

**Institution:**

University of Essex

**Unit of Assessment:**

28 - History

**1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy****Unit context and structure**

The Department of History's core principle is that 'History matters', the notion that our discipline should engage with the vital issues of our times. We question received 'truths' to understand how power has operated in past societies and to work out creative ways for history to empower people today. This commitment is at the heart of our intertwined strategies in research, impact, and education. Since 2014 we have significantly enhanced gender equality within our Department, while strengthening a research environment that supports staff to produce world-leading research and capture increasing amounts of research income. We have also embedded public engagement and impact activity into our research culture. In the post-REF2021 period we will develop further a research environment that values inclusivity, openness, intellectual risk-taking, and engagement with multiple publics, and that increases understanding of where we are today, how we got here, and where we can go next.

Our eighteen research-active staff (five professors, three readers, five senior lecturers, four lecturers, and one senior research fellow) participate in three research clusters (**Race, Gender, and Identity**, **Political Cultures, Class, and Citizenship**; and **War, Conflict, and Memory**) and one centre, the **Centre for Public History**. Grounded in the Department's longstanding commitment to research excellence in social and cultural history, our clusters and Centre have developed as dynamic micro-environments which nurture and support individual staff members in research and impact activity. We are situated within the Faculty of Humanities. Our staff participate in multi-disciplinary research networks across the Faculty and University; with HE partners in the Consortium for the Humanities and the Arts South-East England (CHASE) and the Eastern Academic Research Consortium (Eastern Arc); and with wider academic and non-academic networks. Our expertise extends from the early modern period to the present, ranging across Britain and Europe to Asia, Africa, and the Americas; our geographical coverage enables us to foster a wide range of collaborations, both nationally and globally.

**Research and impact strategy**

Our research and impact strategy has three strands:

- a) **Collaboration and Interdisciplinarity**
- b) **Inclusion, Support and Openness**
- c) **Impact, Creativity, and Engagement.**

Below, discussion of each strand reflects on the evolution of the aims set out in our REF2014 environment statement and explains our current strengths. **These strengths underpin our strategic aims for research and impact in the next REF period, which are:**

- 1) **to sustain and develop the work of our three research clusters**, in order to support colleagues to continue to produce high quality research outputs, impact, and funding applications;
- 2) **to extend the work of our Centre for Public History**, with particular emphasis on increasing our capacity to work with external partners on co-created research and impact projects;
- 3) **to prepare students as effectively as possible for postgraduate research (PGR)**, by aligning our taught MA programmes more closely with research cluster themes and engaging PGR students as fully as possible with cluster and *Centre for Public History*

activities;

- 4) and **to build on our success in equality and diversity** by applying for an Athena SWAN Charter Silver Award, and by seeking a new post that furthers our commitment to decolonising our research and teaching.

### ***Collaboration and Interdisciplinarity***

A key aim in REF2014 was to develop the work of research groupings in the UoA through recruitment and successful grant applications. We have almost quadrupled our total annual research income in the REF2021 period; it rose from around £100,000 in 2013-14 to nearly £400,000 in 2019-20 (*Section 3*). We have modified our research groupings since 2014 as a result of staff changes (notably the retirements of Higgs and Raven, which meant that we lost expertise in Big Data and the history of the book) and the staffing strategy detailed in *Section 2*.

**Our main Departmental mechanism for facilitating and sustaining collaboration has been the institution of formal research clusters**, with the aim of providing sustainable structures that extend beyond individual research projects or staff careers. After a period of experimentation and consultation we settled on three thematic clusters, with the following members: ***Race, Gender, and Identity*** (Flather; Kelley, Krikler, Loughran; Röhrig Assunção, Rowlands, Smith); ***Political Cultures, Class, and Citizenship*** (Colson, Grant, Green, Gurney, Payling, Priest); and ***War, Conflict, and Memory*** (Freeman, Noakes, Rossol, Schnell, Zhou).

Clusters host external speakers; peer review grant applications, book proposals, and draft outputs; and organise research-related events, such as writing workshops. Each cluster has a small annual budget, ring-fenced for this purpose in our departmental research support fund. Clusters report to our departmental Research Committee, which has oversight of our research support fund. It is chaired by our Director of Research and includes our Director of Impact and research cluster leaders. Clusters can bid for further departmental research support funds for larger collaborative events. Recent cluster highlights include international conferences on *Rethinking the Russian Revolution* (2017) and *Gender, Labour and Consumption in Historical Perspective* (2019), and peer review of Röhrig Assunção's successful AHRC Leadership project application, *Contemporary Capoeira* (2017).

All research, honorary and emeritus staff and PGR students are invited to cluster events and to our annual research away day; cross-cluster exchange of ideas is facilitated through discussions at these events. PGR ideas for cluster activity are pro-actively solicited and supported; the monthly *War, Conflict and Memory* reading group was started by PGR students. In the next REF period we will embed the clusters further within our research community by deepening PGR engagement with them and by aligning our MA programmes more closely with cluster themes. Our interdisciplinary MA in *War, Culture, and Society* (introduced in 2019) is the first phase in this plan.

