

<b>Institution: University of Nottingham</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: 31 Theology and Religious Studies</b>
<p><b>1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy</b></p> <p><b>1.1 Overview</b></p> <p><b>Context</b></p> <p>UoA31 comprises 12 (11.5 FTE) R&amp;T staff and one postdoctoral fellow based in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies (TRS). The Department is part of the School of Humanities, one of three schools in the Faculty of Arts. There are Directors of Research and Knowledge Exchange (KE) at faculty, school and departmental levels and the Faculty Pro-Vice Chancellor's research activity (Gregory) is included in this unit. The Faculty and School Research and KE Committees have primary responsibility for strategy, planning, budgets and management of research and KE activities within departments. Within this structure, responsibility for the oversight, development and support of research and impact is delegated to the Head of Department, the Departmental Director of Research, and Director of Postgraduate Research.</p> <p>The Department has long-term strengths in historical, philosophical and theological approaches to the Abrahamic traditions and their inter-relations. In this REF period, it has consolidated these and extended its interdisciplinary range by engaging theological inquiry with politics, history, philosophy, culture and science: for example, Bell's work on Wagner, Milbank's on the Gothic, and Burdett's on technology. The impact of its research has been generated out of lasting engagements with religious and political organisations (see Impact Case Studies). Both individual and collaborative modes of research are supported, recognised and rewarded, as is excellent research irrespective of career stage, age, gender, ability/disability, religious belief, or other protected characteristics. The predominant mode of research is based on studying texts, whether historical or contemporary; this scope has been broadened during this REF period through the appointment of a sociologist who works on digital media.</p> <p>Current research is centred around the following <u>clusters</u>, the latter two of which are interdisciplinary (some are involved in more than one):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biblical studies: Bell, O'Loughlin, Parks, Quine</li> <li>• Islamic and Jewish thought: Bielik-Robson, Hoover</li> <li>• Historical theology and religious history: Gregory, Hoover, Knight, O'Loughlin</li> <li>• Religion, science, nature and technology: Bell, Burdett, Cunningham, Hutchings, Loumagne, Milbank</li> <li>• Theology, philosophy, and culture: Bell, Bielik-Robson, Burdett, Cunningham, (Goodchild, in Philosophy), Hutchings, Milbank</li> </ul> <p>The Department's two <u>research centres</u> further empower staff and PGR research conversations, conferences, outputs and impact: the Centre for the Bible, Ethics and Theology (CBET) and the Centre of Theology and Philosophy (CoTP).</p> <p><b>1.2 Achievement of strategic priorities for research and impact 2014-20</b></p> <p>Since 2013 we have consolidated and extended proven areas of research strength and achieved the strategic priorities for research and impact identified for this REF period.</p>

### 1.2.1 Research

**To maintain a record of internationally excellent research**, the Department has retained and recruited high quality research staff to pursue research projects focused upon authored books. This has been achieved by: our staffing strategy (see 2.1); encouraging research-led teaching to feed back into research; promoting on merit; offering research leave; facilitating research groupings; and ensuring an international profile and research environment. Outputs include 17 authored books covering an exceptionally wide range of topics, from *The Making of Israel to Eschatology and the Technological Future*.

**To increase activity supported by external research income**, the Department has supported staff to submit grant applications during this period, including co-institutional funding applications. Enhanced mentoring and infrastructure support (see 2.1, 3.2) has led to the submission of 30 grant applications since 2013. TRS has increased its external research income spend to £519.2k, a significant uplift from £71k reported for REF2014. Funding has been won from a range of bodies, including the Leverhulme Trust, AHRC, BA, John Templeton Foundation and the Bible Society. Individual and team awards for Bell, Crouch, Gregory, Hoover, Loumagne & Burdett, and Zellentin are detailed in section 3. This activity has also underpinned 10 outputs.

**To enhance the Department's contribution to supporting the sustainability of the discipline**, we have actively encouraged engagement with the wider discipline through: participation in networks; refereeing for publishers, journals, and research councils; editorial positions with journals and monograph series; undertaking leading responsibilities for learned societies; organisation of conferences; and keynote presentations. Members of staff have an extensive and diverse portfolio of activities supporting the sustainability of the discipline, described in 4.5. These include leadership of subject associations (Gregory, Knight, O'Loughlin) and editorship of journals (Hutchings).

**Consolidation of our postgraduate research community** has been achieved through funding from Midlands3Cities Doctoral Training Partnership (M3C DTP, 2014-19), and its successor Midlands4Cities (M4C DTP, 2019-25) (see 3.2). Twelve awards to date (6 PhD and 6 Masters), a high proportion relative to the Department's size, have supported the strategic aim of bringing on the next generation of researchers and contributed to 43.3 FTE doctoral awards (a significant increase from the 23.1 FTE reported in REF2014).

**To contribute towards an open research environment**, the Department has published some 89 articles/chapters as open access, six of them prior to the REF requirements coming into force (see 1.3).

### 1.2.2 Impact

**To build a comprehensive strategy for the maximisation of potential impact**, the Department has encouraged staff to inform public debate and influence civil society by:

- i. **Taking on leadership or consultative roles with church and civil society organisations.** O'Loughlin has undertaken extensive educational work on liturgy (see ICS2); Milbank is Canon Theologian at Southwell Minster; John Milbank chaired the thinktank Res Publica and worked with political parties (see ICS1); Gregory is a Member of the Board of Trustees, Nottingham UNESCO City of Literature; and PGR Adam Morton organised and spoke at the Mockingbird Pastors' Conference 2019.
- ii. **Hosting conferences with participants from outside academia.** Successes include Hoover and Zellentin's work with the Karimia Institute for public Islamic education, leading to public lectures attended by c.400 people.

