

Institution: Leeds Trinity University
Unit of Assessment: Theology and Religious Studies
<p>a. Overview</p> <p>Leeds Trinity is a new, small University with approximately 135 academic staff and a student population just over 3,000 FTEs (full time equivalents). The student population is predominantly undergraduate, and there are currently 136 taught postgraduate and 7 postgraduate research students. This small size enables us to work across discipline boundaries, which is particularly seen in our flagship interdisciplinary research centre, the Leeds Centre for Victorian Studies. The institution is committed to the 'creation of a strong research culture' while being 'student-centred at all levels' (Strategic Plan, 2013/14). It has a record of sustained engagement with Research Assessment Exercises from 1992 onwards.</p> <p>The period 2008-2013 has been one of dynamic and rapid institutional change. At the point of the RAE 2008 the institution was still a College of Higher Education, and its undergraduate and postgraduate degrees were awarded under the aegis of the University of Leeds. The institution received Taught Degree Awarding Powers in 2009 and gained University status in December 2012. During this period the institution has remained committed to sustaining research excellence and to its primary aim of developing the breadth of research activity (Research and Scholarship Strategy, 2006). As a result, there are 2 new Units of Assessment being submitted for REF 2014 (which did not submit in 2008), an increased number of individuals being submitted, and more than twice as many registered doctoral students (7 as compared to 3). During this period the University's research culture has been enhanced, enriched and expanded within the wider context of a community characterised by inclusiveness and the commitment to being student-centred. As a result of this institutional change, Leeds Trinity has undergone a degree of restructuring, which has necessarily impacted on some of the roles described in the research plan stated in RAE 2008. During this process, research became embedded within the staple business of the institution. For example, Heads of Department gained responsibility for aspects of research leadership that had previously resided solely at senior management level, in the Director of Research, while the Faculty Research Champions created by the Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund became Research Leads within Departments. Since gaining University status, the institution has appointed a Vice-Chancellor (from Jan 2013) and a Pro-Vice Chancellor (Academic) (from Sept 2013). These appointments have led to a revised Strategic Plan (2013/14) and a bold and ambitious ten-year research strategy. Research is the institution's 'intellectual capital' and that capital is for the 'benefit [of] our students in the wider community' in an institution that aims to contribute to local and international community partnerships (Strategic Plan, 2013/14). Its academic provision, which has always been characterised by a particularly high level of vocational focus underpinned by professional practice, is now also to be 'research-led and research-informed' (Strategic Plan, 2013/14).</p> <p>The Theology and Religious Studies UoA comprises seven members of staff as a subject area within the Humanities Department. This team is small but has an established and dynamic research culture, all members being research active, and most submitting to the REF 2014. Two members of staff are fulltime and five are on fractional contracts (four at 0.5FTE and one at 0.2FTE). All have established research careers and publishing records with the exception of two members of staff who are completing their PhD. All participate actively in conferences and scholarly bodies at both national and international level. The Unit has a visiting professor and five Research Fellows. TRS has had success at previous research assessment exercises, with 50% of the research graded as 2* quality or above in RAE 2008. There is one PhD student in the department, an embryonic research centre and a masters programme is being scoped. The UoA is working to establish the whole unit as a centre of excellence for research in Theology, Philosophy and Religion with a stimulating research environment. This process is being supported by the</p>

increasing academic reputation and research infrastructure of the University.

