

Institution:

University of Essex

Unit of Assessment:

33 – Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies

1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy

This submission describes the collaborative environment of the Screen and Performance Research Network (SPRN) at Essex, a research alliance between East 15 Acting School (E15) and the Department of Literature, Film, and Theatre Studies (LiFITS) situated within the Faculty of Humanities. LiFITS has a strong record of internationally recognised researchers forging synergies between creative practice and scholarship, while E15, a conservatoire, contributes a renowned industry-focus on rigorous, professional actor training. Our 12 FTE staff are engaged in the creation, production, analysis and contextualisation of research in two intersecting areas: theatre and performance practice, and film and screen media.

The vitality of the unit is ensured through the systemic integration of ECRs and advanced research leadership; seven of the 12 network members are ECRs and the network provides ongoing dialogue and mentoring for these colleagues with senior staff that include the network's four Professors (Chaudhuri, Geiger, Klich, Rubin). The Network is represented within national and international forums, subject organisations and research bodies, responding to and driving forward global research agendas in theatre and screen media. Network members' research productivity has been recognised through numerous awards and a diversity of grants capture (see below).

The Network's **strategic priorities** have included substantial investment in staff and the development of a publicly engaged research culture. E15 has appointed a research team (Kapadocha, Kartsaki, Klich, Maples, McAllister-Viel, Rubin) and focused on the validation of PhD programmes and the targeted integration of research and teaching. LiFITS has supported these developments through the expansion of research clusters and the appointment of new staff (Jarvis, Lax, O'Brien). Since October 2017, the Unit has prioritised the following strategic aims:

1. *The cultivation of a shared E15/LiFITS theatre, film, and screen media research ethos (section 1.1)*
2. *Support for practice-as-research and knowledge exchange (section 1.2);*
3. *Diversity of funding capture to support a variety of staff research and public engagement (section 1.3);*
4. *Support for interdisciplinarity and partnerships, working with positive social, intercultural, industry and community impact (section 1.4).*

1.1 The Research Network, Centres and Clusters

The SPRN reaches strategically across the University to build on interdepartmental research synergies and dove-tails two departments. Staff and postgraduate students benefit from the interdisciplinarity of LiFITS and the industry-focused remit of E15. Encompassing three campuses (Colchester, Loughton and Southend), the cohesion of our research environment is ensured through network meetings and termly away-days; the establishment of interdepartmental research clusters; intercampus mentoring and impact activities; intercampus teaching and PhD supervisions; virtual research seminars; and financial support for intercampus travel.

The Network is united around investigation of the making, methods and reception of contemporary theatre, film, and media. Our research aim is to illuminate and enhance the processes by which innovative theatre, film, and media practices are formed, performed, produced, and consumed and to raise the value of their impact on communities. Activities are focused around three research clusters and supported by two LiFITS-based research centres. The key areas and a representative sample of activity for each cluster are outlined below.

Lived Experience and Creative Process

Research includes professional creative practices and methods for training (theatre and film directing processes; movement direction; vocal training; actor training); documentation and analysis of artistic work within different cultural contexts; and the treatment of testimony within verbatim screen and performance practice. Notable examples include Blower's development of documentary film techniques for working ethically with the testimony of traumatised subjects; his 2020 PaR film *LIFTED* examines the impact of PTSD on the lives of army veterans and their families. Also exploring the ethical treatment of testimony, Lax has developed a sustained collaboration with Amnesty International. Lax's PaR interrogates the collection, editing, and recontextualisation of testimony by INGOs and charities. Chaudhuri has also worked with Amnesty International as well as organisations such as The Mosaic Rooms to curate public film programmes and events such as the 2019 symposium *The Paradox of Creative Constraints* exploring the creative restrictions on filmmakers in the Middle East.

Maples' immersive performances for the Heritage Lottery Funded *Paston Footprints* project illustrate how historical verbatim theatre can enhance audiences' understandings of local heritage. Kapadocha's research into movement-based approaches to actor training has led to her development of Somatic Actor Training[®] (SAP[®]) and her edited book *Somatic Voices in Performance Research and Beyond* (2020) published with Routledge. McAllister-Viel's monograph *Training Actors Voices* (2018) outlines her significant contribution to the acting industry as a voice specialist and includes a chapter on her practice-as-research at the Namdaemun Market in Korea examining the relationship of sound, voice, and culture. The work of PhD students further develops key areas of investigation. Lapidge's PhD PaR (supervisors McAllister-Viel, Kapadocha) investigates physiological responses to voice and re-positions voice as a haptic and visceral contributor to audience experience.

Embodiment and Perception

Research addresses affect and sensory studies, with branches exploring: gaming, virtual bodies, and the ethics of participation; immersive experience; touch and intimacy; perception and affect; gender and motherhood; and disability and new technologies in artistic practice. Exploring the technological manipulation of audience perception, Jarvis and Klich examine issues of embodiment and immersivity in intermedial performance. Jarvis' monograph *Immersive Embodiment: Theatres of Mislocalized Sensation* (2019) explores the intersection of technologised performance and neuroscientific studies in body-ownership. Klich's body of research (five publications) in the field of 'headphone theatre' examines auditory perception and proprioception in contemporary performance. Extending the cluster's expertise in spectatorship, Kartsaki's monograph *Repetition in Performance: Returns and Invisible Forces* (2017) explores the phenomenon of repetition in relation to spectatorship and precarity in visceral performance practices. In the area of embodied spectatorship, O'Brien addresses the audiences-as-participants in audiovisual storytelling through a post-phenomenological framework.

PhD projects include Mueller's PaR (supervisor Jarvis) interrogating notions of ethics and indeterminacy in performance and the distribution of creative agency between director, performer and spectator. Lyons' PaR PhD (supervisors Kartsaki, Klich) explores how bodies in contemporary performance interrogate notions of normativity and resistance in terms of gender, sexuality and desire. Richards PaR PhD (supervisor Lax) examines issues of consent and sexuality with young people. Grice's PaR PhD (supervisors Geiger, Ades) explores embodied and visceral engagements of contemporary Surrealism through experimental documentary.

