

Institution: University of Sheffield
Unit of Assessment: D-25 Area Studies
1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy

1.1 Unit context

The School of East Asian Studies (SEAS) was established in 1963 in response to the 1961 Hayter Report's recommended national expansion of research and teaching in area studies to better reflect the changing world order. In line with the rising global importance of East Asia, we have since expanded dramatically beyond our original focus on Japan to cover a variety of disciplines and languages relating to China, the Korea Peninsula, and the region as a whole. As a result, we are now one of the biggest East Asian studies departments in Europe. Our vision is to promote a vibrant intellectual culture through which we communicate and disseminate our passion, expertise and knowledge of this region internationally, nationally and across Sheffield with the goal of impacting on the understanding and behaviour of a range of individuals, groups and organisations.

To achieve this vision and our **REF2014 objective** of addressing 'grand challenges and societal problems', we have focused in this assessment period on both our traditional areas of strength and important themes that break down boundaries between disciplines and the study of China, Japan and Korea. Reflecting our historical roots, these areas of strength include Japanese studies and the social sciences but have been complemented with cross-cutting themes that reflect our expansion into Chinese and Korean studies, as well as the humanities. These themes include the ways in which the region represents itself through its oral, written, visual and material cultures, the impact of migration, economic and social development across East Asia, and the drivers and outcomes of political change, conflict and cooperation both regionally and globally. Bringing together researchers from different disciplines around these themes has created a distinct and sustainable intellectual environment. In order to leverage this momentum, broaden the scope of these cross-cutting themes and strengthen links with other departments and research centres, we collectively made the strategic decision in 2019 to move to the Faculty of Arts and Humanities (FAH), while maintaining our existing links with the Faculty of Social Sciences (FSS).

Notable achievements include:

- McAuley's two-volume *The Poetry Contest in Six Hundred Rounds*, a 'tour de force' in one reviewer's words that inspired a song cycle by New York-based music organisation [Kyo-Shin-An Arts](#);
- Pendleton, Taylor-Jones and Jennifer Coates's collaborative work to establish cultural festivals including Japan Now North and the British Film Institute's (BFI) Early Korean Cinema series;
- Matanle's conceptualisation of the 'depopulation dividend' that results from demographic shrinkage and promotes human and environmental sustainability, which led to an invitation to address the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population.

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1.2 Unit structure

We have delivered on our **REF2014 objective** of moving ‘beyond the confines of single-country area studies and create a research community united by its engagement with strategically important and cross-cutting debates that are interregional, multidisciplinary and theoretically-driven in their nature’. We have done this by balancing existing collective areas of expertise with emerging priorities to identify the cross-cutting themes mentioned above in 2014. These themes were then given greater coherence and purpose through the creation in 2015 of three new research clusters: 1) Power, Cooperation and Competition; 2) East Asian Texts & Cultures; and 3) Movement(s), Economy & Development. With sustainability in mind, these clusters include both staff and postgraduate research (PGR) students within SEAS and across the University, who work together as supportive communities of scholars. A member of SEAS staff and a PGR coordinate each cluster, supported by departmental funds and encouraged to organise activities locally, nationally and internationally to sustain the discipline.

- The **Power, Cooperation and Competition** cluster explores the causes and impact of international cooperation and competition in East Asia with reference to international and regional structures, agencies, norms and culture. The cluster leverages Sheffield’s traditional strength in politics and international relations and provides a focus point for researchers across the University with a specific regional interest. It has contributed to our research culture by hosting guest speakers including Gideon Rachman of the *Financial Times* on China’s rise. Staff and PGRs have also contributed to the discipline through the organisation of joint panels, for example at the 14th Pan-European Conference on International Relations on status symbols in East Asian politics postponed from 2020 to 2021 as a result of COVID-19.
- The **East Asian Texts and Cultures** cluster brings together researchers who share a fascination with the use of oral, written, visual and material artefacts by the countries, peoples and individuals of East Asia to represent themselves and others. To this end, cluster members mine archives, organise film festivals, visit historical and cultural sites, engage in translation to explore the content and social uses of these texts. Departmental funds have supported the cluster in organising workshops and conference panels, often led by PGRs under the guidance of staff. A notable example was the 2019 workshop ‘Of Maps and Dead Cats: New Directions in the Study of East Asian Cities’ that brought together internal and external speakers in Sheffield to explore how sound recording, map-making, and film-making can be used as innovative research methods to understand contemporary cities in the region.
- The **Movement(s), Economy & Development** cluster is an interdisciplinary research group with a strong interest in migration, economic and social change, and development in East Asia that works with researchers across the University in this area of strength. The disciplinary backgrounds of its researchers include international relations, economics, anthropology, business and law. They have contributed to our research culture by organizing workshops in Sheffield on geographical information system mapping software and collaborating with the East Asian Texts and Cultures cluster on the theme of contemporary cities.

