



**Research Handbook**  
for  
**Post Graduate Research Certificate in Theology**  
&  
**PhD Programme**

**2024**

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## WELCOME

We are glad to welcome you into the IBTS community; a community of those who through their research are seeking to participate together in the mission of God in Europe and in the wider world.

The IBTS research community is comprised mainly of those who are personally and ongoingly involved in ministry and mission in their own context. This is an embodiment of the ethos of the Centre, which sees research not as 'pure' or 'detached' but as part of God's mission in society and integral to ministry in particular communities. Embodied research and prayerful participation of this kind underline our commitment to pursuing research methods which realise the potential for change and transformation.

At heart our longing is to make a significant contribution to the ministry and mission of the church in the region covered by the European Baptist Federation (EBF) and beyond. At one level this longing is served as those who have successfully gained a doctoral degree through IBTS go on to engage with God's mission in their own context. However, we wish to develop the level of connection with those who study with us beyond their PhD studies, so we would encourage you to consider ongoing involvement in research-as-mission by being part of the Centre community once you have received your Doctorate. In this way, and through collaboration with EBF and other key partners, we believe that together we can make effective and meaningful contribution to the future of European mission.

A key part of the move of IBTS to Amsterdam was the formation of a formal collaborative partnership with the Faculty of Religion and Theology at the Vrije Universiteit, and with the Dutch Baptist Seminary, the Baptist Union of the Netherlands and the European Baptist Federation, with whom we share a home in Baptist House. Our formal relationship with the VU is as a collaborative partner in the Faculty. We have found a warm welcome within the VU and work closely with faculty members and research groups to support research students and share research interests. In addition, the community in Baptist House has become a real home for us where we share a daily rhythm of prayer and fellowship and offering of hospitality to a wide variety of visiting individuals and groups from around the world. It is also in this context that we can offer study retreats for those who wish to access our library or simply find some reflective space.

We welcome you therefore as a participant in our learning community, rather than simply as a student. Our hope is that by sharing together in open-hearted conversation, rigorous research and a grounded desire to participate in God's mission, you will not only benefit from the IBTS community, but you will also become a co-contributor to our shared journey of mission.

Mike Pears

Director, International Baptist Theological Study Centre (IBTS)

## IBTS STAFF TEAM



Dr Mike Pears  
IBTS Director



Dr Toivo Pilli  
Director of  
Baptist Studies



Dr Fran Porter  
Chair Academic  
Oversight Committee



Ingeborg te Loo  
Director of  
Learning Network



Anna Ujvari  
Library Assistant

## SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOWS AND HONORARY RESEARCH FELLOWS

See website for details - [www.ibts.eu](http://www.ibts.eu)

## **BAPTIST HOUSE COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

The IBTS offices are situated in Baptist House on Postjesweg in the Nieuw West district of Amsterdam – within easy reach of Schiphol Airport and the City Centre. We share these premises with the European Baptist Federation, the Baptist Union of the Netherlands and the Dutch Baptist Seminary. Baptist House was formerly a Baptist church building which has been beautifully renovated to meet the needs of the current occupants. At the heart of the building sits the meeting room, which seats 80 people, and around it are offices, a well-equipped kitchen and classrooms. A specially built upper floor houses the IBTS John Smyth library, with its unique collection of over 41,000 books and study resources.

In addition to Seminary classes, IBTS activities, EBF and Baptist Union committees and other events, three church communities – Dutch, Brazilian and Burmese – use the building on different evenings and at the weekend.

The Baptist House community gathers together every morning at 10.30 for prayers followed by a coffee break. This forges close relationships between staff from the different organisations and enables all staff to share news and prayer requests relating to their work, families and other interests.

There are also three IBTS guest rooms with shared kitchen facilities next to the Baptist House and these are available for visiting scholars to use at a reasonable cost – contact the IBTS Administrator for details: [administrator@ibts.eu](mailto:administrator@ibts.eu).

## AREAS OF RESEARCH

IBTS Amsterdam has three key research areas:



### **Identity**

The research into Baptist and Anabaptist Identity is conducted under the general theme of *The History and Identity of Radical Reformation Traditions*. The research takes into account both the social and historical context of where these traditions developed as well as theological realities. Special attention is paid to Baptist history in the Eastern European context, where research in this field was dramatically limited during the Soviet era.

### **Mission**

The research area of Mission encourages research work in the area of mission and evangelism in the region of the European Baptist Federation and beyond. It looks at relationships between Baptists and other denominations, encourages ecumenical work and partnership and analyses a broad range of mission activities conducted by different groups including Baptists.

Research is carried out in order to encourage baptistic and other churches to continue God's mission as those sent by him. This includes fostering dialogue not only with other Christian groups but also with other religions. It includes the study of different contexts of the EBF, analysis of the local and global contexts and missional interaction in the post-modern world.

### **Practice**

The IBTS research area of Practice focuses on what is commonly known as the field of Practical Theology and encompasses the areas of ethics, homiletics, justice, peace, religious freedom, conflict resolution, human rights and the ministry and life of the church. There is a strong focus on research methodology – the use of appropriate qualitative and quantitative methods, ethnography and ethical research practices.

# ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

## Entry Qualifications

The IBTS programme is designed for students who hold a master's degree in theology with thesis (MTh, MPhil, ThM) from an accredited institution in an Anglo-American context or a two-year Bologna type academic master's degree from an accredited Continental European University. Consideration may be given to applicants holding a master's degree in another discipline. Those accepted who do not hold a Master's in theology may be required to do additional reading or auditing of modules in biblical theology.

## Admissions Criteria

- Academic competency – evidenced by previous undergraduate and post graduate awards as required and approved by the Vrije Universiteit.
- Competency in English – if English is not the first language, evidence of proficiency will be required. The Vrije Universiteit requires a score of 580 or above (237 or above in the computer version, and 92 in the Internet Based Test) in the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), or an equivalent score in another accepted language test. Students whose native language is not English but who have completed their prior theological or other studies at an English-speaking institution may be exempted from the English language test score requirement.
- Research interest – must fit within the Centre's research profile of identity, mission and practice.
- Capacity to finance the research – there must be some credible evidence of financial means or means of support. The Director has the discretion to waive elements of the costs in certain circumstances.
- Active in ministry – the Centre will give priority to those actively involved in Baptist ministry or other forms of ministry (e.g. mission, theological education, leadership).
- Gender balance – the Centre wishes to encourage more women to engage in theological research.
- Ministry context – priority will be given in the following order to applicants from
  - EBF member Unions
  - Members of our partner support agencies
  - Applicants from other ministry contexts
- Study commitment – must be able to show a work/study balance that creates a reasonable possibility of completing the PhD in 6-7 years part-time.
- Research community – must be willing to continue to engage post-graduation in the life of the Centre's research community.

## Application Procedure

An application form and information on the programme, including fees, is available on the website at <https://www.ibts.eu/programmes> . Completed applications should be sent to:

IBTS Administrator  
POSTJESWEG 150  
1061AX AMSTERDAM  
The Netherlands  
administrator@ibts.eu

**Transcripts**

Official transcripts of all previous academic work, including post-secondary school, university and seminary studies should be mailed directly to the Administrator of the Centre by the institution issuing the transcript. If the applicant's programme of study is in progress, a transcript should be sent at this time and a final transcript sent following completion of the programme. In the first instance scanned documents can be sent electronically to administrator@ibts.eu but authorised (stamped) original transcripts of previous academic qualifications will need to be produced.

**Please note that our intake of new students occurs between May and October and the programme starts in the following January of each year.**



## **IMPORTANT FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

Details on tuition fees are available on the IBTS website.

Payment of fees can be by bank transfer, cash, or use of Transferwise as agreed with the Administrator.

Payment plans will be agreed with students during the Induction period.

All students must take financial responsibility for their own visa, health insurance, accommodation and travel costs. Please note that obtaining a visa is often a lengthy process. The Centre will provide letters of invitation for visa purposes if required.

The Centre will facilitate applications to grant and bursary awarding bodies whenever possible.

The Centre may have a limited bursary fund available. Details can be obtained from the administrator.

In order to receive final marks and graduate with the PGCert, students must have met all outstanding fees to IBTS.

Researchers registered in the Graduate School are not liable for fees to the VU. However, fees for services and supervision will be charged by IBTS. Failure to pay fees may result in the withdrawal of IBTS support, including online facilities and supervision.

Students and researchers who find themselves in financial difficulty should contact the administrator at the earliest possible moment.

# THE RESEARCH JOURNEY

## Introduction

IBTS partners with the Faculty of Religion and Theology for the purposes of provision of PhD studies. The faculty is globally recognised for the delivery of theological studies. IBTS has been recognised as a collaborative partner within the faculty since 2013, a position and status we value very highly. Besides the additional resources IBTS offers, researchers with the Centre have the added benefit of the Centre's status within the faculty and its capacity to advocate on their behalf if difficulties arise during the life of the project.

The first formal entrance to the Faculty of Religion and Theology at the VU is through the Graduate School. Full details of the operation of the Graduate School, including the Doctorate Regulations of the university can be found at <https://vu.nl/en/about-vu/more-about/graduate-school-of-religion-and-theology>.

The research journey proceeds through a number of stages. At each stage the student is guided by Centre staff, an IBTS supervisor or a VU supervisor. While the stages and their order are the same, students may go through stage 3 onwards at different times from each other in their IBTS student cohort, depending on when they join and the rate at which they progress through the VU timeline (see appendices 5 & 6).

## Stage 1: The Post Graduate Research Certificate

On acceptance, the student begins the Post Graduate Research Certificate in Theology (PGCert) programme of the Centre. This one-year programme begins in January with one week of Induction followed by attendance at the annual IBTS Colloquium. (Also see the following section on the Post Graduate Research Certificate.)

## Stage 2: Progression

For progression into the Graduate School of the Faculty of Religion and Theology, the following are necessary:

- passmark for the PGCert programme is 50% and a minimum of 65% must be obtained in the main written assignment of at least one module of the PGCert programme;
- satisfactory participation in the module formative tasks;
- full participation in the trajectory following the PGCert to design a peer-reviewed research proposal;
- the Academic Oversight Committee, overseeing and upholding academic standards for IBTS, in their professional judgement, must be satisfied that students demonstrate a clear capacity for critical thinking and an ability to apply knowledge and understanding;
- an IBTS supervisor must be assigned to the research project;
- a professor from the Faculty of Religion and Theology at the Vrije Universiteit (VU) must be willing to be the VU supervisor and promoter.

## Stage 3: Registration at the VU

Students go through the registration process at the VU FRT Graduate School. The Graduate School accepts new doctoral candidates twice a year – in a winter and a summer cohort. Depending on the nature of the research, some students may benefit from taking more time in preparing their proposal than others and hence wait for the next VU cohort before

registering. (Preparing a proposal may take considerable time and effort and involve significant work in gaining in-depth understanding of your chosen field and appropriate research methods. Experience shows that it is helpful to see this stage as a beginning of the research process under the guidance of supervisors rather than focusing exclusively on the proposal itself.)

Further information on the various steps and help with the forms (where to find them and how to fill them in) can be found on 'The VU PhD Process' Moodle pages.

#### Step 1: The Pre-Proposal

Students produce a pre-proposal using the template provided by the Graduate School; this is forwarded to the Graduate School by IBTS.

#### Step 2: The Training and Supervision Plan Form

Students fill out a Training and Supervision Plan (TSP) Form.

The Graduate School requires that those compiling a training and supervision plan who do not have a Bologna research master's degree must show how they will earn 30 ECs (European Credits) during the lifetime of their project. Even students with such a degree may be required to fulfil certain taught components as part of their initial training, in keeping with requirements set by the faculty. IBTS has an agreement with the Graduate School at VU that students who follow our PGCert gain an automatic waiver for all the 30 credits.

The TSP form and other registration documents are submitted to the Graduate School by the IBTS office.

#### Step 3: Appointment of a VU Supervisor

The Graduate School appoint a VU supervisor (also known as a promoter) to the student and allocate the student to one of the Faculty of Religion and Theology's fourteen research teams. By this stage, students will also have been appointed an IBTS supervisor.

#### Step 4: Acceptance into the Graduate School

With the supervisory team in place, final revisions to the TSP are made and the form is signed by the VU supervisor. At this point, the student becomes a member of the Graduate School, and then begin their official PhD trajectory with the VU Faculty of Religion and Theology.

The student will take part in a Q&A session with other students in their VU student cohort, enrol in the Scientific Integrity course (an online seminar course required in addition to the 30 ECTS or waiver), and take part in the Graduate School annual two day PhD student gathering (available online). Students have access to Canvas, the Graduate School VLE (akin to Moodle).

### **Stage 4: Proposal Approval**

Once the supervisory team is in place, When the VU supervisor is satisfied that the outline research proposal (using the Graduate School's research proposal form) is sufficiently developed, the VU supervisor may take the proposal to a research group within the faculty for comment (although this is not a mandatory step).

Once the comments of the research group (if involved) have been considered by the student and any amendments to the proposal made, (and after ethical clearance, if required, is obtained – see Research Ethics) the VU supervisor submits the proposal to the PhD Proposal Advisory Committee (PPAC) who, on behalf of the Board of Professors, make recommendations to the dean of the faculty about the acceptance of the proposal.

