Discourse:

**Learning and Teaching in
Philosophical and
Religious Studies**

The Higher Education **Academy**

Discourse:
Learning and Teaching in Philosophical and Religious Studies

Discourse

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The journal of the *Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies* of the *Higher Education Academy*

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Editorial: Employability in Philosophical and Religious Studies

Welcome to the latest issue of *Discourse*. As ever, the editorial team hope you find something of interest to you; and welcome your feedback and comments.

This eighth edition of *Discourse* features a 'focus on employability'. The relevance and place of employability in higher education generally, and our disciplines in particular, has been the subject of critical analysis and debate since the very inception of this journal;[1] and throughout recent years there has been growing interest and engagement with this topic—hence we have drawn together here some of the key contributions to the field.

A key concern is to respond to the 'employability agenda' in ways which are appropriate to our disciplines. Thus Hinchliffe's article provides an insightful philosophical critique of weak conceptions of 'employability'; and outlines a more discipline-sensitive approach. Another common theme (e.g. Allen and Burke; Gilliat-Ray; Pattison) is that our graduates typically develop a range of capabilities and attitudes which are of great value to society as a whole; but that these are not always explicitly recognised as such, by students or by employers. These articles present a range of innovative approaches to enhancing students' awareness of their abilities, and their confidence in applying these both to their studies and in the wider social environment.

The Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies has also pioneered a range of projects and activities to support our disciplines in maximising our graduates' potential:

- Detailed subject-specific information about the success of our graduates; by means of graduate case studies, and a national survey of graduate destinations (2005/6)
- Discipline-specific 'profiles' of the skills and attributes developed by our graduates—based on the capabilities identified by academics as key to the study of their disciplines; and compared with the 'competencies' sought by employers—to facilitate the recognition and articulation of our students' distinctive strengths and abilities; and thus raise awareness of the contribution made by graduates from our disciplines (see pp. 16-18)
- Pioneering new developments, such as a pilot project to demonstrate 'entrepreneurial' approaches in our disciplines (see Allen and Burke); and a research project to analyse society's increasing need for graduates who are 'literate' in issues of value (e.g. ethics, belief)—and the ability of our disciplines to play a key role in meeting such needs (see King and Smith)

To find out more:
- Visit the Subject Centre website: **http://prs.heacademy.ac.uk/employ/index.html**
- Contact the Subject Centre—for further details of any of these projects; or for individual guidance on the issues of concern to you and your department.

Dr Clare Saunders,
Subject Coordinator

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[1] Cowley, C., "Cultivating Transferable Skills in Philosophy Undergraduates", *The PRS-LTSN Journal*, 1/1, 2001, 39-51.

News and Information

The Higher Education Academy

The finalisation of the Higher Education Academy's central structures and functions is nearing completion. Throughout these changes the mission of the Subject Centre and the subject network has remained broadly the same. The Academy is building on the success of the network and includes a wider range of functions and activities than has been offered by the LTSN in the past. To find out more, visit the Academy's website:

http://www.heacademy.ac.uk

The Subject Network

The Support Network is a network of 24 subject centres based in higher education institutions throughout the UK. It is funded by the four HE funding bodies in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. It aims to promote high quality learning and teaching through development and transfer of successful practice in all subject disciplines.

Activities

The Subject Network's core activities are:
- setting up, supporting and developing learning and teaching networks;
- promoting and sharing successful practice in learning, teaching and assessment through workshops, conferences, meetings and the interoperability of resources and databases of resources;
- facilitating the transfer of knowledge between users, experts, developers and innovators.

The Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies,
The Higher Education Academy

The Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies is based at the University of Leeds and at a partner site at the University of Wales, Lampeter and covers the disciplines of Philosophy, Philosophy of Science, History of Science (including the History of Medicine and Technology), Theology, and Religious Studies.

Activities

The mission of the Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies is to enhance teaching quality and improve the student learning experience for all in the context of a changing educational environment.

More specifically, we aim:
- to be the accepted source of information and advice to PRS subject communities on subject-specific and relevant generic educational issues;
- to promote the discovery, development and brokerage of good and innovative practice in learning, teaching and assessment;
- to develop and maintain a national and international profile;
- to identify and disseminate current and future national policy objectives in learning and teaching and to assist departmental implementation where appropriate.

We provide the following services and resources:
- news and support advice on national developments and funding opportunities;
- individual consultations;
- departmental visits;
- grants and funding for learning and teaching mini-projects;
- a comprehensive website of electronic resources and reviews;

- *Discourse: Learning and Teaching in Philosophical and Religious*;
- *Discourse Supplement* for heads of departments and policy makers;
- e-news updates;
- regional and departmental workshops and conferences.

Visit the website for the Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies (formerly the PRS-LTSN) of the Higher Education Academy:

http://prs.heacademy.ac.uk

Departmental Visits, Workshops and Contacts

Departmental Visits

We have now visited most of the departments in our subject communities. We have contacted all the departments (either via your departmental Subject Centre representative or your Head of Department) and if we have not yet set up a face to face meeting then please do not hesitate to contact us at the address below to arrange one. The aim of the visits is to gather information about existing effective practice and to find out what the most pressing issues for your department and for individual lecturers and tutors are, so that we can better direct our resources and efforts to serve the PRS community in all learning, teaching and assessment matters.

We also offer a programme of follow-up visits and workshops. These are designed to help us better help you with issues raised in our first visits and to see how things have changed in your learning and teaching environment. We aim to provide workshops and support advice on any learning and teaching issue that has a subject-specific dimension. These workshops can be tailored to your departmental needs and time and can cover topics such as plagiarism, assessment and tutor training. Please contact us to discuss how we might help your with a workshop for your department, free of charge.

Contacts

Our list of departmental contacts continues to grow, but there is still a small minority of departments that have not registered a representative. If you would like to be a representative for your department, please contact:

Martyn Fletcher
Subject Centre for PRS
Higher Education Academy
School of Theology and Religious Studies
University of Leeds
Leeds LS2 9JT
Tel: 0113 343 4184
enquiries@prs.heacademy.ac.uk

All the Subject Centre news on funding and events is available from our website:

http://prs.heacademy.ac.uk

Also available are:

- our biannual *Discourse Supplement* (for heads of departments and policy makers);

- our *e-news updates*. To receive the e-bulletins you need to be registered with Subject Centre (visit the website).

The e-bulletin will keep you up-to-date with:

- Events
- Funding
- Conferences in learning and teaching
- National developments

NB: some institutions block mass emails. If you are registered but do not receive the e-bulletin, please contact Martyn (martyn@prs-ltsn.ac.uk) with an alternative email address.

Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETLs)

In January 2005, HEFCE announced the outcomes of its largest ever single funding initiative in teaching and learning: the creation of 74 Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETLs). This initiative has two main aims:

- To reward excellent teaching practice; and
- To invest in that practice further in order to increase and deepen its impact across a wider teaching and learning community. (HEFCE 2005/17 para. 2)

The CETLs will be funded for five years, from 2005-06 to 2009-10; in total, HEFCE will invest £315 million in this initiative.

The Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies is developing links with a number of CETLs whose work may be of particular relevance to staff and students in our disciplines:

CETL	Institution(s)
IDEAS: Inter-disciplinary ethics across subject disciplines	Leeds
Enabling Achievement within a Diverse Student Body	Wolverhampton
CRUCiBLE: Centre for Rights Understanding and Citizenship Based on Learning through Experience	Roehampton
CETLE: White Rose Centre for Excellence in the Teaching and Learning of Enterprise	Sheffield, Leeds, York
Institute for Enterprise	Leeds Metropolitan
Centre for Excellence in Preparing for Academic Practice	Oxford

CCMS: Centre for Career Management Skills	Reading
Centre for Employability Through the Humanities	Central Lancashire
ESD: Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning for Education for Sustainable Development	Plymouth
ALiC: Active Learning in Computing	Durham, Leeds, Leeds Metropolitan, Newcastle
LearnHigher	Liverpool Hope + 15 others
CILASS: Centre for Inquiry-based Learning in the Arts and Social Sciences	Sheffield
Centre for Promoting Learner Autonomy	Sheffield Hallam
Blended Learning Unit	Hertfordshire

To find out more about these CETLs; how the Subject Centre will be supporting their work with our disciplines; and how you and your department could benefit:

- Contact us: **enquiries@prs.heacademy.ac.uk**
- Consult the Subject Centre website: **http://prs.heacademy.ac.uk/cetls/**
- Consult the HEFCE CETL website: **http://www.hefce.ac.uk/learning/tinits/cetl/**

Religion, Enterprise and Consultancy

Terms such as 'enterprise', 'entrepreneurship' and 'consultancy' are not ones that one would usually associate with Religious Studies (RS). Yet over the past 18 months the Subject Centre has funded a successful project that has caused quite a number of people in the HE sector to reconsider the way in which they view our subject areas. When, in January 2004, we received an invitation for Subject Centres to apply for grant funding from the Department for Education and Skills to raise awareness of Entrepreneurship and Enterprise within our subject areas; we wondered whether this would be something that we could successfully work with.

Something that was uppermost in our minds at the time was the implementation of the Employment and Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations that had come into force in December 2003. We were aware that these may have implications for RS graduates, in that their knowledge may become more useful to companies and public sector bodies as they seek to adhere to the requirements of this legislation; and this may be reflected in an increase in demand for consultants with specialised knowledge.

In considering these two issues we thought that we may be able to bring them together by thinking how we could:

- assess the need for consultancy on issues related to religion
- raise awareness of RS graduates' skills that can be developed and used in this area
- encourage students (undergraduate and postgraduate) and graduates to consider 'religious consultancy' as a realistic employment option
- consider how increasing interest in 'social entrepreneurship' can act as a further encouragement to RS graduates to engage in this sort of activity
- support academic departments in identifying the enterprise skills that they are already providing for students
- help academic departments to develop their own consultancy concerns

We thought that there were some compelling reasons to apply for funding contained within these points, and were successful in obtaining funding. The main outcomes of this project, run in collaboration with the University of Wolverhampton and the Religion in Britain Research Organisation (*ribro*), are reported elsewhere in this issue (pp. 151-172).

That the project has been successful beyond our expectations has signalled that there is a real potential to develop the idea of 'religious consultancy'. Of the three graduates who acted as consultants for a mixture of public bodies and charities, two have received requests to engage in further, paid, work; and the third has been successfully involved in promoting the outcomes of the project. This has been a really transformative experience for the graduates who have all discovered that a degree in RS has more applications than they had previously thought.

Importantly the project has enabled those involved in it to develop something that stresses the social benefits of enterprise and entrepreneurship skills; rather than the more commercial ones that may immediately come to mind—although a combination of both is, of course, possible. In doing this project we have also become aware that Centres for Enterprise in HE institutions are often very keen to get the involvement of departments and individuals from non-vocational subject areas, and often have funding to help encourage collaboration. As a result enterprise and entrepreneurship could be developed within the curriculum for little extra cost in a way that is sensitive to the ideas and values of staff and students. There are also resources that would help departments and individuals to consider this on the Higher Education Academy website (see **http://www.prs.heacademy.ac.uk/employ/eship/index.html** for a link to the appropriate page).

In summary, we think that there are increasing opportunities for RS departments to:

- increase student recruitment by including the possibility of developing skills that may lead to consultancy work both social and commercial;
- work more closely with enterprise centres to consider those enterprise skills that are already being attained by RS students, so minimising any requirement for additional work to be done;

- consider setting up their own consultancy businesses (involving staff and, possibly, postgraduates) to run in conjunction with providing support for students in this area;
- encourage the rising importance of social enterprise and social entrepreneurship.

If you would like more information on the project, and how the Subject Centre can help you to become involved in a similar scheme, please contact Dr Simon Smith (**simon@prs.heacademy.ac.uk**). Please note that although the main funding of this project has now finished, we are able to provide small amounts of money to help departments and individuals to begin to think about this area of activity.

Why Philosophy Graduates can be Highly Effective Employees

Over the past two years the Higher Education Academy Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies (PRS) has been carrying out research that has looked at why Philosophy students are regarded as highly employable in a wide range of professions. Included in this have been a series of case studies that provide useful indicators of how graduates use their skills in a diverse range of jobs. The Subject Centre has also produced a guide to employability in Philosophy, Theology and Religious Studies that offers useful information to students and teaching staff on how to articulate the skills that are engendered. All these resources are accessible on the website at:

http:// prs.heacademy.ac.uk/employ/index.html

In addition to this programme the Subject Centre has been part of a consortium of twelve subject centres (covering 23 subject areas), along with the Enhancing Student Employability Coordination Team (ESECT) and the Council for Industry and Higher Education (CIHE), that has commissioned a series of Student Employability Profiles that were designed to overcome widely held stereotypes about the employability of the graduates of a number of different subject areas. It encourages students to understand the skills that they have developed and to interpret them in a manner that employers will appreciate. The Profiles also provide employers with easily accessible information on how graduates conform to a range of generic employability competencies. A guide for employers covering all 23 subject areas has just been published by CIHE, and can be downloaded or ordered from their website at:

http://www.cihe-uk.com/publications.php

The Employability Profile for Philosophy highlights the plurality of approaches that students are required to encounter, understand and critically question. It suggests that while other degrees—such as Business, Finance, and Law—are more obviously vocational in terms

of the skills they provide, 'Philosophy focuses more on providing the ideal environment in which to develop the fundamental and essential attributes on which these skills depend'. This is because Philosophy encourages people 'to think, analyse and communicate ideas in a clear rational and well thought out way'. In addition the guide rightly suggests that, because of the way Philosophy is taught and learned, 'it is constantly questioning and refreshing itself', and this is 'the very essence of learning and knowledge'. This means that good philosophy graduates will possess the ability to understand situations from any number of angles, making them highly effective problem solvers and agents to support organizational and individual change. As the guide suggests, 'this means that the employability possibilities are almost limitless'.

It is also arguable that the skills that Philosophy students bring to the workplace are, if anything, likely to become more valuable over time. As the guide suggests, 'In an increasingly global economy, the skills of vision, creativity and analytical power being developed through the study of Philosophy will have a premium'. The Subject Centre also recognizes that employers and consumers are becoming more aware of social and ethical issues that can be identified through approaches to Corporate and Social Responsibility, Social Enterprise, and Sustainable Development; and it is developing employability projects in all of these areas. These projects recognize that Philosophy graduates will almost certainly have studied ethics at a deep level, and seeks to identify how all the specialist skills that they attain can come together as an 'ethical literacy' or 'values literacy'.

The Subject Centre for PRS is continuing to work on this Profile, as well as its other projects, to produce a series of guides aimed at prospective students, graduates, employers, and teachers. If you would like to register an interest in receiving this material please contact the Subject Centre, details below.

For more information please contact:
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School of Theology and Religious Studies
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Leeds, LS2 9JT
Web: **http://prs.heacademy.ac.uk**
Email: **simon@prs.heacademy.ac.uk**

New Approaches to Employability

Higher Education Academy Subject Centres for Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences (GEES); and Philosophical and Religious Studies (PRS)

The Higher Education Academy subject centres for Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences (GEES); and Philosophical and Religious Studies (PRS) have been working on a number of projects around the themes of Employability and Entrepreneurship for a number of years.[1] Much of this work has focused on enhancing the skilfulness of our graduates; with relatively little attention being directed towards fostering graduates' attitudes, and their impact on their value in the workplace and society. The two subject centres are beginning to address these issues with a collaborative project based around supporting the development of employability skills for corporate and social responsibility (CSR).

There is evidence of growing emphasis upon the need for graduates to have the ability to 'see the bigger picture', for example the increasing demand for professional ethics as a core element of many subject curricula, government initiatives to foster citizenship and sustainability, and a greater emphasis on social enterprise and social entrepreneurship. This may lead to a situation where there is a premium on graduates who have the capacity to appreciate the values dimension, that is, to recognise and critically evaluate the impact of their actions on their wider environment. This 'values literacy' is, in most disciplines, only just emerging as a component of employability as commonly understood in many parts of the HE (and employer) sector(s).

In approaching these issues we broadly divided them into two main categories:

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[1] For further information see
http://www.gees.ac.uk/projtheme/emp/employ.htm;
http://www.gees.ac.uk/projtheme/entrep/entrep.htm; and
http://prs.heacademy.ac.uk/employ/index.html

- Responsibilities to the individual: including employment practices that are governed by law (such as discrimination by gender, age, disability, race and faith)
- Responsibilities to the local and global community: including sustainability and an understanding of community and globalisation issues.

These various issues are familiar to the two Subject Centres involved in this proposal in that they are, to varying extents, part of the underlying theoretical framework of their curricula. For example, GEES has a focus on globalisation and sustainability; and PRS has expertise in areas of ethics and faith literacy.

Through this project, therefore, we intend to:

- Investigate how GEES and PRS subject communities are already involved in developing values-based skills.
- Work with stakeholders, including employers, to discover more about their requirements from students relating to these skills.
- Produce a report that will provide evidence of these skills being incorporated into the curriculum and of the value of these skills to employers.

The outcomes of the project are intended to inform future development work in the areas of CSR, sustainability, ethics, and social entrepreneurship.

For further details please contact:

- Dr Helen King, Assistant Director, Subject Centre for Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences; **h.king@plymouth.ac.uk**

- Dr Simon Smith, Centre Manager, Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies; **simon@prs.heacademy.ac.uk**

Conference: **Future Discourse: Learning and Teaching in Philosophy**

1-2 July 2005

University of Leeds, UK

Keynote Speaker: **Simon Blackburn (Cambridge)**

International papers from:

University of Leeds; University of Manchester; Grand Valley State University; Institut de Pratiques Philosophiques; University of Southampton; Ramapo College of New Jersey; University of Cyprus; Ball State University; University of North Carolina at Charlotte Medaille College, Buffalo; Wright State University; University of Maryland University College; Southern Illinois University, Carbondale; University of East Anglia; University of Liverpool; City University of New York; Peace College; University of Hertfordshire; Coastal Carolina University; Bilkent University, Turkey; University of Glasgow; University of Aberdeen.

This international conference will explore a range of themes in philosophy teaching in the UK and worldwide, examining current and future issues and developments in both curricula and methods of delivery. Sessions are organised into themed units and the will be plenty of opportunity to share your views and expertise on leaning and teaching in philosophy. There will be a conference reception and dinner.

The conference programme, abstracts of the papers, workshops and discussion, covering a wide range of topics from ethics to e-learning, from Kant to the curriculum, are available at the conference website, along with registration details:

http://www.prs.heacademy.ac.uk/philosophy/ events/conference.html

Conference: **Real World, Real People: Ethics in a Virtual World**

Second International Conference on Teaching Applied and Professional Ethics in Higher Education

30 August – 1 September 2005
Southlands College, Roehampton

There are three linked themes for the conference:

- Ethics in the virtual world

- The response of Higher Education—earning and teaching ethics for the changing world

- Ethics, religion, toleration and respect in a globally linked world.

The Conference themes will be explored across a range of disciplines including pharmacy, computing, healthcare, engineering, business and many others. Keynote speeches will be supplemented by a series of papers and discussions conducted in parallel sessions. These will include 'round the table' conversations.

There will also be displays and presentations, alongside the seminar rooms, of the work of charitable foundations and organisations that are committed to particular ethical issues associated with the environment, relieving poverty, creating improved working practices, more honest and equitable business practices and with the protection of vulnerable people.

http://www.roehampton.ac.uk/bss/cape/conference.htm

Conference: **Uncertainty in Philosophy: The Learning Experience and Research**

Saturday 29 October 2005

Regent's Park College, University of Oxford

A one-day conference organised by the Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies, and the Society for Women in Philosophy

Keynote Speaker: **Dorothy Edgington, Waynflete Professor of Metaphysics, University of Oxford**

The aim of this one-day conference is to explore 'uncertainty in philosophy' theoretically and practically. This will include an opening keynote paper on uncertainty and philosophical discussion of the topic. This will be followed in the afternoon by more informal opportunities to consider the challenges for women and men doing philosophy in the changing environment of contemporary UK higher education (HE); and ways of meeting those challenges. This will provide opportunities for philosophers from all fields to exchange experiences and expertise; to develop shared understandings of working in/with the uncertainties of philosophy in contemporary HE, and establish/strengthen links with a diverse range of colleagues. A final plenary discussion concerning the way forward will aim to generate strategies for strengthening both the Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies and the Society for Women in Philosophy as vital networks of support.

Opening Plenary Address—On Uncertainty

- Professor Dorothy Edgington (Magdalen College, Oxford)
- Chaired by Dr Pamela Sue Anderson (Regent's Park College, Oxford)

Parallel Sessions:

The Postgraduate Experience—Teaching Postgraduate Students

- Professor Jennifer Saul (Sheffield), Dr Alessandra Tanesini (Cardiff) and Adele Tomlin (King's College London)

Philosophy in an Interdisciplinary Context

- Dr John I'Anson (Education, Stirling) and Dr Alison Jasper (Religious Studies, Stirling)
- Dr Monica Mookherjee (Politics, Keele)

Panel Discussion—Career Development Issues

Chaired by Dr C Soran Reader (Durham)

Closing Plenary Discussion—The Way Forward for Philosophy

There will also be extensive opportunities for open discussion of the issues raised. Further debate and development of the topic (before and after the conference) will be supported by means of a discussion list, and future events as appropriate.

Please note: There is **no fee** for attending this event; however, **please register** for a place. To find out more and register:

http://prs.heacademy.ac.uk/events/swip_conference.html

Conference: **Women and the Divine**

Friday 17th – Sunday 19th June 2005

University of Liverpool, Hope University College

Keynote Speakers:

Luce Irigaray
Pamela Sue Anderson
Morny Joy
Daphne Hampson
Melissa Raphael
Regina Schwartz

Institute for Feminist Theory and Research
Dale Hall, University of Liverpool

Supported by the British Academy

> Divinity is what we need to become free, autonomous, sovereign. No human subjectivity, no human society has ever been established without the help of the divine.
>
> Luce Irigaray

This conference will explore the claim that central to the emancipatory aspirations of feminism is reflection upon and reinterpretation of notions of the divine. We aim to provide a stimulating and inclusive forum for interdisciplinary debate on the question of women and the divine. Concerned with the impact of sexual difference on religious and spiritual practices, this conference will offer a chance to explore, articulate and share the personal experiences and reflections of women practitioners from all faiths and denominations.

Participants from all disciplines, as well as spiritual practitioners from all faiths are welcome. Topics include: Feminist Philosophy of Religion; Radical and Orthodox Traditions; Ecofeminism and Ecotheology; Desire, Sexuality and the Divine; Reading Sacred Texts; Goddess Feminisms; Christian and Islam Dialogues; Wicca, Russian Orthodoxy; Reconstructing Mary, and Buddhism and Gender.

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Articles, Discussion and Practical Teaching

Christian Theology for Ministry and the Quality Assurance Agency Criteria:
An Epistemological Critique

Mark J. Cartledge

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1. Introduction

In the last fifteen years there has been an explosion in the provision of Masters level programmes for those engaged in or preparing for Christian ministry.[1] Many theological colleges have developed such programmes in order to compete with other colleges for precious

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[1] See the 1999-2001 research conducted by Paul Ballard, *Practical Theology—Proliferation and* Performance (Cardiff: Department of Religious and Theological Studies, University of Cardiff, 2001); Paul Ballard and Stephen Pattison, 'Ambiguity and opportunity: appraising practical theology', *Contact: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Pastoral Studies* 139 (2002) pp. 15-23; and Paul Ballard, 'Reflections on Professional Theological Education', *Theology* 107.839 (2004) pp. 333-342.

ordinands. The rising educational standard of the clergy has meant that more and more clergy are using their continuing ministerial education budgets to embark on higher degrees. This has support from churches of different denominations and thus reflects the recent societal expectation that people progress further than before in terms of Higher Education (hereafter: HE) qualifications. However, the development of such programmes has been influenced by a number of factors and I intend to explore the interface of two in this essay.

The first factor is the expansion of HE and the way in which the sector is now driven by the market economy.[2] At the end of the day the chief goal of such education is understood by the Government to be economic and social. That is, education is for the purpose of providing society with competently trained individuals who are able to contribute to the workforce and the economy.[3] The HE sector is now instrumental to national economic success, which is, of course, measured in a variety of ways. Therefore, the educational product is measured using simple measurements (levels and credit units) and financial tags are easily attached to such measures. In a fast moving economic reality it is also the case that many people will change jobs frequently, so programmes are to take account of such transference and such flexibility needs to be measured in ways that are observable, such as 'transferable skills'.[4] In this economic and social climate, with an ever expanding HE sector, it is important to control the quality of the various programmes via the Quality Assurance Agency (hereafter: QAA),[5] so that employers understand the value of what it is that they get when they employ someone with a Masters degree in sociology or philosophy or indeed theology. It is not the subject specific information that is most important but the competence and skill

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[2] Ronald Barnett, *The Limits of Competence: Knowledge, Higher Education and Society* (Buckingham: The Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press, 1994) p.5, who observes that the new vocabulary of HE (competence, outcomes, skills and transferability) serves 'a closed conception of higher education with the economy'.

[3] See Elisabeth Lillie, 'The Humanities: From Ivory Tower to Marketplace?' in R. Barnett (ed.), *Learning to Effect* (Buckingham: The Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press, 1992) pp. 121-134, who discusses this issue.

[4] Barnett, *The Limits of Competence* p.15 calls this requirement 'operationalism', that is, the requirement that students have the capacities to operate effectively within contemporary society.

[5] Full information on the work of QAA can be found at **http://www.qaa.ac.uk**

development that it represents in the job marketplace. Of course, there are social and cultural spin-offs and these are, no doubt, valued but they are inevitably secondary to the perceived economic benefits.

The second factor is the development of ministerial education itself. The development of the discipline of practical theology in this period has been significant for ministerial education.[6] It used to be the case that the applied model of theological education was the norm, and it can still be seen in the more conservative traditions. In this model, philosophy, doctrine and biblical studies mark the first phase, and this is supplemented by historical study. After one has discerned sufficient knowledge from such disciplines, then that knowledge can be applied in a rather linear fashion to the contemporary context such as church leadership today.[7] Alongside this theoretical knowledge base, students can be expected to pick up 'tips' on how to do certain things, such as 'not dropping the baby' at baptism,[8] and this is often called 'pastoralia'. However, with the influence of liberation theology and praxis orientated theology there has been greater attention to the contemporary context and its influence on theology more generally. There is a move to understand theological knowledge not just as cognitive and theoretical, which one can simply apply, but as complex and holistic; and including interdisciplinary theory, action, affections and integrated within Christian spirituality informed and shaped by theological tradition. Thus the older tradition of theology as a form of *habitus*, a way of life, is gaining greater attention and this, in turn, is influencing the expectations of academics and students associated with programmes intending to resource Christian ministry.[9]

The aim of this essay is to consider these two factors and (1) to suggest ways in which the epistemology associated with Christian

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[6] See the suggestion by Don S. Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology: Descriptive and Strategic Proposals* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996) pp. 58-59.

[7] Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Brief Outline of the Study of Theology* Trans T.N. Tice (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1996); Nigel Cameron, *Method Without Madness? An Evangelical Approach to 'Doing' Theology* (Leicester: UCCF, 1983) articulates the classic encyclopaedia approach as proceeding from biblical languages and exegesis, biblical theology, systematic theology, ecclesiastical history and historical theology to practical theology, pp. 22-25.

[8] Paul Ballard, 'The Emergence of Pastoral and Practical Theology in Britain', in James Woodward and Stephen Pattison (eds.), *The Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology* (Oxford, Blackwell, 2000) pp. 59-70 (p.62).

[9] This has been expressed by Edward Farley, *Theologia: Fragmentation and Unity in Theological Education* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983).

theology for ministry can critique the epistemology embedded in the QAA documentation; (2) to suggest how the QAA criteria might be interpreted by those seeking to provide M level programmes in Christian theology for ministry; and (3) to raise some questions for academics and QAA to consider.

2. QAA Masters Level Criteria

The QAA provide generic criteria to enable universities and HE institutions to understand the levels required for a successful student to achieve certain objectives. Undergraduate levels are 1-3 and correspond to the first three years of a degree (except for Scotland where degree programmes are usually four years). Postgraduate levels are 4 and 5, corresponding to Masters and Doctoral levels respectively. They are very similar in their philosophical bases and therefore the comments regarding level 4, that is, Masters level, can easily be applied to the other levels. In order to appreciate the criteria, the Masters level ones are cited below in full.

Masters degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:
(i) a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study, or area of professional practice;
(ii) a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship;
(iii) originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline;
(iv) conceptual understanding that enables the student:
- to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline; and
- to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:
a. deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences;
b. demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level;
c. continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level;

and will have:
d. the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:
- the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility;
- decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations; and
- the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.

These criteria can be analysed in relation to two basic epistemological categories, theory or body of knowledge (*theoria*) and practical skills (*techne*). Thus criterion (i) is about the acquisition of a *theoretical body of knowledge* appropriate to the subject such that the student appreciates the boundaries of such knowledge. It can be driven by problems arising from the world of work, or by issues in professional practice, but it is fundamentally about acquiring a body of knowledge. Criterion (ii) relates to understanding of research skills and techniques. This criterion concerns both theory and skills. The comprehensive understanding reflects a need for an engagement with *a body of methodological theory*, but it is expected that such knowledge will be translated into skills. Criterion (iii) specifies the level of originality that is required at M level and it is in relation to the *application of the body of knowledge*. M level work is not expected to demonstrate theoretical innovation, but only *applied* originality, as well as practical insight in the use of such techniques and the interpretative role that they have in the production of knowledge. Criterion (iv) refers to *thinking skills* that the student working at this level is expected to display. Thus there is the ability to evaluate advanced scholarship, that is, work at the forefront of the body of knowledge (*theoria*); and the ability to evaluate methodologies

(*techne*) and propose suggestions for new approaches (hypotheses). In this analysis it can be seen that the twin categories of *theoria* and *techne* dominate the discourse. There are two essential domains of knowledge: theory and technique or practical skill; and these define and delimit the nature of knowledge across *all* disciplines. As such these controlling categories have a hegemonic quality, functioning as universal epistemological norms. This paradigm is a modernist and post-Enlightenment construct that is based on a fundamentally dualist and task-oriented epistemology.

The professional and personal qualities that a 'typical' M level graduate is expected to display are largely for the employment market.[10] They include the ability to deal with complexity, make 'sound' judgements based on limited evidence, communication skills, independent direction and problem solving capacities and the willingness to continue to learn new bodies of knowledge and new skills as required. This employment drive is explicit in criterion (d) and reiterates some of the earlier qualities in different language. So we read that employable persons are to display initiative, responsibility, decision-making qualities, independence and continuing professional development. This list of qualities looks like a person specification for a job! This is the kind of person we would like to employ if we had the choice because they would be able to contribute to the efficiency and competitiveness of our company. We want someone who is able to deal with global capitalism in a postmodern world. Such a person would not be tied to one job for life, nor would they be intimidated by new technological developments. She or he would be flexible and able to meet the challenges that lie before the fast-moving world of post-industrialised societies in the Western world. If ever there were an 'ideal type', this is it, and with them lies the future economic salvation of the UK!

