

<b>Institution: Newcastle University</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: 34 Communication, Cultural and Media Studies, Library and Information Management</b>
<p><b>Section 1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy</b></p> <p><u>Overview</u></p> <p>Media, Culture, Heritage (MCH) Subject Group is located in the School of Arts and Cultures (SACs) in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (HaSS). MCH was formed in 2016 through a merging of the pre-existing Media and Cultural Studies Department (MACs) and the International Centre for Cultural and Heritage Studies (ICCHS). This combination enabled the creation of a unique multi-disciplinary space for world-class research and teaching on the relationship between media, culture and heritage. In this regard, the new Subject Group builds upon the successful submission of both departments to REF2014. At the REF census date, MCH had 38.8 FTE CAT A (Category A) staff whose focus crosses research in media, culture and heritage including a strong cohort of practice-based staff providing training and education in journalism, public relations (PR), and film making. This is a marked growth from REF2014, where MACs submitted 15 CAT A staff, meaning that the Subject Group has more than doubled in size and research capacity since 2014. With the exception of 2 staff, everyone being submitted to UoA34 is a member of staff in MCH.</p> <p>MCH's mission is driven by the belief that how the past and present are mediated through a range of technologies and practices is key to understanding the political, economic and cultural challenges of the present moment and the imagined future. These technologies include print, film and digital media and practices of media consumption and production, journalism, public relations, and museum management and curatorship amongst others. From fake news and misrepresentation of the past in digital media, to the contested politics of memory in monuments and museum and gallery spaces, to the rise of far-right discourse on social media, staff in MCH recognise that understanding, analysing and intervening in these technologies and practices is key to producing a more just, equitable and fair world.</p> <p>As the largest Subject Group in SACs, MCH is uniquely positioned to achieve its strategy through a singular combination of interdisciplinary knowledge and expertise. MCH staff creatively combine theories and methods from humanities, creative practices and social sciences, supported by significant infrastructural investments in world-leading film making facilities to create original interdisciplinary forms of research-led knowledge, outputs and impact. The success of MCH's unique interdisciplinary strengths is evidenced in outputs as diverse as internationally award-winning documentaries on racism, policy-challenging social science research on immigration within the EU and evidence that improves the protection of cultural property during armed conflict. In turn, this work demonstrates MCH's (and the University's) commitment to enabling socially conscious change for communities both within Newcastle and in a range of other international and global contexts.</p> <p>Recognising the importance of leading outward facing debates in academia and civil society around equality and inclusion, MCH is also focused on producing a research environment that is transformative for staff and students. To do this, MCH works to create a space that addresses issues of diversity and offers a research culture that is equitable and inclusive for all people, through actively seeking diversity in hiring practices, mentoring, promotion and progression and research support.</p> <p><u>Research Strategy</u></p> <p>The synergy of expertise and skill in the newly formed MCH has resulted in a series of major achievements in the current REF period, which build upon the strategy outlined in the 2014 REF</p>

environment template. In 2014, we made a commitment to advance critical theory and further bridge divisions between theory and practice with research at regional, national and international levels; to foster collaborative and RCUK/EU-funded research and to respond with politically current and policy-relevant research to the major societal challenges that our work addresses. This commitment has borne considerable fruit, including the award of £2.76 million of research funding during the assessment period and significant international impact, which the Subject Group continues to build upon.

As such, the Subject Group's current research strategy is threefold:

- i) to advance critical theory and further bridge divisions between theory and practice across media and cultural studies, heritage, film, and journalism and public relations in order to produce innovative digital and creative practice-based outputs.
- ii) to foster interdisciplinary collaborative UKRI/EU-funded projects that produces innovative, discipline leading research.
- iii) to respond to major societal challenges with interdisciplinary theory and method that creates politically and policy-relevant research at regional, national and international levels.

To realise this strategy, the Subject Group's research is organised around 4 key groups/themes. These groups/themes are organised to enable interdisciplinary research and collaboration between staff members with varying academic and professional backgrounds where that seems appropriate and productive.

1. **Media and Culture** examines issues of digital and social media and politics and identity across a range of cultural practices. Specifically, staff working in the media and culture theme are world leading in their respective fields of expertise, producing pathbreaking research on digital media theory and practice (Ash, Hands, Chambers); disabled girls' online self-representation practices (Hill); gender, politics and media (Ross); leisure and blue spaces (Evers); gender and identities (Haywood; Longstaff); and culture, science and technology (Sikka). These phenomena are studied through the significant theoretical and methodological forwarding of perspectives including Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis; Critical Discourse Analysis; Digital Media Theory; Feminism and Critical Race Theory. Other staff include: Baldwin, Davenport, Mearns, Newman and Rush-Cooper.
2. **Heritage** is concerned with all areas of heritage studies and is internationally renowned for its distinctive focus on issues around immigration and the politics of memory. The importance of the heritage group within the University has been recognised by its support of the Heritage NUCoRE, (Newcastle University Centres of Research Excellence). This work expands debates around politics and memory by considering these terms in a diverse sense, examining a range of specific periods and spaces, including difficult histories in Northern Ireland, Germany and Turkey (Bozoglu, Markham, Eckersley); migration and identities (Whitehead, Galani); belonging and memory (Sayner); built heritage (Coffield); community, museology and heritage spaces (Mason); and the protection and preservation of cultural property and artefacts (Mazel, Stone). These periods and spaces are examined from a number of different theoretical and methodological perspectives, including affect theory; postcolonial theory and feminism. Other staff include; Lanz.
3. **Film** focuses on the production and theorisation of film, with a particular emphasis on documentary film making practice. Staff share a number of overlapping interests and have expertise in theorising documentary as a critical and creative practice; history of the documentary; intersections between the documentary and sociological / anthropological / cultural studies; independent film production and exhibition; documentary practices in India / South Asia; film festivals; and sports documentaries. These interests have resulted in award winning and genre defining documentary films on a diverse range of topics from Martin Luther King (McDonald and Jayaraman) to language education in Africa (Cole). Other staff include; Gharavi, Shail and Sidenova.

4. **Journalism** critically examines the relationship between politics, journalism and PR practice and society. Topics under research in this area include the role of moral storytelling, propaganda, mythology and ideology in relation to a range of topics including gender; civil unrest, political party rhetoric, economic disasters, and terrorism (Kelsey, Khosravinik, Lavy, Peng, Zollmann); data visualisation and information graphics (Dick); the politics of local media (Baines); and celebrity journalism (Usher).

