

Institution: University of Reading
Unit of Assessment: UOA33 – Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen
<p>1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy</p> <p>Context and structure</p> <p>The Department of Film, Theatre & Television (FTT) is a relatively small, close-knit team with 13 permanent T&R staff (12.6 FTE). We have clearly defined specialisms across Film studies, Television and Theatre studies, from which we reach out with innovative and distinctive research that draws people and ideas together in exciting ways. We are part of Reading's School of Arts and Communication Design (Head of School: Gibbs) alongside the departments of Art and Typography & Graphic Communication. Our research outputs are primarily historical and critical studies, complemented by research-led audio-visual essays in film, and performance, installations and curation practice.</p> <p>As described in the Institutional Environment Statement (IES, Section 1), the University's research activity is structured around four interdisciplinary research Themes. FTT is one of nine Research Divisions that make up the Heritage & Creativity Theme (H&C). Our staff have leading roles in two of the University's ten Interdisciplinary Research Centres:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Centre for Film Aesthetics & Cultures (founding Director, Nagib) examines diverse political, historical and cultural contexts of filmmaking and creates international research networks and cultural exchanges between academics, filmmakers and producers across disciplines and national borders. • The Samuel Beckett Research Centre (founding members Bignell, McMullan) links colleagues in Reading to national and international Beckett scholars, befitting our role as the leading home of Beckett Studies in the world. Researchers in English, FTT, Modern Languages and Philosophy form a critical mass, and the Centre has introduced a Creative Fellows programme to link archival research and new creative practice in writing, music composition and filmmaking. <p>During the assessment period the Department's research and impact strategy has been to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enhance our focus on live and screened performance and production in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries by expanding the reach of our work into new areas of specialisation. • innovate theoretical, practical and historical methodologies. • forge productive relationships between colleagues in our three specialisms to generate research across film, theatre and television, and between theoretical and practical study. • drive original research within and across discipline boundaries with impactful collaborations with external academic and industry partners. <p>This strategy is evident in the design of our funded research projects, as well as individual scholarship. For example, the AHRC-funded Intermedia project centred on film, but worked across cinema and performance, and brought together academics, practitioners and producers to understand histories and aesthetic forms in Brazilian culture through theoretical and practical methodologies. Large-scale research initiatives such as this have generated new archival work, investigated commercial and institutional records, and collaborated with other universities and key non-HEI resource holders, growing organically from our established ways of working.</p> <p>Since 2014 there has been a step-change in the ambition of our research and impact strategies, and in corresponding support from the University through enhanced infrastructure and strategic initiatives designed to help us achieve our objectives, for example the £500k Strategic Collections Project designed to increase research use of the University's extensive archival holdings (IES, Section 4.4).</p>

Research strategy

Our research strategy is reviewed annually by our Research Division Lead (RDL) (**Bignell**, formerly McMullan) in discussion with the Research Dean and Head of School (**Gibbs**). The resulting Research Division Operational Plan feeds into the Theme plan for Heritage & Creativity and fosters interdisciplinarity and collaboration.

The department planned in 2014 to grow its staff complement and mix of permanent research-active academics and fixed-term research staff, using external research income and PGR recruitment to nurture collaborative research internally and with external partners. We have achieved this, using income from external sources to reduce teaching and administrative loads for staff whose research fits our strategic priorities.

- **Research in Film** centres on the analysis of films and the histories of cinema, including work on mise-en-scène by **Butler, Gibbs, O'Brien, Purse, Nagib**, on avant-garde and art film by **Butler**, and digital and 3D aesthetics and technologies by **Purse**. Expertise in the analysis of audio-visual texts and methodologies for aesthetic study has created a foundation for the development of related approaches. The Department's established focus on the globally dominant US film culture and film style is complemented by research on European and non-Western cultures of cinema, especially **Nagib's** work on film's intermedial histories and forms. Distinctive new initiatives include our first feature-film as a research output, *Passages* (director **Nagib**), and experimenting with the audio-visual essay (led by **Gibbs**) as an open access output format accessible to a range of users.
- **Theatre and Performance research** clusters have created work on the historical, cultural, political and production contexts of twentieth and twenty-first century performance, in British and Irish theatre (**Bartley, McFrederick, McMullan, Murjas**, former staff **Angelaki, Saunders, Taylor** (Emerita)); diasporic performance, translation, and non-Anglophone theatres (**Angelaki, Murjas, Woynarski**); and interdisciplinary practice-as-research allied to written scholarship (**Murjas, Taylor**). We gained our first funding from the national Industrial Strategy via **Taylor's** work with software designers Marmelo and theatre company Dante Or Die, making new links with IT specialists keen to work on the challenges of integrating interactive media with live performance.
- **Television research** centres on the analysis of the aesthetics of TV programmes and their histories, especially British and US TV drama and documentary (**Bignell, Knox, Woods**). Archival work on television history is conducted by **Bignell** and **Knox**, and research on contemporary television by **Knox** and **Woods**. **Knox's** studies of screen acting link theatre with television, as does **Bignell's** work on the dramatists Beckett and Pinter and especially to the expertise of **McMullan** and **McFrederick** on these practitioners. The Television Drama research group now brings together established staff **Bignell, Knox** and **Woods** with PDRAs and research students. Our AHRC-funded research on 'Pinter Histories and Legacies' was the most recent large grant project to document and make public new work in TV history, with open access scholarship and a public online database of all of Pinter's work in the UK.

