

Institution: University of Glasgow

Unit of Assessment: 33 Theology and Religious Studies

a. Context

The work of all staff within the UoA of Theology and Religious Studies at the University of Glasgow (UoG) expresses a deeply held commitment to the exchange of research-based knowledge with a range of non-academic bodies and organisations in the public domain, especially with faith-based organisations. The UoA has considerable impact in relation to four key areas of cultural and civic life: policy making and public discourse; education; training; and cultural life. The main users of our research, and the nature of the impact on these areas, are:

- policy making and public discourse: Churches and faith communities both nationally and internationally have major roles and responsibilities advising and informing national policy debate and legislation. The UoA directs its research to support faith groups' policy work: Jasper was Convenor of the Doctrine Committee of the Episcopal Church (2008-12) and in this role, was the primary driver of its contribution to the current debate on the revision of the marriage law and advising the Scottish Parliament on theological aspects of the revived proposal to legislate on assisted suicide. Methuen was one of the drafters of the Church of England's *Men and Women in Marriage* (2012), a central document in the debate on the marriage law in England; she is a member of international Anglican policy and one of the main drafters of the report of the Anglican Lutheran International Commission, *To Love and Serve the Lord* (2011). In interfaith relationships and religion within ethnic minority groups, Yazaki initiated within UoG the Scottish launch of *Contextualising Islam in Britain*, Phase II Report (2013), bringing together police, city council, the Glasgow Forum of Faith and Muslim organisations.
- education, at secondary and tertiary levels: Our work here has shaped curricula and supported delivery in schools. We have been innovative in raising aspirations for research-led CPD. At the request of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, Jasper has served on the Qualifications Design Team of the Scottish Qualifications Authority for curriculum design and development in Religious and Moral Education in Scottish schools (2010-), working as the only HEI representative in a team of school teachers. In 2011 Walton designed and launched the doctorate in practical theology, currently with 26 students (25 part-time). The 2013 intake is 11 students. This degree is unique in Scotland contributing significantly to the professional development of ordained and lay workers.
- training, especially within the NHS: The civic responsibilities of the UoA align through our work with the NHS. Walton's research into the spiritual welfare of hospital patients, working with both secular and religious agencies in the health service, has significantly developed the understanding of spirituality in hospital practice and in patient recovery and well-being. Clague chairs the Ethics Committee of the Assisted Conception Service of the Greater Glasgow NHS Trust.
- cultural life: Leading and advising arts events and festivals is a key way by which we deliver public engagement and seek to enrich cultural, educational and civic life, creating and interpreting cultural capital. We work regularly with the St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art, Glasgow – eg, in 2010 Jasper co-curated an exhibition of new video-art by artist and doctoral researcher Tara Beal which involved educational visits and talks to primary schools in Glasgow's East End. He also worked to bring an exhibition of photographs of religious communities in Birmingham by the artist and photographer Liz Hingley to Glasgow: *Under Gods: Stories from the Soho Road* was presented at St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art (2013), and acted as a backdrop to a postgraduate research seminar on issues in interfaith relationships and ethnic minorities. In 2010-11 a joint application by the UoA and UoG School of Law resulted in the Leverhulme Trust funding sculptor Sari Lievenon as TRS Artist-in-Residence, culminating in a public exhibition of her work in UoG Chapel. Supported by the AHRC, Clague organised a conference on 'Art, Religion, Identity' at UoG and curated a two-month exhibition of the art of veteran sculptor Hannah Frank (2008).

b. Approach to impact

Our impact activities demonstrate reach: geographically across Scotland the UK and globally, often via faith organisations; and institutionally across a range of beneficiaries in the cultural and education sectors. Their significance is evidenced by the depth of engagement with prestigious and influential stakeholders. Public engagement is part and parcel of how we work: it is a norm and an expectation. It is a key criterion at recruitment and thereafter; commitment is fostered formally

Impact template (REF3a)

through the annual Performance and Development Review and by mentoring and peer-support, ensuring that pathways to impact are imaginatively addressed. Engagement with a range of audiences and public bodies is integral to research projects. Our approach to impact is informed by a re-evaluation of the UoA's research strategy post-RAE 2008 and by adjustments made in the light of the UoG's 2020 Global Vision and Knowledge Exchange (KE) Strategies developed by the College of Arts (CoA). This led us to prioritise the following objectives: informing and advising national policy debate and legislation; supporting education at secondary and tertiary levels, especially in Scotland; advising and delivering training within the NHS and hospital chaplaincy context; and leading and advising curators and programmers of art exhibitions and festivals, as well as working directly with artists. This has been catalysed by enhanced support from UoG resources, especially since UoG's internal restructuring in 2010 that created four new Colleges, including CoA with its four new Schools, including the School of Critical Studies in which we sit. Each School has dedicated research administration and a School-level Research and KE Committee sets priorities, targets resources and delivers intellectual and practical support. We seek to achieve our impact by:

