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| Institution: The University of Bolton |
| Unit of Assessment: 27 English Language and Literature |
| 1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy <u>Research structure</u> Research in English Studies is situated within the broader School of the Arts and is focused in two dynamically interrelated groupings: the Creative and the Critical. Several members of staff teach in both areas; the Creative group includes practitioners in poetry, fiction and drama, while the Critical group is concerned with nineteenth century fiction, literary theory and philosophy, contemporary children's literature and classical aesthetics. Our research as a unit draws on this distinctive critical/creative synergy and is informed by the University's commitment to an integrated approach to teaching, learning and research embodied in its Teaching Intensive, Research Informed (TIRI) agenda. To this end, our research directly informs the design, delivery and development of our English and Creative Writing programmes at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. <u>Research objectives and evidence of achievement of REF 2014 plans</u> The principal strategic aim of the unit is to build on and enhance our combined critical and creative strengths, giving equal weight to both disciplines. This strategy has informed our previous REF submissions (RAE 2008, REF 2014) and has been fully realised during the assessment period, as evidenced by a broad range of publications by staff submitted in 2014. On the Critical side, Prof. David Rudd and Prof. Suzanne Stern-Gillet have continued to contribute theoretical and philosophical papers to highly regarded journals in the discipline, including <i>Children's Literature in Education</i> and <i>The Classical Quarterly</i> respectively. Dr Jill Marsden has produced numerous articles exploring the interface between literature and philosophy, with recent publications in <i>Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal</i> , <i>Nietzsche Studien: Internationales Jahrbuch für die Nietzsche-Forschung</i> and <i>Textual Practice</i> . On the Creative Writing side, Prof. Jon Glover has continued to be prolific, his most recent poetry collection <i>A Birdsong on Mars</i> appearing in 2020 with Carcanet. Mary Cooper has continued to produce topical drama, achieving national recognition with <i>Piao Yang Guo Hai/From Shore to Shore</i> which toured to nine UK cities in 2017. Dr. Simon Holloway and Dr. Evan Jones, both early career researchers in 2014, have been highly productive. Dr Holloway published a novel based on his creative writing research, <i>The Words We Use are Black and White</i> (2014) and Dr. Jones produced a critically acclaimed contribution to translation studies, <i>The Barbarians Arrive Today: Poetry and Prose by C. P. Cavafy</i> (2020) in addition to a new volume of poems, <i>Later Emperors</i> (2019). The appointment of three new staff members, (Ed Jones, Dr. Ben Wilkinson, Dr Valerie O'Riordan) during the accounting period has boosted the critical and creative strengths of the UoA (as detailed in Section 2). As evidence of the aforementioned synergy between disciplines, it is to be noted that Dr Wilkinson and Dr. O'Riordan are submitting both critical and creative outputs in REF 2. The second strategic aim of the unit is to develop research which engages the public. During the assessment period the team developed a number of projects with an explicit community arts focus, including Mary Cooper's <i>From Shore to Shore</i> (2017) based on interviews with Chinese communities which played in non-traditional venues such as Chinese restaurants, and Ed Jones' drama <i>The Political History of Smack and Crack</i> (2018) which, in addition to a national tour of the UK theatres, played in HMP Thameside and the homelessness centre, The Mustard Tree. Both projects embody the 'outward-facing' identity of our research and reflect our desire to widen |

the arts participation of marginalized communities. During the accounting period, other members of the team also worked together to develop projects around literary heritage and raising awareness of mental health issues as reflected in our two impact case studies discussed below.

Strategy for achieving impact from research

The unit's strategy for achieving impact from research is informed by i) TIRI and ii) Research funding (Jenkinson and ACE).

i) TIRI

As a small team who collaborate and co-teach across a range of research-informed modules, we are well placed to devise impactful research projects that will feed back in to the curriculum. This has been particularly true in relation to our work in local literary heritage and in our work with community partners. For example, when working on our 'Literary Landscapes' workshops, English and Creative Writing students joined with us on placements at Sanctuary Storytellers (Bolton City of Sanctuary) whilst others filmed videos for our digital writing map [Writing Bolton](#) and our Victorian Bolton website [Victorian Bolton](#). These close links to teaching at undergraduate and postgraduate level ensure the sustainability of our research provision and the vitality of our research environment.

ii) Research funding

The principal mechanism within the university for enabling the achievement of impact from research is the Jenkinson Award scheme. In making a bid for funding, applicants must explicitly demonstrate how the research will achieve impact. In addition to winning individual awards, the UoA secured three team awards during the current REF cycle: *Poets for Bolton: Writing the Town* (2017) led by Dr. Ben Wilkinson, *Whitman 200* (2018) led by Dr. Evan Jones and *Centre for Literature and Community* (2020) led by Jill Marsden.

In addition to the Jenkinson Awards, the UoA has also been very successful in achieving Arts Council England funding.

