

<p><b>Institution:</b> Heythrop College</p>
<p><b>Unit of Assessment:</b> Theology and Religious Studies</p>
<p><b>a. Context</b></p> <p>The submitting Unit of Theology and Religious Studies constitutes the whole institution, which is divided into three departments: Theology, Pastoral and Social Studies, and Philosophy. The departments are unified by an understanding of theology and philosophy in dialogue with each other and wider social need. Six research Centres and Institutes (hereafter 'Centres') give focus to strategic areas of research interest and develop the Unit's impact and outreach through public events and other partnership work. Each Centre has its own strategic and operating plans, which prioritise impact-related activities and are monitored by the Research Committee and relevant Departmental Board. The Unit's audience and range of beneficiaries is wide, but falls into four groupings. <b>Public and private sector organisations</b> make use of the Unit's research to inform developments in policy, social issues and ethics. Research and resulting impact projects meet needs in <b>faith-based organisations and religious communities</b>, influence <b>teaching in schools</b>, and reach a wide <b>general audience for public education</b> in religion, philosophy and ethics.</p> <p>These beneficiaries and modes of impact relate to the full spectrum of the Unit's research. One area of research strength is in <b>interfaith relations</b> (Barnes, O'Mahony, Howard, Ganeri and Griffith-Dickson), which research contributes particularly to private and public sector institutions and faith communities. Howard was part of a delegation from the Vatican in 2012 talking to religious scholars from Iran on justice. O'Mahony, Director of the <i>Centre for Eastern Christianity</i>, was invited in 2010-11 to advise the European People's Party-Christian Democrats, the largest political party alliance in the European Parliament, on Muslim-Christian relations and the question of Christianity in the Middle East. He organized two synods, supported by CAFOD, on Muslim-Christian relations for African and Middle Eastern bishops (attendance 220), and has thrice been invited to address Pro Oriente, the leading Catholic foundation for ecumenical dialogue between Eastern and Western Christianity. Griffith-Dickson is the founder and Director of a research and social impact charity, the Lokahi Foundation, now in strategic partnership with the Unit.</p> <p><b>Philosophy of religion</b>, a research strength of the Unit embodied in the <i>Centre for Philosophy of Religion</i>, is the focus for impact on secondary level education. The Unit houses arguably the four academic philosophers with the greatest influence on A level philosophy and religious studies curricula in the UK, through their talks, conferences and textbooks: Ward, Law, Vardy and Lacewing. Lacewing also leads on the British Philosophical Association's activities concerning A level Philosophy, thus supporting and disseminating this work across the discipline nationally.</p> <p>Research from the Unit's strong <b>pastoral and spirituality</b> profile has significant impact on quotidian concerns of communities and religious institutions. Costigane, drawing on her research in canon law, has provided consultancy to many Catholic schools, congregations and clergy, and advice in a High Court case concerning child abuse. The <i>Religious Life Institute</i> has translated its research into a variety of resources and learning opportunities for religious congregations, and its Director, Simmonds, has acted as consultant to congregations of religious in the UK, Ireland, New Zealand and the Caribbean. Kirwan, a leading researcher on René Girard, has developed his research on violence and religion to engage regularly with the Colloquium on Violence and Religion, an international network of non-academic practitioners, including peace activists, psychologists and pastors, as well as academics from many disciplines, including the social sciences and literature. The Catholic Bishops' Secretariat of Nigeria requested Kirwan's contribution to the Colloquium on Peace and Reconciliation in Abuja in February 2013, to further the processes of reconciliation. Many of the 80 participants, who were mainly priests and members of religious orders, lived and worked in areas of violent conflict in northern Nigeria.</p> <p>A number of Heythrop researchers engage with the general public to inform and enhance their understanding of religion, philosophy and ethics through the media and public events, and through publications aimed at a general audience. Ward, Simmonds and Cowley are frequently invited to appear in the print and broadcast media, discussing aspects of their research. Law's work has been viewed nearly a million times on his own blog alone, and is cited in over 90 further weblogs, while his trade books are among the most popular philosophy books in the world (see case study).</p>
<p><b>b. Approach to impact</b></p> <p>Long before impact became a national priority, the College developed such work as an intrinsic part of its mission based on its vision of the engagement of theology with the wider world. The scope of projects currently ranges from local communities to religious congregations across the</p>

