

Institution: University of East London
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1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy

Context and structure

Our UoA brings together researchers across creative disciplines who share a commitment to socially engaged practice and art form innovation. We are primarily situated in the Department of Music, Writing and Performance, working in dance, creative writing, performance, music production and applied theatre; we are part of the large multi-disciplinary School of Arts and Creative Industries, and maintain close links with other departments and researchers in the school.

Our research is rooted in our lived reality in East London, a hyper-diverse borough with one of the highest young populations in the country as well as severe levels of inequality and deprivation, and strives to open the borders between academic research, participation and professional arts practice, creating an environment that is inclusive, diverse and dynamic. We directly address the well documented inequalities and deprivation which generate social exclusion and lack of **representation, access and participation in the arts**, and aim to enable inclusion and bring East London's young population into the vanguard of cultural, artistic and social regeneration. We celebrate the particular expertise, specialisms and innovations of our individual researchers and their practices, while at the same time promoting an ethos of inclusion that leads us towards **collaborative, innovative interdisciplinary action research**, intended to act as a catalyst for social change.



'Parambulator Parade' (2014) developed by Qualmann as part of the AHRC funded Walking Artists Network

The UoA has grown significantly over the last decade. In REF 2014 we submitted 7.2 FTE, with a group of early and mid-career researchers carrying out distinctive work in participatory arts and

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socially engaged performance as well as sound art/music and creative writing; this was reflected in ratings of 50% 3 and 4 ratings for outputs, and 3.3 for impact. The unit has nearly doubled in size with the current submission of sixteen researchers (13 FTE), and builds on the legacy of socially engaged research with both local and international reach. The interdisciplinary structure of the School encourages the development of new networks and synergies; our research crosses departmental and disciplinary boundaries to draw in researchers located elsewhere in the School (in the Department of Media, such as Chapman) and the University (in the Department of Art and Design, such as Raney). With a number of new appointments in the Department since 2014, we remain a relatively youthful group, with one professor (Hingorani), one reader (Castelyn) and a high proportion of early and mid-career researchers. The UoA is home to two research centres, the Centre for Performing Arts Development and the Centre for Applied Performing Arts. Researchers in the UoA share common interests with School's other two research centres, the Centre for Cultural Studies Research and the Moving Image Research Centre, based primarily in UoA 34, and also collaborate with researchers in Education and Social Sciences.

Research and impact strategy

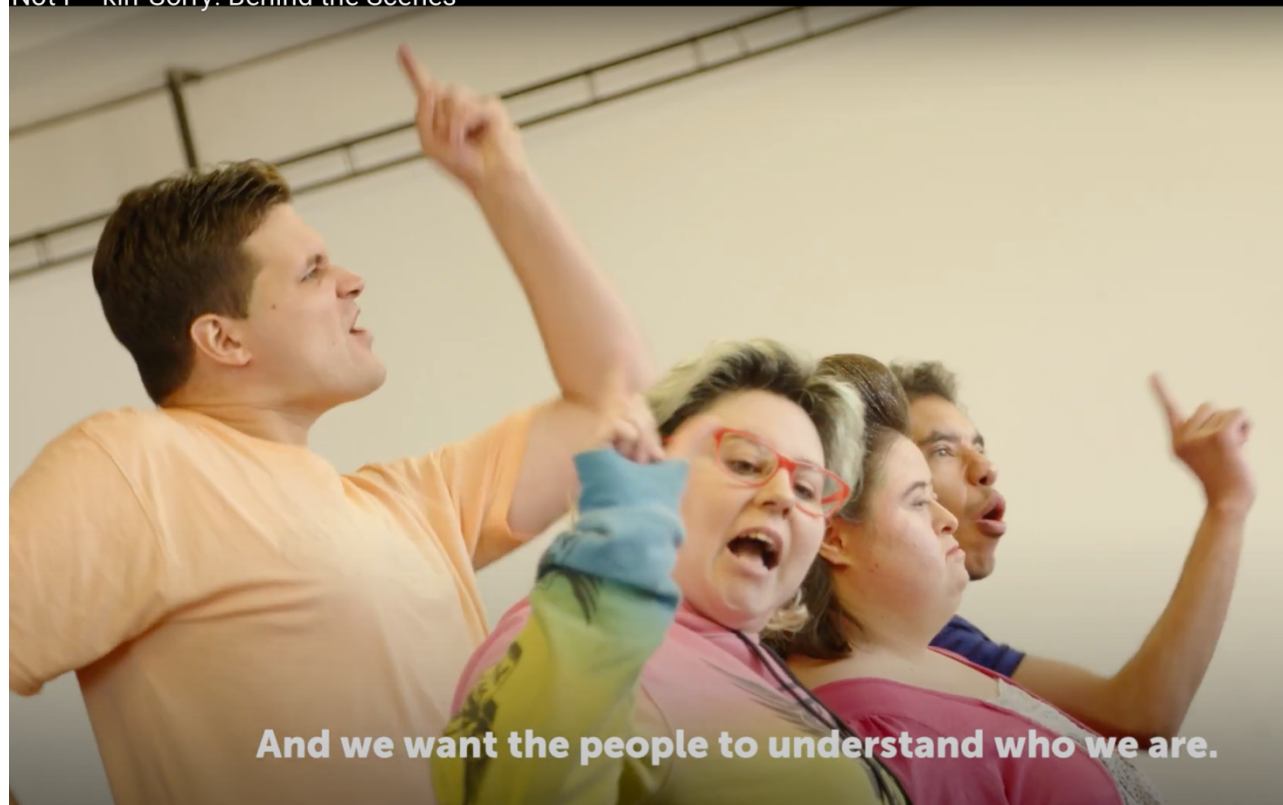
Our UoA has an **activist ethos**, and our research ecology in both form and content is directly focused on driving socially engaged performance, representation, access and participation in the arts, embedded in the community both locally and beyond. Our research is structured around the key strategic aims of ensuring that we have a positive and enriching impact on both our students and the communities in which we are rooted, while continuing to build on our core strengths and established indicators of excellence.

