

**Institution:** 10007140 – Birmingham City University (BCU)

**Unit of Assessment:** 27 – English Language & Literature

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

### 1.1 Overview

The School of English at BCU has longstanding research clusters in i) Descriptive Linguistics, including Corpus Linguistics, Sociolinguistics, and Language and the Law, and ii) Literary Studies, especially the Long Eighteenth Century and the Modern Period, also encompassing Drama and Creative Writing. The primary driver of our research excellence is the intellectual curiosity of our academic staff and doctoral students. As we go on to describe, the focus of our research strategy, as an individual UoA and as part of a cohesive Faculty, has been on developing support mechanisms to provide researchers at all career stages with the necessary skills, time and resources to produce and disseminate research of the highest quality.

We have submitted to all assessment exercises since RAE1996, and returned the vast majority of our staff in both 2008 and 2014. Since 2014, we have increased our research-active staff base by 23% from 12.4 to 15.2 FTE. We have increased the range and total value of external grant awards (see §3), and our involvement in the AHRC Midlands4Cities consortium has had a transformational effect on our doctoral training environment (see §2.2). This has been achieved by our most junior group of researchers ever, with 53% of the staff in our return awarded their doctorate during this REF cycle. This is the result of our strategic decision over the past two cycles to contribute to the vitality and sustainability of both our own research community and the wider discipline by recruiting and developing early career researchers (see §2.1).

We have an eclectic understanding of our discipline, with staff engaged in activities ranging from software development and quantitative analyses to public exhibitions and creative forms of expression. Our outputs and impact case studies demonstrates the power of English to reinvent its historic boundaries and form new alliances. Cross-disciplinary working has been enhanced during this cycle by changes to University structures and our relocation to Birmingham city centre. The School is now part of the Faculty of Arts, Design and Media (ADM), which was established by **Roberts** as Executive Dean in 2014 to bring together all arts and humanities work in the University, and through which research activity is strategically co-ordinated. Under **Kehoe's** Directorship, English Language & Literature is one of four Units of Assessment within ADM, each having the same Research Directorate structure, with Associate Directors for careers, outputs and impact, external income, and doctoral education.

### 1.2 Review of research and impact strategy, 2014-2020

In our REF2014 submission we summarised our future research strategy as “to continue to foster world-leading research across the field of English Studies, with an increased emphasis on cross-disciplinary collaborative projects”. We went on to describe how the relocation of the School would “bring together the University's arts and humanities provision in a single city centre location with new state-of-the-art facilities [and] enable us to explore common methods and approaches to research across the arts and humanities, exploiting synergies between subject areas and working more closely with city centre-based arts organisations”.

Our research strategy was, and continues to be, inextricably linked to our Impact strategy. In our 2014 REF3a document we outlined our plans for the latter as being “to build upon existing partnerships and develop new cross-disciplinary research collaborations with potential for high impact” and to “exploit the growing importance of Corpus Linguistics as a cross-disciplinary methodology”. At the beginning of this cycle we set out the following specific goals in our School research strategy, all of which have been met or exceeded:

| Goal   | Achievement  |
|--|--|
| Forge new cross-disciplinary (and cross-institutional) links | Our planned relocation took place in 2015 and collaborative projects have since been initiated between our staff and those researching a |

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|  | wide variety of disciplines (see §1.2.1)  |
| Explore new funding opportunities beyond research councils   | We have increased the range and total value of external grant awards in this cycle by turning to new sources such as Horizon2020, DFG, and the National Lottery Heritage Fund, in addition to new AHRC awards (see §3)  |
| Increase doctoral student numbers and, thus, completions   | Our involvement in Midlands4Cities has trebled PhD completions, with continued growth (see §2.2)  |
| Build on our Impact success in REF2014 (100% 4*/3*)  | Researchers across both clusters are involved in high-impact external engagement activities. For our case studies we have selected two cross-disciplinary projects (one from each cluster) with significant impacts beyond English Studies and beyond academia (see §1.2.2)           |
| Involve more staff in research management by establishing a School Research Directorate                                    | The Directorate was established in 2014 with a Director ( <b>Kehoe</b> ) and Associate Directors ( <b>Howe, McGlashan, Trowbridge</b> ), overseeing career development, research leave, and the peer-review of outputs/bids (see §2.1)  |
| Provide all staff with a research mentor   | Overseen by <b>Trowbridge</b> , our mentoring scheme ensures that all staff, from emerging researchers to Professors, are assigned a mentor to offer support with outputs and funding application development, and to review the annual Personal Research Development Plan (see §2.1) |
| Provide all research-active staff with guaranteed research time aligned to performance targets appropriate to career stage | This has been achieved through the introduction of a new institutional Workload Allocation Model and Faculty Research Investment Scheme (FRIS), and the continuation of our School research leave scheme (see §2.1)   |

### 1.2.1 Cross-disciplinary working

Since our relocation in 2015, staff across both clusters have collaborated closely with researchers in other Schools co-located on the City Centre campus. In particular, there has been extensive collaboration with colleagues in Law and Social Sciences. **Issa** has co-authored two journal articles on Islamophobia (2018, 2020) with Professor Imran Awan (Criminology), while **Gee** and **Tkacukova** worked with colleagues in Law in 2019/20 to co-supervise a research intern exploring the language of equality in the UK Supreme Court. In 2017/18, **Gee, Kehoe** and **Lawson**, along with Dr Pelham Carter (Psychology) were awarded an internal STEAM grant for a series of workshops on the use of Corpus Linguistic methods in the social sciences. Later, in May 2019, **Tkacukova** co-hosted a BA/Leverhulme-funded workshop on applications of Corpus Linguistics for socio-legal scholars, with presentations by **Gee** and **Kehoe**. **Tkacukova's** collaborations in this area extend beyond BCU through her AHRC-funded work with Professor Robert Lee (University of Birmingham Law School) on legal-lay communication and her BA/Leverhulme project with Professor Hilary Sommerlad (School of Law, University of Leeds) on improving access to legal advice for litigants in person (see §3).

