

Institution: Ulster University
Unit of Assessment: 34
<p>1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy</p> <p><i>Brief Historical Context and REF 2014</i></p> <p>Ulster University (UU) pioneered the development of Communication and Media Studies in higher education, introducing one of the first undergraduate degrees in the UK and Ireland in 1978. For over forty years Ulster scholars of Media and Communication have been at the forefront of pioneering research-led learning in the field. In 2003, our researchers were awarded a £3.1m grant from Atlantic Philanthropies through SPUR (Support Programme for University Research) to set up the <i>Centre For Media Research (CMR)</i> and, since 2016, all research across media and communication at Ulster has been conducted through the CMR, located within the School of Communication and Media.</p> <p>Our strategic priorities for research and impact in REF 2014 were: facilitating submission of journal articles, book chapters and media practice; encouraging the production of monographs; developing impact; improving the vitality and sustainability of research by generating research income; improving upon the recruitment, retention and completion of PhD research projects. This strategy allowed us to achieve the following in REF2014: we more than doubled our percentage of 4* world-leading research outputs, and the wider impact of our research was 100% 'internationally excellent', of which 40% was 'world-leading'.</p> <p><i>Current Strategy and Achievements, Brief Highlights</i></p> <p>Our broad strategic priorities for research and impact in the current assessment period are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - increasing submission of outputs to international peer-reviewed journals - supporting research for monographs - engaging in transformative impact through collaborative and co-creative practices - growing and diversifying our research income - improving the vitality of the research culture through investment in the PhD research culture. <p>As will be highlighted in the sections of the narrative below, we achieved each of these strategic priorities. However, in anticipation of this more detailed narrative of evidenced achievement, two things are worth highlighting upfront.</p> <p>Firstly, the output profile of the unit has changed dramatically from REF 2014. A key objective of the Research Director of the CMR (Porter) was that the output submission consisted only of monographs and/or articles in international peer-reviewed journals. This we achieved with 100% of submitted outputs as monographs and/or articles in international peer-reviewed journals. This is a significant step change from REF 2014.</p> <p>Secondly, the CMR team was particularly focused and successful in executing our strategy of growing and diversifying our research income. During the current assessment period, CMR researchers successfully secured in excess of £2 million. This is a clear step up from our performance in 2014, an overall increase of 69.4%. Our income per FTE has more than doubled, rising from £74,688 in REF2014 to £163,403 in REF2021, an impressive increase of 119%.</p>

Unit Structure: Key Areas of Achievement

The current structure of the CMR research unit, and its associated activity during this assessment period, is broadly defined by its achievements in the following broad and related areas:

- The Representation of Politics and the Politics of Representation
- Emerging Media Technologies
- Critical Theory, Everyday Culture, Media Policy

The Representation of Politics and the Politics of Representation

Working in the classical tradition of those who helped pioneer the development of Communication and Media Studies at Ulster in the late 1970s, the research work of **Baker, Baylis and Edge** concerns itself with the politics of representation and the representation of politics. In the **monograph**, *The British Media and Bloody Sunday*, **Baker** and McLaughlin provide a cross media analysis of news, film and TV that spans a period of almost 40 years. In his foreword to the book, Derry activist and Civil Rights campaigner, Eamon McCann describes it as ‘the first major work’ to analyse the role of the media in shaping our perception and understanding of Bloody Sunday, which ‘speaks necessary truths’ not simply about the event itself, but about ‘the political role of a supposedly objective media’.

In peer-reviewed journals such as *Early Popular Visual Culture*, *Eire Ireland*, *Irish Studies Review* and *History of Photography* **Baylis** illuminates the cultural politics of nineteenth century Irish photography and visual culture, the formation of what she calls ‘memory cultures’ that shape discourses of gender, class and national identity. **Edge** similarly works in the field of nineteenth century photography. Described by the scholar John Storey as a ‘wonderful **monograph** that makes a significant contribution to the cultural theory and history of photography’, that has importantly revitalised ‘social class as an important explanatory concept’, **Edge’s** *The Extraordinary Archive of Arthur J. Munby: Photographing Class and Gender in the Nineteenth Century* is a significant and career defining achievement.

This focus on class is shared by both **Baker** and **Mairs Dyer**. In peer review journals such as *The Journal of Media Practice and Education*, *The International Journal of Media and Cultural Politics* and the *Journal of British Cinema and Television*, they’ve developed modes of class analysis and participatory/collaborative media practice and used their research as a starting point for engaging in civic and impactful projects with marginalized groups in Northern Ireland (NI).

One of our key strategic priorities is to **engage in transformative impact activity**. **Baker’s** and **Mairs Dyer’s** projects are exemplary experiments in dialogically meaningful and **impactful co-creation**, of reciprocal learning that aims at a genuinely democratic exchange between the academy and civic culture(s) within which it is situated. The Co-director of the *Left Bloc Irish Media Collective* describes their work: “*To be sure, there is often a degree of cynicism concerning the way academics engage with groups that are determined ‘marginalized’, a worry that the former (whether consciously or not) will exploit the latter for their own ends, rather than seeing their working together as a transformative end in itself. Baker and Mairs Dyer’s work is distinctive, original and significant in that it makes no claims to speak for marginalized communities from a predetermined position of power or authority, but, instead, is about attuning the ear to the low murmur of exclusion experienced by such groups and then empowering them to amplify their own voices...within their own communities and beyond*”. (**More detail, context and testimonial evidence can be found in their ICS ‘Empowering Marginalized Communities in Contemporary Northern Ireland’**).

