

Institution: Leeds Trinity University
Unit of Assessment: 31 Theology and Religious Studies
1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy <p>[Note: Category A staff (3) in the Unit in bold. Category A staff (4) in the Unit who left the institution prior to 31.07.2020 <u>underlined</u>. Research students and other staff outside the Unit in normal text.]</p> <p>The Theology and Religious Studies (TRS) Unit at Leeds Trinity University (LTU) has benefited from specialist academic expertise in various contributing disciplines including philosophy, ethics, religious studies and theology, leading to a vibrant interdisciplinary research environment. The Unit's research focus has been on building strong links with the third sector, which plays to LTU's strengths as a University with strong links to the local community, and its Mission, vision and values centred on respect, dignity and inclusion, social and economic wellbeing (Mission, vision and values - About - Leeds Trinity University).</p> <p>The three category A staff included in REF2021 are Dr Suzanne Owen, Dr Ann Marie Mealey and Dr Shyane Siriwardena. Owen specialises in the study of religion, with a focus on indigenous religion and contemporary paganism. Mealey specialises in moral theology and social justice, whilst Siriwardena specialises in metaphysics and causation. TRS category A staff members who were in the Department during the assessment period but have since left were <u>Prof Kirsteen Kim</u>, <u>Dr Hannah Hunt</u>, <u>Dr Patricia Kelly</u> and <u>Dr Anna Piela</u>.</p> <p>Prior to 2019, TRS were part of the Department of Humanities, with History and English, the leading research Department in LTU, with the three areas continuing to work together in co-supervision of research students and through the Leeds Centre for Victorian Studies (LCVS). In 2019, TRS moved to the Department of Children, Young People and Families (CYPF) within the Institute of Childhood and Education (ICE). This has enabled the team to build on previous University collaborations and, through synergies within ICE, begin to develop new ones, externally, in the areas of social justice and education, and to enhance inclusion and the teaching of religious education in schools (see strategic aims below).</p> <p>TRS staff have had regular representation as members of LTU's research committees helping to shape the University's research strategies. Both <u>Kim</u> and Owen have sat on the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (RKEC). Owen was Chair of the School of Arts and Communications Research Ethics subcommittee until 2019 and is currently a member of RKEC and the Research Degree subcommittee. Siriwardena is currently serving as an external member on the School of Communications, Business and Law Research Ethics and Integrity subcommittee. In addition, Owen is a member of LTU's two Research Centres (more below).</p> <p><i>Achievement of strategic aims for research and impact during the assessment period</i></p> <p>LTU's institutional research strategy up to the year 2018 was to have more staff contributing research outputs across the academic disciplines and to support staff toward gaining a PhD, while the 2018-2021 research strategy has focussed on research and research impact through a range of collaborations outside the University sector. The strategy also involved recruiting and supporting PGRs and by the census date there were 26 completions, including 5 from this Unit (and two further completions in TRS by the end of 2020).</p> <p>The REF2014 research strategy for TRS had five aims, which dovetailed with the institutional strategies. All of these aims have been achieved by TRS.</p>

(1) to encourage high-quality publications and grant applications.

The Unit's current staff have produced a significant corpus of high-quality outputs enabling a strong selection to be made for the current submission. Former TRS staff and the Unit's PhD students had also produced a number of quality publications during the current REF assessment period. Current and former staff had also received small grants from various external bodies, including charities, to support their research (detailed in section 3).

(2) to make use of research networks and to host one major conference.

TRS hosted the annual conference of the British Association for the Study of Religions (BASR) in 2019 at LTU, co-organised with members of the International Research Centre for Interactive Storytelling (IRIS), a Research Centre based at LTU (see more in section 4). It was attended by staff and PhD students in TRS and Media and had over 60 participants, including international presenters from Ireland, Hungary, Germany, Iran, Columbia, Japan and the USA.

TRS has invited external speakers for interdisciplinary research seminars at LTU, enriching the research environment at LTU, such as Dr Alana Vincent (Chester, strengthening links with TRS in a fellow Cathedrals Group University). We also had a number of public lecturers organised in collaboration with the chaplaincy at LTU, including one given by Prof Mark Wynn (University of Leeds, strengthening links with the TRS Department there) and one by Prof Linda Woodhead (University of Lancaster, in 2016), who also gave an additional talk about the REF and applying for research funding to LTU staff.

(3) to develop links with churches and other charitable bodies.