Action research: performance and participation

Inclusion is a key imperative for the UoA. Issues of marginalisation and deprivation are engaged with through action research, in which **performance is our methodological tool, enabling a dynamic creative exchange between researchers and participants**. In celebrating the diversity of our location, we recognise it as a creative catalyst for innovation in arts practice. **Our research agenda embraces difference, demands decoloniality and insists on representation** in elite as well as community spaces, and in high art forms such as opera (Hingorani; Harries) as well as popular forms such as hip hop (Trim-Vamben; Read; Robinson). **Our students also form part of this participatory exchange**: many come from East London themselves, and their own experiences of diversity and marginalisation inform and contribute to both research and teaching. A similar ethos informs **text-based research** in the UoA: marginal and gendered communities are the focus of McCarthy's work with Travelling communities, and Castelyn's international work on contemporary dance and HIV/ AIDS in South Africa.

Our research and impact strategy are thus mutually constitutive; our outreach work informs and is informed by our research.

Not F**kin' Sorry! Behind the Scenes



Cast rehearsal for Not F**kin' Sorry developed by neuro-divergent Terret and co-created with six learning-disabled and neuro-divergent performers and performed at Soho Theatre (2018).

Terret's work thus focuses on **opening up theatre spaces and career pathways** to traditionally excluded groups. In addition to her work with neurodiverse writers and performers, presented in detail as one of our ICSs, she co-curated the 'Take Up Space' cabaret (2018) in partnership with the Royal Court, to celebrate and showcase the work of **feminist, trans, crip and queer artists**, as well as curating and hosting the Feminist Cabaret (Wickedly Wild Cabaret, 2018) at WOW (Jude Kelly's Women of the World) at the South Bank Centre. Hingorani's work as Artistic Director of Brolly (www.brollyproductions.com), a **BAME-led cross-arts company, creates new opera**, staging often 'hidden' minority histories. These projects (nationally supported by Arts Council England and Opera North) both develop new roles in the opera repertoire for BAME artists and act as drivers to **engage diverse new audiences**. Harries creates **accessible opera through participatory workshops**; his projects include 'Create an Opera!' in partnership with South Bank Centre, and StreetWise Opera (<https://www.streetwiseopera.org/>) led by people who have experienced homelessness, as well as a symposium series in collaboration with Trinity Laban Conservatoire which led to a community-devised opera.



'Opera Audiences of The Future' at Hackney Museum (2016) with local primary schools and the cast of *Clocks 1888 the greener* which was staged at Hackney Empire.

At a more local level, our research works to **empower our local communities**. The aim of **driving change in the arts sector** is also exemplified in the work of Trim-Vamben's *Transforming Leadership in Hip Hop* project with East London Dance, which supports the development of the next generation of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people to gain leadership positions in the arts. Our research is predicated on a dialogue with our communities and an understanding of our **geography as a cultural location**. This is exemplified by the development of the AHRC-funded *Walking Artist Network* (Qualmann), designed to challenge exclusion and bring people and place together, and perhaps even more sharply by her East End Jam project, in which she works with local communities to forage fruits and make jam collectively – a project with transformational potential for people's sense of cultural and geographical belonging. McCarthy's research engages with local campaigning groups especially in relation to ideas of home and human value; exploring how the processes of **gentrification and the eviction of Travellers** marginalise and stigmatise protesters, her work aims to amplify the voices of these excluded groups.

Following our diasporic routes out from the diverse communities in which we are based also **connects the local to the global**, making our socially engaged research an international practice. Attention to issues of decoloniality and the representation of marginalised and/or popular dance forms are reflected in partnerships with One Dance UK's **Dance of the African Diaspora** (<https://www.onedanceuk.org/programme/dance-of-the-african-diaspora/>), which seeks to raise the visibility of dance cultures from Africa and the African Diaspora (Castelyn). Brazzale's brief documentary *Afropean Moves* explores the rise of popular festivals of **African dance and music in Italy**, focusing on the experiences of migrating artists to nuance public perceptions of African migration to Italy. Chapman's art installation *Memories of a Failed Insurrection*, exhibited at Coomaraswamy Hall, Mumbai (2017) and Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, Delhi (2018), in collaboration with Vitali in UoA 34 as well as partners in Mumbai and Delhi, offers audiences an encounter with a moment of possible transformation in the **last phase of British rule in India**.

Research Centres and Partnerships

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Two research centres are primarily associated with the UoA: the **Centre for Performing Arts Development** [<https://www.uel.ac.uk/research/centre-for-performing-arts-development>] (CPAD), and the **Centre for Applied and Participatory Arts** [<https://www.uel.ac.uk/research/centre-for-applied-and-participatory-arts>] (CAPA). The two centres share a commitment to engaged and active research, and many staff members are attached to both. The centres also serve a vital function in providing a supportive peer-to-peer platform for developing our research praxis, dissemination and culture.

CPAD (co-directors Brazzale, Harries), established in 2014, focuses on **building innovative performance research** within UEL, reflecting our determination to raise our profile for **interdisciplinary art form development** alongside socially engaged research. CPAD hosted the Sound Body Movement annual symposia, which explored interdisciplinary practice with a focus on sound art. More recently 'Hip Hop Encounters: Practice, Research and Pedagogy', a series of talks, round-table discussions, performances, film screenings and workshops to advance innovative explorations on hip hop cultures, practices, research and pedagogies, brought together scholars, Hip Hop artists and students to catalyse dialogues across disciplines. A current PhD student attached to the Centre working on a project on Shakespeare and hip hop exemplifies this breadth and innovation.