Progress since 2014

In 2014 we declared plans to extend our work with external partners such as the BBC and the Victoria and Albert Museum, and to maximise the value of important archives and collections at Reading. Over the assessment period, staff have built collaborative research projects using the collections such as work on the world-leading Samuel Beckett Archive (**McMullan**), the wartime evacuee archive (**Murjas**), and the personal archive of filmmaker Steve Dwoskin (**Butler**).

- We planned to exploit opportunities to develop research in the area of digital and 'new' media, and have done this in **Purse's** work on digital cinema production and the aesthetics of visual effects, and **Taylor's** work on social media technologies in theatre

performance. Taylor's research was funded by the AHRC/EPSRC Creative Economy programme on next-generation immersive experiences to work on questions of social media identity through performance.

- We also planned to seize opportunities for research links within the School, and **Butler** is working with Art's experts in art film on research using the [Dwoskin Archive](#) to explore the history of his output through historical, archival and practice-as-research methodologies. This is leading to filmmaking projects as well as scholarship. Dwoskin's early adoption of computing for creative projects in the 1980s has enabled us to embrace collaborative working with computing experts to pilot innovative digital forensics methodologies that enable us to recover and interpret his unpublished notes, scripts and other records of the creative process, which were held in digital form but hitherto inaccessible to researchers.
- We outlined our ambitions to internationalise and diversify our research in Film, and this has led to work such as collaboration by **Butler, Gibbs, Nagib** and **Purse** with the Federal University of São Carlos on Brazilian Cinema and intermediality. This has brought international experts to Reading and staged research events that combine film with live performance. Methodologically, we have also benefitted from **Gibbs's** contributions to the development of the audio-visual essay as a research output format, addressing intermedial film histories and approaching classical Hollywood in new ways.

Impact strategy

Our impact strategy meshes organically with our research aims, and leads us to:

- innovate within our relatively small staff cohort to link the three audio-visual mediums in which we specialise, so as to generate resources and forge connections internally and externally in order to carry out ambitious cross-disciplinary projects. Taylor's work with theatre company Dante Or Die led to the *User Not Found* performance funded by AHRC/EPSRC and associated impact using video and IT. **Murjas's** theatre company Around the Well comprises professional interpreters who work in public services, creating performance-as-research into migration, involuntary displacement and cultural/linguistic mediation. This was showcased in Glasgow for UNESCO's Refugee Integration programme and in the Language Acts programme (London) of the AHRC-funded Open World Research Initiative.
- exploit opportunities to build impact as an embedded part of scholarship, supporting staff to collaborate through the mutual support that we have cultivated and promote. **McMullan's** Beckett scholarship fed into the [creation of open access resources](#) in the AHRC-funded Staging Beckett project, working with **McFrederick** and external collaborators to document all productions of Beckett's plays in the UK and Ireland in an extensive public database. New collaborations with Trinity College Dublin are testing innovative VR performance that pushes technological boundaries and opens up new forms of live, interactive experiences of Beckett's work for digital users.
- extend and enhance relationships with external partners, to develop ambitious new research underpinned by excellent scholarship. Our geographical location facilitates links with non-academic partners who are involved in co-creating research and they benefit from the resources for public/non-academic audiences that are produced as outputs from our research. These partners include the British Film Institute (BFI), BBC Archives, National Theatre collections and the V&A Museum's Theatre collections. We have launched research-led cinema programmes, internationally with the Museum of Image and Sound, Brazil (on film history), nationally with BFI South Bank (the Pinter on Screen season devised with them) and locally with Reading Film Theatre (Brazilian cinema season), with initiatives embedded in scholarship and new research.

Open research

The Department is committed to open research as evidenced by publication in Open Access journals and our creation of open archives and databases to ensure our work is accessible and replicable. We have also made extensive use of funding support for Gold OA, through research grants, institutional arrangements with publishers or University funding, enabling **Bignell, Nagib, O'Brien** to fund open articles and monographs.

Research integrity

A School ethics committee reviews all relevant people-centred research projects for the Department, with any requiring higher scrutiny reviewed at University level. Our annual Personal Development Review incorporates a strong professional standards aspect which reinforces issues of research integrity and provides an opportunity to review training needs. Staff are made aware of the values set out in the University Code of Good Practice in Research and responsibilities under the Concordat to Support Research Integrity through the University's committee (IES, Section 2.2).

2. People

Staffing strategy

There are 13 core staff in the unit, one of whom (**McMullan**) is part-time. Senior staff comprise Professors in Film (**Gibbs, Nagib, Purse**), in Theatre & Performance (**McMullan, Murjas**), and Television & Film (**Bignell**). Associate Professors comprise **Butler** in Film, and **Knox** and **Woods** in Television & Film. Our early career researchers are **O'Brien** (Lecturer in Film), and **Bartley, McFrederick, Woynarski** (Lecturers in Theatre).

Our staffing strategy has been to use increases in and replacements of staff to strengthen and expand existing expertise in line with our research and impact strategies. Our collegial research culture provides secure foundations and continuity of staffing; five staff in post since 2014 have been promoted internally, two new Chairs appointed, and two Teaching-focused staff were mentored to develop research profiles that enabled them to achieve T&R roles:

- **Bartley** joined us in 2020 to spearhead new collaborations with creative practitioners in Applied Theatre and develop research into performance and community.
- **O'Brien** was appointed to extend existing strengths in film aesthetics, bringing expertise in film analysis to bear on pressing global issues of ecology and environment.
- **Woynarski** has enhanced our established strengths in theatre and performance, especially ways in which performance can engage audiences in contemporary political and ethical debates and explore questions of community and diversity.
- **Nagib** joined us in 2013 at Professorial level to develop our Film expertise further beyond Anglophone cinemas, and her leadership initiated the creation of the Centre for Film Aesthetics and Cultures and ambitious international collaborative research in World Cinema and intermedial studies.
- **Taylor** retired as Professor in Theatre & Performance and remains active as Emerita, leading research with creative industry partners and supervising PGRs. Aspects of her expertise, and that of former colleague **Saunders**, were taken further by **Angelaki** in studies of historical and contemporary British Theatre, and in ecology and politics. These aspects are now led by **O'Brien** and **Bartley**, demonstrating our commitment to forward-looking investment in innovative and socially relevant research.