In addition, since 2014 our Executive, Research & Innovation Committee, PGR Affairs Committee and staff meetings have reviewed our internal structures to bolster research leadership, governance and professional services support with the objective of realising our vision and creating a culture based on rigour, transparency, collegiality and support. This has included clarifying

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committee structures, communication channels and terms of reference, as well as introducing comprehensive mentoring for all staff regardless of career stage. We have also introduced pre-submission peer review of outputs, red-lined writing retreats, meaningful research away days focused on specific and important themes, as well as joined-up and transparent research planning (see Section 2). Our Research and Innovation Director has led on these initiatives, supported by an Impact Director and professional services staff (FTE 0.5 within SEAS prior to the establishment of the Faculty Research Hubs outlined below). Strategic oversight of the PGR experience and monitoring of milestones is provided by our PGR Director who also provides pastoral care in cases where they are not supervisor, and they receive excellent professional support from a dedicated PGR Support Officer.

1.3 Research and impact strategy

Our research strategy has supported our **REF2014 objectives** of 'achiev[ing] excellent and high-impact research through increased critical mass; greater cross-fertilisation between clusters, departments and disciplines; and a commitment to conceptual and methodological development within the field of Area Studies'. We engaged with external speakers and research users to identify a shared understanding of excellence and the state of our field. We also audited developments within the discipline, regionally and internationally, and identified specific areas of investment and growth, namely Korean studies, media studies and international relations, to strengthen the research clusters. We prioritised staff recruitment in these areas and discussed the related benefits of requesting to move faculties. To increase critical mass as well as promote conceptual and methodological developments, we established a departmental Research Stimulation Fund (RSF) that has awarded approximately £100k since 2015 to support excellent and high-impact research. We have emphasised impact at multiple levels from the local to the global, invested time through the strategic use of study leave, promoted mentoring through the Impact Director and Faculty Impact Manager, and allocated departmental, Faculty and Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) resources. As regards greater cross-fertilisation, we bolstered the clusters by allocating a budget and developing cluster-specific objectives and annual plans. We also revamped our webpages and promotional materials to reach out across and beyond Sheffield.

In terms of results, our two impact case studies illustrate the success of our approach. In addition, we have increased critical mass within SEAS as a result of our recruitment and development activities (see Section 2). We have achieved greater cross-fertilisation between departments and disciplines as seen for example in the increased number of co-supervisions (in AY2013-14 we had one co-supervision between SEAS and another department; in 2019-20 we had nine in collaboration with the Schools of Architecture and English, as well as the Departments of Journalism, Politics and International Relations, Sociological Studies and Urban Studies) alongside collaborative events with departments and research centres across the University mentioned above and below. In terms of conceptual and methodological development within the discipline, we have made contributions as seen in the work of SEAS researchers like Matanle's concept of a 'depopulation dividend' in Japan. In addition, Pendleton's collaborative research has resulted in interdisciplinary methodologies and approaches to the co-creation of cultural artefacts between academic and non-academic partners, identifying the conditions in which this can flourish.

The fact that we are making a single-department submission in REF2021, in contrast to the faculty-wide area studies submission in REF2014, pays testament to our efforts.

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Our future strategic objectives build on our current strategy by:

- Reinforcing our position as the focal point in the UK for high-quality research, impact, and knowledge exchange (KE) in Asian studies targeting strategic areas of growth within our clusters including media and the digital humanities, Korean studies, international relations, and music and sound cultures.
- Sustaining the discipline, training the future generation of researchers and contributing concretely to national and international capacity-building in East Asian expertise. We will do this by leveraging our unique cross-cutting position between the social sciences and humanities, increase in staff numbers and successful postgraduate taught (PGT) recruitment, as well as our innovative double degree programmes to recruit high-quality postdoctoral researchers and PGRs.
- Continuing the cross-fertilisation of our three research clusters with other partners across and outside Sheffield in order to mainstream a coherent and consistent East Asian perspective and sustain the vitality of our discipline. We will do this by establishing a tripartite annual research conference, organising thematic panels at international conferences that draw from each cluster, and prioritising engagement with other departments within our own institution and across others.
- Embedding KE and public engagement activities leading to impact within every researcher's work. We will do this by financially supporting individuals who are already accustomed to impact-generation and plugged into networks, while pairing less confident colleagues with established impact generators in both faculties in order to provide an Asian perspective.
- Promoting open research by planning at an early stage for open access (OA) for our outputs, working with our dedicated East Asian studies librarian to open more archives and datasets that support the activities of our research clusters, and encourage staff to develop digitised resources that disseminate their research.
- Target larger scale UKRI funding related to East Asia in addition to the bespoke East Asian funders by leveraging Faculty and departmental support (such as our RSF), and pooling existing successful examples within SEAS (see Section 3).
- Minimising the inequalities resulting from COVID-19 on research activities by increasing engagement with digital research methods and prioritising Faculty and departmental funds on staff with caring duties who have been disproportionately affected.

In measurable terms, our goal is to ensure that the overwhelming majority of our research outputs and impact is either world-leading or internationally excellent in terms of originality, significance and rigour. In broad terms, if we can ensure that the region receives the attention it deserves both in academia and society, and is not treated as 'exotic', the 'other' or a 'bolt on', then we will also have succeeded.

