

Institution: St Mary's University, Twickenham
Unit of Assessment: 31, Theology and Religious Studies
<p>1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy</p> <p>This submission comes from the staff of Theology and Religious Studies (hereafter 'The Unit') presently mainly located within the Institute of Theology and Liberal Arts (hereafter 'The Institute') of St Mary's University, Twickenham (hereafter 'St Mary's/the University').</p> <p>The Institute consists of staff and students from the former Institute of Theology (formed in 2018 from the School of Education, Leadership and Theology), who are supplemented by Liberal Arts staff and students after a university-wide restructuring in summer 2020. The Unit presently contains staff who submitted under two Units of Assessment in the Research Excellence Framework in 2014: UoA 33 (Theology and Religious Studies) and UoA 32 (Philosophy). Thus, the present Unit encompasses research in theology and religion as studied using philosophical, theological, historical, psychological, sociological, and anthropological methodologies. This has enabled a rich multi- and cross-disciplinary approach to the subject to flourish in the Unit which reflects the interdisciplinary research culture that has been fostered at St Mary's.</p> <p>The submission represents the work and research culture in a thriving Institute with over 350 students in a range of Theology and Religious Studies Foundation, Undergraduate, Masters and Research Degrees, not only taught at the campus in Twickenham but with collaborative provision arrangements in partnership with the Beda Pontifical College in Rome; St John's Seminary, Womersley; the Southern Catholic Dioceses Diaconate Formation Programme; the Catholic Bishops' of England and Wales Westminster Interns scheme and the Institut Catholique, Paris. These national and international connections have enhanced the impact and outreach of the Unit's research, especially with regards to wider Catholic Christian pastoral concerns. All the Unit's research active staff participate in teaching at all levels, which ensures that their expertise is being used to develop research enriched teaching as we create an environment that not only facilitates internationally recognised excellent research but also nurtures future generations of researchers in its undergraduate and postgraduate student programmes.</p> <p>In 2019 the Holy See approved that St Mary's would host Mater Ecclesiae College which would reside in the Institute. These ecclesiastical faculties of theology and philosophy were originally granted in 1614 and confirmed by Pope Pius XI in 1932. This marked a new departure for the University and has strengthened our international research culture as we have formed closer research links with Catholic universities globally, as will be evidenced in the submission. As well as the Institut Catholique in Paris these have included collaborations with Katholieke Universiteit, Leuven (Belgium); Catholic University of Portugal; University of Notre Dame, Boston College, Ave Maria University, Oblate School of Theology (USA); Christ University, Bengaluru (India); Australian Catholic University and University of Notre Dame, Australia; Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul (Brazil); Universidade Católica de Moçambique and Leeds Trinity and Newman Universities in the UK. These developments accord with the University's founding principle to contribute to the life of the Catholic Church. As will be evidenced in this statement this is focussed on pushing research into new directions exploring the numerous religious and ethical challenges of the contemporary world whilst rooted in the richness and depth of the Catholic Christian tradition.</p> <p>The development of the Unit's thriving research culture over the past seven years is marked by us having seen 15 candidates through to completion at Doctoral level during the REF submission period, with more than 30 doctoral students currently under supervision. Most of the outputs discussed emerge from four research centres within the Unit associated with four research clusters: the Benedict XVI Centre for Religion and Society (hereafter 'The Benedict Centre'), the Centre for Bioethics and Emerging Technologies (hereafter 'The Bioethics Centre'), the Centre</p>

for Initiatives in Spirituality and Reconciliation (hereafter 'The Spirituality Centre') and the Centre for the Social-Scientific Study of the Bible (hereafter 'The Bible Centre').

The Benedict XVI Centre for Religion and Society (Benedict Centre)

The Benedict XVI Centre (Benedict Centre) is an international hub for research and engagement activities in religion and the social sciences (primarily economics, sociology, and political science). It was founded in 2015 with Professor Stephen Bullivant as its first Director. The Centre holds regular public events and convenes a monthly research seminar for its doctoral students. The Centre regularly releases free-to-download research reports, several of which have generated major media coverage (e.g., *Time*, *Fox*, *NBC*, *Economist*, *BBC*, *Guardian*, *Telegraph*, *Times*). Reference to the impact of these is made in the Unit's Impact Case Study 2. In the six years since its foundation the Centre has maintained a strong track record of grant capture, including the AHRC, John Templeton Foundation, Porticus UK, and the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. During the assessment period these have amounted to over £350,000, as detailed below.

See www.stmarys.ac.uk/research/centres/benedict-xvi

The Centre for Bioethics and Emerging Technologies (Bioethics Centre)

This was established in 2008 by Professor David Albert Jones and Professor Geoff Hunt. Professor Trevor Stammers became director in 2016. The Centre was founded in response to the challenges posed by recent developments in biotechnology, which have brought advances in terms of science and technology. The Centre's work focuses both on perennial questions of life and death as these pertain to biomedicine and on emerging questions surrounding the use and development of such technologies. These concern how human dignity and human rights intersect with the fundamental anthropological question of what it means to be human, the epistemological question of the limits and promise of knowledge, and ethical questions of what should and should not be done in medicine and bioscience.