Emerging Media Technologies

As stated above, one of the key elements of our unit's strategy is to support and develop **collaborative research** where there are particular alignments of interest and cogency of purpose, and **where this leads to transformative impact activity**. Nowhere is this better expressed than in the **collaborative work of Hickey, Hook and Jackson** in the area of emerging media technologies. Publishing in peer-reviewed journals such as *The Journal of Media Practice and Education*, *Learning, Media and Technology* and *Convergence* **Hickey, Hook and Jackson** focus on unlocking the potential of emerging media technologies in developing new forms of learning, knowledge and organisational practice, particularly in the areas of tourism and education in NI.

Speaking about how **Jackson's** research work has directly driven change and innovation within the cultural and tourism sector in NI, The Museums Services Development Manager at Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council (CCGBC) points out how the "academic research and expertise" of **Jackson** "has led to significant **impacts** on CCGBC's development of a *Heritage Lottery Funded project*" which aimed "to develop initiatives that will encourage growth in specific sectors and enhance the area's tourism provisions".

Working with external educational providers as collaborative partners to prototype and develop new learning landscapes, **Hook, Hickey and Jackson's** AGENCY project has helped enhance the pedagogical experience of a number of learners in primary and post-primary educational contexts in NI. The Principal of North Coast Integrated College, Coleraine, emphasised the **impact** of AGENCY to the teaching practice of her staff and colleagues. She states: "The teachers found it really valuable", showing "how we can make small changes that have large impacts on student wellbeing and their learning. Your discussions of the space being the 'third teacher' in a newly developed 'learning landscape' were really interesting and allowed the teachers to use emerging media and technology in exciting ways to increase engagement, classroom inclusion and the students understanding".

Since 2016 **Hickey** has been critically refining his participatory action research project *Generation Animation*. This project improves access to educational opportunities by bringing school children, parents and teachers to UU's campus and engaging them in contemporary active learning pedagogies using emerging media technologies. Speaking of the **impact** of **Hickey's** *Generation Animation*, Principals in two Primary Schools in North Antrim both emphasised that; a) the "project enhanced the teacher's expertise in animation and gave them the confidence to integrate these new-found skills into their teaching" and b) inspired "the staff of both schools to explore and unlock the potential of iPad technology in the classroom. As a result of the project, teachers were now prepared to take a risk in relation to the delivery of ICT in the primary setting". (More detail, context and testimonial evidence can be found in their ICS 'Emerging Media, Learning and Organisational Practice – driving change in tourism and education in Northern Ireland')

Critical Theory, Everyday Culture, Media Policy

Giffney, Ekins, Ramsey and Porter draw on various inter-connected tradition(s) of critical theory in order to illuminate and critically negotiate contemporary public culture and everyday life. **Giffney's** research focuses on cultural objects (film, art, literature, music) and their impact on the psychological lives of clinicians and patients inside and outside the psychoanalytic consulting room. These themes are explored in **Giffney's** book, *Clinical Encounters in Sexuality*. Working in a symbolic-interactionist tradition, and publishing in peer reviewed publications such as *Jazz Research Journal* and *Popular Music History*, **Ekins** critically unpacks the everyday social and cultural construction of popular music, in particular 'New Orleans Jazz'. **Porter's** work is driven by the problem of how culture and everyday life ideologically reproduces our understandings of 'the political'. Described by the Australian cultural theorist Ian Buchanan as a 'marvellous argument for the continuing relevance of situationism and a sustained attack on the new absurdities this century has thrown at us so far', *Meanderings Through the Politics of Everyday*

Life is Porter's fourth monograph. Working within a normative critical theory and (broadly Habermasian) concept of 'public value', and publishing in a **range of international peer reviewed journals** such as *Media, Culture & Society*, *Journal of Radio and Audio*, *European Journal of Communication*, *Television and New Media* and *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, **Ramsey** critically engages with and focuses on media policy, in particular the regulation of public service media in the UK. **McGrath** shares **Ramsey's** broad interest in policy and is particularly concerned with how the PR industry is culturally and politically situated in the broader public sphere. In his **monograph**, co-written with Kevin Moloney, *Rethinking Public Relations: Persuasion, Democracy & Society*, **McGrath** considers how the PR industry represents itself in public and everyday life, discusses its forms of idealised self-presentation and rhetorical power, and critically evaluates its influence on democratic debate, showing, for example, how contemporary journalism often capitulates to PR in an era of 'fake news' and 'churnalism'.

Strategy Beyond REF2021 – New Structures, New Opportunities

The formation of a new Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences faculty and the merging of the School of Media, Film and Journalism with the School of Communication at Ulster to form a new School of Communication and Media in 2016 has provided opportunities for new kinds of research collaboration and activity that will take the CMR beyond the current REF cycle. Our strategy over the next five years is to exploit these new institutional structures and associated opportunities in order to build the capacity of the unit in a maximally efficient and sustainable manner. As you will see below, we have already begun in earnest.