This analysis suggests that these two sets of criteria promote both a modernist and a postmodern epistemological interface. On the one hand, the rationalistic first set of criteria display the dichotomy between theory and practice and the movement is from theory *applied* to technical skill/practice. Although professional practice is

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[10] Barnett, *The Limits of Competence*, p.6, refers to the state's agenda for 'orientating higher education to the claims of the world of work', and the key concepts are the usual suspects: competence, capability, transferable skills and enterprise.

mentioned, the dominant sense is that the body of knowledge is in the service of research and research is in the service of the economy or the work of work (hence problem-solving). This characterises the modernist paradigm still dominant within many HE sectors, especially the sciences.[11] On the other hand, the kind of workforce that is required is essentially flexible and mobile. This is driven by the values of mass consumption and the need to respond to the complexity of multi-cultural contexts in a global and unpredictable economy, i.e. postmodernity.[12] Both sets of values are economically driven, but they display different contexts. The first arises from an historical context that is modernist in its epistemological assumptions and the second arises from a future and unpredictable context, from out of which persons will need to compete in the future global market place. This QAA document seems to embody the sociological theory that Western contemporary societies are in the process of moving from modernity to postmodernity. Modernity still holds sway but postmodernity is beginning to arrive and its appearance seems inevitable. It could just be a matter of time. [13] It also displays the tension between older notions of academic discipline-specific knowledge and skills and newer demands for generic transferable skills, apparently devoid of disciplinary related content,[14] which can be applied flexibly to this unpredictable, global market economy in which each nation state will compete.

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[11] Modernity has been analysed in a variety of ways from Marx (world of commodities ruled by the pursuit of profit) to Durkheim (subdividing of tasks and responsibilities) and Weber (functional rationality: the calculating attitude to more and more aspects of life), see: David Lyon, *Postmodernity* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1999, 2nd edn.) p. 30.

[12] Lyon, *Postmodernity*, pp. 71-76.

[13] For an excellent discussion of these themes in relation to Christianity in the Western world, see: Andrew Walker, *Telling the Story: Gospel, Mission and Culture* (London: SPCK, 1996), who describes the cultural transition as either a paradigm shift or an implosion, pp. 184-187.

[14] See George Brown, Joanna Bull and Malcolm Pendlebury, *Assessing Student Learning in Higher Education* (London: Routledge, 1997) pp. 35-39.

3. Christian Theology for Ministry

In recent years there have been many new programmes designed to meet the needs of churches educating professional ministers of religion. In most cases these are programmes that have to pass two sets of criteria. The first is the validating or accrediting criteria of the university and the second is the professional accreditation of the church denomination. At the end of the day the churches require clergy who are trained to deal with the complexities of a fast-changing contemporary society and at the same time are grounded in the tradition of a faith community.[15] They are required to be guardians of the tradition as well as those who engage creatively with the challenges presented to their faith community by the world in which they live. In this context theological education has developed new understandings of its mission and rediscovered older insights.[16]

The study of Scripture will continue to be the focus of a considerable amount of theological education for ministry. This is because it is regarded as the sacred text, however defined, and its reading and preaching is crucial to the ordained ministry in most traditions. How the text is to be interpreted will, of course, vary but the fact that it is interpreted through a theological tradition and in a cultural context is now rarely disputed. Attention is being paid to the tradition and to the contemporary culture that influences its use today in a number of ways.[17] These include the ways in which Scripture has been interpreted throughout history in order to understand how

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[15] The Church of England Report, *Mission and Ministry: The Churches' Validation Framework for Theological Education* (London: Advisory Board of Ministry, approved by the House of Bishops 1999) offers reflections on an earlier framework document, *Education for the Church's Ministry*(ACCM 22, 1987), and suggests that ordinands should be expected to have covered three main areas of study: the Interpretation of Christian Tradition for Today (including Scripture, theology and history), the Formation of Church life (including personal commitment to Christ and spirituality), and Addressing Situations in the World (including reflective capacities in relation to pluralism and ethics), pp. 22, 41-42.

[16] For an overview of the debate in the USA dealing with issues of vocation and formation in the context of seminary education, see: Robert Banks, *Reenvisioning Theological Education: Exploring a Missional Alternative to Current Models* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999).

[17] See Joel B. Green and Max Turner (eds.), *Between Two Horizons: Spanning New Testament Studies and Systematic Theology* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2000).

reading traditions change over time, as well as the ways in which contemporary biblical scholarship now uses a range of tools from literary theory to the social sciences and in some cases replacing historical-critical methods. However, there has been a truly significant turn to the contemporary end of the hermeneutical process in theology that is significant for epistemology and for ministerial education. All roads lead to the 'here and now'!

The impact of liberation theology with its emphasis on contemporary praxis as the judge of truth, hence orthopraxis, cannot be ignored.[18] From this perspective, truth is not merely abstract theory but something that is lived and has currency in the contemporary action of the church. Attention is now being given to the actual practices of the faith communities as providing a form of knowledge for authentic action. The level of authority that is given to such communal practices is very much disputed, but that these practices are now researched is a significant difference.[19] Theology is not simply about the application of an abstract theoretical perspective to a concrete situation, but can start with a concrete situation and, after engagement with the theological beliefs, attitudes and actions, can be revised. This means that 'lived communal practice' is an important epistemological category for ministerial theology and a key skill for a clergyperson is the ability to reflect with one's community upon its practice of the faith. This is illustrated in the growth of the use of the phrase 'theological reflection' as a tag for the ability to reflect theologically upon one's own practice of ministry and to lead one's congregation in corporate reflection.[20]

The insight of recent theology combines not only right belief (orthodoxy) with right action (orthopraxis) but also right affections (orthopathy) before God.[21] This is not a return to nineteenth century liberalism or eighteenth century romanticism but a genuine attempt to

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[18] The classic text is by Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation* (London: SCM, 1974) p.10.

[19] Elaine L. Graham, *Transforming Practice: Pastoral Theology in an Age of Uncertainty* (London: Mowbray, 1996) advocates that norms should be located in the faith communities themselves.

[20] Ballard, 'Reflections on Professional Theological Education Today', p.340; cf. John Witcombe, 'The Emperor's New Clothes of Theological Education', *Anglicans for Renewal—Skepsis* 80 (2000) pp. 29-35.

[21] Mark J. Cartledge, *Practical Theology: Charismatic and Empirical Perspectives* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2003) pp. 17-20.

recognise that the Christian tradition contains ways of knowing that are affective not simply cognitive or action based.[22] The Christian faith cannot be reduced to a set of true propositions or religious rituals or experiences, nor can it be encapsulated in a sense of the transcendent, rather it combines a number of features. At its centre lies a cluster of important epistemological categories that function socially and individually. One of these important categories is what might be metaphorically called the 'heart'. In biblical anthropology the 'heart' is the seat of human emotion and will (although other parts of the body function symbolically in this way, e.g. the kidneys) and provides a clue to understanding.[23] It points to a way of knowing that recognises emotions, virtues and passions as significant for knowledge of God, self and others.[24] Therefore in the Christian tradition the greatest commandment is: to love the Lord your God with all you heart, mind, soul and strength, and the second is to love one's neighbour as one's self (Mark 21.28-34). Love can be described as an emotion but can also be a virtue and even a passion through which knowledge is gained. It may not be knowledge that can easily be communicated via rational means, nor displayed in a clearly articulated set of practical skills, although it may be displayed in the wisdom of a proverb or enacted in an instinctive yet appropriate manner.[25] It is a form of knowledge that forms character, which is also at the centre of Christianity: to make disciples of character after the person of Jesus Christ (theologically called sanctification: being renewed in the image of God in Christ). This formation is recognised by many churches to be essential to theological education, as it is

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[22] W. Jay Wood, *Epistemology: Becoming Intellectually Virtuous* (Leicester: Apollos, 1998) argues for the role of the emotions in proper cognitive functioning, pp. 175-196.

[23] T. Sorg, 'Heart' in Colin Brown (ed.), *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* Vol.2 (Carlisle: Paternoster, rev ed. 1986) pp. 180-184.

[24] I have addressed the role of the affections in relation to theological beliefs and practices in: Mark J. Cartledge, 'Affective Theological Praxis: Understanding the Direct Object of Practical Theology', *International Journal of Practical Theology* 8.1 (2004) pp. 34-52; cf. Johannes van der Ven, *Education for Reflective Ministry* (Leuven: Peeters, 1998) who talks about attitudes as 'affective-evaluative orientations' at the disposal of the pastor in relation to competent reflection on ministry, pp. 152-168.

[25] Barnett, *The Limits of Competence*, p.45, highlights how the capabilities and virtues of friendship, altruism, ethical concern, carefulness, generosity, etc. are neglected as transferable skills.

appreciated that church leaders need to embody certain Christ-like qualities in their ministry and upon which the church depends for the authenticity of its witness.[26]

There is increasing recognition that spirituality is also located at the centre of Christian theology for ministry.[27] If there ever was a split between academic theology and confessional theology then it is now significantly questioned. It is perfectly possible to demonstrate profoundly scholarly virtues and at the same time be committed to a particular Christian tradition as truth. Aligned with this dual commitment, and indeed as a means of integrating the two, is the life of prayer and worship (hence *lex orandi*, *lex credendi*: 'the law of prayer is the law of faith'). In the institutions where the programmes of Christian theology for ministry are offered, the life of prayer and worship is not tagged on the end of the academic curriculum but it is conceived as belonging to the essence of the educational process. This is because Christian discipleship is a way of life that is served by theology and includes all aspects.[28] Therefore, it is expected that certain knowledge and understanding can be gained through prayer and meditation that could not possibly be gained in any other way.[29] It is the knowledge of the intimate embrace and the knowing smile rather than the theoretical proposition or the analytical skill. Unfortunately, it falls outside the remit of an academic discipline to measure such knowledge in terms of *theoria* or *techne*.[30] However, it

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[26] The Church of England Report, *Mission and Ministry*, again reflecting on the ACCM 22 document, makes this precise point in relation to Church's mission: 'the statement that the fundamental aim of theological education is to enable the student to grow in those personal qualities by which, with and through the corporate ministry of the Church, the creative and redemptive activity of God may be proclaimed and realized in the world', p. 9.

[27] Steven Croft, *Ministry in Three Dimensions: Ordination and Leadership in the Local Church* (London: DLT, 1999) argues for spirituality in the three orders of deacon (listening to God and integrity), priest (intercession and holiness) and bishop (discernment), p.191.

[28] Miroslav Volf, 'Theology for a Way of Life', in M. Volf and D.C. Bass (eds.) *Practicing Theology: Beliefs and Practices in Christian Life* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002) pp. 245-263.

[29] See the discussion of meditation and contemplation as the epistemology of spiritual gaze in Jürgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation* (London: SCM, 1992) pp. 202-208.

[30] Barnett, *The Limits of Competence*, p.75, makes a similar point with respect to 'understanding', it can be demonstrated but it may not be demonstrated and still be

does connect different forms of intelligence as thought, affections, practices and spiritual dimensions combine. Indeed, the rather limited categories of QAA simply do not take into account the notion of understanding in relation to intelligence. With the diversity of human understanding is also associated multiple forms of intelligence, including emotional and moral capacities and this has implications for understanding human nature (see below).[31]

The impact of these concerns for Christian theology for ministry mean that as well as engaging with the classical sub-theological disciplines of biblical studies, systematic theology and church history, it will engage in rigorous study of contemporary theology expressed through the beliefs and practices of ordinary believers.[32] Instead of privileging philosophy as the main dialogue partner, its inter-disciplinary partners will be the social sciences, the arts and literature, as well as the natural sciences. All these dialogue partners have a contemporary focus in addition to historical interests. However, where Christian theology for ministry differs from these dialogue partners is in the positive role it gives to the additional epistemological categories mentioned above. Therefore all engagement with these partner disciplines will necessarily involve a critique of their rationality, especially where it is perceived to be reductionist.

4. Implications and Challenges

There are important implications arising from these concerns in relation to the QAA criteria and Christian theology for ministry.

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present. By contrast, competences require demonstration since they obtain meaning from some form of public performance.

[31] I am impressed by the breadth of goals for universities suggested by Michael Allen, *The Goals of Universities* (Milton Keyes: The Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press, 1988) pp. 98-102, who distinguishes between cognitive learning (verbal skills, quantitative skills, substantive knowledge, rationality, intellectual perspective, aesthetic sensibility, creativity, intellectual integrity and lifelong learning), emotional and moral development (self-awareness, psychological well-being, human understanding, values and morals and religion) and practical competence (traits of value in practical affairs generally, leadership, citizenship, work and careers, family life, leisure and health).

[32] Jeff Astley, *Ordinary Theology: Looking, Listening and Learning in Theology* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002).

The relationship between professional practice and dichotomous thinking leads to certain assumptions. Although professional practice is referred to in the criteria, it is unclear what kinds of professional practices are in view. It could be suspected that health care, legal and social welfare professions are intended; however, professions vary considerably in their ethos and the issue is made much more complex with the addition of faith motivated vocations.[33] Whatever the professional model for such secular thinking, practised based programmes need to be prepared to fit into the 'one size fits all' epistemology displayed in the criteria. This means that a certain uniformity is expected at the level of transferable skills, and that this demonstration is subsequent to the acquisition of certain theoretical knowledge prior to practice. Again, practice follows theory and practice essentially means 'skills', although the complexity of the relationship between professional and personal skills should be noted. Practice is again primarily *techne* and, despite the apparent acknowledgement of knowledge-through-action paradigm, it is always a secondary dimension in the criteria. As a consequence, there is an emphasis on the end product rather than on the process to be gone through. The educational process is viewed as a means to an end rather than an end in itself. There is a focus on the tasks to be accomplished and techniques acquired rather than on the people who are 'formed' by an engagement with the process. Therefore, the holistic and all-embracing nature of education and the way in which knowledge extends holistically in individual and social ways is ignored.[34]

Professionalism and the Christian vocation do not fit neatly into this paradigm. The churches, while to some extent accepting this modernist dichotomy, also wish to affirm lay participation as ministry

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[33] See my discussion of the interface of theology and community and youth work studies in: Mark J. Cartledge, 'Practical Theology in the Public Sphere: Reflections on Church Community and Youth Work Education', *Journal of Adult Theological Education* 1.1 (2004) pp. 91-104.

[34] The Church of England Report, *Mission and Ministry*, notes that assessment expectations includes that the student should be able to know, do or be by the end of the programme, and that these criteria (knowing, doing, being) should be integrated and coordinated within the overall programme aim and design. This is because students are being assessed fundamentally as 'persons' for accredited ministry 'independently of methods of assessing academic ability and ability to perform ministerial tasks', p. 27.

and expand the category of the ordained. Increasingly the boundaries between the professional, i.e. clergy, and the laity is being blurred and constraining notions of professionalism, when applied to the ordained ministry, are being rejected as unhelpful and inauthentic to its nature. This can be seen in the development of lay offices, such as Readers in the Church of England, and newer ordained roles, such as Local Non-Stipendiary Ministry and general Non-Stipendiary Ministry. In these church offices the persons so authorised earn their living within the world of work and pursue ministry in their own time. It can also be seen in the greater role for lay participation in the wider church with increasing participation in the decision-making processes of the church. Ministry is no longer something that the professional elite do on behalf of or to the laity. Christian Theology for Ministry programmes have needed to recognise this adjustment and to be flexible for the demands of training a variety of ministry roles (e.g. minister, youth and community worker and counsellor).

There is an impoverished understanding of human nature lying behind these criteria that is imprisoned in a post-Enlightenment rationality. It displays a form of thinking that is extremely limited. Why consider human beings from within a slender base of knowledge and skills? Surely intelligence cannot be reduced to such things. The theory of multiple intelligences could have better informed such an epistemology by affirming the diversity of human ability and the value of different kinds of knowledge within the whole spectrum of human understanding.[35] Knowledge is inevitably informed by one's anthropology and if the basis of one's anthropology is essentially materialistic and rationalistic then the dimension of the spiritual will be excluded or reduced to those categories.[36] This is exactly what such criteria do to the detriment of human flourishing. Furthermore, an

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[35] Howard Gardner, *Multiple Intelligences: The Theory in Practice* (New York: Basic Books, 1993) argues for seven kinds of intelligence (musical, bodily-kinaesthetic, logical-mathematical, linguistic, spatial, interpersonal and interpersonal) which are distributed differently within individuals. He allows that moral or spiritual intelligence serves as a candidate for an eighth intelligence but that it could be seen as an amalgam of interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence with a value component added that is heavily influenced by culture (p. 46).

[36] As Alistair I. McFadyen, *The Call to Personhood: A Christian Theory of the Individual in Social Relationships* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) observes: 'Talk of human being in our society has been so completely secularised that we find it increasingly difficult to talk of humanity with reference to God in a way which is meaningful in our contemporary human situation' (p. 10).

anthropology that is interested in virtue and character will inevitably understand human persons in less functionalist ways.[37] Therefore, a Christian theological perspective raises these issues and by so doing inevitably suggests a critique.

For those programme directors designing or redesigning Master's curriculum for ministry purposes, this analysis exposes some challenges. It can be suggested that the challenges be met in a number of ways. These include: compliance to that which can readily be affirmed, resistance to the ideologically dissonant and creative interpretation as a strategy at the interface.

The first is to work within the framework because there is no other choice if one wishes to obtain accreditation or validation. As I have made clear, the criteria embody an ideology linked to economic interests and promoted by the Government. As an instrument of the Government, the power is with the controlling body of QAA and everyone must comply if academic legitimacy is to be retained or acquired. Therefore theologians in the field must develop strategies for complying with the expectations of these criteria in ways that are positive for the discipline. In many respects this is not hard. Christian Theology for ministry within the Western context has for a long time affirmed the necessity for the systematic acquisition of a body of knowledge at the forefront of the discipline and the inculcation of both thinking and writing skills. Therefore, the basic strengths of the criteria can be affirmed, as such knowledge is essential to academic work. However, it is possible to come to theory from professional practice rather than from a literature base and ministry programmes need to be creative in their design for this to occur.[38]

It is possible that a programme can expect certain kinds of knowledge, wisdom and insight to be displayed among the students but that these are un-assessed academically. They do not count towards the academic mark because they fall outside the framework. They are a consequence of having engaged whole-heartedly in a process and represent the formation of character and spiritual virtue. In other words, alongside the academic criteria, programmes develop indicators of ministerial health and suitability that are monitored by a

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[37] Wood, *Epistemology*, passim.
[38] See Banks, *Reenvisioning Theological Education*, pp. 223-245, for some suggestions.

peer group or a mentor rather than assessed by an academic.[39] The formational process is affirmed just as much as the academic product.[40] Therefore the programme has added value because it is embedded in a holistic Christian worldview and tradition. It does not mean that academic standards suffer, but that they are set within an alternative framework of thought. From that alterity, theology offers a critical reflection on a set of criteria embodied in the QAA ideology, which is economically framed and reductionist in a number of ways. That ideology is evaluated critically, even if we are forced to work with the criteria for the purposes of the programme. In other words, there is a certain resistance to the ideology, even if an engagement with it within the routine of academic life cannot be escaped. This is because it has become part and parcel of our academic culture and it is now a 'given' within the system.

As a way of using the set criteria, it is important to consider in what ways these categories can be translated theologically for the purpose of ministerial education. The translation is two-way: interpreting QAA categories via theological and ministerial categories and *vice-versa*. It may be that some ministry categories can be readily changed into the QAA categories without too much loss. For example, oral communication skills and interpersonal skills can quite easily translate the skills of preaching and counselling, although other features associated with these skills may not be. Some forms of intuitive spiritual discernment in certain ministerial contexts would be difficult to translate into the dichotomised structure of QAA epistemology and it may be that additional if not alternative criteria are advanced as well. Nevertheless, this is a challenge before theological educators and academics. My experience of working with a number of programmes is that some academics are wrestling with this challenge and arriving at creative interpretive solutions. The irony is that the creativity required might in fact demonstrate the kinds of

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[39] In effect, this is what the Church of England Report, *Mission and Ministry*, does by referring to 'Agreed Expectations for Ordinands' in conjunction with its Selection Criteria, pp. 40-42.

[40] Barnett, *The Limits of Competence*, p.13 observes how in the 'modern' era the university has move from a place where knowledge was conceived as a broad educational development (process) to a place where knowledge is viewed as a commodity (product) acquired by those with competence. He also notes that the notion of product implies the meeting of some pre-specified end and uniformity of outcome, that is, capacities pre-identified by a labour market (p.43).

transferable skill that the Government desires but used in ways that could (unintentionally) undermine its project!

5. Conclusion

This essay concludes by taking some of the issues that I have addressed and asking how the wider debate needs to hear a distinctly different academic voice. If the kind of analysis and critique I have offered has validity, then a number of questions are raised by what has been articulated. These include:

- What might be the long-term problems associated with academic curricula driven by the dominant economic values and predicted workforce needs?
- In what ways might the HE sector address the issues surrounding the marginalization of academic voices with different ideological agendas?
- How can QAA criteria be adjusted to take account of different forms of non-Western and non-Enlightenment rationality?
- Would it be possible to listen to the concerns of Churches and theologians preparing ordinands for a ministry and working with clergy in ministry and therefore having different aims and outcomes?
- To what extent might the categories of theory and skills be supplemented by assessment in relation to attitude?
- In what ways might the policy-makers consider the most basic of presuppositions, such as anthropology, and how they inform academic criteria?
- Criteria are inevitably interpreted by a community broadly agreeing the parameters of legitimate interpretation. Are there places where this reading tradition can be debated openly and contested if necessary?

It is hoped that these reflections are both interesting and useful in the provision of Christian theological education for ministry and in the service of HE in the UK today.

'Like a good brisk walk'

The Relationship between Faith Stance and Academic Study in the Experience of First Year Theology Students at the University of Oxford[*]

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Introduction

The Faculty of Theology at the University of Oxford has a syllabus that focuses on the study of the history of Christian Theology. Although in recent years the opportunity to study a non-Christian religion in depth has become part of the syllabus, with teaching largely provided by members of the Oriental Studies faculty, most students still opt to concentrate on areas within Christian Theology: biblical studies; the history of doctrine; Christian ethics;

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and church history. As in every other faculty or department in the UK, students face the problem of negotiating a course which enables them to explore the interface between their faith commitment and the academic study. Anecdotal evidence over the years has suggested that students deal with this in a variety of ways. Some are determined not to let their studies affect their faith such that a strict division is enforced. Others find that the interface is one that is personally disturbing and so gradually move away from a previous faith position or, sometimes, with great heart-searching, find one that is either different from what they had when they first came to university or is essentially the same though informed by a critical awareness which was not previously present. The growing numbers of students with a lively faith commitment in institutions of higher education suggest that this is a topic that deserves more detailed consideration.

Academic Theology itself has reached a stage where the conviction that students who come with a naïve faith need to be challenged and learn an approach to religious traditions, which is sceptical and essentially historical in orientation, has been widely questioned. The intellectual dominance of a position that marginalizes faith commitment and its contribution to critical enquiry is now a matter of debate rather than a premise. There has built up over the years a suspicion of academic Theology by faith communities, on the one hand, and, on the other, a suspicion within academic institutions that there is a lack of intellectual rigour on the part of those studying Theology. Pre-existing faith commitments, the institutions might suggest, are allowed to interfere with the dispassionate study of religious traditions and their social context, thus compromising the openness that is a prized part of academic life. Some institutions, therefore, want to restrict the influence of religious traditions within the academy, whilst some proponents of those traditions argue forcefully for a voice in it. In such a situation any emerging partnership requires give and take. So although we may attempt to set the boundaries for the interaction between faith stance and academic study we cannot anticipate all aspects of students' encounter with these questions. This is difficult for the relationship between university Theology and the faith communities because of the questions and challenges to even the most liberal form of religion and because of the indeterminacy that is so central to intellectual life.

Gavin D'Costa in his new book has explored the ambiguous position of departments of Theology and religion in the modern

academy and suggests that the place of Theology in modern universities has always been problematic. Religious studies have facilitated the acceptance of Theology in the secular academy. While the pressures to abolish both Theology and religious studies departments have always been there, the mutation of Theology and religious studies into the historical study of religion has meant that they are very much at home in the contemporary humanities.[1] Within higher education at a national level the centrality of these debates to Theology and Religious Studies (TRS) has been recognised as evidenced by the Benchmark Statement for Theology and Religious Studies which states:

1.6 The interface between academic study and practising religious communities is complex and significant. Critical analysis may destabilise profoundly held convictions producing sharp rejection of academic study, but may also stimulate real engagement with contemporary concerns. Such study is a major contributor to cross-cultural understanding and the avoidance or challenging of prejudices arising from misinformation. It may also contribute to the articulate self-awareness of particular religious traditions, particularly as religious leaders of several of the traditions represented in Britain have in fact often studied TRS.

These debates are the context for a research project that explores students' experiences in a Faculty of Christian Theology.

The specific questions pursued in this research arose from informal anecdotal discussion that had taken place over many years. Recently, in the Faculty's annual Tutorial Teaching seminar, the role of faith in learning and teaching has become a typical and thought-provoking strand of discussion. The aim in this study was to use these insights gained through day-to-day practice as a starting point for a small, systematic exploration of students' experience, and of tutors' views and perceptions.

The study did not set out to evaluate, or in any sense judge, quality of teaching. Its purpose was to continue an inquiry that had already begun within the faculty on an informal, occasional basis. The findings are not representative of students' experience, nor of tutors' views; they are the outcomes of a preliminary exploration. It is hoped

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[1] Gavin D'Costa, *Theology and Education: The Virtue of Theology in a Secular World*, Cambridge University Press, forthcoming. We are grateful to Gavin for making available parts of his book in advance of publication.

that the findings will generate further, maybe sharper, questions which can in due course be discussed amongst and between students and tutors.

The study as a whole is subject-specific. Although it aims to make a contribution to describing what it means to be a critical thinker in the humanities in general, it does this by exploring what it means to be a scholar and a believer in Theology. Its primary focus is the interplay between the personal and intellectual challenges for students and tutors.

The questions we set out to investigate were:

1. What motivates students to choose to study Theology at the University of Oxford?
2. What role, if any, does faith commitment play in that motivation?
3. What experience, if any, do first year students have of an interaction between faith commitment and the academic study of Theology?
4. How do students construct the issues that arise from such an interaction?
5. What strategies, if any, do they employ in the first year of their academic study in response to any perceived conflict or disjunction between their faith commitment and understanding of the requirements of academic study?
6. What sources of support do students perceive to be available and how, if at all, do they make use of them?
7. How do tutors and others who support students perceive the interaction between faith commitment and academic study?

Methodology

The project explored the lived experience of first year undergraduate students; it was a qualitative study that sought 'rich' or 'thick' descriptions[2]—descriptions that are full, varied and contextual—of

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[2] See Gilbert Ryle, 'Thinking and reflecting' and 'The thinking of thoughts: what is 'le penseur' doing?' in *Collected Papers, II* (London: Hutchinson, 1971); Clifford

this experience. The method chosen to elicit such descriptions was to conduct interviews thorough enough, and across a wide enough range of students, to generate sufficient data of this type.

The project set out to interview thirty students twice: once on arrival in Oxford and again during their third term. Thirty were recruited and participated at the first interview stage; one of these could not be contacted for the Trinity Term interview. Some features of the interview sample are described in Table 1. The sample was generated through two approaches. The project team wrote to all first year Theology students in October 2002. The letter introduced the project, explained what being involved would entail, and clarified the level of confidentiality that would pertain. It invited those who were interested in participating to contact the project team. The letter also advised students that they might be approached directly by the project team. Potential participants were later identified at random within each of three courses (the BA single honours Theology, the BA joint honours Philosophy and Theology, and the vocational BTh) and invited to participate. Four participants responded to the opportunity to volunteer, and the remaining twenty-six, randomly chosen, were invited.

Table 1: sample	
Gender	**13 women** **17 men**
Age	c.22-c.40
Courses followed by participants	Theology BA – 10[3] BTh – 9 (Certificate of Theology – 1) BA Philosophy/Theology – 10

Solely seeking volunteers might have led to three possible problems for the project: too few students volunteering in the time available; a sample of only those students for whom the relationship between faith and academic study was problematic; or, perhaps, even, a sample of

Geertz, 'Thick description: toward an interpretative theory of culture' in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973)

[3] One student changed from Theology to a different discipline between the first and second interviews. As a result the data from this interview, though interesting, was not useful for the purposes of this project.

only those students with faith. The project was seeking both to produce data from a variety of perspectives, and to harness the spontaneous interest that the project aroused. The sampling approach was successful in achieving these aims.

Each researcher took a cohort of one of the course groups— BTh, BA Theology, and BA Philosophy and Theology. Researchers contacted each selected student individually, by email, to offer them the opportunity to participate in the project, if relevant, and to set up the interview. The interviews, wherever possible, took place on 'neutral' territory such as college meeting rooms. The schedule for the first interviews is outlined in Table 2. The questions relating to the focus of the project came at the middle of the schedule, with earlier areas of questioning designed to allow the interviewee to develop confidence in both the interviewer and in the interview process, and to build rapport. Those initial questions also provided a context for the subsequent questions about faith and academic study.

Table 2: first interview schedule
• **Introduction**
(Clarifying the researcher's role, the boundaries of confidentiality, the voluntary nature of the student's participation and the use of the audio tape recording)
• **The past**
What formal religious education have you received?
What informal religious education have you received?
Have there been any significant events in your life, or particular circumstances that have been important in the way you faith has developed?
What role did religion play in your home life?
• **Perceptions of others**
What are some of the reactions you have received about choosing to study Theology?
How did you feel about that?
• **The present**
Why study Theology?
Why Oxford?
Did you know much about the course before you arrived?
What, if anything, about the course attracted you?
Tell about your tutorials so far

How do they compare with what you expected?
What does your faith commitment mean for you?
How important is your faith to your study of Theology?
Drawing on your experience here so far, how do you think your faith will affect your academic study?
How might your faith influence your involvement?
Drawing on your experience here so far how do you think your academic studies might affect your faith?
What makes you think that?
How do you process these issues?

- **Expectations**

Turning now to how you think things might develop during your time in Oxford:

How do you think your thinking about Theology might change?
How do you think your faith will be affected as you go through the degree?

- **Conclusion**

Do you have any questions?

