

**Institution:** Ulster University

**Unit of Assessment:** 28

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

#### Context and Structure

History is a subject group of 9 historians in the School of Arts and Humanities which is part of the Faculty of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences. There is a balance of senior and junior posts of historians across the career range, with 1 Professor (Thatcher), 1 Reader (Ó Ciardha), 3 Senior Lecturers (McCormick, McNamara, O'Connor), and 4 Lecturers (Guarino, Hughes, Miller, Sneddon). As part of an overall strategy to create new synergies and partnerships, in the current REF cycle, History was consolidated on the Coleraine campus, although one member (Ó Ciardha) teaches history through the medium of Irish on the Magee campus. Historians research in different historical periods (early modern to modern), geographies (Ireland, Britain, the British empire, the Mediterranean, Russia and Eastern Europe), and have different historical approaches (chiefly political, social, cultural, gender, international, intellectual, medical). A major focus is therefore on supporting individual research. This noted, a priority in this REF cycle has been to promote collaboration, most notably in the one research centre housed in History, the Centre for the Study of the History of Medicine in Ireland (CHOMI), of which McCormick (Director), Miller, and Sneddon are the leading members. Staff have also collaborated on major projects with scholars within and outside of Ulster, evident in co-authored monographs (4 out of the 9 submitted), co-PI UKRI research awards (particularly with Queen's University Belfast (QUB)), and leadership of international research groups.

The Research Director (RD) in History has overall strategic managerial responsibility for research and impact in UoA28. It is a 1.0 FTE position with administrative support. The RD is recruited through an open competitive process, with the expectation being that the post-holder will be a senior staff member, preferably of Professorial standing. The RD keeps abreast of the research agenda in Ulster and in the HEI sector. The RD acts as the crucial information point between the UoA and the broader university community, sitting, for example, on the monthly Faculty Research Leadership Team, chaired by the Associate Dean Research and Impact (ADRI), and on the University-wide RD Forum, chaired by the DVC Research and External Affairs. This ensures that the UoA aligns itself to the research priorities of the Faculty and University, most notably the Five and Fifty Institutional Strategy (2016-2034) and the Research and Impact Strategy (2017-2022), for example, to increase quality of outputs, to attract more external research grants, and to recruit more PhD researchers.

The UoA is fully committed to sharing the results of its research as widely and as transparently as possible. Applications for research awards, for example, include costings to make the resultant findings open access. This has been particularly successful with Miller's submitted monograph *A History of Force Feeding*. Its open access publication has undoubtedly increased the output's reach, with **over 40,000 individual chapter downloads**. Sneddon's government funded project on Ulster-Scots literature is also maintained as an open access resource on Ulster's web pages. All SRR staff and PhD researchers undertake intensive training on PURE - Ulster's open access repository for all research and research related activity— for which each researcher has responsibility to keep up to date. Research ethics and integrity are embedded into the Unit's research. The Unit has an Ethics Filter Committee – ran jointly with the English UoA – that is chaired by both RDs. The Ethics Filter Committee vets all research for ethical considerations and makes recommendations in line with the University's guidelines on ethics in research. All SRR staff have completed on-line research integrity training that is updated every three years.

#### Research Strategy, 2014-2020

The strategic priorities for research described in the REF2014 return focused upon increasing submission of outputs to international peer-reviewed journals; supporting research for monographs; and enhancing the vitality and sustainability of research by generating more research income and improving upon the recruitment, retention, and completion of PhD research projects.

The headline successes include: **a 27% growth in research income with a resultant 132% increase in research income per FTE; a 52% increase in PhD completions, with a 180% increase in Supervisor completions from 0.82 to 2.3; and a 66% increase in submitted monographs per FTE from 0.6 to 1.0.**

The key objective to sustain and increase the amount of externally funded projects, particularly via large-scale research awards from UKRI, has had some notable successes, with the unit sustaining and **increasing its research income from £1,682,210 in REF2014 to £2,138,681 in this REF cycle.** As indicative examples, McCormick is Co-PI on the AHRC funded project *Bad Bridget: Criminal and Deviant Irishwomen in North America, 1838-1918* (2015-); MacRaild was PI on the Leverhulme Project Award *'The Irish and British Famine, 1845-1850: comparing lives lost and lives saved'* (2015-).

The key strategic goal of increasing the recruitment, retention, and completion rates of our PhD researchers has been met. **In the current REF cycle the number of PhD graduates has increased by 52% since REF2014, from 13.5 to 20.5.** This is partly due to the success of the MA programme in History that contains a strong strand of research training (two compulsory research methods modules) and a substantial thesis element (60 credits). The MA programme typically recruits 12-15 students per intake, around one-third of whom progress to full- or part-time PhD research. A feature of the development of a larger and deeper research culture and its integration into the broader research culture of the UoA has been the collaboration of staff and PhD researchers in the organisation and running of major conferences. This included the first holding of the Canadian Association of Irish Studies Conference on the island of Ireland (27-30 June 2017, Ulster Magee Campus), at which five Ulster PhD researchers and three staff members presented.