CAPA (co-directors Heaney, Hingorani, McCarthy) was established in 2017 under the leadership of Sheila Preston (then head of department) to focus on **action research and community outreach projects across a range of creative and visual arts**, rather than solely in performance. CAPA co-director Heaney has been engaged in a range of programmes in the borough of Barking and Dagenham, including Get Creative, funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, and was an evaluator on the 'My Creative School' programme in Medway. CAPA has allocated seed funding to support interdisciplinary socially engaged projects, including McCarthy, *Performing Infrastructure: urban planning, community property and gendered spaces in the London Plan*; Trim-Vamben, *The UK Hip Hop Leadership programme*; and Lounasmaa, *Creating Spaces and Belonging* (a project which underlines our cross-institutional reach; Lounasmaa is in the Department of Social Sciences and submits with Sociology). CAPA also focuses on questions of pedagogy and in particular on the BAME student experience, with a successful online symposium in summer 2020 on 'Eradicating the Award Gap', which brought together academics and students to examine the issue and debate strategies to address it. CAPA underpins our reputation for disseminating applied practice, exemplified in Preston's publication *The Applied Theatre Reader* (2016).

Our strategy is focused on driving growth in the cultural and creative ecology and economy of the region by developing our **research partnerships, networks and collaborations** at a local, national and international level. We aim to position ourselves as **cultural intermediaries**, able to promote the development of networks and partnerships between the hyper-local, the national, and the international, and to drive change by leveraging capacity, expertise, reach and legacy for our research projects. Our partnerships include community, arts and cultural organizations in East London (e.g., Newham Music, the Half Moon Theatre, CAMHS Tower Hamlets) and elsewhere (e.g., the Royal Court, Opera North). We have also recently entered into an extended partnership between UEL and the V&A, with a research fellow appointed by VARI (the V&A Research Institute) to develop shared research and teaching projects focused on engagement with local communities as well as our student body. These partnerships are unified by a shared commitment to the values and aims of the UoA.

2. People

Staff profile and strategy

This unit is driven by a vibrant, energetic and socially committed group of predominantly early and mid-career researchers. The emerging area is supported by the staffing strategy in the School, which aims to recruit and develop research-active staff and to increase research capacity, in support of our ambition to nurture the next generation of leading researchers and to become a centre of excellence and innovation for socially engaged performance practice and research.

There has been substantial change in the UoA since the REF 2014 submission, with a number of departures but also a significant expansion in staff numbers overall, and a consolidation of research strengths. We are returning sixteen staff members, double the eight submitted in 2014. In the intervening years we have worked to consolidate and develop our core areas, and clarified our research direction, embracing the opportunity to make a difference to local communities through action research and complementary curricula. Alongside a number of new appointments, the School has also been keen to build research capacity among existing staff. Hingorani, promoted to Reader in 2015 and Professor in 2019, and Castelyn, promoted to Reader in 2019, have led the submission for the current round. We are also proud to include in this submission staff who were in post in 2014 but not eligible for submission to REF; staff who have been supported to develop as active researchers since then include Castelyn, Qualmann, Harries and A. Robinson.

In the current submission, the levels and FTE of researchers submitted in the UoA are as follows:

Name	Level	Fraction	Research specialism
Hingorani	Professor	1.0	Performance
Castelyn	Reader	1.0	Dance
Garrett Brown	Head of department	1.0	Dance
Brazzale	Senior lecturer	1.0	Dance
Cawkwell	Senior lecturer	0.5	Contemporary Music
Chapman	Senior lecturer	1.0	Film/ music
Harries	Senior lecturer	0.6	Music
Heaney	Senior lecturer	1.0	Performance
Qualmann	Senior lecturer	0.7	Performance
Raney	Senior lecturer	0.6	Creative Writing
Read	Senior lecturer	1.0	Dance
Reddington	Senior lecturer	0.5	Music
Terret	Senior lecturer	1.0	Performance

McCarthy	Lecturer/ ECR	0.5	Performance
Robinson L	Lecturer/ ECR	0.8	Dance
Robinson A	Lecturer/ ECR	0.8	Creative writing
Totals	1 x Professor 1 x Reader 1 x HoD 10 x SL 3 x ECR 16 headcount	1.0 1.0 1.0 7.9 2.1 13 FTE	Creative writing: 2 Dance: 5 Music: 4 Performance: 5

As this table demonstrates, mid-career researchers are significantly the largest group in the submission, with a very small number of senior staff to provide research leadership. This is beneficial in terms of the energy and egalitarian spirit generated by a relatively flat profile. However, we are also keen to bring on the next generation of research leaders in the UoA, and a priority for the coming years will be to develop our mid-career researchers and to encourage promotion to readerships and professorships.

We have been growing a critical mass of practitioner scholars keen to work across disciplines, and we are also working to identify and support researchers for the future among staff who do not currently have significant responsibility for research. Since our last REF submission we have made strategic appointments especially in the field of Performance (Heaney, Terret, McCarthy) and Dance (Brazzale, Read, Robinson). The School research budget uses QR funding to support research centres and ECRs, and also to offer individual staff opportunities for study leave and financial support for practice-based and impact-related projects. Research centres have a key role in mentoring and nurturing staff, identifying research priorities and encouraging synergies and collaborations; individual mentors also give feedback on research plans, including writing drafts, performance projects and grant applications to arts organisations. The university-wide Research Development team offers advice and guidance on grant applications, and a suite of research training workshops on topics such as planning research projects, impact, ethics, doctoral supervision, and writing grant applications.