For REF2014, the Impact Case Studies submitted both came through links to churches and/or charitable bodies – Kim primarily with the World Council of Churches and Hunt primarily with Monos, a charity for fostering a monastic spirit within Christianity – and this focus remains the case for REF2021.

Mealey has developed solid and active links with churches as part of Leeds Citizens and the Living Wage campaign, where her research has made an impact (**see Mealey's ICS**). Social justice is a key theme in **Mealey's** research developed in collaboration with Leeds Trinity institutionally as well as with staff in CYPF. This led to a volume *Everyday Social Justice and Citizenship* (Routledge, 2019) co-edited by **Mealey** with staff members in CYPF. **Mealey** is also co-chair of Leeds Citizens: "an alliance of faith, education and community organisations, working together for the common good of Leeds" (<https://www.citizensuk.org/chapters/leeds>), of which Leeds Trinity University is a principal member.

Owen has several ongoing research projects which develop her collaborative links and partnership with faith bodies, one in cooperation with the Anglican Church of Canada Central Diocese of Newfoundland and another with the Druid Network, a registered charity, which has had an impact on how the Pagan Federation plan to frame their next application for charity registration (**see Owen's ICS**).

Several former staff in TRS had also forged links with churches and the third sector. Piela collaborated with the Muslim Women's Council as a research consultant 2014-15. Kim was consultant at the Archbishop of Canterbury's Theological Retreat Group in Canterbury in December 2016. Hunt had several invitations to speak at meetings organised by Orthodox Christians in Romania and in Russia.

(4) to build a centre for excellence for mission and world Christianity, which would contribute to internationalisation of the University.

Kim was spearheading this research strategy before she left (in 2017) and had attracted three high-quality PhD students in the area of mission studies. She was the editor in chief, assisted

by one of her PhD students (Gary McKee), for *Missions Studies: Journal of the International Association for Mission Studies* while at LTU. In addition, she was academic advisor for the International Association for Mission Studies general conference in Seoul in August 2016. Her success was recognised in her offer of a post as Professor of Theology and World Christianity at Fuller Theological Seminary in California.

Owen has continued elements of this strategy with her research into Anglican missionaries' encounters with the now extinct (c.1829) Beothuk Indians in Newfoundland. In December 2020, **Owen** and her collaborator from Newfoundland presented a paper for the Leeds Centre of Victorian Studies (LCVS) research seminar at LTU on the involvement of an early 19th century Anglican missionary in the capture of one the last known Beothuk Indians, which is being developed into a journal article (more on this research below).

(5) to use the increased national and international standing of its staff to attract more research masters and PhD students.

TRS has been able to attract PhD students of a high calibre, four of them receiving fully funded studentships from LTU (see more about them below in section 2). By December 2020, TRS staff had supervised a quarter of Leeds Trinity's total completions (7 out of 28). TRS has also attracted several Masters' by Research students, two of whom are currently co-supervised with Psychology and a third with Computing, which links to TRS's research strategy for the next period, to build interdisciplinary collaborations.

Strategy for impact during the 2014-2020 period

In relation to impact, TRS has focussed in particular on its 3rd aim above of developing links with churches and the third sector. Of former staff in TRS, Kim received funding for teaching replacement for research on Christianity in Korea, building on her REF2014 ICS and links with the World Council of Churches, while Piela received funding for research in collaboration with Muslim women in Bradford (see more on these in section 4).

Mealey has been building and nurturing partnerships with organisations such as Leeds Citizens and participating in the Living Wage Campaign (**Mealey's ICS**) and **Owen's** links with the Druid Network for research on "religion" in contemporary Druidry was picked up by the Pagan Federation as they were preparing their charity application and also in the media on whether Ethical Veganism could be regarded as a "religion and/or belief" under the Equality Act (**Owen's ICS**).

Details of future strategic aims

TRS is contributing to LTU's aim of achieving Full Degree Awarding Powers through application to award Research Degrees in the next cycle by demonstrating appropriate vitality and sustainability in the research environment at institutional and disciplinary levels. The focus will encompass both applied research and associated knowledge exchange and research impact activities. In particular, TRS's **strategy for impact** in the next period is to build on its links with charitable bodies and a newly emerging aim to influence teaching of religion, ethics and philosophy in schools and in higher education, strengthened by the relocation of TRS into the Institute of Childhood and Education.

