Equality and diversity issues are embedded in teaching, including in the work of postgraduate researchers focusing on themes of inclusion. Elonka Soros's doctoral research comparing British and Dutch public service media, for example, examines how newsrooms become more diverse; and PhD student D'bi.Young Anitafrika is helping the School to pilot an action-research project investigating barriers to achievement and how students of colour experience university. We have funded two practice-as-research projects employing BAME professional theatre directors to work with our students of colour to produce two externally-facing productions at Southwark Playhouse: *The Bogus Woman*, by Kay Adshead, and a new devised series of monologues streamed on the Southwark Playhouse website in response to the Covid pandemic. All our funded and non-funded research meets the Research Concordat's EDI guidelines, as reviewed by our research committee.

Since 2014, the university has enlarged and enhanced central research support services, reformed research governance mechanisms in response to the new structure of schools, and established a London Doctoral Academy to support postgraduate researchers. The School benefits from dedicated points of contact in the central research support team for both postgraduate research student administration and for funding bids.

As part of the restructuring into schools, the university instituted a new management structure at local level, with each school having a Director of Research and Enterprise as part of the senior executive team. In ACI, **Jackson** is Director of Research and Enterprise, responsible for overall research strategy and the planning of the annual research budget, as well as overseeing the work of the two research centres and chairing the School's research committee. In addition to ensuring there is an on-going focus on research as part of the day-to-day management of the School, **Jackson** also represents ACI on the university-level research committee. The School also has its own full-time administrator supporting the research centre directors, the research group leads, and **Jackson** as director of research.

The School runs four annual bidding rounds for researchers to apply for teaching buy-out to support the completion of research outputs. Since 2014, we have allocated around £120,000 to the research centres to support research-active staff in this way. Researchers from the School have also successfully applied to the university-wide sabbatical scheme in 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2020. **Jackson** chairs the ACI research committee, where school-level funding decisions are made. The committee is comprised of the leads for the two research centres, and representatives of the research groups, representatives for postgraduate studies and the ethics committee, a

representative from the central LSBU research office, and the dean of the School. It meets bi-monthly and offers flexible and responsive support for both research centre / group initiatives and for individuals, in addition to regular funding for conference attendance or other items of research expenditure via four annual application rounds, disbursing around £40,000 annually.

The university runs a centrally-managed promotions round every October. Staff are able to access workshops that help them identify strengths and potential training needs. At School level, we have a recruitment and promotions policy that takes into account research track record, research fit and research potential, including the potential to win funding and establish/lead research. We run regular training workshops for researchers in the School, ranging from how to identify relevant research funding opportunities to writing bids and disseminating work to academia, policy-makers, and industry.

We have established a mentoring scheme within the School, aimed primarily at Early Career Researchers (ECRs). All active ECRs, and staff who wish to become research-active, have access to a mentor — professors / associate professors who can advise on goal-setting and the formulation of a three-year research plan, covering potential publications and research funding bids. The mentoring scheme draws on LSBU's central training for researchers, and also on the national *Vitae* training for junior scholars. The university's central research support services have offered specialist training sessions for ACI researchers on peer-reviewing, writing abstracts, identifying calls for funding, and bid-writing. We have also organised our own targeted training workshops with external facilitators, including one specifically for ECRs, with Professor Janis Jeffries in 2019, and three for practice-based researchers, with Professor Roberta Mock (in 2016), Professor Paul Fryer (2019), and Professor Stephen Boyd-Davies (2019). We hold an annual Research and Enterprise Conference in July which offers a platform for showcasing internal and external work. Keynotes have included speakers from other universities and the London Mayor's creative industries team. We also provide an annual induction for new research-active staff run by the School's Director of Research and Enterprise.

