

Institution: The Open University

Unit of Assessment: D32 Philosophy

a. Overview

The Philosophy Department is part of the OU's Faculty of Arts and Humanities. Research is monitored and guided by the Research Steering Group (RSG). This group takes a strategic overview of the research activity in the department, coordinating doctoral student admissions, training and provision, and providing peer review and strategic guidance around external grant applications. In line with Faculty policy, there is extensive peer scrutiny of research through seminars, research 'pods' (informal lunchtime seminars), and an annual departmental 'work in progress' conference. The department currently has 10 full time members with two former members (**Hursthouse** and **Frankish**) as Visiting Research Fellows. Research is focused on two thematic strands: *Philosophy of Value* and *Mind, Meaning, and Rationality*; in addition, the department continues the OU tradition of interdisciplinary strength. We take advantage of the OU's unique distance teaching model to enable individuals to spend periods abroad at any time of year (by arrangement) to pursue research internationally.

b. Research strategy

The research strategy since 2008 has been fulfilled in the following ways: the *Philosophy of Value* and *Mind, Meaning, and Rationality* clusters have produced world-leading research. We have also increased both the quantity and quality of our graduate community, and links have been built internationally, with individuals taking visiting appointments and contributing their expertise to other departments and academies. Finally, the department initiated a range of interdisciplinary projects.

The *Philosophy of Value* research cluster has two aims: to research into, and then to disseminate, moral philosophy. This is driven by The OU Ethics Centre and features **Barber**, **Belshaw**, **Chappell**, and **Matravers**. The Centre secured external funding from private benefactors (including £1500 p/a recurrent funding from the city firm F&C Asset Management between 2009 and 2013 following personal representations by **Chappell**).

Since 2008, departmental members have published 32 articles, three books, and edited one book on topics in the area. The Centre organises events such as international conferences (for example, 'Death: What it is and Why it Matters' (2008)), public lecture series (such as those held in the City of London on the subject of 'Integrity in Public Life' (2008)); and seminar series (most recently, the 'Knowing and Deciding' series (2010/11)).

We are recognised as a centre of excellence; all members of the Centre are regularly subject to solicitations to contribute articles to notable Handbooks and Companions. In addition, **Chappell** and **Belshaw** have books coming out with OUP and Acumen respectively during the next REF period. Another result has been a development of a research interest in the philosophy of literature. Two PhD students have been recruited to work in the area, **Matravers** has a book coming out with OUP and **Chappell** has applied for a Leverhulme Fellowship on the topic of Philosophy and Poetry.

Mind, Meaning, and Rationality is currently led by **Price**. The cluster is known for promoting discussion across philosophical boundaries, and stimulating cross-disciplinary discussion and collaboration. It has driven departmental involvement in a cross-disciplinary project on 'localising emotions'. The work on this is genuinely interdisciplinary – the focus on the private/public distinction within emotions is a new departure for philosophy in this area – with members of the cluster working with colleagues from History and beyond.

Three year-long seminar series have been run since 2008 under the title 'Practical Reasons'. It is the departmental home for **Chimisso**'s work on the history of the mind in modern French philosophy, and for **Frankish**'s work on 'dual process' theories of the mind, which have had a

significant international impact. Members of the department working in this cluster have published one monograph, 26 articles, and edited four books.

The flexibility offered by the OU teaching role (see c (i)) enables us to pursue research in a variety of modes. We have identified five as the focus of the departmental strategy over the next census period and the RSG is charged to manage internal funding and research leave to enable this.

First, departmental members' time will be managed to enable them to produce books and articles. We aim to increase significantly the number of books produced by the department in the next REF period; seven are already under contract.

Secondly, the department aims to increase its income from external sources, and will work closely with the Faculty Research and Enterprise Team (see (d)) on grant applications. Currently, **Chappell** has applied for the Leverhulme Fellowship as mentioned above and **Price** is developing a Networking Grant for the 'Localising Emotions' project which involves Goldsmiths College and the Golden Lane Estates community group in London.

Dries has also participated in a number of European research initiatives such as the Digital Humanities project DISCOVERY (ECP-2005-CULT-038206) and the European Commission funded COST Action A32 'Open Scholarly Communities on the Web'. He brings with him a proven record in large-scale grant applications such as, for example, the project 'AGORA: Scholarly Open Access Research in European Philosophy' that has been funded with €1.8m by the European Commission's Information Society and Media Directorate-General (PSP ICT Grant Agreement 270904).