Each interview was recorded, with permission from the participant, onto audiotape to enable the researcher to conduct a thorough analysis. Researchers also made contemporaneous notes, which aimed to capture both the subtleties of the interactions that were lost on the recordings and the researchers' own responses to the interviews. These could then be reflected upon, and either used in considering the interview data or set aside. The researchers met as a group with the project adviser twice during the first phase of interviews in order to encourage the continued development of this reflexive approach. These meetings also provided support to the researchers, and minimised the risk that researchers' own—sometimes powerful—responses to the interviews might interfere in the task. It was felt that there was no need of this structure during the later phases of the project.

As the project team discussed the first interview schedule modifications and extensions to the original parameters evolved. One significant example was that the term faith 'stance' rather than 'commitment' was adopted, as a more inclusive way of expressing the variety of standpoints that the anticipated cohort of students might occupy.

The second student interviews were conducted during May and June 2003. The schedule for these interviews—shown in Table 3—was drawn up in light of the data that had begun to emerge both from the first interviews and also from interviews with a small number of tutors that were conducted during Hilary Term 2003 (see below). Again, the heart of the second student interviews related to the role of the tutor and tutorial, and to the interaction between faith and study.

Table 3: Second interview schedule

• **Introduction**
 (Including a reminder of the anonymity and confidentiality agreement and the focus of the study.)
 • **The present**
 What do you think your motivation is now in studying Theology?
 Tell me about your tutorials this year.
     What do you think the purpose of tutorials has been?
     What do you think the purpose of essays has been?
 Drawing on your experience here so far, how do you think your faith affects your academic study?
     Can you give me an example?
 Drawing on your experience here so far how do you think your academic studies affect your faith?
     Can you give me an example?
 • **Significant course-specific issues**
 You've just been through Prelims [an examination]: is there any aspect of that experience that sheds light on how you view your faith stance in relation to the course?
 • **Support**
 Do you ever talk with other people about these issues?
 What do you think the role of your college tutor is?
 • **Expectations**
 Turning now to how you think things might develop during your time in Oxford:
     How do you think your thinking about Theology might change?
     How do you think your faith will be affected as you go through the degree?
 • **Conclusion**
 Offering the opportunity for questions, and inviting participants to comment on the experience of the interview.

Interviews with tutors aimed to investigate the context within which students are operating. Thus, these were exploratory discussions to determine tutors' perceptions of the intellectual journey that is undertaken by Theology undergraduate students and that journey's relationship to the faith commitment (or absence of commitment) of the student and of the tutor. Potential tutor participants were chosen such that the sample included: those who are chaplains as well as tutors, tutors from each of the three courses, and tutors relatively new to Oxford as well as those with many years' experience. Twelve tutors were approached and invited to participate. All of them agreed. The schedule for the tutor interviews is contained in Table 4.

Table 4: Tutor interview schedule
• **Introduction**
(Clarifying the purpose of the interview, the researcher's role, the boundaries of confidentiality, the voluntary nature of the student's participation and the use of the tape recording.)
What papers do you teach?
What other contact do you have with first year students?
• **The interaction between faith and the study of Theology**
What do you think the role of faith in academic study ought to be?
And what role, if any, do you see for academic study in the development of students' faith stance?
What experience do you have of undergraduate students for whom the interaction of theological study and their own faith stance is an issue?
Within this example, how did the student develop over the course of the three years OR how did you expect the student to develop?
• **The purpose, function and boundaries of tutorials**
In your experience, when do students bring up issues of personal faith?
How do you see the role of the tutorial with respect to faith issues?
How do you see the role of the essay with respect to faith issues?
How does this work out in practice?
• **The role of the tutor, and the boundaries of that role**
How do you think students perceive your role as a tutor in Theology?
How do you see your own role as tutor with respect to faith issues?
How do you communicate that to students, if at all?
To what extent have you felt under pressure to talk about your own faith?
How much of yourself and your own values and faith position do you see as

being appropriate to share with students - in tutorials? And outside tutorials?
- **The tutor's personal stance and its connection with their role as tutor/academic**

What role does faith play in your own research and scholarship, if any?
What would you say is the relevance of a faith stance to Theology as a discipline?
- **Support**

What should students do if they need to talk about their faith stance and academic study?
    What support is there for them?
    What are your views about this kind/level of support?
- **Curriculum/Discipline issues**

Are there parts of the curriculum that are more challenging to students' faith than others?
How, if at all, do you think the way we teach Theology and what we teach should be changed to allow students to deal with the issues we've been talking about?
    the way we teach Theology …
    what we teach …

The analysis of the interview data was undertaken in stages. At each of the three interview phases—the first student interviews, the tutor interviews and the second student interviews—the researchers listened to the tapes after each interview, drawing out the key issues and themes, and, in looking across their set of interviews, highlighting commonalities and differences. These issues, themes, commonalities and differences were circulated amongst the full project team so that all members could see the range of concerns raised throughout the cohort of research participants. Rigour was enhanced by a selection of tapes also being listened to by a member of the team other than the researcher who conducted the interviews concerned. The full team met after each interview phase to consider the provisional findings and, in the light of these discussions, researchers returned to the data to produce a more developed report on each interview set. The final stage in the data analysis process involved examining all nine reports and sets of interviews in order to distil these into the findings presented in the next section of this report and to develop the three case studies that follow it.

Findings

The project sought to identify and describe a variety of patterns in students' experience. One expected source of variety seemed to be the mix between vocational and academic, and between single-discipline and inter-disciplinary courses. As the research progressed it emerged that there were similarities between the experiences of students across courses as well as significant differences between them. The findings are therefore reported under themes, with differences related to course membership referred to wherever they arise. The themes are: the purpose of tutorials; tutor roles; faith stance and motivation; faith stance and syllabus; and community and support.

In addition to this thematic presentation a series of case studies traces the development of three students. These accounts are intended to describe the fine texture of individual students' experience: they illustrate how the general themes we have delineated are evidenced in contiguous narratives. They are not intended to be representative of general trends or viewpoints within our sample of thirty students. They represent complexity of thought and experience, ambiguity in the environment in which they operate, and variety in their strategies for making sense of the relationship between their faith stance and their academic study.

In the findings report students are identified by both a number and a code to indicate their course (e.g. Student Th 6).
Th = BA Theology
Ph/Th = BA Philosophy and Theology
BTh = Bachelor of Theology
Tutors are identified by a letter (e.g. 'Tutor H').

Purpose of tutorials

The purpose of tutorials is to monitor what I've learned and check that what I've deduced from the reading is right; and to make me aware of other ideas, question my arguments and make sure they're justified. [Student Th 5]

The goal of the tutorial is precisely to expose them to other points of view. [Tutor J]

Students and tutors alike—as illustrated in the first quotes above—saw the essential purpose of tutorials as academic learning and development. However, there were differing views about how faith fits into this purpose. Whilst there were students who felt that tutorials ought not to have a faith dimension, others—across all three courses—saw faith as playing a legitimate role in tutorial discussions and essays:

The purpose of tutorials for me is greater than just passing exams; the way that I'm re-examining my faith in an academic light brings new things to it and enhances it, so that at the end of tutorials I nod and think, 'Yeah, this is why I've come to Oxford', because it enriches my outlook. [Student Th 6]

Everybody's preconceptions are going to affect their academic study. My presuppositions include my faith, which may be the most important of my preconceptions ... When I approach the text of the New Testament, I'm starting off with a presupposition because of my experiences and how it's affected me in a positive and real way. [Student Ph/Th 6]

I absolutely think it essential to pray before I write an essay—I am here for spiritual formation. I would much rather write an essay that gets a 2.2 and helps me understand the subject and helps me get to grips with it from a pastoral point of view, than a teaching point of view. [Student BTh 2]

These approaches are presented as being private, sometimes covert, but deliberate and often the result of much thinking on the part of students.

Tutors described an ambivalent view of the role of personal faith in the tutorial. Tutor A perceived tensions between the imperatives of the syllabus and a potentially fruitful interplay between faith and intellect:

Tutorial essays can have a role in discussions of faith given that relevant topics can arise as intellectual questions in essays, and this ought not to be ruled out; but in practical terms, the syllabus needs to be covered in the essay and tutorial, and this is the main purpose of this kind of work. In practice, this can be more difficult to uphold; sometimes there is a grey area. [Tutor A]

The features of this 'grey area' were further elaborated by Tutor F, who argued that the tutorial must not become 'spiritual therapy' for the student, and that,

The lines between what constitutes an intellectual or academic issue and what constitutes a faith issue are pretty blurred. [Tutor F]

More specifically, Tutor I comments that the historical papers of the course,

Enable students to be more mature in their faith because it gives them an understanding of the very different sorts of Christianity that have existed.

Many tutors said that they avoided discussion of faith in tutorials altogether. Tutor B was emphatic:

I don't really see how there is an obvious place for it. Thus, if a student includes a 'sermon' in an essay, s/he will be instructed not to do so, and will not do it again. [Tutor B]

The view, shared by most tutors and most students, it would seem, is that, while personal faith is seen as relevant, making it explicit is outside the boundaries of tutorials and essays. (There were exceptions to this view, which will be outlined below.)
Most tutors, however, have experienced students raising issues of personal faith, implicitly, within a tutorial or class setting. These occurrences seem to be picked up by tutors almost intuitively. In the experience of Tutor F, students often speak 'in code':

What they present as a purely intellectual problem may be something that's actually worrying them. [Tutor F]

Tutor E noted that issues of a student's personal faith were often discernible in their body language. Tutor J commented that students could appear embarrassed at raising issues of faith in a tutorial.
Although one tutor commented that he had,

[n]ever felt students were particularly interested in raising these issues explicitly for discussion, [Tutor E]

several students expressed the hope that discussions of faith would occur in tutorials and perceived signals that such discussion was undesirable. Student Ph/Th 6 recounted that one tutor had made it perfectly clear that the tutorial was not the place for discussion of personal belief, because:

[f]aith perspectives do not need to be involved in the academy. [Reported by Student Ph/Th 6]

Many students seemed to want to be more open in discussing the interplay between their studies and their faith, but one imagines that it takes considerable courage—or, as some might argue, a lack of clarity about the task—to do so.

Student Th 2 was an example of a student who is open in discussing his faith, his account of his views and behaviour contrasting sharply with those of the tutors and students described so far in this section. He said that,

The purpose of my essays is to sermonize … I always end up having a life-application in my conclusion, which my tutor is all right about, but he says it's not academic. [Student Ph/Th 2]

However, it is also the case that two tutors stated ways in which they, too, explicitly raise or acknowledge issues of personal faith in their tutorials. At initial meetings with students, for example, Tutor D asks them whether faith is a help, a hindrance or irrelevant to academic work in that particular paper. Tutor H does not wish tutorials and lectures to be an intellectual exercise alone; he gave an example of the interplay between intellectual discussion and faith:

I had a student today who said he enjoyed my lectures and he could tell I was a believer. [Tutor H]

He did not explain how he responded but one imagines that fruitful discussion might have ensued. It seems that the tutor sets the tone about how faith might or might not appropriately be brought to bear on the student's academic work.

Tutor roles

Both tutors and students identified a multiplicity of roles that tutors play. For both groups, the academic role of the tutor is paramount but, at times, each group observes tensions between those roles. Several students perceived their tutors to have a pastoral concern for their welfare and development throughout their time at University. Student Th 7 said:

I'd like to say that a tutor's role is to help me grow as a person … and I think most of them want us to get to that place where we can think for ourselves and think about things more deeply, but I think a lot of the time their role is to get you to pass an exam. [Student Th 7]

This was echoed by Tutor J, who identified his role as maintaining a balance between examination preparation and a general interest in the development of the student. Thus far these tensions, no doubt, are not specific to Theology and may be recognisable within many subject areas. However, they acquire a heightened significance when experienced in conjunction with particular stances about the role of faith.

Tutor B expressed the hope that students perceive the role of the tutor as wholly academic, 'and so in principle it is a neutral role' with regard to issues of faith. By contrast, some students, especially those pursuing the vocational BTh, emphasised a tutor's faith-based, pastoral role. Student Th 4 said:

[My tutor] covers all the critical agenda, but he will also spend time talking about the fact that it is going to affect your faith, and he's struggled with the same issues and wants to make sure that you can talk about that, so he'll ask pointed questions to make you think in a different way [about issues] from a Christian perspective … Ideally a tutor is somebody who is there for you, someone with whom you can talk about academic issues and about your spiritual life and how it's developing. [Student Th 4]

Similarly, Student Th 2 commented:

The pastoral care is quite key, and I suppose with any queries about faith or academic theories which don't link in with faith, then it's a personal tutor's place to show how they do link in with faith. [Student Th 2]

Tutor J, who teaches BTh students, also recognised that some students may seek professional guidance in relation to their faith, and may thus look to their tutors to legitimise, in a professional capacity, their faith opinions as candidates for ordination. Tutor H sensed that students who have faith:

Want our [tutorial] talk to give them clarity for their own faith. (Tutor H)

Tutor A recognised that students who raise issues of faith in tutorials are often prompted to do so because their study is affecting their understanding of faith in some way, which he sees as legitimate, but this raises tensions between his academic and pastoral responsibilities and how these are carried out in the context of the tutorial:

If you can't contain it within the bounds of the Theology course, as it were, then I suppose I'd rather view it as a pastoral matter … and as a tutor, I've always regarded myself as having pastoral responsibilities for the students I teach. [Tutor A]

It is not clear whether these 'pastoral responsibilities' are undertaken during or outside the tutorial itself. However, he is clear that it is a central part of his role to attend to student needs beyond the academic:

The relationship between the tutor and the tutee is a personal, not an impersonal, relationship; at the other end, it's a personal relationship, not a private relationship, because it's a professional relationship.'[Tutor A]

Most tutors expressed the view that there is, on the one hand, a professional role demanding a fixed focus upon academic matters within tutorials, lectures and classes. On the other, they noted that tutorial teaching in particular encourages the formation of a relationship between tutor and student. For the majority of tutors faith-related issues were regarded as pastoral concerns most appropriately addressed after or outside the tutorial:

A tutorial is not a place of spiritual direction.[Tutor G]

This is consistent with the views explored in the previous section ('Purpose of tutorials'), although, clearly, the pressures on the boundaries of the tutorial can be considerable.

For many students it was the scholarly status of tutors that lent credibility to them as role models with respect to personal faith. Students often commented that they felt reassured in their faith commitment precisely because so many well-respected academics in Oxford were also practising Christians. This perspective was recognised by some tutors:

I hope they [students] would see me as someone capable of a whole range of academic views and as a person of faith. It is good for them to see that one can study Theology and be a person of deep faith. [Tutor G]

[Students want to know] how I can be a believer and an academic theologian at the same time. The world would say anyone who has any brains wouldn't believe any of this. Students come to me and complain that they can't tell a lecturer's faith position.[Tutor H]

However, one tutor, an ordained member of the Church but not a College chaplain, insisted that he resists the need that students might have to place him into a box marked 'believer':

I like to reserve the right to wear an academic hat and to pursue academic questions wherever they lead, without feeling constrained. [Tutor E]

Some tutors reported telling students explicitly that issues of personal faith are not directly related to academic understanding and success. Tutor F related how he states at the beginning of a course of tutorials that the student's work will not be assessed according to whether the tutor agrees with the student's faith opinions. Tutor K described feeling that students understand that he has different roles and commitments as a tutor and chaplain, and that consequently he may say and do different things in different settings.

Most tutors confirmed that they do not initiate discussion of their own faith stance with students in a tutorial, class or lecture. There were exceptions, however. A few identified that it is inherent in the nature of teaching for a tutor gradually to share his or her personal values and opinions with students. Tutor D asks students in an initial

meeting what they expect from him as a tutor and explains his approach by saying:

The majority would have some suspicion of someone who teaches a particular moral tradition, such as the Christian tradition, who does not have any sort of personal commitment to it … They don't want me to speak about my own opinions all the time, which I'd hate to do, but briefly and roughly they want to know what sort of a person I am. [Tutor D]

Another tutor reported that he consciously ensures that his own faith views are revealed clearly in tutorial discussions because he does not want,

… to undermine their faith or throw up obstacles which make them think that their beliefs are irrational or that the Christian tradition has got it all wrong. [Tutor H]

Few tutors have felt under explicit pressure to reveal their faith stance to students. Most feel that it is only appropriate to discuss their own faith stance in a reactive, non-academic setting.

Students at times seemed to project a faith stance or a faith-oriented role onto their tutors:

For me and the tutor there has to be an interest in the subject beyond what's discussed in that room. There must be something beyond the tutor simply wanting to give me a grade, because it's implicit in the nature of the subject that they're broadening your faith horizons. [Student Th 6]

Some further interpreted tutor interventions in tutorials as reflections of tutors' personal faith:

In tutorials he seemed to personally reject things that I and the majority of Christians would say are integral to the Christian faith. [Student Ph/Th 5]

A Christian tutor will bring a tutorial round to a faith-based answer, or to a life-application', whereas 'a non-Christian tutor' will reach conclusions which 'end up completely slating Christianity. [Student Th 2]

Consequently, within these students' conceptions of the tutor's role, the impact of tutors' comments and opinions can acquire meanings that may not occur to the tutor. Student Th 9 described feeling hurt

and offended by one tutor's perceived 'anti-Catholic views'. Student Th 2 took the view that 'dangerous, liberal teaching' exists in the University, and illustrated his point by describing his tutor's 'false' interpretation of biblical texts to support pre-marital sex, homosexuality, and an authoritative role for women in the Church.

On a more general level, some students struggled to see the point of pursuing the questions that are considered worth exploring by tutors:

A lot of what scholars and tutors come up with is so ridiculous; they fascinate themselves with minor little points … and I could never ever be able to agree with my tutors … Tutors seem to argue with everybody; they don't seem to come to any useful conclusion about what they're reading; they just want to take it to pieces … and I couldn't see the point in doing essays when tutors wouldn't value or listen to what you're arguing. [Student Th 10]

This student, in common with several others interviewed, seemed to be suggesting that her whole framework for thinking and believing is not recognised, represented or valued in academic work. Whether or not this is what tutors intend is not the central issue here, though; what this student's perceptions, and others presented in this section, illustrate most tellingly is the power that students invest in tutors.

Faith stance and motivation

There seemed to be some development between the first and second interviews in students' motivation to study Theology at Oxford in the ways this was related to their faith stance. Some students seemed to find it unproblematic during the first interviews, as they started their courses, but by the end of the year their perceptions of the relationship had become more complex.

Many students interviewed came to study Theology at Oxford because of their faith commitment. For some, there was a vocational element, too; all of those undertaking the BTh are aiming for a professional role in the Anglican Church in some capacity. Many of this group articulated, at the second interview, how their studies had influenced their motivation further during the year:

If it [my motivation] has changed in any way it's in my discovering in myself a real need not so much as to just fulfil certain requirements for ordination, but to dig deeper. For example, how does scripture really affect me on a deeper level? How will the study of the sacraments change my view of them? So I think it [my study of Theology] has become a lot more personalised. [Student BTh 8]

The only thing that has changed is the depth of my appreciation … For me, Theology can't ever be just an academic discipline, you can't dispassionately study Theology, or at least if you do, then you miss the whole point of it. [Student BTh 2]

The vocational dimension was present for students pursuing BA degrees as well, albeit from a more exploratory starting point:

It's always been mainly to explore the possibility of training for Church orders, and that hasn't changed. [Student Th 8]

[I take the course] far more seriously in a way, because it's now become vocational … but it's always been a spiritual course of study for me, so that I can know more about God. [Student Th 4]

Even for those students whose motivation contained no vocational element, their commitment to academic theological enquiry was described as related to their faith stance. Some described a dynamic whereby academic study is pursued for its own sake but where, separately, or as a bonus, it enriches or tests their faith. Others described a reciprocal relationship where faith and academic study interrogate each other:

My academic life was always a journey corresponding with my faith, but that's not to say that one affects the other in a negative way. We all need to keep re-evaluating our faith just to make sure that we still believe it … so my motivation is to study the subject in an academic context as I did at school, and so bring my religious life and academic life together. [Student Th 6]

Faith is the most important part of my life … I would say this is all a project of faith seeking understanding. [Student Ph/Th 3]

Studying Theology is] a challenge to my faith … I want to challenge, and by challenge confirm. [Student Ph/Th 1]

By the second interview—the end of the first year—one student was able to report:

I (now) have a faith that is bound up in fact and historical knowledge: if a faith is true it should be able to stand up to theological and historical questioning [Student Th 2]

Tutor H, echoing Student Th 2's experience, remarked that there was scope for the intellectual fathoming of personal faith among students:

For a student trying to figure out how Jesus can be God and man, a tutorial with the right tutor can help them sort this thing out in an academic setting.

Tutor B, similarly, in speculating about students' motivation, suggested that students often seek to discover on an intellectual level more about the faith commitment they already have. Those who do not have a faith commitment, it was noted, might equally choose to do Theology at Oxford because they wish to discern a more robust reason not to believe; or they might wish to develop skills of empathy in seeking to understand people who do have faith.

Other students—nearly half of the sample of those studying for the BA degree—considered that academic interest alone was the motivation for studying Theology. Student T/P 4 decided on Theology and Philosophy because he enjoys examining 'controversy and conflict'. One BA student hinted that his overriding academic motivation may be a reflection of the style of the degree course:

[My motivations are] purely academic … the way you study in Oxford is not very theological, it's more of a historical and literary study of the Bible. [Student Th 3]

For one student his year of academic study had the effect of undermining his initial faith-based motivation. Whereas he had originally chosen to study the subject because he was,

'Religious and wanted to test my faith, and see if it all really was true', he now says that,

It's a lot more difficult to call myself religious … because there are so many problems [for faith] raised by study which are easier to ignore if you're not

studying Theology … and I think the reason that there are so many problems is that it simply isn't true. [Student Th 1]

He described himself now as being primarily motivated by academic, rather than spiritual, inquiry. He seemed to view this change in motivation as a negative experience. Similarly, Student Th 7 said that although she is interested in the subject, she now felt her motivation for studying Theology had changed:

I must admit it feels like I'm stuck here [with Theology] now —I do enjoy it, but here at Oxford there are lots of ups and downs, and in the middle of term I thought I didn't want to study Theology any more because I wasn't enjoying the work, but now I'm a bit more interested in it again. But it's more for interest's sake, less so than faith, like it was at the beginning, because I'm realising how difficult it is having a faith and maintaining that with the study of Theology. So I would definitely not say now that I'm studying Theology for my faith, but that I'm really enjoying Oxford, and I happen to do Theology. [Student Th 7]

She seemed less troubled by this shift than Student 1. Her approach now aligns with others on the BA programme who said that their motivation had always been solely academic.

A change in motivation—in the opposite direction—appears to have been a positive experience for a different BA student, who, by the end of the year, said that his motivation for studying Theology had become:

To know God better. Theology is one interesting way of knowing and loving God. [Student Th 3]

His motivation at the start of the year had been one solely of intellectual curiosity. He had 'become a Christian' within a few weeks of starting the course in Michaelmas term, and as a result his motivation was now 'absolutely driven by faith'. Student T/P 7 also experienced a change in motivation: although she still described herself as 'religious', she learned through the year that, while she recognised that Jesus is central to Christianity, He was not central to her faith, and thus she had decided that she was not a Christian.

Faith stance and syllabus

On the whole, only a few students were able to articulate responses to questions in this area. Tutors, understandably, had far more to say.

Several students said that they chose Theology courses offered at Oxford because they perceived them to be more traditional than those offered at other Universities. Many commented that Theology and/or Religious Studies courses at other universities were too comparative and did not focus upon Christianity enough. It was not the focus on Christianity but the academic stance and its absence of reflexivity that at least one student criticised:

I'm not sure if Theology is what it says it is: Theology at Oxford is a really interesting subject, but it isn't what it claims to be, because Theology is the study of God and you can only grasp God through love, not through study … Tutors aren't doing Theology; they're doing history, or literary criticism, or philosophy … I think they should be more open about their methodology, about what presuppositions they have—honesty is important. [Student Th 3]

Among the BTh students, there appeared to be a widely-held opinion that the nature and purpose of the BTh course is vastly different from the BA courses. Student BTh 10 observed a contrast between the 'BA approach' to the study of Theology—which 'encourages individuals to be detached and intellectually honest'— and that required for the BTh, which, by implication is seen as more practical (and less rigorous, perhaps). For one BTh student, on the other hand, an initially vocational, almost simplistic, outlook developed into one that accommodated complexity and uncertainty:

I had this idea that if I went to Bible College I would be given all the answers, but now I realise that this is quite a simplistic view of God and faith; you can't box God up into a two year course. [Student BTh 3]

Though some students explained that studying Theology gave them the opportunity to combine several academic interests, including language, history and literature, as well as religion, many more expressed a particular interest in studying biblical texts and/or doctrinal issues. Student Th 6 is Catholic and chose the doctrinal track in a conscious effort to learn more about Catholic theologians and Christian doctrine:

This will affect the relationship between my study and my faith because it will be directly linked to my faith … because it's quite a 'traditional' course I can choose a Catholic theologian. I'm lucky … because I belong to a traditional denomination and I can study and enhance my faith directly. [Student Th 6]

As with this student, a number of others' choices about pursuing particular tracks in the syllabus were to some extent determined by their expectations of the potential impact on their faith:

My brother became an atheist through reading Theology, doing biblical studies, so I want to prove to him that that doesn't necessarily happen. [Student Th 3]

Another student is pursuing the doctrine track in order to:

… avoid having to study as much of the Bible as possible … because although it probably wouldn't happen … there's a danger of focusing too much on the Bible and being told [by scholars] that it's all rubbish. [Student Th 2]

The opinion that biblical studies can challenge one's faith stance more directly than other aspects of the course was widely shared among students.

Amongst tutors too, there was a common perception that certain subjects within the course are more likely to pose a challenge to students' faith than others. Several tutors, as did students, suggested that the biblical papers, particularly the New Testament ones, could be difficult for some Theology and Philosophy/Theology students,

[e]specially if the student has a big personal investment in the figure of Jesus as depicted in the New Testament. [Tutor E]

Many tutors pointed out that this tension is probably felt because students are required to locate the biblical texts within an historical, rather than faith, context. Indeed, as Tutor C says:

Some find it difficult to question what they regard as fact. [Tutor C]

However, in this context, Tutor F stated that biblical studies can be very good for faith, 'like a good, brisk walk'. Several tutors felt

that papers focused upon Christian ethics and doctrine can also be more difficult for students. Tutor F explained that, with these papers,

[s]tudents are invited to articulate what they think; as these are more conceptual issues, they tend to be more difficult, and perhaps more threatening to faith. [Tutor F]

On the other hand, another tutor argued that:

[i]f Theology is done properly, it should make no difference what area of Theology it is: every aspect should be as effective as any other in producing krisis. [Tutor D]

In other words, it is the job of the academic study of Theology to challenge and provoke.

A few tutors commented on the potential difficulties faced by non-Christian students. Tutor E suggested that

[i]t's easy to imagine that some students would have difficulty coping with the Christian Doctrine and Interpretation paper, in which they're expected to behave like Christian Theologians. [Tutor E]

Similarly, another tutor remarked:

The stereotypical idea is that biblical papers pose more of a challenge to students who have faith. But doctrinal papers can be challenging to non-Christian students, who may be at a loss as to what to say in essays and how to say it. The syllabus presupposes to a certain extent that the students are interested in learning about Christianity and the history of that faith. [Tutor B]

Such difficulties would be demanding of a non-Christian student's skill, and it could be argued that such difficulties might be challenging of his or her integrity. However, while not wishing to underplay such difficulties, they would appear less likely to provoke 'krisis' than the potential challenges, outlined above, posed by elements of the Theology syllabus to some students with Christian faith.

When questioned on whether the syllabus should be changed in any way, tutors' opinions varied considerably. Some advocated radical change:

I think it's such an old-fashioned faculty. We're just not teaching very up-to-date stuff. People are reading Tillich and Barth; they're not reading

theologians who're engaging with the world today ... What we are serving up to them as doctrine is so disconnected from the world. All this abstract philosophical stuff is taken out of context. The doctrine people do not make the issues relevant. [Tutor I]

There may be some benefit in changing the syllabus completely to take in other faiths and belief systems, and reflect the plurality in faith communities today. [Tutor E]

Others argued that the current syllabus ought not to be abandoned and begun again:

The more old-fashioned core of Christian Bible, History and Doctrine is preferable, with more emphasis on primary literature rather than secondary reading. This would ensure that students know their stuff inside-out. [Tutor F]

Similarly,

I don't want the Theology programme here to be another religious studies programme. I would like to keep the core curriculum Christian. They may have options around them but the core of the degree is the four or five required papers. That's what keeps it Christian. My fear is that Religious Studies always tends to say that you've got a whole bunch of religions out there and they're all basically the same, and I'm not happy with that. [Tutor H]

Many tutors commented on the way in which Theology is taught. Several appeared to feel discontented with the tutorial system as a means of integrating discussions of faith with the requirements of the syllabus. One tutor (C) argued that tutorials ought to be extended to make time for discussions of faith issues with students, particularly first years. Tutor F felt that the tutorial system itself teaches too narrow a set of skills that may prepare a student for a three hour examination but cannot teach a student reflexive skills and the art of exploring a text slowly. A more suitable method of teaching would be a two hour seminar: an hour for the tutor to lecture, and an hour for student discussion. Tutor I expressed similar views:

Students need to learn how to read primary texts critically … we also need to do proper seminar work. Everyone should go away and read the same text closely and then be prepared to talk about it together. [Tutor I]

For some tutors, looking beyond the issue of the teaching and learning structures employed (important though that debate is), faith stance itself was regarded as inseparable from the approach to teaching:

If we say that a faith stance is important for doing Theology, then the key to this whole thing is the faith of those who are teaching.[Tutor H]

Fundamentally, there was a recognition, amongst a number of tutors, that,

There is…a lot of diversity in the way in which Theology is taught, by lecturers with and without faith. [Tutor G]

However, not all trusted this diversity. A different tutor held the view that, while, superficially, diversity exists, students learned in an overall culture,

Where to mention Christian faith is somehow biased, because the non-believer is objective. [Tutor J]

This perception, if widely held, would contribute to the self-censoring that students described above, in 'The purpose of tutorials'.

Community and support

Nearly all students described friends and family as their main sources of support and community in discussing issues of faith and academic study. Student BTh 3's support was drawn from a range of sources:

I find it hard to distinguish between academic Theology and faith Theology; there's a real continuity between them, so in talking to someone about something to do with Theology I wouldn't draw a distinction. [Student BTh 3]

Student Th7 echoed this, implicitly finding contact with those outside both the faith and academic Theology communities:

Theology is one of those subjects that everyone talks about, whether they have a faith or whether they don't, whether they've been studying it or not —so I've had loads of conversations with people about Theology and faith quite a lot. [Student Th 7]

Despite this broad interest in Theology in the University community, several students of varying faith stances described feeling the need to defend their academic discipline to other - academic and non-academic, religious and non-religious —people. One student reported:

I would say that at University 80% of my conversations are about Theology and faith … but the problem I encounter is that [non-academic] people assume that anyone studying Theology is going to be quite snobbish about the angle they're coming from, although I know that I'm at the advantage of coming at this from an academic point of view … I've got faith and I've also got a background in it. [Student Th 6]

Student Th 9 commented:

I have some friends in College … who have a very strict interpretation of biblical authority, and that's been amusing … they've implied that I could be heretical!

