

<b>Institution: The Open University</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: D28 History</b>
<p><b>1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy</b></p> <p><b>1.1 Departmental context</b></p> <p>The History Department at The Open University (OU) is a community of internationally recognised researchers, distinctive in applying leading-edge digital technologies to the generation and dissemination of knowledge. OU historians research the history of Britain, Europe, Africa, Asia and America from 1500 to the immediate past. We work collaboratively and with HEI and non-HEI partners, fostering interdisciplinary research including co-supervision of PhD students and collaborative interdisciplinary projects.</p> <p>Our Department has grown over the census period. Compared with REF2014, we have a larger academic staff base, increased external funding, and more successful PhD completions. We have developed and strengthened our strategic partnerships, resulting in public engagement and impact. History is a priority research area for the OU, resulting in strategic financial investment. For REF2014, we submitted 16 researchers (14.3 FTE) compared with 20 Cat-A staff (18.4 FTE) for REF2021.</p> <p>While we teach ‘at a distance’ in research terms, the OU operates like any other university, with the added advantage that OU historians benefit from unparalleled access to the OU’s unique channels for public engagement designed to communicate our research to diverse audiences. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>OpenLearn</b>, the OU’s free learning platform which allows historians to make research available to international audiences (over 80 million visitors to date) (see 1.3);</li> <li>• the <b>BBC/OU partnership</b> to co-produce programmes for all BBC TV, radio, digital and online channels/platforms, enabling us to shape programmes which reach audiences of millions (see 1.3);</li> <li>• <b>FutureLearn</b>, an innovative company founded and part-owned by the OU, which offers free online courses where OU historians make their research available to large public audiences (see ICS1).</li> <li>• Our unique programme for <b>learners in secure environments</b> which reaches over 150 prisons and 50 secure hospital units; history research has informed an innovative open educational course on prison education for learners in secure environments (see 1.3).</li> </ul> <p>Historians work in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, which provides a well-resourced support network for our research and impact activities. As part of the University’s commitment to research integrity, Faculties are responsible for ensuring that all new staff members are briefed on issues relating to good research practice. The Faculty promotes an open research environment in which staff and students benefit from numerous points of support and advice – discipline research leads, School Directors of Research, discipline PGRS coordinators, the Associate Dean for Research.</p> <p>Our research centres and groups provide well-resourced and stimulating intellectual homes for staff and PhD students. Some are long-standing, others evolved over the census period to reflect current research interests.</p>

- **The Centre for the History of Crime, Policing and Justice** is our longest-established research group. Founded by Clive **Emsley**, centre members include **Crone, Lawrence, O'Shea, Williams**, two colleagues from Law and Social Sciences and 14 associate members. The Centre has had significant external funding successes, namely Crone's AHRC Early Career Fellowship 'Educating Criminals in Nineteenth-Century England' (2015-18), and AHRC Follow-on Funding 'Prison History for New Learners Inside and Outside the Prison' (2019-21) with external partner Prisoners' Education Trust. Members have established successful relationships with non-HEI institutions (e.g. Prisoners' Education Trust, Howard League for Penal Reform, National Justice Museum, local and family history societies, police history societies, prison and policing museums). They have forged links with the Home Office via a successful collaboration with History & Policy (see 1.3 and ICS2). The Centre's seminar series attracts academic and non-academic audiences, including practitioners. It also houses several substantial primary and secondary source collections that are used by researchers around the world. Eight PhD students were successfully supervised in the Centre during the REF period.
- **The Ferguson Centre for African and Asian Studies** was founded in 2002 to facilitate interdisciplinary research into the history of empire and postcolonialism with particular focus on external collaborations. It has 16 members from five disciplines and is located in the History Department. Members **Slight, Hack, Hazareesingh, O'Shea, and Hughes** have built interdisciplinary research capacity with a range of externally funded projects such as **Hughes's** ESRC-funded project *Cultural Rights and Kenya's New Constitution* (2014-2017) and **Hazareesingh's** AHRC-funded GCRF project *Changing Farming Lives in South Asia, Past and Present* (2017-2019). We have enhanced the group's vitality with the appointment of **Slight** whose research interest in the Middle East adds a new dimension to the Centre. Four affiliated PhD students were supervised to completion in the census period.
- The Research Group **War and Peace in the Twentieth Century** encompasses the interests of historians whose research focuses on the two World Wars (**Mombauer, Slight, Trott**), the Cold War, peace and anti-war activism (**Brunet**), and colonial violence (**Hack**). New appointments (**Trott, Brunet, Slight**) have enabled the expansion of this group which includes eight associated members from five other disciplines. The group successfully bid to host a Royal Historical Association Symposium on the commemoration of the First World War in 2019, as well as organising other interdisciplinary research events, including with partner institution LSE. The group is home to **Brunet's** developing network on peace activism (for which an AHRC networking grant was submitted in January 2021); four PhD students have been supervised by the group in the census period.
- Following the recent appointment of medievalist **Hayes** and additional early modernist **Wolfson**, the **Medieval and Early Modern History** group was founded in 2020 to replace the *History of Medicine* and *Early Modern Britain and Europe* groups.

Historians are also members of the interdisciplinary *Medieval and Early Modern Group* (**Allen, De Renzi, Forbes, Wolfson, Younger**) and *The Centre for Research into Gender and Otherness in the Humanities* (**Allen, McEneaney**).

### **1.2 The Unit's research objectives during the assessment period and over the next five years**

In 2014, we set ourselves three strategic research priorities:

1. To increase and diversify external funding to enable further development of research in key areas of strength (e.g., History of Crime, Ferguson Centre);
2. To foster links with non-HEI and HEI partners to enable innovation in collaborative and interdisciplinary research;

3. To maximise public engagement and impact with targeted engagement in a broad range of online and broadcast activities.

