

**Institution: Leeds Beckett University**

**Unit of Assessment: 34: Culture, Communication and Media, Libraries and Information Management**

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

#### A. Overview

Leeds Beckett's Media research group comprises of 9 FTE staff from the School of Cultural Studies and Humanities, which itself is formed of Media, English and History. Our research is characterised by an interdisciplinary concern with socio-cultural inclusion and social justice with a specific focus on everyday lives, belonging and community. We have a dual focus: the first is on **media representations**. Our work investigates and intervenes in the relation of media representations to socio-cultural inequalities with particular focus on race, age, weight and social class. The second focus is directed to **mediation**: our group is characterised by a significant orientation to non-media centric theories and non-representational theories of practice. Our work, in this regard, is concerned with mobile/creative methodologies and embodied and sensory engagements with places, digital immersions and temporalities. These foci allow us to approach media in their broadest terms and they underpin our mission to develop our discipline, extend media literacy, and generate critical curiosity and wonder for those in Leeds and beyond.

There have been three significant developments in the research culture of the Unit since the last REF (i) the launch of a research centre, (ii) new research leadership structures, and (iii) new investment in Media staff.

- (i) The first was the launch of the School's research centre: the **Centre of Culture and Arts (CCA)**. The CCA emerged from colleagues' interest in the cross-fertilisation of disciplinary expertise across the School (English and History), its application to a range of socio-cultural issues and the wider University Research Strategy. A new Vice Chancellor (in 2015) aimed to make quality research a defining characteristic of the University with specific aspirations to advance three areas of proven strength in our institution: Culture, Health & Well-Being, and Technology & Society. The CCA speaks to these three areas through its five interdisciplinary strands which include *Cultures of the Body, Gender and Sexuality*, *Cultures of Environment, Space and Place* and *Cultures of Stigma, Deviance and Dissent*. (Each strand's interdisciplinarity is signalled by its leadership; all strands are led by colleagues from at least two of the School's three disciplines.) For example, **Chan's** work on embodiment and movement in Virtual Reality spaces is a crucial interdisciplinary project within the strand 'Cultures of the Body, Gender and Sexuality'. Her work interrogates issues of contemporary culture and the impacts of new technologies on bodily movements through space. Her research advances the University's key focus on Technology and Society and brings her work into dialogue with others across the University. Similarly, **Raisborough's** analysis of fat stigma in mainstream media and policy is key work in the 'Cultures of Stigma, Deviance and Dissent' strand where it launches a critique of neoliberal re-definitions of health. This work contributes to the University's strategic area of Health & Well-being.

Additionally, the CCA functions to disburse Quality Research funds to support short periods of research and activities such as conference attendance. Media have benefited from seed corn funding to develop research in spaces and places (**Tew Thompson** and **Taylor**). The alignment of colleagues' work to School and University objectives has provided not just monetary investment to improve our

research culture, but a strong sense of a wider purpose and a defined 'home' for our research – an important aspect for a small team.

- (ii) The second significant development was the creation of an **explicit research leadership structure**. In 2016, LBU appointed Directors of Research (DORs) for each school, who in turn appointed research leads in each of the School's subjects (this involved the investment in a new post for Media: their first research Professor in 2016). The DOR sits on the School's senior management group, to ensure research is considered across all policy making. Further, all research leads meet monthly in a Professors and Readers meeting to discuss PGR development and training, impact, and research development. There are clear lines of communication for interdisciplinary exchanges and for the delivery of objectives.
- (iii) There has been **significant staff investment** since 2014. Media has increased the number of FTE research active staff over five new appointments: (**Kilvington, Chan and Harrison** at Senior Lecturer, **Raisborough** as Professor, **Pelurson** as ECR Lecturer). These strengthen our research focus on social exclusions, non-media centric theory, the digital, and place, as well as providing defined research leadership for the team. LBU's previous recruitment strategy was to only appoint to Senior Lecturer level: new policies have helped us widen our role demographic and in so doing, have helped motivate colleagues towards promotion (we expect to see a different profile in the next REF as colleagues apply for Readerships). As we enter REF 2021, we have one ECR lecturer (**Pelurson**), 6 at Senior lecturer level (**Kilvington, Chan, Mills, Washbourne, Tew Thompson, and Harrison**), 1 as Head of Subject (Taylor) and 1 Professor (**Raisborough**).

