



## Job Description

### Postdoctoral Research Associate in Catholic Studies ( 20000052)

Department of Theology and Religion

Grade 7: - £33,797 to £40,322

Fixed Term - Full Time

**Contract Duration:** 3 years

**Contracted Hours per Week:** 35

**Closing Date** 11-Mar-2020

## Durham University

Durham University is one of the world's top universities with strengths across the Arts and Humanities, Sciences and Social Sciences. We are home to some of the most talented scholars and researchers from around the world who are tackling global issues and making a difference to people's lives.

The University sits in a beautiful historic city where it shares ownership of a UNESCO World Heritage Site with Durham Cathedral, the greatest Romanesque building in Western Europe. A collegiate University, Durham recruits outstanding students from across the world and offers an unmatched wider student experience.

Less than 3 hours north of London, and an hour and a half south of Edinburgh, County Durham is a region steeped in history and natural beauty. The Durham Dales, including the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, are home to breathtaking scenery and attractions. Durham offers an excellent choice of city, suburban and rural residential locations. The University provides a range of benefits including pension and childcare benefits and the University's Relocation Manager can assist with potential schooling requirements.

Durham University seeks to promote and maintain an inclusive and supportive environment for work and study that assists all members of our University community to reach their full potential. Diversity brings strength and we welcome applications from across the international, national and regional communities that we work with and serve.

## The Department

Founded in 1832, Durham's Department of Theology and Religion was recently ranked third in the world in the QS World University Subject rankings. We also came top in the country in the last two UK assessments of research (2008 and 2014). We are home to more than 30 academic staff, and a community of over 100 doctoral students. Teaching and research within the Department is focused on three key areas: Biblical studies, Christian Theology, and the Study of Religion.

Biblical studies covers the New Testament, the Old Testament / Hebrew Bible and ancient Judaism, and includes both close engagement with the biblical texts and broader considerations of their historical, cultural and theological contexts and interpretation. We are one of the few universities to offer the full range of biblical and ancient languages (Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic, Syriac, and Middle Egyptian).

Christian theology covers ethical, philosophical, and systematic theology, as well as historical theology and church history. We work within a range of Christian traditions – Catholic, Anglican, and Eastern Orthodox Studies are particular strengths – but we are not confined to any of them: our approach is to let each tradition be itself, but also to bring them each into dialogue.

The study of religion looks at the anthropological and sociological aspects of religion in the analysis of mainstream traditions and alternative religious movements, and at the practical study of contemporary religion. Specialist staff interests include Mormonism; death, dying, and disposal; shamanism; religion and emotion; religion/faith and globalization; contemporary and post-evangelicalism; religion and generational change; pilgrimage; sacred space; myth analysis; and South Asian Christianities.

The Department enjoys many cross-departmental and interdisciplinary links around the University, including with the Institute for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, and the Institute of Medieval and Early Modern Studies, as well as a strong, collaborative relationship with the theological institutions based in and around Durham (e.g. Cranmer Hall).

With its home in Abbey House, right next to Durham Cathedral, a UNESCO world Heritage site, it is a beautiful and immensely exciting place to study and to research in Theology and Religion.

The Department is also home to a number of research centres: the Michael Ramsey Centre for Anglican Studies, the Centre for Death and Life Studies, and the Centre for Catholic Studies (CCS). The CCS is a research, teaching, and outreach unit in Catholic Theology and Catholic Studies more widely (including the empirical study of Catholicism, the history of Catholicism, and the cultural impact of Catholicism. See <https://www.dur.ac.uk/theology.religion/ccs/>). One of the core research project areas for the CCS relates to the critical constructive Catholic ecclesiology and empirical study of Catholicism, to which this post relates.

### **The Role**

This is an opportunity for a first-rank post-doctoral researcher. Applications will be considered from candidates with a background in Catholic ecclesiology who wish to undertake a postdoctoral project in the area of the Catholic Church and sexual abuse in England and Wales.

As a post-doctoral researcher, the candidate will assist, develop, and co-lead – as part of a core team – a research project, ‘Boundary Breaking: The ecclesial-cultural implications of the sex abuse crisis within the Catholic Church’. This is a flagship research project specifically analysing the possible implication of aspects of Catholic ecclesial self-understanding and the wider Catholic cultural habitus in the circumstances which allowed Catholic clerical sexual abuse and its historic mishandling to occur. The particular focus for this project will be on the role that interpretations of Catholic doctrine and law may have played in the UK context: to what extent have some interpretations of Catholic teachings and their expression in ecclesial governance contributed to the circumstances in which abuse was at once possible, unthinkable, and routinely mishandled when reported?

Candidates should evidence a thorough knowledge of Catholic ecclesial systems and a competence in the scholarly analysis of the doctrine and practice of the Catholic Church. In the light of the experienced difficulties facing the church, how might positive change be facilitated? Candidates will be required to work with a broad range of people, and with complex and sensitive issues; candidates will also need to be sensitive to gender and power dynamics.

The successful candidate will be expected to:

- Assist with the development of research objectives and proposals including initial theological reviews of existing data, co-lead as part of the core research team on gathering the relevant data in relation to the sexual abuse crisis and assist in bringing empirical research into conversation with the Church’s formal theology.
- Prepare and deliver presentations on research outputs/activities to audiences which may include: research sponsors, academic, and non-academic audiences.
- Assist in the development of a digital research hub to house the project.
- Publish high-quality outputs, including papers for submission to peer-reviewed journals and for presentation at conferences and workshops under the direction of the Principal Investigator (Dr Marcus Pound) and Co-investigator (Prof. Paul D. Murray).
- Assist in the organisation both of regular international colloquia, in collaboration with relevant partner-institutions, and of a major, end-of-project international conference.
- Liaise with research colleagues and make internal and external contacts to develop knowledge and understanding, and to form relationships for future research collaboration.

