

Institution: University of Birmingham
Unit of Assessment: UoA31 Theology and Religious Studies
<p>1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy</p> <p>a. Context and Structure</p> <p>The Department of Theology and Religion (T&R) is part of the School of Philosophy, Theology and Religion (PTR), one of five schools of the College of Arts and Law (CAL). This arrangement has been in place since 2008 and provides an established base for the pursuit of theological and religious studies in themselves, in conjunction with colleagues in Philosophy, and in an interdisciplinary fashion more widely across the College, the University, and through numerous national and international partnerships.</p> <p>All submissions to this UoA come from staff employed in T&R (19.9 FTE). Its members occupy leadership positions in the School and College, including the two most recent Heads of School. This ensures that the unit is highly visible and able to contribute to discussions that shape initiatives at College and University level through weekly leadership meetings hosted by the Vice Chancellor. Strategic decisions are largely taken at School and College level, while staff workload and teaching responsibilities are managed within the Department.</p> <p>Research excellence in the unit spans the formation and development of the foundational texts and manuscripts of Judaism, Christianity and Islam to their interpretation in feminist, queer, ethical, theological, philosophical and environmental perspectives to the study of lived religion and its impact on society. It is at the interface of religion and society that impactful research in the unit has changed the way governments and public bodies nationally and internationally engage with faith communities, including during the Covid-19 pandemic.</p> <p>There are six formal research groups led by staff in T&R which combine Birmingham's established fields of expertise with innovative areas under development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the Institute for Textual Scholarship and Electronic Editing (ITSEE), a University-Recognised Research Centre specialising in religious texts; - the Edward Cadbury Centre for the Public Understanding of Religion (ECC); - the Birmingham Centre for the Philosophy of Religion (BCPR, previously known as the John Hick Centre); - the Centre for Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies (CIMES); - the Centre for Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies (CPCS); - the Science, Knowledge and Belief in Society Research Group (SKBS). <p>While these groups provide a focus for externally-funded projects, postgraduate study, research collaboration, networks and consultancy, they are not exclusive but co-exist with numerous other internal and external initiatives and commitments which characterise our diverse and vibrant research culture.</p> <p>b. Research Objectives</p> <p>Achievement of Strategic Aims</p> <p>In REF2014, we articulated five key activities to develop the unit's profile and realise our research potential: i) Dialogue within the University; ii) Dialogue with the wider community; iii) Increasing grant capture; iv) Increasing our international culture; v) A staffing strategy focussing</p>

on retention, recruitment and respect for diversity. A combination of planned initiatives, building on existing strengths and an openness to new opportunities presented by research findings and recruitment possibilities, has meant that progress in each of these areas has exceeded any goals which might have seemed realistic seven years ago. Highlights include the following, which all address several of these key activities:

a) ***An increase from 14 to 25 core-funded staff members.***

This significant expansion has included the recruitment of the **SKBS** research group led by **Elsdon-Baker**, placing Birmingham at the heart of an international network on Science and Religion funded by multi-million-pound John Templeton Foundation grants. The group has brought researchers from a variety of disciplines into T&R and initiated wide-ranging teaching and research collaborations with colleagues in STEMM. At the same time, a successful staff retention policy has seen the promotion of four members to personal chairs (**Cheetham, Hempel, Houghton and Vondey**) in a department which now has a majority of women.

b) ***The appointment of a new Edward Cadbury Professor.***

Moss succeeded **Parker** in our senior chair in Theology in 2017. **Moss's** pioneering research on Disability, Medicine and the New Testament has further embedded matters of equality and diversity into our programme of research and teaching. She is also a leading public intellectual in the USA (CNN correspondent, religion news commentator for CBS, columnist for the *Daily Beast*) and stimulates media coverage of academic research and issues such as the trafficking of biblical artefacts.

c) ***The identification in Birmingham of the world's oldest carbon-dated Qur'anic manuscript.***

This discovery in 2015 as part of **Fedeli's** doctoral research at **ITSEE** on the University's Mingana Collection was global news, and inspired considerable interest in the University from the local and international communities. It provided further impetus for plans to develop Islamic Studies across the University, with T&R taking a leading role. Our expertise has been enhanced by no fewer than six new appointments with expertise in Islam in Europe and the Middle East (**Brown, Cesari, Jones, Scharbrodt, Shanneik, Todd**) and we continue to be responsible for leading journals and book series in this field.

d) ***External research awards of almost £7 million in 2014–20.***

Our continued outstanding record of attracting funding has placed us at the top of the UK Theology table since 2017. Three major European Research Council projects, led by **Houghton** and **Scharbrodt**, have been based at Birmingham in the last seven years; other success for our existing research institutes includes a £1.7M Templeton project on Philosophy of Religion in **BCPR** (co-directed by **Cheetham**) and the £1.6M Commonwealth Initiative for Freedom of Religion or Belief hosted at the **ECC** (directed by **Davies**).

e) ***The establishment of a Guru Nanak Chair in Sikh Studies.***

Substantial investment from the Indian Government was secured in 2019 for the establishment of a chair in Sikh studies to be based in T&R and the University's India Institute, further promoting T&R's profile across the University and internationally, as well as engaging with Birmingham's Sikh population. The Department's consistently high

position in the QS rankings—placing us as 23rd in the world in 2018—also attests to our global recognition.