TRS's 2021 research strategy has these four aims:

(1) Build on existing interdisciplinary collaborations within LTU and develop new ones.

LTU encourages interdisciplinary collaborations across disciplines, which maintains and develops the sustainability and vitality of the research environment. TRS will build on existing interdisciplinary collaborations and extend them, both within LTU and beyond.

Mealey, as Senior Teaching Fellow since 2020 and the Coordinator of the PGCert in Higher Education, is developing new connections within the Institute of Childhood and Education, including in the area of pedagogical research in Higher Education. Her work with Leeds Citizens also has potential to bring in staff from other disciplines. **Mealey** is also continuing to bring in other colleagues in CYPF and elsewhere to contribute to research into social justice issues, this time on ways of bringing them into educational contexts, building on earlier collaborations that resulted in the volume *Everyday Social Justice and Citizenship*.

TRS links with colleagues in the School of Communications Business and Law continue with **Owen** participating in the Leeds Centre for Victorian Studies (LCVS) Research Centre with her research on Anglicans in Newfoundland (the activities of LCVS are included in the submission for UoA 27). At the end of 2020, **Owen** also became a member of LTU's International Research Centre for Interactive Storytelling (IRIS), building on collaborations that began with the organisation of the 2019 British Association for the Study of Religions conference (the activities of IRIS are included in the submission for UoA 33). **Owen** and members of IRIS are in the early stages of developing a project combining the study of religion with documentary filmmaking.

(2) Secure at least one major research grant.

One benefit of developing interdisciplinary collaborations is the underpinning of work aimed at securing research funding. Each of the category A staff belong to networks within LTU (in ICE and LTU's two Research Centres) and externally, either with the third sector or academics at other institutions both nationally and internationally for this purpose.

One funding application in progress is **Owen's** for the final stage of research on Anglicans and the Beothuk with a collaborator in Newfoundland, connecting it to the reconciliation work of the Anglican Church of Canada, in particular through the Truth and Reconciliation's aim of "addressing the ongoing legacies of colonialism that have had destructive impacts on Aboriginal peoples" (principle 4) by examining the role of the Anglicans in the years leading to and the ongoing legacy of the demise of the Beothuk Indians in Newfoundland and recovering the stories of named Beothuk individuals. This research builds on **Owen's** British Academy Small Grant award for "Remembering the Beothuk in Newfoundland" in 2013 and funding from the Anglican Church of Canada Central Diocese in Newfoundland in 2018-2019 (see section 3 below).

(3) Build on links with churches and the third sector.

Owen and **Mealey** both continue to engage with elements of wider society as part of TRS's strategy for impact. Thus, part of TRS's research strategy for 2021 is to strengthen these links further. **Mealey's** research on social justice continues to inform her connections to Leeds Citizens and the Leeds Church Institute while **Owen's** research on contemporary Druids and Pagans continues with links to the Druid Network, a registered charity. It is supportive of **Owen's** research for a forthcoming publication on the social impact of often negative or stereotypical representations of Druidry and Pagans in the media and popular culture. In addition, **Owen** is continuing her collaboration with the Anglican Church in Newfoundland with a journal article in progress and plans for a monograph.

(4) Make an impact in the field of education (in schools and in higher education)

Making use of TRS's location in the Institute of Childhood and Education, **Mealey** is reshaping the Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education at LTU and mentoring new staff, which is leading to new collaborative research opportunities in the area of pedagogy. In addition, as a member of the network for Catholic Religious Education Development Opportunities (CREDO) and building on her expertise in Catholic social teaching, **Mealey** is bringing ethical considerations and social justice issues into Catholic education at all levels, including non-governmental organisations.

Owen was invited by the Commission for Religious Education for a series of consultations hosted by Religious Education Council (REC) consultations June 2020 because of her research on the category of religion in 2020. Further events connected to their Worldviews project include CPD for teachers and REC members (educators and representatives of faith groups). **Owen** will continue to develop these links as a strategy for impact.

2. People

The three full-time permanent staff in TRS specialise across the three areas of Philosophy, Ethics and Religion and contribute interdisciplinary expertise within TRS and beyond. Two were promoted from Grade 8 to 9 (**Mealey** and **Owen**) during the 2014-2020 period and one new staff member was appointed to her first substantive academic post (**Siriwardena**).