Case Studies

Our approach to achieving impact from research is exemplified by our two impact case studies, *Empowering Marginalized Communities through Literature and Partnership: Writing the Community and Accessing Literature: Widening Cultural Participation and Improving Mental Health Awareness through Theatre and Poetry*.

The first case study, *Writing the Community*, was supported by two Jenkinson awards. *Poets for Bolton: Writing the Town* (2017) enabled the team to develop a bespoke digital 'writing map' for Bolton, showcasing creative work produced by university staff, students and members of the local community. The map was used to record work produced from our 'Literary Landscapes' workshops. These workshops with local community groups were also supported by *Whitman 200* (2018), a project to celebrate the bicentenary of the birth of Walt Whitman, who has a unique connection to the literary heritage of Bolton (see the video *Walt Whitman and Wonder Women* at <https://youtu.be/cM5DLD6MF3k>). The work culminated in an international conference hosted by the UoA in May 2019. Working with marginalized communities was also at the heart of Mary Cooper's drama *From Shore to Shore* which played in conjunction with a series of associated bilingual workshops with the Chinese community throughout its UK tour in 2017. This was made possible through Arts Council England funding.

Our second case study *Accessing Literature* was supported by three ACE awards and enabled us to consolidate shared research interests in the UoA around raising mental health awareness and

improving access to the arts for marginalized audiences. Each element of the study reflected the research expertise informing the teaching of poetry and drama. For example, a work in progress performance of Ed Jones' *The Political History* was shared with HE4 students as part of the module 'Understanding the Contemporary' taught by Jill Marsden. Similarly, Ben Wilkinson and Mary Cooper used the research informing the *Accessing Literature* case study in the workshop modules for poetry and drama at HE5 and HE6. As a result of working both independently and collaboratively on these themed studies, the UoA have been able to develop ideas for achieving impact from research as we go forward in to the next REF cycle.

Future Plans to ensure the vitality and sustainability of research and research impact

A key principle of the university's research strategy for the next five years is to enhance its commitment to community engagement and work with community partners. This principle will continue to inform our local strategy for achieving impact in the UoA.

In 2020 Jill Marsden led a successful Jenkinson bid *Centre for Literature and Community* (2020), a project to raise the profile of, and consolidate, the various research-informed community activities of the team.

Over the next five years the team plans to develop an identity for the Centre. Building on the success of our work with local community partners, we intend to continue research which will support community activities in literary heritage, creative writing and community arts. Indeed, a legacy of *Writing the Community* is that much of this work is ongoing. As a result of our creative writing and literary heritage workshops with local, disadvantaged groups and asylum seekers, we are now developing bids for future community initiatives with our community partners City of Sanctuary and Bolton at Home. One recent project was a collaboration with City of Sanctuary to host 'Bolton's Literary Heritage Café' as part of the Being Human 'New Worlds' festival, November 2020, led by the School of Advanced Study, University of London, in partnership with the AHRC and British Academy. This was an opportunity to share some of the research informing our *Writing the Community* case study with both the Bolton community and other researchers in the UK. Another initiative underway is a project with City of Sanctuary, the Destitution Project in Bolton and Befriending Refugees and Asylum Seekers (BRASS) entitled 'Distant Pasts, Shared Futures'. Participants in this project are being encouraged to share stories celebrating different cultural interpretations and heritages and the aim is to use our digital map as a repository celebrating these narratives.

A significant legacy of the *Accessing Literature* case study is that Ed Jones is currently running online workshops for former homeless people in Bristol, coordinated by the theatre company Cardboard Citizens who specialise in working with the homeless. This initiative developed from Ed Jones' post-performance writing workshops which accompanied the national tour of *The Political History of Smack and Crack* in 2018.

Future plans for the UoA include developing impactful research around literature and mental health. Not only is this a current interest amongst members of staff, it is also emerging as a university priority. We envisage developing Ben Wilkinson's work on engaging new audiences through poetry and are currently working on a Jenkinson bid to this end. Bibliotherapy is also an area which we are planning to explore, capitalizing once again on our creative/critical strengths.

A further research priority for the UoA over the next five years is to consolidate critical and creative research strengths in our individual specialisms. This work will feed in to our teaching at postgraduate level in both supervision of research students and in teaching on the MA. This is a particular growth area for the team. Our postgraduate provision was boosted in 2020 with the launch of an innovative and dynamic suite of Masters programmes in The School of the Arts, including MA via Creative Practice, MA Creative industries and MA in Applied and Community Arts. Some of our students pursuing the MA in Applied and Community Arts are involved in

research with our community arts partners and this is serving to reinforce both TIRI and the future health of the research environment.

Approach to supporting interdisciplinary research

The vitality and sustainability of the unit's research environment is enhanced by its location within the broader School of the Arts. Staff in the UoA are on the supervisory teams of a number of interdisciplinary PhDs in the School, a recent example being the PhD, 'Picturing Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*: Representing Philosophical Ideas in Graphic Novel Format,' which brought together the unit's expertise in philosophy and literature (Dr. Jill Marsden, Prof. David Rudd) with the specific skills of colleagues in graphic design. A number of colleagues also act as second supervisors on arts-themed PhDs in the School. Recent Jenkinson bids in the UoA have also included exciting interdisciplinary collaborations with Media (*Poets for Bolton*) and Fine Art and Psychology (*The Missing Mother*).