A key initiative in research development made by the School during the REF period has been our on-going partnership with the Faculty of Communication and Design at Ryerson University in Toronto. Established in 2016 with an investment of more than £10,000 from each of the partners, the partnership has enabled numerous staff to travel between the two institutions in order to explore potential areas for collaboration and project development. One project to emerge from the partnership is the collaboration between **Alexander** (LSBU) and Sara Knelman (Ryerson), which began with working on a curatorial strategy for developing Alexander's photographic work on war commemoration from a book publication into an exhibition. Over the course of three visits between March 2017 and June 2018, Alexander initiated new work based on research into the displacement of Canadian Soldiers during WWI and WWII, which in turn led to further connections with two other Ryerson colleagues, Blake Fitzpatrick and Vid Ingelevic, whose work also investigates commemoration. Alexander and Knelman curated an exhibition of the work as part of the 2018 Scotiabank Contact Photography Festival, together with a symposium on Conflict, Commemoration and Displacement, which contextualised the exhibition and featured contributions from Fitzpatrick and Ingelevic. Knelman subsequently published an article about the work in *Prefix Photo Magazine*, and the exhibition toured to the Alliance Francaise in Toronto in December 2018.

Another highly successful LSBU–Ryerson collaboration was initiated by **Marchevska** (LSBU) and Marusya Bociurkiw (Ryerson). Exchange visits to explore areas of mutual interest resulted in a successful funding bid with a third collaborator, Caroline Lenette (University of New South Wales), for a two-year project, *Finding Home: Housing, Migration and Research Creation*. Funded by an Insight Development grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and an Immigrant, Diversity and Inclusion grant from the Royal Bank of Canada, the project uses creative research to understand the complex intersection between forced migration and new place-making strategies. The research involves working with visual and performance artists as co-creators (including the Psychedelight theatre company, Phosporos theatre company, D'bi.Young Anitafrika, Mojisola Elufowoju, Khaled Barakeh and Ice&Fire), and the project has recruited

filmmaker Winstan Wittan as a co-researcher. The project will culminate in a symposium at Ryerson (planned for 2021), and will be archived through an open-access online repository.

We see the research partnership with Ryerson as experimental and developmental, and therefore support trips by ECRs as well as more established researchers. Pastor (not submitted), for example, initiated a collaboration with Michael F. Bergmann (Ryerson) in 2019 focusing on the exploration of intimacy in one-on-one performance mediated through lo-fi VR. Having undertaken a practical exploration of the potential of VR technology, conducted a literature review, and run a one-day development workshop with student participants on the implications of lo-fi VR, Pastor and Bergmann are now looking for funding and future development opportunities and plan a second exchange visit in 2021.

Jackson (LSBU), Charles Davis (Ryerson), Christine Horz (Technical University of Cologne) and partners at the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the BBC, and the German public service broadcaster ZDF have formed the *Youth Media and Culture Network* to bid for funding and host events. Since 2019 the consortium has bid for funding to the international ORF funding programme, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, and the AHRC. The network hosts online seminars on their core focus: ensuring public service media better orientates to Generation Z, specifically 14–16 year olds, who are often understood as a difficult group to reach, engage, and retain. The network also provides an on-going, novel, knowledge exchange mechanism to draw together young people, public service broadcasters, and independent media producers.

2.1 Research Students

At university level, the Research Board of Study (RBOS) is responsible for strategy, capacity-building and research degrees provision, including monitoring and progression. The RBOS meets monthly to consider relevant issues, review the progress of every student, and review research policy. This is mirrored at school level, where **Marchevska**, the Director of Postgraduate Research, monitors student progress, reports any issues to the ACI research committee, and organises training workshops and research seminars for postgraduate students – including, for example, sessions on Social Media Data Analysis Training run by Professor Mike Thelwall (University of Wolverhampton); on Decolonial Auto-ethnographic Practice led by D'bi.Young Anitafrika; and on The Art and Craft of Editing, led by Royal Literary Fund fellow Katie Grant.

The university uses the online management system HAPLO to monitor postgraduate research progress. Students are registered on this system on enrolment, and both students and supervisors receive automated messages alerting them when to submit reports on progress, as well as attending review and assessment meetings with independent assessor from the School. **Rietveld** convenes ACI's research ethics panel each semester, to review research ethics applications from both staff and postgraduate students, and also sits on the University ethics panel, which is available to deal with complex issues of research integrity and ethics.

The university's London Doctoral Academy, established in 2016, supports postgraduate research students from across the university. The Academy provides an annual university-wide PGR training programme, culminating in its annual week-long Summer School, which offers workshops on research methodologies, a research poster competition and a PGR conference. The university also offers a wide range of training and development opportunities for staff undertaking postgraduate research supervision. These include a range of specialist workshops delivered by LSBU's staff development team, covering subjects such as intellectual property, and advising doctoral students on teaching; the Missenden Centre's one-day course on supervision; and an online training programme, developed jointly with Epigeum, which covers topics such as pastoral care and quality assurance.