b. Research strategy

The TRS RAE 2008 strategy stated as its aims: 1) to develop further the research culture in the subject area, particularly within the areas of patristics, the philosophy of religion, and ethics; and 2) to ensure that all members of staff are encouraged and enabled to develop their publications output. Since RAE 2008, there have been significant staff changes within the Unit, including a change of leadership, the inclusion of religious studies and philosophy within the brief of the unit, and the appointment of early career academics. The outlined plans have been adjusted accordingly. The subject area has evolved during the REF assessment period as this list reflected the staff in post at the time. It has now been expanded to include pneumatology, world Christianity, indigenous religions, 20th Century Catholic theology, Druidry and women in Islam. The second aim has yielded significant 2* research and above for the REF 2014. Implementation of the RAE 2008 strategy was via: 1) further strengthening the research community in Theology and Religious Studies through sustainable growth in student numbers and subsequent growth in staff resources. Student numbers have grown with the introduction of three new undergraduate programmes (Religious Studies; Philosophy, Ethics and Religion); 2) encouraging and enabling members of staff in TRS to use the Research Leave Scheme in order to develop their publications records. The number of staff submitted to the REF 2014 has increased significantly (from two to six) and several have published monographs; 3) encouraging all TRS staff to support and present work at the Humanities Seminar series. A particular example of this is the team's involvement in the interdisciplinary *Austerity* project. This research project ran from 2009-10 and generated reflections on 'Austerity' interpreted from the perspectives of the different disciplines of the Humanities department; 4) building on previous plans for an MA in Theology to develop a new Master's programme in Applied Theology. This has not yet been realised and is retained in the new strategy; 5) seeking to build on recent success in other subject areas in Humanities to achieve outside funding. Details of significant success on this front is found below under 'income'; and 6) recruiting research degree students in Theology. Our first PhD student is due to complete in 2014.

The plans for 2014-19 have been made in response to the revised Strategic Plan and to the 10-year Research Strategy. A stated objective of the Strategic Plan (2013/14) is that the institution's research capacity will be increased. This is supported by the Research Strategy's overarching aim to create a strong, vibrant and sustainable research culture that underpins our teaching, enables research excellence and enhances our academic reputation and credibility. Projected plans in the Research Strategy are to stimulate research partnerships and networks regionally, nationally and internationally, create research leadership and co-ordination roles and, subject to clear procedures and protocols, establish new research groups and centres. A key objective of this strategy is to lay the foundation for the application for Research Degree Awarding Powers by 2022, plans and targets for which are outlined in 3-4 year periods (the current period being 2013-16). Details of how the institution will work towards this over the next four years include: revision of academic staff appointment procedures to ensure only research-active staff are appointed to academic roles; providing funding (level of which will be agreed on an annual basis) to recruit and support the progression of postgraduate research students; seeking at least one externally-funded PhD research studentship for each internally funded studentship; and creating the position of Research Officer to provide institutional support for grant administration.

Responding to the institutional research strategy and recognising that staff in the UoA are already research active and productive, over the next six years the TRS team intends to become a recognised centre for research in Theology, Philosophy and Religion. The means to achieve this will be to:

1. Encourage staff to achieve their full research potential and maximise quality publications by distributing work-loading in a way that rewards research, supporting applications for

- research fellowships and small grants, and establishing a mentoring scheme to help the development of early career academics.
2. Make use of the extensive links of its staff with other scholars, networks and institutions, and the increased institutional support now in place, to develop project and conference funding bids. Aim to secure at least one major project or conference that will raise the profile of the UoA.
 3. Develop the multiple links of its staff with churches and other religious and charitable bodies to further increase impact.
 4. Build on the success of the 2012 conference on Evangelization (see below) to build up a Centre for the Study of Evangelization with a Research Assistant and associated fellows to be a centre of excellence in mission and world Christianity (see below) and through it contribute to the internationalization of the University.
 5. Use the increased national and international standing brought about by the raised academic profile of its staff, its research projects, and the creation of a research centre in order to attract more research masters and PhD students.