We have been successful across all three areas:

### (1) Funding

We have external research funding income of just under £1M (a 22% increase on funding submitted to REF2014). This enabled high-profile research projects in Africa, Asia and the UK, which benefited non HEI-partners and NGOs and produced high-quality scholarly outputs.

Projects include:

- **Hughes's** ESRC-funded 'Cultural Rights and Kenya's New Constitution' (2014-2017, £628,157).
- **Crone's** AHRC Early Career Fellowship 'Educating Criminals in Nineteenth-Century England' (2015-18, £184,260) and AHRC Follow-on Funding 'Prison History for New Learners Inside and Outside the Prison' (2019-21, £72,370) with external partner Prisoners' Education Trust (which underpins ICS2).
- **Hazareesingh's** AHRC-funded GCRF 'Changing Farming Lives in South India Past and Present' project (2017-19, £48,327) and British Academy-funded 'Commodities of Empire' project (2014-16, £10,000) (see 3.1). This has resulted in an application for further AHRC-GCRF funding for 'Ancient Futures: supporting the revival of a millet-oriented food system in Karnataka, India' (£172,998).

### (2) Collaborations

We have fostered links with external collaborators, resulting in funded projects with HEI and non-HEI partners. The Department's commitment to collaborative interdisciplinary research has enabled us to submit innovative funding applications and to reach diverse audiences. Examples include:

- **Hughes's** collaboration with non-HEI organisations in Kenya, including the Katiba Institute, the British Institute in Eastern Africa (BIEA) and its French sister institute IFRA on the project 'Cultural Rights and Kenya's New Constitution' with partner University of Nairobi. Project members worked with a network of community peace museums in rural Kenya and organised a public event on cultural rights at Storymoja National Museum Nairobi.
- NGO *Green Foundation* collaborated on **Hazareesingh's** AHRC-funded oral history project on women farmers' cultural memories in India. **Hazareesingh** co-organised an international two-day workshop on 'Sustainable Farming Practices Past and Present', Bangalore, India, and shared the research with local farming communities in Karnataka, India. **Hazareesingh** and partner *Green Foundation* jointly presented their project 'Changing Farming Lives in South India', Past and Present at a House of Commons conference (2019).
- **Brunet**, who is founder and co-director of the LSE-based Peace and Security Project, organised several joint OU/LSE research events. He compiled 'Peace Activism in the UK during the Cold War', an online resource based on archival collections of the LSE Library. Building on this collaboration, **Brunet** developed a successful OU/LSE Library Collaborative Doctoral Award (CDA) proposal. His collaboration with the LSE formed the foundation of an AHRC networking grant (submitted January 2021) involving nine partners in seven countries.

- We have developed productive links with the Prisoners' Education Trust, the Howard League for Penal Reform and the National Justice Museum, via **Crone's** successful AHRC bids, which in turn have led to impact (1.3; ICS2).
- We have built a close working relationship with History & Policy (H&P), an umbrella organisation which connects historians with policymakers, leading to collaboration with the Home Office via a seminar series organized by **Williams** (ICS2).
- **Goodrich** developed close links with History of Parliament, resulting in a successful Collaborative Doctoral Award (CDA) to research the history of BAME presence in British politics and a developing funding bid for 2021.
- **Vincent** was visiting research fellow at the History of Conspiracies project at the Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities Cambridge University.

### (3) Public engagement

We have developed successful research-based courses for public engagement and impact using the exceptional opportunities afforded by the OU's channels for public engagement. Examples include:

- **Mombauer's** FutureLearn MOOCs which attracted over 34,000 learners in 97+ countries in four presentations (see ICS1).
- **Crone's** Open Education Resource (OER) for which she drew on the OU's expertise in teaching learners in secure environments, and her innovative research into prisons and prison education. The OER teaches prisoners and prison staff about the history of education in UK prisons and is a first step towards formal tertiary education; uniquely, former prisoners were involved in the production of the module.
- A continuous professional development course (CPD), freely available on OpenLearn, developed by **Plassart, Mombauer** and **Trott**, working with teachers to provide research-based professional development for secondary school history teachers.

These successes in meeting our research objectives are due to the support we provide to all UOA members. Our strategy has focused on helping colleagues achieve their full potential in grant capture, outputs, public engagement, impact, and contributions to the wider discipline. The Department's Director of Research (DoR **Mombauer**), along with a research steering group, provides mentoring, guidance and peer review of outputs and grant applications. We run research training events, a research workshop offering informal peer review on drafts, and a departmental research seminar which is a supportive forum for trying out new ideas.

Following REF2014, History became a strategic priority area for the University, resulting in generous financial support, including a research fund for D28 (totalling c. £160,000 over the assessment period) to support research and impact activities. In total, c. £281,000 of internal funding was allocated to support historians' research during the census period. This includes an annual individual research allowance for all OU researchers and additional School and Faculty funds available on request (see 3.2).

#### 1.2.1 Future Research Strategy

Building on the work of the current assessment period we will continue actively to support all categories of staff to reach their full research potential. We will build on past successes in collaborative and interdisciplinary research and will:

- strengthen internal and external **collaborative research** across disciplinary boundaries;
- encourage and enable **bidding for external grants** to enable and expand research for all staff, supporting Early Career Researchers and mid-career bidders and helping already successful bidders to develop their research projects further with larger grants;
- continue to support the work of our **research centres** and enable smaller **research groups** to develop to reflect evolving research interests (with internal funding and strategic appointments where possible);
- foster **continuing and new links with external partners** to grow research leadership and interdisciplinarity, for example via networking grants and CDAs;
- pursue impact in all areas of research and continue to utilise the **OU's unique channels** for engaging diverse communities with the aim of generating meaningful impact from our research in the four nations and internationally.