1.4 Open research

In line with the *Concordat on Open Research Data* and the FAIR principles, and as an early adopter of OA, our open research environment is built on the three pillars of transparency, collaboration, and efficiency. To ensure maximum discoverability of our research, we aim to put all short-form outputs in White Rose Research Online, our shared repository with Leeds and York (green route). The 195 outputs deposited over this assessment period were downloaded over

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20,000 times. This is our preferred route, ensuring equity in publishing opportunities regardless of available funding; we also publish outputs in fully OA journals, or hybrid where required for funder compliance. We ensure that staff are provided with the required understanding, training, and infrastructure. We support Plan S and our staff are engaging with the current debate through their editorial positions and roles in learned societies. Our departmental Executive and Research & Innovation Committee have made it an agenda item.

We have encouraged staff to join Publons and secure an ORCID so that they can share information effectively and receive recognition for their publications, grants, and peer review work. Since appointment in 2015, our dedicated marketing officer has worked to make our research activities and understanding of current affairs open to a wider public through blogs (for example, *The Conversation* and our own *Spotlight on East Asia@Sheffield*) as well as traditional/social media engagement. We will continue working with our dedicated librarian to make our research and datasets open, and promote examples of best practice in the development of digitised, online resources in the dissemination of research, such as McAuley's [site of classical Japanese poetry](#), and Dobson's work with student policy analysts on [global summitry](#).

1.5 Research integrity

SEAS has supported an evolving culture of research integrity in line with institutional policies and best practices, especially as regards the induction and mentoring of new staff by pairing them with more experienced staff in SEAS or cognate departments. Staff and students comply wholly with ethical approval procedures, which are overseen by an Ethics Officer. However, we also face a number of challenges that are specific to East Asia, such as working in dangerous environments (post-disaster Japan or North Korea), and navigating cultural differences in approaches to research integrity and academic freedom. To this end, we have used research away days and cluster activities to host specific speakers from within the University and across East Asia on a range of strategically important issues, including dialogues with leading publishers and impact users. Reaching out across the University, SEAS has taken the lead during the current assessment period in providing training to staff and students in other departments unfamiliar with different cultural approaches to research ethics and how to conduct research in dangerous and distant locations. This has been well received and also led to the development of a revised off-campus fieldwork policy in SEAS in 2018 that contributed to University-level fieldwork policy.

2. People

We are a team of 19 academic staff, all employed on open-ended teaching and research contracts, at different career stages: 2 professors (1 male and 1 female), 4 senior lecturers (2 male and 2 female) and 13 lecturers (6 male and 7 female). All submitted staff (and some PGRs) are fellows of the Higher Education Academy (HEA) and three are Senior Fellows (Jamie Coates, Pendleton and Taylor-Jones). Our strategic priorities are to attract, retain and develop outstanding researchers. Our recruitment strategy is informed by innovative equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) processes outlined below and in line with our future objectives has targeted media and the digital humanities, Korean studies, international relations, and music and sound cultures. As a result, we are a multi-disciplinary group of researchers across a range of humanities and social science fields united by a passion for understanding this dynamic region and organised around three research clusters. In terms of ethnicity, our Category A staff are highly diverse and internationalised coming from countries including Japan, South Korea, China, Australia, Germany, the US, as well as various European backgrounds. 60% of these staff members are White and 40% are Asian. We work to ensure that staff with protected characteristics are treated equally.

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2.1 EDI

Echoing the faculty-wide commitment, we have placed EDI at the heart of our approach to staff development and recruitment during this assessment period leading to vitality in the reach and relevance of our research culture. One of our two professors is female (Taylor-Jones was promoted). Prior to the census date, two of our three professors were female (Morton recently moved to China). 50% of senior lecturers and 54% of lecturers are female. SEAS has been a first-mover in this regard, demonstrated by our engagement with the 'Narrative Goals' pilot in collaboration with leading EDI consultants Simon Fanshawe and Roy Hutchins. In 2015-16, we undertook a structured and honest self-reflection to identify gaps in our current staffing and research profile and, once identified, embedded them in the criteria and wording of job adverts, as well as making them a key point of reference in our shortlisting and interviewing practices. As a result, during this assessment period we now receive a majority of applications for advertised positions from women and our staff profile has changed dramatically and positively.

To sustain this achievement, our EDI Directors are now members of our Executive and we have examined our administrative roles, interview panels, committee membership, advisory panel and seminar speakers to ensure gender parity. The University also operates a two-ticks scheme that guarantees an interview to any applicant with a disability that meets the essential criteria. SEAS has shortlisted several two-ticks applicants.

Staff taking family leave can apply for £10k in financial support under the Women Academic Returners' Programme to support a range of research activities. All eligible women in SEAS have taken advantage of this funding. The results have been positive. Taylor-Jones was able to access the fund even though her parental leave was taken when employed by another University. The provision of teaching support, as well as conference and travel funds allowed her to focus on completion of a monograph, submit a number of grants and conceptualise a new research project in the first 18 months of her return to work. SEAS has a 100% maternity retention rate over the last five years. We also support flexible working in line with Faculty and University principles, for example by arranging teaching in one semester or to facilitate school collection.