Dr Ann Marie Mealey has been at Leeds Trinity since 2006 and in 2020 was promoted from Senior Lecturer to Senior Teaching Fellow for her work on the University-wide ethics and society undergraduate provision and the development of the Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education for staff and research students, which includes a research component. She supervised one Theology PhD to completion and is also a mentor for new staff. **Mealey** has been involved in the Living Wage campaign, of which Leeds Trinity was an early supporter, and her edited volume on *Everyday Social Justice and Citizenship*, to which she contributed several chapters, underpins her impact case study (**Mealey's ICS**).

Dr Suzanne Owen arrived in 2008 and was promoted from Senior Lecturer to Reader in 2018. She was lead supervisor for four postgraduate completions at LTU and was the internal examiner for three others in TRS. **Owen** was also an external examiner for one PhD at the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies. She has collaborated with Druid and Pagan groups on her research, in particular with regards to their applications for charity registration which relates to **Owen's** impact case study (**Owen's ICS**). This research produced two of her outputs, one in collaboration with Teemu Taira "The Category of 'Religion' in Public Classification: Charity Registration of the Druid Network in England and Wales" (2015) and the other "The Problem with Paganism in Charity Registration in England and Wales" (2018).

Dr Shyane Siriwardena arrived in 2019 for philosophy after holding a postdoc at Leeds and a teaching fellowship in Cambridge. An early career researcher, she is contributing to the REF for the first time.

Previous staff in TRS also contributed a number of outputs during this REF period. Hunt wrote *A Guide to St Symeon the New Theologian* (Wipf and Stock, 2015). Kelly has a chapter in *Faith and the Marvellous Progress of Science* (New City Press, 2015). She also completed her PhD at Durham University in 2016. Kim has a number of publications from the time during which she was at LTU, including a chapter in *Korean Church, God's Mission, Global Christianity and Ecumenical Missiology: Changing Landscapes* and in *New Conceptions of Mission* (both published by Regnum Books International, in 2015 and 2016 respectively), and a chapter in *The End of Theology: Shaping Theology for the Sake of Mission* (Fortress, 2016). In addition, she is the editor of *Mission Studies*. She was also keynote speaker at the International Symposium on Theology and Pedagogy (Romania, 2016) and at the meeting of the Christian Meditation Trust (Leeds, 2016). Piela edited *Islam and Media: Critical Concepts in Sociology* (Routledge, 2016) and, having contributed an article for them in 2015, she became an editorial board member (in 2017) of *Hawwa: Journal of Women of the Middle East and the Islamic World*. She also has a peer-reviewed journal article in *Youth and Society* (2015) and in *New Media and Society* (2016).

Research students

Investment in postgraduate students has been a key part of LTU's research strategy and LTU offers excellent support for them, funding studentships and generous research support for them to attend conferences and carry out fieldwork. This has greatly benefited the PhD students within TRS who have received studentships and attended international conferences

with the support of Leeds Trinity as well as having their fieldwork costs covered. The institution also runs training support for postgraduate students for viva preparation, getting published and various skills-related training, e.g. in IT, or more specialised training according to need, such as film editing. In addition, they can access research training offered by the accrediting institution, University of Leeds, via Vitae, and (through the relationship with Guild HE) offered by the University of East Anglia.

TRS has attracted and selected high-quality PhD students, demonstrated by the fact that four of them (Dr Jung Soo Jo, Dr Eleanor Wort, Dr Ilaria Vecchi and Dr Angela Puca) had received fully funded three-year studentships (includes fees – the international fee in Jo’s case – and a standard stipend) from LTU while one (Dr Edwin Arthur) received external funding from Wycliffe Bible Translators. Kim was the lead supervisor for Jo, Wort (**Owen** from 2017), Dr George Otieno (**Mealey** from 2017), Dr Edwin Arthur (until 2017) and Dr Gary McKee (**Owen** from 2017). **Owen** was the lead supervisor for Puca and Vecchi and for one new PhD student who started in October 2020.

TRS staff have encouraged their PhD students to attend conferences and three of them – Wort, Vecchi and Puca – had received full conference bursaries (covering registration, accommodation and meals) from the British Association for the Study of Religions to present papers at its annual conferences, while Puca had also received one from the European Association for the Study of Religions to present a paper at its conference in Bern in 2018. This has aided the development of their careers and as part of the TRS approach to invest in the academic future of the subject area.

