

<p>Institution: University of Wales, Trinity Saint David</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: 33</p>
<p>a) Context. Research in the Unit is undertaken in three broadly defined and interrelated areas:</p> <p>i. Biblical Interpretation, Interreligious Dialogue and Religious Education. Work in this area relates to the impact that the Bible and its interpretation has had on community and culture; the ways in which study of the Bible lends itself to dialogue between the three Abrahamic faiths and the place and role of the Bible in the school curriculum. Researchers in the cluster have a range of interactions with user groups who are interested in issues of interpretation: in areas of teaching and cultural engagement, in interreligious dialogue especially between Christians and Muslims, and in interactions with church-based groups. Impact in this sphere includes a defined contribution to social cohesion and focuses on greater understanding of identity-related issues in a multi-cultural context. Additionally, it provides a stimulus for knowledge transfer whereby academic knowledge and research help shape the agendas of cultural and faith-based organisations.</p> <p>ii. Church History and Religious Heritage. Work in this area relates specifically to historical questions (including Welsh religious history), and finds an audience in heritage and tourist-based organisations. The underpinning research and its subsequent impact centres on issues of understanding the historical contexts in which different denominations have been formed and on interacting with groups involved in religious tourism and interpretive historical sites. Interactions in this area have related to a range of beneficiary groups interested in the interplay of tourism and faith, on the one hand, and the development of church and heritage sites in Wales on the other. The impact of staff consultancy in this regard is assured by contributing to various processes by which heritage sites are more efficiently managed and interpreted both through practical activities 'on the ground' and through policy making processes.</p> <p>iii. Faith, Spirituality and Health. Work in this area relates to issues that connect and affirm traditional and contemporary links made between faiths and perspectives on health, well-being and illness. In the case of both Hinduism and Afro-American religions research has had particular salience for healthcare practitioners. In the latter this had led to enhanced public and professional awareness of the healing aspects of spirituality, in the former, developing impacts in the case of the Ayurvedic Practitioners' Association and yoga relate to the interplay of this practice and health. Other work has focused on spirit possession and mental health in the Caribbean Diaspora through the Ethnic Health Initiative.</p>
<p>b) Approach to impact. Since 2009, the Cluster has been supported by a dedicated Research Development Officer who has assisted in identifying opportunities for knowledge transfer. The Cluster has obtained wide external exposure through its membership on professional bodies outside of academia and in local government. This has been supported by a targeted reduction in teaching contact hours and administrative duties for staff active in research and knowledge transfer, in addition to conference attendance and sabbatical policies and pump-priming funds to develop research and collaborative areas.</p> <p>i) Biblical Interpretation, Interreligious Dialogue and Religious Education. The cluster's staff has a range of interactions with user groups who are interested in issues of interpretation in the broadest sense: in areas of teaching and cultural engagement, in interreligious dialogue (especially between Christian and Muslim faiths), and in interactions with church-based groups. This includes work with Bible Society and the Society for Promotion of Christian Knowledge (SPCK) and the Council of Christians and Jews (CCJ). Research contributions from Ehrensperger for example have fed into the organisations' work on lay-engagement with the Bible to extend the knowledge of Bible-reading groups' to include more contemporary approaches and to help them produce informed and innovative materials to resource a wider readership beyond academia. O'Kane and Williams have likewise delivered study days on the Bible and its interpretation in culture to pastors and ministers in the Church of Wales and other denominations. In the field of Islamic Education the cluster has representation on the Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education, which has enhanced public awareness and engagement with issues concerning the history and practice of Muslim Education in Britain. This includes work on CDP programmes on Islamic culture and law with Public Sector organisations. Such work on religious education and theological training has</p>