The proposed research centre will collaborate with other similar centres at Cambridge, Edinburgh, Liverpool Hope Universities and seek funding from both church-related and secular bodies. User groups and beneficiaries of the research specialisms at Leeds Trinity include local and global church bodies (e.g. Leeds Diocese, West Yorkshire Council of Churches, World Council of Churches), interfaith organisations, educational and government bodies seeking advice on contemporary Christianity and world Christian movements. The Centre will explore critically how evangelization – sharing the ‘good news’ – takes place locally and globally through diverse means such as preaching, education, worship, missions, service, social action, inculturation and the witness of Christian community life. The perspective of various religions, ethics and business models and disciplines such as biblical studies, theology, history, sociology, psychology and media will be utilised. The Centre will bring together UoA staff research related to mission studies and world Christianity, Eastern Christianity, Catholic social teaching, young Christian workers, world religions, interfaith relations, post-colonial and post-modern studies and staff in other disciplines such as history and media. The Centre will seek to attract research students and visiting research fellows from overseas and through its multiple global contacts to contribute to the internationalization of the University. A masters programme will also be developed, providing a clear route into postgraduate research and helping to recruit more PhD students.

c. People, including:

i) Staffing strategy and staff development

The Leeds Trinity HR Staff Development Strategy identifies Research and Scholarship as one of its priority areas. This includes the objective ‘To support the Strategy for Research and Scholarship by increasing staff expertise and experience in research and scholarship’, elaborated in three actions: ‘(I) Ensure that academic staff who are involved in research are supported in carrying out this role effectively, by providing a programme of staff development activities designed to build research competencies. (II) Establish a mentoring system for early-career academic staff. (III) Provide support for staff undertaking research degrees through the provision of partial funding.’

The institution is committed to equal opportunities in the recruitment and support of research staff. The HR Staff Development strategy addresses equality and diversity in objective 2: to embed the principles of equality and diversity, which underpin the institution’s vision and values, into all actions of the institution’s work.

After RAE 2008, as part of an initiative to maximise staff research engagement, the annual Professional Development Reviews (PDR) was revised to incorporate focused coverage of research and scholarship plans in place of the optional individual Research and Scholarship Plans used before. This process also highlights staff development needs with regards to research. These reviews are reported back to HR via line managers. The UoA has employed a mentoring scheme

for several years: Owen was mentored by Professor Maureen Meikle (Head of Humanities) for the ULTA -2 scheme; and Mealey was mentored for this and her work within the department by Bill Tompkiss, a former member of the UoA. The policy for research leave is that every member of lecturing staff has an automatic right to 20 research days a year. In addition, Leeds Trinity operated a competitive scheme for research leave (known variously as the Research Leave Scheme (pre-2010); Research Support Scheme (2010-12); Research Fellowship Scheme (since 2012)), and three members of the UoA have successfully applied for funding: Dr Hannah Hunt was awarded Research Leave of 80 hours teaching relief in 2009-10 and a further 40 hours in 2010-11; Professor Kirsteen Kim was awarded 40 hours of teaching relief in 2009-10 and 100 hours in 2011-12; and Dr Suzanne Owen was awarded 100 hours of research leave in 2011-12.

There are clear procedures for career progression of staff, including clear criteria for applicants seeking a Professorial title or Readership. Under this scheme, two members of staff were recipients of such titles. Dr Hannah Hunt, a specialist on the spirituality of the Eastern Christian Church became a Reader in Eastern Christianity. Dr Kirsteen Kim, an expert on Christianity as a world religion and theology of mission became Professor of Theology and World Christianity.

ii) Research students

Research degrees undertaken at Leeds Trinity University are currently awarded by the University of Leeds. Leeds Trinity's monitoring and support mechanisms therefore follow guidelines set out by the University of Leeds. The Research Committee at Leeds Trinity has overall responsibility for the internal quality for Research Degree Programmes and considers reports on enrolments and progression of postgraduate research students. An important initial stage of student progression is the 'transfer' process. Research candidatures which are intended to lead to a Doctoral award are subject to a process whereby the student is formally assessed and, if successful in the assessment, is 'transferred' to a specific degree category after an initial, provisional stage. The assessment at 'transfer' stage is intended to identify whether the individual student and the research project have the potential for research at Doctoral level and also whether completion of a thesis within the standard period of study for the programme concerned is a reasonable expectation. Students are required to submit reports, which should include a planned schedule of work and a synopsis of work already carried out or a sample chapter, within 10 months of commencement for full-time study (22 months for part-time students).