### Impact Strategy

The Subject Group's impact strategy is built out of its commitment to carry out research that creates a more just and equitable world. As such, the Subject Group's impact strategy is closely linked to the ethos of how research and research funding applications are designed across the 4 research themes. Research and impact strategies are linked through 3 core tenets that underlie research:

- i) a focus on problem-driven research which studies social, economic, political and cultural phenomena by identifying what issues they raise for different groups in society and designing methodologies that can produce insights to enable change.
- ii) a drive to design projects in collaboration with the communities, groups and stakeholders who are expert in the issues under study, or who can benefit most from the findings from such projects.
- iii) evidence gathering and data collection that is designed to produce insights that can speak to policy change and other forms of societal transformation.

This strategy was key to the development of the four impact case studies (ICS) submitted. For example, Stone's ICS (34-4) was driven by the problem of cultural property destruction that occurred during armed conflict and he worked with US and UK military forces to develop policies to ensure their protection. Newman and Davenport's ICS (34-1) on ageing and dementia worked directly with people living with dementia and local artists to develop opportunities for creative expression. Ross's ICS (34-3) draws on decades of research and comprises a set of resources which provide pedagogical and practitioner-focused materials to enhance gender-sensitive journalism. Ash's ICS (34-2) was based on data that was collected using innovative interface methodologies and which provided insight that directly informed the design of credit union-backed alternative digital platforms to high-cost forms of digital credit.

A commitment to impact driven research, which is shared by teaching staff, technicians, students and professional services, results in an impact strategy focused on three goals.

- i) **Influence policy and regulation across local, national and international governmental and non-governmental organisations.** In the Subject Group, staff produce knowledge that has informed evidence-based policy recommendations in a variety of realms. Evidence of these strategies in action include Stone's UNESCO work with international militaries to protect cultural property (2015-ongoing), Ash's ESRC (2016-18, £139K) funded project on high-cost credit and Newman's AHRC (2013-17, £266K) work on Dementia.
- ii) **Co-produce knowledge and education with charities and third sector organisations in order to inform different local, national and international groups.** Staff working across all 4 themes work to co-produce knowledge that informs the strategies and activities of a range of charities and third sector organisations. Evidence of success here include Ross's ESRC Impact Accelerator Account (IAA) 'Not Acting Our Age' network (2016-17, £11K) to promote the visibility of women in the city and Chambers' ESRC project (2018-22, £14K) working with local mental health charities focusing on improving services for young people.
- iii) **Work with local, national and international communities to change the environments and spaces in which they live.** Researchers in all 4 groups directly work with a variety of communities, with a focus on altering how these communities live together and understand

one another. Evidence of this strategy includes Ever's Macquarie University funded (2019-20, £2K) project on polluted leisure, which has generated community projects to rejuvenate disused spaces in North Tyneside and within journalism, Baines has worked with Newcastle charity Headliners on a Heritage Lottery funded project (2019-21) to enable young people in migrant groups to document their experience through news reporting.

#### Strategic future aims and goals for the next five years

Building upon the success of the current REF period, MCH's aims over the next 5 years are fourfold.

1. The Subject Group seeks to further build its interdisciplinary research profile through innovative methods and practices. Extending the success of networks built within Newcastle, such as the Heritage NUCoRE (see Institutional Level Environment Statement 2.2), the Subject Group will create further links with other NUCoREs. This strategy is beginning to be realised. For instance, Newman is working with the Ageing NUCoRE to develop interdisciplinary research on dementia and ageing.
2. The Subject Group will extend its research networks in order to enhance the international standing of our research and in particular work with institutions and organisations outside of the global North. The groundwork for this expansion is already developing, with members of staff actively pursuing research in the global South and Asia. For example, Ash has recently been awarded EPSRC funding to develop VR technology to aid maternal health in refugee camps in Kenya (2019-20, £18K award to University, £3K to SACs). Ross is one of the leads on an internally-funded network on women in development (2019-2021) and will be developing two projects focused on women entrepreneurs in India (2021) in collaboration with 2 Delhi-based NGOs and the Indian Institute for Mass Communication.
3. The Subject Group will build upon its impact activities, with a particular emphasis on public policy influence. In the current period, impact across the Heritage and Media and Culture themes has been international (ICS 34-3, 34-4) national (ICS 34-1, 34-2) and regional. In the next REF period, the Subject Group will seek to create more joined-up impact, with regional research data feeding into national and international debates through collaboration with existing colleagues at other institutions and organisations.
4. Recognising that a commitment to Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) is an ongoing process, the Subject Group will continue to diversify its community of staff and students across all four research themes. We will achieve this through working to enable the transfer of staff from CAT B to CAT A, supporting women's progression to senior grades, continuing to decolonise curricula through ongoing review and using targeted studentships to diversify our Postgraduate (PGR) community.

#### Open Research

The Subject Group is an open research environment, rigorously engaging with Newcastle's commitment to maximising research discoverability and impact. MCH research outputs are freely available on ePrints, the University's online open access research depository. Moving significantly beyond the REF's open access policy requirements, the Subject Group is part of the Plan S commitment. Plan S requires that publications arising from research funded through grants from cOAlition S members (e.g. the European Commission) are published in open access journals and platforms or made immediately available through open repositories without embargo.

MCH leads the drive on open access data, as part of Newcastle's key role in the development of the UK Concordat on Open Data. The Subject Group follows the principles of the Concordat to make research openly available for use by others wherever possible in a manner consistent with relevant legal, ethical and regulatory frameworks. The Subject Group is also committed to the effective sharing of research data, following the University's FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable) data policy. To support FAIR, datasets from MCH research projects are shared via data.ncl; Newcastle University's open data repository. The repository makes



research data discoverable and enables new collaborations. Data deposited is preserved for at least 10 years and in most cases openly accessed. The commitment to Plan S and the UK Concordat on Open Data reflects MCH's core mission to promote its research as widely as possible and ensure staff and student work is discoverable as soon as it can be.