Global Perspectives and Intercultural Practice

This cluster includes social justice and workplace human rights, arts practice within conflict and post-conflict zones, and intercultural theatre and film practice. Select examples of activity include Chaudhuri's research in World Cinema, human rights, and postcolonial theory; following her book *Cinema of the Dark Side* (2014), Chaudhuri has five further publications addressing

representations of conflicts in Palestine, Iraq and Syria. Also drawing on postcolonial theory, Geiger's research on Nigerian film examines established critical resistance to low-budget 'non-western' cinemas. Geiger's work on colour and travelogues contributes to processes of decolonising the archive of 'American Pacific' representations. Further contributions to this area include Geiger's and Chaudhuri's editorial board memberships on Routledge's *Remapping World Cinema* series and the journal *Transnational Screens* respectively.

Rubin's PaR in theatre direction involves international collaborators in the creation of intercultural productions. Rubin's *A Shakespearean Handan Dream* (2016) combines two historically concurrent sources, Tan Zianzu of the Ming Dynasty and Shakespeare, and partners with a traditional Kunqo opera company in Nanjing, China. Investigating the role of women theatre-makers in post-conflict areas, Lax's work with Kuti on GCRF-funded *Tales of Winter and Spring: Gender, History and Intergenerational Exchange in Global Theatre* (2016-19) brought international artists to Essex from Rwanda, Burundi, Congo, Palestine, Serbia, Sri Lanka and India for a residency leading to a PaR performance at Colchester's Mercury Theatre. Blower's documentary film of this project is touring Africa.

Doctoral research contributions include Akhter's PhD (supervisor Chaudhuri 2017), which explores fragmented narratives of women in war films of Bangladesh. Darraj (supervised by Chaudhuri, 2019) investigated problematics of migrant identity in South-Asian and Arab Post-Colonial Fiction. CHASE scholar Dirstaru's PhD (co-supervisor Blower, 2019) on women's testimony, conflict, and post-trauma in Romanian documentary led to the founding of *Essex DocFest*, streamed in 2020 with dozens of international entries in categories including women filmmakers, Human Rights, disability, and environment.

In addition to the SPRN's research clusters, our UoA is also home to the LiFTS-based **Centre for Film and Screen Media** (CFSM) (Geiger, Blower, Chaudhuri, O'Brien) and the **Centre for Theatre Research** (CTR) (Jarvis, Lax), which also include colleagues in UoA 27. Established by Geiger in 2001, the CFSM was formed as an interdisciplinary Centre, joining Literature with Theatre in 2003 to form LiFTS. Founded by Essex colleague Lichtenstein, the CTR joined LiFTS in 1998. Both Centres host research events and speakers, support funding bids, foster PGT and PGR networks, and contribute to mentoring, curriculum, and teaching development.

1.2 Practice-as-research and knowledge exchange

Our Network celebrates the concept of the artist-scholar and is committed to supporting research in a variety of forms. 100% of staff engage in supervision of PaR projects by PGT and PGR students, collaborate with practitioners and industry, and organise PaR workshops and training events. The embedding of research within the traditionally teaching-intensive context of practitioner training benefits scholarship through engagement with new forms of enquiry and enhances knowledge-exchange through connection with industry experts and practitioners. Our postgrad community plays a key part in this cross-fertilisation. Well-established professional practitioners undertaking PhDs include theatre director Ailin Conant of Teatre Temoin, who alongside her PhD has directed E15 final-year student productions; exhibited painter and installation artist Brigitte Nicole Grice, filmmaker Elena Dirstaru (PhD 2019); and performance maker and writer Sue MacLaine who explores autobiography, trauma and memory. Her work *Vessel* was selected for the British Council Showcase 2019.

PaR within the Network also benefits from delivery within a professional context, offering opportunities for public engagement and industry partnerships. For example, Jarvis is Artistic Director of theatre company Analogue; his work has received extensive ACE and Wellcome Trust funding and has been co-produced with organisations such as Shoreditch Town Hall, Barbican, The New Wolsey, Oldenburgisches Staatstheater and Staatstheater Mainz, Germany. Kartsaki is an award-winning performance artist; her PaR has been presented at Tate Britain, V&A, Whitechapel Gallery, Sadler's Wells, Camden People's Theatre, Anolfini, The Yard, Chisenhale Dance Space and Palais de Tokyo. Lax is an Associate Artist with theatre company ice&fire; her site-work *Arming the World* was a collaboration with Teatro Vivo and ice&fire, and toured London

in 2017. Kapadocha has worked as a professional movement director on productions by VanThanh Productions at the Park Theatre (2019) and Mikra Theatricals (2017), and has movement-directed performances at Cockpit Theatre, Arcola Theatre, and Theatre Royal Stratford East. Theatre directors Maples and Rubin continue to direct professional productions internationally, eg in China, Ireland, Bali, and across the UK.

1.3 Diversity of Grants Capture

Staff are actively encouraged to pursue external grants from a wide range of funders. While industry bodies such as the Arts Council do not explicitly fund academic research, they support the making and distribution of original arts practice that includes practice-as-research outputs. Arts funding also facilitates impact activities, supports local and national touring productions, enables public engagement activities, and encourages better marketing of transferrable knowledge. Further to the generation and dissemination of PaR, such funding enables collaborative outcomes that lead to KTPs and diversifies the University's relationship with funders and stakeholders.

As well as Wellcome Trust, AHRC, ESRC, British Academy, and the Leverhulme Trust, the Network has obtained funding from the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF), Arts Council England (ACE), Arts Council Ireland (ACI), Heritage Lottery Fund (HCL), Enabling Innovation: Research Application (EIRA), The British Association of American Studies (BAAS) and the Consortium for Humanities and the Arts South-East England (CHASE). A selection of projects enabled through this approach to grant-capture includes Maples' HCL, ACE, and ACI funded heritage projects such as the Norfolk *Paston Footprints* project (2018-20), the Norwich Castle Museum *Viking: Discover the Legend* exhibition (2019), and the Irish Dock Arts Centre *Knock Me Down* performance (2020).

