

Research Environment (REF5)

UoA 35: Music, Drama, Dance and Performing Arts

The three main strategic objectives in this area were to develop our practice as research (whose potential stood out in the RAE2008 results), to make technology-informed enquiry a priority wherever possible (following the decision to institute a major Research Centre for Creative Technologies), and to establish our cluster as a significant research interface generally (in particular by holding, and sharing work at, major industry- and sector-facing events). In recognising the internationally excellent work done to achieve these objectives, the REF2014 panel noted that practice as research activity, measured by discrete outputs compared with 2008, increased by as much as 70%. It also praised the sheer breadth and scope of initiatives: from academic symposia and conferences to festivals and other mixed events, involving participants from all over the world and a total of at least fifty thousand attendees. Perhaps most important, the panel recognised how much had been invested in the sustainability of these achievements and in the future growth of Music, Drama, Dance, Cinematic Arts and Creative Technologies at Ulster. This has been reflected in the increase in staffing levels (against the opposite trend in the Faculty of Arts as a whole, and in a context of extreme economic adversity more generally): Ulster submitted 25% more researchers to sub-panel 35 in the REF2014 exercise than it did to the equivalent disciplines (in sub-panels 57, 63, 65 and 67) in RAE2008. Sustainability has also been manifested physically: in the expansion of the subject-group into a contemporary, high-specification building next to the existing listed Georgian building (itself improved and extended in 2008 following its adaptation and complete refurbishment in 2003).