Alongside the University's research strategy, the Subject Group supports a culture of research integrity, and ensures that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks. Such ethics are also integral to MCH's research environment. For instance, those working within the Journalism theme subscribe to the NUJ code of conduct and those in Media and Culture, Heritage and Film proactively work to ensure their research is also responsible, with a particular focus on how research outputs might be negatively used or misused.

## **Section 2. People**

### Staff and Staffing Strategy

MCH is a large academic Subject Group, consisting of 38.8 FTE CAT A staff (at the census date). This is a more than doubling of staff numbers from REF2014, and thus research capacity and expertise. 2 members of the submission come from other departments (Gharavi and Baldwin), while working within the MCH research remit. The increase in staff reflects a sustained and ambitious investment in the Subject Group from the University during this period. Further evidence of this investment is the institutional support for Stone's UNESCO Chair for Cultural Property Protection & Peace, which was renewed in 2019 and demonstrates the University's recognition of MCH's research excellence in this sub-disciplinary area.

Staffing strategy for the Subject Group is based on growing expertise across the 4 research themes in ways that enable further interdisciplinary engagement, with a particular emphasis on digital practice and theory. Digital technologies have become more and more pervasive in structuring all aspects of society, but also require unique interdisciplinary knowledge to study and understand. As such, MCH's appointment strategy has resulted in unique interdisciplinary Lectureship appointments in Digital Media and PR (Peng 2019) and Digital Approaches to Media, Heritage and Cultural Studies (Eckersley 2019; Coffield 2019; Rush-Cooper 2019; Markham 2020). This intentional investment has led to an increase in research funding in this area, such as the EU-funded En/Counter/Points project (Eckersley 2019-22, £213K) and ESRC projects on interfaces and gambling (Ash 2019-21, £254K) and high-cost credit (Ash). There is also an increased focus on practice-led research with new appointments planned in PR, data and journalism, which feeds into our research groups.

To enable an outstanding research, teaching and impact environment for staff, all CAT A staff are provided with 40% research time in the work-load model and the Subject Group enables staff to set dedicated time aside for research each week and clearly communicates this protected time to other staff and students. Staff in the Subject Group are assigned a research mentor and each staff member goes through an annual review of their Personal Research Plan (PRP) and Performance and Development Review (PDR) and support is given for staff seeking promotion. The Subject Group recognises and rewards staff for carrying out research and for achieving impact. MCH follows HaSS faculty policy that all staff hours won through external grant funding are added to the work allocation model on top of their research allowance, ensuring staff have the time to fully deliver on projects. Staff winning external grants are allocated a proportion of the grant to their personal research account. Staff who were leading on developing an ICS were allocated 200 hours to work on the ICS in both 2019-20 and 2020-21.

MCH is pathbreaking in its approach to research leave. All staff can apply for leave every 7th semester for 1 semester and sabbatical plans and end of leave reports ensure staff make the most of this important opportunity. Crucially, staff on teaching and scholarship (T&S) contracts are also on the sabbatical leave rota and this has enabled staff to complete research outputs that have enabled them to transition to teaching and research (T&R) contracts (Usher). In relation to early

career researchers (ECRs), the Subject Group implements the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers, ensuring that researchers work in an equitable and supportive environment, have the opportunity for professional development and are encouraged to apply for permanent posts (if on fixed-term contracts) and promotion, where appropriate.

#### PhD and Postgraduates

The growth and expansion of staff has attracted a larger, more diverse and vibrant PGR community, with the number of completed PhD students increasing from 32 during the REF2014 reporting period to 54 for the period covered by REF2021 (44.29 supervisory allocation to MCH). The international reputation of MCH's PhD offer is evidenced by the diverse nationalities of PhD students including those from China, Germany, Thailand, Saudi Arabia and the United States, a number of whom are in receipt of government-funded scholarships. The gender balance of completing PhD students is moving towards parity, with 46% Female Identifying (FI) (25 of 54). The number and quality of PhD students is matched by an increase in funded PhD studentships and a wider source of funders, including the AHRC Northern Bridge and NINE Doctoral Training Programmes and several foreign governments. The expansion of research themes in the Subject Group is also reflected in the range of PhD topics including death on social media in relation to music celebrity (AHRC funded, Culbert), queering the museum (Robenalt), documentary films on fan activism (Karydis) and neoliberal journalism in Taiwan (Lin).

MCH is one of the only Subject Groups in the country that offers both ESRC and AHRC funding to media and cultural studies PhD students. This is enabled by MCH's membership of the ESRC Northern Ireland/ North East (NINE) Doctoral Training Programme (DTP), which provides MA and PhD funding for exceptional social science students working on issues surrounding media and culture and the AHRC Northern Bridge DTP, which supports PhD scholarships for outstanding postgraduate researchers across the full range of Arts and Humanities subjects, including creative practice disciplines. PhD students also have access to a Faculty Research Training Programme (FRTTP), which enables study towards a 60-credit Postgraduate Certificate in Research Training and has been recognised by the ESRC and AHRC as a relevant foundation for doctoral studies. In turn, the FRTTP underpins the training provisions of the ESRC NINE and AHRC Northern Bridge DTPs. Together, these schemes offer further evidence that MCH's unique research culture is nationally outstanding.

PGR student progress is monitored through a range of processes. All PGR students must complete project approval within 3 months of the start of their studies (6 months for part-time). Further to this, annual progress reviews provide students with feedback and ensure their research is progressing according to the University's expectations. Research supervision of PGR students involves a supervisory team comprising at least 2 Faculty, one of whom is identified as the primary supervisor, with students able to access alternative supervision and expertise as their project evolves or if other needs arise. The quality of the PhD programme in MCH is reflected in the destination of PhD graduates, with many going on to academic positions, or utilising their skills in relevant private and public sector organisations. Graduate destinations include lectureships and teaching and research fellowships at major universities and researcher positions at a range of international digital consultancies.

#### Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

SACs, in which MCH is situated, achieved an Athena Swan bronze award in 2018. Achieving this award was based on building systems that enable diversity, equality and inclusion in order to ensure all staff can fulfil their potential. Key work on EDI in MCH includes:

- i) Addressing gender imbalance in hiring and promotion

A majority of recent hires have been FI, contributing to a redressing of historical gender imbalances, with 37 CAT A staff in MCH and 2 in other Subject Groups at REF2021 census date (see Table 1).