This student also described talking informally with his New Testament tutor, although this was problematic. She inferred that the tutor's critical approach to the Bible was threatening—to others, but also to him, it seemed.

Whilst the experience of the students described so far appears to be that they had well established networks, a few students seemed to feel isolated within their colleges. Student Th 1 is the only Theologian in his year at College:

It's not ideal … on the whole it's easier to avoid conversations about these issues. [Student Th 1]

Another student is the only Catholic amongst his peer group of Anglicans, so he told of finding community and support outside of college when he attends mass. (There is an interesting contrast here with the perception of Tutor B, who said that 'the last place' he'd send a student struggling with a clash between faith and study to is a church community.)

It is perhaps significant that several students explicitly stated that they would not approach a tutor or college chaplain to discuss issues of personal faith and academic study. For many of these students, this reflected a perceived disinterest on the part of the tutor, or a biased or non-academic stance on the part of the chaplain. Student T/P 4 felt the tutor would be an inappropriate source of support because tutorials are characterized by factual discussion, rather than expressions of the student's opinion (sic.); hence, she felt that the tutor would not be interested in discussing her personal issues.

Tutors' views about what would constitute appropriate support for students varied considerably. Almost all regarded tutors as sources of support.

Although the Faculty is officially neutral in terms of faith commitment, most tutors have a faith commitment of some sort, and so their perceptions of the student's problems would be empathetic, or they could at least point the student in the direction of a more appropriate person. [Tutor F]

For some, such support on faith issues was only appropriate outside the tutorial. For a minority of tutors the potential confusion of roles makes tutors an inappropriate source of support. Tutor B observed that, given the diversity of students, the Faculty is probably not varied enough to offer effective support for all.

Students and tutors alike expressed reservations concerning the effectiveness of College chaplains in support roles for students. Tutor A suggested that a college chaplain may be 'an over-optimistic choice' for a student given that any potential support may be complicated by differing religious backgrounds; tutor D, in echoing this view, noted that

A chaplain is representative of a particular arena, just as the tutor is too. (Tutor D)

This does not, in itself, suggest that chaplains are inappropriate sources of support, but that students need to be aware that chaplains and tutors—like others outside the academy—hold views that influence their responses. The student, by implication, needs to make an informed judgement about what he or she is looking for.

Case studies

These case studies are intended to describe the fine texture of individual students' experiences: they illustrate how the general themes we have delineated are evidenced in contiguous narratives. They are not intended to be representative of general trends or viewpoints within our sample of thirty students. They represent complexity of thought and experience, ambiguity in the environment in which they operate, and variety in their strategies for making sense of the relationship between their faith stance and their academic study.

The following three accounts were written by members of the project team who listened to the interview tapes. No prior discussion took place about the format of the case studies: each therefore has distinctive emphases and represents a subjective interpretation of the student's own narrative. The case studies have been validated by the research participants whose experiences they are based upon.

Case study: BTheology

Rachel comes from a family that was involved in the local Anglican church, where her mother was the Sunday School teacher. She has been a Christian for many years.

She decided to apply for the BTh primarily for her own personal development and only partly for vocational reasons. There was a significant shift in this position by the end of the year, by which time she was aware that she was being called by God into a leadership role. The experience of being at Wycliffe was still contributing to her personal development but had now become only a secondary motivation. This shift was terrifying in the new responsibility that it placed upon her, but affirming too.

Her faith in Jesus is everything to her; her reason for being. Her faith informs all decisions she makes, however significant and however trivial: where to go on holiday, where to live, her decision to apply to Wycliffe. Behind this original decision had been her commitment and desire to share her faith more effectively with others.

With her faith underpinning her motivation to be at Wycliffe, her faith is all-important to her studies. In the Michaelmas term interview she described wanting her studying to help her to understand

God more; to think as God thinks, to feel as God feels, to do as God would do. Studying the historical elements of the course was meaningful because it was studying God's history, what He was doing at a certain point in history and why. If she could understand His character more she could worship and explain Him to others more fully. She wanted everything she studied to enrich her 'walk' with Him. She saw her faith as prompting her to want to know more and, in turn, that new knowledge leading to a deeper faith, which would lead to a desire to know more, and so on, in an upward spiral. However, she saw that there was a risk that the experience of studying Theology would undermine her faith.

In practice the role of her faith in her studies meant—throughout the year—that she tried to discipline herself not simply to read and agree with the academic reading that she did, but to question it from her faith perspective. Do I agree with what I'm reading and, when I write, am I just regurgitating something I don't believe? Does it line up with my understanding and principles? Where she came across perspectives that she could not accept she would look for alternatives to counteract them.

At the start of the first year she described her love of academic study, and this love remained by the end. Her belief at the start of the year was that her studies would strengthen her faith, although there was some anxiety about this. She had already had the experience of being in a lecture and there being a moment of realisation, prompted by something that the lecturer was talking about, about how wonderful God is; she hoped that these kinds of experiences would continue. However, she had also found that she had been in lectures and experienced the rug being pulled from under her, even if only for a moment. She would question herself: what does this mean for my faith? What does this mean for my life? By the end of the year she was able to reflect upon how positive these challenges to her faith had been. It was healthy to recognise that she could not simply take the views of conservative scholars at face value, and reject those from other perspectives. She had begun to realise that God can be bigger than just one view. The academic depth to which she had been led by her studies had deepened her understanding of God.

At times of uncertainty, like those alluded to above, she had found it helpful when a tutor had recognised that material might be troubling and had created opportunities for students to express their

concerns. Rachel had tended not to discuss her doubts directly with other students outside this context.

At the start of the year she was aware of her lack of knowledge. She was finding it difficult, for instance, to make sense of Isaiah, but she was excited at the prospect that, by the end of the year, she would be able to write coherently about it. She was hopeful, too, that the practical aspects of the course would be making a difference by that stage. Later, when she was interviewed for the second time, she reflected upon her idea that, by that stage, she would have it all 'sorted out'. She realised that this had been a simplistic view of both God and faith. She was aware that the BTh was not going to be a once-and-for-all experience; she was going to keep on learning, and she was being equipped by the course to have the skills to do so. She was awed by the breadth of Theology; there's a theology of everything—a theology of work, a theology of maths, even.

She had had tangible experiences of God over the year and her faith had become stronger; but she was more profoundly aware, positively, of how fallible she was, that she was no closer on the road to 'perfection'—whatever that meant—than she had been at the start of the year. The contribution of the academic aspect of this journey had been crucial.

Case study: BA Theology

Martha came to Oxford with a strong Christian faith, having been brought up as a child and teenager in ways that encouraged her to explore her beliefs. She had the support from Church while doing A-levels and developed a strategy of separating the intellectual from the faith content. Over time she had since become increasingly uncomfortable with this strategy. At Oxford in her first term her faith has been developing as the basic datum of life and as an environment for academic exploration and for learning. At the start of the academic year she saw this as crucial in enabling her to manage the difficult questions that she anticipated would arise. While it has always been important to know the faith position of tutors and lecturers, she doubted that tutors would be the appropriate persons to consult over faith issues that might have implications for her academic progress. On the other hand she would not be at all hesitant about discussing other personal matters with them. While she set great store on open-mindedness (a characteristic, she suggested, to be found more in non-

committed students than those with faith commitment), there was always the need to look for ways of buttressing faith, for example by seeking out mature, like-minded Christians, a strong church etc. The more there is a grasp of one's faith therefore, the less threatening study seemed to be. It would never be appropriate to articulate a faith standpoint in an essay. Not only was it deemed to be intellectually questionable, but pragmatically, such attempts did not merit the best marks. So writing an essay to get the best marks means suspending one's faith commitment.

Towards the end of the year Martha reflected on the ways in which study had affected faith: for example, she had developed a more questioning attitude. Alongside this her initial interest in the subject had waned and Theology had to some extent become a means of enjoying the life of Oxford. The effects of the general culture were as strong as the effects of academic study of Theology. What faith offered was a way of persevering when the study was difficult. She had a greater awareness of defensiveness in some areas of study (especially New Testament) as a result of faith commitment, though thought she had found herself able to develop the capacity to see theological veracity in historically doubtful texts. Martha hoped to move through the doubts and questions to a more secure faith, helped by the breadth of knowledge she had acquired, to come to enjoy theology as a subject in itself and to obtain a panoramic view of the theological enterprise. She felt that faith commitment was still not something to be brought into tutorials, though there she was clearly aware that a tutor's role was to enable a student to grow as a person.

Case study: BA in Theology and Philosophy

Alan felt he made a well-informed choice about taking the course. He had a keen awareness it would not provide 'easy answers'. He hoped it would give him a better understanding of the nature of the Bible and the nature of God. He started thinking about the relationship between his faith and academic study long before he came to Oxford and during his first year his thoughts about these questions developed. He reflects at the end of the year that the resources at Oxford have provided an environment that has enabled this development to take place.

At the start of the academic year he speculated that his faith might limit how open-minded he would be to the critical study of

Theology. On the other hand if he was to experience doubt in his faith he felt this was as likely to come from a variety of other sources as from academic study. In the first few weeks of the course faith remained separate from his studies. He could see that there might be points when the two might clash. Friends of his would have found it difficult to get through the first few weeks of the course and in particular through the kind of critical approach to the Bible to which he was being exposed. He disassociated himself from their standpoint and felt confident that if 'I find something I don't agree with I'll say so'. There was some ambiguity in his stance: he identified with these friends but was also of the opinion that it is difficult to make an academic argument for the belief that the word of scripture is absolute and entirely correct.

At the end of the year he continued to be focused on understanding as much as he could about the Bible and saw this as being about the purposes of the people who wrote it and also of the people who have interpreted it. He planned to take up Church history or doctrinal studies in order to acquire a rounded theological appreciation.

For Alan 'faith informed' has meant having a framework for considering taken for granted beliefs on the basis of systematic study. For example, the existence of King David is questioned on the basis that he is only referred to the Bible and not in any extra-biblical sources. Alan was not willing to pretend the evidence is not there if it was compelling. He had confidence, however, that it was possible to reconcile faith with his academic work so long as the challenge did not question anything truly fundamental.

He anticipated that such challenges may occur in studying the New Testament and was concerned at the prospect of writing essays in which he'd be expected to say that Jesus made mistakes. Whilst he was happy to explore the sources of the gospels, he had an absolute commitment to believing that Jesus was the Son of God and therefore did not get things wrong. He wondered whether tutors might be steering him toward that view having heard stories from friends at other universities but did not see evidence of this at Oxford. In his experience tutors here are try to illuminate as many points of view as possible. There did not seem to be prescriptions but rather theories that are always presented in opposition to other theories.

He has felt that anyone reading his essays would know that he has a faith because of the way he refers to God. However, he felt this

should have no bearing on the quality of the arguments that he makes which should be well reasoned. The difference was in the use of language rather than in the substance of the arguments: for example, he would write 'God says…'

Alan felt confident that there is a support system in college if he needs it but his first port of call would be friends at his Church whom knows and whose theological interpretations he trusts. Talking to tutors would be difficult because he was not sure whether they would have a faith and he was not sure that a Theology tutor who studies the subject constantly would have experienced a problem with anything he or she had to teach. A fellow-church-goer would be much more likely to empathise.

Reflecting on the year as a whole Alan felt that in his first year he gained an understanding of the richness of different opinions. His 'patience is worn down with people who would put forward their own opinion as the only possible viewpoint.' Nothing in the course has been threatening to his faith. He did feel challenged in studying the New Testament, in particular, when discussing the resurrection and critical approaches to it. As a Christian he put critical views to one side—did not ignore them—but found reasons to disagree with them. So he sees faith influencing the direction of his academic inquiry.

In the past he has aligned himself with Protestant evangelical views. He saw some conflict between this approach to the Bible and Theology as an academic subject. He thought he would have to reconcile the conflict between the two and believed this would entail a movement of both faith and the academic view of the subject rather than one dominating the other. He quoted the view that 'Scripture is infallible in all that it affirms' and argued that there is room to interpret what is affirmed.

Alan had originally chosen to study Philosophy alongside Theology because he thought the former would be a more academic and scientific lens with which to explore his interests. In the first few weeks of the course he saw that in Theology the skills he was using were similar to those he had used in English and History whereas Philosophy seemed more intellectual. However, his experience of the philosophy course was limited at this point and he was reluctant to make judgements about it.

Toward the end of the year the differences between Philosophy and Theology were further elaborated. In Philosophy the focus was the text and his views on it whereas in Theology the approach was to

draw on as many different views as possible. It was in Philosophy that he was asked about his own opinion the most. He was enjoying Theology most because of its breadth and language component: the breadth was in terms of skills involved, use of secondary texts, different sorts of analysis and exposure to linguistics and archaeology. In terms of ideas, the study of the Bible brought up a number of themes that are repeated whereas in Philosophy the breadth is in the range of questions that are addressed.

Discussion

The fastest way to succeed is to look as if you're playing by somebody else's rules, while quietly playing by your own. [Michael Konda]

The experience of dissonance between our personal beliefs and values, and the requirements, as we perceive them, of the context within which we wish to succeed, is a common one. It is not unique to students and tutors of Theology. A student of Mathematics in Oxford commented that he could 'see Maths in everything but the actual course doesn't do that it's just trying to get you through your exams.' [4]

However, there is something critical, perhaps extreme, about the juxtaposition of religious faith and spirituality with intellectual ways of knowing. The students and tutors who contributed to this project by telling us of their experiences have revealed some of their strategies for dealing with that dissonance. In doing so they tell us something about what it means to be a scholar of Theology but they also contribute to our understanding of the interplay between learners' preconceptions and the often implicit premises that underlie academic and vocational courses of study. This study has explored what happens for students when their preconceptions are at odds with the taken-for-granted starting points that lie at the core of the syllabus. And specifically, it has examined the state of 'being at odds' in a context where the most fundamental aspects of 'being' are questioned.

We set up potentially oppositional forces to students' preconceptions both in what we choose to teach and in how we deem

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[4] Quoted in Ashwin, P and Trigwell, K (2001) *The Oxford Learning Context: interim results of qualitative studies of students' experiences of learning at Oxford*, Oxford: Institute for the Advancement of University Learning.

it appropriate to teach. Students construct their environment in a variety of ways: they live with the dissonance sometimes explicitly recognising that they are doing so; or, to varying extents, they seek to resolve it. Tutors observe these processes as students progress, and perhaps perceive patterns in students experiences as they accompany generation after generation of students on that part of their intellectual and spiritual journey that takes place whilst they are in Oxford.

The findings of this research reveal that a great deal of thinking has taken place among tutors and students about what constitutes appropriate tutorial involvement and support in the life of a student. The parameters of the tutorial role of course have implications for the rights and obligations of the student. Expectations have therefore evolved: for tutors these are rooted in extensive experience as well as personal beliefs; for students their expectations embody a whole raft of motivations for coming to Oxford and preconceptions of academia in general and Theology in particular.

These expectations were often implicit in the interviews. Students, especially in the first round of interviews, found it hard to articulate their points of view. They became more lucid and perhaps more apt to problematise their experiences in the second round of interviews. One of the most thought-provoking findings is the frequency with which students arrive, fully intending to experience some kind of integration between their faith stance and their academic study. As they experience tutorials and essay-writing they become aware of the rules by which they must 'look as if' they are playing. A question that is worth pursuing beyond the first year experience is whether these rules, once discerned, promote or hinder integration between what students pursue in their studies and what they believe.

Tutors, on the whole, had not only established 'rules of thumb' for their own practice but did so with a keen awareness of the complexities of the context in which they operate: a collegiate university in which there are diverse and contradictory views about the aims of Theology as a discipline. To what extent does this diversity benefit students? Are there ways of harnessing what is distinctive about the traditions represented in Theology at Oxford for the greater benefit of all students?

The Way Forward

Faculty of Theology finds itself at a critical juncture in the development of its strategies for learning and teaching. Its peculiar role as a broker between top class academic scholarship and professional training for the Christian churches gives it an important opportunity at a time when all the mainstream churches are thinking seriously about adult education and considering radical proposals of the future, (e.g. The adoption of the Hinde report by the Church of England in July 2003).

The research undertaken suggested a difference of perception with regard to the role of the tutor between students and tutors themselves, and the attitudes of tutors and students respectively with regard to the appropriateness of faith stance being a topic for intellectual discussion in tutorials. Theology is peculiar in the way in which it affects students existentially as well as intellectually, which raises questions about the need for tutors to be aware of their responsibility to manage this interface.

The students come to tutorials with little clear understanding of how well they will manage the balance between faith commitment and academic study and discover strategies for dealing with it, often as the result of the way in which tutors model a strategy, e.g. by making a clear distinction between the two.

The project team's key recommendation is that the issues raised be discussed further within the Faculty. The following questions seem, to us, especially significant:

I. How explicitly, at the beginning of the first year, at the beginning of each new tutor/student relationship should tutors and students discuss the role of students' faith stance in tutorials and tutorial essays?

II. How can students and tutors come to a shared understanding of tutors' roles: how willing they are, and in what context, to discuss with their students the impact of academic study on faith stances?

III. How could the Faculty improve the support it offers to students and tutors, and/or the information about support that is available to students?

There are, and will be, other questions, but these would constitute, in our view, a useful place to start.

Processes

1. Consideration of the questions raised in this study should be integrated into the Faculty's professional development opportunities for all those who teach including graduate tutors as well as experienced colleagues.
2. The findings of this research should be disseminated by a national conference, possibly in collaboration with other LTSN projects, open to members of other departments.
3. There should be an optional workshop for freshers in which this particular issue is discussed drawing on the case studies and an abridged version of the report. The purpose of this workshop would be to stimulate explicit, public examination of these issues among students and between students and tutors.
4. The findings suggested that the tutorial space was still un-charted terrain whose contours students found themselves mapping by experience. A more explicit articulation of expectations and aspirations at the start of their university career might help students to acclimatise themselves and make the best possible use of their learning opportunities at Oxford. The inclusion of faith issues in this articulation should signal the legitimacy of their discussion and potential for aiding learning.
5. The Faculty Board should appoint a working party of tutors to produce a guide of possible avenues of support which students can pursue when wrestling with faith issues and academic study.

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Engaged Religious Studies:

Some Suggestions for the Content, Methods and Aims of Learning and Teaching in the Future Study of Religions

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Introduction

The theme of the conference is 'Mapping the Field', a metaphor which is applicable to religious traditions themselves, and to learning and teaching in the Study of Religions, as well as to delineating the content of our subject discipline, if such it is. Religious traditions, like

maps, purport to tell us where we are at present, where we are heading, and the best way to get there. Planning teaching is similar, in that we need to know where the students are now, where we hope to get to, and the best way of getting from A to B. However, although teaching and learning (and no doubt spiritual quests) are usually more successful with a clear idea of the aims of the exercise, as with other journeys, too rigid an adherence to the plan may cause us to miss unexpected attractions and events along the way. Thus the learning journey needs to be a flexible one. Perhaps we should not be too obsessed with predetermined 'Learning Outcomes'. More importantly, we need to know before we start why we are going on the journey—is it worth setting off?

Michael Grimmitt defines pedagogy as 'a theory of teaching and learning encompassing aims, curriculum content and methodology' (2000:8), in other words the why? what? and how? of our educational endeavour. Scholars of religious education for school-aged students have a long history of critical thinking, if not to say agonising, about the why, what and how of learning and teaching in Religious Studies, and perhaps university level Religious Studies has something to learn from this. Over many years of trying to help students become teachers of religious education in school and of being a teacher myself, my focus has moved from the content through the methods to the rationale, especially after sitting through many a technically competent lesson wondering 'so what? Why do these pupils need to know this?'. With a clear aim, the content and methods often fall into place naturally. However I shall look at these three questions in reverse order of their current importance to me and start with content.

Content

In spite of our 50th anniversary, Religious Studies is still in many ways relatively a young subject, and although we have successfully distinguished ourselves from Theology to our own satisfaction, the distinction still needs to be constantly made to the uninitiated, and sometimes proves difficult, in that the boundaries easily become blurred. Ninian Smart (1995:8) described the continuing hegemony of Theology, and Anglican theology at that, in British universities, and a

rough analysis of the AUDTRS handbook reveals that 'religionists' are still outnumbered by Theologians and Biblical studies scholars in Great Britain by about 1:4. In making the distinction I was involved in some interpretation of the brief listings scholars give of themselves, and several scholars are, of course, happy to be both theologians and religionists. In common with most terms in higher education, as our poor students have to recognise, the definitions of both Religious Studies and Theology are disputed. Some definitions of Theology stress that it is an activity engaged in by believers: 'the systematic reflection on God and belief in God by Christians for Christians' is one given by Adrian Thatcher (1997:74-75); whereas Alister McGrath (2001:138) would see it more neutrally as the 'analysis of religious belief', with Christian theology being 'the systematic study of the fundamentals of the Christian faith'. This presumably can be engaged in by Christian and non-Christian alike.

The distinctions in practice in Britain are partly about approach, if the 'insider' definition of theology is taken, but are also about content, as Theology tends to stress belief (i.e. doctrine rather than practice) and is often limited to the Christian traditions, whereas the Study of Religions attempts a more holistic approach to belief, behaviour and customs labelled religions and is plural, engaging with several traditions. However, I am concerned that we might have left Christianity to the theologians. Looking at the programme for the next few days, I could spend a whole day on Buddhist Studies or South Asian Studies, and there are substantial sections on Jaina Studies, Jewish Studies, Islamic Studies, Sikh Studies, New Age Studies—but where is Christian Studies? There are papers within thematic, area, or methodology sections dealing with Christian topics, but no 'Christian Studies' section. We are celebrating the establishment in Oxford of Centres for Buddhist Studies, Hindu Studies, Islamic Studies and Jewish Studies—presumably 'Christian Studies' is the business of the university Faculty of Theology. Similarly, it is hard to find books to recommend to students which take a 'Religious Studies' approach to the Christian traditions. This division into 'Christianity' and 'other religions' was labelled the 'fundamental distinction' by John Hull (1993) when discussing government guidance on religious education, and this distinction seems still to influence the way we divide up our subject field in Britain, and elsewhere in Europe (Tim Jensen noted a similar division in Study of Religions in Denmark [Jensen:2004]). Is the real difference between Theology and Study of Religions one of

content—theologians study Christianity and Study of Religions studies the rest—or one of approach, or of aim?

One of the questions that has been exercising scholars of religions for the last decade or so, is whether we have a content at all—is there such a thing as religion? Are the so-called religions mere eighteenth or nineteenth century constructions, 'isms' born of Western post-Enlightenment rationalism, or in the case of Eastern traditions, of the desires of imperialist colonisers to categorise and control? Is the very notion of 'religion' a misguided category as Tim Fitzgerald (e.g. 1995), for example. has suggested? In many non-European languages there is no word that easily translates into the English 'religion', or way of distinguishing between 'religious' and 'non-religious'; there is just how people live their lives. It was explained to me by a lecturer in religious education from Botswana that this is the case in her own language of Setswana. My question about whether non-religious lifestyles could be included in religious education would just not be translatable. On the other hand, in everyday English, this question does make some sense, as we can see from the current debate about including 'atheism' in the English Religious Education curriculum, even if we reject any essentialist notion of the term religion. We all know that 'religion' is notoriously difficult to define. Definitions focussing on belief in God only suit theistic religions and leave Buddhism out. Those that focus on the supernatural rule out those worldviews that see no natural-supernatural distinction. If defined as 'beliefs', this is seen as a western post-enlightenment view, inappropriately imposed on non-western traditions, which tend to be more about 'doing', and even that is an unwarranted generalisation. In reality the traditions we label 'religions' are internally diverse, and the dividing lines between them are not clear, particularly in non-western (e.g. Indian) traditions or post-modern or late-modern manifestations of religion such as 'new age', nor is 'religion' easy to distinguish from other aspects of human life. Thus we recognise that the trend in academic circles is to take a non-essentialist view of the term religion: following Jonathan Z. Smith, 'religion' tends to be viewed as an artefact of the academy, a tool for analysis, rather than having any direct relationship to reality 'out there' (Smith 1982:xi).

Even if we decide that religion is merely a convenient term, is it a useful one? For some time I have been concerned about the negative baggage that the term 'religion' seems to carry in our contemporary culture, to the point where I have started to call it the 'r'

word. Colleagues working in Education departments seem happy to talk about the need to recognise cultural diversity, but become uncomfortable when 'religion' is mentioned. Each year I start one of our first year courses with a word association task obtaining students' reactions to the terms 'religion' and 'spirituality'—the gut reactions to the term 'religion' are all to do with other people telling you what to do, misuse of power, control, repression, especially the demonic 'organised religion' (which always makes me wonder what 'disorganised religion' might be like). This, remember, is from students who have actively chosen to take at least one module in 'Study of Religions'. 'Spirituality' receives a warmer welcome, being associated with individual freedom, peace and meditation. Discussing the definition of spirituality makes trying to define religion seem easy —suggestions range from those that make it identical to religion to those that include religious and non-religious responses to life. Often it seems to be a way of retaining the 'nice' bits of religion without having to face either the criticisms or demands of adherence to an organised religious tradition. So would 'study of spiritualities' be a better description of our content? Although I can be persuaded to include it in the title of my subject, I would be loath to reduce it to 'spiritualities' because of the rather individualised, self-oriented associations of the term, adrift from the traditions.

If community and traditions are important, would the more fashionable 'culture' be better? In my institution, as in others, more popular than Study of Religions is Cultural Studies, suggesting that students do want to look at human beliefs, customs and artefacts. The word 'culture' seems more acceptable to those who do not like 'religion', such as the Education colleagues mentioned above. In Russia, the subject equivalent to our religious education being introduced into schools is called 'Orthodox Culture'—the first half to satisfy the dominant religious community that its influence on the nation is recognised, and the second to still the objections of the secularists—don't worry, it's not religion, just culture. Apart from the fact that 'Cultural Studies' is a term already taken, and appears to be mainly about the study of popular art, music, film and new media, I have two main concerns about using the term 'culture' to describe the content of our study. First, as pointed out by James Cox, Phillip Goodchild and others (see Bunt 2004) 'culture' as a label suffers from the same artificiality as the term 'religion' and we end up in more debates about the meaning of words. Second, and more importantly to

me, the use of the term 'culture' would seem to presume from the outset that religions are human creations. From a believer's point of view, a clear distinction may be made between the eternal truths of their tradition (whether or not they like the term' religion' for these) and 'culture' (the changeable social context in which eternal truths are expressed). It does make some sense, even if it becomes very fuzzy, to talk of 'religions' adapting to different 'cultures' or making changes in what is merely 'cultural'. In practice we all know that there is often no agreement as to what counts as 'religion', therefore unchangeable and what as 'culture' therefore changeable. For example ordaining women as priests, monogamy, not cutting one's hair, honouring ancestor spirits and local gods, female circumcision all may be viewed as religion or as culture by different people, or the distinction may not make sense to them. Nevertheless, it would not seem sensible to start by alienating the very people we are trying to study by taking an a priori stance that sees their customs and beliefs as merely human creations. As Brian Bocking points out, one of the distinctive features of the generally phenomenological Study of Religions as traditionally practised in Britain has been 'its programmatic reluctance to propose any theory of religion which makes it impossible for the religious believer to go on believing, or the religious practitioner to go on practising' (2000:4). I have tried hard to think of another term to encompass the beliefs, values and customs of everyone, whether 'religious' or not, in order to explain the content of our study. I have not yet succeeded, and for the time being think we need to continue with the term religion, whilst airing its problematic nature, and trying to explain to anyone who will listen what we mean. As a convenient shorthand, I think we have to hold on to both the communal dimension suggested by James Cox's 'sociohistorical manifestations of authoritative traditions' (Bunt 2004:164) and the more personal and inclusive 'responses to' 'the significant limits of experience' suggested by Philip Goodchild (Bunt 2004:167)—the latter having room for individual, non-traditional or non-religious responses.

I still rather like Ninian Smart's delineation of the content of our subject as religions plus ideologies plus questions of value and meaning (Smart 1995). Many school departments have taken to calling themselves 'religion and philosophy'. My own preference, given the fuzzy nature of the concept of religion, is to cast the net as wide as possible, without rendering it completely meaningless. Thus one of the ways in which the Study of Religions is distinguished from

Theology is by breadth of content. In designing the content of our curricula I would argue for a diverse selection of major religious traditions (with all the caveats about the category 'world religion' pointed out by Ron Geaves [1998] and others), ancient traditions with fewer followers, new religious movements, so-called indigenous traditions, contemporary Paganism, the more nebulous forms of contemporary spirituality such as those sometimes labelled 'new age', implicit and vernacular religion, as well as secular alternatives such as humanism that play a similar role to religions in people's lives: always stressing internal diversity, fuzzy boundaries and the multiplicity of interpretations of each category.

No Department has the time or staffing to cover all the varieties of traditions and spiritualities ancient and contemporary, so we need to have some criteria for selection. I guess that for most of us it tends to be guided by our own research interests, so that students are taught by scholars at the forefront of their discipline. However, it is also important to consider what the students themselves are interested in, if only for recruitment and retention. Edinburgh University were reported in THES 27th August as finding that among students 'there is more interest in contemporary affairs than in biblical studies'. The current good news is that the number of candidates taking A-level in our subject has seen the largest rise (almost 14%) of any subject with 14,418 taking A-level this year. This is partly a result of the earlier success of the 'short-course GCSE' in Religious Education, which led to RS , if both full and short course are amalgamated) being the most sixth popular subject at GCSE, beating French, Art, History and Geography and behind only Science, Maths, English Language, English Literature and Design Technology. (This year's full course entries were 141,037 up from 132,304 last year. I could not find this year's short course entries but last year's were 223,885). The bad news is that as yet this does not seem to be transferring to Theology and Religious Studies at degree level. According to Dick Powell (2004), only Oxford, Cambridge, Durham and Edinburgh have increased their intake this year, and there were 2017 TRS courses left in 'Clearing' this year. At A level, papers increasing in popularity are those dealing with the Philosophy of Religion and Ethics, and one of the reasons why the short course GCSEs are popular is because as well as options in Christianity and 'world religions', there are options in philosophy and ethics, and contemporary issues like religion and science, human relationships, wealth and poverty, peace and justice,

creation, the environment, medical ethics etc. The reason seems to be that in these aspects of the subject you have more opportunity to form and express your own opinions—to quote a local schoolboy 'I like RE because other subjects tell you what to think—in RE you can say what you think'. Research by Mark Fearn and Leslie Francis (2004) revealed that students prefer a 'religious studies' to a 'faith based' approach, and analysed the areas they would most like to study at university level. There are differences between 'churchgoers' and 'non-churchgoers', and between male and female students. Among the findings that interested me are that Philosophy and Psychology emerge as the most popular approaches to studying religions, that Buddhism is the most popular non-Christian tradition especially with boys and non-church goers (with whom it beat Christianity), that new religious movements are of more interest than 'new age' (which may be a term less familiar or interesting to them), and that of contemporary issues the order of interest is religion and gender issues top, religion and the media next, religion and politics third and religions and the environment last: a finding that surprised me. Ancient Egyptian religion has quite a high level of interest too.