Current Research Strategy

After seven years of significant growth, our strategy for the next five years is to exploit this enhanced capacity for research in order to advance our position and esteem on a national and international level. While we will continue to be responsive to new and unexpected opportunities, our principal focus will be the development of current staff and areas of research excellence in (1) texts and manuscripts (Judaism, Christianity and Islam); (2) theology; (3) Islamic studies; (4) lived religion and its impact on society. We will pay particular attention to the following five activities:

i. ***Developing Interdisciplinary Partnerships.***

Humanities scholarship is often undervalued in comparison with scientific subjects, despite its significance for quality of life and understanding the human condition. Through our research and teaching, especially the activities of the **SKBS** group, we will seek to advance the integration of our expertise into activities across the University and with external partners, with the goal of increasing recognition of the value and distinctiveness of the humanities and social sciences.

ii. ***Prioritising Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.***

Theology and Religious Studies is a discipline which has at its heart questions of diversity. We will pay special attention to embedding this range of identities and experience into our research projects and public engagement, as well as ensuring increased representativeness in our staffing profile.

iii. ***Advancing International Partnerships.***

A remarkable range of international activity already happens within T&R. In the next five years, we will build on our key relationships with institutional partners in other countries to produce world-leading collaborative research outputs and to ensure ongoing access to funding opportunities, in order to ensure the sustainability and resilience of our research culture.

iv. ***Encouraging Aspirational Career Development.***

Staff development is key to the retention of excellent researchers. We will ensure that our established research leaders continue to thrive, while also devoting time and resources to developing the next generation. This will be achieved through enhanced mentoring schemes at all levels, leading to the sharing of experience, good practice and innovative ideas.

v. ***Embracing the Digital.***

Our research profile includes pioneers in the development of digital tools and resources for humanities research, and many of our collaborative and distance activities are sustained by communications technology. In the light of the broader adoption of these platforms and increased digital literacy during the pandemic, we will increase our activity in this area in order to widen participation and enhance our global reputation.

c. Impact

Impact has constituted a major part of our activity since REF2014. As expected, the **ECC** (called the Centre for the Public Understanding of Religion in REF2014) has proved to be a focus for engagement and influence beyond academia, developing global networks of theological experts in the public sphere and cultivating links with government and non-governmental organisations. This, along with T&R's increased media involvement, has facilitated pathways to dissemination and impact both for individual staff members and for research projects. A dedicated Research Development Officer was appointed by the School in 2015 to assist with impact, public engagement and research communications. Our Impact Case Studies from **Brown** and **Jhutti-Johal** (REF3) have been selected as examples of the way in which this supportive context enables individuals to apply their expertise to shape social and political policy. The following three areas highlight some of our public involvement over the last seven years:

a. ***Influence on National and International Policymaking.***

Members of T&R have occupied a number of high-profile advisory roles, particularly relating to research in Islamic studies. **Cesari** was a member of the Special Operations Command Central Group on ISIS in Iraq at the US Department of Defense and served on the working group on Religion and US Foreign Policy under the auspices of Secretary of State John Kerry until 2016. **Cesari**, **Brown**, **Jhutti-Johal** and honorary fellows from **ECC** have all addressed policymakers at the United Nations. **Brown** has provided expert evidence for the Home Office, the Joint International Counter-Terrorism Unit and the Foreign Office, as well as contributing to the Commission for Countering Extremism and High Court cases. **Nielsen** chairs the Advisory Board of the Erlangen Centre on Islam and Law in Europe and has developed training courses for the European External Action Service of the European Commission as well as the foreign ministries of the Netherlands, Poland, Czech Republic and Lithuania. **Jhutti-Johal** was a member of the Commission on Religion and Belief in British Public Life (Woolf Institute, 2013–15); she has worked closely with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, participating in a Ministry of Justice working group on Sharia. In 2017, **Davis** was appointed as Advisor to the Minister for Disabilities and the cross-government Office for Disability Issues: this led to changes in procurement at a national level and the adoption of disability inclusion in regional industrial strategies.

b. ***Engagement with Local Communities.***

Following the election of the first West Midlands Mayor, the **ECC** facilitated the inaugural Mayor's Faith Forum, bringing religious leaders from across the region to the University. **ECC** also fostered links with local communities by hosting a five-day celebration of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, and a commemoration in 2016 of the 350th birthday of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji. The Birmingham Qur'an was exhibited at two locations in Birmingham in 2015, before a facsimile display at the Sharjah Book Fair close to the University's new Dubai campus. Elsewhere, **Kidwell**'s mapping of faith communities developed into work with the Scottish government and NGOs such as A'Rocha, Christians Against Poverty and the Development Trust Association Scotland, while **Augustine** applied her research on social transformation and urban sustainability as advisor for the Cleveland Against Sex Trafficking initiative in Tennessee.

c. ***Promoting Religious Studies in the Public Sphere.***

The media activity of **Moss** has been mentioned above; a recent audit estimated that since her appointment to Birmingham in 2017, her TV, radio and journalistic contributions have reached a global audience of over 100 million people. **Hempel** appeared on the BBC's *Any Questions?* in 2018, while **Brown**, **Houghton** and **Parker** have spoken at the

Hay Festival. Drawing on her research on migration, **Shanneik** co-ordinated art exhibitions at the Council for British Research in the Levant in Amman, the Disability and Deaf Arts Festival in Liverpool, and the British Academy's Summer Showcase in 2019.