Table 1: Shift in gender balance CAT A Staff REF2014 to REF2021

	REF2014	REF2021
FI (Female Identifying)	5 (33%)	18 (46%)
MI (Male Identifying)	10 (66%)	21 (54%)

Also significant is a shift in the seniority of MI and FI staff, with FI staff now occupying more senior positions in the Subject Group than in REF2014. For example, in REF2014, Professorial positions were mostly held by MI individuals (2 MI 66.6%, 1 FI 33.3%). Professor level roles in REF2021 are now 50% FI (3) and 50% MI (3), as are Lecturer level roles (8 FI, 8 MI). Further shifts include an increase in FI Senior Lecturers from 28% in REF2014 (2) to 44.4% (4) in REF2021 and an overall increase in FI staff at Lecturer level (3 FI staff in REF2014, 8 in REF2021). This shift has been created by proactive staffing, recruitment and promotions policies that work to enable diverse candidate pools, neutral wording of job adverts to not be exclusionary and ensuring recruitment and promotions panels are balanced in terms of both gender and career stage. Reflecting Newcastle's position as a globally facing University, the Subject Group continues to employ a large number of staff from outside of the UK, maintaining a 33% ratio of international staff (5/15 in 2014 and 13/39 in 2021).

## ii) Recognising intersectionality

MCH is composed of a diverse range of individuals from a range of international perspectives and backgrounds. At the REF2021 census date, 23% of staff describe their Ethnic Group as BME, which is higher than the sector average of 16% for BME staff, demonstrating that MCH is an attractive place for BME colleagues. At the same time the unit recognises that 69% of the submission still describe their Ethnic Group as White (remaining colleagues did not provide this information), suggesting there is still important work to done here. Mindful that diversity takes a variety of forms alongside gender, such as race, sexuality, cultural background, religion and nationality (amongst many others), a number of MCH staff are members of the SACs Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Access (IDEA) Committee. In order to further address and develop the complex intersectional aspects of EDI, Newcastle University is a member of The Stonewall Diversity Champions programme, the leading best-practice employers' forum for organisations who are committed to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) inclusion. MCH is central to this intersectional commitment, with MCH staff member Longstaff leading the Rainbow Network, a cross University LGBT+ group. The Rainbow Network was established by and for University staff and students with the purpose of supporting LGBT+ staff and students; challenging heteronormativity and promoting inclusion of people of diverse genders, sexualities, and relationships. To do this, the group provides advocacy and work to influence University policy on all matters relevant to LGBT+ inclusion. Recognising diversity issues are not only a matter of gender or sexuality, the Subject Group is actively working to decolonise the curriculum. This is being achieved through seminar series and training sessions, such as a decolonising the museum seminar series (2018-2020) organised by PGR members of the Subject Group and supported by the School's Strategic Research Fund (SSRF).

## iii) Shifting staff from hourly paid to permanent contracts

MCH provides outstanding support for a variety of career pathways for both part-time and fixed-term staff, where having job security is a basic condition the Subject Group aims to provide as standard. MCH's commitment to ensuring that ECRs (and especially FI staff, who tend to be overrepresented in this category) have an opportunity to move to open ended contracts has resulted in 5 ECR staff moving from hourly-paid to open-ended contracts in the current REF period.

MCH is also focused on staff who wish to develop research trajectories and 3 members of staff (Coffield, Markham, Usher) have been converted from T&S to T&R contracts as a result.

iv) Enabling diverse working and opportunities for research

To support EDI, the Subject Group has an open approach to flexible and remote working, which is enabled by a range of University initiatives, including the provision of IT equipment for remote working and health and safety audits and adjustments of remote workspaces to ensure the health of staff. Staff can apply through the School for flexible working and this is well supported, with staff and timetabling requests taking individual circumstances into account. University resources are available to all staff remotely, including file systems and library and teaching applications. Furthermore, conference attendance and other necessary travel is facilitated for staff and research students with caring responsibilities, ill health or disability through multiple mechanisms. All staff have access to an allowance of £1.5K to support research and scholarship activities including conference attendance and travel and the University's conference fund can provide additional support for staff who organise international conferences. For staff and students with additional needs, extra costs associated with travel are covered in the running budget of the School to ensure no disadvantage. MCH utilises the University's Returners' Support Programme (RSP), which has been designed to reduce the impact of extended leave on the delivery of staff activities. The scheme provides funding of up to £10K to help colleagues maintain career development.

As part of EDI, MCH recognises the crucial role technicians play in the production of a successful research and teaching culture in the Subject Group, and support staff to realise their own research and scholarship ambitions. The contribution of technicians in MCH has been recognised externally at a national level. Evidence of this is James Davoll's nomination for 'Outstanding Technician of the Year' in the 2019 *Times Higher Education* awards and David De La Haye's nomination in 2020. Davoll's work was praised for 'contributing to cutting edge interdisciplinary research in the fields of cultural studies, environmental humanities, creative arts, leisure studies, and media studies'. In terms of progression and further training, technicians are invited to develop PhD applications, which has resulted in 2 staff (Rushton, Roush) registering for PhDs in film in order to further deepen their subject expertise and enable career progression. Technician colleagues can also apply for internal funding support in order to further their research ambitions.

To recognise the importance of EDI initiatives and ensure these principles are embedded in everyday working practice, from 2018 MCH has actively included 'good citizenship' service activities into the workload allocation model, ensuring that activities such as membership of EDI, Ethics and other committees; informal mentoring of colleagues and support for PGR student network activities are recognised as crucial aspects of the work we do.

### Section 3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

#### Income

Total research income for MCH in the current REF period stands at over £2.76 million with 33 awards from international and national funders. Income includes funding from organisations including the AHRC, ESRC, European Commission, Leverhulme Trust, British Academy, EPSRC and Swedish Research Council. Major projects include EU-funded work such as the 'CoHERE project' (Whitehead, Eckersley, Mason, Galani, McDonald 2016-19, £551K award to University, £221K to SACs) and 'En/counter/points' (Eckersley 2019-2022, £213K); European Commission projects include 'Women, Politics and Media Framing' (Ross 2108-20, £156K); ESRC-funded projects include 'Between Gaming and Gambling' (Ash 2019-21, £253K) and 'Digital Interfaces and Debt' (Ash 2016-18, £139K); AHRC projects include 'Knowing the Secret Police' (Saynor 2017-2019, £553K award to University, £221K to SACs), 'Plural Heritages of Istanbul's Land Walls' (Whitehead 2016-18, £201K award to University, £141K to SACs). This is a marked increase in the number of awards and range of funding bodies awarding funding compared to



REF2014. Further evidence of MCH's research leadership is that staff from MCH lead the majority of projects they win, being Principal Investigators in over 75% of grants (25 out of 33) awarded in the REF period.