- iii. **Producing educational materials on emerging subject areas that contribute to the shape of curricula elsewhere.** Zellentin's University of Nottingham MOOC on the origins of the Qur'an taken by 6000 people.
- iv. **Participating in public engagement activities including representation in the media** has led to nearly all staff, as appropriate to their career stage, being involved in a wide range of engagement activities, whether public talks, radio interviews, printed articles, church- or mosque-based events, blog posts, podcasts, or online videos (see 4.3).
- v. **Publishing YouTube videos** of lectures and conversations to reach wider audiences has ensured that a total of 338 YouTube videos are now available online.
- vi. Our aim to **develop robust mechanisms for recording evidence of impact** has been supported by the Faculty's Research Impact Officer and by Faculty funding to employ and train two research assistants in impact evidence gathering.

Our strategy has embedded a rich culture of KE and public engagement throughout the Department. It has facilitated the design of research to meet priorities identified by engaging in partnerships with organisations and individuals outside academia and has also ensured we are best-placed to contribute significantly to the public conversation. Our two Impact Case Studies exemplify how long-term impact is facilitated by the Department's strategic approach to leadership, consultative and educational roles within church organisations and political parties. For *The Roots of Christian Worship* (O'Loughlin: ICS2), extensive involvement in theological education has brought to light live questions raised in churches about the relation between past and present liturgical practices. The completed research has then had a broad-ranging impact through theological education of church communities. For *Influencing Political Thought* (Milbank: ICS1), involvement in leadership of a London-based thinktank, Res Publica, has resulted in research into political theory and policies that have a theological underpinning in pursuit of the common good. The impact of the completed research (primarily the book *Politics of Virtue*) on political parties in three countries has been charted by the case study.

### 1.3 Interdisciplinary research, open research and research ethics and integrity

The Department has built on its tradition of collaborative and interdisciplinary research, supporting this through its research centres and clusters. The established cluster, 'Theology, philosophy and culture' (Bell, Bielik-Robson, Burdett, Cunningham, Goodchild [Philosophy], Hutchings, Milbank), has supported major projects, including Bell's work on Wagner and Milbank's work on Gothic literature. The new cluster of 'Religion, science, nature and technology' (Bell, Burdett, Cunningham, Hutchings, Loumagne, Milbank) has enhanced the Department's capacity for interdisciplinary enquiry, supporting recent outputs on evolution by Loumagne and Burdett's involvement in public engagement activities on artificial intelligence and theological anthropology through his collaborative research networks.

The Department has a healthy open research environment, with a history of publishing research papers on the CoTP website dating back to 2005 and YouTube videos since 2008. The School Research and KE Committee oversees implementation of the University's policies on open access and research data management (REF5a 2.3). Library services offer training in open access for staff and PGRs, guidance on UoN's repository, and support for UKRI applicants' data management plans. The Faculty funds Gold Open Access publishing – e.g. for Hoover. Staff have worked to deliver open access resources, for example O'Loughlin's curation of 338 YouTube videos and Zellentin's production of a research-led Nottingham MOOC on the origins of the Qur'an (6000 participants). A conference on working towards open access monographs, involving external speakers and participants, was scheduled by the Faculty of Arts for May 2020 (Covid-cancelled, rescheduled for 2021) to debate institutional and national change in this area.

Institutional policies on research ethics and integrity (REF5a 2.4), including the Concordat to Support Research Integrity, govern all our work, overseen by the School's Research and KE Committee where research ethics is now a standing item on the agenda. All research takes place under the University's *Code of Research Conduct and Research Ethics*: trust and confidence in research is enabled by promotion of the core values of honesty, rigour, transparency, and care and respect. Training in research integrity starts at the outset of a research career, with all PGR students now required to undertake online training in research integrity relevant to the Faculty of Arts. Any research involving human subjects requires an ethics review of the methods employed, risks involved, and ways in which data retention is minimised. A full ethics application, including a data management and privacy plan, any questions to be asked of participants and documentation to be given to them, is submitted to the School Ethics Officer for approval, who discusses the project with an Ethics Officer from another school within the University. Hutchings has successfully gained approval for several projects in this way.

#### 1.4 Strategic priorities for research and impact 2020-25:

The Department will build on its success in 2013-20 and continue to foster an inclusive, interdisciplinary research and impact culture. Activities will be driven by the following strategic objectives:

- i. **To further develop the new interdisciplinary research cluster on religion, nature, science and technology.** We will expand the cluster's interdisciplinary collaborations, including on the following ongoing and emergent research projects: natural science and German idealism (Bell); technology and artificial intelligence (Burdett); the soul in relation to scientific theories (Cunningham); the ethics of media technology (Hutchings); evolutionary theory and gender (Loumagne); and a genealogy of ecological theology (Milbank). We have already laid the foundations for this activity, grouping departmental research seminars for 2019-20 around the cluster's themes, and recruiting six PGRs to work in these areas.
- ii. **To further embed levels of public engagement and external partnerships to foster potential impact.** The Department will encourage staff to participate in public engagement activities, including representation in the media; to involve themselves in leadership or consultative roles with church and civil society organisations; to host conferences with participants from outside academia; to write textbooks on emerging subject areas that contribute to the shape of curricula elsewhere; and to develop mechanisms for recording evidence of impact. Support and guidance on these activities will be provided by the Faculty Research Impact Officer in one-to-one meetings. Specific pathways to impact are already under development: for example, Hutchings has gained impact accelerator funds for work on digital media awareness in different faith communities; Burdett is involved in public engagement activities on artificial intelligence and theological anthropology through his collaborative research networks; and Hoover is building a partnership with the Karimia Institute for public Islamic education.
- iii. **To extend activity supported by external research income.** The Department will encourage and support its staff to submit grant applications during this period, supported by the workshops, training and advice provided by the Faculty (see 3.2), as well as seeking formal arrangements for cross-institutional funding applications. Specific plans are underway for applications to the John Templeton Foundation (Burdett and Hutchings), Leverhulme Trust (Cunningham), and Birmingham-Nottingham Strategic Collaboration Fund (Burdett and Hutchings, collaborating with Prof. Fern Elsdon-Baker, University of Birmingham Department of Theology and Religion).