**We engage in multi- and interdisciplinary research in various ways.** At Essex, historians participate in the following inter-disciplinary, cross-faculty research networks: the *Digital, Creative, and Cultural Network*; the *Essex Armed Conflict and Crisis Hub*; the *Transitional Justice Network*; the *Human Rights Centre*; the *Centre for Latin American and Caribbean Studies*; and the *Centre for Migration Studies*. Beyond Essex, we are members of the Eastern Arc Health Systems, Social Care and Wellbeing Group and the Young European Research Universities Network (YERUN); we work on the wide range of national and international research collaborations detailed in *Section 4*. Interdisciplinary approaches are at the heart of some of our most innovative research and impact activity. For example, Krikler worked with colleagues from the Department of Literature, Film, and Theatre Studies and with theatre professionals to develop the play which underpins his REF2021 impact case-study on changing historical understanding of the slave-trade.

### ***Inclusion, Support and Openness***

Our research culture recognises and respects the contributions of its diverse constituents, embedding care for individual researchers into all its working practices. We see this as the best

way to stimulate and support cutting-edge research.

**We foster an inclusive and supportive research culture by means of the Staffing Strategy and the Equality and Diversity initiatives which are discussed in detail in Section 2.** The significant progress we have made in this regard can be seen in our gaining of an Athena SWAN Charter Bronze Award (in 2017), and our achievement of a 50/50% gender balance of colleagues submitting outputs to REF2021, and a 60% female/40% male balance at professorial level. Sensitivity to issues of race, gender, class, and power underpin our research clusters and are central to all facets of our research environment.

**We have developed further mechanisms during this REF cycle to identify and support the research needs of individuals:** in addition to our research clusters, a key innovation has been the introduction of research support workshops, which provide a flexible method for responding to research and impact-related issues identified by colleagues (Section 2).

**We foster an open research culture, which foregrounds the importance of research integrity.** We contribute to UK-wide debates on open research (Green and Loughran for the Royal Historical Society) and create accessible datasets and archival collections (Section 4); 69% of the journal articles colleagues published in this REF cycle are green or gold Open Access. In the next REF period we will enhance the principle of open research by prioritising colleagues choosing Open Access publication forums in the distribution of our research support funds and by continuing to ensure that colleagues are up-to-date with disciplinary changes in relation to OA through research support workshops and ongoing liaison with relevant experts in the University Library.

**Our research environment is animated by a communal ethos,** which seeks to inspire new generations of PGR students by embedding research and impact opportunities in our teaching and by creating global communities of researchers. At the undergraduate level, we give students the opportunity to create a public history output instead of a final-year dissertation, and in this REF cycle we won over 20 University of Essex *Undergraduate Research Opportunities Programme* awards, to give students paid opportunities to work with us on research and impact tasks. We introduced a paid, co-funded MA-placement scheme, enabling postgraduate students to do research with local community organisations (such as Colchester's Community360) and the Essex Record Office. We pioneer innovative methods, such as the online, real-time, international 'transcribathons' of early modern recipes, run by Smith as part of the *Early Modern Recipes Online Collective* project (EMROC) to help student researchers develop transcription skills and to build global communities of academic researchers at all levels.

### ***Impact, Creativity, and Engagement***

In REF2014, three of our strategic aims related to public engagement: expanding the work of our *Centre for Local and Regional History*; generating impact through oral history; and creating online resources. Since 2014, our approach to public history has developed through our reconfiguration of the *Centre for Local and Regional History* as the **Centre for Public History** (CPH) and the appointment of a lecturer with a public engagement remit (Green) in 2016. The CPH is now the hub for public engagement activities and the co-ordinating point for our strategic approach to impact, outlined below:

**We embed impact and public engagement activity strategically within the Department, based on the principles that impact is relevant for all researchers, should be imagined in the widest sense possible, and should be sustainable across REF cycles.** The Department has a Director of Impact as well as a Director of Research; each role is taken on for a three-year term by academic colleagues who work closely together, as well as with our research cluster leaders and the Research Impact Officer in the Research and Enterprise Office (REO). We discuss impact at departmental Research Committee meetings, research support workshops, and research away days. Guest speakers have included the Times Higher Education public engagement award-winner David Wyatt. We hold impact workshops with external experts (in this cycle, from the education and museums sectors). We ring-fence an annual budget from our departmental research

support fund to which colleagues can bid for help in undertaking impact activity, and support colleagues' bids to external impact funds. Several colleagues, including Green and Krikler, the authors of our REF2021 impact case-studies, won ESRC Impact Acceleration Account awards in this cycle (*Section 3*).

**We encourage creative forms of engagement, often stemming from interdisciplinary research, to ensure the widest impact possible.** Röhrig Assunção's prize-winning 2014 documentary, *Body Games: Capoeira and Ancestry*, which traced the African roots of the Brazilian martial art capoeira, was created with ethnomusicologists and benefited from extensive crowd-funding. His expertise was shared through various channels, including an international knowledge exchange event, *Historical Research and Documentary Film* (2018). Krikler's REF2021 impact case-study emerged from this emphasis on creativity in the communication of historical ideas to diverse publics. Krikler's play about the slave ship *Zong*, performed in Essex and London in 2017, communicates complex legal and ethical issues through drama and is the basis for a new, sustainable resource for school-teaching on the history of the slave-trade.

**We involve different publics in making History through events which foreground the co-creation of historical understanding and resources.** Our annual *Dora Love Prize* programme, named after a Holocaust survivor who lived locally, has been an integral part of the University's Holocaust Memorial week for the past eight years. Colleagues work with students from Years 7-10 at East Anglian schools to enable them to produce and present Holocaust awareness projects. This strategy of working with schools to deepen understanding of complex and emotive historical topics also underpins Krikler's REF2021 impact case study. Green's REF2021 impact case-study on academic-archivist collaborations is another example of co-creation: at all stages of their project, Green and her archivist partner worked to demonstrate the historical importance of business archives to their parent companies and to wider research communities. The research projects led by Noakes, Loughran, Zhou, Gurney and Grant all used oral history to place 'ordinary' people at the heart of the research and created new resources for researchers and other publics (*Sections 3 and 4*).

