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| Institution: Staffordshire University |
| Unit of Assessment: UOA32 – Art and Design: History, Practice, and Theory Note: names of people whose outputs are submitted to this UOA are in bold |
| 1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy |

a. Overview.

Staffordshire University's Department of Art and Design is recognized for its leading research activity within its three research themes of: Ceramics and the Artist; Communities in Development; and Audiences, Technologies, and Attention. Our research culture is led by an ethos of interdisciplinary innovation and practice-based research. We proactively collaborate with industry, arts, and social partners to drive impact and new discoveries. Our research is thematic and guided by the close connection between academic research and civic commitments, and an ongoing commitment to fostering **academic leadership** and **social impact** through co-creation, co-production and co-delivery (REF5a, Section 2). Our research is strongly driven by the legacy of the pottery industry that Stoke-on-Trent is famed for. The 'Potteries' has a distinct regional identity that remains synonymous with the ceramics industry and is an archetypal example of a post-industrial urban region with its attendant economic and social impact. Our research activities in ceramics history, community development and audience participation are all shaped by this regional identity.

Since REF2014, Staffordshire University has undertaken institutional developments which have enhanced the Department's research. The Department now benefits from infrastructure within the University's **School of Digital, Technologies and Arts**, which was established in 2019. Its mission is to undertake sustainable research and teaching in the context of the developing digital and industrial world. With an increase in specialist resources for digital research, and strengthened pathways to interdisciplinary working, the School has proved an invaluable boon to our research environment.

Our submission reflects the Department's vibrant, evolving research culture. The Department encourages its research staff to undertake high quality research in a variety of output formats, including innovative artworks, curatorial projects, design works, and academic and commercial publication. Researchers are supported as they engage with academic partners and with domestic and international arts and design organizations, both in leadership roles and in contributing practice and heritage activities (Sections 2b, 4). In line with the University's Research Strategy on the enhancement of collaborative research and civic university agenda (REF5a, Section 2), recent researcher initiatives include the establishment of the **C3 Research Centre** for Creative Industries and Creative Communities (2019), an interdisciplinary partnership with researchers submitted to

UOA34, and the renewal of the international academic network **Topographies of the Obsolete** (2019) (Section 1b).

b. Research and Impact Strategy.

The department's research and impact strategy is **to use thematic research (Section 1a) to support the institutional strategies of building research, capacity and capability, enhancing research collaboration and enabling and facilitating impact (REF5a, Section 1)**. The impact of the department's research focuses on cultural and social enrichment and wellbeing through projects that investigate the impact of globalisation on audience, place, industry, community, and identity. The strategy is underpinned by a recognition of the benefits of the breadth of research methods and modes of public engagement employed by its researchers.

The Department's **Research Themes** are driven by global dynamics and its relationship to the unique social and historic features of individual and community experiences, such as the 'Potteries' (Section 1a):

Ceramics and the Artist

The investigation of expanded discourse within contemporary ceramic practice. This theme is practical and historiographical. Motivated by the history of the ceramics industry in the 'Potteries', it studies how interdisciplinary arts practice can preserve and re-imagine cultural heritage when work maintains traditional methodologies and connections to disappearing industrial practices and workforces. (**Brownsword, Branthwaite**)

Communities in Development

Research in this theme considers how artists and designers can relate to different societies. The theme explores how art and design can build post-industrial communities, contribute to wider social development, and inform historical preservation and urban renewal. (**Francis, Dobson, Branthwaite**)

Audiences, Technologies, and Attention

Examining how emergent social, cultural, and technological practices shape the ways that artworks and designs make – or seek to make – audiences. Research in this theme considers the roles that artists and designers can take in producing digital works, the overlaps between 'audiences' and 'users', and digital methodologies for investigating non- or pre-digital contexts. (**Brown, Power, Day, Key, Buckingham**)

These themes drive our research culture, underpinning the success and sustainability of our research environment. We have enjoyed **significant thematic research achievements over the**

assessment period. Our thematic research upholds a collaborative environment where research happens both *about* and *through* the arts.

Ceramics and the Artist: we have developed new, interdisciplinary practice and leadership in re-evaluating, preserving, and re-imagining Stoke-on-Trent's cultural ceramic heritage, and, importantly, its skills. **Branthwaite** led the pioneering mixed-media project **Vessel** (Branthwaite, 2015), which examines how the concept of exhibiting handmade ceramics relates to digital technologies to reproduce and displace unique items. The project was curated within the international 3D Glitch exhibition (2015-17) (drugo-more.hr/en/3d-glitch/). **Brownsword** led projects which make Stoke-on-Trent's ceramics heritage the subject of international academic enquiry and innovative new research-led teaching. Located within C3's **Ceramic Cultures, Practices, and Debates Research Theme** (led by **Brownsword**), the international research network **Topographies of the Obsolete** (Brownsword, 2014-20) connects 18 academic organizations and 97 participants from 13 countries to investigate and curate the international legacy of Stoke-on-Trent's historic, shuttered ceramics factories. It explores how a single post-industrial location can be related to impact in global cultures, economics, and politics (topographies.uib.no/). His projects, **FACTORY** (Brownsword, 2017-20) and **Re-Apprenticed** (Brownsword, 2015-20), explored the relationship between present-day artistic collaboration and the preservation of lapsing artisanal practices. The works were exhibited at the British Ceramics Biennial (BCB), the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), and the Ashmolean Museum. **National Treasure** (Brownsword, 2014-19) used a mixed-media exhibition to examine the civic and ethical implications of ceramics production shifting from private, closed workshops to the 'artisan on display' or 'factory tourism' model. These projects consolidated our leading position within ceramics worldwide, underlining our commitment to preserving Stoke-on-Trent's industrial heritage and using heritage preservation and recovery as a springboard for innovative research, teaching, and arts practice. This research contributes to the social and cultural health of the region, whose identity is grounded in ceramics, as part of University's civic responsibility, and priority (Ref 5a, Section 2).

