

Institution: The University of Edinburgh

Unit of Assessment: 33 Theology and Religious Studies

a. Context

For the School of Divinity, 'impact' is neither a new thing nor an add-on. Teaching and research at this School have been practice-oriented and public-facing since the study of theology in the University of Edinburgh moved from Old College to New College in the 1930s and continues today. New College is the leading seminary of the national church, and includes the General Assembly Hall of the Church of Scotland. This gives a public setting and professional orientation to the conduct and communication of scholarship in the School which is reflected in the broad publics attracted to events such as book launches, exhibitions, public and inaugural lectures at the School. It is also reflected in the extensive range of broadcasts, journalism, policy briefings and public lectures in which members of the School are involved.

The reach of our impact extends across civic, charitable, commercial, cultural, ecclesiastical, policy and political sectors; locally, nationally and internationally. The case studies demonstrate impact across this range of sectors. We have reached clergy, churchgoers, charitable organisations, congregations, church leaders and denominational organisations, local and cultural historians, amateur and professional musical audiences and musicians, policymakers, political leaders and voters, energy consumers and householders.

Our broader impact-related activities in the census period included:

(i) Classic 'public intellectual' mode, using press radio, TV. The range of examples includes: Bond's TV documentary contributions for the BBC, National Geographic and Discovery channel on the lives of Jesus, Pilate, Caiaphas, Herod and Mary and contributions on the same topics to Radio 4's *In Our Time* and radio essays for Radio 3; Grumett's articles on food and religion in *THES*, *Tablet*, *Christian Century*, and TV interview on *The Big Questions* for BBC 1, and for a Radio 4 documentary *What Would Jesus Eat?*; Hardman-Moore's contributions on Puritans to Radio 4's *In Our Time* and *Today Programme*; Mitchell, Northcott and Siddiqui's contributions to Radio 4's *Sunday program*; Mitchell's contributions to and co-production of documentaries for BBC World Service and Radio 4 on media and religion; Siddiqui's regular *Thought for the Day* on Radio 4; and contributions to documentaries on Islam in Britain and multifaith relations; Siddiqui's *Desert Island Discs* on Radio 4 in 2012; Jack and Fergusson's broadcast worship leadership and preaching on Radio Scotland. Overseas impact of this kind included Mitchell's documentary interview for IRIB (Tehran) on religion and film; Northcott's Australian Broadcasting Corporation and Radio New Zealand radio broadcasts on the ethics of climate change, Stanley's TV interview on Edinburgh 2010 for *Le Jour du Seigneur* on France 2.

(ii) Public lectures: the School and University have historic endowments which bring prominent public intellectuals to the University and School for public lecture series including the Gifford Lectures on Natural Religion and the Cunningham, Croall and Gunning Lecture series. The most notable and high impact lectures in the census period, with large audiences from the public and academic communities, as well as being available for later viewing online, were the Gifford lectures [estimated total attendances in brackets] of Eck (Harvard) in 2009 on religious dialogue (720), Harrison (Queensland) on science and religion in 2010 (940), McCullough (Oxford) in 2012 on Silence in Christian History (1210), Latour (Paris Po) in 2013 on Gaia and Religion (1500); the Gunning lectures of Jensen (Vanderbilt) on Early Christian Art in 2009 (240); the Croall lectures of McCormack (Princeton) on the theology of Karl Barth in 2012 (220). The School also holds inaugural public lectures at the commencement of each academic year.

(iii) Public exhibitions: the CTPI-sponsored *Shadows of the Divine* art exhibition (Mitchell) in the Martin Hall during the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in 2011 attracted more than 4,000 visitors and included spinoffs such as public panel discussions at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe; Peacebuilding and Media Arts photographic exhibition *Insight of Peace* (Mitchell), also at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2013, attracted more than 4,000 visitors; the *Singing the Reformation* exhibition, Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2011 and on tour thereafter (Case Study 'The Wode Partbooks'); *Edinburgh's Jews* (Holtschneider) New College, 2013, supported by funding from the University's Challenge

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Investment Fund and Knowledge Exchange grants.

(iv) Festivals and similar public engagements: Fergusson, Lim and Northcott participated in Edinburgh International Book Festival events in 2008, 2010, 2011, 2013; Fergusson and Northcott in Edinburgh International Science Festival lectures and panels in 2011 and 2013; Mitchell and Siddiqui in Edinburgh International Festival panels in 2012, 2013; Harris and Fergusson in Edinburgh Festival Fringe panels in 2013. Dawson's *Singing the Reformation* concert was part of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2011 (Case Study 'The Wode Partbooks'). Siddiqui participated in panels at Glasgow Ayewrite Festival 2013, Cheltenham Literary Festival 2013, Wells Festival of Literature 2013, Gordon Cook Conversations Aberdeen 2013, and Plymouth International Book Festival 2013. N. Adams gave a plenary lecture at the Istanbul World Forum in 2012.

(v) Relationships with creative artists and film industry: examples include public performance and discussion of part of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, New College, 2009; Mitchell as a regular panellist at Berlin Film Festival 09-13; Northcott as a consultant/panellist in Edinburgh University Environmental Film Festival Oct. 2011; four CTPI sponsored film screenings for the Africa in Motion International Film Festival, Edinburgh Filmhouse (2011 and 2012).

