

<p>Institution: University of Manchester</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: 33 (Theology and Religious Studies)</p>
<p>a. Context</p> <p>As from 2012 Religions and Theology at the University of Manchester is part of the School of Arts, Languages and Cultures (SALC). Religions and Theology shares the new School's determination to engage beyond HEI with local, regional, national and international bodies. Partly in response to the University's 2020 Agenda for Social Responsibility, the School has appointed a new Director of External Relations (David Law, from Religions and Theology) with specific responsibility to liaise with external groups and manage the School's social responsibility and impact.</p> <p>The main non-academic user groups, beneficiaries or audiences for some of the expertise behind the research in the UoA have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● religious groups and faith communities ● political lobbyists and members of NGOs ● technical advisors to those responsible for museum and library collections ● those concerned with heritage conservation more broadly ● members of the media and other significant informers of public opinion. <p>The UoA's research active staff are engaged in the study of aspects of religion in antiquity, the middle ages and the modern period and each of these aspects has had impact. The long-standing research activities of staff have borne fruit for wider society, not least through (1) engagement with the cultural capital of manuscript discoveries that are widely acknowledged to have become iconic (Dead Sea Scrolls; Gnostic Texts; Cairo Genizah; the texts of Advaita Vedanta); (2) the Lincoln Theological Institute's contributions from a critical perspective to the discussions of those engaged in debating ethical issues, political self-understanding, or religious beliefs; and (3) engagement in interdisciplinary ways with contemporary forms of religious expression as reflected in several of the world's major religious traditions and their histories.</p>
<p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>The University of Manchester is committed to impact beyond HEI. Social responsibility is one of three core goals in the University's 2020 Strategy and impact a core pillar of its research strategy. Knowledge exchange has long been one of four key criteria when evaluating promotions. This UoA has reflected this strategy and itself has a culture of engagement with users. We encourage colleagues to develop a culture of discovering potential impact in their research. A series of important relationships structure our approach:</p> <p>For media engagement, with the BBC long having its headquarters for Religion and Ethics in Manchester, there are long-standing close links. Several staff have made programmes with them; now, however, staff evaluation encourages academic researchers to gather information on responses to such involvement in broadcasting (e.g., Alexander and Williams BBC R4 <i>In Our Time</i>; Brooke BBC 2 <i>Horizon</i>; Dreyfus, BBC R4 on France's Forgotten Concentration Camps; BBC R4 on Catholics and Jews; Hoelzl, BBC R4 <i>Today</i> on voluntary sector and faith-based communities; BBC Radio Manchester on Pope Benedict's resignation; Law, BBC R4 in debate on overseas validation by University of Wales; Williams BBC R4 <i>Beyond Belief</i>). Print media are also important and our work is regularly covered in both the Christian press (e.g., Cornwall on sexuality widely covered in 2012) and in other religious contexts (e.g., Williams' 2009 book was published in popular form in India for the Parsi community).</p> <p>Knowledge exchange, mostly indirectly linked to specific research projects, is a normal professional commitment of staff. (1) There have been long-standing relations to local faith communities (e.g., regularly through Centre for Jewish Studies; Suthren Hirst, as convenor of annual Sanskrit Tradition in the Modern World attended by local Hindu community members; Graham [moved 2010] until 2010 Lay Canon at Manchester Cathedral; Law, Trustee of Martin Luther Kirche, Stretford; Williams with Parsi community) and specialist commitments for training religious professionals (e.g., Oakes in 2012 Liverpool Diocesan Reader Training; Scott at 2011 Faith Workers' Conference, Unite).</p> <p>(2) In addition several staff have worked with religious organisations nationally. Sometimes this has been as consultants (e.g., Cornwall [moved 2013] to 2012 LGBT Anglican Coalition; Langton to preparations for 2008 Lambeth Conference on Jewish-Christian Relations; Scott in 2011 on Human Genome Committee of the Church of England which has influenced Church submissions to Government and other bodies [BMA] on issues of medical ethics). Some staff have been involved in evaluation (e.g., Brooke as assessor of theological colleges for the House of Bishops 2010-</p>

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2012; **Law** for the Archbishop of Canterbury's Lambeth awards; **Brooke** on behalf of the Archbishops' Council in 2013 in evaluating the Common Awards for ministerial training).

