



# **Theology and religious studies 2014**

Draft for consultation

March 2014

## Contents

How can I use this document? .....	1
About subject benchmark statements .....	2
About this subject benchmark statement.....	4
1 Academic standards .....	5
2 Nature and extent of theology and religious studies.....	8
3 Subject knowledge and skills .....	11
4 Teaching, learning and assessment.....	14
5 Benchmark standards.....	18
Appendix A: Master's degrees in theology and religious studies .....	20
Appendix B: The current range of possible areas of study in theology and religious studies	24
Appendix C: Membership of the benchmarking and review groups for the subject benchmark statement for theology and religious studies .....	25

## How can I use this document?

This document is a subject benchmark statement for theology and religious studies, that defines what can be expected of a graduate in the subject, in terms of what they might know, do and understand at the end of their studies.

You may want to read this document if you are:

- involved in the design, delivery and review of programmes of study in theology and religious studies or related subjects
- a prospective student thinking about studying theology and religious studies, or a current student of the subject, to find out what may be involved
- an employer, to find out about the knowledge and skills generally expected of a graduate in theology and religious studies.

Explanations of unfamiliar terms used in this subject benchmark statement can be found in the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education's (QAA's) glossary.<sup>1</sup> QAA has also published a general guide to quality assurance in higher education.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> The QAA glossary, available at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/glossary](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/glossary).

<sup>2</sup> A general guide to quality assurance, available at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/what-is-quality](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/what-is-quality).

## About subject benchmark statements

Subject benchmark statements form part of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code) which sets out the Expectations that all providers of UK higher education reviewed by QAA are required to meet.<sup>3</sup> They are a component of *Part A: Setting and maintaining academic standards*, which includes the Expectation that higher education providers 'consider and take account of relevant subject benchmark statements' in order to secure threshold academic standards.<sup>4</sup>

Subject benchmark statements describe the nature of study and the academic standards expected of graduates in specific subject areas, and in respect of particular qualifications. They provide a picture of what graduates in a particular subject might reasonably be expected to know, do and understand at the end of their programme of study.

Subject benchmark statements are used as reference points in the design, delivery and review of academic programmes. They provide general guidance for articulating the learning outcomes associated with the programme but are not intended to represent a national curriculum in a subject or to prescribe set approaches to teaching, learning or assessment. Instead, they allow for flexibility and innovation in programme design within a framework agreed by the subject community. Further guidance about programme design, development and approval, learning and teaching, assessment of students, and programme monitoring and review is available in *Part B: Assuring and enhancing academic quality* of the Quality Code in the following Chapters:<sup>5</sup>

- *Chapter B1: Programme design, development and approval*
- *Chapter B3: Learning and teaching*
- *Chapter B6: Assessment of students and the recognition of prior learning*
- *Chapter B8: Programme monitoring and review.*

For some subject areas, higher education providers may need to consider other reference points in addition to the subject benchmark statement in designing, delivering and reviewing programmes. These may include requirements set out by professional, statutory and regulatory bodies, national occupational standards and industry or employer expectations. In such cases, the subject benchmark statement may provide additional guidance around academic standards not covered by these requirements.<sup>6</sup> The relationship between academic and professional or regulatory requirements is made clear within individual statements, but it is the responsibility of individual higher education providers to decide how they use this information. The responsibility for academic standards remains with the higher education provider who awards the degree.

Subject benchmark statements are written and maintained by subject specialists drawn from and acting on behalf of the subject community. The process is facilitated by QAA. In order to ensure the continuing currency of subject benchmark statements, QAA initiates regular reviews of their content, five years after first publication, and every seven years subsequently.

---

<sup>3</sup> The Quality Code, available at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/qualitycode](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/qualitycode), aligns with the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*, available at: [www.enqa.eu/index.php/home/esg](http://www.enqa.eu/index.php/home/esg).

<sup>4</sup> *Part A: Setting and maintaining academic standards*, available at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/Quality-Code-Part-A.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/Quality-Code-Part-A.aspx)

<sup>5</sup> Individual Chapters, available at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/quality-code/Pages/Quality-Code-Part-B.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/quality-code/Pages/Quality-Code-Part-B.aspx).

<sup>6</sup> See further Quality Code, *Part A: Setting and maintaining academic standards*, available at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/Quality-Code-Part-A.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/Quality-Code-Part-A.aspx).

## **Relationship to legislation**

Higher education providers are responsible for meeting the requirements of legislation and any other regulatory requirements placed upon them, for example, by funding bodies. The Quality Code does not interpret legislation nor does it incorporate statutory or regulatory requirements. Sources of information about other requirements and examples of guidance and good practice are signposted within the subject benchmark statement where appropriate. Higher education providers are responsible for how they use these resources.<sup>7</sup>

## **Equality and diversity**

The Quality Code embeds consideration of equality and diversity matters throughout. Promoting equality involves treating everyone with equal dignity and worth, while also raising aspirations and supporting achievement for people with diverse requirements, entitlements and backgrounds. An inclusive environment for learning anticipates the varied requirements of learners, and aims to ensure that all students have equal access to educational opportunities. Higher education providers, staff and students all have a role in, and responsibility for, promoting equality.

Equality of opportunity involves enabling access for people who have differing individual requirements as well as eliminating arbitrary and unnecessary barriers to learning. In addition, disabled students and non-disabled students are offered learning opportunities that are equally accessible to them, by means of inclusive design wherever possible and by means of reasonable individual adjustments wherever necessary.

---

<sup>7</sup> See further the *UK Quality Code for Higher Education: General Introduction*, available at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/Quality-Code-introduction.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/Quality-Code-introduction.aspx).

## About this subject benchmark statement

This subject benchmark statement refers to bachelor's degrees with honours and master's degrees in theology and religious studies.<sup>8</sup>

This version of the statement forms its third edition, following initial publication in 2000 and review and revision in 2007.<sup>9</sup>

## Note on alignment with higher education sector coding systems

Programmes of study which use this subject benchmark statement as a reference point are generally classified under the following codes in the Joint Academic Coding System (JACS), though not entirely limited to them: V600.<sup>10</sup>

## Summary of changes from the previous subject benchmark statement (2007)

The review group agreed that although the previous subject benchmark statement had served the subject community well, in a number of places the language could be updated and some of the more discursive passages tightened up. More significantly, the review group agreed that the benchmark standards as articulated at the threshold level were insufficiently challenging for the achievement of a bachelor's degree with honours in theology and religious studies, particularly in relation to critical engagement with the subject matter. The threshold standards have therefore been revised, and only these are included (as opposed to the threshold and typical standards featured in previous versions).