Jarvis was P-I for an EIRA-funded immersive VR experience for a new production by poet Murray Lachlan Young called *The Mystery of the Raddlesham Mumps*. This performed at the Mercury Theatre and has led to iterative business outreach and knowledge exchange, for example, through collaboration with creative digital storytelling company MBD. The project was featured at the opening of the University's Innovation Centre on the Knowledge Gateway, and outcomes of the project have included seven in-school workshops with 236 participants, four in-school performances to 496 participants, and a showcase at the Beyond Conference in Edinburgh 2019.

1.4 Support for interdisciplinary and partnership working with positive cultural, social, intercultural and industry impact

Cross-faculty and cross-campus working by members of the UoA can be seen in our record of applying for collaborative research grants (eg £6 million AHRC Creative Clusters bid in 2018, P-I Klich, Co-I Jarvis); E15's leadership role in the University's Digital, Creative, and Cultural Research Network (co-lead Klich); Jarvis' contribution to COURAGE network led by School of Health and Social Care; Kartsaki's contribution to the University Gender and Work Research Network; Chaudhuri's membership of the School of Law's Human Rights Centre; Lax's collaboration with Gizelis in Department of Government on the testimonies of women peace keepers, and the presentation of staff research in Faculty networks such as the Digital Humanities (Klich), Migration Studies (Lax) and Medical Humanities (Kapadocha, Blower, Lax) and in Cross University Research Events (CURE) on The Digital World (Jarvis), Behavioural Social Sciences (Lax), Brain and Mind (Kapadocha), and Health and Wellbeing (Kapadocha).

Staff across the UoA are engaged in award-winning collaborations with local, national and international partners with targeted cultural, social and industry impact. Maples' (P-I) and Klich's (Co-I) COVID-19 response project (ESRC 547k) with Co-Is at Queens University Belfast and Manchester Metropolitan University and partners including Equity, Society of London Theatres, Theatre Royal Belfast, and The Mercury Theatre, addresses the social, cultural, creative, and financial impact of the pandemic on independent arts workers. This project will inform sector stakeholders and policy-makers on industry recovery measures.

Other notable examples include: Lax's 2015-20 PaR in partnership with Amnesty international investigating the ethics of using first-person testimony within an activist setting; Chaudhuri's activist work regarding Middle East film including collaborations with English PEN, Index on Censorship, Amnesty International, and cultural institutions such as The Mosaic Rooms, the Goethe Institute, NYUAD Arts Center, and Art Exchange; Geiger's collaboration with the Royal Anthropological Institute screening their Sudan archive; Sarah Casey-Benyahia (PhD 2019, supervisor Geiger) was a key consultant and author on the AQA A-level Film national curriculum review (2017-18); Jarvis's PaR project *Transports* (2014) with external partner Parkinson's UK involving the first-person simulation of tremor based on testimonies from subjects living with Young-Onset Parkinson's disease; and Kartsaki's performance art PaR project *No More Children* (2018-20) which explores pressures on woman around reproduction and fertility with performances *Herpes* (2018) and *Collapsing* (2019) at the Yard as well as presentations at Fertility Fest at the Barbican 2019.

1.5 Research Strategy 2021-2026

Our research strategy 2021-2026 focuses on increasing the velocity and broadening the impact of our current strategic aims and extending the ambition and visibility of the SPRN. The unit's emergent strategic aims entering the next REF period include:

- Developing our three research clusters through mechanisms such as a leadership framework, internal peer-mentoring, and postgraduate-led research events;
- Growing our research community through new appointments whilst ensuring opportunities for research-led teaching and preserving our collegiate ethos. A further priority to achieve this aim will be to grow the number of postgraduate researchers at E15;
- Support the development of the high percentage of early career researchers (ECR) in our unit through training programmes, provision of opportunities for leadership experience and support for promotions;
- Building visibility of screen and performance research at Essex through, for example, hosting the annual TaPRA conference in 2022, which has never been hosted in the East of England;
- Develop the research potential of industry and partner collaborations, for example, the potential of our Memorandum of Understanding with the Mercury Theatre, Colchester. We aim to build on partnerships developed through our role in *Creative Estuary*, which promotes creative and economic evolution along the Thames Estuary supported by a £4.3m DCMS Cultural Development grant;
- Build on the experience of network members in leading and co-leading large bids that reached the final assessment rounds such as the Network's 2018 AHRC Creative Clusters programme bid for £6.3million with PI Klich, Co-I Jarvis and named researcher Lax, and the University of the Arts-led UKRI Strength in Places bid for £25million (Klich Co-I). We aim to build on this experience in order to expand our capacity for large grant capture.

2. People

2.1 Staffing Strategy and Development

This first submission to UoA 33 by the University reflects substantial investment and an ambitious policy of support for excellence in screen and performance research. The significance of and commitment to this research at Essex is evidenced by the fact that all 12 staff have either been new appointments, have moved onto research contracts, or have been promoted during the current REF period.

New appointments during the REF period include Jarvis and Lax 2015, Klich 2017, Kapadocha and

Kartsaki 2018, O'Brien 2019, and Maples 2020. Three staff members transferred from scholarship to research contracts: Blower and McAllister-Viel 2018, and Rubin 2019. The appointment of Klich as the first Director of Research (DoR) for E15 in October 2017 reflects a new research agenda for the conservatoire, with further appointments prioritising targeted research specialisms that extend the educational portfolio and contribute to the development of shared research clusters as outlined in section 1.1. In addition to recruiting new staff, the Network has achieved significant internal promotions (Chaudhuri and Geiger to Professor, and Jarvis, Lax and McAllister-Viel to Senior Lecturer).

