

THE APPROPRIATENESS OF
KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
TO RESEARCH
IN ARTS AND HUMANITIES DISCIPLINES.

IRELAND'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE EUROPEAN DEBATE

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1 . I N T R O D U C T I O N

In March 2009 the Royal Irish Academy (RIA) in conjunction with the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences (IRCHSS) organised a workshop on the topic of key performance indicators (KPIs) for humanities research in Irish universities. The report of the meeting, *Developing key performance indicators for the humanities*, was widely circulated to universities; the Department of Education and Skills; the Higher Education Authority (HEA); and other relevant agencies as a preliminary to stage two: the actual identification of KPIs. There is a continuing anxiety on the part of higher-education administrators and public-research funders to have measures in place to assess the quality and impact of publicly funded research. In the absence of humanities specific indicators, it is possible that the measures long-used and approved by the science community will become the *de facto* measures used to assess quality and impact of research in the arts and humanities. As was argued in the 2009 RIA report, such measures fail to capture the diversity of output, methodology and experience across the range of disciplines in the arts and humanities and reveal little of real meaning concerning the quality of research in this area.

The appropriateness of key performance indicators to research in arts and humanities disciplines. Ireland's contribution to the European debate is a response to these concerns and reflects the thinking and beliefs of the Irish academic and scholarly community in the arts and humanities relating to the range of activities and type of performance currently expected of those who wish to develop and sustain a professional research and academic career in the relevant disciplines. This report acts as a guide to current norms in relation to research outputs and activities, and the range of performance expected by the arts and humanities community itself of its early career and senior scholars.

This report compiles a series of discipline-specific statements prepared at the request of the President of the Royal Irish Academy by the Academy's network of humanities committees and (where no relevant committees exist) by invited external experts. The statements are in the following disciplines: archaeology; Classical and Near Eastern studies; film and media studies; folklore studies; historical sciences; history of art; international affairs; literature; modern languages, literary and cultural studies; musicology; and, philosophy and ethics. The Academy asked each committee or author to consider current norms in scholarship, research outputs and activities, to reflect upon the aspirations of the community as to how research quality and activity should be assessed, as well as the reality of how the discipline's activities and outputs are currently valued, and of likely future changes in research output and scholarly practice. Further guides will be available shortly including one on Léann na Gaeilge.

Finally, the Academy would like to thank its humanities committees and the external experts involved for their contribution to this report.

Nicholas Canny
President, Royal Irish Academy

2 . COMMENTARY ON CURRENT PRACTICE IN THE USE OF KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS IN THE ARTS AND HUMANITIES

CONTEXT AND AIMS

This guide has been compiled, in the first instance, for the benefit of early career researchers,¹ allowing them the benefit of the considered perspective of their senior colleagues on the activities and competencies expected and esteemed within their discipline. Any such document must of necessity be aspirational, given that many early career researchers are, in the present financial climate, having to eke out a living through performing humdrum tasks at the fringes of academic life. However, it will help all early career researchers to benchmark their careers and identify where they may most usefully concentrate their energies if they wish to build a professional career as an academic researcher and scholar. The guide will also hopefully encourage individual researchers to keep a careful record of the range of activities they engage in and encourage them to prioritize those activities known to be held in high esteem by their academic community. It is hoped that the guide will become required reading for those within higher-education institutions charged with the assessment of research quality and impact for the purposes of recruitment and promotion. Similarly, it should prove relevant to research funders including the HEA and research councils, not least in making them aware of the range of research activities pursued by academics in arts and humanities disciplines, and valued by their community.

Finally, the Academy intends to use the guide to inform its contribution to European debates on research assessment and evaluation in the arts and humanities including ongoing initiatives by the All European Academies Association; the European Research Council; and the European Science Foundation. Early career researchers are increasingly encouraged to avail of international mobility initiatives and a period spent researching and/or teaching abroad is usually actively encouraged. Given this fact, it is important to ensure that measures being applied in Ireland to assess quality are not so uniquely and idiosyncratically Irish that they lack all comparability or common ground with international, particularly European, frameworks to assess research quality. The guide's discussion of preference activities and competencies will thus provide a useful input into initiatives to develop national career frameworks for researchers and contribute to the development of the European Commission Framework for Research Careers.

PUBLICATIONS ARE BUT ONE TYPE OF PERFORMANCE INDICATOR

The popular perception of the lone humanities scholar working in splendid isolation engulfed by dusty archival materials is comprehensively shattered by the diversity of activities identified

¹ In line with the definition followed by Irish and European funding agencies, an early career researcher is categorised as a researcher that is up to twelve years post-PhD.

in this guide that are deemed essential to the successful career progression of the modern-day scholar of the realm of arts and humanities. The discussion on indicators for Classical and Near Eastern studies notes, 'publication is not the sole measure of academic performance and that scholarly standing is dependent on significant contributions across the broad range of activities'.

The diversity of activities pursued by the researcher in arts and humanities domains ranges from the management of research grants and programmes to the supervision and mentoring of PhD and postdoctoral researchers; from the editing of monograph series and learned journals to the designing of undergraduate courses; from holding office within university or learned societies to presenting at national and international conferences; and from participating in media and popular debates to curating exhibitions. This multiplicity of activities and outputs illustrates the wealth of methodologies, perspectives and practices followed by the arts and humanities community as scholars attempt variously to create, understand and apply the knowledge generated through their research undertakings. No single key performance indicator (KPI) currently exists that could adequately capture the quality and impact of research activity described within this guide.

IS IT POSSIBLE TO IDENTIFY A HIERARCHY OF RESEARCH OUTPUTS?

The guide will possibly challenge the assumptions of those charged with capturing the extent and quality of research activity in Ireland, whether within university management or state bodies. This is particularly the case as it applies to long-held assumptions concerning the hierarchy of activities in which peer-reviewed journal articles and monographs are accepted as superior to all other research outputs. It emerges clearly in this guide's discussions that such beliefs are based upon unsustainable and outdated assumptions. The diversity—demonstrated both across and within disciplines—explicitly challenges the value and validity of a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to capturing the quality and impact of arts and humanities research. Instead, scholars and researchers should ideally engage in a mixture of discipline-appropriate activities in the knowledge that each will enhance the scholar's reputation and standing.

PEER REVIEW IS SEEN AS THE PRIME MEASURE OF QUALITY

There is, however, unanimity across arts and humanities disciplines concerning the value and importance of peer review as a measure of quality. International peer review is accepted as the most reliable measure for the assessment of research quality in the arts and humanities regardless of discipline; publication type; the research output or activity; the focus of the research (national vs international); or the research methodology adopted.

Some difficulties and weaknesses in relation to the system and process of peer review are identified. For example, it was observed that the small size of the cohort of scholars in some disciplines means that anonymous peer reviewing and assessment is difficult to achieve. The Academy's Coiste Léann na Gaeilge suggests that the narrowness of the peer-group commu-

nity in Léann na Gaeilge contributed to the restricted number of peer-reviewed journals published and the limited amount of monograph-reviewing undertaken.² The absence of appropriate journals and the weaknesses of peer review in relation to emerging disciplines within Léann na Gaeilge were especially remarked upon (e.g. literary criticism and many areas of linguistics).

In November 2009 the Academy convened a meeting of editors of local journals and the key publishing houses in Ireland to discuss the growing requirement for peer review on the part of academic administrators. It is aware that the requirement for peer review may be overly burdensome for the smaller Irish publishing houses and local journals, which may have neither the administrative nor financial resources to bear the costs and requirements associated with peer review. This issue is particularly vexatious for those disciplines or specialisms where the most prestigious publication outlet may well be a journal published in Ireland or indeed where the journal, while enjoying only a limited circulation, may be required reading for those within the sub-discipline. The Academy wishes to express its support for such niche publications and publishers while also encouraging them to acknowledge the growing importance of clearly defined peer-review processes as an indicator of publication quality. There is scope perhaps for the smaller journals and publishing houses in Ireland to work together to develop standardised editorial and reviewing processes thereby reducing the burden upon the individual journal/publishing house. Further, there is acceptance in the case of monographs that it is the subsequent reviews and general reception of books by the profession, rather than the imprint of the publisher, that determines their worth.

NO AGREED HIERARCHY OF PUBLICATION TYPES

No agreed hierarchy of publication types emerges: a monograph does not necessarily 'trump' a journal article; rather the test is the existence and stricture of the editorial policy followed by the publisher and, particularly, the type of quality and impact review and evaluation process to which the journal adheres. There is consensus across the disciplines represented within this guide of the futility of attempting to establish an equivalence between publication types as a means of assessing quality and impact. In most disciplinary areas, the highest esteem or priority is attached to the publication of monographs by publishing houses with clearly defined peer-review processes, and articles in peer-reviewed journals. However, in some disciplines, other publication types will be viewed as equally prestigious. For example, literary and textual scholars are comparably recognised for the publication of new critical editions of, and commentaries on, texts; while in musicology, peer-reviewed book chapters are viewed as favourably as journal articles. Issues of discipline size also influence the importance attached to particular publication types. For smaller-scale disciplines, for example folklore studies, publication outputs, such as the edited proceedings of major conferences, play a significant role in the international dissemination and development of knowledge and ideas and so are held in high esteem by the community of scholars.

The lack of acknowledgement of Irish-medium scholarship in international bibliographies and citation databases was a concern for the Léann na Gaeilge community as it felt that this may particularly adversely impact early career scholars.

² The Academy's Coiste Léann na Gaeilge intends to prepare a guide to key performance indicators in Léann na Gaeilge during 2011.

CHANGING PRACTICES AND THE GROWTH OF DIGITAL HUMANITIES

Publishing practices are changing rapidly in line with the new opportunities generated through online publishing including electronic-only journals. Such opportunities are having a profound effect on all aspects of arts and humanities research practice. The growth in digital humanities is accompanied by the emergence of new research outputs including digital databases; digitised libraries, repositories and collections; geospatial information systems (GIS) and datasets, etc. All disciplines acknowledge that these activities and outputs are expected to grow rapidly but no clear consensus yet exists as to how best to value these outputs or assess their quality. Similarly, higher-education promotional structures have been slow to comprehend and appreciate scholars' involvement with activities such as the preparation of exhibitions, either as curators or contributors.

IMPORTANCE OF SERVICE TO THE DISCIPLINE AND SOCIETY

Service to the discipline and society is seen to be closely interlinked with the development of a research profile in the arts and humanities. Archaeology and folklore studies have a strong element of curatorship, with 'a consequent responsibility for dissemination and repatriation of research results that reaches far beyond the academic community'.³ Disciplines with a strong creative, practice-based output, e.g. archaeology, literatures in English and art history, continually emphasize the importance of 'service to society' activities to build a sustainable, vital ecosystem for their discipline and in building popular support and understanding for the discipline. However, university promotional and review structures typically struggle to capture these activities, which do not lend themselves well to peer-review processes.

SHOULD INCOME GENERATION BE A KPI?

Finally, the growing use of 'income generation' as a KPI—whether by means of awards won or funding successfully obtained—is acknowledged by all disciplines. It is notable however that some disciplines, e.g. archaeology, have considerably greater opportunity to raise funding for research activities from public and private sources over and above the usual state and European Union (EU) R&D avenues. Access to such a diversity of potential funding sources is not so readily available to all disciplines. A number of disciplines have historically received a much smaller slice of the public-research funding pie than those that can more readily represent themselves as having a commercial link or being of strategic relevance to national social and economic priorities. The use of 'income generation' as a KPI should therefore, the Academy suggests, be dependent upon the process used to determine whether or not the funding is awarded. In this, the use of peer review is again the most highly regarded method of assessment and income/funding awarded after a peer-review process may be considered an indicator of the quality of the research.

INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

Discussions within Ireland on how best to capture quality and impact in arts and humanities research are proceeding in parallel with international debates. Some countries have tried to institutionalise the process of assessing quality with varying degrees of success. The Academy

³ See below 'Statement on key performance indicators in the humanities: folklore studies'.

sees no real merit to such approaches believing that the integrity of the discipline and the importance of upholding quality must be recognised and maintained at all times. Another issue in international as much as in national discussion is that early career researchers, and even more so university administrators, are frequently anxious to know if there exists an accepted hierarchy of academic publishing houses and academic journals against which the work of an individual can be measured. It has already been made clear that no consensus on a hierarchy exists in Ireland or elsewhere, and there is general agreement that the efforts of the European Science Foundation and Thomson Reuters at establishing such a hierarchy for all journals worldwide, with an associated set of citation metrics, is methodologically unsound where arts and humanities disciplines are concerned.⁴

CONCLUSION

Universities, and university communities, are by their very nature conservative. Change typically happens slowly and incrementally. However, research practice and norms in the arts and humanities are undergoing rapid change driven in large part by the explosion in the availability of digital humanities and e-resources, and the opportunities and challenges offered by e-publishing. Recognition of the challenges and opportunities presented to long-established practices and conventional understanding of issues of quality and impact in the arts and humanities by such changes can be found throughout the statements in this guide. Looking ahead, the Academy believes that many of the views and perspectives offered within this report will become outdated as arts and humanities research practices and norms evolve, and embrace change such as that offered by the worlds of digital humanities and e-publishing. This guide should therefore be read with some caution in full recognition that the norms held by the arts and humanities community regarding indicators of quality and impact continually evolve and change in line with changing research practices and outputs.