Equality and diversity

Concern for equality and diversity is embedded formally and informally in our ways of working. We have proportionately more female staff (7 of 13), and our seniority profile reflects that (4 of 6 professors, all 3 associate professors, and 2 of 4 ECRs are women); and although we are 95% white, 21% are non-UK nationals. Several colleagues have undertaken LGBT+ Ally training and **Purse** is a Stonewall LGBT+ Role Model. We have two formal leadership roles for Diversity and Inclusion (held by **Tyler** and **Woynarski**), whose remit embraces both staff and students, and research and teaching. Leadership roles held by women staff include **McMullan** as Co-Director of the Beckett International Foundation charitable trust administering Reading's Beckett Archive,

and **Purse**'s role as Head of Department and formerly leader of the Faculty Research Theme on Minorities. **Nagib** sits on the steering committee of the UK-China Humanities Alliance, representing the University, and represented the H&C theme on the University Board for Research & Innovation (2016-20).

Our disciplines address academic questions of identity and community, such as in **Nagib**'s work on world cinema, **Woynarski**'s work on indigenous performance as political intervention, and **Bartley**'s work in applied theatre in the community, and such questions are organic rather than exterior to our thinking. **Tyler**'s Arts Council-funded Diversity through Development project has welcomed guests to talk on issues of gender, race and equality, including performance creators Nicky Werenowska and Greg Wohead, 'in conversation' events with playwrights Inua Ellams and Natasha Gordon, and a performance co-organised with Reading School of Law commemorating women's entry into the legal professions. **Murjas**'s work on diasporas, migration and linguistic integration is fundamentally about diversity and inclusion and involves collaborations within and outside academia to explore questions of identity. An event organised by **Nagib** (funded by the British Council) for the UK-China Alliance brought filmmakers to Reading to discuss intercultural communication, including Wu Wenguang, pioneer of independent documentary cinema in China and founder of Caochangdi's 'Folk Memory Project', and Zhang Mengqi, Resident Filmmaker and Choreographer at Beijing's Caochangdi Workstation.

To address Equality and Diversity in our REF submission, all staff were asked to nominate outputs and these were peer reviewed. The selection was made to ensure representativeness of gender, career stage, and specialism within the Department. All staff were involved in collation of information for the environment statement which was circulated for review. We followed the University Code of Practice and information about the REF processes was widely shared with staff, who were given the opportunity to declare personal circumstances if they wished. We reflected on the outcomes of the University's interim Equality Impact Assessment (2020) and the bias analysis on our final selection (2021) using these opportunities to minimise potential for bias.

Support for ECRs and research staff (PDRAs)

FTT has a sustained record of recruitment of ECRs to funded research posts, and they have gone on to employment at HEIs in the UK and internationally (Courage, Davies, Donaldson, Elduque, Jeffery, McFrederick, Panos, Smart, Solomon, Wrigley). We were able to retain **Jeffery** and **Smart** as PDRAs on two AHRC projects, and **McFrederick** became a Teaching Fellow following a post on McMullan's AHRC project. We helped him to transition to a permanent T&R lectureship in 2020 and two other current Teaching Intensive staff on permanent contracts (**Ghosh**, **Tyler**) are similarly being supported to develop research profiles that will enable them to transition to T&R appointments. Their career development is proactively supported by mentoring from the Research Division Lead, support of the Head of School and seed-funding from the Theme to help them develop their research. **Woynarski** was awarded a University Research Fellowship, and the Dean for H&C awarded seed-funding to both **Woynarski** and **O'Brien**, who was also a winner of the H&C annual ECR Research Output prize. ECRs on T&R contracts are awarded relief from teaching or early research leave for completion of research, especially to complete their first monograph or other major output. For Teaching-Intensive staff, staff development time (similar to the 'research day') can be used to develop research if they wish, for example completing a PhD (**Tyler**) or conducting practice-as-research (**Ghosh**). New lecturers are mentored by an established academic, including formal induction into departmental procedures for research planning.

We expect PDRAs to be outward-facing and ambitious, and we support them to develop independent careers. Individual PDRAs have presented their research at seminars both within FTT and elsewhere in the University, and at other HEIs. Research staff also participate in external events and networks that develop their research skills, e.g., PDRAs **Panos**, **Smart** and **Wrigley** (on the 'Spaces of Television' and 'Pinter Histories & Legacies' AHRC projects) have been active members of the Southern Broadcasting History Group, comprising academic researchers and representatives from BBC Archives and Learning on Screen. **McTighe**, when

PDRA on 'Staging Beckett', participated in the International Federation of Theatre Research's Samuel Beckett Working Group and is now its Chair.