The Centre's approach to bioethical enquiry is primarily focused on natural law philosophy and theology, rooted in the universal dignity of the human person. During the assessment period the Centre has held regular public events (detailed below) and engaged in significant research impact outlined in the accompanying Impact Case Study 1. It has also been active in grant capture as well as editing and compiling the quarterly issues of *The New Bioethics – A Multidisciplinary Journal of Biotechnology* and *The Body* published by Taylor and Francis.

See www.stmarys.ac.uk/research/centres/bioethics-emerging-technologies

The Centre for Initiatives in Spirituality and Reconciliation (Spirituality Centre)

Established in 2010 with Professor Peter Tyler as its first Director, the Centre has three primary aims: to promote reconciliation within individuals between the apparently conflicting demands of faith and reason; to promote reconciliation between individuals and communities both in British society and globally, and to promote reconciliation between humanity and the created world. This is all done within the context of engaging in study and outreach, primarily centred on Christian spirituality. To this end the Centre sponsors regular international conferences on themes connected to spirituality and reconciliation, details of which are given below. Three of these have led to significant international publications which have shaped current research in the area. Over the assessment period it has supervised five doctoral students to completion and is presently supporting 11 research students in their studies. In addition it promotes dialogue between different traditions, as well as reflecting on the practice and principles of dialogue, and most recently receiving grants to develop dialogue between Muslims, Christians and Jews around de-radicalisation.

See: www.stmarys.ac.uk/inspire

The Centre for the Social-Scientific Study of the Bible (Bible Centre)

The Centre for the Social-Scientific Study of the Bible was created in 2012 with Professor Chris Keith appointed as its first Director. The Centre's mission is to foster social-scientific research in Biblical Studies in the UK and internationally. It accomplishes these goals through funded research projects, organisation of international conferences, hosting visiting colleagues on research leave, and recruiting and supervising postgraduate students. During the REF submission period it has convened conferences which were both interdisciplinary and international which typically led to publications. More details are given below.

See: www.stmarys.ac.uk/research/centres/social-scientific-biblical-studies-centre

Research and Impact Strategy

Following the last REF assessment in 2014, the Unit identified three key strategic priorities which were informed by the activities and visions outlined in our REF 2014 Environment Statement and reflection upon the feedback received from the REF 2014 sub-panel. These were as follows:

1. To develop a thriving and sustainable research environment, putting our research centres at the heart of the Theology and Religious Studies research culture.

In 2014 the Unit had two active research centres: the Spirituality and Bible Centres. Following positive feedback from REF 2014 we decided that the research centre structure was the most beneficial means of nurturing a sustainable research culture in the Unit owing to constraints of size and staffing. This was supported by the University Research Action Plan (2012-2016) which encouraged us to 'actively enhance the quality and quantity of research across all core discipline areas, with activity focused on research centres of excellence.' Accordingly, as well as consolidating the work of the two existing centres, we established the Benedict Centre in 2015 following discussions with the Holy See and the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. This was followed by the incorporation of the Bioethics Centre into the Unit in 2016 (previously based in the Philosophy Unit). This structure helped us to build a robust, inclusive and sustainable culture of research involving students and staff at all levels based on the active network of the four Centres. The fruits of this investment are seen in the 75% increase of staff returned to this unit of assessment since the last assessment: 2014: 4.8 FTE vs 2021: 8.4 FTE.

The establishment of the four Centres has enabled us to nurture our research culture, recruiting new research talent and developing existing researchers, both early career and established. Of those being returned Dr Costigane, Professor Crossley, Dr Playford, Dr Phillips and Professor Booth have all been recruited post-2014 whilst Professors Bullivant, Stammers and Tyler have all received their chairs during the assessment period. Leading international scholars such as Professors Jones and Keith and Dr Matthews have been retained and have deepened their involvement with the Unit demonstrating the retention of existing researchers and the development and nurturing of a new generation of internationally excellent researchers.

Examples of this successful approach are found in the international conferences that have been held at the Unit during the assessment period. As well as bringing internationally leading scholars to St Mary's, our conferences have created opportunities for PGR students to attend with scholarships and sponsorships, and for early career researchers to give papers. The final published proceedings have become important reference points for future research, some of which are included in our research outputs for assessment. Examples include:

Evil in Second Temple Judaism and early Christianity, sponsored by the Bible Centre in Spring 2014 which led to the publication of: Chris Keith and Loren T Stuckenbruck eds., *Evil in Second Temple Judaism and Early Christianity* (2016).

Mystical Theology: Renewing the Contemplative Tradition held at Durham, September 2014 with conference partner, Durham University which led to the publication of: Peter Tyler, Chris Cook and Julienne McLean (eds), *Mystical Theology: Renewing the Contemplative Tradition* (2018).

Teresa of Avila – 1515 to 2015: Mystical Theology and Spirituality in the Carmelite Tradition at St Mary's, June 2015 with conference partners, the British and Irish Carmelites, Heythrop College (London), Sarum College (Salisbury) and the Mystical Theology Network. This led to the publication of: Peter Tyler and Edward Howells (eds), *Teresa of Avila: Mystical Theology and Spirituality in the Carmelite Tradition* (2017).

Memory Theory and Historical Jesus Studies, Spring 2016 which led to two publications. The first was a special edition of the *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* (16 [2018]). The second was a three-volume reference work: Chris Keith, Helen K. Bond, Christine Jacobi, and Jens Schröter, eds., *The Reception of Jesus in the First Three Centuries* (2020).