globe. In support of impact and impact-generating research, the Unit for some years has prioritised seeking external funding. Recent grants of this nature have been received from a range of sources, including the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, Porticus, the Waterside Trust, the Conference of Major Religious Superiors, the Chaldean Church, and CAFOD. The value placed on impact is also evidenced by its inclusion as an independent criterion for promotion, alongside teaching and research. To further facilitate impact, the Unit appoints visiting research fellows with an impact agenda, including Archbishop Kevin MacDonald, working on interreligious dialogue, and Dr Gillian Paterson, working on HIV/AIDs in collaboration with the World Health Organisation.

To maximise the impact of its research, the Unit utilises two broad strategies for developing the necessary relationships. First, an individual researcher may develop networks supported by College resources. Barnes operationalised his research on interfaith relations in an innovative residential project in multifaith Southall, uniting local people from different faiths in events and interfaith discussion. Follow-up is evidenced in Barnes' most recent research outputs (see case study). Howard helped establish a community outreach base in the Hurtado Centre in East London, drawing on his research to provide training on Islam and Christian-Muslim relations to Catholic priests, members of religious communities and lay people around the country. Ganeri, Director of the *Centre for Christianity and Inter-Religious Dialogue*, is the Catholic representative on the Hindu Christian Forum UK, an advisor to the Office for Relations with Other Religions of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, and author of *Meeting God in Friend and Stranger*, which outlines good practice in interreligious relations in institutional settings, including parishes, schools, hospital chaplaincies and prisons, and is distributed internationally (UK sales: 2617). He also advised the former Archbishop of Canterbury on Hindu-Christian relations in India.

Second, the Unit itself leverages existing partnerships with significant bodies, building networks to yield lasting engagement and influence. The work of staff in the *Heythrop Institute: Religion and Society* has been promoted through the Institute's association with the Scribani network of European Jesuits. Years of working with schools has led to a powerful reputation in this field and created a resource-rich infrastructure, to be crystallised by the creation of the *Centre for Education* in 2014. Drawing on the Unit's research, Ward, Cottingham, Law and Lacewing give over 60 talks per year in schools, while Vardy has addressed tens of thousands of school students, both in the UK and Australia. The Unit organises A level student conferences with a total annual attendance of around 900, at which these scholars regularly present aspects of their research. Copies of their textbooks sell tens of thousands each year. Lacewing has created a website that has become a key reference point for those involved in A level philosophy, receiving over 2000 hits a month. The *Heythrop Institute: Religion & Society* has partnered with the Catholic Education Service on a project that examines the significant theological and ethical issues arising from leadership in the Catholic school sector in England and Wales, aiming to extend the theological and ethical capacity for leadership in Catholic education among existing and emerging leadership personnel.

Many newer projects sought long-term relationships from the outset. The *Heythrop Institute: Religion and Society* houses the Action Research: Church and Society (ARCS) project, set up in 2006 to help church agencies and community groups to reflect theologically upon a chosen feature of their work. The project developed a new methodology for theological action research through engaging with twelve such groups on their pastoral development (Cameron et al (2010) *Talking about God in Practice*, London, SCM Press). The project then mentored five further groups that applied this methodology themselves. Other research projects were intended to give rise to new ongoing relationships after the initial research was completed. Cowley's long-standing, dynamic relationship with Catholic Bishops' Conference, facilitated by the Unit's existing links, enabled a single meeting with financial leaders to develop into a new project on the transformation of business (see case study). Riordan's research on socio-political issues and the common good forged a set of longstanding international relationships, producing multiple opportunities over time for cooperation with professional and religious organisations concerned with social welfare and government policy, including new equality legislation, education, criminal justice, 'Big Society' initiatives and Charity Commission requirements. His audience ranges from former prisoners, chaplains, penologists, politicians, civil servants and prison reformers from across Europe; to the Catholic Bishops' Conference; to 300 Shi'a clerics in Iran charged with the guidance of young adults in the tertiary education system.

