

**Institution:** University of Dundee

**Unit of Assessment:** 32 Philosophy

**a. Overview**

The Philosophy programme at Dundee specialises in continental philosophy. It has evolved strategically from a philosophy department founded in 1960 and since RAE 2001 has defined itself as a specialist research group in European philosophy. All members of staff are research active returned as category A researchers.

There is strong collaboration and support between researchers. The publications on Deleuze, Lyotard and Nietzsche of the recently appointed Dr Ashley **Woodward** complement research on these thinkers by Professors **Davey** and **Williams**. The fresh addition of Dr Todd **Mei's** expertise on Ricoeur extends the team's reputation for publications on French Thought and the appointment of Dr Dominic **Smith** as an early career lecturer consolidates our work on Deleuze. **Smith's** research on Deleuze and literature extends our continental philosophy focus into philosophy of technology specifically through the joint research he currently undertakes with Paris VIII and the 'Digital subject' research group.

More broadly, the programme undertakes research on post Kantian, recent, and contemporary European philosophy. We have particular research strengths in Hermeneutics, post-structuralism, the philosophy of Gadamer, the philosophy of Deleuze and recent French philosophy (Ricoeur, Lyotard and Derrida). The programme has recently added new research directions in the philosophy of technology and philosophy of information exemplified by its concern with the works of Stiegler and Virilio.

The Dundee philosophy programme is part of the larger School of Humanities, which includes English, Politics and History research programmes. The research of the programme is interdisciplinary and links at School level with all other programmes. Particularly strong are our research links to DJCAD (Dundee's School of Art). These are built around our joint programme in Art, Philosophy and Contemporary Practice. Its new post-graduate programme has grown alongside our research on aesthetics, for example, through Professor **Davey's** work on aesthetic response and hermeneutics as well as Dr **Woodward's** studies of Lyotard, art and film.

Research is supported by a well-stocked research library with a specialist collection in continental philosophy. All members of staff have their own offices within a shared building alongside other Humanities researchers. The secretarial service is excellent, as is the IT support offered by UoD-IT. Honours and postgraduate teaching reflects research specialisms, strengthening the links between teaching and research. The University has a supportive and expert research office to assist grants applications and other research initiatives: Research and Innovation Services (RIS). The School and College have dedicated officers from RIS. All grant applications go through RIS.

The programme runs a regular research seminar supported by the Royal Institute of Philosophy. It is the focal point for collective discussion, allowing many specialists in continental philosophy from outside Dundee to participate in our research programmes (Anne Sauvagnargues, Andrew Benjamin, David Wood, Jack Reynolds, Ian James, Dermot Moran, Tina Chanter, and Pierre Cassou-Noguès, amongst others). The programme also runs conferences and workshops throughout the year, supported by a wide range of sources, including the School, the Scots Philosophical Association, Royal Society of Edinburgh and the AHRC. These research events have been specifically designed around our research specialisms, as shown by the recent conferences on the works of Spinoza, Jean-Luc Nancy, Deleuze, and metaphysics in the continental tradition.

## b. Research strategy

An ambitious research strategy is set at the highest University level in the University's Transformation agenda, which articulates the core values, aims and expectancies for research across the institution. The strategy is translated into the College and School five year plan which articulates the specific goals for each of the School's research programmes. Philosophy aspires to be the leading continental philosophy research group in Scotland. The programme aims to expand its international operation as a highly effective and resilient specialist research group in continental philosophy. Endorsing this ambition, the University has, in the last year, made three new appointments in continental philosophy.

To attain as wide a mix of areas as possible beyond our current strengths in German and French philosophy, these strategic appointments were made around specialists with strong Australian and US connections, as well as specialist research interests in technology, economics and art as studied in the continental tradition. The philosophy programme takes full advantage of support offered by the University, i.e. paid research leave (one semester after every six), research mentoring (all members of staff have research mentors), advice from research officers and committees at all University levels, and research days (one a week during teaching semesters). Members of staff are supported by a recently increased individual annual conference fund of £800.