PIs inform research staff about training and development opportunities and advise them on training that may be relevant. PIs inform each PDRA about the Concordat for Research Staff and discuss its provisions. The Head of School oversees School policies relating to research staff but it is the responsibility of the RDL to ensure that research staff receive appropriate mentoring and Personal Research Planning support. Research mentors are appointed by the Head of Department in consultation with the RDL and PI. Each PDRA has a mentor other than their PI/line manager, and all PDRAs have at least annually Personal Research Plan meetings. PDRAs benefit from training offered at University level by the Centre for Quality Support and Development (CQSD), and are offered, and normally undertake, some limited teaching to develop their skills and employability. Training includes sessions on dissemination of research (e.g., conference presentations and publication), interviewing for research, preservation of research data and University financial processes. Records of staff training from the CQSD are maintained centrally online, and PIs report termly on project staff progress to the Department's Research Committee. Research staff have a representative on the Committee and training and development is a standing item. Other training, for example on social media, collections-based research, Digital Humanities and open research, is provided via the Heritage & Creativity Theme, promoting links across Divisions.

Support for staff

We are an inclusive and supportive team, enjoying informal seminars, launches, performances and screenings of our own and others' research work, and social events that bring us together regularly. This culture underpins our support for colleagues who have experienced illness or bereavement, taken maternity and paternity leave, or had other special circumstances during the assessment period. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic was challenging because it reduced opportunities for teamworking, but we sustained our collaborative culture by quickly creating informal seminars, coffee break meetings and research workshops online.

Our research policy is to promote original work by all members of staff and to create a culture that encourages collaboration. The Personal Research Plan (PRP) process, in which all research-active staff including PDRAs participate, centres on one-to-one discussions with the RDL to discuss plans and address individual research support needs, producing short- and medium-term plans for outputs, funding, public engagement and impact activity. Considerations of workload, resource needs, mentoring and feedback on specific outputs or plans are addressed and actions reviewed on a rolling annual basis. Often these discussions identify unforeseen research opportunities, and ways for staff to engage with University support such as the expertise of Research and Enterprise Services (RES) colleagues, the Impact team, Research Data or Digital Humanities support to help us develop technically ambitious projects. In many ways the PRP is a mechanism for making connections between people, ideas and resources to facilitate research excellence.

Overall strategy for staff research development is coordinated by the department's Research and PGR Committee, meeting termly. Research leave, funded by internal redistribution of workload among colleagues, is based on an established pattern of one term in nine, subject to the Research Committee's approval of research objectives and plans. In addition, research leaders and mentors encourage and assist staff to apply to external funding schemes as well as University and H&C seed-funding to pilot new research. Schemes include financial support for research leave and grant bid development from the University's Research Endowment Trust Fund (RETF), controlled by the Research Dean for H&C, and research travel from the Conference Travel Fund. During the assessment period, **Bignell** and **Taylor** benefitted from pump-priming funding to support short-term PDRA employment of **Courage** and **Jeffery** to help scope and draft grant bids, and **Nagib** won a University Research Fellowship to complete major outputs and funding bids. **Murjas** won a H&C fellowship to explore new research questions and develop innovative outputs based on University museum collections.

The School allocates discretionary funding to each colleague for research expenses via Staff Development Accounts (SDA), normally used for travel, short-term buy-out from teaching or support from a short-term PDRA to help develop a major research initiative. **Bignell**, for example, used SDA funds to employ **Wrigley** to conduct bibliographic surveys and assist with grant development workshops with potential collaborators. The Head of School allocates a share of overhead from external research projects to the SDAs of staff with project leadership roles, and this is often used to support individuals' research that cannot be funded externally because of its experimental or speculative nature.

Postgraduate research students

Our Postgraduate Research student numbers have grown steadily, from 19 in 2013/14 to 28 in 2019/20, and we have seen an increase in non-UK students from 37% in 2013/14 to 46% in 2019/20, reflecting our strategy of internationalisation and increased breadth of specialisms. 18% of our PGR students declared a disability in 2019/20. We have a departmental Director of PGR Studies (**Butler**), and all research-active staff supervise postgraduate researchers and act as assessors for PGR monitoring. All PGRs are supported by Academic Tutors and central support services for wellbeing as well as training.

Since 2014, we have awarded 16 PhDs, and have developed an MA by Research to prepare further graduate students for PhD. In 2014 we launched a new taught MA in Creative Enterprise (with pathways for Film and for Theatre), working with Reading's renowned Henley Business School to develop students who want to link their academic specialisms to the creative industries.

The University's Research Endowment Trust Fund awards doctoral studentships, and we benefit from **AHRC Doctoral Training Consortium** membership. The South-West and Wales Consortium (Aberystwyth, Bristol, Bath, Bath Spa, Cardiff, Exeter, Reading, Southampton) includes studentships in all areas relevant to the department's cross-disciplinary work: Drama and Theatre, Film and Television, Media and New Media.

- In the assessment period we also participated in a University-wide PhD programme in **Collections-based Research** which funded a practice-based PhD student working on performance practice with Murjas in the University's Evacuee Archive.
- A bequest from former Reading colleague Mary Bryden's funds a PhD **studentship in Beckett Studies**, supervised by Bignell and McMullan, and another Beckett PGR receives the James and Elizabeth Knowlson Bursary.

The University's Graduate School implements the University Code of Practice on Research Students, including provision of training across the four aspects of the Researcher Development Framework. It coordinates an extensive development programme, focusing on key transferable skills, such as research methods, communications, and entrepreneurship, as well as an induction into University teaching (compulsory for any student who wishes to undertake such duties). It also oversees competitions for PhD funding, coordinates recruitment and annual monitoring processes, and provides desk space, training rooms and social activities for students, allowing them to meet and develop networks across the University.