### 1.3 Research impact

In line with the University's inclusive mission, we have always communicated our research beyond the academy. The impact agenda has further embedded this aim. We are responsive to opportunities to engage public learners with our research, and we enable impact activities with targeted training, ring-fenced funding and workload allowance. We have achieved impact in the following ways:

#### a) Digital reach for engagement and impact

We reach large global audiences by publishing research-based articles and free courses on OpenLearn. Examples include '60 Years after the Treaty of Rome: Lessons from history for today's EU' (**Brunet**); 'The First World War continues: Britain's dash for Mosul, Iraq, November 1918' (**Slight**); and **Marsden's** 'Methodism in Wales, 1730-1850'. To give an example of reach, **Mombauer's** OpenLearn materials on the First World War attracted 277,774 unique page views in 176 countries over the census period.

We engage learners via Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) such as [World War One: Trauma, Memory, Controversy](#) (2020), and with Continuous Professional Development (CPD) courses aimed at schoolteachers. In 2020, we piloted a CPD course based on research by **Trott** and **Mombauer**, working with secondary school teachers in Wales and England (see ICS1).

#### b) Unique Partnership with the BBC

The OU's partnership with the BBC is the only such partnership the BBC maintains. We co-produce programmes for all BBC TV, radio, digital and online channels/platforms, combining the best of both organisations' resources and talents to reach the widest possible audience (see also IES, 2.2). OU historians are 'nominated academics' within BBC production teams (a role that is distinct from invited media consultancies) and provide sustained input into the production process.

During the census period we have worked with the production teams for BBC programmes which attracted 55.95 million viewers in total: *The Blitz* (audience 8.17 million); *Full Steam Ahead* (17.3m); *Britain's Great War* (16.4m); *Icons* (8.56m); *Dangerous Borders. A Journey across India and Pakistan* (5.52m). *Empire: Hidden Histories* was delayed by Covid and is forthcoming.

To accompany these programmes, OU historians devised 'learning journeys' and produced research-based educational materials which extend the programmes' remit. These free resources enable us to connect our research expertise and popular BBC programmes. Examples of free print and digital items include **Mombauer** and **Trott's** 18-page booklet 'The

First World War Experienced' to accompany the 2014 BBC/Open University Series *Britain's Great War* (10,000 free hard copies distributed; 63,990 unique page views for the online booklet in 99 countries). **Williams's** poster 'Our Railway' accompanied the series *Full Steam Ahead* (BBC2, 2016, 50,000 hard copies).

We created additional online content on OpenLearn to accompany BBC series. Examples include **Hazareesingh's** three articles to accompany *Dangerous Borders* (2017); **Mombauer's** materials on Germany's experience of the Blitz to accompany and contextualise the BBC1 series *The Blitz* (2019); and **Williams's** 'The Railways in the 999 system' alongside *Full Steam Ahead* (2016).

### c) Strategic Partnership with History & Policy (H&P)

The Department collaborates with and supports the national network History & Policy. Since 2015 **Williams**, working with H&P, has run a successful seminar series at the Home Office which provides historical context to topics of contemporary concern. **Williams** has represented H&P on initiatives with the Cabinet Office (including co-ordinating H&P's support for its COVID-19 response), the Department for Education, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (as part of a consultation process about Whitehall in-house historians prior to the appointment of the first such in-house historian to the Home Office in their 245-year existence). **Williams's** collaboration with H&P and the Home Office led to impact on Home Office civil servants (ICS2). Since 2016, the OU has contributed £3000 annually to the running costs of H&P; in 2020 we increased our funding to £10k to secure the group's future. Our backing of H&P supports the research environment nationally and benefits UK HEIs. In addition, OU staff (**Williams, Lawrence, Slight**), students (**Wilburn**), emeritus staff (**Emsley**) and alumni (**Hassett**) have presented at **Williams's** Home Office seminar. **Williams, Vincent, Marsden** and **Brunet** have written policy papers for H&P. We plan to maintain these significant links with H&P and with policymakers, and to continue ongoing efforts (temporarily put on hold due to Covid-19) to replicate these in the Ministry of Justice.

### d) Generating impact and engaging public audiences in more traditional ways

We host public events in Milton Keynes and in our national centres, using our technological infrastructure to broadcast to audiences at a distance. For example, via our public research lecture series we engage large audiences beyond the academy (with over 3,000 viewings of our 2019 lectures).

We collaborate with museums and libraries (e.g., National Museum of Singapore, Science Museum, National Justice Museum, National Museum Nairobi, British Library, LSE library). **Trott's** research helped shape the British Library's WW1 centenary exhibition; **Goodrich** was historical adviser for the BL's exhibition 'Georgians Revealed' (2013/14); **Vincent** was a member of the advisory board for the Science Museum's 'Top Secret' exhibition (2018/19).

We make our research and primary sources open access via online databases. Examples include **Allen's** collaboration with the *Women's Early Modern Letters Online* project (2013-16) and **Brunet's** and **Crone's** open access primary source databases (see 1.2; ICS2).

Our research expertise led to high-profile media engagements. For example, during the centenary of the First World War, **Mombauer** engaged international and national audiences via media interviews including Radio Bremen, Deutschlandfunk, BBC Radio 5 live, Turkish Government Channel TRT World, ABC, BBC World Service, BBC2 and international newspapers (see ICS1). The Covid-19 lockdown resulted in high demand for **Vincent's** research expertise on the history of solitude as his April 2020 book [A History of Solitude](#) offered a unique perspective on the experience of lockdown (e.g., interviews in *Toronto Globe and Mail*, *Die Welt*; *The Big Issue*, ZDF/3Sat.de; *Time Magazine*, *Singapore Straits Times*, Australian Broadcasting Corporation National Radio, AgeUK website).

