

Institution: University of Wales Trinity Saint David
Unit of Assessment: 31
<p>1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy</p> <p>The submitting unit combines research active staff from the Centre of Humanities and Social Sciences located on the Lampeter campus (UWTSD). The Lampeter campus has a long history of teaching theology and religion in Wales. Since the granting of the Royal Charter in 1822, Theology and Biblical Studies were at the core of St David's College (latterly University of Wales Lampeter), later supplemented by the inclusion of Study of Religions, Islamic Studies, Philosophy of Religion, and Ethics. In addition, Lampeter has a rich tradition in Classics and other subjects in the Humanities and maintains a national and international profile in these areas.</p> <p>The current submission reveals the strong synergies between Theology and Religion and Classics as well as links to History and Anthropology. In 2014 the research strategy underpinning the submission to UoA 33 (TRS) had three main objectives: interfaith studies; minority religions; and the biblical and theological legacy of Wales. The research objectives for the submission to UoA 31 (Classics) in the last REF cycle centred on four key areas: narrative; Rome and the West; Ancient Near East; materiality. During the period under review, the merger of these departments into a single Humanities unit has led to various collaborative research activities and to the crystallisation of four interdisciplinary research areas: modern theology, interfaith, ethics and Islam; text and reception; church history and religious history; and also anthropology of religion and land/skyscape, with several colleagues active in more than one of these areas. As a result, the research environment of the submitting unit has been developed from the ground up instead of top down, and the research themes outlined below are built upon shared interests among staff.</p> <p>Research in modern theology, interfaith, ethics and Islam (Baylor, Bunt, Humphreys, Scott, Slater, with input from Jansen, Schmidt) is carried out around social justice, environmental philosophy, and religious activism. Located at the intersection of theology and ethics, it explores, for instance, various religious theories about the moral and spiritual significance of the material world. Baylor's work is about rival conceptions of divine justice and the ways in which it shapes Christian moral and social teaching (Baylor1). He also investigates theological treatments of creation and how they interact with concepts of divine justice (Baylor2). Slater's research centres on the connection between theology and the development of better theological practices in pluralistic societies (Slater1). His work on social ethics (Slater2) has led to his current work on LGBT and Anglicanism, while the focus on interfaith engagement dovetails with Schmidt's research on interreligious conflicts in Brazil (Schmidt2) and Jansen's work on religious legacy in China (Jansen1). Bunt's research on Islam and the internet (Bunt1) relates to the debate on dialogue among religious communities in pluralist societies, including the use of social media (Bunt2). Humphreys's research in Environmental Philosophy focuses on animal ethics, environmental ethics, and bioethics, as well as moral philosophy (Humphreys1/2). Scott's historical research also falls in this area, as he examines the ways in which places are constituted through interconnections between humans and non-humans, past and present (Scott1).</p> <p>Research on text and reception (Bissa, Cobb, Erickson, Keady, Ohrman, Parkes, Williams) focuses on the intersection of texts and the contexts from which they emerge – religious, social and cultural, such as the development of early Christianity within its historical context. It includes research in Biblical Studies and Classics and represents a continuation of the research objectives submitted in REF2014 to UoA Classics as well as to UoA TRS. Williams's research centres primarily on John's Gospel, particularly its reception of Jewish scripture and tradition (Williams1/3). She explores how various modes of scriptural reference can shed light on the ways in which 'Scripture' is appropriated by John as a catalyst for, and expression of, its distinctive Christology (Williams2).</p>

Texts and their reception, especially within the context of late Second Temple Judaism or Christianity in late antiquity, are the focus of research by Erickson, Parkes, and Keady. Erickson's work focuses on religious and cultural developments in the East and in Asia Minor during the late Hellenistic period (Erickson1). Also focusing on late Second Temple Judaism is Keady's research on the Dead Sea Scrolls which she analyses from a range of perspectives including masculinist / feminist and embodiment (Keady1). Parkes's research focuses on Claudian, a late antique Roman and so-called 'pagan' poet writing during the rise of Christianity (Parkes1/2).

Ohrman's work explores the intersection of literary texts and material culture (Ohrman1/3), such as the use of textile metaphors in early Christian texts (especially Potamius of Lisbon), and also deals with literary description of ancient craft practice in light of archaeological research and experimental archaeology (Ohrman2).

Cultural and economic interconnections between the Mediterranean and wider Afro-Eurasian world in antiquity are explored by Cobb, whose work focuses on the exchange of commodities (and ideas connected to these) and on how they feed into wider socio-economic, religious and cultural practices (Cobb1/2). Bissa's research investigates the classical Greek world from the perspective of economics and, like Cobb, focuses on its fiscal sector (Bissa1). These research projects on the ancient world also connect to those produced by other colleagues across the submitting unit. Webster, for instance, studies thirteenth-century narrative histories and fourteenth-century canonisation dossiers (Webster1).

Research in **Church history and religious history** (Austin, Bezant, Burton, Webster) has centred on the religious legacy of Wales, which was one of the main research objectives in REF2014. It has led to publications such as *Theologia Cambrensis* by Professor Emeritus Densil Morgan.

