

Institution: Aberystwyth University
Unit of Assessment: 33: Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies
<p>1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy</p> <p>The Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies (TFTS) at Aberystwyth University has a distinctive profile and diversity of expertise in the history, theory and practice of film, media, theatre and performance. Staff are associated with one of two curriculum groups: Film, Television and Media, and Theatre and Performance, and the research activities often blur the boundary between these two fields. Underpinned by a strong commitment to practice-as-research, the Department pursues cutting edge creative and critical outputs that have a lasting impact on their field. Central to the Department's research is the relationship between contemporary creative works and expanding forms of public engagement with an emphasis on space, place, landscape, location and embodiment.</p> <p>The Department's mission reflects the Aberystwyth University institutional vision, as described in REF5a, to 'contribute to society in Wales and the wider world by applying our knowledge to local and global challenges.' The Department has a particular commitment to research within a Welsh and Welsh language context, and it plays a key role in Welsh culture and society, whilst engaging in global academic networks and contributing to the broader advance of knowledge and practice in our disciplines. The vitality and sustainability of research in the Department has been enhanced in the assessment period by the strategic reconfiguration of our research activities, and is supported by excellent facilities and a strong emphasis on staff development and inclusion. The reach and impact of our work is demonstrated by its well-established and active relationships with key industry partners, such as the BBC, S4C, Arad Goch, National Theatre Wales, Theatr Genedlaethol Cymru, Music Theatre Wales, Quarantine, BAFTA Cymru, Fiction Factory, Edinburgh International Film Festival, Tribeca Film Festival, the British Council Wales and Wales International. The Department's far-reaching and increasingly symbiotic ecology of research practices, and the public and professional impacts that arise from them, are encouraged and facilitated through our active promotion of research excellence.</p> <p><i>Research and Impact Strategy and Achievements since 2014</i></p> <p>Research and impact activities in the Department during the assessment period have been guided by strategic objectives articulated in the REF 2014 submission. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To engage in original investigations that will lead to significant and positive contributions to the disciplines and profession, and to the construction and creation of new knowledge within theatre, performance, film, television and media studies (through peer-reviewed publication activity, performance creation, knowledge exchange with the creative industries and public engagement) • To explore the relationships between these disciplines, and how these relate to other academic and creative disciplines and practices (including through collaborative research projects, networks and centres) • To establish meaningful and creative connections between different modes of research and types of output, to enable theory and practice to interrogate each other, and to generate texts, performances, designs, images and ideas which lead to new insights (through practice-as-research and by facilitating research time for staff) • To develop awareness of the ways in which the particular characteristics of theatre, performance and media culture in Wales relate to trans-national activities and international contexts (through participation in international conferences, symposia, exhibitions and festivals)

- To further develop our international collaborations with other researchers and external organisations (through joint grant applications and engagement with industry)

These objectives have been successfully achieved in the assessment period. Our research activities have made **significant and positive contributions to our disciplines and professions**, demonstrating a diverse and innovative approach to both scholarly and creative outputs, with discipline-defining monographs on philosophical and theoretical approaches to theatre; experimental cinema and technological transition; and new media and performance (Gritzner, Knowles, Rabey, Woycicki). We have further developed our expertise in other key areas such as **media history** – primarily through Medhurst’s research into television and society in Wales in the 1970s (funded by a £113,813 Leverhulme Trust Research Grant), and his contributions on early BBC television, and television in the nations and regions – and **contemporary television aesthetics and convergence culture**, through the internationally-recognised work of Creeber. These critical studies complement work in theatre production, filmmaking and playwriting. Brookes’ public outputs as an independent artist and performance maker have been widely commissioned and presented in collaboration with production contexts and communities across Europe, Asia, Australasia, South America and the USA, including the long-term international public art project ***Just a little bit of history repeating***. Gough’s stage adaptation of Dylan Thomas’ ***Adventures in the Skin Trade*** was commissioned for the Dylan Thomas Centenary Celebration 2014 and funded by the Arts Council of Wales and Welsh Government. It was the first play to be performed at the Sydney Opera House by a Welsh Theatre Company. The play text and associated education resource materials have been adopted by the Melbourne school curriculum, providing young students with an opportunity to interact with Thomas’ work in the context of Welsh culture.

We have **explored relationships between disciplines and forged new connections**. This has included reconfiguring our research clusters around trans-disciplinary themes, as described further below, as well as developing inter-disciplinary work with other fields, both within the Institute of Literature, Languages and the Creative Arts (ILLCA) (2013-18) and the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (2018-), and more broadly. Filmer’s work on the intersection between theatre and architecture, as well as theatre and sport, demonstrates a key Departmental strength in moving beyond disciplinary boundaries. This is also evidenced in Ff. Jones’ site-specific research that brings together performance and rural studies through an emphasis on farming practices and communities.

We have consolidated our strengths in **interdisciplinary research and intermediality**, interrogating intersections between different art forms and methodological approaches. For instance, Knowles was Co-Investigator on the **AHRC International Research Network ‘Film and the Other Arts: Intermediality, Medium-Specificity, Creativity’** (2015-17), which established links with academics and artists from the UK, France, Belgium, Austria, Romania and the USA, as well as two non-academic partners: LUX: Centre for Moving Image and Filmhouse Cinema in Edinburgh. The network led to four workshops in Aberystwyth, Cambridge, Edinburgh and Vienna, as well as specially curated film screenings and events open to the public.