Staff have also shaped EDI issues beyond SEAS. Dobson led a task-and-finish group in AY2018-19 whose recommendations led to changes in the governance of FSS and its departments, for example by including EDI Directors in departmental executives. Pendleton is an active member of the Royal Historical Society LGBT+ Working Group, responsible for the [2020 report](#) on equality and inequality in UK History. This is already beginning to shape policies and practice nationally and at Sheffield. Taylor-Jones is senior researcher on an ERC project exploring decolonising the curriculum, which will run until 2024.

In terms of REF2021, we followed the Code of Practice, ensuring internal assessors received appropriate training and respecting gender parity and disciplinary representation. We chose a smaller review panel to ensure consistency while rotating membership to provide developmental opportunities for other staff. Taylor-Jones (humanities, female) and Dobson (social sciences, male) were the only assessors who took part in every internal audit. The balanced distribution of selected outputs reflects our positive staff profile in terms of EDI and is a positive development in contrast to REF2014 when only two females (both Asian) were submitted.

2.2 Staff development

In terms of staff development, the University's Staff Review and Development Scheme (SRDS) occupies a central position and SEAS has again been a first-mover. During the assessment period, we have moved from a system in which a team of reviewers conducted annual staff reviews to a

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single point of contact to ensure consistency. As a result, the Head of Department conducts all reviews but liaises before and after with the R&I Director who also meets annually with all staff to develop five-year research plans and discuss individual progress in terms of outputs, grant capture and impact. This ensures focused and consistent objectives, in line with academic career pathways. As regards developmental needs, a number of staff have undertaken bespoke research-related training as a result of SRDS conversations, whether it be through departmental initiatives such as specific training in software packages and paper-writing masterclasses, or institutional initiatives such as the multi-level Sheffield Leader programme or CV+ Scheme that provides female staff with senior peer review on their CVs.

Workload planning for each member of SEAS is guided by a collectively agreed Work Allocation Framework, with each member of staff allocated 40% of time for research, grant capture and impact activities as a baseline regardless of career stage. We use online workload planning software to ensure transparency and equity. However, we flex this allocation to prioritise impact with clear potential and early career researchers (ECRs), who have more time allocated for research and lower-than-average teaching loads to facilitate their production of excellent research from an early start. Their three-year probationary period is tapered (60% research time in Y1, 55% in Y2 and 50% in Y3) and based on regular monitoring of research outputs by the Head and R&I Director as an essential criterion for completion. All probationary staff are allocated an appropriate mentor either inside or outside SEAS and receive a recently revised and more rigorous induction. They also undertake the University's Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching for Learning in Higher Education that leads to HEA Fellowship as part of the University's commitment to inculcating an ethos of research-led teaching. In terms of research supervision, compulsory dual supervision of doctoral students ensures new academics learn best practice from more experienced staff. As a result, recent appointments have made considerable progress in their development and demonstrate the success of mentoring and allocation of time as seen in Chang's and Son's AHRC recent grant applications and a pipeline of publications in high-quality journals.

Our ECRs and PGRs also access the institution's award-winning *Think Ahead* researcher development programme. This programme provides a wide range of professional development opportunities, corresponding to the areas articulated in Vitae's Researcher Development Framework. A dedicated professional Faculty lead ensures that training and development provision is tailored to the needs of SEAS researchers and is available to provide individual support to help them to identify the most appropriate training and development opportunities for their specific needs. This activity is complemented by a specialist careers consultant for researchers, who offers a career development programme and one-to-one career consultations for our ECRs. *Think Ahead* also offers a mentoring scheme to complement our departmental scheme, and leads a comprehensive well-being programme.

Study and special leave are available to all staff and used strategically to enable high-quality outcomes. Expressions of interest for future periods of leave (variable in length) are considered at any time throughout the academic year and assessed by a committee including the Head, R&I Director and Learning and Teaching Director on agreed criteria, including the originality and significance of the project, its fit with SEAS and Faculty priorities, a realistic set of deliverables and the track record of the applicant. Unsuccessful applicants receive detailed feedback and are encouraged to reapply. Since 2014, 11 members of staff of different grades, ethnicities and genders have applied for and completed a semester's study leave (see Table 1).

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	Lecturer		Senior lecturer		Professor	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Asian	2	0	1	1	0	0
White	1	3	1	1	0	1

Table 1: Diversity in study leave

In addition, two members of staff (one White female professor and one Asian male lecturer) have been granted special leave during this assessment period. The remaining members of staff are ECRs and will qualify for study leave after completing probation. Our approach has facilitated large-scale research projects supported by external funding such as Jennifer Coates, Pendleton and Taylor-Jones's impact and KE work with the Japan Now North cultural festival, Morton's appointment to the Boeing Chair in International Relations at Schwarzman College at Tsinghua University established by Presidents Obama and Xi, Watanabe's appointment as Kiriya Visiting Professor in the Centre for Asia Pacific Studies at University of San Francisco, as well as a steady stream of high-quality publications.