Looking at younger secondary pupils prior to GCSE, during my current research with secondary school pupils identifying themselves as witches, my control (non-witch) group were also interested in Ancient Egyptian religion, Buddhism and Hinduism, and the whole area of ghosts, dreams, mysterious occurrences and the 'unexplained'. The latter also came top in research undertaken by an MA student a few years ago. It was interesting to hear from a colleague in Estonia that research into what secondary aged pupils would like in the newly introduced subject of religious education revealed that the options they thought most important of a list provided were ethics, world religions other than Christianity, religion and culture and religion and science in that order, and that when asked to given their own top ten topics these were sexuality and relationships, love, UFOs, world religions other than Christianity, destiny, life after death, alcohol and drugs, soul, spirits and ghosts and reincarnation (Valk 2004). Further research on the religious affiliations and interests of 16 to 19 year olds in England by Lat Blaylock (2004) leads him to describe them as a generation characterised by 'plasticity of spirituality', post-modern in the sense of being eclectic, anti-tradition and relativistically inclined, plural, 'religion-lite',in their relationship to the 'faith communities', rarely

anti-spiritual, more open to ideas like God and life after death than they are often portrayed, and very much in search of meaning. Turning from their own interests to the Religious Education provided for them in schools, the recently launched 'non-statutory national framework' (QCA 2004) for religious education in English schools gives guidance for the local producers of syllabuses. A balanced content is considered to be one which includes Christianity, the five other 'principal religions' in this country, other traditions 'such as the Baha'i faith, Jainism and Zoroastrianism' and 'secular philosophies such as humanism' (QCA 2004:12). The learning objectives are quite challenging, for example pupils aged 11-13 will among other outcomes be able to 'analyse and explain how religious beliefs and ideas are transmitted by people, texts and traditions', 'investigate and explain why people belong to faith communities and explain the reasons for diversity in religion' and 'apply a wide range of religious and philosophical vocabulary consistently and accurately, recognising both the power and limitations of language in expressing religious beliefs and ideas'. The content will cover at least three religions and possibly secular worldviews (QCA 2004:28-29), and deal with themes such as human nature and destiny, authority, religion and science, spirituality, ethics, human rights and social justice, global issues such as war and the environment, and interfaith dialogue. Pupils aged 14-19 will, for example, 'think rigorously and present coherent, widely informed and detailed arguments about beliefs, ethics, values and issues, drawing well-substantiated conclusions' and 'develop their understanding of the principal methods by which religions and spirituality are studied' (QCA 2004:30).

So, in order to capitalise on the interest and previous educational experience of young people we would be wise to include philosophy of religion, ethics, psychology of religion, gender and sexuality and religion and the media at least into our curricula, as well as something dealing with life's mysteries, especially those surrounding death. Universities have much to gain by liaising carefully with schools concerning the aims, methods and content of religious studies. However, I would also argue that we should not be complete slaves to fashion and 'contemporary relevance', or we will be in danger of losing an historical perspective and the languages and literary skills to access religious texts. I would agree with Fearn and Francis that we should not cut less popular options such as Pali or

early Christian history, but we do need to find new ways of marketing them to potential students.

Method

Even if we have agreed on the content of our curriculum, our search for learning and teaching methods cannot be viewed as the attempt to find a successful way of communicating a fixed package of information. Religions are just not like that. They are living, growing, changing, fuzzy at the edges, and our construction of the content may shift as our attempt to discuss religious traditions with students may affect our own understanding of the tradition as well as the students'.

      I am not treating here a discussion of the best methods of researching religions, but of teaching religions to our students. There are questions of general approach, and of practical teaching techniques. Fearn and Francis claim that school students prefer a 'religious studies approach'. By this I understand a broadly phenomenological approach, which at school level has nothing to do with Husserl and essences or Eliade and the sacred, but simply trying to take an impartial and objective as possible look at the traditions or issues studied, and trying to understand before judging. Importantly it is open to believers, non-believers and agnostics. Although we may need to go 'beyond phenomenology', it is not a bad place to start. Objectivity, epoche and empathy may all be impossible and in some cases undesirable, but the general attempt to understand with sensitivity before evaluating, and to be conscious of our own presuppositions and agendas, and where these come from, cannot but aid our explorations of religions and our own personal development. As Brian Bocking argued (2000:2), 'the Lancaster-style phenomenology of religion … still has a lot going for it', at least as a place to start. Over the last thirty years, this approach has been supplemented by feminist insights, first hand ethnography of a dialogical nature, and a more sophisticated understanding of terminology, but has not been fundamentally overthrown. One valuable component of the 'methodological agnosticism' associated with the phenomenological approach is the commitment to avoid premature evaluation, an attitude described as 'epistemological humility' (Cush 1999: 386; Bocking 2000 6; Chidester cited in

Jackson 2004:181). James Cox contends similarly that even taking account of the many criticisms of a basically phenomenological religious studies 'there is still a methodological middle ground between theology and culture' (2004:263). One argument for having a subject called Religious Studies/Study of Religions is that it means that we can look at traditions in a rounded and holistic way, drawing on the insights of insiders and outsiders, and of a range of disciplines including ethnography, sociology, psychology, philosophy, literary theory, languages, history, art, archaeology, music…I would agree with Smart that the study of religions is polymethodic (1973:8).

A heated debate in religious education circles has been whether religious traditions are best studied systematically or thematically, paralleling the 'particularist' and 'comparativist' approaches in higher education. There are strengths and dangers in both, as well as hidden agendas. The strengths of looking at one tradition at a time include maintaining the integrity of the tradition in all its dimensions, being able to grasp the historical development and contexts, whereas the weaknesses include essentialism and reification, accepting the construction of a tradition by a dominant group, and ignoring the lived reality where people may draw upon a variety of so-called religious traditions. The hidden agendas may be those of theological exclusivists who are convinced that their own traditions cannot be compared with others, or a postmodern concern to stress the incommensurability of different cultures. The strengths of a comparativist approach include that similarities often cut across the traditions (with for example liberals in two religions having more in common with each other than with non-liberals in their own traditions), and that the 'religions' are to some extent at least constructs anyway. Weaknesses include giving students a one dimensional view of a tradition, imposing categories upon traditions that come from outside and may distort, be eurocentric or orientalist or in other ways unacceptable to the tradition, and that aspects of a tradition may be studied with no grounding in historical or other wider contexts. The hidden agendas with comparativism may include a universalist or inclusivist desire to teach that all traditions are really different paths to the same goal. My answer to this problem at all levels of education has always been to do a bit of both, being aware of the pitfalls.

When we turn to the practicalities of teaching and learning, a battery of strategies is required as different students respond to

different methods and variety is welcomed by all. Sophie Gilliat Ray (2003) describes an interesting variety of techniques employed by colleagues in Wales: teaching through visual material such as art and film, using popular music, and practical drama. Technology has enhanced our repertoire in many ways, both using the internet as resource (with the corresponding requirement to enable students to interrogate and interpret what they find—the 'hermeneutic of suspicion' being much required), and as a means of learning and teaching. Distance learning in particular has been revolutionised by communications technology, and many university departments have developed very successful courses this way. Susan Stuart and Margaret Brown (2004) describe an innovative use of handsets to encourage students to answer questions in the teaching of logic—other tutors have reported students who are far happier to engage in an on-line discussion than a classroom one. My ongoing discussion board for students at Bath on the meaning of spirituality is proving popular and interesting. On a visit to the USA in spring 2004 I was impressed by the use of technology at a community college in Chattanooga—not only did they have completely on-line and hybrid courses in world religions, complete with interviews specially created by the college film crew, but they were making excellent use of webcams to have interactive lectures with students at a distance, but being able to see them face to face. This enabled learning to be distant in space only or time as well, and had proved popular with the non-traditional students they were trying to reach. The college provided the first two years of a degree course, after which students progressed to university for the second two years of their programme. The combination of FE provision of HE and extensive use of technology gave me a distinct feeling that I was looking at the future of mass higher education.

The learning and teaching strategy I am most committed to myself is the direct experience of living religions. This can now be partially achieved at a distance through technology, such as interactive or recorded interviews with religious practitioners, but there is much to be said for actually visiting religious communities on their own ground. Learning happens through all the senses—iconography and atmosphere can communicate directly as well as what the community representatives say. At Bath Spa, there is a long-standing tradition of over 30 years of sending students on placements where they live alongside a religious community and join in as far as their own perspectives will allow. Students almost inevitably report that such

experiences bring their studies to life, and that they gain more insights into the tradition than through the more conventional methods of attending lectures and reading books. Such encounters not only enhance learning about the host tradition, but the experience of being in an environment where the presumptions underlying everyday life are different, often leads students to reflect upon their own worldviews and spiritual resources.

I have been to four conferences this summer, and among many benefits is the experience of spending long hours passively listening to colleagues. Even when fascinating, the effort to keep listening is often difficult. One of the four was intended more for practising teachers of religious education in European schools, and as a result some sessions involved activities rather than listening to papers. Interpreting pictures, working out why a certain ethical action had been taken from written clues, discussing specific issues in small groups, certainly made for more memorable learning. Returning to those Estonian school students, their favourite teaching and learning methods included, from the top, fieldtrips, free conversation, visiting experts, group work, storytelling, games and interviews conducted by students, and their least favourite was teachers' oral presentations and students taking notes (Valk 2004). Field visits, philosophical discussions, the use of the creative arts, and experiential methods are all common in British RE, but perhaps less so in Higher Education.

In taking students on the journey of learning about religions, it is important to know where they are starting from, and our experience is that they are starting from very different places, especially as widening participation brings us an increasingly diverse student body. I usually start new first year modules with something like word association to see what existing perceptions students have, and a quick show of hands to see who has studied this topic before at A level or GCSE. Increasing I find that students know both less and more than one would have presumed, and we are trying to develop the ability to teach at more than one level at the same time: for example in first year lectures combining basic information with some points for further reflection for those who are in a position to go beyond the basics, and reading lists differentiated by previous experience. Another impressive learning strategy I came across in my recent travels was in a Canadian state-funded Catholic school which was one of a few schools pioneering individualised self-directed learning. There is no timetable, and students negotiate their own programme, which is a

mixture of individual use of study materials, working in small groups and attending lectures and seminars by tutors if and when required. Teachers in the school become teacher advisers who write learning materials, organise more conventional lessons and workshops where required and assist students with their planning and with tracking their progress. Tests and assessments can be taken when ready rather than a whole student group at once. This has proved a particularly useful arrangement for pupils of all abilities, including the so-called gifted and talented as well as those with special needs. It requires a lot of commitment to producing both paper and on-line learning materials, and utilises an electronic system for tracking pupils' progress. Students gain excellent time-management and learning skills which equip them well for further study, employment and adult life in general. It does not suit all students, but I would certainly like to have attended such as school myself. Perhaps university Religious Studies can develop a similar mixture of distance learning materials for individuals and groups, on-line resources and individualised guidance.

Just as diversity of content and of learning strategies is advisable, so is diversity in forms of assessment. Traditional university students were those who performed well in formal examinations, and my external examining experience reveals a relative bias in favour of formal examinations in the older universities, and towards various forms of course work such as essays, projects, dissertations, assessed seminar presentations by individuals and groups, and visual productions in the newer institutions. Only last week a mature student candidate asked if it was possible to create a piece of artwork rather than a written piece of work as an assignment. I had to admit that this was not one of our current forms of assessment, but I shall give it further thought—perhaps there are topics where a piece of artwork with an accompanying written piece might be possible. I know that there are some institutions where such forms of assessment are used. There are arguments for and against each form of assessment, and different students prefer or perform better in different modes of assessment. Age and gender appear to have some relevance here.

Finally on 'method', whatever resources electronic or otherwise are available to tutor and student, I remain convince that at heart learning and teaching is a relationship—sometimes necessarily asymmetrical, where the onus is on the teacher to find a way of bringing student and material together, but sometimes, if the notion of

teacher as possessor of a fixed commodity called knowledge is shed, a journey of equals where both learn together. And, although variety in a programme is generally a good thing, there is a lot to be said for playing to the strengths of the individual lecturer rather than trying to force everyone into a predetermined model of good practice. Students respond well to enthusiasm and expertise, whatever the mode of delivery.

Aims

Now to the crucial question of why we are engaging in this enterprise anyway. I was disappointed that I was unable to attend the PRS-LTSN sponsored conference at Lancaster last December 'Religious Studies, what's the point?', but found reading the conference report in Discourse 2004 3.2 very illuminating. Gary Bunt writes (2004:161) that 'a central premise was that studying religion in comparative contexts is a worth while exercise, which can widen horizons and deepen understanding of the world around us'. However, this central premise is not necessarily shared by those outside our field or those with power to grant resources. Throughout my teaching career, I have found opposition from two main quarters—religious people and non-religious people. The former, when of the more exclusivist variety, cannot see the point of studying the history of falsehoods that lead one away from the truth, and the latter cannot see why one is wasting one's time on obviously false, dangerous and dated worldviews. You may all have suffered like me from people in managerial positions who hold one or other of these views. The type of students who might in the past have studied religions because of an interest in what makes people tick, are now more likely to choose psychology. There is truth in the claim that the history of the subject shows that interest in comparative religion tends to be associated with liberal protestant rather than secularist outlooks. It is interesting that the few countries that have pioneered non-confessional multi-faith religious education in schools have been of liberal protestant heritage, often with a state church.

So what are our aims and motivations for teaching religions? The most common answers fall into one of two categories, the first being what I call the 'understanding our neighbours' rationale—

religion, whether you like it or not, whether you can define it or not, or even if you critique the category, is still a powerful force in the world. We need knowledge, understanding, and dialogue in a world of plurality of religions, cultures, beliefs, values and customs. The other is to do with the student's own personal and intellectual development. Studying religions involves the students having to engage in critical reflection on their own, as well as others', beliefs and values—their sources—their validity. This aspect is central in school RE, but tends to be a bit of a side effect in university level Religious Studies, in contrast with Theology. The combination of the two aspects of understanding and critical reflection has been termed 'religiacy', a word first coined by Brian Gates in 1975. A 'religiate' person is one equipped to deal with religion at the level required by their context in the same way as the literate and numerate can cope with words and numbers (Gates 1975:72). Andrew Wright (1993:64) talks of 'religious literacy' as 'the ability to think and communicate intelligently about the ultimate questions that religion asks' and I noted in Discourse 2004 that John Shepherd continues the St Martin's tradition by defining 'religiacy' as 'a combination of informed understanding of religions and the exercise of critical skills in their evaluation' (Bunt 2004:164).

One of my main aims in teaching the study of religious at university level is to generate more RE teachers for schools. Religious Studies is not vocational exactly but in practice this is one of the major career destinations for TRS graduates in this country. The shortage of RE teachers is desperate—we produce between us less than 1000 graduates per year in England (Single Honours Theology and/or Religious Studies) and about 600 of these would need to enter teaching to fill the posts required, a larger proportion than any other subject. This important for us as it affects our recruitment. Since giving up teacher training, I have developed a Religion and Education module as part of our undergraduate as well as Masters degree dealing with interactions between Religion and Education on an international scale, and asking the big questions before they get bogged down in the practicalities of government directives and how to control Year 10 on a Friday afternoon, when undertaking a PGCE. These are proving popular, vocationally oriented modules which to date have encouraged more students than they have dissuaded. Opportunity for students to go into schools and see what RE departments are like is also an option in a compulsory professional and academic development module.

Returning to the less pragmatic aims, at an international conference of RE teachers and teacher educators in 2001, there was surprising agreement between teachers of RE in schools and universities from very different educational settings—whether the contexts were confessional or not, all put forward some version of the 'understanding others' and 'developing critical and reflexive thinking' reasons above, plus a third which could be summed up as addressing crucial issues for the future of humanity.

At 50, it is probably the time to ask whether what we are doing is the best use of our time. My colleague Dave Hicks at Bath, an international figure in Global Futures Education has analysed various projects and initiatives by educationalists and organisations such as Oxfam working for change. The four main themes that recur as the most crucial for educating today's young people for the future they will face are:

- wealth and poverty
- human rights including inequalities of gender, race, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religious freedom
- peace and conflict, including religious conflict
- the natural environment
  (Hick 2004:22)

These, and similar topics, do feature in the syllabuses for religious education in schools. Interestingly, according to Francis and Fearn, the last mentioned—religion and the environment—is not such as priority for A-level candidates looking to choose universities—perhaps they've had an overdose of environmentalism in schools?

I would suggest that not only for marketing purposes, but also for the future of the planet and its people, we need to address such issues theoretically either in thematic modules or within our considerations of individual religions, looking at the various ways in which the power and resources of religious traditions can both help and hinder positive ways forward. As Rosalind Hackett argues, 'Religion constitutes a powerful ideological, symbolic and organisational resource, not only for constructing personal and communal identities, but also for underwriting social and countercultural movements' (2003:8). However, can we also do something practical?As Brian Bocking asked, 'Is the scholar simply

trying to understand religions … or is one trying to understand in order to bring about some change?' (2000:4).

Part of our distinguishing ourselves from Theology has been an altogether correct desire to be as impartial as possible. However, as feminist and other liberationist thinkers have pointed out, complete objectivity is a myth and it is immoral to collude with injustice. Ninian Smart himself, way back in 1968, argued that although religious studies should 'emphasise the descriptive historical side' it should also 'enter into dialogue with the parahistorical claims of religious and anti-religious outlooks'; it must 'transcend the informative … in the direction of understanding the meaning of, and into questions about the truth and worth of, religion' (1968:105-6).

I have spent some time this year in a number of countries in an exploration of the interactions between religion and education especially in countries where religious education does not feature on the state school timetable. One thing I have been impressed by is the commitment to doing something practical found in confessional institutions. Religious faith provides tremendous motivation for ethical action. One example is Craig Kielburger from the Mary Ward School in Toronto, the school with self-directed learning, who, at the age of 12, after seeing a documentary on child labour in India, started an organisation called Free the Children, run by children for children and now internationally successful. I'm not talking about the 'sponsored no-uniform day' type of charity but students being enabled to take an in depth look at the reasons behind world problems as well as actually taking action. Among the 16 educational institutions I visited in Mexico, USA and Canada, the most impressive was not a school, college or university, but the Cuernavaca Centre for Intercultural Dialogue and Development. A Catholic run but ecumenically open endeavour influenced by liberation theology and the radical educational theories of the likes of Paulo Friere and Ivan Illich, this centre brought sixth-form and university students into contact with the poorest Mexicans in shanty towns and indigenous villages—not as gaping tourists or even as charity projects, but simply to meet and begin to understand their lives and the structures and factors that caused them to be as they were. The meetings were embedded in a programme of briefings and debriefings guiding the students to a deeper understanding and a commitment to do something. One of the strengths of Theology rather than Religious Studies in British universities is the element of practical theology

which enables students to engage with communities. Can there be an equivalent in non-confessional study of religions, or can only religious commitment provide the motivation to do something practical? Maybe some institutions are already doing something like this. On the model of 'Engaged Buddhism' I have labelled this 'engaged religious studies'. Religious Studies that makes a difference to the poor, oppressed, sufferers in conflict situations and the planet. This is somewhat similar to Rosalind Hackett's call for 'a committed scholarship which has something to offer the world and its problems —a more relevant future for a critical, comparative religious studies' (2003:21).

Returning to the map analogy, maps are never a simple representation of reality but distorted by the perspectives and interest of the mapmakers. The Mercator Projection emphasised Europe at the centre and the USA and then USSR as large —the Peter's projection gives centrality and emphasis to Africa and the poorer, southern countries. An Australian friend has a version of the Peter's projection, upside down from our perspective, which puts Australasia firmly at the centre top. Perhaps we need to work on a Peter's projection of Religious Studies which puts the previously marginalised at the centre and top of our map.

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Islam in Higher Education
University of Birmingham
29-30 January 2005

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Introduction

The *Islam in Higher Education* conference was organised by the Higher Education Academy Subject Centre for Philosophical Studies, the Association of Muslim Social Scientists UK (AMSS) and the Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim relations (CSIC), University of Birmingham.[1]

Over one hundred people attended during the two days. A significant proportion of the audience worked in higher education sectors in the UK (including universities, HE colleges, Islamic

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[1] The conference secretariat comprised: Dr. Anas S. Al-Shaikh-Ali, Dr. Jabal Buaben, Dr. Gary R. Bunt, Martyn Fletcher, Shiraz Khan, Dr. Bustami Khir, Abdul-Rehman Malik, Dr. R.P. Reed, Siddique Seddon.

Studies/Theology and Religious Studies departments, and the independent sector). There were representatives from Muslim communities, organisations, mosques and media. Participants had come from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Malaysia, USA, Turkey, and Europe. There was a display of related books and magazines.

The conference was instigated because the organisers felt that Islam in higher education represents a significant theme in the present political, religious and education climate—not just for those directly involved in Islamic Studies, but for the wider academy, the Muslim community and UK society. This was especially pertinent, given that approaches towards the study of Islam also have international implications, in terms of the diverse ways in which Islam and Muslims can be understood and interpreted in an ever-changing global context. The conference sought to bring together participants with a broad range of experiences relating to Islam in Higher Education, to interact on these crucial issues.

The organisers had worked on separate related events in the past: in March 2002, the Subject Centre organized a colloquium entitled *Teaching Islam after 9-11*, inviting academics engaged in Islamic Studies and Religious Studies to participate, and published a related article in what was then the *PRS-LTSN Journal*.[2] In September 2002, the AMSS organized its fourth annual conference on *Muslim Education in Europe*. A Session at the conference was devoted to "The Future of Islamic Studies in Higher Education" with a contributing speaker from the CSIC. The agenda of the *Islam in Higher Education* conference was derived in part from the findings of both the subject centre colloquium and the AMSS conference, which raised issues of pedagogy, recruitment, perceptions of 'the other', and the evaluation of learning and teaching materials. The Subject Centre, AMSS, and the CSIC considered these as significant themes for discussion and evaluation in the context of a changing higher educational environment.

Over twenty papers were presented during the two days of the *c*onference, and there was time for substantial follow-up discussions in session—with animated dialogues continuing in many cases during conference breaks. The descriptions of the papers given in this report

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[2] Gary R. Bunt, "Studying Islam after 9-11: Reflections and Resources", PRS-LTSN Journal, Vol. 1, No. 2, Winter 2002, 156-164, **http://www.prs-ltsn.leeds.ac.uk/relig_studies/discussions/islam/bunt1.html**

are drawn in part from the participants' abstracts, together with the writer's own notes.[3] The format for conference sessions consisted of short papers presented in sequence, with the sessions concluding with discussion and comments from the floor. Discussion comments are not attributed to named individuals in this report.

Papers and Discussions: Day 1 (29 January 2005)

Conference Opening Remarks

The conference commenced with a recitation from the Qur'an, given by Mohamed Muslih. A series of brief opening remarks were then given, chaired by Dr. Bustami Khir (CSIC conference co-organiser). Professor Michael Clarke (Vice Principal, Birmingham University), discussed the importance of Birmingham as a multicultural city which contains a substantial Muslim population, and referred to the establishment of Islamic Studies at the University. Professor Shearer West (School of Art, University of Birmingham) welcomed the delegates to the conference, and highlighted the significance of its agenda to the university. Dr. Gary R. Bunt (Subject Centre co-organiser) and Dr. Anas Al-Shaikh-Ali (AMSS co-organiser) outlined the background to the conference, and the opportunities for dialogue that the event presented in relation to its central themes.

Session 1: 'Approaches To The Study of Islam – I'
Chair Dr. Anas Al-Shaikh-Ali

Professor Malory Nye (Al-Maktoum Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies, Dundee)—co-authored with Dr. Alhagi Manta Drammeh (Al-Maktoum Institute): 'Mapping an Agenda for the Development of Research and Teaching in the Study of Islam and Muslims': this paper discussed key issues in the development of the Study of Islam and Muslims "as a discipline which is post-orientalist and multicultural, in which it is recognised that there is no single methodology or approach, but is both inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary." The impact of Edward Said's "Orientalism" on the

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[3] Abstracts are given in quotes without reference. Full abstracts can be found in the conference booklet, available at Islam in Higher Education,
http://www.islaminhighereducation.net

study of Islam was noted, and perceived key points of 'orientalist Islamic Studies' were highlighted. Nye then discussed how 'post-orientalist Islamic Studies' presented a developing field in the UK, and that academics were "only the start of the discussion of issue of redressing balance of issues on post-orientalist agenda."

This led to a discussion about who is 'qualified' to study Islam, including the critical questions: "is it right to then say that Islamic Studies can only be pursued by Muslims? [D]oes Islamic Studies require a Muslim institution (Muslim text books and reference works)?" Nye suggested that the answer to both of these questions was "No", whilst identifying a "clear need for Muslim scholarship within contemporary post-orientalist studies of Islam and Muslims." Distinctions were made between *ilāhiyyāt* (defined in this session as 'faith seeking understanding') and non-faith based religious studies. Reference was then made to the 2004 Dundee Declaration for the Future Development of the Study of Islam and Muslims, and its key themes of Post-orientalist, Post-traditionalist, Multicultural, and Interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary study of Islam and Muslims.[4]

Dr. Gary R. Bunt, "Approaches to the Computer-Mediated Study of Islam in Higher Education": this paper focused on issues of pedagogy associated with the application of digital materials—in particular those derived from the Internet—for the study of Islam in higher education. It explored how these resources can complement other 'traditional' educational materials, and suggested examples of how lecturers and students can successfully integrate such materials in an appropriate manner into their work. The role of lecturers as guides to online resources in their subject area was considered. The impact of 'essay banks' and plagiarism detection software was highlighted. It was suggested that, in some cases, plagiarism can be pre-empted through good learning and teaching practice. Examples of Islamic Studies essays available online to purchase at a variety of prices (dependent on their quality) were presented. The paper introduced related work of the Subject Centre, the Higher Education Academy, and JISC—particularly on the issues of plagiarism and access to

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[4] Islamic Universities League/Al-Maktoum Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies 'Dundee Declaration for the Future Development of the Study of Islam and Muslims **http://www.almi.abdn.ac.uk/**

educational resources.[5] Reference was made to specific web-based learning resources for Islamic Studies, including a subject-centre funded mini-project conducted by Dr. Rob Gleave (University of Bristol).[6]

Professor Hassan Ahmed Ibrahim (International Islamic University Malaysia), "The Experience of the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) in Higher Education": this paper defined IIUM's approach to Islamic Studies, with its emphasis on English as a learning medium, the significance of co-education, and the integration of 'modern knowledge' and Islamic knowledge. There was then a focus on "the teaching of Islamic disciplines across the Faculties and Centres of IIUM, particularly in its biggest and central Faculty, deliberately and carefully called "Kulliyyah [Faculty] of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences."

Session 1 Discussion Points

- the problems of labels in relation to 'orientalism' and its accentuation
- the use of Arabic in IIUM
- how Google 'weights' different resources (including Islamic Studies materials) in its search engines
- the role of the English language in teaching Islamic Studies
- the present status of the Dundee Declaration.

Session 2: Access, Recruitment and Employability Issues
Chair: Dr. Gary R. Bunt

Professor Ian G. Williams (University of Central England, Birmingham) "Muslim Identities, Higher Education and Access to the Teaching Profession": this examined "developments in recruitment into the teaching profession from Muslim Asian communities and proposes strategies to enhance the profession for

[5] For example, JISC Plagiarism Advisory Service, **http://www.jiscpas.ac.uk/**, Virtual Training Suite, Internet for Religious Studies, **http://www.vts.rdn.ac.uk/tutorial/religion**

[6] Rob Greave, 'Creating Web-based Exercises for Theology and Religious Studies Students', Subject Centre funded mini-project, 2003, University of Bristol.

religio-ethnic traditions based on understandings of education particularly within the Muslim faith." Williams' analysis referred to Teacher Training Agency (TTA) recruitment targets, in terms of the (under-)representation of Muslim teachers. Patterns of recruitment reflect and reinforce social exclusion, given the comparatively low average affluence and education of Muslims in the UK (in comparison with other primarily migrant Asian heritage Hindu and Sikh communities). Williams noted that—in general terms—Muslims have the lowest labour market advantage and achievement in the UK, with specific barriers to education including dress code and "explicit Islamophobia". The status of teachers was considered in relation to 'Asian' contexts, and parental influence on careers/lifestyles. Williams noted that he represented one faculty of education's attempt to redress the balance, but that wider access to higher education across the Higher Education sector for Muslim students was essential.

Dr. Adrian Brockett (York St. John), "Islamophobia and Arabophobia in English Adolescents": this paper presented data based on a study undertaken in York: "The study was a cross-sectional study of young people's negative attitudes towards Muslims and Arabs, and young Muslims' experiences of negative attitudes and victimisation. 1515 participants were recruited to participate from ten schools and one college of further education in the city of York." This survey was significant because of its implications in reflecting the outlooks of students arriving in the higher education sector, who may either present or be victim to such attitudes.

Julie Gallimore (Independent Consultant/member of Subject Centre's Steering Group), "Employability and Religious Studies Students": this paper presented issues from the perspective of how the skills acquired during HE degrees in Religious Studies and Islamic Studies can be applied and transferred in professional and employment contexts. It discussed the role of Subject Centres "in supporting the enterprise skill of Religious Literacy and discover how employing organisations value this skill." This highlighted issues of knowledge transfer, transferable skills, vocational and subject-specific educational objectives, entrepreneurship, and awareness of diversity. This can be linked with the issue of Faith Literacy and good practice.[7]

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[7] For a discussion on the Faith Literacy project at Wolverhampton, supported by the Subject Centre, see Deirdre Burke, 'Entrepreneurial consultancies in Religious

Session 2 Discussion Points

- statistics relating to teacher training presented an 'awful' picture, according to one community leader, which were countered by him stating that his community was house-owning, employed and relatively prosperous.
- there was consideration of the lack of teachers as role models in communities.
- The question was raised of what is the TTA were actually doing to improve the recruitment situation, especially given a substantial increase in the Muslim population of the UK?
- problems of reliability of statistics and samples were raised.
- there was a perceived need to introduce elements of ethnicity, class and parental influence when discussing Higher Education
- there was a perceived need for a more sophisticated understanding of Higher Education situations relating to Muslim communities
- there was an opinion that central government also needed to get more involved in initiatives associated with teaching.