In addition to research on the religious and theological legacy of Wales, the research cluster focuses on material religious settings, in particular Welsh monastic houses such as the former Cistercian Abbey Strata Florida which received funding from the AHRC and other bodies (details in REF3 'Strata Florida') (Austin1, Bezant1). The research in Strata Florida is connected to the Monastic Wales Project led by Burton, which examines medieval monastic houses as formative influences on the political, economic, social, and cultural development and transformation of Wales (Burton1/2). Burton also investigates the material and symbolic siting of English monasteries on islands and the materiality of medieval relics (Burton3), while Webster's research on the Church in the Middle Ages provides a textual approach (Webster1/2). The cult of saints in Wales was the topic of an AHRC project involving Jane Cartwright (submitted to REF UoA 26) as well as other researchers at the Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies in Aberystwyth (CAWCS) which recently became part of UWTSD. Collaboration between Lampeter and CAWCS led to the current AHRC-funded project on 'Sacred Landscapes of Medieval Monasteries' also involving colleagues from Leeds (with Austin as PI). The project is a comparative and cross-disciplinary study of Cistercian Abbey sites in Wales and Lincolnshire, investigating how medieval monasteries established themselves in pre-existing landscapes and within their symbolic and social meanings.

The fourth research area is **anthropology of religion, land/skyscapes and the intersection between people and the material world** (Attala, Coard, Campion, Jansen, Ohrman, Schmidt, Steel, Zinn, with input from Burton and Webster) with studies on body, alternative spirituality, and environment. This research area incorporates two research centres, the Sophia Centre and the Religious Experience Research Centre, and the newly founded Harmony Institute that facilitates and supports critical inquiry and research into concepts of harmony and their application.

Research within this cluster examines ways in which objects and materials shape human experiences. It explores how materials and matter (including humans) interact to create the world we live in (Coard1, Burton3, Attala2/3, Webster3). Related to this is Schmidt's research on

embodiment and the agency of embodied entities. Her ethnographic work on spirit possession and trance in Brazil offers a new methodological and theoretical approach to the anthropology of religious experience (Schmidt1). Campion's research on skyscape deals with certain ways in which we construct notions of time and the universe, and how these are used to provide context, meaning and purpose in both collective and individual terms (Campion1/2).

Materiality and the intersection between people and the material world (including the body and foodstuffs) lies at the core of Steel's research, focusing on the ancient Near Eastern and Aegean contexts (Steel1/2). She explores the interaction between people and things, and how objects are embedded in daily life and ritualized practices (Steel3). It links to Attala's research about how the properties of physical substances shape people's beliefs and behaviour (Attala1). Bodily experience of a different kind is the focus of Zinn's research (Zinn1). She works on Ancient Egypt and the materiality of death and shows that artefacts from tombs represent the ancient Egyptian belief system (Zinn2).

Wellbeing is a new research focus in this cluster, with links to research undertaken in other centres of UWTSD. Schmidt's current research looks at the concept of wellbeing and spirituality (Schmidt3) while Jansen studies self-sacrifice and other spiritual practises as ways to increase wellbeing in China (Jansen2).

Research Objectives for the next assessment period

The main objective for the coming 5 years is to strengthen further the interdisciplinary research within Humanities, based on the shared research interests presented above.

One objective linked to the strand in modern theology is to develop projects on interreligious and intercultural studies, past and present. In addition to biblical and theological studies, it will include anthropological, historical, and other text-based studies of encounters between people from different religious, spiritual, and non-religious communities. We also plan to expand the research further into the study of analogical perspectives on ancient and contemporary intercultural and interreligious dynamics.

Another objective is to increase research on materiality in the form of display and heritage. In addition to the ongoing Monastic Wales and Strata Florida projects, we aim to strengthen cooperation with the Cyfarthfa Castle Museum and Art Gallery in Merthyr Tydfil which has recently received funding for a major renovation project. Another strand of activities under development is linked to the bicentenary of St David's College Lampeter (2022), which is generating new research about the founding of the university in the context of colonialism and slavery.

The anthropology of religion cluster aims to develop more theoretical work on the intersection of the tangible and intangible worlds. The research will be rooted in classical, religious, indigenous and scientific models of nature, and it will examine the social worlds linked to wellbeing, sustainable environment and education.

Another objective embedded in all previous objectives is to increase and diversify research income by increasing PGR numbers in certain areas, developing new study programmes such as MRes and Professional Doctorates, strengthening and diversifying collaborations with other universities and non-academic sectors; and seeking new research funding bodies.

Impact

The key elements of the unit's impact strategy are as follows: embedding impact in project planning and funding plans; collaboration with external partners; political engagement and policy formation; and sustaining community partnerships for environmental sustainability, health and wellbeing. The two selected case studies exemplify these elements. REF3 'Strata Florida' showcases the impact of the research activities on rural communities based on collaboration with several partners, and REF3 'Wild Animals' demonstrates impact on policy formation with the introduction of Welsh Government legislation in relation to animal ethics.

Looking to the future, our impact strategy focuses on three areas as well as acknowledging, at the same time, that the production of impact can be a long process. Consequently, emphasis will be placed on impact development in interfaith and intercultural studies (Slater, Williams, and Bunt), further strengthened by ongoing PhD projects in these areas. Sponsored by the KESS funding scheme of the EU, these projects work together with the Muslim Council of Wales and the Evangelical Alliance Wales, the Harmony project, and the Chin Kung Foundation to support local communities in South Wales.