Impact Plans

Over the next five years, we will seek to develop our strategy to promote impact through engagement with partners and practitioners in the following ways:

i. ***Expanding our Reach.***

This will include extending the activities of **ECC** into Asia and Australia, while also drawing on the University's Dubai Campus as well as its India and China Institutes. The newly-established Guru Nanak Chair in Sikh Studies will significantly support our activity in India. Nationally, we will continue to broker new relationships with faith leaders in Higher Education, the NHS, schools, the military and the Third Sector.

ii. ***Increasing Individual Impact and Engagement Profiles.***

Experienced staff will share their skills through peer mentoring to ensure that all members of T&R develop initiatives to share their research and expertise in public fora. Our goal to promote a culture of high-quality engagement activities which reflect research excellence will be supported by the introduction of a University promotion path in 2021 focussing on impact and engagement.

iii. ***Embedding Impact as a Student Activity.***

Communicating research findings to promote the discipline and stimulate public interest is also a skill to be cultivated among our doctoral candidates and, increasingly, our taught students. We will encourage activities such as the immensely-successful 3-Minute Thesis initiative to enhance the accessibility of our field and reach both traditional and new audiences. Students will be encouraged and assisted to develop their own profile and network, especially in the digital sphere.

d. Interdisciplinarity, Open Research and Integrity

Interdisciplinary Research

The study of religion and its importance in human life demands a variety of complementary skills and approaches, drawing on multiple research fields and overcoming traditional disciplinary boundaries. Our 2014 focus on dialogue within the University resulted in extensive involvement in university-wide initiatives. For instance, **Brown** is a member of the University's *Institute for Conflict, Cooperation and Security*, and with **Nielsen** convened a workshop on Muslim Societies and Islam under the aegis of Birmingham's *Institute for Advanced Study* in 2017, alongside colleagues in History, Sociology and Education (REF5a, 2.3.2). **ITSEE**'s co-director (**Ward**) is based in Modern Languages: **Houghton** and **Smith** have formally assisted editorial projects across the College which have won external funding; they also co-supervise PGRs outside T&R. **Shanneik**'s research on pre-marital genetic screening in Dubai involves researchers based in the College of Medical and Dental Sciences as well as hospital practitioners and faith groups. Moves towards developing a centre of excellence in Islamic Studies have drawn members of T&R into dialogue with colleagues across the College. Meanwhile, ongoing research in this field within the Department combines historical and philological expertise with those skilled in the tools and approaches of social science. **Scharbrodt**'s ERC-funded team studying contemporary Shiism, for example, includes intellectual historians, political scientists and anthropologists.

The attraction of the innovative **SKBS** research group to Birmingham has resulted in the incorporation within T&R of specialists in fields including Science Studies (**Elsdon-Baker**), Sociology (**Jones**), Psychology (**Sharp**) and History of Science (**Hall**). Having made this commitment to interdisciplinary research on religion and non-religion by recruiting this diverse group, our hope is that it will catalyse partnerships in research and teaching across the University while making the case for the distinctive contribution of humanities skills and expertise within domains traditionally regarded as scientific in nature.

Open Research

Members of T&R have availed themselves of institutional support for open research, including dedicated funds and arrangements with publishers for Open Access publication, online repositories and the posting of pre-prints online. Research projects and individuals have used social media to share details of their activities and findings. Staff are required to enter details of all publications on acceptance into a public-facing University research portal (REF5a, 2.2): this is supported by a dedicated Library team to ensure that outputs are made as widely available as possible. Take-up of this can easily be quantified: **Houghton**, for example, is the highest-ranked academic on Birmingham's eData repository, while his 2016 book has almost 4,000 downloads from the portal. The University's free online eTheses repository (REF 5a, 4.5) contains over 380 postgraduate research theses from T&R.

In the area of digital outputs, T&R has demonstrated a particular commitment to open research. Datasets from research projects are routinely made available online, such as the digital images, text files and databases for scholarly editions created within **ITSEE** and **Kidwell's** geographical material. **Houghton's** published advocacy of the release of manuscript transcriptions under a Creative Commons Attribution license in order to promote re-use led to its adoption by the International Greek New Testament Project. Software created by **Kidwell** and **Smith** is released on GitHub or Zenodo under GNU-GPL or MIT open licences, and has been adopted or integrated in a variety of platforms.

Research Integrity

Questions of research ethics and integrity are of particular interest within the School. **Moss's** research on illegally imported biblical artefacts has served to make the field more aware of the issues involved, leading to the adoption of professional codes of conduct and the exclusion from publications of items whose provenance has not been appropriately established. Several members of T&R serve on the College Ethics Panel, which reviews all research, including postgraduate projects, ensuring that research practices are in line with the UK's Concordat to Support Research Integrity (REF5a, 2.2). Regular audits are undertaken to ensure that GDPR requirements are observed and research data is stored on secure servers.

2. People

a. Staffing Strategy and Staff Development

As noted above, there has been an increase from 14 core-funded staff at REF2014 to 25 in July 2020: these comprise 9 professors, 2 readers, 7 senior lecturers, 4 lecturers and 3 research fellows on open-ended contracts. At the census date, the total of research-active staff in T&R (including those on externally-funded projects) stood at 38: of these, 19 are female (50%), 6 identified their ethnicity as BAME (16%) and one declared a disability (3%). The percentage of

female or non-binary core staff has risen from 33% in REF2014 to 64%, including 11 of the 18 at senior grades. Several members of T&R staff have negotiated flexible patterns of work (including part-time employment) which take account of protected characteristics or other responsibilities and commitments. We have implemented effective succession management for four recently-retired senior professors (**Anderson, Parker, Pattison, Thomas**), whose research areas continue to be highlights of our portfolio.