Postgraduate Research

Our PGR students are a vital and growing part of the research culture of the UoA. We have 26 doctoral students across the School of Arts and Creative Industries and over 20 active supervisors also drawn from across the School (and occasionally from other schools in the university), reflecting the innovative and interdisciplinary scope of our doctoral research. Many of our PhD students (like our staff) are studying part-time while remaining active professionals in the arts, and their research is central to their practice. Several staff members who have entered academia via professional practice rather than through more usual academic routes have also registered for PhDs, and we are keen to support this cross-fertilisation between creative and academic work. We currently have two members of staff undertaking doctoral study and are supporting two more to prepare to enrol on PhD programmes in September 2021.

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A vital key to our participatory, practice-based and socially engaged research culture is the diversity and unconventionality of our research students. Their professional activities help to sustain connection to the professional arts ecology, supporting our ambition to keep the borders between academic research and practice as porous as possible in order to increase representation, inclusion and innovation. PGR students work across a range of areas including performer training, theatre, film, creative writing, art form development and cultural politics. After completion, these perspectives infuse their academic and professional work, contributing to the production of a new generation of creative practice-based academics. We are also developing a far-reaching suite of collaborative professional doctorates with Rose Bruford College and Ravensbourne University London, including a professional doctorate in performing arts due onstream in 2021.

Given the relative youth of the UoA, the total number of completions is still small, but with 14 students currently registered for doctoral study and with an ambitious expansion plan, we expect to grow this area significantly in the coming years.

PGR completion rates 2014-20

Year	Number of completions
2014	2
2015	1
2016	3
2017	0
2018	4
2019	1
2020	1
Total 12	

We have worked hard in recent years to build a strong and inclusive PGR culture, which operates at school rather than at department level (reflecting the fact that supervisory teams frequently include academics from more than one department). Students are encouraged to take part in the range of events led by research centres across the school, creating opportunities to network and share their research more widely. The student-led Research Networks Committee is responsible for curating PGR events, and supported by an annual budget of GBP2,000. **Reflecting our collegiate and anti-hierarchical ethos**, this committee aims to bring students and academics together to develop research culture, promote networks and knowledge exchange, and support employability. Events held in recent years include PGR conferences on 'Authenticity and the Arts' (2019) and 'Speaking from the Margins' (2020). PGR students also regularly give papers at UEL's annual cross-institutional Research Conference. Individual students are also supported to give conference papers and achieve research outcomes (for example, Tom Drayton in 2019 was supported to give a paper to the Philosophy at Play conference in Prague, and also allocated funding to cover interview transcription costs for his PhD research).

This investment in PGR experience underpins a strongly positive response in the 2018 PRES survey, where supervision, research skills and professional development were all rated at over 90%, and overall experience at 83.78%. Research culture, always a challenge in contexts with small student numbers, a high proportion of part-time students and a wide disciplinary range, was rated at 68%, representing a sharp rise from 53.6% in 2015, and all categories showed improved ratings. These results demonstrate the success of the strategies put in place over the last few

years, and we are keen to build on this improvement. We will continue to work on improving postgraduate outcomes and experience, including carefully monitoring training needs and career advice provision, and continuing to strengthen the school PGR research culture and networks through symposia events, research seminars and networking.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

A commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, in the staff body and in our teaching as well as in our research, is central to our activist and participatory ethos. Our research is strongly engaged with contesting marginalisation in the arts, foregrounding a politics of inclusion and insisting on representation in academic research and recognition. Our location in the culturally and ethnically diverse East of London ensures that our community outreach and engagement activities are constantly engaged with these issues, and we also highlight them in our international perspectives. Our work on BAME performers (Hingorani), eviction and homelessness (McCarthy), queer and crip participation in the arts (Terret), African migrant dance cultures in Europe (Brazzale) and South African dance and performance (Castelyn) all testify to our continuing engagement with issues of inclusion.

The university was awarded a Bronze level Race Equality Charter in May 2019, and in summer 2019 the School formed its own Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee. Objectives identified in the EDI Committee's University Action Plan specify an inclusive research environment; the review and development of provision of academic mentorship, allowing for longer term career mapping and support; and an increase in the proportion of BME academic staff. The School contributes to UEL's Race Equality Charter by committing to these objectives; we have established a staff anti-racism group and developed a School Action EDI plan, mandating an alignment of ACI's research and enterprise activities, themes and priorities with the University's EDI priorities that includes running EDI training events for staff.

The School is currently preparing its own submission for the Athena Swan Bronze Award. School staff take part in the Athena Swan Mentoring Scheme as mentors or mentees. The action plan addresses working culture, the staff base gender balance and representation at senior level positions, and strategies for supporting parental leave, ill health, mental health issues, caring responsibilities, and staff with protected characteristics, all of which have implications for research. We are working on objectives to ensure gender equality for both students and staff, maintain gender balance for REF submissions and for research leave, and monitor workload allocation practices. We are also mindful of the impact of the pandemic lockdown on childcare and caring responsibilities, and the potentially disproportionate impact of this on women researchers; we will be actively exploring strategies to rectify this in the coming year.

We carry out an institutional Equality Impact Assessment following each REF annual research review. In the current submission the gender balance runs strongly in favour of women (twelve out of sixteen); this to some degree reflects the gender balance within staff teams in many performing arts departments. However, there is more to be done to build the research base among BAME staff, currently two out of sixteen in the submission. Among the staff currently identifying as developing researchers and/ or expressing an interest in studying for PhDs we have greater diversity (as we also have among our PGR students), and we are developing strategies to offer dedicated support to this group in particular in order to improve our record.