(3) In addition most staff engage in **public outreach**. This takes the form of public lectures (e.g., since Jan 2008: **Brooke** 29 public lectures, incl. Leeds Lit. and Phil.; **Cornwall** Greenbelt; Oakes, 3 public talks incl. Peake Memorial Lecture; Smithuis 4 public talks on Genizah topics; **Williams** at Edinburgh Festival), popular articles (e.g., **Cornwall** on sexuality in the print media 2011), popular books (e.g., **Williams**' 2009 book published in popular form in India for Parsi community), documentaries (e.g., **Brooke** for 2008 BBC 2 programme on the Dead Sea Scrolls; for 2013 Yesterday Channel programme on John Allegro), other forms of broadcasting (e.g., **Dreyfus**, for 2010 CBC programme on love, hate and propaganda; **Langton**, for BBC Jewish Citizen Manchester), and web page projects (e.g., **Oakes**, SBL Bible Odyssey Project). Some have assisted in curating exhibitions (e.g., **Suthren Hirst** and **Zavos**, From Kashmir to Kandy, Manchester 2008; **Williams**, The Everlasting Flame [Zoroastrianism], London 2013).

(4) Some staff have taken **leadership roles** in local communities (e.g., **Law** as MSE in Diocese of Chester). Some have promoted their disciplines broadly in the community regionally (e.g., **Brooke**, from 2011 V-P of Chester Theol. Soc.; **Dreyfus** through activities at Imperial War Museum North).

(5) Some staff have been active in the **education sector**. They have acted as educational consultants beyond HEI (e.g., **Langton** AQA; **Suthren Hirst** and **Zavos** in curriculum development through their pedagogically innovative book on Religious Traditions in Modern South Asia).

(6) Some staff directly promote **international social responsibility** (e.g., **Hoelzl** on the New Visibility of Religion, Beijing 2009; with Kinderuni, Austria [over 1000 children annually]; **Langton** as coordinator of International Council for Christians and Jews 2012, in Manchester; **Oakes** in 2013 Stockholm School of Theology; **Zavos** on the place of Hindu communities in Europe).

Building users into research projects. The UoA's approach to impact during 2008–2013 is already built into its shared ethos, namely that religion and theology are located in the real world, in society and the individual. Within its current research activity the UoA has promoted and supported projects that have had deliberate and discernible impact beyond the academy since 2008. The long list of past research projects of the **Lincoln Theological Institute** (Women and Ordination; Patriotism?; Big Society—Bigger Nature; Divinity after Empire; Future Ethics; Remoralizing Britain; God, City, Place) all of which have had some output or activity since January 2008 have involved the active participation of those outside the academy (e.g., Will Hutton, Thabo Makgoba, Jesse Steele, Paul Vallely, Max Wind-Cowie); present projects (Belonging and Heimat; The Common Good; Intersex, Identity and Disability; Churches, Communities and Society) likewise directly involve those beyond the academy, especially some members of NGOs from the UK and overseas (e.g., Cornwall with UK Intersex Association, Intersex South Africa). Of particular significance is LTI's recent project on the discourses, religious and otherwise, of climate change. The project was designed from the outset to maximize its impact by putting in several different fora its findings in order to sensitize many contributors to the debate: scientists, politicians, policy-makers, members of the media, and others need to check their frames of reference. Inter-disciplinary academic interaction enabled the broad reach of the project.