**The key strategic goal of supporting research for monographs has led to the production of nine substantial monographs,** four of which were planned in the REF2014 submission: Hughes (*Ribbon Societies*), McNamara (*The White Redoubt*), O'Connor (*Big Jim Larkin*), and Sneddon (*Irish witchcraft*). **The strategy of publishing articles in peer-reviewed journals,** whether of a broad historical or specialist nature, **has resulted in 30 successful submissions.**

### Impact Strategy, 2014-2020

Historical research at Ulster has a long-standing tradition of impact across a range of stakeholders and user groups. This is especially important in the context of the UoA's contribution to the Ulster mission, expressed in the Five and Fifty and Research and Impact strategies, of being a civic university, and of the relevance of history to Northern Ireland's (NI) political, cultural, social, and economic life. The range of our impact ambitions flows in part from the mission of our research centre CHOMI, in which the study of medicine in Ireland's history is linked to contemporary health agendas. McCormick's research into sexual health in modern Ireland, for example, underpins her contribution to research into the operation of historic care homes commissioned by the Department of Health. The findings from this research will inform, for example, how government makes policy choices about how best to respond to the demands for justice for the victims and families of abuse. Impact is also embedded in individual research programmes whose originality flows into public perceptions, debate, remembrance, commemoration, and commercialisation and celebration. This provides numerous opportunities for impact, of which the following are prioritised: the educational sector beyond HEI, outreach to the general public, influencing creative practitioners in the media, policymakers in local government, and professional practice in the museum and heritage sector. These are outlined below and are also in evidence in our submitted impact case studies.

### Impact on Professional Practice: Education Beyond HEI

Teachers and pupils outside of HEI are key users of our historical research. The UoA organises an annual conference for schools across NI in which staff present the findings of their latest research. Feedback indicates that it is precisely cutting-edge research that holds most interest for teachers as it feeds into their lesson planning and for pupils as they can include the latest historiography in their work. Staff are also encouraged and supported to undertake visits to schools to communicate their underpinning research. In March 2019, for example, Thatcher gave three talks on the Russian Revolution to pupils and teachers at Dollar Academy, Scotland. This was so successful that he

was invited back to deliver a commemorative lecture of the 102<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the Russian Revolution at the school on 25 October 2019. He also gave 1:1 advice sessions to pupils working on their advanced special topics in Russian history.

The UoA forges links with public institutions whose mission is to bring history to local communities. O'Connor, for example, is Chair of the North West branch of the Historical Association and arranges links between teachers and schools and local historians. It is thanks to these links, for example, that Thatcher has presented his research findings on Lenin's Russia to AS History teachers and pupils at Foyle College (April 2019).

The UoA encourages staff to write summaries of their research in popular format for use in magazines and in podcasts that target schoolteachers and pupils. *History Ireland*, for example, is a leading history magazine that has special appeal to schools. Miller's article on force feeding in this publication was distributed to all schools in the Republic of Ireland (ROI). Thatcher's podcast 'Lenin in October 1917' recorded for The Faculties, a historical resource specially for secondary schools, available on youtube.com has attracted over 7,100 views.

### **Outreach to the General Public**

The UoA is most concerned that its research reaches the general public, helping to inform and shape debate, remembrance, and understandings of the historical past in the present. To this end the UoA encourages and supports several initiatives.

The UKRI funded projects provide examples of our multi-layered approach to public outreach. The research that resulted from Miller's Wellcome Trust Humanities Fellowship ('Medicine, Ethics and Hunger Strike Management in the British Isles, c.1909-81', 12/2013-12/2016, £149,703), for example, informed a major exhibition at Kilmainham Goal, Dublin 'Hunger Strikes, 1877-1981' that ran from 09/17-01/18 and attracted over 100,000 visitors. The research findings were also presented in condensed form to numerous public audiences. It featured in popular history magazines ('Force Feeding and the Death of Thomas Ashe', *Revolution Papers*, 17 March 2016 with a circulation of c. 15,000). It framed a podcast commissioned specially by the public history society the Western Front Association, the largest body of its type with a world-wide membership. This podcast has been downloaded over 1,800 times. The research also informed and underpinned several features in the mass popular press ('Why h-block hunger strikers were not fed', *Irish Times*, 5 July 2016; 'A history of hunger strikes: from the Suffragettes to Guantanamo', *Independent*, 10 December 2018).

Staff make presentations at public events, including commemorations. Noting 100 years of the Russian Revolution Thatcher, for example, argued for the centrality of the period February-October out of his underpinning research at public talks at PRONI (25 October 1917), at Washington College, USA (2 November 2017), and the Watershed Bristol (12 March 2018). As part of Ulster's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations, in April 2019 Guarino organised a public event that marked the impact of the Spanish Armada in Ireland. The event attracted over 100 participants and was attended by the Consul General of Spain.