The conclusions that the Irish research community in the arts and humanities has reached may come as a disappointment to those for whom metrification provides a seemingly scientific guide to ascertaining the relative merits of research and researchers in every domain. While the Academy is recommending that all researchers in arts and humanities disciplines harvest data on the full range of their activities as evidence of their commitment to their vocation, they, as much as the quantifiers, must recognise that numbers in themselves are no proof of quality. To suggest that they are such would be to deny the integrity of the disciplines we cherish.

Nicholas Canny
President, Royal Irish Academy
January 2011

⁴ See below 'Statement on key performance indicators in the humanities: historical sciences'

3. INDIVIDUAL DISCIPLINE STATEMENTS

3.1. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR RESEARCH IN THE ARTS AND HUMANITIES:

ARCHAEOLOGY

PREPARED BY PROFESSOR WILLIAM O'BRIEN, UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CORK, ON BEHALF OF THE RIA COMMITTEE FOR ARCHAEOLOGY

Archaeology is both an academic and a professional discipline, with a range of interests, responsibilities and performance demands that involve different elements of research. Academic research is undertaken to create knowledge about different aspects of the human past, using approaches and methodologies that are distinctive to the discipline. Most research in Ireland centres on an understanding of our archaeological heritage in a European context, but also includes work in other parts of the world, as well as on different aspects of archaeological theory and practice. In the professional context, research contributes to the development of state policy in cultural heritage management. Archaeology has a strong commercial element, with consultancy research undertaken by individuals and companies on development-led projects such as infrastructural projects and general building construction. Archaeological research in Ireland has an important public dimension, through engagement with the media, local and national historical societies, community heritage groups, schools and tourism interests.

The discipline is perhaps unusual in the arts and humanities in that all of its practitioners are involved in research at some level. The type of key performance indicators (KPIs) employed for research will therefore vary depending on the needs and priorities of different sectors. For universities, there is an emphasis on academic publication, whereas museums and state monument services may prioritise exhibitions, monument management and presentations, and the development of heritage policy. Consultant archaeologists undertake research tied to particular projects, and though many of their reports are not published they constitute important research archives.

Most academic research in archaeology is funded by agencies such as the IRCHSS; Science Foundation Ireland; The Heritage Council; and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government through the Royal Irish Academy, with funding also from the EU and private sources. These areas of research have their own performance requirements, where deliverable outputs are identified within a specific time-frame. The funding agencies adopt

Fragment of a crest from an Irish crossier (BM 1863, 1-22, 140) © The Trustees of the British Museum.



specific systems to evaluate performance and to make decisions on continuing or future support. Independent international evaluation also exists for postgraduate research (masters and PhD) in universities, one of the most significant areas of archaeological research in Ireland. For the private sector, research performance is usually assessed according to the requirements of the funding agency (e.g. the National Roads Authority), the statutory authorities (excavation licensing, etc.) or particular outputs.

In considering the wide range of activities within the discipline, there is an obvious distinction between research that is explicitly undertaken to advance knowledge about the human past, and that which is connected to **conservation and cultural heritage management**. The former is mostly carried out in the higher-education institutions (HEIs), and by bodies such as the Discovery Programme and the Royal Irish Academy, while the latter is undertaken in the commercial archaeology sector, in museums and state heritage agencies. Academic research represents the highest level of enquiry, particularly if undertaken in a supportive environment, however the private consultancy and state make a significant contribution to knowledge generation. Research that mitigates a major impact on archaeological heritage, and in so doing facilitates the completion of a major infrastructure project, is of no less value to society than the creation of pure academic knowledge about the human past.

Publication continues to be the most important and measurable index of research activity in Irish archaeology. In this respect, archaeology is no different to other arts and humanities disciplines, with a similar emphasis on peer review in the evaluation of published output. Within the discipline there is also a strong recognition of the need to disseminate information to different audiences. This can create conflicts, particularly for university researchers who are under increasing pressure to adopt the science model of collaborative publication in international journals, in an environment that emphasizes career progression and institutional reputation. While international publication to the highest level is certainly important, this should not be at the expense of engagement at a national, and regional level, especially with the taxpayers who ultimately fund the work. This is the level at which social impact of archaeological research can be most directly measured.

Research in archaeology includes a range of outputs distinctive to a discipline that has significant levels of primary data gathering, description and analysis. The production of books through reputable publishers within and outside of Ireland is very important. This includes thematic studies, text-books and project monographs (the latter frequently peer-reviewed) aimed at a scholarly audience, in addition to works of a popular, educational and touristic nature. The amount of research publication in Ireland is comparable to that in other countries in Europe. This is impressive when both the lack of financial support for publication, and the small number of academic publishing outlets available, is considered.

While publication is a critical KPI for archaeology, other outputs need to be considered. These include the writing of reports, compilation of archives, and the organisation of conferences, seminars and meetings for academic and public audiences. Archaeology is a highly popular subject, which often features in print journalism, radio and television. The Internet plays an increasingly important role in the dissemination of research data through digital archives and project websites.

Research is integral to the **development of teaching** in the higher-education sector, both at undergraduate and postgraduate level. The importance of research-led teaching is widely stressed in the development of curricula that emphasize the training of researchers as a significant learning outcome. It should be recognised that there is a significant element of science-based teaching and research in archaeology. Archaeological research also impacts indirectly on the teaching of history, geography and civic awareness in primary and secondary-level schools, where the discipline is gradually increasing its profile.

Research contributes significantly to the development of state **policy** in the cultural heritage area. There is an important research dimension in the built heritage inventory work undertaken by state agencies, both in the recognition and interpretation of different types of historic sites and landscapes. Archaeological research contributes to the drafting of heritage policy and legal frameworks, as seen in a number of reports produced in recent years. These include the Heritage Council's *Review of research needs in Irish archaeology* (2007); the School of Archaeology, University College Dublin's foresight study, *Repositioning Irish archaeology in the knowledge society* (2006); and the Royal Irish Academy's initiative, *Archaeology in Ireland: a vision for the future* (2007). These discussion documents were informed by research priorities and practice, as indeed is the current redrafting of the National Monuments legislation in the Republic.

Research in **commercial archaeology** is mostly concerned with the study of historic sites, monuments and landscapes impacted by modern developments. This sector is especially important in terms of data acquisition through the discovery of new sites and their investigation through large-scale excavation. Efforts continue to strengthen research linkages between academics in the higher-education sector and those archaeologists in the private consultancy sector. These include the current Irish National Strategic Archaeological Research (INSTAR) programme, which was established to address key issues in archaeology, build research capacity and address the issue of unpublished excavations.

Income generation is increasingly being used as a KPI for research activity in the university sector, with emphasis on funding from state, EU and private sources. Archaeological research has considerable potential in this respect, however it is questionable whether funding in itself should be a KPI. The fact that much research in Irish archaeology is ultimately funded by the taxpayer places a considerable onus on dissemination of results to local communities, historical societies and heritage groups. This research can be used to enrich understanding of local heritage, as part of various community development and tourism initiatives.

In conclusion, the above discussion illustrates the broad scope of research in the discipline of archaeology, and the important applications that this knowledge can have in modern society. In terms of the KPIs relevant to archaeology, there is a need to develop sectoral models to take this diversity of interest and activity into consideration. No single KPI can be applied to research in archaeology, as the metrics used depend on the desired outcomes and responsibilities in the different sectors.

SUMMARY TABLE OF KPIS SUITABLE FOR RESEARCH IN ARCHAEOLOGY

KPI	RESEARCH AREA	MEASURABLE OUTPUT
1***	Publication of academic books and monographs by reputable publishers in Ireland and abroad	Print publications
2***	Academic publication in peer-reviewed journals to international standards of scholarship in Ireland and abroad	Print and online publication; citation indices
3***	Field-work and museum projects having significant research elements conducted in the academic and consultancy sectors	Reports available in archives and online
4***	Heritage tourism and community initiatives	Specific projects; employment creation
5***	Development of state policy and legislation	Policy documents; seminars; meetings; drafting and implementation of new heritage laws
6***	Employment of research graduates in state, EU and privately funded projects	Employment statistics
7**	Popular publication of the results of archaeological research in Ireland and abroad	Archaeological magazines and books
8**	Research income generation, Irish and external sources	HEI financial metrics
9**	Facilitation of research through academic meetings and discourse	Conferences, seminars and lectures
10**	Contribution of research activity to creation of community-based projects	FÁS and LEADER type schemes; employment initiatives
11**	Research-led teaching of archaeology in higher education	Curriculum development, new courses and programmes; significant number of graduate students with vocational training and transferrable skills
12*	Dissemination of research to the general public through local and national societies, museums and heritage centres	Lectures, excursions and conferences, museum exhibitions, visitor centres
13*	Media initiatives	Newspaper, radio and television shows, Internet
14*	Development of primary- and secondary-level teaching	Expanded teaching of history; Transition Year programme; classroom initiatives

*** Highest importance; ** very important; * important

3.2. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR RESEARCH IN THE ARTS AND HUMANITIES:

CLASSICAL AND NEAR EASTERN STUDIES

PREPARED BY DR EDWARD HERRING, NUI GALWAY, ON BEHALF OF THE RIA COMMITTEE FOR
CLASSICAL AND NEAR EASTERN STUDIES

Academics in the fields of Classical and Near Eastern studies in Ireland and elsewhere that have attained senior positions and international reputations will be involved in many scholarly and research-related activities over and above their university responsibilities and the supervision and mentoring of PhD and postdoctoral researchers. Such activities will include, for example, the management of research grants and programmes; the editing of monograph series and learned journals; holding office in learned societies; organising and presenting papers at national and international conferences and local seminars; and engaging in various forms of 'outreach'. It is important to recognise that publication is not the sole measure of academic performance and that scholarly standing is dependent on significant contributions across the broad range of activities adverted to above. No two academics will be engaged in precisely the same spread of activities, and the range of performance expected of a senior scholar in Classical and Near Eastern studies differs from country to country and across different kinds of institution. This alone underlines the fact that there is, and can be, no universally accepted means of measuring the performance of an individual academic, still less of measuring the impact that senior scholars exert in their particular countries and fields over a career span. Moreover, expectations of research outputs change over the course of a career and are tempered by the acquisition of additional responsibilities. Thus, early career scholars find that designing new courses eats into their research time while more senior scholars acquire doctoral students to supervise and take on leadership roles within their institutions which also impinge on research time. Heavy teaching loads and unfavourable staff-to-student ratios also impact negatively on research output. That said, all senior scholars are likely to be engaged energetically in a range of activities and all will have earned international recognition in the first place through the publication of books and peer-reviewed articles. An additional complexity when considering the fields of Classical and Near Eastern studies is that these are not single disciplines; rather, they are convenient shorthand terms for a whole range of studies, involving all aspects of numerous civilisations and cultures. The principal disciplines represented under these heads in the university sector will include archaeology, art history, history, languages, literature, philosophy, and religious studies; more technical areas such as epigraphy, papyrology, linguistics, and numismatics may also be represented. In recent years, reception studies has also become a major focus of attention. Interdisciplinarity is the norm rather than the exception in these fields, making the establishment of a unitary set of key performance indicators (KPIs) impossible.

When it comes to advising early career researchers in Classical and Near Eastern studies, and the institutions that might employ them, or assess them for promotion, as to what research activities they should be engaged in, common practice suggests that in most disciplinary



areas priority should be given to writing monographs that will be produced by publishing houses with clearly defined peer-review processes and articles in peer-reviewed journals. Literary and textual scholars are also comparably recognised for the publication of new critical editions of and commentaries on texts, while archaeologists may seek to publish the output of field research in the form of substantial excavation/project reports or collections of data, such as a major corpus of artefacts.