Each PGR student is jointly supervised. Monitoring includes an annual presentation attended by Department staff, and regular formal evaluations of written work by supervisors and third-party readers with a feedback interview. Confirmation of PhD registration after a year of work (or part-time equivalent) is granted after review of chapter-length submissions by two colleagues with PhD supervision experience, leading to more timely completions and excellent pass rates for FTT students. Across the assessment period 82% of vivas resulted in outright Pass or Pass with Minor Amendments at the first attempt.

Our support equips PGRs to innovate and acquire new skills, whether they come to us from conventional academic backgrounds or as creative professionals looking to deepen their intellectual base (80% of our PGR students are aged over 25, and between 40% and 60% of

PGRs since 2014 have funded their own studies). For example, PhD graduate Lees, a professional film and television director, came to FTT to seek ways of thinking critically about his creative practice, and took new ideas about mise-en-scène back into his career. In the assessment period students working through theatre and film practice have staged and screened innovative work at UK and overseas venues as part of, and resulting from, their studies: Hegarty-Lovett creates Beckett performances with her theatre company Gare St Lazare Players, as does Scaife with her Company SJ, while former student O'Brien has become an internationally renowned performance artist.

More traditionally, our postgraduates benefit from a programme of research presentations by visiting academics, departmental staff (including PDRAs) and research students. There is a strong culture of regular, less formal seminars organised by PGRs and supported by staff, including discussion groups on film and TV analysis, critical theory and practice-as-research methodologies and case studies. Our annual PGR conference Journeys Across Media (JAM) (co-founder Purse) is organised by current students, and in its evolving formats it has offered a supportive environment for students to present work and make interdisciplinary connections. Murjas led the development (from 2012) of an annual edition of the Journal of Media Practice in which PGR papers from the JAM conference have been published.

Research travel support for PGRs is available from the University's Conference Travel Fund, and additional Department funds are allocated for discretionary support for expenses such as travel and conference attendance. The Department underwrites research events initiated by PGRs. Our PGR students are collegial and enterprising, and their contribution to our research culture is recognised and supported.

3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

Research funding and strategies

Research income since 2014 totalled £1.63m, deriving largely from the Research Councils (primarily AHRC). We have sustained a track record of securing large awards and we have expanded collaborations as Co-Is, e.g., **Bignell's** collaboration with Leeds on Pinter's media writing and **Butler's** collaboration with Art on Dwoskin's films. We have led major externally funded research projects in each of our subject areas, establishing FTT as a centre of excellence in specific areas and embracing collaborations with external experts and industry professionals. The Department's research infrastructure shares and supports both discipline-specific and cross-disciplinary research and methodologies through its research clusters, projects and research events. For example:

- **In Film** we have focused on the specificity of cinematic styles and the historical and intermedial links between film and other arts, winning £720k plus R\$267k for the AHRC/FAPESP co-funded project with Brazilian colleagues, '**Towards an Intermedial History of Brazilian Cinema: Exploring Intermediality as a Historiographic Method**' (PI Nagib, 2015-19). Purse secured Leverhulme funding for Visiting Professor Chris Holmlund (2018) to collaborate on international research into contemporary digital cinema and its cross-media aesthetics.
- Our expertise in **British theatre history** was expressed in the AHRC-funded research project, 'Staging Beckett: The Impact of Productions of Samuel Beckett's Drama on Theatre Practice and Cultures in the UK and Ireland' (£816k, led by **McMullan**, with FTT CI Saunders and a CI from Chester, 2012-15) employing full-time PDRAs at Reading (McTighe) and Chester, and with one PhD student at Reading (McFrederick). It documented and analysed the histories of Beckett performances in the UK and Ireland using the Beckett archive and external sources including the V&A's theatre holdings. At the start of the assessment period **Saunders** was completing work as PI of the AHRC project 'Giving Voice to the Nation' (2009-14) on the role of Arts Council funding in shaping British theatre, with a CI and two PDRAs at the V&A and retired Emeritus

colleague Bull as consultant. These projects focused on archival work and created new resources as well as scholarship.

- Similarly, in **Television Studies**, archival and historiographic methods drove 'Spaces of Television: Production, Site & Style' (PI **Bignell**, 2010-15), an award of £722k with Co-Is at Leicester and Glamorgan. It linked archival work on written records of TV production with testimony from producers, writers, directors and other creative staff, to research the distinctions between and development of TV studio and location shooting in TV drama. The project employed three PDRAs at Reading (Donaldson, Panos, Smart) with PhD students at partner HEIs. **Bignell** was CI for 'Pinter Histories and Legacies' (2016-20, led by Taylor-Batty at Leeds, an £800k award), with Reading PDRAs Davies, Smart and Wrigley to research radio, TV and film drama by Pinter. The Reading team collaborated with the British Library (holder of the Pinter Archive) on a joint conference, with the Pinter Theatre (London) on its anniversary performances, and with BFI on a film season (2018) and new commercial DVD release.

Effective research team management and leadership are developed by means of the close relationships between colleagues in the Department as well as formal training. During the assessment period, eight staff have been PIs or Co-Is on large grants (**Bignell, Butler, Gibbs, McMullan, Nagib, Purse, Saunders, Taylor**). These colleagues share extensive experience in research and in staff management: **Bignell** has been PI of six previous funded projects with research staff, is currently Research Division Lead and Academic Lead of the Grant Development College for Heritage & Creativity. **Taylor**, now Emerita, is a former Head of School, Head of Department and School Director of Research. **McMullan** is a former Head of School and Research Division Lead. **Nagib** was founding Director of the Centre for Film Aesthetics and Cultures. We maintain links with colleagues now retired or moved on, as in the collaboration with Emeritus Bull on 'Giving Voice to the Nation', and Saunders (now at Birmingham) as CI with Bignell on 'Pinter Histories and Legacies'.