Philosophy's research strategy also follows the University's strategy on internationalisation. The programme has developed strong links with other European departments. It has close links to Paris VIII through the 'Digital subject' and 'SPHERE' research projects, which have funded research visits to Paris by Dr **Smith** and Professor **Williams**. It also has strong links throughout Europe for its work on Hermeneutics and phenomenology (see detail of talks, editorial work and conferences in section e.). Further efforts have been made to develop collaborative work with Australian and North American Universities through joint conferences, grants and research projects. This includes the recent Australian Research Council, Discovery Project, 'Analytic and Continental Philosophy: Arguments for the Methods and Value of Philosophy', Aus\$213,000 (2008-2010) run by Latrobe University's Jack Reynolds with the participation of James Williams as co-investigator leading to joint workshops and conferences in Melbourne and Dundee, and publications. The international dimension of the research strategy in continental philosophy was also supported by visiting fellows from overseas funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Institute (Professor Karin de Boer, Groningen and Leuven), by the Leverhulme Fund (Professor Margret Grebowicz, Goucher College) and by Scots Philosophical Association Centenary Fellows (Professor John Protevi, Louisiana State University and Professor Levi Bryant, Collin College).

## c. People, including:

### i. Staffing strategy and staff development

The programme has 5 members of staff: Professor Nicholas **Davey**, Dr Todd **Mei**, Dr Dominic **Smith**, Dr Ashley **Woodward** and Professor James **Williams**. The programme has a good mix of levels of experience with two recently appointed early career lecturers, a lecturer recently appointed from the University of Kent and two professors. The programme aims to address gender balance in future appointments, supported by the University's equal opportunities policy <http://www.dundee.ac.uk/hr/equality/equalopportunities/#statement> and aims around the University's Athena Swan membership. The University has also been recognised by the European Commission for its 'HR Excellence in Research'. The successful development of former colleagues Dr Beth **Lord** and Dr Rachel **Jones** from early career researchers to more senior appointments in Dundee, and then to senior posts at other universities indicates the success of our support and mentoring of early career researchers. We expect similar success for our new appointees.

The strategy for the next five years is (i) to maintain and extend ourselves as a tightly focused team of continental philosophy specialists, developing our acknowledged research strands relating to Deleuze and Gadamer, and (ii) to consolidate and expand our new research concerns with the philosophical dimensions of technology and information, religious thought in the hermeneutic tradition and the relationship between aesthetics and economics in recent continental philosophy.

The University supports development of its research staff and postgraduate researchers through its OPD unit and investment in on-going personal, professional and career development. Researcher Development is an integral part of the institute's Organisational and Professional Development unit, and encompasses the entire research lifecycle with an aim to develop a complementary range of skills for researchers such that they are well-qualified, employable and experienced. The provision includes training that ranges from short training workshops on writing, to research funding, enterprise, presentation skills, coaching, and career advice.

Support is also provided for academics on how to work effectively with teams, setting research objectives and managing research projects. All training and further opportunities can be accessed via an online portal ([www.dundee.ac.uk/opd](http://www.dundee.ac.uk/opd)). The researcher development programme has been mapped to the Vitae Researcher Development Framework. This framework provides a way to fulfil the requirement of the QAA Quality Code of Practice for Research Degrees programmes, the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers and the Roberts recommendations on training for research staff and postgraduate researchers. The unit promotes and is involved in many local schemes, such as mentoring for early career academics and national collaborative initiatives designed specifically and exclusively for researchers, for example, Scottish Crucible, Research Futures, Part-time Researchers Conference, A Creative Enlightenment and Converge Challenge. The unit engages with and is responsive to the needs of the University's postgraduate and research staff associations. It also provides opportunities for researchers relevant to the Athena Swan agenda, by means of workshops such as 'Resilience in Academia', as part of the Dundee Women in Science Festival.