Session 3: Challenges Facing the Study of Islam in HE – I
Chair: Siddique Seddon (Markfield)

Professor Pierre Lory (Sorbonne, Paris), "The Challenges of Islamic Studies in Post-Colonial France": Lory's abstract noted that: "During centuries, French higher education developed a double-sided knowledge on Islam. One side was scholarly and endeavoured to describe a classical, fixed, non evolutive culture (in theology, literature, arts etc). The second trend tried to analyse the societies as they functioned, in order to help penetration of economic and political interests in the East. Since the end of colonization, the main centres of Islamic studies are trying to escape from this old orientalist model. But they still have to face many obstacles: the debate on orientalism does not seem to be totally closed." Lory explored the stress on the past in scholarship about Islam, and a lack of understanding of what Islamic Studies is/was in France. He noted the 'crisis' of identity

Studies' **http://www.qualityresearchinternational.com/ese/papers/ burkefv.doc**, retrieved 15 February 2005.
Michael Sells, *Approaching the Qur'an: The Early Revelations* (Ashland, Oregon: White Cloud Press, 2000)

facing Muslims in France, and suggested the emergence of a new generation of Muslim scholars and scholarship.

Professor Charles E. Butterworth (**University of Maryland**), "Islam on its Own Terms: A Plea for Understanding": Butterworth suggested in his abstract that "[T]o speak of Western approaches to the study of Islam and to link that topic with the call for such approaches to be appraised implies too much error. Certainly, there are misguided attempts to prejudge Islam. And many such attempts do come from individuals in the West who have no accurate understanding of Islam, not of Islam as a religious creed embraced by more than a billion people worldwide nor of Islam as a culture. To dwell on error, to continue polemic by engaging in defensive polemic, is a task better left to those who value defence of one's own over simply presenting things as they are. The goal we should all be striving for, regardless of how we identify ourselves, is mutual understanding." Butterworth based his analysis in part on studies of Alfarabi (870-950) and Averroes (also known as Ibn Rushd (1126-1198)).

Butterworth also explored reactions to—and controversy surrounding—Michael Sells' book *Approaching the Qur'an*, when it was nominated in 2002 as a set book for undergraduates at the University of North Carolina (Chapel Hill).[8] The question of locating 'reliable' English-language translations of the meaning of Qur'an was considered. Butterworth discussed his own experience of conveying a sense of the Qur'an's beauty and complexity to undergraduates.

Professor Jørgen S. Nielsen (University of Birmingham), "Challenges Facing the Study of Islam in Higher Education": Nielsen's abstract noted: "With the increasing internationalisation of higher education and diversity of our student constituencies the broad field of Islamic studies is being challenged as never before. Does it make a difference whether we are teaching to Muslims or non-Muslims? What role, if any, does the religious adherence of the teacher play? Aspects of these questions are not new but tend to be avoided. What about the content of the subject? Are we teaching Islam in some form of abstract, or as a lived religion? And to what extent does this issue require the mobilisation of a variety of disciplines?

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[8] Carolina Summer Reading Program 2002, **http://www.unc.edu/srp/srp2002/**, accessed 15 February 2005

Why do we not appear to be asking the same questions of the teaching of Christianity?"

This raised significant questions of what practitioners (this writer's term) are teaching, in terms of skills and 'transferable' elements (linking to Gallimore's earlier conference theme of employability)? Nielsen noted that he had been recently teaching undergraduates. He faced issues of 'faith' and 'non-faith' based perspectives as part of this teaching process, and suggested that the latter was in itself a kind of faith-based perspective.

Issues associated with the study of Edward Said were introduced, including Said's 'selectivity' of sources, and how "Orientalism" had become a key text in Islamic circles in the Arab world. 'Orientalist' scholars had made substantial contributions to the fields, contributing knowledge that would otherwise had been lost. Nielsen noted the need for a multidisciplinary approach to the subject area, and considered that there were some institutional absences from related subject spheres at the conference. Nielsen discussed how this might reflect the Academy division of the subject area, and how the profession was divided up on this basis. Reference was made to the BRISMES survey on 'Middle East Studies'.[9] Student-catchment areas and motivation for the study of Islam were considered, especially in relation to Muslim women.

On the subject of examiners, the implicit assumptions associated with the 'authenticity' of sources in Islam were not recognised across disciplines, resulting in difficulties in recruiting appropriate PhD examiners who would not demand complex (and lengthy) justification as an integral component of thesis' content.

Professor Yahya Michot (University of Oxford), "The Myth of the Great Baddy: Ibn Taymiyya and New Orientalists?": this paper gave consideration towards the 'negative' representation of Ibn Taymiyya (1263-1328) in a number of sources. Michot argued in his abstract that "[T]he great Mamluk theologian is in serious need of a scholarly re-appraisal as the most malevolent and erroneous statements now pullulate about his so-called "political" thought, among academics as well as in the media. Instead of questioning the misuses of some of his writings (for instance, the anti-Mongol fatwas)

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[9] BRISMES, 'The Crisis facing Middie Eastern and Islamic Studies in British Universities', **http://www.dur.ac.uk/brismes/**, accessed 15 February 2005

by various extreme Islamist movements or writers, "new" orientalists give them a surplus of pseudo-scientific legitimacy and therefore become their best allies, in very unhealthy synergies. But would Ibn Taymiyya still be interesting if, historically speaking, it was wrong to consider him as the spiritual ancestor of armed Islamism?" Michot sought to locate the 'real' Ibn Taymiyya, by ignoring perceived selective readings and erroneous texts, and returning to source materials. Michot presented a number of source materials that demonstrated, in his view, the ways in which Ibn Taymiyya had been misrepresented.

Session 3 Discussion Points

- Ibn Taymiyya was seen as demanding rehabilitation and studies – not just those of 'new orientalists' who are linked to 'extremists'
- limits had to be attached to the job of 'mufti' and the impact of fatwas
- the influence of Islamic Studies on foreign policy was considered (with the role of 'safe' Muslim perspectives holding compatible views to government being applied)
- one opinion was that Islamic Studies holds no influence, but a generation of multifaith education has impacted on public opinion, and makes the public environment in the UK more constructive
- "optimism is required in this job" (teaching Islam)
- Edward Said's work contained many valid points
- there are misunderstandings about textual 'authenticity', and the roles of determining hadith (and other) sources
- when dealing with a thesis with the sunnah "as given", it is not justified for the examiner to go through the whole process of authenticity or not—it being an "unnecessary" hoop to go through
- the US government sponsors language training in Arabic, Persian etc. but graduates have to give a percentage of their time to governmental agencies (FBI, CIA, etc.)—this raises concerns of scholars being perceived as being US governmental employees.

Session 4: Challenges Facing the Study Of Islam in HE – II
Chair: Professor Pnina Werbner (Keele).

Dr. Tariq Ramadan (Geneva), "Western Approaches to the Study of Islam in Higher Education: An Appraisal": Ramadan noted that it is not feasible to generalise on 'western' perspectives of Islam, and that the term itself lacks accuracy. He discussed his position as the first Muslim to teach Islamic Studies in Switzerland, asking whether it was 'scientific' according to 'western' standards. He explored how the French tradition of orientalism was seen as a huge legacy, more 'political science' than 'theology' in nature. He noted that there are problems about Muslim scholars not being able to speak about their own religion, and that some 'Muslim scholars' accepted by the media read the Qur'an as "any other book". Ramadan noted that it is not easy to read the Qur'an, and issues emerge in translating the text. He considered whether approaches to Islamic sources are 'scientific'. He considered aspects of methodology and critical approaches to the subject, and the validity of Muslim and non-Muslims teaching about Islam. "Someone who doesn't believe in God can ask the right questions." Whilst respecting the intrinsic methodology of Islamic sciences—and emphasising the need of faithfulness and accuracy of knowledge in teaching and transmitting information about Islam, Ramadan sought to go back to the sources and apply new rational approaches, whilst operating from a faith-based perspective.

Dr. Zahid H. Bukhari (Georgetown University) [whose paper contained a contribution in absentia by Professor Sulayman S. Nyang, (University of Virginia) and Professor Mumtaz Ahmad (Hampton University)], "The State of Islamic Studies in American Universities: Initial Findings of a Larger Project": this presented an overview of Islamic Studies, and a comparative analysis of 'Islam 101' courses offered in the USA. It has emerged from an ongoing research project organised by the Center for Islam and Public Policy (CIPP). "The project will actively engage thoughtful scholars, students and alumni of these programs in panel discussions, focus groups and a dialogue where they will share their diverse individual and collective experiences. Through qualitative as well as quantitative research, a deeper understanding will be developed on the origins, history, and growth of the discipline."

Reference was made to the 'positive' and 'negative' elements associated with aspects of Islamic Studies after 9-11: to the

'negativity' of the 'Approaching the Qur'an' issue from Chapel Hill (see Butterworth, above), and the 'positive' element of a $9 million endowment given to Stanford in 2003 for a programme and professorship in Islamic Studies. Bukhari considered how Islam is studied in diverse contexts and programmes, including as a single module in 'World Religions' programmes. Through survey analysis of reading lists for introductory Islam courses, he reflected on how 186 books were deemed to be of a 'primary' nature in different universities. He noted the difference between the study of Judaism in the USA—with 159 endowed chairs—and the small number of chairs for the study of Islam. He also asked what the Muslim communities in the USA had done to counter this situation?

Professor Mehmet Pacaci (Ankara University) "Higher Islamic Education in Turkey": the abstract noted that the paper sought to present "a historical perspective of higher Islamic education (*ilāhiyyāt*) in Turkey one that persists in parallel to that of the process of the establishment of secularization, on the one hand, and the struggle of religious tradition to open a room for itself in the structure of the secular modern state, on the other." It explored aspects of curriculum developments, and recent developments in higher religious education in Turkey.

Session 4 Discussion Points

- the ensuing discussion on the papers discussed aspects of textual criticism in relation to the Qur'an
- reference was made to the developments of secular curricula in US influenced institutions in Saudi Arabia
- it was noted by one speaker that, in a United Arab Emirates university, law was the only faculty using Arabic as a teaching tool—the 'Islamisation' of knowledge and diverse modernisation models were referred to in this regard
- the question emerged of 'objectivity' in relation to Muslim lecturers; it was asked "why does a Muslim scholar have to accept a framework that traps them?"
- there was dialogue on whether social science techniques were appropriate for the study of Islam

- there was a discussion on how the Qur'an can be seen in historical and social contexts, as well as being part of tradition too
- the multidisciplinary elements of Islamic Studies were referred to: Ramadan further explored issues of dogma, and how some scholars discussing Islam 'disconnect' from faith; ethics is the 'key element' rather than Islamisation of knowledge.

Papers and Discussions: Day 2 (30 January 2005)

Session 5: 'Approaches to the Study of Islam – II'
Chair Dr. Mehmet Asutay (Markfield)[10]

Dr. Seán McLoughlin (University of Leeds), "The Study of Islam and Muslims in Britain in UK Higher Education": this provided a survey of the influences and approaches on the study of Islam, including reference to phenomenological approaches (for example, E.J. Sharpe, Ninian Smart, Wilfred Cantwell-Smith); 'phenomenology' of the Qur'an (Neal Robinson); studies of Islam in social, cultural, historical, political and economic contexts (for example, Dale Eickelman, Clifford Geertz, Ernest Gellner, Barbara Metcalf); he noted that we should not ignore other sources, such as (auto)biography, the novel, other literature and film, as resources for learning/teaching. McLoughlin suggested that it was important to locate studies of religion in Migration and Diaspora Studies, noting that "[R]eligion can both reinforce and challenge/transcend ethnicity (as well as nation-state) by forging more universalising linkages."[11] Questions arise relating to insider-outsider perspectives (and beyond), and possible definitions of Islamic Studies ("what Muslims do"?).

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[10] Professor Tamara Sonn (College of William and Mary) was unable to deliver the paper "Islamic Studies and Inter-Religious Understanding in the US" intended for this session, but provided its text: **http://www.amssuk.com/docs/pdf/4_Prof-Tamara-Sonn-paper.pdf**

[11] Seán McLoughlin, PowerPoint slide. For a detailed discussion on these themes, see Seán McLoughlin, 'Migration, Diaspora and Transnationalism: Transformations of Religion and Culture in a Globalising Age' in John R. Hinnells (ed.), *The Routledge Companion to the Study of Religions*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2005)

McLoughlin referred to multidisciplinary studies of Muslims in Britain (for example those undertaken at Universities of Birmingham, Warwick, Leeds, Cardiff). Citing Steven Vertovec's 1993 study (whilst suggesting that it should be updated), it was noted that religious studies as a discipline is not responsible for a big percentage of studies of Islam and Muslims, compared with other disciplines.[12] Reference was made to the diverse approaches to mapping Muslims in the UK, and McLoughlin reflected on the literature that has emerged in this process. McLoughlin showed how this evolution of research had influenced the content of an interdisciplinary third level module he runs as the University of Leeds on Muslims, Multiculturalism and the State.

Amjad Hussain (University of Wales Lampeter/Trinity College Carmarthen), "Islam; Why is There a Need to Study it in Higher Education?": Hussain's abstract explained his approach to this question: "To answer this question I will look into the dual form of teaching Islam that takes place in the arena of higher education in Britain. The aim of studying Islam as an academic subject in British universities or colleges is different from the training and education of Imams in private Muslim higher education institutions. Should these two not be complementing each other?" Hussain placed emphasis on the significant majority of Muslim children not going to faith-based schools (he provided a figure drawn from BBC News of 97% in this category). He suggested that the study of Islam in Higher Education was not worthwhile unless its influence fed into British society, and incorporated into the discussion the roles, qualifications and status of imams. He explored the shifting authority models of imams in British society, with roles as counsellors and specific pastoral responsibilities that could often be best met by imams educated in the UK. Hussain noted that in many cases imams were ill-equipped to help women in society, and that the roles of imams needed to be redefined.

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[12] Steven Vertovec, *Annotated Bibliography of Academic Publications regarding Islam and Muslims in the United Kingdom, 1985-1992* (Warwick: Centre for Ethnic Relations, 1993)

Session 5 Discussion Points

- the significance of the 'imam issue' was identified, with poor salaries, shifting roles and lack of community status influencing the quality of imams
- the perception of mosques failing women was reinforced by some members of the audience
- some Muslim institutions are attempting to address this problem
- the academic world needed to 'connect' with Muslim institutions, but the opinion was noted that many imams do not understand the academic world
- an opinion was presented that an Islamic Studies degree "does not equip an individual to be a religious leader", because it does not train them spiritually; this was not the role of (all) universities, but there needed to be an alternative institution, making these kinds of connection
- it was suggested that the emotional impact of some popular 'preachers' such as Amr Khaled was impacting on the influence of imams in domestic contexts, especially amongst 'naïve' youths
- the opinion was expressed that imams lack awareness of the pressures and influences on youth
- imams in Britain were defended, and it was explained that some have links to academia: an example was given from Preston, Lancashire
- the opinion was expressed that qualifications can be irrelevant to whether an individual acquires a job as an imam—ethnicity and personal contacts/networking being "more important" than specific training
- the '3% acquiring faith-based Muslim education' has to be segmented (public schools, home education, education abroad, etc.)—the statistic's validity was challenged.

Session 6: Workshop: Private and New Initiatives
Chair: Sharia Walker

This session introduced diverse endeavours relating to Islam in Higher Education in the UK and Europe:

Dr. Mehmet Asutay (Markfield Institute of Higher Education) outlined the expansions taking place at the Institute, noting that the degrees had been validated by Loughborough University since September 2003.

Dr. Abas T. Ridha (European Institute of Human Sciences, Llanybydder) presented an overview of the Institute's work to date, and a profile of students/graduates.

Dr. Sophie Gilliat-Ray (Cardiff University) introduced the new Centre for the Study of Islam in the UK, to be officially launched in September 2004. This includes a new Masters' programme, with a strong focus on interdisciplinary research, and outreach programmes for Muslims in Cardiff and South Wales.

Dr. Johan Meulemen (University of Oxford) presented a discussion on "Dutch Initiatives for Islamic Higher Education". It noted developments in Dutch language education, particularly attempts to create contemporary Islamic higher education opportunities in the Netherlands, including imam training.

Conclusion

The conference concluded with remarks from co-organisers Dr. Bustami Khir, Dr. Gary R. Bunt and Dr. Anas S. Al-Shaikh-Ali. It was noted that this conference was seen as a 'starting point' for further discussion and events on the central themes of the conference, with interested groups and parties (including those not represented at the conference). Future proposed activities include the publication of conference papers, and the continuation of the conference website **http://www.islaminhighereducation.net** as a hub for further developments. It was also noted that information on the event would be circulated throughout the Higher Education Academy, and that it would feed into the future subject centre activities, including the 2007 conference (provisionally entitled 'Beyond Beliefs'). Feedback from participants has been positive. Some remarked that it was notable in being the first conference in the UK of this kind. Others enjoyed the networking opportunities! The conference was seen as an effective way of connecting diverse educational interests associated with Islam in Higher Education. It is hoped to apply this conference as a model through which to interact and 'outreach' to other academics of religion, representative groups and religious communities in the UK.

Fieldwork Projects in the Sociology of Religion and the Development of Employability Skills:
Findings from a Small-Scale Study

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Background

Readers of *The Times Higher Education Supplement* may have noticed in the 23rd May 2003 issue a supplement published by 'Palgrave' about learning skills in higher education. Among the articles in the supplement there was one about employability skills and how they might be measured and another about fieldwork projects (though mainly in disciplines such as geography, town planning, and language courses). These respective articles on fieldwork and employability skills reflect two of my current teaching interests and they underpinned a new course that I developed for undergraduate

students in Religious and Theological Studies at Cardiff University called 'The Social Context of Religion' during the academic year 2002/3. This article explores how fieldwork projects in the sociology of religion might help students to be more 'employable' at the end of their studies. It also aims to make the case for the sociology of religion as a particularly suitable area of the Theology and Religious Studies curriculum in which to integrate employability skills through fieldwork. This is because fieldwork gives students an opportunity to immerse themselves in their subject in the 'real' world outside academe and helps students' 'experiential, cognitive, reflective and affective learning—the transferable skills so valued by employers' ('Rocks or a hard place', Pat Leon and Rob Butler, *THES*, 23rd May 2003).

According to one of the contributors to the Palgrave supplement article on employability, the word 'employability' might mean several things, such as rendering graduates 'fit for purpose' in the world of work, or the ability of individuals to present themselves effectively to potential employers. I understand 'employability' in much the same holistic way as the Centre for Employability at the University of Central Lancashire as: 'a set of skills, knowledge and personal attributes that makes an individual more likely to secure and be successful in their chosen occupation(s) to the benefit of themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy' (cited by Val Butcher, in 'Style over substance?', *THES*, 23rd May 2003). In addition, I place emphasis on the ability of students to critically reflect upon and articulate what they have learned and achieved.

As part of their assessment for my new course at Cardiff, students were required to undertake a fieldwork project as a way of developing skills of conducting and presenting social scientific research with a view to the acquisition of skills that might be useful to them in future employment settings. Twenty-two students chose to take the course and enrolment was deliberately 'capped' to ensure that students had the tutor support that they needed for their fieldwork projects. The kind of projects undertaken included some of the following:

- A case study of a Muslim school in Cardiff
- Wicca in Wales: an in-depth interview with one Wiccan practitioner

- Religions professionals today: participant observation at a Christian monastery in Oxfordshire
- The relationship between Welsh language, religion and identity: a questionnaire-based study at Dewi Sant Church, Cardiff
- A comparison of the Eucharist in Roman Catholic and Evangelical churches: an observation of ritual
- Responses to the death of Diana, Princess of Wales through interviews
- Women priests in the Church of England: a comparison between two women at the start and end of their careers based on in-depth interviews
- Spirituality and practice of yoga: a questionnaire survey among Cardiff University student

The students were prepared for fieldwork over the course of 6 lectures, covering methodology, data analysis, resources and contacts, and, crucially, ethical issues. A guiding principle for the fieldwork projects was the British Sociological Association's 'Statement of Ethical Practice' which covers issues of professional integrity, and relationships and responsibilities towards research participants.

The module handbook specified the employability skills that students could expect to develop during the course, and included the following:

- An ability to produce work for dissemination in a variety of forms, including written and oral
- Facility in presenting work using audio-visual resources
- An ability to present work to peers both formally and informally
- The capacity to exercise judgement on a topic and to substantiate your arguments
- Self-critical awareness of personal conduct in relation to external organisations and individuals

At the end of the project students had to write a report of 3,000 words and make a 10-minute seminar presentation to their peers, with each presentation being chaired by a fellow student. Amongst other things,

reports and presentations had to address two key issues, and students were asked to reflect upon:

- *Your role as a researcher*: what worked, what didn't, what you would do/not do next time if the study was repeated, how it 'felt' to do the research, how you overcame any problems, recognising any power dynamic etc.
- *What you have derived from the study as a student/researcher* e.g. more confidence in approaching people, better skills of observation and/or listening etc.

It is near impossible to make a reliable, objective measurement of attributes that students might acquire as a result of fieldwork projects. They could not be given marks for becoming more confident, self-reliant, or better at networking or time-management. However, marks were awarded on the basis of the degree to which they were able to self-critically reflect upon and articulate their own self-development as learners.

With support from the PRS-LTSN, I drafted a short questionnaire that required students to consider how their empirical research might have specifically contributed to the development of their employability skills. This exercise was designed to compare their perceptions with my own as the course tutor, and to raise their awareness of the skills they had acquired. The questionnaire took the form of open-ended questions, and took no more than 15 minutes to complete. Two students 'piloted' the questionnaire prior to its use with the whole class. The questions revolved around the following themes, and this paper examines each in turn:

- The most and least enjoyable aspects of the fieldwork project
- Skills acquired through setting up, conducting, analysing and presenting data (especially communication skills)
- Personal development as a result of the fieldwork (e.g. self-confidence)
- How new skills might be used in future employment

The results were analysed using the data analysis programme 'Idealist', a programme that allows for the rapid evaluation of open-ended questionnaire data.

Findings

The more and less enjoyable aspects of fieldwork projects

Many students clearly enjoyed the experiential aspects of learning from the people they met. Preconceived ideas were shattered and unexpected findings emerged from some projects. For those students who arrived at unforeseen conclusions, I was genuinely surprised to find that this was, for them, the most enjoyable aspect of their fieldwork project! They genuinely appreciated the opportunity to see social life from a different viewpoint. For other students, the fieldwork project gave them a legitimate reason to investigate areas of social life that are often sensitive, closed or hard to penetrate. The 3 days spent at a Benedictine monastery in Oxfordshire was a life-transforming experience for one student, and it was the task of conducting a fieldwork project that gave her the pretext to approach the monastery. Another student used family connections to do a small-scale investigation of how the Thames Valley Police Force has tried to recruit more Muslim officers into the service. This project involved the sensitive gathering of data from Muslim and non-Muslim, individual and organisational, perspectives. Some less able students initially found the prospect of doing a fieldwork project difficult. For them therefore, the enjoyment of the exercise was in facing an unfamiliar challenge and seeing successful results as an outcome.

Many students used a limited number of interviews as their main source of data, and departmental recording equipment was made available to students in order that they could use the recording as an *aide memoire* after the interview. It is either a reflection of their enthusiasm, or their reluctance to take advice, that many decided to do full transcriptions of these interviews, although this was expressly not requested. Not surprisingly, some students regretted undertaking this time-consuming task, and it became a less enjoyable aspect of their project. Many students reported that while they derived satisfaction and enjoyment from the actual *doing* of their fieldwork, they found the

writing-up stage difficult. Their particular frustration revolved around searching databases, to identify other similar research and then relating their findings to these studies. I am still trying to find ways of enthusing students in relation to databases (beyond the library catalogue), and research journals in particular. Many fail to see these resources as relevant to them. Even in an electronic age, the idea that picking a book off the library shelf is sufficient as a basis for research is still hard to dislodge.

The students did however have one legitimate reason to find the writing-up of their fieldwork projects a less enjoyable aspect of their work. Unlike the familiar format of 'the essay' as a means of assessment, the idea of writing 'a report' was new to nearly all the students. Despite very clear instructions as to the kind of headings they should use to structure their reports, many wanted a black and white hard copy example they could emulate. With nothing more than suggested headings and clues as to the kind of material they should include under each heading, many students were hesitant and stressed about the idea of presenting work in a new way. One student felt herself 'in at the deep end'.

Having been presented with a new and unfamiliar task, what did students feel they had derived from the exercise? What did they feel they could now do (or do better) as a result of the fieldwork? Over half the students reported that their confidence had grown as a result of doing fieldwork, mostly in relation to dealing with unfamiliar situations and people. In their own words:

I was quite shy on the first interview but by the end [I] felt quite confident in what I was asking.

More confident to approach people I don't know.

I feel that doing the project has given me more confidence in my ability to do things.

Feel more confident in approaching a different situation to my own and asking people questions about themselves.

This last quotation is particularly revealing of what I regard as especially valuable about fieldwork projects as a teacher, and as a tool in developing employability. Many projects undertaken by students

involved dealing with issues of 'difference'. Interviews were undertaken with people who were different to the students in terms of gender, age, faith, socio-economic background, and so on, or they had to gather data on topics/situations with which many of them were unfamiliar (e.g. conversion, extreme poverty, monastic life). Students had to engage with these differences, and the most 'successful' projects came from those students who had managed to glimpse, reflect upon, and share with fellow students the worldview of another person or section of society. This must surely be a key skill of value to employers.

As a teacher, it was gratifying to hear from some students that they now felt more able to turn ideas into reality. In many cases, students initially came with suggestions for projects that were vastly over-ambitious. It took considerable time to turn good ideas into manageable and researchable small-scale projects, *without* interfering to the extent that students lost a sense of 'ownership' of their ideas. But by the end of the course, a number of students had a better idea of how, in future, abstract ideas could be shaped into a practical project that is necessarily constrained by time and resources. Such skills of planning must count heavily as an attribute of employability.

Skills acquired through the fieldwork projects

Students described a range of different skills acquired through the different stages of setting-up, conducting, analysing and presenting their fieldwork. At the set-up phase in particular, students mentioned some of the following skills:

- The need to be organised
- Responding gracefully when people decline the invitation to co-operate/take part in research
- Recognising the time involved in organising interview dates/times
- Making a good first impression with gatekeepers/interviewees
- Explaining the research project to non-specialists clearly and concisely

- Deciding on the most appropriate methodology for a project
- How to write survey questions and layout a questionnaire schedule

A number of fieldwork projects involved students writing letters of introduction about their research and requesting co-operation from potential interviewees and organisations. The standard of many first drafts of these letters was surprisingly low with serious omissions of information, incorrect forms of address, poor layout, and so on. It was clearly only as undergraduates that some students acquired the formal letter-writing skills that one would have expected them to learn at school. In terms of employability, it was a case of 'better late than never'.

In the conduct phase of their research, unsurprisingly many students indicated an improvement in their communication skills. This evidently went beyond the task of merely asking interview questions, but also developing a sense of when to stay silent, when to probe/prompt interviewees, and how to use probes and prompts 'without being pushy and seeming to want certain answers'. For one student, the development of communication skills also involved the physical business of 'the way I behaved and presented myself [with] consideration for the participant'. A number of students mentioned the need to be sensitive to informants/respondents, this including matters such as appropriate dress in places of worship, keeping agreed appointments, and necessary pre-interview etiquette. As an employer, I would regard this kind of awareness as essential.

Some students failed to heed warnings about being over-ambitious in their data gathering, and consequently spent too much time trying to organise and analyse their material. This turned out to be an important learning exercise however, and some realised the importance of 'not asking too many questions in the first place—otherwise too much data'. For all the students there was a need to exercise skills of organisation of data, and discrimination between relevant and irrelevant material. While some of their data was clearly fascinating, they were forced to consider whether it answered their research question. Furthermore, they had to learn how to make creative use of interview notes or questionnaire data, and incorporate

it into their reports. In short, their skills of evaluation, judgement and critique, interpretation and analysis were sharpened in many cases.

If the students found the business of report-writing unfamiliar, many were similarly apprehensive about giving a formal, 10-minute (unassessed) seminar presentation to their peers. Most of them had never had to undertake such an exercise before. Although a seminar had been devoted to helping students to think about presentation skills, many of them learnt something about preparing, pacing, structuring, illustrating, and generally delivering data orally in a professional manner[1]. They also had to be ready to think quickly during a 2-minute 'question and answer' session. In short, the capacity to face questioning, engage an audience and overcome nerves, must count as the kind of skills that a potential employer would value. For one student, the experience of giving a presentation was 'a taster of what teaching may be like', and clearly helped her to reflect on her own future employment.

Personal development

As part of the questionnaire survey, students were asked to reflect upon the extent to which they felt they had developed as individuals as a result of the fieldwork project. The word 'confident' was mentioned repeatedly in responses, and many answers suggested that students felt gratified that they had faced an unfamiliar challenge successfully. This comment from one student was typical: 'more confident … was dreading the whole thing but rather enjoyed it in the end'. Confidence in approaching people, giving presentations, and asking sensitive questions all emerged as dimensions of personal development. One student reflected: 'since school I have not really done much in the way of presentations so this has really boosted my confidence as a whole … given me self-discipline/reliance and motivated me to work'. For one student, her growing confidence emerged from some of the tasks related to doing the fieldwork:

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[1] Students were given individual feedback on their presentations within 24 hours via e-mail. Question and answer sessions also included an element of feedback from peers.

Confidence has grown! I drove to Oxford and back (a place I had never been to before) and stayed with people I have never met!

Such responses to a question about personal development complemented the answers to a similar subsequent question which asked students to reflect on what, if anything, they felt they had learnt about their own worldview as a result of doing the fieldwork project. Nearly all the answers could usefully be recorded in full, such was the extent of self-reflection. However, the key theme that emerged was the realisation that matters of religious belief and practice are rarely 'black and white', and the consequent need to be open-minded and tolerant. For a number of students, it was clear that the process of doing fieldwork opened up and broadened their worldview.

The experience of doing their own fieldwork was a powerful way of helping students to realise that the 'ideals' in relation to religious belief and practice that they read about in textbooks on religions might be very different to the lived reality of religious life. Some students clearly felt that they had got behind 'appearances' and understood something far deeper by: 'trying to understand people's *motives and reasons* for doing things—to try to understand them better' (emphasis added). A future employer would surely value a person whose preconceived ideas have been realised and challenged, someone who has recognised that statistical data many omit important dimensions of human experience, and someone who is open to new avenues of thought and interest. For one student, the most significant learning experience of the whole project was realising 'that it is important to think as an individual … try not to follow the ideas of everyone else just for the sake of it'.