Thirdly, we will increase our presence in international research networks: for example, membership of international research assessment bodies; visiting positions abroad; attendance at international conferences, and service on conference committees and advisory boards. For example, **Matravers** helps lead the American Society for Aesthetics.

Fourthly, we will continue our commitment to interdisciplinary research. The principal current example of this is the 'Localising Emotions' project, with resources being directed to further projects.

Fifthly, we aim to increase both the quantity and quality of our graduate students, particularly students supervised in conjunction with other disciplines. Currently, all MA students who achieve a distinction are encouraged to continue to apply to us to study for a higher degree.

c. People, including:

i. Staffing strategy and staff development

Since 2008, three Senior Lecturers (**Frankish**, **Warburton**, and **Wilkinson**) have left. The Faculty has acted to preserve the size and shape of the department by promoting **Matravers** to Professor (in 2010) and recruiting two new early career academics (**Cordell** and **Dries**). New appointments' research is protected from the outset, as they are entitled to their full complement of research leave (see below) from appointment.

Cordell's is a strategic appointment to further strengthen our existing work in the *Philosophy of Value*; his appointment brings an interdisciplinary project on 'Role Ethics' entirely within the department (it is run by him and **Barber**). **Dries'** appointment strengthens our provision in the History of Philosophy; his specialism in Post-Kantian European philosophy complements **Chimisso's** specialism in Twentieth Century philosophy and we aim to develop this theme of the *Meaning, Mind, and Rationality* cluster.

Since 2010, **Matravers** has been seconded to the Open Media Unit (the unit that manages the OU's relationship with broadcast and informal online learning) as the Faculty Media Fellow

(40% FTE) although his research time has been protected. The Media Fellow acts as a conduit between the unit and academic departments for programme ideas, requests for assistance with particular broadcasts and advice on the broadcast possibilities of particular aspects of research (see (e) below).

The University fully supports the seven key principles of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers. In February 2013, The OU received the European Commission's HR Excellence in Research Award for its commitment to improving working conditions and career development for research staff. All central academics are allocated at least 79 days (out of 217 working days per annum) to spend on research (ideally taken as one day per week, and 44 days' remission from other duties). Because of the dynamics of OU teaching, Arts Faculty academics are not restricted to taking their research leave at particular times of the year (during the summer, for example, as at other universities) but are able, by arrangement, to 'book' research leave at any time of year, enabling flexibility in attending conferences and undertaking research. Doctoral student supervision is not normally included within the 79 days for research, but carries its own, additional, time allocation. The University operates a clear, rigorous, and transparent process for promotions and special performance-related pay awards, which are open to all.

ii. Research students

The department runs a part-time MA (completed over three years) and currently has 10 part-time students on its PhD programme (it had seven in 2008). The MA, which began in 2002, regularly has over 200 students; there are 226 registered in 2013. Since 2008, two part-time students (one based overseas) have graduated with PhDs and one part-time student with an MPhil.

The University infrastructure for PhD research meets or exceeds the requirements of all research councils and Quality Assurance Agency specifications. In addition to two compulsory induction events, the University provides a structured and intensive programme of workshops and seminars on matters such as effective supervision of graduate students, bidding for funding, and publishing research. Philosophy PhD students also benefit from the Open University Virtual Research Environment: a one-stop online environment providing doctoral students with a reflective skills-audit tool, a suite of training modules and discussion forums. In addition, the Faculty runs a residential conference every year, open to all postgraduate students but particularly targeted at part-time postgraduates. The conference (fully funded by the Faculty including accommodation and subsistence) allows part-time postgraduates to meet their peers and other faculty members face-to-face on campus.

Each postgraduate student is allocated at least two supervisors and a third-party monitor in a pastoral role. Formal progress reporting is biannual, with a major probation report and viva after 24 months. The Faculty caters fully for the needs of part-time students, many of whom are older and may be combining a research degree with a career, caring or other duties. The expectations and standards are the same as for full-time students, but particularly flexible supervision and training are offered. Such arrangements complement the department's international focus and we have students who live in Milan, Vancouver, Zürich, and Helsingborg in the current cohort. They are required to be present at key moments (such as induction and the annual day conference in which the students are encouraged to give 'work in progress' papers) and we manage their studies such that they can be present for intensive periods. At these times, supervision takes place face-to-face although, as with all students, Skype and other virtual means are employed as appropriate. Postgraduate students are invited to all departmental seminars.