A further key priority has been to establish **meaningful and creative connections between different modes of research and types of output, enabling theory and practice to interrogate each other** and bring about new insights. In particular, we have continued to solidify our **practice-as-research** profile, which has been strengthened by investment in two new research hubs, a digital research lab and an analogue film lab. Through film, performance, scenographic design and installation art, we have pursued new creative synergies with other disciplines. Downing’s scenographic installation ***The Fractal Clock*** is the result of collaborative research with mathematician Professor Richard Taylor, leading to the visualisation of fractal geometry. Bevan’s ongoing collaboration with the Aberystwyth Ceramics Festival has opened up new practiced-based explorations of sculpture, experimental music and the moving image in his film ***Exemption from Meaning***. Through the scholarly outputs and practice-as-research activities of Ames, we are leading the field in **dance and disability**, creating new ways to

engage both academic communities and wider publics with disability through physical performance.

Staff in the Department have engaged in national and international networks and projects, **relating theatre, performance and media culture in Wales to trans-national activities and contexts**. Inter-departmental dialogue is facilitated by the active involvement of departmental staff within fora such as the Theatre and Performance Research Association (TaPRA), with the department hosting the TaPRA conference in 2018. Several staff members form a strong Departmental research nexus focusing on the field of Performance Design and Space, the vitality of which is demonstrated through engagement with national and international research and user communities. This is notably manifested in staff involvement (Banham, Downing, Filmer) in **The Prague Quadrennial**, the largest and most important international exhibition and festival of scenography, design for performance, and theatre architecture. Banham's theatre company **Quarantine** continues to interrogate dramaturgies and scenographies of being on stage and beings on stage, most notably in **Summer. Autumn. Winter. Spring. (S.A.W.S.)**, four distinct performance works conceived and performed as a seven-hour performance cycle. In 2015, as part of the 3-year research and development period for **S.A.W.S.**, a **Quarantine** residency with the Department's MA cohort facilitated the creation of a formally experimental and entirely new work entitled **Wallflower**, which has toured internationally (UK, Ireland, Netherlands, Sweden and Canada).

The **impact of our research** has been promoted through strategic objectives outlined in the REF 2014 submission, including undertaking scholarly, practical and sustainable research which is relevant to the needs of theatre, film, television and media industries in Wales and beyond, and working with partners in public engagement. We have strengthened our connections with organisations such as National Theatre Wales, particularly through Brookes' ongoing development of innovative large-scale intermedial and site orientated theatre practices within NTW's production programme. Most notable is Brookes' realisation of **ILIAD**, a marathon eleven-hour verbatim staging of the entirety of British poet Christopher Logue's epic reimagining of the main events in Homer's account of the last weeks of the Trojan War, and his resultant exploratory three-year Associate Artist attachment to the company. We also have developed our **public engagement activities** through a series of large-scale projects and international theatre commissions by Banham, Brookes and Downing.

Summer. Autumn. Winter. Spring. and **ILIAD** are the focus of our two Impact Case Studies. Both projects fully embody the department's strategic commitment to the development of original and significant investigations and outputs in **collaboration with major industry partners**, with the aim to directly **inform and influence disciplinary understandings and practices**. The resulting large-scale public outcomes have furthered many of our stated research and impact objectives, through new creative and collaborative approaches, platforming issues and realities of **the local** within works of **international reach and significance**, and combining **multidisciplinary creative and technical expertise** with innovative forms of **public engagement and participation**.

Our research strategy recognises the need, as well as the proven abilities of our research community, to simultaneously engage the local, national and international spheres. This strategy is informed by the value we continue to place on genuinely public and industry-facing enquiries and outcomes. We intend to further develop and capitalise upon the inherently interdisciplinary nature of our research practices, to direct our energies towards providing increasingly collective solutions to the expanding social and global challenges within our fields of expertise, by even greater integration and dialogue within our capabilities across disciplines, methodologies and working cultures.

Research Structure and Management

One of the Departmental aims laid out in the REF 2014 submission was to review the configuration of research groups along thematic rather than disciplinary lines, with a view to fostering collaboration between individual staff members and establishing national and

international research partnerships. A set of research clusters was introduced in 2016 and all research-active members of staff are associated with at least one of these. The clusters represent three broad themes across Departmental research and cut across the two curriculum groups of Film, Television and Media:

1. **Scenography, Performance and the Everyday** aims to support and enhance dialogue between the existing scholarly and practice-based research trajectories of its various members through a focused exploration of how scenographic and performance practices might inhabit, enliven and disrupt the habits and ecologies of everyday life.
2. **Media Industries and Institutions** brings together staff whose research interests include contemporary policy debates within the field, media audiences, digital culture and economies, historical and archival research, minority language media and the political economy of the media. The cluster includes staff with considerable experience of grant capture – attracting research grant awards from the AHRC, British Academy, Leverhulme Trust, the EU and Knowledge Transfer Partnerships.
3. **Screen Practice** fosters interdisciplinary research in lens-based media, incorporating practice-as-research and theoretical reflection on old and new technologies that range from photochemical film to virtual reality. The cluster draws on the expertise of affiliated members and on strong connections already established with academics, filmmakers, curators, galleries and film festivals, as well as other centres for artists' film production and fine art practice.