2.3 Recognition and reward

During the assessment period, five members of staff have been promoted (four from lecturer to senior lecturer and one from senior lecturer to professor), in contrast to one staff member in the previous REF period (lecturer to senior lecturer and then to professor). As a result, we now have more members of staff who can contribute to the development and mentoring processes outlined above. Within these processes, promotion is discussed with the Head and more specific mentoring is organised with a member of staff within SEAS or from another department who has recently been promoted to the desired grade. This has meant frank and honest conversations with members of staff not yet ready for promotion and the provision of clear feedback on what needs to be done. In any case, formal consideration is given to all cases through the Departmental Reward and Promotions Panel that is constituted using HR guidelines (a balanced group of appropriate seniority to the posts under review, including professional services managers) and once again provides clear feedback on the readiness of cases, while continuing to offer the opportunity of self-submission.

2.4 PGR students

Our PGR students are a diverse, active, and integral part of our community. At the time of writing, we have 35 PGRs at different stages, full-time or part-time with caring duties or health conditions across different programmes including our double degree programmes with Tohoku University in Japan and Yonsei University in South Korea. We currently have a 43:57 (15 male, 20 female) split in terms of gender and a 20:23:57 (seven home, eight European, 20 overseas) split in terms of nationality. We provide bespoke support for overseas students, for example in academic English, but all PGRs have access to the same support and resources outlined below.

We have demonstrated a steady stream of timely completions (five in AY2014-15 and five in AY2018-19). To achieve our objective of fostering the next generation of researchers in Asian studies, we are aiming to increase this number at a sustainable pace without compromising quality. We have targeted home and international PGRs with EDI in mind through an enhanced and more research-focused web presence and succeeded in increasing the number of high-quality PGRs in receipt of funding from a diverse range of national and international funders (the ERC, British Academy, ESRC, White Rose Doctoral Training Programme (WRDTP), Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation and GB Sasakawa Foundation) to eight currently. We are also now targeting the White

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Rose College of Arts and Humanities. We have embedded research culture within our undergraduate student community through the Sheffield Undergraduate Research Experience scheme and our new undergraduate curriculum implemented from AY2018-19. In the near future, this should serve as another pipeline of high-quality postgraduate students.

Effective supervision, pastoral care, rigorous training, and community building are also key to this objective. All PGRs have two supervisors and progress is assessed through a series of formal milestones: biannual, confirmation, and submission reviews. Biannual reviews take place in January and May to cover the preceding semester. At the end of their first year, students complete a confirmation review, which involves submitting a substantial piece of work (literature review and methodology chapter) and making a 30-minute presentation. At submission review, students and supervisors meet usually about one year before formal submission to plan a timely submission. Before their viva examination, all PGRs undergo a mock examination that complements workshops offered centrally. They also have access to the same institutional sources of financial support as staff (see Section 3), to support conference attendance, travel, and fieldwork. Fourteen of our current cohort of PGRs have had the chance to undertake paid teaching and supervisory work while conducting their PhD, received training in teaching methods and several have achieved FHEA status.

As regards research training, all staff, PGRs and PGTs receive mandatory research ethics and integrity training, and our Research Ethics Officer ensures engagement and compliance with the appropriate frameworks. Our PGRs benefit from the high-quality training and support provided by the successful WRDTP (Social Science or Arts and Humanities as appropriate). To complement the DTP and ensure that our PGRs receive specific training in area/Asian studies, we introduced our own Asia-specific doctoral development programme in 2018. We have also invested in bespoke training on a case-by-case basis, whether it be NVivo or statistical methods. An iterative training needs analysis and data management plan underpins this PGR journey.

To further build an integrated community and encourage integration within SEAS, PGRs join at least one of the three research clusters and present work, plan and organise activities, and chair meetings. They are integrated further through participation in our Research & Innovation and PGR Affairs Committees, research away days, departmental seminars, writing retreats, social events, and recruitment presentations. They also benefit from dedicated profiles on our webpages. In addition, staff mentor and collaborate with PGRs on a regular basis in terms of impact, KE and outputs. PGRs supported events like the Japan Now North cultural festivals and the 2018 British Association for Japanese Studies (BAJS) conference by acting as presenters, co-organisers and attendees. PGRs also organise their own annual mini-conference and are supported in submitting panel proposals to international conferences. To further build a community, enhance employability and celebrate excellence, in 2016 we established the annual [Charles Alfred Fisher Prize](#) (named after the SEAS founder) for the best PhD thesis. Rongrong Lin, the first winner for her thesis on the role of political elites in reforming China, has already published a number of related articles.

In terms of future careers, during the assessment period several PGRs secured employment as research-active academics in leading universities in the UK and overseas (Edinburgh, Glasgow, Iceland, City University of New York, Hiroshima, Hirosaki, Kyoto Women's, Shenzhen, Tohoku), as well as in related non-academic fields (Konrad Adenauer Foundation).

The Postgraduate Research Experience Survey highlights areas of improvement but also highlights future priorities. For example, in the most recent survey of 2019, 100% of students felt that their understanding of research integrity had developed, that their supervisors had the skills and subject knowledge, and that they have regular contact with supervisors appropriate for their needs. We also registered double-digit improvements in responses regarding appropriate

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workspace and ability to manage projects, which were priority areas as a result of the previous survey. As a result of our strategic move to the Faculty of Arts & Humanities and physical relocation, our PGRs have been allocated dedicated space in the Humanities Research Institute, providing the opportunity for further cross-departmental collaboration and cohort building.