The five (by headcount) TRS PhD completions within the census period have all published papers and progressed into careers related to their research, contributing to the development of TRS as a subject area nationally and internationally – Dr Jung Soo Jo is now lecturing in the Global Leadership School at Handong University in South Korea, Dr Eleanor Wort is a tutor for the Church Army in the UK, Dr Edwin Arthur is Theological Researcher for Wycliffe Bible Translators, Dr Gary McKee is Director of Advancement and Administration at Westminster Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Newcastle, while Dr George Otieno is senior lecturer at Msalato Theological College of St John’s University of Tanzania.

Two current TRS postgraduates (Vecchi and Puca – both have since completed their studies after the census date) became Visiting Lecturers for the subject area in September 2020, with one (Vecchi) gaining a lectureship at Leeds Trinity at the end of 2020, adding to the vibrancy and sustainability of the research environment.

Dr Ilaria Vecchi’s research is highly interdisciplinary, situated within TRS and Media. Her PhD research at LTU included a documentary film on a group of female spirit mediums in Japan. From September 2020 she was a Visiting Lecturer in both TRS and Media, collaborating with several colleagues in both subject areas, particularly as part of the International Research Centre for Interactive Storytelling (IRIS). She ran a seminar on documentary filmmaking with LTU’s Dr Stefano Odorico at the British Association for the Study of Religion conference in 2019 at LTU. Segments of her documentary film on the *Itako* mediums of Japan were screened during the conference as well. The completed film, *Tohoku Monogatari* (Tohoku Story), has been selected for the Moscow International Festival of Visual Anthropology “Mediating Camera” in May 2021. Vecchi has also contributed a peer-reviewed article for the *Journal of the British Association for the Study of Religions* (2019) and one for a special edition of the journal *Implicit Religion* (2020), co-edited by **Owen** and Teemu Taira, on the impact of Timothy Fitzgerald’s book *The Ideology of Religious Studies* (2000). Vecchi became a Lecturer in Media at LTU at the end of 2020 and continues to contribute to the TRS research environment.

Dr Angela Puca’s research is on contemporary shamanism and folk magic traditions in Italy. She was also employed at LTU as a Graduate Teaching Assistant for TRS until September 2020 when she became a Visiting Lecturer for the subject area. She has already published several peer-reviewed articles on her research for the *Journal for the British Association for*

the Study of Religions (2018), the *International Journal for the Study of New Religions* (2018) and the *Journal of the Irish Society for the Academic Study of Religions* (2019). She became the social media officer for the British Association for the Study of Religions (BASR) in September 2020 and will be co-editing with **Owen** the volume *Paganism in Five Minutes* for Equinox Publishing (forthcoming). Her research on folk magic traditions in Italy is already making an impact, which greatly enhances the international reach of TRS at LTU.

The research students who have completed their studies have also published papers recently: Arthur has an article in *Mission Round Table* (2017) and a chapter each in *Prosperity Theology and the Gospel: Good News or Bad News for the Poor* (2017) and in *Churchman* (2019). Jo has a peer-reviewed article in the *Asian Journal of Religion and Society* (2019). Wort has an article in *Ecclesial Practices* (2020), while McKee has a peer-reviewed article in *Studies in World Christianity* (2018) and one in *Mission Studies* (2020).

TRS plan to offer a Taught Masters as a strand within the programmes offered in the Department of Children, Young People and Families (CYPF), where research methodologies can be a core module and options offered across the different MAs as well as subject-specific ones in our respective programmes, as one route toward recruiting future research students.

Equality and Diversity

As per LTU's Code of Practice, all staff involved in the Unit's decision making for REF2021 have completed REF-specific Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training. During the census period one Category A staff member was appointed with protected characteristics that are traditionally underrepresented (LGBT+, BAME, international, female).

The Unit also has a good percentage of international staff and half the research students in TRS were international and also balanced in terms of gender (4 male and 4 female PhD students, including the one who started in 2020).

TRS are located within the Children, Young People and Families (CYPF) department of the Institute of Childhood and Education (ICE). Promoting and practicing inclusion is part of the mission of ICE and underpins its approach to research and impact activity in education and has prioritised social justice and social work, which connects especially to **Mealey's** current research on social justice and pedagogy in higher education.