**1.4 Rationale for our impact case studies**

Our two ICSs for REF2021 showcase the different approaches to impact outlined in 1.3.

ICS1 uses our research expertise in the history of the First World War to demonstrate impact resulting from engaging public audiences, e.g., via the OU's online platforms and broadcast opportunities.

ICS2 demonstrates impacts resulting from strategic partnerships via our relationships with History & Policy and the Home Office, and from our collaborations with non-HEI bodies such as the Prisoners' Education Trust.

**1.5 Impact beyond REF2021**

We will continue our successful inclusive approach to supporting impact activities by providing mentoring and training to ensure that impact is a central part of research projects. To enable impact activities, we can draw on internal funds to support external engagement. Impact activities will continue to be included in annual work-load plans; they also form part of our promotion criteria.

Future impact will result from projects delayed by Covid-19, including the work of our criminal justice historians. **Crone's** OER for prisoners and prison staff will have impact on diverse learners in secure environments. Her 'local lock-ups' project (which invites members of the public to populate a large database collating evidence on lock-ups and local prisons) will generate more public participation over the next few years. Plans for a seminar series with the Ministry of Justice have been delayed by Covid-19 but have the potential for future impact, along with **Williams's** ongoing commitment to H&P and collaboration with the Home Office.

Our Continuous Professional Development course on the First World War will generate further impact in the classroom. **Mombauer's** MOOC *WW1: Trauma, Memory, Controversy* has potential for further impact on international learners. Our ongoing collaborations with the BBC will continue to offer us opportunities for impact, with colleagues already planning further collaborations (**Allen, Hack**) for broadcast in 2021/2022.

We are already developing new projects with impact potential, including Brunet's research project on peace activism (a collaboration with several international partners), for which we sought external impact advice at the drafting stage. Newly appointed Layton-Jones's research on public parks has already had impact on policy makers and has further impact potential over the next census period; we are supporting her developing funding bid with external partners. Goodrich is developing a large-scale collaboration with History of Parliament with impact potential.

**2. People****2.1 Staffing strategy and staff development**

At census date, the Department consists of 11 Lecturers, 10 Senior Lecturers, four Professors and one Research Fellow. Since REF2014, three colleagues have been promoted to Professor (2 male/1 female) (**Lawrence, Mombauer, Hack**). Seven have been promoted to Senior Lecturer (6 female/1 male) (**Allen, Crone, De Renzi, Goodrich, Loftus, Marsden, Plassart**). Since 1 August 2013 we have made 13 new appointments. Staff initially appointed on fixed-term or fractional contracts now have permanent, full-time appointments (**Trott's** 0.5 appointment became full-time in 2017; **Slight's** temporary contract became permanent in 2019).

Seven members of staff have retired (**Laurence, Grell, Moore, Emsley, Vincent, Brunton, Hughes**). Some emeritus staff continued their association with the Department: **Emsley**

contributed to our research culture by participating in *Centre for History of Crime* seminars; **Vincent** re-joined the Department on a fractional contract, and **Laurence** joined our REF preparation panel.

The Department consists of two distinct categories of academic staff: Central Academics and Staff Tutors (see IES 1.2). 'Central Academics', based in Milton Keynes, are contractually required to pursue research, teaching and administrative duties. They are entitled to at least 79 research days p.a., approximately a third of contracted working hours. This can be taken by arrangement at almost any time of year and can also be 'carried over' in a teaching-heavy year or to support the demands of projects and research awards. All central academic staff are included in our REF submission.

'Staff Tutors' (ST) manage teaching provision in the nations and regions in addition to their own teaching. While not required to undertake research, they are entitled to 22 days research and scholarship time p.a. (with more on request). Across the University, few STs meet the 15% threshold for significant responsibility for research stipulated in our REF Code of Practice. However, in History we have always supported the research potential of all staff and two Staff Tutors are included in our submission. Irrespective of inclusion in REF2021, we will continue to support ST research to enable them to meet the criteria for inclusion in the future and to develop their academic careers and profiles.

## **2.2 Staff recruitment, formal staff appraisal and development**

Newly appointed historians are formally inducted, including research mentoring with the DoR, and integrated into research groups and centres. ECRs are initially given a lighter teaching load to enable them to focus on research, and new staff are paired with a mentor.

Staff benefit from a formal annual appraisal with the HoD (**Laurence**). Using the University's academic workload planning system, the process ensures that research time is allocated holistically and fairly across the Department, essential in an institution which operates without the rhythm of terms, vacations and sabbaticals. The appraisal also identifies staff development requirements for which extensive provisions are available. Individual research plans (2.3) are discussed along with the progress of funded research.

## **2.3 Informal staff development**

All staff have a formal annual research review with the DoR which addresses research and publication plans, planned grant applications, impact activities etc. The DoR and HoD also offer informal advice and guidance throughout the year and provide peer-review on developing grant applications, book proposals and all draft outputs. New staff have mentors.

The University's Research, Enterprise and Scholarship team provided strategic research investment funds for D28 which were managed by the DoR and were available to all staff, with strategic priority given to early career researchers (e.g. enabling **Trott** to undertake exploratory US archive trips to develop his post-doc research project) and to supporting impact and external engagement activities (e.g. by supporting **Crone's** work with former prisoners). These funds also covered publication costs and informal staff development, such as research training (e.g. 'The Productive Researcher' in November 2020).