The University's Office for Institutional Equity provides a mentoring programme aimed at staff with protected characteristics and we will pilot a programme of PhD research support targeted at BAME students beginning in September 2021.

Our principles underpin the creation of a supportive, collegiate and dynamic environment for all researchers in our UoA, valuing all contributions equally, and building on our ethos of access, inclusion and representation to create a dynamic space in which to achieve research excellence.

3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

We are committed to creating a vibrant and supportive ecosystem that is not only of benefit to staff and students but ensures that this environment has a **positive impact** in the diverse community in which we are based. Our income, infrastructure and facilities are not simply resources for internal use, but vital commodities to be leveraged and supported by committed organisations such as the V&A without whom we would not be able to effectively disseminate and deliver our socially engaged research. Our fundraising activities thus reflect our drive to decolonise high art forms - such as opera – and also represent opportunities to **open up access** to cultural institutions (such as The National Maritime and British Museums) to new and diverse audiences.

Income

Funding streams from a range of trusts, foundations and research councils enable us to carry our creative projects into the community, and to engage in participatory and outward-facing research. Some of our activities are small-scale, with few participants and minimal requirements; others involve large numbers of people and large venues and would be impossible without the support of funding bodies. We are therefore very pleased to see a continuing rise in HESA-returned funding: between 2013 – 2018 the UoA won GBP113,281.32 in HESA returned income, a considerable increase from GBP77,247 in REF 2014. But the bulk of our funding comes from non-HESA income, for which we have an extremely notable record in attracting income from sources which specifically support our socially engaged practice. The GBP250,000+ funding from multiple sources that has supported Hingorani's new operas *Clocks* and *The Powder Monkey*, for example, made it possible to work on a very large scale to address marginalised histories and engage new diverse audiences.

HESA FUNDING:

AHRC funded projects:

2015/16	Hunter	Walking Network Artists	GBP18,013.25 GBP1,230.31 GBP19,243.56
2016/17	Breed	Cultural Institutions Traumatic Pasts	GBP31,002.06
2017/2018	Breed	Inclusive Civil Services	GBP2,000.78
TOTAL			GBP53,494.84

NON – HESA Funding:

Cawkwell;

2018	Arts Council England	Half the Sky	GBP4,500
2019	“	Lyndsy Cooper Songbook	GBP9,000

TOTAL			GBP13,500
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Hingorani;

2014	Arts Council England	Clocks 1888 Opera	GBP13, 731
2015	"	"	GBP81,364
2015	Kaye Pemberton Charitable Trust	"	GBP3,450
2015	"	"	GBP4,900
2015	Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation	"	GBP5,000
2015	British Museum	"	GBP500
2015	UEL	"	GBP3,600
TOTAL			GBP112, 545

2015	Arts Council England	New play - <i>her</i>	GBP13,984
2016	"	"	GBP9868
2016	"	"	GBP13450
2016	Half Moon Theatre	"	GBP13,900
2016	Cockayne – London Community Foundation	"	GBP10,000
TOTAL			GBP61,202

2017	Arts Council England	Opera – The Powder Monkey	GBP14,615
2018	"	"	GBP14,163
2019	"	"	GBP48,524
2017	Kaye Pemberton Charitable Trust	"	GBP1,500
2018	"	"	GBP2,000
2019	"	"	GBP1,000
2018	National Maritime Museum	"	GBP2,000
2019	"	"	GBP1,000
2019	Cockayne London Community Foundation	"	GBP15,000

2019	Bernarr Rainbow Trust	"	GBP500
2019	Unity Theatre Trust	"	GBP300
2019	Fidelio Charitable Trust	"	GBP1,600
2019	Ambache Charitable Trust	"	GBP1,000
2018	Opera North	"	GBP3,000
2019	Opera North	"	GBP3,000
TOTAL:			GBP109,202.00

Total Non Hesa Income: GBP282,949.00

Terret:

201?	Arts Council England	NoT YoUr CiRcUs DoG CoLIeCTiVe	GBP34,000
201	“	“	GBP70,000
201	“	“	GBP50,000
201	Royal Court Theatre	“	GBP2,500
201	Southbank Centre	“	GBP2,500
201	Duckie,s Ectetric Brixton	“	GBP1,500
TOTAL			GBP160,500

Muller and Knight:

2020	Royal Docks	Project on A Bus	GBP13,900
2020	Royal Docks	“	GBP4,000
TOTAL			GBP17,900

These funders include small-scale and locally based charitable trusts, who advocate for marginalised communities (Cockayne Foundation), and local theatres committed to widening participation (the Half Moon), third sector organisations concerned with regeneration (Royal Docks), as well as major national institutions (Arts Council England). The range of funders demonstrates our UoA's successful navigation of a number of income streams to support our socially engaged research practice.

We are supported in accessing these sources by a central grant application support team which actively seeks out other funding streams less familiar in the academic community. This has helped us to build connections between our research and a wide range of charities and trusts, important not only in funding, but in developing partnerships, networking and collaborations with stakeholders to ensure that **our research is directly responsive and relevant to communities**. This gives our research greater dissemination and reach to audiences beyond academia, including communities, advocacy groups and policy makers.

Internal support for research and research-related activities

Funding support throughout the REF period has been provided for a range of research-related activities, to individual researchers and to research centres. School research centres were funded at GBP2000 per year in the first part of the assessment period, with time allocations for research centre directors, and in the case of one centre (now no longer located at UEL) administrative support. From 2017 this was replaced by funding on application: research centres requested School funding to carry out specific activities, including conferences, seminars and outreach projects, and centres were encouraged to become more financially self-supporting. Funding is now allocated under a School budget held by the Director of Impact and Innovation, and staff are invited to apply for a range of research support: new initiatives, applied research, high profile events, delivering conference papers, production costs for creative outputs, and so forth. Early career researchers and postgraduate students are offered funding to help with research development. Researchers have

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also been able to apply for funding for sabbatical leave and/or teaching remission; researchers who have benefited from this include Brazzale, Castelyn, Terret and Qualmann. Support is also provided by the University via funds specifically targeting civic engagement and impact-related projects, including the Civic Engagement Fund, the Impact Fund, and the Student Internship fund.