- iv. **To extend its record of internationally excellent research.** The Department will seek to retain and recruit high quality research staff to pursue research projects leading to authored books. Activity already in train includes securing a Leverhulme Early Career Fellowship (Parks, 2020-23) to further develop work on gender in the gospels. Research leave has been granted to develop new book projects, including: *Derrida's Marrano Passover* (Bielik-Robson), *The Soul and the Marriage of Discourse* (Cunningham), *Ibn Taymiyya's Retraction* (Hoover), and *A History of Anglican Theology of Nature* (Milbank).

## 2. People

### 2.1 Academic Staff

The Department seeks to recruit, retain and develop outstanding researchers at all career stages, and in support of this, has implemented the University's robust and extensive policies and practices covering the entire researcher lifecycle, with equality, diversity and inclusion at the heart of our activities (REF5a 3.1, 3.5). Protected characteristics are explicitly considered in each aspect of staff support.

#### Recruitment

To recruit the best researchers, all hiring decisions within the Department are made without regard to gender, ethnicity, disability, or other protected characteristics. To encourage equality of access, recruitment and interviewing decisions are now made on a competency-based framework, replacing reliance on numbers of publications or years of teaching experience. In addition to academic expertise, candidates are selected who can demonstrate behavioural competencies in valuing people, being forward-looking, taking ownership, showing professional pride, and being always inclusive. All those involved in recruitment panels undertake mandatory training provided by the University in the selection methods relevant to such attributes. In assessing research capabilities, attention is paid to the intrinsic merits of published research without regard to journal rankings or publisher's reputation.

For the sake of sustainability and development, the Department favours appointing staff to permanent positions on research and teaching contracts and is successful in recruiting researchers with postdoctoral experience for these. Appointments are made to sustain expertise in PGR supervision and UG teaching, and to enhance our overall research and impact strategy. In this REF period, expertise in Systematic Theology was maintained by the appointment of Burdett, enhanced by his experience in cross-institutional research collaboration. The appointment of Quine maintained research strengths in the Hebrew Bible, whilst that of Hutchings brought new expertise in the sociology of religion and online religious life. Gregory's University-level appointment as Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor brought his expertise in research leadership and church history to the Department. Parks was initially appointed to a three-year fixed-term position (replacement for Bell during his Leverhulme Major Research Fellowship, 2017-20) and was then supported in a successful Leverhulme Early Career Fellowship bid that brings expertise on gender and the gospels. To develop the careers of early researchers, the Department employs recent doctoral candidates (e.g. Thornhill, Van de Wiele) on teaching contracts and fully involves them in its research culture via participation in mentoring, clusters, reading groups, centres and seminars. The success of this is demonstrated by Quine's move from a teaching contract to Assistant Professor.

The Department underwent a major restructuring in 2016 as part of an Arts Faculty Portfolio Review to ensure its longer-term sustainability. The retirement of some senior staff (the FTE went from 15.71 to 12.5 FTE) has changed our staffing profile to: 1 Faculty Pro-Vice Chancellor; 4.5 full Professors; 2 Associate Professors; 4 Assistant Professors; and 1 postdoctoral

researcher. Key leadership roles (e.g. Head of Department, Director of Research) are facilitated through succession planning and have largely been held by women during the REF period (Knight, Milbank, Crouch).

#### Support and promotion

All new staff, at whatever level, are allocated a mentor to assist with all aspects of settling in, including offering career advice and guidance on developing as a researcher. Early career researchers are supported by a reduction in teaching and light administrative loads in their initial years, giving them time to develop their research careers and to complete the PGCHE. In addition to benefiting from the opportunities for training and development available to all staff regardless of contract type and duration, they also benefit from dedicated Researcher Academy training (see REF5a 3.3), including an extensive programme of research supervision training.

Recognition of a wide range of research, public engagement and impact activities is included in the workload allocation model. To foster collaboration and collective mentoring, the Department holds an annual research away day where researchers discuss with the entire team their work in progress and future plans for research projects, collaborations, grant applications, impact activities, contributions to the wider discipline, and any ethical issues arising from their work.

The annual Appraisal and Development Conversations with a senior colleague or the Head of Department (REF 5a 3.1) provides a further support mechanism. Conversations focus on wellbeing, work-life balance, future plans including setting objectives, and development and training opportunities; they are no longer linked to performance management or pay awards. Instead, excellence in research and impact performance can be recognised financially through the Nottingham Reward Scheme. All staff are encouraged to participate in the wide range of central short courses on professional and personal development run by the University's Professional Development team: these cover areas such as career management, interpersonal and communication skills, research methods and approaches, research environment and context, leadership and management development, equality and diversity, and partnering with external organisations. Specific training has been given to the whole staff team on open access as well as on unconscious bias in reviewing. The Director of Research provides advice on plans for study leave, grant applications, and pathways to impact. More established staff are encouraged to participate in the Arts Research Leadership Programme and University Research Leader's Programme (see 3.2).