Approach to open research and research integrity

Within the context of the University's TIRI strategy to engage with the community in knowledge transfer, the unit is progressing towards an open and inclusive research environment in which research is more transparent and collaborative. In this context, the effective sharing of research data takes a number of forms, and we have a range of mechanisms to share research openly. For example dissemination of our research takes place locally at the annual University TIRI conference in addition to public events such as the Whitman 200 international conference (2019) hosted at the University by the English Studies team, and the Festival of Worktown (2020), a collaboration between various subject disciplines with the Bolton School of the Arts. Keynote presentations and performance of poetry, prose and drama take place at a range of national and international events, including our regular 'Live Literature' series hosted by the English Studies team in collaboration with the Bolton Libraries and Museums Service. Research work is also disseminated at our regular English Studies Research Seminars and is also made freely available through the University institutional repository.

The unit supports a culture of research integrity, and ensures that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards. With respect to research governance, all research projects are scrutinised for ethical issues at the proposal stage, and, if necessary, considered at university-wide level through the Research and Graduate School. Any member of research staff suspected of any research misconduct (e.g. plagiarism, abuse of confidentiality, misappropriation of resources, falsification/fabrication of data) is dealt with by a disciplinary process that judges people according to the University's Code of Policy and Procedures for Investigating and Resolving Allegations of Misconduct in Research (based on the 7 principles identified by The Nolan Committee on Standards in Public Life as having relevance to best practice in the conduct of research: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership). Research projects involving the collection of data from human participants are subject to obtaining ethical approval from the University Ethics committee. This process was fully observed when working with community groups in association with Bolton at Home, Bolton City of Sanctuary and Bolton Big Local as all these projects involved collecting personal data from participants.

2. People

Staffing Strategy and Staff Development

The senior research team for the School of the Arts comprises Samantha Johnson (Head of School), Prof. Paul Hollins, Prof. Robert Snape and Dr. Jill Marsden. Collectively, the research team oversee the development of the research culture in the School. The staffing strategy for the

School is directly linked to its research objectives to make impacts on creativity, culture and society through a range of collaborations with organisations and community partners. The School has a five-year plan to develop a range of research projects around the theme of 'Arts and Social Regeneration' and 'Arts and Wellbeing'. The English Studies' community-focused impact strategy, which underpins its Centre for Literature and Community, is central to these School research priorities.

Each staff member has a Personal Development Plan reviewed annually at an appraisal meeting with Samantha Johnson, in which research requirements are discussed. In line with the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers, researchers are provided with the opportunities and structured support to engage in a minimum of 10 days professional development pro rata per year. A key element of this structured support is research mentoring, provided by the four members of the School research team and overseen by the Research Coordinator. During the accounting period, Prof. David Rudd was Research Coordinator until his retirement in 2015, succeeded by Prof. Suzanne Stern-Gillet (2015-2017) and Dr. Jill Marsden (2018-present). The role of the Research Coordinator is to support staff to become research active, to mentor early career researchers and staff new to research supervision, and to assist staff with potential publications. All research coordinators contribute to the University's general Postgraduate Training Programme. As research coordinator for the School, Dr. Jill Marsden oversees staff development sessions for the School of the Arts as well as for English Studies. In 2020, Dr. Valerie O'Riordan shadowed Dr. Marsden during postgraduate supervisions sessions, including R1 and R2 panels as part of the Research Supervisor Training programme. In conjunction with Prof. Hollins and Prof. Snape, Dr. Marsden monitors the provision of support for research students. She also sits on the Board of Studies for Research Degrees and oversees Research Ethics for the School.

The unit's staffing and recruitment policy is geared towards supporting and sustaining a vibrant and thriving research culture, building on and consolidating existing strengths in both critical and creative areas. The effectiveness of this strategy is evidenced by the staff recruitment pattern over the assessment period which demonstrates significant stability in core staffing, complemented by investment in the recruitment of excellent researchers. In 2013 the core teaching staff in English comprised Dr. Evan Jones, Prof. David Rudd, Dr. Jill Marsden and in Creative Writing Mary Cooper, Dr. Simon Holloway and Anne Caldwell, all on permanent teaching and research contracts. Creative Writing staffing was boosted in 2014 with the full-time appointment of Ed Jones and in 2016 the poetry specialist Dr Ben Wilkinson was appointed to succeed Anne Caldwell who moved to a new career (Anne remained a PhD student in the English Studies department at Bolton and successfully defended her thesis in 2020). In his post-retirement role as visiting professor, Prof. Rudd has continued to supervise a number of PhD students and to contribute to research seminars in the School. During the REF period Prof. Jon Glover and Prof. Suzanne Stern-Gillet also became Emeritus and Emerita professors respectively, with Prof. Glover supervising four creative writing PhD students to completion in collaboration with Prof Michael Schmidt. Prof. Schmidt has been a visiting professor in English Studies since 2013 and has lectured across all years of the programme, in addition to making regular contributions to Employability seminars. Dr Valerie O'Riordan was appointed in Creative Writing (Fiction) on a short-term contract in 2018 to cover for Dr. Simon Holloway during a period of extended sick leave. Her post was made permanent in 2019.