Following the review of the subject benchmark statement in 2007, the Association of University Departments of Theology and Religious Studies (AUDTRS, now renamed TRS UK) approached QAA to explore the possibility of setting out further benchmark standards for taught master's degrees. A number of considerations prompted this decision. There are at least 80 higher education providers across the UK in which master's degrees in the subject are taught, and numerous different named degrees are offered. AUDTRS thought it appropriate that there should be a concrete attempt to ensure consistent academic standards, and to offer guidance on the naming of degrees. Since many - although by no means all - master's degrees in theology and religious studies are associated with vocational religious training, it was thought important to address specific issues, such as confessional expectations on the part of sponsoring bodies, in addition to the research skills and training necessary for students intending to undertake study at doctoral level. The statement addressing matters pertaining to master's degrees in theology and religious studies is now appended to this subject benchmark statement.

---

<sup>8</sup> Bachelor's degrees are at level 6 in *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (2008) and level 10 in the *Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework* (2001), and master's degrees are at level 7 and level 11 respectively.

<sup>9</sup> Further information is available in the *Recognition scheme for subject benchmark statements*, available at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/Recognition-scheme-for-subject-benchmark-statements.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/Recognition-scheme-for-subject-benchmark-statements.aspx).

<sup>10</sup> Further information about JACS, available at: [www.hesa.ac.uk/content/view/1776/649](http://www.hesa.ac.uk/content/view/1776/649).

# 1 Academic standards

1.1 Theology and religious studies is a dynamic subject area in the higher education sector marked by both expansion and diversification. It is offered by a wide range of higher education providers, both directly by degree-awarding bodies and through colleges and other validated provision. Aspects of the subject are also found integrated into other provision across the humanities and the social sciences. The vitality and richness of the subject reflects its significance in the context of a world constantly (re)negotiating cultural and religious diversity. Beliefs, values and institutions, whether described as religious or not, are contested and frequently in a state of flux.

1.2 While the title Theology and Religious Studies is carried by many programmes, for others simply Religious Studies, Study of Religions, Theology or Divinity is used. Combinations of Religion, Philosophy and Ethics are also common. Others specify Biblical Studies, for example, or Buddhist Studies, Islamic Studies, Jewish Studies, and so on. Some may use a title such as Applied Theological Studies where their character is intended to be more fitting for those entering a range of caring or pastoral professions; similarly for prospective school teachers the title may be Religious Education. The title will reflect the range of modules offered (see Appendix B).

1.3 Providers aim to promote understanding in a variety of ways, for example, by:

- stimulating curiosity about and fascination for the variety of religious cultures across the globe, both past and present
- enabling in-depth study of the sacred or significant texts, history, practices and developed theology (or religious/philosophical thought) of one or more particular religious traditions
- creating opportunities to consider the artistic, ethical, gendered, social, political and cultural characteristics of religion(s)
- exploring in an interdisciplinary way the interface between religion and/or theology on the one hand and literature, culture and the arts on the other
- opening up awareness of plurality within societies and within religious traditions, including the capacity of religious allegiances for conflict
- encouraging critically reflective practice in religious communities, as they negotiate their relations to their traditions and their wider social and geographic contexts
- fostering empathetic engagement with both familiar and unfamiliar viewpoints
- promoting self-critical awareness of presuppositions and encouraging constructive and critical exposition of an argument for a particular position
- inviting participation both in debate about the nature of the subject and dialogue between different traditions
- encouraging intelligent use of a variety of theories and methods of study and engaging in critical analysis of relevant data and arguments
- providing opportunities for critical academic involvement in changing the way things are.

1.4 The programmes delivered in different contexts are diverse for good reason, and flourish within varied academic frameworks. Different approaches to the study of theology and religious studies include:

- the study and analysis of religion as a significant dimension of human culture, especially to enhance understanding of its importance in shaping societies, history and people and, in turn, of their influence in shaping religion

- a focus on key bodies of religious literature (such as the Bible, the Torah, the Vedas) and particular religious traditions within a general humanities framework
- the study of at least two religions in some depth, for example, because students may go on to train as teachers in multicultural and pluralist Britain
- recognised programmes for the formation of religious professionals, for example, for ministers for the various Christian communities represented in Britain, or for chaplaincy work
- programmes within higher education providers with a specific confessional stance (for example, Christian, Jewish, Hindu or Islamic theological colleges), which may or may not have a professional focus
- residential full-time programmes, distance learning, or a combination of different modes of study
- providing a menu from which students may choose to follow up their specific interests or diversify, depending upon their goals in pursuing the programme
- incorporation or overlap of some elements from theology and religious studies with programmes in other subjects.

## **The development of the subject**

1.5 This diversity of programmes is the result of the history of theology and religious studies as an academic subject. It has been shaped by cultural, social and political developments in the UK and elsewhere.

1.6 In the UK, academic theology is conducted as an intellectual enquiry which engages with a range of methods of study and subject matters. This academic tradition includes pastoral and practical theology, often, but not exclusively, for the training of professionals, and these subjects have often been influenced by developments in psychology, group therapy, counselling and social work. Given its engagement with post-Enlightenment rationality, contentious issues for theology include the grounds for believing in God and the roles of revelation and faith. Most would accept that the ability to engage with 'inside' and 'outside' perspectives is important, and that theological enquiry and academic study of religions should not exclude believers, non-believers or agnostics, although some programmes are designed specifically for those engaged in practice in specific religious communities, or training for positions of religious leadership.

1.7 Meanwhile, religious studies originally developed out of oriental studies and the fascination Western scholars found in the discovery of the languages and sacred literatures of the East; the 'scientific' study of religion, which was sometimes closely bound up with the early development of anthropology, sociology and psychology; and the comparative study of religion. It has been characterised by:

- valuing and studying cultures, texts, arts and practices of societies both within and beyond Europe
- considerable interaction with the social sciences and with contemporary cultural, literary and gender studies
- engagement with the plurality of religions globally
- cross-cultural comparisons of topics such as beliefs, rituals and practices
- extensive debates about aims, methods and assumptions in the subject.

1.8 In teaching, as in research, work in this field has involved not only language studies, but also fieldwork, social surveys and concern with material culture and the visual and performing arts. Dialogue between scholars globally, and often with people from within religions studied, is common. In addition, where theology once implied Christian thought



(within a UK context at least), nowadays the term is used also of parallel studies in other religious traditions.