## **2.4 Postgraduate Research Students (PGRS)**

Unlike our distance teaching for undergraduates, postgraduate supervision is more 'traditional', but with added flexibility tailored to our diverse student body. Many of our PhD students join us after pursuing other careers. They come from diverse backgrounds; while the majority are currently AHRC-funded, many are also self-funding and/or part-time.



We are distinctive in considering an applicant's life experience and potential at the application stage, rather than rigidly insisting on formal prerequisites for a research degree. Our rigorous supervision and upgrade procedures ensure that successful candidates reach the required standards for a PhD. This inclusive approach benefits students with protected characteristics or from diverse educational backgrounds.

Supervision is arranged in line with the Graduate School's Research Degrees regulations, usually face-to-face and occasionally at a distance (but during the current pandemic conducted remotely), with at least ten supervision sessions p.a. for full-time students, five for part-time. When students request study breaks for health reasons or caring duties, we continue to provide informal supervision. The Graduate School oversees training and progression alongside a faculty Director of Research Degrees. A departmental postgraduate convenor is responsible for recruitment and discipline-specific training.

Our provision for PhD research meets or exceeds the requirements of all research councils and Quality Assurance Agency standards. Each student has at least two supervisors and a third-party monitor. Progress and training are monitored through six-monthly progress reports, with initial MPhil registration upgraded to PhD following satisfactory performance in a presentation and upgrade viva assessed by two internal examiners (see also IES).

Since 2014, 18 students (up from 15 in REF2014) have been awarded a History PhD (12 studied full-time; five were self-funded), including three AHRC collaborative doctoral awards. The Department currently has 13 postgraduate research students, including 8 AHRC-funded.

Our students benefit from the OU's membership of DTP1 - The Consortium for Humanities and the Arts South-East England (CHASE, 2013-2018) and DTP2 - The Open-Oxford-Cambridge Consortium (OOC, 2018-2023). **Lawrence** was central in developing these, co-writing both consortium applications. He served on the CHASE Management Board and chaired the Training and Development Group (2013-16), thus shaping the training of hundreds of research students. He was PI on the AHRC-funded Skills Development Grant 'Becoming a Public Intellectual' (2013 - £45,581) and Co-I on the 'Going Digital' programme (2012 - £59,990). **Lawrence** has been Deputy Director of OOC since 2018 and will be its Director from April 2021, continuing to shape the consortium's doctoral training and its collaboration with strategic partners (The BBC World Service, The National Trust, BT).

Our research students benefit from an excellent research library with sector-leading online facilities and a large print collection (see 3.2). Full-time students are allocated workspace and networked laptops. All students receive generous financial support (£1000 p.a. for full-time students, £500 part-time, with more available by application). Both part-time and full-time students are fully integrated in the Department's research culture, are members of our research centres and groups, and attend/present at our regular research events.

A wide range of skills training is provided. Our PhD students can access our taught History MA, which is shaped by OU staff research interests, provides a grounding in research methods and has had a significant impact on recruitment, retention and progression. PhD students can acquire teaching experience by joining our teaching teams, lecturing students online via Adobe Connect and with the Brilliant Club.

Because of the flexibility of our existing provision, it was possible quickly to adapt our research support during the Covid-19 pandemic. All research student training, inductions and supervision are currently delivered remotely. Our regular research seminar (with papers presented by staff and PGRS) takes place online. Virtual coffee-mornings provide opportunities to socialise at a distance. In consultation with their supervisors, research students keep logs of any disruptions to their research as a result of the pandemic. To date none of our PhD students have faced significant disruptions. Our students have been offered financial support from the University's hardship fund, including a fee-free six-month extension for all full-time final year students.

We have high levels of research student satisfaction. 100% of respondents to our exit survey of history graduates since 2017 agreed/agreed strongly they were pleased a) with the academic advice they received from their supervisors and b) with the training provided by the Department, Faculty and University. All would recommend studying for an OU History PhD to others (75% response rate). The OU ranked fifth nationally for research student satisfaction in Postgraduate Researcher Experience Survey ([PRES](#)) and first in overall satisfaction among BAME research students. History scored especially highly on PhD student satisfaction.

Following graduation, our PhD students can become Honorary Research Fellows in the Department, ensuring continued library access, IT facilities and email, and involvement in the departmental research culture. They mentor current PhD students (a recent History initiative which has been adopted across the Faculty). Many of our PhD students have successful careers in academia (e.g., **Trott** is now a Lecturer in the Department; **Wakefield** is Lecturer in Museum Studies at Leicester University; **Churchill** is Associate Professor at Leeds University) and other professions, including teaching careers. **Ryland-Epton** won the Bryan Jerrard award for best Gloucestershire local history essay (2018) which was published in *Parliamentary History* in 2019; **Clark** worked for the Hillsborough Independent Panel.

### **2.5 Equality and diversity**

The History Department implements fully the University's range of policies and practices intended to achieve equality for all staff and research students (IES Sections 3.1, 3.5). Women and men have been appointed to leadership roles within the School and Faculty.

Diversity extends to our research and teaching. The History Department has long taken a decolonising approach to the teaching of history of empire and indigenous people and we have expanded that impetus to embed BAME history into our full curriculum at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. For example, we recently secured a CDA on the history of BAME presence in British politics which was awarded to a BAME candidate, and we have been successful in securing a new Lectureship for 2021 recruitment, with the specific aim of broadening the Department's diversity.

Campus life at the OU differs substantially from that of other universities. Our student body is dispersed, and we teach at a distance. OU historians (and our research students) are distributed around the four nations of the UK. The University facilitates research with a range of measures for remote and flexible working which accommodate life events and promote wellbeing. Meetings can be attended remotely using University-supplied software and PCs, benefitting those with caring responsibilities or periods of ill-health. This infrastructure has ensured that our work continued with minimal disruption during successive lockdowns.

