



Reference Number: 005863
Post: NBCW post-doctoral Research Associate on 'Ecclesial Learning about Women and the English Churches through Receptive Ecumenism'
Department: Theology and Religion
Location: Durham City (with essential travel throughout England)
Contract Type: Full-time, fixed-term 24 months (1 Sept 2017 – 31 Aug 2019)
Grade: Grade 7 £32,004 - £38,183
Opening Date: 9 May 2017
Closing Date: 8 June 2017

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| <p>Job Description / Advert</p> | <p>The Centre for Catholic Studies (CCS) within the Department of Theology and Religion at Durham University, in partnership with the National Board of Catholic Women and the Caulfield Foundation, invites applications for a two-year post-doctoral Research Associate in 'Ecclesial Learning about Women and the English Churches through Receptive Ecumenism'.</p> <p>The appointee will be directly responsible to the Head of Department of Theology and Religion, but will be expected to work in close co-ordination with the Dean-Director of the CCS, Prof. Paul D. Murray, who is PI for this project. The appointee will be fully involved in the CCS, working in close collaboration with the other CCS staff members, associates, and postgraduate community. As Co-I for this project, Prof. Karen Kilby (Bede Professor of Catholic Theology) will act as mentor. The appointee will have use of a shared office.</p> <p>This is an opportunity for a first-rank early career, post-doctoral researcher. The appointee will have energy and proven gifts as a scholar and will be a full member of this internationally regarded research Centre, situated within the UK's research-leading Department of Theology and Religion (RAE 2008 & REF 2014).</p> |
| <p>Job Purpose</p> | <p>Employing the methodology of Receptive Ecumenism, the post-doctoral Research Associate will undertake research into potential ecclesial learning across and between the English Christian traditions specifically in relation to the experience and deployment of lay and ordained women within the English churches. As such, the core focus of the research is not so much on the past and present realities of women's involvement in ecumenical work in its various forms in England. Rather, the core focus is on women's experience of living and working within the English churches – both the challenges and problems this raises and the possibilities it poses – and how the various traditions might fruitfully learn and receive from each other in these regards.</p> |

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| | <p>Recognising both that women’s experience of the Christian churches is distinctive in some significant ways (e.g. whilst women form the majority of the active participants in each of the traditions, they are in a minority within the hierarchical leadership and, in some cases, without any such role at all) and that women can, on occasion, be inhibited from talking freely about such experience in mixed sex groups, the National Board of Catholic Women (NBCW) has established some women-only ecumenical regional discussion groups and wishes to extend this practice.</p> <p>Working as a participant-observer and peer dialogue partner, an essential requirement of this project will consist in the post-doctoral Research Associate fully participating in, observing and drawing on the experience of the women in these NBCW-sponsored women-only ecumenical regional discussion groups. Whilst this presupposes sympathy for the aims and ethos of these NBCW-sponsored discussion groups and the ability to engage and analyse the relevant theological issues that arise, there is no faith restriction on this post. The Research Associate will fully engage in these women-only groups as a participant (and observer) while maintaining an environment within which all members feel safe and able freely and openly to discuss their relevant experiences as women and ensuring that the research can be completed. It is anticipated that the active participation of the Research Associate will be catalytic in bringing the distinctive experience and potential learning across the women’s experience to clear articulation. It is therefore an occupational requirement that the post-holder is a woman.</p> <p>It is anticipated that the post-holder will produce internationally excellent research work both in specific relation to this project and in relation to her wider research engagement with such topics as Receptive Ecumenism, Women and the Churches, and Women and Theology.</p> |
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ACCOUNTABILITIES / MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES

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| <p>Requirements</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over the course of the two-year appointment, the post-doctoral Research Associate will produce two articles suitable for publication in peer-reviewed academic journals, in addition to two popular-level articles in the Christian press. • The Research Associate will produce a written report on completion of the research project, and will present two interim Annual Reports to the Executive Board of the NBCW. • As an essential requirement of the role, the Research Associate will be given privileged access to NBCW women-only regional discussion groups in order to fully participate in and engage with the groups while conducting peer participant-observation research. |
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| NBCW Mission | The National Board of Catholic Women actively seeks to enable the spiritual growth and development of all Catholic women. Building on this, it aims to promote the presence, participation and responsibilities of Catholic women in the Church and in society in order to enable them to fulfil their evangelical mission and to work for the Common Good. |
| NBCW Aims and Objectives | <p>Recognising the contribution of women to the life of the Church, its work, its spirituality and its thinking, NBCW aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively promote the presence, participation and responsibilities of Catholic women in the Church and society. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To ensure that the voices of Catholic women are heard within the Church and society. ○ To identify issues and concerns to women and to take these forward appropriately. ○ To enable women to be better informed by providing up-to-date information and education. • Act as a consultative body to the Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales (CBCEW) to discuss and communicate needs and concerns of Catholic women. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To develop mechanisms that enable listening and consultation with women. ○ To develop mechanisms to further women’s contribution and involvement in the thinking and decision-taking of the Church. ○ To actively engage in dialogue with CBCEW. • Work nationally and internationally to challenge discrimination and promote a women’s rights to gender justice within the context of sustainability and inclusivity. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To monitor policy nationally & internationally and work to influence its development, implementation and impact. ○ To work collaboratively with organisations and networks to further NBCW’s aims within the UK context. ○ To work collaboratively with organisations and networks to further NBCW’s aims within the international context. • Work with all women of faith to enable opportunities for spiritual growth. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide opportunities for women’s spiritual growth and development. ○ To contribute to the developing understanding of women’s spirituality and theology. ○ To work with women of faith and ecumenical/interfaith bodies to develop mutual understanding and closer working relationships |
| Key Responsibilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building on the success of existing NBCW-sponsored women-only regional discussion groups, the post-doctoral Research Associate |