Collaborative projects in the School of Communication and Media

UU is a multi-campus university, geographically dispersed across four sites: Belfast, Jordanstown (a Belfast suburb), Coleraine and Derry on the northern and north-western tip of the island of Ireland. The formation of the School of Communication and Media brought together colleagues from previously site-specific schools (Communication scholars from Jordanstown and Belfast with those from the School of Media, Film and Journalism at Coleraine). By adopting a number of measures to mitigate this geographical dispersal and potential dislocation (for example, regular on-line interaction, the formation of PhD supervisory teams on a cross-campus basis), our aim will be to increasingly bring CMR researchers together to engage in various projects. Indeed, this is already beginning to happen. Examples include: **Porter** and **Baker** (Coleraine) working with **Ramsey** (Jordanstown) on critical media studies and policy have published an article on regional Screen Policy in Northern Ireland in *Media, Culture & Society*. This ongoing collaborative work with **Baker** and **Porter** will also feed into **Ramsey's** new **monograph**. This book, *The governance of Public Service Media in the UK: from policy to practice*, will be published by Palgrave-Macmillan in late 2021. **Porter** (Coleraine) is working with Kerry-Ann Porter (Jordanstown) on a new book that brings together their respective expertise in critical theory and the social-psychology of institutions and organisations. This **monograph**, co-written with a political philosopher at Kent Iain Mackenzie, is entitled *Discipline and Publish: The Problem of Disciplinary Thinking in the Contemporary Academy* and will be published by Rowman and Littlefield in early 2022.

Moving from outputs to how already secured funding could lead to potentially **transformative impacts**, **Jackson**, working with school colleagues **Hickey** and **Hook**, as well as academic colleagues from Ireland, Finland and Iceland, is currently PI on a major transnational EU funded project that is investigating the impact of immersive technology concepts and techniques on digital marketing strategies. Working with 50 SMEs across different sectors, the aim of the project is to enable international growth of participating SMEs by enhancing their marketing by using immersive technologies. Providing a number of capacity building projects to be implemented by businesses (15 SMEs in NI and 35 SMEs across Ireland, Finland and Iceland), **the regional and transnational economic impacts will be significant**. To **capture these impacts**, **Jackson** and the team will identify how the performance of the participating SMEs has been improved through the introduction of the immersive marketing solution(s) that they have

implemented for the SME. In terms of civic engagement, we can single out an emerging research cluster concerned with the role the arts in public debates on mental health. This cluster is made up of **Giffney, Long** (Jordanstown) and **Mairs-Dyer** (Coleraine) and the Research Director of the CMR is providing ongoing infrastructural support to facilitate various public events that will lead to more significant research activity. We already see evidence of this as **Long** has secured a book contract with the Open University Press. This **monograph**, *A Psychosocial Understanding of Self-Injury and Trauma in Context: Wounds and Their Meanings*, will be published in late 2021.

Collaborative projects in Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences and Beyond

Hook and Jackson - working with UU faculty colleagues in Applied Social and Policy Sciences (Friel UoA 20), Linguistics (McDermott UoA 26), Theatre, Performance and Museum Studies (Maguire and Crooke UoA 33) - secured a **£200K** grant to work on a new AHRC project 'Museums, Crisis and Covid 19: Vitality and Vulnerabilities'. This project will produce **three co-authored journal articles**, with researchers from the CMR focusing on themes of remediation, location-based heritage, digital archives and the 'transmedia museums'. **Porter** - working with a scholar from Queens University Belfast, Jim Donaghey, - secured a **£250K** from the AHRC for the project 'Failed states and creative resistances: the everyday life of punks in Belfast, Banda Aceh, Mitrovica and Soweto'. In Spring 2021, Donaghey will join the Centre for Media Research at Ulster to work with **Porter** and both are committed to producing the following: **a joint authored monograph, three peer reviewed journal articles, four complication records, four record launch events, four zines and a research symposium**. This is an exciting new development in popular music studies at the CMR and it connects both to ongoing research within the unit (**Ekins** on 'New Orleans Jazz') as well as the work of AHSS faculty colleagues more broadly in UoAs 32, 33. **Hook** is working with various colleagues in UoAs 32 and 33 as part of Future Screens NI. Also, through the development of a cross-faculty collaboration with colleagues in UoA 32 and UoA 33. The CMR has contributed to the creative industries component of the successful **Belfast Region City Deal (an £850 million investment package)** which will include a **£61 million investment in a Screen Media Innovation Lab**).

Research Integrity and Open Research

We have an **open approach to research**, with sustained engagement with various stakeholders, beneficiaries and audiences (see section 4 below). The CMR aligns more broadly with the Open Access initiative of the University. CMR researchers are encouraged to publish in open access outlets. A dedicated executive administrative assistant in the CMR supports researchers to ensure that their outputs meet compliance regulations for accessibility of publications to the wider academic community and the general public. We also insist that the **highest standards of research integrity be achieved**. Ethical governance, regulation and training is overseen by a University level Committee. There is a School Ethics committee with responsibility for ensuring that all staff are aware of ethical standards and adhere to these. All CMR staff are strongly encouraged and incentivised to complete the University's research integrity course. Completing this course is also a requirement for all post-graduate researchers. The course reflects the University's Code of Practice for Professional Integrity which, in turn, reflects the UUK Concordat.

2. People

Staffing Strategy and Staff Development

Our **staffing strategy** seeks to support research that is strongly aligned to our broad strategic priorities (see section one above). The unit is led by the Research Director (**Porter**), who combines the role of **REF Unit Coordinator** with **PGR Tutor** (with responsibility for all PhDs and their assessment), coordinating with the Head of School and the Associate Dean for Research and Impact. Support staff include an administrator for the research unit, with a further dedicated administrative support role for PGR matters, in addition to School, Faculty and

discipline-level support staff. Each CMR researcher profits from the developmental infrastructure that UU has created in this current assessment period. The unit implements the University's Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers' principles with annual opportunities for advancement, regular training and development. Our **staff development strategy** is to make these new infrastructural resources work for staff locally, and in a way which directly led to positive outcomes for the individual researcher and the unit as a whole. This we achieved in a number of ways and across a number of support programmes.