University support structures

The federal structure of the School enables considerable autonomy for the Department, including research planning and allocation of resources and staff time for research. We are supported by funding from the Research Dean for Heritage & Creativity to pump-prime new research, with over £30k competitively awarded to eight colleagues starting up new projects. Since 2014 the University has invested £1m in additional professional services posts to drive innovation, impact and communications, and the Theme also supports new methodologies through **Digital Humanities** training and expert advice (benefitting **Butler, McMullan, Taylor**), and funds a **Grant Development College** that provides peer review and drives innovation and best practice in research and collaborative funding proposals. Our impact strategy, supported by a dedicated Impact Manager for H&C, identified ambitious work led by **McMullan, Murjas** and **Nagib** that the University supported with expertise and resource in its Building Outstanding Impact Support Project (IES, Section 2.3).

Facilities

FTT is based in [Minghella Studios](#), a purpose-built complex of staff offices, meeting rooms and facilities for making film, television and theatre performances to professional standards. The Studios provide state-of-the-art facilities where research conferences, performances, screenings and exhibitions are mounted, including high-profile events for expert and public audiences. They include a digital cinema, two theatres and an experimental performance space (licensed for public performance, and equipped with flexible seating and storage), foyer and exhibition areas, a digital sound stage/multi-camera television studio, editing rooms, audio post-production spaces and a sound studio. University investment of £11.4m was supplemented by contributions for equipment from the University, Department and the Friends of the University, and in 2018 a £144k investment from the University's Research Infrastructure Fund equipped the School with technology to underpin our work with new VR and multimedia research methodologies.

- For research by practice, staff and PGRs have free access to all departmental performance spaces, editing suites, software and camera and lighting equipment.
- Research collections held by the department include an extensive AV collection of films, broadcast adaptations of theatre and records of performances, and a wide range of television programmes. Much of this collection is digitised and held on our own servers, maintained by central IT staff.
- All staff have networked computing facilities in their offices, and PGRs have a dedicated room with shared networked computing and playback equipment, and software for moving image editing and capture.
- Support staff comprise six technical staff (four full-time and two part-time) and one administrator, with additional support provided by the School administrative and University technical and IT staff.
- Support staff facilitate individuals' research projects, providing for example lighting, costume and scenography for **Murjas's** practice-as-research installations on diasporic memory, PGR **Husanovic's** multimedia performance research on belly-dancing, and the staging of live performance 'prologues' with archive film screenings in the Intermedia research on Brazilian cinema (**Nagib** working with **Tyler**).
- Support staff also facilitate research conferences, with capability for four simultaneous strands or panels within Minghella Studios, and facilities for public screenings and events (e.g., presentations by guest film director Walter Salles and philosopher Jacques Rancière).
- In the virtual arena, the University's CentAUR online repository promotes access to the outcomes of our research and staff make work available through portals such as ResearchGate and research blogs (mainly attached to our Research Centres and funded projects). We support staff to publish increasingly in open access formats, taking advantage of publisher initiatives (e.g., Berghahn's Knowledge Unlatched for **O'Brien's** monograph), University central funds (*Historical Journal of Film, Radio & Television* articles as Gold OA for our Pinter research) or individuals' discretionary Staff Development Account funding (Gold OA for **Bignell's** article in the *Adaptation* journal).

Our research is greatly aided by the University Library, which has extensive holdings and excellent IT facilities. The Film, Theatre & Television collection has been built up systematically in Drama since 1926 and in Film and Television since 1974 when we launched the first Film degrees in the UK. Relevant databases include FII, FIAF, JSTOR, MLA, Project MUSE and TVTimes. A specialist librarian oversees these collections and liaises with the Department.

- The **University's Museums and Special Collections** house the **Samuel Beckett Archive**, the world's largest collection of Beckett papers, on which research projects and outputs by **Bignell**, **McFrederick**, **McMullan** and **Saunders** have been based.
- Reading's collection of **Second World War evacuee papers** led to the launch of a new research project in 2013, led by **Murjas** to animate the archive, winning Arts Council funding, and also to Murjas's related work on the University's Huntley & Palmer archive to tell soldiers' stories through their creative uses of the biscuits in their food rations.
- In 2013 the University acquired the personal archive of filmmaker **Stephen Dwoskin** which **Butler** studies alongside internal and external colleagues, including specialists in digital forensics (to decode Dwoskin's legacy of digital files held on his outdated hardware).

As mentioned above, the University's interdisciplinary Research Themes and priorities connect researchers across disciplines and promote collaborative research. The Beckett Research Priority (led by Bignell, then McMullan) grew into the cross-disciplinary **Samuel Beckett Research Centre** in 2017. Purse led the **Minorities Rights & Representations** research priority, focusing on questions of race, ethnicity and gender, and encompassing work on the body in digital cinema by Purse and theatre representations of Polish ethnicities by Murjas. This informed the development of the University's Research Theme in Prosperity & Resilience in 2015. **Bignell** co-chaired the Implementation Group of the new Heritage & Creativity Research

Theme (2015) and led its Grant Development College which promotes new (especially digital) methodologies and collaborative projects.

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

Partnerships

Our major academic collaborations are outlined in Section 3 above (research funding). We have grown collaborative research with UK and international scholars and partner institutions, and public engagement through the process and outputs of our research, in particular with non-academic partners. Our funded research projects are a base for enhancing **industry and public engagement**, incorporating film production, performance, exhibitions and web-based dissemination that lead to public dialogue. Our practice-based research has led to increasing interaction with local, national and international practitioners, archives and community and arts organisations. For instance, the Gate Theatre (Dublin) Network benefits from **McMullan's** expertise as their International Advisor, **Taylor** is a member of theatre company Dante Or Die's management Board and assists them with project development and FTT is an institutional partner in the [Tate Exchange programme](#), creating research-focused public events for Tate Modern.