In addition to research-contracted staff submitted to REF2021, our research environment benefits from the involvement of research-engaged staff within both E15 and LiFTS who have PhDs, produce publications, and undertake internationally recognised professional practice. These colleagues make a valued contribution to the thriving culture of enquiry, exploration, and experimentation that is at the heart of our research environment. These staff contribute to the profile of theatre and film research at Essex and participate in and organise research events; in July 2019 Silveiro was supported by E15 to lead an event celebrating the legacy of Brazilian playwright Nelson Rodriguez at the Brazilian Embassy, London, with invited talks and roundtable discussions from international researchers and practitioners.

The SPRN supports ECR development through informal and formal peer-review, providing a forum for critical elaboration of nascent research ideas, providing mentoring, offering a platform to develop research collaborations, and building readiness to respond swiftly to relevant funding calls, knowledge exchange, and project opportunities. Seven submitted SPRN members meet the AHRC definition of early career researchers; their productivity and career development have been major priorities for the UoA. Appointees have been supported through a rigorous probationary system, with new staff matched with mentors in both education and research. During the first years of employment, mentors guide the probationer through their 'Pathway to Permanency' with a programme of agreed goals that include research publications and grant applications. All new staff meet with the Research Development Manager and the Research Impact Officer and are invited to maintain regular dialogue with this specialist team in the Research and Enterprise Office, which also includes the Knowledge Exchange Manager for the Cultural and Creative sectors. Support is available from the Faculty for staff at all levels, for example, through workshops on writing grant applications, on developing major new projects post-PhD, on impact planning and reporting. SPRN-specific support has included training and forums on PaR methodologies, documenting practice, developing impact, and opportunities for one-to-one mentoring meetings. Network staff have undertaken University-managed *Strategic Leadership Training* (Chaudhuri, Geiger, Klich, McAllister-Viel, Lax, Rubin) and all staff are required to undertake various levels of training for research supervision.

Departmental Work Allocation Models aim to ensure that research time is encouraged and protected for all staff and administrative, teaching and leadership roles are balanced. The success of our systems of support for ECRs and new staff is evidenced through examples such as Jarvis' and Lax's promotion to SL after only two years, our funding capture as outlined in Section 3, and through recognition of staff achievements at the University's Excellence in Research and Impact awards. In 2020, Maples won the Best Creative and Cultural Research Impact Award, and Kapadocha won the Faculty of Humanities Outstanding Early Career Researcher Award. In 2019, Lax won the Research Champion for the Humanities Award, which recognises a significant track record of outstanding research and academic leadership, and Jarvis won the Humanities Outstanding Early Career Researcher Award. Additionally, Lax won Supervisor of the Year for the Humanities Faculty, 2020.

The University has a policy that offers one term of research leave after six terms of service (i.e., after two years of ASER employment). E15 staff are allocated £1,000 annually to cover research costs and conference attendance; LiFTS staff are allocated £500 annually with further strategic funding available on application. Across the SPRN, staff have received funds in addition to their annual allowance to support research leadership roles, for example, Jarvis' role as a Working Group Leader within the International Federation for Theatre Research. Staff travel between

campuses is encouraged and reimbursed, and research events and activities across the SPRN receive financial assistance, for example, to support the A Call to Act research event series outlined below.

2.2 Research Students

LiFITS has a thriving, interdisciplinary community of PGR students with currently over 60 PhD candidates. LiFITS programmes include: PhD Drama, PhD Drama with Creative Practice (PaR), PhD Film, and PhD Film with Creative Practice (PaR). E15 runs two PhD programmes in Drama and Performance (with and without PaR). In 2019, E15 welcomed its first cohort of PhD students; these doctoral researchers are supported in playing an integral role within the research environment alongside academic staff. PhD students have the same access to University facilities as staff. Across the UoA, funds are allocated from Department budgets to support PhD research (£300-750 per student depending on the course/needs). E15 PhD students host PGR training sessions on topics such as 'approaching a question', 'methodologies' and 'PaR', and undertake fortnightly 'writing retreats', research sharings, and a PhD student symposium. In LiFITS, the postgraduate year culminates in an annual PhD conference organised by PGRs with staff contributions as respondents and keynote speakers. Research support is also provided through the University's centrally run '*Proficio*' provision, which targets professional development and training for PhD students and for which students each have access to £2,500 (of which £700 can be made available for conference attendance).

As well as course-specific training sessions, postgraduates across the Network benefit from access to initiatives and events. In addition to ongoing visiting screenings, performances, talks, and seminars by scholars and practitioners, collaborative events have included Geiger and Blower's CHASE-funded *Intimacy and Ethics in Documentary Media* (2015), part of the Intimacies programme (with Goldsmiths, Sussex), featuring screenings and masterclasses hosted by BAFTA-awarded participants. Also with CHASE-funding, Kapadocha organised a two-day praxical symposium *Somatic Voices in Performance Research and Beyond* (2019), which brought together national and international movement practitioners to provide research-led training workshops. PGR students are also invited to organise events, such as the CFSM weekly screening series at Colchester featuring visiting filmmakers and Q&A events organised by PGRs, and the PGR-led 'In Progress' research discussion series.

All PhD students are supported by a Supervisory Panel involving one or two supervisors and three members in all. The panel meets formally twice a year to assess student progress against key milestones. The progress of the students is overseen by the Research Student Progress Board (consisting of the Head of Department, Director of Graduate Studies and another senior member of academic staff such as the DoR) who monitor the progress reports from the Supervisory Panel. Students meet monthly with their primary supervisor/co-supervisors and joint supervision is encouraged wherever possible. Where supervisors are ECRs, they work in a team with a more experienced supervisor.

PGR teachers are trained in research-led teaching and work towards HEA Fellowship in their first teaching year through staff mentoring, observations, and the University's *CADENZA* programme. As an institution, Essex has 350+ staff Fellows of the HEA offering feedback on applications. As part of the HEA's Code of Practice, Fellows are expected to support staff and PGR development, encourage the highest codes of teaching practice and promote the UKPSF. *CADENZA* runs numerous training and moderation sessions throughout the year.