Infrastructure and facilities

As the list of funders above suggests, a core aspect of our infrastructure is once again our East London base. UEL's Performing Arts provision is located in University Square Stratford, opened in 2013 as a collaboration between UEL and Birkbeck University of London. Facilities include four specialist performance studio spaces, alongside a suite of music and multi-media recording and production rooms, rehearsal rooms and live ensemble/band recording and control rooms. More importantly, the campus's location in Stratford's Cultural Quarter places us in close physical and intellectual proximity to key partners, including Stratford Circus Arts Centre and Theatre Royal Stratford East, as well as (further afield) the Half Moon Theatre, the Hackney Empire, and the South Bank arts complex. We benefit from a dynamic local cultural quarter, with theatres, cinemas and arts centres. At the same time, embedded in the centre of Newham, we are at the heart of the juxtaposition of old and new, deprivation and gentrification, which characterises the East End. This radical proximity also shapes many of our research strands. Homelessness, inequality and poverty, marginal and excluded populations are part of our environment, and **our research responds to and engages with these conditions**. Significant connections with local and regional art galleries, archives and independent cinemas, creative hubs, heritage groups and councils, underpin a participatory and outward-facing approach to research. The city's long history of migration also shapes our research projects and supports international partnerships with researchers across Europe and Asia in particular (for example Chapman's international collaboration with artists and galleries in Mumbai and Delhi to commemorate the naval uprising of 1946).

The shaping force of this hyper-diverse environment drives research not only in our UoA but across UEL in general; this in turn creates an intellectual infrastructure where problems, interests and perspectives mingle productively across disciplinary boundaries. Our connections with researchers across the university are founded in a shared commitment to transformative interdisciplinary research that engages with the key problems of our time and place. There are particularly close connections between our researchers and centres such as Moving Image Research Centre (MIRC) and those in Cultural Studies and Media, Art and Design and Social Sciences (for example, Brazzale and Chapman are members of MIRC; Clare Qualmann has presented her research in the Centre for Cultural Studies Research; Aura Lounasmaa from Social Sciences is running a research project sponsored by the Centre for Applied Performing Arts).

In addition to the facilities offered by the many libraries and galleries of London, the university library holds a number of archives relevant to researchers in the UoA, including the Refugee Council archive and other collections relating to refugees; the British Olympic Collection archive; the East London People's Archive (an oral history collection); and the Gender, Sexualities and Ethnic Studies collection, and the East London Theatre Archive (currently being investigated by PhD student Deborah Jeffries), all collections which resonate strongly with our research interests and provide a resource for students at all levels as well as staff.

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

Contribution to research base

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As scholars and researchers, we are committed to sustaining the viability and dynamism of our disciplines, bringing in our distinctive perspectives through membership of editorial boards, committees, and other activities, in both academic and arts communities. We are invested in leading academic dissemination, making visible marginalised forms, and **decolonising both research and the curriculum**.

Staff contribute to the promotion of cutting-edge research nationally through their **contribution to academic journals and book publishers**. Garrett Brown is the Founding Editor for the *Journal of Dance & Somatic Practices*, and the founding director of Coventry Dance. We are represented on a range of **journal editorial and advisory boards**, including *Punk and Post Punk* journal, *The Journal of the Art of Record Production (JARP)*, and the International Association for the Study of Popular Music (IASPM) Journal (Reddington); HOTFOOT, the online magazine of the Dance of the African Diaspora strand of One Dance UK; the South African Dance Journal (Castelyn); *Streetnotes: ethnography, poetry and the documentary experience* (Brazzale). We are also **peer reviewers** for publishers including Routledge, Bloomsbury, Methuen, Oxford University Press, Ashgate Press, Methuen Drama. We contribute to the development of pedagogy in our specialist areas as members of **national subject associations**: Garrett Brown is the current Chair for Dance HE (Standing Conference for Higher Education); Blakemore sits on the Higher Education Committee of the National Association of Writers in Education (Subject Association for Creative Writing in the UK) and is on the editorial board of the Association's two journals.

Our research support activities also have **international reach**, enabling us to share insights and innovations in global contexts. Harries is a member of the Accademia Nazionale di Danza in Rome; Cawkwell sits on the board of directors of the Japanese Association for the Study of Musical Improvisation. Castelyn's work with international organisations includes Khuluma, part of the 22nd JOMBA! Contemporary Dance Experience (2020) in South Africa (The Centre for Creative Arts (SA), University of KwaZulu-Natal (SA). In 2016 she was invited to present to THE ARTS CLUSTER (University of Pretoria) on practice-based research in South African Dance.

Our pioneering work to **challenge the divide** between elite and popular art forms and our drive to open access to underrepresented groups is supported by a wide range of **committee, advisory and curatorial roles** in arts organisations. These include, for example, Harries's participation in the organising committee for the Opera and Politics annual symposium, bringing together a network of speakers from the English National Opera, Opera North, Opera Holland Park, Streetwise Opera, Mahogany Opera, and RESEO, to engage with these issues. Laura Robinson serves as Treasurer of PoP MOVES, an organisation that works to decolonise the study of dance through the championing and sharing of research on popular/vernacular dance forms; she is also a board member of the Society of Dance Research. Cawkwell regularly sits on the judging panel for the Ivors Composer Awards (British Composer Awards).