These forms of **publication** in the appropriate outlets should normally be the primary KPIs for early career researchers in Classical and Near Eastern studies. Those with ambitions to make a career in academe will normally publish a first monograph (usually derived from a PhD thesis) quite early in their careers. They will typically proceed to define a second monograph topic comparatively soon thereafter. They will also publish journal articles. These may, for example, elucidate a problem on which the scholar concerned has assembled evidence in the course of his or her research but which he or she will not address in the course of a monograph; or sketch, and invite criticism of, an argument that may subsequently be developed in a monograph; or situate a topic that has been previously perceived to be of narrow interest within a wider intellectual framework; or take some other form (there are numerous possibilities). Those seeking to make a career in Classical and Near Eastern studies are thus likely to publish both journal articles and books, including editions of texts, commentaries, excavation reports, and so on, as appropriate to their sub-discipline. Professionals advise against attempting to establish an equivalence between journal articles and books in numerical terms; such a system would be misleading and open to serious abuse. Ideally, academic authors should engage in both activities in the knowledge that each will in its own way enhance the author's standing and reputation. Publishing in journals is especially beneficial to early career researchers because editors, who are normally helpful and sympathetic, and anonymous reviewers often provide valuable advice and guidance. Thus publishing in good journals, in itself a prime scholarly activity, can be an important step in terms of the development of various academic skills; rewards can be reaped particularly when seeking to win a contract for a monograph with a reputable publisher.

It is good practice for early career scholars to agree, when invited, to **review** some books in learned journals; but they should do so strategically in the knowledge that, in general, and however much this is to be regretted, reviews do not carry great weight in university promotion stakes. However, reviews that are appropriately critical not merely descriptive and well-written, and published in widely read and respected journals, are valuable in raising the profile of early career scholars.

Early career scholars may, on occasion, be invited to contribute **articles to edited volumes or edited conference proceedings**. Such invitations should be viewed positively when presentation at a conference provides scholars with a national or international exposure that they have not previously enjoyed; and agreement to contribute to an edited collection may place them in good grace with senior scholars in a position to help advance their careers. Papers in edited conference proceedings, however, are usually held in lower professional esteem than articles published in peer-reviewed journals; on the other hand, edited volumes that are not simply conference proceedings but carefully themed collections edited by established

scholars and published by well-regarded university presses or other publishing houses may be highly rated. Early career scholars will therefore need to assess carefully the merits of accepting an invitation to contribute to any particular collection. By the same token, such scholars should normally be advised against undertaking the editing of colloquia or conference proceedings, given that such work is time-consuming and generally not held in high esteem by university recruitment and promotion bodies. Such work should remain with established scholars or those who are explicitly paid to be their research assistants. The invitation to co-edit a themed edited volume with an established scholar or scholars, by contrast, may well be thought worth accepting both to raise the early career scholar's profile and as a learning opportunity, though the work is still likely to consume a great deal of time and energy. The career value of writing or contributing to 'companions' and similar survey works is uncertain and may vary between institutions. Such work, however, will normally not be rated as highly as scholarly monographs or peer-reviewed articles in good journals.

In the matter of **digitised-editing**, early career scholars are advised to take every opportunity to understand the technology, and master the skills, associated with digitisation, but they should involve themselves with the compilation and maintenance of digitised resources only where they aspire to a career in digital humanities or where such work is part of an employment contract.

Early career researchers will often be more aware than their seniors of the existence of e-book publishers, e-journals, and H-Net outlets, and many will enjoy online engagement with such resources. This may represent the future; for the moment, however, such publishing can only be commended where it enables aspirant academics to associate themselves with international networks of scholars with cognate interests. The harsh reality is that institutions have, as yet, been reluctant to give credit to **e-publishing**.

This brief statement indicates that professionals in Classical and Near Eastern studies have a general understanding that a hierarchy of activities exists against which the performance of early career researchers is commonly measured. Early career scholars should be aware of such preference and prejudice, but they should also harvest information on all academic activities that they engage in, while giving priority in their *curriculum vitae* to those activities that are known to be held in the highest regard by academic institutions and within the profession at large.

Early career scholars, and even more so university administrators, are frequently anxious to know if there exists an accepted **hierarchy of academic publishing houses and academic journals** against which the work of an individual can be measured. While each individual senior scholar in Classical and Near Eastern studies will have her or his ideas on which journals or publishing houses are best, there is no consensus on a hierarchy, and there is general agreement (for reasons stated in the 2009 RIA/IRCHSS report) that the efforts of the European Science Foundation and Thomson Reuters at establishing such a hierarchy for all journals worldwide, with an associated set of citation metrics, is methodologically unsound and therefore a waste of time and money. The insistence of professionals in Classical and Near Eastern studies within Ireland and abroad is that **most value should be attached to scholarly books and articles appearing in peer-reviewed publications**. There is acceptance in the case of mono-

graphs that it is the subsequent reviews and general reception of books by the profession, rather than the imprint of the publisher, that determines their worth.

The general reception of scholarly work cannot be assessed using citation metrics as these remain insufficiently developed in the disciplines of Classical and Near Eastern studies. In the case of journals, early career researchers are advised to consider first which audience they wish to reach, and to allow this to determine the journal to which their article should best be submitted. Therefore, **the most appropriate publication outlet may be a regional, national or international journal depending on the piece of research in question**; for example, the most appropriate place to publish on Latin from Celtic sources might well be a journal published in Ireland. It should also be kept in mind that Classical and Near Eastern studies have many discipline-specific journals which, while they enjoy only a small circulation, are required reading for those in the sub-discipline (e.g. numismatics). Thus, assessing the reputation of journals on the basis of place of publication as related to the domicile of the author is a very crude measure when applied to Classical and Near Eastern studies.

FILM AND MEDIA STUDIES

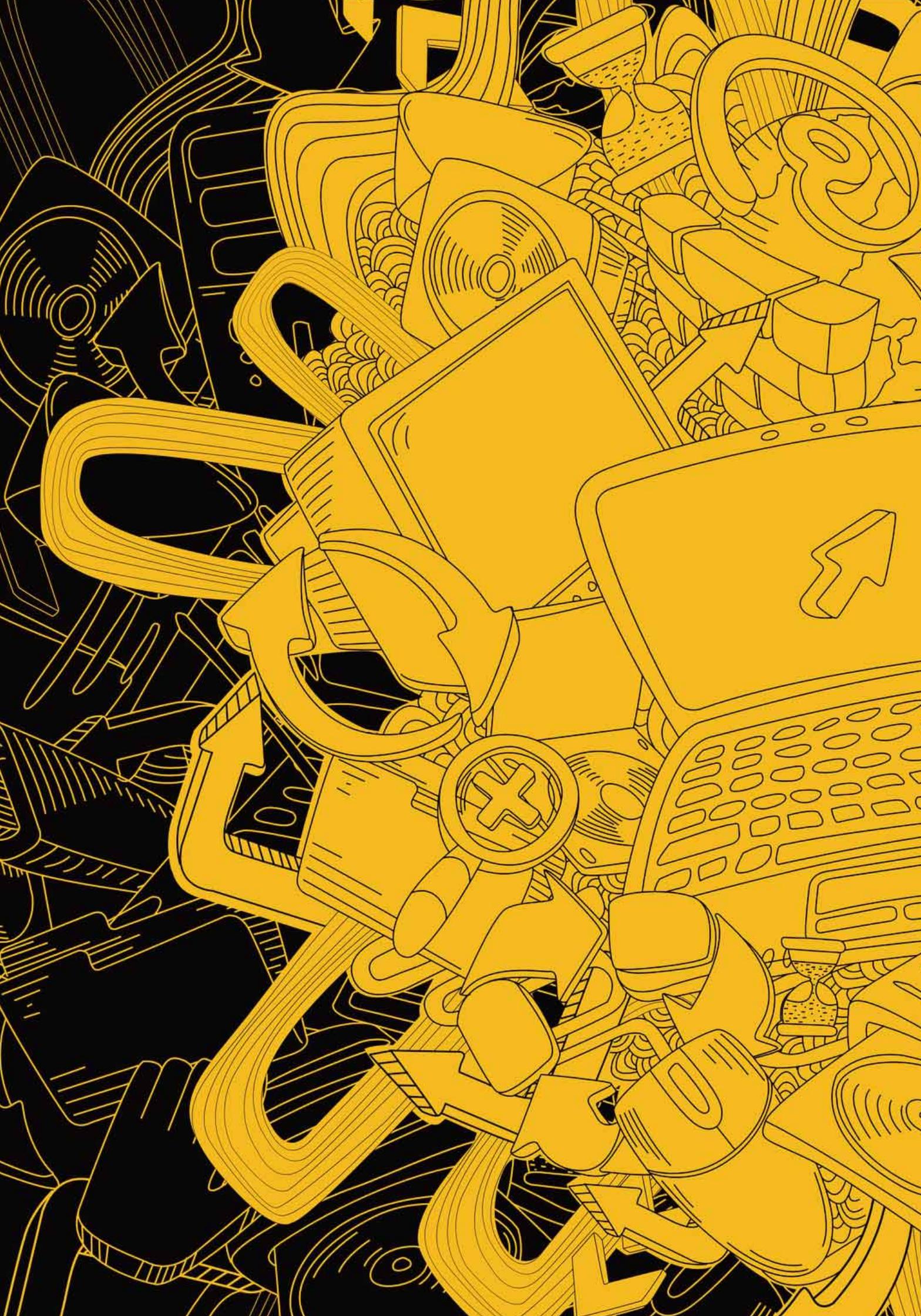
PREPARED BY DR ROD STONEMAN, HUSTON SCHOOL OF FILM & DIGITAL MEDIA, NUI GALWAY, AT
THE REQUEST OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL IRISH ACADEMY

This statement seeks to identify and delineate specific key performance indicators (KPIs) in research activities for those teaching film and media arts in Irish universities. The wide range of approaches and interdisciplinary connections in this domain has grown over the years, and should be recognised alongside the particular strength of the relationship between critical and creative practice in this area. Key research domains include: historical scholarship; critical and theoretically based enquiry; media practice-based research; and, cultural, economic and industry-based analysis. The interplay of approaches and disciplines is fertile and productive, and increasingly, activity takes place in a hybrid zone between the theory and the practice of film-making, and between film studies and adjacent disciplines. These approaches represent diverse attempts to create and understand a range of imaginative worlds specific to film. Those currently working in film studies or professional film-training in higher education use different combinations of the following research methodologies:

- » Formal analysis—developing the close reading, interpretation and analysis of signification; examining sound/image meaning-making in detail; and understanding these dynamics in relation to spectator process and reception.
- » Historical research—following empirical and archive-based investigations to analyse the development of aspects of film history and culture: production or reception processes, institutions, policies and practices in relation to their social and historical contexts, utilising primary sources.
- » Theoretical reflection—performing theoretically informed speculation engaging with the ideas through which the study of film takes place and the context through which visual culture is understood more widely.
- » Practice-based and practice-led research—the production of films (documentary, fiction or animation) for cinema, television and for other forms of distribution including film festivals, DVDs and the Internet. The contextualisation of practice within a valid theoretical and reflective discourse.

Clearly, it is necessary to develop a robust metrical basis to gauge research outputs for individuals working within film studies and adjacent disciplines, and in relation to other academic





fields. The following discussion is a starting point in developing discipline-specific indicators, which will withstand challenge and yet remain flexible enough to reflect the range of activities and intellectual priorities specific to this sector. Three particular activity types are considered: academic productivity; practice-based outputs; and the generation of research funding.

Academic productivity is subdivided into publication activities, website and digital humanities work and participation in conferences. With reference to **publication outputs**, graded differential metrics could be developed for the following outcomes:

- » Scholarly monograph;
- » Chapter in an edited book of essays;
- » Article in a peer-reviewed scholarly journal;
- » Edited book of essays; and
- » Edited issue of a scholarly journal.

The area of website and **digital humanities** work is only recently establishing itself and has not achieved universal institutional recognition, but it will continue to expand as reputable academic publishers in the sciences and humanities move towards 'paperless dissemination', and more subjects work with moving image and audio-visual sources and want to incorporate AVI files into their publications. It should include scholarly editing and contextualising texts, including audio-visual texts, for example, commentary on DVDs.

Conference papers should be recognised for early career academics; invited key-note addresses at conferences and invited guest lectures in other academic contexts are a significant indicator of academic impact and status and form a crucial part of the development and delivery of academic research.