## B) Research strategy

The unit's research strategy has been informed by feedback received from REF2014, changes to LBU's research infrastructure and the establishment of CCA, described above. Our strategy was co-developed over away days and workshops with colleagues in the team, in order to best reflect and support colleagues' ambitions and their response to LBU Institutional Research strategy. Our strategic aims for 2016-2021 were:

- To nurture a confident research culture to enable the disaggregation of a School-wide submission (Media, English and History all entered Unit 36 together in REF2014) to produce the first REF submission solely from the LBU Media team.
- To nurture organic inquiry and intellectual interest for sustainable research cultures and research-led teaching.
- To strengthen the originality, significance and rigour of our academic outputs.
- To promote effective communication and dissemination of research within the University and academia more widely.
- To develop as public intellectuals with specific focus on building media literacy, inquiry and curiosity for the population of our city, its surrounds and beyond.
- To develop impactful work.

The strategy has been delivered through an enhanced **mentoring system** organised through the CCA, team and school-based workshops on improving and making explicit, the significance, originality and rigour of our work. Close peer-mentoring has helped orientate the team towards a sharper consideration of methods and methodological issues. CCA and wider school events have helped us refine our understanding of impact. In 2016, we also established a research seminar programme and an annual 'work-in-progress' conference (Leeds Beckett Media: #LeBeMe), where colleagues in Media, our research students, and other media scholars from across LBU, shared our work and developed it through feedback. To help with practical matters

of finding the time and peace to write, we also ran weekly 'shut-up and write' sessions on campus and online.

These initiatives have produced a marked growth in research confidence and quality since the last REF cycle. More specifically, there has been a demonstrable uptick in research productivity and two shifts in our work. The first is an increased confidence submitting to peer-reviewed journals and favouring these over book chapters. This has provided us with wider peer feedback on our work and helped us target highly ranked journals such as *Qualitative Research* (**Harrison**) and *Media, Culture and Society* (**Kilvington** and **Raisborough**). The second, is a greater move towards collaborative working, both within the team (**Taylor, Harrison, Raisborough, Tew Thompson**), with colleagues from other HEIs (**Harrison, Kilvington** and **Raisborough**) and with our creative partners (**Taylor's** co-production with the musician Boff Whalley, and ongoing work with artist Catherine Bertola). Our work is actively pushing theoretical debates in areas of embodiment (**Chan**), queer gaming (**Pelurson**), racism (**Kilvington**) healthism (**Raisborough**) gentrification (**Tew Thompson**), celebrity (**Washbourne, Mills**) and deindustrialisation (**Taylor**) and we are making space in specialist and international journals, such as *Gaming Studies* (**Pelurson**).

This renewed confidence is demonstrated in bidding activity. We have had external funding successes with British Academy Small Research Grants (Hibberd and **Tew-Thompson** and **Raisborough, Taylor and Harrison**). Additionally, **Taylor** was shortlisted for 2018 ISRF mid-Career Fellowship and **Harrison** for the Fulbright Scholarship in 2020. Our commitment to collaboration is also demonstrated in our roles of Co-Investigators on successful bids: **Kilvington** was CI on a 2019 BA Small Research Grant on social media and racism and **Raisborough's** Northern Network for Medical Humanities Research (2019) researched cultural representations of the menopause. This new bidding energy has already yielded results for the next REF cycle (**Taylor** has been awarded ISRF Mid-Career Fellowship for 2021-2022) and we have submissions awaiting results for Leverhulme, British Academy Fellowships, ESRC and ISRF ECR fellowship. Our research confidence is also demonstrated in a marked increase in invitations as keynote speakers (detailed in later in this report).