Another area of impact development is linked to materiality and heritage. As indicated in REF3 'Strata Florida' we have good links with local communities in Mid Wales which will be strengthened through further collaboration with local museums in South West Wales as well as other local communities (Attala, Ohrman, Scott, Steel, Zinn, Ohrman, and supported by Austin and Burton). In addition, Attala is involved in the Tairona Heritage Trust, invited by UNECSO to the BRIDGES workshop to develop an international coalition for action in sustainability science. Impact in the area of health and ethics belongs to a wider University strategy linked to the Welsh Government's Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. The aim is to strengthen collaboration with colleagues across the University and to develop new impact in the areas of wellbeing and ethics (Attala, Jansen, Humphreys, Schmidt).

Our strategy also includes building on ongoing impact. Several of the case studies previously submitted (REF2014) continue to generate impact (e.g., Bunt's research in i-Islam) and we expect this also to be the case with REF3 'Strata Florida'.

Open Research Environment

Following the University's guidelines under its Open Access Publications and Data Management policies (2016), all researchers in the submitting unit are actively encouraged - with the support of the open access team in Learning and Library Services - to seek out opportunities to publish in open access journals or those compliant with REF2021 policy in terms of embargo limits. Central licensing agreements have accelerated the unit's transition to open access publishing models. Staff also work closely with the University's Research, Innovation and Enterprise Services to develop research data management plans for funded research bids.

An example of the increasing Open Research Environment in Lampeter is the Religious Experience Research Centre, which has made most of its research publications available for free download from its website as well as providing researchers worldwide with online access to its primary data (narratives of spiritual and religious experiences). The submitting unit oversees several open access journals that are hosted on the UWTSO website, such as the *Journal for the Study of Religious Experience*. Another journal, *Culture and Cosmos*, previously behind a paywall, is now fully accessible online. This is in line with our intention to increase online resources for our growing number of distance-learning postgraduate and undergraduate programmes.

Research Integrity

As outlined in REF5a, the UWTSO has a Research Integrity and Ethics Code of Practice, which ensures compliance with the UK Concordat to Support Research Integrity. All research students and academic staff undertaking research projects must apply for approval. One member of the submitting unit (Humphreys) ensures that the code of practice is followed and offers annual training events to staff and research students, which are also recorded so that everyone can be updated on the process. Schmidt was the lead in developing a new Code of Conduct for the British Association for the Study of Religions.

2. People

Staff

Since 2014, the submitting unit has seen significant changes in personnel. The impact of the departure of colleagues has been mitigated to some degree by the recruitment of new members

of staff as well as the strategic development of cross-disciplinary teaching and postgraduate research supervision.

Staff training and the development of research skills, aligned to the Researcher Development Concordat, takes place on various levels. The University has a Staff Development Unit that coordinates training events for all staff, often via webinars that are recorded and made available to all staff. The development of research-related skills is organised centrally by the Research, Innovation and Enterprise Services (e.g., about open access publishing, data management, supervision of research degree students, ethical approval of research projects), as outlined in REF5a and the Research Development Plan. In addition, the Humanities Research Committee organises training targeted at Lampeter-based Humanities staff (e.g., workshops for mid-career colleagues on bid writing and preparing book proposals). Due to the high number of research students in Humanities, Lampeter offers additional training to support young colleagues starting out as research supervisors and examiners. Training sessions are conducted, for instance, by Schmidt who was the chair of the University's Research Degrees Committee (2015-2018), by Zinn, the current co-Director of Graduate Studies within the Institute, and by Humphreys, the Humanities representative on the Ethics Committee. All members of the submitting unit on a permanent contract (full- and part-time) are involved in postgraduate research supervision. Additionally, the Institute of Education and Humanities holds a series of Research Days especially for Early Career Researchers.

Career Pathways

As outlined in REF5A, the University operates the HERA job evaluation scheme that is embedded into the pay structure, thereby ensuring a transparent pay scale with clear parameters regarding progression. It is University policy to recruit staff on short-term contracts only in exceptional circumstances or related to projects with external funding. Among Category A eligible staff in this submitting unit the majority (16) are on full-time contracts, 6 on fractional contracts, and only 2 are on fixed-term contracts (linked to external funding). The University expects strong research profiles when recruiting new staff and offers them support to develop careers as researchers, including a mentoring system for new staff. During the assessment period two new ECR (Slater and Keady) were recruited to strengthen the field of Interfaith Studies, one of the strategic foci of the submitting unit. Two other ECRs were hired as replacements for colleagues (Scott and Baylor) as well as one (Webster) to strengthen a research area regarded as strategically important and in order to put a succession plan in place. All new staff members receive training to further their publication record and grant capture and have already made good progress in this regard.

Professional development opportunities are available to all members of staff regardless of their contract, and all staff can participate in the Performance and Development Review Scheme to identify short- and longer-term career, performance and development goals. Academic staff use a planning and workload management tool, which is negotiated and agreed upon with the line manager and is aligned to the Performance and Development Review Scheme. It acknowledges that the academic role involves a range of activities, including study and development activity. In addition, the Humanities Research Committee monitors staff research activities. Staff are asked to update the Research Proforma annually by recording activities such as conference papers, publications, and grant applications. Depending on budgetary capacity the Research Committee can offer financial support for research activities such as conferences, preparing book manuscripts for publication, and impact-related activities. Research activities are also discussed in Activity Profile meetings and Appraisals with the Academic Director in Humanities. Research achievements are part of staff progression and are recognised in the award of academic titles such as Associate Professor, Reader, and Professor that are made centrally by the University.