The monitoring of research students is undertaken through the supervisors. Supervisors are required to provide regular written reports on the student's progress which are presented to the Research Committee. Leeds Trinity's reporting processes require reports on admission, transfer and examination, in addition to interim 6 monthly reports. The committee considers the reports and where there are matters of concern arising, recommends the appropriate action to the Postgraduate Research Tutor and supervisors.

All students enrolled on a Research Degree Programme at Leeds Trinity have access to the training courses provided by the Staff and Departmental Development Unit (SDDU) at the University of Leeds. A wide range of training is available through the SDDU including personal skills development (such as project management) and research specific skills (such as ethical issues in research, methodology, and writing and publishing).

There is currently one PhD student within Theology and Religious Studies, who has successfully completed the transfer process, and is due to complete in 2014. This research student was successful in winning a Leeds Trinity studentship in 2010. Though he is the sole research student, he is fully integrated into the research culture of the University. For example, he has acted as the research student representative on the Research Committee (2012-13) and been supported in his career as a future academic by being given the opportunity to provide guest lectures for undergraduate courses run in the TRS programme. Since June 2013 he has also been the Editorial Assistant for *Mission Studies* (published by Brill), the academic journal of the International Association for Mission Studies, by invitation from the journal editor (Kim). He has also been

encouraged to publish his research and has presented at seven national and international conferences. His work on Korean Catholicism has been supported by a research hub at Leeds Trinity, including a visiting research fellow, which has held three seminars. In addition he has contributed to workshops at The Bauman Institute (University of Leeds), the Department of Politics, Philosophy and Religion at Lancaster University, and at the British Association for Korean Studies, in London.

The Unit is aiming to increase the number of research students significantly in accordance with the University's 2013-16 Research Strategy which includes the objective to 'Increase the recruitment, progression and completion of postgraduate research students from the UK and overseas'. This is part of a longer-term aim to pursue Research Degree Awarding Powers (RDAP) after 2016. Leeds Trinity plan to fund 10 PhD studentships (at the same level as Research Council funding) across the institution to be advertised in January 2014. Unit specific strategies to increase numbers include developing masters level programmes in TRS, securing funding for research projects and bidding for Leeds Trinity studentships. In addition the unit is developing contact with potential students through its Eastern Christian Studies Seminar and its public lecture series in collaboration with Leeds Trinity Chaplaincy.

d. Income, infrastructure and facilities

During the REF assessment period, oversight of research has been vested in the Research Committee, who were responsible for the development and enhancement of activities relating to research and scholarship. It ensured that there was a supportive and proactive environment for these activities. The Research Committee was one of the primary standing committees of the Academic Board, the main University forum for establishing policy on academic matters, as such it advised the Academic Board on matters of policy relating to research. Among its membership there was a research student nominated by the research student community. The Research Committee was chaired by the Director for Academic Enhancement (Research) who was responsible for the development, coordination and implementation of institutional strategies for research. Since the appointment of the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Academic) a new deliberative structure has been implemented (October 2013). The purpose of the Research Committee has been revised and now operates under the title of Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (RKEC). The Committee retains its status of reporting to the Academic Board on research activity. The activities of the RKEC will be supported at the operational level by the recently appointed Research Officer (October 2013) who will support the implementation and promotion of Leeds Trinity's research strategy. In addition a sub-committee of RKEC, the Research Degrees Committee, will be established to monitor the recruitment and progress of Post Graduate Research Students and develop relevant policies and procedures.

A recently formed Professoriate, comprising of Professors and Readers within the institution, also contributes to the organisational structure supporting research. Having regular meetings since June 2013, the Professoriate aim to contribute to informing future policy and strategy for research, and to generate research ideas and initiatives to enhance the relationships, reputation and impact of the University. The Professoriate meets at least once per semester and report their activities to the Pro-Vice Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor.