Our strategy reflected the value Media place on **public intellectualism**. Over the assessment period we have done much to bring our research to wider audiences. The CCA has led a collaboration with Palgrave Macmillan and Leeds City Council for monthly lunch time 'cultural conversations' in city centre locations (museums, libraries and Leeds Town Hall). These are popular and well attended – over 2000 people have attended since 2013. All of the media team have shared their work this way and benefited from audience feedback and questions. Examples include Washbourne's 'W.G. Grace: Cricket missionary to the North and Hero of 1985; Harrison's *Stitch and Bitch: Knitting, Femininity and Women's Everyday Lives* and Tew Thompson's 'Verdant Creativities: Urban gardening and sensuous placemaking in West Yorkshire'. In one of the last live public events before Covid, two of the Media team were amongst the four researchers chosen from across the University to present their work in the University's inaugural TEDx event. Under the theme of Our Changing world, Kilvington presented 'the virtual stages of hate' (addressing racism on social media platforms) and Raisborough's 'Grey planet' (addressing ageism as a predictable result of media definitions of this life stage as a 'problem'). The videos have an averaged over 1,000 views. In line with our focus on the sensory, Tew Thompson has taken her work into the city and led walking tours, helping people to 'look-up' and *feel* connections to their city. Furthermore, with the help of Media training, organised through the CCA, colleagues have also actively shared their work on national and local radio and news. For example, Kilvington has discussed his work extensively on *5Live* and *Sky News*, Mills has also presented his research on *Radio 3 Time Travellers* in 2019.

Our strategy has encouraged **greater focus on the impact of our work**. This emerges from our concern to chart and tackle social inequalities and injustice and with our interests in community and belonging. We see all of our work as providing theoretical frameworks for possible interventions – the relations of oppression and privilege are so normalised that a

critical forensic account of representations, discourse and visual grammar remain integral to our work. Yet we are developing expertise in empirical work and have worked to support the research the forms the impact case studies for this REF submission. CCA money has supported **Kilvington's** grass-root intervention, **Creating and Developing Coaches** (CDC). CDC challenges cultures of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) exclusion in UK football by encouraging networking between BAME grassroots football coaches/managers and key stakeholders. He has worked with over 250 current and aspiring BAME football coaches across the country. Several stakeholders have collaborated including the Football Association (FA), the UK's national football governing body, and the Zesh Rehman Foundation (ZRF). CDC has succeeded in increasing diversity in football; creating networks for marginalised communities; highlighting opportunities; providing support mechanisms; and showcasing role models.

We are also developing impactful work across a range of projects relating to **space and place** (**Taylor and Tew Thompson**). This is an on-going project, also supported by the CCA, that aims to enable a fresh sense of belonging and of community in spaces where belonging may be disrupted by deindustrialisation or tourism. The skills developed over this work have positioned us to make an impact on a local business over the first lockdown: understanding how customers felt about and used their home space to exercise, helped an exercise business develop a new strategy and pricing for online classes (**Taylor, Raisborough and Harrison**).

The work discussed so far, has allowed us to achieve our goal to be able to enter the REF as a Media team (not as previously, a School submission). We see this as the start of a trajectory of enhanced research expertise and sustainable impactful work.

### C) Future strategic aims and goals for research and impact

Our research strategy evolves as we grow in strength and expertise and as we flex into new areas of media cultures. We are an evolving, not yet established research group, but we have done considerable work over this cycle to raise the quality of work and in developing the skills and expertise for impact. Over the next REF cycle we will build on this groundwork to enhance research quality and impact in sustainable ways that foster creativity, curiosity and collaboration with a range of stakeholders. Our future plans are based on our values to

1. To approach media cultures in their broadest terms and diverse forms, past, present and future.
2. To investigate and intervene in the relation of media cultures to social problems, social justice, emancipatory practice, subjectivities, belonging and community.
3. To develop creative and ethically sensitive work around the local, regional and the North

These inform a strategy to build expertise in method and impactful research. We aim:

- To build relationships which provide lasting benefit to our communities and thus play our part in LBU's mission to be a Civic University and regional anchor institution.
- To regard benefit to our communities as integral to our research design.
- To continue to develop collaborative, participatory, interdisciplinary practice and scholarship
- To improve extending the value of our work through public engagement and knowledge exchange
- To develop rigorous methods and methodological frameworks to generate relevant and accountable knowledge about media cultures and social justice.
- To demonstrate our research confidence and standing through promotion from senior lecturer to Reader and Professor
- To build capacity and expertise in achieving external funds,

We will be pursuing training in relationship building and we will use our seminars and workshops to develop our practice of putting impact at the centre of our endeavours over the next cycle. We will seek to have our research trajectory recognised in the role demographic of our research group: close mentoring and use of QR monies to afford short term teaching relief and research assistants, will help colleagues take up opportunities for promotion. We will better use mentoring and assistance from the University's Research and Enterprise Service to assist us in identifying bids and practising our skills in writing them.