Within the ADM Faculty, **Issa** worked with colleagues in the School of Art in 2017 to secure €17,500 of Erasmus+ Staff Mobility funding for a partnership between BCU and Palestinian arts institutions and universities, **Leadbetter** was Poet in Residence in Fine Art (2014), and **Botham** divides her time equally between the School of English and the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, teaching and undertaking research collaborations in Acting. **Trowbridge** is a member of the Dress in Context research cluster hosted by the School of Fashion & Textiles, where she has co-organised conferences and given a series of talks on literature and dress. She also works

extensively at the intersection of English Literature and Art History, including her AHRC-funded *Reading Art* project in collaboration with the city centre-based Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery (see §3). Outputs in our submission which have benefitted from our cross-disciplinary environment in ADM include **Moss's** work on Music and Modernism (27Z\_OP\_D0023), **Trowbridge's** on Art and Poetry in the Victorian period (27Z\_OP\_B2503), and **Roberts's** on Beethoven and Shakespeare (27Z\_OP\_D0028). The last of these led to a commission on Shakespeare, Beethoven and Wagner for the *Oxford Handbook of Shakespeare in Music*, edited by two musicologists (OUP 2021).

In addition, several colleagues have co-supervised doctoral students across disciplines at BCU, including Media (**Botham, Lawson, McGlashan, Tkacukova**), Art & Design (**Anderton**), Game Studies (**Seiwald**), Law (**Gee**), and Music (**Roberts**). Further synergies have emerged since January 2020 when the School of English joined with the School of Media under a single Head to form the Birmingham Institute of Media and English (BIME), one of four Institutes within ADM Faculty. This will help foster new research collaborations and cross-supervision in the next cycle.

### 1.2.2 Impact

We have adopted a strategic approach to impact through management of individual workloads and research allowances. Additional Faculty support has helped us track evidence trails, learn from impact narratives in adjacent disciplines, and make use of the University's suite of specialist exhibition space. The first of our case studies describes **Issa's** ground-breaking work on the *Stories of Sacrifice* project and exhibition which drew upon and contributed to research in History, Sociology and Theology. This work – awarded £97,500 by the Ministry of Defence's Covenant Fund and match funded by the British Muslim Heritage Centre – increased public awareness of the role played by Muslim soldiers in the Allied campaign during WWI by revealing that at least twice as many (885,000) fought in the war than had previously been reported. *Stories of Sacrifice* won the prize for Research Project of the Year in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences at the 2019 *Times Higher Education* awards. The project has increased cross-cultural and cross-faith awareness at local, national and international levels, with the UK Army changing its Diversity and Inclusion strategy and Greater Manchester Police diversifying its recruitment practices as a direct result of **Issa's** findings. His research was facilitated by a full semester of research leave awarded by the School and further teaching buy-out awarded through FRIS.

Our second case study is based on the work of the Research and Development for English Studies (RDUES), a team of Corpus Linguists developing novel software tools to detect patterns and trends in 'real world' language data. The case study demonstrates the success of our 2014 Impact strategy, specifically our desire to "exploit the growing importance of Corpus Linguistics as a cross-disciplinary methodology", and is the result of significant internal investment in dedicated IT infrastructure over a sixteen-year period (see §3). This investment has allowed RDUES researchers **Kehoe** and **Gee** to expand their WebCorp and eMargin text analysis systems to cover a wider range of data and to facilitate work by a broader spectrum of external users. As an indication of this growth, the eMargin collaborative annotation tool, which we reported as having 800 registered users in our REF2014 submission, now has over 13,000 users across disciplines and sectors worldwide, with accelerated growth during the COVID-19 pandemic. A new project initiated during this cycle has seen the RDUES team apply its expertise and linguistically-informed software algorithms to the analysis of free-text comments made in the National Student Survey. In collaboration with BCU's Planning & Performance department, **Kehoe** and **Gee** developed OurSurveySays: a user-friendly 'dashboard' system designed to provide non-specialists with insights into the key themes emerging from the comments made by students across courses and disciplines. OurSurveySays has been rolled out to universities across the UK and has been extremely well received (see REF3).

Beyond the selected case studies, researchers in both clusters continue to undertake external engagement activities which will reach maturity in the next cycle. Our Institute of Creative and Critical Writing (ICCW), directed by **Leadbetter**, draws upon research and practice expertise across our Literary Studies cluster and beyond to engage with the wider culture of the West Midlands. This is achieved through an annual programme of poetry readings, book launches and

other public events, with a total attendance of over 1000 during the REF cycle. The ICCW has a well-established partnership with the Arts Council-funded development agency Writing West Midlands, which runs the annual Birmingham Literature Festival and the National Writers' Conference. This relationship has been strengthened during the current cycle through an AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Award exploring the critical reception of new literary writing beyond academia. The ICCW is the public face of our MA in Creative Writing and, through this, aims to provide career development opportunities for young writers. A recent success has been the *Poetry Birmingham* journal, founded by MA graduates Naush Sabah and Suna Afshan and published through their own press, Pallina. The *TLS* wrote in November 2020 "Very quickly, then, *Poetry Birmingham* has become a magazine in which a promising variety of poets evidently want to be seen" before going on to praise its "intellectually lithe and provocative editorials [...] each a passionate and measured meditation on the art and its contexts" (<https://www.the-tls.co.uk/articles/poetry-birmingham-review-rory-waterman/>). An indicator of longer term success is the fact that the novel *Love and Other Thought Experiments* by Sophie Ward, graduate of our previous Diploma in Writing, was long-listed for the 2020 Booker Prize. Elsewhere in our Literary Studies cluster, we have invested in research with an impact on the education of students at A-Level and the first two years of undergraduate study. **Roberts's** book *Restoration Plays and Players: An Introduction* (Cambridge University Press, 2014) was commissioned to meet the needs of undergraduates. His textbook *Games for English Literature* (Libri, 2016), co-authored with **Hopkins**, is a resource for A-Level and first-year undergraduate tutors that derives from work funded by the HEA Innovative Pedagogies programme; its research basis is articulated in an article for the educational journal *Changing English* (2015).

