

**Institution:** University of Aberdeen

**Unit of Assessment:** 22 (Anthropology)

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

Established in 2002, the Department of Anthropology (11.5FTE) sits within the School of Social Science alongside the Departments of Sociology, Politics and International Relations. We began with a research focus on the Anthropology of the North and, over the ensuing years, have introduced a complementary focus on the themes of Environment, Creativity and Perception. We have become an internationally leading centre for research in these twin fields. During the current REF period we were the only anthropology department in the UK to hold two ERC grants simultaneously (led by **Anderson** and **Ingold**). A coherent set of research themes underpins our work going forward: (1) Anthropology of the North; (2) Environment, Creativity and Perception; (3) Museums and Histories of Science; (4) Religion, Politics and the State; (5) Anthropology with Art and Craft. Regionally, our northern research extends from Scotland to the Canadian Arctic, the Nordic and Baltic countries, Russia and Siberia. We also undertake research in the Andes, Central Asia, Tibet and the Himalayas, and North Africa.

#### 1. Anthropology of the North

The Anthropology of the North has been at the core of the Department's mission since its foundation. Today we have one of the largest concentrations of anthropologists working in the northern circumpolar regions worldwide. Our work covers sustainable development and resource co-management, oral tradition and cultural revitalisation, human-animal relations and histories of domestication. For example, the ERC-funded *Arctic Domus* project, led by **Anderson**, has assembled field research in anthropology, archaeology, environmental history and social studies of science around the circumpolar North to elaborate a new model of human-animal relations in the Arctic. Our northern research has also profited from the Department's involvement in three of the four research programmes funded by the University-wide interdisciplinary theme on *The North*, led by **Ingold** (2012-15). **Brown** and **Wachowich** were joint leaders of *Northern Colonialism*, and **Arnason**, **Wishart** and **Argounova-Low** were on the programme teams for *The Northern Temperament and Fragility, Adaptation and Resilience (FAR North)*.

#### 2. Environment, Creativity and Perception

Our approach to environmental anthropology rests on the principle that people, and their environments, are co-constitutive and ever emergent within coupled processes of perception and action. We have been working to understand the intrinsic creativity of these processes, thus, placing creativity firmly within the nexus of human environmental relations. This approach underwrites the Department's MSc programme *People and Environment*, directed by **Whitehouse**. In a series of AHRC-funded projects, **Vergunst** and his co-investigators have looked at creative ways of engaging with lived landscape and heritage in northeast Scotland. In the ERC-funded project *Knowing From the Inside (KFI)*, a research team led by **Ingold** has explored the properties and histories of use of a wide range of vital materials looking at how these material engagements can enhance sustainability in human-environmental relations. **Anderson**, **Wishart** and **Wachowich**, with funding from the ERC, ESRC and SSHRC, have looked at craft and its importance in building resilience in Indigenous communities. This focus on resilience and local engagement and participation in environmental projects aligns with the UN's sustainable development goals on climate and environment.

#### 3. Museums and Histories of Science

Our research under this theme encompasses histories of anthropology, science and technology, heritage and museum anthropology. **Wishart**'s SSHRC-funded work on Franz Boas's papers reassesses how ideas of environment and domestication shaped early American cultural anthropology. **Anderson**, with funding from the Leverhulme Trust and the ESRC, explores links between Russian and Chinese concepts of *ethnos* and *minzu*, and Euro-American concepts of nation and ethnicity. **Bolton**'s uncovering of connections between Aberdeen and Bolivia in the stories of 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century Aberdonian miners has reignited interest in local heritage.

**Brown's** work on collaborative practices between museums and source communities, funded by the AHRC and Leverhulme Trust, informs our innovative MLitt in Museum Studies, which she co-convenes with **Walklate**.

#### 4. Religion, Politics and the State

Anthropological research on religion tends to rest on a secular conception that treats religion as an object of study. Our research under this theme, by contrast, engages with non-secular traditions of thought and practice to rethink and go beyond the constraints on theory imposed by the secular model. **Mills** has developed South and Central Asian approaches to the ceremonial construction of the state, and to the historical development of "constitutional mythologies", as a range of state-ideas outside the bounds of modern constitutionalism. **Árnason** researches the intersection between religion, state and individual in a context of "moral collapse" in Iceland.

**Anderson** works on shamanism and neo-shamanism in Eurasia and its relation to the post-Soviet state. **Rasanayagam** studies state practices of governmentality and the development of Muslim moral subjectivities in Uzbekistan. His work on Qur'anic healing, spirit possession and magic in Morocco, funded by the Carnegie Trust, interrogates questions of perception and imagination through a conversation with an Islamic tradition.

#### 5. Anthropology with Art and Craft

Our approach to this theme regards the practices of art and craft as ways of study in themselves, on a par with anthropology, from which we can learn in a spirit of interdisciplinarity. This was key to **Ingold's** *KFI* project, which structured a collaboration between scholars and contemporary artists, woodworkers and eco-builders to develop a speculative inquiry working with persons and materials to explore sustainable living. In 2016-17, artist-poet Alec Finlay worked with **Vergunst** as Leverhulme Artist in Residence on place names and landscape in Aberdeenshire. Our work in this field has also focused on indigenous craft production and the revival of craft skills. **Wachowich** has looked at how the revitalisation of Inuit sealskin sewing skills promotes the sustainability of the Inuit seal hunt in the Canadian High Arctic, and obtained co-funding for a women's arts collective in Pond Inlet, Nunavut, with a current membership of 25 women. **Argounova-Low** has explored the craft of carving mammoth tusks among Sakha people in Siberia from the first experiments to contemporary kitsch.