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| | <p>will advise NBCW on the process of establishing additional women-only regional discussion groups throughout England, and will assist in the implementation of this strategy. Such groups will constitute essential research contexts for the Research Associate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based within the Centre for Catholic Studies (CCS) of Durham University's UK research-leading Department of Theology and Religion, the Research Associate will work in partnership with NBCW, with an expectation of travel to participate (as peer) in NBCW-sponsored women-only ecumenical regional discussion groups and partner organisations in England, especially in connection with their pilot projects on Women and Receptive Ecumenism. |
| <p>Duties</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over the course of the two-year appointment, the post-doctoral Research Associate will produce: a) two articles suitable for publication in peer-reviewed academic journals; and b) two popular-level articles in the Christian press. • It is expected that the post-doctoral Research Associate would also be working towards a monograph based on research in relation to such topics as Receptive Ecumenism, Women and the Churches, and Women and Theology, though not necessarily to be finished within the two-year funding period. • It is hoped that, subject to additional funding and the organisational capacity of the NBCW, the post-doctoral Research Associate would present an academic paper, based on the findings of their final report, at a conference on this topic, to mark the culmination of the two-year project. The appointee would <i>not</i> however be expected to organise or manage the conference, this task will be taken on by the NBCW with appropriate partners. • It is expected that the Research Associate would contribute to the life and community of the CCS, through such means as attending public lectures, participating in and contribution to research seminars, sharing in CCS planning meetings, and meeting with donors and partners when relevant. |
| <p>Budget Responsibility</p> | <p>The successful applicant will be expected to manage a budget for travel, accommodation, subsistence, conference attendance and other related expenditure necessary for the successful completion of the project.</p> |

PERSON SPECIFICATION

| ESSENTIAL UPON APPOINTMENT | |
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| Qualifications | Educated to PhD level in a relevant area |
| Experience | Experience engaging with the lives of women active in their respective religious traditions |
| Knowledge/Skills | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent interpersonal skills • A record of internationally regarded academic publications and programme of research appropriate to career-stage • Willingness and ability to engage in and contribute to the research culture of the CCS and the Department of Theology and Religion • Strong oral and written communication and presentation skills • Ability to speak to large and small groups of women and to engage with individuals on a one-to-one basis • Ability to write and present Annual Reports to an Executive Board |
| Personal attributes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy, enthusiasm, and the ability to work under pressure • Ability to work independently and as part of a team • Ability to network effectively and to represent the interests of the CCS regionally and nationally • It is an occupational requirement that the postholder is a woman, for the reasons outline above. |
| DESIRABLE UPON APPOINTMENT | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous work experience in an HE environment • Imagination, initiative, and the ability to identify and to implement innovative practical solutions to problems • Broad awareness of, and interest in, developments in Receptive Ecumenism • Previous experience in participant-observer modes of research • Previous experience in conducting one-to-one research interviews |
| Additional Information | <p>Prof. Paul D. Murray (Professor of Systematic Theology, Dean-Director of the CCS, and PI for this project)</p> <p>+ 44 + 191-334-3947</p> <p>paul.murray@durham.ac.uk</p> <p>Alternative Contact:</p> <p>Prof. Karen Kilby (Bede Professor of Catholic Theology & Co-I for this project)</p> <p>+ 44 + 191-334-3612</p> <p>karen.kilby@durham.ac.uk</p> |

The Application Process

Please ensure that you have read the full job description and that you have clearly evidenced the skills, knowledge, experience, qualifications and any additional attributes as required in the person specification before submitting your application. You must include a description of the personal research project that you will pursue during the term of the post, explaining how it will contribute to 'Ecclesial Learning about Women and the English Churches through Receptive Ecumenism'.

The application method is by CV and covering letter. Please also include a written piece of work – either recently published or accepted for publication, and the names of three referees.

The interview process will consist in: a) a presentation (20 minutes) to a mixed group of academic staff, postgraduate students, and representatives of partner organisations on your understanding of the potential of Receptive Ecumenism and its relevance for work on Women and the Churches (to be followed by 15 minutes plenary discussion); and b) a formal interview.

If you have any queries relating to your application, please do not hesitate to contact the HR Recruitment Team. You can email us at e.recruitment@durham.ac.uk