While the University supports research leave only in case of grant capture (e.g., Ohrman was granted one-year leave supported by her MSC grant), Humanities moved to immersive block teaching in 2018/19 to allow time for research via time allocation in activity profiles. Staff are expected to engage in research activities during blocks free of teaching duties.

Research students

Programmes and recruitment. The submitting unit has a strong history of recruiting research students. Since 2014, 121 research students within the unit have successfully been awarded a research degree, and 145 students joined our research degree programmes. In recognition of the growing financial pressures on research students and their potential impact on recruitment, the University has validated new study programmes supported by a new Welsh Government scheme (from 2019) for Postgraduate Doctoral Loans and which have helped to maintain strong recruitment of postgraduate students. Among the newly validated Professional Doctorate Programmes is one in Interfaith Studies taught on campus in Lampeter, and which had an initial intake of 15 students receiving a full fee waiver and stipend. Funding for it was secured through our partnership with the Chin Kung Multicultural Educational Foundation (£750k) with additional funding for specific activities secured from the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID, Vienna), Libertas (Ukraine), and the Russell Berrie Foundation (Rome). In addition, 4 KESS PhD scholarships in interfaith studies were awarded in 2019/20, with funding (£215k) from the European Social Fund. These are collaborative projects whereby students work with key partners (St Padarn's Institute, the Muslim Council of Wales, and the Evangelical Alliance Wales) in the areas of faith-based approaches to sustainability and mental health. Another successful recruitment strategy has been the validation of Master by Research (MRes) programmes. These shorter research programmes prepare students for research degrees and are proving to be popular for the recruitment of PhD students. The MRes Religious Experience, which has been particularly successful, has gained financial support from the Alister Hardy Trust in the form of student bursaries (based on needs).

Supervision and Training. A high percentage of our research students are mature students, working (e.g., teaching in a theological seminary or a college) or retired. The majority are distance learners, and supervision takes place via online facilities. Students are encouraged to attend the annual Summer Graduate School that takes place in Lampeter, as well as postgraduate conferences organised by the University, or subject-specific conferences also held in Lampeter. In addition to recording research seminar presentations and making them available to our distance learning students, we offer them webinars and other related activities. Our longstanding experience with online teaching and research engagement has made us well prepared for the unprecedented situation caused by the COVID19 lockdown. Campus-based workshops/seminars and the weekly research seminars were quickly moved online. We also have a strong and successful practice of meeting our students at international conferences, both to support and mentor them and to provide further opportunities for inclusion in our research environment.

Doctoral research students are supervised by a team of at least two supervisors (lead supervisor and second supervisor), often comprising of a mix of ECRs and experienced supervisors which allows an ECR to develop experience in supervision. The Institute has two Directors of Graduate Studies to oversee progress mechanisms for research students and to support supervisors.

Students receive training in generic skills as part of the Research Development Plan. The Research, Innovation and Enterprise Services offer a series of training events including webinars (e.g., in publishing, presenting at conferences, preparing for the viva) to accommodate distance learners. This programme is fully aligned to the Vitae Researcher Development Framework and all students and staff are encouraged to establish personal development plans using Vitae's online RDF planning tool. In this respect, the submitting unit has set up additional resources such as the recording of research seminars for PGT/PGR students. Students are given the opportunity to present their work on PG-dedicated research days and workshops. Subject-specific PG conferences, usually held during non-teaching sessions, include annual conferences in philosophy and religion (Humphreys) and interfaith studies (Slater), in addition to centrally organised events such as the Summer Graduate School (in Lampeter) and the Postgraduate conferences (in Carmarthen) organised by the Research, Innovation and Enterprise Services.

Research students regularly present at annual conferences of the subject associations such as the BASR, BNTS, BRAIS, BRISMES, often supported with bursaries offered by these associations. Several former PhD students have successfully published their theses following graduation (e.g., Charles Allers, Monsoon Books 2014; Edward Gerber, Brill 2016; Naomi Thurston, Brill 2018; Laura J. Hunt, Mohr Siebeck 2019; Nathan Elawa, Springer 2020) and/or contributed to edited volumes and journals even before or shortly after completing their studies.

Some research students are offered teaching experience to develop their teaching skills. The University runs a PG Cert in HE Teaching that is offered to research students on teaching contracts. While this option is not available to distance learners, several of them are already teaching while working on their PhD at a distance.

The result is an impressive employability rate for our research graduates. For instance, Duo Luan, PhD 2017, now works at the University of Edinburgh, and Naomi Thurston, PhD 2014, received a job offer from the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Several of our distance learning students already held teaching positions when they enrolled on the PhD (e.g., Ibrahim Abusharif, PhD award in 2020, at the Northwestern University in Qatar; Margaret Webster, PhD award pending, at Edge Hill University). Several have successfully used the PhD award to gain promotion to full positions (e.g., Michael Bradley Jr, PhD award in 2017, promoted at Georgia State University in 2018).

