



BEDE PROFESSOR OF CATHOLIC THEOLOGY

VACANCY REF:

Salary: by negotiation within the Professorial range

Job Description

Durham University's Department of Theology and Religion, home to the Centre for Catholic Studies (CCS), is seeking an outstanding scholar-teacher with gifts for public communication for the Bede Chair of Catholic Theology, the only such endowed chair in Catholic theology in the UK since the Reformation. We are seeking a highly productive, deeply committed, energetic team-player who can define this unique role and fulfil its immense potential. Working in close collaboration with the other CCS staff members, associates, and postgraduate community, together with colleagues in other institutions nationally and internationally, and in co-ordination with the CCS Director and CCS Administrator, the Bede Professor will share in providing internationally regarded academic leadership in Catholic theology and Catholic studies in the public academy and so help further Durham University's reputation as a world-centre in these regards. Together with the recognised excellence of her/his scholarship, the Bede Professor will have proven excellence also in teaching and public communication. The Bede Professor will not have any major administrative responsibilities but will instead carry out significant theological outreach work on behalf of the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle and act as theological advisor, as required, to the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle (approximately 20% of workload). As a consequence the post is restricted to practising (Roman) Catholics.

Salary will be by negotiation within the Professorial range.

Background

Durham University is seeking an outstanding scholar-teacher with gifts for public communication for the Bede Chair of Catholic Theology; a highly productive, deeply committed, energetic team-player who can define this unique role and fulfil its immense potential.

The Bede Chair of Catholic Theology was established in May 2008 as the only one of its kind in the UK as a further significant growth-point for the Centre for Catholic Studies (CCS) within the Department of Theology and

Religion. This was made possible through endowment received from the Sisters of Mercy (Oaklea), the Diocese of Hexham & Newcastle, the Sisters of La Retraite (Britain & Ireland) and the Ballinger Trust.

The CCS, itself formally established in October 2007, is a unique body: a major research and teaching centre explicitly focussed on the study of Catholic theology, thought, practice, history, and tradition in the premier stream of the public UK university system. Durham is England's third oldest university. The Department of Theology and Religion, within which the CCS is situated, has its home on the World Heritage Site of Palace Green, facing Durham Castle (a college of the University) and immediately beside Durham Cathedral. Of all UK peer departments, the Department of Theology and Religion at Durham came first in the two leading categories in the 2008 Government Research Assessment Exercise, and has also regularly topped league tables for student satisfaction and overall quality. Since its formal establishment the CCS has enjoyed very significant growth and expansion and is currently pursuing further ambitious academic development goals. The aspiration is to become the most significant place in the world for research and teaching in Catholic theology and Catholic studies in the specific context of the pluralist, public university system. These plans are being significantly enhanced through the central role that the CCS is playing in furthering the University's strategic aim of fully integrating the historically important site of Ushaw College (founded in Douai in 1568) and its bibliographical, archival, and heritage holdings as a Catholic college of the University and proposed home to an international centre for Catholic scholarship and cultural heritage under the auspices of an expanded CCS.

Working in close collaboration with the other CCS staff members, associates, and postgraduate community, together with colleagues in other institutions nationally and internationally, and in co-ordination with the CCS Director and the CCS Administrator, the Bede Professor will share in providing internationally-regarded academic leadership in Catholic theology and Catholic studies in the public academy and so contribute to furthering the reputation of Durham University as a world centre in these regards. The post-holder will take an active part in the life and work of the CCS: e.g. regular participation in and contribution to the Durham Catholic Theology Research Seminar and other academic events and associated hospitality; participation in twice-termly planning meetings; the occasional scoping of international conferences; and the devising of research projects and associated grant/funding submissions. In addition, the post-holder will be eligible for membership of the Catholic Theological Association of Great Britain and will normally participate actively in the Association's annual conference.

Together with the recognised excellence of her/his scholarship, the Bede Professor will have proven excellence also in public communication and teaching (from u/g through to PhD and also to include significant outreach work in church contexts). Indicative areas of subject specialism, amongst others, that could be of particular interest to the CCS and the Department of Theology and Religion include:

- the interpretation of scripture in Catholic tradition;
- medieval theology;
- Catholic theology and practice in historical perspective;
- Catholic theology in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries;
- Catholic moral theology;
- social-scientific study of Catholic practice, history and tradition.

As is standard at Durham University, the post-holder will be expected to devote on average of 50% of his/her total work time to research and scholarly production and, approximately, a further 30% combined to u/g teaching and assessment and p/g teaching, supervision and assessment. In place, however, of the standard further 20% commitment to carrying out a significant academic administrative portfolio, the Bede Professor will use this portion of her/his time to pursue a range of Bede Chair theological outreach activities organised, in the main, in partnership with the Departments of Spirituality, Formation, and Education of the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle. The 20% allocation for this – equivalent, on average, to one day per working week – is intended to cover all aspects of the proposed outreach work, including: organisation (where relevant), preparation, travel, delivery, and subsequent preparation for appropriate popular publication (where relevant). For further on Bede Chair Outreach work, its character and organisations, see attached Agreed Framework for Bede Chair Outreach. In addition, as required and invited, the post-holder will act as a theological advisor to the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle.

The Bede Outreach work constitutes a formal sharing in the catechetical mission of the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle. This, together with the theological advisor role to the Bishop, requires under relevant canon law practising Catholic status as a condition of competency for the post. Consequently, in order to confirm that they are practising (Roman) Catholics, candidates are required to submit a statement from a priest, bishop or religious superior of their choosing.