Local and regional arts culture benefits from our close collaborations with South Street Arts Centre in Reading, recognised by Arts Council England as a key interface with hard-to-reach audiences. Applied Theatre specialist **Tyler** (now joined by **Bartley**) was appointed with a remit to energise South Street's support for new writing in theatre and diverse new writers, collaborating to develop best practice in addressing new audiences and using theatre as an engine of social change. One outcome, the drama 'Being Gordon Greenidge' about the West Indian cricketer, won a [2018 Reading Cultural Award](#). The collaboration was the basis for Development & Diversity Through Theatre (2019), an initiative led by **Tyler** and funded by ACE, in which selected emerging theatre companies (e.g., Red Cape, Action Hero, Dante Or Die) gained new opportunities for research and development at South Street including working with FTT staff. South Street's reach as an arts hub expanded (Cultural Space of the Year award, 2019) with new shows premiered and new, diverse audiences responding.

One of our Impact Case Studies features innovative research in **co-created theatre performance** generated by, and producing, collaboration. **Murjas** facilitated innovative engagements with evacuees, migrants and their support groups, generating social value via the practice-based War Child research project using the University's Evacuee Archive and her work on migration and displacement in collaboration with linguists, psychologists, performers and interpreters. The performances of the practice-as-research piece 'Between', by her theatre company Around the Well, were staged as a live stream for events at the Open University and University of Glasgow (2019) for UNESCO, and as a live performance for the European Commission (London). They involved public service practitioners (especially interpreters working with migrants) through participation and audience engagement activities that tried out new ways to address current problems.

In our second Impact Case Study, we organised initiatives in local and national venues to **share knowledge and research results** created by the Intermedia research project. We proposed and co-organised the 'Tropicália' season of Brazilian cinema at Tate Modern, London, in 2017, publishing a catalogue and running associated events to introduce curators and the public to this unfamiliar film culture. Locally, we collaborated with the independent Reading Film Theatre (a BFI regional venue), and with the Museum of Image and Sound in São Paulo to run seasons of Brazilian music films, and to stage the live 'prologues' that were performed in Brazilian cinemas in the mid-twentieth century.

Collaboration between FTT, the theatre company Dante Or Die and the London-based technology agency Marmelo, led to new performances using **mobile phones integrated with live performance**. **Taylor** led this ['User Not Found: Social Media Technologies as Immersive Performance'](#) project, funded by AHRC, which enabled Dante Or Die to develop a more

ambitious project than would otherwise have been possible, and Marmelo to build new expertise and client relationships with arts organisations and venues. The performance won national awards, toured the UK and transferred to New York in 2019. Its innovative and timely focus on people's legacies in social media led to sharing expertise that benefitted will-writers, end-of-life carers and funeral directors, and generated invitations to speak to archaeologists and curators, e.g., at the British Museum's Grave Goods conference (2019) to connect today's virtual legacy to historic memorialisation practices.

As part of both the 'Spaces of Television' and 'Pinter Histories and Legacies' AHRC projects, **Bignell** and his PDRAs (Panos, Smart, Wrigley) initiated and led discussions with archive curatorial staff at BFI, and negotiated with broadcasters, literary agents and publishers to facilitate high-profile public events that enabled these institutions to showcase their **custodianship of cultural assets** and created opportunities for rights holders to generate value for their intellectual property. We worked with BFI South Bank in London to plan and curate seasons of television and film screenings (2015, 2018) that also included platform events, interviews and presentations with leading television producers, directors, actors and designers, linked to the launch of a new five-DVD box-set of his plays ('Pinter at the BBC') and supporting materials authored by our team.

Contribution to the research base

We maintain established links with institutions holding key research collections and resources, notably BBC Archives and the Theatre Museum and Arts Council archives at the V&A. These relationships enable us to create and enhance research resources with and for them, which are then used by other academic researchers and schools, creative practitioners working on new interpretations of past works, and members of the public with specialist interests.

- ['Giving Voice to the Nation'](#) included cataloguing Arts Council papers at the V&A, thus enabling future research, and several guides for researchers were created about the online Arts Council archive.
- ['Spaces of Television'](#) created interview, report and blog materials, and new public databases of historic UK TV drama intersecting with online fan discussions.
- The ['Staging Beckett'](#) research team, in partnership with the V&A, compiled a database of all UK and Irish productions of Beckett's plays, as a pilot for a globally compatible performing arts database in dialogue with the creators of the Australian database AusStage and IbsenStage (University of Oslo).
- ['Pinter Histories and Legacies'](#) also produced an online, open access database (2020) cataloguing all Pinter's works for stage, screen and radio (hosted at Leeds), for which we created the film, radio and television records.

Leadership of networks

Department staff have leadership roles in national and international research groups including:

- Association for Adaptation Studies (former Trustee: **Bignell**).
- British Association for Film & Screen Studies (Treasurer: **Nagib**).
- British Association for Modernist Studies (Advisory Committee member: **Bignell**).
- Southern Broadcasting History Group (Chair: **Bignell**).
- **McMullan** is Co-Director of the Beckett International Foundation, a charitable trust that administers Reading's Beckett Archive and pursues internal and external collaborations in Beckett Studies; she and Bignell are Trustees.
- **Woyinarski** has been Co-convenor of Performance and Ecology Working Group for the American Society of Theatre Research.
- Within Reading, **Bignell** sits on the Board of the Graduate Centre for International Research in Childhood.
- **Nagib** is an invited member of the steering committee of the UK-China Humanities Alliance, involving Reading and universities in Tsinghua, Peking, Fudan, Wuhan, Hong Kong, King's College London, Manchester, Oxford, SOAS and Warwick.