This full complement of staff on permanent teaching and research contracts gives the unit excellent stability and enables us to work on long term, sustainable plans for future research projects.

Individuals at the beginning of their research careers are well supported and integrated into the research culture of English Studies. For example, Jill Marsden is research mentor for Valerie O'Riordan who, having recently completed doctoral supervision training, is now the second supervisor with Dr. Marsden on a critical/creative PhD. PhD students are also well supported in their career development. One of our graduates from the English BA programme who went on to secure the fully funded Ainsworth Award to pursue her PhD in women, wellbeing and community theatre (*Women, Worktown and Wellbeing: The Influence of Community Arts in the Field of Drama*

on the Subjective Wellbeing of Women) has also been mentored by Jill Marsden. This student has co-taught two modules with Dr. Marsden and has worked closely with the team on our research-informed community outreach work which fed in to *Empowering Marginalized Communities through Literature and Partnership: Writing the Community*.

Research leave, including impact and sabbatical leave is negotiated with Samantha Johnson, Head of the School of the Arts. Staff members must make a compelling case for research leave on the basis of a clearly defined project and research. For example, Mary Cooper was granted a six-month sabbatical to work on her ACE funded play, *Shore to Shore* in spring 2017. The play has had significant national impact with two national tours and recently has been adapted for BBC Radio Four.

As noted in section one, the second route to securing research leave is through the University Jenkinson Award scheme, a pump-priming scheme for supporting innovative research. Funding supports teaching remission, travel expenses, conference expenditure and the purchase of research related equipment and software. Staff may submit individually or as a team for a sum of up to £10,000. Staff must be able to demonstrate that their research work is in line with the TIRI philosophy of the university, that it has demonstrable high-level outputs and that it is achievable within the stated time frame. The scheme is open to all members of staff at all stages of their careers. Within the last four years, the UoA has successfully secured six Jenkinson Awards (see below).

The English Studies team has an employability agenda underwritten by the TIRI philosophy which facilitates appropriate research exchanges between academia and creative industries. For example, Prof. Schmidt, who is also publisher at Carcanet press in Manchester, hosts regular literary events in conjunction with the University and the Bolton Library and Museum Services. New Carcanet poets regularly read at our Live Literature series and the UoA is involved in a range of Carcanet sponsored events. Recent examples include the online launches of new poetry collections by Prof. Jon Glover (*Birdsong on Mars*) and Dr Evan Jones' (*Later Emperors*) and Dr Jones' recent translation of poetry and prose by C. P. Cavafy.

Staff members who carry out research and who achieve impact are recognised and rewarded at the Jenkinson Awards annual ceremony. Jenkinson Award winners are members of staff who have successfully demonstrated how their research supports the TIRI agenda; makes a contribution to knowledge of the discipline; and makes an impact beyond the wider academic community. Dr Ben Wilkinson won two Jenkinson Awards, one to work on his monograph, *Don Paterson and The Catch* (2017) and one to work on *Poets for Bolton: Writing the Town* (2017). Dr Jill Marsden won a Jenkinson award for *The Transvaluation of the Literary* (2018) to work on her monograph on literary thinking. Dr Evan Jones secured a Jenkinson Award (2018) and a Jenkinson Impact Award (2019) for *Whitman 200*. As previously mentioned, Dr Marsden recently won a Jenkinson award (2020) to support the development of *The Centre for Literature and Community*. A further recent accolade went to Dr. Valerie O'Riordan who won 'Research Publication of the Year' (2019) for her O Henry prize winning story, 'Bad Girl'.

Research students

Research students in English and Creative Writing are fully integrated in to the research culture of the unit. Recruits to the postgraduate programmes are attracted by the specialist expertise of our researchers and by the nationally acknowledged high levels of student support at undergraduate level (English and Creative Writing has scored 100% on the National Student Satisfaction Survey several times in recent years). During the accounting period we have had a number of critical and creative doctoral completions in poetry supervised by Prof. Jon Glover and Prof. Michael Schmidt on topics as diverse as 'The Continuing Relevance of Formalisms in Women's Poetry,' 'Poetry and Numinous Connections,' 'The "Extrospective" poetry of Keith Douglas' and 'A Comparative Study of Western and Vietnamese Modern Poetry'. Other projects supervised by the team have included 'Representing Philosophical Ideas in Graphic Novel

Format,' 'An Intersectional Approach to Modern Children's Fantasy Fiction,' 'The relationship between plot and genre in short fiction,' 'A five part drama on alternative comedy,' and ' Alice and the North: an exploration of the prose poem'.