In our Linguistics cluster, corpus methods are being used in **Tkacukova's** ongoing AHRC project on the language of litigants in person, **McGlashan's** work on toxic masculinities (including his contributions to the AHRC Mascnet Research Network), and research on the language of far-right groups (**Lawson** and **McGlashan**, including regular contributions to national media). **Lawson's** *Sociolinguistic Research: Application and Impact* (27Z\_OP\_B2006) is a unique reference for those designing and assessing the public benefit of research in (socio)linguistics. Towards the end of this cycle, all five linguists in the School collaborated on a successful bid to the UKRI COVID-19 rapid-response call for a project applying their Corpus Linguistic tools and expertise to the analysis of COVID-19 misinformation on social media. The project, led by **Kehoe** and awarded £77K by the AHRC over 6 months, promises to produce a significant impact in the next cycle by building a COVID information dashboard for use by government agencies and the general public.

### 1.3 Future research and impact strategy

Our specific objectives for the next five years, shaped through discussion at all-staff meetings, are to:

- i. continue to appoint and nurture early career academics in order to develop the next generation of research leaders, supporting them over the long term, not just within a REF cycle (see §2.1).
- ii. strengthen our postgraduate research community through the development of new feeder courses (e.g. MA English Literature launched in September 2020) and through the collaborative recruitment and training potential of the AHRC Midlands4Cities consortium.
- iii. diversify our external grant income through a continued focus on cross-disciplinary work, particularly on the role of Corpus Linguistics as a catalyst for research innovation and impact across the humanities and social sciences (see §3).
- iv. increase external engagement through new partnerships with businesses, the creative industries and public bodies, building on the strong track record evidenced in our impact case studies.
- v. ensure that our research excellence feeds directly into teaching at all levels, offering students opportunities to engage in knowledge discovery and applied research.

### 1.4 Open research environment

With one exception, all in-scope outputs in our submission (journal articles) were made available in BCU's open-access repository (<https://www.open-access.bcu.ac.uk/>) within the required



timescales. An initiative which demonstrates our commitment as a School to an open research environment is the eMargin collaborative text annotation system developed by RDUES with initial funding from Jisc (see REF3). The system is hosted on a virtual server at BCU and is freely available for use by researchers, teachers and students across academic disciplines, as well as the wider public. Full source-code is also freely available on SourceForge for other software developers to download, modify and expand.

### 1.5 Research integrity

The School fosters a culture of research integrity, and ensures that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards. Our Linguistic data analysis adopts secure access and backup protocols. As UoA Ethics Coordinator, **McGlashan** is responsible for the implementation of University policies (including a multi-stage ethical review for all staff and doctoral research projects) and reports to Faculty Ethics Committee. The University-level Compliance Team oversees externally-funded project periodic review and the provision of training workshops for principal investigators.

## **2. People**

### 2.1 Staff recruitment and development

Our research community in the School of English is made up of 17 people or 15.2FTE (with 76% of staff working full-time and 24% on fractional contracts; all except **Seiwald**, a fixed-term Postdoctoral Research Fellow, are on permanent contracts). This represents a 23% growth in FTE terms since REF2014. As noted above, our long-term strategy has been to recruit and nurture staff at the beginning of their academic careers. We returned a record number of ECRs to REF2014 (six, making up 43% of our staff) and three of these researchers (**Gee**, **Leadbetter**, **Trowbridge**) are still in post. All have reaped the rewards of the career development opportunities described later in this section, with **Gee** promoted to Research Fellow in 2015 and **Trowbridge**, who completed her PhD with us in the last cycle, promoted to Senior Lecturer in 2017 and Reader in 2020. **Leadbetter** has also been promoted twice in the current cycle: to Reader in 2014 and Professor in 2020.

We have continued to recruit staff to their first permanent post, with research track record and potential being essential criteria in all academic appointments throughout the cycle. There have been nine such appointments (56% female, 22% BAME): **Issa** and **Tkacukova** (2015), **McGlashan** and **Moss** (2016), **Ananisarab**, **Anderton**, and **Hopkins** (2017), and **Potter** and **Seiwald** (2019). Both **Hopkins** and **Seiwald** completed their doctorates with us during this cycle before taking up Faculty-funded postdoctoral fellowships (the former being converted to a permanent contract). **Anderton**, **Moss** and **Tkacukova** have all since been promoted to Senior Lecturer based on research success. **Issa** was promoted from Lecturer to Reader in under five years in recognition of his outstanding contribution to our research environment. Other promotions of longer-term staff have been of **Howe** to Reader (2014), and **Kehoe** and **Lawson** to Associate Professor (2015 and 2018 respectively).

The nine staff departures since REF2014 (due to a combination of retirements and appointments to new posts within the sector) have included four Professors, none of whom were replaced at the same grade. The only remaining Professor for much of this cycle (until **Leadbetter** was promoted in 2020) has been **Roberts**, who was PVC Executive Dean of ADM Faculty until 2018 and has since been on a 0.6FTE contract. This limited amount of research leadership at Professorial level has presented us with some challenges but also opportunities to diversify our research portfolio, and we have benefited from enhanced leadership structures at Faculty level, as described below.

Research in English is led by **Kehoe**, an experienced Associate Professor who has been in post as Director of Research since 2012. Until 2020 he was also Deputy Head of School and he continues to sit on the management committee of BIME, ensuring research is fully integrated into all Institute-level planning and policies. Throughout this cycle, **Kehoe** has been supported by Associate Directors for career development and impact (**Trowbridge**) and doctoral education (**Howe** until 2019, **McGlashan** from 2020). The Research Directorate meets monthly, reporting to Faculty Research Committee. They are supported by **Roberts**, who coordinated our internal peer-review of

outputs for REF. The formation of BIME has provided opportunities for increased co-working with experienced research leaders in the School of Media. Our Associate Directors work as part of the ADM Researcher Education Team, led by Dr Oliver Carter and Professor John Mercer, while Dr Dima Saber provides leadership across BIME for external grant capture.