Practice-based outputs are increasingly relevant as practice-based routes to PhDs develop in Ireland. A number of Irish universities recognise 'professional equivalence' and this should be carried into KPIs for career outputs. Typical outputs include film production, new digital media outputs and participation in and contribution to community knowledge, by placing film in the public sphere. In the domain of film production, graded differential metrics can be formulated for the following practice-based research outcomes:

- » Production of documentary, fiction, experimental or animated films;
- » Screen-writing; and
- » Digital media outputs.

Indices in the area of documentary, fiction or animation production that could be seen as equivalent to traditional peer review for written work may include the scale of the funding originally attracted to realise the project, or inclusion in recognised festivals on completion. There should be some theoretical context to justify its relevance to 'scholarly research' namely, a framework or penumbra of scholarly activities and publications.

New digital media involve gallery exhibition, new media installations and performance, net art and virtual and real space interactivity. There should be evidence of research relevance i.e. the integration of creative practice into broader scholarship in the field for such digital-media outputs to be considered as an indicator of research performance.

Film and media studies have a strong potential as a contributor to **community knowledge** through public media, public lectures and talks. There is a great deal of scope for intervention in public media. The more substantial of these interventions in newspaper or magazine articles, individual television and radio programmes or series, should have an appropriate degree of recognition or indication of knowledge transfer and public knowledge. Carrying research published in scholarly journals to dissemination through audio commentary or written notes published with DVDs should be recognised. On a smaller scale, public lectures and talks take research work to a wider public sphere. Raising **research funding**, whether individually or as part of a research cluster is a significant factor in developing a research profile, building networks and achieving national and international impact.

A **hierarchy of recognition can be constructed** and metrics used to support the cluster of activities that experienced film-studies academics and film professionals have built around their specialised interests in film and related media; 'evidence of esteem' may be used to assess research quality and impact. In applying KPIs to film and media-arts research we must ensure that there are robust mechanisms that recognise excellence in both critical and practice-based contexts. 'Esteem' or 'impact' and 'knowledge transfer' are important for this work both within a scholarly context and a broader cultural sphere—getting the balance right, and making the integration of practice and theory productive, is a unique opportunity that exists in film and media. The specificities of this new and developing area are clear and a motive to avoid being compared or assessed by the inappropriate criteria of other established subjects and professions.

As with other disciplines, professionals in film have only a vague understanding that a hierarchy of activities exists against which the performance of early career researchers should be measured. Newer scholars should be aware of such preference and prejudice, but they should also harvest information on all academic activities that they engage upon, while giving priority in their *curriculum vitae* to those activities that are known to be held in highest regard within the profession and by academic institutions.

FOLKLORE STUDIES

PREPARED BY PROFESSOR ANGELA BOURKE, MRIA, AT THE REQUEST OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL IRISH ACADEMY

Folklore studies is a relatively small field in Ireland, but the leading role played by Irish scholars, collectors and archivists in its development means that Ireland's international standing in the discipline is very high. While the collecting and publishing of materials from living oral tradition flourished in the nineteenth century, and especially during the Gaelic Revival of its final decade, the academic study of Irish folklore may be said to have begun in the 1920s and 1930s, with the establishment in 1926 of the Folklore of Ireland Society, of its journal *Béalóideas* in 1927, and of the Irish Folklore Commission in 1935, under government auspices. The first of the commission's terms of reference was:

1. To consider, after such consultation with university and other authorities as the commission may deem desirable, and to submit from time to time for the approval of the Minister for Education, programmes of work connected with Irish Folklore research prepared by the director and, subject to such approval, to arrange for
 - (a) the collection, collation, and cataloguing of oral and written folklore materials; and
 - (b) the editing and publication of such materials when thought desirable.⁵

The commission built upon existing international links and forged important new relationships, notably with Scandinavian universities and archives, but also with university departments of folklore in the United States and elsewhere. These connections, established through sea voyages and the postal service, have been maintained and enhanced in the digital age. Meanwhile the remit of collecting, archiving and publishing folklore materials has expanded to include the study of ethnology, urban folklore and popular culture, with significant development in theoretical approaches to the interpretation of data and in digitized resources and electronic-publishing.

Folklore studies in Ireland have been, and continue to be, inspired, enabled and guaranteed by the National Folklore Collection, the extensive multimedia archive of Irish folklore assembled by the commission and its successors, and currently held at University College Dublin (UCD). In 1971 the Irish Folklore Commission became UCD's Department of Irish Folklore, and began soon after to train undergraduate and postgraduate students. Some ten years later folklore and ethnology became a recognised section of the Department of History at University College Cork, and is now a university department in its own right. Like other academic disciplines, the study of folklore has both 'applied' and 'theoretical' dimensions,

⁵ <http://historical-debates.oireachtas.ie/D/0168/D.0168.195806120014.html> (last accessed 24 January 2011); see also Micheál Briody, *The Irish Folklore Commission 1935-1970: history, ideology, methodology* (Helsinki, 2008).

with scholars (and in some countries, whole university departments), often identified as belonging primarily to one or other 'camp'. Folklore also shares with geography, archaeology and many of the natural and social sciences a very significant (some would say central) reliance on field-work. Folklore scholars in Ireland and elsewhere may be employed in university departments of folklore and/or ethnology, or in departments or schools with a wider remit in literature, history, sociology or cultural studies, including Irish studies; several are employed in archives and museums.

Given the international importance of the National Folklore Collection, and of other Irish collections such as the Irish Traditional Music Archive and the various Radio Teilifís Éireann (RTÉ) archives, and their origins in the voluntary and mostly unremunerated contribution of Irish citizens, folklore studies in Ireland include a strong element of **curatorship**, with a consequent **responsibility for dissemination and repatriation of research results** that reaches far beyond the academic community. In addition to the academic activities they share with colleagues in other disciplines, therefore, senior scholars in Irish folklore studies may **organise exhibitions, host conferences and publish material** aimed at general as well as specialised audiences, in print, on CD/DVD and online. They may conduct extensive **research projects** involving non-academics as collectors or informants. Their work may appear in journals of literature, history, geography, sociology and a number of interdisciplinary areas, as well as in specialised journals of folklore studies. As the field is not a large one, the edited **proceedings of major conferences** play a significant role in the international development of knowledge and ideas. In recent years post-colonial studies, gender and media studies, and advances in historiography have unsettled many of the assumptions under which earlier folklore scholars conducted research. The result is that some of the most important work in international folklore studies is now devoted to interrogations of theory and method, and of the ethics of folklore collection and dissemination.

A 'one-size-fits-all' approach to the assessment of research performance in folklore studies would clearly be inappropriate, as would any suggestion that publication in Irish-based journals or in edited conference proceedings was less desirable than publication in journals deemed 'international'. Neither would it be appropriate to assign a strict weighting to a monograph, say, or to a journal article, or to confine key performance indicators (KPIs) to books and journals, although **peer-reviewed academic publications must be the cornerstone of any aspiring scholar's career**. The work of **editing and publishing material already collected** must continue, and there exists an honourable tradition of publishing the edited stories or oral poetry collected from a single individual in book form. Given the amount of material collected from these storytellers and singers, however, such books do not often allow for more than basic introductory, explanatory and comparative notes.

Editing and annotating materials collected from oral tradition should not in itself be sufficient to achieve promotion to senior university positions. Folklore researchers in Irish universities must demonstrate both a deep familiarity with the materials of Irish folklore (or an equivalent corpus), and a record of extensive original commentary, interpretation, criticism and/or comparison, thoroughly grounded in appropriate international theory and presented to an international academic readership. Classic contributions have been made in landmark books, but such a record may also take the form of articles in refereed journals and international



conference proceedings published in Ireland or elsewhere. Where the material studied has particular local relevance, new folklore research may also appropriately appear in journals of local history and local studies, which, while not strictly peer reviewed, attract a discerning, informed and engaged readership.

Early career scholars in folklore studies should be encouraged to publish the findings of their doctoral research without undue delay, either as a peer-reviewed monograph or as a series of articles in a peer-reviewed journal or journals. They should be advised that while it may be appropriate and desirable to publish some of their findings in local, and/or non-peer-reviewed outlets, such publications will not help them to build the sort of international reputation needed for advancement to the most senior grades of an academic career. They should gain credit for perhaps one such publication per year, but must not neglect publication in peer-reviewed journals with international circulation. While some important journals are based in Ireland, there is a great deal to be gained—and learned—from the peer-reviewing process of journals based farther afield.

Following the publication of doctoral research, an academic folklorist should embark on a new major research project, which may be individual or collaborative, depending on the area of work. By the end of this project, a scholar engaged in teaching and research might be expected to have given papers at international conferences at least once a year, delivered one or more key-note addresses or invited lectures to international academic audiences, and published a second monograph or series of peer-reviewed articles. Scholars whose doctoral work has appeared as journal articles should be advised to publish in book form at this stage. It would not be unreasonable in this second period to expect all scholars to take responsibility also for editing either a collection of original material or a collection of essays on a topic within their expertise. In this second period, a scholar employed in an archive or museum might be given substantial academic credit for curating a major exhibition with international dimensions and enduring outcomes, such as book(s), film(s), CD(s)/DVD(s), or for establishing a significant electronic resource. International referees could be asked to review such materials submitted by candidates for academic employment or promotion.

HISTORICAL SCIENCES

PREPARED BY NICHOLAS CANNY, PRESIDENT ROYAL IRISH ACADEMY, IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RIA COMMITTEE FOR HISTORICAL SCIENCES

The community of professional historians on the island of Ireland has a long and distinguished tradition of engagement with research, and the interests of its members range widely both spatially and geographically. Most of its members have, in the past, made careers in higher-education institutions, but significant numbers are also employed in national cultural institutions, and an increasing number are now sustained by postdoctoral fellowships and other research supports of a temporary nature. Many scholars are involved in Continental European, American, and non-western history, but by far the greatest number do their research on Irish or British subjects. This part of the community prides itself on its achievements in the study of Irish history, and it sustains the world's leading journals dedicated to that subject. The interests of the discipline are upheld by the RIA's Committee for Historical Sciences, which, for some time, has been giving much thought to devising a model appropriate to measuring research performance in their discipline. In the course of their discussions, the committee has been critical of the Research Assessment Exercise/Research Excellence Framework culture within which historians now operate in the higher-education institutions of the United Kingdom (UK), and members have been conscious that the standards that have become the norm in the UK are peculiar to that jurisdiction, and that quite different standards of research performance are expected of practising historians in other countries. Thus while conceding as inevitable the adoption in Ireland of a key performance indicator (KPI) process for measuring research activity in humanities disciplines, the committee insists that:

- »It must be a process whose primary purpose is to foster and identify excellence in research;
- »The crude application of bibliometrics, as is becoming increasingly accepted in some science disciplines (and as is encouraged by the compilers of citation indices), is entirely inappropriate to history; and
- »Peer review is the most reliable means by which research quality can be upheld.

Members of the committee are also aware that much research is now sustained by funded research projects (sometimes of a multi- or cross-disciplinary character), but they remain convinced that the success of any such projects rests on the quality of **the work of the individual historian, and that it is at that level performance measurement should be conducted.** The committee recognises that research-funding agencies favour the adoption of an agreed system of KPIs for Ireland, and also accepts that managers of HEIs also favour KPIs both to help advance their institutions in international rankings, and to guide them when recruiting academic staff or assessing them for promotion. The committee has scant regard for the

university rankings race, and it firmly believes that historians, whether in Ireland or elsewhere, who have attained senior positions and international reputations, should be at liberty to involve themselves in a range of **scholarly activities** over and above their university responsibilities and the supervision and mentoring of PhD and postdoctoral researchers. These scholarly activities will, for example, range from the management of large research grants and programmes; the editing of monograph series and journals; holding office in learned societies; and the organisation of conferences, to presenting on radio and TV programmes; writing and reviewing in newspapers as well as in learned journals; lecturing to local, national and international conferences; and advising government, and the educated public, on cultural and educational matters. **No two such historians will be engaged on precisely the same spread of activities**, and the range of performance expected of a senior historian differs from country to country. Irish historians contend that this alone points to the fact that there can be no universally accepted means of measuring the worth or the research performance of the individual historian, and even less a means of measuring the educational or political impact that individual senior historians can exert within their particular countries and discipline over a career span. However, given the career uncertainties for early career researchers in history that currently obtain in Ireland and internationally, the committee is ready to advise on KPIs for history, both in the interests of preserving the integrity of their discipline, and of guiding early career researchers (and the institutions that might employ them, or assess them for promotion) with ambitions to make a career in history. Any such advice must necessarily be tentative given the rapidly changing character of academic life in higher-education institutions in most countries, and given also the new publication possibilities that are available because of the digital revolution. The advice being offered is necessarily conservative due to the emphasis that the committee places upon peer review as the assurance of quality, but members are aware that their advice of today may be subject to early change once the editors of various digitised publication outlets, ranging from online journals and e-books to multimedia edited compilations, systematically apply peer-reviewing controls analogous to those traditionally applied by the publishers of academic printed books and journals.