RIGOUR (Research Income & Grant Opportunities for Ulster Researchers) is a programme designed to help academic researchers improve on the success rate of grant applications to external funding bodies. Colleagues who secured **research income** as a consequence of engaging with this programme include: **Jackson, Hook, Hickey, Porter**. External funders here include: AHRC, British Academy, The Leverhulme Trust, EU Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme and BBC Research and Development.

SOARING (Significance and Originality in Academic Research: Interpreting New Guidance) is a support programme focused on further strengthening Ulster's research outputs by increasing their quality. Under the auspices of this programme, the Research Director of the CMR (**Porter**) organised a series of 'REF mind-set' events exclusively for researchers in the unit. For instance, the chair of the Communication, Media and Cultural Studies REF panel in 2008 and 2014, Professor Peter Golding (Northumbria) led an interactive discussion with colleagues at Ulster and this was followed by a workshop by Professor Julian McDougall (Bournemouth). As a direct result of attending these events, **Baker, Ramsey, Porter, Mairs-Dyer, Hook, Jackson and Hickey** were then motivated to write, redraft, target and finally publish work in **international peer reviewed journals** such as: *Convergence, Media, Culture & Society, The Journal of Media Practice and Education, Contemporary Political Theory, The Journal of British Cinema and Television*.

Sabbatical leave and study leave provide staff the time and space to engage in ambitious projects that may otherwise fall foul of the busy rough and tumble of academic life. This leave has provided crucial **research support for monographs** such as: *The Media and Bloody Sunday* (**Baker**), *The Extraordinary Archive of Arthur J. Munby: Photographing Class and Gender in the Nineteenth Century* (**Edge**), *Meanderings Through the Politics of Everyday Life* (**Porter**), as well as **support for peer review journal articles** in *Contemporary Political Theory, Media, Culture & Society, The Journal of Media Education and Practice and Convergence* (**Hook, Hickey, Jackson and Porter**). In addition, the early stages of the development of the **monograph** *A Psychosocial Understanding of Self-Injury and Trauma in Context* (**Long**) was supported by sabbatical leave.

The Research Mentoring Programme is a university initiative that supports researchers in building their research capacity. Locally, members of staff in the CMR are provided with a mentor and, in addition, are mentored and given targeted support by the Director of the CMR. The CMR director (**Porter**) meets formally with every member of the CMR at least once a semester to ensure infrastructural support is appropriately tailored to the specific researcher(s) needs. We pride ourselves in the CMR on understanding the local infrastructure that we wrap around REF activity in predominantly *human terms*. *The infrastructure wraps around the researchers as people* in various bespoke arrangements, and we exercise care in thinking about how we use the resources at our disposal to support them. Examples of such mentoring and support: teaching relief to meet research targets (e.g., **Giffney** supported to complete her **monograph** *The Culture-Breast*, to be published by Routledge in late 2021); directed, purposeful, one-to-one, research mentorship and career development of ECRs and mid-career colleagues from the CMR Director (recent examples are Senior Lectureship promotions on a research track for **Hickey** and **Hook** in October 2020).

The Impact Development Series

As stated in section one above, a **key strategic priority** for the CMR in the current assessment period relates to recognising, supporting, enabling and rewarding those CMR researchers engaging in **transformative impact activity**. *The Impact Development Series* is UU's support programme designed to help academic researchers enhance the **impact** of their research. In addition to availing of this university wide initiative, our two **impact case study teams** (i.e., **Hickey, Hook, Jackson and Mairs-Dyer, Baker**) benefited from bespoke and targeted support from the CMR Research Director (**Porter**) to achieve **transformative impacts** beyond the academy (see testimonial evidence detailed in section one). This meant providing the ICS teams with the necessary financial, physical or technical resources for stakeholder engagement in their various civic projects. This civic impact activity is further incentivised and rewarded as part of the broader mentorship and career development of CMR researchers. As stated above, two colleagues have already benefited from the profile they developed through their research **impact activity** (i.e., academic promotions of **Hook and Hickey**) and the CMR Research Director is currently working with **Mairs Dyer and Baker** on their promotion portfolio, a key aspect of which will be their **impact activity**.

Training and Supervision of PGR

As stated above in section one, a **key strategic priority** for the CMR in this assessment period was **to strengthen our PhD research culture**, thereby revivifying the broader unit culture. This we achieved **through increased investment in the recruitment, retention and completion in PhD projects**. The CMR invested approximately **£820K during this assessment period in funding a range of PhD projects** connected to our core thematic research areas. This period has also seen our integration into the circa **£30 million AHRC Northern Bridge Doctoral Training Partnership** (alongside Newcastle, Durham and Queen University Belfast).

The CMR PhD community is lively and engaged, running and participating in regular seminars, reading groups and symposia that are facilitated by the CMR Research Director (**Porter**) or organized by the PhDs themselves. Particular emphasis is placed on the importance of peer support, encouraging the PhD researchers to work together both within and outside the strict confines of their individual projects. Recently, for example, two of our final year PhD researchers, Amy McCroy and Stephen Goulding, published a paper, 'Representing the (un)finished revolution in Belfast's Political Murals' in *Critical Discourse Studies*. Our PhD community includes emerging scholars from the UK, Ireland and North America, scholars with protected status and complex needs, and those from non-traditional backgrounds. But whatever their background, colleagues in the CMR work tirelessly to ensure that they are all welcomed and integrated into the CMR research community with exacting care and attention.