Equality and diversity

REF5A details the profile of staff regarding pay and protected characteristics at Institutional level. In preparing its submission, the University has complied with the processes detailed in the REF Code of Practice, to ensure that equality and diversity responsibilities are fully considered. This has included regular reporting through the University's governance process, a University-wide process in activity profiling, a full staff-briefing programme, ongoing opportunity to declare personal circumstances, an appeals process, and data analysis to undertake equality impact assessments. The assessments confirm that UoA31 has a higher proportion of female academics (61%) and the selection of outputs is consistent with this distribution (63% female; 37% male). There is no evidence of discrimination between any age group with a near even distribution of staff between 26-34 (17%), 35-44 (26%), 45-54 (17%), 55 -64 (16%) and 65+ (13%). 17% of staff declare that they are from BAME backgrounds, which is a small improvement on the University's entire submitted cohort, in which 89% of all submitting academics have declared their ethnicity as White.

The profile of the cohort of research students is different. Regarding gender, it reflects the national trend in the subject. Despite a good recruitment of female students on UG and PGT degrees, most research students are male though the ratio is above the national average for TRS. The demographic profile of students shows a higher ethnic and racial diversity, further supported by the validation of Professional Doctorate programmes. Among the recipients of the scholarship for interfaith studies are students from India, Nigeria, Ghana, Ukraine, China, in addition to students from the EU and the USA. Their visibility on campus is strengthening its ethnic diversity, particularly as some students are involved in undergraduate teaching.

As detailed in REF5A, the unit's approach to supporting and managing the well-being of staff is focused on prevention and early intervention strategies. The implementation of 'family friendly' and flexible working policies enables people to balance work and caring responsibilities, and the principles of equality and diversity are fully embedded across all employment-related policies and processes. Due to the demographic profile of the submitting unit, there are several with caring responsibilities for young children or elderly parents. Staff with such responsibilities have the option to move to a fractional contract. In cases of prolonged medical leave, staff receive support upon return with a phased return to full duties. The University offers all staff the same support for their research activities.

3. Income, infrastructure and facilities**Research Infrastructure****Operational and scholarly infrastructure**

The submitting unit is located in the Centre of Humanities and Social Sciences which is part of the Institute of Education and Humanities. It was established in 2019 when the Faculty of Humanities and Performing Arts was merged with the Faculty of Education. Research activities are coordinated by the Institute's Research Committee, which reports to the University's Research Committee. The Institute's Research Committee is divided into two units, one for Humanities and Social Sciences and the other for Athrofa (Education), that coordinate research activities and also support the REF Management Team of the University. The units receive reports from Institute representatives that sit on the University's Research Degrees Committee and the Ethics Committee.

The University Research Strategy is supported by the Research, Innovation and Enterprise Services (RIES), which provides organisational infrastructure in relation to income bid development, project management and training.

Research infrastructure within the Centre of Humanities and Social Sciences

In addition to the centrally organised infrastructure, the Humanities Research Committee - in cooperation with the Institute's Research Committee - organises workshops and training events to support research development. In specially arranged Research Days (one per term, mandatory for all staff members) staff discuss ideas for developing research applications across the Institute. Other workshops are arranged to help staff write new grant applications and to provide feedback on applications. The aim is to provide a supportive and interdisciplinary research environment so that staff in Humanities learn from staff in Education (e.g., about impact) and vice versa (e.g., about publication).

Scholarly infrastructure

The Centre of Humanities and Social Sciences includes two special collections, both of which are unique in the UK: the Roderic Bowen Collection and the Alister Hardy Archive. Both are administered by the Library in Lampeter and looked after by special collection librarians. The Roderic Bowen Collection contains unique manuscripts and artefacts that provide an important resource for researchers in Church History, Religious History and also Welsh History. In particular research by Austin, Burton, Jansen and Webster were inspired by material in the collection. It is also a valuable resource for the archival training of postgraduate students who are introduced to medieval manuscripts.

The Alister Hardy Archive in the Religious Experience Research Centre contains personal narratives on religious experience that have been made available online during this assessment period. The Centre organises conferences, research seminars and publications. Its growing visibility has led to an increasing number of research students and international visitors. The most recent visitor was Prof Marta de Freitas from the Catholic University of Brasilia, a professor of psychology of religion who works around wellbeing and spirituality. During her visit she developed plans for a joint research application to the Templeton Foundation and joint publications.

Another specialist research facility located within the submitting unit is the Sophia Centre, which is the only academic centre to explore culture in relation to the sky and cosmos. Since its move from Bath Spa University in 2007, the centre has organised annual conferences and set up three different publication streams: the journal *Culture and Cosmos*, the postgraduate student journal *Spica*, and the Sophia Centre Press for the publication of monographs and edited volumes.

Research Income

The Unit has been successful in securing external research funding from various sponsors. The interdisciplinary nature of its research activities has helped to diversify the research income

stream. During the assessment period the submitting unit received research grants from the UK Research Councils (in particular the AHRC and the British Academy), other UK central bodies and charities, EU government bodies, and non-European bodies. While income has varied across the submitting unit, all research areas have attracted funding during the assessment period.