Owen and **Siriwardena** are also interested in research in pedagogical issues in higher education, especially in the area of decolonisation as well as equality and diversity more broadly. Both are members of the University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee's Curriculum Team to decolonise the curriculum and **Siriwardena** is also a member of the EDI Committee's Curriculum Team and Assessment Team. In addition, **Siriwardena** participates in the BAME and LGBT+ Networks at the University. These efforts have helped LTU achieve the Race Equality Charter Bronze Award in 2020 (<https://www.leedstrinity.ac.uk/news/archive/2020/leeds-trinity-university-receives-race-equality-charter-bronze-award.php>).

Connected to the aims of the EDI Committee, **Owen** is currently involved in the Worldviews project of the Religious Education Council (at events in June 2020 and January 2021) with a particular interest in how it may help to decolonise Religious Education (RE) by bringing in more diverse views, e.g., perspectives from indigenous peoples (see also in section 4).

Overall, EDI infuses and provides structure and support for the Unit's research on social justice, Muslim women, non-Western Christianity and indigenous and pagan groups.

3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

Research income

Kim received £7655.25 as Principal Investigator for “Critical Assessment of the Christian Impact on the Shaping of the First Republic of Korea, 1945-1948” (receiving \$15,000 in total from the Academy of Korean Studies, 2015-6). The funds went toward replacement teaching, travel costs and some materials such as books.

The income from hosting the British Association for the Study of Religions conference at LTU in 2019 was £9188.45.

TRS was also awarded three standard fully-funded LTU PhD studentships during the current REF period, and one international fully-funded LTU studentship that began in the previous REF period and was completed in the current REF period.

Other research income independent of LTU:

While she was at LTU, Piela received a Small Community Research Grant of £3000 as Research Lead/Consultant for the Muslim Women's Council in Bradford, which was used toward recruitment of participants for the “Engaging Islamic Niqab Wearers in Yorkshire” project, 2014-2016 (part of this research was published as an article for the *Journal of American Academy of Religion* in 2019).

Owen and her collaborator in Newfoundland received around £5500 (CA\$10,000) from the Anglican Church of Canada, Central Diocese of Newfoundland, to cover travel, accommodation and subsistence costs for research in Oxford and Newfoundland in the summers of 2018 and 2019 to research Revd John Leigh's and other Anglican missionaries' involvement with indigenous people in Newfoundland in the early part of the 19th century (see more below in section 4).

Research Ethics

The research ethics process is normally handled at School level. TRS research students had all had their research ethics applications approved by the School of Arts and Communications Research Ethics subcommittee as had **Owen's** most recent application, which was for conducting a survey with Druids on “Perceptions of Druidry” (Ethics Code SAC/17-18/066) in June 2018. Although TRS was relocated to the Institute of Childhood and Education in 2019, it would still be the case that applications would go to the relevant committee by subject area. All research-active staff, and all PGRs access research ethics and integrity training as an LTU requirement.

Library and facilities

LTU has an excellent central library and IT facilities which includes electronic access to a wide range of journals and specialist qualitative and quantitative data analysis software as well as the opportunity to access further material via inter-library loans. Each subject area is supported by a dedicated liaison librarian and has a budget allocated for purchases and subscriptions. In addition, LTU staff and postgraduates have access to University of Leeds resources (as the validating institution for research degrees).

In recognising the benefits to the public and external stakeholders of unrestricted access to research outputs, TRS observes the LTU's default Open Access approach (<https://www.leedstrinity.ac.uk/media/site-assets/documents/key-documents/pdfs/open-access-policy.pdf>), primarily via the green open access route linked to LTU's acquisition of the PURE repository. Such practice ensures that the Unit's research outputs are openly available and accessible while facilitating rapid dissemination.

Staff and PhD students also have access to the Media Centre's equipment and facilities - the media centre has industry-leading production spaces and equipment. Staff and students can benefit from equipment hire, bespoke media training, and help and support from the Media Loans and Helpdesk team. In general, LTU provides free use of rooms for conferences and seminars, free IT facilities and technical support.

Staff development

All LTU staff have twice-yearly professional development reviews (an annual one and a "light touch" review in between). In this meeting, research roles and training needs are discussed with implications for the Workload Planner.

Owen and Piela were awarded research leave for a term each between 2015-2016. Staff have also been supported financially by LTU to attend conferences, which has enabled **Owen** and Kim to attend the American Academy of Religion meetings in the US and for **Owen** to attend European Association for the Study of Religions conferences in Europe, which strengthened their international research networks, adding to LTU's profile for research. Both **Owen** and Kim have provided research mentoring to early career staff in TRS (previously for Piela and Kelly, and now for **Siriwardena**).