Each research student has a team of two to three supervisors from the unit who meet them regularly to discuss their research project and provide professional development opportunities, relevant advice and pastoral care as needed. All PhD researchers in the CMR receive £900 per year for research support and have used these resources to present their work at conferences and in exhibition spaces across the UK, Ireland, Europe, North America and the Middle East. Our PhD researchers can also avail of CMR monies at the discretion of the CMR Director, where such discretionary monies add value for the unit and/or the individual researchers in question (e.g., funding the field-work that informed McCroy and Goulding's *Critical Discourse Studies* article). The close, productive and meaningful relations between CMR supervisory teams and our postgraduate research community is reflected in the fact that a number of our research students (both past and present, both during and beyond their doctoral students and into their postdoctoral career) currently collaborate with CMR colleagues on research activity: successful funding bids, publish papers, edited books, run public events and, in some cases, even teach together. Particularly striking examples of this include **Porter** and McCollum, **Baker, Porter** and Ramsey, **Jackson** and McCollum, **Porter** and Brady, **Porter** and Monteverde.

Beyond the unit level, and managed through the Doctoral College, The *Researcher Development Programme* (RDP) at Ulster provides extensive and significant opportunities for the training and development of our postgraduate research students (<https://www.ulster.ac.uk/doctoralcollege/researcher-development-programme>). The RDP is a suite of workshops, specialist skills sessions, online courses and personal development planning activities which provide opportunities to gain the experience and skills required to be a competent and professional researcher, whether employed in academia or beyond. Employability is also enhanced as all PhD researchers have the opportunity to teach. They enrol on the *First Steps to Teaching and Learning Programme*. The module is accredited by Advance-HE at Descriptor 2 and following successful completion the PhD researchers are awarded Higher Education Academy Associate Fellowship (AFHEA). They then have the opportunity to develop their teaching skills on under-graduate courses under the supervision of a member of staff.

Equality and Diversity

As a civic university, UU is motivated to live what it preaches: namely, to maintain a strong connection to the region in which it is situated and to be a progressive force for societal change locally and, where possible, beyond. This is something we take seriously in the CMR, concerned, as we are, to publish research and engage in civic spaces in order to inspire and motivate the critique of inequality and precarious labour in the regional economy (**Ramsey, Baker, Porter**), to focus attention on those politically marginalized whether on the basis of class or ethno-religious background (**Mairs-Dyer, Baker, Hickey, Hook, Edge, Baylis**), gender and sexuality (**Ekins, Mairs-Dyer, Edge, Baylis, Giffney**), or race (**Baker**). For evidence of this kind of engagement with politically marginalized groups, see the testimonial detail relating to the **Mairs-Dyer and Baker's** ICS foregrounded in section one above.

The CMR unit is split evenly in gender terms. Men and women are equally represented across all levels in the school (from Lecturers through to Professorial staff) and in the school management group. A number of colleagues (e.g., **Baker, Mairs-Dyer, Porter**) come from working-class and/or non-traditional academic backgrounds and this is something they unapologetically bring to their work, informing, particularly, the public or civic activity they engage in. For example, in Spring 2016 the CMR Research Director (**Porter**) invited the then *Guardian* Journalist (and now Professor of Sociology at The University of Manchester) Gary Younge to Ulster to give a public lecture entitled 'Black Lives Matter in the Age of Obama' (see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ubpy6xCq7Cq&feature=youtu.be>). Chaired and moderated by **Porter**, Younge discussed the Black Lives Matter movement against the backdrop of what was then his forthcoming book, *Another Day in the Death of America*, a book then published by Faber and Faber later that year. Or, to give another example, **Baker** was commissioned by the NI Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM) in 2015 to conduct research on how the local/regional media in NI reported on race crime.

Diversity and inclusivity are valued, actively promoted and embedded in all research processes and policies as outlined in our Code of Practice (CoP). This 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. All UU staff undergo mandatory equality and diversity training. Those involved in REF management (**Porter**) have had specific **REF equality and diversity training**. Staff have also undergone optional training (e.g. neurodiversity training), and the unit has provided reasonable adjustments, support and equal opportunities for research advancement (e.g., grant applications, promotion, collaborative publishing) for all colleagues, irrespective of, for instance, their complex needs or caring responsibilities. Equality and diversity are standing items on the Communication and Media school board agenda, as well as in school management meetings. The School of Communication and Media are making plans for Athena Swan accreditation in 2022. A CMR researcher (**Long**) will coordinate this process as the AHSS faculty lead on Athena Swan.

3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

As stated above in section one, a **key strategic priority** for the CMR in this assessment period was **to improve the sustainability of our research activity by generating research income**. Building on our performance in REF2014, we are particularly proud of the significant strides we are continuing to make in **executing our strategy of growing and diversifying our research income**. During the current assessment period, **CMR researchers successfully secured in excess of £2 million**. This is a clear step up from our performance in 2014, **an overall increase of 69.4%**. Our **income per FTE has more than doubled, rising from £74,688 in REF2014 to £163,403 in REF2021, an impressive increase of 119%**.