Communities in Development: we led interdisciplinary research projects where arts methodologies combine conceptual work with social impact. **Branthwaite** demonstrated the potential of joining visual cultures practice with forensic archaeology to produce histories of Holocaust events in **Finding Treblinka - Artists Respond** (Branthwaite, 2015-17), as part of the wider **Finding Treblinka** project led by PI **Sturdy Colls** (UOA15). In conjunction with the C3 Centre's **Art and Society Research Theme** (led by **Francis**), **Francis** undertook extensive, inventive collaborations with research end-users. Her **Rethinking the Brownfields** (Francis, 2014-18) examined how documentary video and mapping reframes deprived and unclaimed spaces, contributing to urban renewal. **Community Maker** and **The Portland Inn Project** (Francis, 2015-

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present) use socially engaged arts practices to investigate how deprived communities respond to, and participate in, local government urban renewal projects (see also Impact Case Study **Driving urban regeneration and empowering communities through socially engaged arts practice**). The Local Government Association now uses the project as an example of best practice (local.gov.uk/people-culture-place-role-culture-placemaking). **Estate Agency** (Francis, 2017-19) studied community responses to urban renewal and gentrification and to the possibility of lost regional identity, repurposing empty high street shop units as exhibition spaces that emphasize the concept of homogeneity. With the research project and Impact Case Study, **Cancer and Sexuality: Opening Different Therapeutic Conversations and Challenging Assumptions Using the Language of Art Textiles** (Dobson, 2014-20), **Dobson** used textiles methodologies to create possible visual languages that assist therapeutic professionals in speaking to cancer sufferers about sexual problems. **Power** has brought design and pedagogic expertise to interdisciplinary settings. Her **Functional Medical Products** (Power, 2016-17) involved working with charity Little Heroes Cancer Trust on the collaborative design and production of a safety harness suitable for child cancer sufferers who have central venous catheters. The harness is now in commercial production with the trade name 'Tookie' (tookie.co/about-us/). Her **Creative Challenge-Based Learning** (Power, 2014-18) developed a methodology for implementing interdisciplinary challenge-led learning in undergraduate teaching, resulting in benefits to students' understanding of commerce and entrepreneurship.

Audiences, Technologies, and Attention: we have produced high-quality, interdisciplinary research outputs in collaboration with a variety of academic, and cultural partners (Section 4a). **Brown** specializes in developing innovative combinations of visual cultures and theoretical analysis, producing outputs within an overarching body of practice-based research, **Throwing Voices: Celebrity and the Attention Economy** (Brown, 2016-21), undertaken as part of the Common Culture artist group (commonculture.co.uk/). **Vent** (Brown, 2016) critiques the television talent show genre as imposing unspoken expectations and deformative cultural values onto the possibility of audience participation. **The Age of Chopping Off Heads** (Brown, 2018) appropriates the format of confessional celebrity interviews to explore how mass entertainment packages the expectation for private or forbidden knowledge as a means of generating attention as cultural capital. **I Can't Go On, I'll Go On, I Can't Go On, I'll Go On** (Brown, 2016) explores the commercialization of charisma, confidence, and audience participation in stand-up comedy performance. **Day** spearheaded the use of digital media in critiquing how internet-capable technologies change day-to-day life. His **Airplane Mode** (Day, 2015) examined how reading styles can empower otherwise passive audiences of online written material. **Invisible Layers** (Day, 2015) critiqued methods by which smartphone digital mapping software assimilates and reconstructs the user. **Epicentres** (Day, 2015-16) explored how large-scale data-collection infrastructures affect day-to-day human experience. Work by **Key** focused on how contemporary arts discussion

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encourages artists to foster a shared critical language through their artworks. Her practice-based painting research **Different Kinds of Matter: Propositions on the Conditions of Contemporary Painting Language** (Key, 2014-15) queries how cultural debates have shaped twenty-first century painters' use of an 'abstract' and 'figurative' critical binary. **Buckingham** is currently developing his research interests in the areas of visual storytelling and narrative illustration based on his successful series of children's publications.

The Department complies fully with the University's Open Access research mandate and policy (REF5a, Section 2) and is working towards full compliance with the Concordat on Open Research Data. It has followed the University's Statement on the Responsible Use of Metrics in preparing this REF submission.

Future Plans

Our research over the assessment period provides a base from which we will deliver continued, increasing success through the coming years. We will continue to focus on **Research Capacity, Leadership, Impact, and Income** (Ref 5a, Sections 2 and 3).

Research Capacity: Since 2014 we have expanded the capacity and size of our research base (Section 2a). Our future aims are to:

- By the next REF exercise, use training and recruitment to increase the UOA's submission size from 7.1FTE to >15 FTE.

We will do this by providing targeted support to researchers and recruiting established and high-potential researchers to expand within our areas of research focus (where possible recruiting ECRs from the graduating PGR body). The initiation of the Art and Design: Culture and Society Research Group utilises a steering group model to provide representation for staff at all research career stages. The research group will:

- Mentor and support staff who are not currently research active and who want to be.
 - Develop research projects to include and provide ECRs with research experience.
 - Increase visiting titleholders through ongoing engagement with external expertise in the field.
 - Instigate research events on existing thematic concerns whilst building and defining new areas for growth.
- Continue to embed training and support processes that help researchers build on their strengths.

The annual Performance and Development Review (PDR) provides staff the opportunity to reflect on their activities, set objectives aligned to the School and University strategies, and

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identify development needs. The PDR process prioritises the discussion of career development and aspirations, helping to identify and encourage the undertaking of relevant training.