Research in the Department is overseen and supported the **Director of Research (DoR)**. The DoR chairs the **Research Committee**, which is involved in co-ordinating and assessing Departmental research for REF submission. Working closely with the Head of Department (HoD), the DoR is charged with promoting an active and interdisciplinary research culture through the development, monitoring and evaluation of research projects and initiatives. These include:

- evaluation of and assistance in developing applications for research leave, which are considered as part of a wider Faculty Committee.
- evaluation of PhD applications at both Departmental and Faculty level, in dialogue with the Director of Postgraduate Studies.
- co-ordinating the Department's Research Seminar Series, combining staff presentations with external speakers.
- organising and chairing the Department's Research Group meetings, which are held twice per semester and facilitate the communication of key research-related information, as well as providing a platform for the discussion and development of research ideas and Departmental events.
- liaison, dialogue and exchange with other Departmental research groups via the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences Research Committee, including the sharing of best practice (see REF5).
- the organisation of workshops and skills-sharing sessions on a variety of research topics including grant applications (via a dedicated Departmental Grant Application Mentor), publication strategies, practice-based research.

The Research Committee and Research Groups are supported by the Associate Dean for Research, Knowledge Exchange and Innovation, as well as the Faculty Manager. Researchers are kept fully updated and informed of funding opportunities by regular communications from the

Faculty Research Officer and the DoR. Practice-based research and other activities are further supported by the Departmental Technical Manager and Technicians.

As a Department working with multiple and overlapping forms of communication, our research reaches academic and non-academic audiences via multiple channels. Our publications adhere to the **Aberystwyth University open access policy**, and open access is facilitated through the University's Aberystwyth Research Portal. Audiovisual works are freely available on public platforms such as YouTube and Vimeo, and the documentation of live performance is hosted on relevant project websites in order to be widely accessible. As outlined in REF5a, staff receive training in open access, open research and research data management.

Research in TFTS is carried out in adherence with the University's ethics procedures. All research grant proposals and PhD research activities apply via an online system for ethics approval at Departmental level in the first instance, and are then referred to the University Research Ethics Panel if appropriate. Staff are encouraged to discuss proposals with the DoR and Research Officer at an early stage of development in order to ensure the highest level of research integrity and professional standards.

Research strategy 2021 onwards

Our research strategy for the next REF cycle is overseen by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and responds to the University's strategic priorities, as described in REF5a. It seeks to build on previous successes and identifies areas for potential growth.

Our plans for 2021 and beyond fall into the following key areas:

- Consolidate and expand our research strengths in **Welsh film, media and performance**. We have 2 monographs commissioned by the University of Wales Press – *Methiannau Gogoneddus: Gweledigaeth Berfformiadol Aled Jones Williams / Glorious Failures: Aled Jones Williams' Performative Vision* (Evans, 2022) and *Programmes, Protest and Politics: Television and society in Wales in the 1970s* (Medhurst, 2023), plus a further co-authored monograph in preparation – *Society, Identity and the BBC in Wales* (Medhurst with Martin Johnes and Elain Price, Swansea University).
- Develop our existing **practice-as-research hubs** as key sites of creative innovation following an extra £215k of capital funding received from HEFCW between 2020-21.
- Continue to develop our **practice-as-research profile** in the fields of scenography, theatre and performance, playwriting, documentary and experimental filmmaking, and curatorial practice. We will explore new and innovative public engagement strategies and strengthen our collaborative relationships with external arts organisations. Through the research hubs, we will further develop intermedial dialogues, exploring the relationship between theatre and moving image technologies. Investment in staffing, initially in relation to the analogue film laboratory, will enable us to build on the capital funding mentioned above and establish the Department as a unique site for technological innovation.
- Further encourage **research with impact** by helping staff members to identify the wider significance of their work outside academia. Explore further research collaborations with non-academic partners and encourage staff to seek financial and administrative support through the Impact Research Leave Scheme.
- Maximise **grant capture** through dedicated workshops and grant writing away days, where staff can spend concentrated time working on and discussing applications with peers.
- Develop the research culture of the Department by growing the **PhD cohort**, primarily through the new interdisciplinary MA schemes in Film Producing, Theatre Practice:

Performance and Scenography, and Documentary Filmmaking: Landscape and Ecology, as routes into PhD study.

- Establish a **Centre for Material Thinking** that consolidates the Department's interests in the aesthetics and politics of materiality, artistic responses to landscape and environment, and human/non-human interactions. This extends across all three research clusters, but offers a way of establishing a cross-Faculty dialogue, particularly with colleagues in the Department of Geography and Earth Sciences.
- Further strengthen the inclusive research environment in TFTS by reviewing structures and practices to remove barriers to equal and effective participation of all Departmental members in research activities. We will also continue to support staff whose research capacity has been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, building this into the Departmental Personal Research Plan (PeRPs) exercise and the University-wide Effective Contribution Scheme (ECS).