3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

3.1 Income

Our income strategy is based on a shared understanding that funded research provides the resources and capacity to facilitate ambitious world-leading research and impact. This is made meaningful to the individual researcher's planning through discussions with the Head and R&I Director as part of the SRDS process and annual dialogue that develops and monitors each researcher's five-year research plan. Individual staff are then mentored and receive peer review from the R&I Director, Faculty professional teams and other staff across the University as appropriate to the funding call. ECRs are encouraged to secure smaller grants before attempting larger grants often in collaboration with more senior researchers. As a result, in this assessment period we have secured a number of grants detailed below that have built, or currently are building, towards high-quality outputs, international networks of scholars and future larger scale projects across the research clusters' themes and priority areas mentioned above. For example, Chen's collaboration with colleagues in Sheffield and China funded by the Global Challenges Research Fund has resulted in high-quality publications in some of the discipline's leading journals, including *Environment and Planning B*, *Urban Studies*, and *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*. Similarly, Dobson and Pendleton were both successful in the AHRC-ESRC UK-Japan Social Science-Arts and Humanities Connections Grants Call to facilitate the creation of multi-stakeholder UK-Japan networks exploring prime ministerial leadership and coal mining history respectively. Finally, Pendleton's visit to Nichibunken (International Research Centre for Japanese Studies) was funded by the AHRC International Placement Scheme and contributed to his chapter in the edited collection *Tokyo: Memory, Imagination and the City* (2017), a co-authored article in *GeoHumanities* (2017), and the special issue of *Japan Forum* co-edited with Jamie Coates.

We have benefited from several institutional sources of support, including the Worldwide Universities Network, Erasmus+ Mobility Programme, and Learned Societies Fund, which provides support to attend national and international conferences and workshops. These funds are devolved and SEAS prioritises ECRs and PGRs. To support KE, impact generation and our two impact case studies specifically, our staff and PGRs have secured approximately £40k from the HEIF and the ESRC Impact Accelerator Account. In addition, we have benefited from the institutional support provided by Faculty Impact and Knowledge Exchange teams. This has supported the Japan Now North cultural festival and BFI Early Korean Cinema series, complementing the income-in-kind from local cinemas and galleries. SEAS is also the only university in the UK to have received funding from the One Asia Foundation of approximately £80K over two years to support the dissemination of research related to East Asia community building to staff, students and the public.

To support these various mechanisms and complement existing funding schemes, we established our own RSF in 2014 with the specific aim of providing the seed funding to support projects that will result in larger research projects supported by external funds or enhance impact activities. The RSF is open to all research-active staff and applications are received on a rolling basis. It awarded £102.7k over this assessment period. The criteria for selection resonate with our School and Faculty priorities of producing world-class research, increasing our market share of research

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income in support of that, and in the process raising our profile as well as making a difference in the world. To enable closer monitoring, staff are required to submit a post-project report highlighting concrete results. Notable successful examples of how projects have grown as a result include Conrad's work with the National University of Singapore. This bilateral collaboration received £6k of RSF support and expanded into a multi-stakeholder project funded by several bodies including the Japan Foundation and Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation, which identified the priorities of Japanese multinationals in their employment of non-Japanese graduates and fed these priorities into the curricula of a number of centres of Japanese studies across Europe to enhance student employability. Similarly, the RSF provided £2k to support Taylor-Jones's initial networking that developed into a collaborative £127k Horizon 2020 award on Decolonizing Film and Screen Studies of which Sheffield received £96k. Her project with Dr Wikanda Promkhuntong of Mahidol University in Bangkok on film tourism received £2k of RSF support and secured £20k from the British Academy Newton Fund shared between Sheffield and Mahidol Universities. ECRs are prioritised within the RSF and further supported through the mentoring process by pairing them with successful income generators in other departments (see Section 2). In 2020, this enabled Chang and Son to scale their projects up and make larger funding applications to the AHRC.

As a result of these various initiatives, our research grant awards, volume of applications and success rate have increased from three awards (out of four applications) with an apportioned value of £12k in AY2013-14 to 11 awards (out of 15 applications) with an apportioned value of £217k in AY2018-19 (AY2019-20 is unrepresentative because of COVID-19 but see Section 1 for our efforts to minimise the impact). In line with our **REF2014 objective**, this is spread across a wider range of funders that reflect our efforts to bridge disciplines and area studies, including the AHRC, ESRC, ERC, British Academy, Leverhulme Trust and Arts Council UK, in addition to Asian-focused funders such as the Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation, Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation, Japan Foundation, Toshiba International Foundation, Korea Foundation and Academy of Korean Studies. Our collaborative work with the University of Leeds under the umbrella of the White Rose East Asia Centre was funded from 2006 to 2012 by the ESRC, AHRC and HEFCE, and from 2012 to 2016 by the AHRC and British Academy. With the end of this funding, we have transitioned to a self-supporting unit through the increase and diversification of our research income and sources of PGR funding, as outlined above, to include larger scale UKRI funding related to East Asia in addition to the bespoke East Asian funders.