Like other universities, we find ourselves in a challenging environment for growing postgraduate research. Our strategy for growth, likely to continue in the years ahead, has centred on a partnership model, co-funding collaborative PhDs with arts organisations. Most projects to date are focussed on two key themes: the value and impact of arts and cultural organisations (Kristina

Nilles's work with the Young Lyric educational team; Carolyn Defrin's work with Hammersmith United Charities); and the frameworks used to research and evaluate the social impact of art participation (Viktoria Ivanova's work with Serpentine Galleries; Lozana Rossenova's work with Rhizome). These are all practiced-based projects that address real-world problems and seek long-term solutions to enhance and diversify the host organisation's structures and practices.

In several cases we have been successful in drawing on the networks established via these collaborative PhD projects to facilitate postdoctoral opportunities for completing students. Ioanna Zouli, for example, who successfully completed an AHRC collaborative doctorate with Tate in 2018, was subsequently employed by our partner, The Photographers' Gallery, as the editor of its *Unthinking Photography* blog, and has subsequently been commissioning writing on Machine Ways of Seeing, financially supported by CSNI. Gaia Tedone, who graduated in 2019 having undertaken a practice-based thesis on online curating, secured a postdoctoral research position with the *Post Photography* research project, funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation, working with Sluis and **Dewdney**. Wherever possible, we have also been keen to create temporary postdoctoral positions at LSBU: this is how **Dekker**'s connection with the School was first established, for example; and a current PhD student, Nicolas Malevé, undertaking a collaborative PhD with The Photographers' Gallery, will be offered a contract to work for CSNI on the preparation of a new research funding proposal focused on his area of specialisation, Machine Vision.

A taught module, Research Methods and Methodologies in Arts, Design and Humanities, is available for research students in the School. The module introduces a range of qualitative and quantitative research methods including different types of interview ethnography (narrative, biographical, in-depth, semi-structured, structured), focus groups, surveys and questionnaires, experimental and quasi-experimental research, auto-ethnography and (auto)biographical research, documentary and textual analysis, practice-as-research in arts, and approaches that involve mixing methods. More informally, CSNI runs a regular reading group for doctoral students (also open to other scholars interested in the themes explored by the research centre), with a particular focus on contemporary theory.

3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

As noted above, we have managed to grow our research income and have exceeded the targets we set ourselves after REF2014. Our strategy for doing so, likely to continue in the coming period, has three strands: first, to seek to make the growth of postgraduate student numbers sustainable via co-funding with partners and collaborators; second, to increase the amount of bidding activity in the School (supported by training where necessary), both in terms of the total number of grant bids, and the number of staff engaged in bidding; and third, to seek to develop a smaller number of larger bids by dedicating staff time to this and by cultivating strong relationships with potential bid partners. Earlier sections have already described the success we have had with postgraduate funding. We have also succeeded in increasing the number of small to medium bids of around £10—50K, including two AHRC research networks over the REF period, for example. This type of bidding has still involved a minority of staff, but we continue to invest time and training to enable a larger pool of staff to engage with such activity. The success we have had with large (£100K+) bids has been led by a few individuals, including **Marchevska** (a successful Marie Curie Fellowship bid) and **Jackson** (the *ACE IT* and *R&D-4-SMEs* grants from the ERDF).

Two major rounds of investment by the university during the REF period have established and upgraded state-of-the-art media production facilities for practice-based teaching and research. Our Elephant Studios media production centre incorporates a film studio, photography studio, sound studio, games studio, and a multimedia newsroom. LSBU's Edric Theatre incorporates a 90-seat main auditorium fitted with industry-standard lighting, sound and AV technologies, plus a 30-seat studio theatre, a fully equipped workshop for making props and sets, and rehearsal and backstage spaces. Our postgraduate and postdoctoral researchers will also begin to use our new studios run in collaboration with Maidstone Television Studios from April 2021. These will comprise a state-of-the-art studio for virtual production (studio and cloud-based production blending

techniques from film, television, gaming, and post-production), edit suites, and a co-working space to encourage collaborative research and innovation partnerships with industry. This production centre will be networked with two companion centres in Folkestone (with Screen South) and Canterbury (with Canterbury Christ Church University). The shared network and cloud facilities will enable the testing of remote and international workflows across geographical and national boundaries.