## Section 2. People

The University's staffing strategy seeks to enable all colleagues to achieve their potential. Equality is a priority for the University, and this is reflected in our research and the policies and procedures for recruitment, staff development and REF submission. Equality and diversity are also represented in our staff make-up, particularly in terms of social class background, gender and sexuality. There is a well-established network of equality and diversity coordinators within LBU and the University has been proud to be a Stonewall top 100 employer, has been awarded Bronze in Athena Swan, with our School working towards its own submission, is a Disability Confident Employer and is a member of the Race Equality Charter pilot. The DoR and media colleagues (**Pelurson** and **Raisborough**) are members of the Athena Swan working group. The unit's research reflects and contributes to these activities, promoting equality and diversity through work about, for example, racial inclusion (**Kilvington**), ageing (**Taylor, Raisborough, Harrison, Mills**); gender (**Tew-Thompson, Taylor, Harrison, Pelurson, Washbourne, Chan**), body-size and weight prejudice (**Chan, Raisborough, Washbourne**) and class inequalities (**Harrison, Taylor, Raisborough**). The unit is particularly concerned with geo-spatial inequalities and focuses critical attention on the construction and experience of the North (**Kilvington, Taylor, Tew-Thompson, Washbourne, Mills**).

### Research development via the development of staff

Our development as researchers is tied to our commitments to; nurture inquiry into media cultures in their broadest terms; to academic citizenship and to public engagement. We recognise that we can live up to these if we are situated in a supportive and encouraging environment; one that enables the pursuit of ideas and one that realises that research is at times unpredictable and its demonstrable goals, elusive. At the heart of our development is nurturing confidence, developing talent and helping support resilience. Much of this work takes place across our research seminars, the informal spaces of our annual media festival and in our research away days. These research developments are supported in two main ways.

#### (i) Research Mentoring.

All Media colleagues in the Unit take part in mentoring sessions which take place each semester. Mentoring is used to reflect, discuss, share and define research goals and ambitions, and to identify any resources or training necessary for their realisation. The process is tied into the University's Performance Development Review process and agreed objectives and plans feed into the annual PDR and from there, into deployment agreements. This relatively new initiative has bedded in well and has become a normalised part of our growing research culture. This has helped our team express, work towards and realise our goals for research-led teaching and also helped us formally sustain time for research amongst other duties.

#### (ii) Internal and external funding

Competitive Centre of Culture and Arts research support schemes use QR to develop research ideas and secure outcomes. Since 2014, Media colleagues have been successful in bids for research expenses and research leave. Specifically, **Kilvington's** success in bidding for CCA funds enabled two coaching workshops for his 'Creating and Developing Coaches' initiative addressing institutionalised racism in UK football from the grassroots. **Tew-Thompson, and Taylor** secured funds to establish a portfolio of work examining gardening, memory and place and the impact of deindustrialise spaces on once-working communities. This work has produced

a number of peer reviewed outputs and provided empirical support for two successful bids to the British Academy Small Grants Award. **Chan** was awarded money to organise research networking and ground building symposiums around the digital. **Tew- Thompson** was awarded a semester teaching relief to conduct a pilot on women's long-distance walking 2017. We have also been successful in bidding for University level sabbaticals: **Taylor** was awarded £8,636.20 from central university funds to pilot her Landscapes of Loss project in 2014, which now forms the basis of external bidding for a mid-career fellowship with the ISRF (awarded for 2021) and resulted in a number of peer-reviewed outputs. A monograph from this project will be submitted in the next assessment cycle).