2. People

Staffing Strategy

TFTS aims to maximise the vitality of its research by enabling staff to undertake internationally excellent research, and to ensure its sustainability by making strategic appointments to expand and consolidate the research profile and by supporting the development of early career and postgraduate researchers. Two new research appointments have been made in the assessment period (Alcott and Ff. Jones), complementing investments in staffing made towards the end of the 2014 REF period (Bevan, Knowles and Woycicki) in significantly expanding the range and depth of the Department's research. Combined with the effect of retirements, staff moves and restructuring as part of the University's Sustainability Implementation Plan (SIP), these appointments have consolidated a team of 19 research active members of staff – 14 on full-time contracts (Ames, Banham, Bevan, Creeber, Downing, Evans, Filmer, A. Jones, Knowles, Medhurst, Owen, Rabey, Woodward, Woycicki) and 5 fractional posts (Gough, Ff. Jones, Brookes, Alcott, Ladd) (16.7 FTE). During the assessment period, three members of staff have been promoted from Lecturer to Senior Lecturer (Ames, Creeber, Filmer), two have been promoted to Reader (Jones, Medhurst), and one has been promoted to Professor (Banham).

Researcher Support and Development

The vitality of the Department's research and its future sustainability are underpinned by policies and practices for researcher support and development that are aimed at equipping staff with the time, resource and skills to design proposals and successfully compete for funding, effectively deliver projects and communicate their research for impact. This support is framed by the University's *People Strategy*, as described in REF5a, and involves actions implemented at university, faculty and departmental levels. Aberystwyth University subscribes to the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers and has established a Researcher Concordat Group in order to oversee the annual review of the Policy Statement and manage the implementation plan. For new academic staff, induction includes a meeting with the Research Development Officer, mandatory training through a Research Good Practice programme, followed by a period of mentoring with a senior colleague to support their introduction into the research community. All research staff participate in individual Research Development and Progress Meetings, linked to the development of their Personal Research Plan (PeRP). These are usually conducted twice yearly with the DoR and form the basis of biannual Department-level Research Monitoring. These monitoring meetings provide data for the University's Research Committee to consider how best to support research staff and what further training is required for staff to achieve their research ambitions. A regular Grant Writing Away Day has been implemented, which allows staff to develop funding bids, with support and advice from their peers, as well as the DoR and the Grant Application Mentor. Staff are encouraged to participate in the research seminar series, which puts particular emphasis on the sharing of work in progress. Staff have participated in the HEFCW Welsh Crucible (e.g., Woodward), a competitive scheme to identify and develop future research leaders. Participants take part in three intensive

residential workshops involving training and capacity building in areas including media engagement, networking with policy stakeholders, research impact and interdisciplinary working, and have access to seedcorn funds for small-scale interdisciplinary projects with participants from other Welsh HEIs.

Support for researchers includes:

- **Research Leave Scheme:** all research-active staff are invited to apply on an eligibility basis of one semester's leave in eight. Application is by pro forma that requires a detailed outline of intended research during the period of leave and the identification of definite returnable research outputs; applicants are expected to be engaged in securing external funding for research projects where appropriate. Applications are considered by the HoD and the Departmental Research Committee, and decisions are made by the Faculty Research Committee on the basis of their recommendations. The outcomes of all periods of research leave are reported to the Departmental Research Committee and to the Faculty Research Committee. Staff are also encouraged to share some exposition of these outcomes and related activities more widely, through a Departmental research presentation. Decisions on future leave are informed by both past performance and the vitality and sustainability of plans moving forward.
- An annual **Departmental Research Allowance** of £600 per annum for research trips and participations in conferences, workshops and attending research-related performances.
- Faculty support of £6,000 per annum for innovative and cross-disciplinary research centres.
- Access to the **Departmental Staff Development** fund of £3,000 for clearly-defined projects that relate to either learning and teaching or research.
- All researchers are encouraged to apply to the **University Research Fund**, which supports the development of significant, strategically driven research projects, allocated on a competitive basis, with awards of up to £10,000. Projects that are aimed at developing proposals for external funding are prioritised.
- **Support for Impact:** all research-active staff are encouraged to apply for funds that will allow them to initiate and develop impact activities emerging from their research. Through the University-wide **Research Impact Leave Scheme**, staff can apply for up to six months dedicated to generating impact and working with external organisations.
- The Department operates a **WAMM** (Workload Allocation and Management Model) and **Effective Contribution Scheme** to ensure that one-third of staff time is allocated to research.

Monitoring of Department research quality is achieved through:

- **Annual monitoring** of all researchers by HoD and DoR through the Research Progress and Development meetings, based on **Personal Research Plans**, which are discussed with research leaders within each unit, in order to offer advice, identify training needs and research targets; including possible training for research leadership with the innovative Welsh Crucible.
- Formal close reading and internal rating against published REF criteria of all potential outputs by the **Reading Committee**, which meets on a regular basis.

- Advice and assessment of research funding applications, including review and evaluation by senior researchers.
- Regular scrutiny of procedures by the **Research Committee** that includes the HoD, DoR, the Director of Learning and Teaching and two other staff members.

Early Career Researchers

Early Career Researchers (ECRs) make a significant contribution to the Departmental research culture and they are supported through Faculty events and initiatives such as the FASS Early Career Researcher Away Day. The Faculty has recently established a Concordat Mentor/Champion role, with responsibility for extending the support offered to ECRs in the development of their academic careers. Newly appointed ECRs are encouraged to set research targets as part of the 3-year probation exercise, and these are monitored every 18 months by the Probation Committee. As part of our research renewal, in 2019 we embedded a research focus in our PGCTHE training and there is also support for Early Career project development and ringfenced University pump-priming funds are available.