The School has a Dolby Atmos Immersive Media studio, the first in higher education, presented by the company for experimentation into surround sound, immersive sound, and object-oriented sound. The Sonic Research Group is associated with the Acoustics Research Group (School of Built Environment and Architecture), which provides research expertise and research facilities in acoustic architecture, and our recording studio is employed in work with the *ACE IT* project for innovation and experimentation sessions between researchers and SMEs.

All of the School's facilities, meeting rooms and equipment are available to postgraduate researchers, who also have a dedicated workspace equipped with computers, a small library, and refreshment facilities. Doctoral researchers are also able to apply to the ACI research committee for funds to cover conference attendance and research expenses. Our aim is to make postgraduate researchers and junior scholars and practitioners a full part of the School, since we recognise their vital importance to the sustainability and vitality of the research culture.

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

We have several important institutional memberships and are particularly pleased to have hosted the annual conference of the Media, Communications and Cultural Studies Association (MeCCSA) at LSBU in 2018. We also support individual researchers in joining academic associations and other organisations that are important to their research interests, enabling them to connect with and contribute to relevant networks. A number of colleagues have also held leadership roles in these organisations during the REF period.

Institutional memberships
British Interactive Media Association
Creative Industries Federation
D&AD Global Association for Creative Advertising & Design
Digital Games Research Association
Digital Production Partnership
European Communication Research & Education Association (ECREA)
Media, Communications & Cultural Studies Association (MeCCSA)
Standing Conference of University Drama Departments
The Culture Capital Exchange (TCCE)
The Independent Game Developers' Association (TIGA)
Theatre and Performance Research Association
Individual memberships
Association of British Stage Designers
British Academy of Film and Television Arts
Cultural Studies Association (US)
International Federation of Theatre Research
International Game Developers Association (IGDA)
Royal Society of Arts
Society for Artistic Research
War and Media Network
Leadership roles
Association of Continuing Education for Esports
Digital Research in Humanities and the Arts
International Association for the Study of Popular Music

International Association of Public Media Researchers (formerly Re-envisioning the Public Service Media Enterprise)
Live Interfaces International Conference
Live Music Exchange
Mercury Prize for UK/Ireland Album of the Year
Oxford & London Interactive Fiction Group
Theatre and Performance Research Association
Youth Media, and Culture Network

We have hosted a number of important conferences and other events at LSBU over the REF period, including:

Motherhood and Creative Practice conference hosted at LSBU, June 2015 (with a follow-up conference, *Gender Generation*, co-organised at the Royal College of Art in September 2016)
No Way Out: Theatre as a Mediatised Practice: a two-day international symposium of the Theatre and Performance Research Association's performance and new technologies working group, hosted at LSBU and Birkbeck (April 2017)
MeCCSA Practice Network annual conference hosted at LSBU, June 2016 (*Post-Screen Cultures/Practices*)
TCCE *Inside Out Festival* hosted at LSBU, March 2017
Sound & Vision Symposium, in collaboration with the 21st Century Music Practice Research Network, hosted by the Sonic Research Group and supported by the Creative and Digital Economy Institute at LSBU, March 2017.
The City as Modernist Ephemera conference hosted at LSBU, June 2017
MeCCSA annual conference (*Creativity and Agency*) hosted at LSBU, January 2018
Critical Care: Audience in Immersive, Interactive and One-on-One Performance: one-day symposium organised at LSBU, March 2018
Art and Housing Struggles conference hosted at LSBU, May 2018
Automatic Cinema two-day experimental workshop led by London Fieldworks, June 2018
The Working-Class Avant-Garde conference, June 2018 (led to the launch of a new Open Library of Humanities journal (*The Journal of Wyndham Lewis Studies*) and an Arts Council-funded series of artist residencies at the Set Space gallery)
TCCE *Blockchain for the Arts and Creative Industries* forum launch at LSBU, September 2018
The Personal is Political: How Polish Women Negotiate the Price of Migration, organised by the Practice as Research group in collaboration with the London Migration Film Festival, December 2018
Beyond the Console: Gender & Narrative Games two-day conference organised in collaboration with the Victoria & Albert Museum, February 2019
TCCE *Feminisms and Technology* symposium hosted at LSBU, March 2019
Performance and Digital Technology Gathering annual meeting co-organised by hosted at LSBU, October 2019
TCCE Creative Entrepreneurship Forum hosted at LSBU, November 2019
Performing Border Crossing, research seminar with curator Alessandra Cianetti and Jill Daniels (University of East London), December 2019
Filmmaking as Resistance, seminar series in response to Black Lives Matter, 2020