This success in improving our income generation has importantly been made possible not only by the newly created university-wide developmental programmes at UU such as *RIGOUR*, but also by a locally targeted *Research Mentoring Programme* that wraps around CMR researchers as individuals or project teams (see section two above). Again, it is important to understand this infrastructure in primarily *human* terms: that is, seeing good research activity as fundamentally people-driven and a product of meaningful and sustained inter-personal relationships.

Further, CMR colleagues have access to a range of high-end technological resources and infrastructure, production facilities and industry level equipment in order to carry out ongoing research activities. CMR researchers have access to both broadcast and black box television studios across three campuses (Belfast, Coleraine, Jordanstown), industry standard production equipment for film and televisual content (4K cameras, field recorders, lighting kits, outside broadcast equipment), immersive content (high spec edit suites, 360 cameras, VR Headsets), audio (sound studios, portable audio recording equipment) and access to high end edit and production computer equipment as well as the full Adobe CC suite. There is also an extensive scholarly or library infrastructure at Ulster, with four libraries holding almost a million monographs, print and electronic books. The unit has a book/journal budget of more than £58,999 per year and the faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences has an electronic database budget of £225K. In addition, CMR researchers have directly benefited from £616,432 institutional funding via the Vice Chancellor's Strategic investment in developing research and teaching facilities on our Belfast campus.

Also, as stated in section one, through the development of a cross-faculty collaboration with UU colleagues in UoA 32 and UoA 33, the CMR has contributed to the creative industries component of the successful **Belfast Region City Deal (an £850 million investment package)** which will include a **£61 million investment in a Screen Media Innovation Lab**.

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

Research Networks, Collaborations and Partnerships

CMR researchers engage in academic collaborations with colleagues in a range of universities across the UK, Ireland, Europe and Latin America. For example, **Porter** and Iain Mackenzie at University of Kent have a longstanding relationship publishing **articles in international peer reviewed journals** such as *Contemporary Political Theory* and *Political Studies Review* and are currently working on what will be their **third** co-authored **monograph** together. **Porter** also has an ongoing relationship with a number of Deleuze scholars in Latin America (Argentina, Chile, Brazil). Some of the fruits of this engagement can be found in the edited book *Deleuze, Ontologica, Practica*, which **Porter** contributed to. In addition, CMR scholars have developed many connections with various other bodies, institutions and organisations beyond academia. Some of these include: **Giffney** with the British Psychoanalytic Council (BPC), the Irish Forum for Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy (IFPP), the Psychoanalytic Section of the Irish Council for Psychotherapy (ICP), the Association for Psychosocial Studies (ASP), the College for Psychoanalysis and Jungian Analysis (CPJA), the United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP), the Belfast Film Festival, Verbal Reading Rooms Project, Science Gallery Dublin, and IMMA – The Irish Museum of Modern Art; **Baker** with Trademark, Irish Congress of Trade

Unions; **Jackson** with BBC audience council; **Ramsey** with IMPRESS and as Chair of the Media, Communication and Cultural Studies Association (MeCCSA) Policy Network; **Porter** as part of MeCCSA executive and with BBC Research and Development; *Baylis* with TG4 and Belfast Exposed Gallery; **Mairs Dyer** and **Baker** with various community groups in the NI region; **Edge** with Northern Ireland Advisory board for Women in Film and TV.

Research Users, Beneficiaries or Audiences: Civic, Professional, Economic/Societal

CMR researchers engage users, beneficiaries or audiences in various ways and across three broadly related spheres or spaces: *civic/cultural life, professional practice and economy/society*.

Civic and Cultural Life

Mairs Dyer and **Baker** lead various civic and outreach projects in the NI region, projects which engage community groups and activists on questions of media, representation and citizenship. A good example of this was an event organized by **Baker** in April 2016. *Representing Loyalism: Media, Culture & Politics* focused on the media portrayal of loyalism, and working-class Protestantism. With contributions from representatives of the loyalist community, academics, artists and journalists, this event was open to the general public. Due to her expertise in collaborative documentary filmmaking in post-conflict contexts, **Mairs Dyer** was an invited member of the Ethics and Filmmaking panel and discussion at the Belfast Human Rights Festival on 6th March 2017. Similarly, because of her on-going research interest in women's contribution to peace-building in post-conflict NI, **Mairs Dyer** has participated in a number of other public events in the UK and Ireland, including: 'Herstory', an event highlighting the contribution of women to Irish history; WANDA: Feminism and Moving Image Film Festival; 'Art for the Senses. A Journey of Resilience and Recovery' which focused on how art can be used in the facilitation of recovery from trauma and in the development of resilience. This event formed part of the series funded by the Royal Society for the Arts, London.

Jackson was a member of the BBC Audience Council. The Council advised the BBC Trust, the governing body of the BBC. **Jackson's** role involved the use of audience feedback and other information to provide strategic advice to the BBC Trust and she has presented various findings on behalf of the Audience Council NI to Rona Fairhead, Chairman of the BBC Trust; Trust members including Lord Williams; Jon Zeff, Director of the BBC Trust; Alison Gold, Head of Public Services Strategy; Philip Lillico, Chief Advisor Governance; Fran O'Brien, Head of Editorial Standards; and Nick North, Director of BBC Audiences. **Porter** has an ongoing relationship with BBC Research and Development in London and Manchester, as part of UU's participation in the multi-institutional *Data Science Research Science Partnership*. In collaboration with a BBC funded Postdoctoral fellow and CMR research assistant, Dr G. Monteverde, **Porter** presented a significant research report to the Head of Partnerships at the BBC, Samantha Chadwick, entitled 'Measuring the Societal Impact of the BBC'. The two-fold aim of the work was to: a) review the literature of societal impact measures and metrics used by public service providers, including broadcasters; and b) to identify best practice for using relevant measures and metrics to evidence societal impact relevant for the BBC. **Edge** has been working in an all-Ireland or cross border context to examine the impact social network sites have been having on young people's mental health. Her research findings have been presented to the regional media industry, to members of the Northern Ireland Assembly and key policy makers at Stormont and to interested bodies such as Ofcom and the Princess Trust. **Long** has also presented her work to policymakers at the Northern Ireland assembly, as well as the Public Health Agency in Northern Ireland (PHA). The PHA is a statutory body, and a regional organisation for health protection and health and social wellbeing improvement.