## Research students

### *Recruitment*

We currently have 10 research students studying in the Unit, and for the REF census period can report 4 completions at the rate of roughly one per annum. The completion figure is currently low because previous numbers of students for this group was similarly low. The increase in recruitment demonstrates a significant growth for Media from 2014, where the majority of students and completions reported for UoA36 were actually located in sister disciplines. The growth in recruitment figures for students that are 'ours' indicates our growing research confidence and presence. We have worked hard to build an inclusive research culture that is open to their needs. The recent establishment of a PGR forum (2018) - where students meet regularly with the Dean, DOR and postgraduate tutor to discuss their place in the School, raise concerns or bring ideas to the table – is the direct outcome of a student request. Results from the most recent PRES survey (2019) at School level show that this work is bearing fruit, and high levels of satisfaction were expressed, especially relating to supervisory support (100% of our students were either very satisfied or mostly satisfied with their supervision).

LBU's institutional research strategy charged us with increasing research student numbers to contribute to both local and institutional environments. We are very aware that our subject area tends to be both very white and middle-class in its PGR recruitment, and if our subject's future is to be more inclusive, we have a role to play in redressing demographic imbalances. With the aim of both increasing our numbers and increasing our diversity, we joined successful bid for an AHRC-funded Centre for Doctoral Training (The Heritage Consortium) and the CDT's sister organisation, the North of England Consortium for Arts and Humanities (NECAH), which self-funds its students, but uses the cohort model of the CDT to build a broader research community.

The two consortia were established in 2012 and 2014 respectively to deliver doctoral training, widen access to doctoral education to students who came from outside traditional research-intensive universities, to build a distinctive community of scholars, and to promote research across all arts and humanities disciplines. All consortium students benefit from a tailored research training programme delivered at the University of Hull with support from the member institutions and from a greater cohort of students than any single institution can provide. The events and some elements of the programme are also open to the wider PhD community from participating HEIs.

All students, whether from the consortia or not, enrol as members of the University wide Graduate School. This offers research training programme, with specific training targeted for particular stages of the research journey (for example, writing up workshops and residentials are largely targeted at students in their final years). The Graduate School also offers a support network for students, career development programmes and an annual Postgraduate Conference to share work and practice academic skills. The Graduate School also administer students' recruitment and subsequent progression through annual meetings.

We intend that our MA Media will encourage our students to continue to doctoral work. To this end, there is unique provision in the MA for student to learn and practise advanced academic skills, shadow a lecturer and meet with our research students for an insight into research life.

*Development of Doctoral Students*

All UoA34 colleagues with supervisory responsibility undertake Supervisor training and are then considered by University's Research Degree Sub-Committee to be included on the list of approved supervisors. This ensures that our students can expect research-active and trained supervisors. Students benefit from a programme of training organised by the Graduate School and annual progression meetings. This offer is supplemented by a range of activity in the School of Cultural Studies. The postgraduate tutor facilitates the Cultural Studies seminar, a work-in-progress seminar, and a writing channel (via Teams) for those students who are unable to be on campus at any point. There is a postgraduate forum for them to meet regularly with the Dean and Director of Research. They participate in research seminars, workshops, and annual conferences. Media's own annual festival of media (#LeBeMe – see above) offers the opportunity for our research students to present work-in-progress alongside established colleagues: this helps us to unpick and demystify common aspects of the research journey. In 2017, Media colleagues invited research students to a monthly global writing motivation initiative 'Shut Up and Write' and in 2018 joined research students in a School book club.

*Facilities*

Media research students are housed centrally in dedicated office space with the School's research students. This helps to develop a cohort experience, a sense of belonging within the wider rhythms of School life and to foster cross-disciplinary conversations. PGRs have access to a kitchen, lockers, desk and up-to-date computers. The University's extensive library provides access to a wide range of information sources for researchers (journals and multimedia databases), further supplemented by SCONUL+ access use of other University libraries

**PGR Supervision, Mentoring and Training**

Participation in a University Induction programme is compulsory for all candidates accepted for a place on a research award of the University. This induction takes place on campus and the schedule is available online through the welcome system where students also enrol. The intention of this activity is to ensure that all students are oriented in a large organisation right from the start of their studies, and that they begin with a peer group who can be mutually supportive during the PhD journey.