1.9 There remains a lively, ongoing debate between the academic traditions of theology and of religious studies, which has enriched both strands. Each has influenced the development of the other. Biblical studies has long been shaped by both approaches, while in some contexts it has deliberately positioned itself as a humanities subject without explicit connection to either theology or religious studies. Theology and religious studies as a subject is therefore marked by diversity but also elements of convergence. This subject benchmark statement is written in a way which encompasses this heterogeneity and does not stifle future innovation in the subject.

## **The social value and wider impact of theology and religious studies**

1.10 Diversity is also driven by the differing backgrounds and intentions of both staff and students engaged in theology and religious studies. Some want to:

- explore theology and religious studies out of sheer fascination for the subject
- study religion or sacred/significant texts because of their political, philosophical, social or cultural importance
- pursue religious commitments
- pursue a clearly identified career path (such as teaching, ministry, social work, race relations or international relations) for which the programme is part of their preparation.

1.11 Whatever the subject, or motivation, the acquisition of knowledge and understanding is usually transformative at some level, broadening a person's perspectives and often challenging or changing attitudes. The nature of theology and religious studies means that studying the subject may have a profound impact on the student's life and outlook. The experience of studying this subject may contribute to a student's personal development, transforming horizons by engaging with cultures and societies other than her or his own, whether ancient or modern. It may foster a lifelong quest for wisdom, respect for one's own integrity and that of others, self-examination in terms of the beliefs and values adopted for one's own life, a better understanding of religion's role in geo-political conflict and, not least, the challenging of prejudices. The multidisciplinary nature of much theology and religious studies also means that students develop breadth of vision and intellectual flexibility.

1.12 The interface between academic study and practising religious communities is complex and significant. Critical analysis may challenge profoundly held convictions producing sharp rejection of academic study, but may also stimulate engagement with contemporary concerns. Such study is a major contributor to community understanding and development and the avoidance or challenging of prejudices arising from misinformation. Democratic society has an interest in ensuring that in matters of religion, debate is well informed and of high quality. Such understanding contributes to discussions on topics including international relations, race relations, human rights, social justice, wealth disparity, sustainability, climate change and the impact of the digital revolution. It is important that society has places where thorough and thoughtful engagement with current religious issues (including political, ethical and educational questions) can go on, thus enabling public debate to be resourced appropriately on all sides. The fact that theology and religious studies graduates go into a variety of careers, not just as religious professionals, means that there is a pool of citizens with a sophisticated understanding of religion who are able to contribute to debate in many areas of society.

## 2 Nature and extent of theology and religious studies

2.1 Theology and religious studies may be characterised as a family of methods, subjects and fields of study, clustered around the investigation both of the phenomena of religions and belief systems in general, and of particular religious traditions, texts, practices, societies, art and archaeology. Most would identify within this the unifying principle of addressing questions raised about, within or between religions through a range of different academic subjects. Some would emphasise the unifying focus that comes from studying particular religious traditions and/or texts as coherent systems with their own integrity. Some would affirm as a core the intention of raising questions of meaning and truth, beauty and value.

2.2 Much of the stimulation of the subject lies in its contested nature. What is or is not regarded as belonging to the subject, what methods are used, the different results that come from adopting different presuppositions - these are some of the challenging issues addressed. Students experience the stimulation of engaging in debate at a fundamental level. The development of the subject (see paragraphs 1.5 to 1.9) has shaped some of its current emphases and predominant approaches.

2.3 The range of studies encompassed by theology and religious studies has also been influenced by what is happening elsewhere in the academy, such as in literary criticism and by sociological and fieldwork-based approaches to information gathering and analysis. Observation of religious practices and theoretical analyses of information so acquired sit alongside the study of texts and history. The development of Buddhist, Islamic and Jewish studies, for example, has tended to follow the historical paradigm, for example, in the interpretation of the respective sacred texts. Such historical approaches can distinguish academic exegesis from the kind of exposition offered in religious communities.

2.4 Thus both theology and religious studies are now likely to aim to provide students with the opportunity to engage in the twofold exercise of:

- exploring the religious thought of one or more traditions so as to understand each in its integrity and diversity, and grasp its integrative role in relation to lifestyles, practices and ethics
- analysing the historical, social, philosophical, cultural and artistic role of religion or belief systems in diverse contexts.

In both contexts students explore both an 'inside' and an 'outside' perspective, so that the perspectives of both practitioners and non-practitioners are appreciated.

2.5 Historically, theological and religious studies have interacted with and responded to contemporary issues and culture. Currently, global perspectives, environmental change, the disparity between poverty and wealth, interfaith and ecumenical activity, and issues of gender, sexuality, race, disability, violence, justice, colonialism and culture figure largely in discussions about the nature and parameters of theology and religious studies, alongside fundamental debates about methods of study. A further development is the inclusion of atheism and other forms of non-belief within religious studies. Such factors, along with the practical and pastoral elements required in some programmes, have generated the range of different topics currently offered in theology, religious studies and associated programmes (see list in Appendix B).

2.6 The subjects from which theology and religious studies draws and to which it relates may be listed as:

- anthropology
- archaeology
- area studies
- child and youth studies
- citizenship studies
- classics
- cultural studies
- economics
- education
- ethics
- ethnology
- gender studies and women's studies
- geography
- health studies
- history
- international relations
- language(s)
- law
- literature
- media studies
- material culture studies
- natural sciences
- philosophy
- political science
- psychology
- sociology
- social policy and social work
- visual and performing arts.

2.7 The range of content covered by individual programmes depends on the specific degree offered and the context of provision (see paragraphs 1.2 to 1.4). No provider has the resources to cover everything that may be properly regarded as included in theology and religious studies, and the rich diversity of curricula means that students have significant choice. Whatever programme, modules or provider students have chosen, they are likely to be aware of the formative influence on current intellectual frameworks or present social realities of some of the following movements:

- the Enlightenment critique of religion
- the development of historical consciousness
- anthropology from the 'myth and ritual' approach, to contemporary ethnography and subsequent developments
- the impact of science from Galileo through Darwin to current developments
- the scientific and historico-critical challenges to the authority of scriptures
- global and indigenous religion, and permeability between religions
- non-traditional and non-aligned religious movements, and contemporary spirituality
- humanism, non-religion and atheism
- secularisation and the rise of the social sciences
- post-colonialism and the critique of Western culture
- widening cultural horizons, the rise of postmodernity, pluralism and globalism
- religions in diaspora

- gender, feminist, queer, black, inclusive and liberationist studies.