## ii. Research students

The strategy for research students is to recruit and support students in continental philosophy to work closely with our specialists in this area. This has proved effective with 10 successful PhDs over the REF period. We support PhD students with travel grants, grants for conference organisation and an annual postgraduate prize for the best postgraduate article submitted to a journal. PhD students are supported by Organisational and Professional Development courses and given office accommodation by the School of Humanities. The School has a dedicated postgraduate officer aided by the University Postgraduate Office. Students are encouraged to develop the skills required for academic publication by attending PG research methods sessions on the skills involved in reviewing, as well as by ongoing advice from supervisors. Current and recent students have published book reviews, articles and chapters in peer reviewed journals and books (for instance Dr Brian Smith's chapter on Sartre and Badiou, in *Badiou and Philosophy* edited by Bowden and Duffy for EUP and Austin Smidt's article on Sartre in *Cosmos and History: The Journal of Natural and Social Philosophy*, Vol 7, No 1, 2011). Our future strategy is aimed at recruiting high quality PhD students to put forward to the Scottish PhD consortium and to participate in the new Scottish Graduate School for the Arts and Humanities (SGSAH).

## d. Income, infrastructure and facilities

Income was generated from grants from AHRC, Carnegie Trust, Kingston University and National History Museum, Royal Institute of Philosophy, HERA, Royal Society of Edinburgh, Scots Philosophical Association and Leverhulme Trust. This reflects the strategy to link university research leave supported by School and University to grant applications and to the overall research plan and staff development. All grant applications receive strong expert support from the University's Research and Innovation Services. Total grant income was around £72,000.

The programme is situated on the main campus with all the other subjects of the School, with the School office nearby. Each member of staff has individual research space in the same building with good IT, Research and Innovation, Continual Professional Development and library support from University level services (see details above for library). There is support at School level from an Associate Dean Research) then research committees at College and University levels. The School has an ethics officer for research and there is an ethics committee at University level which sets

policy. The School of Humanities has a centralised funding arrangement for activities on individual, discipline and School bases.

The School Arts and Humanities Research Institute serves as a forum for research activities across the School's research led disciplines. The AHRI provides a unified framework for the disciplines to present their research to University colleagues and to the wider public. It offers a forum for researchers across the School to exchange, enhance and pool research experience. It provides funding to support inter-disciplinary initiatives, staff research activities, discipline research seminars, public lecture events, School conferences and guest seminars. The AHRI operates an annual budget of about £200,000, which goes towards supporting School based public lecture and seminar series, discipline based seminars, staff and postgraduate led research events, conferences and public engagement work.

#### e. Collaboration or contribution to the discipline or research base

In addition to our research outputs, collaboration and contribution to the discipline was through: (i) contributions to research councils; (ii) contributions to editorial boards and as editors; (iii) PhD external examiner roles; (iv) international plenary papers; (v) collaborations with overseas universities. The aim is to have a high external and international research profile and to contribute fully to scholarly activity in continental philosophy through work for journals and presses.

Members of the programme contribute fully to grant councils in the UK and internationally. Professor Nicholas **Davey** is a member of AHRC Strategy Panel 2010-2014, AHRC History of Ideas Editorial Board 2012, REF Philosophy Panel 2011-2014, AHRC Aesthetics Project Reviewer 2012, UCC (Eire) Institutional Research Review 2008. Professor **Williams** has served as Membre du jury, Prix scientifique Ernest-John Solvay, sciences humaines et sociales, Brussels, May 2010. He is Australian Research Council International Reader (2009-present), AHRC SSC Grant Pre-Award Panels Member, AHRC peer reviewer, and reviewer for Research Foundation Flanders.