Research students

Research students are central to the vitality of the research culture of the Department and are an investment in the future research sustainability of the field. 40.5 doctoral degree awards were made to TFTS students during this REF period, with many of these PhD graduates going on to secure academic jobs in leading institutions and to produce theoretical and practice outputs of particular importance to their field (e.g., Bodor – University of Dundee; Collins – Edinburgh College of Art; B. Davies – Bangor University; Jenner – Anglia Ruskin University; Matthews – University of Salford; McAllister – Leeds Trinity University; Pett – University of York; Reading – Cardiff Met University; Sedgman – University of Bristol). TFTS has been able to offer a number of scholarships for doctoral study through the University's prestigious AberDoc scheme. This scheme foregrounds employability and the development of skills for future careers in academia and beyond.

TFTS is part of the AHRC South West and Wales Doctoral Training Partnership (with the universities of Bath Spa, Bristol, Cranfield, Cardiff, Exeter, Reading, Southampton and UWE Bristol, and the National Museum of Wales). The Department has primary-supervised 2 and co-supervised 2 DTP students during this assessment period. Additionally, 2 studentships have been secured from the AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Partnership scheme, working with Chapter Arts Centre in Cardiff and the National Museum of Wales respectively. Significant public engagement activities have emerged from these partnerships, such as the retrospective of the Welsh artist Ivor Davies, '**Silent Explosion: Ivor Davies and Destruction in Art**' (14 November 2015 – 20 March 2016), curated by Judit Bodor as the practice element of the PhD. The EU-funded Knowledge Economy Skills Scholarships (KESS) scheme in Wales has funded a further 13 research students (9 PhDs, 4 MPhils) over the review period to conduct their research with a partner industry or the public sector.

The support, mentoring and career development of research students takes a number of forms. Students are allocated a first and second supervisor, and monthly supervisory meetings are held to monitor progress and set research targets. They also participate in an annual research monitoring process, which considers student progress with reference to benchmarks of submission and achievement for every year of study.

A rigorous induction process – dovetailed with the central University programme – is a requirement for research students; they undergo compulsory research training (two modules) in their first year, together with workshops covering research skills, ethics, writing, publishing and employability. They are also able to undertake the HEA accredited Teaching for Postgraduates at Aberystwyth University (TPAU) scheme, which equips them with vital skills and a recognised qualification for their future careers.

All research students are invited to attend a monthly Departmental 'Jour Fixe', where they have the opportunity to present aspects of their work or discuss issues related to either doctoral study or pursuing an academic career. These sessions involve presentations by current staff, as well as invited speakers from other academic institutions. Students in all years of the PhD are expected to contribute a paper to the annual Faculty Postgraduate Conference, where they gain crucial skills in conference presentation. They are also encouraged to attend external conferences and present papers as part of their professional development, supported by a Departmental Research Student Allowance of £300pa per student. They may also apply for other research resources, for example for staging symposia or research-related practice. Research students currently occupy a study suite in the main building of the Department, which provides office, desk and storage space. Research students are actively involved in the research culture of the Department. Evidence of this is the 'Performance, Media and Sport' seminar series initiated and organised by a current PhD student, as well as two recent conferences: 'The Pro Wrestling Symposium: Laying the Academic "Smackdown"' (2016) and the Past Cinema Audiences Conference (2018). Research students are actively involved in disseminating their research through book chapters and peer reviewed articles, supported through the process by their supervisors.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

TFTS is committed to building an inclusive research environment with respect to issues of equality and diversity reflected in recruitment, promotion and staff development policies; opportunities and support for research; research monitoring and REF selection; postgraduate recruitment and supervision; and impact and engagement activities. We are working towards a more gender balanced team, currently with 12 male and 7 female REF eligible staff members.

The Department has adopted a number of policies and procedures to enable inclusive engagement in research, including a transparent framework for **research leave**, with applications considered by a FASS panel with a supportive "stretching" rather than gate-keeping process; and flexible contracts and hours, including a number of staff members employed on **part-time contracts** with research time protected through the WAMM. Within the Department, equality and diversity issues are promoted by a designated Equality Champion who has worked closely with the University's Diversity and Inclusion Manager on International Women's Day initiatives and initiatives for Black History Month.

The commitment of the TFTS Department and Aberystwyth University to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion issues is recognised by a Disability Confident Employer accreditation and inclusion in Stonewall's Top 100 UK Employers for a LGBT+ friendly workplace. All staff are required to have completed Equality and Diversity Training and a number of networks promote equality issues and provide support for researchers, including the Women in Research Network, BAME Network, LGBT Network and Disability and Wellbeing Network. Members of staff in the Department are active in these networks, including for example as both mentors and mentees in the Female Academic Mentoring Programme.

Principles of equality and inclusion have been incorporated into the REF 2021 selection process, as outlined in the University's Code of Practice, with all members of the REF Reading Committee and supplementary reviewers engaging fully with unconscious bias training. The Departmental REF Reading Committee has also included an independent member from a cognate department in FASS to monitor fair practice. Applications for output reductions for Individual Staff Circumstances are assessed through an anonymous process, with decisions made outside the Department.

The Department supports a bilingual research environment in which English and Welsh languages have equal status. Five staff members currently conduct research in Welsh, and all research in Wales follows the University's Welsh Language Policy, with opportunities for research subjects to participate in Welsh and bilingual communication with research participants and the public. Staff and postgraduates are encouraged to present and publish research in Welsh where appropriate. A. Jones is Editor of the transdisciplinary Welsh-language e-journal

Gwerddon, and staff in the department have been involved in Welsh-language public engagement and impact activities, including at the National Eisteddfod (Bevan, Ff. Jones, Medhurst, Woodward). This also includes contributions to Welsh-language media and representation on committees such as BAFTA Cymru (Woodward). Research carried out by Ff. Jones into local farming communities is carried out in Welsh.