In preparation for their Confirmation of Registration (CoR – see below) students complete a Training Needs Analysis which forms the basis of an individual training plan that they undertake throughout their research degree. The competencies that students are required to develop, and evidence are based both on the needs associated with their individual doctoral research and also on the Joint Statement of the UK Research Councils' Training Requirement for Research Students. Central sessions which meet key PGR criteria are provided by the Graduate School in block sessions at least twice a year. This offering is supplemented in this unit by a range of other activities which are more subject or domain oriented. Students are supported a supervisory team which normally includes a Director of Studies (DoS) and a supervisor. Within 4-6 months of beginning their project, research students at LBU are expected to undertake Confirmation of Registration (CoR), where they are able to discuss their project with senior members of the University and their supervisory team. Progress is also monitored further by an annual progression meeting, chaired by senior colleagues from the School where students report on their progress before being permitted to re-enrol. These are supportive meetings designed to uncover any problems and to support students to get back on track if required. Actions arising from progression meetings are often related to training needs for students

**Ethics infrastructure**

All research projects, whether staff or student, are required to have ethical approval in place before they begin. All researchers are required to undertake training in ethics to ensure that they understand their obligations. Simple approvals for desk-based research which does not involve human subjects are approved locally, by the research supervisor for students, or the Local Research Ethics Co-ordinator (LREC) for staff. More complex cases are considered by LRECs, and where they feel that there are particular issues that arise from the project, it may be referred to the University Ethics Committee for final decision. Annual audits of research ethics

compliance are undertaken to ensure that we are meeting our ethical obligations to all human participants, and to the general ethos of good governance across the whole of our activity

### Open access

One of the ethical considerations that is new for REF2021 is the obligation, where possible, to make our research accessible to the public. All the journal articles contained in this submission comply with that requirement. The university has a fully searchable open access repository, the Leeds Beckett Repository, which is an online collection of Leeds Beckett research outputs. Media, in line with its commitments to engage with its various publics noted above, is strongly committed to making work available wherever possible. The institutional Open Research Policy, which encourages staff to deposit, where copyright allows, any output type, will increase the volume of other outputs openly available. Although out of scope of the REF 2021 Open Access policy, some Media book chapters are available open access in the repository. We look forward to the policy discussions on this element of our work in the future, and to the new mechanisms that will be required for open access to all research.

### 3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

There has been a significant support for and investment in research in recent years. The Strategic Planning Framework 2016-21 includes the explicit goal of growing and developing research culture, submitting 45% of colleagues to the REF2021, and creating a research environment for quality research. To realise these goals, in 2018/19, the University took the strategic decision to disburse 66% of QR funds to the areas which had earned them to enable those areas to own the strategic direction of their spending. UoA34 benefited from a share £165K, and School support the doctoral students who were recruited via NECAH The relative stability of this income stream speaks to the University's commitment to its research strategy, and gives the unit the means to plan activity attached to the School and Centre priorities for the next assessment cycle.

#### Current income

In the census period we have secured two British Academy Grants:

2014-15 British Academy Small Grant SG142952 Navigating Holme: Memory, Media and Imagining Place in the Summer Wine Town. Hibberd (PI) Tew Thompson (CI)  
£10, 000

2018-20. British Academy Small Grant SRG18R1\180914 What function do representations of space and place perform in factual welfare programmes? Towards a visual grammar of benefits stigma Raisborough (PI), Taylor (CI) Harrison (CI) £9998.95.

This success does not reflect the increase in bidding activity in Media, since 2016. We have already had a significant success: Taylor's ISRF Mid-career Fellowship for 2021-22, will form the impact case study for the next REF exercise. Working on bid writing is a goal in our research strategy 2021- 2026.

#### Facilities

Media is housed, alongside colleagues in English and History in the Leeds City Campus on the second floor of the Broadcasting Place Humanities Building. Completed in 2009, this award-winning building has a Cor-ten façade, and is designed echo the flow of water through rocks. Inside the 'rusty' building, there is a modern, well-lit design of open plan offices, meeting rooms, classrooms and a recently refurbished social learning space. This space is 'home' to the School, and has been carefully designed to enable both quiet and collaborative working.

Postgraduate students also have office space in this area. They enjoy a suite of hot-desking space, though in practice, individuals have created their own spaces and personalised the room accordingly. The main advantage of being all on the same floor is a stronger sense of community and, before Covid, the opportunity for sociable discussions as well as formal



supervisions. Our students report they are really an embedded part of the School's culture (PRES survey 2019).