Members of the Department have taken parental leave. Staff returning from long-term periods of leave were given reduced teaching loads and flexible working hours. Several colleagues qualified for output reductions on account of ill-health, disability, or maternity/parental leave. The University offered contingency leave to support staff with Covid-19 impacts (plus additional closure days for all staff). During the pandemic, staff and research students have received guidance on well-being and safe working at home.

We consider it important for collegiality to meet regularly in person (prior to Covid-19), including social occasions for all Department members and research students. During lockdown we have scheduled frequent online meetings, weekly virtual coffee mornings and informal 'drop-ins' with the HoD. We are proud of our robust, collegial and supportive community of researchers which provides equality of opportunity for all colleagues.

The University's approach to promotion takes full account of the profiles of part-time staff. The Faculty's robust processes to review part-time promotion cases ensured, for example, that **Goodrich** (0.6 FTE) achieved promotion to Senior Lecturer. Part-time and fixed-term staff receive the same research privileges and support as full-time/permanent staff. For fixed-term

staff, exit interviews six months before the end of a temporary contract provide help with career planning.

### 2.6 REF2021 Preparations

Our REF submission has been prepared by a panel of six, chaired by **Mombauer**. All members of the Department were asked for expressions of interest to join the panel; final membership reflected representativeness of experience, research expertise and gender balance and included senior colleagues (former Pro-Vice Chancellor **Vincent**, former Arts Faculty Associate Dean Research **Mombauer**; Head of Department **Lawrence**; School Director of Research **Allen**); and junior lecturers **Brunet** and **Slight**. All members completed EDI training.

The panel adhered to the OU's REF Code of Practice for REF2021. It conducted an initial round of standardisation to ensure a fair assessment of outputs. For this purpose, five different types of outputs were selected from the potential output pool and read by all panel members and an external adviser. All outputs were subsequently evaluated by at least two members of the panel, borderline outputs were referred to the external assessor, before being discussed in the round in order to decide on the final output pool. The panel considered gender balance in selecting the final output pool.

The panel worked collegially; our overriding concerns were fairness and transparency. The panel drafted all REF-related templates. All members of the UOA had the chance to review the paperwork and to feed into our research and impact strategies for the next REF period.

Following the processes set out in the OU's Code of Practice, six colleagues submitted cases detailing personal circumstances which had impacted upon the time available to them to conduct research during the REF period. The cases were considered individually and confidentially by an independent REF Equality Panel, separate from other aspects of institutional REF preparation. This process resulted in an output reduction of seven for D28.

## 3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

### 3.1 Research funding

We have had significant external funding successes, continuing our upward REF income trajectory from £326,083 in RAE2008, £774,922 in REF2014 to £994,589 in this census period. Funders include the British Academy, AHRC, EHRC, UKRI, Wellcome Trust, Leverhulme Trust, the Royal Society of Edinburgh, the Economic History Society and the Police History Society. We have also been successful with several smaller funders, including the Rothschild Archive, Scouloudi Foundation, Max Batley Peace Studies Foundation, the Society for Renaissance Studies and the Royal Historical Society. We have successfully bid for seven AHRC CDAs with partners Imperial War Museum, British Library, National Library of Wales, Cambridge University Library, History of Parliament, LSE Library and the Bodleian. We have had significant DTP funding successes (see 2.4).

**Crone's** two AHRC grant successes have enabled a series of long-term research projects which have extended the *Centre for the History of Crime's* external collaborations and have had impact on her field of criminal justice history: her 2014 AHRC Early Career Fellowship ('Educating Criminals in Nineteenth-Century England', £184,260 resulted in a website ([prisonhistory.org](http://prisonhistory.org)) with two large datasets: *19<sup>th</sup> Century Prisons* contains information on all 846 English prisons in operation between 1800 and 1899 and their surviving archives; *Local Lock-Ups* invites contributions from members of the public (see 3.1; ICS2). AHRC Follow-on Funding, £72,370 (2019) for her collaboration with the Prisoners' Education Trust resulted in her ground-breaking OER for prisoners and prison practitioners.

**Hughes'** ESRC-funded project 'Cultural Rights and Kenya's new constitution' (£628,157, 2014-2017) resulted in the temporary appointment of three researchers (**Lamont**, **Cormack**,

**Stylianou**). Her project was affiliated with the University of Nairobi and involved non-HEI partners the Katiba Institute, the British Institute in Eastern Africa (BIEA) and its French sister institute IFRA. The funding enabled a network of community peace museums in rural Kenya to develop curatorial capacity and generate new interpretations of a contested past. The project included a public event on cultural rights at Storymoja National Museum Nairobi and an international workshop, 'Cultural rights in action: from global policy to local practice', at BIEA.

**Hazareesingh's** British Academy grant, 'Commodities of Empire' £10,000 (2014-16) and AHRC-GCRF grant 'Changing Farming Lives in South Asia, Past and Present', £48,327 (2017-2019) resulted in an oral history project with local farming communities in India and enabled him to develop an AHRC-GCRF collaborative funding bid with India-based NGO partners Green Foundation, Amritabhoomi International Centre for Sustainable Development, and Science Gallery Bengaluru: 'Ancient Futures: supporting the revival of a millet-oriented food system in Karnataka, India' (£172,998).

Bidding for research funding is a collaborative and iterative process in which DoR, Head of Department and others help colleagues develop their bidding plans and shape the bid text, allocating additional research leave and/or seed funding to support developing bids if necessary. The process is supported by a Faculty team which delivers:

- assistance with the financial elements of grant applications;
- oversight of the ethics committee approval process;
- advice on ensuring our research and impact capture is subjected to appropriate legal and professional scrutiny, conforming to the OU's guidelines and processes, including accurate record-keeping, applying professional standards, and secure data management in line with GDPR (see IES, Section 2);
- post-award management and guidance.