Increased grant income and research leadership has opened significant opportunities to more quickly realise the Subject Group's research strategy, grow and sustain the Subject Group's staff and increase engagement and impact opportunities with a wider selection of national and international stakeholders. For example, Ross was PI on an EU-funded impact project, 'Advancing Gender Equality in Media Industries' (AGEMI) (2017-19, £94K), which was subsequently leveraged as the basis of further funding from the Council of Europe in 2020. The relevance of MCH work to wider society is also evidenced in £223K of commercial research income in the REF period, with staff providing expertise to 7 organisations, ranging from UNESCO (Stone £45K) to the European Commission (Ross £94K) to inform their practices and policies.

To achieve this increased success, MCH has benefitted from a range of internal investment, including successful bids to the HaSS Faculty's Bid Preparation Fund, which offers up to £10k to prospective PIs to help write and submit grant applications; the Faculty Research Fund (up to £4K), which has been used to help staff develop new research projects and outputs; the Faculty Impact Fund, (up to £5K), which enables knowledge exchange (KE) and impact activities that contribute to economic and societal development in the region and beyond; and the ESRC IAA Fund (up to £10K), to accelerate engagement and knowledge exchange activities. The award of these funds to MCH staff was instrument to the development of several major projects in the Subject Group, including Ash's gambling and high-cost credit ESRC work and Whitehead's AHRC Plural Heritages project.

The Subject Group supports staff to develop the skills necessary to increase research grant income and develop impact from research. This is achieved through a range of activities, including regular research drop-in sessions and engagement with specialist colleagues including Faculty Research Funding Development Managers, Impact Officers and School Research Managers, all of whom offer important peer review of applications prior to submission. Mindful of the fact that junior scholars are under-represented nationally in successful grant applications, the Subject Group also draws upon the SACs SSRF, which is specifically aimed at providing seed-corn funding for ECRs. The Subject Group also has a £5K annual research environment budget that is used to invite speakers to visit, organise seminar series and develop collaborations.

#### Facilities and Infrastructure

The University has made a large investment in MCH facilities. For example, the Film research group has a new dedicated production and editing facility 'Culture Lab', which has been key to the group's outputs and success. Culture Lab is housed in a Grade II listed building located in the centre of Newcastle's city campus and includes the Ballroom, a performance and events space that can host up to 150 people; an industry-standard recording studio facility which includes an anechoic live room; a fully-fitted control room and multichannel monitoring facilities; and dedicated editing suites for video and film editing. This investment of over £1 million has transformed the research capabilities of film. Alongside infrastructural and technical facilities, Film@Culture Lab has also benefitted from the appointment of 4 additional technicians and support staff (Rushton, Roush, Robinson, Lynn) between 2017-2020, who offer specific expertise in film production to complement/collaborate on the research and teaching work of this research group.

The environment for PhD study is enhanced by the Doctoral Training Suite, a purpose-built facility for lectures, workshops, seminars and computer access to specialist software. Each year we have 2 student-led research postgraduate conferences. There are also a variety of prizes and awards to celebrate the successes of our students.

Investment in facilities and infrastructure has helped MCH engage with more partners, both within and outside of academia. For example, the investment in Culture Lab has enabled the appointment

of 2 3 year visiting professorships to award-winning documentary film makers John Akomfrah (2016-2019) and Nick Broomfield (2015-2018), supported with funding from the Newcastle University Institute for Creative Arts Practice. Deeply political film makers, their work explores racial tension in a range of settings. In turn, these appointments have fed back into the research culture of the Film group as a whole, contributing to both the technical and theoretical aspects of teaching and researching documentary film and the politics in, and of, documentary film making.

MCH offers facilities to support a range of staff, especially ECRs. This includes courses such as Principal Investigator workshops, to help develop grant-writing skills, departmental mentoring and a 'students-who-teach' training programme. PhD students work as Research Associates (RAs) on funded research projects and give occasional presentations on their research to students and faculty, as well as support seminars in order to prepare them for an academic career after graduation. Recognising that empowering ECRs to produce world-leading research requires internal investment, all staff on fixed and open-ended contracts, including RAs, are provided with a yearly personal research allowance (£1.5K). This support enables ECRs to speak at international conferences, build research networks and complete small research projects, which have informed ECRs' published outputs.

MCH also benefits from a range of organisational infrastructural support which maximises research and impact. For PGRs, this includes support at both the School and Faculty level, with over 700 hours of Faculty-led training based on the RDF (Research Development Framework) principles. A dedicated Careers Service provides access to employer presentations and workshops to help PGR students prepare for careers both within and outside academia. A University and Faculty Press Office offers essential support to ensure research findings from research outputs and ICS (e.g. 34-2) are communicated nationally. This support has been key to MCH research featuring on national and local radio and in national and online newspapers and news outlets, including the *BBC*, *The Times*, *The Conversation* and *BBC Radio 4*.

To ensure all MCH research meets and exceeds ethical standards, the Subject Group benefits from Faculty level ethics support, which ensures all research funding applications are carried out with the upmost care for respondents and participants. This support includes online ethics toolkits, dedicated Faculty level ethical approval committees and repositories that provide best practice examples of consent forms and information sheets.

Library facilities to support MCH research and impact are world leading, with the Robinson Library providing online access to much of its catalogue and a significant off-campus research reserve, which gives staff access to over 400,000 titles. Library and IT staff are also key to the MCH research environment, providing subject expertise and ensuring all MCH research is open access and accessible through the University's ePrint system. Within the past year, such staff have proven particularly invaluable to enable research at a distance and working from home given COVID-19 restrictions.