A key focus of this activity has been to support and develop the research base to build partnerships with academic colleagues in other institutions, locally, nationally and internationally through recognised research routes. In summary, secured grants total **£2.61m**, including the AHRC (7 projects, total grant value £606k), FP7 (1 project, £550k), British Academy, Leverhulme and Wellcome (£75k) and charitable sources and foundations (£804k) such as the Fuller University (£12K), Davenant (£3k), the Wenner-Gren Foundation (£11.6k), and the Chin Kung Multicultural Educational Foundation (£750k). Another grant came from the Qatar Government (£283k). Other small grants have been secured in the UK from the Pasold Research Fund, Independent Social Research Foundation and Donald Atkinson Fund (£8.4k), and the Alister Hardy Trust (£19K). Consultancy work has been undertaken for CADW (£36k) and also for NHS Wales through the Welsh Government's Integrated Care Fund. A further £215k has been awarded from the Welsh European Funding Office / European Social Fund for doctoral training. Joint project proposals have also been submitted in funding initiatives under UKRI's Joint Programming Initiative (e.g., Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, US National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Irish Research Council).

Within the £2.61m total, Petersen's archaeological research projects (listed in REF1b), *Qatar Islamic Archaeology and Heritage* and also *Visualising Qatar's Past*, received substantial funding (£283k) from the Qatar Government, while his research on *Medieval and Ottoman Buildings in Palestine* (2013/14) was funded by the British Academy (£6k). Equally successful was another archaeological project, *For Sea Discovery*, that received £550k of funding from the EU's FP7 programme through the Marie Curie Actions. The AHRC funded research (£73k) on cultural identity, religion and food (*Food Stories: Fostering Cross-Cultural Dialogue through Food*; PI was Abbot, listed in REF1b) and research on *Hidden Pasts: Developing Narratives for Community Archaeology and Local History at Arediou, Cyprus* (Steel, £7k). Further AHRC funding (£31k) was secured by Mason, Zinn, Abbot and Draycott for four smaller projects within the unit. More recently the AHRC awarded Austin a grant for research on sacred landscapes of medieval monasteries linked to Strata Florida (see REF3). The total grant value on this project is £683k, with the unit receiving £492k, and the collaborating partner, University of Leeds, in receipt of £191k.

Several staff received start-up funding from the University for research initiatives in response to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act (e.g., Schmidt/Leonardi, Keady). Attala received funding from the Hywel Dda Health Board (£36k) for conducting fieldwork among NHS staff about their experience of new work environments in the newly constructed Aberaeron and Cardigan Integrated Care Centres.

Funding targets over the next 5 years will continue to diversify research income. Within each of the four research groups presented in section 1, the target is to apply for at least one network application and 4 ECR and mid-career funding grants (e.g., British Academy, Leverhulme). To support this, activity profiles for all staff members includes allocated hours for grant applications. The Humanities Research Committee organises workshops to support the development of research plans and to discuss draft applications. It also allocates a mentor to ECR.

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

Collaborations

To ensure the continuation of our distinctive and significance contribution to the various research areas, the submitting unit has developed and maintained strong national and international research networks. The Monastic Wales Project (PI Burton) includes team members from Spain,

Ireland, Germany, Czech Republic and other HEIs in the UK. It was initially set up with start-up funding from UWTSD and developed from a collaborative seminar with colleagues in Ireland that led to the Monastic Ireland project. Currently it is sustained as part of the AHRC project 'Sacred Landscapes of Medieval Monasteries', which is a collaboration between UWTSD (including CAWCS) and Leeds University. The Colloquium Ioanneum, to which Williams was elected as one of 14 members, includes senior Johannine scholars from the USA, South Africa, Australia and various European countries. Williams has also co-led a project on 'John's Transformation of Mark' (funded by the University of Aarhus) with colleagues from the universities of Edinburgh and Münster, and she is part of a four-year research network (with Danish funding) investigating early Christian manuscripts in relation to the reception history of John's Gospel from the second to the sixth century CE. Keady belongs to the Interdisciplinary Biblical Studies Shiloh Project that brings together scholars from the UK and beyond and is the recent recipient of a Digital Humanities Award. She is also a member of the Second Temple Early Career Academy (Birmingham University). Baylor is involved in the 'TheoPsych: Bringing Theology to Mind' project hosted by Fuller Theological Seminary with funding from the John Templeton Foundation. Schmidt collaborates with the research centre 'Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society' at the University of Vienna and is on the advisory board of the Higher Power Project run at Chester University.

Engagement with research users

Staff in the submitting unit are actively engaged with research users in various ways, in outreach activities as well as impact development. An example of this is the research on interfaith and intercultural studies. Though still at an initial stage, it demonstrates the importance of our engagement with research users and has great potential to create future impact. Since the launch of interfaith studies in Lampeter, staff have focused on interfaith hermeneutics, in line with the Professional Doctorate in Interfaith Studies, and this has resulted in a series of focussed public engagement and denominationally influential events that have taken place since 2017. These include staff applying their research in theology and biblical studies to develop new methodological approaches to interfaith engagement, including papers by Williams on reading NT texts from an interfaith perspective to the North American and European Regional Meeting of the Anglican Interfaith Commission (September 2019) and the Ecclesiology Seminar at Westminster Abbey (March 2020) in preparation for the Lambeth Conference 2021. Papers by Slater have resulted in direct knowledge transfer and impact within the Anglican Communion, particularly its ongoing interfaith and ecumenical agenda. Williams's research has had a significant impact on the current production of guidance documents for the Church in Wales Doctrinal Commission for which she serves as ecumenical member. In addition, through the sponsorship and involvement of the Welsh Assembly, the unit's religious policy impact has been brought to the attention of political policy makers.