Each month, via the Research and KE Office, the Director of Post Graduate Researchers hosts a postgraduate supervisors' forum and provides training sessions, e.g., on good supervision practice, drawing on materials from our accrediting institution, University of Leeds, where key. In addition, the University of Leeds runs supervision and internal examining training that LTU staff can attend. **Owen** is a "Model 1" PhD supervisor having attended these sessions and supervised at least at least three PhDs to completion.

LTU also hosts annual research days for staff development and showcasing of recent research. They have also invited speakers to present talks on their research journey or provide workshops for grant applications. LTU staff have run research writing support groups for the past couple of years and workshops to support grant applications. In June 2020, **Owen** ran a CPD session for ICE staff on ways of getting published: as a Grade 9/Reader she undertakes a mentoring role for junior academic staff and early stage researchers in CYPF and ICE as well as TRS.

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

Owen, who has been developing her research and publications for over ten years leading to her promotion as Reader, has published widely on the study of religion, indigenous religion and contemporary Druidry. She has been leading the development of the study of religion through such publications and as a major contributor to the principle subject associations for the study of religion in the UK, Europe and North America. A member of the British Association for the Study of Religions (BASR) since 2003, **Owen** became the coordinating editor of the *Journal of the British Association for the Study of Religions* (JBASR) in 2012 when she also became a member of the executive committee for the BASR. In 2009-2015 she was co-chair of the Indigenous Religious Traditions Group for the American Academy of Religion (AAR), remaining on their steering committee until 2018. In this role, she organised the call for papers and their selection for panels for the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion, helping to shape the study of indigenous religions and ensure its sustainability. She has since (from 2018) been serving as a Book Award for Excellence Juror for the AAR.

In recognition of her authority in the study of religion, **Owen** has been invited onto the editorial or advisory boards of several international peer-reviewed journals: *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion*, *Implicit Religion*, *Bulletin for the Study of Religion* and the Italian journal *Civiltà e Religioni*. **Owen** has also received several invitations to speak about her research to academic audiences. In 2018, she was invited by the North American Association for the Study of Religion to present the lead paper in a panel discussing Religion, Class and Economy at their annual meeting in Denver, Colorado (publication of the papers is forthcoming). In 2019-2020 academic

year, she was invited to deliver research seminar papers in the Centre for Religion and Public Life in Leeds (October 2019), in Mansfield College, Oxford (January 2020), and in New College, Edinburgh (March 2020).

Owen is also involved in a significant collaborative research project with her collaborator Revd Dr Joanne Mercer in Newfoundland on Anglicans and the last Beothuk Indians in Newfoundland. This research was initiated in 2016 when **Owen** and Mercer carried out archival research in St John's, Newfoundland, on the correspondence of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel at the time of the last Beothuk Indians (they were extinct by the mid-1800s). This developed into a project called "*Unreconciled: The Beothuk and Anglicans in Newfoundland*", which led to the provision of storyboards about John Leigh and the Beothuk for the 200th anniversary of Leigh's arrival in Twillingate in 1816. First exhibited in St Peter's Church in Twillingate, the storyboards then went on tour in Newfoundland for parishioners and visiting tourists. The Central Diocese of the Anglican Church in Newfoundland funded this research as part of fulfilling the principles of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Canada toward historical research into the Church's role in the mistreatment of indigenous people as a step toward reconciliation. **Owen** and Mercer received further ad hoc funding from the Central Diocese to cover expenses for archival research in Oxford in 2018 and fieldwork in 2019 to investigate some of the other Beothuk who had been captured in Central Newfoundland. This research will lead to a report for the Central Diocese and a peer-reviewed journal article. **Owen** is also in the process of writing a funding application supported by LTU to write up the findings of this research into a monograph.

Owen also collaborates with Dr Teemu Taira (Helsinki, Finland), which began with research on the Druid Network's successful application for charity registration (published as a co-authored chapter in 2015 and submitted as an output for REF2021). In 2016, **Owen**, Taira and Dr Steven Sutcliffe (Edinburgh) organised a panel on religion as a category in public discourse at the European Association for the Study of Religions (EASR) in Helsinki (**Owen's** paper led to an article on Paganism in charity registration cases, published in 2018, also submitted for REF2021) and in 2019, Taira and **Owen** organised a couple of panels for the EASR in Tartu, Estonia, on the influence and impact of Timothy Fitzgerald's *The Ideology of Religious Studies* (2000), which led to the publication of a special issue of the journal *Implicit Religion* in 2020, co-edited by Taira and **Owen**, to mark the twentieth anniversary of the publication of Fitzgerald's book.