2. *To promote the highest levels of excellence in research and scholarship by recruiting research students, developing a research student culture and encouraging early career researchers.*

We have worked over the assessment period to attract increasing numbers of research students to the Unit and provide them with an excellent doctoral research programme that will support the successful development of their degrees and future careers. Assisted by funded scholarships and central support from the University we have awarded 10 scholarships over the assessment period. We have seen a year-on-year increase in PhD registrations since 2014 with the number doubling from 17 to the present 34. Alongside this growth in PGR students the number of staff in the Unit who are eligible to act as Director of Studies has doubled from three in 2014 to six at present.

In collaboration with charities such as Porticus UK we have sought to recruit students who would normally not have the opportunity to study at a British HEI. For example: Nate Shedd was awarded a studentship for the Bible Centre commencing 2016-2017. He passed his viva with 'no corrections' in September 2019 and is expected to publish his thesis in a major monograph series. Similarly, Mark Murphy was awarded a St Mary's scholarship to complete his Doctorate looking at aspects of St John of the Cross and Jacques Lacan in 2013. He passed his viva with minor corrections in summer 2019 and is presently working at Nottingham University.

During the assessment period the Unit has supported the progress and development of the work of its ECRs. For example, Dr Jacob Phillips was appointed as a lecturer in Theology in January 2016, shortly after undertaking his successful Doctoral defence. He was subsequently appointed to a permanent Lectureship in Theology in August 2016. Since appointment and with the support of the Unit he has completed eight articles and two monographs, some of which will be included in the submission. He has conducted four PhD examinations in the past year and is on the supervision team for four research students. In Autumn 2019 he was promoted to Reader. He is presently the Director of the Institute. Staff development and support in research and scholarly activity has thus enhanced the capacity and quality of research in the Unit.

3. *To host public lectures, colloquia, blogs and conferences that disseminate the fruits of academic and scholarly research to a wider public whilst increasing the quality and quantity of external funding.*

These areas have been developed both at the St Mary's Twickenham site and at the new media centre at 'The Exchange', Twickenham, as well as with partners nationally and internationally. Of note are the postgraduate spirituality seminars presently being run in association with the Margaret Beaufort Institute for Theological Research, Cambridge and Sarum College, Salisbury. Although the Covid-19 pandemic has meant we have not been able to hold 'face to face' events over the past year, this work has continued online with Zoom events. Online work continues to be done by the Bible Centre with its Jesus Blog, edited by Professors Keith and Crossley with international collaborators since 2012. The blog currently hosts an average 9,000 viewers per month across the globe and is the leading website on social scientific research into the Bible (see www.historicaljesusresearch.blogspot.com).

We also draw attention to the series of annual day conferences on the wider topic of mental health and spirituality (2015–2019) run in conjunction with the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, the Maudsley Trust, Mind and the Catholic Children's Society on topics such as ageing, mental health, dementia and spirituality; addiction, mental wellbeing and spirituality and young people.

As part of our ongoing collaboration with ecclesial communities both nationally and internationally we have sought to disseminate the fruits of our research especially in promoting dialogue and the common good, notably the 2014 conference held at the Unit in collaboration with the Catholic Universities of Leeds Trinity and Newman to promote dialogue within and beyond the Catholic Church in celebration of the 50th anniversary of Pope Saint Paul VI's encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam*. Supported by a Porticus UK grant, the conference was open to PGR students and ECRs at no cost and conformed to the Unit's commitment to open access. The proceedings were published in a special edition of *The Journal of Dharma* in 2018 by our collaborative partners at Christ University, Bengaluru. The work of the conference resulted in day conferences, publications and doctoral research into dialogue and de-radicalisation which is ongoing.

Of note in this context is the visit in 2015 to St Mary's by His All Holiness, Bartholomew, the Ecumenical Patriarch to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the visit of Pope Benedict XVI to the campus. His All Holiness delivered a lecture entitled 'Religion in Dialogue: The Importance and Imperative of Dialogue in our World'. The dialogue continued with the conference *Religion, Identity and Conflict* held at St Mary's in 2016 which again has spurred initiatives around de-radicalisation and the promotion of interfaith dialogue in social context which will continue into the next REF cycle.

Details of the increase of our external funding are given in Section 3 below. This has increased markedly during the cycle with the Unit having captured c. £450,000 in grant income during the assessment period. As illustrated below, much of this has been invested in the infrastructure of the Unit to ensure a sustainable research culture, especially with regards to the development and prioritisation of our PGR students and ECRs.

Future Research Priorities

Having successfully accomplished the three strategic priorities that we set out after REF 2014, we go forward as the new Institute of Theology and Liberal Arts (ITALA), updating our research strategy to align with the University's overarching *Vision 2025* strategy. With this vision in mind we have identified the following research and impact priorities for the next REF cycle in the period 2021–2027:

1. To continue to build a robust, inclusive, open and sustainable culture of research involving students and staff at all levels based on an active network of research centres.

2. To attract increasing numbers of research students and provide them with a high-quality research degree programme to support their development, to achieve success in their degree and in their future careers.

3. To develop opportunities for increased engagement in collaborative and interdisciplinary research activity with external researchers and research centres thus enhancing the Unit research environment.