During the REF period, 22 University PGR students supervised by five SPRN staff in LiFITS have completed their studies. Essex PGRs are supported towards diverse employment options, with direct support of supervisory mentors and the Essex Careers Office and *Proficio* modules, which offer training on publishing, applying research, grant capture, networking, and impact and innovation. Essex recent graduates hold academic posts at Birkbeck, RCSSD, Southampton Solent, City, Roehampton, Manchester Metropolitan University, and Beijing Forestry University as well as permanent posts in English language teaching, university research management, theatre

management, and festival directorships.

2.3 Equality and Diversity

The Network actively promotes equality and diversity across its staff and PGR student community, through the University's *Essential Training* programme that provides certification in Equality and Diversity, Unconscious Bias, and Doctoral Supervisory Training (including regular refresher training for established supervisors). In making appointments, Essex operates the Disability Confident (formerly 'Two Ticks') Employer system ensuring qualified candidates with disabilities are guaranteed an interview, and all appointment panel members are required to engage with Equality and Diversity and Unconscious Bias in Interview training.

Our [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy 2019-25](#) defines our approach, in the context of our institutional mission, values and objectives as set out in our *Strategic Plan*, our *People Supporting Strategy*, our *Education and Research Strategies* and equalities legislation. It supports our commitment to addressing under-representation where it exists, celebrating the diversity of our students and staff, nurturing communities of belonging, and promoting inclusion, well-being, resilience and empowerment to enable everyone to reach their full potential. E15 and LiFTS are currently preparing applications for Athena SWAN Bronze Awards and aim for Silver Awards during the next REF period.

The SPRN takes pride in promoting gender, ethnic and international diversity encompassing both staff and students. The 12 submitted Network members include seven women, Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) and LGBTQIA+ staff. 50% of submitted staff are from international backgrounds. Where research leave allocation of summer terms may adversely affect those with childcare responsibilities, leave is supported for alternate autumn and spring terms. The Open Research seminar programme on the Colchester campus is scheduled at different times to ensure greatest accessibility for staff with caring responsibilities. Internal research funding may be used for caring support expenses to enable a researcher to attend a conference or research visit.

In July 2020, E15 released its comprehensive Anti-Racism Action Plan (<https://www.east15.ac.uk/anti-racism-action-plan>) regarding Accountability, Training, Curriculum, Increased Diversity, Events and Projects, and Research. E15 researchers are investigating language in actor training as relating to culture and race, and exploring how Black actors engage with current UK vocal training practices. The process for reporting racism, harassment and discrimination has been streamlined making it easier for students to navigate. Staff have access to Bystander Training and undertook an anti-racism and inclusion training workshop with HighRise Theatre. The School has deployed an Anti-Racism Task Force formed of staff and students to oversee the progression of the action plan and hold the School to account. The University has also formed a Tackling Racism Working Group with an institutional action plan (<https://www.essex.ac.uk/about/tackling-racism>) to promote trust and transparency across the University community.

3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

Our grant profile includes a rich variety of funders that have supported a diverse array of research methods and activities, from exhibitions to monographs, installations to industry reports. The number and scale of grant applications across the Network has been ambitious given the high proportion of newly appointed staff and/or early career researchers. Our success over a limited timeframe evidences effective departmental and institutional support processes.

Significant successful external applications across the Network, both research-council funded and from other sources that support research activity, include:

- Maples (P-I) and Klich (Co-I), ESRC, *The Economic, Social and Cultural Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Independent Arts Workers in the United Kingdom* (£546,976), July 2020;

- Geiger, Leverhulme Trust Senior Research Fellowship, *Kodachrome Travels: Colour Film, Realism, and the 'American Pacific' Imagination* (£59,246), July 2020;
- Chaudhuri, Leverhulme Research Fellowship, *Creativity and Constraint: Contemporary Cinema in Iran and the Arab World* (£44,749), 2019;
- Klich and Jarvis, Enabling Innovation: Research and Application (EIRA) grants (£58,551 combined total), 2019;
- Klich, partnership on 4.3 million DCMS Cultural Development Fund award (Essex activities awarded £283,000), 2019;
- Lax (Co-I) with UoA 27 colleague Kuti (P-I), Global Challenges Research Fund, *Tales of Spring and Winter: Gender, History and Intergenerational Exchange* (£96,910, a significant proportion supporting PaR activities led by Lax with the residency of the ARIADNE network), 2016.

Other smaller grants awarded to staff whilst employed at the University during the REF period **total £129,047** and include: Chaudhuri's awards from the Global Challenges Research fund (£7666.58) and from ESRC (£8,810.50); Geiger's collaborative awards from AHRC and CHASE (£11,300 over two grants) and from the BAAS Founders' Research Award (£1,000); Jarvis' funding from ACE (£15,000) and Wellcome Trust (£15,000); Lax's awards from the Heritage Lottery fund (£15,000) and ACE (£15,000); Kapadocha's CHASE funding (£8,572); Kartsaki's ACE funding (£11,543 total) and commissions with The Yard (£3,000); Maples ACE award (£14,500) and Arts Council Ireland funding (€3,000).

Grants active during the assessment period once staff joined Essex total £166,063 with staff as P-I with an additional £524,400 as Co-I. These grants include: Jarvis with Analogue's commissions from Shoreditch Town Hall (£10,000) and New Wolsey Theatre (£2,000), Staatstheater Coproduction investment (£40,000), and grants from ACE (£55,000) and Wellcome Trust (£30,000); Lax's collaborative grants with ice&fire from Joseph Rowntree Foundation and Esmee Fairbairn (£78,000) and Adah Kay Memorial Commission (£10,000); Klich's ACE funding (£14,963) and award as Co-I from the Polish National Science Centre (305,630 PLN (approx. £62,000)); and Maples ACE grant (£14,100) and funding as Co-I, Drama-lead and Project Partner from the Heritage National Lottery (£374,400). 254,063.