Editorial work is an important aspect of our contribution to the development of continental philosophy in the UK and internationally. Professor **Davey** is on the Advisory Board of Nordic Journal for Aesthetics, the Editorial Board, Internationales Jahrbuch für Hermeneutik and Aesthetic Pathways. Professor **Williams** is series editor (with Ian Buchanan) of Critical Connections Edinburgh University Press <http://www.euppublishing.com/series/crcs> and is co-editor of Deleuze Studies, and on the editorial board of EUP's Plateaus book series. Dr **Mei** is Member of the Editorial Board for Études Ricoeuriennes/Ricoeur Studies and The Philosophical Quarterly. He is Board Member of the UK-Ireland Ricoeur Society. He is Director of European Relations, the Society for Ricoeur Studies. Dr **Woodward** edits Parrhesia: A Journal of Critical Philosophy. He is a founding member of the Melbourne School of Continental Philosophy, a non-profit organisation focused on fostering continental philosophy.

Members of the programme have played a major role in higher degrees and careers in continental philosophy through external examining. Professor **Davey** has examined six external PhDs (University of Birmingham, 2013, University of Liverpool 2013; University of Plymouth, 2012; University of Durham, 2011; University of Cardiff, 2011; University of Nijmegen, 2008). Professor **Williams** has examined 14 external PhDs (University of Essex, February 2008; University of Edinburgh, August 2009; University of New South Wales, September 2009; Soutenance de thèse, Université de Paris VIII (with Profs Badiou, Douailler, Patton, Ramond and Smith) November 2009; University of Cambridge, January 2010; University of Tasmania, March 2010; University of the Arts, London, September 2010; Staffordshire University, November, 2010; University of Warwick, February 2011; Cardiff University, February 2011; Manchester University, February, 2011; University of Ballarat, Australia, September, 2011; University of York, March 2012; Goldsmiths College, University of London, September 2012).

To achieve our aims around international and UK profiles for continental philosophy, members of the programme have given numerous talks across a wide range of institutions. Professor **Davey** has given international presentations around the world, including "The Challenge of Hermeneutical

## Environment template (REF5)

Plurality”, University of Nijmegen; “The Problem of Humanism”, University of Budapest; “The Language of Art”, Swedish Society for Aesthetics, Uppsala; “On Excessive Reading”, University of Freiburg; “Hermeneutics, Language and the Language of Art”, Boston College; Ostrava University Hermeneutics Conference: The Language of Relations; “Language and Measure in Truth and Method”, University of Freiburg; “Thinking Beyond Truth and Method”, Seattle University; “Lest We Forget: Hermeneutics and Metaphysics”, Ostrava University; “Art and Technology” University of Coimbra, Portugal; “Hermeneutics and the Voice of Nature” Phenomenology Society of Brazil, Paraty; “Gadamer’s Concept of Play” Federal University of Rio de Janeiro; “Defence of ‘Unquiet Understanding’” SPEG, University of Chicago. Professor **Williams** also gave many plenary papers internationally, for instance, at Deakin University Melbourne, Jan Van Eyck Academie, Maastricht, Southeastern Louisiana University, Netherlands Institute for Cultural Analysis, Amsterdam Cultural Academic Centre (Spui 25), University of Melbourne, Australasian Society for Continental Philosophy conference, La Trobe University, Université Paris VII, Université Paris I, Université de Lyon 3, University of Amsterdam, Second International Symposium on Process Organization Studies, Rhodes and University of Cologne. Through collaboration with the ‘Digital Subject’ group, based at Paris VIII and CNRS Lille and with the research centre iMinds-SMIT at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) (<http://smit.vub.ac.be/home>), Dr **Smith** gave plenary papers on philosophy and technology at Paris 8 and at the VUB, as well as a paper on philosophy and technology in Portugal for the Society for Philosophy and Technology international conference.

Members of the programme are also involved in international research projects that serve to situate Dundee within larger research networks; for instance, Professor **Davey** leads the Hermeneutica Scotia research group that runs annual international meetings for research on hermeneutics in Scotland. As already flagged in section b., Professor **Williams** was co-investigator for Australian Research Council, Discovery Project, ‘Analytic and Continental Philosophy: Arguments for the Methods and Value of Philosophy’. Dr **Woodward** is a founding member of the Melbourne School of Continental Philosophy, a non-profit organisation focused on fostering continental philosophy. See above and section a. for details of Dr **Smith’s** ongoing work with Paris VIII and VUB.