4. To develop and promote the quantity and success of research funding applications, enterprise and income generation.

5. To continue to develop the Unit's open research culture and environment enhancing its impact and benefit to society.

As in the previous cycle, the primary focus for the implementation of these research priorities will be outlined in plans for the Unit's four research centres:

The Bible Centre aims to accomplish these goals by continuing its collaborative work with international scholars via conferences that lead to publications. Having nurtured emerging scholars and ECRs in the past cycle (see below) the Centre aims in the next cycle to secure postdoctoral positions to provide early career research opportunities for promising scholars. The Centre is also developing strategic cooperation with the charity Panacea's Centre for the Study of Apocalyptic and Millenarian Movements, possibly sharing costs for PhD studentships as well as developing joint conferences.

The Benedict Centre seeks to continue its recent grant successes and is currently involved in two joint bids to the John Templeton Foundation (with the Universities of Oxford, Notre Dame Australia, Queen's Belfast, Coventry, and Kent), in both cases developing existing collaborative relationships with colleagues at other institutions.

The Bioethics Centre will continue to build its doctoral research degree programme which has already seen three of its MA students (on the Bioethics and Medical Law MA) obtain their doctorates since the last REF cycle. The Centre will be supporting doctoral students through regular scholarships, at present awarded from the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, the most recent of which was appointed in autumn 2019. In line with the priority of promoting an open research culture the Centre will continue to promote fully funded events open to the public for free (see below).

Finally, the Spirituality Centre will continue to support doctoral students through their research programmes with scholarships and staff input. It will continue to develop international scholarly links through its partnerships with organisations such as the Franciscan and Carmelite orders and the Mystical Theology Network. These will contribute to major international conferences, the next ones planned for 2021 looking at the Carmelite spirituality of St John of the Cross and the Healing of the Impact of Modern Slavery jointly with the St Mary's Centre for the Study of Modern Slavery and the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain. The Centre was awarded a grant from Porticus UK in 2020 to continue its interfaith dialogue work of reconciliation. A colloquium and publication are now being planned for 2021/22 leading to further colloquia and publications later in the cycle.

2. People

Staffing strategy and development

St Mary's seeks to retain its most talented staff, an aim reflected in the Unit, where a core of senior and established research active staff who were returned in REF 2014 have been retained and are returning in the present exercise (Professors Bullivant, Jones, Keith, Stammers, Tyler and

Dr Matthews). These staff have enhanced our strategy of creating a nurturing environment for developing researchers. This is illustrated by the number of staff recruited in the cycle who are now being submitted for assessment (Profs Booth, Crossley and Drs Costigane, Phillips, Playford).

The Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers (2008/2019) informs the implementation of the Unit's research strategy by supporting both researchers, supervisors and supervisees in developing integrity, probity, equality, and diversity in the Unit's research environment. Every new staff member and ECR considered to be a 'developing researcher' is allocated a research mentor (this is also available to all staff who request it). In addition, staff meet with the Institute Director of Research on an annual basis to agree a Personal Research Plan (PRP) for the coming year. This covers all proposed research activity and the resources to be allocated for its successful execution. The Research Plans are reviewed on an annual basis and a report given to the University Research Office. All staff are annually invited to make bids for allocated Institute research funding, such funding may be used to support attendance at national and international conferences, assist with data collection, to develop an external profile and disseminate research. Experienced researchers, such as the Directors of the research centres, act as mentors for ECRs and research students. This is done through participation in research seminars, supervision, and co-supervision of research students, and sharing experience of research, supervision, and publishing, especially with ECRs.

The success of the Unit in fostering the work of ECRs can be seen in their inclusion in this REF submission. A good example of the developing and mentoring of staff is Dr Richard Playford who joined the Unit as a Lecturer in Religious Studies (0.5) in September 2017 having completed his doctorate in June 2017 on Natural Law and Ethics. As an ECR he has been mentored and encouraged by the Unit's staff and will be submitting several outputs for this Unit, his first submissions for REF. Similarly, Dr Nate Shedd began his doctorate in October 2016 under the supervision of Professors Keith and Crossley. From 2018–19 he worked as a graduate assistant on the BA Theology, Religion, and Ethics degree whilst being mentored by Professor Crossley. He successfully defended his doctorate in September 2019 and is presently working on the staff of St Mary's.

Staff are invited annually to bid for up to one semester's research leave to write up a major piece of research. These sabbaticals are generally awarded annually, and over the past cycle seven have been awarded. Many have used this opportunity to complete monographs that are being submitted as outputs in REF 2021. For example, Professor Keith had a sabbatical leave in Semester One of the 2018-19 academic year, which enabled him to finish his monograph, *The Gospel as Manuscript*, which will form part of his output submission. He also spent the sabbatical finalising and submitting all three volumes of *The Reception of Jesus in the First Three Centuries*, for which he served as lead editor. However, research leave is not tied to REF preparation. All staff attend the Unit's research seminars and present their work in this forum. Each semester priority in allocating seminars is given to research students and to ECRs. New members of staff are encouraged to present their work in their first academic year so that they can participate fully in the research life of the Unit. These seminars, run at least once a month over the academic year, are attended by research active members of staff and postgraduate students, owing to the pandemic, at present remotely.