2.8 Whatever the context, students are confronted with some of the questions raised by this general intellectual history and are required to consider viewpoints other than their own, and other than any declared stance of the provider where they are studying. Critical dialogue is essential to the subject as studied at higher education level.

### 3 Subject knowledge and skills

3.1 As indicated, the nature of theology and religious studies is multidisciplinary, covering a wide area of subject matter and methods of study. Particular programmes will touch on most of the following and focus on some of them.

- A broadly based core together with the wider context required for the subject area covered by the programme in question, and specialised study in depth of some aspects of the field. This implies not just the mastery of data but also the setting of these data within a theoretical framework, which includes critical analysis and debate about how to understand and structure the raw data into a coherent whole.
- One or more religions, ancient or modern, including the origin, history and developed or present character of each.
- The reading, analysis and interpretation of texts, sometimes in the original languages, particularly texts that have been sacred or significant to one or more practising communities. This study will often focus both on the historical context which generated the texts and on hermeneutical questions concerning their meaning and application for the appropriate community of believers in the present, or for other readers today.
- Engagement with some of the major religious thinkers, prophets, teachers, ascetics, mystics, healers, or leaders through their extant work or subsequent influence.
- The application of a variety of critical methods of study, often adapted from those of other subjects in the humanities and social sciences, to the study of texts, practices, religious communities as social and cultural entities, or their diverse material culture and art forms.
- The history of the particular subject(s) covered by the programme, including the major theories, movements and thinkers.
- Ethics, morality, and values. All religions have certain expectations in these areas, which are studied along with other aspects of the religion. Even if the religion is studied only historically, the values and problems for living as an adherent of the religion do not go unnoticed by the student.

(The current range of possible subject matters is indicated in Appendix B).

3.2 The qualities of mind that a student acquires by studying theology and religious studies may be characterised as follows.

- The ability to understand how people have thought and acted - and continue to think and act - in contexts other than the student's own; how beliefs, doctrines, traditions and practices have developed within particular social and cultural contexts; and how religious traditions have changed over time and continue to evolve in the contemporary world.
- The ability to read and use texts both critically and empathetically, while addressing such questions as genre, content, context, perspective, purpose, original and potential meaning, and the effect of translation if the text is not read or used in the original language.
- The appreciation of the complexity of different worldviews, mentalities, social behaviours and aesthetic responses, and of the ways they have been shaped by beliefs and values, and conversely how beliefs, worldviews, sacred texts and art forms have been shaped by society and politics.
- Sensitivity to the problems of religious language and experience, and to the issues of multiple and conflicting interpretations of language and symbols, texts and traditions. Simplistic, literalising or doctrinaire explanations are less likely to be advanced by a student of theology and religious studies.

- Appreciation of both the interconnectedness of and internal tensions within a system of beliefs and practices.
- Basic critical and analytical skills: recognition that statements should be tested, that evidence and arguments are subject to assessment, and that the interpreter's role demands critical evaluation.
- The ability to employ a variety of methods of study in analysing material, to think independently, identify tasks, set goals and solve problems.
- The capacity to give a clear and accurate account of a subject, marshal arguments in a mature way and engage in debate and dialogue with respect for the opposite case or different viewpoint.

3.3 Such qualities of mind may be regarded as intellectual skills and competencies arising from study of the subject. As in other academic subjects, they are supported by commitment to integrity in pursuit of understanding and to being true to the object(s) of study, and by recognition of the contested and provisional nature of knowledge and understanding.

3.4 Some generic skills, such as independence of mind, derive from such intellectual qualities. Others, such as self-discipline, the ability to gather, organise and deploy evidence and information, or to work in teams, emerge from the processes of studying the subject.

3.5 The potential range of skills that may be acquired would include a majority of the following:

- empathy and imaginative insight, with a tolerance of diverse positions
- self-discipline
- self-direction
- independence of mind and initiative
- capacity for reflexive learning
- commitment to lifelong learning
- ability to attend to others and have respect for others' views
- capacity to modify, suspend or otherwise change position when warranted
- ability to gather, evaluate and synthesise different types of information
- analytical ability and the capacity to formulate questions and solve problems
- presentation skills, both oral and written, supported by appropriate technologies
- technological and media literacy, including the generation of documents and other resources, electronic communication and interaction in various forms and accessing information from a variety of sources
- an awareness of the importance of contemporary media as both a resource for study and a medium for theological and religious discourse
- teamwork skills
- writing skills, including accurate referencing and clarity of expression
- ability to engage critically with the meaning of documents and recognise that meanings may be multiple
- ability to read texts in a different language, where appropriate.

3.6 A guide which indicates how the skills developed by graduates in theology and religious studies relate to the attributes sought by employers was produced by the Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies, part of the Higher Education Academy, prior to its closure in 2011.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> *Employability: Where next? Unlocking the potential of your theology or religious studies degree*, available at: [www.basr.ac.uk/trs\\_resources/pubs\\_and\\_resources/projects/employability/emp\\_guides.htm](http://www.basr.ac.uk/trs_resources/pubs_and_resources/projects/employability/emp_guides.htm).



## **4 Teaching, learning and assessment**

### **General principles**

4.1 Theology and religious studies may be studied on single honours, joint or combined honours, major-minor programmes or within general degrees. Modules may be open to students whose principal area of study lies elsewhere, although highly specialised or advanced modules are not always made available to students who are not majoring in the subject. Students from other fields may bring benefits to the study of religion from better acquaintance with the methods of other subjects. The benchmark standards specified within this document are for single honours degrees but may be applied in other situations with suitable adjustments.

4.2 Theology and religious studies attracts students from traditional and non-traditional backgrounds. Mature students, in particular, often bring experience and motivation to the study of the subject that enhances their capacity for achievement at high levels. The diversity of students from different religious and cultural backgrounds enhances the vitality of theology and religious studies.

4.3 Theology and religious studies is a subject that promotes lifelong learning. Many of those who are attracted to the subject approach it as an element in the development of their own life, especially those who undertake it as a second degree; come into higher education later in life; or undertake studies as part of professional training, frequently as they embark on a second career. The relatively high number who progress or return to postgraduate study also reflects the fact that students discover an urge to take their studies further and pursue them to greater depth.

### **Student learning**

4.4 Independent learning lies at the heart of studying theology and religious studies. Students are engaged actively in the process of seeking to understand, drawing upon a variety of sources and experiences. The ability to evaluate sources critically is essential to the learning process. The production of assignments, assessed and non-assessed, is a significant element in digesting, analysing and presenting what is learned. The development of cogent arguments is fundamental to the subject. Guidance is provided through recommended resources and advice from academic staff. Progressively, through the programme, students are encouraged to develop independence, especially by undertaking extended essays, longer projects or dissertations.