### **Impact on Creative Practice**

Media interest in History is high across television, radio, newspapers, and social media. Research within the UoA has directly impacted across the range of media outlets, shaping its content and form. This then extends the reach of this impact into the public sphere so that there is an intimate connection between our impact on creative practice and our reach to the general public. This takes several forms. As indicative examples:

- (a) historical consultancy - O'Connor for the Radio Foyle series on the Civil Rights movement (October 2018).
- (b) direct interviews – McCormick on Bad Bridget on the Radio Foyle Breakfast Show (6 March 2019).
- (c) providing copy out of research findings, for example in newspaper articles (McCormick, 'Bad Bridgets: the criminal and deviant Irish women convicted in North America', *Irish Times*, 20

**Unit-level environment template (REF5b)**

February 2019); in popular blogs (Sneddon, 'The Devil in the Room: Researching the History of Witchcraft in Ireland for the public on-line magazine *FolkloreThursday*, 9 August 2018); and in podcasts (Sneddon on witch-hunting as a public event on Project 10's podcast 'Trial by Social Media', 14 January 2018).

(d) suggesting new historical documentaries to TV companies that flow from underpinning research. In August 2019, for example, McCormick in collaboration with a media company made two short videos for a pitch to RTE for a series on 'wayward' Irish women.

Outside the media, history at Ulster has also impacted on the creative practice of individual artists. Sneddon, for example, revealed that one of the Islandmagee witches was a man. This discovery inspired the artist Sarah Shiel to depict male witches.

**Impact on local government: the heritage and tourist industry**

The UoA's research informs and contributes to the activities of a range of stakeholders working in the interface of local government and the heritage and tourist sector, including museums, archives, and public bodies. Ó Ciardha's research into early modern Irish history, for example, informs political, civic leadership and heritage/museum curators on both sides of the Irish border. Sneddon's ground-breaking research into the Islandmagee witches impacted on how Mid and East Antrim Council promote tourism in the area on its [shapedbyseaandstone](#) website. In September 2019 McCormick met with the Research Co-ordinator of NI Museums to discuss a bid that will be made to the AHRC to support the establishment of a permanent Bad Bridget exhibition at the Ulster American Folk Park. In October 2019 McCormick was invited to join the Advisory Board for a projected Women's Museum of Ireland.

**Impact on Public Policy**

The UoA's strength in Irish history underpins our strategy to forge close working relationships with politicians and civil servants as they grapple with the historical legacies of Ireland's past. McCormick's publicly funded research into the mother and baby homes/Magdalene laundries and the Northern Irish churches, for example, will shape decisions on whether a public inquiry will be held. In August 2019 McCormick's 693 pp. co-authored report was submitted to the Department of Health.

**Research and Impact Strategy, 2021-2028**

The UoA is continually linking current research and impact to future strategic goals. Planning for the next cycle of research and impact to 2028 began in the 2019-20 academic year. The priorities are to focus upon deepening and extending the publication culture, especially around monographs; to attract major funding from UKRI; to enhance the UoA's research environment by, for example, further expansion of the UoA's research unit CHOMI including more PhD researchers and an additional staff member; to forefront impact to the public out of our underpinning research; and to support further staff promotion via the research route.

Projected monograph projects include as indicative examples 'Between Habsburgs and Bourbons: Dynastic Rivalry, Ritual Power and Diplomatic Relations in the Courts of Eighteenth Century Naples' (Guarino), 'The Mercenary Rebirth 1960-1980' (McNamara), and 'A History of Self-Esteem' (Miller). Book contracts have been signed or are being negotiated with leading publishers, including CUP and Johns Hopkins Press. There is an agreed projection of sabbatical leave applications linked to key points in the development and completion of research projects. As an indicative example in the 2020-2021AY McCormick is due to take leave to complete a monograph 'Bad Bridget: Deviant Women in North America' and Hughes to begin a new project 'The Associational Culture of Ulster Unionism during the Home Rule Period', planned to come to fruition in 2025-2026.

External funding is also planned into the monograph projects. As an indicative example UoA seed funding was awarded to Miller in 2019-2020AY for a new project on a modern history of self-esteem. This project will then bid for further support from UKRI. In collaboration with QUB McCormick will submit a bid for major funding (c.£900,000) to the AHRC for a study of the history of homosexuality in NI that will include the hire of postdoctoral researchers in the UoA. Sneddon is planning to bid to the Leverhulme to support research on Fortune Telling in Ulster.

The UoA will continue to emphasise the public impact of its research and its use to a range of stakeholders. As indicative examples a bid will be made to the Heritage Lottery fund for c. £100,000 for a series of initiatives around the history of public health in NI as the province marks its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary over 2021-22.

CHOMI will seek to collaborate with the foundation of the Ulster's School of Medicine that accepts its first students in September 2021. This will provide opportunities for new interdisciplinary research between medical historians and medics. As part of this forward strategy bids for PhD bursaries will be made to UKRI. Additionally, an application is also anticipated to the Wellcome and to the Leverhulme for an early career lectureship as a strategic hire of a medical historian of the Troubles period. This would offer synergies with McCormick and Miller.

Finally, we anticipate further successful research led promotion applications in the next REF cycle, with two more scholars achieving professorial standing. This will be an important element of succession planning in the unit around research mentoring and management. Alongside the projected hire of an ECR and Postdocs linked to grant applications, the unit intends to maintain a good balance between colleagues at different career stages.