Research Students

As well as open selection of doctoral candidates, during the REF assessment period ten competitive studentships have been awarded to doctoral students by the Unit, covering all degree costs and in most cases with additional funding for research needs. These have been openly advertised and the students selected from a panel of fellow students and academics. For example, Marc Barnes and Stephen Nakrosis received Benedict Centre studentships for projects on gender theory and Catholic Social Teaching respectively. Both are on course to complete within the next 12 months.

The development of the PGR community is shown in the number of our registered students doubling from 17 in 2014 to 34 at present. The University's application for Research Degree

Awarding Powers was approved on 16 March 2021, and we will be able to award research degrees from 1 April 2021. During the period covered by this report, our cohort was primarily comprised of students registered at Liverpool Hope University, with one remaining from an older collaboration with the University of Surrey. Both universities have rigorous monitoring systems and St Mary's has supplemented this with its own progress monitoring review under the aegis of the University Committee for Research which reviews the support and training provided to all research students through the Annual Report and Interim Review processes.

A research students' 'Module' is hosted on the St Mary's Virtual Learning Environment. This contains all relevant administrative documents and research programme resources. A central PGR skills training programme is provided at St Mary's in addition to the sessions available at Unit level. As well as increasing PGR numbers we have endeavoured to create an environment that supports and values the PGR community so that they can thrive and flourish within the Unit. Each student is attached to a research centre and as well as the programme of Unit-led events each Centre actively involves its students in conferences, colloquia, seminars etc. All registered PhD students are required to have a minimum of eight formal PhD supervisions per annum – with most exceeding this.

Progress is closely monitored with both the interim review and annual review each year, the results of which are discussed at the Institute sub-committee for research. The annual review requires each student to produce a 2000-word report about which they are questioned at the hour-long review meeting by their supervisory team. In line with Liverpool Hope and Surrey regulations the progress of each student is reviewed mid-way through their course in a Confirmation Review. This requires a 20,000-word report detailing their progress to date and an in-depth interview with the supervisory team and external auditors. Each student is allocated £340 per annum for research expenses (conferences, books, research materials etc) from central funds, however many students have been allocated more than this owing, for example, to the need for extra expenses for conferences abroad.

We encourage each student to feel themselves part of the international scholarly community and encourage them to present at international conferences. Over the assessment period graduate students have engaged in teaching undergraduates (maximum of two per year) to prepare them for a future career in the academy (such as Dr Nate Shedd and Dr Leonora Butau). Students engaging in teaching are required to undertake training for this role. They are assigned to a member of academic staff involved in the programme or module who will coordinate their teaching activities and brief them fully on the objectives, academic content and programme regulations. The student is also required to take relevant modules on the University College's Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice and/or attend compulsory training for PGRs. The success of these measures in nurturing a thriving PGR student culture is seen in our completions over the REF cycle:

Table 1. PhD completions per year and cumulative since 2013/14

	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019- 2020
PhD completions		2	0	4	3	3	3
PhD completions (cumulative)		2	2	6	9	12	15

Each research student is supervised by a team to give greater support. This is led by a Director of Studies, assisted by a Research Supervisor, and in many cases supplemented by a Research Advisor, the latter can be appointed from outside St Mary's. In consequence of this targeted and person-centred support the Unit is proud to have mentored and launched the careers of international scholars over the past cycle period. For example, Brandon Massey, currently studying for a PhD with Prof Keith, recently had an article published in the prestigious PRJ *New Testament Studies* that draws on research he is undertaking for his PhD. Dr Leonora Butau, a former undergraduate of St Mary's who was awarded her doctorate in the last cycle, is presently Director of the John Paul II Foundation, Houston, Texas where she draws on her research completed at St Mary's on Pope St John Paul II's Theology of the Body.

Equality and Diversity

Consistent with the University's core value of Inclusiveness, the unit has a commitment to providing equal research opportunities regardless of age, race, gender, religion or sexual orientation. The international nature of our doctoral supervision has supported a growing number of PGR students from BAME and LGBTQ+ backgrounds. Recent doctorates awarded to the Institute's students include Vincent Mannings' 2019 doctorate on people with HIV living in church context and Sangthong Phenrisai's 2019 doctorate investigating Buddhist views of euthanasia in Thailand. As detailed above, our scholarships and research mentoring systems are enabling us to grow and develop support for these groups to assist their doctoral work.

The present pandemic conditions have made online supervision and seminars more important than ever, and we have continued to fully support our students in an online and digitally interactive fashion. The Bible Centre had already pioneered international online supervision, so it did not require a large shift in the Unit's environment to embrace the challenges of Covid-19. Thus, students who may have been affected detrimentally by the pandemic due to their ethnic or family circumstances have had their situation ameliorated.

Several staff and research students have caring responsibilities, family needs (including the need for parental leave) and long-term illness. The Director of the Institute and the Director of Research have taken all this into account when allocating funding, leave and other Institute resources and the allocation of these resources is regularly monitored by the Institute Research Committee to ensure it is fairly distributed according to the University's *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy Statement* (2020).

See, www.stmarys.ac.uk/services-departments/HumanResources/equality-diversity-inclusion/SiteAssets/Pages/Equality

Two specific examples illustrate this wider commitment. In this last REF cycle the Institute has been instrumental in setting up the first MA programme in Catholic Social Teaching in the British Isles, to date the only one of its kind. Students for the degree include interns supported by the Bishops Conference of England and Wales *Faith in Politics* programme and final year students training to be permanent deacons, who are expected to be specialists in this branch of moral theology. The nature of the degree, with its emphasis on combating inequality and promoting liberation, presents a significant statement of the Unit's commitment to equality and diversity.