The post-holder will be entitled to apply for the Department's standard one-term-in-seven fully paid research leave, during which periods it would be normal for Bede Outreach work to be somewhat less extensive. Should such standard research leave be further extended by the addition of externally funded periods of additional research leave, it would be appropriate to explore how Bede Outreach work is most appropriately to be accommodated during such periods (which might include organising cover).

The line manager for the Bede Professor is the Head of Department of Theology and Religion. In practice, however, the post-holder is required to work closely with the staff, associates, and postgraduate assistants of the CCS in co-ordination with the CCS Director and the CCS Administrator. The involvement of the Bede Professor in the life and work of the CCS and in Bede Outreach activities will be considered in the context of annual staff appraisal (to be conducted in the case of the Bede Professor by the Head of Department).

In addition to the annual internal appraisal process, the Bede Professor is accountable to an annual Bede Chair Advisory Board on which the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle and the other donors are represented.

Job Summary and Purpose

The main academic functions of the post are:

a) To research and publish at the highest academic levels in critical-constructive Catholic theology engaged with significant issues of relevance for contemporary Catholic thought and practice and to devise related research projects and associated grant/funding submissions.

b) To act as an academic leader, particularly within the CCS, by means which may include:

- National and international conference attendance (e.g. the annual conference of the Catholic Theological Association of Great Britain as required general norm);

- Developing and participating in national and international academic networks;

- Considering positively, with due prudence, invitations to serve on national and international bodies providing opportunity for furthering the impact and profile of her/his research.

c) To attract and supervise high quality research students in fields related to the work of the CCS.

d) To contribute to the teaching of critical-constructive Catholic theology at u/g and Master's levels, specifically through:

- Taking the lead, in collaboration with other relevant CCS colleagues, in devising and delivering a level 3 optional module in Catholic theology;

- Devising and offering a core module within the MA in Christian Theology (Catholic Studies).

e) To give leadership in the public dissemination of the work of the CCS through such means as:

- The production of a range of publications (including, on occasion, writing for national Catholic and other publications);

- Considering positively, with due prudence, invitations to address church bodies and church conferences on a national and international basis.

f) To share actively in the life and work of the CCS through such means as:

- Regular participation in and contribution to the Durham Catholic Theology

Research Seminar and all other lectures, conferences, and public events organised by the CCS, together with participating in the hospitality and social dimensions associated with such meetings and events;

- Participation in the twice-termly CCS team meetings and contributing to the process of identifying speakers for seminars, lectures, conferences and public events etc;
- Maintaining regular communication with the CCS Director and the CCS Administrator together, as appropriate, with the CCS Assistant Director(s) and the CCS Development Executive;
- Taking the lead in scoping the rationale and list of speakers for major international conferences related to his/her own research interests and aimed at extending the profile and draw of the CCS, with all administration, organisation and action beyond the scoping of theme, shape and speakers to be carried out by the CCS Administrator in liaison with designated p/g assistants;
- Being an interested advocate for the development of the CCS and the related Ushaw project and being prepared, on occasion, to meet with potential donors.

Reflecting the commitments of the partner sponsors of the post, alongside the traditional academic responsibilities identified above, and as a formal part (20%) of her/his contractual duties, the Bede Professor will be regularly involved in occasional public outreach activities organised in liaison with the Departments of Spirituality, Formation and Education of the Diocese of Hexham & Newcastle (for full details, see the Agreed Framework for Bede Chair Outreach Activities). In addition, s/he will act, as required and invited, as a theological advisor to the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle. As a consequence and contrary to the standard practice at Durham University, the Bede Professor will not be required to take on any significant administrative portfolio, including the role of Head of Department.

Person Specification

Qualifications:

1. A strong, sustained record of published academic output at international/world-leading levels of recognition (E)
2. A letter from a bishop, priest or religious superior of the candidates choosing confirming his/her practising (Roman) Catholic status (E)

Experience:

1. Track record of successful postgraduate supervision (E)
2. Proven ability to establish and maintain networks with church and professional bodies, at both national and international levels (E)
3. Past record of successful theological communication and outreach work (E)

4. Demonstrable success in winning external research funding competitively (D)

Skills/Competencies:

1. The ability to supervise research students (E)
2. The ability to teach at u/g and Master's levels in Catholic theology of contemporary relevance (E)
3. The vision and ability to provide academic leadership in shaping the future of the discipline, within and beyond Durham (E)
4. The ability to engage in theological outreach in partnership with the Departments of Spirituality, Formation and Education of the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle (E)
5. Excellent communication skills, both oral and written, in both academic and public contexts (E)

Additional Information & Interview Date

Contact for academic enquiries:

Prof. Alec Ryrie (Head of Department)

+ 44 + 191-334-3942

alec.ryrie@durham.ac.uk

Alternative Contact:

Prof. Paul D. Murray (Professor of Systematic Theology & Director of the Centre for Catholic Studies)

+ 44 + 191-334-3947

paul.murray@durham.ac.uk

The Recruitment and Selection Process

In the interests of efficiency, we request that you apply for this vacancy using the on-line application form.

Applications should be submitted, including the names of three referees, by the closing date, 7 March 2013.

Applications should consist of a CV, covering letter and a statement from a priest, bishop or religious superior of the candidate's choosing, confirming that s/he is a practising (Roman) Catholic.

Please quote reference 2403 on all applications and correspondence.

Assessment Method:

When they attend for interview, candidates will be asked to give a 20-minute presentation on their current research to an audience of staff and postgraduate students. They will also be asked to give a second 20-minute presentation, on a subject of their choosing, at the level of general adult

theological education, to an invited mixed audience. These presentations will be followed by a formal interview.