## 2. People

### Staffing Strategy and Staff Development

Ulster has remained committed to supporting research in History within a reorganisation of the university's Faculty and School structures that prioritised resources for research. The main objective has been to retain breadth and depth of historical coverage that underpins the provision of research-led teaching on the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Within this remit, there has been a strategic emphasis on recruiting staff who work at the intersection of established areas of staff expertise in, for example, Irish and in International history and in medical history to support the expansion of CHOMI and to contribute to cross-disciplinary research around the Ulster research theme of health. Two such successful hires have taken place in the current REF cycle. Miller took up a permanent post in January 2017. He has benefitted from collaboration with colleagues in CHOMI (McCormick, Sneddon) and with the unit's established expertise in modern Irish history (Hughes, McNamara, O'Connor). In 2017 the unit received a generous bequest from the John Springhall legacy fund - the bulk of these funds were used to appoint an ECR who worked in John's field of modern British international history but with a medical history interest. Neal was appointed and with full research support successfully completed a monograph and several articles. The university offers a research-led route to promotion. In the current REF cycle two staff members have been promoted on the basis of their outstanding record in research – McCormick from Lecturer (L) to Senior Lecturer (SL) (2017) and Ó Ciardha from SL to Reader (2020).

Within the unit, the RD discusses and agrees individual research programmes on an annual basis. These are subject to continual and on-going discussion to allow for the unexpected ways in which research can develop. Normally this takes the form of 1:1 sessions in which advice and support is offered on grant applications, researching and writing monographs and articles, for conference support, for relief from teaching duties, and when to plan sabbatical applications under the University's sabbatical leave policy. In the current REF cycle, 78% of staff have enjoyed a semester of Ulster-funded study leave. This has been crucial to bringing large projects to a successful conclusion, and to begin a cycle of new research. In addition to sabbatical leave, the RD can also arrange a year's teaching into 'heavy' and 'light' semesters to enable more concentrated engagement with research at key moments in its development. In workloads for SSR staff, a key priority is to guarantee that staff are allocated 40% of time for research in order to achieve agreed research goals and priorities, and that staff are appropriately supported and resourced. Research plans and objectives form a key element of annual probation meetings for ECRs in the three years following appointment. These are attended by the HoS so that management of administrative and teaching duties can be coordinated with research needs and plans. In the period of this REF, Miller and Neal benefitted from the emphasis placed on research in the probation period.

The unit promotes staff development in research within the broader university environment. There are annual calls for example for excellence in research to be recognised by competitive applications for the title of Early Career Research Excellence, Senior and Distinguished Research Fellowships, all of which carry financial reward to support research. In the current REF period McCormick won the Distinguished Research Fellowship in 2016, an achievement that then formed an important part of a successful promotion application to SL in 2017.

A crucial element of staff development in research is to ensure that staff have financial support for a range of research activities. The RD has control over the UoA budget and can use this to support staff research and strategic research initiatives. Since the foundation of the new Faculty in the 2017-18 academic year, the allocated UoA budget amounts to over £60,000. The commitment is that the QR income is reinvested in staff research, whether enabling trips to libraries and archives, research networking events and presentations, purchasing necessary equipment, or in buying in some teaching relief. Within the current REF cycle monies have been used to support research, as indicative examples, in archival trips for Guarino's work on Early Modern Mediterranean history (Florence, Turin, Modena, Naples); for McNamara's studies of twentieth-century international history (Ronald Reagan Library), and O'Connor's investigation of Irish soldiers in the Spanish Civil War (Madrid and Burgos).

An important part of staff and PhD researcher development is played by our on-going research seminar series. This consists of 8-10 sessions annually at which staff and PhD researchers present for supportive feedback. The expectation is that staff will present after each period of study leave, and PhD researchers in their final year of study. We also invite leading researchers from the UK, Europe, and North America so that staff and PhD researchers can avail themselves of opportunities to keep abreast with a range of research topics and methodologies. Since 2014 external speakers have included: Anne O'Connor (NUI Galway), Miri Rubin (Queen Mary), Glyn Parry (Roehampton), Giora Sternberg (Oxford), Lars Lih (McGill), Renzo Honores (Lima), Emma Reize (QUB), Alice Mauger (UCD), Ida Mauro (Barcelona), and Darin Stephanov (AIAS, Arhus).

The unit implements the University's Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers' principles with annual opportunities for advancement, regular training and development. Staff are supported by several Ulster developmental programmes to achieve strategic goals in research. There is a dedicated Grant Development Manager who provides advice around costings and management of various research schemes. This covers all aspects of research income from application to management to completion. The majority of our staff have availed of training offered by the RIGOUR (Research Income and Grant Opportunities), SOARING (outputs) and Impact Development series programmes. Staff thereby receive specialist advice and guidance on all aspects of the research process, from application to management to completion.