Our School staff development strategy has two overarching ambitions: i) to contribute to the vitality and sustainability of the discipline by developing the careers of the next generation of academics, and ii) to ensure that all staff are supported in developing the skills necessary to shape appropriate research priorities and to access internal and external funding. These goals have been achieved through a combination of School-, Faculty-, and University-level initiatives:

- A transparent institution-wide Workload Allocation Model (WAM), introduced during this cycle, recognises the importance of research activity in the career of an academic and ensures that adequate time is allocated for this purpose. Staff who apply successfully to the Faculty for research-active status are awarded Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR). Staff at SRR1 are granted a research allowance of 0.25FTE, while those at SRR2 (Readers/Professors) are given 0.35FTE, including time for leadership activities within the School and the wider discipline (e.g. journal editorship, subject association membership, research council peer-reviewing). All research-active staff are guaranteed a day each week (pro rata) on which they are free from teaching and administrative duties. In their first year, new colleagues receive a lighter teaching load and do not take up major administrative roles.
- Standardised Faculty-level research goals are built into the Individual Performance Review (IPR) process, covering areas appropriate to SRR status (outputs, conference speaking, external funding proposals, doctoral supervision, etc.). Progress is assessed at mid-year and year-end meetings, where staff are given the opportunity to discuss immediate training needs and long-term career aspirations.
- Colleagues have benefited greatly from the Faculty's extensive Researcher Education and Development (RED) scheme, a year-round programme of workshops on topics such as grant capture and doctoral supervision (accredited by SEDA, the Staff and Educational Development Association). Since 2014, the RED programme has enabled 13 researchers in English to attend a Supervisor Development Day, four to undertake Mentoring Training, and four to attend a PhD Examination Workshop.
- All colleagues meet with their research mentor formally twice a year. Mentors are assigned on the basis of career stage and subject specialism, and year-round mentoring includes advice on project planning, network building, outputs and impact.
- Support for external funding bid development has been enhanced by a Faculty peer-review process mapped against UKRI standards. Our staff are able to draw upon expertise from two Peer Review College members within the School (**Tkacukova**, AHRC; **Kehoe**, ESRC) and, in the wider Faculty, from two AHRC Strategic Reviewers (Professor Rajinder Dudrah, Professor Tim Wall) and a HERA Knowledge Exchange & Impact Fellow (Professor Tony Whyton).
- The Faculty Research Investment Scheme (FRIS) enables staff to bid for funds for teaching remission to work on a substantial research task, such as the completion of a monograph, the development of an external funding proposal, or an impact activity. Support has been provided through FRIS for 18 projects by English staff, worth a total of £90,000. The Faculty also devolves a researcher mobility budget to each UoA, which has funded over £42,000 of conference travel, library/archive visits and other networking activities for English staff in this cycle.
- Although there is no standing University- or Faculty-level sabbatical scheme at BCU, as a School we have our own research leave scheme for permanent staff, including those on

part-time contracts. Leave applications must demonstrate clear, measurable outcomes, and are scrutinised by the Research Directorate. A report is required at the end of the leave period, followed by a seminar to present outcomes to colleagues. Staff become eligible for research leave three years after appointment and can then expect to be released for one semester every six years, without penalty if awarded external or FRIS funding. During this cycle, **Botham, Issa, Howe, Kehoe, Lawson, Leadbetter, Tkacukova** and **Trowbridge** have all been awarded a full semester of research leave, leading directly to outputs and impacts included in our submission.

## 2.2 Support for research students

Our approach to doctoral education has been transformed in this cycle through our participation in the AHRC Midlands4Cities doctoral training partnership alongside Birmingham, Coventry, De Montfort, Leicester, Nottingham, Nottingham Trent, and Warwick. As a School, we have been awarded six studentships through this highly competitive route, and secured two separate AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Awards in collaboration with partner organisations outside the HE sector. The first, in partnership with the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, funded a doctorate supervised by **Issa** on international responses to Shakespeare (2017) while the second, in partnership with Writing West Midlands, funded a cross-disciplinary project on the reception of the literary arts and implications for public funding, co-supervised by **Leadbetter** and **Kehoe** (2019). All AHRC awards have been match-funded by ADM Faculty through the devolved QR budget. In addition, ADM has funded two studentships for English students through the internal STEAMhouse initiative.

There have been eight doctoral completions during this cycle: five in Linguistics and three in Literary Studies, including our first completion in Creative Writing. This represents a significant increase on the three completions we reported to REF2014. A further completion in the current cycle not included in the reported figures is by **Kehoe**, who was awarded a PhD by submission of published works in 2016. The recruitment of doctoral students continues to grow, with six recently registered doctoral researchers in both clusters set to complete in the next cycle.

ADM Faculty provides an organised and systematic doctoral education and development programme across the arts and humanities. This follows the AHRC's doctoral training framework and the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers, providing postgraduate research students (PGRs) with key professional and transferable skills to prepare them for careers inside and outside academia. The programme begins with three strands of induction:

- University-level induction introduces PGRs to BCU's research culture including an introduction to the PGCert in Research Practice and sessions on University services (library, student support, wellbeing, etc.).
- Faculty-level induction embeds a sense of research community across all UoAs outlining the roles and expectations of supervisors and a Q&A with current PGRs and Postdoctoral Research Fellows.
- Midlands4Cities PGRs are also required to attend a 2-day residential induction which sets out requirements and additional opportunities specific to Midlands4Cities, showcases research from current students, and highlights cross-consortium collaborative opportunities.