4.5 Group learning and peer learning is central to many approaches to theology and religious studies. Group participation in discussion facilitates understanding of concepts and issues. Group analysis and presentation enhance student learning by developing skills in sharing and testing hypotheses and rigour of evidence. Interpersonal study of this kind underpins theology and religious studies as an interdisciplinary area that values dialogue and debate.

4.6 Experiential learning is a significant element of many theology and religious studies programmes. Study visits and placements are incorporated into many programmes for students to engage with the living practice of religion. Undertaking study visits and field work enables interaction between experience and analysis. Students are encouraged to engage with the historical and contemporary material culture of religions.



4.7 Learning through research is an important aspect of many programmes. Students are encouraged to design small-scale research projects about a limited topic in theology and religious studies, in line with the Framework of Professional Practice.<sup>12</sup>

4.8 Work-based learning is a component of some theology and religious studies programmes. Students may be encouraged to undertake activities that enhance their understanding of relevant employment opportunities.

4.9 The development of a range of academic skills or literacies is a key part of programme design. Students undertake study and assignments that enable them to progress effectively through each level of their study. The structured development of capabilities and competencies in academic writing and research enable students to apply and effectively transfer their knowledge and skills to novel environments.

4.10 Off-campus or distance learning is available for substantial numbers of students. Students may take these pathways part-time or full-time. Structured learning materials on virtual learning platforms or other online media are available for students to access in their own time and at their own pace, while mechanisms for engagement with the provider may include synchronous or asynchronous tutorial guidance. Student learning may sometimes be supported by occasional day or residential schools.

## Teaching methods

4.11 A wide variety of teaching and learning methods are employed in theology and religious studies, with the range and balance between different types determined by the nature and focus of the programme. They are likely to include:

- lectures and presentations
- seminars
- technology-based learning
- tutorials, supervisions or other small group work
- workshops
- language classes
- text-reading classes
- study trips
- fieldwork
- study placements
- work placements
- case studies
- reading (and accessing electronic information sources) with appropriate guidance
- working on individual or group projects
- giving presentations through a variety of media, and discussing the presentations of other students.

4.12 Lectures, learning materials and presentations enable teachers to provide an overall perspective on a subject area and designate the parameters of the syllabus. They may also provide exemplary discussions of a topic, models for considering and assessing different views of a subject, or clear distillation of essential points. Lectures often provide a valuable opportunity to grasp the particular stance of a scholar, to gain further insight into disputed questions, and to raise matters directly with the lecturer. Lectures are often recorded on varied media to provide opportunities for asynchronous review. Whatever the context, students are clear that material provided through lectures alone is not adequate to achieve a good grasp of the subject. Peer-reviewed scholarship, electronic and hard copy,

---

<sup>12</sup> The Framework of Professional Practice, available at: [www.basr.ac.uk/ethics.htm](http://www.basr.ac.uk/ethics.htm).

is provided in module guidance for further reading and information. Students are expected to develop skills in sourcing appropriate online material with discernment.

4.13 Group seminars and tutorials, face-to-face and online, are core modes of student learning. Debate and dialogue, interaction with peers and teachers, is vital for the pursuit of theology and religious studies, so the provision of a forum for questions and discussion is essential. Attending to people who understand things in a variety of different ways is a significant feature of the subject.

4.14 All students, studying on campus and remotely, have opportunities for engagement with electronic resources and active online teaching media. Online provision is an important element of student learning.

4.15 The relationship between formative and summative teaching and learning opportunities is considered in the design of programmes. Students are provided with opportunities to undertake assignments that build cumulatively toward assessment outcomes. Assignments may provide the formative basis for a final summative assignment or allow for feedback that enables one assignment to be the formative basis for the summative assignment.

4.16 Individual tutorials and support are common elements of the higher education learning experience. Academic advice is a core element of teaching and learning in theology and religious studies and may include discussion of research topics for independent study.

4.17 Where appropriate, a number of other learning opportunities may be provided. In all such cases, the careful articulation of clear goals and expected learning outcomes is the key to their effectiveness. These may include:

- language classes for the acquisition and practice of particular linguistic skills
- reading classes to work through primary texts, whether in the original language or English translation
- computer-based learning to acquire specific skills (for example, statistical analysis)
- fieldwork conducted through social scientific methods of study, within an appropriate ethical code of conduct
- social survey work
- practical placements
- professional work placements
- archaeological excavation
- iconographic or architectural studies.

## **Progression**

4.18 The varied subject matter of theology and religious studies may be experienced at many different levels: prior to entering higher education, at different stages of the degree programme and beyond graduation. Programmes arrange the order in which subjects are treated in different ways. Progression in the subject therefore requires the acquisition of greater facility and competence (for example, in languages), greater depth or sharpness of focus and deepening intellectual maturity.

4.19 The programme of study is designed to develop student understanding through structured learning materials and cumulative assessment programmes. Students are supported in their learning progression from the acquisition of academic writing and research skills towards becoming increasingly independent learners and researchers. Single honours programmes, for example, generally provide the opportunity for a major project or dissertation as one way of ensuring that independence and intellectual maturity are attained.

## Assessment

4.20 The range of assessment methods used in theology and religious studies programmes, as appropriate to the learning outcomes specified, include:

- timed written examinations
- essays with access to information sources
- language tests/examinations
- oral presentations
- book and electronic resource reviews
- portfolios
- individual dissertations, project reports or presentations
- group project reports or presentations
- written theological reflection
- fieldwork reports or presentations
- analysis of survey material
- placement reports or presentations
- extended essays
- oral examinations.

4.21 Assessment is intended to ascertain that stated learning outcomes have been achieved. A variety of assessment methods enables students to demonstrate a range of attainments and skills. Modes of assessment and the range of types of assignment are diverse among providers, with different methods justified by their purpose.

4.22 Assessment opportunities across a programme are designed to be formative in the sense of assisting students to reach agreed learning objectives. Formative assignments which are not credited for assessment are sometimes designed as foundations for summative assessed assignments. All assessed assignments work in a formative way to provide students with evidence of their achievements and the areas where they may improve their performance.