Research students on the Masters programme via Creative Practice are supported in the acquisition of research skills through generic modules prior to project supervision by a subject specialist in poetry, fiction or drama. The appropriate research specialist is assigned to the student on their application to the programme and this staff member mentors the student on the development of their distinctive body of creative work.

This practice mirrors the established methods for postgraduate supervision in the department. PhD students are supervised by a research team comprising 2-3 staff: a Director of Studies, the regular point of contact, and up to 2 others with appropriate expertise. At each supervision meeting, progress is logged and a record kept of topics discussed, targets set and feedback on progress. The student retains a copy of this as a useful digest of plans for work between meetings. It also helps the supervisor and student to track the milestones in the research journey (e.g. annual monitoring of progress; R1 proposal; R2 panel; viva).

Research students are encouraged to attend any other classes/modules that they feel would benefit their studies. This is aside from the University-wide research training programme, which covers topics such as research skills, techniques and management, research ethics and standards of good research practice, teaching skills, data protection, Freedom of Information and Intellectual Property, research funding processes, networking for researchers, communicating research, academic and commercial exploitation of research results, personal effectiveness, and career management. Students are encouraged to present at the annual University TIRI Conference and at the annual Postgraduate Research Conference. Both of these provide the chance for students to learn how to present their research in a supportive environment. Research students are also encouraged to attend and present at external venues (e.g. research conferences, readings) wherever possible.

Research students are well supported in terms of preparation for their future careers. In English this is typically through mentoring PGR students teaching on the B.A. degree whereas Creative Writing students are supported in publishing their work. For example, three of our doctoral researchers who were all jointly supervised by Prof. Jon Glover and Prof. Michael Schmidt, have gone on to publish in reputable journals and poetry magazines. Under Prof. Glover's editorship, all three poets have published in *Stand* where one of the poets is also a regular reviewer of new poetry. Under the editorship of Prof. Schmidt, another doctoral student published two volumes of poetry with Carcanet Press, *Otherwise Unchanged* (2012) and *Rego Untold* (2014), in addition to contributing to *PN Review*. With the support of Dr. Simon Holloway, one of our recent PhD students successfully published a book based on his PhD thesis, *How to Write Short Stories and Get Them Published* (Robinson, 2019). Dr. Holloway also supported Anne Caldwell in her research journey, encouraging her to present at *Great Writing: The International Creative Writing Conference*, of which he has been a long time convenor. Dr. Anne Caldwell's *Alice and the North* (the creative component of her PhD) is now out with Valley Press (2020).

Equality and diversity

All members of staff are required to undertake mandatory online training in Equality and Diversity Awareness; The Bribery Act; PREVENT duty; GDPR. In addition, research coordinators and those in management roles must complete the module 'Challenging Unconscious Bias'. The University is committed to the advancement of equality of opportunity and the fostering of good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. As highlighted in our institutional environment template, the University as a whole supports a thriving and inclusive research culture, actively encouraging applications to study from a wide cross-section of society. This is evidenced by the fact that of the ten English Studies PhD students who completed their studies during 2014-2020, three students had disability support notifications, four were over fifty-five, one was from an ethnic minority, one had a period of maternity leave to tend to her twins, one identified as transgender. With respect to the research students with

disabilities, reasonable adjustments were made at each stage of their doctoral studies to ensure that they were able to fulfil the requirements of the R1/R2 panels and PhD viva.

As previously noted, the unit of assessment is extremely fortunate in consisting of a stable and established staff team who are all on permanent contracts. Members of staff on fractional contracts have equal opportunity to request study leave, conference attendance and flexible working. Both Mary Cooper and Ed Jones have taken advantage of flexible working arrangements when their drama productions have been on tour.

All members of staff have equal opportunity to bid for internal funding (Jenkinson Awards) and there is no limit on how many members of staff from the unit can submit a proposal. Similarly, any member of staff seeking financial support for conference attendance, research training or study leave is treated equitably and the processes are transparent. For example, where a member of staff is seeking leave or teaching remission to pursue research relating to the unit's impact strategy this is negotiated with the team and with Samantha Johnson.

Protecting the well-being of staff and research students is a fundamental priority of the unit. Staff returning from periods of sickness leave are given lighter duties and their return to work is phased appropriately. Reasonable adjustments are made to ensure that staff with protected characteristics are able to research productively.

In constructing its REF submission the unit has paid due regard to equality and diversity issues. In line with the university code of practice the unit has ensured that all staff have had the opportunity to present their research to be considered for inclusion in the submission. It is the responsibility of Dr. Jill Marsden, Research Coordinator and member of the REF 2021 Outputs Subpanel, to observe good practice in relation to diversity, inclusion transparency and equal opportunities in the construction of the unit's REF submission. Accordingly, in full and open consultation with individual researchers in the UoA, outputs have been selected which best represent the breadth and diversity of research undertaken in the unit. We are fortunate in that we have been able to include outputs from every researcher in our team.