The Faculty is now a member of CHASE (The Consortium for Humanities and the Arts, South-East England). This consortium, which links the OU to the Universities of East Anglia, Essex, Kent, Sussex, Goldsmiths, London University and the Courtauld Institute, was recently awarded Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) Block Grant Partnership funding worth c.£17m. Under the BGP2 scheme, the constituent members of CHASE will receive 232 fully funded studentships over five years, with the first cohort commencing in October 2014.

CHASE institutions have committed to sharing postgraduate research student training programmes

and supervisory expertise, thus significantly enhancing the environment for doctoral students at all member institutions. In addition, CHASE will be developing shared specialist doctoral training in all subject areas, including philosophy. The consortium has already run a number of AHRC-funded skills development programmes, and members of philosophy have taken advantage of two in particular – ‘Going Digital’ (2012–13) and ‘Becoming a Public Intellectual’ (2013–14). Through our partners in CHASE, in particular UEA, Essex and Sussex, the department hopes to develop innovative doctoral training and broader collaborative research projects. **Matravers** is an Advisory Board Member on a current CHASE bid to the AHRC for postgraduate training on media engagement.

d. Income, infrastructure and facilities

The Faculty of Arts is a collaborative environment producing world-class research. The OU Library combines the best traditional library facilities and services with the latest technologies and learning opportunities to provide a modern, spacious environment for research and collaboration. OU researchers have access to one of the largest university collections of online resources in the UK, including more than 94,000 ejournals, more than 300 databases, and nearly 550,000 ebooks.

The Library manages the OU’s institutional open access repository ORO (Open Research Online), one of the UK’s largest, which provides a platform to showcase research publications to an average of 500,000 online visitors each year from over 200 countries. All research publications of departmental members are included in ORO and where possible the full-text content of these publications is available freely online. The department also benefits from the work of the University’s Knowledge Media Institute (KMI), a research unit that develops systems for artificial intelligence, including high level developments projects relating to linked data processes and the semantic web.

At Faculty level, the Faculty Research Sub-Committee (FRSC) allocates 20% of QR (REF-related) funding directly to Faculty research projects and studentships (the rest being allocated to research via the staffing budget). The FRSC also funds at least two full-time PhD studentships every year on a rolling basis (that is, at any one time FRSC will be funding at least six full-time PhD students). Since 2008, the FRSC has allocated £1.48m of internal funding for research projects, expenses and studentships (including ‘pump-priming’ nascent projects expected to bid in future). The FRSC allocates up to £500 to each academic towards research expenses such as conference attendance and also considers ad hoc requests for additional research funding.

At departmental level, research plans are discussed individually between the staff member and the Head of Department as part of the annual Career Development and Staff Appraisal process. This includes a discussion of progress over the past year, achievement of previously agreed targets, and research plans for the coming academic year such as research outputs, grant applications, travel plans, research leave needs and any personal factors. The two new appointments have a research mentor, and are made fully aware of the resources and opportunities available to them as part of their induction process.

The department holds research seminars continuously throughout the academic year, with a range of speakers from the UK and abroad. It also holds an annual research conference in which members read and discuss their current research. Research conferences for the 32 associate lecturers who work in the UK regions were held in 2011 and 2013; the plan is for these to continue to be held biennially. The department hosts a Branch of the Royal Institute of Philosophy.

Philosophy research is funded in a number of ways, including Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) funding, funding from learned associations, private funding, and travel and subsistence funding from other higher education institutions. For example, **Chappell** has solicited private, philanthropic donations to the Ethics Centre and **Matravers’** research travel is funded as part of his role in the editorial team of the *British Journal of Aesthetics*. HESA funding since 2008 has been £42,000.

The Faculty has a five person Research and Enterprise Support Team which provides superb pre- and post-award support, ensuring the timely and effective delivery of Research Council UK (RCUK) and other externally funded projects. Academics working on externally funded projects are given relief from teaching duties if appropriate and necessary, with no preference as to seniority or career stage. The Faculty has a mentoring policy which aims to build capacity in bidding for (and running) externally funded projects by pairing more junior colleagues with successful senior principal investigators. Members of the Faculty are able to draw on a peer-review system when preparing funding bids, and this includes drawing on expertise beyond the Faculty if necessary.

e. Collaboration and contribution to the discipline or research base

As stated above, the dynamics of OU teaching provides the opportunity for a focus on interdisciplinarity and also for international collaboration. We are unusually active in these fields for a department of our size. Such activity is mutually beneficial: the department makes an important contribution to the national and international presence of the discipline, and it connects the department to wider currents in academic research.