In their first year, all PGRs undertake the PGCert in Research Practice, led by Dr Oliver Carter with support from academics across the Faculty. Through 10 weekly workshops, the course exposes students to a wide range of methods, working as part of a diverse community of researchers. Sessions are supported by weekly tutorials with supervisory teams. The course takes place over 6 months for full-time PGRs (12 months part-time), requiring them to submit a 6000-word research proposal and 3000-word critical reflection. PGRs are expected to consider their current skills, knowledge and experience in relation to future ambitions and the potential impact of their research, leading to the production of a 5-year plan.

Throughout their studies, students take part in 'PGRStudio', an interdisciplinary programme led at Faculty level by Dr Jacqueline Taylor, which aims to enhance the ADM PGR student experience by offering weekly training workshops and a mentoring scheme. PGRs are given the opportunity to

complete the SEDA course in HE Teacher Training and to apply to become an Associate Fellow of AdvanceHE. Since 2015, PGRStudio has also held an annual student-run conference which aims to provide an inclusive and experimental space for PGRs to present work-in-progress.

BCU revised its regulations and processes for research degrees in 2014 to provide better monitoring as well as a more supportive student experience, adopting best practice from the sector and learning from our experience as part of Midlands4Cities. Potential supervisors are involved in the application process at an early stage. This assists in assessing the applicant's suitability for a research degree and how well the proposed project fits with our expertise and priorities. All students have at least two supervisors, with the designated Director of Studies expected to meet full-time students fortnightly, and part-time students at least twice a semester. Second supervisors provide specialist disciplinary or methodological expertise. The responsibilities of supervisors and students, set out in the Research Degree Student Handbook, have been developed in line with the QAA Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research Programmes. Progression review meetings take place at 6-months and 12-months (or equivalent) and are conducted by a panel external to the supervisory team using viva-like examination processes. At the end of each academic year, the student and each supervisor are asked to complete an annual report and a plan for the coming year, which are scrutinised by Faculty Research Degrees & Environment Committee. Viva preparation support includes compulsory mock-vivas, and interdisciplinary 'Viva Survival' workshops facilitated by recent PhD graduates and experienced PhD examiners.

### 2.3 Equality and diversity policy

We are a relatively small unit (17 people with SRR: 10 identifying as male and 7 as female; 14 white, 2 BAME, 1 other; none with a declared disability). We foster an open and inclusive environment where staff at all levels are involved in decision making and are given access to the same sources of support. In accordance with BCU's code of practice, all staff are encouraged to apply for research-active status (SRR), and therefore to receive the appropriate WAM remission and resources to pursue a research career. Applications are assessed via submission of a five-year research plan (which may include support to undertake a PhD). On the census date, 6 people had opted not to apply for SRR. Doctoral students, postdoctoral researchers and ECRs, including those on fixed-term contracts, are eligible to apply for conference travel and networking funds, and ECRs can also apply for FRIS funds. Members of all recruitment and promotion panels attend EDI training. Our UoA REF2021 peer-review panel included colleagues representing all career stages and all attended EDI training provided by AdvanceHE. The panel presented its output selection criteria to all staff and invited discussion at a series of School meetings in 2019/20.

Our commitment to equality and diversity will be strengthened further still in the next cycle. The wider BIME institute is in the process of applying for an Athena SWAN departmental award (application delayed by COVID-19), and the University's LGBT+ Staff Network is in the process of applying for accreditation from Stonewall's Diversity Champions programme.

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

All QR income from REF2014 is devolved by the University to the Faculty, which disburses it through the processes described in §2 (doctoral studentships; postdoctoral fellowships; FRIS; Conferences, Networking & Mobility Fund). English has benefitted significantly from this approach: with 14% of the Faculty's research-active staff, we have attracted 21% of QR income.

During the census period, staff in English have been awarded external grants with a combined value to BCU of over £375k from a wider range of sources than ever before. Signal successes include **Tkacukova's** AHRC project in partnership with the University of Birmingham on legal-lay communication (£184k) and her BA/Leverhulme project with Leeds Law School on access to legal advice for litigants in person, as well as successive awards to **Issa**: AHRC/BBC New Generation Thinkers, British Muslim Heritage Centre, Ministry of Defence, National Lottery Heritage Fund. A major Leverhulme-funded initiative (£108k) by Professor Richard Ingham (since retired) with technical input from **Gee** led to the creation of the Bilingual Thesaurus of Everyday Life in Medieval England (<https://thesaurus.ac.uk/>). External funding has also supported our public engagement activities. For example, **Trowbridge's** AHRC Cultural Engagement project Reading Art explored



the literary aspects of the Pre-Raphaelite collections held by the Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, leading to a series of public lectures, storytelling sessions and student workshops on art and poetry (<https://readingart.wordpress.com/>).

The success of our strategy for exploring new funding opportunities beyond research councils, as outlined in our REF2014 submission, is further evidenced through several awards from bodies outside the UK, including the US (**Issa**: Milton Society of America, Huntington Library) and Germany (**Gee**: DFG). In addition, **Kehoe** and **Gee** (RDUES) were members of the consortium awarded €5million through the EU Horizon2020 scheme for the RED-Alert project (2017-20), alongside colleagues from BCU's School of Computing and 15 partner organisations across Europe (total BCU share: €270,000). RED-Alert is a real-time early detection and alert system for online terrorist content, the development of which has drawn upon the linguistic and web analysis expertise of the RDUES team.

Our grant-capture strategy seeks to foster a range of initiatives from small pilot projects through to large European bids, thereby drawing upon a wider range of income streams. We have placed a particular emphasis on collaborative projects, across disciplines and often across institutions. In this cycle we have benefited greatly from enhanced support at Faculty level. Regular bulletins from the ADM Research Office inform all staff of the latest funding opportunities. As outlined in §2.1, RED workshops support staff in making grant applications, with sessions targeted at particular funders (AHRC, BA/Leverhulme, etc.). The Research Mentoring scheme and Personal Research Development Planning help colleagues identify and apply for funding opportunities and integrate external bid development into annual review goals. Bid development in the School is supported through an internal peer-review process. There is in-person support from the moment the applicant decides to develop a bid until the bid is submitted. Each funding application is peer-reviewed by a team which includes senior and early career researchers, and a combination of specialists and non-specialists. Review templates are adapted from UKRI review forms to allow applicants to address concerns external reviewers are likely to raise. The composition of the peer-review panel ensures that applications communicate effectively with reviewers within and outside the area of specialisation, and also enables ECRs to gain peer-reviewing experience. The final stages, including institutional approval, are coordinated by the Faculty Research Office.