Rewarding progression through promotion is central to the unit's strategy. Processes are transparent with criteria widely disseminated, and promotion itself is based on merit evidenced in respect of leadership, research and public engagement, and teaching, and without regard to a unit's financial situation. Promotion applications are mentored by the Head of Department and subsequently by the School Promotions Committee and all have been successful during the REF period. Three out of four promotions were of women: Knight and Milbank to Professor, Crouch and Zellentin to Associate Professor.

All staff, whether full-time or part-time, are eligible to apply for one semester of leave to develop research and impact after each six semesters of teaching (REF5a 3.1). Applications are mentored by the Department's Director of Research and approved by the School Research and KE Committee. 16 semesters of institutionally-supported leave 2013-20 have produced: 8 authored books, 2 edited books, 35 articles/book chapters, 2 impact case studies and underpinned increased grant capture. Additional support for staff with major publications or impact projects to complete is available in the form of the PVC's fund which supports an additional semester of teaching relief: Knight had PVC leave in 2020 to work on the spiritual life of Ebenezer Howard, the founder of garden cities. Impact funding for public engagement activities was awarded to Bell, O'Loughlin, and Hutchings in this REF period (see 3.2).

Researchers are further developed via participation in lectures, seminars, workshops and conferences. The School of Humanities offers a generous annual allowance of £1,200 to assist presentations at overseas conferences (e.g. Parks' attendance at an SBL panel on *Gender and the Rhetoric of Jesus*, 2019), and £600 for more local conference attendance; 43 conference papers have been supported, including 11 at the AAR and SBL. Research projects and grant applications benefit from a separate School Research Fund, which, amongst other activities, has enabled research trips to libraries and archives in Bayreuth, Cambridge, London and Oxford by Bell, Crouch, Hoover, Milbank and Oliver. The Department supports regular research seminars, hosting 10-12 external speakers, many international, every academic year. We also host the biennial Firth Lectures, public lectures delivered by some of the most internationally-significant figures in the field, including Charles Taylor (2014), Rowan Williams (2016), John Barclay (2018), and Celia Deane-Drummond (2020 but rescheduled due to the pandemic). The Firth lecturers also deliver a seminar for PGRs, supporting our culture of study and conversation.

Support for grant applications is provided within the unit, where the Director of Research advises and comments on all applications, at School level, and by the Centre for Advanced Study (CAS). All applications for projects and fellowships are reviewed by the School Director of Research and, in the case of postdoctoral fellowships, by the School Research Committee. Once approved by the School, applications are passed to CAS for costing and further review by an internal Peer Review College whose members are all experienced in external grant application and evaluation. The success of this support is evidenced by the externally-funded projects reported in 3.1.

The long-term success of investment in the research careers of staff within the unit is illustrated by further destinations. Parks, on a three-year R&T post as replacement for Bell at the census date, has successfully obtained a Leverhulme Early Career Fellowship within the Department (2020-23). Likewise, temporary teaching staff have successfully transitioned into research contracts elsewhere, with Ali-reza Bhojani moving to an Oxford research fellowship, and Harith Bin Ramli to a permanent research and teaching post at Edge Hill. Established staff have taken up chairs in the world's top departments in the field: Kilby and Oliver each moved to named ecclesiastical chairs at Durham; of those appointed in more recent years as assistant professors, Zahl and Zellentin both moved to lectureships at Cambridge (and Zellentin has subsequently moved to a chair at Tübingen), and Crouch to a chair at Fuller Theological Seminary.

#### Postdoctoral research

The Department actively supports the development of a new generation of researchers. Quine (Assistant Professor) was seconded for ten months to a Junior Research Fellowship at Merton College, Oxford, for her own research career development. We have successfully facilitated postdoctoral fellows during the REF Period, ensuring they are fully integrated into the Department's research culture, and benefit from facilities, training and professional development courses; e.g. Loumagne (2019-21) is currently undertaking postdoctoral research on gender and evolution, working in collaboration with Burdett. The destinations of two postdoctoral researchers who worked alongside Hoover demonstrates the effectiveness of our support mechanisms: Demir (2015-16) has moved on to an assistant professor role in Turkey, while Mahajneh (2014-15) has progressed to further research posts in Israel.

## **2.2 Research students**

The Department recruits a wide range of research students (26 FTE at the REF census date). Selection decisions are overseen by the Director of Postgraduate Research and are based on a combination of merit and fit with a suitable supervisor. Care is taken to follow the University's Equality and Diversity Code, with the result that the research student community has a balance

of places of origin, ethnicity, age and gender, with students coming from North America, Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East (of doctoral awards made during the REF period, 67% identified as white, 19% BAME, 14% not known; 6% identified as having a disability; 33% as women, 67% men). There is also a 50:50 balance between full-time and part-time modes of study. Students benefit from funding from AHRC DTP (M4C) and its predecessor M3C (see REF5a 3.3), with the Department gaining six research masters and six PhD awards during the REF period. A further student has won a Sir Francis Hill studentship, and two more have won Vice-Chancellor's scholarships. Near runners-up are supported by fees-only scholarships by the School of Humanities. Topics supervised are diverse and include: feeding the hungry and clothing the naked in the Hebrew Bible; the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15; Ibn Taymiyya; Luther's account of the image of God; Kabbalistic images in contemporary art; and secularisation in Catholic fiction.