- supporting research and researchers that influence public affairs and policy. Whilst our policy focus is faith organisations, we actively pursue opportunities to extend that and support colleagues to deliver in a range of contexts – eg, Clague organised two workshops to improve literacy in religion and faith communities at the UK Department for International Development, that involved MPs, civil servants and other staff (2013). We encourage staff to play leading roles in the context of faith organisations and as effective members of non-HEI groups within Scotland and internationally. Release from specific UoG duties is given to allow staff to undertake key roles on such committees and bodies – eg, Walton served as a member of the Working Group on Issues in Human Sexuality within the Mission and Discipleship Council of the Church of Scotland (2005-10) and Clague is theological advisor to the Bishops' development agencies in Scotland England and Wales and to Caritas Social Action. Clague's research on sexual abuse within the Catholic Church resulted in a colloquium on 'Religion and Public Life' (2010), the findings of which have informed our impact strategy – eg, identifying topics for future events with a clear user demand.
- supporting and sustaining activities that enhance public engagement. We support events, seminars and workshops that bring a wide range of stakeholders and the public together to debate, discuss and learn. We hold these events within the UoG and in other locations – eg, St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art – and they regularly attract a wide range of groups from the community: a day event on religion and science (2013) had attendance from local churches and schools; a public seminar on Pussy Riot and civil rights in Russia was held at UoG (2013) in co-operation with the Dioceses of Glasgow and Galloway; and Clague organised an event on 'Christian responses to hunger and food insecurity' sponsored by Christian Aid, the Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund and the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (2012). We also use this format to support our doctoral researchers develop skills and experience in the wider dissemination of their research – eg, a day event on religion and autism was organised by a doctoral researcher and involved 30 members of the nation-wide Autism Spectrum People and Religion Research Group, as well as a wide public audience, and was the subject of an extensive discussion on BBC Radio Scotland (2013). Our researchers have developed a close working relationship with UoG's Communications Office, benefiting from a new media training programme, and better targeting audiences for our research.

c. Strategy and plans

Strategy for impact operates at University, College, School and UoA levels and will do so in future. Within this, the impact strategy of the UoA remains focused on the development of local, national and international collaborations across a wide range of organisations and individuals, contributing to disciplinary agendas, advising policy makers, supporting curricula development and training innovation, and enriching cultural, educational and civic life. We will achieve this by:

- supporting staff and doctoral researchers to identify and achieve their impact goals. Impact is embedded into UoG's criteria for promotion and is addressed in annual Performance and Development Reviews. Our postgraduate experience will be enhanced by embedding internships and collaboration with non-HEIs in the BGP2 partnership programme and by the new doctorate in practical theology as well as impact training provided by the Graduate Schools. Recent appointments – including at Professorial and Readership levels – enhance our capacity to offer mentorship and to further internationalise our network of potential partners.

– targeting resources to ensure that the impact potential of our work is captured and delivered. With the appointment of new research leadership to the UoA, we have greater capacity to provide support and to direct colleagues towards internal resources such as seed funding, KE grants, media training and UoG staff appointed to promote social and new media. We will continue to provide expertise and case studies for the CoA’s *Industry Days* which is an opportunity to share our research expertise with industry leaders, including from cultural organisations and broadcasters. Yazaki led an oversubscribed event, ‘Narratives of Conversion to Islam in Britain: Female Perspectives’, as one of the CoA’s ‘mini-Industry Days’ – highly targeted events with specific objectives in terms of capacity building and stakeholder engagement. The UoA recognises the timeliness of Yazaki’s research and its impact potential. We are committed to supporting her – through training, mentoring and targeted resources – to develop the KE potential of her work and support her developing a leading role within CoA KE strategy, specifically in respect of advising on issues of equality and diversity in impact planning.

– sharing best practice and ensuring knowledge and use of resources available to staff. Researchers in the UoA have developed a close working relationship with UoG’s Communications Office, benefiting from a new media training programme for staff and postgraduates, and better targeting public audiences for our research. The CoA KE strategy includes the appointment of a Business Development Manager with the remit of raising exposure to the knowledge base and expertise within CoA and encouraging an increase in formal engagement with private, public and third sector organisations. Launched in 2011, CoA’s KE magazine *Reach*, targets external research users while showcasing good ideas and best practice internally. It is augmented by a KE blog and twitter feed. UoG First Step Awards support innovative collaborative research with small and medium enterprises, whilst its KE fund aims to develop project pipelines, ensuring long term planning, delivery and evaluation of impact. Our staff have already had success with this fund – eg, Yazaki’s ‘Women in Islam’ event. As before, support will be provided by ArtsLab, a specialist unit within CoA advising on research-development, KE and impact.

We recognise, above all, that recent appointments to the UoA have sharpened our focus on interdisciplinary and collaborative research, specifically expanding the range of HEIs and non-HEIs with whom we will work. We are, therefore, planning to;

- enhance our CPD and training provision – eg, the appointment of Spurlock, with research expertise in Scottish church history, has strengthened our capacity in the provision of training within the Church of Scotland and we will review and refresh our offer for this group.
- grow new links within the arts and cultural sector, especially with international partners. Whilst stewarding our existing partnerships – eg, with the St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art – the appointment of Pattison, and his role in the group ‘Arts and Christianity Enquiry’, provides a new focus and we anticipate growing new projects both within Glasgow and beyond.
- grow our reputation for providing relevant policy advice and support delivered via consultancy and innovative events and workshops that bring stakeholders. The appointments of Orzech, Spiro and Yazaki extend our capacity to reach non-Christian traditions as well as Christian traditions. Alongside the support available from UoG and the CoA, the financial support of the Senate of Trinity College (incorporated into the UoG in 1923) that provides funding for research by staff and postgraduates, as well as the impact plans embedded in upcoming research projects enables us to aspire to become the major think tank for churches in Scotland.

d. Relationship to case studies

The UoA’s two case studies exemplify our approach to impact and our shared understanding of the importance of theology and religious studies in the bridging of the gap between faith-based and secular organisations, and between individuals and the academic community. Walton’s research has stimulated at the national level a change in the practice of hospital chaplains. This work has effected a deeper understanding of the crucial significance of theological reflection and reflectivity as professional competencies in health care. Clague’s case study illustrates the boundary crossing nature of the UoA’s approach to impact, and its emphasis on research that seeks to influence and change public attitudes to major issues of current social and political importance. The two case studies are indicative of the commitment of the UoA to the intellectual development and delivery of public discourse and perception in the realm of informed theological reflection, leading to changes in public practice for spiritual and physical health.