- *Continue to increase sustainable PGR recruitment.*

We have grown numbers in line with University's call for the 'postgraduate research community [to grow] by 10% per annum' (Research, Innovation and Impact Strategy (RII Strategy)). We will consolidate this success by continuing to increase the size of the PGR environment in a steady and well-supported manner, including building PGR funding into collaborative work, and making proportionate increases to PGR support and resources. The Art and Design: Culture and Society Research Group will further embed PGRs into the department's research culture, boosting PGR activity and recruitment by providing them an interdisciplinary research platform within the University.

Research Leadership: We are cultural and academic leaders within our fields. To expand our position, we will:

- *Increase national and international research collaborations with industry, social, and academic partners.*

We have collaborated with >85 external partners throughout the assessment period (Section 4a). We will continue to foster sophisticated and innovative practice-based research, including co-production, and increase our international presence. We will do this by extending our national and international networks and founding new ones, by recruiting a diverse range of prominent visiting fellows and professors, and by embracing new opportunities to disseminate our research.

- *Increase local, interdisciplinary collaborations within the University.*

We encourage researchers to join and take an active role in the C3 Research Centre. Ongoing and future projects involve innovative research questions and distinctive methods that support interdisciplinary work across the University. These include collaborations such as **Alchemy and Metamorphosis** (2021), a collaboration with the V&A, Wedgwood, Spode Museum Heritage Trust, the Potteries Museum, and the Brampton Museum to explore the digitization of historic North Staffordshire ceramic collections and their implications for ongoing creative work, and interdisciplinary preparatory work for **Topographies of the Obsolete (Stage 3)**, to be undertaken in conjunction with the University of Bergen (September 2021).

Impact: We partner with our research's users, shaping and deploying our work and methods to generate new knowledge and meet real-world needs. Our future aims are to:

- *Increase collaborations with research users.*

With support from the University's Employer Partnerships team, we will co-create original, significant, and rigorous research with the people and organizations who use it to ensure that impact priorities are built in from inception. We will continue to use our research to drive urban renewal and influence local government policy in Stoke-on-Trent and the surrounding region. **Brownsword's** projects continue to use co-creation with former industry artisans as a method of exploring new thinking and creative applications of near-obsolete craft knowledge within North Staffordshire's ceramic sector, engaging new audiences with the value of regional heritage.

- *Lead the academic preservation and study of Stoke-on-Trent's ceramics heritage.*

Brownsword's current and future collaborations with the local heritage sector, (including Spode Museum Trust, V&A/World of Wedgwood, Brampton Museum and Art Gallery, and the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery), have continued to forge new connections with historic collections through innovative intersections of digital technology and the practice of endangered industrial skills. **Brownsword** as Trustee has helped steer the Spode Museum Heritage Trust's successful application to the National Heritage Lottery Fund for GBP97,500 (2019) to undertake a development feasibility study. The award gives us a leading position in the development of strategy and vision for a new museum space.

- *Continue to develop impact monitoring and evaluation measures and embed them into our workstreams.*

In collaboration with the University's Research Impact Manager, we will foreground impact awareness within our work, use specialist Impact Tracker project-management software to collect impact assessments, and produce Impact Case Studies as a matter of course.

Income: We seek to secure our research activity by increasing funding from stable, sustainable sources:

- *Increase research funding per FTE by >50% and increase strategic funder and research council funding to >30% of total.*

We will increase total income derived from research avenues, which will in turn expand the scope and prominence of our research. Our emphasis is on enhancing a sustainable research environment through a robust, diverse network of major funding partners. We will increase our engagement with these partners, who include the UK Research Councils and Horizon Europe 2021-2027 (over the assessment period, research council funding was ~24% of total income).

- *Increase our grant application training and support infrastructure for researchers.*

We are co-ordinating with the University's Research Innovation and Impact Service (RIIS) to create new standardized training for writing applications for external grants. With the C3

Centre, we are increasing mentoring available for grant application writers. Our intention is to empower individual researchers by providing the skills necessary to thrive in this new situation.

2. People

a. Staff Strategy.

Since 1 January 2014, the Department has made 3 new research appointments: **Brownsword**, to Professor (2019); **Buckingham**, to Lecturer (2018); and **Power**, to Associate Dean – Students (2018).

With these appointments, we have integrated high-capacity established researchers into our research culture, creating a sustainable base from which we can develop research successes from within. They contribute to achieving our **strategic objective of expanding on our existing expertise and disciplinary areas of excellence to achieve a dynamic, steadily growing research environment**.

To guide this growth, the School has recruited new Associate Deans for Research and Enterprise (ADRE), **Dodd** (University of Sheffield) (UOA12) and **Seker** (Northumbria University) (UOA3). **Dodd** and **Seker** form part of a University-wide investment in the ADREs to give strategic guidance within Schools. They provide substantial expertise – including mentoring and coaching capacity – in overseeing research and enterprise and in co-ordinating expansions in research capacity and interdisciplinary networks.

We added additional research capacity and knowledge through the strategic appointment of 5 visiting titleholders. Andrew **Lawrence** (Global Executive Creative Director, Elmwood design studio) was appointed as Visiting Professor of Innovation and Margaret **O'Rorke** (independent artist, Cast Light) as Visiting Fellow. **O'Rorke** is a renowned porcelain lighting artist. She delivered masterclasses and small group tutorials to undergraduate and postgraduate students based on her extensive practice-based research and industry knowledge. In collaboration with the C3 Centre, we recruited Kevin **Millward** (Course Director, Clay College and Gallery) and Iain **Cartwright** (Executive Director, BCB) as Visiting Fellows. **Millward** is a key figure in studio ceramics, and, notably, a consultant to the Great Pottery Throw Down (Channel 4). His recruitment brought extensive technical knowledge to the Department, establishing a pathway for staff and PGR exchanges with Clay College. As part of the Department's growing relationship with Jingdezhen Ceramics Institute (JCI), we recruited **Hou Tiejun** (Professor, JCI) as Visiting Professor to study ceramic production and culture in Stoke-on-Trent and the region.