Therefore, when it comes to **advising early career researchers in history**, best practice suggests that they should give priority to conducting research that will result in the authoring of monographs that will be produced by publishing houses with clearly defined peer-review processes; articles in peer-reviewed journals; book chapters in carefully edited collections to be produced by publishers with transparent peer-reviewing procedures; and to editing documents or entire texts that will demonstrate their mastery of palaeographic, linguistic, and contextualisation skills. Committee members are reluctant to identify any hierarchy in the means by which research might be disseminated, but most early career researchers will have recently completed a PhD thesis, and will be revising that work with a view to publishing a first monograph or some journal articles. More unusually, but less so in the case of work on medieval topics, this first substantial research investment will result in an edited documentary collection, augmented by an explanatory introduction and *apparatus criticus*, and the editors of such works are advised to reach a wider scholarly audience through the publication of learned articles related to the primary research they have engaged upon. This suggests that those seeking to make a career in history will, from quite an early stage, aspire to publish journal articles and a first book. The committee is opposed to the idea of establishing a numerical equivalency between a specified number of journal articles and books, as is being favoured

in some of the social sciences; authors are advised to engage upon both activities in the knowledge that each in its own way will enhance the scholar's standing and reputation. Publishing in journals is especially beneficial to early career researchers because anonymous reviewers as well as usually helpful and sympathetic editors will offer authors advice on their work and on how to improve upon it. This suggests that those seeking to make a career in history will publish both journal articles and books. The activities are complementary because authors of articles will sometimes elucidate a historical problem on which they have assembled evidence in the course of their research but which they will not address in the course of a monograph; they will sometimes sketch, and invite criticism of, an argument that they propose subsequently to develop in a monograph; and they will sometimes situate a topic that has been previously perceived as narrow within a wider historiographical framework.

The committee is decidedly of the opinion that the merit of research work must always be assessed for its **quality** rather than quantity, with the best assurance of quality being the **peer-reviewing processes** that are applied by publishing houses and journals. It recognises that historians in some countries (particularly anglophone countries) accept that there is a hierarchy of publishing houses and of historical journals. This committee sees little merit in seeking to establish such a hierarchy, and believes that the academic worth of each publication should be assessed on its individual merits. Where books are concerned, it is their subsequent review in scholarly journals (another vital part of the peer-review process) that is the best measure of the impact that early career researchers are making on their subject. Because of the importance that the committee attaches to published reviews as an assurance of quality it suggests that scholars (even those at the outset of their careers) should, when invited, agree to **review some books in learned journals**, but they should do so strategically in the knowledge that reviews will not usually be credited to them as publications in any university calculus for hiring or promotion. However, reviews (particularly well-written reviews) enhance the name recognition of early career scholars.

Once they have achieved their early publication successes, and hopefully more secure appointments, early career historians will be approached to contribute **papers to conferences** (which will sometimes be published too as **conference proceedings**), and to **edited volumes**. Such invitations should be viewed positively when presentation at a conference provides scholars with a national or international exposure that they have not previously enjoyed; and agreement to contribute to an edited collection may also prove beneficial particularly when the volume is carefully edited and placed in the hands of a peer-review publisher. However, early career researchers are advised against undertaking (on behalf of, or in association with, senior scholars) the **editing of colloquia or conference proceedings** given that such work is time-consuming and generally not held in high esteem by university recruitment and promotion bodies. Such work should remain with established scholars or those who are explicitly paid to be their research assistants. Early career researchers are also advised against **writing text-books**, or if they do so they should accept that they are doing so for the financial recompense they will receive since such work is given scant academic credit in any country. Such warnings are as a prelude to making the point that the aspirant career scholar will at this point be commencing research on a completely new topic from that undertaken for their PhD; will, if in university life, be involved with graduate as well as undergraduate formation; and may have become a partner in project research.

Constitution

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①

The name of the State shall be ~~Eure~~

②

Eure is a Sov. Indep.
Democ. State

③

The Territory of Eure shall be such as from time to time may come within the Jurisdiction of Eure

In the matter of **digitized-editing**, early career historians are advised to take every opportunity to understand the technology, and master the skills, associated with digitisation, and they will be more aware than their seniors of the existence of **e-book publishers, e-journals, and H-Net outlets** and many will enjoy online engagement with such resources. This may represent the future, and for the moment, online linkage makes it possible for historians in Ireland to associate themselves with international networks of scholars with cognate interests.

Early career researchers, and even more so university administrators, are frequently anxious to know if there exists an accepted hierarchy of academic publishing houses and academic journals against which the work of an individual can be measured. It has already been made clear that no consensus on a hierarchy exists in Ireland or elsewhere, and there is general agreement (for reasons stated in the 2009 original RIA document) that the efforts of the European Science Foundation and Thomson Reuters at establishing such a hierarchy for all journals worldwide, with an associated set of citation metrics, is methodologically unsound where humanities disciplines are concerned. The position of this committee is that **most value be attached to books and articles appearing from professionally peer-reviewed outlets**, out of the belief that it is the ultimate reception of books by peers in the profession, rather than the imprint of the publisher, that determines their worth. In the case of journals, early career researchers are advised to consider firstly which audience they wish to reach, and allow this to determine the journal to which it should best be submitted.

This brief statement indicates that professionals in history have a vague understanding that a **hierarchy of activities** exists against which the performance of early career researchers in history should be measured. Early career scholars should be aware of such preference and prejudice but they should also harvest information on all academic activities that they engage upon, while giving priority in their *curriculum vitae* to those activities that are known to be held in highest regard within the profession and by academic institutions. They should also be aware that once they establish themselves in employment and achieve a scholarly reputation, they will have increasing obligations to scholarly engagement with the wider educated public both within Ireland and internationally.

HISTORY OF ART

PREPARED BY PROFESSOR ROGER STALLEY, MRIA, PROFESSOR OF HISTORY OF ART, TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN AT THE REQUEST OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL IRISH ACADEMY

The pattern of scholarly activities undertaken by art historians is, in general terms, similar to that encountered in other areas of the arts and humanities, though there are some activities that have particular significance for the discipline. It should be noted that the very phrase 'art history' is an all-encompassing term, which includes architectural history, the decorative arts, design history, as well as the study of painting and sculpture. It is also important to recognise the discipline's historical and geographical scope. The traditional focus on European art has given way to a more universal approach, a development especially noticeable in the USA. Most university departments now offer courses in non-European art, one such department in the UK describing itself as a School of 'World Art Studies'. The historical range of art history is likewise all-embracing, extending from 'pre-history' to the contemporary world. Any scheme of assessment must be flexible enough to appreciate that, for example, the methods and expertise appropriate for the study of Chinese sculpture of the Tang Dynasty may not have much in common with the study of contemporary Irish art, with its reliance on postmodernist theory.

The **diversity of art historical practice** obviously affects the overall pattern of research activities and, as with other disciplines in the arts and humanities, there can be no universal or absolute means of measuring the achievement. One specific problem for Ireland is that art history departments are generally small when compared with other disciplines. This means that staff are required to teach over a wide area, often far beyond their areas of expertise. Preparation of undergraduate courses can therefore eat into research time in a way that is simply not the case in large departments—a point that is not always grasped by university managers. A further complication is that professional art historians are not restricted to the universities. The colleges of art teach art history, and the schools of architecture are likewise engaged in the study of architectural history. Given their engagement with contemporary practice, professionals in these institutions tend to have different approaches and different priorities from those working in art history departments in the universities.

Notwithstanding the reservations made above, **an established art historian can expect to undertake a range of scholarly activities** not unlike those expected of historians: preparing articles and books; writing book reviews; establishing networks between scholars with similar interests; organising symposia and conferences; editing journals or conference papers; applying for and managing research grants; and giving public lectures at local, national or international level; etc. As a subject that attracts a high degree of public interest, art historians will almost certainly be in demand for 'extra mural' and other external lectures, an important obligation which serves to disseminate the latest research and thinking to a wide audience.



One activity of fundamental importance to art historians is the **preparation of exhibitions**, either as curators or contributors. Exhibition catalogues form part of the bed-rock of the discipline, providing up-to-date assessments of the latest research and laying out alternative ways of approaching a particular artist or subject. University promotion committees have been slow to comprehend and appreciate this aspect of the art historian's activities. Even when they do, there is a danger that more kudos is given to lavish exhibitions in major galleries or museums, with insufficient recognition being given to more modest exhibitions that might make an equally profound (albeit less popular) impact.

Publication presents particular problems for art history. As young art historians soon appreciate, completing a text is only half the battle. Illustrations have to be sourced; negotiations have to take place with museums, galleries, libraries or private individuals; in some cases, new photographs have to be commissioned; and the vexed issue of copyright has to be tackled—the latter a particular problem for those engaged in modern or contemporary art. Publishing houses do not cover the costs involved and raising funds can be a further drain on academic time. There is also the question of the status of the publishing house and the degree to which it engages in a process of peer review. While publication with a major international company with a well-established process of peer review is clearly ideal, it is not an option available to all. The review process takes time and several years can elapse between submission of a text and eventual publication. Major publishers will favour more 'popular' areas where the prospect of sales are good; some now refuse to consider monographs on individual artists or architects (unless they are major names). In areas where there is a strong collectors' market, the prospects of publication are likely to be enhanced. There is a danger here of a centrifugal effect, with scholars encouraged to move to supposedly 'popular' areas. Indeed some would argue that the traditional art historical monograph is already in its death throes. Without sponsorship, production costs are usually prohibitive, the volumes have a short commercial shelf life, and publishers are all too frequently attracted by novelty and fashion rather than serious scholarship. Art historians would certainly endorse the view expressed in the context of history that *it is the subsequent reviews and general reception of books by the profession, rather than the imprint of the publisher* that should determine their worth.

There is no doubt that the **digital revolution** is having a profound effect on all aspects of art historical practice. The 'virtual' exhibition with all the accompanying scholarship is now well established and there are many Web-based publications of illuminated manuscripts with learned commentaries. Such activities are immensely valuable, since (in the case of manuscripts) every page can be reproduced with digital images in full colour, avoiding the prohibitive costs associated with a printed version. Moreover, many research associations and networks have their own Web-based platforms where scholars present their ideas and engage in debate. From a research point of view, this is a rewarding process but, in the context of 'performance' one that is almost incapable of objective or numerical assessment. In recent years, almost all art history departments have been engaged in the preparation of image databases, which might be seen as the equivalent of the historians' traditional practice in publishing and editing documents. This work is labour intensive and demands a high level of academic knowledge—essential in the preparation of metadata. Most art historians with

professional ambitions are reluctant to get involved in this time-consuming activity, though nobody doubts its value in the context of research.

The advice that might be given to young scholars would be to publish their PhD theses as soon as possible, either as a monograph or as separate articles. If publishing articles, they should aim for a range of different periodicals, ideally in different countries. Journals with an international reach are obviously to be preferred. There is a widely held view that a monograph has far less impact than a well-placed article derived from a PhD. While this initial work is going on, they should develop ideas for a major monograph. The ideal strategy is to prepare individual papers corresponding to chapters in the proposed book, a couple of which might be published in advance: in this way, a young researcher will be deemed 'research active' and will avoid a long lead-in time which might otherwise appear blank in any research assessment exercise. As in history, time spent on dictionary entries, organising major conferences, or editing the works of others is best avoided at this stage. Writing reviews is a good way of establishing a 'name', providing the volumes under review are relevant to one's research area. Despite their importance, it should be noted that reviews do not normally form part of research assessment exercises in Ireland.