3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

TFTS receives funding from a variety of research councils and charities, with a total external research income of over £1,272,000 over the period of assessment. Research grants have been awarded from the Arts and Humanities Research Council, the Leverhulme Trust and EU government bodies. Key awards include an AHRC Networking Grant (Knowles) and a Leverhulme Trust Research Grant (Medhurst). Our practice-based research is funded through organisations such as the Arts Council of Wales (ACW), Arts Council of England (ACE), Creative Scotland, the Wellcome Trust and the National Trust. Key projects have emerged through either direct Arts Council funding (Banham, Brookes, Gough) or as artistic commissions and research residences produced by publicly supported institutions (Brookes, Gough, Ladd, Ff. Jones). Practice-based research staff within the Department also regularly receiving fully-funded project commissions and residency awards from equivalent overseas organisations and institutions (Brookes, Ladd, Ff. Jones). Quarantine theatre company (Banham) received just over £1.5m in project and company funding during this assessment period, primarily from the Arts Council of England and the Wellcome Trust, for public performances that emerge from and intersect with Banham's research activities. In addition, Brookes received approximately £600,000 in direct public funding and production support from UK, EU, national, regional and city arts funding to facilitate impact through the development and public presentation of innovative performance works. *ILIAD*, for example, was commissioned by National Theatre Wales and received £200,000 from Arts Council of Wales and Welsh Government funding. The University Research Fund has made awards to three staff members during this cycle to a total of £15,938 for projects that will lead to larger external research grant applications and REF outputs.

The Department supports the development and submission of research grant applications through its Research Committee and the mentoring arrangements provided in each research group. Research management, guidance and monitoring is provided by the DoR and the HoD. The progress and successful delivery of externally funded research projects is formally evaluated and recorded through the Research Committee and, thereafter, the University. Capacity-building for research grant capture to enhance the vitality and sustainability of research in the Department is also supported by programmes and initiatives run by the University's Department Research, Business and Innovation, including, research cafes, sandpits and a 'Grants Factory' workshop, as well as by actions introduced by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences including the designation of Senior Research Development Leads with a remit to stimulate collaborative inter-disciplinary research activities and provide mentoring for grant applicants. Support for the development of individual grant applications is provided by a Research Development Officer assigned to the Department, and we have strengthened the University-wide internal peer review process by matching applicants with a mentor at an early stage of the process.

Equality and inclusion in access to research grant income is addressed through targeted measures including an annual sandpit event for ECRs to support the development of ECR projects, and the opportunity for ECRs to apply for ringfenced University pump-priming funds, and Faculty 'Women Doing Research' workshops covering topics including international research, mentoring, leadership and the REF.

Facilities

The vitality of research in the Department is supported by excellent facilities for practice-based research, which have been enhanced through significant capital investment of £180k from HEFCW during the assessment period. This investment has enabled the establishment of three

specialist research laboratories that form an important foundation for the sustainability of our research:

- The **Digital Technologies Laboratory** provides researchers with hardware and software to enable more sophisticated experimentation in areas where staff interests coincide in collaborative performance projects. The interaction between a performer and the digital world in Live Art is a growing field of research in the department that will be developed throughout the next REF cycle. This research resource relates particularly to the recently-awarded AHRC Research Network on Theatre, AI and Ludic Technologies (NTAIL), led by Woycicki.
- The **Analogue Film Laboratory** is a professional quality photochemical film (16mm/8mm) lab and darkroom that houses rare equipment for research-led experimental film practice (16mm cameras, optical printer, Steenbeck editing table, digital scanner). This space has recently been fully refurbished to a high standard as part of the Department's investment in technological diversity. It will create valuable opportunities for residences by visiting filmmaker-researchers and will be an attractive resource for PhD by practice students.
- The new **Scenography Laboratory** will support research which is greatly dependent upon being able to make experiments in and with the reshaping of spaces. This research combines the analogue and the electronic, an interface between both the physical construction and animation of objects in space and the environments that those objects inhabit. Closely associated with the research interests of Banham, Brookes and Downing, this laboratory will focus on materials and materiality to develop practice driven explorations of the object as actant as well as establishing a productive 'agonistic pluralism' across all 3 laboratories.

These new facilities complement established infrastructure in the Department including three large studio spaces (one equipped as a high-definition television studio), three rehearsal rooms, wardrobe, sound studio, 25 digital editing suites (industry-standard Avid) available for the creation, rehearsal and presentation of practice-based research and outreach activities, as well as technical equipment and the support of six full-time members of technical staff, each with a very specific area of expertise. Practice-based researchers and research students have access to The Foundry – a fully equipped laboratory theatre studio dedicated to the development of practice-based research and workshops by staff, postgraduate research students, and visiting scholars and practitioners. Additionally, the Department has a fully equipped theatre in Aberystwyth town centre, Theatr y Castell.

The Department benefits from close proximity and association with the National Library of Wales, a legal deposit library, and its specialist National Screen and Sound Archive; and with the University's Arts Centre, with which the Department has a strong working relationship.