3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

Staff members in the English and Creative Writing team have been very successful in securing Arts Council England funding for their impactful research.

Mary Cooper was the recipient of a major Arts Council award of £87,250 (2017) to develop *From Shore to Shore*. She also received an ACE Strategic Touring Grant of £119,720 in 2018 to take the play to Manchester, Liverpool, Newcastle, Birmingham and Lancaster. Her other drama productions and workshops have also received ACE funding. These include her work for M6 Theatre company on *Clueless* and *Hench* (2016).

Ed Jones's critically acclaimed play, *The Political History of Smack and Crack* was funded by an Arts Council 'Development of Research and Creativity Grant' of £14,980. Ed Jones subsequently secured Arts Council funding towards the cost of taking the play to the Soho Theatre, London and Thameside Prison (2018), followed by a further Arts Council touring grant of £14,996 to take the play to six major theatres including Bristol Old Vic, Birmingham Rep, Glasgow Tron, The Marlow in Canterbury, Sheffield Crucible, HOME Manchester, Cast Doncaster (2020). More recently, Ed Jones has secured two research development grants of £15,000 each to write the new plays, *Getting Away with it* (2019) and *Radical* (2020).

Ben Wilkinson secured Arts Council funding of £4,800 to complete two major sequences of poetry with significant public impact – 'Kopite Sonnets' and 'The Catch' - with final publication as part of a book-length volume of original poems (2015). Ben Wilkinson was also the recipient of a Northern Writers' Award for Poetry of £2,000 (2014), to support the development of a debut full-length volume of original poetry.

Valerie O’Riordan won an Arts Council ‘Developing Your Creative Practice’ grant worth £8,340 in July 2018 to develop the research for her new novel, *Bandits*.

In terms of organisational infrastructure, the English Studies team enjoys collaborative research links in relation to impact activities with the University Centre for Worktown Studies, a research group which draws on expertise in local history, leisure studies and psychology based around Bolton’s unique identity as Mass Observation’s Worktown. A recent collaboration between English Studies and The Centre for Worktown Studies was the Cotton Queens project (2019) which developed directly from the UoA’s ‘Literary Landscapes’ workshops delivered in conjunction with Bolton at Home and Bolton City of Sanctuary. Building on the community links forged in our case study *Empowering Marginalized Communities through Literature and Partnership: Writing the Community*, members of the English Studies team worked with the ‘Wonder Women’ group to devise a radio drama based on Lancashire female cotton operatives. Extracts from the play were performed at the university online ‘Festival of Worktown’ (July 2020). In support, Dr Valerie O’Riordan drew on her prize-winning fiction writing expertise to deliver two Creative Writing Workshops, using visual prompts from the Worktown archive materials held at the Bolton Museum and Library.

The English Studies team are supported by the Research and Graduate School when engaged in research activities involving external participants and when hosting large scale events such as the Whitman 200 international conference in May 2019. The latter event involved drawing on the expertise of university technical and support staff and estates and facilities as well as our community partners at the Bolton Library and Museum Service who supported the evening performances and reception. We also drew on our connections with the Bolton Socialist Club who hosted a talk on Whitman’s Bolton legacy as part of the conference activities.

The English Studies team have a long-standing partnership with the Bolton Octagon Theatre and share facilities for hosting research activities. Notable events include the Arthur Miller Centenary (October 2015), the ‘Shakespeare 400’ anniversary celebrations (October 2016) and regular ‘Investigate’ days connected to Octagon drama productions at which visiting academics, theatre practitioners and members of the English Studies team present papers. Several seasons of the UoA ‘Live Literature’ series have been hosted by the Octagon Theatre.

The English Studies team is home to *The Bolton Review* (ISSN 2398-1938), an interdisciplinary creative arts journal which is published in print and online each year. The journal’s scope and reach has been extended from 2014-2020 to include submissions and inclusions from beyond the University, and has formed connections with and submissions from regional community writing groups, schools, colleges and libraries. In 2018 it included a special feature of writing from Bolton Hospice, drawing on links with one of our former PhD students.

The department has also furnished a dedicated Writers’ Room for use by undergraduate and postgraduate students in English and Creative Writing.

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

Research Collaborations

Research collaborations both within the university and beyond are buoyant in the unit. We encourage staff members with complementary skills to work together to develop new research ideas and disseminate research in different subject areas. A recent example of a project which brought together staff in different subject areas and external partners was Dr. Ben Wilkinson’s 2017 Jenkinson funded ‘Poets for Bolton: Writing the Town’ which was a collaboration between Creative Writing and Media staff at the University of Bolton, and the external literature organisation *Wordlife*.