Staff are fully supported to pursue relevant training offered outside of Ulster. This has involved attendance at competitive applications for UKRI training events, and at information and training sessions run by professional associations – History UK, the IHR, and the RHS. Sneddon and McCormick were also supported to take up two-month visiting research fellowships at the Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India (March-April 2018). This was very much an informational visit, in which staff could discuss research approaches and methodologies, and compare and contrast the organisation of research in the UK and Indian contexts. In April-May 2015 Miller enjoyed a Visiting Fellowship at the Max Planck Centre for the History of Emotions, Berlin that contributed to his work on force feeding. Ó Ciardha's visiting professorships in Vienna (2015-6) and Framingham State University (2016) facilitated the completion various publications, including a co-edited volume with Dr. Gabriela Vojvoda (Routledge, 2015), a 900pp collection on County Monaghan (2017), as well as a series of peer-reviewed chapters in edited collections.

Outside the full-time staff, the UoA has made a number of strategic honorary research appointments at Visiting Professor and Research Associate levels. As Visiting Professor Liam Kennedy was an important part of a successful bid to the Leverhulme for an investigation into the Irish famine. In the second semester of the 2015-16AY the Department hosted Professor William

Jenkins of York University Canada as an Honorary Visiting Professor. His work on Irish migration to North America was of interest and relevance to several Ulster scholars (MacRaild, McCormick, O'Connor, Sneddon, Hughes). Dr. Helen Williams of Northumbria University spent the second semester of the 2016-17AY as an Honorary Visiting Professor to work on eighteenth-century print culture. Williams was also working with the NI Dept. for Communities on an AHRC-funded public policy placement for ECRs. This resulted in a community theatre initiative in Armagh and the performance of 'The Good Club' by the Armagh Community Theatre group in May 2017. This engaged young people not in education or employment with set design. As Honorary Research Associate Dr. Angela Byrne has used our support and facilities to bring *A Scientific, Antiquarian, and Picturesque Tour: John (Fiott) Lee in Ireland, England and Wales, 1806–1807* (Routledge for Hakluyt Society, 2018) to fruition.

### Support Mechanisms, Training and Supervision of PGR

The aim of building a broader research culture has been achieved through the development of the MA History programme in 2015. This stand-alone degree focuses on the development of advanced historical research skills and an important training ground for doctoral work. The programme leads students through the process of how to formulate a PhD application and how to progress to doctoral study. The MA has been an extremely successful route for undergraduates to move to advanced postgraduate research study, supported by units such as CHOMI, which has been particularly successful in mentoring students through MA to PhD. Overall, the MA programme provides an annual flow of students capable of winning DfE award or a Vice-Chancellor's Research Scholarship (VCRS) for doctoral study. The MA programme also contributes generally to our research culture by, for example, facilitating interaction between staff and students in the production and dissemination of research. Staff members present research papers in the History Research seminar strand of the MA, which encourages close interaction between academic and student interests. The forum also provides an opportunity for in-house peer feedback, as well as a genuine insight into the on-going research activities of History staff for the students.

History has had notable success in attracting increased numbers of PhD researchers in the period of this REF. This has been across the range of staff interests, but there has been special emphasis on building up the cohort of PhD researchers in the prioritised area of medical history. The UoA has also sought to recruit part-time PhD researchers, an option of research study that has proven attractive for trainee scholars at various stages of their careers and life cycle. In the current REF period, there have been several successful PhD completions from people in retirement (one of whom won the Faculty Prize for Best PhD Thesis in 2019), as well as from people in mid-career. For younger scholars who missed out on competitive funding at first application, a year or so of part-time study has also proven to lead to eventual full-time funding and registration. We offer the same training and research support to our part-time and full-time PhD researchers. Current and recent doctoral projects include seven within medical humanities, nine in early modern Irish and international history, six in modern Irish history, two in modern international history, and one in Irish language and literature.

In the current REF cycle, we have both increased the cohort of PhD researchers, with 25 PhD scholarships awarded in the UoA, and continued the upward trajectory of completion rates that was a feature of the last REF submission. For example, **in REF2014 the completion rate per FTE was 0.82 and in REF2021 it stands at 2.3**. We have a rigorous doctoral supervision and support programme that includes a detailed and varied Researcher Development programme. In each academic year PhD researchers are expected to evidence attendance at relevant training. Training is assessed at registration and throughout the doctoral programme in annual reports. Any ethical considerations have to be addressed within the first three months of registration, by which time all PhD researchers must complete on-line research integrity training. There are also progress panels that ensure research is progressing as expected. In year 1 of a PhD, for example, a PhD researcher will have to present at an initial (100-day) viva to a panel. After successful progression from the initial viva, the PhD researcher will face a confirmation viva, with the same panel members, and involving a paper submission (draft chapter) and an oral presentation. The confirmation viva rigorously tests the robustness of the PhD, and the panel can recommend resubmission; transfer to MPhil; or continuation with the PhD. Progress is further monitored by

annual review carried out by the PhD researcher and supervisors throughout the duration of the doctoral programme. In the final year of study, there is a final assessment, normally presentation of the research to a research seminar.

The UoA emphasises the centrality of good supervision. Each PhD project has two supervisors who offer complimentary expertise. This also includes a mentoring aspect so experienced and less experienced supervisors are paired. There are meetings scheduled each semester between supervisors and the RD to discuss the progress of PhD projects. Supervisors also undertake on-going training as part of the Supervisor Development Programme offered by the Doctoral College.