3.2 Infrastructure and facilities

We have enhanced our infrastructure and facilities by creating social spaces for both staff and PGRs alike, and refurbishing a dedicated language lab with technical support as the utilisation of East Asian languages is central to our research as well as our teaching. Our strategic decision to request a move in faculties was partly motivated by the goal of improving our estate and we will be moving to the main arts & humanities building in 2021. This will provide us with a better developed facility at the heart of the campus, closer proximity to HumLab, the laboratory space for empirical research in language and music cognition, and allow us to foster face-to-face research collaborations with fellow departments while still maintaining links to the social science departments.

In improving our research income, SEAS has benefited from support for research development provided at the Faculty level that complements our internal review processes and annual research planning meetings outlined above. Research support received substantial investment from 2019 when a Faculty Research Services team (1.8 FTE) was expanded to a Faculty Research Hub (2.9 FTE; 3.4 FTE from 2020), and Faculty Research Growth Team (1.8 FTE), and academic and Faculty support for KE, impact and public engagement was expanded from 1 FTE to 6 FTE. The

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

teams work closely together to provide a coordinated service to staff across the Faculty and SEAS, specifically to provide complementary knowledge and expertise covering the external environment, faculty research strengths and non-academic collaboration; ensure that support is responsive, helpful, scalable and priority driven with the focus on adding value through expertise; provide support where it is most impactful (for example, ECRs, complex and non-standard applications, and capacity and community development); be responsive to and influential in the academic leads' steer by providing supporting data, evidence and experience; and build and integrate across the University and beyond to maximise opportunities.

With our goal of communicating and disseminating our passion, expertise and knowledge of East Asia across Sheffield, SEAS staff have been active participants in many of the University's research institutes and networks, including the Digital Society Network (Jamie Coates, Jennifer Coates, Taylor-Jones), Crick Centre for Public Understanding of Politics (Dobson, Watanabe, Zhong), Sheffield Institute for International Development (Chen, Matanle, Taylor-Jones), Centre for Contemporary and Modern History (Pendleton, Taylor-Jones), Migration Research Group (Chen) and Sheffield Political Economy Research Institute (Dobson).

We have long benefited from a dedicated East Asian studies librarian who works with researchers in the three clusters to access bespoke Asian language materials online, in Sheffield and in East Asian archives. For example, in line with our prioritisation of Korean studies, we were the first and only library in the world in 2018 to collaborate with the National Assembly Library of Korea to make their digital resources available. We have also invested in making other archives available including *The Japan Times* digital archive (1897-2017), *The Korea Times* (1956-2016), ProQuest Historical Chinese Newspapers Collection (1832-1953) and Foreign Office Files for China (1919-1980). We also cooperate with the European Association of Japanese Resource Specialists and the European Association of Sinological Librarians to acquire and share up-to-date resources and information for our academics and students. The collections in Chinese, Japanese and Korean studies, alongside special collections like *Daily Worker* journalist Alan Winnington's archives, are regarded as national and international resources within the discipline and have enabled leading scholars to produce world-leading and internationally excellent research. In addition, University software provision supports research in East Asian languages, for example to support the discourse analysis of Japanese parliamentary debates.

4. Collaboration and contribution to the research base, economy and society
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Our goal is to disseminate our knowledge of East Asia across Sheffield as well as nationally and internationally and impact on the understanding and behaviour of a range of individuals, groups and organisations. To achieve this, we have prioritised activities that can articulate clear outcomes from KE and public engagement, provided the essential time and financial support, and supported our staff in securing external funds to operate regionally in the Sheffield City Region and the North of England with a specific focus on cultural industries, as well as nationally and internationally with a specific focus on international relations. In total, we have engaged with 20 international, eight national and 11 local partners. Other external partners with whom collaboration is being developed into tangible future impact as a result of discussions in annual research planning and mentoring meetings, include the South Korean Ministry of Justice, the Institute for Global Law, the Bophana Audio-Visual Resource Centre in Cambodia, the Rohingya Human Rights Network Canada and the Transitional Justice Working Group.

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

4.1 Local collaborations and contributions

The Japan Now North cultural festival, part of an impact case study, is a high-quality collaboration that exemplifies our approach. It is based upon the exchange of ideas and approaches to the curation and celebration of Japanese contemporary culture between SEAS academics and cultural partners led by Martin Colthorpe, Director of Modern Culture, an agency working with several partners in the arts sector. This is a mutually beneficial relationship that has evolved since 2016, when Colthorpe identified SEAS as the leading centre for Japanese Studies in the North of England, to embrace a number of regional galleries and cinemas. Japan Now North is responsible for a number of high-profile Japanese cultural icons (for example, Ninagawa Mika, renowned photographer and director) and commentators (for example, Richard Lloyd Parry, East Asia editor for *The Times*) visiting Sheffield and the North of England. As well as providing departmental funds and support-in-kind, we allocated time to SEAS staff in securing external funding to support this now annual festival. This sharing of ideas has resulted in a new approach to presenting Japan and its cultural artefacts shaped by Jennifer Coates, Pendleton and Taylor-Jones.