#### Review and forward look

In our overview of future plans submitted in REF2014, we highlighted expected growth in three of our research areas: *Anthropology of the North*, *Creativity of Practice*, and *Religion, Belief and Practice*. This growth has been largely achieved, boosted by the Department's leading involvement in the University's strategic research theme on *The North* (2012-15), by the award of two ERC Advanced Grants, *Arctic Domus* and *KFI* (2013-18), and by our collaboration with colleagues in Divinity and Religious Studies and Politics and International Relations in the programme *Religion and Politics in the Contemporary World*, funded by the University's College of Arts and Social Sciences. We have since reformulated our research themes to reflect these achievements. Thus, our work on creativity is now tied to our research both on environment and perception and with art and craft disciplines, while our work on religion has expanded to include its relations with politics and the state.

Over the next five years we will develop our research through all our themes. **Anderson** and **Wishart** recently obtained seed-funding from the ESRC and NERC to explore "food sovereignty", a topic, which cuts across the themes of the **Anthropology of the North**, **Environment**, **Creativity and Perception**, and **Museums and Histories of Science**. **Wishart** will examine coastal resource use in Scotland and the impact of the blue economy. He is also developing research into food sovereignty in remote areas and the impact of failing food supply chains in times of crisis such as pandemics and severe weather events. **Anderson** will continue his work on identity and nationality policy in Eurasia to explore the history and roots of neo-liberal governance in late Soviet economic reforms. Within our theme of **Environment**, **Creativity and Perception**, **Vergunst** will investigate the policy concerns of environmental sustainability with arts, heritage and community participation in relation to the Scottish

landscape. His current AHRC network will seed further research proposals in this field.

**Whitehouse** will explore environmental change by thinking through bird migration, and is developing research on shifting environmental relations in response to COVID-19. Within our theme of **Museums and Histories of Science**, **Walklate**, with Carnegie Trust support, is examining documentation practices and webs of relations at the University of Aberdeen's Museums, within the themes of historical consciousness, memory and hauntology. **Bolton** will continue research into historical connections between Scotland and Bolivia. **Brown** is part of an AHRC-funded Network, led by Central Saint Martin's School of Art, looking at digital access to Blackfoot collections in the UK and developing a bid to examine how virtual visits to German museums can support Blackfoot goals of sharing collections-based knowledge post-COVID-19. Under the theme of **Religion, Politics and the State**, **Mills** is researching the relationship between personhood and the state through a study of Tibetan imperial systems of statecraft and the organisation of the Tibetan state under the Dalai Lamas. In dialogue with Islamic theologians, **Rasanayagam** is designing new research on social exclusion, citizenship and governance that engages with non-secular modes of thought. **Arnason** is involved in projects on trauma and mourning in times of pandemics, and an ongoing project involves documenting the social history of trauma in Iceland. **Argounova-Low**, within the theme of **Anthropology with Art and Craft**, will continue her research into Sakha mammoth ivory carving practices. **Wachowich** will address Inuit food sovereignty and self-governance through the initiation of locally run projects on traditional methods of preparing hunted meat.

### Achieving impact

We enhance the impact of our work by concentrating our efforts within a well-defined structure of research themes. Here, we present two of these as examples of our general strategy, and describe how our selected case studies (see **Ref3b**) relate to our approach to achieving impact:

#### **1. Environment, Creativity and Perception**

Work under this theme, with its focus on the improvisational dynamics of everyday life, has led to productive collaborations in the fields of contemporary art and performance, architecture and design. This has benefited practising artists, architectural and design professionals, environmental managers and policy makers. In the *KFI* project, for example, we worked with local arts organisations Deveron Arts, Peacock Visual Arts and the Scottish Sculpture Workshop. Similarly, our work on heritage and landscape involves multiple network partners, community groups in Scotland, and an interactive digital community learning hub. Further, our research in collaboration with Indigenous peoples contributes to the development of policies for sustainable natural resource co-management, the protection of Indigenous rights to land and the revival of their own heritage.

#### **2. Museums and Cultural Heritage**

Our research has led to collaborations with Indigenous communities and museums and galleries in the UK and internationally, bringing benefits to source communities, museum audiences and the museum sector. A notable example is the AHRC-funded *Narrative Objects* project, led by **Brown** and **Argounova-Low**, in which we partnered with the National Museum of the Arts of the Sakha Republic and the British Museum (see **REF3**). This, in turn, fed into the British Museum's lead exhibition for 2020-21, *Arctic: Culture and Climate*. Co-curated by **Lincoln** and **Loovers** (both Aberdeen Anthropology PhDs, 2011), the exhibition acknowledges eight of the Department's current staff and researchers as having contributed with materials and ideas. Our work with the University's Museums and Special Collections has raised their profile internationally and is contributing to wider public discussions on decolonising museum work.

Our impact case studies, "Revitalising Culture: Community Collections Research with Digital Engagement" and "UK Tibet Policy", highlight the ways in which our core research themes underpin both the distinct Aberdeen approach to anthropological scholarship and the global reach of our work. They both demonstrate our commitment to collaboration with Indigenous communities and to informing policy and practice in regard to these communities. Thus,

research for our first case study on connecting communities with historical collections involved working with local collaborators, including Indigenous communities, to generate outputs aimed at cultural revival. The *Scottish Centre for Himalayan Research*, the focus of our second study, draws on a wide network of contacts in India, Nepal and Tibet, as well as collaborations with historians, archaeologists, legal scholars and specialists in comparative religion. In its role as secretariat of the Scottish Parliament Cross-Party Group on Tibet, it informs policymaking by parliamentary and government bodies, development agencies and civil society organisations working on human and cultural rights, cultural revitalisation and environmental mitigation.