The UoA aligns its PhD researcher training and supervision to the policies, procedures, and programmes offered by the Doctoral College, a major investment of the current reporting period by Ulster for all its PhD researchers. Thus, for example, there is UoA induction that follows and complements Doctoral College induction so that incoming PhD researchers have a local and university-wide understanding of the support context in which their research is pursued. There is a UoA Postgraduate Tutor with special responsibility for research support and pastoral duties outside the formal supervisors. The UoA Postgraduate Tutor sits on the Doctoral College Postgraduate Tutor Board, enabling regular communication around training, new initiatives, and the timely resolution of any emerging issues.

A beneficial development in this reporting period has been the introduction in 2018-19 of PhD Manager. This secure on-line system enables PhD researchers to take ownership of their research project, ensuring responsibility for reporting and training that is accurately recorded. There is a mandatory requirement, for example, that supervision occurs at least once per month. After each supervision, PhD researchers are expected to write a summary of the meeting and action points for the next meeting. These reports are then approved by the supervisors. PhD researchers are also expected to upload all required documentation for initial, confirmation, and final assessment onto PhD Manager. The reports and recommendations around each assessment are shared and accessible to PhD researchers and supervisors. In this way progress through the PhD programme is clearly sign-posted and monitored.

The training for our PhD researchers in the first instance involves the demands and needs of their thesis research. For this the PhD researcher has access to a dedicated training award, typically of £900 p.a. Where needed and possible the UoA will provide further financial support for training and research. In addition, we emphasise relevant training for a career in academia that also captures transferable skills. In the second year of the PhD, for example, PhD researchers are offered a teaching opportunity, normally 20 hours of seminar teaching on a level 4 module. It is expected that such teaching will be broader than the narrower focus of their research. Before teaching, it is required that a module, 'Introduction to Teaching', will be taken through the CHERP. This also counts towards the professional AFHEA qualification.

It is our expectation that PhD researchers will participate in conferences, including presentations of on-going research, as essential networking and feedback opportunities, for which financial support is provided. Staff include PhD researchers in their research networks where possible and encourage active participation. Miller, for example, encouraged his PhD researchers (Coon, Kinsella, Scott) to join the research network that he helped to form, the History of Science, Technology, and Medicine in Ireland Network. We also encourage our PhD researchers to gain experience in organising and hosting conferences. With appropriate staff guidance and support, for example, the Ulster PhD researchers organised the holding of the Irish History Students Association Conference at Ulster University's Magee campus on 23-24 February 2018.

Publication of research in peer-reviewed article and monograph format is a key goal of historical PhD researcher training. In this context, staff are encouraged to develop their PhD researchers as writers by collaborative work. A notable success of this strategy was the publication of a jointly written article by Sneddon and his PhD researcher Fulton that appeared in the *Historical Journal* ('Witchcraft, The Press, and Crime in Ireland, 1822-1922', 62(3), 2019, pp. 741-764).



The impact of research is an increasingly important feature of scholarly research. Ulster PhD researchers are made well aware of this and supported in understanding impact and how to attain impact for their research. Sneddon, for example, arranged for his supervisees (Fulton, Shelvin) to appear on a Northern Vision Television (NVTV) roundtable discussion of research into witchcraft at Ulster that aired in January 2019. PhD researchers are also encouraged to link their research, where appropriate, into contemporary events and relevant anniversaries that attract media interest. Burton, for instance, was mentored by his supervisor to write a popular media article on the historical picture of the relationship between Irish nationalists and Catalonian independence in the 1930s and how that compared to stances taken around the same issue in 2017 ('A tough nut to crack': An Irishman's diary on Catalonia and Ireland in the 1930s', *Irish Times*, 30 October 2017).

The strength of the PhD research culture is reflected by the quality of graduates we produce, evidenced in subsequent publication and employment. We also mentor our PhD researchers to gain the maximum public exposure for the publication of their research as, for example, in coverage in the local press of Okan Ozseker's *Forging the Border: Donegal and Derry in Times of Revolution, 1911–1925*, Irish Academic Press, 2019 ('New History of Derry in Age of Revolution', *Derry Journal*, 30 April 2019). Since the 2018-19 academic year the unit has ran the annual Birley prize for the best MA and PhD theses in social history, for which an award of £750 is made to each awardee.

### **Equality and Diversity**

The UoA promotes equality and diversity in line with Ulster's equality and diversity policies. Ulster respects the full array of Northern Irish equality legislation and, as a public authority, must have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity in respect of nine protected characteristics. Diversity and inclusivity are valued, actively promoted and embedded in all research processes and policies as outlined in our Code of Practice (CoP). As the CoP places people at its centre, is mindful of the needs of all staff and ensures barrier free processes to maximise inclusivity and participation in REF, we used it as our roadmap for identifying SRR staff and selecting outputs for REF2021.

Staff undertake mandatory training in research integrity, equality and diversity awareness training, disability awareness training, and data protection training. Those involved in REF have had specific REF equality and diversity training.