In any assessment exercise there is, of course, a vital distinction between scholarly *activity* and scholarly *quality*. In this respect, art history is no different from other disciplines in the arts and humanities, where peer review remains the only generally accepted means of assessment. There is no support for the use of citation indices or other 'mechanical' methods. Even with a system of peer review, however, Irish-based scholars may find themselves at a disadvantage, especially those whose publications are devoted to regional or national topics, whether in the context of Ireland or abroad. In this respect, Irish scholars have a major problem since the country sustains only one major peer-reviewed publication dedicated to art history (*Irish Architectural and Decorative Studies*). As a consequence, Irish art historians have frequently found themselves publishing their work in journals dedicated to archaeology or local history, rather than journals dedicated to their own discipline. For this reason, most professionals would strongly object to the introduction of a hierarchy of publishers or journals, arranged according to discipline in some sort of qualitative grading.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

PREPARED BY DR OWEN WORTH, UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK, IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RIA COMMITTEE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

In order to assess the key performance indicators (KPIs) within the field of 'international affairs', the first thing to note is that 'international affairs' as it stands is not an academic discipline, but an area that incorporates a wide range of disciplines. The closest single discipline to it is international relations, which is seen as distinct from politics when categorising academic journals and books. This is despite the fact that nearly all international relations academics (with the notable exception of a few) work within larger politics departments and as such are often regarded as a sub-discipline of politics. International affairs can also include history; most notably in the study of foreign policy documentation and in the history of international relations. The study of international affairs also features in areas such as law and economics and is also of interest to many of the subjects in the arts, humanities and social sciences. As a result, it is difficult to make specific guidelines over KPIs, but there are some general indicators that can be made that extend to all of the separate disciplines that might focus upon the study of international affairs.

The main KPI can be seen in the area of **publications**. In recent years the measurement of ranking such publications has become popular and has been used to ascertain which individuals and departments achieve high-quality research. Measurements have included the quantity of externally reviewed publications, the impact factor of each publication and the peer-reviewing of each publication by an independent panel. Each of these measurements has its advantages, but each also contains serious shortcomings. For example, the quantity of publications does not take into account its quality and impact, while the impact-factor measurement often uses a narrow collection of journals in order to draw results, thus overlooking other types of publications. Finally, the method of peer review that had been practised in the UK under the Research Assessment Exercise and continues to be favoured for the forthcoming Research Excellence Framework might appear fairer in the sense that the publications selected for review can be assessed through a wide selection of criteria, but questions can be placed over the objective nature of the panel involved in the peer-reviewing process.

As a result, it is best to try to avoid the shortcomings of these measurements while at the same time to provide general KPIs to use as a bench-mark for academics /departments/faculties to follow. It is generally considered that the two types of publications that are most highly regarded are **monographs** and **journal articles**. Whilst there is no accepted hierarchy of academic publishing houses in the area of international affairs, there are a number of publishers that are deemed as more recognised in which to publish. Certain university presses (such as Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard, Princeton, etc.) are generally considered to be seen as more

prestigious, while recognised international academic houses and commercial academic publishers such as Palgrave, Routledge, etc. are often seen as being more preferable than publishing in lesser-known or national publishers. However, despite this, there is acceptance in the case of monographs that it is the subsequent reviews and general reception of books by the profession, rather than the imprint of the publisher, that determines their worth. This would naturally be more likely to occur if the monograph was published with an established international academic press.

A number of attempts have been made to measure the importance and impact of journal publications across the humanities and social sciences. Some of these have tried to ascertain the 'status' and as a result the 'rank' of a journal using the criteria of whether it is included in certain citation indexes (for example the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI) and the Arts and Humanities Citation Index (A&HCI), run by the ISI Thomson Reuters Web of Science programme) or the number of times a specific article has been cited by other academic outlets (such as Publish or Perish that draws on Google Scholar). Again both these methods have problems. Firstly, the number of citations an article receives is no indication of its quality, or whether it has gone through a vigorous peer-review system. Secondly, attempts to rank journals through citation indexes are highly selective. Only certain journals are included in the ISI system, and only the ones that have a significantly high impact factor can be considered as prestigious. In addition, new journals that are added to the system tend to fare very well, demonstrating that those which have not been included do not necessarily have lower impact factors. Finally, any attempt to rank articles through either the journals high impact factor or how many times that piece itself has been cited has to take into account that certain subject areas will always attract more interest—and as a result will have more impact—than others.

In terms of KPIs, what would be more useful would be to say that there are certain 'leading' journals, in terms of reputation, that often serve as official outlets for prestigious academic associations. In international relations, these might include *International Studies Quarterly*, *Review of International Studies* and *European Journal of International Relations*, which serve as the official journals of the International Studies Association (ISA); the British International Studies Association and the European Consortium for Political Research's standing group of International Relations (ECRP/SGIR) respectively. However, first and foremost, academics should look to publish in an international journal (or one that has international reach), and one that provides a rigorous peer-review process. At the same time, while Publish or Perish does provide an indication of the impact of a scholar's work—far more so than the SSCI as it includes a wider collection of academic material in determining its results—this can only give a limited and general indication of the quality of one's research. In response, the most important KPI is to test whether an academic is publishing consistently in well-regarded peer-reviewed journals.

After monographs and journal articles, other outlets for publication include **edited books and chapters, working papers** and **conference paper proceedings**. While these can be very rewarding and certain edited books can also make a significant impact and have a wide reach if published with a good academic publisher, they are generally not as highly regarded as monographs and peer-reviewed journal articles. Despite this, many early career scholars might benefit from publishing a chapter in a well-assembled edited book and all benefit from the networks created when compiling such a collection. Working papers and conference



proceedings should be seen as a stepping-stone in a piece of work and as something that might be fine-tuned and submitted as a journal article at a later date. The writing of **text-books** can be a rewarding pedagogical experience and is essential for the development of teaching material, but the action is not regarded very highly in terms of research excellence and scholars should avoid involvement in the process in their early careers.

While publications are still seen as the strongest KPI within the subject area of international affairs, there are other activities that should also be regarded as good supplementary practice. Increasingly, **securing external funds** has become very important to academic research. It allows for collaborative projects within and across specific departments and institutions, and produces empirical studies that form the basis for further publications. Other academic roles that should be an indicator of good academic development include externally **reviewing** submitted book proposals and manuscripts, externally reviewing journal articles, journal **editorial board membership** and **consultancy** work. The study of international affairs provides many outlets for such consultancy, with organisations at the national, supranational and international level providing opportunities for those specialising in the areas of international law and international organisations. Reports written in the process of consultancy should be included as a separate KPI, as while they do not stand out as a peer-reviewed publication, they still provide a form of research-based expertise in one specific area.

To conclude, it is possible to identify general KPIs within the subject areas that cover international affairs. However, these KPIs should not be based upon any scientific measurements in the manner that some forms of metric-based citation exercises have been used to rank research. Instead, it is possible to make some broad research performance indicators based upon:

- » Type of publication;
- » Broad impact of the publication;
- » Quantity of publications;
- » Reach and prestige of certain journals and publishing houses; and
- » Publications that are produced for external agencies through forms of consultancy.

These can act as the basis for KPIs within the various academic disciplines that study the state of international affairs.

LITERATURES IN ENGLISH

PREPARED BY DR EIBHEAR WALSH, UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CORK, IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RIA
COMMITTEE FOR LITERATURES IN ENGLISH

The discipline of literary studies covers several key areas of activity. These areas include close reading, analysis and interpretation of literary texts, archival, textual and bibliographical research; and consideration of the historical, cultural and political contexts for literary writings. The discipline also encompasses literary theory, creative writing and comparative literary studies. Scholars of literature in Ireland are in a unique position in that they are part of a vibrant, highly visible literary culture with a broad cultural relevance. Therefore, all scholars of literature in Ireland will be involved with many academic activities over and above their university responsibilities and the supervision and mentoring of PhD and postdoctoral researchers. These scholarly activities will, for example, range from managing large research grants and programmes; editing monograph series and journals; holding office in learned societies; creative writing; and organising conferences; to presenting on radio and TV programmes; writing and reviewing in newspapers; lecturing to local, national and international conferences; and advising government, and the educated public, on cultural and educational matters. This alone points to the fact that there can be no universally accepted means of measuring the worth or performance of the individual literary academic, and even less so a means of measuring the impact that such scholars are exerting within their particular countries and discipline over a career span. However, all scholars will be engaged energetically in a range of activities and all will have earned international recognition in the first place through the publication of books and learned articles in peer-reviewed outlets. Therefore, when it comes to advising early career researchers in literary studies, and the institutions that might employ them, or assess them for promotion, on what research activities they should be engaged upon, best practice suggests that they should give priority to authoring monographs that will be produced by publishing houses with clearly defined peer-review processes and writing articles in peer-reviewed journals. In addition, the **RIA Committee for Literatures in English wishes to highlight all aspects of service to the discipline of literatures in Ireland relevant to academic life and to endorse those activities as part of an ethos of scholarly generosity and support.**

While the development in the past decade of large-scale funded research projects, particularly in the field of digital humanities, has begun to encourage collaborative undertakings, it is arguable that as long as at least one of the objectives in the field remains the formulation of original ideas (as opposed to the accumulation and interpretation of data), **the individual scholar-author will remain an important model for research activity.** As such, there continues to be a widespread recognition that the highest production of the individual scholar-author is the book-length monograph, in which an idea or a topic is explored at some length. This is evident in criteria for appointments and promotions. In literary studies, books of significant

impact remain current for many years, even decades, and in this respect the longitudinal impact of a book needs to be taken into account, in a way that is largely not true, for instance, in the experimental sciences.

This is not to say, however, that other **forms of publication** are necessarily less important. It would be possible within the field to point to single-author collections of essays whose continuing impact on the field has been as significant as that of a monograph. By the same token, there have been instances in which edited scholarly editions, anthologies or reference books have had a lasting impact on the field. Indeed, an edited scholarly edition (one thinks of Joyce as an obvious example) will often not only shape debate, but become the subject of scholarship in its own right. Finally, collections of essays by various authors continue to be common; however, their impact will often depend upon the overall coherence of the collection, and the degree to which it stands in a recognised series from a major publisher. The same would be true to an even greater degree with regard to signed contributions to reference works.

With regard to **contributions to scholarly journals**, these continue to provide important interventions in ongoing debates. Unlike the situation in the sciences, however, it is not uncommon for material initially published in journals to be reworked as either chapters in a monograph, or as elements in a collection of essays. Unlike the situation in the sciences, it is most unusual for journal articles, or essays in a collection, to be the collaborative production of more than one author. Moreover, while some journals would be seen as more prestigious than others, the hierarchy of importance in literary studies is not as rigid or as recognised as would be the case in some other fields. Invitations to review major works for leading journals can be interpreted as a recognition of expertise in the field; however, reviewing, while a necessary role within the scholarly community, is probably the least durable form of scholarly output.

Where **creative writing** forms a significant component of the undergraduate or postgraduate curriculum, an original work of literary merit may be considered a more appropriate indicator of reputation than a scholarly monograph. It is envisaged that existing models of practice-based research within the creative arts may be modified and extended to the broad area of English studies. To some extent, then, the situation with regards to publication in the field of literary studies shows considerable continuity with the past. However, **the effects of digitisation** on the book are already producing changes. Already, the database has emerged as a significant scholarly output, arguably equivalent to a major scholarly edition. It is also an area in which questions of authorial attribution are perhaps most problematic, as it is at the greatest remove from the model of the individual scholar-author. This is a situation that will need to be addressed in the years ahead. As increasing numbers of literary texts (many formerly rare or obscure) become available, it could be predicted that the significance of the literary anthology in scholarship will decline although its popular readership appears as strong as ever. By contrast, ease of access to peer-reviewed journals has already increased their use, and hence we can expect their importance in the field to grow. Finally, as the book itself increasingly becomes a digital product, and academic publishers come under financial pressure, it may be that electronic publication for all sorts of publishing output will become the norm.

In addition to activities related to the publication of research, scholars in the field of literary studies will be expected to indicate their commitment to the **service and development of their discipline**. Indicators of performance in this respect are diverse and more difficult to evaluate than those within the remit of research publication, but generally fall into two categories.

The first of these concerns the systems and procedures related to the institutional development of literature research. As scholars advance in their careers, they will take on key positions within their respective academies in the supervision of postgraduate and postdoctoral research and in the mentoring of fourth-level students in the field. They may be invited to examine doctoral dissertations at internal and external level, and to serve as subject reviewers for university promotion committees, or for national and international funding and scholarship allocation boards such as the IRCHSS, the Fulbright Commission of Ireland, and the Arts and Humanities Research Council. In relation to all such activities, they will be invited to provide a range of reference, research review and peer-review material on an ongoing basis. Most academics will have a degree of involvement with at least one scholarly journal (this category includes online journals and databases), in an editorial or advisory capacity, and some will be appointed as readers for academic publishing houses. Scholars in literary studies will usually engage significantly in conference work; they will normally be expected to present papers at local, national and international conferences, and to design and organise such conferences on a regular basis. They will frequently serve on the committees of relevant scholarly societies such as the International Association for the Study of Irish Literature (IASIL); the European Society for the Study of English (ESSE); the European Association for American Studies (EAAS); and the Comparative Literature Association of Ireland (CLAI), to name a few, and thus develop disciplinary research networks within the academic community. It is likely that at some stage, individual scholars will initiate or collaborate on specific research projects, both minor and major, and they may serve as named principal investigators on such projects, engaging as necessary with the processes of funding application and research-income management. Within the second category of service to the discipline, scholars in literary studies in Ireland will be expected to participate in the cultural and creative activities of a broader public arena, and to contribute to the development of literary and educational interests both at policy and at community level. Scholars may be appointed to the advisory boards of national committees and institutions (such as Radio Teilifís Éireann, the Abbey Theatre or the National Library of Ireland), or asked to assist the work of literary organisations such as Poetry Ireland; the Irish Writers' Centre; Dublin Writers Festival; Cúirt International Festival of Literature; the Irish Writers' Union; Ireland Literature Exchange; Irish Translators' Association; and the Society of Irish Playwrights, just to exemplify some of the variety of bodies on which writers serve.