In the next REF cycle we will use our **Centre for Public History** to sustain and develop co-creative approaches to research and impact with existing and new partners. To further these activities we will seek more funded MA and PhD placements with external partners and develop a responsive-mode staff/student public history team to support collaborative and community-based research and impact projects.

## 2. People

### Staffing Strategy

There are 18 historians in our Department: 16.5 FTEs on research and education (ASER) contracts, and one FTE on a research-only (ASR) contract. We are much the same size as the 18.2 FTEs submitted to REF2014. However, our profile has changed since 2014 as a result of a re-appraisal of our equality and diversity priorities in response to planned retirements. This produced the double-stranded staffing strategy, outlined below:

- i) **We improved the gender balance of our Department, particularly at senior level.** Our Department had no female professors in 2013. We now have three: Rowlands (promoted 2014); Noakes (newly appointed to the Rab Butler Chair in Modern History in 2017); and Loughran (newly appointed as Reader in 2017 and promoted to professor in 2019). All three are experts in gender history, flagging the importance of gender to our research clusters; the Rab Butler appointment process was designed to secure a Chair with this expertise. We have two male professors (Gurney and Röhrig Assunção, also promoted during the REF2021 cycle). Four male professors (Schulze, Higgs, Walter, Raven) retired and continue to play valuable roles in the Department as Emeritus Professors. Grant (male) and Zhou (female) were promoted to Reader during this cycle.



In addition to Noakes and Loughran, we made seven other ASER appointments in the REF2021 period, two (Kelley and Schnell) at Senior Lecturer level (both male), and five at probationary Lecturer level, three female (Flather, Green, Smith), two male (Colson, Freeman). As a result of our attention to gender equality in appointments and career development, our submission to REF2021 is balanced at 50% male/50% female academics.

- ii) We strengthened career development for probationary Lecturers and postdoctoral researchers.** Our supportive approach to staff development (see below) has enabled all five probationary Lecturers appointed during this REF cycle (Colson, Flather, Freeman, Green, and Smith) to gain permanency, with Green not only gaining early permanency but also rapid promotion to Senior Lecturer. Flather and Freeman moved from fixed-term to full-time, permanent ASER contracts, demonstrating our commitment to improving job security and career-development opportunities.

Our research environment was invigorated further by a vibrant group of postdoctoral researchers: Beth Jenkins held a British Academy Postdoctoral Research Fellowship (2017-20), while James Wallis, Joel Morley, Kate Mahoney and Daisy Payling held Research Officer posts on major research projects housed in the Department. The latter four developed their publication portfolios, grant-writing and workshop-organising skills under the mentorship of their project PIs. Mahoney, Payling and Wallis each published a co-authored monograph, as well as articles and book chapters. Mahoney and Payling staged public engagement activities on period poverty and perceptions of beauty with local schools and community groups and taught an undergraduate module of their own design on cultures of activism in 20th-century Britain (2018). Payling co-organised a doctoral training workshop on gender history in a non-binary world (2019).

### Staff Development

We use a range of policies and mechanisms to help research staff develop their careers and produce high quality publications, grant bids, and impact activity, in line with the *Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers*:

- i) The three-year probationary period (called Pathway to Permanency or P2P) for newly-appointed Lecturers** is organised around an agreement drawn up between the Head of Department, P2P Academic and their Academic Adviser. P2P Academics receive a reduced teaching and administrative workload, to enable them to produce research outputs. Academic Development Agreements set out feasible research plans, with the Academic Adviser and P2P Academic meeting regularly for discussion.
- ii) All ASER staff have performance and development reviews conducted by the Head of Department** (who completes Managing Diversity and Unconscious Bias essential training), with the departmental Director of Research present for discussion of research and impact plans. These meetings focus on enabling colleagues to make the best use of the time and money they have for research and impact. This is done through discussion of potential funding streams for their work; the identification of issues they wish to see discussed at research support workshops; and the consideration of any work/life balance or well-being concerns we can assist with. Colleagues are made aware of training opportunities for career development offered by the University. In this REF cycle nine colleagues completed the University's *Future Leaders* programme and two completed Advance HE's *AURORA* leadership development initiative for women.
- iii) University policy entitles all ASER staff (including probationers) to apply for one term of research leave after six teaching terms.** Our Department has always ensured that this entitlement is met as soon as possible, as we believe that the right to non-competitive leave is vital to ensure all staff have equal opportunities to develop their research careers. University timetabling also allows for one day per teaching-term week to be kept free for research.

- iv) **Colleagues can draw on various financial resources for their research.** All ASER and ASR staff are entitled to an annual (non-competitive) budget of £1000 from our **departmental research support fund** (created from our pooled departmental ICR allocations) to finance archival visits and other research expenses. Colleagues can apply to our research support fund for additional funds (awarded annually and competitively) for impact activity or for 'seed-corn' funds to kick-start major projects. We help colleagues apply for grants from the University's **PVC-Research Strategic Fund scheme**; in this REF cycle we won £47,621 (research) and £24,710 (impact) through the scheme.
- v) **We introduced termly research support workshops during this REF cycle**, to respond to challenges and opportunities identified by colleagues and to share best practice. Recent workshops focused on writing monographs; knowledge exchange; research impact; career-planning; and grant writing. They involve scholars at all career stages, including PGRs and Emeritus Professors, providing a forum for discussion of academic life and informal career counselling.
- vi) **We facilitate research and impact discussions through other fora.** In addition to our research clusters (discussed in *Section 1*), these include our departmental meetings and annual research away days (to which all research staff and PGR students are invited). We invite experts from across the University (our Research Impact Officer and Research Development Manager from the REO; and Research Support Manager from the University Library) regularly to these sessions.