- Assist in the editorial process for a volume arising from the research.
- Assist in Impact case-studies related to the project.
- Complete, or be working towards completion of, a monograph.
- Conduct individual and collaborative research projects under the direction of the Principal Investigator.
- Work with the Principal Investigator and other colleagues, as appropriate, to identify areas for research, develop new research methods and extend the research portfolio.
- Deal with problems that may affect the achievement of research objectives and deadlines by discussing with the Principal Investigator and offering creative or innovative solutions.
- Plan and manage own research activity, research resources in collaboration with others and contribute to the planning of research projects.
- Deliver training in research techniques/approaches to peers, visitors and students, as appropriate.
- To contribute to fostering a collegial and respectful working environment which is inclusive and welcoming and where everyone is treated fairly with dignity and respect.
- Engage in wider citizenship to support the department and wider discipline.
- Engage in continuing professional development by participation in the undergraduate or postgraduate teaching programmes or by membership of departmental committees, etc. and by attending relevant training and development courses.

In addition to the primary research responsibilities of this post, the appointed postholder may be asked to take on the 0.1-0.2 FTE specific administrative role of Assistant Director of the CCS, with responsibility for key aspects of the internal life of the CCS in such ways as: leading on regular liaison with CCS postgraduate student members; organising the annual one-day Postgraduate and Early Career Catholic Theology and Catholic Studies Conference; coordinating and making a lead contribution to the work of the CCS Communications Working Group; leading on organising occasional visits of students in response to requests (typically once, or twice, per year); and other such activities. As part of the Department of Theology and Religion at Durham University, the appointee will be directly responsible to the Head of Department of Theology and Religion, but will work under the immediate direction of Dr Marcus Pound, who is PI for this project, and with Prof. Paul D. Murray, the Co-Investigator and CCS Dean-Director.

The appointee will be fully involved in the life and work of the CCS, including participation in key meetings and regular academic and public/church engagement events. Established in October 2007, the CCS is a major research, teaching, and outreach Centre – situated within the Durham's Department of Theology and Religion but with cross-Faculty and inter-Faculty reach – focused on the study of Catholic theology, history, and practice in the heart of the UK public university system (see [www.dur.ac.uk/theology.religion/ccs](http://www.dur.ac.uk/theology.religion/ccs)).

This post is fixed term for three years as the funding is only available for the fixed term period only.

The post-holder is employed to work on research/a research project which will be led by another colleague. Whilst this means that the post-holder will not be carrying out independent research in his/her own right, the expectation is that they will contribute to the advancement of the project, through the development of their own research ideas/adaptation and development of research protocols.

Successful applicants will, ideally, be in post as soon as possible.

### **How to Apply**

For informal enquiries please contact Dr Marcus Pound ([m.j.p.pound@durham.ac.uk](mailto:m.j.p.pound@durham.ac.uk)). All enquiries will be treated in the strictest confidence.

We prefer to receive applications online via the Durham University Vacancies Site. <https://www.dur.ac.uk/jobs/>. As part of the application process, you should provide details of 3 (preferably academic/research) referees and the details of your current line manager so that we may seek an employment reference.

Applications are particularly welcome from women and black and minority ethnic candidates, who are under-represented in academic posts in the University. The role is full time but we will consider requests for flexible working arrangements including potential job shares.

## What to Submit

All applicants are asked to submit:

- A CV and covering letter which details your experience, strengths and potential in the requirements set out above;
- One English language academic article by the candidate.

## Next Steps

The assessment for the post will include an interview and presentation. Candidates will be asked to give a 20 minute presentation on how their existing and/or current research and experience would provide a basis for the proposed research project for this post to a mixed audience of staff and postgraduate students.

## **The Requirements**

### **Essential:**

#### **1. Qualifications**

- A good first degree in an appropriate subject.
- A PhD (or be close to submission) in an appropriate subject.

#### **2. Experience**

- A high level of knowledge of and competence in Catholic doctrine and ecclesiology.
- Experience of conducting high-quality academic research in the ecclesiological study of Catholicism.
- Demonstrable ability to work in an interdisciplinary fashion.
- Demonstrable ability to write material of a quality commensurate with publication in highly-ranked journals.
- Demonstrable ability to present research papers at international conferences and communicate complex information both to specialists and within the wider academic community.

#### **3. Skills**

- Demonstrable ability to work cooperatively as part of a team, including participating in research meetings.
- Demonstrable ability to work with a broad range of people, and with complex and sensitive issues.
- Ability to work independently on own initiative and to strict deadlines.
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills.

### **Desirable:**

#### **4. Experience**

- Experience of conducting empirical research in the study of Catholicism and/or of utilising the data emanating from such empirical studies of Catholicism in the analysis of Catholic ecclesiological doctrine.
- A familiarity and ability to work with canon law.
- Strong publication record in peer-reviewed journals, commensurate with stage of career.
- A track-record of presenting research at conferences, symposia, or meetings,

commensurate with stage of career.

- Demonstrable ability to develop research proposals and designs in collaboration with other academics.
- A track-record of working in relation to the institutional Catholic Church, and Catholic laity and clergy.
- Proven administrative competence.

## **5. Skills**

- Demonstrable ability to plan and manage independent research.

**DBS Requirement:** Not Applicable.