Our impact case study on the work of RDUES has been facilitated by almost £100,000 of institutional investment since 2014 in five dedicated virtual servers and 25TB of high-speed storage space. This IT infrastructure hosts the WebCorp, eMargin and OurSurveySays systems and associated textual corpora. The ongoing investment has therefore supported not only staff and students at BCU but also hundreds of thousands of people across and beyond the HE sector globally who are able to access the resources free of charge (see REF3). BCU has also invested heavily in its city centre campus during this cycle, improving the physical environment for both teaching and research. The University library was relocated to the new £63million Curzon Building in 2015 at the same time as the School, bringing its substantial resources within easy research of our staff and doctoral students. The library has received significant investment in monographs and in databases such as EEBO, LION and JSTOR that directly support individual staff projects as well as the interface between research and teaching (for example, undergraduate projects involving document search and analysis in EEBO).

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

Researchers across the School have been engaged in collaborations, nationally and internationally, contributing to the vitality and sustainability of the discipline as well as to the wider academic, literary and artistic culture. Selected examples are given below (27Z\_OP\_\* identifiers refer to outputs in our submission).

##### 4.1 Literary Studies Cluster

The Faculty scheme of research allowances described above supports **contribution to national and international research initiatives**, including **Ananisarab's** role as a working group coordinator on the executive committee of the Theatre and Performance Research Association (TaPRA), **Howe's** Editorial Board membership of *The Byron Journal* and *The Keats-Shelley*

*Review*, **Trowbridge**'s guest editorship of *Victoriographies*, and **Botham**'s service as a reviewer for the Israel Science Foundation and lead co-convenor of the Political Performances Working Group at the International Federation for Theatre Research (2014-2017). **Howe**, **Kehoe** and **Roberts** serve on the AHRC Midlands4Cities doctoral training partnership's studentship panel.

Colleagues have also been supported in assessing proposals for publication for publishers including OUP (**Leadbetter**), CUP (**Roberts**), the Society for Theatre Research (**Roberts**), Ashgate (**Trowbridge**) and Routledge (**Trowbridge**), and journals including *Exchanges: The Interdisciplinary Research Journal*, *Green Letters: Studies in Ecocriticism*, *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, *Journal of Literature and Science*, *Studies in Theatre and Performance*, *Milton Quarterly*, *Romanticism*, *European Romantic Review*, *Religion and Literature*, *Notes & Queries*, *Studies in Romanticism*, *Restoration*, *The Historian*, *Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Theatre Research*, *Religion and Literature*, *Journal of Victorian Studies*, and *Nineteenth-century gender studies*.

Forty invited essays and studies have been published by members of the cluster since REF2014: **Ananisarab**, 'Candida' in *The Literary Encyclopedia*. Volume 1.2.1.08, *English Writing and Culture of the early Twentieth Century, 1900-1945* (2019); **Botham**, 'The Twenty-First-Century History Play', in *Twenty-First Century Drama: What Happens Now*, ed. Siân Adiseshiah and Louise Le Page (Palgrave, 2016); Commissioned journal article: 'Teatro testimonial contemporáneo en Chile: Dilemas éticos y estéticos' [Contemporary Testimonial Theatre in Chile: Ethical and Aesthetic Dilemmas], in *Nuestra América* vol 10, 2016; **Howe**, 'Byron's Letters' for *The Keats-Shelley Review*; 'Defences and Manifestoes', in *The Oxford Handbook of British Romanticism*, ed. David Duff (2019); **Issa**, 'Milton as Propaganda: Republican and Divorce Tracts in the Arab Press', *Milton Studies* 62.2 (Fall 2020); 'Milton's *Areopagitica* in the Arab World Today', in *Reading Milton through Islam*, eds. David Currell and François-Xavier Gleyzon (Routledge, 2018); 'Milton's Global Impact: the Arabic-Speaking World', in *A New Companion to Milton*, ed. Thomas Corns (Wiley Blackwell, 2016); **Leadbetter**, 27Z\_OP\_C0021; 27Z\_OP\_D2002; 'Savage, Holy, Enchanted: Coleridge in Concert with the Wild', in *Wild Romanticism*, ed. Markus Poetzsch and Cassandra Falke (Palgrave, 2020); 'Byronic Inflections in British and Irish Poetry since 1945', in *Byron Among the English Poets*, ed. Clare Bucknell and Matthew Ward (CUP, 2020); 'Hare and Hound: Ends and Means in Coleridge's Letters', in *Romanticism and the Letter*, ed. Madeleine Callaghan and Anthony Howe (Palgrave, 2020); 'Samuel Taylor Coleridge', in *The Bloomsbury Anthology of Romantic Poetry*, ed. Daniel Robinson (Bloomsbury, 2020); 'The Hunt Circle and the Cockney School', in *Keats in Context*, ed. Michael O'Neill (CUP, 2017); 'The Lyric Impulse of *Poems*, in Two Volumes', in *The Oxford Handbook of William Wordsworth*, eds. Richard Gravil and Daniel Robinson (OUP, 2014); 'The "true wild weird spirit" of "Christabel"', *The Coleridge Bulletin* 50 (Winter 2017); 'The Snake, the Goddess and the Poet's Learning: Ted Hughes and the Contentions of Criticism', *The Ted Hughes Society Journal* 5:2 (2016); 'Marked by secret knowledge: Coleridge and the mystery of "Orpheus"', *The Times Literary Supplement*, 20 May 2016; 'Poetry, Politics and Portents: Coleridge and the Waters of Plynlimon', *The Coleridge Bulletin* 43 (Summer 2014); **Moss**, 27Z\_OP\_C1005; 'Classical Music' in *Literature and Sound*, ed. Anna Snaith (CUP, 2020); 'Ezra Pound as Music Theorist: The *Treatise on Harmony*' in *The Edinburgh Companion to Ezra Pound and the Arts*, ed. Roxana Preda (Edinburgh UP: 2019); 'Popular Culture' in *The Edinburgh Companion to D. H. Lawrence and the Arts*, ed. Catherine Brown and Sue Reid (Edinburgh UP, 2020); **Roberts**, 27Z\_OP\_C0026; 27Z\_OP\_A0006 (inaugural commission for Methuen monograph series *Cultural Histories of Theatre and Performance*); 'Theatre Criticism' and 'Jeremy Collier' in Jack Lynch and Gary Day, eds., *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Eighteenth-Century Writing* (2015); editorship of Congreve's *The Way of the World* in the New Mermaids series (2020); *Restoration Plays and Players* (2014), an introductory monograph written at the invitation of Cambridge University Press; **Trowbridge**, 'The Gothic in Victorian Poetry', in *The Cambridge Companion to the History of the Gothic*, ed. Dale Townshend (CUP 2019); invited contributor on Elizabeth Siddall to the *Palgrave Encyclopaedia of Victorian Women's Writing*, ed. Lisa Scholl (2019).