The importance of this engagement cannot be overstated in the context of Ireland's dynamic cultural life. As critics, literary scholars play a crucial role in preparing audiences for new writing as well as ensuring the vitality of Ireland's literary traditions. In addition to reviewing in the press and contributing to features on the broadcast media, the network of summer schools and festivals that bring academic research to a wider public depend on the generosity of their academic curators and participants for their annual survival. Scholars may be invited to serve on prestigious literary prize committees such as the International IMPAC Dublin

Literary Award or the *Irish Times* Poetry Now Award. Equally, literary theorists will extend the discipline by their involvement in broader cultural politics through commentary and/or activism. Finally, scholars in literary studies have an important part to play in the development of the discipline at secondary educational level: those with appropriate expertise may be invited to serve as consultants in examination and curriculum design or in the development of text-books and teaching materials.

Service to the discipline of literature in Ireland should be recognised as inextricable from the development of a research profile. In the light of this fact, early career scholars should be advised to establish a range of commitments to the research activities of their respective institutions and to secure connections to the wider literary, media and educational community. While sole-authored publications may be of most service to individual careers, such acts of service outlined above should be regarded as of equal value to the academic community as a whole.

MODERN LANGUAGES, LITERARY AND CULTURAL STUDIES

PREPARED BY DR MAEVE CONRICK, UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CORK, IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RIA
COMMITTEE FOR MODERN LANGUAGE, LITERARY AND CULTURAL STUDIES

Scholars in modern languages work in a variety of research areas (e.g. literature, linguistics and cultural studies), across many languages,⁶ are involved in a broad range of scholarly activities and produce a wide variety of research outputs. Scholarly activities include contribution to professional associations; presentation at conferences (national and international); organisation of conferences (national and international); appearances at invited lectures; application for and management of research grants; as well as contributions to cultural activities and public life generally. Examples of publication types include scholarly monographs; edited books; journal articles; reviews; reports; translations; scholarly editions; digitisation projects; and creative writing. Scholars work both on an individual basis but also increasingly in research teams and networks. Modern languages as a discipline is particularly well placed to develop research collaboration on an international basis.

The **principle of peer review** as a marker of good scholarship is respected in modern language studies, as it is in other areas of scholarship in the humanities, and, as a general rule, the more rigorous the peer-review process, the more highly regarded the publication. **Scholarly monographs** and **peer-reviewed journal articles** are both regarded as highly prestigious research outputs for this reason. In the case of books, those published with publishing houses with clearly defined peer-review processes (such as university presses) are among the most highly regarded and, for many, such books are the 'gold standard' of published work. Peer-reviewed book chapters, published by respected publishing houses, are often very highly regarded within the modern language community, despite sometimes being rated lower than journal articles by institutions. The issue of the standing of journals is not quite as clear-cut in modern languages as may be the case in other areas of humanities scholarship. While journals published in English tend to have wider circulation, many journals published in a language other than English are highly regarded by scholars within specific language groups. The committee regards the practice of prioritising journals published in English over journals published in other languages as undesirable and considers publication in foreign-language journals to be essential to the development of an international, global approach to scholarship, especially in, but not limited to, modern languages. The quality of journal articles cannot be gauged by the language in which they are written or by recourse to impact-factor technologies.

The **editing of books and journals** features as an important scholarly contribution in modern languages. However, early career researchers wishing to edit a volume of essays should be aware that the standing of edited volumes is higher where there is a clearly defined thematic coherence to the volume, where an explicit peer-review process is in place and/or where the editor(s) has/have made a substantial intellectual contribution to the volume, e.g., a

⁶ Languages studied at third level in Ireland include: Catalan, Chinese, Dutch, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish and Japanese.

substantial introduction and a chapter or chapters. Other books such as translations (e.g. of creative or scholarly writings) contribute substantially to the advancement of scholarship by making texts available to a wider international public. Again, a translated volume will have higher academic standing if it includes a substantial introduction.

Most of the leading **journals** in modern languages have embraced online journal publication. This means that journals which exist in hard-copy format are, increasingly, also available in electronic format; indeed, early career researchers would be well advised to publish in journals whose content is available online as well as in hard copy. In some instances, particularly in the case of the more recently established and/or innovative journals, articles are published exclusively in electronic format. This does not mean that their peer-review process is any less rigorous than it is in the case of more established journals. As is the case with all journals, the academic standing of an e-journal should be assessed prior to attempted publication in such an outlet. In other words, journals which exist only in electronic format need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis. In some instances, the e-format is particularly useful and attractive for early career researchers, as it allows publication within a short time frame and at minimal cost. Furthermore, setting up and managing an e-journal would certainly provide invaluable experience to early career researchers in establishing their research careers.

Creative work may feature as an activity in modern-language studies and its various forms may include poems, novels, plays and other performance-based activities. Creative work can be an important complement to academic activities in modern languages, the scholar who practises in the field of creative writing, for example, being particularly well-qualified to translate creative work such as fiction, poetry and drama. This work appears in a wide range of publications and as public performance. In terms of academic standing, the principle of peer review is relevant, in that creative work which has been published, for example, with a prestigious publisher such as Faber and Faber, or which has received critical acclaim, for example, by winning a literary prize, will be more highly regarded.

The advancement of knowledge in the area of **language-teaching and -learning** is also a valued research activity among scholars in the field of modern languages, and merits parity of esteem where equivalent criteria with regard to peer review are met.

Service to, and leadership within, the particular discipline are an extremely important aspect of modern-language studies and scholars advance their discipline by engaging in a wide range of activities, some of which may not be as highly rewarded as published outputs in contexts such as university promotions schemes, but which are, nonetheless, crucial to the sustainability and promotion of the subject area. Contributions in this category include (in no particular order of importance):

- »Supervising PhDs to completion;
- »Holding office in learned societies/professional associations;
- »Organising international conferences;
- »Presenting at international conferences;
- »Appearing at invited lectures;

- » Giving key-note addresses;
- » Refereeing for journals and edited volumes;
- » Acting as the principal investigator on externally funded research projects;
- » Evaluating grant and scholarship funding applications;
- » Acting as an external examiner for PhD dissertations;
- » Sitting on the editorial board of peer-reviewed journals; and
- » Contributing to and impacting on public policy.

A well-regarded scholar in modern languages would be expected to engage in a range of these activities though not necessarily all. It is also the case that the 'ambassadorial' aspect of modern-language studies in Ireland constitutes an additional aspect of the work performed by academics in this field. Liaison with cultural institutes and embassies often involves the organisation of outreach academic activities, which may go unrecognised by universities. In addition, academics in modern languages bear a relatively high level of responsibility for the supervision of student exchanges, an activity that is frequently not acknowledged at institutional level in the form of Student Full-Time-Equivalents.

For a number of reasons, including issues of academic freedom and the diversity of career paths which may develop across a number of different education systems, trying to steer early career researchers too strongly in any one particular direction in terms of their scholarship is deemed inadvisable. While there is general agreement with regard to the standing of books and journal articles, the relative standing of all the other scholarly activities, publications and service to the discipline depends on individual contexts. Consequently, the committee prefers not to propose a suggested hierarchy of activities for early career researchers, but rather to propose the view that the health of the modern-languages community in Ireland depends in a significant way on the current 'biodiversity' of research activities being preserved and valued.

Scholars in modern languages believe ultimately in the prerogative of each individual researcher to channel his or her energies in the directions most appropriate to his or her particular strengths and expertise. Comments on research practice in this document are therefore observational rather than prescriptive. While key performance indicators (KPIs) for research may serve as useful signposts, scholars in the field of modern languages believe, like others, that the quality of an individual's research cannot be reliably quantified in the broad terms offered by KPIs.

MUSICOLOGY

PREPARED BY PROFESSOR HARRY WHITE, MRIA, CHAIR OF MUSIC, UNIVERSITY COLLEGE DUBLIN AT
THE REQUEST OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL IRISH ACADEMY

Although the consolidation of musicology as a self-standing discipline in Irish universities is a comparatively recent phenomenon (before the mid-1990s, musical research was very limited and often part of more general programmes in performance, composition and education). Musicology is now firmly established as the prevailing feature of most Irish university and college departments of music. It is also an important (and self-standing) component of performance programmes in music conservatories and academies. It is perhaps helpful at the outset to define musicology as musical research in four primary domains: historical musicology (including cultural history, performance practice, textual scholarship and critical discourse); ethnomusicology (including the study of traditional music and the sociology and anthropology of musical practices and traditions); analysis (including the application of computer-assisted models for the development of mathematical theories of musical structure); and systematic musicology (including the sociology, aesthetics and philosophy of music, and, the study of music education).

Although each of these four domains of musicological research entails different emphases and methodologies, international best practice in musicology allows all four of them to be grouped together in terms of identifying key performance indicators (KPIs) for research in the humanities. This is not to suppress other, vital performance indicators such as the importance of field-work in ethnomusicology or the development of discipline-specific skills in textual scholarship or analysis, but simply to register a reliable and easily recognizable set of KPIs which musicology shares with related disciplines in the humanities notably, but not exclusively, history, literature, sociology and art history. Nevertheless, it might be prudent also to confirm that these KPIs apply to musicology (as it is defined here) and *not* to other components of music education in Irish third-level institutes, such as performance and composition. It is admittedly more difficult to identify KPIs in these two areas, although some are nominated very briefly at the close of this statement.

It is already obvious to musicologists in North America and Europe and to the universities in which they are employed that **international peer review** is the key criterion for evaluating musicological research, however diverse the methodologies which such research entails. This is because the discipline of musicology has depended from the outset on modes of evaluation borrowed from other disciplines in order to ensure its claims to serious attention within the Academy. Nevertheless, the vast nature of music itself as a research domain means that the number of peer-reviewed journals in musicology is especially high, even if an informal hierarchy as to the ranking of these journals sometimes obtains. Given this plenitude, it is almost impossible to attain a reliable ranking of journals beyond such informal assessments, even if it remains easy to identify those journals to which one would direct early career researchers. The fact remains, however, that the sole reliable criterion in respect of scholarly journals of musicology must remain that of peer review. Although this point may seem self-evident to assessors in

other disciplines, it is of particular importance in the context of musicology in Ireland. There are two principal reasons for this. The first is that while peer review is universally accepted as a reliable indicator of research quality in Ireland, universities and grant-research agencies in this country almost axiomatically depend on evaluations from colleagues in Britain in assessing the merit of early career researchers. This can sometimes be problematic, simply because the general condition of British musicology is notably conservative, especially insofar as it favours empirical and archival research over critical discourse and cultural history. By contrast, the pursuit of musicology in North America especially in the USA and in other parts of Europe entails a more pliant and interdisciplinary approach to the discipline, with the result that it is at least advisable to bear these differences in mind when formulating KPIs in relation to musicology in Ireland. (The same point might be made in relation to the composition of assessment panels within and beyond the domain of Irish universities). The second reason that peer review is of particular importance to early career musicologists is that, by contrast, the *laissez-faire* nature of much writing on traditional and contemporary art music in Ireland, published in journals with no claim whatever to scholarly discourse, promotes an *ad hominem* discourse which at worst endangers the credibility and good standing of musicology as an academic discipline in this country. At best, the circulation of music journalism in place of serious scholarship encourages the 'exemption' of musicology from the criteria of assessment which peer review ensures.

These precautionary observations to one side, the growth of musicology and its assessment in terms of KPIs are best encouraged through the agency of **publishing houses and journals** which for the most part are outside Ireland. Some of these venues are of course in the United Kingdom; others are further afield. Nevertheless, the existence of a learned society for musicology in Ireland and of publication outlets within this country, which are governed by peer review, should be recognised on equal terms with corresponding societies, publishers and journals abroad. At the time of writing, however, there is only one peer-reviewed journal of musicology in Ireland, a fact which perhaps throws the observations offered here into particularly sharp relief.