We also host the monthly meetings of the Oxford and London Interactive Fiction Group, organised by **Van Den Beukel** in collaboration with leading interactive fiction author Emily Short, which include industry talks, development workshops, game-jams and play sessions, by and for independent game-makers and interactive fiction authors.

In addition, colleagues have organised events elsewhere, in collaboration with other institutions, for example **Cox**'s annual workshop at transmediale (Berlin), in collaboration with Aarhus University and various partner institutions (for example, CRASSH, University of Cambridge, 2019; Emergent Media Lab, Concordia University, 2020); and **Hammond**'s one-day workshop on *Ludic Expressions of Violent Conflict* at the 2018 Central and Eastern European Game Studies Conference, in collaboration with colleagues from the University of Tromsø and Charles University, Prague.

Jackson co-organised the 2018 European Media Manager's Conference (EMMA) with Dr Michal Glowacki from the University of Warsaw at Warsaw University. The conference considered the datafication of media and resulting implications for media managers internationally. The conference was preceded by an 'unconference' that brought scholars together with small to medium-sized businesses in Warsaw to discuss and test models of knowledge exchange between industry and academia. A direct outcome from the conference was an edition of the *Journal of Media Management*. The membership of EMMA increased by a third that year, due to the popularity of the conference topic and the overall organisation.

We have also been successful in attracting funding for collaborative research projects and networks:
Cox is co-PI on *The Contemporary Condition*, a research project funded by the Danish Council for Independent Research (6.2 million Danish Krone) at Aarhus University, and a partner on the *Ways of Machine Seeing* project, working with colleagues at the University of Cambridge. The latter includes publications and workshops, most recently (December 2018) *Generative Adversarial Networks Experimentation Lab*, co-organised with Anne Alexander (University of Cambridge), David M. Berry (University of Sussex), and Leonardo Impett (Max-Planck for Art History, Rome), at CRASSH, Cambridge University.

Hammond was PI on a one year AHRC network grant (£41,000), *War Games: Memory, Militarism, and the Subject of Play*, which sought to develop new critical understandings of the relationships between videogames, militarism and war, cultural memory and history. The network involved academics (from the universities of Tromsø, Bergen, Gothenburg, Utrecht, Kent, Portsmouth, Oxford, Notre Dame, the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Charles University Prague, the Jagiellonian University Kraków and Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam) as well as games companies (Auroch Digital, Evil Twin Artworks, Matrix Games, Modiphius Entertainment), museums (Narvik War and Peace Centre, Imperial War Museum, Royal Armouries Museum), and games journalists.

Dewdney is a funded member of the advisory committee of a three year (2019—21) Swiss National Science Foundation funded research project on *Post Photography* in collaboration with the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts and Fotomuseum Winterthur. He presents papers based upon his own research, chairs sessions, attends seminars and advises the PI and CI on the progress of the research.

Jackson's four-year international research project with Michal Glowacki (University of Warsaw), funded by the Polish National Science Center (€65,000), compared the internal organisational culture of ten high technology clusters in North America and Europe. The findings were presented at the European Broadcasting Union's *Accelerating European Media* conference in Brussels in October, 2019. The conference was designed to inform priorities within the forthcoming seven-year Horizon Europe research programme. Jackson is also founding President of the International Association for Public Media Researchers which incorporated in 2020. The Association draws together nearly 400 researchers worldwide and draws on over 20 years of scholarship in the field. There is a bi-annual conference co-hosted by a university and public service broadcaster and a bi-annual Reader published by Nordicom. IAPMR has partnerships with the Public Media Alliance and the Central European University. The Association is sponsored by the European Broadcasting Union.