Of the nine staff being returned in this UOA, six have fractional contracts (**Brown, Brownsword, Day, Dobson, Francis, and Key**). These contracts are implemented strategically, ensuring that our research staff is composed of active artists who are prominent in their fields, at the cusp of new developments in arts practice, and able to maintain networks throughout their fields and commit to long-term arts projects. **Brownsword's** prominence and extensive networks have since led to University staff and PGRs (Angela **Atkinson**, Ed **Austin**, David **Edwards**, Emma **Fallows**, Tim **Forrester**, Richard **Harper**, Vicki **McGarvey**, and Mike **Whitehead**) showcasing their work and expanding their research into new areas through **Externalising the Archive**, a digital curation project in collaboration with the BCB (britishceramicsbiennial.com/event/externalising-the-archive/) (2019). **Francis's** professional practice operates through the AirSpace Gallery (Stoke-on-Trent), her fractional contract providing her time to be a director of the organization.

b. Staff Development.

The Department provides an environment where its researchers can prosper, supporting growth in capacity, capability, and collaboration (REF5a, Section 3). It invests in their development with access to training, guidance, and resources, it implements clear and well-communicated policies, and it provides pathways to promotion opportunities.

The Department implements the principles of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers (revised 2019). The University has been recognized for its work to support research and provide career development opportunities to researchers through the award of the HR Excellence in Research accreditation (June 2018).

In alignment with the University's 2030 Academic Strategy and the School's Workload Planning Document (WPD), all new staff undertake a formal induction process including an onboarding pack with information on the organizational structure and support sources and a mentor to introduce the research culture and key colleagues.

To ensure ongoing career development and growth of its research capacity, the Department provides academic staff with bi-annual development reviews, providing staff opportunities to discuss their development and training needs. As specified in the WPD, the development review process focuses on 'what staff have learn[ed]' about their involvement in research and teaching, and about building 'connectivity with colleagues, experts and industry'. All managers who conduct development reviews receive training on how to connect researchers to the appropriate resources and on how to set appropriate development objectives.

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The Department seeks to promote research staff and expand our Professoriate. The four career stages for academics are: Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Associate Professor, and Professor.

Promotions to Senior Lecturer follow an established HERA process. Promotions to professorial levels are considered by the Professorial Conferment Committee (REF Code of Practice) which includes external members to ensure sector standards are adhered to. The Department draws on the expertise and experience of its own staff to ensure the provision of discipline-specific support for all researchers seeking promotion. Academic staff seeking promotion are encouraged to attend support sessions and receive mentoring from senior colleagues, co-ordinated by the ADREs and (where applicable) the C3 Centre Directors. Since 1 January 2014, the following promotions have been awarded: **Brown**, to Professor (2014); and **Francis**, to Associate Professor (2016).

The Department promotes a culture of continuous, collaborative learning for all researchers. It provides access to Staff Development Fund (SDF) money from the School to support their ongoing learning. The SDF includes funding for PhD study for academic staff who are seeking the degree. Since 1 January 2014, two staff within the Department have accessed this funding to undertake PhD degrees (Dan **Lewis** and John **Hudson**). The School provides this funding as part of the University's commitment to having >50% of academic staff hold PhD degrees ([RII Strategy](#)). The Department has established working groups to instil this culture into its environment. As part of C3, the Art and Design Research Group provides an informal opportunity for our researchers to share methodologies, research opportunities, and links to external organizations and funding sources.

RIIS provides a Research Training and Development Programme (RTDP). The Department encourages researchers to enrol in all RTDP sessions and to contribute to the Programme where possible. **Brown** and **Power** both contribute teaching to RTDP (Practice-based Research REF Submissions and Interdisciplinary Research). The RTDP is delivered through online and in-person workshops, which are organized around the distinct themes of '*You*', '*Your Research*', and '*Your University*'.

Research impact is an important component of the RTDP, with specific workshops available for all staff and department researchers receiving one to one guidance from the Research Impact Manager to develop impact strategies.

The RTDP is reviewed regularly and updated annually to ensure that it meets researchers' needs. It is informed by the ADREs in consultation with academics and the Professoriate, and by the return from the University's Culture Employment and Development in Academic Research Survey (CEDARS) (Summer 2020, hereafter annually).

c. PGRs

The Department is prioritizing building a sustainable, steady growth in PGR numbers by increasing the quality of the PhD environment and the supervision experience. There are currently four PGRs enrolled within the Department, two of whom are pursuing full-time study.

We select PhD students to ensure they have the relevant background, skills, and motivation. Development of PhD students starts with the application process, which requires a research proposal and interview with the supervisory team and an independent panel member (ensuring as far as possible a gender balance).

The Department provides expert supervisory support to all PGRs. Each PhD candidate has a team of two supervisors who are specialists in the PhD project's field. All supervisory staff are trained in the University's policies governing research supervision and researcher integrity and ethics. They receive ongoing training and informal collaborative links through the University's central Supervision Training Network. Three staff within the Department have received the Graduate School's Research Supervision Training necessary to supervise PGRs. The Department encourages staff to complete the Research Supervision Training, which the Graduate School provides biannually.