Aware of her article "*The World Religions Paradigm: Time for a Change*" (2011), **Owen** was invited by the Commission on Religious Education to participate in a series of consultations in 2020 with the Religious Education Council of England and Wales toward understanding and utilising "Religion and Worldviews" as a replacement for "Religious Education" in schools. This has continued with **Owen** being invited by the Religious Education Council to participate in CPD for their members in January 2021 on "worldviews", provisionally titled "What's the Fuss?". She also presented a paper on "worldviews" in relation to dismantling the "world religions paradigm" and decolonisation of the RE curriculum for the British Association for the Study of Religions in 2020 and is developing it into an article. This is aligned strategically with ICE.

As mentioned in previous sections, Owen is a member of LTU's two Research Centres (LCVS and IRIS) bringing together staff from across the disciplines. With Dr Stefano Odorico (submitted to UoA 33), the Director of the International Research Centre for Interactive Storytelling (IRIS), **Owen** organised the annual conference of the British Association for the Study of Religions at LTU with the aim of developing collaborations between religious studies, visual ethnographers and documentary filmmakers. The conference theme was "*Visualising Cultures: Media, Religion and Technology*" and included contributions from IRIS members Prof. Graham Roberts (submitted to UoA 33) as well as PhD students Ilaria Vecchi of TRS and Tom Pollard who showcased their documentary films relating to the study of religion. Odorico and Vecchi also ran a workshop for the BASR on documentary filmmaking to encourage more interdisciplinary collaborations. Having completed her PhD in TRS, Vecchi, now a Lecturer in Media, is developing research projects in IRIS bringing together documentary filmmaking and the study of religion.

As a Reader, it is part of **Owen's** role to support other staff in research. When TRS was in the School of Arts and Communications (until 2019), she co-organised a series of research seminars with invited speakers. Since early 2021, she has been leading one of LTU's weekly writing groups for staff and research students. Within TRS and as part of ICE she encourages colleagues working toward publications (such as the session on "Ways of Getting Published") and in individual discussions about research plans.

Dr Ann Marie Mealey co-chairs the Leeds Citizens group of which LTU is a founder. She has collaborated on research with Pam Jarvis of the Department of Children, Young People and Families (CYPF) at LTU, resulting in her co-edited volume on *Everyday Social Justice and Citizenship* (Routledge 2018). **Mealey** is also on the theological reference group for the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) and wrote a paper for the Catholic Theological Ethics in the World Church network on "*Feminism and Ecology*" (2015) in which she promotes ecofeminism within Christian theology, based on her chapter in *Just Sustainability* (2015). Her focus has been on developing impactful links with employers and the third sector and is looking ahead toward interdisciplinary pedagogical research with colleagues in ICE as a Senior Teaching Fellow (Grade 9) and a member of the Catholic Religious Education Development Opportunities (CREDO).

Dr Shyane Siriwardena has continued to collaborate on research into metaphysics with John Divers at the University of Leeds (now at Trinity College Dublin), where Siriwardena had held a postdoctoral fellowship, and also Max Jones at the University of Bristol. Her research on causality and metaphysics has so far produced an article on causal discourse. As a new appointee and ECR, she has an emerging research profile, which TRS is supporting, guided by Prof John Leach as Director of ICE and Chair of the Race Equality Charter Self-Assessment Team (RECSAT) providing opportunities for research and career development, including her (developmental) role since 2020 as external member of the School of Communications Business and Law's Research Ethics and Integrity subcommittee.

Vecchi, having completed her PhD in TRS and as a new appointment in Media (since December 2020) is developing her interdisciplinary research profile through publications and national and international collaborations with a view to contributing to the next REF.

Situated within an anchor institution, its high-quality learning led provision underpinned and enriched by impactful, innovative research, the Unit has succeeded its research aims combining research toward publications with a national and international reach and a strategy toward impact by working with local groups such as Leeds Citizens, Muslim women in Bradford and British Druids and Pagans, supported by LTU's links with the local community and its work on achieving Equality and Diversity and Internationalisation.