Internal University research funding across the SPRN, in addition to Departmental individual research allowance and conference support, **totals £79,230** and includes: £28,386 from PVC (Research) Strategic Fund Awards for impact (Chaudhuri, Kapadocha, Klich and Jarvis, Lax); £18,000 Research Equipment Awards (Blower, Jarvis); £9,865 Impact Acceleration Account Challenge Lab (Blower); £8,579 PVC (Research) Award (Blower); £5,000 GCRF Internal Funding (Lax); £4,500 UROP funding (Lax); £3,900 IAA Active Engagement Awards (Blower, Rubin); and £1,000 Outstanding Research Humanities Award (Lax). A **further £21,500** internal funding was awarded to Network members whilst previously employed by other institutions during the REF period that have enabled research continued at Essex.

3.2 Facilities

Across our Colchester, Southend, and Loughton campuses, research staff and PGRs have access to high-quality rehearsal rooms, performance spaces, cameras and media equipment, television and FX studio space, film editing suites and specialist software to support PaR, as well as facilities for meetings, presentations and symposia. The Albert Sloman Library (Colchester campus, accessible via inter-campus loan) has extensive resources for theatre and screen research including over 70 named special collections, and subscriptions to Drama Online, Digital Theatre Plus, and Box of Broadcasts. The Forum in Southend is a multi-purpose building shared with Focal Point Gallery and South Essex College and includes Southend Libraries, media rooms, study hubs,

and The Forum Big Screen, which champions cutting-edge audio-visual content and has provided a platform for staff practice-as-research films.

In Loughton, facilities include 23 rehearsal studios, a dance studio, a designated postgraduate room, library, and a radio and recording studio, as well as a wardrobe/technical theatre site with set and prop building facilities and planning permission for two new double height studios. In Southend, E15 facilities include 17 large rehearsal studios (including a dance studio), Creative Producing room with filming equipment and computers, wardrobe and costume making facilities, set building workshop, seminar rooms, and a film editing suite. PhD students also have access to an interdisciplinary Postgraduate Study Room. Colchester facilities includes a Media Centre (6+ staff) providing high-end cameras, lighting, and other equipment, and the Cine-10 cinema seating 120 for teaching, CFSM screenings, practitioner Q&As, and Student Union and society film nights. Additionally, all three campuses are home to a state-of-the art theatre:

The Lakeside Theatre is the creative hub of the Colchester campus. Among notable productions, it staged the world premiere of Nobel-prize winning author Derek Walcott's dramatisation of his poem *Omeros* (2014) in conjunction with Shakespeare's Globe Theatre. The venue includes two performances spaces: an intimate studio and the 200 seat Main Stage, and a vibrant café. A producing house and venue for touring shows and NT live events, the theatre has collaborated with staff and PGR students from LiFTS and E15 on PaR performances, festivals, and public-facing events.

The Clifftown Theatre is a converted Gothic church in the heart of Southend, alterable for any configuration including traverse, in the round, and thrust; the moveable flooring allows the seating area and stage to be raised and lowered as required and depending on the configuration can seat anywhere from 130 to 160. Overlooked by the original organ, the theatre has blackout curtains and blinds, acoustic panels, and the finest audio, lighting, and live streaming equipment.

The Corbett Theatre was in honour of Harry H Corbett, a key member of Joan Littlewood's Theatre Workshop and early benefactor of E15. This medieval tithing barn was dismantled and transported to Hatfield House, E15's Loughton location, in the 1960s. With full technical facilities, tiered seating for 125 people and fitted dressing rooms, the theatre provides a research facility for public productions, lectures and presentations. In 2018 the theatre, library, and refectory in Loughton benefitted from a £2 million upgrade.

Staff and PGR students have access to high-quality cameras, microphones, and lighting equipment, for use in practice and documentation of events. The University has also recently funded £12,000 of digital and audio equipment as requested by Jarvis, which supported his co-delivery/design of a Digital Performance Workshop in collaboration with The Mercury Theatre and Signals. This equipment is used for academic PaR, and for knowledge exchange and business-sector research outreach activities at venues including the Essex Innovation Centre, which opened July 2019 on the Knowledge Gateway. The £12 million Innovation Centre, designed to enhance the region's science, technology, and digital creative industries, provides state-of-the art facilities for collaboration between academics and industry.

3.3 Organisational Infrastructure

As outlined in Section 1.1, organisational infrastructure across the UoA is distributed across two Departments and coheres in the SPRN, which was formed through discursive process across UoA forums (May 2018- June 2020). Network members participate in regular meetings (on site and online) and termly 'away-days', and collaborate on funding bids, impact projects, peer-to-peer mentoring, and joint PhD supervisory panels (Kapadocha, Kartsaki, Klich, and McAllister-Viel are on LiFTS supervisory panels). The SPRN also facilitates research events, both with internal members, for example, the Network's 2020 symposium, *Embodiment and Audience (Stage and Screen)*, and with invited speakers, such as the public seminar organised by Kapadocha in 2019 with Dr Ben Macpherson on embodied voice.

Within the UoA, there are various mechanisms for the facilitation of invited speakers and research events. LiFTS fortnightly Open Research Seminars offer term-time research talks and symposia, often in collaboration with The Centre for Film and Screen Media (CFSM) and the Centre for Theatre Research (CTR). Open Research seminars provide a regular platform for sharing work and for exploring common ground, and work to integrate students in the research community. Speakers include invited guests from other institutions, visiting fellows, our own academics, and PGR students. The CFSM (run by Blower, Chaudhuri, Geiger), hosts a weekly screening series (established in 2002) in Cine-10 and has supported numerous events, visiting speakers, and PGR Q&A events. E15's flagship seminar series *A Call To Act*, open to all University staff, students, and the public, invites researchers and practitioners to share work. The seminars interrogate ways of making and valuing theatre and performance and unpack critical and creative considerations of contemporary practice. 2019-20 seminars included founder of Voice Studio International Nadine George, leading commedia dell'arte expert Didi Hopkins, international PaR working group Cross Pollination Space led by Dr Alex Boyd, and multi-award-winning writer, dramaturge and director Kaite O'Reilly in discussion with performer and disability activist Sara Beer about their 2018 production *richard iii redux*.