### PGR Students

- i) **We attract high-quality research students and PGR-funding from various sources.** Overall in this REF cycle we awarded 29 doctorates; we had 83 students (30 of them part-time) registered for doctoral study in total, 29 of whom secured funding for all or part of their studies. Major awards included nine AHRC PhD Studentships won through the CHASE Doctoral Training Partnership, two of which were collaborative awards (with the British Library and John Lewis Partnership respectively). Other sources of PhD funding include the Wellcome Trust and Eastern ARC studentships.

In this REF cycle we improved the system of departmental support for students drafting CHASE applications; we plan to pursue more collaborative doctoral awards, as these widen PGR career prospects and generate impact.

- ii) **External recognition of research excellence won by our students while completing their PhDs includes** the *Labour History Review* postgraduate essay prize (Mason, 2016); the I.B.Tauris Award for Best Paper on Post-Antique Iranian History (Good, 2017) and the John Scholes Transport History Research Essay Competition prize (Lewis Smith, 2018). Several students (including Cozens, Good, and Yang) have begun academic careers at other UK or overseas universities; many have articles (Good; Lewis Smith; Smyth; Frew; Cozens) and book-length publications (Mason; Kenneison) to their names. Others progressed to careers in fields such as librarianship and university administration.

The resilience and ingenuity of our PGR students was seen in their response to the COVID-19 lockdown in 2020; two of them founded *History Indoors*, a flourishing website where they and their peers present their research to the public.

- iii) **We integrate PGR students into our research environment in a variety of ways.** We interview them as part of their application process and require them to participate in departmental as well as University-run induction events when they start their research. PGR students are invited to all departmental research events; individual students are invited to networking events with speakers of key relevance in their field. One departmental research seminar every autumn term is reserved for postgraduate speakers to enable them to practise presenting and gain feedback.

- iv) **PGR students are members of our research clusters and are encouraged to initiate cluster-based research activities.** We facilitate PGR input into the shaping of our research environment by inviting PGR students to participate in our annual research away day and via formal PGR representation at departmental meetings. We have two PGR offices in the Department with work-stations for 12 students.
- v) **We provide an annual budget of £2,000 from our departmental research support fund for PGR conferences/conference strands,** enabling our students to present their work and gain conference organisation skills. In 2017 a PGR team of students ran a successful conference called *The Ever Present Past*; they published the proceedings in *Essex Students Research Online* in 2019, while PGR speakers from Essex and beyond were an integral part of our 2019 *Gender, Labour and Consumption in Historical Perspective* conference.
- vi) **PGR students have monthly meetings with their supervisors, plus two formal supervisory panels per year** (one for part-time students), to which specific pieces of written work and a completed report form (in which student and supervisor reflect on plans and training needs) are submitted for discussion. Students are required to meet the milestones set out in a University-level document, with the confirmation panel at the end of the first year of particular importance.
- vii) **We introduced a system of co-supervision in this REF cycle,** in which all students have a designated main and second supervisor, to ensure continuity of supervisory arrangements (in cases where a colleague might be on leave). Supervisory panels are chaired by the departmental PGR Director or Director of Research, both of whom sit on our termly Research Students Progress Panel to ensure centralised oversight of progress. Our PGR Director and Graduate Administrator work closely with University PGR services to monitor PGR student progress.
- viii) **Training needs are assessed at every supervisory panel and met in various ways.** The most important of these is the University's *Proficio* framework, which offers courses covering issues such as career development, writing, public engagement, and IT skills. Recent offerings include courses on digital mapping, Library Special Collections, and analysis of historical texts. Each PGR student has an allowance of £2000 to spend over their three years of study in light of their specific research needs, plus £500 for conference attendance. PGR students are encouraged to participate in the University's Network for Early Career Essex Researchers programme and to attend CHASE conferences and training events. In this REF cycle we organised CHASE-funded doctoral training events open to PGR students from Essex and the CHASE consortium on: *Historicising Selfhood*; *Writing for Pleasure*, *Writing for Publishing*; *The 'I' in History*; and *Autobiography, Memory and Practice*.
- ix) **PGR students (from their second year) can apply to become paid Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) on team-taught first-year undergraduate history modules.** PGR GTAs are supported through team meetings, peer observation of teaching, and moderation of coursework and exam marking. All PGR GTAs gain Associate Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy by completing the University-run *CADENZA* scheme, thus gaining a teaching qualification while completing their PhDs.
- x) **To emphasise the importance of impact, we encourage PGR students to apply for Research Assistantships with external partners.** Successes in this cycle include Marshall (CHASE-funded, at the Imperial War Museum) and Lewis Smith (British Society for the History of Science Engagement Fellowship at the Essex Record Office). Smith won a further Research Assistantship funded by an EIRA Innovation Voucher scheme, producing a strategy for digital engagement for the Essex Record Office focused on its Marconi collection in collaboration with the University of East Anglia and BT.

**Equality and Diversity**

Our equality and diversity commitments (outlined below) are central to the **Inclusion, Support and Openness** strand of our research and impact strategy.

