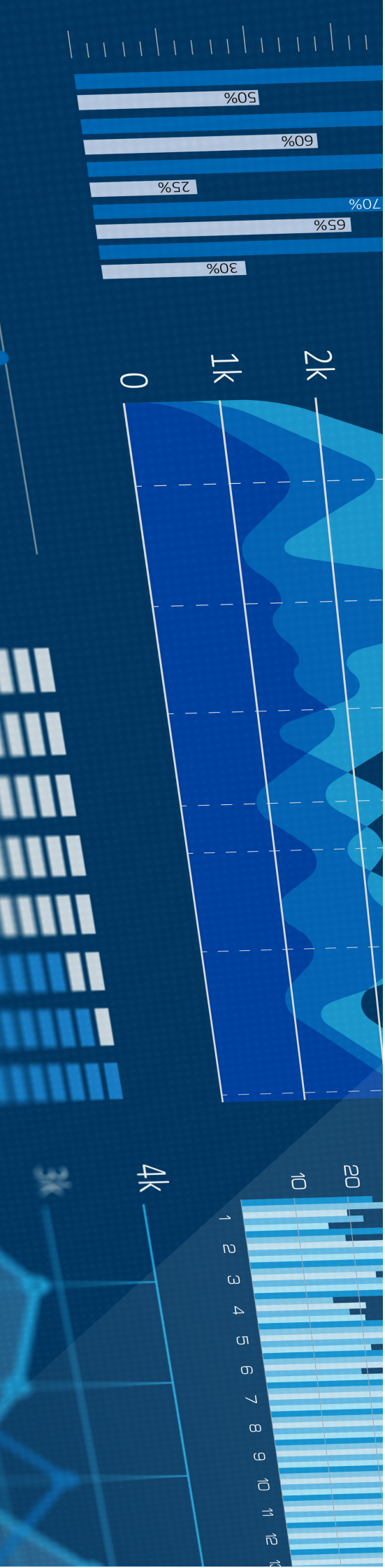


THE ENGLISH ASSOCIATION

REF HEADLINES

FOR SUB-PANEL 27
ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

The English Association, University English and The Institute for English Studies welcome the Overview Report for Sub-Panel 27, which attests to the robust health of the discipline in the UK, highlighting the transformational contribution being made by colleagues at every stage of career to knowledge, culture, well-being, and economic prosperity, locally, nationally, and globally, in units of all types and sizes. 34.7% more researchers were returned in 2021, while 210.7% more research outputs were assessed. In the period 2013-2020, 1,889 more doctoral degrees were awarded (4,549 in 2021, 2,660 in 2014), and recorded research funding doubled (£135,692,613). English was the largest submission in Main Panel D (Arts and Humanities) in terms of the number of submissions and Category A staff submitted; it also achieved the highest percentage of world-leading research in Main Panel D: Overall (48%), as well as in Outputs (45.9%), Impact (48.9%), and Environment (53.2%). Outputs of world-leading quality (4*) were found in submitting units of every type and size.

The health of the subject is clear when the average overall profile of all REF results is taken into account. 87% of research outputs, impact and environment in English Language and Literature are judged world-leading or internationally excellent. 48% of this figure is world-leading. This compares extremely favourably with the average overall profile of all subjects submitted to Medicine, Health and Life Sciences (MP A), Physical Sciences, Engineering and Mathematics (MP B), Social Sciences (MP C); Arts and Humanities (MP D): 41% is world-leading, 43% is internationally-excellent (84%).

The biggest change from 2014 is that the subject in 2021 is ‘intensely interdisciplinary’. There is evidence of thriving collaborations with colleagues across the arts and

humanities and social sciences, as well as with the natural sciences, computer science, and business and management studies. Interdisciplinary collaborations demonstrate that the subject is contributing new approaches to address the challenges of our time, from climate change to social inequalities. Our impact is especially noteworthy. 48.9% of the case studies returned in 2021 are found to be of outstanding quality (4*) with a further 38.3% judged to be very considerable (3*). This compares favourably with the results for MP D (Arts and Humanities): 46.4% of submitted impact is judged 4*, while a further 37.6% is judged 3*. Collectively, the impact case studies submitted make clear the subject's capacity to respond to challenges, and, in partnership with organisations of all kinds, to translate academic excellence into transformative societal benefit, locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. The seven areas of outstanding contribution are identified as (1) civil society; (2) creativity and cultural life; (3) economic prosperity, including support for commercial innovation and entrepreneurial activity and innovation in the development and use of digital technologies; (4) education, including the creation of new forms of pedagogy or the development of environmental education, as well as support for climate science, and the deepening of public understanding of climate change; (5) health and well-being, including transformations to the experience and practice of care in healthcare settings; (6) policy making, from the local to the global, and (7) social justice, including enabling disadvantaged and marginalised communities to tell their histories.

The subject's health is attested by the range of work submitted. World-leading research is found in language and literature across all periods, from Old English and Old Norse to the 21st Century. Textual editing is particularly strong, as is creative writing in various genres. Areas of continuing or emerging excellence include creative-critical writing; life writing; literary biography; Anglophone literature in English, Irish, Scottish, Welsh, and in global contexts (American, European, postcolonial literatures and cultural histories); textual criticism; archival and manuscript studies; histories of the book, of reading and of rhetoric; the sociology of texts; digital humanities; multilingual research and translation studies; women's writing; gender and sexuality studies; critical race studies; and literature and culture within the framework of the history of ideas. In English language, the growth in corpus-based methods and psycholinguistic experimental approaches was noted, and so too was the growth of multidisciplinary teams. The full overview report for MP D is to be found here: https://www.ref.ac.uk/media/1855/mp-d-overview-report-final.pdf