Staff are supported by Research Committees in both LiFTS and E15. These are chaired by DoRs with support from the Research and PGR Administrator, and include Directors of Impact (DoI), Directors of Graduate Studies (DGS), Ethics Officers, and Heads of Department. Research Committees meet twice termly and undertake consultation with staff around the development and implementation of departmental Research Strategy. The DoR and DoI represent the interests of the Department and the SPRN on Faculty and University Research Committees. Supported by the Research and PGR Administrator, the DGS convene PGR Progress Boards, co-ordinate PGR training programmes, and sit on Faculty and University PGR Committees.

SPRN staff capitalise on University research infrastructure such as the University Research Opportunity Placement (UROPE) Fund, which supports researchers to work with a paid undergraduate research assistant on a defined project, for example, Lax mentored UG research outputs on the *Tales of Winter and Spring* project. Network staff participate in initiatives coordinated across the Eastern Academic Research Consortium (Eastern Arc) of the Universities of Essex, East Anglia and Kent, such as symposia (Jarvis and Klich on Digital Humanities) and cross-institutional mentoring (Jarvis with University of Kent), and events coordinated by the EIRA partnership, such as the two-day 2020 'BT Hothouse' day event *5G Enabling Technology in Live Performances* (Jarvis).

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

Through publications, practice-as-research, and other research activities, SPRN members are shaping their disciplines and leading initiatives with significant industry and public impact. In addition to our six research monographs, 29 book chapters, 28 academic articles, edited collections, and 26 PaR outputs (theatre productions, performance art, film, exhibition and event curation, play-scripts, and digital installation) from UoA staff this REF cycle, our contribution to the research base is demonstrated through our positions within subject associations, advisory roles on research organisations, charities and industry company boards, visiting professorships, and invitations, consultancy, and reviewing.

Though relatively new, the SPRN has developed a **wide range of significant, collaborative projects with international reach**, examples of which are outlined in Section 1 above. Maples is PI on an ESCR-funded (£547k) project awarded July 2020 with E15 colleague Klich and Co-Is at Queens University, Belfast and MMU, which examines the social, economic, and creative impact of COVID-19 on independent arts workers and the organisations that serve them, informing strategies for sector recovery. Rubin's PaR project *Cymbeline*, presented across Bali (Indonesia) including at the annual Balinese Festival, was filmed and distributed to education colleges, institutions and performers and broadcast on the major Balinese television station, *Bali TV*.

Lax's project *Protect the World* (2016-19) produced play-scripts, performances, films and

workshops in collaboration with Amnesty International examining the way testimony is treated and valorised by rights-based NGOs. Ten live performance/workshops were delivered across the UK; the films were presented on the Amnesty UK and International website and used as training resources for staff and members. Blower's documentary *LIFTED* about veterans with PTSD has been screened 12 times across the South East of the UK and in the Netherlands playing to audiences of NHS, prison and military mental health workers, veterans' charities, film professionals, government mental health advisers, veterans, and families, and members of the general public. Blower received the Exceptional Merit Award at the *Docs Without Borders* festival, USA, 2020 and official selection at four other international film festivals.

Klich's involvement as Co-I for the University of Kent's Cultural Development Fund award (£4.3 million, project title 'Creative Estuary') brought £268,000 into the University to facilitate paid placements for emerging arts producers and a series of 'labs' and 'summits' for academic researchers, artists and creative business to develop new projects and compete for seed-funding. Klich is academic lead for the University's role within the Thames Estuary Producing Corridor (TEPC), an ambitious industrial vision launched by the Mayor of London in 2017 for creative and cultural production in east London, North Kent and South Essex. Klich also sits on the Cultural Innovation Forum, a partnership of 10 HE institutions in the South East working towards collective action and positive change through cultural and creative initiatives that respond to the priorities of the regional community.

SPRN members are embedded within **national and international subject research organisations and networks**. Network staff are members of: British Association of Film, Television and Screen Studies; Society for Cinema and Media Studies; Performance Studies International; European Network for Cinema and Media Studies, and the British Association for American Studies; International Federation for Theatre Research; Theatre and Performance Research Association; Voice and Speech Trainers' Association; Actor's Equity Association; Association for Theatre in Higher Education; British Voice Association; Association for Asian Performance, and the Korean Association for Voice of Performing Arts. Jarvis is co-convenor of International Federation for Theatre Research Intermediality Working Group (2017-ongoing), as well as a Fellow at Hanse-Wissenschaftskolleg, Advanced Institute for Research, Delmenhorst, Germany since 2012.

Other significant **invited roles and visiting professorships** include: Visiting Professorial Fellow, University of New South Wales, Australia, 2019-20 (Chaudhuri); Visiting Professor, Beijing Central Academy of Drama, China, 2019 (Rubin); Visiting Professor, New York University Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, 2017 (Chaudhuri); Visiting Professor, Nanjing University of the Arts, China, 2017 (Rubin); Visiting Professor, University of Malta, 2016-18 (Geiger); Fellow of the Royal Society for Arts (Rubin); Fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society (Rubin); Fellow of the Royal Anthropological Institute (Geiger). Rubin is an Honorary Professor at GITIS Academy in Moscow and has an Awarded Honorary degree from UNATC, Bucharest. McAllister-Viel held a year-long Research Fellowship 2015-16 at the International Research Centre, Freie University, Berlin, as part of the *Interweaving Performance Cultures* programme. Jarvis has contributed to theatre company Theatre-Rites' Board of Management since 2013. Klich represents the University on the Thames Estuary Production Corridor Partners Board, and on the ACE-funded Cultural Innovation Forum South East.

Additional roles as **invited panelists** include Chaudhuri's extensive contribution as critic and panelist for competitions, festivals, and media events. Her roles in this capacity include: invited critic for BBC Culture Poll 100 Films by Women, 2019; panelist for Persian Film Festival, Sydney, 2019; panelist for Arabic Cinema's Fearless Female Filmmakers, The Cultural Frontline, BBC World Service, 2019; and panelist for *Thinkers for our Time: Sigmund Freud*, British Academy, London, 2015.