### **Supporting impact into the future**

Supported through Departmental, School and wider University mechanisms, for example, via the GCRF Impact Accelerator awards or the Public Engagement with Research Enabling Fund, staff will continue to build on long-standing community and policy connections. As examples, our long-term plans to engage with the University Museum and Special Collections through the lens of decolonisation will impact audiences locally and internationally and contribute to curatorial practice. **Walklate's** recent appointment enables us to expand existing work in this area and integrate it more fully into our postgraduate programmes. Likewise, we expect links with governments in the Himalayan region to be maintained and expanded through the SCHR, and we anticipate working on climate change specifically. We will maintain the departmental post of Impact Officer, which involves work with other academic staff to identify and develop impact from research and to promote opportunities for support and funding beyond the Department. At University level we will continue to draw on training, cross-disciplinary discussions and funding support for impact.

### **Support for interdisciplinary research**

Much anthropological research is by nature interdisciplinary, and ours is no exception. We have been at the forefront of interdisciplinary collaboration at the University, bringing an anthropological approach and expertise into dialogue with disciplines across the entire academic spectrum, from art and architecture, through education, law, history, linguistics and archaeology, to the biological, geological and chemical sciences. This has contributed much to the vitality of our research, and will continue to do so. Our interdisciplinary work is supported by University initiatives. In 2012, for example, the University identified four priority themes for strategic investment, in one of which (*The North*, led by **Ingold**) the Department played a leading role. Its staff, postdoctoral researchers and PhD students collaborated with historians (in the programme *Northern colonialism*), psychologists (in the programme *The Northern temperament*) and geoscientists (in the programme *FAR North*). With matching funding from a range of other sources, these programmes ran from 2012 to 2015. Another example is **Árnason's** collaboration with colleagues in the Schools of Medicine, Geosciences, Divinity, History and Philosophy, as part of the University's Interdisciplinary Conversations series in response to COVID-19. The result has been a project on funerals and the ethics of care in the context of pandemics, recently awarded ESRC funding. To illustrate our interdisciplinary research we focus next on our two ERC-funded projects; however all staff routinely collaborate with colleagues from a wide range of disciplines in the UK and internationally.

The *KFI* project was interdisciplinary in its very conception. Uniting anthropology, art, architecture and design, its primary objective was to establish and trial a speculative mode of inquiry which would bring scholars and practitioners in all four fields together in a synergistic exploration of the conditions and possibilities for sustainable living. As the project developed, it expanded to include experimental theatre, dance and music, as well as the philosophy of art and education. Visiting scholars included the education theorist Jan Masschelein (KU Leuven) and philosopher Erin Manning (Concordia). They influenced not only our ways of working but our project outcomes, which have included, besides written texts, works of art and craft, performances and installations. Many of these were displayed in 2017 in a University-wide exhibition.



The *Arctic Domus* project was, likewise, founded on an interdisciplinary synergy, in this case embracing circumpolar ethnography, the history of science, environmental archaeology, linguistics and animal genetics and osteology. The project's teams, comprised of anthropologists, chemists, geneticists, archaeologists and zoologists, worked at the same field sites, co-designed research and co-authored papers published in both natural science and anthropological journals. This blend of geoarchaeological research on past environments with ethnographic and linguistic work in the present was a hallmark of the project. It redefined the biogeographic and biogenetic study of animal populations through the use of data from ethnographic interviews. In recognition of his leadership **Anderson** received an Outstanding Interdisciplinary Research award from the University of Aberdeen in 2020.

### **Progress towards an open research environment**

It is a basic principle of research in social anthropology that observations take their meanings from the situations in which they are made. Thus openness, for us, goes far beyond the technicalities of data management. It is about promoting a climate of generosity and collegiality in which work-in-progress is routinely presented and discussed in a spirit of constructive criticism. We support initiatives to open up access to publications arising from our research, supported by the University's Scholarly Communications Service, see **REF5a**. Within the limits of technical possibility, we have ensured that all publications from our two ERC-funded projects, *KFI* and *Arctic Domus*, are open-access, as are the key outputs of AHRC-funded research by **Vergunst** on landscape and heritage and **Brown** on the Blackfoot Shirts project. The Department is one of the supporting institutions that have enabled the publisher Berghahn to make all 13 of their core anthropology journals open access.

### **Culture of research integrity**

All staff and postgraduate student research is subject to institutional research ethics approval procedures and follows guidelines established by professional organisations such as the Association of Social Anthropologists. All staff undertake mandatory training in research integrity, and ethics training is embedded within all our undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Anthropological research, however, often poses ethical dilemmas that do not register with formal procedures, in part because of the active involvement of our interlocutors as co-participants in the research process. It calls for on-the-spot judgement and sensitivity on the part of researchers to, often, unpredictable situations. Our culture of research integrity is founded on the premise that all research is a practice of care, entailing not only responsibility but also ongoing responsiveness towards those with whom we study. Thus, we insist on keeping the ethical dimension as a topic at the forefront of the research process itself, rather than allowing it to be relegated to a separate domain of procedure. **Brown** sits on the University's Research Policy Committee and contributes to institutional research strategy. **Árnason** is School of Social Science Ethics Officer and provides guidance to all staff and postgraduate students in the School. He also contributes to ethics approval procedures elsewhere in the University.