The Department is committed to supporting future funding applications to enable colleagues to pursue ambitious and rewarding research projects. We do not expect every colleague to submit a major grant application, but we provide support and practical help to enable everyone to bid. We recognize that successful bidding takes time and we provide additional research time and seed funding to develop bids. We are mindful that unsuccessful bids can affect a researcher's confidence, and we work with individuals on seeking alternative funding opportunities where applications have failed, or on enabling projects to proceed instead with internal funding.

### **3.2 Internal Research Funding**

Following REF2014, History was identified as a strategically important UOA for the University. We were given our own UOA budget, administered by the DoR, to support research and impact activities (c. £160,000 over the assessment period). All historians were able to apply for these funds, enabling them to travel to archives, engage research assistants and organise impact activities.

Historians benefitted from the Faculty Strategic Research Investment Fund which provides seed-corn funding for individual and collaborative research projects (£17,500 for historians over the assessment period). The Faculty also allocates between £1,500 and £7,500 pa to research groups/centres to spend on seminars, conferences and collaborations; a total of £32,000 were made available to history research groups.

In addition, historians receive a personal allocation of £500 a year which can be spent on conference attendance, library and archive visits, books and other research materials. We can also apply for additional funding from the School and Faculty for library/archive visits, conference participation or research assistance. In total, OU historians in D28 have benefitted from more than £275,000 of internal funds since 2014.

### 3.3 Research infrastructure and facilities

OU historians benefit from access to the extensive online holdings of the University Library (see IES, 4.2). Our efficient inter-library loan system is geared towards online and print access to research materials and complements these resources; it has proven invaluable during lockdown. The Library houses a significant collection of primary materials related to the history of policing, including collections of interviews and personal papers from senior police officers and UK police publications. This collection is used by academic, media and public enquirers.

All OU History research publications and PhD theses are included in the University's open access repository ORO (IES, 2.3) and, subject to embargo, are available freely online. To date (January 2021), there have been 169,261 downloads of 659 deposited history publications. In 2018, the History Department launched a new initiative to deposit undergraduate research on ORO. 40 third-level dissertations have been already deposited and downloaded 12,897 times. In 2020, the MA History was added, with 32 theses deposited (6,301 downloads).

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

### 4.1 Collaborations, networks and partnerships

Forging and maintaining national and international partnerships is one of our strategic priorities (see 3.1; 1.2). We supported the development of **Hazareesingh's** successful AHRC networking bid and **Brunet's** recently submitted networking bid, involving collaborators in seven countries, including the Wilson Center.

The Faculty Research Office assists with formal grant collaboration agreements, covering finances, ethics, intellectual property, data protection and other issues required to establish secure working arrangements. The Faculty provides investment into strategically important collaborations, such as our financial and staff-time contributions to the running of History & Policy (see Section 1.3 (c)).

### 4.2 Engagement with key research users, beneficiaries or audiences

Some of our engagement with diverse audiences has been outlined above (1.2; 1.3). Two examples demonstrate the variety of audiences we reach.

**Marsden's** successful UKRI Enhancing Place-based Partnerships application 'BG Reach' (Blenau Gwent Residents Engaging in Arts, Community and Heritage) established a formal collaboration with non-HEI external partners Linc Cymru Housing Association and Aberbeeg Community Group. The project operates in economically impoverished and socially stigmatised communities in South Wales and utilises our unique footprint in the UK's four nations.

**Crone's** working relationship with the Prisoners' Education Trust and the Howard League for Penal Reform resulted in engagement with beneficiaries in secure environments, and with prison museums, community and family historians who use her *Prison History* website.

History's Social Media Lead (**Slight**) coordinates our open access public engagement through our [blog](#) and Twitter account [@history\\_ou](#) 917 followers, 22/2/2021.

### 4.3 Wider contributions to the economy and society and engagement with diverse communities and the public

We have access to a range of channels to make our research available to diverse communities (see 1.3). We also engage public audiences with research-based primary source websites, such as **Brunet's** 'Peace Activism in the UK during the Cold War' which includes digitised archival documents from the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and video interviews with academics,

peace activists and policymakers. **Crone's** website *Prison History* hosts two databases, *19th Century Prisons* and *Your Local Lock-up*. Members of the public can add new information about their local lock-ups and publish their own accounts of historic penal facilities. *19th Century Prisons* was used by the production team for *Who Do You Think You Are* television series to inform their programme. *Prison History* featured in *WDYTYA Magazine's* 'Websites to Watch in 2020' (readership 74,300).

We also engage diverse audiences in more traditional ways, from pre-theatre talks to public events in libraries and museums, presenting at Historical Association and Western Front Association meetings, in schools and at A-level revision conferences.

We publish in many different places and formats, including *The Big Issue* (**Vincent**), the Liberal Democrats' *Journal of Liberal History* (**Goodrich**), *BBC History Magazine*, *History Today* (e.g., **Crone**, **Mombauer**), *Who Do You Think You Are?* magazine (**Crone**). Six members of the UOA contributed 12 research-informed articles to *The Conversation*, on topics ranging from Jack the Ripper to Game of Thrones, attracting c. 528,000 readers. **Byford's** two articles on conspiracy theories attracted 402,000 readers and were picked up by CNN, Metro and BBC News.