The Department has increased the supervision provision by encouraging interdisciplinary multi-supervisor PGR supervisions with other Departments. Across the University, a total of 9 PGRs are supervised by researchers in the Department, including 5 as principal supervisions). **Brown** supervises Anderson's sound/contemporary art research with Boehm and Payling (UOA 34). **Brownsword** supervises Fallow's research in the use of mixed digital reality to interpret historic ceramic collections with Ma and Cartwright (UOA 34). This increase is informed by the RII Strategy (REF5a, Section 3). It is advantageous because it familiarizes PGRs with a wider-than-normal spectrum of working methods and disciplinary knowledge. We use this method for a guided expansion of our interdisciplinary research base. In the 20-21 intake **Brown** will be principal supervisor for Hasting's Contemporary Art/Geography research with **Tweed** (UOA 15).

The Department requires that full-time PGRs have a minimum of 10 meetings with their supervision team per annum. After each supervision meeting the student and supervisors co-sign a reporting form that summarizes progress and short- and long-term goals. As well as producing a record of PGR progress, this mechanism familiarizes the student with regular self-assessment and record keeping. The Department has a formal review of PGR progress at the end of each study year (known as the 'Early-', 'Mid-point', and 'Final' progress reviews). Students submit a substantial

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selection of work (e.g., a portfolio or a thesis chapter) and are subject to a panel interview from within the School. They also complete a self-appraisal form, based on the Vitae Researcher Development Framework, with guidance from the supervision team. It forms part of a total reporting and progress system that accords to the University's Regulations for Supervised Research.

In addition to tracking student progress and ensuring timely completion, student reporting is submitted to the School for ongoing assessment of PGR training and development needs. These assessments lead to targeted support for individual PGRs. They also influence the Graduate School's provision of training for PGRs. This training takes the form of workshops covering academic skills, researcher development, and wider career development and skills. These workshops respond to identified PGR needs and are shaped by the Vitae Researcher Development Framework and the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers.

The Department supports PGRs to take part in industry and academic networks. It provides financial assistance for studies and specific research needs through the University's Student Experience Fund. Within the Department, Chatton received an Emerging Scholar Award at the Fifteenth International Conference on The Arts in Society (Ireland, (2020)) with mentoring by supervisor **Brown**. McGarvey is gaining professional experience by contributing to the Heritage Craft Association (HCA) survey of industrial crafts (2020-2021) and by co-developing a two-day symposium (projected September 2021) at the Potteries Museum in collaboration with the HCA and the BCB, both with mentoring from supervisor **Brownsword**. McGarvey and Fallows are contributing to the **Externalising the Archive** project with mentoring from supervisor **Brownsword**. Moreover, the Department encourages PGRs to contribute to the University's Annual Research Conference (ARC). The University has integrated the Postgraduate Research Conference, into the ARC. The new ARC empowers PGRs to contribute to and network in a professional research environment, provides valuable practice in presenting research and opportunities to develop wider collaborations. The Department provides ARC submission mentoring and support through supervisors and signposts its availability at the Graduate School.

As well as ensuring progress and fostering intellectual excitement, supervisors are trained in providing pastoral support to PGRs. The Department's pastoral care structures (Academic Mentoring) are centrally integrated with the School and University and are key to identifying wellbeing issues and providing support and guidance. All PGR students new to the School receive an induction event together with students joining in the same cohort (there are three set admission points during the year, which ensures that students are part of a cohort and peer support network). The Graduate School provides a programme of social events for PGR and PGT students, who are all also encouraged to join the Staffordshire University Postgraduate Society.

d. Equality and Diversity.

As outlined in the Code of Practice, the University has a comprehensive ED&I framework which we support throughout the Department. The University is a Stonewall Diversity Champion and is working towards the Athena SWAN and Race Equality Charters. There is a specific action plan for the Race Equality Charter. Upholding these successes, the Department is committed to the importance of equality and diversity for ensuring equality of opportunity and an inclusive research environment. The Department offers a flexible return to work policy for life events, secondments, and research leave, and enables staff to move between full and fractional employment. The Department implements the University's Race Inclusion Action Plan (2020-2023) (RIAP) and it is compulsory for all staff to take unconscious bias training. Its overseeing ADRE, **Dodd**, is part of the University Inclusion Champions group that encourages and disseminates best practice in equality, diversity, and inclusion in line with the University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Framework 2018-2021.

The University offers all staff free mental health awareness training in conjunction with Mental Health First Aid England: mhfaengland.org/. In addition, the University provides students and staff a team of Mental Wellbeing Advisors. The advisors offer support for both short- and long-term situations. As part of their remit, the Advisors supply information about relevant Equality Legislation and help disabled students to access specific funding.

As part of RIAP the Department has established an Equality Audit process for employment vacancies in conjunction with the Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development, which ensures that every applicant is afforded an equal opportunity. The Department's recruitment strategy aligns with RIAP and with the School's WPD, which emphasizes the necessity of diversity and equality of opportunity in bringing 'different experiences, perspectives and capabilities' to bear on all aspects of the School's work and environment.

3. Income, infrastructure and facilities.

a. Generating Research Income.

The Department generates income from diverse external sources. This is due to our **strategic emphasis on forging collaborative and interdisciplinary research opportunities with partners throughout industry and academia**. We brought GBP112,513 total external income

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into the department to support research over the assessment period. GBP812,241 was generated directly to researchers for research projects.

The Department encourages researchers to pursue funding awards and supports them in this work. It promotes researchers planning and making joint applications with the C3 Centre. It liaises with RIIS's Research Environment and Development team to co-ordinate grant applications, help researchers find and apply for funding opportunities, and to develop accurate costings for research projects. In addition, the Department provides dedicated time for researchers to attend the RIIS 'Research Professional: How to find research funding' workshop.

Key awards include:

- GBP94,767 for Ceramics Dimensions (2015-2019), funded by the EU's Creative Europe programme and with 15 partners across Europe supported an investigation into Ceramics in cultural, economic, and social terms.
- GBP9,000 for After the Gold Rush, ACE (2013-2015), which delivered new artworks linked to the Staffordshire Hoard, the largest hoard of Anglo-Saxon gold ever found.