## **2. People**

### **Staffing strategy and staff development**

Equality and Diversity are embedded into the culture of our department, with training regularly provided on topics such as unconscious bias and protected characteristics awareness. Anthropology, as part of the School of Social Science, achieved the Athena SWAN Bronze Award in 2017, with the self-assessment team including **Wachowich**, **Vergunst** and **Árnason**.

### **Staffing and recruitment**

Most appointments since REF2014 have been at postdoctoral level to support externally funded research projects. There have also been several staff changes since REF2014. **Leach** left the University in 2014, and **King** left in 2015. **Ingold** retired in 2018 after working part-time since

2015. **Bolton** (2014) and **Whitehouse** (2015) have been promoted to Lectureships, and **Argounova-Low** (2016) and **Vergunst** (2017) to Senior Lectureships. **Brown** was promoted to Senior Lecturer in 2014 and subsequently to a Personal Chair (2017). The previous and current REF periods have seen a continuous career progression of staff from temporary to open-ended contracts and from junior to senior roles. In 2019, **Walklate** was appointed as lecturer to strengthen the Department's teaching and research strengths in Museum Studies. We now have 12 staff including two professors, five senior lecturers and five lecturers.

#### **Staff development and research support**

Demonstrating our commitment to equality and diversity, we ensure that all staff are treated fairly in the allocation of time and opportunity for research. Teaching duties are shared equally among staff, with workload figures made available to all. Staff research is supported by bespoke training, mentorship and appraisal, leave arrangements, flexible scheduling of duties, accommodation of individual staff circumstances and structures of line management.

We have developed bespoke training in writing grant applications for Early Career Researchers, and subsequently delivered this to the entire School of Social Science. We work with the University's Grants Academy (see **REF5a**), which organises training in research ethics and integrity, publishing, preparing grant applications, project management and public engagement. In line with the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers (and supported by the University's Researcher Development Unit) all staff are encouraged to participate in training and career development opportunities, such as HEA recognition, using the Continuous Professional Development Framework for Learning and Teaching. This strong foundation of developmental support for our researchers is reflected in the University's HR Excellence in Research Award (see **REF5a**).

All new members of staff at Lecturer level are assigned a senior colleague as mentor. The progress of every staff member is monitored through annual appraisal meetings, which offer individually tailored advice on publication, funding, grant proposals and professional development.

The School of Social Science honours requests for full-cost replacement backed by external funding and rearranges teaching so that partial funding awards can be taken up. Requests for leave unsupported by external funding are initially considered at Departmental level. Decisions, ratified at School level, take account of funding applications, previous leave and relevant personal circumstances. Leave is scheduled to coincide with stages in a research project that require undivided attention. All staff are treated fairly and equally in the allocation of research leave, and no disadvantage accrues to those whose alpha-rated applications were unfunded.

Staff research is also supported through the scheduling of teaching, which wherever possible, is arranged to release staff from core teaching for one semester per year. Teaching at advanced levels is tied to staff interests, so that ideas generated in course presentation can directly inform research and writing. The requirements of staff with caring and other responsibilities are supported through flexible allocation of teaching and other scheduled duties agreed through discussion with the Head of Department. In the changed working environment necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the department has maintained weekly staff meetings during which issues arising from individual staff circumstances can be managed. This has ensured that all staff have the resources required to work remotely.

Individual staff circumstances are accommodated to enable colleagues to undertake research to the best of their abilities. Some staff members, including postdoctoral research fellows, have had to take periods of absence from work due to illness. Health permitting, they have been re-integrated into our research and teaching programmes. In addition, part-time working and parental/adoption leave has been facilitated for staff.

In 2015 the University introduced an Academic Line Manager system throughout the

institution. In the Department of Anthropology, we incorporated this into our existing Head of Department role, with responsibility for permanent staff, while introducing a separate Academic Line Manager with responsibility for externally funded postdoctoral research staff who liaises with project PIs to ensure that ECRs are well-supported. Feedback from our postdoctoral research fellows indicates that they value a dedicated channel for communication with the Department and the University, independent of their individual project PI or supervisor, on matters not directly related to their research projects.

### REF submission

In developing our REF submission we have followed the University's Code of Practice. Central to this have been principles of inclusivity, consistency, accountability and transparency. The selection of outputs was based solely on quality, assessed through a process of internal and external review, which was discussed in Departmental staff meetings to ensure transparency. Each output proposed by a staff member was reviewed for quality by at least two others at the grade of senior lecturer or above. These assessments formed the basis for the final selection, which was made by the REF Unit Lead, the School Director of Research and Institutional REF leads. Every person involved in the selection of staff, outputs and case studies has completed equality and diversity training tailored to the requirements of the REF process.

### Contribution of postdoctoral researchers

During the REF period, the Department has supported an exceptional number of postdoctoral research fellows (PDRFs) through its externally funded projects. Our PDRFs have contributed to every aspect of the Department's work, and to its vibrant research culture, with significant publications of their own. They are listed below:

<b>ERC Arctic Domus</b>	<b>ESRC Etnos</b>	<b>ESRC JPI Climate</b>	<b>ERC KFI</b>	<b>AHRC Narrative Objects</b>
<b>Loovers Kamerling Salmi Schroer Siragusa Volzhanina Ween</b>	<b>Alymov Arzyutov Nakhshina</b>	<b>Haurrault</b>	<b>Clarke Gatt Harkness Higgin Hodson Scheldeman</b>	<b>Peers</b>

Another PDRF, **Simonetti** (PhD, Aberdeen 2012), was appointed in the Department for three years (2012-15), funded by the University's interdisciplinary research theme on *The North*. We also hosted several visiting postdoctoral fellows with funding from other sources including **Martin** and **Stoll** (both supported by the Fyssen Foundation).