Finally, a grant received between 2018-21 from Porticus UK to the Bioethics Centre: 'Towards a Catholic understanding of Gender identity', PI Professor David Albert Jones. This grant has enabled the development of a project that is both academic and pastoral, engaging with trans-sexual people who are Catholic and facilitating dialogue on gender identity within the Catholic community.

3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

Evidence for Successful Generation of Research Income.

Each of the four Centres has a budget and Director who is tasked with developing the work and operations of its research. In addition to income provided by St Mary's each Centre has successfully generated substantial amounts of research income during the cycle. Examples of this include:

The Benedict Centre

This Centre has received over £350,000 in grants over the assessment period. Recent substantial grants include:

- 2015-16 John Templeton Foundation: 'The Scientific Study of Nonreligious Belief', co-PI Professor Stephen Bullivant on 15-month project in collaboration with colleagues at the Universities of Kent, Coventry, and Queen's Belfast (£215,000 of which c.£20,000 was direct to St Mary's).
- 2016-20 John Templeton Foundation: 'Understanding Unbelief', co-PI Professor Stephen Bullivant on 3-year project in collaboration with colleagues at the Universities of Kent, Coventry, and Queen's Belfast (£2.3 million; c. £70,000 direct to St Mary's).

These two grants have facilitated Professor Bullivant's work on the role of non-belief and its wider social implications, leading to several significant reports that have impacted on wider society. These impacts are detailed in the accompanying Impact Case Study. Other Benedict Centre grants include:

- 2016-19 Porticus UK: 'Evangelising Parishes', PI Professor Stephen Bullivant (£31,500).
- 2019-22 Porticus UK: 'Signs of Hope: Catholic Growth in the UK', PI Professor Stephen Bullivant (£80,000 direct to St Mary's).
- 2018-19 Ryan Foundation: 'Teenage Pregnancy: a cross-country analysis', PI Professor Stephen Bullivant (£61,000).
- 2019-21 AHRC: 'Catholics in Britain: Faith, Society, Politics', co-PI Professor Bullivant in collaboration with colleagues at Leicester University (£170,000; c.£60,000 to St Mary's).
- 2019-22 St Barnabas Society: 'The experiences of clergy from other denominations (and religions) within the Catholic Church in the British Isles'; PI Professor Stephen Bullivant (£100,000).

From these grants the Centre has been able to develop research scholarships and studentships that have led to several doctoral completions during the cycle.

The Other Centres

These have achieved cumulative grants of c. £100,000 over the assessment period. Substantial examples of these include:

- 2015 Bible Society UK: 'Engaging Poverty in the Early Church and Today' (£5,000).
- 2015 Caritas Diocese of Westminster Conference Sponsorship Grant: 'Engaging Poverty in the Early Church and Today' (£5,000).
- 2018-21: Grant from Porticus UK to the Bioethics Centre: 'Towards a Catholic understanding of Gender identity', PI Professor David Albert Jones (£30 000 total to St Mary's).
- 2019 Grant to the Bible Centre from the Franklin Humanities Institute, Duke University, USA: 'Cultures of Reading in the Ancient Mediterranean: Jews, Christians, Greeks, Romans' (\$11,000).

- 2020 Porticus UK grant to the Spirituality Centre (£20,000) to initiate an international dialogue event in Toledo, Spain, on de-radicalisation in Islam, Christianity and Judaism leading to a publication and further on-line events.

The number and size of the awards attests to the Unit's growing ability to foster internationally recognised research ventures that have been recognised by a range of significant funding bodies. A significant proportion of income each year is ring-fenced for PGRs (£340 x 40 students = £13,600).

Scholarly infrastructure supporting research

The Institute has a Research Director for Theology and Religious Studies as well as an Associate Dean for Research and Enterprise. Accordingly, all PGRs have an independent point of contact to offer support and guidance beyond supervisory teams. The Research Director manages interim and annual monitoring reviews of PGRs, as well as PhD enquiries and enrolments. Research activity in the Institute reports into, and is formally monitored by, the Institute's Research Sub-Committee. This Sub-Committee meets three times per year and is chaired by the Research Director, with the committee comprising of the Director of the Institute, Associate Dean for Research and Enterprise, Head of Research Office, Representatives of research centres, Library representative, and PGR student representative. To ensure the presence of the student voice, the PGR student rep has a fixed agenda item to report on PGR activities and issues arising. The Sub-Committee receives reports on progress of research projects, research outputs, and grant applications, and is responsible for monitoring PGR progress and considering PhD applications. The Sub-Committee reports into the University Research Committee on which both the Director of Research, Associate Dean for Research and Enterprise and Faculty PGR student representative also sit.

To develop the international excellence of the Unit's research facilities in 2004 St Mary's acquired the archives of *The Tablet*, a Catholic weekly founded in 1840. This archive is a unique resource for understanding the development and self-understanding of the Roman Catholic Church in England from 1840 to the present. The archive supports the research of PGR students in the Institute and is utilised by staff and visiting scholars. In 2017 St Mary's acquired the Franciscan Study Collection after the closure of the Franciscan Study Centre, University of Canterbury. It is one of the most substantial collections of Franciscan and Mendicant studies in Northern Europe and is currently housed in the main campus library. In September 2019, the Centre for Marian Studies, established 1995, moved to the St Mary's as an affiliated centre, making St Mary's the custodians of their significant library collection of 1800 volumes on Mariology.