Contribution to economy and society

The significant range and scope of our activities in the wider community is fundamental not just to the researchers included in the formal REF submission, but to the wider culture of our department and school. Staff whose primary focus is on practice rather than on research are often active in community-based arts projects; in line with our strategy of enabling all colleagues to develop into independent researchers, these community-based and creative practice projects are often the seed for collaborations with more experienced researchers, or for practitioners to develop new research skills. Our contribution to local culture and well-being is inclusive and participatory within as well as beyond the department, and we also value the contributions made by those whose academic roles are not research-based. Many of the projects described in this section involve colleagues who do

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not have significant responsibility for research, but who take leading roles in outreach and engagement projects, sharing our framework of action research and our commitment to knowledge as action-based and transformative. This section gives examples of our collective commitment to **representation, access and participation in the arts as a means of transforming lives.**

- **We create sustainable research and outreach projects through collaboration and partnerships.**

We work with arts organisations that are strongly embedded in marginalised communities such as the Hackney Empire, the Half Moon Theatre and Newham Music; we also run joint projects with third sector and community groups such as Chadacre Residential Home in Newham, CAMHS Tower Hamlets, East End Jam – London Legacy Development Corporation. We also collaborate with arts organisations with a national profile, such as the Royal Court Theatre, Opera North, the National Maritime Museum, and the V & A. Our recently signed memorandum of understanding with the V & A includes collaborative projects with UEL programmes at both undergraduate /postgraduate levels, working with international artists such as Theaster Gates, and partnering in collaborative bids (AHRC). The V & A East Project, with two new sites planned for Stratford, will open up this partnership to new and exciting developments. With all our partnerships, we aim to connect with groups that share our commitment to the values and aims of the UoA, and specifically our key themes of diversity, inclusion and access; our intention is that by joining forces we can enhance our contribution to society and also our sustainability as a hub for action research.

- **We promote the work of artists and art forms from marginalised communities as well as creating works that reflect our ethos**

Our focus on engaging with **marginalised and excluded communities** enables us to reach wide public audiences and also to develop art form innovation in theatre, dance and music. Responding to the systematic discrimination and exclusion of learning disabled and neuro-divergent artists from the performing arts, Terret's NoT YoUr CiRcUs DoG CoLIeCTiV's, *Not F**kin' Sorry!* in partnership with *Access All Areas* reached live audiences of 3,000 (including 100 learning disabled residents from assisted living and day centres in London people who also participated in workshops about the performance of NFS), and employed 25 Artists/Creatives (**including 50% with learning disabilities or/& neurodivergent**).

We promote and highlight the creativity of **under-recognised artists and genres**. Researchers in music have focused particularly on **gender as a category of exclusion**. Cawkwell has worked extensively on the compositions of the influential English feminist composer Lindsay Cooper. In 2018 she staged a performance of Cooper's work, 'Half the Sky', alongside two of her long-term collaborators and four younger musicians, to an audience of around 100 people including influential bloggers and reviewers. This was followed by a mini-tour to celebrate International Women's Day 2019, with partners Cafe OTO (London), ReR Megacorp (London), ExtraNormal Records (Ramsgate), Free Range (Canterbury), and In Situ Music Society (Germany), reaching an audience of close to 500 people (and 1000 listeners to the podcast of Canterbury performance supported by a GBP9,000 ACE grant). Reddington's film *Stories from the She-Punks: music with a different agenda* has toured the UK as part of Doc 'n' Roll festival 2019, with partners including Gina Birch, The British Library, The Roundhouse, Sunderland Museum, and Folkestone Arts Centre; it has also been shown in Los Angeles and has a planned screening in Australia.

For researchers in dance, the **art form hip hop**, often marginalised in academic dance departments, has an important presence in our creative activities. Read's performance in hip hop dance company

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Boy Blue's film *Emancipation of Expressionism*, directed by Danny Boyle, which aired on BBC2 Darcey Bussell's New Dance programme, was part of a drive to revalue and promote the importance of the form. This project was funded and supported by Artstrusts Productions, BBC, Barbican, and Arts Council England.

- **Our projects empower and engage local communities and offer opportunities to develop new skills and participate creatively**

In music, in addition to Hingorani's inclusive operas (see his ICS), Harries continues this type of community work with 'Create an Opera!' with Red Hat Opera. This project, which began in 2017, focused on devising workshops that were open and **free to the local community** with 150 participants **from a range of nationalities, ages and cultural backgrounds**. Workshops were designed to empower participants to engage with creative practice through developing skills in movement, voice and writing as well as collaboration and improvisation in partnership with Theatre Delicatessen, Streetwise Opera, and the Southbank Centre. A **collaborative project with Streetwise Opera** (Harries) involved about 30 people who are/were homeless and was presented at Southbank Centre to the public. Harries also led a project 'Protest and Performance' at The Tate Modern together with dance practitioner Simonetta Alessandri, created with the general public.

Engaging with the lives of LGBTQI+ young people, 'Our House', a devised immersive theatre production performed inside Eltham Palace and the surrounding grounds, celebrated the Queer History of the Palace (Parkes) and won an English Heritage Award 2020 for best live event/exhibition. It was delivered by English Heritage, Parkes, Kane Husbands (Pappy Show) and the National Youth Theatre of Great Britain (NYT). Parkes also ran weekly workshops at Metro Charity with LGBTQI+ children (13 to 18 years) devising material to be used in contribution in a partnership with NYT (young actors who identify as LGBT+).