PDRFs were given opportunities to design and teach honours level undergraduate courses relating to their specific expertise under the mentorship of experienced members of staff. Examples include the Level 3 courses, *Linguistic Anthropology*, taught by **Siragusa** and *Society and Nature*, taught by **Loovers**.

With the support of the research training and experience gained while working on their respective projects, the majority of our PDRFs have gone on to further research and/or teaching posts. For example, **Hodson** holds a Lectureship at Glasgow College of Art; **Ween** is a senior curator at the Ethnographic Museum, University of Oslo; **Peers** is Arctic Information Specialist at the Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge; and **Alymov** is a senior research fellow at the Institute of Ethnography in Moscow.

### Research students

PGR numbers in the Department have remained buoyant, and we sustained high numbers of PhD completions (2.9 FTE in 2014, 5 in 2015, 5.35 in 2016, 9.25 in 2017, 5.2 in 2018, 6.8 in 2019, 5.9 in 2020), totalling 40.4 FTE. Additionally, we have welcomed many visiting PhD students, for periods of up to a year, from countries as diverse as Russia, Norway, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Spain, Mexico and Brazil. Our international PGR students form a cohesive and mutually supportive community and have achieved prominence through the collective organisation of workshops, exhibitions and conference panels. Many of our students have achieved individual distinction, further raising the department's profile. For example, **Martin** (2020) was offered a competitive place on the Ostego Institute Summer Seminar in 2017; **Moderbacher** (2019) received an award from the Austrian Film Commission to make a feature length documentary; and **Kuprian** (commenced 2014) won the 2016 Magnus Magnusson essay prize from the Scottish Society for Northern Studies. Our former PhD students have been outstandingly successful in finding employment; of the 29 who completed in 2014-20, 17 moved directly into post-doctoral positions.

### Recruitment and funding

We receive many international applications for admission to our PhD programme, with numbers boosted by the global reputation of the Department and the important ambassadorial role played by present and former students. We have had considerable success in supporting students in their applications for grants and in securing grant funding ourselves. Five PhD students were funded through our two ERC grants, and several others affiliated to these projects received financial support for fieldwork as well as workshop/conference participation. Some of our non-UK/EU students have secured funding from their own national bodies (in Thailand, Chile and Belgium). Five students held studentships from the ERSC, and two from AHRC, during the assessment period, and three were funded by the University under its interdisciplinary theme on *The North*. Thanks to a generous private donation, we fully funded three Galloway Trust PhD Studentships. Many of our students received support from funds administered by the University's Development Trust. For example, from 2008 to 2014, 12 PhD students received support from the Angus Pelham Burn Fund for their fieldwork in a variety of locations in the circumpolar North, and two were supported by the Friends of Aberdeen University Library to work on the University Museum collections.

### Support mechanisms

Every PhD student has two supervisors. While one takes the lead, the other plays an active role, ensuring continuity of supervision. Junior staff gain supervisory experience by being paired with senior mentors. Supervisory meetings take place fortnightly in the first year of the PhD. Students on fieldwork are supported via e-mail and, where possible, by video calls, and during writing-up they meet regularly with their supervisors for feedback and career mentoring. PhD student progress is monitored through two formal assessment reviews: the *Pre-fieldwork review* at the end of the first year and the *End of year two assessment*, by which time students will normally have completed their fieldwork and are beginning to write up. Both reviews are undertaken by two members of staff not on the supervisory team. All students, during their writing-up period, make at least one contribution to the Departmental seminar which is assessed by staff as an indicator of progress. Every semester, the progress of all our PGRs is discussed in a Departmental staff meeting. PGRs and their supervisors are required to submit a progress form, at six-monthly intervals throughout the period of registration, to the University's Postgraduate Research School.

We encourage our PGRs to contribute to workshops and conferences and help them to secure the funds to do so. Besides drawing on project funding, all PGRs may apply for travel awards for conference attendance from the School of Social Science. We actively support PGRs in the development of publications including co-authored papers and edited volumes. Notable examples include: **Joly's** (PhD 2019) widely acclaimed articles in *Extractive Industries and Societies* and *Social Compass* and her co-edited book *Extracting Home*; **Schroer's** (PhD 2014) co-edited book, *Exploring Atmospheres Ethnographically*; **Anusas's** (PhD 2018) book *Surfaces* (co-edited with PDRF **Simonetti**); and **Oehler's** (PhD 2018) authored book *Beyond Wild and Tame* and co-edited *Multi-species Households*.



**Cross-institutional PhD supervision**

Our staff supervise students in other departments in Scotland and beyond. **Vergunst** has co-supervised students with UHI, Glasgow School of Art and the University of Edinburgh; **Bolton** co-supervises with the Anthropology department in St Andrews; **Argounova-Low** co-supervises a PhD student with the Arctic University of Norway (Tromsø) as well as students in the Russian Federation and Greece; **Ingold** has co-supervised with colleagues at the University of Liège, and is currently supervising students at the Universities of Alicante and Barcelona. **Wachowich** has been a member (since 2007) of the Executive Steering Committee for the International PhD School for the Study of Arctic Societies.