OU historians are frequently invited experts for TV and radio programmes. For example, **Hack** advised on Malaya and POW conditions for *Heir Hunters* (BBC1, 2016) and on SAS operations in the jungle for *Black Ops 2: Crisis in Malaya* (Amazon, UK and US, 2014). **Brunet** was academic advisor on *Call the Midwife* (BBC1, series 6, episode 6, set during the Cuban Missile Crisis, 2017). **Mombauer** was an expert on *Armistice* (BBC1, 2019), Max Hasting's *Necessary War* (BBC1, 2014) and BBC World Service's *The History Hour: The end of World War One* (2018). On the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the independence of India and Pakistan, **Hazareesingh** was interviewed for BBC Radio 4: *Printing A Nation* (2017). **Crone** was interviewed for *Inside...The Old Bailey* (Channel 5, 2017) and for *Classified Britain* (BBC Radio 4, 2018). She was consultant and interviewed expert for *Tate Walks*, (Sky Arts, 2018) and *Who Do You Think You Are* (Series 16, Episode 4, Kate Winslet, BBC1, 2019). **Byford** contributed to the BBC World Service *Trending* programme and a series of BBC reports on conspiracy theories (2020) and talked on the topic on BBC5 Live, BBC Oxford and Talk Radio. **Vincent** contributed to Radio 4 programmes on Loneliness, Freedom of Information, and Solitude (2020).

#### **4.4 Contribution to the sustainability of the discipline and wider influence**

As a department, we enable all staff to contribute meaningfully to the sustainability of the discipline and we are well supported by the University, in terms of time and resources, in this endeavour.

We organise and host national and international conferences and symposia, often collectively. Examples include the 'Women and Gender in Early Modern Britain and Ireland' conference at the IHR in 2016 (**Allen, Forbes, Goodrich, Younger**) and hosting a successful RHS symposium in 2019 on the commemoration of the First World War (**Mombauer, Brunet, Slight, Trott**).

Over many years, colleagues have convened strands of the Annual Social History Society conference (e.g. **Loftus** 2014-2021). We co-organise conferences with colleagues at other institutions, including the 2019 Society for the History of Women in the Americas (SHAW) conference (**McEneaney**); *Global Histories of Anti-Nuclear and Peace Activism in the Late Cold War* (**Brunet**) with the University of Sheffield, LSE, Università Roma Tre and the Woodrow Wilson Center (May 2020 - postponed to March 2021 due to Covid-19); the international network on Western Military Power and Reordering Asia with the US Naval Postgraduate School and University of New South Wales (**Hack**); the Environmental Histories of Commodities 1800-2000 conference with the Institute of the Americas at UCL (**Hazareesingh**).

We contribute to the running of seminar series, e.g. by co-convening IHR seminars (**McEneaney** 'Gender and History in the Americas'; **Younger** 'Tudor and Stuart History'; **Goodrich** 'The Long

Eighteenth Century'). **Goodrich** is member of the IHR Seminars Advisory Group. **Brunet** runs a public lecture series at the LSE and is founder/co-convenor of the LSE-Sciences Po Seminar on Contemporary International History; **Williams** runs a research seminar series at the Home Office.

We are active members of research councils, grants committees and external committees, such as AHRC; Women in American Studies Network; Institute of Commonwealth Studies; History UK Steering Committee. We chair societies, e.g. the Society for the History of Women in the Americas; **Laurence** chaired the Economic History Society until her retirement.

We are editors, review editors and editorial board members for journals including *Crime, Histoire et Sociétés*; *Cold War History*, *Journal of Contemporary History*, *Modern and Contemporary France*, *Royal Studies Journal*. **Crone** is series editor for the monograph series 'States, People and the History of Social Change', McGill-Queen's University Press; **Goodrich** is on the BBC History Magazines Editorial Review Board.

We are active peer reviewers for national and international funders, including the AHRC, British Academy, Irish Research Council, European Research Council, Austrian Science Fund, Horizon 2020, Israel Science Foundation, Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study. **Goodrich** is a judge of the IHR Pollard Prize; **Mombauer** has judged the German History Society postgraduate prize; **Slight** has been a judge for the Abdullah al-Mubarak British Kuwait Friendship Prize in Middle Eastern Studies. We act as peer-reviewers, including 58 different academic journals, ranging from the *Historical Journal* to *Arabian Humanities*, and 17 academic presses.

Members of the Department hold Fellowships of the Royal Historical Society, the Higher Education Academy, Royal Asiatic Society, the Historical Association, Royal Society of Arts, History UK (HE) Steering Committee. We are active members of 19 national and international societies.

We act as external examiners, including at the Universities of Lancaster, London (Birkbeck), Birmingham, Brunel, Canterbury Christ Church, Oxford, York, Swansea and Aberystwyth. We have examined postgraduate theses at the Universities of Victoria, Tasmania and Adelaide, at the Universities of Sussex, Cambridge, Sunderland and the LSE.

We conducted programme reviews and validations, e.g., Brunel University and Agored Cymru's Access to HE (Humanities and Social Science). **Vincent** is a British member of the European University Association's Institutional Evaluation Programme.

We have given numerous public lectures and are frequently invited to deliver keynote addresses in the UK and abroad. Examples include **De Renzi's** keynote to PhD students of the consortium of the universities of Trieste and Udine (2020). **Allen** and **Younger** presented and chaired panels at the Tower of London in 2016. Several colleagues have been invited academic visitors at other institutions (e.g. **McEaney** at Australian National University, **Hack** at Singapore University, **Brunet** at University of Ottawa, Carleton University and the LSE.)

Our publications have won prizes, including **Brunet**: Michael J. Hellyer Award, British Association of Canadian Studies (2018), **Crone**: Highly Commended from British Records Association Janette Harley Prize, **Slight**: Institute of Commonwealth Studies' triennial Trevor Reese Memorial Prize (2017).