The success of our recruitment and support strategies and processes is evidenced by 43.3 doctoral awards (2013-20) as compared to 23.1 in REF2014. All PGRs are allocated more than one supervisor, with a weighting of responsibility ranging from 80:20% to 60:40%. Full-time students have a minimum of 10 one-hour supervisions per year, with part-time students at least 6. Students complete a supervision form in advance to set the agenda for discussion, and agreed feedback, outcomes, and future action is recorded in the meeting. There is a rigorous process of annual review, with the first annual review requiring the submission of thesis plan and sample writing for the purpose of a practice viva with an internal assessor. Subsequent reviews require a full report on progress and plans for completion.

PGRs are developed by a full range of research skills training opportunities which are accessed through two main avenues. The first involves the Arts Faculty Researcher Skills Programme (conforming to AHRC's 'Research Training Framework') which combines core and optional training courses delivered by the Researcher Academy (REF5a 3.2.-3.3). These cover a range of topics from managing research projects to research governance and ethics, and from methodologies such as archival and digital research to writing, networking and communication skills (in 2018-19, for example, the Researcher Academy ran 46 such courses). The Research Integrity element of this training is compulsory for all PGRs. Forms of training for a wider range of careers include a range of placement opportunities provided by Postgraduate Placements Nottingham (REF 5a 3.3). The second route involves the Midlands Arts Programme which is available to PGRs in receipt of M4C funding. This customised programme of research and employability training draws on all eight Midlands-based universities within the partnership and encourages PGRs to establish non-academic as well as academic networks, and to reflect on the changing status of arts and humanities researchers in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. M4C students are also able to use its Student Development and Cohort Development Funds for additional types of research and employability training such as work placements and field-trips (see 3.2). Finally, M4C students can also use the Research Training Support Grant for overseas study visits with a training dimension.

The University's Researcher Academy runs a programme of training for new supervisors and ongoing regular workshops on aspects of PhD supervision (REF5a 3.3). PGRs undertake a Development Needs Analysis test with their supervisors to identify areas where additional skills are needed so that a bespoke pathway through the array of research skills training on offer is mutually agreed. Work placements are also encouraged where they have relevance to the doctoral project and progress has been satisfactory.

PGRs participate fully in the research culture of the Department via its research seminar, biblical studies research seminar, regular reading groups in Islamic studies and in philosophical theology, and annual residential conference (with distance-learning MA students), where papers are presented by research staff and PGRs. The success of the PhD programme and researcher

development is evidenced by recent graduates who have subsequently turned their PhDs into monographs: at least seven have done so. King-Ho Leung (2013-2017) won the Heymann Prize for the best PGR researcher and contributor to the life of the Faculty of Arts and secured a Templeton Religion Trust research fellowship at St Andrews. Successes amongst current PGRs include: Jonathan Rowlands has published five academic articles; Sarah Holt has obtained £3500 in travel money from two separate trusts; and Erik Eklund was awarded the David E. Zimmer Prize (\$1500).

### 2.3 Equality and diversity

All aspects of the Department's approach are informed by the University's EDI Strategic Delivery Plan (REF5s 3.5) that provides university-level support and guidance on the development of local activity. All new policies and procedures require an equality impact assessment form to be completed. Departmental policy and practice around equality, diversity and inclusion are overseen by the School of Humanities, which established a School Equality and Diversity Committee in 2013. The School has recently conducted a thorough investigation of all aspects of its provision and submitted a successful application for an Athena Swan Bronze Award (awarded October 2020). At School level, while 35% of applicants for assistant professor roles are from women, 50% of job offers are made to women. The Department itself has women in senior roles: Knight and Milbank have taken turns as Head of Department during the REF period, Crouch was formerly Director of Research and REF Coordinator, and Bielik-Robson is a Professor. Six out of the thirteen (46%) current research staff within the Department are women, including half of the full Professors; one has a declared disability. At the REF census date, one was Faculty Pro-Vice Chancellor (man), 4.5 were Professors (2.5 women/ 2 men), 2 Associate Professors (2 men), 4 Assistant Professors (2 women/ 2 men) and 1 Postdoctoral Fellow (woman). Successful promotions of women during the REF period include Knight and Milbank to Professor and Crouch to Associate Professor.

The Department encourages flexible working with particular concern for those with caring responsibilities and those returning to work after a period of ill health: three colleagues have benefited since 2013. It is University policy to replace those on maternity or adoption leave with temporary appointments, rather than redistributing work among existing staff; likewise, the Department facilitates switching between roles as personal circumstances demand. The University has established a fund for additional support for conference attendance for those with caring responsibilities or ill-health. The Vice-Chancellor runs a mentoring programme for those with protected characteristics (REF5a 3.1).

#### Outputs Selection

The Department followed the processes outlined in the University's Code of Practice (REF5a 3.6). The output portfolio for REF2021 was constructed on the basis of a double peer review system, with reviewers selected from across the full range of research staff. Everyone involved in the selection of outputs received unconscious bias training. The selection of submitted outputs was based on a ranking order determined by this internal review process, with EDI taken into account throughout. 42% (by weighting) of the submitted outputs were authored by women (compared to 44% of FTE); 3% authored by a PVC (8% of FTE); 48% authored by Professors (36% of FTE), 19% authored by Associate Professors (16% of FTE); 26% authored by Assistant Professors (32% of FTE); and 3% authored by a Postdoctoral Fellow (8% of FTE).