Our artist-researchers have won external funding to support their research projects. This is money outside of the University, but which is controlled and used by individuals and committees whose work is guided by the Department and its research themes. Notable awards include:

- **Francis**, to support the urban regeneration of Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, as part of the **Portland Inn Project**, has won GBP200,000 (2019) from the Local Trust (the Creative Civic Change programme), GBP63,000 (2019) from Red Industries, two awards of GBP50,000 from Stoke-on-Trent City Council (2019 and 2018), and GBP28,811 from Arts Council England (2018). These are part of GBP566,116 total funding won by Francis's programme of community-based research (see REF3, **Driving urban regeneration and empowering communities through socially engaged arts practice**).
- **Brownsword**, GBP120,580 (Norwegian Artistic Research Programme, 2015), GBP15,000 (Arts Council England, 2019), GBP11,750 (University of Bergen Publication Fund, 2020) and GBP9,440 (Bergen Academy of Art and Design, 2016) for **Topographies of the Obsolete** (2014-present).
- **Brownsword**, GBP20,480 (Korean Ceramic Foundation, 2017), GBP6,638 (British Council Korea, 2017), GBP3,500 (British Ceramics Biennial, 2017), GBP3,000 (Korea Culture Centre, 2017), GBP3,000 and GBP15,000 (Arts Council England, 2016) for **FACTORY** (2017-20).

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- **Brownsword**, GBP15,000 (Arts Council England, 2015), GBP7,400 (Bergen Academy of Art and Design, 2016), and GBP1,500 (British Ceramics Biennial, 2015) for **Re-apprenticed** (2015-20).
- **Branthwaite**, GBP3,000 from Weiner Library to support his work in **Finding Treblinka** (2016) and GBP5,000 for **Accessing Campscapes** (ACE International Fund, 2019).
- **Brown**, GBP26,826 from the Midlands Art Centre (mac Birmingham) to develop, produce, and disseminate **Vent** (2016).

b. Infrastructure - Organisational

RIIS supports research activities at University level (REF5a, Section 2) including supporting impact and community engagement and providing researcher training to staff and PGRs. The RIIS Research Impact Manager provides Department staff training and support on research impact strategy, impact planning, and impact evidence collation. Our Impact Case Study leads (**Francis** and **Dobson**) have benefitted from Impact Acceleration funding to support the employment of dedicated research fellows through RIIS.

The University's Graduate School provides individual and group training sessions to staff and PGRs. The Graduate School provides administrative support and monitoring (both quality and progress) for all doctoral degree programmes throughout the University. This monitoring provides the basis for annual progress and policy reports sent to the University's Research and Innovation Committee, a subcommittee of the Academic Board.

RIIS's remit also includes proactively seeking funding and industry collaboration opportunities for the University's researchers and centres. Through RIIS, our researchers work with the University's Research Development & Funding Managers, the Employer Partnerships Team, and the ADRE to support internal and external collaboration.

The Library and Learning Services (LLS) provides access to a University-wide Research and Digital Resource Librarian. LLS also provides the School a dedicated Subject Librarian. As part of Graduate School training, supervisors are empowered to liaise with LLS's Academic Skills Tutors to arrange targeted support for their PGRs.

c. Infrastructure – Operational and Scholarly

The Department benefits from high quality specialist facilities, world-leading artefact collections and dedicated exhibition space. These facilities are embedded into the Department's teaching,

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

research, and innovation. This multi-purpose use promotes connection between our different communities, who interact with one another in shared spaces. These connections help to achieve our strategic goal of increased collaborative and interdisciplinary working.

The Department has access to specialist facilities supported by 26 dedicated technical specialists in three deployment divisions defined as 'Material & Make', 'Media & Communication', and 'Smart Technology'. Facilities include:

- A suite of 556m² of **ceramics workshops**. These include modelling rooms, a computer design suite, plaster and print rooms, a 3D ceramics printer facility, and a kiln room.
- Access to the **Smart Zone**, which includes the 3D Factory and Immersive Technology Suite. The 3D Factory provides a laser cutting room and 3D plastic and metal printing facilities. The three-room Immersive Technology suite provides modern resources for virtual and augmented reality work.
- An extensive range of **traditional designer-maker workshops** (1366m²) housing heavy- and fine-metalworking equipment, screen-printing, dyeing, and transfer-printing textiles equipment, sewing and rug-making rooms, professional woodworking equipment, and plastic and resin fabrication equipment.
- Professional standard **digital imaging and rendering software** including Ansys 2020 R1, Autodesk Alias, Fusion 360, Inventor CAM Ultimate, Maya, Motion Builder 2020, Sketchbook, and VRED Professional, the Adobe Creative Suite, Capture One Pro, KeyShot 9, Manga Studio 5, and Microsoft Solidworks 2020.
- The **Henrion Photography Studios** (571m²), consisting of four professional studios, a black and white dark room, and two post-processing computer labs.
- The **Henrion Post-Production Labs** (623m²) housing professional grade video-editing technology. The facility consists of three open-plan labs, which are fitted with a range of Apple Mac Pro and 27' 5k iMac computers.

All PGRs are provided with their own dedicated working space while enrolled.

The Department will benefit from further investment in facilities. These investments include the new Innovation Enterprise Zone portfolio as detailed in REF5a. The Innovation Enterprise Zone has received funding from UKRI, the European Regional Development Fund, and the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Local Enterprise Partnership to support innovation in product design and manufacture.