### c. Strategy and plans

The aims of the Unit's Impact Strategy are to **foster innovation in the service of public benefit**

and to **develop supportive structures and systems to enable staff to maximise reach and significance**. This builds on the College's long-standing commitment to making the fruits of academic research available to the broadest possible public to meet needs in society and to support positive social change. This is reflected in the Centre's explicit foci, the Unit's engagement with schools, and a concentration on neglected areas for research, e.g. the needs of religious orders and minorities. As illustrated below, the Unit is working with commissioning partners to conduct research that delivers impact in 'applied' areas for theology and philosophy, including business and media ethics, theology and the arts, and peace and security in relation to religious conflict and extremism.

**Foster innovation:** In seeking to benefit the common good and meet needs in society, we stimulate innovation by asking what key needs are often overlooked and where activities are currently not adequately informed by research, to thus target our research projects and their translation into impact. Deliberation takes place through the annual plans of Centres, Departments and the Research Committee. For example, using the ARCS distinctive theology action research methodology, the Religious Life Institute is running a two-year project, together with the Centre for Catholic Studies, University of Durham and the Margaret Beaufort Institute of Theology, Cambridge, that seeks to help apostolic women religious reflect on signs of vitality in their communities, to help them assess where their religious life is now and to plan for the future. Griffith-Dickson conducted research on a Muslim community project that she created, the only community project in the UK to prevent a terrorist attack. Her research has informed counter-terrorist strategy and practice in the UK and the project has now been adopted by the United States National Counterterrorism Centre and Department of Homeland Security as the major plank in their strategy for countering violent extremism.

**Supportive structures and systems:** Support means sustainability, and dedicated resourcing of impact work in its own right is a priority. Internal resources are being made available through seedcorn funding for impact and the creation of a 'Principal's Impact Prize' to stimulate and support the imaginative extension of research into impact projects. Impact is being bedded into a major College change project, focusing on continuing education for the public and online resources.

The Unit develops researchers both individually and through the collaborative work of Centres. The Unit will target individual staff training in planning, monitoring and evaluating impact projects.

Centres were created in close collaboration with relevant user groups and have standing external advisory groups. Their external focus will intensify through enhanced administrative support for projects and external funding. As part of our strategy for engagement with schools, the impact work of the interdisciplinary *Centre for Textual Studies*, created in August 2013, will address a gap in secondary learning resources and teacher support for Biblical Studies, and a new *Centre for Education* will stimulate and inform the teaching of philosophy and theology in schools.

Long-lasting external partnerships continue to support impact. Through a partnership with Fordham University, the Unit is developing a research interest in theology and the arts, building on Hoff's research on performativity and doxology, with ongoing projects with MMK Museum (Frankfurt), Cabaret Voltaire (Zurich), and the artist collective IRWIN (Slovenia). Through a new partnership with the Lokahi Foundation, the Unit has joined a three-year multidisciplinary project supported by a €220,000 grant from the EC investigating government policy and community practitioners in 'deradicalisation' projects addressing religious extremism. The insights gained will be translated into reports and toolkits for faith communities and commissioners, followed by training events in multiple European countries. Plans to extend this impact to the USA and Middle Eastern and Asian countries are in development with US bodies.

#### **d. Relationship to case studies**

The case studies exemplify key characteristics of the Unit's approach to impact. 'Ethics in Finance' and 'Interreligious Dialogue in Southall' are both examples of creating impact through the use of networks, the deployment of other resources, and the focused and sustained engagement with external organisations to maintain fruitful relationships over years. 'The Rationality of Religious and Other Belief Systems' illustrates the longstanding commitment to improving and resourcing public debate, and the provision of resources and inspiration to schools and teachers. The three studies exemplify the different types of impact the Unit generates – from transforming religious practice and its understanding, to informing policy and agenda setting, to engaging with all forms of media to raise public interest in and awareness of philosophical and theological issues.