The development of St Mary's Doctoral College during the cycle has given the Unit's research students a well-equipped and appointed space in which to pursue their research. ECRs and research students who have been engaged in teaching have been given access to an office, computer and phone-line, which has enhanced their ability to deepen their belonging to the St Mary's research community. The University Library continues to invest in high quality theological and religious resources for the use of researchers including subscribing to all key research journals and databases of relevance to our students.

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

The Unit has always prized its links with the Third Sector, in particular the Educational and Church-based initiatives that have developed from its research culture. This is outlined in the accompanying impact statements.

Support for Interdisciplinary and Collaborative Research Joint Research Projects

As outlined above, St Mary's has always recognised that theological research is inter-contextual and inter-disciplinary. Since 2018 Professor Tyler has worked in collaboration with the Centre for Spirituality, Theology and Health at Durham University. One of the fruits of this collaboration was the multidisciplinary conference and publication cited earlier. Other examples of collaborative work undertaken by the Unit include the work done by Professor Stammers with Professor Mohammed Ghaly of the Centre for Islamic Legislation and Ethics in Doha. Having presented at a conference in 2017, he contributed a chapter towards a subsequent volume of papers published by Brill in December 2018 as *Islamic Ethics and the Genomic Question*. The Bioethics Centre has also collaborated with the Scottish Council for Human Bioethics (SCHB) with its annual Edinburgh Bioethics Film Festival each November up until 2018. In January 2020, the SCHB and the Bioethics Centre jointly hosted a two-day residential conference on the Ethics of Engendering Non-Human Persons.

Prof Keith is currently collaborating with Professor William Johnson, Chair of Classics at Duke University, on a multi-site research project, 'Cultures of Reading in the Ancient Mediterranean: Jews, Christians, Greeks, Romans.' This involves three events leading to the publication of a major collection of essays. The first event was a workshop held at Duke University in 2019. The second event was a two-day conference held virtually at St Mary's in 2020. The third event will be a panel review of the published proceedings of the two earlier events at the Society of Biblical Literature's annual meeting in 2021. This project is interdisciplinary, placing scholars of ancient Judaism, ancient Christianity, and Classics in discussion over the common theme of 'reading cultures'.

Professor Bullivant is currently involved in the following major collaborations: Co-PI of 'Understanding Unbelief', funded by the John Templeton Foundation, with Drs Lois Lee (PI; Kent), Jon Lanman (co-PI; Queen's University Belfast), and Miguel Farias (co-PI; Coventry); co-PI of 'Catholics in Britain', funded by the AHRC, with Dr Ben Clements (PI; Leicester University); co-editorship of two-volume *The Cambridge History of Atheism* (forthcoming 2021), with Professor Michael Ruse (Florida State University), with whom he previously co-edited *The Oxford Handbook of Atheism* (OUP, 2013); ongoing work on social network analysis with Dr Giovanni Sadewo (Swinburne University of Technology, Australia), and a project on Catholic statistics in Britain and Ireland, in collaboration with Dr Alana Harris (King's College, London) and Tim Kinnear (Benedict Centre PhD student). By including Mr. Kinnear in the project Professor Bullivant will be helping to develop his involvement in future research projects in the academy.

Professional Associations and Editorial Work

Staff in the Unit have been substantially involved in their Professional Associations and associated editorial work during the assessment period. Examples include the Revd Dr Ashley Beck who has been President of the Catholic Association of Great Britain (2018-20) and Professor Peter Tyler who is presently Treasurer of the Mystical Theology Network (2019 – present).

In terms of editorial contributions examples include Professor Tyler who is Deputy Editor of *Vinayasādhana: Journal of Psycho-Spiritual Formation*, published at Dharmaram College, Christ University, Bengaluru and Editorial Adviser to *Mount Carmel Journal*, *Journal of the Teresian Carmelites of the Anglo-Irish Province*. Other examples of editorship include Professor Crossley who is Editor of the *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* and Professor Keith who is Editor of the *Library of New Testament Studies* monograph series; Co-editor of the *Reception of Jesus in the First Three Centuries* monograph series; Editor-in-Chief of the T&T Clark Jesus Library digital database and (with Professor Johnson of Duke University) Co-editor of the *Cultures of Reading in the Ancient Mediterranean* series (Oxford University Press). He is also on the editorial boards of *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus*, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, and *Stone-Campbell Journal*. During the cycle he has also

served as editor of two reference volumes: *The Reception of Jesus in the First Three Centuries* (T&T Clark, 2020) and *The Dictionary of the Bible and Ancient Media* (T&T Clark, 2017).

Research Collaborations, Networks and Partnerships

As well as the major International Conferences outlined in Section One, the Bioethics Centre co-hosted a November 2014 conference on euthanasia in Belgium in collaboration with the Anscombe Bioethics Centre, the Scottish Council on Human Bioethics, and the Centre for Biomedical Ethics and Law at the University of Leuven. This led to an academic publication with Cambridge University Press included in the outputs for REF 2021. The contribution of the Centre to the debate over assisted dying nationally and internationally is explored in the accompanying Impact Case Study.