- i) **We are committed to continued engagement with the Athena SWAN gender equality programme.** We were one of the first History Departments to gain an Athena SWAN Bronze Award (in 2017). Our Athena SWAN submission included actions on family-friendly event timings; additional support for promotion applications; and clearer information on University-level support on flexible working. It also reflected existing work undertaken on recruitment processes (such as gender-balanced recruitment panels and gender-sensitive job advertisements). Implementing these actions helped us hire more women (5) than men (4) in this REF cycle and improve the number of women submitted to REF. In RAE2008, two women were submitted out of fourteen FTEs (14%); in REF2014, it was five out of nineteen (27%), while for REF2021 the balance will be 50/50.
- We will apply for an Athena SWAN Silver Award in the next REF period.
- ii) **We recognise the importance of gender balance and female role models in research management.** Our Research Committee (which has oversight of departmental research and impact matters and our research support fund) has roughly equal male/female, junior/senior membership. In this REF cycle we had female Directors of Research (Rowlands) and Impact (Green) for the first time. Our REF2021 submission has been overseen by a UoA group consisting of 5 female and 4 male members, across 5 professorial and 4 non-professorial posts (all of whom completed *Unconscious Bias for REF* training).
- iii) **We advance understanding of inequalities in wider communities of historians.** Green contributed to the Royal Historical Society (RHS) investigation into inequalities relating to race and sexuality in UK history. Following the *Second Gender Equality Report* published by the RHS in 2018, Noakes and Payling ran AHRC/CHASE-funded workshops in 2019 on *Gender (In)Equality in the Historical Professions* (Noakes) and *Gender History in a Non-Binary World* (Payling) which generated recommendations for best practice in the history profession.
- iv) **In the next REF period we will build on our equality and diversity achievements by prioritising race and ethnicity.** We will decolonise our curriculum and contribute to the RHS Roadmap for Change on Race, Ethnicity and Equality in UK History. We are submitting outputs by two BAME staff to REF2021 (one of whom, Frost, took up a post at UCL in 2020) and want to do more to ensure that our research community better reflects the diversity of wider society. We will seek feedback about their experiences from current and former BAME staff and PGRs, and work with BAME undergraduates to discuss what factors influence their decisions about applying for postgraduate study.

**3. Income, infrastructure and facilities****Income**

**Our research and impact strategy (Section 1) has helped us increase our capture of external research funding during this REF cycle.** We won an overall total of £1,835,622 in external research funding; our total annual research income nearly quadrupled over the cycle, rising from £108,373 in 2014/15 to £425,592 in 2018/19. Research income per member of academic staff rose at a comparable rate, from £6,021 per FTE in 2014/15 to £23,067 per FTE in 2018/19.

We also had considerable success in capturing impact funding, particularly in the form of Impact Acceleration Account awards (£26,320 in total) and in winning grants from non-UK funding schemes.



**We have achieved this success by fostering a sustainable pipeline of high-quality applications across a range of funding schemes.** We involve research clusters in the grant-writing process (for example, in the grants listed below for Röhrig Assunção, Kelley, Gurney and Grant). We encourage colleagues to apply for smaller 'seed-corn' grants for preliminary research preparatory to larger bids; we devote time in our research support workshops (discussed in Section 2) to sessions on how to write grant applications for specific funding schemes. The Department's Director of Research and at least one other colleague review all grant applications, including those from early career scholars and PGR students applying for post-doctoral funding. We work closely with our designated Research Development Manager and Research Impact Officer (in the University's REO) to identify relevant research and impact funding opportunities.

Two-thirds of colleagues won funding during this cycle while all colleagues made one or more funding applications. Our responsiveness to changing funding landscapes was seen in the fact that Green coordinated a successful funding bid with Colchester's *Community360* organisation in 2020 (to capture local experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic through oral history).

**During this REF cycle, members of the Department were Principal Investigators for eight research projects worth £100,000 or more.** These were:

- Frost's *War Memoryscapes in Asia Project* (Leverhulme International Networks, £102,877) and *Living With Violent Heritage: Contest and Coexistence in Post-war Sri Lanka* (British Academy £299,838);
- Gurney and Grant's *National Service Life Stories: Masculinity, Class and the Memory of Conscription in Britain* (Leverhulme Trust, £222,000);
- Kelley's *Documenting Africans in Trans-Atlantic Slavery* (Netherlands Research Council and ESRC, £161,067);
- Loughran's *Body, Self, and Family: Women's Psychological, Emotional and Bodily Health in Britain, c. 1960-1990* (Wellcome Trust, £613,365);
- Noakes's *Reflections on the Centenary of the First World War: Learning and Legacies for the Future* (AHRC, £300,000);
- Röhrig Assunção's *Contemporary Capoeira in Rio de Janeiro, 1948-1982* (AHRC Leadership, £227,000); and
- Zhou's *Between State and Community: Public Health Campaigns and Local Healing Practice in Socialist Asia* (EC Marie Skłodowska-Curie action, £100,000).

**Colleagues acted as Co-Investigators on** the AHRC Connected Communities project, *First World War Engagement Centres. Gateways to the First World War* (Noakes); the ESRC-funded *An Atlas of Victorian Fertility Decline* (Higgs); and the BA-funded *European Cuisine and British Identity in the Age of Nationalism, 1760-1837* (Smith).