All members of the cluster have been supported in giving invited research/conference papers, highlights being presentations at the Shahidi Behesti University, Iran (**Ananisarab**), King's College

London (**Issa**), the University of Vienna (**Anderton**), the University of Bielefeld and a keynote at the 2020 Standing Conference of University Drama Departments (SCUDD) at York (**Botham**), the University of Birmingham's Shakespeare Institute (**Issa, Roberts**), the American University of Beirut (**Issa**), the University of Durham (**Howe, Trowbridge**), the University of St Andrews (**Leadbetter**), the University of Strasbourg (**Issa**) and successive presentations for the Coleridge and Wordsworth autumn/winter schools (**Leadbetter**).

Our commitment to public outreach has seen numerous presentations for general audiences, highlights of which have been talks for the Byron Society of London (**Howe**), the Royal Shakespeare Company (**Issa**), the Keats House, Rome (**Howe**), the National Gallery (**Trowbridge**), the Shakespeare Institute (**Issa, Roberts**), the British Council, Algiers (**Issa**, in Arabic), with numerous talks and events at local institutions including the Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, the Birmingham & Midland Institute, the Birmingham REP, and the Birmingham Hippodrome. Further events and publications with public benefit are as itemised in **Issa's** Impact Case Study and also include contributions by **Leadbetter** in hosting the headline Carol Ann Duffy event for Birmingham Literature Festival (2019) and chairing events every year for the Festival since 2011; he has had poetry and narrative commissioned for 'Write Brummie', BBC Radio 4, broadcast 22/11/19; his 'Terroir' was commissioned for the Arts Council England funded Overhear Poetry app, September 2019; he was Poet in Residence, King's High School, Warwick, 2019-20. Four of his poems feature in the Spring 2020 edition of *The Hudson Review*; a poem from his *Maskwork* collection features in *Wild Court* (<https://wildcourt.co.uk/new-work/a-march-nest-a-poem-by-gregory-leadbetter/>). He has also contributed to Gillian Wearing's experimental documentary, *Everything is Connected: George Eliot's Life* (10/11/2019, BBC Four) and interviewed Alys Fowler for BBC Radio 4 (12/11/2019). Since 2008 **Roberts** has written regular programme essays for the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, most recently on Literature and Trauma (*La Forza del Destino*, 2019) and Inheritance Comedy (*The Intelligence Park*, 2019). He has also written *Hippodrome 120* (monograph anniversary history of the Birmingham Hippodrome, 2019) and programme essays for the Bristol Old Vic, Nottingham Playhouse, Birmingham Royal Ballet and Birmingham REP. His HEA-funded project, 'Games and the Teaching of Literature' (<https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/games-and-teaching-literature>) was co-designed with **Hopkins** and led to a widely used textbook for A-Level and undergraduate students, *Games for English Literature* (Libri, 2016), as well as an article in *Changing English* vol 22 no.2 (2015). **Trowbridge** has given invited talks at the Ashmolean Museum and Kelmscott Manor, advised on and appeared in a BBC Radio 3 programme about Elizabeth Siddall (October 2019), talked about Siddall as part of the National Portrait Gallery's Pre-Raphaelite Sisters exhibition (2019-20) and features in the Channel 5 series, *Great Paintings of the World*, fronted by Andrew Marr. Both **Trowbridge** and **Roberts** have significant readership in *The Conversation UK* for features related to COVID-19 and other topics (over 50,000 reads with onward readership in the *i* newspaper of c.300,000).

Our concern to see expertise translated into public benefit is marked by external trusteeships for **Leadbetter**, Trustee and Vice-Chair of The Friends of Coleridge (2009-); Board of Trustees, Artistic Policy and Finance Sub-Committees, Writing West Midlands (2013-); Trustee (2013-17) and Hon. Treasurer (2014-16) of the Wordsworth Conference Foundation; Board of Trustees and Programming Sub-Committee, Wenlock Poetry Festival (2013-16); **Roberts**, Trustee of Birmingham Hippodrome, 2014-20 (Deputy Chair of Audit Committee and member of Nominations Committee); Trustee of Birmingham Repertory Theatre, 2016- (including term as interim chair, 2019-20 and membership of COVID-19 committee); Trustee of Mid-Wales Opera (2019-); and **Trowbridge**, Vice-President, Pre-Raphaelite Society; Trustee and Vice President, Birmingham & Midland Institute.

The cluster's expertise is recognised by recent external doctoral examinations for **Botham** (King's College London, 2018), **Issa** (University of New Brunswick, Canada, 2020), **Leadbetter** (Goldsmiths College London, 2018; University of Birmingham, 2018; University of Leicester, 2017; University of Aberdeen, 2017), **Roberts** (University of Oxford, 2017; University of Birmingham, 2017), and **Trowbridge** (University of Hertfordshire, 2018; University of Birmingham, 2019; University of Liverpool, 2020).