### 3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

Over the REF period, the Department has followed University priorities for investment: realising the full benefits of team-based research, enhancing research leadership skills, and identifying strategic priorities which cluster research staff at all stages. Alongside this, individuals continue

to be strongly encouraged and supported to develop their own programmes for research (see REF5a 4.1b).

### 3.1 Income

Our strategic priority of improving grant income (1.2.ii) has been achieved by enhanced mentoring (2.1) and the infrastructural support described in 3.2. This has underpinned the submission of 30 external research grant applications (2013-20), an increase of awards across all levels of seniority to £762.8k, with spend at £519.2k in the period compared to £71k in REF2014. In this REF period, grant capture has enabled us to:

(i) **develop the interdisciplinary range of our research.** For example, Bell used a Leverhulme Major Research Fellowship (full award £152k) to complete a project on Wagner, which culminated in a two-volume book on the *Theology of Wagner's Ring Cycle*. Gregory is currently a Co-Investigator (0.1) on an AHRC-supported collaboration with historians at the University of Manchester on 'Faith in the town: lay religion, urbanisation and industrialisation in England 1740-1830) (income to UoN £48.7k, total award value £477.4k: 2018-21).

(ii) **develop strategic new areas of research.** To support the development of a new generation of researchers, Burdett applied for and was awarded a John Templeton Foundation grant (£191k) with ECR Loumagne as a named researcher. This project on gender and evolution led to the output 'Visiting Iniquity Upon the Generations: epigenetics, systems biology, and theologies of inherited sin' (Loumagne 2020);

(iii) **consolidate strengths in the history of ancient Israel.** Crouch was awarded an S.A. Cook Bye-Fellowship, and secured funding for a Jerusalem Exhibition Project (total £38k) – her recent advances in the field of the history of ancient Israel are outlined in publications further to the output submitted for REF2021;

(iv) **consolidate and enhance existing strengths in research on Islam.** Hoover was awarded a Leverhulme Fellowship for his work on the medieval Islamic theologian Ibn Taymiyya and his contemporaries, which underpinned one peer-reviewed journal article and two peer-reviewed book chapters, and subsequently a BA Mid-Career Fellowship that led to his book *Ibn Taymiyya* (£142k) as well as a programme of international public engagement, including five YouTube videos in Arabic and five in English (over 17,000 views in 16 months). He now has a sizeable group of doctoral students working with him on Islamic theology. Zellentin was awarded a BA Mid-Career Fellowship and subsequently a Philip Leverhulme prize for his work on the Jewish and Christian origins of the Qur'an (£139k came to Nottingham) resulting in his book, *The Qur'an's Reformation of Judaism and Christianity* as well as his MOOC.

### 3.2 Infrastructure and facilities

The research and KE successes by colleagues at all career stages described throughout this statement and further evidenced by our Impact Case Studies and outputs are the results of a robust infrastructure and access to excellent facilities.

The Department's scholarly environment is fostered by its Director of Research, whose role includes the promotion of research culture, advising on grant capture, facilitating collaboration, helping colleagues at all levels of seniority achieve their goals, and ensuring EDI, integrity, and fairness in matters relating to research. The School of Humanities Research Committee, on which the Director of Research sits, grants institutional research leave, monitors the outputs and/or impact delivered by such periods of leave, advises upon staff research funds, assesses PGR studentship applications, and coordinates research-policy. The Faculty of Arts ensures the development and oversight of research strategy, employs a dedicated Impact Officer, and offers targeted funding for strategically important research initiatives.

The Department's two research centres – the Centre of Theology and Philosophy (CoTP, director Cunningham), and the Centre for the Bible, Ethics and Theology (CBET, director Parks) – provide additional structure and support for staff and PGR research and KE. CBET has run a public workshop series on the body and death in the Bible, followed by a subsequent project on illness and wellness. It has run conferences on Forced Migration, Epiphanies of the Divine in the New Testament and Septuagint, and postgraduate study days on economics, magic, and crime and punishment. It maintains a regular seminar series for researchers and PGRs in biblical studies, involving opportunities to present their current research and to benefit from listening to presentations by external speakers. CoTP has run a conference at Nottingham on Metaphysics after the analytic-continental divide, The Reformation and Radical Orthodoxy, Theology and the European Union (with the University of Freiburg), and planned The Future of Hylomorphism (postponed due to the pandemic). It runs a regular online seminar series featuring international speakers.

Our PGR infrastructure is enriched by the Researcher Academy (see 2.2) and the AHRC DTPs M3C and M4C (2.2 and REF5a 3.2-3.3). The Department has had 6 M3C/M4C doctoral studentships. These have developed and embedded a collaborative infrastructure for research, supervision and training that has benefited both PGRs and their supervisory teams. Joint-supervisions across disciplines and across institutions has had a significant effect on fostering interdisciplinarity in our PGRs' research topics. Examples include PGRs co-supervised with Leicester (Garland, for a project on Robert Louis Stevenson) and Birmingham (Quine, leading directly to her book, *Casting Down the Host of Heaven*). The AHRC's DTP Cohort Development Funds supported Bullock, Lyell and Quine to run a conference 'The Midlands Ancient Israel and Beyond' (2018, £7,803). The DTP's Strategic Development Fund has supported PGRs undertaking language courses, research trips to Israel and Pompeii, and presenting papers at SBL (total £10,826). Supervisory teams have also benefited from M3C/M4C's enhanced networking and the impact of interdisciplinary exchange on their own practice as researchers. The Department currently has three DTP-supported PGR students, as well as three successful M3C doctoral graduates. The latter include Quine, now Assistant Professor.