Joint research projects with academic colleagues in other institutions are abundant. Recent examples include Dr Valerie O’Riordan’s co-edited special issue of *Contemporary Women’s*

Writing: Contemporaneity, the Digital and the Experimental in the Writing of Jennifer Egan with Dr. Alicia Rouverol, University of Manchester (2021). Evan Jones is currently collaborating with Dr. Kim Edward Keates and Kirsten Harris (University of Warwick) on a co-edited essay collection, *Whitman Today* (under consideration with Manchester University Press). Prof. Suzanne Stern-Gillet has recently collaborated with a number of international researchers including Gary Gurtler of Boston University on *Ancient and Medieval Concepts of Friendship*, and colleagues at Emory University (Atlanta, Georgia) and the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (Brazil) on *A Text Worthy of Plotinus* (Leuven University Press, 2021).

In the period 2014-2020 the UoA developed key relationships with Bolton at Home, the Bolton Wonder Woman Group, Bolton City of Sanctuary, and the Big Local. As a result of the unit's 'Literary Landscapes' and 'Whitman 200' work with Bolton Wonder Woman Group and Bolton City of Sanctuary, Bolton at Home joined with the University as a strategic partner to successfully bid for funds from Ambition for Ageing for a larger interdisciplinary, Creative writing, Media and Textiles project, 'Bolton Cotton Queens'.

These collaborations have enriched the research environment in the unit, particularly in enabling us to develop impactful activities in relation to local heritage. Future literary workshops are also planned with The Big Local who have commented on how the unit's research-led workshops with the Tonge and the Haulgh residents has 'impacted on how the organisation moves forward with community development through community engagement' (Big Local, impact statement 2020).

Wider impact and engagement with diverse communities

Working with marginalized communities has been at the heart of the UoA's impactful research activities. Both of our impact case studies have focused on widening participation in the arts and the promotion of social inclusion through the sharing of literature and creative writing. Beneficiaries include Chinese migrants in the UK, socially marginalized women, asylum seekers, refugees and residents in disadvantaged areas (*Writing the Community*); football fans, mental health service users, prisoners, and substance misuse group participants (*Accessing Literature*). As previously mentioned, work with many of these groups is ongoing. In some cases, participants have progressed to further learning, including HE level study.

In addition to the above, the English Studies team has engaged with other diverse communities through its research.

Since 2017 we have been running an annual programme of creative writing sessions for The National Talking and Writing Saturday Club for 13-16 year old local schoolchildren. Each year we have a theme for the club, relating this to our broader community projects and research expertise in local literary heritage and creative writing. For example, in 2019 we introduced the schoolchildren to Walt Whitman's poetry and they produced critical and creative work in response. All members of the core staff team contribute critical or creative sessions to the club and the work produced by the children is exhibited at the National Saturday Club exhibition at Somerset House.

In 2016 Mary Cooper was a core member of the research team working on *Daughters of Fortune*, 'a ground-breaking arts and science project exploring learning disability and parenthood' with Mind The Gap Theatre and a range of UK partners including learning disability advocacy groups and the NHS [Collaborators - Mind the Gap \(mind-the-gap.org.uk\)](https://mind-the-gap.org.uk). The project explored the experiences of learning disabled parents and led to various published and produced outputs (2017). As writing mentor Mary Cooper worked alongside disabled researchers to interview parents. In a separate project, her dramas *Clueless* and *Hench* produced by M6 Theatre (2016) engaged with audiences 13+ and led to the development of a schools' resource on mental health called 'Curriculum For Life' [Curriculum for Life - m6 Theatre Company](https://m6theatre.com/curriculum-for-life).

Contribution to the sustainability of the discipline

The unit contributes to the sustainability of the discipline in a number of ways. All members of the team engage in professional development, with several members having obtained Fellowships of the Higher Education Academy (Dr. Ben Wilkinson) and Senior Fellowships (Dr. Jill Marsden, Dr. Simon Holloway) during the accounting period. Dr. Valerie O'Riordan runs a monthly writing retreat at the Elizabeth Gaskell House in Manchester for Writers' HQ and Dr. Ben Wilkinson and Dr. Evan Jones regularly participate in poetry events around the country. Interdisciplinary research in the unit also contributes to its vitality and sustainability. Dr Valerie O'Riordan is currently collaborating with Martina Mullaney (Fine Art) and Dr. Julie Prescott (Psychology) to develop the Jenkinson-funded conference, 'The Missing Mother' taking place in April 2021. Dr. Jill Marsden continues to research at the margins of literature and philosophy and is currently working on a monograph on these themes.

The English Studies team remains responsive to national and international priorities and initiatives. Dr. Simon Holloway is co-author of the Creative Writing Research Benchmark Statement (NAWE, 2018). In 2016 he was also co-Convenor (with Susan Greenberg, University of Roehampton) of a meeting with colleagues from many institutions and the EThOS team at the British Library to discuss issues with the depositing of theses online. This led directly to the creation and publication of a guidance document for all creative writing doctoral candidates, approved by the BL and NAWE.

Editorships

Several members of the English Studies team have editorial responsibilities and positions of significance in English and Creative Writing.

Dr. Evan Jones is poetry editor for the Canadian poetry press, Fitzhenry & Whiteside Ltd.