At an institutional level, the OU has a long pedigree in the democratisation of knowledge and in engagement with key issues of public debate. A wide variety of television, radio and online productions benefit from the input of academics within the Faculty, and collaboration with the BBC (under a formal OU/BBC agreement) and with other broadcasters (on an ad hoc basis) enables the wide dissemination of research findings. More specifically, 55 of the programmes broadcast in 2009–10 by the Open Media Unit drew on Arts Faculty research, and garnered an audience of 70 million.

In the same year, Arts Faculty academics were directly involved in 179 public engagements, including TV and radio appearances, lectures and performance arts, which attracted 1.7 million viewers or attendees. In addition to **Matravers'** secondment as Media Fellow (see c(i)), departmental participation is as follows: **Belshaw** (Inside the Ethics Committee, Radio 4, 2013); **Chappell** (The Philosophers' Arms, Radio 4, 2013); **Matravers** (Inside the Ethics Committee, Radio 4, 2010); **Price** (Justice Season, BBC Four, 2012).

At a departmental level, we broaden the range of topics in which we supervise research students by collaborating with other disciplines. Currently, **Chappell** co-supervises doctoral students with colleagues in both French and Classical studies, and **Price** is co-supervising a doctoral student with a colleague in Psychology.

In addition to organising conferences based in the UK, members of department are involved in the organisation of conferences abroad. For example, **Chimisso** was a member of the advisory board of the 14th Congress of Logic, Methodology and Philosophy of Science (France, 2011) and is a member of the European Science Foundation (ESF) Research Networking Programme *The Philosophy of Science in a European Perspective*; in addition to the core ESF funding, institutions from 18 countries contribute. **Matravers** was Programme Chair of the American Society of Aesthetics (Pacific Division) Annual Conference (Monterey, 2012). He is also on the committee for the PYTT First International Conference in Philosophy (Singapore, 2013).

Members of department have also held a number of visiting positions, both nationally and internationally. **Belshaw** held a CEPPA Fellowship in St. Andrews in 2013. **Chappell** held brief Visiting Fellowships in Oslo and Reykjavik in 2010 and 2011, and was on AHRC-funded research leave in 2011/12 (which included Visiting Fellowships in Stirling and St. Andrews). **Matravers** was Visiting Professor at the University of British Columbia, Canada, for 2009/10 and also Dan and Gwen Taylor Visiting Lecturer at The University of Otago, New Zealand, in 2012.

The Department is also involved in both national and international research assessment. **Chappell** and **Matravers** are AHRC Peer Review College members, and **Chappell** is an AHRC Strategic Reviewer; regular AHRC refereeing work has also been done by **Barber** and **Chimisso**. **Chappell** has worked as an International Assessor for the Social Sciences and Humanities Research

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Council of Canada. **Chimisso** has acted as a referee for the French National Research Agency (Franco-German Programme in the Humanities and Social Sciences) (2011) and the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT) (2012). **Matravers** is an International Assessor for the National Science Centre, Poland. In addition to examining postgraduate theses in the UK, members of department have also examined theses abroad: **Chappell** in Australia, **Chimisso** in Italy, and **Matravers** in the USA.

The international and interdisciplinary themes are continued through departmental members' editorial positions and contributions to learned associations. **Chappell** is Reviews and Associate Editor for *Philosophical Quarterly* and **Matravers** is Reviews Editor for *British Journal of Aesthetics*.

Members of department have also served on Editorial Boards: **Chappell** with *Philosophical Quarterly*, *Ratio*, *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, *Religious Studies*, and Blackwell's *Philosophy Compass*; **Chimisso** with *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science* (2006–12) and *The Yearbook for History and Interpretation of Phenomenology*; and **Matravers** with *Philosophy* (2006–09), *Prolegomena*, and the *Khazar Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences*. **Chappell** is Treasurer of the Mind Association. He and **Price** are both Members of Council for the Royal Institute of Philosophy (on which **Matravers** also served until 2009). **Chimisso** is member of the management committee of the British Society for the History of Philosophy (former Secretary, 2002–08). **Matravers** served as Treasurer of The British Society of Aesthetics (2004–09) and was an elected Trustee of the American Society for Aesthetics (2008–11).