Special collections and archives are housed by LLS and in the Department. Key collections include:

- The **Ernest Thornhill Collection of Ornamental Ceramics**. This comprises 270 pieces of predominantly Chinese ceramics, including unique and historically significant pieces dating to the Chinese Bronze Age Shang and Zhou Dynasties. This collection further establishes the role that the department plays in creating resources to research ceramic heritage, extending this into a global context. In 2016, the Department sold the Thornhill Stem Cup, a Ming Xuande stem cup, at auction for HKD41,560,000 (approx. GBP3,600,000). These funds are to be invested into the development of an International Centre for Ceramic Research within the Department. This Centre will champion Stoke-on-Trent's contribution of ceramics in the UK and worldwide and explore unexpected collisions between regional traditions and new technologies, driving forward the city's agenda and reputation of being a creative hub. It will provide new ceramics facilities and a permanent location for the Thornhill Collection, making these rare artefacts fully accessible for study and research.
- The **Ceramic History Collection**, which includes catalogues, autograph manuscripts, and administrative records dating from industrial British and European ceramics production c. 1860-1930.
- The **Betty Smithers Design Collection**, which archives twentieth-century textiles, costumes, and fashion, household commercial products, and related periodicals and advertising materials. The collection contributes to fashion and textiles research and teaching.

These collections are a valuable part of our research activity. **Brownsword** is supervising an ongoing PhD project which investigates interactive, virtual ways to exhibit the Thornhill Collection to support ceramics teaching and research.

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

a. Embedded Collaboration

The Department's emphasis on thematic and interdisciplinary research continues to embed collaboration into our work. We benefit from collaborations with the **arts industry and organizations**, with **government bodies and other research users**, and with **academics and academic networks** on an international scale. We have collaborated with >85 external partners over the assessment period.

Branthwaite helped steer and develop the international exhibition of material visual cultures, 3D Glitch. **Brown** collaborated with mac Birmingham, Rampa (Porto, Portugal), Due Raum (Berlin, Germany), the Harris Museum and Art Gallery (Preston), RadicalAesthetics-RadicalArt (RaRa)

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

(Loughborough), Florence Arts Centre/Grizedale Arts (Cumbria) as part of the Common Culture collective. He also collaborated with the National Maritime Museum, Royal Botanical Gardens (Kew), Picture Berlin (Berlin, Germany), and Kit & Cutter (Folkestone). **Brownsword** investigated ceramics heritage preservation in partnership with the BCB, the Spode Museum Historical Trust, the Korea Ceramic Foundation, the V&A, the Ashmolean Museum, the Heritage Crafts Association, Stoke-on-Trent City Council's Heritage Service, Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery, and the Whitegold International Ceramics Festival. **Day** explored the presence of automated and alternate reality software in everyday life with the Park Hill Gallery, Tinsley Art Project, and the Site Gallery (all Sheffield), Ma Bibliothèque (London and Sheffield), and Lanchester Gallery (Coventry).

Francis investigated brownfield spaces as resilient ecosystems in collaboration with BCB, the Royal Horticultural Society (Tatton), and the AirSpace Gallery, and explored the role of artists in urban renewal with the artist Rebecca Davies, the BCB, AirSpace Gallery, the Social Art Summit (Sheffield), Collective Matter (London), and a-n: The Artists Information Company (Newcastle and London).

Collaboration and co-production with **research users** are vital to our research environment. This production of knowledge underscores the importance of using art and design methodologies in real-world settings. It ensures the relevance, impact, and rigour of our research. **Dobson** partnered with the Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust to investigate the use of textiles methodologies in therapeutic settings (2014-20). **Francis** investigated the role of artists in urban renewal and community seeding in collaboration with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (the 'Pocket Parks' initiative), Stoke-on-Trent City Council, Staffordshire Police Service, and the Local Trust (London) (2015-20). **Power** collaborated with the Little Heroes Cancer Trust (2016-17) to use design methodologies in garment research, and with the National Centre for Entrepreneurship in Education to research interdisciplinary learning in undergraduate provision (2014-18).

Our research themes contribute to a thriving research culture through connections with local, national, and international **academic** debates. Our researchers collaborate with colleagues and HEIs across borders and across disciplines:

Branthwaite partnered with the University's Centre of Archaeology and the Museum of Struggle and Martyrdom in Treblinka to use arts methods to investigate the history of Treblinka in the Holocaust. His **Encountering Campscapes** (2019) was produced as part of the iC-ACCESS (2016-19) forensic archaeology project Accessing Campscapes, a trans-European collaboration between Staffordshire University and five European HEIs (University of Amsterdam, Norwegian Institute of Science and Technology, Freie Universität Berlin, University of West Bohemia, and the Institute for Bioengineering of Catalonia).

Brownsword co-leads the **Topographies of the Obsolete** research network (2014-present), which has involved to-date 97 academic participants from 18 international partner and affiliate institutions including the University of Bergen (Norway), Haute école d'art et de design (HEAD) (Switzerland), and Nottingham Trent University. In December 2021, phase three of the project will begin with planning and research design to determine additional international partners, funding, and research directions.