The Department works closely with the University's Centre for Advanced Studies in Arts and Social Sciences (CAS) to support researchers and develop new research projects and KE opportunities. CAS gives advice on grant applications from their earliest stages to submission, provides costings, runs funding and training workshops, operates a robust peer-review process, and offers seed funding for new collaborative research initiatives to support their development into external bids. Enhanced support is afforded to ECRs, and a regular programme of CAS events promotes interdisciplinarity and collaboration.

Impact and KE is supported by the University through the Ingenuity Lab, facilitating regional business engagement, and the Corporate Partnerships Team, providing dedicated support for Innovate UK funding streams and major partnerships. The Nottingham Policy Institute (launched 2019) provides contacts, support, and funding for developing policy-related projects. At Faculty level, the PVC has discretionary funding to support the completion of both research and impact projects, as does the School; such funding has been accessed by members of the Department during this REF period: O'Loughlin received a PVC's research leave award to contribute to the impact of his research on the Eucharist by following it up with a popular book, *Eating Together, Becoming One: Taking Up Pope Francis' Call to Theologians* (Liturgical Press, 2019) (see ICS2).

Targeted funding for interdisciplinary research provided by the UoN's Interdisciplinary Research Clusters (IRC, REF5a 2.1), supported Hutchings' project Ancient Texts, New Stories: Shaping the Future of Jewish and Christian Storytelling (£1000, COVID-19 delayed). Likewise, Hutchings has benefited from a Public Engagement award (£1,250) from the Nottingham Institute for Policy

and Public Engagement (REF5a, 2.2c) for his event Religion, Media and Ethics: A New Agenda for Interfaith Partnership. O'Loughlin secured funding from the Faculty's Research and KE Excellence fund (2018-20: £8,763) and its Arts Impact Accelerator (2019: £1,770) to support development of his KE and impact work (see ICS2).

Our researchers' potential is further developed by Faculty and University infrastructure. Hoover and Hutchings have participated in the Faculty's Arts Research Leadership Programme. This is aimed at academics who are between 8-18 years post-PhD and supports them to make the transition from the individual excellent researcher to the researcher who can take on leadership roles in the Faculty and beyond. A carefully curated programme combines talks by internal and external speakers, peer-to-peer learning activities, and (pre-COVID-19) a visit to another HEI; it supports participants in career planning, navigating changes to internal and external research environments, and leadership development. The Programme was of particular benefit to Hoover in his year as Head of Department. Zellentin's skills were enhanced by completing the University's Research Leaders Programme, aimed at researchers recently promoted to, or on the cusp of, a personal chair (REF5a 3.1).

The Departmental and scholarly infrastructure supporting research and impact includes excellent access to resources. The University Library holds over 1.3 million printed books and journals and provides access to 500,000 ebooks and 50,000 ejournals. The Department of Manuscripts and Special Collections has >600 collections, including the papers of Alan Richardson (subject of a current PGR thesis). Nottingham's Lakeside Arts has hosted talks, including by Milbank and Thornhill (recent PGR, now on a teaching contract).

The University's lecture and seminar rooms and meeting facilities are widely used to promote the Department's research and impact: the Society for the Study of Theology and the Society for Old Testament Study regularly hold their conferences at the university, which has also been used by the British Association for Islamic Studies and the Ecclesiastical History Society (postponed until 2021). University facilities are used to promote public engagement and impact through: (i) hosting public lectures (such as those organised by the Karimia Institute: the Baroness Sayeeda Warsi Lecture, 15 March 2018 and Prof. Akbar Ahmed Lecture, 24 May 2017), (ii) through the production of a massive online open access course (on the origins of the Qur'an), and (iii) through hosting an extensive portfolio of YouTube videos on staff research interests, recorded professionally in the former Central TV Studios, many of which have received 3000-4000 views, and some as high as 45,000.

We also benefit from staff and PGRs being co-located in the purpose-built Humanities Building, a short distance from the main research library (the Hallward). Staff members are allocated generously-sized offices; and research students have desks in a large open plan study area close to their supervisors' offices; staff and PGRs all benefit from networked computing and printing. The Digital Transformations Hub provides staff and PGRs with Arts-specific IT resources, equipment, expertise, and training. The School Management and Research Office, within the same building, provides dedicated teams to support (i) conference organisation, workshops and symposia, websites, marketing and social media, and (ii) research funding, grant-funded projects, grant applications and PGR travel arrangements.

#### **4. Collaboration and contribution to the research base, economy and society**

Since 2013, Departmental strategy, staff development, and infrastructure have successfully enabled our researchers to develop their careers by producing key research outputs and embracing a diverse spectrum of collaborations and conversations with civil society organisations, public beneficiaries, other universities, and academic subject disciplines. This diverse spectrum of engagement has been achieved by researchers at all stages in their careers, regardless of any protected characteristics.

#### 4.1 Collaborations

Researchers are supported to initiate, develop and participate in national and international collaborative networks aligned to their specialist areas of research and national/international research agendas. Bielik-Robson leads a collaborative intellectual history project funded by the Polish National Centre of Science (c.£120k) on 'The Marrano Phenomenon: Jewish Hidden Tradition and Modernity'. Burdett is PI on two collaborative projects involving researchers from other universities, centred in Oxford: one on theological anthropology for a technological age supported by the Issachar Fund; one on creaturehood in an age of biotechnological enhancement, funded by the John Templeton Foundation; outputs include popular media (interviews, news articles, blogs), three special editions of academic journals and two books. Gregory is collaborating on an AHRC-funded project with Manchester on religion and urbanisation in the industrial revolution. Hutchings is collaborating with the Swiss Institute for Bioinformatics to edit a book on Christianity and the digital humanities. O'Loughlin is collaborating with the interdisciplinary Power of Words project at Vrei Universitet Amsterdam, as well as on three editorial projects with the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, and Corpus Christianorum.