**Skills development and career advice**

Along with their peers from St Andrews and Edinburgh, our postgraduates participate in the *Scottish Training in Anthropological Research* (STAR) programme. Established in 2006, this research training consortium delivers intensive residential workshops for MRes and first-year PhD students and, separately, for students in the writing-up phase. Post-fieldwork training includes masterclasses with distinguished visitors and sessions on strategies for publication, grant application, and career opportunities beyond the academic sector. Initially funded by the ESRC Researcher Development Initiative, STAR is now self-funding via the Scottish ESRC Doctoral Training Centre and contributions from each of the Scottish Anthropology departments. Those funded via AHRC participate in a variety of Scottish Graduate School for Arts and Humanities training events across Scotland, giving them opportunities to meet with their peers and develop networks for life after the PhD.

The University's Postgraduate Research School provides a wide range of short courses, open to all our PhD students, on themes including getting started, research ethics and integrity, writing and publishing, research methods, data management, digital skills, wellbeing, networking, impact, career progression and research leadership (see **REF5a**).

**Placements and internships**

We ensure that our postgraduate students gain opportunities to collaborate with external organisations beyond Higher Education. This is partly through fieldwork opportunities at the doctoral level but also includes placements associated with our taught programmes. In recent years, for example, students on the *People and Environment* programme have worked with Scottish Natural Heritage, the National Trust for Scotland and the James Hutton Institute. Students on the Museum Studies MLitt have been placed in organisations throughout Scotland (e.g., National Museums Scotland, the Gordon Highlanders Museum), and internationally (e.g., the Guggenheim, New York). PhD student **Kernohan** held an AHRC funded internship in 2019 in the Dumfries Museum.

**3. Income, infrastructure and facilities****Research funding and income generating strategies**

Despite a challenging environment, our success in gaining external research funding has continued unabated. Alongside numerous smaller grants, significant examples include: ERC Advanced Grants awarded to **Anderson** (EUR2.5M) and **Ingold** (EUR2.4M); AHRC Research Grants awarded to **Brown** and **Argounova-Low** (GBP556K) and **Vergunst** (totalling GBP157K); two ESRC awards to **Anderson** (ESRC Ethnos GBP517K, ESRC JPI Climate GBP398K); funding from the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) for **Wachowich** (GBP70K) and from the British Council Newton Fund for **Bolton** (GBP5K).

**Operational infrastructure and research support**

The unit benefits from the support of the University's Research and Innovation Team including the Grants Academy for research grant applications and management and from IT Services for procurement and data management. (See **REF5a**) Monthly School Forums provide opportunities for staff to engage with the research support teams in the University as well as to familiarise

themselves with institutional guidance and external research environments; recent topics include research data management and research culture.

Staff and PGRs have access to high quality library and information systems. Every research student has a computer and desk space in dedicated accommodation adjacent to the Department. With grants to support new courses, we have extended the University Library's anthropology collections. We work closely with the University's extensive Museum and Special Collections, assembled over five centuries, with **Brown, Vergunst, Wachowich** and **Walklate** appointed as Honorary Curatorial Fellows. The Department has established a multimedia workstation for digitising diverse media for analysis and editing and for producing analogue and digital media from paper printouts to DVDs and web media, depending on the technological needs of users. Effective dissemination of our research is vital, and we seek to enable open access wherever possible, supported by the Scholarly Communications Service (see **REF5a**).

The University offers a wide range of pump-priming funds including its Global Challenge Internal Research Fund, Principal's Interdisciplinary Fund and Knowledge Exchange and Commercialisation Fund. Funding is also available to support the purchase of new equipment and to cover Open Access publication costs. The School of Social Science allocates an annual staff allowance for travel and conference attendance, and further support comes from the Department's share of overheads from external income.

Our expectation is that every member of staff is either engaged in externally funded research or preparing a new project with the aim of submitting a funding application. We discuss our plans in the collegial setting of our termly Research Away Days where we consider research strategy, report progress on funding applications and future publications and evaluate our thematic priorities. Contributing to our success is our cohesive research ethos, backed by shared and clearly articulated thematic priorities and supported through regular seminars and research co-ordination meetings. The weekly Departmental seminar, financially supported by the School of Social Science, is attended by 20-30 staff and PGRs and addressed by visiting speakers from home and overseas. We also run informal lunch-time seminars for staff to present work-in-progress to colleagues, and our PGRs run their own reading group and writing-up seminars.

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

##### Contribution to the economy and society

It is a hallmark of all our research that we involve the diverse practitioners and public with whom we work from project inception to completion. For example, *Arctic Domus* has worked with Indigenous communities around the circumpolar North, belonging to five Nations (Gwich'in, Saami, Nenets, Evenki, Sakha), sponsoring local initiatives of cultural and historical revival and in the support of livelihoods based on fishing and reindeer herding. In line with this, project researchers have made a point of publishing in languages accessible to Indigenous people. *Arctic Domus* is singled out in a 2019 Scottish Government report as "an excellent example of how social and natural sciences can be combined to better understand and support remote communities and economies in the Arctic". *KFI* researchers, likewise, have worked with local communities, conservationists and artists in a series of projects ranging from the management of native pinewoods in Scotland, post-earthquake reconstruction in Japan and Italy, marine conservation in Argentina, skills training for refugees and migrants in Belgium, to experiments in the arts of collaboration with theatre practitioners and arts educators. The *KFI Spring Gathering* (May 2017), with its week-long programme of talks, performances, film screenings, workshops and discussion events, brought together over 70 participants, both scholars and practitioners, from around the world.