Further invited roles as panel expert include Geiger's appearance on BBC Radio Essex programme '*Darkest Hour* and the power of cinema' (2018), interview for Research Fortnight on the National Media Museum (2016), and role as juror for the Essex DocFest (2020). Kartsaki was

invited as a panel expert for Fertility Fest 2019 panel 'What Comes First, The Career or the Egg: To Parent or Not to Parent' at the Barbican Centre. Klich was invited panelist for *Digital forensic: Partnership Launch* of The Centre for Research in Digital Storytelling and V&A Digital Programmes 2018.

SPNR staff have **organised and curated academic conferences and events**. Klich organised the SPRN *Embodiment and Audience (Stage and Screen)* symposium July 2020. Geiger organised *Journeys Through Colour* at the RAI London 2018 with fifty participants. Kartsaki hosted a discussion about the compulsion towards reproductive futurity at Conway Hall as part of Anti-University Week 2018. Kapadocha organised *Somatic Voices in Performance Research and Beyond*, a two-day praxical symposium 2019, and *The Somatic in Theatre and Performance Research Gathering*, Kato Garouna, Corfu, Greece with the Municipal Theatre of Corfu, 2018. Blower co-led the 2018 University conference *Thinking Though the Visual* with academic and industry speakers, and Maples organised a symposium on Immersive Performance at Senate House, 2018.

Staff have also **organised collaborative events with industry partners** such as Chaudhuri's partnership with the Mosaic Rooms and organisation of the public symposium *The Paradox of Creative Constraints*, London, 2019. Chaudhuri collaborated with Art Exchange on Syrian film screenings and talks accompanying the exhibition *The Movement of the People* (2016). Chaudhuri also curated a series of film events, *Crisis and Creativity: A Season of Contemporary Films from and about the Arab World*, at The Mosaic Rooms, London, 2016. Lax, Chaudhuri and Bahun (UoA27) collaborated with The Essex Book Festival for the *Freedom and Expression* symposium, 2015. Chaudhuri collaborated with The Goethe Institute on *Documenting Nazi Atrocities: Early Films on the Liberation of the Camps*, June 2015. Chaudhuri also worked with Amnesty International to organise the Film Screening and Panel Discussion *Where Should the Birds Fly*, 2015.

For the Colchester Film Festival 2015, Geiger convened the masterclass 'Directing Feature Films' and chaired Q&A discussion with director Cem Kaya at Firstsite Gallery and co-organised *The Sudan Trilogy* conference (2014) with the RAI and SOAS (140 participants). Jarvis co-led *Digital Performance*, a two-day workshop with local artists and researchers in association with Signals and The Mercury Theatre at the Abbey Field Centre (2019) and co-ordinated a performance/science public engagement event *Feeling with Another's Hand* at the Science Museum (Dana Centre) with the British Neuroscience Association, Parkinson's UK and Professor Narender Ramnani (2014). Kartsaki curated a bi-monthly performance event at Jamboree, Cable Street Studios named *Coocoolili Presents*, which invited emerging and established artists to present work-in-progress in a cabaret setting. In total, Kartsaki curated six events over 12 months, which hosted around thirty artists and over 600 attendees.

Network members contribute to the research base through **widespread editorial work, consultancy, and peer-reviewing**. Chaudhuri and Klich are members of the AHRC Peer-Review College (Chaudhuri since 2010 and Klich since 2019). Klich also reviewed for European Research Council and Engineering and Physical Sciences Council. Geiger is on the Advisory Board for *Remapping World Cinema* (Routledge), the CHASE consortium PGR scholarships (2015, 2020), and peer reviewer for Leverhulme Trust (2015). Chaudhuri is a member of the advisory editorial board for *Camera Obscura* and the editorial boards for *Transnational Screens* and *Open Screens*. McAllister-Viel was Associate Editor-in-Chief of the *Voice and Speech Review* 2011-2017, and Jarvis is editorial board member for *Body, Space, Technology* journal. Staff have **refereed for publishers** including: Palgrave, Routledge, Bloomsbury, Ghent University Press, W.W. Norton, Berg, Anthem, Edinburgh University Press, University of Hawai'i, Columbia University Press, Wallflower, and Intellect.

Additionally, staff **have peer-reviewed for journals** including: *Camera Obscura*; *Contemporary Theatre Review*; *Convergence: International Journal of New Media Technologies*; *Digital War*; *International Journal of Performance Art and Digital Media*; *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*; *Journal of American Studies*; *Journal of Gender Studies*; *Journal of New*

Zealand and Pacific Studies; Journal of Urban Cultural Studies; Nordic Theatre Studies; Open Screens; Patterns of Prejudice; Scene, Space and Culture; Screenworks; Studies in American Fiction; Studies in Documentary Film; Studies in Theatre and Performance; SYNOPTIQUE: An Online Journal of Film and Moving Image Studies; Theatre, Dance and Performance Training; and The Voice and Speech Review.

Staff have delivered **46 keynotes, plenaries and invited talks**. Notable keynotes include Chaudhuri's address at the *Media, Communication and Cultural Studies Association (MeCCSA)* annual conference at the University of Stirling, January 2019, and keynote at *Crossing Borders, Traversing Narrative* at the University of St Andrews, February 2015. Geiger delivered a keynote at the 'Visual Cultural and Social Inequality' conference at the University of Konstanz, Germany, July 2017, and Klich delivered a keynote at the International Symposium of the Korean Society of Dance at Sungkyunkwan University, Republic of Korea, Nov 2013. Also in the Republic of Korea, McAllister-Viel delivered a keynote at the Korean Association for Voice in Performance Arts symposium in April 2015. Invited talks across the UoA have been in Poland, Canada, USA, Korea, Germany, Malta, Czechia, China, and the UK.

Since August 2013, staff have presented **over 70 conference papers** in countries including Canada, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Malta, Sweden, USA, Australia, Belgium, Serbia, Greece, Spain, China, Sweden, and Canada. SPRN staff have also **examined** 19 PhDs across the UK, Australia, South Africa, and Malta, as well as 30 MAs and two MPhils.