**'Seed-corn' grants won during this cycle include** Rossol's *Writing about a Revolution: Emotions, Agency and Expectations of German Revolution in 1918* (BA, £7,074); Grant's *Intergenerational Jazz Reminiscence Project* (National Jazz Archive, £7,500); Raven's *Monsters, Myths, and Methods* (BA/Leverhulme, £7,533); Colson's 2015 Richard III & Yorkist History Trust research grant (£4,500); and Noakes's two cohort development grants for *Historicising Selfhood* (AHRC/CHASE, £3,219) and *Gender Inequality in the Historical Professions* (AHRC/CHASE, £3,500).

Many of the above research projects are rooted in international collaborations (discussed further in Section 4). **The global reach of our research is further reflected in the funding won from sources not reported in HESA returns,** a success we are committed to maintaining in the future

as an integral aspect of our international outlook. Noakes received \$125,656 for *Gendering Civil Defense in Post-war Britain* (American Council of Learned Societies). Röhrig Assunção received a stipend to spend a term in residence at Universidade Federal Fluminense in Brazil (CAPES, £11,880); Kelley was awarded a Yale University/Gilder Lehrman Fellowship (\$4,000) to research a new monograph; and Smith collaborated on a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada project on the social networks of early modern collectors of curiosities.

**We encourage applications to schemes that fund public engagement and research impact activity.** We gained funding from the ESRC's Impact Acceleration Account (IAA) scheme, with five colleagues (Kelley; Grant; Zhou, Green; Krikler) winning a total of £26,320 in the IAA's Challenge Lab, Impact, and Active Engagement strands of activity. Green (£8,650) and Krikler (£1,980) won IAA awards to support work on their REF2021 impact case-studies. Other IAA-funded work included Grant's *Cold War Lives* workshop and Green's collaborative *Essex County Hospital* project (discussed in Section 4). Payling won a collaborative *Being Human Festival of the Humanities* public engagement grant (BA/AHRC, £1,485) in 2019 for an exhibition and creative workshops in Colchester on the theme of *Made Up: Health and Beauty Secrets Past and Present*.

In the next REF cycle we will continue to make grant applications across a range of research and impact funding streams. We will continue to use our research clusters and research support workshops to integrate discussion of grant capture into career development conversations, by sharing best practice (about successful applications) and developing resilience in the re-working of initially unsuccessful funding applications.

### Infrastructure and Facilities

**The principal research support facility for history is the University's Albert Sloman Library.** With over 1 million physical volumes, 48,000 e-books, and 40,840 journals and databases (including Historical Abstracts and JSTOR), it supports our research community very effectively. The Library holds 110,550 History books and printed items and provides access to several major digital primary source collections, including Mass Observation Online; Crime and Punishment; Defining Gender; Gender: Identity and Social Change; Empire Online; China: Trade, Politics and Culture; Historical Texts (including EEBO and ECCO); Parliamentary Papers; State Papers Online; and a range of historical newspapers from ProQuest Historical Newspapers and Gale Primary Sources. A History subject librarian liaises with the Department to meet other research needs through inter-library loans or the purchase of essential items.

The Library's Special Collections of over 34,000 printed works include several historically-significant collections, which we embed into PGR training, such as the Society of Friends Collection, the Harsnett Collection, and a pioneering oral history collection deposited by the Colchester Recalled Oral History Group. Colleagues are active in increasing the Library's holdings: Raven was instrumental in ensuring that the Bibliographical Society library came to Essex in 2017, while Noakes created a new Special Collection by depositing the projects created by local communities across the UK as part of her AHRC *Reflections on the Centenary of the First World War* project in 2019.

**Space provision and administrative support for research is generous.** All ASER staff have single-occupancy campus offices; post-doctoral researchers have offices shared with a maximum of one other member of staff. All have unlimited access to free scanning and printing facilities and full administrative and IT support.

**We created a Collaborative Hub in this REF cycle, to facilitate collaborative research and impact, and the dissemination of good practice in digital methods amongst staff and students.** We won PVC-Research infrastructure funding to create the Hub in a re-modelled departmental office. Our digital history experts Colson and Smith equipped the Hub with laptops, a video board, access to ArcGIS (a spatial analysis and cartography software suite), and a map printer. We also won funding to buy podcast recording equipment and portable scanners which can be borrowed by staff and students for use on public engagement projects. The Hub has become a

key creative and collaborative space in our Department, used for online transcribathons; research cluster meetings; writing sessions; digital workshops; and training events.

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

As outlined in *Section 1, Collaboration and Interdisciplinarity and Impact, Creativity, and Engagement* are key strands of our research and impact strategy. We work with the voluntary sector, businesses, arts organisations, community groups, schools, museums, and archives as well as with HE researchers in the UK and beyond.

##### Collaboration and Interdisciplinarity

- i) Several colleagues are members of national and international collaborative research projects, producing new datasets and digital resources for wider use, as well as published outputs:

Noakes was Co-Investigator on the AHRC-funded *Gateways to the First World War Public Engagement Centre* project (2014-19), working with partners at the universities of Kent, Portsmouth and Leeds, the Imperial War Museum, National Maritime Museum, Commonwealth Graves Commission, and community groups to facilitate public engagement with, and creative responses to, the First World War centenary. Noakes also led the AHRC-funded project, *Reflections on the Centenary: Learning and Legacies for the Future* (2017-2020), collaborating with colleagues at the universities of Exeter, Glasgow and Kent to reflect on the legacies of community-based commemoration projects, which were deposited in the University of Essex Library.