Running alongside the scholarly articles in peer review journals on 'New Orleans Jazz' in this assessment period (i.e., between 2014 and 2020), **Ekins** has also produced over fifty Jazz publications, including a book, and a further two CDs (with accompanying booklets) to complete his 9 CD series 'The Lord Richard New Orleans Sessions'. Further, in addition to his significant activities in the field of popular music, the CMR also supports **Ekins** in his active involvement in

the Marchmont Association (MA) History Project in Bloomsbury, London. In 2009, MA established its own independent commemorative plaque scheme honouring significant figures from the past: from the Pankhursts to Virginia Woolf, Kenneth Williams to Mary Shelley, Jerome K Jerome to Vladimir Lenin. **Ekins** has been principally involved in the Blue Plaque project since 2011 and since 2014 he and his colleagues have erected 2 History Boards and 17 Blue Plaques in the area. With Debbie Radcliffe, **Ekins** has produced an overview of MA History Project to date (<http://www.marchmont.org/historyproject/>). For a sense of the depth of research engaged in by **Ekins** in this context, see, for example, his peer-reviewed article in *Pilgrimages*, 'The Case of Dorothy Richardson in Bloomsbury (1896-1907): An Essay in Grounded Theory and the Social Construction of Knowledge'.

Professional Practice

Giffney is a fully-accredited psychoanalytic psychotherapist, a psychosocial theorist and an interdisciplinary researcher. She integrates these facets of her training and experience into her public engagement activities and clinical practice. **Giffney** is the Director of 'Psychoanalysis +', an international, interdisciplinary initiative that brings together clinical, academic and artistic approaches to, and applications of, psychoanalysis. Across the assessment period (i.e., between 2014 and 2020) large public events have taken place in, for example, the Freud Museum in London, the National Museum of Decorative Arts and History, Science Gallery Dublin, Filmbase, and IMMA – The Irish Museum of Modern Art. She was commissioned by IMMA in 2018 to develop 'Unconscious Objects: A Series of Conversations around Art and Psychoanalysis', after giving a keynote lecture on 'The Freud Affect', as part of the Lucian Freud Lecture Series, convened by IMMA and Trinity College Dublin.

Giffney is also developing (with **Long** and **Mairs Dyer**) 'Mental Health & the Arts', an interdisciplinary, cross-border initiative on the island of Ireland, which convenes public events on psychosocial issues in cultural institutions in partnership with community groups/organisations. There have been two such events to date. Firstly, 'The Long-Term Impact of Violent Trauma on Adult Mental and Physical Health' took place in the Strand Arts Centre Cinema, Belfast in October 2018. The event was co-sponsored by the Belfast Film Festival, and featured contributions from professionals working in the fields of counselling, psychotherapy, physiotherapy, general medicine, social work, and documentary filmmaking. Secondly, 'What Can We Do with Our Vulnerability? Words to Make Meaning of Life's Experiences' took place in the Duncairn Centre for Culture and Arts, Belfast in October 2019. The event was co-sponsored by the Verbal Arts Centre in Derry~Londonderry, and featured award-winning writer Emilie Pine and her bestselling book of personal essays, *Notes to Self*.

Giffney also undertook a comprehensive qualitative review of the Irish Forum for Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy's clinical accreditation criteria in 2017-2018, which included forming and chairing a ten-person clinical working group. The Forum adopted the revised set of accreditation criteria she and the working group produced. The Forum is one of the official bodies that accredits psychoanalytic clinical practitioners on the island of Ireland. **Long** was the Honorary External Consultant for this review. Further, **Long's** research directly shaped the policy and professional practices of *Pieta House*, Ireland's leading charity providing therapy for those in suicidal distress, engaging in self-harm, or bereaved by suicide. **Long** also contributed to a *Mental Health Foundation* Report, 'The Truth about self-harm' (<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/truth-about-self-harm>).

McGrath is very active in the professional fields of Public Relations and Political Lobbying within the NI region and beyond. At the Public Relations Institute of Ireland (PRII), he has served as an elected member of the National Council and of its smaller Executive Committee. Moreover, he has been Chair of the PRII's Education Sub-Council, a member of the PRII's Publications and PR Sub-Council, and Chair of its Editorial Board. He was the founder and first Chairman of the Northern Ireland Government Affairs Group, which acts as a forum in which local lobbyists can exchange professional experiences and serves as the representative body for that industry in NI. Based in Brussels, the European Centre for Public Affairs is an organisation which represents

lobbyists there and promotes best practice. **McGrath** has been a member of its Management Board, and Chairman of the group's Research & Publications Committee. He is currently an elected member of the Chartered Institute of Public Relations' Northern Ireland Committee. **Edge** in partnership with *Politics Plus* and *Bespoke Productions* designed and delivered the professional media training programme, 'Be Seen Be Heard'. This programme trained and facilitated fifty women from different areas of civic society with the aim of increasing the representation of women's voices in current affairs and news broadcasting in NI.