Our current staffing strategy centres on four priorities:

i. ***To retain and attract staff who are world-leading in their research quality and performance.***

T&R has built a strong critical mass of internationally-recognised researchers. 14 current core staff have joined the department through investment since REF2014, 5 Professors (**Adams, Cesari, Elsdon-Baker, Moss and Scharbrodt**), 2 Readers (**Augustine, Vondey**), 1 Birmingham Fellow (**Vasalou**; see REF5a, 3.4.1), and 6 Lecturers (**Brown, Daughton, Jones, Kidwell, Shanneik, Todd**). The recruitment of 4 members of **SKBS** was achieved through the University's Dynamic Investment Fund. 12 applications for promotion to senior grades were successful between 2013–2020, 50% of which were by women.

ii. ***To maximise opportunities for Early Career Researchers.***

Externally-funded projects have supported 30 postdoctoral researchers in T&R between 2013 and 2020, several of whom have gone on to further employment at Birmingham or other academic positions. 15 research fellows were in post on the census date (**Al-Hudaid, Hall, Kadhum, Manafis, Mason-Wilkes, Mesbahi, Milton, Myshrall, Parpulov, Rasavian, Riley, Sharp, Shillitoe, Williamson Fa**). In line with the *Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers*, they are mentored by their research leaders and have access to the same institutional support as core-funded colleagues, including centrally-run professional development courses (REF5a, 3.3). Although externally-funded staff do not qualify for research leave, the Department actively and successfully supports post-doctoral colleagues' development, such as **Parpulov's** visiting fellowship at Princeton in 2019.

iii. ***To encourage career planning and research development.***

All members of T&R develop their own rolling five-year research plans, updating them annually for discussion with the Head of School, School Head of Research and College Research Support team. An annual Performance Development Review for all staff also provides an opportunity to consider research aspirations and support for strategic objectives, including promotion. A Workload Allocation Model is deployed at departmental level, with allowances for designated strategic activities such as preparing major grant applications, impact and engagement. Staff on three-legged contracts are eligible to apply for up to two terms' study leave every seventh term: between 2014 and 2020, 15 terms of leave were awarded in T&R (7 to women, 8 to men).

iv. ***To train future leaders.***

Daughton's leadership potential led to her appointment within months of arriving as Head of Department and a place on the University's competitive Emerging Leaders Programme for 2020–21. Other investment in future leaders includes **Cheetham** and **Hempel's** participation in the University's Senior Leadership Programme, **Houghton** and **Scharbrodt** in the Research Leaders Programme, and **Brown, Davies, and Kidwell** as

Emerging Leaders. **Jhutti-Johal** completed the Aurora programme in 2015 (REF5a, 3.4.4).

b. Research Students

Pressing questions of religion and belief in public life across the world mean that the development of high-level expertise in the next generation of researchers in Theology and Religion is a priority. T&R has one of the largest cohorts of postgraduate researchers (PGRs) in the College. 137 postgraduate degrees successfully were completed in T&R between 2014–20. An upward trajectory in PGR numbers during the REF period has levelled at an annual total of 140 or more over the last five years. No fewer than 45 students have been awarded scholarships: 6 from the AHRC Midlands4Cities doctoral training partnership (with another 3 co-supervised here); 16 supported by overseas governments (including Brazil, Canada, Ghana, Saudi Arabia and Singapore); 15 on College or School scholarships; 4 on ERC-funded projects; 3 others, including 1 on the BA Global Challenges programme.

Our PGR cohort is diverse in nationality and experience. The Distance Learning (DL) pathway has proved particularly popular, while around two-thirds of our PGRs are on part-time programmes. The current proportion of women is 41%, while annual figures of 37–43% since REF2014 have always exceeded the sector average. Data from the last five years illustrates other protected characteristics: during this period, PGRs have stated their ethnic origin as 27–35% BAME and 62–72% White; 13–17% have declared a disability; 7–11% identify as not heterosexual.

Our approach to recruiting doctoral research students varies according to context. Open competitions are held to recruit PGRs on funded research projects. The majority of PGR applications are for independent research, and candidates are selected entirely on academic criteria: their previous track record, the quality of the research proposal and appropriate supervisory expertise within T&R. Applicants for the DL pathway are interviewed and a checklist completed to ensure that students have access to appropriate local research resources and technology. Adjustments required for protected characteristics are facilitated as part of the application process or during the course of the project with the help of our dedicated Wellbeing Officer (see §3b below).

From 2016, all PGRs have been co-supervised by a minimum of two members of academic staff to ensure continuity; they are also allocated a mentor. Monthly supervision meetings (pro-rata for part-time students) are recorded on online forms completed by both student and supervisors, where expectations of progress are explicitly addressed. At the beginning of each PGR project, an Ethical Review and a Development Needs Analysis is undertaken along with the completion of a Data Management Plan. All doctoral students are required to attend a School Progress Panel in their first year of full-time study (or equivalent), for which a sample of work and thesis plan are submitted. Doctoral students whose progress is of concern may be recalled to panels to discuss how best to support them. In circumstances where progress remains a concern, a recommendation to withdraw is made. Research Masters students can ask to be considered for an upgrade to PhD through a Progress Panel. An annual Progress Review meeting is held between students and supervisors to review progress and the completion timetable.

PGRs are members both of the University Graduate School and the CAL Graduate School, which organise a rich programme of development activities and online support. PGRs have access to individual desks within the Department's own buildings, promoting the establishment

of a local research community. Students on the DL pathway spend two weeks in Birmingham each full-time year. We also provide additional discipline-specific training for first-year PGR students. Development needs are reviewed every year to ensure that students identify and develop research and professional skills. A significant number of PGRs pursue projects aligned with the activities of one of the Department's research centres where co-location enables them to be integrated in the day-to-day activities of these groups. For instance, doctoral students in **ITSEE** share space with postdoctoral staff and have access to shared electronic resources and a microfilm and book collection.