Aberystwyth University has a strong history of collaboration with both national and international institutions and companies, and these relationships are fostered through the provision of use or service of our research infrastructure. We maintain a central database for equipment and facilities within PURE, which is publicly searchable through the Aberystwyth Research Portal. Details of equipment and facilities available for external use are also listed via [equipment.data](#). We have achieved gold compliance with their standards by making our database as freely discoverable and searchable as possible.

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

Collaborations

The vitality of the Department's research is reflected in collaborations and dialogue with a variety of national and international publics, creative communities and academic and non-academic partners. These collaborations further contribute to the sustainability of our research

environment by increasing critical mass, opening new opportunities and facilitating the broader impact of our work with diverse audiences.

TFTS places emphasis on interdisciplinary collaboration within the university, and although the nature of these collaborations has shifted with staff changes in both TFTS and cognate departments, we continue to develop and seek out innovative partnerships. The Centre for Media History continues to be one of our flagship collaborations with the Department of Welsh and Welsh History. Aberystwyth's research expertise in this field is internationally recognised, and the *Media History* journal is currently based at the University. We are pursuing interdisciplinary collaborations with the Department of Geography and Earth Sciences, which has already led to the establishment of a unique MA in Documentary Filmmaking: Landscape and Ecology. Collaboration with colleagues in the Department of Computer Science has resulted in a successful funding bid to the Wales European Funding Office (WEFO) for a new MSc by distance learning in Advanced Media Production.

The organisation of and participation in key scholarly events and networks by members of the Department, nationally and internationally, has facilitated the exchange of ideas and has laid the ground for future research collaborations. For example, Filmer co-curated the Shared Practice and Shared Pedagogies events at the 2015 Prague Quadrennial of Performance, Design and Space. Knowles was project partner on 'Reset the Apparatus!', an international creative research project based at the University of Applied Arts, Vienna (2016-19). Medhurst is a Steering Group member of the Entangled Media Histories research and teaching network based at Lund University (2013 – present) and has served on advisory committees for AHRC-funded projects on 'Connected Histories of the BBC' (University of Sussex) and 'The History of Forgotten Television Drama in the UK' (Royal Holloway). Brookes is currently an active creative associate to National Theatre Wales, Quarantine (Manchester) and Untitled Projects (Glasgow).

Departmental staff have collaborated both nationally and internationally with companies and institutions such as National Theatre Wales (Banham, Brookes, Filmer); Quarantine (Banham, Brookes); Manchester International Festival, Music Theatre Wales (Banham); Theatr Genedlaethol, International Contemporary Dance Collective (iCoDaCo) (Banham, Ladd); Untitled Projects (Brookes); The National Screen and Sound Archive, and ITV Wales (Bevan), and the Edinburgh International Film Festival (Knowles). Banham's work continues to inform that of other companies and programmes, most recently including the design of the large-scale outdoor participatory event ***What is the city but the people?***, conceived in collaboration with artist Jeremy Deller and director Richard Gregory, as the opening event of the 2017 Manchester International Festival. ***It Will Come Later*** is an intercultural project bringing together choreographers and artists from Hong Kong, Wales, Sweden, Hungary and Poland. These collaborations help to support the Department's contributions to the economy and society, as detailed below.

Contributions to Economy and Society

Many of our staff members are involved in professional practice, public engagement activities and community-led projects, which take place both within and alongside their research. The public nature of our theatre, performance and film research seeks and encourages engagement with audiences in a variety of contexts, communities and localities, through work being staged and screened in conjunction with academic conferences, festivals, international showcases, public institutions and community organisations. These activities contribute to society by enriching cultural experiences and promoting public appreciation of the arts, in Wales and beyond.

Banham was appointed as one of the three International Commissioners for the Prague Quadrennial 2015 *Shared Space: Music, Weather, Politics*, curating the 'Weather and Scenography' submissions from over 80 countries. For the 2015 Prague Quadrennial, Downing was also invited to contribute a workshop to the SpaceLab (a series of workshops which create opportunities for more than 1500 students and young professionals from around the world to meet directly with top professionals in the field of performance design). In 2019 Filmer was one

of three experts on the selection jury for the Performance Space Exhibition. Brookes was also appointed joint curator of the 2018 edition of the international contemporary art and performance biennial *Prototipoak* in Bilbao, Spain – a programme of public performance and exhibition events established to explore new possibilities and approaches within located and participatory public art in the city. Knowles is a member of the core programming team at the Edinburgh International Film Festival and has organised several key events based on her research interests in experimental cinema (e.g., 'Regrouping Retrospective' 2016).

Other members of staff have contributed to national and international festivals with talks, curated screenings and panel discussions at the 25fps Festival, Zagreb (Knowles), Alchemy Film Festival (Knowles), Oberhausen Film Festival (Knowles), Process Festival, Riga (Knowles), and the Strangoscope Festival, Florianopolis (Knowles); as well as for events at the Arnolfini Arts Centre (Knowles), British Film Institute (Medhurst), Kunstforum Vienna (Knowles), Museum of Modern Art, Rio de Janeiro (Knowles), Science Museum, London (Medhurst), Watershed Cinema (Knowles), Vancouver Art Gallery (Knowles), and Whitechapel Gallery (Knowles).