Similarly, staff and PGRs have given talks and organised exhibitions at the Off the Shelf Festival, the ESRC Festival of the Mind, Festival of Debate, 2020 BFI Japanese Cinema programmes, the Japan Foundation Film Programme and the Annual Korean Film Festival. From 2007 to 2018 SEAS also hosted and supported the award-winning Sheffield Confucius Institute (SCI) under Zhao's leadership. Her research on language acquisition and Chinese society has shaped the SCI's activities in educating children and young adults in the Sheffield City Region about China, and advising Sheffield City Council and Chamber of Commerce on engaging with China. We also work with local schools, providing taster sessions on the language and culture of East Asian countries in collaboration with Faculty outreach programmes. Jamie Coates, Taylor-Jones and Dobson have regularly visited local schools and presented aspects of their research.

Finally, we have shaped our local environment literally. Informed by our strategic emphasis on Korean studies, we worked with a leading Korean artist to design and display two Korean totem poles as a permanent feature of our campus and open to the general public.

4.2 National and international collaborations and contributions

We have allocated time, in-kind contributions and financial resources to support several activities on a national and international level. For example, we mentored Morton through her appointment by competitive process as special advisor to the Foreign Affairs Select Committee on China and the Rules-Based International System that began in November 2017 and reported in April 2019. During this time, we allocated time and financial resources so that her research on China's position in global governance could inform the work and findings of this committee. Her research also influenced policymakers through her appointment as advisor to Great Britain China Centre training programmes on 'China and the World' held for civil servants across Whitehall in July 2019. In collaboration with the Japan Local Government Centre, the London office of Japan's Council of Local Authorities for International Relations, Matanle has brought together Japanese and UK local governments to share best practice on his area of research, regional depopulation and rural decline.

4.3 Supporting and building the research base of our discipline

Our strategy has focused on Japanese studies, where our historical strengths lie, and emphasises the development of the next generation of scholars. To this end, SEAS hosted *Japan Forum*, the journal of BAJS, implementing dramatic changes to the management of the journal in the previous

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

REF period by creating a PhD studentship to support the appointment of a managing editor for a three-year period. At the beginning of this assessment period, we oversaw the transition of the journal's management to another team at the University of London who maintained the same sustainable structure. SEAS also hosted the 2018 BAJIS conference, a three-day major international event that attracted high-profile keynote speakers in Japanese studies from the US and Japan. Again, we prioritised the future generation of Japanese studies scholars with several panels organised by PGRs and staff in our research clusters, and innovated with the first student research poster competition. Finally, in February 2017, we hosted the Japan Foundation/BAJS Postgraduate Workshop to demystify impact for postgraduate students through several SEAS-led panels (Dobson, Matanle, McAuley, Pendleton). We host the [University of Sheffield/Routledge Japanese Studies Series](#), now totalling 51 monographs. Taylor-Jones edits *East Asian Journal of Popular Culture*, the first academic, peer-reviewed journal of its kind, now included in Scopus. Other staff serve on the editorial/advisory boards of a range of leading disciplinary and Asian Studies journals most notably *Gender & History*, *History Workshop Journal*, *Japan Forum*, *International Affairs*, *North Korean Review*, *Global Society*, *Asiatische Studien/Études Asiatiques*, *Irish Journal of Asian Studies*, *Political Studies* and the University of Tokyo's *Journal of Law and Politics*.

SEAS staff actively participate in the councils of our most relevant academic organisations including the British and European associations in Chinese, Japanese and Korean Studies, the Universities' China Committee in London, and the East Asian Popular Culture Association. Staff have delivered keynote speeches at academic and non-academic events. Most notably, Matanle convened, chaired and spoke on depopulation and climate change at the Japanese government pavilion at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, COP21 Conference, Paris in December 2015. Morton was keynote speaker on US-China Strategic competition at the 2018 UK/France Strategic Forum and 2019 UK/US Rising Leaders Forum held at the Royal College of Defence Studies. Our staff also review for leading university presses and commercial publishers as well as top journals in Asian studies including *Journal of Asian Studies*, *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, and *Pacific Review*. They have reviewed grant applications for funders including the AHRC, ESRC, British Academy and Leverhulme Trust, examined PhDs at universities in the UK, mainland Europe and Australia, and been appointed to research evaluation exercises in Hong Kong and Ireland.

4.4 Esteem and recognition

Regional, national, and international media regularly approach our staff and PGRs to comment on a range of East Asian issues related to their research. SEAS researchers are responsible for some of the most-read articles in *The Conversation*, including Watanabe on COVID-19 in Japan and Son on cross-border Korean dialogue. Dobson's publications in the *Journal of Contemporary Asia* and *Global Summitry* have been the most-read articles in both journals. Mei Zhang's research on soundscapes in Chinese temples published in *Building and Environment* and *Applied Acoustics* won first prize in 2019 and third prize in 2017 respectively in Liaoning Provincial Government's Natural Science Awards. Matanle was awarded the Ambassador's Special Commendation for Distinguished Services to Anglo-Japanese Relations in 2017, Morton was made a Fellow of Chatham House in 2017, Dobson was made a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences in 2018 and Pendleton a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society in 2019.