Represented by **Wishart** and **Anderson**, the Department is a partner in the Centre for Indigenous Conservation and Development Alternatives (CICADA), an international, interdisciplinary, and inter-sector organisation with members from NGOs, Indigenous governments, and Indigenous community groups. CICADA has created a platform for transferring knowledge on the challenges faced by Indigenous peoples throughout the world,

creating alternative conservation and development strategies and advocating for Indigenous rights as envisioned by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

**Vergunst's** long-term research on landscape heritage in rural Aberdeenshire, through the AHRC *Connected Communities* programme, has directly involved community partners in oral history, archaeology and archival study. Dissemination to the wider public has also been facilitated by a Heritage Lottery Fund award to the community group Bailies of Bennachie, resulting in an app "Digital Bennachie Colony Trail" that has been downloaded over 800 times since its launch in 2018 and is used by the Aberdeenshire Ranger Service. A further AHRC award enabled **Vergunst** to bring together community heritage groups working on similar projects in Sheffield, York and Cardiff, along with Aberdeenshire partners, to share learning experiences.

**Brown's** work with the four Blackfoot Nations involves extensive collaboration and public engagement in Canada, the USA and the UK. A public panel discussion on repatriation, held at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter, was attended by around 120 people and contributed to the subsequent agreement in 2020 by Exeter City Council to repatriate significant Blackfoot cultural patrimony to the Siksika First Nation. Workshops have been held in Blackfoot community venues to inform local people about collections in the UK and to discuss possibilities for further research in Europe. This work has developed into a research programme with staff at Central St Martins School of Art and the University of Lethbridge looking at the digitization of Blackfoot collections.

Over the assessment period we have curated multiple exhibitions in museums and community spaces in the UK, Canada, China, Russia and Norway (to name but a few), all of which were supported with public lectures and other engagement events. **Brown's** outreach grant from the Foundation for Canadian Studies in the UK allowed the University to host the photographic exhibition *Scarred/Sacred Water* (September 2014-January 2015), which raised awareness of the environmental and societal impacts of the energy industry in Alberta, Canada. The exhibition *Aberdonians in the Americas: Migrants and adventurers from Mexico to Paraguay* (January-May 2017), co-curated by **Bolton**, was held in the University's King's Museum and included two public lectures. **Wachowich** and her Mittimatalik Arnait Miqusuqutit Collective colleagues have produced digital installations for a range of international venues including the Art Gallery of Ontario (2018), the University of Oslo Museum (2018) and the British Museum (2020-21).

### Research networks and partnerships

Central to the Department's research strategy is partnership and collaboration, both with other academic and international institutions, and with the communities with which we work. We support the University's commitment to interdisciplinarity which is at the centre of its Aberdeen 2040 strategic plan (See **REF5a**).

During the assessment period, we have hosted several externally funded research networks including: *The Political Ecology of Coastal Societies*, led by **Anderson** and **Wishart**, which links scholars from the UK and Japan (ESRC, GBP50K); *Creative Landscape Futures*, led by **Vergunst**, linking partners and stakeholders in Scotland (AHRC, GBP36K); *Etnos and Minzu Theory*, led by **Anderson** (Leverhulme, GBP124K); and the *Blackfoot-UK Museums Network*, led by **Brown**, with the Cambridge University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, the Royal Albert Memorial Museum in Exeter and the four Blackfoot Nations (Leverhulme, GBP51K).

**Vergunst** has collaborated with University of Aberdeen staff from Archaeology, Education and Museums in research on community heritage in Scotland, funded through the AHRC *Connected Communities* programme. He has published with Dr Helen Graham of York University and other UK colleagues on research arising from a previous AHRC, *Heritage Legacies*.

Research carried out by staff, including within the ERC-funded *Arctic Domus* project, was facilitated with formal MOUs between the University of Aberdeen and the Museum of Ethnography and Anthropology (St. Petersburg), Tuva State University, Irkutsk State Technical University, the Northern Arctic Federal University in Arkhangelsk and the University of Alberta. In

addition, the ESRC/JPI funded *HUMANOR* project, brought together Aberdeen anthropologists and archaeologists with Aberdeen's James Hutton Institute, the University of Lapland's Arctic Centre, the Norwegian Institute for Cultural Heritage Management, the Centre for Arctic Research of the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous, Okrug, the A.P. Vinogradov Institute of Geochemistry SB RAS, Irkutsk, the Scientific Research Centre of the Arctic, Salekhard, the Ájtte Swedish Mountain and Sámi Museum, Jokkmokk and the University of Uppsala.

We have developed partnerships with a range of South American universities during the current REF assessment period. **Ingold** and **Simonetti** (PhD 2012, PDRF 2012-15, now at the Catholic University of Chile, Santiago) led a project entitled *Solid Fluids in the Anthropocene*, funded by the British Academy under its International Partnerships and Mobility scheme, with a view to establishing collaboration in teaching and research in anthropology and archaeology between Scotland and Chile. **Bolton**, with funding from the British Council/Newton Fund, hosted a workshop in Montevideo, Uruguay in 2017, under its Trilateral Workshops Scheme aimed at establishing partnerships between institutions in the UK, Uruguay and Brazil (São Paulo State). The workshop brought together 42 researchers, including 31 ECRs, to discuss human rights, gender equity and environmental sustainability. Participants compared material from Brazil, Guyana, Peru, Chile, Colombia, Uruguay, Bolivia and Mexico, as well as from the UK and other European countries.

The *Scottish Centre for Himalayan Research*, directed by **Mills**, collaborates with historians at the British Library, the London-based International Dunhuang Project, the Rubin Museum in New York, archaeologists at the Leipzig Centre for Central Asian Studies and the School of Oriental and African Studies, London, legal specialists at the Centre for Sociolegal Studies, Oxford and religious specialists at Columbia University and the Buddhist Digital Resources Centre in New York. It has longstanding links with the Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh, the Environment Office of the Central Tibetan Administration and, more recently, with the International China Dialogue Institute and the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development.