As a tutor, I was extremely impressed with those students who had understood some of the social, methodological, and power dynamics of doing fieldwork. For example, by the end of her study, one student whose interview sample had included both men and women, had realised that women might respond to interview questions in a different way to men. She reflected that 'women are more open to questions that contain 'what are your *feelings*'' (emphasis added). For another student whose key informant was a man much older than herself, the importance of confidentiality and trust was recognised as a concrete reality, and not simply as a matter of etiquette or professional practice. She wrote that 'confidentiality in interviews is *very* important

because the interviewee has placed a lot of trust in me by tell me their life story' (emphasis original). Many students appeared genuinely surprised at the extent of co-operation they received, and it seemed to teach them something important about social and research-based interactions. The kind of 'lessons' learnt included some of the following:

- Generate a relaxed/friendly atmosphere so interviewees feel comfortable to talk
- Be patient for replies to questions
- Dress appropriately
- Be clear and open about one's intentions

It is notable that this bulleted list is largely about *behaviour*, not knowledge, and this is apparently exactly what future employers are looking for, according to Paul Farrer, managing director of the Graduate Recruitment Company. He stressed 'that firms needed competences rather than degrees' (*THES*, 13th December 2002).

The degree of co-operation that the students in Cardiff received seemed to give them a positive experience of human nature, and suggested that they had in many cases implemented the kind of advice they had been given about approaching potential research participants.

'there are people always willing to help'
'if you give people the chance they will say loads about something, especially if they care about the subject'
' … people are very willing to help you'

Such comments helped students to make the connection between professional conduct and the willingness of people to provide time and assistance with research. As a potential employer, I would far rather appoint someone who has made such a realisation than someone who had not.

Using skills in employment

Towards the end of the questionnaire, students had to bring some of their reflections on their experience and learning together, to consider how they might use them in future employment settings. It was clear from their responses that the chance to 'have a go' at doing a presentation was extremely valuable to nearly the entire class, though this finding becomes less surprising given the number of students who indicated future plans to train as teachers[2]. Many of them saw the ability to speak to groups as a skill they would almost inevitably need to use again, and so far, few of them had had an opportunity to practice 'for real', but in a situation where the outcome didn't really matter[3]. Given that the presentations were unassessed, I was extremely surprised and delighted at the amount of effort that many students invested in preparing simple illustrations, overheads, and 'props' to support their presentations. As a teacher, I am still weighing up the value of keeping the presentations as an unassessed task, over against the wish to give credit to those students who go to considerable effort to prepare stimulating presentations. Several students mentioned that they would be noting on their CVs their experience of giving a public presentation.

   Besides the opportunity to present work orally, students reflected upon a range of skills that they felt they had acquired, and which would help them in the future. An ability to identify informants, plan and organise research, talk to people different from themselves, read 'body' language, take responsibility for their work, and so on, all came through as newly acquired or honed skills. However, I sense that for many students the ability to 'take responsibility' for their work

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[2] The findings from a very short questionnaire distributed to students at the start of the module asking them why they had chosen it, and what they hoped to gain from it, showed that some had specifically been attracted by the opportunity to do a presentation (particularly those anticipating a career in teaching).
[3] Some students found the prospect of giving a public presentation extremely nerve-wracking. Had the presentations been a formal part of the assessment of the module, some students would have found the experience extremely stressful, and I would feel uncomfortable about down-grading presentations marred by extreme nerves. This suggests the value of having unassessed presentations at level 1 or 2, and assessed presentations as perhaps part of some level 3 courses.

was in many ways much more about having a *sense of ownership* of their efforts and being self-sufficient. Rather than relying on other people's 'data' from books, their own skills and efforts were generating the material necessary to write their reports and pass the module. Students appeared to take pride in their very individual fieldwork projects, and I hope that they have learnt something about themselves in terms of what gives them satisfaction and motivation. I would estimate that three-quarters of the class ended the module with a stronger belief in themselves and their own capacity to produce, organise and undertake tasks effectively.

For some students, the topic for their fieldwork project had directly related to their future career plans:

… the fieldwork project should help substantially since my research concerned poverty [in Wales] and this is what I want to do as a career [as an aid worker]. My project has given me an insight into deprivation in this country which I did not have before and also showed me the kind of projects that can be established in combating poverty.

For those students who did not feel confident enough to tackle independent research as part of the 'Open Choice Dissertation' module[4], the opportunity to do a project on a smaller scale was more inviting.

Most students felt able to articulate and self-reflect on the kind of skills they had acquired or developed as a result of the course. However, it was clear that the simple act of completing the questionnaire was, for at least half of them, the activity that brought these skills consciously to mind. Future careers and employability do not feature prominently in most departmental courses, although the module taught by Professor Stephen Pattison, 'Using Theology and Religious Studies' is an exception (see p. 136). It is clear therefore that there would be considerable value in teachers giving time and explicit attention to the employability skills that could be derived from their modules, perhaps as part of the assessment of the course. A simple questionnaire exercise, perhaps followed by discussion in pairs/groups, could help students to reflect more deeply on their non-

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[4] With appropriate tutor support, this module allows a student to undertake independent research resulting in a dissertation of 8,000 words, in place of a taught module.

curriculum learning … or as in the title of another *Times Higher Education Supplement* article, 'whatever you learn, learn about yourself' (*THES*, 13th December 2002). Self-knowledge is precisely the kind of attribute that the Personnel Manager at the clothes retailer 'Next' values (ibid.), and the process of completing a reflective questionnaire about their fieldwork projects clearly helped students to identify aspects of their self-development and knowledge as individuals. An ability to think about what they have done and how it has helped them as people turns out to be, in many ways, as important as doing it in the first place.

Conclusion

Public and private sector companies and services are looking for individuals with 'drive, empathy, adaptability, [and] communication skills' (ibid.). The findings of my small project on employability skills and fieldwork in the sociology of religion clearly demonstrate that this part of the curriculum has the potential for helping students to develop exactly the kind of skills that will help them in future careers. Independent fieldwork requires strategic thinking, self-motivation and management, communication and data-handling, and helping students to identify and 'market' such skills and attributes to future employers is an important dimension of 'employability'. A paper by Dawn Lees on graduate employability (LTSN Generic Centre, October 2002) lists 39 aspects of employability (personal qualities, core skills, and process skills) based on Knight and Yorke (2001) and Bennett et al (1999). Based on my research findings, I would claim that at least 25 of these skills and qualities were acquired or developed as a result of most of the fieldwork projects[5], these being:

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[5] The extent to which these skills and attributes were acquired or developed clearly varied according to the type of research carried out (e.g. qualitative or quantitative, within our outside individual faith traditions etc.)

PERSONAL QUALITIES

- Malleable self-theory (belief that attributes [e.g. intelligence] are not fixed and can be developed)
- Self-awareness (awareness of own strengths and weaknesses, aims and values)
- Self-confidence (confidence in dealing with challenges that employment and life throw up)
- Independence (ability to work without supervision)
- Emotional intelligence (sensitivity to others' emotions and the effects that they can have)
- Stress tolerance (ability to retain effectiveness under pressure)
- Reflectiveness (the disposition to reflect on and evaluate the performance of oneself and others)

CORE SKILLS

- Numeracy (ability to use numbers at an appropriate level of accuracy)[6]
- Information retrieval (ability to access different sources, technologies and media)
- Self-management (ability to work in an efficient and structured manner, to deadlines)
- Critical analysis (ability to 'deconstruct' a problem or situation)
- Creativity (ability to be original or inventive and to apply lateral thinking)
- Listening (focused attention in which key points are recognised)
- Written communication (clear reports, letters etc. written specifically for the reader; appropriate responses to different audiences and contexts)
- Oral presentations (clear and confident presentation of information to a group)
- Explaining (orally and in writing)

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[6] Some students chose to do quantitative surveys which required the gathering, analysis and presentation of numerical data.

PROCESS SKILLS

- Computer literacy (ability to use a range of software)
- Ethical sensitivity (appreciates ethical aspects of employment and acts accordingly)
- Prioritising (ability to rank tasks according to importance)
- Planning (setting of achievable goals and structuring action, organise sub-tasks)
- Applying subject understanding (use of disciplinary understanding from the HE programme)
- Ability to work cross-culturally (both within and beyond the UK)
- Acting morally (has a moral code and acts accordingly)
- Coping with ambiguity and complexity (ability to handle ambiguous and complex situations)
- Decision making (choice of the best option from a range of alternatives; delegating)

Finally, at a time when information and resources are so easily acquired from the Internet, there is something to be said for summative assessment tasks that cannot be plagiarised, and which require considerable independence of thought and action.

Acknowledgements

Notes

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Using Theology and Religious Studies[1]

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Introduction

This report describes the background and content of a course specifically designed for level three, final year students in religious and theological studies at Cardiff University. The course is designed to enable students to apply their intellectual, subject based and transferable skills beyond religious studies (RS) so they can explain the relevance of them to people outside RS in the wider world of employment and social life. In addition to describing the background, rationale and content of the course, some evaluatory

comments are made about lessons learned by the tutor in the delivery of the course over the two academic sessions 2000-02 to two cohorts of students.

Background

In 1999, Stephen Pattison, the author of this report, proposed to the Board of the Department of Religious and Theological Studies at Cardiff University that there was a need for a module that would enable final year students to evaluate their education, recognise and develop their subject specific and generic skills and knowledge, and allow them to begin to see how these might be applied outwith the academy and sphere of religion and theology. Pattison was a trained theologian who had also worked in management, health care and the academic discipline of health and social welfare. He thus had wide experience of relating his own TRS training to spheres both in his practical and research work beyond the overtly religious. He was reasonably well placed to help those leaving university to begin to evaluate the relevance of religious studies education and training to wider areas, specifically to the world of employment.

Most TRS students at Cardiff University are not vocationally inclined towards religious involvement and work. They use their degrees as a generic humanities qualification to enter jobs in teaching, management, law, nursing etc. This—together with emergent pressures from government and other sources (via the Subject Benchmarking Statement and the University Employability Policy) to establish and develop the significance of generic and subject specific employability skills within education—added impetus to the need to provide a course that would allow students critically to consider the value of their specific disciplinary training to their involvement in worlds beyond religion and RS, as well as allowing them to continue to expand their knowledge of theology and religious studies and to audit their own skills and learning deficits. The resulting 20 credit module at level three is entitled Using Theology and Religious Studies (UTRS).

At the time of writing (2003), this module had been offered to two cohorts of final year students. In 2000-01, four students took it. In 200-02, nine students enrolled. Provisional enrolments for 2002-03 were up to fourteen. The course is designed for a maximum of 15 participants. This small number maximises the possibilities for personal involvement and assessment and development of generic and subject specific skills and knowledge. In many ways, it can be seen as a 'finishing off' course which helps students:

- to look back on and evaluate their TRS education;
- to articulate its relevance, and to identify skill and knowledge deficits to be met within the course or beyond in lifelong learning;
- to extend their thinking on the nature of religion and the 'religious', beyond conventional foci such as organised religious communities.

The aims of UTRS

UTRS has two main aims:

- To enable students to extend and critically assess the relevance of theological and religious studies insights and methods that they have acquired to the world of work and social life outside overtly religious communities.

- To enable students to recognise and consolidate generic and subject specific skills acquired in the course of studying religious and theological studies and to make good some of the important skills deficits that they identify.

Learning outcomes of UTRS

When students have completed UTRS, they should be able to:

- identify and describe some practice-related action-influencing world views, i.e. faith systems, outwith formal faith communities in the contemporary world;
- describe and define the main elements of some important social and work practices in the contemporary Western world, specifically that of management, and outline some of the ways in which such practices might be undergirded by inhabited, action-influencing world views or faith systems;
- explain the nature and contemporary significance of some inhabited, action-influencing faith systems and what these might suggest about understandings of religion and the religious;
- outline and evaluate how theological and similar insights and methods might or might not be useful in analysing practice-based faith systems;
- explain how your education and training in religious studies or theology might be used and of relevance in relation to some practices in the worlds of social life and employment;
- describe the subject specific and transferable skills acquired and recognise skill deficits and what might be done to remedy these through lifelong learning;
- demonstrate a competence in e mail and other aspects of computer technology that relate to education and employment.

Skill acquisition

UTRS is self-consciously a course that aims to help students identify and develop subject specific and generic skills, both intellectual and practical. In particular, it helps students to develop the following skills listed in the Cardiff Employability Skills Policy (distinctive skills or

those that are particularly emphasised in this module using one, two or three asterisks * to denote their relative importance or prominence).

Area 1—Traditional intellectual skills:
1) Arguing logically
2) Applying theory to practice

Area 2—New key or core skills:
1) Communication:
- oral communication in an appropriate medium**;
- making presentations as an individual and as part of a group**;
- writing effectively.

2) Improving learning and performance**:
- commitment to lifelong learning*;
- understanding one's preferred learning style and methods*;
- reflecting on and learn from experience;
- monitoring and evaluating progress against specific objectives;
- planning a course of action*,
- identifying skills, values, interests and other personal attributes and motivators (career management)***.

3) Working with others:
- working as part of a team*;
- negotiating with others;
- successfully managing conflict and asserting one's rights.

Area 3—Personal attributes:
1) Self reliance:
- pinpointing strengths and weaknesses***;
- defining and promoting one's agenda and influencing others*;
- having a personal sense of self-worth or self confidence**;
- managing workloads
- coping with stress.

2) Adaptability:
- applying skills to new contexts, i.e. transferring them**.

3) Creativity:
- recognising, creating, investigating and seizing opportunities.

The module also helps them to acquire and enhance the following skills specified for Religious and Theological Studies graduates in the subject Benchmarking Statement:

Generic skills:
- empathy;
- self discipline;
- self direction;
- independence of mind and initiative;
- attending to others and respect for others' views;
- gathering, evaluating and synthesising others different types of information;
- analytical ability;
- the capacity to formulate questions;
- problem solving;
- presentation skills (oral and written)**;
- IT skills including word processing, using e mail and the web teamwork skills**;
- writing skills.

Discipline specific skills:
- awareness of the multi facetted complexity of religions*;
- using a number of complementary methods of study**;
- awareness of religions contributions to debate in the public arena;
- awarness of how personal and communal identities are shaped by religion and of the creative and destructive effects of this and how important identities are.

Key transferable skills:
- communicating information, ideas, arguments, principles and theories by a variety of organised and well presented means*;
- using appropriate oral and visual means of communication;
- attending to, reproducing and reflecting upon the ideas and arguments of others*;
- engaging with empathy and integrity with the convictions and behaviours of others;
- working collaborative as a member of a team or group**;

- undertaking independent/self-directed study/learning (including time management) and reflecting upon one's strengths and weakness of as a learner**;
- making use of library resources to compile bibliographies to inform research and enhance presentations;
- using IT and computer skills for data capture;
- identifying source material to support research and enhance presentations;
- demonstrating critical self awareness about one's own beliefs, commitments and prejudices**.

Teaching methods and assessment

Because UTRS is a small group course which is designed to help individuals appraise and develop their learning, skills and needs, as well as the applicability of these to the world beyond University, the methods used are mostly participative and require active student engagement. There are no formal lectures. Students are required to engage in and design seminars and learning sessions. Some of these are teacher-led, others are student-led. Sometimes students work in pairs or groups. At other times they work alone. All students are required to do at least one solo presentation/facilitation and they are also required to chair discussions.

At all points they are asked to reflect on the techniques and effectiveness of particular teaching styles and methods and they are asked to evaluate their own and others' performances. They are also required to engage in e-mail contact with the tutor and each other between sessions, and feedback on sessions is provided by the same means. Mostly, the tutor will model a method of engaging in learning and then ask students to try it themselves and evaluate it.

Generally, students are required to do some work between sessions such as reading, thinking or taking part in a preparatory exercise, e.g., audit of their own skills and learning. Most student-led sessions are evaluated but not assessed for credit. This allows students to experiment with presentation and facilitation skills without worrying about their final degree classification and so is probably more appropriate than formal assessment. Students are also required to choose topics and to identify how best to approach them.

The net effect of using these methods is to increase presentational and communication skills, to enhance student autonomy and confidence, as well as developing subject specific knowledge and intellectual skills.

Formal formative assessment is provided by students submitting two coursework essays which are commented upon by the tutor. These essays can then be used as a basis for a final summative assessment portfolio of three essays which includes a further essay whose title is devised by the student in consultation with the tutor.

Syllabus content and shape

The module is delivered in thirty fifty-minute sessions over two semesters. The content of the course is not fixed. This allows the pursuit of different topics and issues that are of particular interest to participants.

The shape of the course is basically as follows.

Part 1 Auditing religious and theological skills, methods, competences and insights

This part occupies the first three sessions. It aims to help students to become aware of and to audit the methods, understandings and competences in theology and religious studies that they possess and do not yet possess. Students are invited to read the subject Benchmarking Statement and the Cardiff Employability Skills Policy and then work out which skills and knowledge they have and have not acquired. This allows the identification of generic and subject specific knowledge, skills and competences and also exposes needs for further training and competence. The tutor then tries to see how far these needs can be appropriately met in the rest of the course. At the end, students return to their audit to see what they have now gained, a process which reinforces their self-assessment and evaluative skills. (A list of the aggregated skill and knowledge deficits identified by the student group in the academic year 2001-02 is attached at Appendix A).

Part 2 Preliminary issues about religion in the modern Western world

This part of the module takes around five sessions and is designed to ensure that students have a competent comprehension of the problematic and contested nature of understanding religion and religions in the modern world. It looks at questions such as, What is religion? What counts as religion in the contemporary world? What are implicit and surrogate religions? Is religion dead or just changed? How can religious and theological studies methods and insights be used in relation to contemporary issues and practices? What are the obstacles to this?

Part 3 An analytic paradigm for applying religious and theological insights and skills

The intellectual aim of the course is to help students to see the relevance or irrelevance of trying to apply the insights, methods and skills acquired in a degree in religious and theological studies to practices outwith formal religion. It is important to model how this might be done, so students are required over nine sessions to introduce and to discuss a paradigm case study analysis of management using the tutor's book, *The Faith of the Managers*. Using this text also has the advantage that students are introduced to a key aspect of employment, namely, management, in which they are likely to have to participate in their subsequent careers, either directly or indirectly.

Part 4 Analysing issues and practices in the contemporary world

The fourth part of the course, which takes up around ten sessions, allows individual students to explore to what extent 'secular' practices and issues may be susceptible to analysis using the insights and methods of religious and theological studies. Such issues/practices might include: the market, medicine, health, science, art, sport, counselling, psychoanalysis, organisations as religious communities, contemporary spiritualities, New Age religion, values, films, and tourism. These topics can be determined according to students' interests to some extent, but a specimen set of topics and questions is provided. (These are provided as Appendix B to this report.) Students are required to present their topic for wider discussion lasting one

hour in the group, thus increasing the awareness of all as well as enhancing individuals' presentation and facilitation skills.

At the end of this part of the course, students are in a good position to recognise the potential and limits for seeing 'religious' dimensions of practices and also to evaluate further what the limits of understandings of contemporary religion are, or might be.

Part 5 Skills, methods, insights and competences revisited

This part of the course takes up four sessions. It enable students to revise and evaluate the skills, methods and insights that they have gained in studying religious and theological studies in the light of their studies in this and other courses, and in the light of their employment aspirations. Students revisit their audit of skills, knowledge and competences (subject specific and generic) and evaluate what progress they have made in meeting their perceived deficits. The final session of the course requires students to undertake a mock employment interview in which they have to explain why a degree in religious and theological studies might be of use and of value to a secular employer.

Evaluating UTRS

Student evaluation of the module is conducted a) by the administration of a standard departmental anonymous questionnaire; b) by an anonymous tutor administered questionnaire, which forms part of the preparation for the final review session; and c) by plenary discussion of student experience and perceptions in the final sessions. Furthermore, the tutor collects *ad hoc* comments in sessions and by asking for e-mail comment as the course progresses.

From all these sources it seems clear that students find this quite a difficult and challenging course, but also a worthwhile one. Most students attend for most sessions—but this might have something to do with the tutor being their Head of Department. There is general agreement that the course clearly attains its specified outcomes. While not being entirely grateful for the amount of presentation and facilitation work required in class, students feel that the course enhances their communication, presentation and thinking skills and makes them better able to talk and think critically in a

public way. A number of students express direct appreciation of being made to use e mail and IT skills. All appreciated the tutorial e mail feedback between sessions that attempts to bring rather diffuse subjects and discussions together. They also pointed out that feedback on individual performances delivered by e-mail rather than in public was less embarrassing and more sensitive to student feelings. Most students say that they have become more confident as a result of doing the course (a key need identified in most initial personal audits) and most appreciated working in quite a personal way within a small group with a tutor who at least one or two describe as 'approachable'. One or two students express some disquiet about dismembering the meaning of religion and some find the emphasis on management a bit too much. Most students would value more help with choosing and researching an independent essay title and this is something that will be dealt with better next time the course is delivered. All students also seem glad to have an opportunity to articulate what their degree studies might have equipped them for beyond higher education as all had encountered general skepticism and bemusement about the value of their subject area, except as a training for religious life, or perhaps the life beyond. One student made the following written comment:

> This was the first module to spend time actually trying to apply our degree and other skills to the world of work. Had I not taken this module as a third year I, like many of my friends on my course, would have left to ponder these important questions in my spare time. I valued the chance to apply our skills to future career, and to apply 'religious' systems and concepts to external environments, organisations etc.—I never thought of this before.

This comment alone would seem to vindicate the importance of running a course of this kind, even if the actual content and methods require some further refinement to meet student needs.

Issues arising from the course

A number of interesting issues and perceptions arise from student participation in, and feedback from, the course.

First, it is clear that students do not enroll on TRS degrees because they wish to develop employability skills. The language of

employability, skills, competences, transferability etc. is still essentially alien and often perceived as irrelevant by current Cardiff students. They are still subject-centred in their choice of course. This puts a question mark from the 'customers' against the prominence that government and university authorities give to this element in higher education. When introduced to concepts pertaining to employability, students feel that they have to learn a new language 'game' (their word not mine). It is debatable whether subject specialist teachers are the best people to help them to learn it and realise its importance. Students also find the language of learning outcomes obscure and difficult, according to their feedback forms. Are those of us who teach in danger of too enthusiastically adopting the technocratic argot of skills, competences, outcomes etc., to the long term detriment of the real interest that students actually seem to have in the subject they have selected to study?

Secondly, the course has exposed a number of deficiencies in overall modular course provision. So, for example, some students can get through a TRS degree without considering the overall nature of the subject/discipline area, they may not necessarily be exposed to the contested nature of understandings of religion. They may often fail to realise that skills learned in specific courses and areas, e.g., language and textual interpretation skills, have a wider reference or relevance beyond particular subject areas. I am constantly surprised that students seldom allude to textual interpretation skills as having relevance in a wider context beyond TRS, and many of them do not understand words such as *systematic*, *dogmatic*, *phenomenological*, *linguistic*, *hermeneutical*, *empirical*, *speculative*, *social scientific*, which are mentioned in the subject Benchmarking Statement which they review early on in the course. On a more prosaic level, it has become apparent that some students had not had to use the internet or journal articles before doing this module, while it also seems to be the case that others had never had to read a whole book critically during the course of their higher education in TRS. This may point to the need to provide a more integrated syllabus in terms of content and skills in Cardiff specifically. However, it also raises questions about the appropriateness of modular, free choice degree schemes in general, particularly as they might relate to joint honours students who only take half the TRS course. Such consumer choice oriented offerings may inadvertently allow, or even encourage students to avoid the

acquisition of skills and knowledge that are integral to the successful, systematic study of the discipline as well as to employability.

Thirdly, and slightly sadly, I think I must report that I think this course is better at exposing knowledge and skill deficits than it is in meeting these. Ultimately, while most students value the way in which the course helps them to articulate the benefits and skills acquired in a TRS degree, they are skeptical that such skills and insights can really be appropriately applied outwith the narrow realm of traditional organized religion. So if the hope of TRS academics is that we can and should help students to apply their skills outside this realm, we need to do much more to articulate and demonstrate how this can really be done. Furthermore, only a limited amount can be done with third year students to remedy skills deficits, if they have not been dealt with earlier in the scheme of study or perhaps before students arrive at university.

Conclusion

UTRS is an innovative course designed to help final year TRS students to be able to identify, evaluate and develop their overall subject knowledge as well as to recognise and develop transferable skills, knowledge and competences. It succeeds in doing this to quite a large extent. Student participation also indicates that a course like this is not enough in and of itself to really bridge the gap between subject specific education and employability. If the relevance and applicability of TRS knowledge, insight and skill is to be taken seriously, as government and university authorities seem to imply it should be, then it will be necessary for Cardiff University, and perhaps others, to do far more work throughout the degree syllabus to embed and develop critical consciousness and awareness of transferability. However, it may be asked whether this is the most appropriate turn for a subject area where students appear to enroll because they are actually interested in the disciplinary area as such rather than because it leads directly to employability or the development of very applicable insights, methods and skills in the worlds of work and society outwith the formally religious context.

References

Cardiff University (1999) 'Cardiff Employability and Skills Policy' Appendix in *Academic Quality Handbook* Addendum, Cardiff, Cardiff University, pp209-24

Pattison, S. (1997) *The Faith of the Managers*, London, Cassell

Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (2000). *Handbook for Academic Review*, Gloucester, QAA

Appendix A:

Skill deficits identified by UTRS students 2001-02

- E-mail—mail merger, distribution lists etc
- IT skills—internet, more advanced knowledge of how computers work-how to use spreadsheets, different drives etc.
- Managing people and situations—standing out from crowd, organising situations and projects, appropriate authority
- Speaking in public
- Communication skills—communicating orally in groups, presenting personal opinions and views confidently
- Groupwork and teamwork skills—good communication skills, negotiation skills, able to compromise, leadership skills etc.
- Time management skills
- Presentation skills—oral and written
- Research skills—gathering, evaluating and synthesising different kinds of information
- Reading accurately and attentively
- Computing skills
- Managing and running things
- Motivation
- Business organizational skills/knowledge—creating business ideas, understanding how businesses function within a hierarchy etc.
- Subject specific skill deficits
- Evaluating other religions traditions
- Understanding meaning and use of complementary methods of study—systematic, dogmatic, phenomenological, linguistic, hermeneutical, empirical, speculative, social scientific

- How religions contribute to the public arena in terms of values, truth, beauty, identity, health, peace, justice.

Appendix B:

Topics/questions suggested for student analysis in Section 4 of the course

1. Is science a kind of religion?
2. Is faith more important than scientific knowledge in medicine?
3. What might some of the critical insights and methods of theology and religious studies reveal about modern concepts and practices relating to health and disease?
4. Is modern counselling a faith system? Do its practices owe anything to those traditionally associated with religion in Western society?
5. Has the market taken over the features and functions of God and providence in modern society?
6. Is Generation X a faithless generation?
7. Have contemporary notions of spirituality got anything to do with religion as traditionally understood?
8. How might a religious/theological studies perspective be illuminative in looking at aspects of the life and work of organisations?
9. Using some of the insights and methods of religious and theological studies, discuss the nature of and significance of storytelling and mythmaking in some parts of the modern world, eg, in the arena of health or of organisations.
10. Is novelist David Lodge right to see tourism as a modern form of the religious quest and pilgrimage?
11. Much of the language and many of the attributes that were formerly associated with God in Western society are not dispersed into other areas of life and discourse. Do you think this is true? Discuss the significance of this kind of thinking in relation to Don Cupitt's recent attempts to write 'a theology in everyday speech'.
12. Is the cinema the best place to go to explore contemporary faith systems and practices?
13. To what extent might humour and laughter be seen as religious activities in the modern world?

Entrepreneurial Consultancies in Religious Studies

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Introduction

Whilst running a stand at the *Enterprisefest*[1] at the University of Wolverhampton we noted that many people rushed past our stand. Was this due to the bold *Faith Literacy* title to our display? Did people think we had another agenda and were there with an ulterior, possibly evangelical, motive? The experience was a timely reminder of the reception that applications from Religious Studies graduates may receive from employers who are not familiar with the method and content of Religious Studies. Perhaps more than

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[1] *Enterprisefest*, 24th November 2004, University of Wolverhampton

any other Humanities or Social Science subject, applications from Religious Studies graduates may be pre-judged and discarded by employers due to their preconceptions of Religious Studies. Graduate destinations for Religious Studies look good on the surface (at Wolverhampton over 80% of RS graduates use their degree) but these figures mask the fact that the majority of graduates either go into teaching or research, and they actually find other avenues for graduate employment difficult to access.

This experience demonstrates the need for an exploration of ways to enhance employability amongst Religious Studies graduates. This project in entrepreneurship in RS provided an opportunity to develop work in the area of 'religion and the professions' by exploring the potential for consultancy work on religious issues in the workplace. We are not sure that these activities are strictly entrepreneurial, but would link them on the basis of broad definitions such as the European Union's Green paper on Entrepreneurship:

> … the mindset and process to create and develop economic activity by blending risk-taking, creativity and/or innovation with sound management, within a new or an existing organisation.

1. Background

1.1   The impact of employment legislation

A key issue underpinning any engagement of RS with employability and entrepreneurship is the context of support for diversity in employment itself. The protection afforded to ethnic minority communities in the UK by the Race Relations Act 1976, was on the grounds of the statutory definition of 'racial group'. 'Racial group' includes race, colour, nationality and national or ethnic origin as markers of race but excludes both religion and belief. Case law under the Race Relations Act extended the definition of 'racial group' in the early 1980s to include mono-ethnic religious groups, in particular the Jewish and Sikh communities, but this did not include multi-ethnic religious groups like Muslims and Christians.

It is therefore unlawful to discriminate against people of African and Caribbean, Asian, Pakistani, or Bangladeshi origin, plus also Jews and Sikhs, but perfectly within the law to discriminate

against someone on the basis of their being Buddhist or Rastafarian for example. This definition of 'racial group' was also adopted in civil anti-discrimination legislation introduced against racial hatred in the Public Order Act 1986. Here again a situation developed where mono-ethnic religious communities were protected from the incitement of hatred against them but not against those same, previously excluded multi-ethnic religious communities.

Despite the Labour Party's election manifesto commitment in 1997 to provide greater protection following the murder of Stephen Lawrence through two clauses in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, against aggravated harassment and violence, and criminal damage both motivated by racial hatred, religiously identified communities remained unprotected.

However, even with legislation things have begun to shift and at the European level, the Human Rights Act 1998 provided within the UK the first direct protection from religious discrimination outside Northern Ireland, giving individuals the 'right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion' as well as the right to, 'manifest one's religion or belief', albeit limited to acts of worship, teaching, practice and observance.

And despite seeking to address this anomaly in the law, the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Bill 2001 failed to afford protection against aggravated offences motivated by religious hatred. Consequently, for the time being at least, multi-ethnic religious groups, including Muslims and various Christian denominations (including the Anglican Church) remain unprotected against the incitement to religious hatred.