The UoA seeks to embed and reinforce the values and practices of equal opportunity and diversity across all its activities. For example, themes of equality and diversity are central to the research agenda in our areas of strategic focus. Staff are passionately committed to research in these areas. McCormick, for example, is Co-PI on a projected study of homosexuality in NI and Sneddon has a contract with CUP for an examination of disability and magic in Britain, Ireland, and America. Research in the UoA is based on equality of opportunity and openness to all historical approaches and perspectives. Staff and PhD researchers are given equal consideration of support from resources in the unit of assessment. The research seminar series provides an opportunity to invite a range of scholars representative of different communities, locations, gender, and disability. In internal panels, we ensure that there is representation from different genders. In PhD researcher recruitment we have achieved parity of gender and people from all stages of the life cycle. In the appointment of external examiners for PhD theses care is taken to ensure that there is gender parity. We encourage the appointment of new as well as experienced examiners.

The UoA is sensitive to the different demands and circumstances faced by members of our research community. It thereby facilitates flexible and/or remote working arrangements. The UoA provides support and advice for particular needs, including equipment requests, and in promotion applications in which there is a section in which applicants can outline how progress in research may have been impacted by external factors. One-third of SRR colleagues have received additional leave in response to special circumstances in the current reporting period. The UoA has a dedicated Well-being officer for staff and PhD researchers. It has also appointed an Athena Swan champion, with a planned application for accreditation in 2023.

### 3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

The UoA attracts external research awards from a variety of funding bodies, including UKRI, charities, national and local government, and EU funding. The extent of our success is clear from the increase in the amount of funding raised since REF2014. From the UKRI, for example, there have been several significant awards for major research projects of several years' duration, most notably Miller from the Wellcome, McCormick from the AHRC, and MacRaild from the Leverhulme.

**Research income per FTE has increased by 132% from c. £102,574 in REF2014 to c. £238,000 in REF2021.** This is a consequence of the expectation that staff will make applications to various bodies for financial support for research, with a strategic emphasis on large UKRI applications. There is a rigorous support programme for this, including the allocation of time in workload allocation so that sufficient time can be devoted to developing grant proposals and peer review. There is thereby a burgeoning bidding culture. The UoA has a good track record of bringing research awards to successful fruition. Miller's Wellcome Award (2013-2016) that ran through this REF period, for example, resulted in an academic monograph, peer reviewed journal articles, conference and networking, and extensive impact, most notably underpinning a major exhibition on hunger strike history at Kilmainham Gaol. The UoA manages two bequests that are used to support research, the TK Daniels Fund for Irish History and the John Springhall Fund for British Imperial History. The capital base of both funds is not allowed to drop below £120,000. Monies above this have been used to support named annual research lectures and seminars, to hire a post-doctoral research assistant to work on a history of the Royal Society of St. George, and to offer fee waivers for part-time PhD research. The UoA has successfully sought to broaden the base of funding for PhD researchers. In 2019-20, for example, a first and successful bid was made to the AHRC Northern Bridge Collaborative Doctoral Awards, with a fully funded offer being made for the project 'Voices of Ulster's Poor: Charitable Requests 1850s-1920s'. Further applications will be made on annual basis.

In 2018 the UoA moved to a £11M purpose designed arts building, the I-block, that incorporated the latest technology and ecology. The individual staff office was retained as the most suitable working environment for historical research. These are well-equipped, ergonomically-designed workspaces, with networked computer equipment enjoying easy access to electronic research resources. Alongside this there are rooms set aside for group meetings and work, including a dedicated seminar room that houses the History Research seminar series. In this reporting period and as part of the strategy of building-up medical history, the UoA has invested in establishing a CHOMI resource room, containing a substantial collection of rare books purchased in 2018 from the Royal College of Physicians in Dublin, workspaces, and an exhibition of historic medical equipment. The UoA also houses a multi-media resource unit that has an impressive collection of audio-visual historical sources and documentaries. In the current REF cycle monies were used to purchase a state-of-the-art microfilm reader with pdf image capture.

The top floor of the I-block contains a purpose designed area for PhD researchers. This enjoys 24/7 open and secure digital card access. There is an open workspace area of networked computers, dedicated printers, lockers, and desks. There are open social spaces that include a dedicated kitchen and sofas. There are also quiet rooms for research and writing.

The UoA carries out an annual review of research equipment needs, and desktop computers are upgraded and replaced on an on-going basis. Digital cameras and laptops have been provided for archival research and digital audio and visual recorders for oral history.

The UoA benefits from a full-time and dedicated librarian who has specialist knowledge of the various holdings, and who maintains regular contact with staff and PhD researchers to discuss maintenance and upgrading of collections. Primary research holdings include such materials as parliamentary papers, national and provincial newspapers, and microfilmed documents, including Russian Historical Sources and *Izvestiia*. There is a fine early-modern Irish collection at Magee on our Derry Campus. The university also maintains a buying policy designed to support hard-copy research holdings and fully funds research requests via Document Supply. The library has also committed to providing access to major digitised research resources for the UoA.

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

##### Research base

Historians at Ulster collaborate and contribute nationally and internationally to research in the discipline in a variety of ways and contexts. These include participation in research networks that include conferences, collaborative publications, and joint funding bids; through peer-review of others' research, including as members of UKRI committees; through the examination of other universities' research degrees; and via service as members of historical associations or as editors of journals.