Partnerships with museums are central to our work. **Bolton** is collaborating with the National Historical Archive of Mining, El Alto, Bolivia, to develop a digitised archive of photographs of Bolivian mines held in Aberdeen; both **Anderson** and **Brown** led projects in partnership with the Cambridge University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology; and **Brown** and **Argounova-Low** with the British Museum and the National Museum of the Arts of the Sakha Republic.

### Visiting scholars and Honorary appointments

Between 2014 and 2020 the Department welcomed numerous visitors from international universities affiliated to our funded research programmes or to individual staff. These visitors collaborate with us on writing and other projects and contribute guest lectures to our postgraduate programmes. Our research culture is enhanced by the active participation in seminars and other activities of a vibrant community of Honorary fellows. As well as collaborating with us on specific research projects, these visitors provide informal mentorship and advice to our PGRs and ECRs.

### Contributions to the sustainability of the discipline

All staff are involved in enhancing the profile of our discipline nationally and internationally. Many of us review grant applications for research councils and scientific bodies including: UK Economic and Social Research Council (**Vergunst**); Carnegie Trust (**Brown**); British Academy (**Bolton**); Austrian Science Foundation (**Brown**); Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada (**Anderson**, **Brown**); and the Leverhulme Trust (**Vergunst**). **Ingold** served on the evaluation panel SH5 for European Research Council Consolidator Grants (2016) and is a committee member of the Association of Social Anthropologists. **Brown** was a member of the AHRC Peer Review College from 2014-2020 and sits on the UK Future Leaders Fellowships PRC and the British Council Newton Trust Panel for Arts and Humanities. She is a member of the Scottish Graduate School for Arts and Humanities (SGSAH) *Discipline + Catalyst* for Cultural and Museum Studies and the Advisory Board for the Smithsonian Institution's Summer Institute in Museum Anthropology programme (SIMA), 2018-21. **Wachowich** is an Expert Panel Member



of Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Large Grant Review Committee (2017-2018) and a member of the Canada Research Chairs (CRC) Program Review College.

All staff routinely peer review articles and book manuscripts and sit on the advisory boards of academic journals relevant to our sub-disciplines. **Rasanayagam** is on the International Advisory Board of the *Central Asian Survey*; **Walklate** is Managing Editor and Board Member of *Museums and Society*; **Wachowich** sits on the Advisory Board of *BC Studies*; **Anderson** is on the Editorial Advisory Board for *Sibirica: The Journal of Siberian Studies* and **Argounova-Low** was Assistant Editor for that journal from 2006 to 2017. **Árnason** co-edits the journal *Mortality* and is a member of the council of the Association for the Study of Death in Society. Ingold and **Anderson** edit high profile book series published by Routledge. *Anthropological Studies of Creativity and Perception*, under Ingold's general editorship, has now reached its ninth published volume (since 2008), and five more are in the pipeline. *Arctic Worlds: Communities, Political Ecology and Ways of Knowing*, under the editorship of **Anderson**, has published four volumes since 2018.

Our staff are prominent in organising conferences and workshops, and in convening conference panels. A highlight was *Beyond Perception*, held in Aberdeen in September 2015, and designed both as a celebration of the Department since its foundation in 2002, and as a showcase for its research, while capitalising on our concurrently hosting two ERC Advanced Grant projects (*KFI* and *Arctic Domus*). With some 160 participants from around the world, the symposium provided a platform for presenting the research of both projects and included a series of postgraduate and early career sessions.

Along with colleagues at the Universities of Edinburgh and St Andrews, and under the aegis of the STAR consortium, we hosted the 2014 Decennial Conference of the Association of Social Anthropologists, held in Edinburgh in June 2014. The Department played a key role in the organisation of the conference *Conversations from the North* in connection with the 2017 Rectors' Forum of the University of the Arctic which was held in Aberdeen. ECRs in the department were involved in training graduate students from universities from around the circumpolar north who attended the event, and several staff gave presentations at the conference. As Director of the University's Research Theme on the North, Ingold was directly responsible for bringing these meetings to the University, thanks to which we have been invited to lead a major Scottish government initiative to expand the work of the University of the Arctic in Scotland.

#### Other Indicators of wider influence

All staff are routinely invited to present at symposia and give guest lectures nationally and internationally. Since January 2014, for example, **Ingold** has presented 39 keynote addresses and 44 special lectures in 19 different countries. Highlights include the Royal Anthropological Institute's Huxley Memorial Lecture (2014), the Dewey Lectures delivered at the University of Rennes in 2016, the plenary lecture at the RAI Conference on *Art, Materiality and Representation* in 2018 and the plenary address at the International Society for Ethnology and Folklore (SIEF) Congress in 2019. In recognition of his services in connection with Finnish universities, in 2014, **Ingold** was named a Knight, First Class, of the Order of the White Rose of Finland. In the same year he was awarded the Huxley Memorial Medal, the highest honour of the Royal Anthropological Institute. He has received Honorary Doctorates from the Universities of Leuphana (2015) and Lapland (2019). **Brown's** co-authored book *Blackfoot Shirts in Museum Spaces* received an Honourable Mention for the AAA Council for Museum Anthropology Book Award (2018). **Anderson's** work on the history of science in Eurasia was awarded the 2019 *Ab Imperio* prize for the best study of the history of diversity in Northern Eurasia.