Frost led the Leverhulme-funded *War Memoryscapes in Asia Partnership (WARMAP)* project, collaborating with scholars from Europe, Asia and Australia to explore how World War Two is remembered across Asia and sharing research findings via a project website. Kelley leads the UK team on the trans-national *Documenting Africans in Trans-Atlantic Slavery* project. Funded by the ESRC and funding councils in the Netherlands, Canada and France, it will produce a world-leading database for the study of African identity in the era of the slave-trade. Higgs worked with historical demographers at Cambridge University on the ESRC-funded *An Atlas of Victorian Fertility Decline* project. Higgs also helped produce *I-CEM*, the first integrated dataset of British censuses from 1851 to 1911, a globally significant data-set deposited in the UK Data Archive in 2014.

Röhrig Assunção worked with the Laboratory of Oral History and Image at the Federal Fluminense University in Brazil on his AHRC-funded project. *Contemporary Capoeira in Rio de Janeiro: 1948-1982* (2018-20), producing and archiving oral history testimony from elderly capoeira masters and sharing his research with global audiences through a project website and blog. Smith is Co-Investigator on the *European Cuisine and British Identity in the Age of Nationalism, 1760-1837* project (British Academy) and creator of *The Sloane Letters Project*, a freely-accessible website featuring the correspondence of physician Sir Hans Sloane. Smith is also a founding member of the international *Early Modern Recipes Online Collective* (EMROC). EMROC holds regular recipe 'transcribathons'; publishes the transcriptions produced on its website; and collaborates with the Folger Shakespeare Library and Zooniverse. Our oral historians are creating research resources for the future, with the digitisation of Gurney and Grant's *National Service Life Stories* Leverhulme project interviews, and the deposit of Loughran's *Body. Self, and Family* Wellcome project interviews at the British Library.

- ii) **We contribute to the research base through peer-review processes, editorial board memberships, participation in learned societies, and conference presentations across the globe:**

Gurney, Loughran and Noakes are AHRC Peer Review College members. Colleagues review for the Finnish Academy (Noakes), German Funding Council (Röhrig Assunção), and Wellcome Trust and Irish Research Council (Loughran). Green was Co-Honorary Director of

Communications at the Royal Historical Society (2016-20) and judged its public history prize in 2015 and 2018. Rowlands was Postgraduate Officer for the German History Society (2017-20); Raven chaired the English Speaking Union of the Commonwealth and was President of the Bibliographical Society; and Priest sat on the Membership Committee of the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations.

We all peer review for leading journals and publishers in our research fields. Gurney is Editor of *Labour History Review*, Colson, Associate Editor of *Urban History*, and Zhou, an editor of *History Workshop Journal*. Flather is general editor of Bloomsbury's *A Cultural History of the Home*; Gurney is general editor of Routledge's *Contemporary Thought on Nineteenth Century Socialism*; Noakes joint Series Editor for Bloomsbury's *New Directions in Social and Cultural History*; and Loughran commissioning editor of *Bloomsbury History: Theory and Methods*. Editorial board memberships are held for *Iberoamericana* and *Bulletin of Latin American Research* (Röhrig Assunção); *Social History of Medicine* (Smith); *Journal of South African Studies* (Krikler); and *Journal of Applied History* (Green).

We organise international conferences regularly at Essex, such as the *Fifteenth Century and Rethinking the Russian Revolution* conferences (2017); the *Reformation Studies Colloquium* (2018); and *The Historian's I and Gender, Labour and Consumption* conferences (2019). Our research presentations have a global reach; in this REF cycle, colleagues spoke at conferences in the UK, Germany, Denmark, Norway, the Republic of Ireland, the US, Canada, Brazil, Colombia, Sri Lanka, Singapore, France, Spain, Italy, Austria, South Africa, and China, as well as to many 'lay' audiences in the UK and beyond.

**iii) Our research expertise is recognised in the award of external accolades and sought often by the media:**

Gurney's *The Making of Consumer Culture in Modern Britain* was named 'Outstanding Academic Title' for 2018 by CHOICE; Raven's *What is the History of the Book* has been translated into French, Italian and Korean. Raven was elected Fellow of the British Academy in 2019. Rowlands was interviewed about the history of witchcraft on Radio 4 in 2018 (*Making History*); and for Channel 5 (*Digging up Britain's Past*) and the Smithsonian Channel (*Mystic Britain*) in 2019. Rossol was interviewed on Radio 4's *In Our Time* about Rosa Luxemburg (2017). Noakes was interviewed about the First and Second World Wars on Radio 4, the World Service, BBC2 and Channel 4 (2017-19); for podcasts by English Heritage and Dominic Sandbrook (2019); and in the BBC1 programmes, *My Family's War: Helena Bonham Carter* (2019) and David Olusoga *A House Through Time* (2020). Zhou participated in the Channel News Asia TV documentary *China on Film* (2018) and in a BBC World Service forum on the history of opium (2019).

Priest was interviewed about US politics by Al Jazeera (2017) and appeared in the six-episode *History Channel* documentary, *Race to Victory* (2020). He and other colleagues wrote blogs and did podcasts for *The Conversation* website; Kelley's 2018 *Conversation* article about the transatlantic slave-trade was picked up by the *Independent*, while Zhou's *Conversation* blog, 'The history of the People's Republic of China through 70 years of mass parades', was quoted by six international newspapers and led to interviews by BBC News and Euro News. In 2020 Zhou and Noakes contributed to national media discussions of COVID-19 and its historical antecedents (on *Newsnight* and in *The Conversation*, the *Financial Times*, and *History and Policy*).