been extended by **Ehrensperger's** work with the Ecumenical Religious Education Centre (Basel). Funded by a British Academy Mid-Career Fellowship, this research is being used to promote understanding between different religious traditions and the cultural translation processes necessary for such understanding in cities. Participants include RE teachers in Birmingham and at the Ecumenical RE centre in Basel, interfaith organisations such as Interfaith Wales, the CCJ and the Abrahamic Forum in Basel. Further planned activities include education programmes for clergy (e.g. Diocese of St Davids, United Reformed Church, Reformed Church (ERK) and the Roman-Catholic Church (RKK) in Basel). This approach towards impact is further evidenced by addresses made by staff in Cluster to General Assemblies and Synod (e.g. Presbyterian Church of Wales, United Reformed Church, Baptist Union of Wales); participation in meetings with various diocese and their members; numerous public lectures (e.g. historical societies and forums, literary societies, the National Eisteddfod of Wales) and programmes of work with religious education and theological training, church workers, clergy and congregations. Members of the cluster also make media appearances on radio and TV. The emphasis is, in particular, on questions of history, faith, culture and identity, within a national and international context. The overarching impact is centred on the transfer of academic research to lay audiences, professional bodies within religious organisations, charities and action groups. This generates significant awareness of issues and focuses on the distinctive and shared cultural and spiritual heritage which enriches the private, public and spiritual lives of those in these organisations, and those they seek to engage with.

ii) Church History and Religious Heritage. The interface between research in Church History and the activities of community- and church-based bodies is a priority in the cluster. **Pope's** work in the history of Protestant Nonconformity has been shared with audiences in the Historical Society of the United Reformed Church, the ministers' conference of the West Midlands Synod, the Wessex Synod of the URC, the Cardiff Centre for Adult Christian Education and the Welsh Hymn Society. **Morgan** has delivered the annual historical lecture at the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Wales, the annual lecture of the Welsh Hymn Society, the Howell Harris Memorial Lecture, and has contributed to the lecture programmes of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion, the Ceredigion Historical Society, the Cardiff Bibliographic Society and the Friends of the National Library of Wales. He has addressed the ministers' summer school of the Union of Welsh Independents and the Baptist Union of Wales. In the context of being long-listed for the Welsh Book of the Year in 2010, he was involved in an Arts Council panel discussion at the Hay Literary Festival. **O'Kane's** project on the Bible and visual culture has also affected considerable public interest. Funded through the AHRC (£330,000), *Imaging the Bible in Wales* catalogued and interpreted over 10,000 biblical images from churches throughout Wales, with academic contextualisation and interpretation. The research has been made available to churches and the public in an online database hosted by the National Library of Wales, a richly illustrated publication and an interactive DVD. Beneficiaries have included the Brecon Arts Festival, 'Artswave', a one-day practitioner conference investigating cultural tourism in the West Wales area, public talks in churches presenting and interpreting the stained glass in the churches, the Cambrian Archaeological Association, BBC Radio Wales Art Show and talks with the Diverse Manners Arts Group and the Dyfed Arts Society. In the field of Religious Heritage, staff have consulted for county councils (Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire), Cadw (the statutory heritage authority for Wales), tourism networks (Churches Tourism Network Wales, Ceredigion County Council Faith Tourism Working Group, St David's Diocesan Tourism Advisory Group and the ATLAS Tourism Special Interest Group on Religious Tourism). Membership of local advisory groups on religious heritage in Wales has included the Bardsey Trust Spirituality Committee and chairmanship of Ffynnon, the holy wells organisation. These contributions have led to popular publications, such as *A Guide to the Churches and Chapels of Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2010), and numerous media appearances (e.g. BBC Wales, Radio Cymru and Radio Wales, S4C). Specific impacts include contributing research and expertise to the development of various interpretation projects to upscale faith tourism and the ongoing sustainable use of religious buildings in rural areas and participating in policy formation. Staff in the cluster have contributed to consultation documents and the Cadw pan-Wales Heritage Interpretation Plan through which several million pounds of ERDF funding was distributed. Generally, the approach to knowledge transfer in both Church History and Religious Heritage seeks to develop outcomes and impacts by contributing to the process whereby the past is more clearly appreciated and heritage is better managed both through practical activities 'on the ground' and through policy making processes.