#### 4.2 External organisations

Members of the Department have taken on leadership, consultative and educational roles with external organisations, informing a two-way conversation between researchers and beneficiaries. Gregory is a Member of the Board of Trustees, Nottingham UNESCO City of Literature from 2016. O'Loughlin has engaged in extensive educational work on liturgy with a range of denominations in the UK, Ireland, Australia and New Zealand (see ICS2). Milbank is Canon Theologian at Southwell Minster, supporting the Dean in managing life at the Minster, in addition to preaching, leading services, and running study days. John Milbank was Chair of the London-based thinktank Res Publica (see ICS1). Quine is on the executive committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund.

#### 4.3 Public engagement

Public engagement with research beneficiaries and audiences is extensive, with our research disseminated public lectures, blog posts and YouTube videoa. Bielik-Robson writes a monthly column for a leading Polish newspaper, *Gazeta Wyborcza*. Burdett's research informs his work as a theological advisor to the Ethical Investment Advisory Group for the Church of England on Big Tech, which advises on over £13 billion of assets. Cunningham has participated in BBC1 'The Big Questions' and BBC Radio 4 debates, especially on evolution. Hoover has given public lectures and radio interviews on Ibn Taymiyya's legacy for modern Jihadism and has been interviewed by and quoted in *De Volksrant* (a Dutch daily), *Church Times* and *Newsweek*. Hutchings has addressed the General Synod of the Church of England on digital media, as well as the inaugural public conference of the Religion Media Centre, London, and the European Christian Internet Conference. O'Loughlin was interviewed by Melvyn Bragg, for BBC Radio 4 'In Our Time' on Papal infallibility. Milbank has written articles for the Church Times and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, and given public lectures at Westminster Abbey, Southwell Minster, as well as in Australia and USA; she has also participated in public debates at St Martin's in the Field, the Polish Embassy and the 'How the Light Gets In' Hay-on-Wye philosophy festival, as well as BBC1 'The Big Questions'.

#### 4.4 Ongoing relationships with research beneficiaries

Ongoing relationships with key research beneficiaries have been developed in order to facilitate two-way influence. This has informed our publications (e.g. *Creating Church Online*; *Eating Together*, *Becoming One*; *Gender in the Rhetoric of Jesus*; *The Politics of Virtue*) and impacted on wider society. For example, Bell's research on Wagner's Ring informed Trilogy Opera's (USA) production of *Siegfried* (2019); Hoover's work on Ibn Taymiyya has, in collaboration with the Karimia Institute and other partners in Lebanon, the Netherlands, USA and UK, benefited public understanding of the roots of varieties of contemporary Islam; John Milbank's work on the politics of virtue has led to collaborations with three think-tanks, the St Paul's Institute, Civitas, and Fondazione Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice, and influenced the Blue Labour movement and the new French political party Refondation (see case study); O'Loughlin's work on the historical origins of the liturgy has helped reshape contemporary church practices (see case study); Zellentin's work on the origins of the Qur'an has been disseminated through a University of Nottingham MOOC taken by over 6000 people, resulting in a further article in *RE Today* to educate RE teachers.

#### 4.5 Contribution to the research base

Support for the wider discipline takes the form of: (a) leadership of subject associations, with Gregory the President of the British Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies 2015-17, Hoover the chair of British Association of Islamic Studies annual conference 2019, Knight to become the Vice-President of the Ecclesiastical History Society 2020-21, and O'Loughlin the President of the Catholic Theological Association of Great Britain 2016-18 (where he pioneered a network with other theological associations concerned with liturgy); (b) editorship, with Hutchings the editor-in-chief of *Religion, Media and Digital Culture*, members of the unit on the board of numerous journals, while Burdett, Cunningham, Hoover, & O'Loughlin edit monograph series; and (c) refereeing of around 70 journal articles and 55 book manuscripts for a variety of publishers, as well as for a various international postdoctoral and research fellowships. Burdett acts as a consultant/reviewer for the Templeton Foundations (reviewing >£15 million of grant funding) and Gregory as a strategic reviewer for the AHRC; Gregory is also Chair of the Management Committee of the AHRC M3C/M4C Doctoral Training Partnership, and Knight a trustee of the Lincoln Theological Institute.

#### 4.6 Esteem indicators

Evidence of esteem within the discipline is significant across the range of the Department. Current members of the Department have been invited to give over 25 plenary or keynote lectures (and former researchers within the unit during the REF period many more). Further examples include: Bielik-Robson won the Eugenio Battisti Award for the best essay published in 2019 in *Utopian Studies*; Gregory edited *Establishment and Empire 1662-1829*, the second volume of *The Oxford History of Anglicanism*. O'Loughlin is an Honorary Member of the Royal Irish Academy (the highest academic distinction available for a non-resident of Ireland). Milbank chaired the Modern Church Conference in July 2016. Parks had a panel devoted to her book at the Society for Biblical Literature 2019. Burdett was elected as a Fellow of the International Society of Science and Religion, the youngest member ever admitted.