Knowledge transfer of research in interfaith studies has been extended further as a result of its annual conferences (since 2017) and research workshops, drawing on the expertise of a range of interfaith practitioners, scholars, students, and national community activists in discussion of hermeneutical principles and practices in Interfaith discussions. This activity has reached around 500 individuals, with additional public outreach on social, cultural, and religious matters being undertaken by Williams's regular appearances on Welsh-language television and radio.

Research in the field of interfaith education and professional practice has resulted in new partnerships with international organisations such as UNESCO where staff presented their research at its headquarters in Paris (in Sept 2017 and 2018), the Russell Berrie Interfaith Foundation at the Pontifical University of St Thomas Aquinas in Rome (in May 2019), KAICIID in Vienna (with fellowships held by Slater and several of our Professional Doctorate students in Interfaith Studies), and the Knowledge Exchange Programme of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia which, in 2017, sponsored an interfaith conference (£50K) about Ethical Approaches to Peaceful Coexistence in Cardiff, organised by TRS staff in collaboration with the Muslim Council of Wales.

Wider contribution to economy and society

Research in the submitting unit has contributed widely to the local economy and to local and national societies as demonstrated by the two submitted impact case studies. The case study 'Strata Florida' is part of a wider strand of impact activities in the intersection between people and the material world focusing on Religion, Materiality, Heritage and Sustainability. Partners include museums and local communities, both in Wales and overseas. The Sacred Landscape Research Project, included in REF3 'Strata Florida', centres on Cistercian land use and is part of the UKRI's *Landscape Decisions Towards a New Framework for Using Land Assets in the UK* programme. Focusing on Cistercian and other medieval monasteries in Wales and Lincolnshire, the research examines the social and perceptual significance of these places.

On a smaller scale, but with important local impact, is Zinn's ongoing research at the Cyfarthfa Castle Museum and Art Gallery in Merthyr Tydfil. Together with students, artists and members of the wider public, Zinn has created object biographies and alternative narratives leading to the cultural (re-)discovery of ancient Egyptian artefacts. Ohrman's research on 'Textile Reflections' is also linked to museums but on a broader scale (e.g., Copenhagen and Hangzhou, China). Another thread involves impact activities that focus on sustainability and local communities. Attala's research on water and its relationship with people in rural Kenya, Spain and Wales has raised awareness of the challenges facing rural people and created support, for instance, for the Giriama, a group of subsistence horticultural-pastoralists in rural Kenya who are suffering from the desertification brought on by climate change. Attala secured support for the Giriama from the Welsh Government and charities such as The Rotary Club, The Round Table, WCVA, Size of Wales and Water Aid. Her work has been awarded commendations including a Gold Star Award from the United Nations and the Green Gown Award from the EAUC.

The impact case study 'Wild Animals' belongs to impact activities in the area of Religion, Health and Ethics. Humphreys's research on the dignity of animals goes beyond the concern for animal welfare; providing an argument for the protection of animals on ethical grounds, her work contributes to the debate on ethics and animals which has a growing place within philosophical theology.

Another strand of activities that led to social impact is around mental health and religion. Schmidt's research on Puerto Rican spiritism was used in the development of staff training seminars for social service staff in Philadelphia (2019), which has experienced a vast influx of migrants from Puerto Rica following the island's devastation by a hurricane. A more recent focus of activities involves the Muslim Council of Wales and St Padarn's Institute in Cardiff where two KESS PhD students are based in projects on faith and mental health. Working closely together with the Muslim Council of Wales, the Evangelical Alliance Wales, the Harmony project, and the Chin Kung Foundation, these projects will develop impact for local communities in South Wales. Belonging to this strand of impact activities is Bunt's ongoing research on online discourse in Islam, submitted as an impact case study for REF2014. He is involved in furthering the understanding of the online discourse about cyberspace and the use of smartphones, which are significant elements in shaping several government policies with regard to Islam and Muslim issues. Through discussions on security-related issues at consultation events and interactions with religious leaders and organisations, Bunt's research impacts on Muslim responses to online hate and 'Islamophobia'.

Engagement with diverse communities, international priorities, and initiatives

Engagement with communities – local and global - is central to research activities across the submitting unit. Research in Interfaith and intercultural studies is undertaken through close interaction with the Church in Wales, the Muslim Council of Wales, the Chin Kung Foundation, the Evangelical Alliance Wales, and other religious denominations and communities listed in the impact sections above. Research around Religion, Health and Ethics engages with communities on issues linked to wellbeing and health. While Attala's research on the wellbeing of NHS staff at the local Health Board engages with health professionals, Schmidt's research on religious and spiritual experiences in Brazil has led to engagement with spiritualists (e.g., the Spiritualist Church in the UK) and other communities with a strong interest in spirituality (e.g., lay members

of the Alister Hardy Trust). These engagements will be broadened in the next five years with events already planned with other communities (rescheduled due to the pandemic).

Indicators of wider influence

Staff in the submitting unit make significant contributions to their research bases and are widely recognised by their peers. These contributions are important ways to ensure ongoing engagement with national and international colleagues and to build up research networks. The indicators listed below represent just some examples.