The UoA has been supported by income from Quality Related funding following success in RAE 2008 and have had further successes generating research income during the REF assessment period. Luke Fox participated in the successful bid to the Templeton Foundation which resulted in the 'Cluster Initiative on Death, Immortality and the Afterlife' at the University of Birmingham. He personally was awarded a grant of £800 from the University of Birmingham's postgraduate development fund in April 2013 to edit the peer-reviewed journal *Metathan: interdisciplinary perspectives on death and the afterlife*. Dr Suzanne Owen was awarded a British Academy Small Research Grant of £2,480 in June 2013 for a collaborative research project with anthropologist Dr

John Harries of the University of Edinburgh on 'Indigeneity, memory and representation of the Beothuk of Newfoundland'. Owen was also awarded £400 in May 2008 to attend the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association Conference in Athens, Georgia, USA in May 2008. A further successful bid was made to the Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius which awarded Professor Matthew Steenberg (then Head of Department) £1,500 to establish the Eastern Christian Studies Seminar Series, which presents talks on matters of interest to lay and ordained Eastern Christians and other interested parties. The unit has also successfully sourced funding for conferences held at Leeds Trinity. The Vatican II conference in July 2012 received external funding totalling £2,500 from various catholic organisations: the Diocese of Leeds, EWTN Global Catholic Network, CAFOD, Sisters of the Cross and Passion, and the Catenians. The Interfaith Day conference (March 2011), which aimed to build relations with local faith groups, received funding of £400 from the Higher Education Innovation Fund.

e. Collaboration or contribution to the discipline or research base

The Theology and Religious Studies unit has made significant contributions to the discipline through its regional, national and international collaborative research projects, numerous conferences organised, editorial positions and keynote speeches. Kim, for example, acted as a consultant (2005-2010) for the 'Religions and Development' research project based at the University of Birmingham and, from her base at Leeds Trinity, as research coordinator for the Edinburgh 1910 World Missionary Conference centenary project at the University of Edinburgh (2009-2011). Kim has produced a co-edited work with colleagues at the University of Helsinki and Regent University, Virginia Beach on diverse pneumatologies (Kärkkäinen, Kim & Yong, PalgraveMacmillan, 2013) and contributed by invitation several other edited volumes. Owen has collaborated with Teemu Taira, University of Turku, Finland, on The Druid Network's Charity Registration, from November 2010 onwards, resulting in a co-authored book chapter (in press) and a workshop held at the University of Aberdeen (April 2012). Owen's collaboration with Dr John Harries, School of Health in Social Science, University of Edinburgh, mentioned above, culminated in a workshop on 'Remembering the Beothuk of Newfoundland at St. John's, Newfoundland (June 2013) involving invited participants from museums, arts and literature as well as academics in Newfoundland itself. Nationally, Fox has collaborated with Michael Fox from the TRS department at the University of Birmingham, creating the peer-reviewed online journal *Metathan: interdisciplinary perspectives on death and the afterlife*. This journal publishes articles in the field of philosophical and theological engagements with death and the afterlife. It also aims to promote interdisciplinary research and dialogue and seeks to include perspectives from neuroscience, anthropology, sociology and literary studies.

The Unit has also organised several collaborative research events including the symposium 'Life, Death and Beyond' (Nov 2012) with the University of Birmingham, and 'Perspectives on Political Theology' (June 2013) with the University of Durham and Cardiff University. 'Vatican II 50 Years On: The New Evangelization' was a major international Catholic theological conference hosted by Leeds Trinity and organised by Professor Kim. The conference considered Pope John Paul II's call for a 'new evangelization', and the more recent initiative of Pope Benedict XVI to promote this, in light of the engagement of the Second Vatican Council with the modern and secularized world through a renewed proclamation of the Gospel. The conference gathered a capacity attendance of more than 200 people from at least 25 different academic institutions, from many different parts of the Church, and from all continents. It was addressed by church leaders and academics, including Prof. Dr Mathijs Lamberigts, Catholic University Leuven; Prof. Tracey Rowland, John Paul II Institute in Melbourne; Prof. Susan K. Wood, SCL, Marquette University; Fernando Cardinal Filoni, Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples; and Archbishop Salvatore Fisichella, Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization. The conference proceedings are being prepared for publication. 'Vatican II 50 Years On' established Leeds Trinity as a centre for

international theological discourse, and in particular for the study of evangelization and world Christianity.