### Events

To bolster staff and student development and foster connection between MCH and other groups, there is an extensive and ongoing programme of events. Many of these events are community facing, including the Queer Media, Culture and Heritage (QMCH) Seminar Series, externally part funded by the Great Exhibition of the North (2018-Present), which works nationally with Tyne and Wear Museums, London Metropolitan Archives and the Globe Gallery Newcastle to generate debate around queer identity in both the region and nationally. Within the Subject Group, an MCH seminar series (ongoing) invites visiting speakers. In addition, staff also run a Critical Discourse Analysis seminar series (ongoing). PGR students are also involved in running their own annual conference (ongoing). Furthermore, staff regularly organise international conferences on new and emerging areas of research, such as Persona Studies (2019).

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

MCH is outward facing, collaborating and contributing to the international research base, economy and society in general. These contributions are organised around MCH's research and impact strategies to produce world-class research across the broad disciplinary areas of media, culture and heritage, including their inter-relations, and ensure findings from this research can positively inform a range of constituents.

Contribution to Research Base

As a large interdisciplinary Subject Group, MCH is collaborating to lead debates in a variety of fields, for a variety of beneficiaries. Within academic discussion, advances have taken place in 4 main areas:

## i) Theoretical and Conceptual Contributions

MCH is pathbreaking in producing and defining new fields of academic research that create synergies between existing fields of endeavour. Of particular strength in the research groups is the theorisation of digital media and technologies. In the Media and Culture group, staff lead theoretical understandings of digital media. In relation to interfaces and smart devices, Ash's *The Interface Envelope* (2015), *Phase Media* (2018) and Hand's *Gadget Consciousness* (2018) have already proven influential in the field. Chamber's *Cultural Ideals of Home: The Social Dynamics of Domestic Space* (2020) and *Changing Media, Homes and Households: Cultures, Technologies and Meanings* (2016) have altered how digital media are studied through contextualising these technologies within a longer history of domestic space. In Journalism, Dick's pathbreaking study on *The Infographic: A History of Data Graphics in News and Communications* (2020) provides the first monograph length examination of the rise of digital infographics and their effect on society. Ross' three-volume *International Encyclopedia of Gender, Media and Communication* (2020) constitutes the first such international encyclopaedia in the field and makes an important contribution to the discipline.

The Media and Culture and Journalism groups are key to the development of new academic areas of research, such as persona and celebrity studies (Kelsey, Usher, Longstaff). This is evidenced by the Inaugural International Persona Studies conference that was organised and held at Newcastle University in 2019 and included international participants from Australia and Denmark.

Members of the Heritage group lead debates in Museum, Gallery and Heritage studies around conceptualisations of Europe, memory, museology and remembering. Through multiple funded projects (CoHERE, Plural Heritages, En/Counter/Points) the group has worked to bridge theoretical and empirical research to rethink Europe as a shifting and historically mutable entity. This work has resulted in multiple publications including monographs, edited collections and journal articles, including Whitehead, Eckersley and Bozoğlu's edited collection *Dimensions of Heritage and Memory: Multiple Europes and the Politics of Crisis* (2019), Bozoglu's *Museums, Emotion and Memory Culture: The Politics of the Past in Turkey* (2019), Mason's edited collection *Museum Studies* (2019) and Galani, Mason and Arrigoni's edited collection, *European Heritage, Dialogue and Digital Practices* (2019), which provides new frameworks for studying and understanding the effects of digital media on practices of memory and remembering. Theoretical and conceptual leadership in this area is also reflected in Eckersley and Whitehead's roles as editors of a major Routledge book series *Critical Heritages of Europe* that explores the cultural and social politics of the European past in the present.

The Film group make international contributions to the development of documentary film as both a research practice and discipline. Staff in film produce international award-winning work that melds research, practice and impact. Films such as the ESRC-funded *Colours of the Alphabet* (Cole 2016) investigated the mutually beneficial structures that enable academic-film and industry collaboration within feature documentary development and impact campaigning. *FREEDOM*, a 4

screen cinematic installation exhibited at The Great North Museum in Newcastle (2017) as part of the Freedom City 2017 commemorations, used archive and original footage to respond to the visit of Dr Martin Luther King to Newcastle in 1967. Blending artistic merit and pedagogical impact, it was awarded a Best Practice Research (Audio-Visual Installation) prize by the British Association of Film, Television and Screen Studies.

PhD students in the Subject Group have also offered significant contributions to their fields, with many publishing work in top ranked academic journals and edited collections during their PhD study. In the Media and Culture group Jansen has published work in the *European Journal of Politics and Gender*. In Heritage, Farrell-Banks has published in *Journal of Community Archaeology & Heritage* and Ferrer-Yulfo in *The International Journal of the Inclusive Museum*. Evidence of excellence of PhD students in documentary film include Karvdis's 98, which scooped Best Documentary at the European Film Festival Mainstream and Underground in 2019. In journalism, as a PhD student, Peng has published work in the *Chinese Journal of Communication*.

## ii) Disciplinary leadership

The international recognition of expertise of MCH is reflected in the fact that members of all 4 research groups hold notable positions in their respective fields. These include editorial board positions on journals including *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, *Sexualities*, and *Masculinities* (Evers), *Journal of Critical Discourse Studies*, *Journal of Language and Politics* (Khosravini), *Feminist Media Studies* (Ross), *Digital Geographies* (Ash), and *International Journal of Heritage Studies* (Newman) among many others. Staff members hold leadership roles in national and international organisations, such as Executive Member of MeCCSA (2011- ) (Ross) and elected Treasurer of the British Society of Gerontology (Newman). Whitehead is the President of the British Chapter of the Association of Critical Heritage Studies. Newman sits on the advisory board for the Centre for Ageing and Dementia Research. McDonald was 1 of 3 jury members for the 2020 Moving Image award by the British Association of Film, TV and Screen Studies (BAFTSS). Staff in all 4 groups regularly edit and guest edit prestigious journals, such as *ACM Journal on Computing and Cultural Heritage* (Galani).

Many members also sit on advisory boards and grant panels for a range of funding councils including the Irish Research Council (Ash); and European Research Council (Khosravini); Ash, Chambers, Newman and Ross are members of the ESRC Peer Review College; Ross is on the PRC for the UKRI Future Leaders Fellowship Scheme, European Science Foundation and COST, and is a REF2021 sub-panel 34 member. Whitehead is an international advisor to the 'Our Museum' Danish national museums network. Members of staff also regularly sit on advisory boards and steering groups for funded research projects and organisations. For example, Galani was on the Advisory Board for the project Past Paths, funded by NESTA R&D (2014-15). Baines is secretary of the UK and Ireland's Association for Journalism Education and its representative on the council of the triennial World Journalism Education Congress (WJEC) and was rapporteur for the WJEC syndicate on Digital Global Collaboration (Paris, 2019).