Several members of the submitting unit are on editorial boards of international peer-reviewed journals, for instance *Journal for the Study of New Testament* (Williams, editor-in-chief until 2018), *New Testament Studies* (Williams), *International Journal of Latin American Religion* (Schmidt), *Journal of Medieval Monastic Studies* (Burton), *Journal for the Academic Study of Religion* (Schmidt), *American Journal of Archaeology* (Steel), *Near Eastern Archaeology* (Steel), *Cyber Orient* (Bunt), *Journal of Islamic Research* (Bunt), *Culture and Cosmos* (Campion), and *Journal of Skyscapes Archaeology* (Campion).

Members of the submitting unit sit on many editorial boards of book series, published by national and international publishers, for instance, Bloomsbury, T&T Clark, Cambridge University Press, Oxford University Press, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Kohlhammer, Boydell and Brewer, and Anthem.

Members contribute to the peer reviewing of publications and proposals on behalf of national and international journals, for instance, *International Journal of Systematic Theology*, *Journal of Reformed Theology*, *The Journal of Global Ethics*, *American Historical Review*, *Journal of Medieval Monastic Studies*, *American Journal of Philology*, *Current Anthropology*, *Journal for the American Study of Religion*, *Classical Journal*, *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies*, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, and for publishers such Brill, CUP, OUP, Blackwell, Routledge, Boydell and Brewer, Edinburgh University Press, and Bloomsbury. Members are engaged in peer-reviewing for research councils, national and international, for instance, RCUK (including members of the AHRC peer-review college and AHRC panels), the Irish Research Council for Humanities and Social Science, the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, Humboldt Foundation, the German Council of Science and Humanities, Leverhulme, the European Research Council, the Norwegian Research Council, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, and the Austrian Science Fund. Members are frequently invited to examine research degree theses, for instance, at Bristol, Edinburgh, Durham, Cambridge, UCL, Aberdeen, Glasgow, Oxford and Sheffield as well as internationally, for instance, Vienna, Sydney, Adelaide and Dublin. Some senior members have been also assessors for professorial promotions or appointments, for instance at the universities of Durham, Vienna, and Princeton.

Among the fellowships we want to highlight are the KAICIID International Fellowship (Slater), the Royal Historical Society (Burton and Webster), the Learned Society of Wales (Williams and Burton), and a research fellowship at the Department of Old and New Testament Studies, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa (Williams). The majority of staff are fellows or senior fellows of the HEA.

Senior members have also taken on leadership roles in various subject associations such as the British Association for the Study of Religions (Schmidt, as current President), the Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas (Williams, co-chair of the 'Johannine Literature' seminar), TRS-UK (Schmidt as Vice-President until 2017), the British Society of Middle Eastern Studies (Bunt as Council member until 2019), the steering committee of the 'Johannine Literature' unit of the Society of Biblical Literature (Williams), and REF21 (Schmidt).

Members contribute to a number of consultancies or act as advisors, e.g., on the Church in Wales Doctrinal Advisory Panel for Same-Sex Marriage (Slater), or for the Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee, Welsh Assembly Government work (Humphreys).

Williams is Ecumenical member of the Standing Doctrinal Commission of the Church in Wales and member of the Education Committee of the Panacea Charitable Trust: Centre for the Critical Study of Apocalyptic and Millenarian Movements.

Members have been active throughout the assessment period in organising national and international conferences and colloquia. In several cases colleagues were the primary organisers; for example Burton organised the annual Jornades d'Historia del Monastir de les Avellanes (Catalunya); Bunt was the conference convener of the 2016 meeting of the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies with 200+ international participants held in Lampeter; Williams co-organised the pre-SNTS conference on 'John and Mark: is there a Connection?' in 2018 (with funding from the University of Aarhus, Denmark) and convened panels on 'John, Jesus, and History' (2014, 2015, 2016) and 'John within Judaism' (2020) at the Society of Biblical Literature.

In other cases, colleagues were co-organisers or sat on the organising committee of international conferences, for instance, Bunt at the Ninth International Conference on Web and Social Media, University of Oxford, 2015. Steel was organiser of a workshop on Anthro-Materiality panel at the ASA as well as organiser of a meeting of the British Association of Near Eastern Archaeologists held in Lampeter (2016). Cobb was co-organiser of a panel at the European Association of Archaeologists (2019). Schmidt was convener of panels at the Congress of the International Association for History of Religion (2015) and at the conference of the European Association for Study of Religions (2013, 2019).

Research leadership and esteem has been likewise acknowledged through invited conference presentations and keynote lectures at, for instance, the International Peace Conference, UNESCO, the Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo, the University of Tokyo, the Université du Québec à Montréal, the Society of Biblical Literature, British New Testament Society, the Mercer Conference on John and Judaism, St Andrews Symposium of Ancient Jewish and Early Christian Studies, the University of Konstanz, the 'Monasteries and the Digital Humanities' conference in Czestochowa (Poland), the Beijing Union University, the University of Kyoto, the European Association of Archaeologists, the American Schools of Oriental Studies, the Deutsche Vereinigung für Religionswissenschaft, Universidade Católica de Brasilia, the 19th Annual International Conference on Islamic Studies, Jakarta, the European Society for Astronomy in Culture (Rome), the University of Amsterdam, University of Leiden, the American University in Dubai, and Vanderbilt University, Nashville.