In offering suggestions for KPIs in relation to musicology in an Irish context, there is perhaps **a useful distinction to be made between the importance of peer review and the validity of other indicators** which do not involve the peer-review process. (These latter are discussed below). As far as peer-reviewed material is concerned, many indicators with regard to musicology will be identical to those which obtain in neighbouring disciplines. Early career musicologists, for example, should be firmly advised that the monograph remains the primary forum for scholarship in the humanities, but only on the understanding that this advice is borne out by the rankings allocated to monographs in assessments for tenure and promotion. The famous 'first book', usually derived from the PhD dissertation, cannot otherwise count for as much as it should. The publication of research in the form of peer-reviewed articles between the first monograph and the second, which will often take from five to seven years to produce, is no less a model of performance which depends on a corresponding weight of importance attached to this model by university assessment boards.

In musicology, other forms of peer-reviewed publication are no less significant. In early music (i.e. music to 1750), the production of a critical edition with commentary of a previously unpublished manuscript will often take the place of a monograph; in ethnomusicology, the recension of field-work is likewise an internationally recognised criterion for advancement.



And few senior musicologists would dispute the fact that a stellar article is preferable to a mediocre monograph. (Sometimes, in truth, the former represents a more mature and considered act of scholarship which often attracts more notice than does the routine publication of a PhD dissertation.) The distinction which some disciplines maintain between journal articles and peer-reviewed book chapters does not necessarily obtain in musicology and certainly not to the extent that senior musicologists would axiomatically advise against the latter in favour of the former. But once again, many Irish universities assume that this preference is universal across the humanities. This is simply not true in the case of musicology at large. As a consequence, it seems unfair to rank peer-reviewed chapters below peer-reviewed journals when determining KPIs for musicologists.

Non-peer-reviewed activities, as indicated above, should also feature prominently in the development of KPIs for musicologists in Ireland. This is because the discipline itself—specifically in an Irish context—is still at a comparatively early stage and offers so many opportunities for early career scholars to show their initiative. Such activities include:

- »Playing an active role in learned societies which promote musicology in Ireland;
- »Participating in the organisation of conferences which broaden the range of musicological discourse in Ireland;
- »Writing reviews in peer-reviewed publications;
- »Participating in joint research and/or publication projects which strengthen the presence of musicology as a normative intellectual presence in Ireland;
- »Exploring the interface between musicological scholarship and the community for music in Ireland at large, which is very diverse and multi-cultural in orientation;
- »Engaging with media (radio, television, newspapers, etc.) to improve the often very poor condition of speaking or writing about music in an accessible and interesting way; and
- »Writing programme notes or CD notes which are literate, informed and likely to promote a better understanding of music and its contexts.

Some of these activities may seem remote from the Academy, but in fact they represent a kind of outreach which musicology can and often does achieve, to the betterment of relations between universities and the communities which support them. In this specific sense, such indicators are indeed 'key' to the well being of the discipline itself.

As a last observation, KPIs in other areas of music education notably performance and composition inevitably differ in kind from those identified above. This is true to the extent that such indicators should be identified and written up by specialists in these areas who in any case pursue professional qualifications such as doctorates in performance and composition which are utterly distinct from the PhD in musicology. Such indicators would not involve scholarly publication as a primary consideration, but would rely instead on: (a) public performance; (b) transmission, publication and recording of works; and (c) performance beyond the university context, for example, as in the case of a lecturer in performance whose case for promotion would, at least in the United States and Canada, be assessed significantly in terms of his or her work with professional ensembles external to his or her place of employment.

PHILOSOPHY AND ETHICS

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COMMITTEE FOR PHILOSOPHY AND ETHICS

Published research in philosophy is, in general, conducted by single individuals ('lone researchers'). Where publication collaborations occur it is most often for the purposes of edited works (achieving a wider overview of a topic). Researchers are based in various third-level institutions, both in the Republic of Ireland and in Northern Ireland. Most researchers are tenured members of designated philosophy units or subunits in a university. Significant research is also conducted by individuals based in non-philosophy units (political science, education, general humanities and modern languages) and in both main colleges of education in the Republic.

Publications take a range of forms, assessable under different criteria. However, international recognition is an essential quality of all well-regarded publications. Not only is this a measure of quality, but it is rooted in the international orientation of the discipline: the overwhelming majority of philosophy professionals in Ireland pursue research into issues that have no defining national boundaries and/or on non-Irish philosophical figures. And those scholars who do publish on Irish philosophical figures direct their work towards an international community of scholarship. The concerns expressed in the report, *Developing key performance indicators for the humanities* (RIA/IRCHSS, 2009), on the appropriate use of bibliometrics and the need for the counter-balancing process of peer review are shared by the philosophy profession in Ireland.

The categories of recognised forms of publication undertaken by philosophy professionals in Ireland—and across the international philosophical community—are:

- » Category A: advanced authored works;
- » Category B: non-scholarly monographs;
- » Category C: edited works;
- » Category D: translation; and
- » Category E: book reviews.

Publications within Category A will comprise the main body of work of well-established, internationally esteemed professionals. Over the course of a career most professionals will have undertaken a wide spectrum of many of the activities noted in this document. A career defined by a more or less exclusive concentration on B, C and D activities would be likely to be perceived as industrious but imbalanced and lacking in a substantial research contribution, with the exception of advanced editorial work, for example, preparing a critical edition of a philosopher's works or important individual texts.

CATEGORY A: ADVANCED AUTHORED WORKS

There is no absolute hierarchy of publication types, though in general (concretely, in tenure/promotion assessments) certain forms of publication receive greater recognition than others. A significant degree of that recognition accrues virtually automatically to:

- » Papers (including substantial, article-length book reviews/critical notices/review articles), appearing in already respected peer-reviewed, international journals;
- » Scholarly monographs (i.e. books attempting to set out a new understanding of their topics) published by already respected international academic presses; and
- » Invited chapters appearing in books edited, or with contributions, by leading international scholars in the field.

As a general rule, publications of all of the above forms represent publishing excellence. The Internet lags far behind print in terms of prestige. However, a number of online resources operate strict editorial standards and their contents are highly respected (e.g. *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, *Philosophy Compass*).

Philosophers in Ireland, together with international colleagues, frequently criticise the various ranked listings of scientific journals. There is a worry about bias in the listings (towards fields preferred by the rankers) and also a concern about the opacity of the ranking criteria. There is little outright rejection of the rankings in principle, however. What is generally accepted is that by itself a ranking position of a journal is not a sufficient indication of the relative quality of the publication appearing in it. This is because excellent work appearing in journals that are not highly ranked often receive equal or greater international recognition.

There tends to be less controversy about which academic presses most often publish material—monographs and edited collections—of the highest quality.

In order to ensure that excellent work is fairly recognised, regardless of where it has appeared, there is an emphatic need for a peer-review process to examine all forms of output. This process should give weight to each publication type listed above, but should also be prepared to consider without prejudice any other publication type presented by individuals or their academic units as being of high quality.

CATEGORY B: NON-SCHOLARLY MONOGRAPHS

Given the complexity of philosophy there is a constant need for books that provide accessible readings of philosophical problems or philosophical history. The gap between these types of book and scholarly monographs may be quite narrow if the book is executed in a sophisticated and ambitious manner. But a non-scholarly monograph might also exposit material in a relatively unoriginal way. Only peer review of books can offer a credible assessment of their scope, contribution and sophistication.

CATEGORY C: EDITED WORKS

Editorial work is recognised as providing a valuable contribution to scholarship and as a task worthy, alongside Category-A type activities, of an excellent researcher. Among the editorial practices most highly regarded are:

- » Standing editorship of an international journal, and below that, invited editorship of a special edition of an international journal;
- » Editorship of a volume of chapters published by an already respected international academic press;
- » Editorship of anthologies published by an already respected academic press; and
- » Preparation of an edition of classical/medieval philosophical texts (which requires an exceptional combination of philosophical, linguistic and palaeographical skills).

Each of these activities reflects the standing of the editor and in differing ways contributes to the international philosophical agenda by:

- » Bringing the latest research positions in the field to publication;
- » Assembling a synthetic set of pieces that can claim to be a statement of the state of the art;
- » Framing the field (which is what successful anthologies do); and
- » Making available authoritative versions of texts which then form the focal point of further philosophical analysis.

CATEGORY D: TRANSLATION

Whilst translation work is quite uncommon for philosophers in the analytic tradition, it is less unusual for those working in ancient philosophy or continental philosophy, where a better translation of a classic work can exert a beneficial effect on scholarship (until an even better one comes along). In the field of Asian and comparative philosophy (which is relatively new to Ireland), good English translations of primary and key secondary texts is a crucial factor in expanding the field and stimulating more researchers to engage with ideas from other philosophical traditions. A translation that is prefaced by an illuminating introduction, furnished with explanatory notes, and/or supplemented with a philosophical commentary is naturally of more value than a translation without any such apparatus.

Although most professionals read several more modern or ancient languages with comfort for the purposes of research the knowledge of a language required for translation obviously goes beyond that. However, the technical language of philosophy and the complexity of the texts make it almost impossible for a non-philosopher—even one with supreme linguistic skills—to undertake an adequate work of translation. This means that linguistically skilled academics, including some at a high level in the profession, feel compelled to undertake the work. In short, translation work is a respected research activity.

CATEGORY E: BOOK REVIEWS

By themselves, book reviews cannot be considered among the significant forms of publications. Many scholars write them as they wish to state a view of some new work, and quite often that statement becomes a reference point for future discussion of the book. Nevertheless, as exercises they are limited in scope and only exceptionally could it make sense to consider them in any peer-reviewed assessment of output.

NON-PUBLICATION OUTPUTS AND ACTIVITIES

No professional philosopher limits his or her commitment to research to publication work alone. The presentation of scholarship, the furtherance of knowledge, and the development and maintenance of a local research environment involve a range of other valuable activities.

Invited lectures, either as a colloquium speaker or a conference key-note speaker, are indicators of esteem for the research achievements of the individual concerned. And they are acknowledged as integral to the development of new work in that they provide vital testing-grounds for an individual's latest research. Many fields of philosophy are developing quickly, and developments in these fields outstrip the speed of traditional forms of publication. In these cases, colloquium/conference presentations are highly influential in shaping the state of the art internationally. Influential presentations can constitute a significant research contribution, especially if the text is made available (e.g. on the Internet).

Visiting fellowships and lectureships, including the Erasmus scheme, demonstrate the international profile of Irish philosophers and their contribution to a broader international context. Invitations to conduct summer schools or master classes are acknowledged indicators of esteem.

The research environment of any third-level institution is significantly enhanced by hosting international conferences and workshops. These events establish or further international collaborations; offer the local academic community statements of the latest research positions; and provide the postgraduate community with the experience of new sets of scholars and different approaches. The task of organising a conference is largely quite selfless, in that the administrative commitment is enormous in comparison with the direct personal scholarly benefit, yet the contribution of these events to the local philosophical community is considerable and widely appreciated.

Learned societies and professional committees contribute to the formation of a community of scholars, and the role of the officers of these societies is therefore valued.

Some sub-disciplines of philosophy, such as philosophy of education, are linked to practice and institutional work and occasionally involve public-policy formation and influence.

The reproduction of the research community requires the emergence of new PhD students. Supervision of PhD students *per se* is not necessarily indicative of research excellence by the supervisor. However, working with PhD students whose dissertations are subsequently

published (as a whole or in selected papers) is evidence that a talented student identified, from among options, a particular researcher with whom he or she wished to work and whose supervision proved helpful to that student.

Since the opportunities for postdoctoral positions in Ireland are limited, only candidates of the highest order succeed in gaining them and even then they do not always succeed. Their decision to nominate a particular research mentor, one who may indeed have advised them during the application process, is a measure of that mentor's standing within his or her field. Large research grants, of the size that would require management of significant funds, local research partners and international collaborations, are of extremely limited availability in Ireland, particularly the Republic. Where individuals have been successful in securing such grants, however, their value to the research life of the individual, his or her team and the wider communities to which the research project is addressed is greatly valued.

Because of the confidential nature of much peer-review work—one can hardly publish a list of one's reports on tenure/promotion or identify papers or manuscripts which one has assessed—it can probably never be built into any key performance indicator (KPI) system. Nevertheless, it is important to note it as successful researchers—those with significant publication achievements (as specified above)—are frequently sought out for these activities.