4.23 Feedback is an important element of student learning and assessment. Feedback provides guidance to enhance student learning, and may be formal or informal. In both cases, feedback may be oral, provided in seminar or tutorial discussions, or written in email or electronic responses to online forums, for example. Formal feedback is provided for summative assessment and is designed to show students how learning outcomes have been met, and areas for improvement.

4.24 All assessment requires clear criteria against which students and teachers measure the achievement of learning outcomes. The objectives of assessment for examinations and essays, oral presentations, group work and other forms of submission are provided in programme support documentation. In cases of oral and group work, criteria for assessment need to be clearly articulated, particularly if an element of peer assessment is involved. In selecting research topics for independent study, it may be necessary to negotiate appropriate modes of assessment.

4.25 Reports on fieldwork or placements and project dissertations may be subject to oral examination in order to clarify the student's contribution to the work and the extent to which learning outcomes have been achieved. Supervisors' reports may be used in the process of assessment. Generally, however, the assessment of such work includes examiners other than the supervisor, and involves the appropriate external examiner (for example, presentations may be filmed and made available to the external examiner).

## 5 Benchmark standards

5.1 The benchmark standards are expressed in terms of learning outcomes at the threshold level. The goal and focus of theology and religious studies programmes is to produce students capable of independently evaluating information and engaging in critical analysis and argument for themselves, alongside knowledge and understanding of the subject area. Excellent students transcend the learning outcomes and display originality, insight and the ability to progress to research.

5.2 The subject benchmark statement is not laying down a curriculum. A single honours programme which specifies both breadth and depth has the potential to enable students to achieve the benchmark standard. Breadth may be interpreted in a variety of ways, such as coverage of more than one religion, or the use of a range of different methods of study (historical, philosophical, exegetical, hermeneutical) or attention to a variety of different historical periods, geographical environments or social contexts. Depth implies some degree of specialisation, detailed focus upon a topic and the avoidance of superficiality. The stated learning outcomes are indicative, and do not form a checklist. It is not expected that all programmes will necessarily lead to the attainment of all the stated learning outcomes.

5.3 It is recognised that explicit assessment of some skills, especially those implying personal development, may be more difficult than assessment of the acquisition of knowledge.

### Knowledge and understanding

5.4 On graduating with an honours degree in theology and religious studies, students should be able to:

- demonstrate comprehension of and intelligent engagement with the richness of at least one religious tradition in its varied and central forms
- state clearly, discuss and demonstrate critical comprehension of some of the following: the political, social, textual, intellectual, historical, theological, ritual, practical, ethical, institutional or aesthetic expressions of the religion(s) studied
- discuss and demonstrate, where appropriate, critical comprehension of the religion's or religions' classic sources and their subsequent articulations by some interpreters of the tradition(s) in different historical periods and in different social or geographical settings
- evaluate and critically analyse a diversity of primary and secondary sources, including materials from theology and religious studies and where appropriate from related subjects such as the humanities or social sciences
- demonstrate comprehension of and critically analyse a range of themes, debates and methods within theology and religious studies and where appropriate from related subjects such as the humanities or social sciences and evaluate a range of associated critical scholarship
- apply insights, themes and debates from theology and religious studies appropriately to broader social and disciplinary contexts, including the physical, medical and biological sciences.

## Subject-specific and intellectual skills

5.5 On graduating with an honours degree in theology and religious studies, students should be able to:

- represent views other than the student's own sensitively and intelligently with fairness and integrity, while, as appropriate, expressing their own identity without denigration of others through critical engagement in a spirit of generosity, openness and empathy
- demonstrate with sensitivity awareness of the conviction and claims to certainty that may arise in religious traditions, with their positive and negative effects
- demonstrate sophisticated understanding of the multi-faceted complexity of religions, for example, in the relationship between specifically religious beliefs, texts, practices and institutions, and wider social and cultural structures, norms, aesthetics and aspirations
- demonstrate intellectual flexibility through the practice of a variety of complementary methods of study, for example, philosophical, historical, systematic, dogmatic, phenomenological, linguistic, hermeneutical, empirical, speculative, social scientific, archaeological, practical, pastoral
- demonstrate awareness of and critical assessment of religious contributions to debate in the public arena concerning, for example, values, truth, beauty, identity, health, peace and justice
- demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of how personal and communal identities and motivations are shaped by religion, how this has both constructive and destructive effects, and how important such identities are.

## Generic skills

5.6 On graduating with an honours degree in theology and religious studies, students should be able to:

- communicate information, ideas, arguments, principles and theories, and develop an argument by a variety of means, for example essays of various lengths and dissertations which are clearly and effectively organised and presented
- communicate information, ideas, principles and theories and develop an argument effectively by appropriate oral and visual means, and relate materials to an intended audience
- identify, gather and analyse primary data and source material, whether through textual studies or fieldwork
- attend to, reproduce accurately, reflect on and interact with the ideas and arguments of others
- engage with empathy, integrity and critical reflection with the convictions and behaviours of others
- work collaboratively as a member of a team or group in a way which allows each individual's talents to be utilised effectively
- undertake independent or self-directed study or learning (including time management) and reflect on one's strengths and weaknesses as a learner
- make discriminating use of a full range of resources in order to identify appropriate source material, compile bibliographies, inform research and enhance presentations
- use technology and computer skills for data capture, to identify appropriate source material, support research, and enhance presentations
- show independence in thought, and critical self-awareness about one's own beliefs, commitments and prejudices.

## Appendix A: Master's degrees in theology and religious studies

### A1 The nature and extent of taught master's degrees in theology and religious studies

A1.1 There exists a diversity of taught master's degrees in theology and religious studies. While the same qualification may be pursued by different students for different purposes, it is possible to identify several categories of award. These are not altogether mutually exclusive.

- Some provide **professional qualifications** for specialist vocational skills, such as counselling, chaplaincy, health and well-being, death studies and inter-religious relations. Some qualifications in this category may be sufficient for a specific religious body to give accreditation to a successful student to practise in a particular role, such as an ordinand or pastor.
- Others enable **specialism** in areas not covered in such depth at undergraduate level, for example, Reformed Theology, Western Esotericism, Celtic Christianity. Such qualifications enable a graduate student to take his or her undergraduate expertise to a more advanced level.
- Some master's degrees may offer a **broader curriculum** for the student, for example, World Religions where undergraduate study has been confined to a single religion.
- A number of master's degrees encourage the **development of research skills**, and may be particularly attractive to students who are considering subsequent doctoral work.

A1.2 In the case of all of the above a student may seek to complete a master's degree to facilitate career advancement, particularly in education, ministry and the caring professions.