Economy/Society

In various roles across this assessment period (i.e., between 2014 and 2020), **Jackson** worked on the following regional economic projects in NI. First, *The Digital Causeway Graduate Accelerator Programme*. An incubator programme to support the development of graduate enterprise in the digital media/big data industries, this was aimed at graduates and undergraduates at UU across the region and was supported by Invest Northern Ireland and Coleraine Borough Council. Secondly, *Digi2Market, Northern Periphery and Artic Programme*. This is a design project which deploys digital marketing strategies in regional SMEs in order to enhance their marketing and sales beyond their regions. The project is developing marketing stories across different participating sectors, including Agri-food, Marine and Engineering, using immersive technology to produce benefits of scale not otherwise available. Thirdly, *Sea Gods, Shipwrecks and Sidhe Folk*, Heritage Lottery Funding. The aim of this project is to develop an innovative form of interpretation for the north coast of Ireland's rich cultural heritage, using smartphone technologies. The wider project team include Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Councils Museums Services, artists and local community groups. This project has: a) used the landscape, cultural assets and activities to enable opportunities for both local people and visitors to participate in the culture, arts and heritage of the area; b) supported the creative development of young people and creative practitioners: and c) promoted a sense of pride, identity and deeper understanding of Causeway area by bringing together its many stories, histories, identities and languages.

Contributions to Wider Research Base: Keynotes, Talks, Symposia, and Peer-Review Activity

During this REF cycle, CMR researchers have given keynote addresses and invited talks in institutional fora such as: University of Kent, The Tavistock Institute, Ulster Museum, LSE, Birbeck, University of Manchester, University of Nottingham, Ningbo, China, The Irish Museum of Modern Art, Trinity College Dublin, University College Dublin, Science Gallery Dublin, Technological University, Dublin, University of Roehampton; Imperial College, Brunel University, FRIAS, University of Freiburg, Germany, La Academia Nacional de Ciencias de Buenos Aires, Argentina, and University of Manitoba, Canada, Stanford University, USA.

CMR scholars engage in peer review activities for journals such as: for *Photographies, Social History, Visual Communication, History of Photography, Contemporary Political Theory, European Journal of Political Theory, Deleuze and Guattari Studies, Studies in Gender and Sexuality, Postmedieval: A Journal of Medieval Cultural Studies, Alphaville Journal of Film and Screen Media, The International Journal of Psychoanalysis, Studies in the Maternal, Media, Culture & Society, Cultural Studies, Convergence, Journal of Media Practice and Education* and *Journal of British Cinema and Television*. **Giffney** was the co-founder and co-series editor of the 'Queer Interventions' book series at Ashgate. Books in the series were re-published by Routledge and in paperback during this REF cycle, including two books co-edited by **Giffney**: *Queering the Non/Human* (2016[2008]) and *The Ashgate Research Companion to Queer Theory* (2018[2009]). **Porter** is part of the editorial executive for Rowman and Littlefield's book series 'Experiments on the Political' and is the co-founder and series editor of Rowman and Littlefield's forthcoming book series on 'ill-disciplinary thinking'. **Porter** is also an active reviewer of grant applications as part of the AHRC Peer Review College.

Finally, the CMR has a lively research culture with regular conference events, symposia, and research workshops. Detailed below are some indicative examples.

Long and **Giffney** were part of a UU team that co-sponsored the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy's (BACP) 25th Annual Research Conference in May 2020, the first time it was convened in the NI region.

In January 2019, **Porter** hosted a one-day symposium on '*Technology, Culture, Politics*'. This public event brought together scholars from University of Kent, Technological University Dublin, Paris 7, Nanterre and Kings College London to think about the ways in which technology, culture and politics intersect in contemporary everyday life.

In October 2018, **Ramsey** jointly organised (with Emerita Professor **Máire Messenger Davies**) the event 'Can we believe the media? The role of journalism in the digital age'. The event was co-organised with IMPRESS, the UK's approved independent press regulator. Speakers at the event included Jonathan Heawood, Chief Executive Officer of IMPRESS, Peter Feeney, Ireland's Press Ombudsman, and journalists from the Irish News and VIEWDigital (<https://impress.press/news/event-can-we-believe-the-media-the-role-of-journalism-in-the-digital-age-04-10-2018-belfast.html>).

In April 2017, and with a £10k grant from **British Academy/Leverhulme**, **Jackson** organised 'Performing the Drone Workshop'. This event aimed to bring new discourses to the interpretation of the drone image by inviting artists to respond through their literary practice to photographs captured by drones. This public event involved a wide range of participants connected to landscape issues, including planners, environmental groups, and creative practitioners.

In April 2017, **Ramsey, Baker and Porter** hosted a one-day symposium, 'Getting Real about Critical Regionalism: What contemporary NI tells us about the Britain beyond its Border'. This event brought together scholars from Queen's University Belfast, University of Kent and Edge Hill University to think about how an inter-disciplinary and cross-connecting analysis of contemporary NI could be advanced. These conversations helped **Porter** to develop the 'critical-regionalist', cross-comparative, framework used in his AHRC bid 'Failed states and creative resistances: the everyday life of punks in Belfast, Banda Aceh, Mitrovica and Soweto' initially foregrounded above in section one.