However, from 2 December 2003, the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations came into force and it became unlawful to discriminate against workers because of religion or similar belief. Applying to vocational training and all facets of employment, including recruitment, promotions, transfers, dismissals and training, these regulations make it unlawful on the grounds of religion or belief:

• to discriminate directly against anyone;
• to discriminate indirectly against anyone;
• to subject someone to harassment;
• to victimise someone on the grounds of religion or belief.

The need therefore to understand and increase our awareness of the religions and beliefs that exist in our very own society are such that proactive measures now need to be taken. Along the lines of cultural awareness training and equal opportunities programmes, a faith-based alternative has emerged.

In this project we investigated the veracity of the PRS Subject Centre Manager's statement concerning the impact such legislation will have for the HE sector:

> Religious literacy will also be very useful in a whole range of business start-ups since such knowledge is likely to be increasingly useful in product design, assessing markets, and customer relations; and would come to be regarded as an important enterprise skill.[2]

The 2004 Queen's Speech provides additional emphasis on this area in extending legislation against religious discrimination to cover the provision of goods and services.[3] These new measures attempt to ensure that protection against discrimination is extended to all religions and beliefs. In addition the Queen's Speech took forward the move towards a single equalities commission,[4] the Commission for Human Rights and Equality. The remit for the commission covers race, disability, religion or belief, and sexual orientation. These regulations are likely to have a significant impact on the workplace and will raise new questions and concerns for employers that take them into previously uncharted areas. The project is a response to this situation in seeking to identify how Religious Studies students could utilise their knowledge, understanding and skills to engage with these questions and concerns.

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[2] Dr Simon Smith, Centre Manager, Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies, January 2004, Bid to LTSN Generic Centre for Entrepreneurship Funding.

[3] Queen's Speech 23rd November 2004: Column 2

> Legislation will be introduced to combat discrimination in the provision of goods and services on the grounds of religion, as well as race, sex and disability. A single Commission for Equality and Human Rights will be established.

[4] **http://www.workplacelaw.net/display.php?resource_id=4958**

Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR)

1.2 Entrepreneurial Consultancies in Religious Studies

The project was based on collaboration between University staff and *ribro* (Religion in Britain Research Organisation). *Ribro* was set up by alumni, as a consultancy business to engage with religious issues within education and wider society, to support equal opportunity in developing a cohesive multi-faith society.

Simon Smith, Centre Manager of the Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies (PRS) contextualised the PRS bid for Entrepreneurial funding from the LTSN Generic Centre in 2003:

Recent Religious Discrimination legislation from the DTI has laid down new requirements for employers to develop awareness of the needs of individuals and communities from a variety of religious backgrounds. This in turn will create a demand for a new consultancy sector advising public and private organisations on the beliefs and practices of people of religion, as well as heightening further the employability of religious studies graduates.[5]

This partnership between *ribro* and the University of Wolverhampton builds on experiences of existing consultancy work to explore opportunities for graduates on short-term consultancies in the local region. Whilst entrepreneurship is essentially focused on setting up new businesses this project sees the benefit in terms of identifying religious knowledge and information as having an important place in today's workplace. It is unlikely to lead to graduates setting up businesses in this area but the project is enhancing the employability skills of those involved and raising the awareness of businesses to faith literacy. This may mean that faith literacy becomes a desirable or essential feature in the undergraduate curriculum to ensure that graduates are competitive in the job market. In addition the work experience gained may enable graduates to gain a placement on a graduate placement scheme.

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[5] Dr Simon Smith, Centre Manager, PRS-LTSN, January 2004, Bid to LTSN Generic Centre for Entrepreneurship Funding.

1.3 Faith literacy

Faith Literacy is an ambiguous term and it is likely to be the case that even Religious Studies lecturers would seek clarification on its meaning. This project has drawn on the term due to the government's use of faith in referring to religions in policy documents. An example can be seen in the setting up of the Faith Communities Unit in the Home Office. Thus the term has currency in the burgeoning field of legislation against religious discrimination, particularly in the workplace.

The Alliance for a Media Literate America encourages the development of faith and media literate educators, whereby media literacy is applied in faith situations. This connotation of faith in terms of the user being religious, i.e. a faith literate person is one who knows, understands and belongs to a particular religion, is perhaps the way that most people will interpret the term. Our use, however, is very different and does not have any confessional connotations.

We define Faith literacy as the knowledge and skills gained by Religious Studies graduates as a result of their course of study which enable them to engage in informed debates about the relationship between aspects of religion and aspects of society.

A leaflet on *Faith Literacy* was produced to support the project and provide a reference point for the consultancies. This identifies how faith literacy consultancy can help an organisation and illustrates the forms that such consultancy might take.

The current climate recognises the importance of faith literacy in society generally and in employment sectors specifically. This recognition is important for Religious Studies as a discipline and to enhance the employability of Religious Studies students and graduates.

Thus the concept of 'faith literacy' has evolved. Faith literacy is about learning more about the world's major religions, about the adherents to those faith traditions, about their beliefs and practices, their sensitivities and sensibilities. Faith literacy is about developing an awareness of the important contribution that faith communities are already making in contemporary society, and the impact that the development of these communities and associated identities will have in shaping the future of British society, not only through the needs of

such legislation, but also through such issues as community cohesion, equal opportunities, and social inclusion.

As regards employers, faith literacy is about developing the existing knowledge base of the diverse background of both staff and customers, about making organisations and businesses more efficient and productive by ensuring that nobody feels excluded or marginalized. Failing to acknowledge this can be hurtful to individuals and communities, and damaging to the relations between them: the relationships between businesses and customers, employers and employees. Being polite, but uninformed, is no longer enough. Fairness at work and good job performance go hand in hand, and tackling discrimination helps to attract, motivate and retain staff, as well as enhance an organization's reputation as an employer. Eliminating discrimination helps everyone to have an equal opportunity to develop themselves and their skills. It is not about everyone believing the same things as each other, or rejecting or restricting valid criticism, but about getting to know each other and respecting our differences. This is what faith literacy is all about.

Increasing the knowledge base of the religious background of both staff and customers thus aids productivity and efficiency through being able to embrace and utilise diversity and difference rather than encounter difficulty and dilemma. Faith literacy provides an understanding of different religions in order to overcome the obstacles of misunderstanding, mistruth and mistrust that diversity can bring to exist in society today, and is a timely evolution of similar cultural and diversity awareness training and consultancy schemes.

If you were an employer faith literacy would help you:

- learn to support your employees during particular holidays and festivals, e.g. Muslim staff during the fasting month of Ramadan;
- learn more about your customers, for example learning about their dietary requirements or basic modesty needs;
- learn more about the religious make-up and demographic of your local area;
- ensure that your organisation or business is reaching out to everyone in society;
- ensure your organisation is fulfilling current equal opportunities legislation;

through such programmes as training for staff:

- on directly relevant religious and cultural needs and sensitivities;
- on the impact of religious and cultural diversity on the provision of client or customer services;
- on how to ensure that all sectors of the community are being catered for and reached;
- to understand local religious diversity and how this might affect the running of your organisation/business;

or by undertaking research into:

- the religious landscape of local towns and cities;
- meeting the religious needs of your employees;
- specific local, regional or national communities;
- the religious landscape of the immediate area of operation;
- the religious demographic of the UK.

The Project

The project focused on students who graduated in June 2004, were currently looking for employment and who welcomed the opportunity to extend their employability through this project. Whilst the aim of the project was to develop entrepreneurial skills among undergraduates, the involvement of graduates in this first stage was beneficial for two reasons.

Firstly, the project was essentially an exploration to test the waters and see whether this approach to 'faith literacy' consultancies could be operated on a wider scale for undergraduate students. Graduates essentially acted as guinea pigs to test possibilities. They were aware that it was a ground breaking initiative and were happy with the way the project was set up, if they had been assessed they may have had reservations about trying something new out.

Secondly, the involvement of graduates, in the form of a partnership, was beneficial as they were not involved in an activity that staff were assessing, so they were not worried about marks. This

meant we were likely to get more realistic feedback on the project. In addition the maturity of the graduates enabled them to contribute to the discussion on how to take the project forward and involve undergraduate students. The graduates had all achieved good honours degrees and were able to operate on a higher level that the level two students likely to be involved in future years. They had a greater depth and range of knowledge and understanding, a wider range of skills and more importantly a greater level of confidence in negotiating with employers.

In the project the graduates were able to build on the module *Religion and the Professions* in which they undertook a case study on the application of their religious knowledge to a particular occupational setting. In future years this is likely to be the place that consultancies take place.

The focus on current graduates for the placement consultancies provides a group who already have a wide range of competencies and will be able to provide feedback on the support that undergraduate students would need to undertake similar placements in the future. The three graduates have been placed with local employers to report on an aspect of working practice that relates to religion. Graduates are able to draw upon their religious knowledge and understanding to research the specified area. The training program is intended to develop their skills further by providing an input on the consultancy sector and training on the development of report writing skills.

This project takes the process further by linking with entrepreneurial graduates, who will act as mentors, and exploring the potential for faith literacy consultancies in a more explicit manner. Thus, the partnership brings a combination of experienced academic input and recent graduate experiences of the world of work. The experience of peer mentoring is one that can be carried on in future years with graduates from the previous iteration acting as mentors for current students.

2.1 Peer mentoring

The fact that *ribro* staff are recent graduates from the same program of study who have attempted to apply their subject knowledge in the

work of work means that many advantages of peer learning identified by Boud[6] apply:

They have face the same challenges, in the same context, they talk to us in our own language, and we can ask them what may appear, in other situations, to be silly questions.

Perhaps one of the main benefits comes from the realisation that attitudes within the world of study about Religious Studies are not shared by outsiders. That businesses and other employers are likely to have preconceived notions about religion, which may lead to negativity and suspicion. In this instance the experiences of Chris Allen in his research on Islamophobia demonstrated how easily misconceptions can arise, and elaborated on the social impact that negative understanding can have for religious groups in our society.

From the perspective of ribro, the experience of peer mentoring is useful in that it allows us to gain further experience and ideas from similar, likeminded graduates who are already 'warm' to the issues of religious studies and religious diversity in society, adding to the already developing and emergent ideas that we as an organisation have.

It is a sharing process where the peer element is as useful and almost reciprocal for *ribro* too. The project and insight gained has also gone some way to proving to *ribro* that the need for such consultancies is most definitely evident in the workplace, and also beyond the business sector in other aspects of today's society too.

As regards the experience and advice given to the graduates themselves, it is useful for the failures and problems that either Chris Allen or *ribro* might have previously encountered are themselves avoided by the graduates during their consultancies. Such a process not only aids the learning process for the graduates themselves, but is also useful in providing some justification and discussion about how to avoid such problems and dilemmas, where the sharing of ideas and suggestions is an integral part both of the project and the peer mentoring relationship that need to develop if such a relationship and project are to be successful.

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[6] Boud, D., Cohen, R., and Sampson, J., (eds) (2001) p.1.

2.2 Training programme

The project team received a great deal of support in setting up the programme from a range of subject and entrepreneurial experts. The PRS Subject Centre, in initiating the project had recruited Julie Gallimore as an expert, to advise the team from her considerable experience in working with the HE Sector on the subject of entrepreneurship. Dr Brian Clements, Head of the Innovations Centre at the University of Wolverhampton, was an important link to wider university resources in this area. In addition advice was gained from the university's Equal Opportunities Officer, the Head of Personnel and the Head of Corporate Staff Development.

The program for Religious Studies Graduates provided an introduction to consultancy work generally, with illustrations drawn from the work of ribro, which demonstrated the relevancy of their subject knowledge and skills to the workplace. Practical issues around timing made it almost impossible to set dates for training events, as two of the graduates had part-time work commitments which varied from week to week. Thus the project team had to act as conduits and relay inputs from internal providers.

The focus of the initiative to develop entrepreneurial skills does necessitate a training or orientation programme. The graduates had a good grounding in work-based learning, as they had completed a module on Religion and the Professions, which explored professional applications for faith literacy. In this module they focused on a case study, wrote a report for the general public and presented their findings to an employer.

The next running of the Religions and the Professions module will have an inbuilt training programme, which will be developed in light of our experience on this project.

2.3 Consultancy reports

Input from staff in Personnel and Equal Opportunities helped the design for the report, illustrating how organizations meet legal

obligations by developing policy documents. A clear specification was provided for the consultancy reports and support provided for graduates to develop appropriate report writing skills. The format for reports was designed to build in a research element but also to meet the needs of employers. Reports cover the following sections in approximately 5,000 words.

The issue: Clear specification of the topic under consideration and some indication of why the topic has been chosen by the placement provider, are they responding to local needs or legislation?

The Content: Details of the placement provider, what kind of organisation, how many employees, ethnic and religious make-up, general ethos.

Research Methods to be employed and findings: Justify the approach you take to the research and set out the main findings from internet, book and other research areas.

Recommendations: This section applies your findings to the research topic and makes a number of recommendations on the best way for the organisation to achieve their aims.

2.3.1. Description of reports:

One City, Many People: this report explored the innovative voluntary course in the Council's Equalities Training programme. The course was set up for employees who need an understanding of the religious and ethnic make-up of the city for face to face interaction with individuals or for policy making decisions. The course aims to:
"develop a deeper appreciation of the rich diversity in our city; take a closer look at our differences so that they are less threatening; celebrate diversity;
address some of the roots, such as stereotyping, that build walls and barriers; consider steps we can all take to challenge racism;
develop ways of working that promote equality and celebrate diversity."

The course offers sessions on individual religions, often meeting at the place of worship, and themes that link religious traditions. We were involved in a session on Welcoming the stranger that focused on the needs of service departments to respond to the needs of refugees and asylum seekers in the city.

The research methodology used for this report was based on council documentation, evaluations by participants, attendance at sessions and wider research. This process enabled the report writer to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the initiative within the context of local council training programmes. The main finding was the innovative nature of the course, which was unique within the local area and could be presented as an exemplar to other councils.

Three recommendations were made to take the provision further. Firstly, for the course to become mainstream and integrated within equalities training, rather than a stand-alone offering. Secondly, the benefit of the course is limited by its voluntary nature, and in order for the full benefit of training to be gained systematic planning was required to identify the needs of service departments, and this should drive involvement rather than individual interest. Thirdly, practical initiatives were recommended to share good practice and provide access to necessary information.

Faith Trails: The starting points for this project linked to the 'One City Many People' training programme and the practical requirements for Religious Education. The Senior Council Official with responsibility for both areas wanted the city to follow the example of the Liverpool Walk of Faith. Wolverhampton offers great opportunity for the study of religion because of the huge diversity both culturally and religiously in such a small area. Field visits give an insight into religion as it is practiced and the difference between this and what is academically written. This leads into the topic of faith walks, as this is a form of field visit in which people can learn about the religious heritage in the city and visit buildings they might otherwise ignore.

The objectives of the project were to set up a faith walk within the city of Wolverhampton for use in both the 'One City, Many People' training scheme and in Religious Education. This includes links with SACRE and the religious studies curriculum in schools as well as using the walk as a distinctive guide to the city. Research on similar projects in other cities was used to make recommendations

about the organization of the walk and possible formats and links with other schemes.

Two walks were set up, each including three different religious traditions, which could be undertaken in a two hour walking tour. There are quite a few mediums that can accommodate the faith walks. These include publishing a final booklet like the Liverpool example and having it available for council and educational sources. The booklet could also be used as a guide for tourists or the general public as a distinctive guide to the city. The walk can also be used as an Internet based venture. This Internet-based virtual tour provided a picture of the exterior of the building, a small location map and a short history of the building. This would be followed by a picture of the interior and a description of what goes on in each particular building. In this format it can be seen in full on the website and then printed in a basic format with only the directions and information about the buildings. This means that people can print off copies from the Internet and use them for individual or group visits. The walk might be attached to a variety of relevant websites like the Wolverhampton History and Heritage society, the Wolverhampton Inter Faith Group, or the University's Religions in Wolverhampton website. These examples show the widespread application of the faith walk as both a religious and historical guide of the city.

Prayer Room: this report looked at the provision of a prayer spaces for use by employees of the West Midlands Police in Wolverhampton an issue identified by the fact that some of the Force's employees see prayer as an important aspect of their everyday lives and because of the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003. To reinforce this, a recent poll undertaken by the Guardian newspaper showed that 88% of young British Muslims would like to see the typical workplace and working day accommodating the five daily prayers required in Islam. West Midlands Police believe that they will help their employees in both fulfilling and enriching their work experience to their potential, where equality at work and good job performance goes hand in hand. They felt that such proactive measures might help them to attract, motivate and maintain their staff and improve their reputation as an employer.

Being diverse in its methodology, the report focused referred to both books and internet sites, supplemented by visits to other prayer facilities in the local area including Wolverhampton Court,

Wolverhampton Civic Centre and Birmingham Airport. In doing so, the report put forward a number of issues that were recurrent in the establishing of a multi-faith prayer space: the provision or non-provision of religious symbols; the provision of washing facilities which is required for some traditions; the issue of security, as a result of vandalism; access for the disabled; privacy and/or segregation; and lastly, the issue of budget and financial cost.

The report recommended that in order for the Force to provide appropriate facilities for their staff and understand their needs, they should begin to collect and collate data about the religious beliefs and requirements of their staff. Such a process would give staff confidence if it was made clear why and how such information was to be used and also that such data would be entirely voluntary ensuring the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.

As a response to the issues raised beforehand, the report also recommended that on the establishment of a prayer space, that the space should be locked; that the proposed prayer room be extended or an alternative area is located; that religious symbols should be available to those who require them, possibly maintained in a series of cupboards for each faith; that washing facilities should be as close as possible to the proposed prayer room; and that consideration be given to gender concerns that exist in some religious traditions, with the contemplation of installing some form of temporary segregation, for example, a curtain or a screen.

2.4 Dissemination

Dissemination is an important feature of the project and will be undertaken in the following ways.

Firstly, to raise awareness about the project. The production of leaflets and a poster has been crucial in this stage. Leaflets were sent out to employers and accompanied invites to the progress report session, and presentations of the project. This high profile led to two invitations to share our experiences; at the Burlington Group's seminar on Employability; and at the Association of Business Schools Undergraduate Forum.

Staff and graduates attended the Enterprisefest[7] at the University of Wolverhampton which focused on enterprise and encouraged student attendees to explore ways to develop their enterprise skills. We hosted a stand in the exhibition and were able to explain the nature of our project to attendees.

Secondly, to present findings and engage in debate with the wider employability and academic community. Firstly at a progress report session, which had time built in both in the formal programme and informally over lunch to receive feedback from the wider subject team, employers and outsiders who were new to the project. Secondly, at major conferences, a paper was presented at the ESECT conference and an abstract submitted for the HEA conference.

The third major form of dissemination will take place through the PRS subject Centre. The project contract requires the team to produce this report which will be used by the LTSN to illustrate practical aspects of entrepreneurship within the discipline. We also hope to host a national conference to explore the general issues in such placements and for a presentation on the consultancy reports. This conference would invite local employers (Local Chamber of Commerce/Federation of Small Business/Local Strategic Partnership) and members of the Community Cohesion group as well as members of the Religious Studies HE community.

The final strategy for dissemination is to publish the consultancy reports, so that copies can be used to seed further consultancy placements by demonstrating the importance of faith literacy to employers.

Interim publication will take place on the Religions in Wolverhampton[8] website, which provides information about religions in the city and is offered as a resource to students and researchers. The website has a section on employability[9] and the consultancy reports from graduates will be added to demonstrate the value of faith literacy for public and private sector organizations.

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[7] **http://asp.wlv.ac.uk/Level5.asp?UserType=11andLevel5=3728**
[8] **http://asp2.wlv.ac.uk/hlss/Religion%20in%20Wolverhampton/index.html**
[9] **http://asp2.wlv.ac.uk/hlss/Religion%20in%20Wolverhampton/ employment.htm**

Evaluation

This experience has shown that there is great potential for faith literacy placements locally. The survey of employers identified opportunities and in the project we have been able to demonstrate the contributions made to local employers.

One of the main achievements has been to identify problems in communications with employers. We have had to learn how to communicate where we are coming from, to employers who do not really understand the legislation, and just have vague notions of what it might involve. The provision of worked examples make it possible to use the exemplars to demonstrate the types of consultancy that could take place:

reports on current activity, which contextualise activities and provide an objective evaluation set against the provider's aims.

developments which take initiatives from other sectors and apply them to faith literacy – in this instance the Faith Trails-

examples which shows how a vague policy notions can be explored in a systematic manner to inform policy making, as in the case of the prayer room.

These projects will enable us to provide a framework and develop communication with employers. The benefits of each report are elaborated below:

One City, Many People: this report drew attention to the innovative nature of the Council's training programme, which the staff currently involved in the programme do not really appreciate. The report, by setting the programme within the wider setting of local council training provision provides evidence for those involved to show they are way ahead of the field and should be sharing experiences and expertise with other local authorities.

The report found the One City Many People training scheme to be a positive and innovative move towards providing staff with the tools they need to support a diverse community. This programme could be developed into a cross-city training package that any business or organisation in the city could draw.

If taken within teams or departments, it could be a one-day event with visits to local religious places of worship which could include a talk by a member of that religious group about the religion, the community the place of worship serves and perhaps something particularly relevant to that team or department's service area, this could be followed by a question and answer session. Taken alongside the findings and recommendations the report on Faith Trails, the two initiatives could be combined to provide a service that could be made available as a religious training tool for local schools and for other businesses or organisations.

Faith Walks: this report provides an educational justification for this approach to learning in the field. This project is an extension of activities that make up the One City, Many Peoples training programme, and the Wolverhampton Inter Faith Group Faith Footprints programme. The provision of worked examples of two faith trails has already led to an extension of consultancy for Business in the Community as part of their negotiated work for customer organizations. In addition the consultancy has been extended by English Heritage to allow for the faith trails to be up and running for heritage Open Days in September 2005.

The Prayer Room report provided an interesting insight into the way in which large employers are looking to implement the requirements of the new legislation. Whilst West Midlands Police were keen to be seen to be proactive with their initiatives, there would appear to be some preparatory work that had been so clearly overlooked, such as in not knowing who or how many—if indeed any —members of its staff either required the facility or would use it. In doing so, there appeared little evidence to suggest that such large employers have much knowledge or experience of such initiatives or requirements and so would seem to substantiate the need for continuing to develop such consultancies and in particular to further the remit of faith literacy. Nonetheless, the report did highlight a number of extremely relevant and pertinent issues that are recurrent in the establishment of multi-faith prayer spaces, from which other sources and organizations that are seeking to replicate such a scheme would be able to draw some very interesting and useful insight from in order to avoid the pitfalls and dilemmas that the report itself highlights. The report's recommendations therefore have a much broader, almost holistic

relevance therefore in addition to the quite specific context and frames within which the report and the associated research was undertaken. The report therefore can be used as an exemplar in the establishment of similar initiatives and possibly have fewer restrictions than one might have suggested at the outset of the project.

Benefits

4.1 Staff: The role of staff in such developments is crucial and this approach has been very much a training programme for staff. We perhaps even more than students are sheltered from the pressures of the big world out there. Within Religious Studies most of our students enter teaching so our figures look good for further research or professional qualifications. But if students don't want to teach or do further research we are not able to provide specific guidance. Thus, this project has forced staff to explore the world of work and identify employers and Public Services where religious knowledge and understanding might have currency.

This has clearly led to building 'educator capability' in this area. Research on entrepreneurship and enterprise in higher education supported the work with graduates, and enabled staff to join the learning and teaching community through conference presentation and debate. The spin offs from this project are already starting to mount up through establishing new contacts and developing incidental ones. We have been able to develop links with employment related provision within the university. Outreach work with existing contacts from the Community Cohesion forum, the City Council and the Police, was the starting point for the project. However, a wide range of potential employers and Public Service providers are coming to light, and a database will be set up for future consultancy placements.

4.2 Graduates: The most immediate benefit has been for the graduates involved in the project. They have had the opportunity to be involved in important consultancy work for major employers in the local area. Graduates have reported an increased sense of self-worth from this appreciation of the value their subject knowledge holds for contemporary society. This opportunity to apply their knowledge and understanding of religions in the workplace has helped to identify new career aspirations, and the training programme has equipped them

with new skills that enhance their employability. One graduate has a consultancy contract with English Heritage to develop the work on Faith Trails for the Heritage Open Days in September. Another graduate is negotiating with Business in the Community to set up a training programme for a national building society.

The feedback from graduates identified aspects of the process that were difficult and where they would expect undergraduate students to require additional support. Whilst they had developed their academic writing for essays and journals, report writing required a different set of skills. In particular they faced the challenge of writing for a non-academic audience; how to pitch the report, knowing the right bits to put in, and which bits to expand on.

Overall graduates found a wide range of benefits from the projects, which went further than the enhancement of their CVs. One summed this up as the "opportunity to develop real life skills, to communicate to a business audience rather than peers, which set researching and investigating on a different level, and required using my own initiative."

4.3 Local Employers: This section was added as an afterthought, but perhaps it should be the first benefit as this is the area that the consultancy initiative will have the most impact upon. The Council receiving two of the reports has over 12,000 employees who interact with a local population of 240,000, thus, action on the reports can have significant and widespread benefit within the local community.

Moving forwards

Julie Gallimore's survey of employers provided support for the way the project developed. Firstly, responses from employers showed an awareness of the impact that new legislation will have on recruitment, and policies concerning leave entitlements and facilities to be provided in the workplace. Secondly, employers recognized the need to extend their equalities training programs to develop an understanding of religious issues. The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development's survey in December 2004 found: 'Little awareness training on the new legislation had taken place and most organizations

were not confident that their managers had the skills to cope with the issues arising under the regulations'[10]

Clearly the legislation is taking all of us into a new situation; employers now need to engage with religious issues and need materials to support this move into the unknown. Gallimore noted that Human Resources Managers recognised the impact of legislation but were not confident in developing their responses. The report identified the need for worked case studies, training manuals, faith guides and a range of e-learning materials.

Within Religious Studies we need to audit the curriculum to ensure that we suitably prepare students for working in a new climate, and ensure that they possess relevant religious knowledge and understanding for the needs of contemporary society. One way forward would be to undertake a curriculum audit, the Bioscience 'employability audit' could stimulate debate about the knowledge and skills that would best prepare students in the discipline for the future. In addition the NCGE report, Hannon 2004, stressed the need for the curriculum to have a "focus on experiential, practice-based, action learning modes of learning underpinned by sound concepts."

The recommendations from Hannon's 2004 NCGE report for bringing things forward highlight the main outcomes of this project:

Linking with alumni, in this instance for peer mentoring, but it is also clear that the project supported alumni in the development of their consultancy business.

Raising the profile of Religious Studies in the local community, with both religious groups and employers, so that we can play a vital role in training developments.

Links with employers make it possible to raise an awareness of faith literacy issues and thus 'incubate' projects. In addition links enable market research to be undertaken so that we are able to respond to employer needs.

The high profile approach taken with posters and leaflets to advertise the project has helped to raise awareness among current undergraduates, many who attended the progress report.

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[10] 'Have Faith in the System' article in 'People Management' 10 February 2005

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Notes for Authors

Introduction

These notes apply to free submissions to the journal and to submitted project reports from funded projects.

All documents submitted to the Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies should be of a high, publishable quality. Please ensure you have proof-read and corrected your documents before submitting them. The editor reserves the right to correct documents for spelling, grammar, layout, consistency and style.

From August 2003, the content of reports and articles will be stored electronically in a database of resources. The format used for storage is XML (eXtensible Mark-up Language), which means that for submissions to this journal it does not matter how documents look, but it is important that they are structured logically and that the same tag or style is applied to the same type of text (headings, blocks of basic text, quotations, endnotes or footnotes, etc.). The following guidelines should therefore be used in preparation of documents to ensure that they can be formatted correctly for this journal and stored appropriately in the database/website.

Word Count

Freely submitted articles for peer-review should be no longer than 8,000 words. Project reports should not exceed 12,000 words, or should be submitted in independently publishable parts. Shorter discussion pieces or event reports should be limited to under 2,000 words.

Applying Styles

The following notes are designed for use with MS Word (but can be adapted for other applications as required—please contact the Editor, **david@prs.heacademy.ac.uk**). In MS Word the types of text within a document are determined by what are called 'styles'. These are available in a drop-down menu on the formatting tool bar. Make sure that you apply the style you want to all the text intended, including paragraph returns.

Allowed Styles

Use ONLY the following styles within a document:

- Heading 1
- Heading 2
- Heading 3
- Heading 4
- Body Text
- Block Quotation/Block Quote

- Endnote ref
- Endnote text
- List Bullet
- List Number

(see below for tables, diagrams and pictures)

For further formatting use only:

- Superscript
- Subscript

- Italic
- Bold

Paragraphs should be separated by a double carriage return only—no indent (tab).

DO NOT:

- Use Normal as a style
- Make headings by adjusting the font, font size or layout of text
- Use section breaks within a document
- Use white spaces or tabs to layout text or data

DO remember to:

- Nest headings and lists logically
- Only use the styles allowed
- Use endnotes instead of footnotes

Tables, diagrams and pictures

All data that needs to be presented in a fixed form must be within a table. Authors must not use spaces or tabs to try to achieve the desired layout. Tables should be kept as simple as possible.

Pictures and diagrams should be saved as .tif, .jpg or .gif format and sent separately. The intended location of the item within the final text should be indicated in square brackets.

Referencing

Additionally, please follow these conventions for referencing from within the body of the document:

1. Books

Surname of author followed by forenames (if known) or initials, comma; title in italics; if applicable, additional information, such as translator, number of edition, or number of volume, separated by commas; place, colon, publisher, comma, date in brackets; number of pages. e.g.:

Smith, John Edward, *Religious Studies in Higher Education* (London and New York: Goodfellow, 1999), xi+389pp.

Brown, F.A. and Green, G.B., *Teaching Philosophy of Science to Science Students*, 2nd edition (Edinburgh: Educational Press, 2000), xx+210pp.

Teufelsdröckh, Diogenes, *What to Wear when Teaching Philosophy*, translated by Carlyle, Thomas, 5th edition (Ecclefechan: Heritage Books, 1912), 79pp.

2. Contributions

As above, but with the title of the contribution in double quotes, followed by 'in' and the names of the editors, and with the pages of the contribution specified. e.g.:

Jones, David Simon, 'Reading the Bible', in Lector, H. and Anagnostopoulos, P., Teaching Students to Read Primary Texts (London: Generic Wisdom Educational, 2001), pp.210-241.

3. Articles

Author, title of article in double quotes, title of journal in italics, volume/issue number, year, pages.

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Livingstone, David, 'Professor Galileo I Presume? Introducing Students to 17th-Century Scientists in the Post-Modern Context', *Teaching History of Science*, 7/2, 1999, 40-62.

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