iii) Faith, Spirituality and Health. In both Hinduism and Afro-American religions, research in the cluster has had particular relevance for healthcare practitioners. In the latter the work has led to an

enhanced public and professional awareness of the healing aspects of this practice and its ground for creating identity, in particular for immigrants. Medical practitioners have widely believed that spiritists and those experiencing 'abnormal phenomena' such as spirit possession and trance are medically unstable and suffering from paranoid schizophrenia. However, by drawing attention to its wider cultural context in terms of the experience of immigration, new interrelationships between mind and body have been explored which point to its 'normality' for that culture. **Schmidt** in this case has worked with practitioners through public forums (e.g. public conference for the voluntary sector social enterprise Ethnic Health Initiative entitled 'Black and Minority Ethnic Psychological Health and Well-Being' and public workshops with INFORM, a London based charity for and about New Religious Movements who publish in publications for a non-academic audience. She was also invited to run a week-long workshop for students of psychiatry and health care in Recife, Brazil, as well as public lectures about Haiti, Vodou and other Caribbean religions in São Paulo, Londrina, Florianopolis and Porto Alegre. Similarly, in the case of 'public Hinduisms' **Warrier** participated in an AHRC funded project to engage with practitioners of Hindu derived practices of yoga and ayurveda. While this focused on approaches to understand and improve the way in which Hinduism is represented and understood in different public contexts, it has also produced emergent impacts with the Ayurvedic Practitioners' Association.

c) Strategy and plans. Over the next funding period the cluster will extend its impact activities by developing collaborative projects. These will be centred on interfaith dialogue with organisations such as the Muslim Council of Wales, Interfaith Wales, the Tony Blair Faith Foundation and Hindu faith schools in London and Leicester, as well as continuing work, as identified in REF3B with national agencies, policy makers and think-tanks. Key impacts emerging from the cluster's research and knowledge transfer will continue to focus on **i)** establishing long-term partnerships to explore the interplay of spirituality and health such that provide greater understanding between public bodies and those in diverse religious groups; and **ii)** working with a range of public, private and third sector organisations to improve the interplay of diverse religious heritages and contemporary interfaith relations and political agendas. Several projects are in development with funding applications either in preparation or submitted under these two broad impact strategies. **Morgan** for example is part of a prospective pan-Wales consortium seeking funding (submitted) from the AHRC to develop a Centre for the *Welsh Memory of the First World War*. The centre will bring together an all-Wales interdisciplinary network of researchers, the libraries, archives and special collections of Wales (including the National Library of Wales and the National Museum of Wales) and the Welsh Government Commemoration Programme Board, to run community based projects that commemorate, teach and document the Welsh experience of the War. Emphasis will be placed on the transformational impact the war had on Welsh life and society, in particular its effects on theology, language, culture, arts, literature, economics and politics. **Bunt** likewise continues the work identified in REF3B and is exploring major funding and knowledge transfer opportunities from the EU Horizon 2020 programme under the sixth and seventh societal challenges of 'Europe in a Changing World' and 'Secure Societies'. Developing the second impact theme, **Schmidt** is preparing an impact oriented research network with the Afterlife Research Centre (UK) and the Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina Núcleo Transes (Brazil). Focusing on the issues of mediumship and healing, and their relationship to therapy, mental health, and altered states of consciousness, the network will seek to develop innovative ethnographic methodologies to foster a dialogue, greater understanding and joint-working between the spheres of spiritual healing and clinical practice with several major hospitals in Brazil. While this is of particular pertinence to the Brazilian context where such practices have widespread traction, it will also inform mental health schemes in the UK, through the Ethnic Health Initiative for example.

d) Relationship to case studies. The overall approach to impact is consistent with the selected case studies; the dual focus is on culture, heritage and identity relating to issues of the arts, faith and religious experience and expression. Particular reference is given to cultural and religious expression and the ways in which they are communicated through digital media, education, tourism, the arts (as in **Hoff's** work) and the practices of organised religious groups, their office holders and practitioners. Further work with health will be a priority area for the next funding period. The second approach relates to policy advice and formation (as in the case of **Bunt**) in each of these areas, with which the School has seen depth and breadth of engagement.