Members of the Department have contributed to culture and society in Wales by holding advisory positions, informing policy, organising and participating in public events (e.g. National Eisteddfod) and speaking to community groups and organisations. Woodward was Vice-Chair of the Arts Council of Wales (2012-17) and Chair of the Wales at Venice Committee (2014-16), whilst Medhurst has been a member of the Institute of Welsh Affairs Media Policy Group (2015-18) and of the Expert Advisory Group for the National Broadcast Archive of Wales (2017 – present), and presented evidence to the National Assembly for Wales Culture, Welsh Language and Communication Committee on Devolving Broadcasting Powers to Wales (March 2020). A. Jones is a member of the Board of Trustees for the National Library of Wales and sits on the Board of Directors for the Coleg Cwmraeg Cenedlaethol. Ff. Jones has disseminated aspects of her research at a number of local and community events in Wales, including the Cymerau Spring Gathering, the Wales Real Food and Farming conference, the Future Landscapes symposium; Evans has written articles for the *The Guardian* on Welsh theatre; Medhurst has been involved in several public engagement and media activities, including contributing to BB2/S4C's programme on Dylan Thomas as documentary filmmaker, curating a web page on the '100 Voices of the BBC' site, writing the history of BBC Wales on the BBC's public-facing website and making regular contributions BBC Radio Cymru. Woodward has organised public engagement activities related to the television series *Hinterland / Y Gwyll*, including a panel event at the National Eisteddfod in 2015. Owen's work as a director with Cwmni Theatr Cydweithredol Troed-y-Rhiw has resulted in *Parc Glas*, 2015, a Welsh-language dialect adaptation of Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*, examining issues of structural change within agricultural communities in Ceredigion. Ladd is active in delivering schools' workshops in Welsh, and her performance *Dawns Ysbrydion* (Ghost Dance) was included in the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in 2015. *Caitlin*, a duet commissioned by the National Library of Wales for her own company Light, Ladd & Emberton, had a Welsh language version alongside the original in English and toured extensively in Wales. It was part of the British Council Showcase at the Fringe in 2019.

Contributions to the Research Base and Discipline

The Department's contribution to the vitality and sustainability of the research base is evident across a number of collaborative projects, editorial memberships, external examiner appointments, peer review panels and advisory roles. These engagements also inform the vitality and sustainability of research in the Department by facilitating a sharing of ideas and experience and the fostering of new opportunities for collaboration.

The Department hosted the **14th Annual TaPRA Conference** in September 2018, organised by Banham. The event brought 230 international delegates to Aberystwyth University, with over 150 papers, special events and exhibitions. 'The Pro Wrestling Symposium: Laying the Academic "Smackdown"' in 2016 (organised by Alcott), the Journal of Media Practice and MeCCSA Practice Network Conference in 2015 (organised by Bevan), and the 'Entangled Media Histories Network Symposium' in 2019 (organised by Medhurst), have also hosted by the Department, and staff contribute regularly to **international conferences** within their field of specialism.

Members of the Department have provided **leadership in subject organisations**, including Filmer as Co-convenor of the International Federation of Theatre Research (IFTR) Theatre Architecture Working Group (2012 – present) and Woycicki is co-convenor of the TaPRA Performance and New Technologies Group. Staff members have supported scholarly publishing and shaped disciplinary trajectories through **editorial work**, including A. Jones as Editor for *Gwerddon*, Medhurst as Editor-in-chief of *Media History* and Banham as Associate Editor of *Theatre and Performance Design* journal; as well as positions as book series editors for Palgrave Macmillian (Knowles) and Cambridge Scholars (Medhurst). During the assessment period, researchers in the Department have served on editorial and advisory boards for journals including *Body, Space and Technology*; *Journalism and Mass Communication*; *Millennium Film Journal*; and *NECSUS: European Journal of Media Studies*, as well as for the Peter Lang book series, 'European Connections: Studies in Comparative Literature, Intermediality and Aesthetics'; and have guest edited special issues of *NECSUS: European Journal of Media Studies* (Knowles, 2015) and *Theatre and Performance Design* (Filmer, 2019).

The expertise of staff in the Department is frequently called upon as members of **peer review colleges** for the AHRC, ESRC and UKRI Future Leaders Fellowships, as well as in peer review of manuscripts and book proposals for over 20 journals and 9 publishers during the assessment period.

The vitality and relevance of research in Department has been demonstrated by invitations for members of staff to deliver keynote presentations and guest talks at international institutions including the University of Applied Arts in Vienna (Knowles), Berlin University of the Arts (Knowles), Duke University (USA) (Knowles), Lund University (Sweden) (Medhurst), Dublin City University (Medhurst), University of Nantes (Woodward), as well as to nine universities in the UK (including Bournemouth, Bristol, Edinburgh, Exeter, Lincoln, Nottingham, Royal Holloway and Warwick). Staff have also examined 20 doctorates in a wide variety of fields and encompassing practice-as-research projects. The international reach of our research is evidenced in External Examiner appointments at the Université de Paris VII; University of Canberra; Macquarie University, Sydney; and Central Queensland University.

As a further indicator of esteem in the field and the wider profession, staff in the Department have received **awards and prizes** for their practice-based research, including The British Universities Film and Video Council's Learning on Screen award for Best Audiovisual Essay for Bevan and Creeber's video essay 'Into the Looking Glass: How selfie culture is preparing us to meet our future selves' (2018), and the Critics' Award for Theatre in Scotland (CATS) Best Design Award for Mike Brookes' 'Paul Bright's Confessions of a Justified Sinner' – an Untitled Projects and National Theatre of Scotland co-production.