The Department's **Centre for Religion and Political Life** has had projects on the New Visibility of Religion and on Political Theology that involved participants from outside the academy. Similar approaches to impact are visible in the profile of projects associated with the **Centre for Jewish Studies** that is largely based in Religions and Theology (Manchester Refugees; Agunah Research Unit; Jewish Built Heritage; Haggadah Conservation Project).

c. Strategy and plans

As detailed above within the UoA for Religions and Theology there has regularly been a concern for engagement with groups beyond HEI. In recent years this has become increasingly formalized. This has taken place in the wider activities of the School in which Religions and Theology plays a full part, such as in the School's Centre for Interdisciplinary Research in the Arts and Languages (CIDRAL) part of whose remit is wider public engagement (e.g., **Sen** as CIDRAL programme organiser). It has also taken place in the research developments within the set of sub-disciplines that form part of Religions and Theology, through some applications for funding giving priority to the impact agenda (e.g., **Dreyfus**, see below). SALC actively encourages applications to the AHRC Follow-on Funding Scheme in order to enhance the non-academic impact of completed research projects. The School takes the lead in the remodelled John Rylands Research Institute (JRRI) founded on the University of Manchester Library's special collections (chaired by **Gregory**).

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In addition to its research agenda (reflected in the UoA's REF 5) the JRRI seeks to enable academic staff to engage with collections in conjunction with the Library's outreach programmes. Religions and Theology has a long history of such public engagement through use of the library's resources, such as the one-day symposium on the King James Bible (**Brooke** 2011). There is also a deliberate strategy within the UoA to engage fully with and initiate research in areas of social and political concern where religion plays an important part (e.g. **Scott**, ethics in the politics of ecology; **Zavos** on minority communities in Europe).

The ongoing concern to have recent and new research projects make impact is reflected in the wide range of activities in Religions and Theology. Three examples are given here where significant impact is beginning to be apparent. (1) The Agunah research project (Jackson), was designed to maximize its significance through low profile impact at the outset in order to convince sceptics in the community of the significance of its conclusions. It is anticipated that this research, largely done between 2003 and 2008, will lead to significant impact in some parts of the Jewish community worldwide by 2020 (it is already discussed in rabbinic fora in Israel).

(2) The Lincoln Theological Institute project on Intersex and Disability, whose PI (Cornwall) has already engaged with many interested in this aspect of human sexuality, is collecting data on the impact of the project's findings. Amongst those being influenced to reconsider their practices are health practitioners and hospital chaplains; this is taking place because the project has built into it a comprehensive element of engagement for impact beyond HEI through symposia for practitioners and the production of policy documents and other aids, e.g., resources for healthcare chaplains and parents of intersex infants; and the development of ethics training for medics.

(3) The current major project on Corpses of Mass Violence and Genocide (European Research Council Grant 283-617) around the world, not least in Europe, with one of its PIs (**Dreyfus**) in Religions and Theology, is still at the stage of the collection and sorting of data with study missions planned through 2015, but before long will have political and religious impact in terms of both reach and significance across Europe and beyond. Such impact will be about policy formation for national governments to cover the multiple sites across the world where mass graves are known to exist or which have been exposed for various reasons in recent years.

With its ongoing concern for the promotion of knowledge transfer and social responsibility much of the research in the UoA has the impact agenda built into it from the outset or is reflected in the wide range of public engagement by members of the Department which is encouraged through regular staff professional development sessions. Alongside this strategy of engagement, it remains the case that some research continues to be very strongly committed towards the academic understanding of primary religious phenomena (texts and communities), whose outputs are intended in the first instance for academic audiences but whose significance for impact becomes clear at a later stage.

d. Relationship to case studies

The case studies selected reflect the multiple disciplinary concerns of the UoA, its success in acquiring grants, part of which have explicit agendas for impact, and its part in the better modern understanding of religious discourse in antiquity and the Middle Ages.

For antiquity the case study is based on the long-standing research excellence in the study of the Dead Sea Scrolls from Jewish antiquity. The impacts are in part diffuse and non-linear: there has been impact on popular cultural imagination, and on the publishing industry through popularisation of recent insights. The impacts are also direct notably as research on the University's own Scroll manuscripts has influenced heritage conservation policy.

For the middle ages, the impact case study is based on the major project to digitise the Manchester holdings of 15,000 fragmentary manuscripts from the Cairo Genizah, largely funded by the AHRC. Manchester was the first university to digitise its complete collection of Genizah fragments and to make them freely available electronically. The excellence of the project has had two wider impacts. (1) The project has allowed Jewish communities worldwide to have access to their cultural capital. (2) The project has facilitated the better understanding of digitisation, cataloguing, conservation and dissemination of manuscript archives.