Brownsword collaborated with academics from UCL and University of Brighton in the project **Preserving Ceramic Industrial Heritage through Digital Technologies** (2019)

(reality.cs.ucl.ac.uk/projects/ceramics/rodriguezechavarria2019preserving.html). The project investigated the use of appropriate digital technologies to support the archiving of endangered heritage held at the former Spode site in Stoke-on-Trent. It led to co-authored papers presented at international conferences and symposia. **Brownsword** and Echvaria (Brighton) hosted public events at the BCB (2019) to introduce the research and demonstrate the potential of 3D scanning for cultural preservation. **Brownsword** also collaborated with Ulster University and the Museum of London Archaeology to deliver the BCB 2019 symposium **Who Will Draw Our Pots in the Future?**

We are developing ambitious links to global ceramics scholarship. Following **Hou's** successful visiting professorship, we received JCI's President, officials, and academics to visit our ceramics facilities in 2019. SU's continued relationship with JCI remains significant for the future strategy of the department and its international networks and connections. The shared ceramic histories and traditions of skill intertwined with contemporary industry of Jingdezhen and North Staffordshire offer fertile territory for staff and students from both institutions to develop cross-cultural research through exchange and collaboration. In 2020 **Hou** published an academic paper examining the development of the British Willow Pattern; **Hou** developed his field research through **Brownsword's** professional network and connections with the UK heritage sector, including the Spode Museum Trust. **Hou's** expertise in Chinese ceramic history has assisted postgraduate research into the digital mediation of the Thornhill Collection using virtual and haptic technologies. Continued exchange between the PGR student and **Hou** has served as a mode of peer review for the provenance and description of the objects the research project explores. When Covid-19 travel restrictions permit, we will receive another visiting scholar from JCI (**Zhang Liwei**), and our staff and students will be able to use and learn from JCI's extensive ceramics infrastructure and knowledge.

b. Contributions to Our Disciplines and the Wider Community.

For a relatively small Department, our researchers have become prominent contributors to their respective disciplines. They have presented over 40 conference papers in the assessment period. They have given another 55 keynotes and invited lectures in the period.

Our researchers serve as external examiners within their disciplines. **Brown** is external examiner to MA Fine Arts at London Metropolitan University (2017-present). **Brownsword** is external examiner to MA Ceramics and Glass at the Royal College of Arts (2019-21). He has also been external examiner to individual postgraduate projects in the assessment period: 1x PhD (Coventry University, 2018), 1x MPhil (Brunel University, 2016), and 1x Postgraduate Studies: Ceramics and Polymers (Geneva University of Art and Design, 2014). **Key** is External Examiner to Fine Arts Practice (Foundation Degree) at Nottingham Trent University (2019-present). **Power** is external examiner to BA (Hons) Textiles & Surface Design at Cleveland College of Art and Design (2019-22). She has been external examiner to BA (Hons) Costume Interpretation with Design at Cleveland College (2018-19); to BSc Clothing Design & Manufacture and BSc Fashion Technology at Heriot-Watt University (2013-17); and to BA (Hons) and FdA Fashion: Design and Marketing at London College of Fashion (2012-16). She was external PhD examiner at Manchester Metropolitan University (June 2020 and July 2018), and the University of Manchester (November 2019). In the assessment period she was editor of the Routledge Textile Institute Professional Publication Series (co-editor, 2018), *The International Journal of Fashion Design, Technology, and Education* (as special edition guest editor with Kevin **Almond** (University of Leeds)), and the *Journal of Fashion Technology & Textile Engineering* (2014).

Our researchers serve as leaders of academic associations, and they hold roles in community bodies that support the dissemination of the Department's formal research and new knowledge. **Brown** serves on the advisory group of New Art West Midlands (2020-present). **Brownsword** is a Charter Member of the Fu Le International Ceramic Arts Museum (Xi'an, China) (2008-present) and an Appointed Trustee of the Spode Museum Trust (2015-present). Francis is a Director of the AirSpace Gallery (2012-present). **Power** serves on the leadership committee for the Ground for Learning in Art and Design (GLAD) (2016-present) and the Textile Institute's Publication and Professional Accreditation Committees (respectively 2016-present, 2012-present). **Power** is Honorary Secretary of the Textile Institute (elected May 2020), which holds a Royal Charter and is the field's global professional body. **Power** has been a Fellow of the Institute since 2010, and she served as an Elected Council Member of the Institute throughout the assessment period (2014-17, 2017-20). **Power** also sat on the Institute of Skin Integrity and Infection Protection's Management Committee (2015-17).

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

Over the assessment period, our researchers have achieved significant and wide-reaching public engagement worldwide. **Branthwaite** held and contributed to twelve public exhibitions at international venues, including 'Accessing Campscapes' at the Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies (Vienna, Austria) (2019). **Brown** held and contributed to eleven public exhibitions, including 'OMG I Love Common Culture!!!! ♥♥♥♥' at Die Raum (Berlin, Germany) (2020).

Brownsword held and contributed to fourteen public exhibitions, including 'Fabrik' at Gustavsberg Konsthall (Stockholm, Sweden) (2019-20). He contributed to the 'Making Narratives' research camp at the Gyeonggi International Ceramic Biennale (5-22 May 2017). He gave seven public lectures, and was interviewed on BBC Radio 4 Women's Hour (21 July 2017)

(bbc.co.uk/programmes/b08xxdsl, bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p05bhzyk (duration: 07:51). **Day** contributed to seventeen group exhibitions, including the 'Computer Vision Art Gallery' at the International Conference on Computer Vision (Seoul, South Korea) (2019). **Francis** provided extensive civic engagement programmes within **Rethinking the Brownfield** (2014-18), and **Community Maker/The Portland Inn Project** (2015-present) (see REF3, **Driving...**).

Our researchers have been recognized with prestigious awards in the assessment period.

Brownsword was awarded the Quartz Award at the Whitegold International Ceramics Prize (St. Austell, 2019). As one of 1470 applicants, with a total field of 2629 entered works, **Brownsword** was unanimously awarded the Grand Prize at the Gyeonggi International Ceramic Biennale (2015) for **National Treasure**, the judges recognizing his 'creativity and contribution to the field'. He was also shortlisted for the inaugural BBC, Crafts Council, and V&A Woman's Hour Craft prize (2017). **Francis's Portland Inn Project** was one of four shared winners of the Whitegold International Ceramics Prize (2020). 'Raising the Roof', **Francis's** community learning space design collaboration with Baxendale Studio within the **Portland Inn Project**, was shortlisted for the RIBA MacEwen Award (2019).