**Collaborative projects with other universities** include **Anderton's** 'Writing Homelessness in Contemporary British Literature, 1948-2020' with Professors Head (Nottingham) and Pleace (York); **Issa's** role as Advocacy and Engagement Consultant to Birmingham City Council and Shakespeare Institute's "Everything to Everybody" project (2019-); **Moss's** work with the international editorial team for *The Cambridge Edition of the Fiction of E. M. Forster*, consisting of colleagues from Brown USA, Genoa, Manchester, Maynooth, Oxford and Sheffield; also her work with the same team on the 'Re-Orientating E. M. Forster: Texts, Contexts, Reception' conference planned for Cambridge, 2-4 April 2020 but postponed owing to COVID-19; and **Trowbridge's** contributions to the organising committee at the University of Birmingham for the British Association for Victorian Studies annual conference in 2020.

Our work has been recognised by numerous **prizes and awards**, among them **Ananisarab's** Oxford Bibliographies award, leading to an article on J.M. Synge (2017), and a Society for Theatre Research award (2020) to support research on theatre festivals. **Issa** has achieved multiple recognition: BBC/AHRC New Generation Thinker, 2017; winner of Times Higher Research Project of the Year: Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, 2019; winner of Irene Samuel Memorial Award for best multi-authored volume, Milton Society of America, 2018, for *Milton in Translation*; Best Exhibition (Highly Commended), Manchester Culture Awards, 2018, for *Stories of Sacrifice*; winner, Outstanding First Book Award, Milton Society of America, 2017, for *Milton in the Arab-Muslim World*; Services to Education Award (Finalist), British Muslim Awards, 2017; Excellence in Community Relations Prize (Finalist), Muslim News Awards, 2016, for *Stories of Sacrifice*. **Leadbetter's** creative outputs were long-listed in both 2016 and 2019 for the National Poetry Competition. One of our PhD students, **Rosie Whitcombe**, won the 2020 Keats-Shelley Essay Prize; another, **Sarah Doyle**, was runner-up in the poetry category.

#### 4.2 Linguistics cluster

**National and international research initiatives** have been undertaken by **Kehoe** as elected member of the Executive Committee of University English (two terms: 2015-21), elected member, of the Executive Board of the International Computer Archive of Modern & Medieval English (two terms: 2013-21), and Member of the ESRC Peer Review College (2015-); **Lawson** as member of the European Science Foundation College of Review Panel Members (2018-) and Fulbright Funding Commission (2014-); **McGlashan** as Technical Editor of the *Journal of Corpus Approaches to Discourse*; and **Tkacukova** as member of the JUSTICE Working Party 'Assisted Digital': Combatting Digital Exclusion in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Justice (2017-18), as reviewer for the Nuffield Foundation, and member of the AHRC Peer Review College (2020-).

Our linguists are active in **assessing submissions for publication** to Palgrave, CUP and Routledge (**Lawson**) and to the journals *Ampersand*, *Discourse*, *Context and Media*, *Gender and Language*, *Journal of Borderland Studies*, *Journal of English Linguistics*, *Journal of Gender Studies*, *NORMA: International Journal for Masculinity Studies*, *Journal of Pragmatics*, *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics*, *Corpus Linguistics*, *Applied Linguistics*, *Discourse & Communication*, *Critical Approaches to Discourse Analysis across Disciplines*, *Critical Discourse Studies*, *Discourse, Context & Media*, *Journal of Aggression Conflict & Peace Research*, *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, and *Text & Talk*.

Recent **invited scholarly essays** include **Lawson**, 'Managing the competing pressures of curriculum design in HE', with S. Wood in *Educational Developments*, 20 (3): 14-17 (2019), and 'Language and masculinities: History, development, future', in *Annual Review of Linguistics*, 6: 409-434 (2020); **McGlashan**: 'Critical Discourse Analysis: a comparison of discourses around Romanians in The Daily Express with its readers' comments', with P. Baker, in *The Routledge Handbook of English Language and the Digital Humanities* (2020); and **McGlashan** et al., 'Disco Divas and Heroic Knights: A critical multimodal analysis of gender roles in "create the world" LEGO cards', in *Innovations and Challenges in Language and Gender: Women and Sexism* (Routledge, 2020).

Members have presented **papers by invitation** at the Hochschule Trier, Germany, 2017 (**Kehoe** and **Gee**); a keynote at the BELP conference, University of Birmingham, 2016 (**Kehoe**); at



Universitat de Barcelona, Università degli Studi di Bari Aldo Moro, Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia, University College Dublin, University College London, University of Cambridge, University of Leicester, University of Tampere, Vienna University of Economics and Business (**Lawson**); and the Universities of Leeds, Aston, Newcastle, and UCL (**McGlashan**).

External **doctoral examinerships** have been undertaken at the University of Gent (**Kehoe**, 2018) and Trinity College Dublin (**Lawson**, 2018), while **Lawson** was Junior **Visiting Professor** at the University of Jyväskylä, Finland (2019).

Our linguistics cluster has been prominent in **projects with public benefit**. The Impact Case Study by **Kehoe** and **Gee** describes the significant reach of the software tools developed by RDUES. In other work, **Tkacukova**'s research contribution is acknowledged in the Ministry of Justice Post-Implementation Review of Part 1 of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (LASPO); she also contributed to redrafting of the Letter of Rights for police forces, underpinning research for which is quoted in the report by JUSTICE on Understanding Courts. **McGlashan**'s work has been presented to non-academic audiences such as the Northern Fertility Nurses Meeting, Leeds (2019), and the Cross-Government Social Media Research Group (SMRG), Home Office (2019). **Lawson** has contributed an article on COVID-19 neologisms to *The Conversation UK* which has been read over 145,000 times.