Prof. Jon Glover is Managing Editor of *Stand* Magazine and edits the Northern House publications of the Carcanet Press.

Prof. Michael Schmidt edits *P.N.Review* and is general editor of Carcanet Press.

Prof. Suzanne Stern-Gillet is the co-editor of *The International Journal of the Platonic Tradition*.

Dr. Valerie O'Riordan is Senior Editor of *The Forge* Literary Magazine.

Prof David Rudd is on the editorial board for five international journals: *The Lion and the Unicorn* (2002-), *Children's Literature in Education* (2003-), *New Review of Children's Literature and Librarianship* (2002-), *The Journal of Children's Literature Studies* (2006-), *International Research in Children's Literature* (2007-) plus two national publications: *Write4Children*, University of Winchester, ISSCL (Irish Society for the Study of Children's Literature). He is also the Editor-in-chief of *Children's Literature in Education* (2007-2018).

From 2014 Dr. Ben Wilkinson has been Poetry critic for *The Guardian*.

Fellowships

Senior colleagues in the UoA enjoy research positions which reflect their contributions to the discipline. Prof. Michael Schmidt OBE is Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. Prof. Jon Glover is Honorary Fellow of the School of English at the University of Leeds and Honorary Fellow of the English Association. Prof. Suzanne Stern-Gillet is Honorary Research Fellow in the Department of Classics and Ancient History at the University of Manchester.

Prizes

Dr. Ben Wilkinson has won a series of prizes for his poetry. These include the Poetry Business International Book & Pamphlet Competition (2014) and New Writing North: Northern Writers' Award for Poetry (2014). He was highly commended in 2019 Forward Prizes for Poetry.

Dr. Valerie O' Riordan won the international O. Henry Award for short fiction of outstanding merit (2019). She was also shortlisted for the 2018 Cúirt New Writing Prize (Short Story) and the 2018 Tom-Gallon Trust Award.

Ed Jones' was a finalist in Theatre 503's Play Writing Award 2017 with a completed draft of *The Political History of Smack and Crack* and was winner of the Summerhall Lustrum Award for the same play at the 2018 Edinburgh Fringe

Mary Cooper won the Rochdale Borough Award for Culture and Health 2016/17 for her play *Clueless*.

Performances and Keynote presentations

During the accounting period, staff members in English Studies have presented their work at conferences, creative writing events and literary festivals.

Dr. Ben Wilkinson has been invited to perform his work at numerous festivals including *South Yorkshire Poetry Festival* (with Kayo Chingonyi, Kei Miller and Liz Berry), *Cheltenham Poetry Festival*, and *Shrewsbury Poetry Festival*, and has read at *Poets & Players presents* (Manchester) and *Off the Shelf presents The Poetry Book Society's Next Generation Poets 2014*.

Dr. Jill Marsden has been an invited keynote speaker at a range of events including international conferences (the University of Newcastle, Manchester Metropolitan University) and subject specialist symposia (University of Staffordshire, the Manchester Philosophy society).

Dr. Simon Holloway has organised *Great Writing: The International Creative Writing Conference* for eight years and has been an invited speaker at The University of Brighton.

Dr. Valerie O'Riordan has been an invited speaker at a number of events including Nottingham Trent University and Sale Waterside.

Prof. David Rudd has given keynotes at a wide range of universities, including the Oxford Green Templeton Lectures, Oxford University, the University of Cardiff, Cardiff Literature Festival and the University of York. International keynotes include The Child and The Book Conference, Aveiro, Portugal, 2015 and the Taiwan Children's Literature Research Association Conference, Tunghai University, 2016 with a subsequent lecture tour in Taiwan at three other universities in connection with the above.

Prof. Suzanne Stern-Gillet has given keynotes and invited presentations at a range of international venues including University of the Ruhr at Bochum, Gonzaga University (Washington State, USA) University of Michigan (Ann Arbor, USA), Emory University (Georgia, USA), University of Buenos Aires (Argentina), Fondation Universitaire (Brussels), Boston College (Mass.), Oslo University, Copenhagen University, SOAS University of London), Classical Society (University of London)

Refereeing academic publications or research proposal

Dr. Jill Marsden is a regular peer reviewer for a number of journals including *British Journal of the Society for Phenomenology*, *Nietzsche Studien: Internationales Jahrbuch für die Nietzsche-*

Forschung, and *Textual Practice*. She has also served as subject specialist reader of scholarly manuscripts and book proposals for Bloomsbury Press and Edinburgh University Press.

Prof. Suzanne Stern-Gillet is a regular peer reviewer for *The British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, *The International Journal for the Study of the Neoplatonic Tradition*, *Eirene*, and has refereed manuscripts for Oxford University Press.

Dr. Simon Holloway is a peer reviewer for *New Writing: The International Journal for the Practice and Theory of Creative Writing* (Taylor & Francis), and a consultant reviewer of proposals and manuscripts for Palgrave Macmillan in Creative Writing.