Anna Robinson's **poetry workshops** celebrate and valorise London's historic and contemporary working-class culture, supporting local people to find poetic voice in a context of deprivation and exclusion. In the last decade she has been poet in residence to the Coin Street Community Builders heritage project in 2013-14; poet in residence on Lower Marsh Market, London SE1; poet in the archives running writing workshops in local government archives in Barnet, Hackney and Wandsworth; running prison workshops at HMP Brixton, among other activities. She currently runs poetry workshops as part of Barking and Dagenham's Pen to Print project.

Seeing the research potential offered by 'Project on a Bus' (2020), a successful bid to house the project was pursued by developing researcher Mueller (staff member and PhD student) along with Performing Arts staff member Knight. Developed by and funded by Royal Docks Learning and Activity Centre as part of the 'Join the Docks' initiative in Newham, East London, Project on a Bus offers a mobile venue: an out of service bus has been customized into a flexible out / indoor space to host original performance work. It aims to support original and socially aware performances by **young local artists**. It offers an **artistic mentorship programme** to support ten young Newham-based artists to develop original performance work designed around the bus as site, exploring what needs to be protested, voiced, or shared by young creative voices in current times. Project on a Bus responds directly to **current socio-political movements** as well as to the **debilitating effect of Covid-19** on the arts. Engaging voices from an ethnically diverse background, it develops new creative responses to how we can see, hear, and support each other through **social change and challenges**. Key partners are The Royal Docks, Mayor of London, Newham Council, and artists from The National Youth Theatre, Artistic Directors of Squint Theatre and Pappy Show.

- **Our projects contribute to economic well-being in local communities**

We aim not only to reflect the communities in which our work is based but to ensure that our research has a **direct benefit on the performance industry**, from employment of performers and technicians to the venues where our works are staged. Income is thus not only about the funding of research; it has wider repercussions, generating income in the location of the work and for the performance and production communities involved. Through our partnerships with local venues, we can work directly with all involved in the performance industry and have a positive impact on these communities.

In addition to collaborating with existing arts and community organisations, several staff set up their own **companies to implement their projects**. Hingorani's company Brolly is responsible for the production of his operas and other works; this is a BAME led organisation that develops BAME artists and creatives for the Arts and Heritage. The youth theatre company See & Eye was set up in 2016 by Griffiths (programme leader on the performing arts foundation) and has performed work for the Youth theatre festival 'Connections' at The National Theatre, The Olivier Theatre and The Dorfman. Such projects fund and support research, whilst also bringing employment opportunities.

Staff are also involved in **evaluation projects in support of regeneration and skills development**. Heaney was an evaluator on the Arts Council-funded project *Prosper* which addressed the **impact of recession on community arts, social services and care provision**, and explored the possibility of **arts-based approaches to foster new connections** between different sectors. The project involved stakeholders such as the Canterbury Festival, Workers of Art, The MAP Consortium, and Kent County Council; it engaged with over 27,000 people and resulted in GBP233,000 in further investment across the region. Trim-Vamben is Evaluation Lead for *We Move*, an ACE-funded Transforming Leadership consortium (ACE GBP260,000, UEL CAPA Seed Funding GBP1000, and UEL GBP25,000 in kind) bringing together leading hip-hop producers and dance organisations to create and deliver a programme **supporting the development of BAME hip-hop producers and art form leaders**.

- **Our projects contribute to health and well-being in communities**

Creative and performing arts have significant impact on mental and physical well-being, and we value the contribution they make both indirectly (as in many of the projects above) and in more targeted ways, **addressing the health and mental well-being** problems so widespread in our local communities. Our focus in this work has engaged particularly with the health of young people. The 2016 project 'Promoting the role of dance, as a form of fitness, to tackle the rise of obesity' was led by Nicolson (in the Dance programme, undertaking a PhD) and funded (GBP3650) by the UEL Civic Engagement Project scheme. Its aim was to tackle the obesity crisis within schools, and it was delivered in schools and colleges in the Borough of Newham, including Lister Community School and Newham Sixth Form College.

RadioActive: Participatory Radio Hub (led by Kerr from the Music team) addresses issues of inclusion and non-formal learning pathways of **socially excluded groups**, bringing together local young people and UEL music students. Participants are involved in the co-production of issue-based radio content leading to improvements in psychosocial dimensions such as confidence (self-efficacy) and self-esteem, organisational learning, and development of contemporary digital skills.

Bringing together mental and physical well-being, Qualmann's East End Jam project (2015-present) builds on her research practice as a walking artist, bringing together local groups to forage for fruit around East London and collectively make jam. The project has an **activist intent**, aiming to help

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people engage more closely with the local environment as well as learning how to make preserves, and at the same time investigating the health and well-being benefits of encouraging **collaborative outdoor activities**.

- **We are committed to pedagogic innovation and investigation**

The Centre for Applied Participatory Arts has a particular focus on pedagogy and on the BAME student experience. Its online symposium in summer 2020 on 'Eradicating the Award Gap', brought together academics and students to examine the issue and debate strategies to address it, with students playing a leading role in planning and delivering the event.

We contribute to the development of educational resources and activities at secondary school level, with Read's Education Resource pack for AQA GCSE Dance teachers.

Conclusion

The development of the UoA in both scale and depth over the last seven years is welcome and drives our ambitions for further expansion in the coming years. The dynamism of the UoA and its commitment to socially engaged action research will increasingly be underpinned by the work of our emerging early researchers and the nurturing of this cohort, and the next generation is a key priority for the UoA going forward. The myriad local partnerships we have established are now being strengthened by new cultural partnerships in East London such as with the V&A. Our research will remain inextricably linked to our cultural location and embeddedness in the diverse communities of East London and our commitment to addressing inequality, exclusion, and deprivation. This means we support our UoA in making active collaborative interventions to enable inclusion, access, and participation in arts practice to drive cultural, artistic and social regeneration through our work.