(vi) Online journalism and social media: Currently 9 blogs are managed and/or contributed to by staff in the School of Divinity (68,385 views since July 2010). These are linked from the School's webpages. Hurtado's blog 'Comments on New Testament and Early Christianity' receives 15,000 views monthly and has 418 subscribers; Hurtado also has an article in the online magazine *Slate* on the Jesus of history; Smith's (PhD 2008-12) blog on climate change, public policy and Christian faith, 'Nothing New Under the Sun', has 3,400 followers. The *Centre for Theology and Public Issues* (CTPI), the *Centre for the Study of Christian Origins* and the Templeton Science and Religion project maintain Facebook and Twitter accounts. These have also been used to promote individual events such as Holtschneider's *Edinburgh Jews* exhibition in 2013.

b. Approach to impact

The ecclesiastical and civic orientation of the School of Divinity promotes a culture where impact is enabled within research practices. Approaches internal to the School that deliver this include:

(i) Via the School's three Research Centres: *Centre for Theology and Public Issues*, the *Centre for the Study of World Christianity* and the *Centre for the Study of Christian Origins*. The centres are supported by the provision of administrative, IT and office infrastructure, and web pages on the University's servers. The three centres support research projects from ideas to impact and have a particular remit in enabling and training new researchers and established academics in engaging with non-academic audiences.

(ii) The School supports colleagues in their external appointments such as: Siddiqui as Chair of the BBC's Scottish Religious Advisory Committee; Northcott as a Trustee of the Fair Trade organisation Traidcraft; Fergusson as a member of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 2012; Foster as a member of the Scottish Episcopal Church Ministerial Development Committee; N Adams as a member of the British Council 'Belief in Dialogue' project in 2010.

(iii) The School supports colleagues in realising consultancy opportunities. Clegg is consultant to the Anglican Communion Office on dialogue and reconciliation between national churches of the international Anglican Communion. Siddiqui and Allison are consulting with the Scottish local and national governments, in the project 'Faith and Belief Scotland', on duties enshrined in the Equality Act 2010 for the recognition of faiths and faith practices such as holy day observances.

(iv) The School reconfigured support for Knowledge Exchange after RAE 2008, with an academic KE Director and a part-time KE secretary.

(v) Decision processes for promotions and salary increments recognise that creating impact from research is important. The annual review completed by all academic staff in the School includes knowledge exchange/transfer and public engagement in the discussion of achievements.

Since RAE 2008, the College of Humanities and Social Science (CHSS) and the University of Edinburgh have created a range of professional development and training initiatives designed to support academics in growing the impact of their research. The Institute for Academic Development (IAD) offers a range of training courses and workshops on research design for

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impact, and on implementing and auditing impact. The University also set up a Task Group on Researcher Impact Training which in 2012 issued recommendations on cross-institutional initiatives to support researchers and departments in realising impact, subsequently endorsed by University Staff Committee for institutional roll-out.

As an enhancement of University-wide Impact support, CHSS established a Knowledge Exchange office and officer in 2009. The KE office provides grants designed to facilitate and support KE events in Schools. The Wode Psalter case study benefited from a KE grant of £4k from this source.

c. Strategy and Plans for Supporting Impact

The School's impact strategy evolved from its long-standing commitment to civic and ecclesiastical engagement and experiences in consolidating University and CHSS institutional support for knowledge exchange and impact, and identifying School-specific support opportunities. The School's impact strategy aims to increase the research impact of members of the School through the following objectives in the next five years:

- (i) The KE Officer and Research Director will use School grant peer review processes to improve and support the embedding of impact plans in the design of research grant applications.
- (ii) The KE Officer, Research Director and Head of School will work with existing and new research users to identify ways to enhance the impact of research publication strategies of individual researchers. The School will create the infrastructure to meet anticipated professional development needs and to promote optimal research uptake. This will include fostering KE benefits for and from the student body, reflecting our commitment to research-led teaching.
- (iii) The School will work through its mentoring of new academic staff to partner colleagues with a good track record in impact with those in need of impact support.
- (iv) The School will use the annual staff review process, and procedures for career progression, to review impact plans of colleagues, and encourage commitment to impact activities, and professional development and training events which raise understanding of impact effectiveness including media training and research users' engagement fora.
- (v) The School will use PURE to track impact of both externally funded projects, and of internally funded research projects and research outputs of colleagues, in order to be able better to describe, demonstrate and measure the local, national, and global impact of our research.
- (vi) The School will test and refine mechanisms established in the census period to enhance the visibility of research outputs including through green open access, through careful management and updating of the School's website redesign in 2013, and the participation of academics in the University's Research in a Nutshell one minute video programme.

d. Relationship to case studies

Reach: *Edinburgh 2010* reached a global ecclesiastical set of publics. *Climate ethics* reached ecclesiastical and civil society publics in Australasia, the UK, the USA and the Netherlands. *Wode Psalter* reached civil, cultural and religious publics in Scotland. *Making War and Peace* reached civil society, educational, governmental, and religious audiences in Scotland and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Significance: The impacts demonstrated in the case studies reveal different styles and approaches to reaching publics beyond the academy. *Climate ethics* was driven by a single academic's passionate engagement with climate science, politics and ethics and dozens of public lectures to ecclesiastical and civic audiences. The *Wode Psalter* project drew on a collaboration between Edinburgh academics in Divinity, Music and curators and musicians across Scotland. *War and Peace* drew heavily on media and social scientific expertise of the PI and Co-I in taking research from the academy into society and demonstrating empirically its relevance to finding solutions to real world problems. *Edinburgh 2010* took the academic model of an international conference and combined it with a participative study process and a conference design that facilitated an extensive international process of knowledge production culminating in artistic and conceptual innovation in the conference itself which was shared with wider publics through webcasts, journalism and other media.