The international reach of research in the Subject Group is also demonstrated by regular invitations for visiting Professorships, including the University of Alberta (2015-16, Ross); Massey University, NZ (2007-2011; 2017-18, Ross), Honorary Fellowships at Potsdam (Eckersley) and permanent Honorary Professorship in Public Humanities at Australian National University (Whitehead). Staff are also awarded prestigious research prizes, including the ICA Teresa Prize for contribution to feminist scholarship (2013, Ross) and ICA Fellow (2017, Ross).

## iii) Methodological Contributions

MCH leads the way in developing new methods and methodological approaches to understanding digital phenomena. These take a variety of forms, involving both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. Galani, as part of the CoHERE project, pioneered the first academic repurposing of Geostream aggregator tools to explore modes of visual representations of place



on geosocial platforms. Through this innovative method, CoHERE was able to assess whether official heritage discourses are challenged by participatory online photo-sharing.

Methodologically, MCH has also pushed forward approaches to understand digital social media utilising interdisciplinary approaches. In relation to Critical Discourse Analysis, research in MCH has led to the development Social Media Critical Discourse Studies (SM-CDS) (Khosravinik) and Techno-Discursive Design (Kelsey, Khosravinik, Peng, Sikka), resulting in major research outputs on discourses of national identity in the Middle East, Iran's nuclear programme, misogyny in China, banking and social media and geoengineering. As a result, this theorisation has become influential within the field of critical discourse studies, journalism and the broader social sciences. Developed through ESRC research on high-cost credit and gaming and gambling, Ash has generated post-phenomenological methods for studying digital interfaces. The result of these methods has been data that has informed evidence-based policy advice on the regulation of interfaces in the high-cost credit and gaming industries.

Research in MCH has been central to the creation of innovative digital tools and smart phone apps, which have enabled community participation and training. The AHRC CARE (Condition Assessment Risk Evaluation) project (Mazel 2013-14, £63K award to University, £34K to SACs), produced a non-invasive digital app (released in 2016) for gathering information essential to the long-term conservation of open-air Neolithic and Early Bronze age rock art in the UK and Ireland. ESRC research by Ash also produced a smart-phone app *Indebted Life* (2019) as part of an educational package to support those working in the debt advice industry to understand the power of digital interface design in debt decision making.

#### iv) Interdisciplinary Contributions

In terms of interdisciplinary contribution, MCH has been path breaking. Examples of interdisciplinary partnership is the link between Film, Heritage and Media and Culture groups, which has produced award-winning results. For instance, produced as part of the CoHERE project, McDonald's film *Who is Europe?* explores the crisis of identity in Europe. International recognition of this innovative collaboration is evidenced through the shortlisting of the film for the AHRC Research in Film award and the Audience Award at the 2019 Refugee Film Festival in Berlin. As a result, a section of the film is permanently on display in the Museum of Classical Antiquities. CoHERE also led to a musical oratorio that was performed 3 times, including at the National Library of Latvia to an audience of over 400 (Bozoglu, Whitehead). Within Media and Culture, collaborations between practice-based film maker technician James Davoll and Media and Culture staff member Evers resulted in the film *A Toxic Love Affair*, focusing on the health effects of pollution, which won best Experimental Film at the 2019 ReelHeart International Film Festival.

Interdisciplinary synergy also crosses between academic and non-academic staff. In relation to Film, technician Davoll won best Experimental Film at the Wales International Film Festival for his film *Adlais*. It was featured in Gwynedd Council's Dorothea World Heritage Site application and was shortlisted for the John Hefin Award at the BAFTA qualifying Carmarthen Bay Film Festival.

#### Contribution to Economy and Society

MCH's research is pivotal in shaping policy and practice within society, across a range of international, national and regional contexts.

#### i) International Contributions

Internationally, Stone has acted as a specialist advisor to the UK government regarding the identification and protection of cultural heritage in Iraq and delivered significant impact within NATO, UNESCO, European militaries, and the US Air Force. Stone is Chair of the UK Committee for the Blue Shield; the cultural heritage equivalent of the Red Cross (see ICS 34-4). Stone works

with a range of international armed forces, including the US military and Navy to build new policies and training which have, since 2015, encouraged many armed forces to take the protection of cultural property during conflict seriously as part of their duties. In turn, Stone's work has been central to coordinating activities across Interpol, the World Customs Organization, museums, leading auction houses and national governments to block the black-market trade in cultural artefacts in order to protect cultural sites. At a national level research undertaken by Stone led directly to the establishment of a new MoD Cultural Property Protection Subject Group to be fully operational by 2020/21. Stone also provided advice to civil servants, MPs, members of the Lords, and Ministers regarding the UK's 2017 ratification of the 1954 Hague Convention and the UK's 2017 Cultural Protection (Armed Conflicts) Act. Also in Heritage, the CoHERE project has generated policy briefs that have been cited in cultural heritage policy document analysis by the European Commission.

The ESRC-funded *Colours of the Alphabet* film project (Cole) had significant international impact, highlighting issues around local language education in Zambia. In turn, the project developed a continent-wide language subtitling and translation project, enabling the release of the film in thirty languages across the continent. As a result, the film reached 1.7 million users worldwide, and 200K views of online content in Africa specifically. Furthermore, the project worked to train 54 new African language subtitlers and proof-readers, furnishing the development of a new network of African language translators; the African Film Translation Network (AFTN). *Colours of the Alphabet* also reached critical acclaim, winning Best Feature Film at the International Children's Rights Film Festival 2018 and Best Documentary at Shungu Namutitima International Film Festival of Zambia 2018.