Research is also supported by Libraries and Learning Innovation. The School of Cultural Studies has three dedicated subject librarians who help with the Information needs of all our PGRs, both individual needs and training sessions. The library is open 24/7/365. Alongside its book stock, it has excellent e-resources. It subscribes to a range of specialist databases relevant for History staff and students (British Library Newspapers Online, House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, Mass Observation Online, etc.). Its own internal offer is supplemented by a partnership with the Leeds Library (one of the oldest circulating and private members' libraries in the world) which has unique historical collections, and also, membership of SCONUL access with multiple other university libraries. Postgraduates and staff are both permitted extensive rights via interlibrary loan. We are located in close proximity to local and regional archives and research libraries, including the British Library's Northern Reading Rooms at Boston Spa, at which staff and students are regular visitors.

### Governance

#### Research Infrastructure and Governance

Overall responsibility for Research in our University is under the remit of the Deputy-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Enterprise. The DVC is supported by the Director of Research and Enterprise Services who leads the various research related teams (the Graduate School for PGRs, The Research Service which supports bidding activity and the development of impact, and the Enterprise Service which has oversight of the institution's academic enterprise activity). Directors of Research provide the interface between these central services and the Schools. The work of the Research and Enterprise Services is the core business of our University's Research and Enterprise Committee, which reports directly to Academic Board, and which also has oversight of the work of the University's Postgraduate Research Degrees Sub-Committee, and the Research Ethics Committee. The Research and Enterprise Committee scrutinises policy, procedure and practice relating to research in all its guises, and makes recommendations to Academic Board for implementation. All DORs are members of this committee, alongside representatives from Research and Enterprise Services, the Library Service and the PGR student body. The specific policies relating to Ethics, Open Access, Research Concordance, the HR policies that attach to HR Excellence in Research, and the policies deriving from UKCGE for PGRs have all been debated and defined by this Committee structure, and implemented at Unit level by the Director of Research, postgraduate tutor and Local Research Ethics Co-ordinators.

Students are represented at the School's Academic Committee by a PGR representative. The administration of their programmes is overseen by the University Research Degree Sub-Committee, a sub-committee of the Research and Enterprise Committee. The centralisation of this work ensures fairness and consistency in the application of regulations across the institution. The ethics infrastructure is also part of this committee process, as noted in Section 2.

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

We value academic citizenship: we recognise that it sustains research culture, and it sparks imagination and the exchange of skills and expertise. Media continue to serve the boarder research community in several ways including

**Peer review activities.** Members of the media group are active peer reviewers for journals and books, these include **Taylor** (*Journal of Travel and Tourism*) **Kilvington** (*Journal of Sport & Social Issues*, *Journal of Cultural Research*, *Leisure Studies*, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*), **Chan** (book series for Routledge and Palgrave). **Washbourne** (Bloomsbury and Polity), **Tew-Thompson** (for Rowman & Littlefield International) **Harrison** (University of Chester Press Social Issues Series) and **Raisborough** (for Palgrave and Routledge). We also serve on editorial boards of peer reviewed journals: **Washbourne** (*Celebrity Studies* and *Media Education Research Journal*) and **Raisborough** (*Fat Studies*). We have edited special issues: **Tew-**

**Thompson** was Guest Editor of Special Issue of *Leisure Studies* journal: 'Leisure, activism, and the animation of the urban environment' and **Raisborough** was co-editor of *Frontiers* special edition on weight stigma in 2019

Funding reviews: **Kilvington** has reviewed a funding bid for The Council for Social Sciences and the Humanities of the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO);

**Washbourne** for Canadian Social Science Research Council, **Raisborough** for the ERSC, **Taylor** for the ISRF. Additionally, **Raisborough** is also a member of the ISRF Advisory Board and a Member of Peer Review College for the UKRI Future Leaders Fellowships scheme.