### A2 The naming of master's degrees in theology and religious studies

A2.1 In addition to the different types of focus within master's degrees, there is a wide range of nomenclature relating to awards at this level in theology and religious studies. The variety reflects the autonomy of and traditions within individual degree-awarding bodies, but some broad trends may be distinguished.<sup>13</sup>

A2.2 Some forms are used generically across a range of subject areas. MPhil (Master of Philosophy), MLitt (Master of Letters), and MRes (Master of Research) generally involve substantial independent research, requiring an extended dissertation. These degrees, however, may include taught components, for which this benchmark statement may be a useful point of reference. For taught master's awards, MA (Master of Arts) and MSt (Master of Studies) are the most commonly used forms. These titles may also be used to describe integrated master's degrees in the subject.

A2.3 However, there are a few qualifications that are awarded exclusively for work in theology and religious studies, notably MTh (Master of Theology) and MDiv (Master of

---

<sup>13</sup> The Master of Arts (MA) granted by the University of Oxford and the University of Cambridge is not an academic qualification (*The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*, 2008, note, p 23). The Master of Arts with Honours (MA (Hons)) is used in some faculties in a small number of universities in Scotland for the Scottish Bachelors Degree with Honours (Scottish Credits and Qualifications Framework Handbook: User Guide, 2009, p 135). Some higher education institutions grant honorary master's degrees. None of these fall within the scope of the present document.

Divinity).<sup>14</sup> In general, an MDiv award tends to provide a fairly broad curriculum (often encompassing the five disciplines normally required for Christian ministry: Old Testament, New Testament, systematic theology, church history, and pastoral theology), and may be a qualification leading to ordination. The MTh tends to be more specialised, typically focusing on a single field of study within theology, biblical studies, and applied theology - for example, Reformed Theology, Orthodox Studies or Theology and the Arts. An MTh award may involve development of practical skills as well as academic knowledge: some higher education providers offer MTh awards in Chaplaincy Studies, Preaching, and Inter-faith Studies.

A2.4 MDiv and MTh awards tend to focus on Christian studies. The historical use of such degree titles, however, does not rule out innovation, and there is no reason why a higher education provider should not propose an MDiv or MTh qualification in some other religion, as appropriate.

A2.5 MMin (Master of Ministry) characteristically signifies more practical ministry training.

A2.6 Master's degrees which are primarily designed as qualifications in other subject areas may include curriculum content drawn from the theology and religious studies field. Qualifications of this type may be titled for example MEd, MSc or LL.M (education, social sciences and law, particularly canon law, respectively). These master's degrees would generally draw predominantly on the relevant subject benchmark statement for the primary field of study, but this benchmark statement may form an additional reference point.

### **A3 Intended entrants**

A3.1 While many applicants for master's degrees already have an undergraduate qualification in theology and religious studies or related subjects, other applicants have qualifications in related subjects including relevant subject knowledge and/or prior experience, having relevant professional expertise with some academic training (such as ministers of religion). However, it is important to ensure that those who embark on a master's degree programme have the relevant academic skills and are capable of work in theology and religious studies at the appropriate academic level. Where appropriate, refresher or transitional courses may be considered.

A3.2 Many master's degrees in theology and religious studies serve as qualifications for work within particular religious bodies, most commonly Christian organisations. While the majority of applicants embark on such courses from a position of religious commitment, it is nonetheless important in a higher education environment that master's degree programmes are open to all, irrespective of religion or belief (or lack of belief), and gender, and subject to the equal opportunities policies of higher education providers. Students are not expected to adopt a confessional stance or simply reiterate a doctrinal position, but to demonstrate critical rigour.

### **A4 Teaching and learning**

A4.1 Master's degrees in theology and religious studies cover a wide range of topics and themes, spanning text-based studies in a single religious tradition, themed courses dealing with topics such as gender, and forms of practical training, among others. In all cases, the importance of critical engagement and reflection, methodological considerations and research skills are paramount. Learning draws on staff research and research-based learning is paramount.

---

<sup>14</sup> In the USA, STM (Master of Sacred Theology) is also in use.

A4.2 Students are encouraged to consider the ethical issues raised by their study of theology and religious studies, and in particular by the research they carry out. They are made aware of the Framework of Professional Practice.<sup>15</sup>

A4.3 Students are introduced to an expanded range of research and study tools, including the use of information technology. They are encouraged to develop an awareness of the importance of contemporary media as a resource for teaching and learning as well as resources for research.

A4.4 Elements of a master's degree programme may sometimes be made available to undergraduates as 'challenge modules', designed to introduce them to postgraduate study.

## **A5 Assessment**

A5.1 Master's degrees generally require a dissertation or some kind of major project, which may be literature-based or involve the collection and analysis of empirical data. At least one piece of extended research is a common expectation, particularly since a significant number of students perceive a master's degree as a route into doctoral research. Generally, this will be an extended essay or dissertation, showing evidence of original independent research and enabling the student to develop high-level academic skills. Other types of student work may fulfil this role as appropriate, for example, a portfolio with a wide range of evidential material, or assessed practical work. For master's level programmes in theology and religious studies, assessment by coursework is now more common than traditional timed unseen examinations, with the method of assessment reflecting the designated learning outcomes.

A5.2 Assessed work has a critical, investigative dimension, demonstrating engagement with the topic, and analytical thought. While some master's degrees may substantially involve the development of skills, they are still expected to involve more than simply professional training, with an important integrative dimension, relating skills to scholarship in the relevant field.

A5.3 Assessment does not involve evaluating any student's confessional stance. While religious organisations may have confessional expectations, especially in cases where they are sponsoring a student's study, personal spiritual development and religious beliefs are not included in the criteria for the award of a master's degree. However, they may be evaluated, by the relevant religious organisation itself.

## **A6 Benchmark standards**

A6.1 A master's degree in theology and religious studies is awarded to students who, during their programme, have demonstrated:

- a high degree of independence and self-direction in learning, taking responsibility for their own learning experience
- a high degree of engagement, interaction, and independent thinking and ability to find their own source material and literature
- knowledge of appropriate research methods and adoption of adequate research skills, with good use of academic journals as well as books
- an ability to use relevant original/primary sources as well as secondary literature
- skills necessary for the production of original research (although the degree of originality appropriate to doctoral research is not expected at this level of study),

---

<sup>15</sup> The Framework of Professional Practice, available at: [www.basr.ac.uk/ethics.htm](http://www.basr.ac.uk/ethics.htm).



with an ability to adopt a critical distance from their source material and to evaluate it critically, reaching their own independent conclusions

- awareness of the complexity of the subject matter, and the range of sources that are appropriate to their work
- critical reflection on their own particular standpoint, and a good understanding of the methodological and hermeneutical issues that are raised
- an ability to be critically reflective, with integration of academic literature relating theory and practice, where students are drawing on practical experience
- an understanding of the ethical issues raised by their research, and compliance with relevant codes of practice
- skills necessary to make full use of virtual learning environments, and to evaluate them
- an ability to evaluate critically and employ online primary sources and web-based study tools, and, where appropriate, to develop their own technological resources.