PGRs participate in specialist seminars as well as wider T&R research events. In order to enable participation by DL students, these are increasingly live-streamed. During the Covid-19 pandemic, **Moss** set up the Birmingham Bible Research Group on Zoom, supporting PGRs at multiple universities and addressing issues including the decolonialisation of research and teaching agendas and professional ethics. AHRC and ERC-funded students benefit from generous allowances to attend conferences, training courses and undertake fieldwork. Many of these events are open to non-funded PGRs across the Midlands Consortium; a CAL fund is open to all PGRs for the same purposes. T&R has a good record of successful funding bids to CAL in support of peer-led PGR events. T&R has also participated in College initiatives to support routes into research including paid undergraduate summer research internships.

c. Equality and Diversity

T&R's commitment to equality and diversity is reflected in its staff profile and its research and engagement activities. **Moss** is part of a group of senior scholars supporting ECRs, especially women, whose research has been affected by the pandemic; to that end, she is co-lead of a mentoring scheme for ECRs under the aegis of the British New Testament Society. The Faith Communities and Government covenant authored by **Davis**, focussing on equalities in procurement, has now been adopted by local authorities covering a population of 6 million people within the UK. **Davies** works with majority-black churches as represented in the Free Churches Group and is currently involved in leading institutional strategy regarding underachievement in BAME students, while **Cheetham** was until recently College Equality and Diversity Lead (REF5a, 3.4.5).

The diversity of research staff and students has been enumerated above (§2a). Women have consistently been prominent in leadership roles (**Hempel** as Head of School since 2020 and Director of the College Graduate School 2014–17; **Daughton** as Head of Department, following **Brown**; **Moss** as Edward Cadbury Chair; **Elsdon-Baker** as Director of **SKBS**). The School Executive committee includes an Equality and Diversity lead. All staff are required to complete Equality and Diversity training on a biennial basis. T&R ensures a balance of genders on all selection panels; a woman Chair is appointed for viva exams of women candidates when both examiners are men. Staff have benefitted from procedures to manage a phased return to work after family-related leave (including one-third of workload remission for the term following six months of leave). Others have adopted flexible working arrangements, including the option to move to a part-time contract for a period, as well as phased retirement. When applying for promotion, staff are encouraged to describe the impact of career breaks, disability or part-time working. T&R has created a supportive environment for disabled students and staff to enable them to work productively. Staff are also supported by the University's Workplace Wellbeing team, which provides employee advice and listening services (REF5a, 3.4.5).

A culture of diversity and equal opportunities is an integral element of the T&R ethos: both our UG and PG curricula contain popular modules that focus on gender, sexuality, multicultural contexts and religious diversity. T&R has recently created a set of bursaries to support students from lower-income backgrounds on postgraduate programmes in Islamic Studies, and also benefits from generous historic funds to support PGRs from South and South-East Asia (the Amphlett Scholarships). The PG Staff-Student Committee is an ethnically and gender balanced group which includes a BAME student representative, and there is a tutor for LGBTQ students. The appointment of a dedicated non-academic Wellbeing Officer has enhanced the School's ability to ensure that appropriate adjustments are in place for students with temporary or permanent requirements.

Matters of equality and diversity have been considered in the construction of our REF2021 submission in accord with UoB's REF2021 Code of Practice. Although membership of the reading panel was restricted to professorial staff, it was balanced in gender. The output selection group considered data on protected characteristics to ensure that the profile of our selected publications appropriately reflects our staff cohort. Both of our selected ICS leads are women and from different ethnic backgrounds. An initial draft of this environment template was circulated to all T&R staff for input and feedback.

3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

a. Income

Our goal to increase external income has been achieved both by our support and encouragement of existing staff to pursue opportunities for individual and collaborative funding and through the strategic recruitment of world-leading researchers. T&R has been in the top two Theology departments nationwide for its research income every year since REF2014. Our total grant capture in 2014–20 from external bodies was **£6,943,741**. This includes two ERC Consolidator Grants (**Houghton** 2018, €1.76M and **Scharbrodt** 2017, €1.95M); a Templeton World Charities Foundation Project (Commonwealth Initiative for Freedom of Religion or Belief, **Berridge** and **Davies** 2015 £1.6M); three AHRC projects over £100K (**Hempel** 2018, £155K, **Parker** and **Houghton** 2018, £307K and **Thomas** 2016, £296K); a British Academy Sustainable Development Programme award (**Shanneik** 2018, £283K).

Recent funding success in 2019–20 includes four Templeton Religion Trust projects (**Elsdon-Baker, Hall, Jones** and **Sharp** 2020, £2.27M; **Elsdon-Baker** 2019, £1.7M with an additional £1.7M match funding; **Elsdon-Baker** and **Hall** 2019, £175K; **Jones** 2020, £137K) and a further Templeton World Charities award (**Elsdon-Baker** 2019, £49K).

T&R also received £105K from UK Charities, and £112K for **ITSEE** as a collaborating partner in an ERC Advanced Grant led by SOAS. Several consultancy activities have been undertaken, including supporting research projects funded by the Central European University and the Museum of the Bible. Funding from the Indian government for the Guru Nanak Chair has been mentioned above, as have governmental PGR scholarships from several countries.

b. Research Infrastructure

The management structure of the School and its Departments is flexible and allows for research groups to be guided by their leaders in consultation with the Head of School. Each centre has its

own director appointed from core-funded staff, with the remit of delivering its research, funding and impact goals. Principal Investigators of funded projects are responsible for the management of their research staff and budgets. Since 2020, the School facilitates regular meetings of PIs to share experience and best practice.