Staff participation in research networks is a strong feature of our research activity, of which the following are indicative examples: Miller is a committee member of the History of Science, Technology and Medicine in Ireland Network. He organised its inaugural conference in 2015 and a further conference held at Ulster in 2019. Sneddon is a member of the Irish Network for Gothic Studies and delivered a keynote address at its inaugural symposium in January 2017.

Staff members organise and chair national and international conferences to promote collaboration in cutting-edge research. Ó Ciardha, for example, is on the committee of Éigse Cholmcille, one of Ireland's longest-running, annual Irish-language history and literary conferences. He has co-convened four of these annual events since REF2014.

Historians at Ulster sit on national and international committees that develop research agendas and disburse funds for research projects and activities. McCormick, for example, is a member of the Executive Committee of the Women's History Association of Ireland, a member of the AHRC Peer Review College, and has peer reviewed grant applications to the Wellcome Trust, the Irish Research Council, the NUI Post-Doctoral Scheme, the Trinity Long Room Hub Fellowship Programme, and the Carnegie Trust.

Our historians work actively as editors of national and international collaborative research projects. This involves membership of national and international editorial boards. McNamara was an editor (2012-18) of Ireland's leading history journal, *Irish Historical Studies*. Ó Ciardha is on the Editorial Board of *History Ireland* and is volume editor of the *Oxford History of the Irish Book*. Thatcher serves on the Editorial Board of *Revolutionary Russia*.

Members of staff regularly act as referees for book proposals, and journal article and monograph submissions, whether such requests come from publishers or from colleagues at other institutions. Thatcher, for example, has been thanked for his help in the research and writing of monographs by numerous colleagues in the current REF cycle, including Steve Smith, Rex Wade, Erik van Ree, Jonathan Smele, Robert Service, Thomas Linehan, James D. White, and Jonathan Davis. Staff have assessed monograph submissions, for example, to Oxford University Press (Miller), Routledge (Thatcher, Sneddon), and Liverpool University Press (Hughes). Staff regularly peer review article submissions, as indicative examples, to *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, *Journal of Social History*, *Medical History*, *Women's History*, *Women's History Review*, *Historical Journal*, *Journal of Religious History*, and *Eighteenth-Century Ireland*.

Staff participate in the quality management and examination processes for research degrees across the UK and internationally. Thatcher, for example, has externally examined research degrees at Bar-Ilan University, Israel, and the University of Leeds; and Sneddon at the University of Birmingham.

We offer service to the discipline. Ó Ciardha, for example, is a board member of Cultúrlann Uí Channáin, Sráid Mhór Shéamais, Doire (2019); founder of EFACIS (Magee Campus Irish Studies Branch (2019-); a member of the editorial board, An t-Ultach (2018-); a member of the archives advisory board, Conradh na Gaeilge (2018-); a member of the globe migrant project team, Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies, Univ. of Split, (2018-) and a member of the board of trustees of the Jacobite Studies Trust (2011-). Ó Ciardha, Sneddon, McCormick, and Thatcher are Fellows of the Royal Historical Society. McNamara has served several terms as member of the History UK

Steering Committee.

### **Economy and Society**

Historians at Ulster actively promote the importance of history as a contribution to economy and to society. Between 2014-16, for example, Sneddon worked on several projects with the Ulster-Scots Agency, from which he received a grant to complete 'The Supernatural in Ulster Scots Literature and Folklore Reader, 1660-1800', an Ulster open access online resource aimed at community groups, members of the general public, as well as educational (schools, universities, colleges) and governmental institutions. The sources were partly selected because they were hard to access for people working outside of an institutional setting.

Sneddon is President of the Ulster Society for Irish Historical Studies. This organisation seeks to bring together academics and the public in regular events and talks. McCormick facilitated sessions with Building Communities Resource Centre Network Women's Project on Irish women's history and contemporary women's issues (Mar-June 2017) that included developing leadership capacity amongst Irish women. McCormick also co-organised a Herstory Salon at Portrush Town Hall (May 2017) to encourage the discussion of women in history in a public setting.

The UoA pursues various initiatives with local primary schools. McCormick organised and ran a series of afterschool workshops and class talks on 'Horrible Medical History' at the Ballymoney Model Integrated Primary School (2015-2017). For the same school Sneddon gave primary 6 pupils an annual tour and talk of Dunluce Castle, Co. Antrim, where he introduced them to subjects such as the Plantation of Ulster, the 1641 rebellion and a witchcraft accusation that took place there.

Staff often speak as historians on contemporary issues affecting society. The impact of Brexit on NI has been a contentious issue that has drawn contributions from Neal on the topic of Empire and Brexit to Irish television (RTE, November 2018), from Ó Ciardha to Spanish and Slovenian television (January-February 2019) and German public radio (February 2019), and from O'Connor in an interview to Franceinfo.fr (February 2019).

For the local economy Ulster historians are continually seeking to exploit the findings of their historical research to promote local tourism. Sneddon, for example, actively promotes the celebration of Halloween out his research in witchcraft. Around the October 2019 commemorations for example he delivered public talks in Belfast and in Derry and gave interviews to the BBC and RTE Brainstorm.