Further networks have been established through staff involvement in national and international committees. Hunt is a member of the Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius, the Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies, the Ecclesiastical History Society and is a board member of MONOS, a lay monastic movement in Leicester. In the interests of internationalising her awareness of Catholic theology she also undertook an Erasmus exchange to Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania, in May 2009. During 2008-2013, Kim has been a member of the British and Irish Association for Mission Studies, the Society for the Study of Theology, the Mission Theological Advisory Group to Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, and the Council of the British Association for Korean Studies. Kim is also a member of the Executive of the International Association for Mission Studies, the Lausanne Theology Working Group and serves as Vice-moderator of the Commission for World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches. Mealey is a board member of the Society for Ricoeur Studies in the UK and Ireland, and Secretary of the Association for Teachers of Moral Theology in Great Britain. Owen is a member of the Native American Indigenous Studies Association, the Native Studies Research Network, and the British Association of Canadian Studies. She is co-chair of the Indigenous Religious Traditions Group at the American Academy of Religion (AAR), organising panels at AAR conferences from November 2009. Owen was also co-opted onto the executive committee of the British Association for the Study of Religions from September 2012. Within the institution's academic structure Kim is the current Professor representative on the institution's Research Committee (academic year 2011/12 – 2014/15), on which Owen also sits on as a member of lecturing staff (academic year 2011/12 – 2014/15).

Further contributions to the discipline have been made through various editorial positions and work undertaken. Owen, Fox and Kim all hold editorial positions of journals: Owen is the coordinating editor of *DISKUS*, the journal of the British Association for the Study of Religions; Fox edits *Metathan: interdisciplinary perspectives on death and the afterlife* (see above); and since January 2013, Kim has been the editor of *Mission Studies*, the journal of the International Association for Mission Studies. In addition, Kim serves on the editorial boards of the *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, *Journal of Korean Religions*, and *Korea Presbyterian Journal of Theology*. Staff have also maintained academic rigour within the field by peer reviewing numerous journal articles and examining a total of 12 doctorates at a national and international level.

TRS staff have also contributed to the research discipline by being invited to give keynote speeches and lectures. In June 2011 Mealey gave the CAFOD 50th anniversary speech in Leeds, March 2012. Mealey, by invitation, gave lectures at the Newman Theological Association, York, and presented a research paper at St Patrick's College, Maynooth, Co. Kildare, Ireland (2009). Owen was invited to present her recent project at Queen's College, St John's, Newfoundland and was an invited participant in the Modernity and the Category of Religion workshop, Centre for Citizenship, Civil Society and Rule of Law, University of Aberdeen, (2012). Hunt was a panel presenter at the winter meeting of the American Society of Church Historians (Boston, US, 2011), discussing chapters from *The Philokalia: a classic text of orthodox spirituality* (Oxford University Press). By invitation Hunt gave a paper to the Department of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Nottingham, as part of their Departmental Research Series (2011), and an invited paper to the Leeds University Medieval Research Group. Kim has given numerous keynote lectures, highlights of which include: keynote address to the joint consultation on mission and ecclesiology of the Commissions on Mission and Evangelism and Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches (Hungary, 2009); keynote lecture at the conference on 'Asian Culture and Christian theology', Presbyterian College and Theological Seminary (Seoul, South Korea, 2010); Cato Lecture, Uniting Church of Australia, Triennial Assembly (Adelaide, 2012); opening lecture in series commemorating the 50th Anniversary of Vatican II (Milltown Institute, Dublin, Feb 2013).