T&R has monthly departmental meetings, supplemented by informal gatherings and events. The Head of Department, and School Research and Impact leads are members of the School Research and Knowledge Transfer committee. A School Away Day typically takes place twice a year for the purposes of training and strategic planning. During the Covid19 pandemic, more regular all-School meetings have taken place online.

Academics in PTR work closely with a team of Professional Services staff, led by an Operations Manager. The appointment of a School Research Development Officer was noted above (§1c); in addition, the School created the post of Wellbeing Officer in 2016, providing local support for students, including doctoral researchers, putting students in touch with appropriate agencies and providers and ensuring that academics are appropriately informed. Most research projects have their own administrators, managed through Professional Services.

All core-funded research active staff are entitled to an annual Personal Research and Knowledge Transfer allowance of up to £1,000, along with termly applications to the College Impact and Research Fund (total £35,000), the Birmingham International Engagement Fund, and other dedicated central streams. A College Research Support team provides bespoke support to individuals on external funding applications and post-award grant set-up, as well as hosting training and dissemination events. The Department benefits from a College Research Communications Manager to support profile-raising for both research and impact activities, and a full-time College Impact Development Officer. PGR students regularly win College funds for research trips and conference organisation. At School level, an annual discretionary fund of around £30,000 supports non-recurrent events. Islamic Studies in T&R receives a strategic allocation of £10,000 per year to host two annual conferences, one for staff and one for the student-led Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies Forum which brings together PGRs from across the University.

c. Facilities

Birmingham holds several important collections of primary sources for theological research, most significantly the Mingana Collection of Middle Eastern manuscripts, the Harold Turner Collection on New Religious Movements, the Church Missionary Society Archives and the archives of the Student Christian Movement. These are housed in the Cadbury Research Library, and attract researchers from across the world. A new state-of-the-art University Library opened in 2016, bringing together Birmingham's extensive holdings in the area of theology and religious studies (REF5a, 4.3). Recent years have seen an emphasis on e-books and electronic subscriptions to journals, ensuring access to these resources for DL PGRs (and all students during the pandemic).

Since 2016, there has been considerable investment in IT support for research. T&R benefits both from a designated CAL Research Software Engineer and a core-funded software developer within **ITSEE (Smith)** who supports a variety of digital editing projects. T&R researchers have used the University's BEAR high-performance computing cluster for complex data analysis (e.g. applying algorithms to manuscript transmission), as well as its DataShare collaboration platform and its long-term research data storage (REF5a, 4.5).

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

a. Research Collaborations, Networks and Partnerships

The fostering of research networks is a key part of T&R's strategy to ensure that its research staff play a major part in internationally-leading activity. Among our research centres, the *Science and Religion Exploring the Spectrum* project (**SKBS**) has partners at University of Queensland (Australia), Austral University (Argentina), York University (Canada), Leipzig University (Germany), University of Barcelona (Spain), University of Colombo (Sri Lanka) and Kent State Ohio (USA). Individual staff are responsible for two AHRC-funded network projects through the Global Challenges Research Fund: "Humanities for Resilience" led by **Brown** with partners in Zambia, Lebanon and Pakistan, and "Women, Faith and Humanitarian Interventions" led by **Wenell**, with the NGO partner Global One focussing on Lebanon and Syria. **Adams** was invited to direct a "Religion on Campus" project by the Association of Commonwealth Universities, leading to collaboration with Dev Sanskriti Vishwavidyalaya University in Haridwar, India; he also runs a project on "Interreligious Literacy in Indonesia" with a partner from Berlin and works with the Anglican Bishop of Cairo to deliver a programme of Scriptural Reasoning in Egypt. In 2017, **Hempel** founded the *Virtual Common Room, Second Temple Early Career Academy* (STECA) as part of an AHRC Leadership Fellowship. This has supported postgraduates and early-career researchers from over 60 countries across 5 continents.

Many of the activities of **ECC** involve partnerships with governments and NGOs, including our leadership of the Commonwealth Initiative for Freedom of Religion or Belief from 2015–18. **Davies** convenes the American Academy of Religion's network of centres on Religion and Public Life, while **Cesari** leads the network of European Centres on Religion and Politics, under the auspices of the Foundation for Religious Sciences. **Augustine** participates in the quarterly Theological Roundtables of the Leadership Foundation (USA), where she has most recently been asked to address an online town-hall meeting reflecting on the pandemic; she also advises the Samaritans NGO (Stara Zagora, Bulgaria). Other public engagement activities are described in §1c above. It is through such examples of leadership and participation that the unit engages with diverse communities and publics through its research.

The major editorial projects based in Birmingham have a global reach. The *Bibliographical History of Christian-Muslim Relations* (**Thomas**) involves 5 international core teams with 26 scholars: over 1,000 contributors feature in the 16 volumes published so far. The edition of the Pauline Epistles overseen by **Houghton** has partners in North Carolina, Texas, Thessaloniki and Wuppertal, in addition to his collaboration with two long-term German Bible editing projects. From 2014–19, **Scharbrodt** was editor-in-chief of the *Yearbook of Muslims in Europe*, the primary reference work on developments in European Islam which includes authors based at universities in 45 different countries.