The AGEMI project (Ross) drew on research findings to create resources to support teaching, learning and training in the broad area of gender and media. It is listed as good practice on the websites of two media unions (European Federation of Journalists and the Permanent Conference of Mediterranean Audiovisual Operators) and the European Institute for Gender Equality and was commended as good practice by the Council of Europe's Gender Commission, as well as being used on a range of University courses in both Europe and further afield (see ICS 34-3). Ross gave oral and written evidence to the House of Lords Communications Committee on women in news and some of her recommendations were included in their final report *Women in news and current affairs broadcasting* in 2015.

Members of MCH have been involved in a range of international public activities that are driven by research. These include festivals, exhibitions and art shows. Internationally, Ever's and Davoll's work on polluted leisure has formed the basis of art shows in Australia (*Caring Better for the Seas* at Sustaining the Seas Conference and Sydney Ideas Festival, University of Sydney and the Sydney Environment Institute), Sweden (*Shadow Places*, Fiskelback) and Paris (Fondation Maison des Sciences de l'Homme). Members of the Subject Group are also involved in international installations, such as *The New Europe Living Lab* digital interactive and architectural installation in Denmark, as part of the CoHERE project (VerdensKulturcentret cultural centre, Copenhagen, Denmark, 2017).

## ii) National Contributions

Nationally, ESRC-funded work in MCH has had a direct impact on a range of charities and other organisations working in the money and debt advice sector. In particular, Ash's ESRC project has led to the co-development and co-delivery of financial wellbeing sessions for practitioners and members of the public through partnership with Clean Slate Financial Wellbeing Services CIC, The Money Advice Trust and Citizens Advice, amongst others (see ICS 34-2). The research directly led to the reframing of an Institute of Money Advisers course for money advisors and the development of online training webinars for debt advisors. The project also produced reports and policy recommendations that have resulted in meetings with the Treasury in order to inform their Digital Money strategy and directly shaped the design of the Just Borrow online credit union platform, which works to provide affordable fast credit to vulnerable groups.

Also, nationally, the AHRC 'Dementia and Imagination' (Newman 2013-17, £266K) project has produced important changes in the ways that arts/museums are used with older people living with dementia both individually (carers, care staff and artists) and within organisations (Arts Council England, care homes, museums and charities) (see ICS 34-1). This resulted in further national impact through the AHRC 'Imagination Café' project (Newman 2017-18, £4K), which created a touring exhibition with artist and care staff training. The project showcased the artwork made by research participants (people living with dementia), trained over 100 artists and care staff using the creative approach developed during the project, and raised awareness of dementia with a wide and varied audience, extending beyond the geographical focus of the original research. The project also toured with a specially commissioned art installation to Llandudno, Edinburgh and London.

The European Commission funded 'Active Ageing and Heritage in Adult Learning' (Mason, Galani 2014-17, £20K award to University, £16K to SACs) project has also had important health impacts both nationally and in the region. The project demonstrated the importance of open-air museums as sites for improving the learning and memory of older adults with dementia. In turn, evidence from the study was used to create new training courses to empower carers to continue this work in other spaces. This has resulted both in changes in attitudes towards those living with dementia amongst the general public and changes in how the public and care organisations utilise open-air museums.

Within the Journalism group, Baines presented evidence to the Cairncross Review into the *Sustainability of High Quality Journalism in the UK* (2019) and was featured in the final report and recommendations. As a result, Baines sits on the advisory panel for the IMPRESS Taskforce of Independent Publishers, which seeks to strengthen public interest journalism in the UK and build on the work of the Cairncross Review.

### iii) Regional Contributions

Regionally, MCH works closely with partners to shape the environment of Newcastle and surrounding areas. For example, the installation film *FREEDOM* was exhibited at the Great North Museum in Newcastle as part of the Freedom City festival (2017) and at the Sallis Benney Gallery in Brighton in May 2018. In the Journalism group, Baines has worked with the local Headliners charity on a Heritage Lottery-Funded project 'Tynesiders' in which young people from home, migrant and transient communities use journalistic approaches to explore Tyneside's cultural diversity. Baines also set up a Hyperlocal news site *Jesmond Local* to produce news that is relevant to local people.

Under the 'WomenInNewcastle' banner, Ross has been collaborating with Newcastle City Council, Newcastle City Library and Tyne and Wear Museums (TWAM) for several years to organise community-facing, research-informed activities to improve the visibility of older women through digital storytelling, community engagement and memory work. 'NOT Acting Our Age: Older Women Challenging Stereotypes and Celebrating Life' received ESRC IAA funding and created visibility and empowerment for local women through a variety of events, including flashmobs and pop-up choirs. Collaborative outputs include an archive of digital stories, 3 photographic exhibitions and 2 films: the photographic exhibitions of *NOT Acting Our Age* and *JOY* are permanently installed in Newcastle University buildings.

Chambers leads the North East dimension of the ESRC 'Emerging Minds: Action for Child Mental Health' network on young people and mental health, hosting workshops with participants from the NHS, local charities and other organisations to improve mental health promotion and alter how mental health issues are represented in the press.

In terms of public activities in the region, Galani's digital interactive installation *Sit with Me* has been permanently installed in the Discovery Museum, Newcastle, since April 2016 and Evers has

produced work as part of the UK GeNErosity Festival (2019) and Rivers of Life Festival (2019), which has involved transforming a polluted space in North Tyneside into a public art gallery.

Across international, national and regional impacts, the collaborations built between MCH and organisations as diverse as the US military, care homes and debt advice charities have fed back into and enriched the research environment of MCH in multiple ways. For example, Stone's impact work with world militaries and Blue Shield was central to the establishment of UNESCO Chair in Cultural Property Protection and Peace at Newcastle (the only such Chair in the world) and the creation of additional research posts to support this position. Ross's ESRC IAA work on flashmobs and women's representation has directly fed into teaching practical workshops on the BA and MA programmes and Ash's innovative digital interface methods developed through their ESRC project has directly informed the design of BA and MA teaching modules. In all these cases, research in MCH has inspired students to progress their interest in the field and to embark on further studies and research, with multiple BA and MA students going on to Masters and PhD study at institutions around the world.

#### Summary

MCH's research environment enables and promotes world-leading research and produces international, national and regional impact on a variety of research bases, economies and societies. Through its unique interdisciplinary composition and successful collaboration between academics from a variety of perspectives, as well as engagement with community and policy stakeholders, MCH staff demonstrate a singular ability to think across and between a range of issues, societal problems and challenges and will continue to work to address these challenges into the future.