Refereeing Academic Publications and Consultancies

Staff are widely involved in the review and referee of academic publications. For example, Prof Bullivant is a regular reviewer of monograph manuscripts for Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press, Routledge and Bloomsbury Academic and Journal Peer-Reviewer for (among others): *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, *Religion*, *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, *Journal of Sociology*, *Critical Research on Religion*, *Religion and Politics*, *Secularism and Nonreligion*, *Religion and Gender*, and *Antiphon*. He has also reviewed grant proposals during the assessment period for the European Research Council, the ESRC and the John Templeton Foundation.

Professor Jones is a peer reviewer of manuscripts for the *American Journal of Public Health*, *Bioethics*, *BMC Medical Ethics*, *Clinical Ethics*, *The Hasting Centre Review*, *The Journal of Medical Ethics*, *The Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal*, *Medical Humanities*, *Melita Theologica*, *Modern Theology*, *The National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly* and *Theology & Sexuality* and for the publishers Cambridge University Press, Continuum, InterVarsity Press, Palgrave Macmillan, Routledge, Springer and T&T Clark.

Unit staff are frequently asked to assist with the work of the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales. For example, during the assessment period Professor Bullivant has been a member of the Catholic Bishops' Conference's Mission to Nonreligious Sub-Committee; Prof Tyler has worked on Catholic-Buddhist dialogue with the Conference's Department of Dialogue and Unity and Professor Jones has worked on the Healthcare Reference Group of the Conference, his accompanying impact statement shows the depth of his consultancy work with this and other major national and international bodies.

Scholarly Awards, Fellowships and Invited Keynotes

Unit staff have featured highly in their specialist areas in terms of national and international esteem over the cycle. Examples include:

- Professor David Albert Jones was awarded the Paul Ramsey Award for Excellence in Bioethics in January 2017.
- Professor Chris Keith was awarded a HUMEVAL research fellowship to the University of Oslo in 2020 which, due to Covid-19 restrictions, he will take up in 2021.
- Recent keynotes delivered by Professor Tyler include:

Melancholia, the Dark Night and Spirituality: John of the Cross, Teresa of Avila and Mental Health. Part of the lecture series to accompany the exhibition, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, at the Bethlem Museum of the Mind, The Maudsley NHS Trust, London, March 2019.

Sannyāsa, Monasticism and Dual Belonging at 'Dual Religious Belonging in Hinduism and Christianity', Faculty of Divinity, University of Cambridge, July 2018. This will be published during the next REF cycle.

Jeanne-Marie Guyon: Christian Mindfulness or Mystic Contemplation? at 'Madame Guyon (1648 – 1717) Mystique et Politique à la Cour de Versailles', Université de Genève, Switzerland, November 2017. *Christian Mindfulness and Contemplative Dialogue* at 'Congrès Dialogue des Rationalités Culturelles et Religieuses', Institut Catholique de Paris, June 2016.

Wider Contribution to Society

The wider contribution to society made by the Unit's research often occurs through ecclesial channels. Our close collaboration with the national and international work of the Catholic church has provided numerous instances of the impact of our research. This has meant that the Unit, as detailed throughout this statement, has contributed significantly to ongoing debates concerning some of the most pressing religious and ethical questions of the day. Three examples of this are provided to conclude this statement by referencing the ongoing work of the Bioethics Centre and Professor Booth's input to the work of Parliament as part of his role in the Benedict Centre.

Since its inception one of the Bioethics Centre's primary objectives has been to increase public awareness of bioethical issues. Since 2017 it has hosted four to six public seminars each year on topics ranging from *Big Data in Healthcare* to *Regulating Bio-Law in 2050*. The Centre also hosted an art exhibition in May 2017 by Antonia Rolls on the theme of "Graceful Death" in association with The Art of Dying Well project, which is also hosted at St Mary's. In January 2020, the Centre hosted (in association with the Scottish Council for Human Bioethics) a two-day residential, fully grant-funded conference, which was free to the public, concerning the ethics of engendering post-human persons (part of the Unit's ongoing commitment to an Open Research Environment as evidenced throughout this statement). This attracted an audience of 50 people. The proceedings from this conference are being published by Bloomsbury Academic in March 2021 under the title 'The Ethics of Generating Posthumans: Philosophical and Theological Reflections on the Creation of New Beings.'

In 2015 H.H. Pope Francis appointed Dr Pia Matthews as an expert of the XIV Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in Rome. As an expert she helped the Special Secretary in the preparation of synodal documents and assisted the General Relator in the drafting of his report. This final report paved the way for Pope Francis's Apostolic *Exhortation Amoris Laetitia*. Dr Matthews has represented the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales at a conference organised by the Dicastery for Laity and Family Life. She presented a paper on catechesis and people with disabilities at the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelisation and this has fed into the Council's 2020 publication *The New Directory for Catechesis*.

Finally, as a last example of the wider social impact of our research, mention is made of the work of Professor Booth in giving evidence at Parliamentary select committee hearings in the last six years. One of them (the Department for Work and Pensions Select Committee's Inter-Generational Fairness inquiry) related directly to his work on government debt, pension obligations and demographics:

(see <https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/work-and-pensions-committee/inquiries/parliament-2015/intergenerational-fairness-15-16/publications/>).

As well as giving oral evidence Prof Booth's statements were quoted in the final report.