The AHRC Midlands4Cities partnership (formerly Midlands3Cities) inaugurated the development of co-supervision with the University of Nottingham for 5 PGRs. T&R staff also co-supervise doctoral projects at KU Leuven, the Universities of Ghana, Babel (Iraq) and Toronto. Alongside our validation of taught courses at the Al-Mahdi Institute and St Mary's Roman Catholic Seminary, New Oscott, T&R has a collaborative agreement for postgraduate research with Woodbrooke Quaker Studies Centre, involving a significant number of PhD students.

b. Wider Contributions to the Economy and Society

In addition to our contributions to national and international policymaking described above (§1c), T&R staff have advised numerous organisations and overseen the implementation of their research. **Davis** was a non-executive director and Chair of Finance for the Solent NHS trust between 2016–19, where he also chaired hearings for detained psychiatric patients; he was appointed to the Advisory Committees of the Faith Research Centre, ResPublica, and St Ethelburga's in 2017. **Scharbrodt** was official advisor to the new International Islamic University of Indonesia in Jakarta. **Kidwell** served as consultant to the Eco-Congregation Scotland and the Scottish Government Climate Change team. **Guest** was consulted by the Canadian National Headquarters of the Salvation Army for their positional statement on same-sex relationships, while **Daughton** was an ecumenical member of the Church of England *Living in Love and Faith* consultation on gender and sexuality. **Davies** manages the national training programme for faith leaders (FLTI) for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. **Elsdon-Baker** is on the advisory board of the "'Science' and 'Religion': Clarifying the Terms of the Debate" project run by the think-tank Theos and the Faraday Institute. Through such advisory roles and the forging of relationships with key research users the unit enriches the wider research environment.

International invitations received by members of T&R demonstrate the significance of our contributions on a global scale. Visiting lectureships include the Sorbonne (**Houghton**, 2019) and Istanbul Sehir University (**Jawad**, 2018). **Moss** is a visiting fellow of the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World at New York University, while **Vasalou** was a fellow of the Library of Arabic Literature at NYU Abu Dhabi in 2017 and **Cesari** was the Dermot Dunphy Visiting Professor at Harvard Divinity School in 2018–19. **Shanneik** was invited in 2016 by the Centre for Woman and Family Research in Qom (Iran) to present a paper on Shia marriage practices in Europe.

In 2015, **Davis** co-founded the Mental Wealth Festival with Baroness Hollins: this has become an annual event with a strong focus on faith and disability, run in partnership with the National Gallery and the British Museum. T&R also has honorary fellows engaged with national and local organisations: **Conway-Jones** was honorary secretary of the UK Council for Christians and Jews from 2014–17 and has advised the Church of England's Faith and Order Commission; **Dandelion** and **Grant** direct the Centre for Research in Quaker Studies, which runs projects on behalf of Quakers in Britain.

c. Contributions to the Sustainability of the Discipline

T&R receives many applications for Visiting Fellowships. Fellows are allocated space in a designated room and play an active part in Departmental life, speaking at seminars and leading taught sessions. During their tenure, Fellows are required to produce an output equivalent to a peer-reviewed journal article. In 2012, **BCPR** started the *William Paton Visiting Fellowships scheme*, admitting up to 4 fellows each year for 3-month periods. A second *William Paton Visiting Fellowship scheme* has been developed in **CPCS**. The *Amphlett Fund* provides scholarships for students from Asia to study Theology at Birmingham. **Hempel** hosted a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellow from 2014–16, while a researcher from Rio de Janeiro was based in **ITSEE** under the Brazil Visiting Fellowship scheme in 2017–18.

The Department holds two endowed lectures each year. The *Edward Cadbury Lectures* are a high-profile public event, recently held in city-centre locations including the Council House and

Cathedral. The lecturers since 2014 have been Amy-Jill Levine, William Lane Craig, Grace Davie, Candida Moss, Jose Casanova, and Miroslav Volf, who have also run workshops for staff and students. **CPCS** has an annual *Walter Hollenweger Lecture*, with speakers from across the world.

In the last five years, we have hosted multiple national and international gatherings. In 2015 the *British Association for Holocaust Studies* held their annual conference here, followed by the sixth *British Patristics Conference* and the *British Association for Jewish Studies* in 2016. **Thomas** ran the eighth *Mingana Symposium on Arab Christianity and Islam* in 2017. **ITSEE**'s biennial *Birmingham Colloquium on the Textual Criticism of the New Testament* attracts participants from at least 10 countries. **Vasalou** hosted an international conference on *Virtues of Greatness* in 2017 and, with **Todd**, on *Sufism and Philosophy* in 2019; **Shanneik** and **Jawad** organised a conference on *Europe's New Migrants: Marriage Practices and Policies* in 2018; **Jhutti-Johal** organised a national conference on *Gender Equality within Sikhism* and the *International Sikh Research Conference* at Warwick in 2018; members of **SKBS** ran an international conference and networking workshops in 2019 with over 100 speakers from 23 countries. **Hempel** hosted an international conference on *Ezra's Legacy and the Dead Sea Scrolls* in Birmingham in 2019 alongside a series of ECR workshops in Birmingham, Berlin, and Helsinki. During the pandemic, **Houghton** initiated an online series of papers on textual criticism which led to the development of a dedicated YouTube channel.