**Impact, Creativity and Engagement**

**i) The Centre for Public History (CPH) is at the heart of our strategy to embed impact and public engagement activity within the Department:**

The CPH provides a pathway to the Department for anyone interested in working with us, enabling us to develop relationships and projects (such as the *Essex County Hospital* project,



detailed below) with wider publics. The CPH has an annual budget to promote a range of public-facing events. These include 'In Conversation' events, in which public figures discuss topical issues with members of the Department (Priest on American politics with Clive Myrie in 2018; Frost on the partition of India with Kavita Puri in 2019). The CPH organises an annual showcase local history lecture and co-ordinates events linked to research clusters. Susan Grayzel (2018) and Helen Parr (2019) gave public lectures on gender and war, while theatre company Bent Architect performed a specially-written play at Essex as part of a programme of events reflecting on women's acquisition of the vote in 1918 (2018).

**ii) Impact and public engagement are embedded as a matter of course into our research projects:**

Röhrig Assunção worked with capoeira masters, practitioners and community groups in Brazil on his *Contemporary Capoeira* project, to co-create historical understanding of how capoeira developed in Rio. Facilitating, responding to, and archiving public commemorative initiatives lay at the heart of Noakes's two projects on the centenary of the First World War. Zhou's project on public health in socialist Asia involved working with local communities in China to co-create historical memories of health-care programmes. Loughran, Payling and Mahoney helped women and girls develop body confidence through activities on the *Body, Self and Family* project. These included workshops on menstruation with Girl Guide groups; the *Made Up: Health and Beauty Secrets Past and Present* exhibition and creative workshops; and the 2019 *Snapping the Stiletto: Essex Women's History Festival*, co-organised with Essex County Council and the Esme Fairbairns Foundation.

**iii) Our creative approach to impact and public engagement is evidenced through our impact case-studies, as well as various digital and co-produced outputs:**

Many of our projects contribute to the wider research base and society through the websites, datasets, digital archives, and oral history collections they create. In addition to Krikler's play, which is central to his case-study about the slave-trade, other colleagues approach impact creatively. Röhrig Assunção secured \$21,000 of crowd-funding to finish making *Body Games: Capoeira and Ancestry*, his documentary film on the Angolan roots of the Afro-Brazilian martial art of capoeira, in 2014. *Body Games* has since been shown at twelve international film festivals and won awards in Zanzibar, Philadelphia, Bristol, Plymouth, Luanda, and London. Audiences in fourteen countries completed over 1,000 questionnaires about the film; 70 per cent of respondents reported that watching it had changed the way they thought about capoeira and its origins.

Frost helped create three historical documentaries for Channel News Asia, including *Becoming Singapore* (2019; winner of three prizes including Best Short Documentary at the Davis International Film, USA), and *Age of Innovation* (2017; winner of Best History Documentary, World Media Festival). Frost's *WARMAP* project led to an exhibition (*Exhibiting the Fall*) at the National Museum of Singapore (2017) as well as the creation of a project website. Zhou's work on public health in China informed the *Schistosomiasis Prevention Museum* in Jiaying (2015); she helped organise an exhibition on the Anti-Schistosomiasis Campaign and related public engagement events in Yujiang county, Jiangxi Province, China (2017-18)

**iv) We work with different publics to co-create resources and advance historical understanding:**

Krikler's REF2021 impact case-study helps teachers and their students understand the slave-trade, while our annual Dora Love Prize programme furthers understanding of histories of intolerance by working with schools to develop Holocaust commemoration projects. The resources created by Rowlands for her REF2014 impact case-study, *Correcting Myths and Challenging Stereotypes in the History of Witchcraft and Witch-hunts* are still being used in local schools. Rowlands also collaborated on public responses to witch-persecution with the artist susan pui san lok (on the Arts Council funded *New Geographies* project, 2017-20); the

Royal Geographic Society on a *Walking with Witches* audio guide (2019); and *The River Runs Through Us Stour Valley Project*, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and Arts Council (2017).

Green pioneered a model for collaborative work between historians and business archivists in her REF2021 impact case-study, which demonstrates the business benefits of archival holdings. Green also led the *Essex County Hospital* project, a collaboration with the NHS to mark the closure of a 200-year-old hospital in Colchester. This culminated in a Heritage Open Day in 2018 which attracted over 500 visitors and was run by a volunteer team of Essex History staff and students. The team used skills gained in bespoke training sessions and equipment from our departmental Collaborative Hub to gather over 30 oral history testimonies (now deposited in the University Library) and to digitise photos, press cuttings and other documents brought by attendees for a digital exhibition and special edition of a local newspaper

Noakes has been a member of the Advisory Board for the Imperial War Museum's new Second World War galleries since 2016, and shaped several creative collaborations through her *Gateways to the First World War* and *Reflections on the Centenary* projects. She acted as historical advisor to the HLF projects *Breaking the Silence* (2020) and *Home Fires* (2015). Both were planned as community theatre productions; Covid-19 led to *Breaking the Silence* being re-imagined as a website with poems, artwork and performances reflecting on the impact of the Spanish Flu pandemic. Noakes helped organise the research training event, *The First World War and the Western Isles*, and the *Capturing Commemoration* workshop on best practice for organisations working on the centenary (2018). Participants at the latter workshop, which generated a report which is available from the project website, included the Imperial War Museum; the Northern Ireland Community Relations Council; the British Future thinktank; and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport. Noakes's evidence to the DCMS was quoted in its final report on the First World War Centenary.

These examples highlight our ongoing commitment to deepening historical understanding with, and for the benefit of, a wide variety of non-HE partners.