Our work has also contributed to **conferences** in the form of keynotes, invited speakers and plenaries: for example

- 2019 **Pelurson**, "Flawless in Defeat': Failure and Queer Pleasure in Gay Ryona Videos". Invited speaker for the *Game Rats* a London conference regrouping people working or interested in the game industry.
- 2019 **Taylor** 'Affective Gardens, Neoliberal Times; Reassessing the Garden in Contemporary Lifestyle Media', at the 'Er Indoors: Domesticity in the Home and Garden' Symposium, Humanities Research Centre, Warwick University, 23rd November .
- 2018 & 2016 **Raisborough** has delivered keynotes at the Methodological Innovations Conference at Plymouth University (2016) and the British Psychology Women and Equalities Annual Conference in 2018.
- 2017 **Tew Thompson** delivered a keynote at the *Spaces & Flows: Eighth International Conference on Urban and ExtraUrban Studies* in October 2017. The special theme of the conference was 'Enculturing the City' : it formed part of the Hull 2017: UK City of Culture bid.
- 2015 **Mills** 'It'll End In Tears - 4AD Records and This Mortal Coil' headed the 'Dark Sound' Conference in Falmouth 2015
- 2014 **Washbourne** 'Reflections on 'More than Cleggmania,'" for the New Directions in Celebrity Workshop, University of Oxford,

We also serve as invited speakers to seminar series and workshops; such as **Taylor's** invitation to the Sociological Review Seminar Series, 'Deindustrialisation and the Haunted Present' at Cardiff University, June 2020 and **Raisborough's** paper for Keele University's Grand Challenges Seminar Series in 2019.

Research collaboration is a practice we wish to develop over the next assessment cycle, but already there are key research collaborations **Harrison** with Liverpool John Moores on creative methodologies and **Kilvington's** co-writing on racism with colleagues at the University of Sunderland.

### Engagement and impact beyond the academy

We also expect to work for our communities by taking our subject expertise to where it can have practical use. This is an area identified in our research strategy 2021-2026. We have good experience to draw upon: **Kilvington** serves as Trustee on two charities tackling marginalization: the Annie Zaidi Foundation (AZF) and The Zesh Rehman Foundation.

Furthermore: **Pelurson** was a member of Leeds Museums and Galleries steering group for their initiative 'OUTing the Past 2020'. We are bringing our expertise to cultural events: **Mills** for example as consulted on the Leeds City Museum exhibition 'Sounds of The City' (2020) and to the 'Joni Mitchell Event', which was part of Garforth Festival, in July 2014. He is currently a consultant on a Davy Jones documentary in production.

In addition to the cultural conversations detailed above, we have written for the *Conversation* (**Kilvington, Mills**) and **Mills** has shared his work with festival audiences ('In Conversation' session on The Monkees, Roundhay Festival October 2015) and we reach wider audiences through media coverage and interviews. Recently **Kilvington** was on interviewed live from Stoke

City on BBC Asian Network discussing racism in football in 'The Big Debate'. **Kilvington** was also involved in a Sky News Tackling Racism programme in September 2019.

### **Interdisciplinarity**

The value of interdisciplinary research is that it offers new paradigms through which to work and think, and helps to underscore the value of humanities subjects. Much of our work already takes place at the borders of our discipline, since so many of the fields of Media Studies intersect with other subject domains. The thinking that underpins **Raisborough's** work on class, age and weight stigma, for instance, exemplifies how the careful understanding of media constructs can help to unpick the assumptions that perpetuate inequity. Our two case studies also demonstrate the necessity for media scholars to think outside rigid definitions of discipline, and the value of working collaboratively outside those confines. Most recently, **Raisborough** in collaboration with two colleagues from English, has begun to consider questions of ageing in culture and in society, questions which focus on the sociology of media, the business of creative industries, and modes of representation. Interdisciplinary collaboration has been a productive mode of action for us, and we expect to build on this for the future.

### **Advancing Media**

Since Media became a unit in its own right, we have made significant progress in building our research environment, while not sacrificing the advantages of working closely with colleagues across disciplinary boundaries. We have increased our PGR numbers, increased both our bidding activity and have seen success. We have produced many more research outputs than in previous REF periods – which we believe to have real quality. We have found a way to sustain our work by placing it alongside our teaching and other activities, and by constructing systems that make our progress sustainable. We see our future as one where we will continue the ethical commitments of our work and see ongoing improvements in the indicators of success alongside clear evidence of real-world effects. Our strategy described above is characterised by a capacity building - developing relationships and collaborations – to help us realise our ambition to undertake purposeful work.