Editorship

We assess, evaluate and enable research by collaborating with funding bodies and by leading publishing initiatives across our three disciplines. Selected examples include:

- In Film, we supply Editors for the journals *Screen* (**Butler**) and *Movie* (**Gibbs, Purse**).
- In Theatre, **McMullan** is on the Editorial Board of the *Journal of Beckett Studies* and *Irish University Review*, and **Murjas** is an Editor of the *Journal of Media Practice*.
- For the *Critical Studies in Television* journal, **Bignell** is Corresponding Editor and **Knox** sits on its Editorial Board to formally represent the European Communication Research and Education Association.
- Major monograph series supported by Editors from our staff include Manchester University Press's 'Television Series' (**Bignell**), Palgrave's 'Close Readings in Film and Television' (**Gibbs**), 'Anthem Studies in Theatre and Performance' (**McMullan**), Bloomsbury's 'Film Thinks' and I.B. Tauris's 'World Cinema' series (**Nagib**).

Conferences and keynotes

The Department's programme of regular international conferences develops and disseminates our research and supports our research strategy, by promoting collaborations between academics, resource holders and practitioners in the creative industries, and between discipline specialists.

Conferences we have organised include:

- Disappearing War: Cinema and the Politics of Erasure in the War on Terror (**Purse**, supported by the British Academy) linked Film specialists with experts in politics, economics and international relations.
- The Moving Form of Film (**Nagib**) focused on intermedial research into world cinema.
- Action Cinema Now and Reconsidering Movie Special Effects (co-organised by **Purse**) addressed how digital film industries might be studied in new ways.
- Videographic Film Studies Now! (**Gibbs**) focused on new methodologies.
- Nation, Nationhood and Theatre (co-organised by **Angelaki**) was the Contemporary Drama in English network conference in 2017, hosted at Reading.
- Screen Studies conference 2019 in Glasgow (co-organised by **Butler**)
- Towards an Intermedial History of Brazilian Cinema (co-organised by **Nagib** in São Paulo).
- World Cinema and the Essay Film (co-organised by **Nagib** with DAAD-sponsored Visiting postdoctoral fellow Krstic).
- Onwards and Outwards: Women's Filmmaking in Contemporary Britain (**Butler, Nagib**) at the ICA in London.
- Liberation Struggles (co-organised by **Nagib** and CFAN Visiting Post-Doctoral Fellow DoCarmo Picarra) on film and African decolonisation in London with funding from the Gulbenkian Foundation and the Camões Centre for Portuguese Language and Culture.

Externally, FTT staff gave invited keynotes at conferences at the universities of Belfast, Brighton, Bristol, Exeter, Hertfordshire, Kent, Leeds, London, Northampton, Oxford Brookes, Warwick, and in Australia, Brazil, Denmark, France, Germany, Iran, Ireland, Mexico, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Switzerland.

A few examples of the range and reach of events at non-HEI venues include:

- **Bignell** presented on television history at the National Science & Media Museum, on Pinter's TV dramas at BFI South Bank, and made a filmed presentation for a Canadian Centre for Architecture exhibition in Montreal, Lisbon and then on YouTube.
- **Murjas** was invited to present results of her performance research to audiences interested in methods for 'animating the archive' at the Hunterian Museum, Wellcome Trust, the National Archives and Research Libraries UK which features her work online as an example of innovative responses to research collections.

- **O'Brien** was invited to speak at the Royal Opera House (and webcast from there), and presented at the British Academy/Royal Irish Academy's Knowledge Frontiers symposium for ECRs in Dublin on approaches to the Anthropocene.
- Both **Angelaki** and **McMullan** have featured in the National Theatre's Talks programme
- **Elduque** (PDRA) gave an invited talk and curated a season of films with **Purse** at the Brazilian Embassy in London, and **Smart** and **Wrigley** (PDRAs) presented and led discussions at a public Pinter Archive event at the British Library.

Partners in our collaborative AHRC projects in the assessment period included the BFI, LUX film arts agency, the V&A Museum, the Universities of Chester, Glamorgan, Leeds, Leicester and Sao Paulo, with research events taking place at partner institutions and in Reading. We have also hosted major international conferences in which academic keynote talks were combined with practitioner presentations (e.g., live performances, film premieres, masterclasses by film directors, etc.), and such events at Reading during the assessment period included 'Acting on Television: Analytical Methods and Approaches' and 'The Moving Form of Film: Exploring Intermediality as a Historiographic Method', 'Spaces of Television' and 'Staging Beckett'.

Visitors to the Department

Distinguished visitors speaking at events we have organised include the actor Lisa Dwan, theatre director Ian Rickson, filmmakers Walter Salles (awarded an honorary degree from Reading in 2020) and Fernando Meirelles (whose film *The Two Popes* had its UK premiere with a discussion event on our campus), novelist and filmmaker Xialu Guo, philosopher Jacques Rancière, and academic speakers from numerous international institutions.

We hosted Leverhulme Visiting Professor Chris Holmlund from the USA, and many Visiting PGR students and Postdoctoral researchers, especially those studying the work of Samuel Beckett or World Cinema, with funding from DAAD (Germany), CAPES and FAPESP (Brazil) and ICT (Portugal) for example, joined our research community.