Kidwell is an executive board member of TRS-UK, of which **Hempel** is also a committee member. **Hempel** serves on the committee of the Society for the Study of the Old Testament. She has been on the AHRC Peer Review College since 2014 and a Strategic Reviewer since 2016. **Scharbrodt** was elected to the council of the British Association for Islamic Studies. Until 2020, **Jones** was General Secretary of the Muslims in Britain Research Network and **Elsdon-Baker** a member of the General Committee of the British Science Association, for which **Hall** is Section Recorder for the History of Science. **Hall** is also President of the International Commission on the History of Meteorology. **Vondey** is founding chair of the ecumenical studies group of the Society for Pentecostal Studies and on the steering committee of the European Pentecostal Theological Association and the European Research Network on Global Pentecostalism. **Shanneik** was a steering group member of the Irish Society for the Academic Study of Religions until 2015, and now advises the AHRC Re/presenting Islam on Campus. She is also a member of the Council for At-Risk Academics, and both she and **Scharbrodt** formally advise Syrian academics who have obtained refugee status in Turkey. **Jhutti-Johal** is on the board of the European Society for Intercultural Theology and Interreligious Studies, as well as being a member of the British Association of South Asian Studies and the Punjab Research Group. **Houghton** was elected as a UK representative to the Association Internationale des Études Patristiques in 2019.

Members of T&R serve on steering groups for conferences across the world, including within the American Academy of Religion and Society of Biblical Literature (AAR/SBL). **Houghton** is on the panel for the Digital Humanities Consultation and chair of the *Editio Critica Maior* program unit at SBL; he is also a convenor of the Textual Criticism seminar at SNTS and from 2015–20 was a director of the International Patristics Conference. **Augustine** is on the steering committees for the Eastern Orthodox Studies Unit of AAR and the European Research Network on Global Pentecostalism. **Adams** serves on the Committees for Systematic Theology and Scriptural Reasoning within AAR.

Peer-review of grant applications is regularly undertaken at an international level, with 4 members of T&R acting as expert reviewers for ERC Advanced Grant applications in this period. The list of funding agencies is extensive: 10 members of the department have served as reviewers for a total of 13 national research councils. **Adams**, for instance, is chair of the doctoral scholarships committee for Al-Azhar University in Cairo and evaluator for the Academy of Finland, while **Hempel** has reviewed for research councils in Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, France, Canada, Israel, Finland and Norway. Members of T&R regularly serve as external PhD examiners across the world.

d. Editorial Appointments

Several T&R staff hold prestigious editorial appointments. **Parker** is the first English scholar to be a member of the editorial committee of the United Bible Societies' *Greek New Testament* and the Nestle-Aland *Novum Testamentum Graece*; he continues to serve as executive editor for John for the IGNTP and editor of the *Editio Critica Maior* of John. **Houghton** is IGNTP executive editor for the Pauline Epistles and was appointed by the German Bible Society as one of two General Editors for the *Editio Critica Maior* of Paul; in 2016, he was the first UK member of the Academic Board of the *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* (Brepols). **Hempel** serves on the Advisory Board of *Scripta Qumranica Electronica*. **Thomas** was founding editor of *The History of Christian-Muslim Relations*, *The Bibliography of Christian-Muslim Relations* and Islam editor for *The Encyclopedia of the Bible and its Reception*.

No fewer than 16 journals or book series are or have been edited by T&R staff since 2014, such as *Global Pentecostal & Charismatic Studies* (**Davies**), *Perspectives on Religion and Politics* (**Cesari**) *Arbeiten zur neutestamentlichen Textforschung* (**Parker**), or *Dead Sea Discoveries* for which **Hempel** was editor-in-chief from 2012–2018. Guest editorships include **Shanneik** for the *Journal of Muslims in Europe* (2017), **Dandelion** and **Grant's** issue of *Religions* on interdisciplinary Quaker Studies, **Scharbrodt** for *Contemporary Islam* (2019) and **Brown** for *International Affairs* (March 2020). Both **Cesari** and **Houghton** have been invited to edit Oxford Handbooks, while **Hempel** co-edited the *T&T Clark Companion to the Dead Sea Scrolls*. 17 academic journals have included at least one member of T&R staff on their board during this period including both **Houghton** and **Moss** to *New Testament Studies*. **Nielsen** and **Shanneik** have served on the *Journal of Muslims in Europe*.

e. Awards and Recognition

Two members of T&R have been awarded the OBE for services to Higher Education: **Parker** in 2015 and **Jhutti-Johal** in 2019. **Thomas** was awarded an honorary DLitt by the University of Derby in 2016 and joined **Parker** and our emeriti professors **Young** and **McLeod** as a Fellow of the British Academy in 2018. **Anderson** was honoured with the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Society for Pentecostal Studies in 2019 and **Cesari** was presented with the Distinguished Scholar Award in the Religion and International Relations section of the International Studies Association in 2020.

Cesari was appointed the inaugural President of the European Academy of Religion in 2018; **Hempel** was President of the British Association for Jewish Studies in 2016; **Wollaston** served as President of the British Association for Holocaust Studies in 2015. The number of keynote lectures, plenary addresses and endowed lectures delivered by members of T&R since 2015 is well above 30, including **Augustine's** plenary address at the Annual Karl Barth Conference, Princeton Theological Seminary (2016), **Cesari's** lectures to the International Association of

Sociology in Turin and the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Rome, **Moss's** Newell Lectures at the Anderson School of Theology (2015) and her inaugural Wolfe lecture at Boston College (2018), and **Houghton's** Graham Stanton Memorial Lecture in 2020.

Moss's *Bible Nation* was named one of the Top Ten Religion Books of 2017 by *Publisher's Weekly* and **Cesari's** *What is Political Islam?* won the Book Award of the Religion and International Studies Association in 2018. **Vondey** and **Augustine** won the Society of Pentecostal Studies Pneuma Book Award in 2018 and 2020 respectively.