### **Stage 5: Progressing the Research and the Go/No-Go Moment**

The student works with their supervisory team to progress their research. Within two years from starting their PhD trajectory, a student must have gone through the go/no-go moment which addresses the question: ‘can we expect this PhD trajectory to be successfully completed, given the academic standards set by FRT, and can this be done within the given time limit?’

Each January until completion, the student and their supervisors complete an IBTS annual supervision record (see appendix 2) and this can be uploaded to Hora Finita.

From the point of registration with the Graduate School, IBTS normally expects a part-time PhD student to complete their work within 6 years.

### **Stage 6: Submission, Examination and Public Defence**

The VU requires that dissertations must be submitted within 8 years from the start of the PhD trajectory. When the dissertation is considered satisfactory by the VU supervisor, a reading committee (known as a Doctorate Committee) of five persons is proposed by the supervisors for approval by the dean of the faculty. If approved, the dissertation is sent to the readers who give their opinion as to whether the work is to a satisfactory standard for the degree of PhD to be awarded.

On the basis of a positive response from the readers, a number of steps follow:

- A date for a public defence is arranged;
- The work is published in book form, with copies sent to the readers (who will then act as opponents at the public defence) and copies to the faculty and the library of IBTS.

At the public defence, which lasts for precisely one hour and is held in the university, the candidate presents a ten-minute summary of their research and then takes questions from each of the five opponents. If the opponents are agreed that the defence is adequate, the degree of Doctor of Philosophy is awarded as part of the ceremony. Details of the process as described by former IBTS researchers are available in Moodle as a guide for others preparing for their public defence.

At the point of public defence/promotion, the student will be expected to pay the transport (within Europe) and overnight accommodation costs of their IBTS primary supervisor to attend this event and any other student costs as required by the VU.

### **Personal Development and Development of Skills**

For many people, the journey of doctoral research can be a significant experience of personal development, even of transformation. Aside from the obvious challenge of completing a competent dissertation, students find that the process of research opens up a broad range of

new opportunities and challenges. IBTS will seek to actively encourage and support research students in a range of activities that will develop skills and equip for future ministry. These might include presenting research in a variety of contexts, writing pieces for publication and collaborating with research partners, such as those in the VU or other theological colleges in the EBF region. We also seek to facilitate connection between what is being examined in research and the lived experience of researchers in their contexts and to bring it as a useful tool or resource for others who are not engaged in the academic realm. In this way we hope to further develop the missionary effectiveness of the IBTS community within the European scene and other global contexts.

From the beginning of the PGCert and throughout the life of the project and beyond, researchers should:

- Seek out opportunities to publish in peer reviewed academic journals as their research develops, including offering a paper for the *Centre's Journal of European Baptist Studies*;
- Make full use of the Centre's online facilities, Moodle, the Digital Theological Library and the John Smyth Library facilities (further information in the Library section of this Handbook);
- Present papers at local or international theological academic conferences for feedback on developing ideas in connection with the research;
- Ensure attendance and active participation in the Centre's annual research Colloquium and programme of online research seminars;
- Continue writing, promoting and contributing to the ongoing research capacity of the Centre as IBTS alumni.

**Note:** In case of a change of topic during the PGCert programme or proposal writing stage, the following steps need to be taken:

1. Talk to us: Schedule a (online) meeting with the academic team ([fporter@ibts.eu](mailto:fporter@ibts.eu)) and explain the reason for changing.
2. Hand in a new preliminary proposal, including relevant literature suggestions, for the Academic Oversight Committee (AOC) team to discuss and review.
3. Await response from the AOC before proceeding with the changes.

The topic/field/proposal has been a significant reason for your acceptance as an IBTSC researcher, therefore any changes needs to be reconsidered by the AOC.

# PhD SUPERVISION

## Supervision Arrangements

All IBTS research students receive supervision from teams of supervisors drawn from IBTS and the VU. Normally an IBTS student will have at least one supervisor from VU and one supervisor from IBTS. Sometimes an additional supervisor may be required to provide expert knowledge in a particular field.

The normal procedure for the appointment of supervisors is as follows:

- An IBTS supervisor will be assigned to the project.
- A VU supervisor (normally a full professor) will be appointed to the project.
- The PhD Proposal Advisory Committee of the faculty may recommend the appointment of an additional supervisor if this is considered necessary.
- IBTS may, in exceptional circumstances, recommend an additional IBTS supervisor for the supervision team.
- A supervision team cannot have more than four members.
- IBTS supervisors are remunerated by IBTS.
- If a student wishes to add a non-IBTS specialist supervisor to their team, this may be possible if agreed with the Director and supervision team. The student will be responsible for paying the costs of such supervision.

As a rule, supervisors are not expected to spend more than thirty hours per year supervising any one student, excluding the annual Colloquium.

The **formal lead supervisor** in any team is normally the supervisor from VU, who also acts as promoter through the PhD process. There are certain tasks in relation to the administration and completion of a piece of PhD research that only the VU appointed supervisor can complete and facilitate. The primary responsibility for completing the required forms for the VU lies with the VU supervisor. However, IBTS will seek to facilitate the reporting process and expects the co-operation of IBTS supervisors in this matter.

The **subject specialist lead** in any team will be the most appropriately experienced/qualified member of the team. This may vary throughout the course of the supervision in relation to the methodology or the content of the work.

IBTS supervisors are generally expected to act as **the generative lead** in the team to ensure on behalf of the IBTS student that there is good and clear communication between the different members of the team, both with one another and the student, in providing helpful supervision. The VU supervisor may wish to fulfil this role instead. Either way, it is important to ensure that one member of the supervision team has responsibility to be the generative lead as outlined above and that this is established at the outset of the supervision process. It is important that the Director of the Centre is kept informed of the student's progress or any problems that may arise.

## Supervision Process

Successful supervision aims at both the successful completion of a piece of research and a good quality of student experience with respect to their learning. It is a goal of IBTS that from

the point of registration with the Graduate School projects should be successfully completed within 5-6 years.

IBTS students are all part-time, distance, international, theology students. This creates the context in which they work and carry out their research. It is also the context which influences the nature of supervision required for a successful outcome. In a piece of research carried out among the IBTS student body in 2016 some important themes emerged:

- Part-time distance learning students can experience isolation. Distance from the institution, peers and staff can easily lead to a pattern of inactivity that can be difficult to break.
- While students appreciate and benefit from team supervision and the variety of expertise that provides, they can find the information given confusing and unclear, particularly if there is a disagreement or lack of communication between the supervisors.
- Students appreciate timely and specific feedback on work which has been provided. General statements such as 'weak argument' are not helpful if more detail as to why the argument is weak are not given. Delays in providing feedback or no indication of when feedback will be provided can hinder progress and contribute to the sense of isolation mentioned above.

While students must accept that the responsibility for the research is theirs, the perceived power differential between the student and the supervisor can make it difficult for them to directly address some of the issues mentioned above. Therefore, research student and supervisors must be aware of the context in which the supervision relationship is set.

Research supervision involves a complex relationship between supervisors and students. The quality of this relationship is widely recognised as being the primary factor in achieving successful outcomes. As the relationship involves a variety of personalities, the way in which each relationship functions will vary. It is important, therefore, at the beginning of the supervisory relationship and, indeed, throughout the relationship, that time is taken to clarify and establish expectations. This clarification can include discussing how the supervisor understands and delivers supervision; the style they will adopt; what they are hoping to achieve through that style and what they expect from the student. Such a discussion should include student expectations around these issues. This can prevent later misunderstandings. The nature of supervision required is likely to change as the project progresses. The need for such change and the fact of such change should itself be part of ongoing supervisor/student conversations.

At the beginning of the relationship other important matters should be explicitly discussed, including:

- The type of progress a supervisor expects a student to make;
- Dates for submission of work to supervisors;
- The timescale in which a student can expect feedback on work submitted;
- The quantity of material supervisors are willing/able to read at any one time;
- The means and frequency of communication during the year (email, Skype etc).

Clarifying expectations at the beginning of the supervisory relationship and discussing the nature of the supervision throughout the process can be particularly important in an international context, where supervisors and students bring the expectations of their own cultural contexts.

### **Supervision at January Colloquium**

The IBTS supervisor will meet with students at the annual research Colloquium, normally with the other members of the supervisory team. Before this meeting, the student should complete their section of the supervision record form (see Appendix 2) and forward the form to their supervisors and [administrator@ibts.eu](mailto:administrator@ibts.eu).

During the meeting the progress of the last year should be reviewed and the plan for the coming months agreed and recorded in the supervision record, which is to be copied to student, supervisors, and [administrator@ibts.eu](mailto:administrator@ibts.eu). Students may also upload the completed form to their Hora Finita record. Students should ensure that work to be discussed at this meeting is with the supervisors no later than the end of the November preceding the January Colloquium.

## **THE RESEARCH COMMUNITY**

### **The Research Community at Colloquium**

The annual research Colloquium has, for a long time, been a vital part of the IBTS experience, providing researchers with a forum for presenting and reflecting on research and for engaging in creative and constructive conversation. The richness of Colloquium is in being together with others from around the world who bring with them an extraordinary range of ministry experience and research interests. Space for informal conversation over coffee, for sharing meals and for worship and reflection are all important aspects of being part of a research community.

The format of the Colloquium enables all researchers to effectively participate with the aim of developing key skills in conversation and critical reflection. The use of a simple banding structure provides the opportunity for constructive engagement for researchers at all stages of the doctoral journey: those just starting out can present initial ideas in small groups and gain the benefit of thoughtful comment from supervisors and fellow researchers, whereas those who are nearing completion can have the opportunity to undergo a mock defence of their dissertation in preparation for the real thing.

### **The Research Community Online**

Whilst the benefits of the Colloquium in supporting research students are clear, the challenge for many has been to sustain momentum in their research work without regular contact with the IBTS research community through the rest of the year. So, from 2019, the Centre is making use of online facilities to enhance and expand the experience of being a research student, consulting with students to shape and facilitate a programme of online meetings that will connect the community throughout the year. Some key aspects of this programme will be to offer the opportunity for researchers to present work done, to receive feedback on this and to engage with key themes in their field of research.

### **The Research Community in Print**

A key aspect of the life of IBTS is the publication of its *Journal of European Baptist Studies*. Established in 2000, this journal <https://www.ibts.eu/publications/jebts/> is produced twice per year and provides an opportunity for current and past research students, as well as more



established scholars, to publish the results of their research and reflections. Articles are peer reviewed and focus on a broad range of biblical, theological, missiological and historical themes. The journal is indexed in the Atla Religion Database® and also included in the full text AtlaSerials® collection.

## THE POST GRADUATE RESEARCH CERTIFICATE IN THEOLOGY

As a pathway into doctoral study, the PGCert has been shaped by several considerations. Firstly, it is designed to introduce research students to the elements of baptistic theology, which we describe in terms of identity, mission and practice. These ideas inform the structure of the course which is delivered via three modules entitled 'Baptistic Identities in Historical Contexts', 'Researching Mission', and 'Practical Theology and Qualitative Research'. An important emphasis throughout all three modules is an exploration of research methodologies and methods that aims to equip course participants with the skills necessary for undertaking doctoral research.

Secondly, the PGCert has been carefully designed to align with the process of entry into the Graduate School of the Faculty of Religion and Theology at the Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam as well as contributing all 30 of the required 30 ECs credits to be earned during the lifetime of the project. The PGCert is also accredited by the European Council for Theological Education (ECTE). The themes covered in the modules enable students to critically review and develop their PhD research proposals in preparation for presentation to the PhD Proposal Advisory Committee of the Faculty. In addition, the PGCert year affords the opportunity of identifying potential VU promoters and IBTS supervisors. Whilst there is no guarantee that on completion of the PGCert the PhD Proposal Advisory Committee of the VU will grant acceptance onto the PhD programme, there is every hope that the course will not only give the best chance of successful entry, but also a sound head-start on the research process itself.

Thirdly, the PGCert incorporates a blended approach to learning that takes place through a combination of face-to-face and online sessions, together with personal reading and research. This blended approach enables students from around the world to participate in seminars and other learning activities and to grow in community with course leaders and fellow research students. The face-to-face sessions are contained within two intensive weeks in January; the first of these is an Induction Week solely for PGCert students and functions as an orientation to the PGCert year and an introduction to the three modules. The second week involves participation in the annual Colloquium and an introduction to the wider IBTS research community. Following the module introductions in the Induction Week, the balance of the module learning is delivered consecutively through a series of online seminars and learning activities using Moodle and Skype/Zoom.

The following documents setting out the details of the programme are found in Appendix 1:

- Programme Aims and Learning Outcomes
- Module Timeline
- Module Specifications
- Assessment Policy
- Assessment Criteria
- Assignment Cover Sheet
- Assignment Feedback Form
- Academic Appeals Form
- Mitigating Circumstances Policy

**PGCert students should ensure they are familiar with all other sections of the Handbook.**

## **IBTS LIBRARY**

(Temporary – Limited library services available until a new library assistant has been appointed)

### **The John Smyth Library**

The John Smyth Library of IBTS is an international Baptist research library. This means we only accept material in the library that helps tell the story of the Baptists or put it in context. This also includes the wider story of the Anabaptist/Mennonite movement and a more in-depth, but not exhaustive, collection on the believers' church. The library is located on the first floor of the Baptist House in Amsterdam. During your visit we strive to make the library available for studying as much as possible. If you want to use the library outside of Intensive/Colloquium time, you need to arrange your visit with the librarian. If you want to make use of our guest facilities (which can be booked for a library visit), please get in touch with the administrator.

### **Practical Information**

During your first visit you will spend some time in the library with the librarian (initially as a group, but individual meetings can also be arranged). This meeting is intended to give you an orientation in 'all things library'. This includes using our catalogue, finding books in the library, understanding the topical arrangement of our collection, learning about our electronic resources and how to access them, consulting the reference resources in the Moodle library section, how to get access to resources when you are not physically here, and how to obtain copies of resources that we don't have available in our collection through Inter Library Loan services. See Appendix 3 for library information and map.

Because most of our students are not able to visit regularly, the librarian is always willing to assist students in reference work, building bibliographies, finding and providing digital online access to sources that are needed. Please write to the librarian with any reference question or support request at [librarian@ibts.eu](mailto:librarian@ibts.eu) and he is always willing to help.

The librarian manages the collection and serves the needs of our library members. He places an emphasis on service and reference help and is continually seeking effective ways to meet the research needs of remote part-time students. If you need help, the librarian is only an e-mail away.

### **Collection Setup**

The library consists of two collections: print and electronic. Our electronic collection is managed for us by the DTL (see below), the print collection is maintained by our librarian. The DTL contains material in all disciplines of theology (with a strong focus on Biblical studies) and additional material in the various disciplines of the humanities. This has made it possible for us to focus the print collection entirely on Baptist studies, allowing us to buy retrospectively as well. We subscribe to a limited number of print journals (mostly Baptist/Mennonite in signature). The DTL holds many current theological journals.

### **The DTL**

IBTS Amsterdam is one of the co-owners of the Digital Theological Library (DTL), a co-owned, born-digital library of religious and theological studies. The mission of the DTL is to provide its co-owning institutions with the highest quality digital resources in religious and theological studies at the lowest possible costs. As of October 15, 2018, the DTL licenses over 375,000

ebooks (including over 115,000 from the last 25 years, over 65,000 from the last 10 years, over 32,000 from the last 5 years), over 150 databases, over 20,000 journal titles, over 20,000,000 full-text, peer-reviewed, articles, over 100,000 musical scores. Some of the collection highlights (not exhaustive): every Bible Commentary that is available digitally; all JSTOR, Project Muse, Oxford & ProQuest databases in religious studies; PyschArticles, PyschInfo, PyschCritique, PsychoTherapy.net; Oxford Bibliographies, Loeb Classical Library, Naxos Music, Patrologia Latina, Philosophy Document Center; all ebooks titles in religious studies from Duke, Harvard, de Gruyter, Cambridge University Press, Bloomsbury, & Albin Institute; major collections from Brill, Fortress, Zondervan, Eerdmans, Baker, University of Chicago, Yale, & Peeters among others; non-English databases in Chinese, Korean, Spanish & French.

During your first visit you will receive an introduction to the DTL and its resources. At some point (at the latest during your first visit) you will receive an access barcode for the DTL. This number is strictly personal and cannot be shared with or used by anyone other than the person it was given to. Failure to obey this rule will result in the immediate suspension of your account. Also, please be aware that downloading the material from the DTL is restricted according to the terms and conditions of the vendor platforms on which the content is hosted.

In addition, many of the vendors log the use of their platforms. Some of their logs are made available to the DTL staff in the form of statistics. However, please be aware that in a case of suspected misuse your activities can be traced back to you.

### **Library Catalogues**

The catalogue of our print collection and of the DTL are hosted in two separate environments. However, they use the same software, so you only have to learn one system.

We share our print catalogue with the libraries of the Theological Universities of Kampen and Apeldoorn. Please be aware that therefore not all material listed in the catalogue is accessible to you when you are in Amsterdam. Only the books/journals with a “John Smyth Library” shelfmark are physically located in Amsterdam. To help avoid confusion, we have created a separate search entrance on our website that only searches our collection.

### **Reference Services**

A great deal of the material you will need for your studies with us is available to you wherever you are in the world via the DTL. If you are looking for access to a title that is not included there, please ask the librarian to request the title/journal to be included in the DTL. These requests can only be honoured if the publisher offers an electronic version to libraries.

However, there are libraries full of material that has never been made available in digital format, including our own. It is possible to request scans of materials from our library (and from a large range of other libraries). You can request scans of articles or scans of a limited number of pages from any book (usually up to 50 pages per book). This service is free of charge for all IBTS students. If the material is present in our library, you will usually receive your scans via e-mail within one week (upon receiving your request the librarian will give you an estimate of when you will receive the scans). If the material is not present in our library, you will usually receive your scans via e-mail within two weeks, but in some cases it will take longer, and perhaps even involve costs, but this will be communicated to you.

Let it be clear that this is the librarian’s motto: *Ask and ye shall receive, don’t and you won’t*. So, all it takes is an email to the librarian!

### **Research Data Management**

As a VU student you will be required to follow their Research Data Management (RDM) protocol and include your own Research Data Management Plan in your proposal form. There is information about RDM on Moodle and through the VU Scientific Integrity course.

### **Institutional Repository**

IBTS is a supporter of open access. During the next couple of years we will endeavour to digitise all our historical student work and make it available on an open access electronic platform that will be integrated into the DTL. For our students, open access is a requirement. When you finish your thesis, you are required to send the librarian a digital copy that will be added to this repository. And don't worry, the librarian will find you if you forget!

### **What you can do for the library...**

Please make sure that you leave one printed copy of your thesis with the librarian. If your thesis gets properly published, please make sure that the library receives a complimentary copy, either from the publisher, or from you. In addition, please consider helping us with the following:

Our physical library is focusing on the very specific topic of Baptist/Anabaptist/Mennonite (B/A/M) history and theology. If you have B/A/M material that you're about to throw out, please bring it with you and give it to the library. We would be very interested in publications of your Union/organisation, e.g. handbooks, directories, training programmes, course books, materials published for church use, programme booklets of conferences, year reports, and other such material, as long as it was meant for national use. Please also bring sample issues from B/A/M journals and magazines from your context so we can consider subscribing. We're also always on the lookout for locally published Baptist church histories. Our library is not limited to English, so publications in any (EBF) language are welcome!

In addition, we'd like to ask you to provide the library with a print copy of any recent publication you have been involved with. If you are unable to provide us with a print copy, please let the librarian know about the publication, so we can consider purchasing a copy.

### **Moodle**

The librarian manages access to our Moodle platform. At some point (at the latest during your first visit) you will receive your login details to Moodle. Your Moodle account is strictly personal and you are not allowed to share your account (details) with anyone. Please be aware that all your activities on Moodle will be logged. These logs are accessible to IBTS staff. When you first login to Moodle you will be forced to change your password. If you ever forget your user name or password, please contact the librarian. Please see Appendix 4 for the IBTS Moodle Policy.

## RESEARCH ETHICS

All students of IBTS must endeavour to meet the highest standards of academic rigour and professionalism, including integrity and ethics in research and must conform to relevant national legislation, codes of practice, and the policies and guidelines of the institution.

### Background

Research Ethics is a world-wide set of principles governing the way any research involving interaction between the researcher and other humans or human tissue or data relating to humans, is designed, managed and conducted. Those same principles apply to any researcher, whether an untrained undergraduate or an internationally recognised scholar.

Formalised research ethics has its origins in the medical world and the testing of new medicines and new techniques on patients and healthy volunteers. However, the same principles have been applied much more widely in human and social sciences where interaction with individuals or with defined groups, or confidential information about individuals, is involved.

The principles of research ethics are grouped under the following headings:

**Autonomy:** The participant must be free to take part in the research without coercion or penalty for not taking part and must be free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without a threat of any adverse effect.

**Beneficence:** The research must be worthwhile in itself and have beneficial effects that outweigh any risks; it follows that the methodology must be sound so that positive results will be yielded.

**Non-maleficence:** Any possible harm must be avoided or mitigated by robust precautions.

**Confidentiality:** The right of the participant and his/her personal data to remain unknown to all but the research team must be respected (unless the participant agrees otherwise).

**Integrity:** The researcher must be open about any gains, financial or otherwise, he or she makes from the research, acknowledge the relevant contribution of third parties and ensure that research outcomes are disseminated appropriately.

### Researchers/Supervisors/Ethical Approval

It should be a regular practice for all researchers to carry out a risk assessment and ethical review of their planned research. Your Programme Director or supervisor will advise you whether your research requires the permission of the VU Faculty of Religion and Theology (FRT) Science and Ethics Committee. Researchers and supervisors should ensure that any project has had an academic review appropriate for the project.

When and where research does not involve live subjects or any particular contested issues related to confidentiality, non-maleficence, or integrity, a supervisor should be able to agree a research proposal without it being submitted to the VU FRT Science and Ethics Committee.

When and where a research project involves live subjects or any contested issues related to confidentiality, non-maleficence, or integrity, the project should be submitted to the VU FRT Ethics Committee for approval. For all students yet to submit their proposals to the PhD Proposal Advisory Committee, ethical clearance, if required, must be obtained before their proposals can be considered.

The Graduate School ethical clearance form is available from the Graduate School webpages. The Student completes the form, which is then signed by their VU supervisor. The student sends the completed proposal form to the VU FRT Science and Ethics Committee (emails should be sent to the FRT Research Bureau: [research.bureau.frt@vu.nl](mailto:research.bureau.frt@vu.nl)), copying in their supervisors.

When and where a project is submitted to the VU FRT Science and Ethics Committee for consideration approval must be obtained before the research commences.

If the Science and Ethics Committee requires amendments to be made to a research proposal, these amendments should be made and the proposal resubmitted to the Science and Ethics Committee. The research should not commence until the approval has been obtained.

Note that subsequent changes to the research plan regarding ethical clearance matters may need further clearance.

# ACADEMIC MALPRACTICE

## Panel of Inquiry

IBTS Centre has a Panel of Inquiry responsible for monitoring cases of academic malpractice, and in particular issues related to plagiarism or other instances of academic malpractice in essay or dissertation submission. The Panel of Inquiry consists of the members of the Centre Academic Team and has adopted the Policy on Plagiarism (below).

## Plagiarism and Legitimate Quotation

All of us learn by taking in the ideas of other people. Usually these ideas are found in books and in order to write your own essay/paper you are expected to read what other people have said about the topic and refer to their ideas. In the early stages of mastering a subject your ideas are likely to depend heavily on the books and articles you have read, and this is perfectly acceptable, so long as you acknowledge your sources of information and do not simply reproduce the ideas of others without formulating your own. Above all, *you must avoid plagiarism.*

## What is Plagiarism?

The *New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (1993) states that to plagiarise is to **take and use as if it were your own the thoughts or writings of another person; to copy literary work improperly or without acknowledgement; to pass off the thoughts or work of another person as one's own.** Such plagiarism may be wholesale, as for example when a student hands in a piece of work actually written by someone else, or where the whole text has been copied from the work of another student or from one or more printed or online sources. Or plagiarism may be small scale, as when you copy a paragraph and include it in your work, without making clear that that is what you are doing and acknowledging the source.

The idea that this is wrong may come as a surprise to some people. Within some cultures there are different expectations of what is required of a student and you need to know that in this Centre we are interested in your own thinking. It is not enough for you to repeat the views of others, however expert the others may be. Plagiarism is considered not merely inappropriate but dishonest, since it involves claiming credit for work that rightly belongs to another person.

## Help from Third Parties

It is legitimate to seek help from someone else who may check your work. However, it will be judged to be unacceptable if you are employing text editors who change the content or meaning of your work. Proofreading undertaken by a third party must not take the form of editing of text, such as the adding or rewriting of phrases or passages within a piece of your work. It is your responsibility to ensure that all work submitted is your own and that it represents your own abilities and understanding.

## The Consequence of Plagiarism

Academic malpractice is any activity – intentional or otherwise – that is likely to undermine the integrity essential to scholarship or research. It includes plagiarism, collusion, fabrication or falsification of results, and anything else that could result in unearned or undeserved credit for those committing it. Academic malpractice can result from a deliberate act of cheating or



may be committed unintentionally. Whether intended or not, all incidents of academic malpractice will be treated seriously by IBTS.

### **Avoiding Plagiarism**

You can avoid plagiarism by properly acknowledging the source of your ideas. Generally speaking, there are three ways of doing this: quotations, footnoted references and bibliography.

### **Quotations**

You may sometimes wish to reproduce another writer's exact words by means of quotation. This is legitimate so long as you observe these rules and guidelines:

- All such quotations must be clearly marked as such by means of quotation marks and a reference to the author concerned.
- Quotations should not be too long or too frequent. Your essay is meant to be the expression of your view, not a string of quotations from other people. For a typical piece of course-work, a quotation should not normally exceed five lines, nor should quotations form more than five per cent of the whole essay. If exceptionally you do need to use a longer quotation, it should be indented as a separate paragraph *without* the use of quotation marks.
- In general, you should put the matter in your words, not rely on quotations.

However, quotations can be effective if they:

- provide a definition, perhaps at the start of a discussion;
- provide a typical example of the view you are discussing. You might say, 'Recently, many scholars have recognised that Paul is not so much attacking legalism as nationalism. For example, Dunn says, "..."';
- offer a particularly sharp or memorable statement of the view you yourself hold, so that you might say, 'In the words of G. M. Styler: "Given Mark, it is easy to see why Matthew was written, given Matthew, it is hard to see why Mark was needed." ...';

Use quotations to define, to illustrate or to sum up. Keep them short.

It is never enough just to say that 'So-and-so' says something. Something is not true just because it is in a book, and learned authors often disagree with each other! You are expected to interact with the books you quote or refer to, and to take responsibility for your own view, not hide behind other people. So, you must make it clear whether you agree or disagree with your source and say why. For example, you might say, 'As So-and-so-says', and then give the quotation. This makes plain that you agree with So-and-so, but of course you will already have shown why you do so. Or you might say, 'Some scholars have argued that Matthew was the first Gospel to be written, but this should be rejected for the following reasons....'

### **Footnoted References**

Where you want to follow or disagree with a specific point made by a writer you should give an accurate page reference, either to acknowledge your debt to the writer or to show that this writer really holds the view you attribute to him/her.

## **Bibliographies**

At the end of your piece you should list the books you have consulted and which, whether you agreed with them or not, have helped you to form your views. Please do not list books you have not consulted. This is dishonest. You should give the author's name and initials, the title of the book and the date. In the case of dictionary articles, give the name of the author of the article, not just the editor of the book. In the case of collections of essays, the details of the essay and the name of the book's editor are required.

Finally, it is worth remembering that you will not gain any marks simply by quoting the views of scholars, since their words are *their* work, and you will be marked on *your* work.

## **ACADEMIC MALPRACTICE: PROCEDURE FOR THE HANDLING OF CASES**

The purpose of this section is to set out the procedures staff should follow if they discover a case of suspected academic malpractice by students. Students who are facing allegations of academic malpractice will also find it useful in helping them to understand the process and how they should expect their case to be handled.

### **Definitions**

*Academic malpractice* is any activity – intentional or otherwise – that is likely to undermine the integrity essential to scholarship and research. It includes plagiarism, collusion, fabrication or falsification of results, and anything else that could result in unearned or undeserved credit for those committing it. Academic malpractice can result from a deliberate act of cheating or may be committed unintentionally. Whether intended or not, all incidents of academic malpractice will be treated seriously by IBTS.

*Plagiarism* is the presentation, intentionally or unwittingly, of the ideas, work or words of other people without proper, clear and unambiguous acknowledgement. It includes the copying of the work of any other person, including another student, and the submission, in whole or in part, of a student's own work – self-plagiarism – where, for example, such work may have been previously submitted for a different assessment.

*Fabrication or falsification* of data or results by individual students or groups of students is the presentation or inclusion in a piece of work of figures or data which have been made up or altered and which have no basis in verifiable sources; this may or may not involve other instances of academic malpractice.

### **Institutional Responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of IBTS to ensure that all students are given ample opportunity to understand fully the academic standards and requirements they must follow. This takes place especially through the work done during the Post Graduate Research Certificate programme, which all students take at the beginning of their studies at the Centre. It should always be made clear that:

- acts of academic malpractice are not acceptable in any circumstances; and
- where such acts are shown to have occurred, an appropriate penalty will always be enforced.

No circumstances justify academic malpractice, and a penalty must always be applied. Although students may present evidence of mitigating circumstances (which may be taken into account when determining the penalty to be applied), it must always be borne in mind that students are encouraged to bring such circumstances to the attention of IBTS at the earliest possible opportunity so that the Centre can consider offering appropriate help.

### **Assessing the Severity of Academic Malpractice**

Each case is different, and the Panel of Inquiry is expected to use their judgment in deciding the seriousness of an offence and deciding whether there are aggravating circumstances that might affect the severity of the penalty. The Panel must attempt to ensure consistency of treatment between cases, making a judgement about what is a proportionate penalty and ensuring that the penalty chosen does not have consequences for academic progression which are disproportionate in impact.

Factors to take into account when determining the penalty and its proportionality include the following:

- The student's level of study: the more advanced and experienced the student, the more serious the offence;
- The proportion of the piece of work that was subject to malpractice: the higher the proportion, the more serious the offence;
- The credit rating of the piece of work: the higher the rating, the more serious the offence;
- The student's previous history: a subsequent offence, occurring after a student has already received a warning or a penalty for academic malpractice, is more serious than a first offence;
- The degree of intention to deceive in the piece of work in question (which might be assessed by, for example, efforts to change wording, poor referencing or lack of referencing of plagiarised material, evidence from earlier drafts) and also in the hearing itself by failure to tell the truth.

The judgement on any case shall give details of the relevant factors taken into account, stating the degree to which they contributed to the decision and will state the Panel's intentions in terms of the impact of the penalty on progression/degree awarded. It will also refer to any other matters taken into account, e.g. any mitigating circumstances, so that precedence and best practice may be established. The written record will also be important in the event that the student appeals the disciplinary process/outcome.

### **Students Who are Unable to Attend an Interview**

Non-residential students may not be able to attend an interview with the Panel. In circumstances such as these, students must be offered the opportunity to have their interview conducted via video or teleconferencing facilities (or equivalent). If this is not possible, or the opportunity is declined, or no response is received within a reasonable time frame (bearing in mind the student's location), it is reasonable to hear the case 'in absentia'. The normal procedure should be followed, but instead of requiring students to attend for interview, they should be asked (via an appropriate means of communication) to respond to the allegation. They should be supplied with full details of the case against them and informed of the possible consequences if they are deemed to be guilty of academic malpractice. They should be given a suitable time limit for a response (this may vary according to where they live) and be

informed that if they do not respond a decision will be made on the basis of the evidence available to the panel. Once a decision has been made it should be communicated to the student as described below.

### **Previous Assessed Work Confirmed by an Examination Board or Authority**

Unless there are very good reasons, there is no expectation that, on the finding of academic malpractice in a piece of assessed work, previous work will be routinely checked, although the option remains to review all the student's assessed work if the investigation determines that it is appropriate to do so.

### **Assessing Whether There is Evidence that Academic Malpractice has Taken Place**

All suspected cases of academic malpractice should be marked up by an academic member of staff to show the location and extent of relevant passages, and their possible original sources or other indicators of academic malpractice, and referred in the first instance to the Programme Director, who will assess whether or not the evidence suggests that academic malpractice may have been committed.

If the Programme Director judges that the case does **not** constitute academic malpractice but rather poor academic practice, the matter will be referred back to the tutor or supervisor responsible for the piece of work in question, with appropriate advice as to how to proceed [e.g. advice may include: poor referencing = poor piece of work, mark accordingly, etc.]. In such instances, it is essential that the student is given appropriate feedback and guidance.

In determining whether an instance constitutes a repeat (subsequent) offence, penalties applied in a previous programme of study/award shall not be included.

### **Handling the Case**

The student will be interviewed by the Panel of Inquiry, which will include a member of academic staff with knowledge of the programme or subject area and the potential effect on the student's academic progress/final degree result of any proposed penalty. The Administrator must also be present to record the outcome. The person(s) making the allegation should not contribute to any penalty decision.

Students must be given adequate notice of a requirement to attend the interview, together with full information about the allegation being made against them. The case must not be discussed by the Panel before the student is present, other than to agree or clarify procedure and to decide the issues that need to be explored with the student. The student must be given the opportunity to hear all the evidence and to present an explanation but should not be present whilst the Panel comes to a decision.

The Programme Director will maintain a record of the case.

If the offence is admitted or proven, the Panel will apply the most appropriate penalty. In the event that the Panel needs to make further enquiries before reaching a decision, the hearing may be suspended pending completion of those enquiries. In applying penalties the Panel should ensure that it is fully aware of the impact of the penalty on the student's ability to progress/final degree result and intended career if appropriate, and that the likely impact is proportionate to the offence committed.

Following the hearing, the decision of the Panel must be communicated to the student in writing within five working days of the interview being held. The communication should include reasons for the decision and an explanation of the potential consequences for the student's academic progress/achievement. The letter should also inform the student that they have the right to appeal to the Director and of the grounds on which they might make an appeal.

The communication should also suggest sources of study skills advice (where appropriate), and a warning about the consequences of a repeat offence.

### **Penalties Available to the Panel of Inquiry**

The Panel shall apply one or any combination of the following penalties:

- The issue of a formal reprimand to the candidate, a written record of which shall be kept.
- An instruction to the examiners, when marking, to disregard any plagiarised text, which may result in a reduced mark.
- The cancellation of the candidate's marks in part or in whole for module(s) concerned, or in all of the modules for the year in question, with a recommendation as to whether or not a re-assessment should be permitted, either with eligibility for the bare pass mark only or for the full range of marks.
- The disqualification of the candidate from IBTS programmes.

If a Panel of Enquiry decides that the above penalties are inappropriate, the Panel may use its discretion to decide upon the appropriate penalty.

## **SUSPENSION OF STUDIES**

It can be the case that for good reason a student on the PGCert or a researcher engaged in their PhD research project feels they must suspend their studies. If such a situation arises the following steps should be taken:

1. The Director of the Centre should be contacted in the first instance and the situation discussed. The Director will hold in confidence any personal or sensitive information disclosed.
2. In regard to the PGCert, the Director will consult with the other module leaders or the Centre staff team as appropriate in advising the student on possible options.
3. Normally PGCert students will only be allowed to suspend their studies for one year. Failure to take pick up the programme after one year will necessitate retaking the whole programme.
4. In regard to those registered in the Graduate School, the Director of the Centre should be contacted in the first instance. The Director will be in a position to offer advice on the situation and options in so far as any suspension of studies relates to IBTS.
5. Following discussions with the Director, the supervisors and head of the Graduate School should be notified of the request for suspension of studies.
6. Anyone who, for whatever reason, has decided to abandon their research project should follow steps 4 & 5 above to ensure that all concerned are duly informed.

Students and researchers should not be embarrassed nor hesitate in contacting the Director as soon as they find themselves in difficulties regarding the continuation of their studies. It is the desire of the Centre to, as far as possible, facilitate students and researchers in completing their studies successfully.

## CODE OF CONDUCT

IBTS reserves the right to exclude from programmes any student or supervisor guilty of the improper interference, in the broadest sense, with the proper functioning or activities of the Centre or of those who work or study in the Centre, or action which otherwise damages the Centre or its reputation.

The conduct covered by this procedure shall constitute misconduct only if it took place on IBTS property or premises, or elsewhere if the person was involved in a Centre activity, was representing the Centre, was present at that place by virtue of his or her status as a student or supervisor of the Centre or if the conduct raises questions about the fitness of the student on a programme leading directly to a professional qualification or calling to be admitted to and practise that profession or calling.

### Defining Misconduct

Misconduct may be understood as that which:

- disrupts, or improperly interferes with, the academic, administrative, social or other activities of the Centre, whether on IBTS premises or elsewhere;
- obstructs, or improperly interferes with, the legitimate functions, duties or activities of any student, member of staff or other employee of the Centre or any authorised visitor;
- involves violent, indecent, disorderly, threatening or offensive behaviour or language (whether expressed orally or in writing, including electronically) whilst on the IBTS premises or engaged in any Centre activity;
- involves distributing or publishing material which is offensive, intimidating, threatening, indecent or illegal, including the broadcasting and electronic distribution of such material;
- involves fraud, deceit, deception or dishonesty in relation to the Centre or its staff or students;
- involves action likely to cause injury or impair safety on IBTS premises;
- causes damage to or defaces IBTS property or the property of students or staff;
- involves serious identified academic malpractice;
- involves breaching the IBTS's commitment to non-discrimination;
- constitutes the misuse or unauthorised use of IBTS premises or items of property, including misuse of computers and the communications network;
- constitutes a criminal offence where that conduct or the offence:
  - takes place on IBTS premises; or
  - affects or concerns other members of the Centre; or
  - damages the good name of the Centre; or
  - itself constitutes misconduct within the provisions of this Regulation.

### Procedure

All members of administrative and academic staff are authorised to intervene to request that a person immediately ceases from any perceived active misconduct and to request they remove themselves from the immediate location or premises of the IBTS pending further action.

Identified behaviour that cannot be remedied successfully informally or is of such a nature as to be considered serious by others should be reported to the Director of IBTS who will decide whether a formal disciplinary procedure should be implemented.

The formal disciplinary procedure will involve the establishment of a Conduct and Disciplinary Panel consisting of at least two members of the Academic Team, a member of the Board and a member of the Centre's administrative staff.

The person will be informed in writing of the meeting of this panel and the allegations against them and have a right to fairly represent themselves either in writing or by being present. Anyone who is the subject of disciplinary proceedings shall receive a fair hearing and will have the right to be accompanied by a person of their own choice who will be able to speak on their behalf.

The Panel will consider all the evidence and make a decision at the conclusion of the meeting. This decision will be communicated verbally and in writing. Actions available to the panel include:

- No case to answer;
- A case to answer but no further action required in light of the response;
- A formal reprimand warning about future conduct;
- A requirement to give an undertaking as to his or her future good conduct;
- A requirement to pay for any damage to property he or she may have caused or to recompense the IBTS for any loss it may have suffered arising from the misconduct;
- Suspension from the programme for a specified period of time;
- Exclusion from the programme of study.

### **Appeals**

If the person wishes to appeal the decision, they need to do so in writing to the Chair of the Board of IBTS **within 15 days** of receiving notification from the Panel. If an appeal is received later than 15 days, it has to demonstrate that there were reasonable reasons for the delay in submitting. A request for an appeal received after this time with good cause shown for its late submission shall only be granted at the discretion of the Appeal Board designated to hear the appeal.

An appeal can be on one or more of the following grounds:

- procedural irregularity;
- availability of new evidence which could not reasonably have been expected to be presented to the original hearing;
- the disproportionate nature of the penalty.

On receiving such an appeal, the Chair will convene an Appeal Board of qualified persons not involved in the original decision.

The person(s) or Appeal Board hearing an appeal shall not re-hear the case afresh, but shall consider whether the initial hearing and outcome were fair by:

- reviewing the procedures followed;



- establishing whether the appellant has presented any new evidence that could not reasonably have been expected to be presented to the original hearing and that this evidence is material and substantial to the findings;
- reviewing the penalty imposed.

The Appeal Board considering an appeal shall have the authority to confirm, set aside, reduce or increase the penalty previously imposed. The decision of the person(s) or the Board hearing the appeal shall be final and there shall be no further opportunity for appeal against that decision within the Centre.

NB If an action or allegation of misconduct related to criminal charges is considered sufficiently serious, the Director of IBTS can issue a temporary suspension of a person from the programme and premises of IBTS pending the meeting of a Conduct and Disciplinary Panel. This right should only be used when and where there is a clear risk to the Centre students, property or staff.

## **IBTS PRIVACY POLICY**

International Baptist Theological Study Centre Amsterdam (“**IBTS**”) respects your personal information and data protection laws around the world. This privacy policy explains how we do this, and it applies to your use of the Centre’s website, any purchases of journal articles or subscriptions from us, and your attendance at any of our events, conferences, or courses.

### **How We Use Your Personal Information**

We use personal information in order to promote and provide the activities of IBTS. We have set out below more information on the categories of personal information that we collect, the specific ways in which that personal information is processed by us, the legal bases which permit us to do this, and the types of partners with whom we share your personal information.

In some cases where we ask for your personal information, we do so in order for us to fulfil your request or order (e.g. needing your email address to send you a journal article). If you do not provide that personal information, we will not be able to process your request or order.

### **What Information Does IBTS Collect?**

We collect and process personal information about you when you purchase goods and services from us, provide services for us and interact with us and our websites. This information includes:

- Your name, address, email address, and phone number;
- Your payment details, including billing and delivery addresses, where you make purchases from us or are due payment from us;
- Your marketing preferences, including any consents you have given us;
- If you are a student with us, records relating to your academic activities;
- Any information you provide to us in relation to your eligibility to study or work with IBTS (e.g. passport and visa information); and
- If you use our library, records relating to your use of our library services.

### **How Does IBTS Use Your Information?**

We use your information as follows in relation to fulfilment of contracts with you:

- To fulfil a contract with you when you enrol as a student at IBTS, or when you provide supervision services for IBTS, when you purchase journals from us, or if you attend an event hosted by us;
- Providing you with library services upon your request; and
- Storing and analysing your information to review and progress any job application that you make with the Centre.

We use your information as reasonably required by IBTS to conduct our business and pursue our legitimate interests, in particular:

- Letting you know about the Centre’s activities by post, email, and phone in accordance with your marketing preferences and laws relating to direct marketing;
- Operating IBTS and maintaining such internal records and processes as are reasonably required to do so; and

- Ensuring the security of the Centre's websites and information technology systems and protecting the Centre's rights.

We use your information as follows where you give us consent:

- If we need your consent in order to send you information about the Centre's activities; and
- When we wish to use your personal information in circumstances that you would not have anticipated when you gave us your personal information.

### **How Will IBTS Share Your Information?**

We share your personal details:

- Within IBTS and with members of staff which are involved in carrying out the processing described above;
- With third party service providers who, as necessary and appropriate, process your information on the Centre's behalf for the purposes above – this includes, for example, our telephony service providers, cloud storage providers, external academics, our financial administrators, and our auditors; and
- With any third party that you ask us to share your personal information with, e.g. prospective employers or academic institutions.

We will also share your personal information:

- If we think this is necessary in order to protect the rights, property, or safety of IBTS, our employees, our partners, or our customers. This includes sharing information for the purposes of fraud protection; and
- With government authorities and/or law enforcement officials if required by law.

### **Giving and Withdrawing Consent, and Updating Your Personal Information**

Where your consent is required for us to process your personal information, we will ask for your consent at the point at which you provide your data. You have the right to withdraw that consent at any time. You can also update your personal information at any time. If you wish to do either, contact us at [info@ibts.eu](mailto:info@ibts.eu).

### **Storing Your Personal Information**

Your personal information may be stored and processed outside of the country where it is collected, including outside of the European Economic Area. When transferring information to others, within the EEA or otherwise, we ensure that appropriate and suitable safeguards and technical measures are in place to protect your personal data.

We will only keep records of your personal information for as long as is reasonably necessary for the purposes for which we have collected it, and in order to comply with any statutory or regulatory obligations in relation to retention of records.

### **Your Rights**

You have the right to request access to and rectification or erasure of personal information, the right to restrict processing of your personal information, and the right to object to processing of your personal information. You have the right to object to your personal information being processed on the grounds of IBTS's legitimate interests. You have the right to object to us sending you direct marketing and profiling you for the purposes of direct marketing.

You can contact us by email at [info@ibts.eu](mailto:info@ibts.eu) in relation to any of the rights described in this section, or if you have any questions regarding this privacy notice. You have the right to lodge a complaint regarding our processing of your personal information with a data protection supervisory authority in a country where you live, work, or where you believe a breach may have occurred.

**Contacting Us**

The data controller for our website and our activities generally is the International Baptist Theological Study Centre Amsterdam at Baptist House, Postjesweg 150, 1061 AX Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

As part of its commitment to ensuring the standard and quality of its programmes of study, services, and facilities, IBTS has established this procedure to deal with complaints from students. Complaints provide useful feedback information and, where appropriate, will be used to improve services and facilities.

The procedure comprises a number of stages, both informal and formal. Students who have a complaint to make should raise it directly with the staff concerned at the earliest opportunity, as matters that are dealt with informally at an early stage have the best chance of being resolved effectively. Only where the informal procedures have been completed and the complainant remains dissatisfied should the formal stage be instituted. It is recognised, however, that there may be occasions where an informal approach is not appropriate and the student may wish to proceed directly to a later stage in the procedure, giving reasons for doing so. In such situations, the recipient of the complaint should decide at which stage in the procedure the complaint should most appropriately be considered, taking account of its particular nature and circumstances. In respect of particularly serious complaints, the student may write directly to the Director without having followed the informal and formal stages of this procedure set out below. In such cases, the Director will decide whether to refer the complaint for consideration by a Complaints Panel or whether it should more appropriately be referred to an earlier stage in the procedure.

Complaints should be made as soon as possible, and in any case **within eight weeks** of the events or actions (or lack of actions) which have prompted the complaint. IBTS will not normally consider complaints made after this period, unless there is good reason for the delay.

Every reasonable effort will be made to deal promptly and efficiently with all complaints, to investigate them thoroughly and objectively and to seek to resolve them satisfactorily. Complaints will be dealt with positively and constructively. If a complaint is upheld, IBTS will seek to provide an appropriate response and will correct any mistakes or misunderstandings and will take any other action as appropriate. If a complaint is not upheld, then reasons for that decision will be given.

All complaints will be dealt with in confidence with the proviso that enquiries will have to be made to investigate the matters that are the subject of the complaint. Also, an individual against whom a complaint is made has the right to be supplied with a copy of the complaint and to comment on it. If this presents a problem for a student who wishes their complaint to be given complete confidentiality, he or she is advised to discuss with an appropriate member of staff how the complaint might be addressed.

The effectiveness of any complaints procedure depends on IBTS being able to collect appropriate information from the parties involved in order to investigate the matter properly. For this reason, anonymous complaints will not be dealt with under this procedure. It is at the discretion of the member of staff receiving an anonymous complaint to determine how the matter is handled.

### **Definition and Scope of the Procedure**

IBTS defines a complaint as 'an expression of dissatisfaction which merits a response'. The procedure is designed for complaints in respect of the student's experience at IBTS related to:

- the provision of programmes or parts of programmes of study, services or facilities by IBTS;
- the actions or lack of actions by IBTS or its staff.

This student complaints procedure can be used by students for both individual or collective complaints. It is expected that the student(s) concerned will pursue the complaint personally; complaints submitted by a third party will not be accepted unless accompanied by written authorisation from the student(s).

### **Informal Stage**

Most complaints can be resolved informally and, where practicable, a complaint should be dealt with as close as possible to the point at which it arises. The complaint should therefore be made initially to the appropriate member of staff who seems best placed to deal with the matter (e.g. Module Leader, Administrator, the Director, etc). The student and staff meeting at Annual Colloquium has been one such ground for addressing any issues informally. A student should normally expect to receive a written or verbal acknowledgement **within five working days** and a full response **within 15 working days** of receipt of the complaint.

### **Formal Procedure**

If the student is not satisfied with the response at the informal stage, he or she may initiate a formal complaint. The information to be provided is as follows:

- details of the complaint;
- a statement of the steps already taken to try to resolve the complaint informally and why the response has not been considered to be satisfactory;
- the form of resolution or redress sought.

The person dealing with the formal complaint (hereafter referred to as the 'Investigator'), who must be independent of the source of the complaint, will undertake an investigation into the substance of the complaint using whatever means he/she feels appropriate. The Investigator will attempt resolution of the complaint by a means appropriate to its nature and circumstances.

It is expected that the formal procedure should normally be completed and a written response sent to the student within 20 working days of receipt of the formal complaint. The possible outcomes at this stage include:

- a resolution, reached in co-operation with IBTS, or following mediation if appropriate;
- provision to the student of information in explanation of the circumstances which led to the complaint;
- referral of the matter to the Complaints Panel if the complaint raises serious or complex matters which require further investigation and enquiry;
- dismissal of the complaint as being without foundation, with reasons given to the student in writing.

## **Complaints Panel**

Where the matter is referred to a Complaints Panel, the Panel should normally convene to hear the complaint **within 20 working days** of the referral. All members chosen to serve on the Panel will be independent of the source of the complaint.

The student will be entitled to attend the meeting and to be accompanied by a fellow student, or a member of staff. If the complaint relates to the actions of an individual member of staff, that individual has the right to be informed of the substance of the complaint and to attend and be accompanied by a fellow member of staff.

The Complaints Panel will consider both the substance of the complaint and also the way in which the complaint had been handled in the earlier stages of the procedure.

The outcomes of the Complaints Panel may include:

- if the complaint is upheld:
  - recommendations to the Director and the IBTS Board in respect of relevant quality assurance issues or other procedures or policies;
  - appropriate redress to the student.
- if the complaint is not upheld, the student will be informed in writing with reasons for its dismissal.

**For the Disputes Procedure of the Vrije Universiteit, please refer to the following:**

[https://www.vu.nl/en/Images/Promotiereglement\\_ENG\\_web\\_22.03.2016\\_tcm270-420455.pdf](https://www.vu.nl/en/Images/Promotiereglement_ENG_web_22.03.2016_tcm270-420455.pdf))

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **PGCert Programme Aims and Learning Outcomes**

- To equip course participants to undertake original research in the fields of baptistic identity, mission and practice at doctoral level;
- To promote the development of key transferable skills that will assist course participants in other areas of their learning and professional lives, including international and ecumenical contexts;
- To integrate course participants into the IBTS research community, a community concerned with the formation of research scholars committed to mission, ministry and ongoing holistic learning.



|   |   |
|---|---|
|   | On completion of this programme you should be able to:  |
| <b>Knowledge and understanding</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Engage with the issues of Identity, Mission and Practice from a baptistic theological perspective;</li> <li>○ Show an awareness of the relationship between theology and philosophical approaches and trends;</li> <li>○ Demonstrate familiarity with a range of research methods and associated ethical issues.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Applying knowledge and understanding</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Compile a coherent research proposal with appropriate research questions, methods and indicative literature;</li> <li>○ Select and justify clearly and concisely your choice of research methodology;</li> <li>○ Demonstrate reflexive appreciation of your situated self within your research context;</li> <li>○ Access a range of key resources relating to your chosen research area.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Critical Thinking</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Subject a range of sources relating to your chosen research area to critical analysis;</li> <li>○ Demonstrate an ability to formulate a reasoned academic argument.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>On completion of this programme you should have developed the following transferable skill areas in the ways outlined:</b> |   |
| <b>Communication</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ the ability to present and discuss aspects of your work accurately in oral and written formats, using a format and style to suit the purpose, subject and audience.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>IT</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ the ability to use electronic databases and the internet to aid research, in the evaluation and selection of disparate information and to present such material in an appropriate format.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Working with Others</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ the ability to establish and effectively maintain co-operative working relationships within the IBTSC and wider research community, demonstrating flexibility, humility, inclusivity and respect.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Improving Own Learning</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ the ability to advance your own knowledge and understanding autonomously, demonstrating reflexivity and developing new skills to a high level;</li> <li>○ the development of an understanding of research as Christian discipleship and ministry.</li> </ul>   |

## Module Timeline

### STRUCTURE OF THE PGCERT YEAR



## Module Specifications

|                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Module Title</b>               | Baptistic Identities in Historical Contexts |
| <b>Module Leader</b>              | Dr Toivo Pilli                              |
| <b>Level</b>                      | Post Graduate Certificate                   |
| <b>ECTS</b>                       | 9   |
| <b>Notional hours of learning</b> | 245   |

### 1. AIMS

#### This Module aims to

- Introduce the major themes in the field of the history and identity of baptistic movements;
- Situate these themes in the broader context of church and society;
- Explore what the baptistic historical tradition might mean for today;
- Present a range of methods available in historical research.

### 2. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE MODULE

This module is designed to improve the students' skills in working with central primary and secondary texts in the field of baptistic tradition and identity. The interpretation of these texts requires taking into account the historical context, as well as the diachronic and synchronic approach to key topics such as ecclesiology, church-state relations, discipleship and social ethics. The module includes readings from baptistic tradition, such as, for example, the Schleithem Confession, Balthasar Hubmaier, early Baptist confessions, Thomas Helwys and John Smyth, Andrew Fuller, James McClendon, Stanley Grenz, Paul Fiddes, Nigel G. Wright and others. Readings also include documents on ecumenical conversations, such as *The Word of God in the Life of the Church* (2012). The selection of key texts may vary in different academic years. The module also has an element of exploring research methods in history – both for working with archival material and written texts, as well as basic tools in researching oral history.

### 3. INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

| <b>Learning Outcomes</b>             | <i>Course participants should be able to:</i>   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Knowledge and Understanding          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss topics in baptistic historical tradition, based on the reading of primary and secondary sources;</li> <li>• Explain key methods in historical research, including work in archives, interpretation of original texts and use of research methods in oral history.</li> </ul> |
| Applying Knowledge and Understanding | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bring historical perspectives into conversation with contemporary theological issues.</li> </ul>   |
| Critical Thinking                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critically read and interpret the primary and secondary sources of baptistic tradition and identity, in the broader context of church and society;</li> <li>• Demonstrate an ability to formulate a reasoned academic argument.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Transferable Skills</b>           | <i>Course participants should be able to:</i>   |
| Communication                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate and discuss the results of their reading and analysis both in written and oral form.</li> </ul>  |
| IT                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independently find sources, using electronic means where appropriate, and evaluate the relevance of these sources for the research goal or assessment task.</li> </ul>   |
| Working with Others                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate respect and basic skills of team-work when working with others.</li> </ul>   |
| Improving Own Learning               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflect on one's own learning processes and research skills.</li> </ul>  |

#### 4. LEARNING AND TEACHING ACTIVITIES AND CONTACT HOURS

| Learning and Teaching Activities                                  | HOURS      |
|---|------------|
| Contact time: Induction Week & Colloquium                         | 30         |
| Other contact time (including online learning tools and seminars) | 10         |
| Independent reading and study                                     | 55         |
| Assessment task/s   | 150        |
| <b>TOTAL CREDIT HOURS</b>   | <b>245</b> |

#### 5. ASSESSMENT

| Assessment Task                              | Formative/Summative  | Weighting |
|--|--|-----------|
| Participation in Induction Week & Colloquium | Formative  | 5%        |
| Participation in online activities           | Formative  | 5%        |
| Reading tasks                                | Formative  | 5%        |
| Essay  | Formative: 500 words draft<br>Summative: final essay<br>3500 words | 85%       |

#### 6. INDICATIVE READING LIST

- Cross, Anthony R and Ruth Gouldbourne (eds.) (2011). *Questions of Identity*. Oxford: Regent's Park College.
- Fiddes, Paul (2003). *Tracks and Traces: Baptist Identity in Church and Theology*. Carlisle: Paternoster.
- Fiddes, Paul (ed.), William Brackney and Malcolm Yarnell III (2018). *The Fourth Strand of Reformation: The Covenant Ecclesiology of Anabaptists, English Separatists and Early General Baptists*. Oxford: Regent's Park College.
- Holmes, Stephen (2012). *Baptist Theology*. London: T&T Clark International.
- Lumpkin, William L (1959). *Baptist Confessions of Faith*. Valley Forge: Judson Press. Also: Lumpkin, William L. and Bill J. Leonard (eds) (2011) *Baptist Confessions of Faith*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press.
- Murray, Stuart (2004). *Post-Christendom: Church and Mission in a Strange World*. Carlisle: Paternoster.
- Randall, Ian (2009). *Communities of Conviction: Baptist Beginnings in Europe*. Schwarzenfeld: Neufeld Verlag.
- Snyder, C Arnold (1995). *Anabaptist History and Theology*. Kitchener, Ontario: Pandora Press.
- Wright, Nigel G (2011 reprint edition). *Free Church, Free State*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock.
- 'The Word of God in the Life of the Church' (2012). In: *American Baptist Quarterly*, vol XXXI, no 1 (Spring 2012). Also available electronically on the Vatican webpage [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)

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| <b>Date of current version</b> | December 2019 |
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|                                   |                           |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Module Title</b>               | Researching Mission       |
| <b>Module Leader</b>              | Doc. Tim Noble PhD        |
| <b>Level</b>                      | Post Graduate Certificate |
| <b>ECTS</b>                       | 9                         |
| <b>Notional hours of learning</b> | 245                       |

### 1. AIMS

#### This Module aims to:

- Introduce a complex understanding of mission and its study (missiology);
- Locate it within the broader academic discipline of theology;
- Explore the historiography of mission, and approaches to practice;
- Engage with the complexity of context and the relationship of the Gospel to different cultures;
- Develop a methodological base for undertaking further studies in the area of missiology.

### 2. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE MODULE

This module begins with an introduction to the complexity of mission, and thus about what missiology as an academic discipline reflecting on Christian mission seeks to do. It also looks at the place of missiology within theology and different approaches to the history of mission. It presents key questions in contemporary mission and enables students to begin the task of engaging with the complexity of context and the relationship of the Gospel to different cultures. Furthermore, it will introduce challenges to Christian mission, occasioned by the encounter with people of other faiths and the cultural changes in many European countries which were once considered Christian. Finally, it will look at methodological approaches to the study of mission and the philosophical insights that are behind them.

### 3. INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

|                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Learning Outcomes</b>             | <i>Course participants should be able to:</i>   |
| Knowledge and Understanding          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate systematic conceptual understanding of the major missiological concepts and paradigms;</li> <li>• Identify the major philosophical schools and thinkers who have impacted on current research in missiology.</li> </ul>                              |
| Applying Knowledge and Understanding | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show a critical engagement with the importance of context in mission;</li> <li>• Examine the broad contours of missiology through the applied methodology and discern how this may impact on Christian mission in today's world.</li> </ul>                      |
| Critical Thinking                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Act autonomously in planning a study demonstrating critical reading of a wide range of relevant literature, including, where appropriate, primary sources, with evidence of originality in the application of knowledge and critical awareness.</li> </ul>       |
| <b>Transferable Skills</b>           | <i>Course participants should be able to:</i>   |
| Communication                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present research on mission in suitable written and oral forms.</li> </ul>   |
| IT                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use databases and other web-based resources for research in mission.</li> </ul>  |
| Working with Others                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop small research projects drawing on mission experience of others.</li> </ul>  |
| Improving Own Learning               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct research in mission in a way that impacts on their own mission practice or that of an organisation they support;</li> <li>• Learn how to integrate research in mission with research in the areas of Baptist identity and Practical Theology.</li> </ul> |

#### 4. LEARNING AND TEACHING ACTIVITIES AND CONTACT HOURS

| Learning and Teaching Activities                                  | HOURS      |
|---|------------|
| Contact time: Induction Week & Colloquium                         | 30         |
| Other contact time (including online learning tools and seminars) | 20         |
| Independent reading and study (including assessment tasks)        | 195        |
| <b>TOTAL CREDIT HOURS</b>   | <b>245</b> |

#### 5. ASSESSMENT

| Assessment Task                              | Formative/Summative                     | Weighting |
|--|---|-----------|
| Participation in Induction Week & Colloquium | Formative                               | 5%        |
| Participation in online activity             | Formative                               | 5%        |
| Reading tasks                                | Formative                               | 5%        |
| Essay  | Formative: 500 words draft<br>Summative | 85%       |

#### 6. INDICATIVE READING LIST

- Adeney, Frances. *Women and Christian Mission. Ways of Knowing and Doing Theology* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2015).
- Bevans, Stephen and Roger Schroeder. *Prophetic Dialogue: Reflections on Christian Mission Today* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2011).
- Bosch, David. *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in the Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991).
- Chatfield, Graeme (ed.). *Mission. The Heart of Baptist Identity* (Macquarrie Park, Australia: Morling Press, 2009)
- Goheen, Michael (ed.). *Reading the Bible Missionally* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2016).
- Terry, John Mark (ed.). *Missiology. An Introduction to the Foundations, History and Strategies of World Missions* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2015). Second Edition.
- Sunquist, Scott. *Understanding Christian Mission. Participation in Suffering and Glory* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013).
- Wright, Christopher. *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2006).
- Yoder, John Howard. *Theology of Mission: A Believers' Church Perspective*. Ed. Gayle Gerber Koontz, Andy Alexis-Baker. (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2014).

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| Date of current version | December 2019 |
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|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| <b>MODULE TITLE</b>        | Practical Theology and Qualitative Research Methods |
| Module Convenor            | Dr Fran Porter                                      |
| Level                      | Post Graduate Certificate                           |
| ECTS                       | 12  |
| Notional hours of learning | 350   |

### 1. MODULE AIMS

#### This Module aims to

- Provide students with an overview of the differing approaches to practical theology in academic, ecclesial and mission contexts;
- Enable students to examine approaches to relating theory and practice in theology and non-theological disciplines;
- Evaluate the place of empirical research (quantitative and qualitative) within practical theology;
- Increase students' capacity to be reflexive and to be empathetic with theological positions other than their own;
- Encourage students' openness to critical perspectives on their own theological tradition - being willing both to witness to cherished beliefs and to risk considering other perspectives.

### 2. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE MODULE

The module will start by introducing practical theology as a discipline that enables theologians and practitioners to undertake rigorous theological exploration of a wide variety of social, religious and cultural contexts. We will look at the ways in which practical theology is used to critically and creatively examine the interconnection of theory and practice in ecclesial and mission situations and how practical theological and qualitative research methods can be deployed to develop theological understanding of human experiences, social situations, ethical norms, political positions and cultural practices. We will investigate and critically evaluate a number of approaches to qualitative research, including a variety of ethnographic methods, and explore ways in which these can be integrated into practical theological methodology and methods. An important part of the module will be the development of practical theological skills through participants' own involvement in an ethnographic exploration of their own context.

### 3. INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

| <b>Learning Outcomes</b>             | <i>Course participants should be able to:</i>   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Knowledge and Understanding          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Articulate a comprehensive and nuanced definition of practical theology that is informed by current research and thinking in the field;</li> <li>• Identify, differentiate and evaluate key approaches and methodological and ethical issues within contemporary practical theology, drawing on contemporary research in the field.</li> </ul> |
| Applying Knowledge and Understanding | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construct a research proposal, drawing on practical theological methods to analyse a complex religious/social situation;</li> <li>• Apply a research method which shows an informed and practical appreciation of reflexivity.</li> </ul>  |
| Critical Thinking                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Express critical appreciation of a range of theoretical and practical contexts within which practical theology operates;</li> <li>• Engage in reasoned and accessible discussion, based on informed analysis of theoretical and practical contexts.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Transferable Skills</b>           | <i>Course participants should be able to:</i>   |
| Communication                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate the findings of systematic and creative research with clarity, sensitivity, fairness and imagination to specialist and non-specialist audiences.</li> </ul>  |

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| IT                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show competence in the use of IT in the context of research and learning environments including the ability to engage with Virtual Learning Environments such as Moodle;</li> <li>• Use research facilities such as the Digital Theological Library with confidence;</li> <li>• Manage interactive platforms such as Skype and Zoom.</li> </ul> |
| Working with Others    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate self-awareness, understanding of cultural and social difference, and hospitable appreciation of others in diverse contexts, including academic, research, ecclesial and mission settings.</li> </ul>  |
| Improving Own Learning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate initiative, self-direction and independence in tackling and solving problems, and in planning and implementing tasks;</li> <li>• Exercise independent learning skills to pursue further professional development or academic study;</li> <li>• Show an appreciation of research as Christian discipleship and ministry.</li> </ul>  |

#### 4. LEARNING AND TEACHING ACTIVITIES AND CONTACT HOURS

| Learning Activity   | HOURS      |
|---|------------|
| Contact time: Induction Week & Colloquium                         | 30         |
| Other contact time (including online learning tools and seminars) | 20         |
| Carrying out field research                                       | 40         |
| Independent reading and study                                     | 260        |
| <b>TOTAL CREDIT HOURS</b>   | <b>350</b> |

#### 5. ASSESSMENT

| ASSESSMENT TASK  | FORMATIVE/<br>SUMMATIVE                    | WEIGHTING |
|--|--|-----------|
| Participation in Induction Week & Colloquium             | Formative                                  | 5%        |
| Participation in online activities                       | Formative                                  | 5%        |
| Devising and carrying out a simple ethnographic exercise | Formative                                  | 5%        |
| Extended written assignment                              | Formative: 500 words<br>draft<br>Summative | 85%       |

#### 6. INDICATIVE READING LIST

- Bennett, Zoë, Elaine Graham, Stephen Pattison, and Heather Walton, *Invitation to Research in Practical Theology* (London and New York: Routledge, 2018).
- Cahalan, K.A. and G. A Mikoski (eds), *Opening the Field of Practical Theology: An Introduction* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014).
- Cameron, Helen, Deborah Bhatti, Catherine Duce, James Sweeney and Clare Watkins, *Talking About God in Practice: Theological Action Research and Practical Theology* (London: SCM, 2010).
- Cloke, Paul, Ian Cook, Philip Crang, Mark Goodwin, Joe Painter, and Chris Philo, *Practising Human Geography* (London and Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2004), chapter 6, 'Doing Ethnographies', pp.169–205.
- Crang, Mike, and Ian Cook, *Doing Ethnographies* (Los Angeles and London: SAGE, 2007).
- Osmer, Richard R., *Practical Theology: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008).
- Robinson, Leah (2023) *Bad Theology: Oppression in the Name of God* (London: SCM, 2023), chapter 1, 'Setting the Scene: Practical Theology as my Methodology', pp. 12–28.
- Scharen, Christian, *Fieldwork in Theology: Exploring the Social Context of God's Work in the World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015).
- Scharen, Christian, and Anna Marie Vigen, *Ethnography as Christian Theology and Ethics* (London and New York: Continuum, 2011).
- Slee, Nicola, Fran Porter and Anne Phillips (eds), *Researching Female Faith: Qualitative Research Methods* (London: Routledge, 2018).



Swinton, John and Harriet Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research* (London: SCM, 2006).  
Veling, Terry A., *Practical Theology: On Earth as It Is in Heaven* (New York: Orbis, 2005).  
Ward, Pete (ed.), *Perspectives on Ecclesiology and Ethnography* (Grand Rapids, MI and Cambridge UK: Eerdmans, 2012).

|                                |              |
|--------------------------------|--------------|
| <b>DATE OF CURRENT VERSION</b> | October 2023 |
|--------------------------------|--------------|

## Assessment Policy

The module descriptors set out the credit rating and assessment requirements.

### Submission of Work

IBTS considers that the appropriate submission of coursework according to an agreed policy is part of learning the academic discipline of study.

Students may (if desired) submit a draft assignment plan of c. 500 words by email to the module leader for comment prior to submitting the main written assignment. Dates for draft submission will be agreed by each module leader.

All coursework for marking should be submitted to the IBTS Academic Administrator: [administrator@ibts.eu](mailto:administrator@ibts.eu) with the subject line: Coursework for Marking.

In submitting course work students should seek to ensure that they pay attention to the following:

### Front Page

All coursework should have a front-page cover (see Appendix 1) that includes:

- The name of the module;
- The assessment question you are answering;
- Your student number (no name);
- The word count;
- Date of submission;
- The following declaration:

I certify that this assignment is the result of my own work with sources duly acknowledged by reference and footnoting and no portion of the work has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

### Presentation

- Work submitted should be in Word format.
- For the main text, double or 1.5 spacing with a minimum font size of 12 must be used; single-spacing may be used for quotations, footnotes and references.
- Page numbering must consist of one single sequence of Arabic numerals (ie 1, 2, 3...) throughout the assignment.

### Word count

Word count as stated for each written assignment includes footnotes but not bibliographies. It is permissible to submit work that is up to 10% over or under the stated word limit. However, work that exceeds the 10% rule will be penalised at 1 mark per 100 words.

### **Referencing and Bibliography**

IBTS expects referencing to be provided consistently throughout the assignment. Students will be introduced to a range of styles and formats as part of the initial Induction programme.

### **Plagiarism**

Students should be aware that assignments may be submitted to plagiarism checks using anti-plagiarism software.

### **Dates**

Individual modules will have their own submission dates. All work, however, to be considered by the Examination Board for the given academic year must be submitted by 13 November.

### **Formative Tasks**

Formative marking materials will not be kept by IBTS. The module tutor will confirm to the Examination Board that work has been completed for each student.

### **Marking**

Provisional marks and feedback for assessed coursework will usually be given to you **within twenty working days**. Confirmed marks will not be made available to students until after the relevant meeting of the Examination Board. Confirmed marks and results will be published as soon as possible (usually within one week) after meetings of the Examination Board.

Please note that once marks have been agreed by the Internal Examiners (Module leader and Internal Moderator) and issued to students, they remain provisional until the Examination Board. External Examiner(s) can request that marks are reviewed.

### **Pass Marks**

The pass mark for the PGCert programme is 50% in each module. To proceed to the next year of the doctoral programme, in addition to passing the PG Cert, a minimum of 65% obtained in the main written assignment of at least one module of the PGCert programme is required.

No provision is made for reassessment in case of a fail, other than as described in "Compensation" below or in the Mitigating Circumstances policy.

### **Progression to the Graduate School**

Progression into the Graduate School of the Faculty of Religion and Theology is dependent upon a number of factors outlined in the 'Research Journey: Stage 2' of this handbook. Students will be notified in September if the Academic Team have concerns about their progression to the Graduate School.

### **Compensation**

Compensation may apply to marks between 40 and 49 on the PGCert programme where the student has demonstrated academic ability in other modules.

Decisions regarding compensation will normally be made at the annual Examination Board, once the full profile of marks is known.

### **Late Submission of Coursework Policy**

IBTS operates a 'sliding scale' system of penalties for coursework submitted late. Any assessed coursework submitted after the deadline without good cause (see Mitigating Circumstances Policy) will incur a penalty determined by the lateness of its arrival:

- The mark awarded will reduce by 10 marks per day for 5 days (assuming a 0 -100 marking scale), after which a mark of zero will be awarded.
- Late work will be logged by the Programme Administrator, and students can expect to receive feedback on it in the normal way.

### **The Board of Examiners**

All assessment is under the control of the Board of Examiners, which includes all members of the Academic Team and the External Examiner.

External Examiners are individuals from another institution or organisation who monitor the assessment processes of the Centre to ensure fairness and academic standards. They ensure that assessment and examination procedures have been fairly and properly implemented and that decisions have been made after appropriate deliberation. They also ensure that standards of awards and levels of student performance are at least comparable with those in equivalent higher education institutions.

### **Transcripts**

You are entitled to one free copy of your academic record. Thereafter the fee will be €10.00 per copy.

IBTS will not release any academic records to students or any third party while any fees or other financial obligations to the IBTS are outstanding, unless arrangements have been made which are satisfactory to the Director. IBTS will not release transcripts of results to a third party without your express written instruction.

Please note that you will not be approved for graduation or receive a copy of your academic transcript whilst fees or other financial obligations are outstanding.

### **Student Support**

As a small institution, we believe we provide excellent student support through our Director, module tutors, administrative and library staff. Many of our staff have training and experience in pastoral care. Students can contact any member of IBTS academic or administrative staff for information about specific support.

### **Graduation**

There will not be a formal graduation ceremony for the PGCert.

The names which are printed on your certificate will be your full name as recorded in the IBTS student record and printed on your Academic Transcript. It is important therefore for you to check your registration form to ensure that your names are correctly recorded.

### **Quality Assurance**

IBTS is committed to maintaining and enhancing good practice. In order to assist in this task, you are asked to complete (anonymously, if you wish):

- Evaluation form at the end of Induction Week;
- Evaluation form at the end of each module;
- Evaluation form at the end of the Post Graduate Certificate programme.

These forms are then used to prepare a report for the module tutors. This feedback is discussed at an Academic Team meeting and the minutes will indicate appropriate action to be taken. Anecdotal comments given by students on these responses are also passed to the tutors. If issues are identified as a result of these surveys, appropriate action is taken by the Director. The results of these surveys are taken very seriously by the Academic Team as a means of helping them improve the overall programme.

## Assessment Criteria: written assignments

|  | 86 - 100  | 76 - 85  | 70 - 75   | 65 - 69  | 60 - 64  | 55 - 59   |
|--|---|--|---|--|--|---|
| <b>Fulfilment of learning outcomes</b> | <b>Fully satisfied at a consistently high level</b>   | <b>Amply satisfied at a high level</b>   | <b>Satisfied, many at a high level</b>  | <b>Satisfied, some at a high level</b>   | <b>Satisfied, many are more than satisfied</b>   | <b>Satisfied, some are more than satisfied</b>  |
| <b>Response to the question / task</b> | <b>Complete grasp and original, clear approach</b>  | <b>Comprehensive grasp, imaginative approach</b>   | <b>Comprehensive grasp and clear approach</b>   | <b>Very good grasp</b>   | <b>Good grasp</b>  | <b>Sound grasp</b>  |
| <b>Argument and reasoning</b>          | Outstanding, fluently articulated   | Excellent, fluently articulated  | Very good, lucidly articulated  | Good, flexible thought   | Good   | Incomplete  |
| Structure and analysis                 | Outstandingly clear and original structure reflecting analysis  | Excellent, clear, imaginative structure, independent analysis  | Excellent structure reflecting independent analysis   | Original and clear structure reflecting analysis   | Clear structure reflecting analysis  | Acceptable structure that partly reflects analysis  |
| Use of evidence                        | Effective and critical use of evidence  | Very effective use of evidence   | Effective use of evidence   | Well supported by evidence   | Supported by evidence  | Not consistently supported by evidence  |
| <b>Knowledge and understanding</b>     | Publishable quality; depth and breadth  | Potentially publishable; depth and breadth   | Excellent depth and breadth   | Very good depth and breadth  | Good depth and breadth   | Adequate depth and breadth  |
| Use of sources                         | Exceptionally extensive, critical engagement with 1 <sup>o</sup> and 2 <sup>o</sup> sources, at forefront of research | Extensive, critical engagement with 1 <sup>o</sup> and 2 <sup>o</sup> sources and at forefront of research | Critical engagement with 1 <sup>o</sup> and 2 <sup>o</sup> sources and at forefront of research | Effective engagement with 1 <sup>o</sup> and 2 <sup>o</sup> sources and at forefront of research | Effective engagement with 1 <sup>o</sup> and 2 <sup>o</sup> sources, some at forefront of research | Sound engagement with 1 <sup>o</sup> and 2 <sup>o</sup> sources, a few at forefront of research |
| Critical thinking                      | Exceptional research potential; creative, insightful and original, with critical depth                                | Excellent research potential; insightful and original with critical depth                                  | Able to work at doctoral level; high accuracy, insightful, independent analysis; critical       | Potential for research; good accuracy and critical insight                                       | Potential for research; good accuracy & some critical insight                                      | More descriptive than analytical; some inaccuracies but sound understanding                     |
| <b>Language and style</b>              | Lucid, fluent, imaginative and compelling   | Lucid, fluent and compelling   | Clear, fluent   | Very good, clear   | Good, clear  | Occasionally clumsy   |
| Presentation                           | Highest professional standards  | Professional standards   | Excellent standards   | Well presented; accurate referencing   | Clear; accurate referencing  | Adequate presentation & referencing   |
| <b>Overall impression</b>              | <b>Exemplary</b>  | <b>Outstanding</b>   | <b>Excellent</b>  | <b>Very good</b>   | <b>Good</b>  | <b>Acceptable</b>   |

|  | 50 - 54   | 40 - 49  | 30 - 39   | 20 - 29   | 10 - 19  | 0 - 9   |
|--|---|--|---|---|--|---|
| <b>Fulfilment of learning outcomes</b>   | <b>Satisfied</b>  | <b>Some are satisfied</b>  | <b>Few are satisfied</b>  | <b>Few, if any, are satisfied</b>                   | <b>Very few, if any, are satisfied</b>             | <b>None are satisfied</b>                             |
| <b>Response to the question / task</b>   | <b>Limited grasp</b>  | <b>Inadequate grasp</b>  | <b>Confused response only partly relevant</b>                         | <b>Little relevance to question / task</b>          | <b>Barely discernible relevance</b>                | <b>No discernible relevance</b>                       |
| <b>Argument and reasoning</b>  | Weak and narrow in parts  | Undeveloped  | Confused and incoherent   | Lack of relevance to task                           | No relevance                                       | None relevant to task                                 |
| Structure and analysis   | Structure and analysis do not correlate clearly                                   | Poor structure and analysis lacks clarity  | Very poor structure and unclear analysis                              | Very poor structure and confused analysis           | Barely discernible structure and confused analysis | No discernible structure or analysis                  |
| Use of evidence  | Inconsistent use of evidence  | Little supporting evidence   | Little supporting evidence  | Minimal   | Unsupported  | No discernible use of evidence                        |
| <b>Knowledge and understanding</b>   | Adequate breadth and depth but some gaps  | Patchy and inadequate grasp of field   | Partial and inadequate grasp of field                                 | Severely limited grasp of field                     | Barely discernible grasp of field                  | No grasp of field                                     |
| Engagement with some key literature, but with some omissions & little analysis | Adequate engagement with some key literature, but with some omissions             | Engagement with some relevant literature, but with many omissions & little analysis    | Marginal engagement with appropriate literature.                      | Almost no engagement with appropriate literature    | No relevant engagement with appropriate literature | No engagement with relevant or appropriate literature |
| Critical thinking  | More descriptive than critical or analytical; some inaccuracies but understanding | Mostly descriptive; inaccuracies and limited understanding; little critical evaluation | Almost entirely descriptive, some inaccuracies, lack of understanding | Lack of clarity, inaccuracies, little understanding | Meaning often unclear, very little understanding   | No critical thinking or understanding                 |
| <b>Language and style</b>  | Stilted writing style, some errors  | Poor vocabulary; grammatical and spelling flaws  | Very poor vocabulary; grammatical and spelling flaws                  | Poor spelling and grammar                           | Multitude of flaws                                 | Unacceptable  |
| Presentation   | Adequate presentation & referencing with some flaws                               | Poor presentation; incomplete referencing  | Poor presentation; inadequate referencing                             | Very poor; omissions, errors, irrelevant sources    | Very poor; omissions, errors, irrelevant sources   | Unacceptable; omissions, errors, irrelevant sources   |
| <b>Overall impression</b>  | <b>Adequate</b>   | <b>Inadequate</b>  | <b>Inadequate</b>   | <b>Unacceptable</b>                                 | <b>Unacceptable</b>                                | <b>Abysmal</b>  |



## **Post Graduate Research Certificate in Theology**

### **Assignment Coversheet**

**Module Title:**

**Assignment Title:**

**Student Number:**

**Word Count:**

**Date of Submission:**

### **Declaration**

I certify that this assignment is the result of my own work with sources duly acknowledged by reference and footnoting and no portion of the work has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

**Please note that marking is anonymous, and you should NOT include your name on any part of this assignment document.**





## Post Graduate Research Certificate

### Assignment Feedback Form

Module Title:

Student ID:

Assignment Title:

Submission Date:

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <b>Overall impression</b> (focus, fulfilment of LOs):                   |  |   |
| <b>Knowledge and Understanding</b> (depth, sources, critical thinking): |  |   |
| <b>Argument and Reasoning</b> (structure, analysis, evidence):          |  |   |
| <b>Language, Style and Presentation:</b>                                |  |   |
| <b>You Can Improve Your Work in Future Assignments By:</b>              |  |   |
| <b>Mark:</b>  | All marks are provisional until they have been confirmed by the Examination Board, at which point marks may be increased or decreased. | <b>Marker:</b><br><b>Internal Module Moderator:</b><br><b>Date:</b> |

## Academic Appeals Form

**If you intend to apply for a reconsideration of a recommended grade for any module, you must use this form. All sections of the form must be completed.**

The form and accompanying documentary evidence should be submitted to the administrator of IBTS **within 15 working days** of the publication of the result.

**You will be informed in writing of the outcome of your appeal in due course.**

Please note that appeals will not be considered against the academic judgement of the Examiners.

### SECTION A - YOUR DETAILS

**Title:**

**Forename(s):**

**Family Name:**

**Address:**

**Postcode:**

**Email address:**

**Programme of Study/Registration Number (if applicable)**

**Tel No:**

### SECTION B – STATEMENT OF APPEAL

**Please set out your case below or attach a separate statement.**

**Grounds of appeal are:**

Please tick as appropriate

**Extenuating circumstances which the student was unable to place, or for valid reasons did not place, before the Examiners.**

**Procedural error either by the Examiners or during the recording, transcription and reporting of the examination results and additionally.**

**Evidence of prejudice or bias or lack of proper assessment on the part of one or more of the Examiners.**

**b) My case:**

**Use the space below to explain in full the grounds on which your appeal is based:**

Describe in detail the circumstances you wish to raise; Identify the specific assessment/s affected and explain how they were affected; Be specific about the dates of the circumstances upon which your claim is based; Include documentary evidence to support your claim, where appropriate. Failure to do so may result in your appeal not being considered.

**c) The desired outcome of my academic appeal is given below (e.g. amendment of a module grade):**

**d) I attach the following documentary evidence in support of my academic appeal, as listed below:**

**Use an additional sheet if necessary. Please keep a copy of the form for your records.**

SECTION C - AN OUTLINE OF ANY ACTION YOU HAVE TAKEN SO FAR

**If you have already taken action to attempt to resolve the matter *informally*, please give details below:**

**With whom was it discussed?**

**Date:**

**Position:**

SECTION D – DECLARATION

**I believe that the above information is accurate.**

**Signature:** .....

**Date:** .....

## Mitigating Circumstances

Sometimes circumstances or events beyond a student's control may adversely affect their ability to complete an assessment or the results they obtain for an assessment. For this reason, IBTS has the following mitigation policy to ensure that there is an open and transparent means of dealing with such circumstances and that students are treated equitably.

### What is Mitigation?

Mitigation is the process of making allowance for circumstances beyond your control that may have adversely affected your ability to perform in an assessment to your full potential or to complete an assignment by the set deadline. Where such circumstances exist, it may be that marks or results will be treated in a way that recognises the adverse impact that may have resulted from those circumstances, or that penalties normally applied for late submission may be waived.

### Grounds for Mitigation

Grounds for mitigation are unforeseeable or unpreventable circumstances that could have, or did have, a significant adverse effect on the academic performance of a student.

It is important to remember that, to qualify for consideration, the adverse circumstances or events must be, or have been, unforeseeable or unpreventable as far as you are concerned, and sufficiently disruptive to have a significant adverse effect on your academic performance or your ability to complete assignments by the due date.

**Possible** mitigating circumstances include:

- significant illness or injury;
- worsening of an ongoing illness or disability, including mental health conditions;
- the death or critical/significant illness of a close family member/dependant;
- family crises or major financial problems leading to acute stress;
- absence for jury service or maternity, paternity or adoption leave.

Circumstances that **will not** normally be regarded as grounds for mitigation include:

- holidays, moving to a new house and events that were planned or could reasonably have been expected;
- assessments that are scheduled close together;
- misreading the timetable or misunderstanding the requirements for assessments;
- inadequate planning and time management;
- failure, loss or theft of a computer or printer that prevents submission of work on time: students should back up work regularly and not leave completion so late that they cannot find another computer or printer;
- consequences of paid employment;
- stress or panic attacks not supported by medical evidence.

### Requesting Mitigation

You are responsible for submitting your own request for consideration of mitigating circumstances.

You should approach the Programme Director as soon as possible if you consider that some serious illness or circumstance has adversely affected your ability to complete one or more assignments (even within an extended deadline), or if you believe that the results you might obtain from one or more assessments will be adversely affected.

You should first seek advice from the Programme Director as to whether the adverse circumstances are sufficient to warrant consideration. You should also seek advice as to whether it is in your interest to consider alternative remedies such as a deadline extension or re-scheduling of an assessment within a current assessment period. In very serious circumstances, you might even be best advised to interrupt your studies for a period.

If the Programme Director confirms that your circumstances merit consideration, you should submit in writing an official request for mitigation, together with any relevant documentation. The nature of such documentation will vary according to the nature of the circumstances, but it must be sufficiently independent to confirm the veracity of the case you are making (e.g. a letter or medical certificate signed by a medical practitioner, a document from an outside agency etc.).

You must submit any request for consideration of mitigation as soon as you are aware of the circumstances. You must put your application in writing to the Programme Director and must attach all relevant supporting documentation.

Requests for mitigation submitted after the published date for an assessment deadline will not be considered without a credible and compelling explanation as to why the circumstances were not known or could not have been shown beforehand.

Requests for mitigation following the publication of marks by the Examination Board will not be considered.

### **The Process of Considering Mitigation Requests**

Requests for mitigation will be heard by the Mitigation Consideration Committee (MCC), which will be made up from the Academic Staff of IBTS.

The MCC will respect the confidential nature of any information you provide in support of an application for consideration of mitigating circumstances.

The purpose of the committee is solely to establish the severity of the mitigating circumstances and to determine if they might have either a negligible or significant effect on the outcomes of the assessment.

The MCC will determine whether the circumstances cited were unforeseeable and unpreventable and that the effect on your academic performance would have been significant, making a case for approving mitigation. If viewed positively, the MCC will convey the findings to the Academic Team and Examination Board.

You will be notified of the decision of the MCC **within two working days** of the MCC's determination.

There can be no appeal against the decision of the MCC or the Examination Board save on the grounds of a failure of the MCC to follow the procedures outlined in this policy. An appeal must be made in writing to the Director who will ensure that it is addressed by the Appeals Committee.

You should be aware that information which is withheld from the MCC will not normally be admissible during any consideration of the MCC's report by the Academic Team or Examination Board. Information that is withheld for reason of embarrassment, shame or concerns over confidentiality will not be considered at a later stage nor be an acceptable basis on which to appeal the decision of the MCC.

If the mitigation request is submitted and agreed in advance of an assignment whose submission date has not yet passed, the report will be given to the IBTS Academic Team. Mitigation may take the form of an opportunity to submit the assignment at a later date.

If the mitigation request is submitted along with or following the submission of an assignment, the MCC will meet prior to the Examination Board and its report will be passed to the Examination Board.

It is the role of the Examination Board to take note of the report and consider any recommendations from the MCC and decide on appropriate action.

### **Possible Outcomes from Mitigation Requests**

Where reasonably possible, approved mitigating circumstances will be handled by flexibility in the arrangements for assessment, in discussion and upon agreement of the Examination Board.

Mitigation will not result in the changing of marks for an assignment once marked, other than the waiving of penalties for late submission if considered appropriate.

Mitigation may result in some marks being disregarded and the assessment being excused because it was adversely affected. If appropriate, you may also be given a mark for a whole module based on your performance in the parts that were not adversely affected.

## APPENDIX 2

### Supervision Record



### Annual Supervision Record

*(January colloquium)*

#### SECTION 1

*To be completed by the PhD CANDIDATE and sent to supervisors (copying IBTS at [administrator@ibts.eu](mailto:administrator@ibts.eu) ) prior to the colloquium supervision meeting.*

**Student name:**

**Supervisors' names:**

**List any contacts with supervisors for the past 12 months:**

**What work have you submitted to your supervisors since your last supervision?**

**What issues would you like to discuss in the supervision meeting? Please include here anything about content, process, or about supervision feedback (for example, what you find helpful and what is unclear).**

**Have you given or do you plan to give any academic presentations and if so, what and where?**

**If applicable, when do you expect to submit a full draft of your thesis?**

**Are there any additional comments you would like to make?**

## SECTION 2

*To be completed by the SUPERVISOR(S) by the end of January and a copy sent to the PhD candidate and administrator@ibts.eu. Students may upload the completed record to Hora Finita.*

**Comments on the PhD candidate's progress since the last supervision meeting:**

**Overall rating of the PhD candidate's progress to date (please tick one):**

Satisfactory\*       Unsatisfactory

**If 'Unsatisfactory' please state clearly the steps the student should take to reach a level of satisfactory progress:**

**Work the PhD candidate should undertake in the next 12 months:**

**Work to be submitted to you before next supervision (with dates):**

**Any additional comments:**

**Who attended the meeting?**

**Supervisor(s) Signatures:**

| <b>Name:</b> | <b>Date:</b> |
|--------------|--------------|
|              |              |
|              |              |
|              |              |

**\* Please note that satisfactory in these 'Supervision Records' do not guarantee the success of the PhD trajectory.**



## APPENDIX 3

### Library Information and Map



THE DTL

#### Using the Library Collections of IBTS Amsterdam

IBTS Amsterdam owns two separate libraries: 1) The **John Smyth Library** (a print research collection that specialises in Baptist/Anabaptist studies) and 2) The **Digital Theological Library** (a born-digital library of religious and theological studies). This leaflet explains how both libraries are available to visitors.

#### Digital Theological Library

Our growing electronic collection of well over 300,000 volumes is managed for us by the Digital Theological Library (DTL), which is jointly owned by IBTS Amsterdam and several other theological institutions worldwide. **Access barcodes** to the DTL will only be made available to staff and students of IBTS Amsterdam. Visitors can access the DTL resources when the librarian is present. The DTL catalogue is available at:

<http://www.digitaltheologicallibrary.org>

#### John Smyth Library

The John Smyth Library consists of roughly 41,000 volumes and is housed on the first floor of the Baptist House. Most of the collection is available in open stacks. You are kindly requested to **find** the book in the library **yourself** and check it out or in with the self-service unit. We share a library catalogue with the Theological Universities of Kampen and Apeldoorn. To search the print collection of the John Smyth Library please use the search box on our website at:

<https://www.ibts.eu/library/library-catalogue/>

## Using the John Smyth Library Catalogue

Our library catalogue has three branches: TU Kampen, TU Apeldoorn and John Smyth Library. The material from the TU Kampen and TU Apeldoorn libraries is physically located in Kampen and Apeldoorn and is **\*not\*** available to library users in Amsterdam. Only the items marked “John Smyth Library” are available in Amsterdam.

In the catalogue every book has a blue “Request” button. Only use this button when a book is checked out. Do not “Request” a book that is set to *Available* in the John Smyth Library (find it yourself in the library), or a book that is physically located in Kampen or Apeldoorn. Your request will be ignored.

## Finding a Book in the John Smyth Library

To find a book in the library, you need to make a note of the shelfmark as listed in the catalogue. Here’s an example of a shelfmark of a random book in our collection:

**John Smyth Library** *Open Stacks (Normal Loan)* 286.142 **G78611E**, 2009.

- **John Smyth Library** denotes the branch that holds the copy.
- *Open Stacks (Normal Loan)* denotes the shelving location in the library.

The next three elements are what’s printed on the book label.

- 286.142 is the Dewey number. It ranges from 000 to 999 and can be preceded by a prefix (OS/P1/P2/R/SEM/T).
- **G78611E** is the Cutter number and decides the (alphabetic) order of books on the shelf within the same Dewey number.
- 2009 represents the year of publication of the book. It is not present on every book.

Please refer to the map on the next page to find out where your book is located.

## Map of the John Smyth Library

|  |                        |   |
|--|------------------------|---|
| Open Stacks (Normal Loan) without prefix |                        | ISSR = International Society for Science and Religion |
| OS = Oversize                            | P1 = Bound Periodicals | P2 = Boxed Periodicals                                |
| R = Reference                            | SEM = Dutch Seminary   | T = Treasure  |

*Back of the library*

Johann Gerhard Oncken

|  |                 |               |  |          |          |
|--|-----------------|---------------|--|----------|----------|
| P1 C – E   | P2 A – