

<b>Institution: University of Stirling</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: D34</b>
<p><b>1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy</b></p> <p><b><u>Unit Context</u></b></p> <p>The submission consists of staff in the <b>Division of Communications, Media and Culture (CMC)</b> in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities. Research is focused on producing interdisciplinary work that engages with national and international debates in communications, media and culture. CMC celebrated forty years of media research in 2018 and maintains a strong international research profile through its publications, collaborations and impacts. Highlights of our achievement include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over the past six years the Division benefitted through growth from 14 to 19 FTE with subsequent investment in staff in early 2021. An expanded professoriate has given renewed academic leadership; a significant number of staff (25%) have been promoted in recognition of research excellence; and the expansion of the Division reflects a strategically focused university recruitment policy to improve the overall quality of the research culture, outputs and impact.;</li> <li>• In the assessment period, CMC staff have been involved in research projects worth £3.2m (£1.14m in value), evidence of significant income growth from the previous REF period (£435,000). The income has enabled CMC to nurture post-doctoral fellows and researchers, some of whom have subsequently moved to full-time teaching and research contracts at Stirling and beyond;</li> <li>• The Division sustains an open, inclusive and robust research culture through its breadth of research fields and ambitions, boosted by postgraduate recruitment, which has been driven by successes in funded studentships and Collaborative Doctoral Awards.</li> </ul> <p>Our research aims to produce impacts with a wide range of external stakeholders in the media, cultural and creative industries, the heritage sector, public policy and the third sector. CMC sustains its research profile via a commitment to enhancing its national and international networks in the field, building academic partnerships, representation on international subject associations, editorial roles, hosting major conferences and leading on new initiatives and research networks. The dynamism and reputation of its research culture has attracted international visiting researchers and postgraduate research students. Across the Division the research expertise underwrites due priority given to wider impacts in civic and public engagement, with representation on Governmental, non-governmental, third sector and cultural committees and boards.</p> <p><b><u>Unit Structure</u></b></p> <p>The <b>Divisional Director of Research</b> holds a senior role within the Division, providing support and mentoring across the subject area, with responsibility for leading, stimulating, influencing and monitoring research. The Director of Research also has responsibility for promoting continuous improvement in research performance, the growth of external funding, enhancement of impact activities and ensuring the general vitality and sustainability of the research environment. The Director of Research represents the Division in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities Research Committee, which sets the research agenda led by the Associate Dean for Research. A Faculty Research Officer provides administrative support to CMC and acts as liaison between the Division and the university's Research and Innovation Service dedicated to strengthening interdisciplinary research, grant capture and training.</p> <p>The Associate Dean for Research is a member of the University Research Committee chaired by the Deputy Principal for Research, which is responsible for the institutional research and innovation strategy. The university's three research themes (Cultures, Communities and Society; Global Security and Resilience; and Living Well) inform the research priorities of CMC, in particular the areas of research impact it seeks to deliver related to the social and economic impacts of the</p>

creative industries, the influence of communications in society and the importance of culture and the humanities for wider health and wellbeing. Societal concerns relating to the impacts of climate change and issues of inclusivity are reflected in the research of the Division in manifold ways.

The university runs twelve Research Programmes which are interdisciplinary by design and open to contribution by all members of the Division. CMC are particularly active in four of these programmes: Digital Society and Culture, Being Connected, Cultural Heritage and Health Behaviour, which foster interdisciplinary research and initiate new research projects and collaborations. At Faculty level, there are interdisciplinary research centres and working groups, including the Centre for Environment, Heritage and Policy, Scottish Studies at Stirling and the Scottish Law and Innovation Network in which CMC staff have membership. The interdisciplinary research groups are designed to provide a critical mass of like-minded researchers and encourage innovation through networking, reading groups and research seminars. Some of these groups were initiated and established by CMC staff including: The Gender Studies Research Group; the Youth, Migration and Human Rights Group; the Health and Wellbeing Research Group; Visual Rhetoric / Media Semiotics (Vis/Res) Research Group; and the Sport and Culture PGR Group. The Division also has members in the university's Data-driven Autonomous Technologies and Agents (DATA) Research Group which also brings together research expertise from computing, social sciences and natural sciences.

The established structures of the research programmes, centres and groups enables researchers to operate across Divisional and Faculty boundaries, producing new connections and facilitating innovative interdisciplinary research activity. CMC staff have benefitted from these interdisciplinary structures, building new collaborations with research colleagues in environmental science, education, health sciences, computer science, education, social science, gerontology, sport science, law, political science, modern languages, literature, philosophy and heritage studies among others. Research that crosses disciplinary boundaries to create new innovative methods and applied theoretical approaches is, therefore, a signature feature of the Division's research strength.

### **Research Strategy**

**CMC's vision** is to build an open, diverse and inclusive research community, recognised across the world for research that addresses the needs of society through innovative interdisciplinary work. **CMC's purpose** is to conduct critical and impactful research across humanities and social science approaches to communications, media and culture. This strategy is informed by our assessment of the contribution we make, and the value we can add, to research of relevance to the media, digital communications and cultural sectors. We conduct research from a broad theoretical, empirical and policy-oriented base with projects that focus on socio-cultural change in the media and communications environment, as well as specific media content and genres. CMC's strategy aims to:

1. produce research outputs of the highest standards and integrity;
2. sustain the scale and strengths of our research capacity across interdisciplinary boundaries;
3. foster a vibrant postgraduate research community;
4. build on our successes in grant capture by diversifying funding opportunities and meeting the global challenges and industrial strategy agendas;
5. develop new partnerships and engagement with our research to produce wider social, cultural, economic and policy impacts;
6. retain and develop early-career staff, postdoctoral researchers and PGR students to become the next leaders in our field.

### ***Implementation of Strategy and Research Focus***

**Our strategy** is focused around six research themes which openly intersect and integrate interests across the Division and are core to our mission and identity. These themes inform both

individual, collective and collaborative research projects, and while new appointments may shift the balance within them, they continuously shape our research endeavour. They are:

1. **Digital media and cultures** (Singh, Bernardi, Harkins, Hadland, Zioga, Buchanan, MacRury and Esteves). Our research on this theme is leading on innovative ways to develop knowledge on how digital media are transforming people's lives and the communities in which they live. This cutting-edge innovative work has focused on: participatory design and open data platforms; data literacy; cross-disciplinary approaches in digital methodologies, datamining and sentiment analysis; interactive media; digital health communications; and human information behaviour. Our approaches to digital communications research aim to address key global questions of social change influenced by the digital environment.

Our approach to digital media is cross-cut by critical concerns for the migrant crisis, health information, gender politics, digital labour, democracy, international security, social inequalities and the climate emergency. The commitment to produce applied digital research is supported through the use of innovative datamining and digital methodologies.

2. **Media histories, heritage and archives** (Haynes, Velez-Serna, Rolinson, Jones, Emeritus Blain and Emeritus Izod). We have actively sought to develop, enhance, research and make accessible special collections held at Stirling and elsewhere within Scotland which have media and cultural history relevance to both academic and public audiences. Archival research has placed emphasis on the co-creation of projects with a range of national partners that extend the reach and public impact of the activity.

Our strategy has delivered archival, heritage and digital interventions, monographs and edited collections which have unlocked major cultural assets. Significant collections including the Musicians Union Archive and the Commonwealth Games Scotland Archive have formed the basis for both a major AHRC-funded-research project and a highly successful knowledge exchange activity in collaboration with the University Archivist, the latter providing multiple pathways to impact and heritage partnerships for one of the submitted Impact Case Studies.

Our archival work expands on previous research on the Stirling-based collections of filmmaker Lindsay Anderson, documentarist John Grierson, animator and artist Norman McLaren and the interviews collected under the Scottish Cultural Memory Project funded by Creative Scotland (2013-2015), which have enhanced the importance of such precious archives, brought them to international attention and are now fully catalogued in readiness for future scholarship.

Our research has also advanced new media histories, such an award-winning monograph on the history of BBC Sport, work on early Scottish cinema and long-standing work on experimental Scottish film-maker and poet Margaret Tait which has raised international public awareness of her work through film festivals, exhibition, blogging and new experimental film works. Work on early television drama has also brought wider public attention to the non-fiction work of screenwriter Denis Potter. While research on international broadcasting collections, particularly in South Africa, has extended the influence and significance of archival and historical work.

Unlocking media and cultural archives for scholarship and public use therefore forms a central theme of CMC's research strategy and shall continue to be an inspirational resource for future research projects, PGR recruitment, collaborations and impacts.

3. **Film Studies** (Fleming, Singh, Elliott-Smith, Velez-Serna, Rolinson, Zioga, Lindner and Emeritus Izod). We have a forty-year-long research tradition in the field of film research which we continue to foster and diversify through recruitment of international film research specialists. Film research at Stirling has largely been focused on experimental themes at

the margins of cinema or has been influenced by feminist and queer theory and more recently environmental issues.

Our strategy has been to push the boundaries of film scholarship through innovative theoretical work reflected in: the theoretical inter-sectionality of film, philosophy and technology; experimental cinema research; film and the environment; and feminist approaches to film linking back to the formation of Gender Studies at Stirling in 2012 which has supported work on queer cinema. For example, interdisciplinary interventions on new queer horror film interlink to Stirling's distinctive Centre for Gothic Studies within the Faculty of Arts and Humanities. A Gender Film Club introduced in 2019 aims to foster further links across staff and students in the division and beyond.

Our approach focuses on the cross-fertilisation of ideas across film, Scottish Studies, gender studies, environmental research, archives and interactive digital futures of cinema to ensure research in this theme continues to innovate and lead on fresh critical ideas in the field.

4. **Scottish media, communications and cultures** (Champion, Berridge, Velez-Serna, Haynes, Dinan, Elliott-Smith, Buchanan, Jelen and Singh). Drawing on the geographical advantage of Stirling's central location in Scotland our researchers have been ideally placed to investigate media and cultural industries both across the industrial Central Belt of the country and in the rural Highlands and Islands.

Given profile through Scottish Studies at Stirling and our involvement in various AHRC-funded projects based in Scotland, our research in this area covers cultural policy issues related to the film, television and media sectors more broadly, as well as a specific focus on Scottish media and creative practices, content and cultural identities. Since 2014 active recruitment of a number of early-career researchers, including the Leverhulme Scholar Velez-Serna, Berridge, Champion and previously Munro, all coming from major Scottish-based research projects, has enhanced the reach and scope of research on Scottish cultural themes. Most of this work has been published in edited collections related to AHRC-funded projects.

More broadly, our strategy in this area aims to illustrate international themes in media and communications research linking the Scottish context with global challenges in media production cultures and practices, media and communications regulation, diversity and inclusion in the media industries, political communications and democracy, health communications and transformations in aspects of popular culture and identities, especially focused on film cultures and media sport.

Collectively researchers in this area maintain constant dialogue and our research has the capacity to develop multidisciplinary case studies on Scottish creative industries and communications contributing to advances in knowledge and comparative analysis of the global media environment. This will be enhanced by new opportunities related to the Stirling and Clackmannanshire City Region Deal which in part will focus on digital and tourism sectors aimed at boosting skills in the region. We believe discussions with practitioners in these areas informs research ideas and, in turn, media and communications research helps shape practitioner conception of the challenges they face.

5. **International Journalism** (Hadland, Harkins, Ahmad, Jones, Haynes, Dinan and Borges-Rey). Colleagues in CMC continue a long-standing commitment to international journalism research which remains distinctive through both research focus and methodological approach. The journalism team form a distinctive component of CMC with a wide-ranging field of research focusing on large macro-political issues such as the media and democracy, transformations in journalism caused by digitalisation and social media, through to specific journalism practices in sport news and photojournalism.

In line with the university's strategic focus on Global Security and Resilience CMC's journalism research places emphasis on international security and human rights, the politics of poverty, refugees and migrants, political communication in non-Western nations and environmental communications. Distinctive and original work on global photojournalism, filling a large void in research knowledge has led to impacts in professional practice in collaboration with World Press Photo and the National Union of Journalists. A long-standing specialism in sport journalism has led to numerous encyclopaedia entries and profiles for the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

Our strategy seeks to maintain innovative interdisciplinary research which has both an international focus, significance and reach, based on both excellence in scholarship and the international networks these staff connect us to. Cross-connections to other themes such as digital cultures, archives and public relations have materialised through work on data journalism, broadcast news archives and lobbying.

6. **Promotional culture** (MacRury, Jelen, Bernardi, Dinan and Buchanan). The recent appointment of MacRury to the Chair in Communications, Media and Culture in 2019 has provided renewal, research impetus and leadership on advertising and the cultural influence of brands on consumer behaviour.

Our strategy in this area is to build on long-standing critical public relations research to broaden the scope of promotional culture research and thus produce a leading presence in the research in fields such as digital advertising, applied public relations and social media marketing. These areas interlink across our other research agendas in digital media and case studies with a Scottish base.

Furthermore, we have strategically developed distinctive areas of research through interdisciplinary collaboration across a wide spectrum of social, cultural and economic areas, exemplified by the ESRC/MRC-funded *Right to Health in Prison* project with colleagues in philosophy and law, psycho-social analysis of a range of commercial and public brands, research on health information and communications and research on lobbying transparency in the Scottish Parliament which informs the other Impact Case Study.

### **Impact Strategy**

Our impact strategy is to make a difference in society, the economy and policy through applied research interventions in media practice and communications and knowledge exchange with a range of media and cultural stakeholders and diverse communities. We are committed to expanding our focus on impact within individual and collective plans, formed from the belief that impactful engagements benefit our media and communications research. This is achieved by integrating impact in five ways:

1. **Impact potential and engagement with external organisations** is a key component assessed in staff recruitment, internal promotion applications and research leave applications. Across each of these processes impact is seen as an integrated feature of research activity.

Recent recruitment practice has concentrated on balancing the various demands of a comprehensive research strategy with successful commitment to engagement with the world beyond universities. Building impact activity and potential has therefore been possible in areas including civil society and public discourse; archives and heritage practice; data literacy; photojournalism practice; film distribution and exhibition; equality, diversity and inclusion practices in the screen industries; and digital media cultures and activism.



2. **Impact activities are shared and monitored on an ongoing basis** through CMC's monthly newsletter as well as annual research mentoring processes where research plans and pathways to impact are discussed between the Director of Research and each colleague.

Our staff are encouraged to disseminate their research and knowledge through public talks, exhibitions, film and cultural festivals, blogging, media appearances, media training initiatives, consultancy and secondment with private, public and third sector organisations, engaging with media policy and regulatory agencies and sitting on media award panels.

We focus on both formal and informal points of engagement with a range of stakeholders in our research and impact activity, which is supported through a non-staff research budget to cover travel and other expenses, as well as match-funding for materials and events.

The University's involvement with *The Conversation*, the online news website sourced and written by leading academic researchers, has allowed colleagues and PhD students to attend training on writing for news outlets. We are committed strongly to equality issues around public engagement and Stirling leads within Scotland in supporting feminist researchers engaging with public debate through its research placement on postgraduate and doctoral programmes.

3. **Pathways to impact are essential to all funding applications** and embedded in the Divisional research culture to deliver broader relevance and benefit beyond the academic world. Non-academic partners are invited to participate and co-create research applications, and consideration is given to the most creative ways in which engagement can occur.

We have striven to open out our research to broad audiences and to do so in innovative and enterprising ways. This has included work in prisons around health and wellbeing, film festivals and screenings with partners and in non-traditional venues, the creation of weblogs and other digital resources with lasting legacies, the creation of training and toolkits to enhance practices in the cultural industries; exhibitions in non-traditional exhibition sites, and new public policy interventions. Numerous contributions to DVD inlays and Blu-Ray booklets and contributions to the BFI's Screenline and Mediateque represent applied screen knowledge to public projects and commercial media products.

4. **The development of applied research elements in our postgraduate research and programmes** (notably in Gender Studies, Media Research, Public Relations, International Journalism and Factual TV), combined with our success in gaining both external and internal funding for applied PhDs has allowed us to embed impact activities into research at postgraduate level.

Our PGR students are encouraged to build research relationships with external partners. PGR students have worked in partnership with the Scottish Football Association, Commonwealth Games Scotland, Scottish Women's Football League, Glasgow Life, Glasgow Women's Library and Document Human Rights Festival. Successful research placements with a range of third sector organisations, as well as archival placements in the university's media-related special collections, have produced a wide-range of outputs including curated exhibitions, catalogued archives, blogs, briefing papers, CPD training and public lectures.

Our students are involved additionally in research for Raising Films and Global Media Monitoring Project ([whomakesthenews.org](http://whomakesthenews.org)), and PhD students have showcased their practice-based research through public screenings as well as organising public events at Glasgow Women's Library, Hampden Stadium and Stirling Hackathon.

5. **CMC staff are actively encouraged to engage with practitioners**, which is supported through our Subject Advisory Board, membership of staff on the boards of various cultural and policy organisations and the appointment of distinguished media professionals to honorary professorships.

The Advisory Board includes representatives from the Scottish Government, the independent film and television sectors, journalism, Scottish creative industries, the information and technology industry and the public relations industry. The Advisory Board provides input into programme and research development activities and has also provided opportunities for research placements for postgraduate research students. The Advisory Board has a significant role to play in guiding our research vision, with our twice annual meetings providing stakeholder engagement on our knowledge exchange strategy.

Whilst this is important in bringing stakeholders to the University to inform key developments, equally important is the wide range of external organisations in which CMC colleagues play an active role. Board and committee memberships are considered prime ways to shape social and cultural agendas through knowledge exchange, and CMC colleagues populate the boards of Lux Scotland, Creative Stirling, Document Human Rights Festival, ALTER EU, Scottish Alliance for Lobbying Transparency (SALT), Scottish Sporting Heritage Consortium and Consumer Scotland's Data Commons Working Group.

Honorary professors are utilised in the delivery of applied knowledge and research opportunities for staff and students alike and have been important for developing close ties with the media and cultural sectors in Scotland. For example, collaboration has come through a fully-funded AHRC PhD on the archives of the Scottish Newspaper Society 1994-2009, deposited by its chair and Honorary Professor, John McLellan. This association has also led to CMC staff working as judges on the Scottish Press Awards, thereby providing further impacts on the sector through networking and public visibility.

Our Impact Case Studies focused on cultural heritage collaborations and lobbying transparency are designed to exemplify the diversity of our research across the arts, humanities and social sciences, and speak to key strengths around archiving and media policy. Each arises from sustained engagement with non-academic interest communities and each has had impacts on specific interest groups but also with a larger public. Accordingly, they demonstrate the success of our approach to impact, particularly through our focus on embedding engagement throughout the research endeavour.

## 2. People

Our staffing strategy is central to each area of our research strategy, providing distinctiveness to our research themes. The University has a robust recruitment and staff development strategy which openly and equitably supports all staff through their careers, enhancing the quality and extending the influence of its research. In keeping with our interdisciplinary research strategy, some faculty have academic backgrounds in media and communications, while others are trained in political science, philosophy, social psychology, sociology, geography, cultural studies and information science. This diversity enables strong interdisciplinarity, and the diverse origins of staff, with currently seven coming from outside the UK (twelve over the REF period), enables the Division to sustain and foster diverse networks beyond the University and the UK. Research capacity is enhanced by two RCUK Research Fellows, a Leverhulme Fellow and a constant flow of international visiting researchers (seven in the REF period to date).

CMC's staff have changed over the past six years, but collectively our profile is stable and clustered around our established areas of core strength. In 2018 we celebrated the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of film and media research at Stirling, bringing many former staff, student alumni, media partners, honorary lecturers and Emeritus professors together to celebrate landmark projects and personalities, showcasing the heritage of the division to broadcast and underwrite its renewal and continued growth.

The University's Research and Innovation Service has direct input into research development and administration at Faculty level, which cascades down to Divisional level. Training offered by the University is interdisciplinary and in line with the national Vitae Researcher Development Framework. All staff manage their research profiles, access to grant application support, peer review and impact repositories via the university's research management system Worktribe. Training in the use of Worktribe is provided to all staff both in workshops and virtual learning environments. Research business is a standing item on the Divisional Meeting agenda: this not only ensures regular feedback from Faculty Research Committee, but also ensures that all colleagues are involved in developing and monitoring research strategy. CMC has maintained its commitment to nurturing and empowering staff and postgraduate research students to work in an interdisciplinary research environment, encouraging collaborations where appropriate, stimulating and facilitating exchanges wherever possible, within and beyond the University. Staff are encouraged to take risks, initiate and explore new research horizons, in an open and supportive environment. Likewise, PGR students are actively assisted in developing collaborations with one another and are supported in taking the lead on particular initiatives.

Research activity and impact is supported by financial investment (with funding for impact activity and conference attendance), training (at university level and personal development initiatives), peer review (from concept to application) and mentoring at all stages of academic careers. Achieving Success, the University's appraisal process, has been designed to identify staff needs and to agree annual goals which involve mutual obligations on the part of the institution and its staff. Reviews occur annually, with a mid-point progress meeting. Through Achieving Success meetings there are clear pathways identified for career progression, with colleagues encouraged to apply for promotion where and when appropriate.

Additional support is provided for Early Career Researchers through the probation scheme which allows colleagues a further reduction in teaching hours (50% in year 1; decreasing in years 2 & 3) in the Workload Allocation Model to further develop their research. For staff returning from a period of maternity leave the Faculty makes available a period of research leave to help colleagues refocus on their research activity. Depending on prior experience, new ECRs are offered a probation period of 1-3 years and are allocated a mentor with whom they work closely during this period. Mentoring is crucially important and takes place in several ways. The responsibility for research mentoring lies with the Director of Research, who undertakes annual research mentoring meetings with all staff to provide opportunities to regularly review their targets and identify their support needs. This allows us to take a longer-term view of workload planning and aids planning and resource support for colleagues developing bids for research funding. This process is particularly important for gathering information on recent appointees and ECRs, as well as checking previous research plans are on track. Mentoring advice focuses on individual priority research activities, whether in outputs, developing impact or grant applications. These criteria will be contingent on where each member of staff is in terms of the development of their outputs and/or research grant awards and applications. In addition, the Faculty operates a mentoring scheme where any colleague – including those in senior positions - can request a mentor (from another Division or Faculty). Lecturing staff are also allocated a 'senior colleague' within CMC whose responsibility is to help with the transition of new colleagues into the division as well as provide support for career development more broadly.

Being conscious of gender, we proactively support staff development and seek to ensure equality of opportunity for strategic roles within the CMC portfolio to help colleagues demonstrate their suitability for academic advancement. CMC colleagues have been fully funded to participate in the Aurora Leadership Development Scheme. The Division is actively leading the development of the Faculty's Athena Swan applications providing leadership in the Faculty committee. This has provided valuable opportunities for us to reflect on equality issues, resulting in the adoption of an email calming policy and scheduling of all key divisional meetings between 10am-4pm. Equality, diversity and inclusion are regularly discussed on our divisional meeting agenda, allowing us to continually reflect on and develop our practice. The Faculty has also provided financial support for colleagues to participate in the EPSRC's CHERISH-DE leadership scheme. Bernardi was selected as part of the Royal Society of Edinburgh's Scottish Crucible scheme, a leadership and



development programme for Scotland's research leaders of the future. This has enabled her to develop interdisciplinary research networks.

CMC has been proactive in supporting postdoctoral researchers in their involvement in Divisional activity and research. The successful appointment of Leverhulme Fellow, Velez-Serna, to a full-time lecturing post is a recent example of this strategy delivering on our commitment to the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers. The appointment of postdoctoral researcher and teaching fellow Esteves in 2021 is further evidence of our support and mentoring of talented early-career researchers into full-time posts. The promotion of mid-career staff to senior positions (SL, AP and Professor) has restored balance to the seniority in the division. Specifically, the period since the end of 2014 has seen investment in CMC as a growth area for research, with two new Professors, four new appointments in Digital Media, four in Film and Media, three in Media Management, three in Journalism and one in Public Relations. This growth has been further supported by the internal promotion of existing colleagues to strengthen the senior research team within the Division: three promotions to professor and five promotions to senior lecturer/associate professor.

As well as supporting ECRs through lighter teaching and administrative loads during their probationary periods, individuals starting out on their research careers are encouraged to involve themselves in organising research seminars and gaining their first experience of PGR supervision and examining. ECRs were also heavily involved in the preparations and steering committee of the Media, Communication and Cultural Studies Association Conference (MeCCSA) in 2019 for which they were given additional workload allocation allowances. ECRs are encouraged and supported to apply for small grant awards to initiate research ideas, and subsequently brought in as co-investigators to larger research bids to build a research track record.

The University operates a Research Leave scheme, which allows staff to apply for leave every seventh semester. This allows for more concentrated periods of research, but ongoing activities are supported by protection of 40% of staff time for research annually within the Workload Allocation Model which collectively ensures a vibrant research culture. During the assessment period, twelve staff were able to take advantage of the scheme.

### **Research students**

PhD students admitted to the Division benefit from a rigorous induction, supervisory and training system, developed in accordance with good practice guidelines from the Scottish Graduate School of Arts & Humanities (SGSAH) and the Scottish Graduate School for Social Sciences (SGSSS). Stirling has invested significant resources in developing training and support for PhD students and supervisors. All our PGR students use our online system, Research Compass, which allows them to keep records of all supervision meetings, undertaken regular skills audits, and log their researcher development activities. All students have annual progress review meetings where their work is reviewed by at least one member of staff external to their supervision team. The University provides dedicated space, a workstation for each researcher and access to the seminars and training sessions provided through the Institute for Advanced Studies (IAS).

PGR monitoring, training and supervisory arrangements are overseen by the Divisional PGR Director. Supervisors attend annual training provided by the Faculty and IAS, and all students have two supervisors, allowing for mentoring of colleagues undertaking PhD supervision for the first time. We hold an annual PhD conference at which all students present their work-in-progress for feedback from their peers and staff, and students are centrally involved in planning our Research Seminar series throughout the year. There is strong encouragement for interdisciplinarity in both research and supervision, with an increasing focus on collaborative supervision across the Faculty of Arts and Humanities and with other HEI's under the SGSAH and SGSSS studentship schemes. We also run staff/student reading groups in gender studies, sport and culture and visual culture to enable interdisciplinary conversations in scholarship across the Faculty and the university. PGR students are also encouraged to attend research seminars across

the Faculty and university more generally. CMC students have been active in the MeCCSA Postgraduate Network, and since 2019 a Stirling student has acted as chair.

Stirling's involvement in SGSAH has enhanced our offer to PhD students. All our PhD students now have access to a range of activities, training, and funding for cohort development. PhD students can apply to the Faculty for financial support with fieldwork and conference attendance. In addition, Stirling enables PhD candidates to participate in the annual summer school of the European Doctoral Network in Media and Communication and has sent at least one student per year. Stirling is a founding member of the Network, which offers the participants important opportunities for intellectual exchange.

We have worked hard to increase the number of fully funded PhD students we attract to the Division and to increase the proportion of staff involved in PhD supervision. CMC staff have acted on selection panels for both SGSAH as well as the Scottish Graduate School for Social Science (the ESRC DTP) as pathway convenors (Haynes and Singh). We have been successful in these and other competitions: having had *no* UKRI-funded students in the last exercise, in between 2015 and 2020 we secured a total of seven studentships from AHRC, ESRC, Scottish Funding Council and Stirling University schemes.

### 3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

The Division has a strong record of external income generation, with successful applications by most staff (the total value of research income in the period is **£1,139,467**). The University introduced new Concept Notification and Internal Peer Review to instigate administrative support from the Research and Innovation Service (RIS), and all funding proposals are discussed at an early stage of development. Internal systems for peer review and demand management for specific calls, are now managed through Worktribe, the university's automated system used from the initial stages, when a draft proposal or concept note is assigned to a dedicated Research Support administrator from RIS. The system maintains accurate records of bid development, provides dedicated support to bid progression and transparency in the overall process including GDPR and ethical compliance. Worktribe data also informs information used to populate CMC's research webpages which are managed with the support of the Communications, Marketing and Recruitment team to help publicly promote research activity and provide news items for university bulletins and external media relations.

A dedicated digital media lab supported by both the university's Information Services and technical staff within the Faculty for Arts and Humanities, with a suit of computers and industry software helps underpin research in **Digital Media and Cultures**, providing a hub for knowledge exchange and activity in this field for staff and PGR students. Smaller grants in digital media research have been used to develop proof of concept and build capacity. To develop more responsive modes to funding calls – with the support of the Deputy Principal for Research – CMC was instrumental in the creation of two interdisciplinary university-wide Research Programmes: Being Connected, and Digital Society and Culture. As a direct result of this work, resources were ring-fenced to build external networks of partners for project development, skills-development and capacity building. The EPSRC Digital Economy Investigator-led Research Project on participatory design and open data platforms for a data commons in Scotland (£455,269), is an excellent example of both research development and collaboration. The project was developed as a result of the Being Connected Programme which supported collaboration with colleagues in Education, two other Scottish universities, and project partners The Data Lab and Stirling Council. This award follows on from the Wikimedia UK project and the research network 'Life in Data' (RSE, £19,920.21). The RSE network has also provided a proof of concept which enabled international expansion of the project to 'Life in Data: East Asia Development' (£13,656). Additional funding (£6,776) through the University's Connect scheme which pump primes ODA research was awarded to host an international conference with participants from China, Vietnam, and Mexico.

Research funding into the **Scottish Media, Communications and Cultures** theme has been diverse, and driven by small awards, research networks and follow-on funding for research impact activity. Colleagues are encouraged to develop sustainable links with creative industry partners

and policymakers in line with both university research themes on Society and Culture and Faculty research priorities focused on the creative industries. Future research in this field is set to benefit from new investment in research infrastructure as part of the Stirling City Region Deal worth £214m in the region which includes building sustainable and inclusive growth in the cultural sector. The investment will enable CMC to build on work in the field of Scottish cultural policy which has already led to significant impact activity with a range of stakeholders across Scotland. These include the AHRC Follow-on Funding Knowledge Exchange Hub for the Creative Economy, Design Innovation for New Growth (DING) project in collaboration with the Glasgow School of Art (£120,180) as well as two Royal Society of Edinburgh funded projects on the role of creative hubs in supporting contemporary craft and creative workers in rural and remote geographies (£6,158) and a project mapping ecologies of care in creative hubs in Stirling during COVID-19 (£5,780). All projects have developed considerable non-academic links with organisations including Creative Scotland, Creative Stirling, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Arts and Cultural organisations (Shetland Arts, Emergents, Orkney Island Council) and industry which inform future cultural policy and support across the highlands and islands region.

Other industry-related research investigating the gendered care responsibilities in Scotland's television production sector has established another key intervention in media practice and led to subsequent work on care in the television workplace funded by the Carnegie Trust (£5,006). Successful cross-institutional networking bids include a Scottish Universities Insight Institute grant developed with partners from University of Edinburgh (£16,500) to explore media and cultural provision for young migrants in Scotland. Other smaller awards helping to foster partnerships with non-HEI's include a Joseph Rowntree Award for a seminar on the Lobbying Register introduced in the Scottish Parliament which supported policy and knowledge-exchange activity in the related impact case study.

The university's status as the Scottish University for Sporting Excellence has encouraged interdisciplinary research on sporting themes across faculties, and divisional support for work on sporting media in Scotland fed into collaborative research with colleagues in Criminology and Law as part of the research team on the Evaluation of the Offensive Behaviour at Football (Scotland) Act 2012 (£154,528), a legislative review for the Scottish Government.

The division receives a great deal of technical and administrative support from the University Archives, part of Information Services. Much of the work in **Media Histories, Heritage and Archives** is supported by the archival infrastructure and expertise at Stirling University, with industry standard air-conditioned stores to preserve precious collections and a dedicated reading room in which researchers can work. The strong working relationships built with the archives service underpins the work on sporting heritage in Scotland, especially the *Hosts and Champions* exhibition, which has been a key feature of work in the area receiving funded support from myriad sources including the Big Lottery Fund, the Scottish Government, Commonwealth Games Scotland, Active Scotland, Glasgow Life, National Lottery Heritage Fund, AHRC CDA funding and the University of Stirling's pump-priming Connect fund amounting to £131,019. The archives and Information Services have also been heavily involved in other projects including the *Scottish Cultural Memory Project*, an archive of filmed interviews with leading producers, writers and directors in Scottish film and television funded by Creative Scotland (£160,000).

The archive facilities and the Macrobert Arts Centre based on campus used for film screenings, public talks and screen-based conferences have provided key infrastructural support to CMC staff in the development of a number of large collaborative awards with other university partners including the AHRC-funded projects: *British Silent Films and the Transition to Sound* project (de Montford, £391,382) which used the Musicians Union Archive; the *Major Minor Cinema* (Glasgow, £357,867); and *Cinema Memory and the Digital Archive: 1930s Britain and Beyond* (Lancaster, £778,000). Work on the experimental filmmaker Margaret Tait received collaborative funding with LUX Scotland to celebrate the centenary of the film-makers birth from Creative Scotland's Screen Funding programme (£63,000) which made a significant contribution to CMC's impact activity in 2019 again in collaboration with the Macrobert. Other funded work in **Film Studies** showcases

the international nature of our research including the postdoctoral Leverhulme Early Career Fellowship of Velez-Serna on the project *Ephemeral Cinemas in Historical Perspective* (£80,267).

The Division has had other success on larger collaborative bids, both within Stirling and with external partners. Interdisciplinary bids under the **International Journalism** theme include collaboration with Sociology on the World Press Photo Foundation project. The project again demonstrated the value of building from smaller awards initially supported by a grant from the Carnegie Trust which led to a further successful bid to the World Press Photo Foundation (£50,000). Research on photojournalism was supplemented by a Royal Society of Edinburgh award (£7,177) which will inform a future monograph. International collaboration in the field includes co-investigation on the AwarEU Erasmus+ project co-funded by the European Commission on 'European Awareness' with various European partners from Italy, Spain, France and Portugal (€575,435). Smaller scale funding for research into open-source investigations for journalists by the Carnegie Trust investigates fact checking in crisis and conflict areas across the world.

Contributing to the area of **Promotional Culture** CMC are co-investigators on the AHRC/MRC Global Challenges-funded project 'Right to Health in Prison', with colleagues at the Universities of Stirling, Dundee and Strathclyde (£165,547) investigating health communications to inmates. Health communications also feature in the ESRC-funded (£259,915) work on understanding the Information Needs of Young First Time Mothers from Areas of Multiple Deprivation informing both policy and practice in Scotland's NHS and social services. Other smaller awards in this field include a Carnegie Trust award to investigate the representation of Down Syndrome in social media, which produced complex data to help practitioners identify how the illness is communicated.

The infrastructural support, technical and cultural facilities and diversity of funding streams supporting our research activity demonstrates our strengths in partnership working and allows us to develop a funding portfolio which is not overly dependent on individual research stars or on research council funding. Infrastructural support for digital media, journalism, archival and production-based research, where research staff can collaborate with teaching and scholarship, technical or archival staff on creative outputs, web-based outputs or exhibitions broaden the scope for research impact and reach.

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

The CMC Advisory Board is instrumental in building strong relationships between both local and national organisations. Collaborations have led to staff development of a new annual television industry conference launched in 2017, 'Focus on Scotland', organised by CMC staff and held at the Macrobert Arts Centre on the university campus. This forum gathers research staff, senior industry executives and practitioners to discuss contemporary issues across the television industry. Since 2018 the event has been fully funded by Creative Scotland with 300 practitioners and students in attendance. This annual event epitomises how the principle of building collaborative research bids with industry is now embedded in our research culture.

Across our research endeavour we are collectively proactive in seeking new ways to engage with academic research networks and hosting events to showcase research expertise, making new connections and partnerships. In 2018 we celebrated the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of public relations research at Stirling with a national conference including leading figures in the field. Our future strategy is to build on the success of these and other conferences, symposia and workshops to broaden research networks and visibility in the field both nationally and internationally. In January 2019, CMC hosted the Annual MeCCSA Conference, the first time the national subject association held its annual event in Scotland. This represented an opportunity to strategically underscore Stirling's long-standing visibility in the field, engaging staff and postgraduate researchers in the organising committee.



Staff continue to take leading and active roles in supporting and developing our disciplines nationally and internationally. Colleagues have been involved in peer review for funding bodies nationally (AHRC, ESRC, British Academy, Carnegie Trust, Scottish Universities Insight Institute, Royal Society of Edinburgh) and on an international stage (e.g. National Research Council of South Africa, Research Council of Norway, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada). CMC colleagues have also taken leading roles in subject associations nationally and internationally including: executive representation on European Communication Research and Education Association (ECREA); the Executive Committee of Psychology and Moving Image International; the Board of the International Communication and Sport Association; the steering committee of the Alliance for Lobbying Transparency and Ethics Regulation (ALTER EU); and the History of Moviegoing, Exhibition and Reception (HoMER) Network.

Many of the conferences we hold are industry and practitioner focused. CMC staff have organised practitioner events in collaboration with: the BBC (Data Journalism UK, 2017); Sporting Heritage and the Archives and Records Association with heritage and cultural sector practitioners at the Macrobert (2017) and Hampden Stadium (2018); and island craft practitioners as part of the AHRC DING project (2018).

Other events have been designed to showcase applied knowledge from funded research projects with *Silent Cinema and the Transition to Sound* (2016), a Lobbying Expert Seminar (2015), the "What I Know Is" symposium (2014), and a series of workshops on migrant youth identity (2015) all designed to develop knowledge exchange opportunities with non-HEI organisations and communities. Public events focused on gender studies research has led to the Women in Political Life workshop (2015), Women, Media & Politics Symposium (2016) and Nasty Women: Stirling (2017) organised in cross-Faculty collaboration with the Centre for International Communication and Publishing.

Staff are encouraged to develop innovative partnerships and consultancies based on their research, with examples including the Leverhulme Fellowship collaboration with Polish artist Marta Adamowicz whose illustrations for the book 'A Screen Less Ordinary' were presented in an exhibition at The Pyramid at Anderson, Glasgow (2020). The Major Minor Cinema project produced an anthology of cinema-going memories of the Highlands and Islands Film Guild in *Reel to Rattling Reel* published in 2018. While the project on caring in the Scottish film and TV industries fed into consultancy for Raising Films on their 'We Need to talk about Caring' survey in 2019. It also led to discussions with BECTU in relation to their job-sharing initiative, Creative Scotland's 'Radical Childcare' initiative, which included a series of Creative Scotland workshops for new mothers.

Staff have given invited keynotes, lectures, and seminars at Universities across the UK as well as in Spain (University Pompeu Fabra), Denmark (Aarhus University), France (IUTB Universite de Lille, and IUT de Lannion), Germany (Heinrich Boll Foundation), the USA (Harvard University), China (Chinese Academy of Press & Publication Beijing) and Vietnam (USSH Ho Chi Minh).

Matching the breadth of our research, colleagues have served on a wide range of editorial boards which also sustains wider research networks and collaborations. These include *African Journalism Studies*, *Screen Bodies*, *Feminist Media Studies*, *Interest Groups and Advocacy*, *Communication and Sport*, *Online Journal of Communication and Media Technologies*, *Journal of Applied Journalism and Media Studies*, *International Journal of Jungian Studies* and *International Journal for the History of Sport*. We have taken active roles in peer review and editing, reviewing for more than 70 different journals since 2014, as well as reviewing proposals and manuscripts for multiple publishers.

CMC staff have served as external examiners for PhDs at numerous universities across the UK and 10 institutions internationally. Staff have also serve on judging panels for academic and practice-based prizes drawing on their expertise in journalism (Community Newspaper Awards and Scottish Press Awards), digital media (Smart Data Hack) and film (Lux Margaret Tait Award).



Conclusion

Throughout CMC's research endeavour we continue to advance knowledge in the media and communications field through a broad engagement with societal and economic issues that pertain not only to the media and cultural sectors, but also a wider range of industrial and societal challenges we now face in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. We fully expect future research across our six themes to connect into agendas on climate change, freedom and democracy, demographic change and the post-pandemic recovery.