## Appendix B: The current range of possible areas of study in theology and religious studies

This appendix is provided for general information. Currently, providers offer modules or programmes which fall under the following headings.

**Biblical studies:** Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, early Judaism (Septuagint (LXX) and Intertestamental Literature), New Testament and Early Christianity. Such studies may be literary, historical, social, theological and/or hermeneutical in their methods of study.

**Studies of other religious literatures:** such as Talmudic and Rabbinic sources, Qur'an, Hadith, Zoroastrian Gathas, Buddhist Sutras and Abhidharma, Hindu Upanishads and Bhagavad Gita, Tao Te Ching.

**Languages:** Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Aramaic, Syriac, Arabic, Persian, Sanskrit and Pali, for example.

**Christian theology:** Historical (Patristic, Medieval, Reformation, Modern); Orthodox/Catholic/Protestant; systematic/doctrinal; liberation/feminist/lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender/black; ecological theology; practical/pastoral/applied/liturgical; Intercultural/missiological/ecumenical; African/Asian/Celtic/Latin American.

**History:** The historical study of religion, including the history of the Christian churches (or church history), of non-institutional religion and of all religious traditions in their cultural, political and social contexts, in the ancient, medieval, early modern and modern eras.

**Religions:** Prehistoric and ancient religions in Greece, Rome, Egypt, Near East; Bahai, Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, folk/vernacular religion, indigenous religions, Islam; Jainism, Judaism, Hinduism, new religious movements, Paganism, New Age, Shinto, Sikhism, Taoism and Zoroastrianism. These studies would cover such topics as origin; development; history; spread; modern/mature forms; key figures; schools; social and cultural forms; sacred texts and other literature; doctrines, philosophy, law, psychology; art, architecture, material and visual culture; practices; institutions and organisations; a religion's presence in UK/in Europe/transnationally; interfaith dialogue and engagement.

**Religion:** Theories of religion; methods of study: comparative religion, phenomenology of religion, hermeneutics, dialogue, sociology of religion, anthropology of religion, religion and politics, psychology of religion, philosophy of religion, religious art, architecture, iconography and symbols; cross-religious themes such as mysticism/meditation/spirituality, devotion/liturgy, religious experience, myth, pilgrimage, rites of passage, concepts of the sacred, monasticism, fundamentalism, violence, death; ethics in/and religion: nature of religious ethics, key values, and issues, such as the environment, war, economics, politics, bioethics; gender and religion; science and religion; modern and post-modern thought, religious and secular; religion and the media: film, literature, the internet; religious education; field-study of religious communities or places; regional studies: for example India, Central Asia, China, Japan, Africa, the Americas, Britain, Europe.

## **Appendix C: Membership of the benchmarking and review groups for the subject benchmark statement for theology and religious studies**

### **Membership of the review group for the subject benchmark statement for theology and religious studies (2014)**

Dr Nick Adams	University of Edinburgh
Dr Hannah Bacon	University of Chester
Dr Marion Bowman (Chair)	The Open University
Dr Elizabeth Burns	Heythrop College, University of London
Dr Dominic Corrywright	Oxford Brookes University
Dr John Curran	Queen's University Belfast
Professor Mike Higton	Durham University
Rev Dr Peter McGrail	Liverpool Hope University
Professor Hugh Pyper	University of Sheffield/Higher Education Academy
Professor Melissa Raphael	University of Gloucestershire
Dr Bettina Schmidt	University of Wales Trinity St David
Harriet Barnes	QAA

#### **Employer representative**

Dr Eeva John Archbishop's Council

#### **Student reader**

Iona Hine University of Sheffield

### **Membership of the benchmarking group for the annex to cover master's degrees in theology and religious studies**

Dr Marion Bowman	The Open University
Dr George D. Chryssides (Chair)	University of Birmingham
Dr Dominic Corrywright	Oxford Brookes University
Dr Wendy Dossett	University of Chester
Professor Ron Geaves	Liverpool Hope University
Professor David Jasper	University of Glasgow
Dr Leon Litvack	Queen's University, Belfast
Dr Peter McGrail	Liverpool Hope University
Professor Jolyon Mitchell	University of Edinburgh
Dr Bettina Schmidt	University of Wales, Trinity Saint David
Dr Andrew Village	York St John University
Dr Rachel Muers	University of Leeds
Dr Stuart Weeks	Durham University

## **Membership of the review group for the subject benchmark statement for theology and religious studies (2007)**

Details provided below are as published in the second edition of the subject benchmark statement.

Dr Darlene Bird	The Higher Education Academy Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies
Professor Brian Bocking	School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London
Professor David Fergusson (Chair)	University of Edinburgh
Professor David Jasper	University of Glasgow
Dr Hugh Pyper (Secretary)	University of Sheffield
Professor Melissa Raphael	University of Gloucestershire
Dr Frank Trombley	Cardiff University

## **Membership of the original benchmarking group for theology and religious studies (2000)**

Details provided below are as published in the original subject benchmark statement.

Professor M Abdel Haleem	School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London
Professor P Badham	University of Wales, Lampeter
Dr M Bowman	Bath Spa University College
Dr B E Gates	St Martin's College, Lancaster
Professor L L Grabbe	University of Hull
Dr C Hardman	University of Newcastle upon Tyne
Professor P Harvey	University of Sunderland
Professor J Hinnells (Co-chair)	University of Derby
Dr W Johnson	University of Wales, Cardiff
Professor J Lieu	King's College, University of London
Professor I Torrance	University of Aberdeen
Dr L J P Woodhead	University of Lancaster
Dr D F Wright	University of Edinburgh
Professor F M Young (Co-chair)	University of Birmingham

QAA644 - Mar 14

Third edition. First edition published 2000, second edition published 2007.

© The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 2014  
Southgate House, Southgate Street, Gloucester GL1 1UB

Tel: 01452 557 000  
Email: [enquiries@qaa.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@qaa.ac.uk)  
Website: [www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk)

Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786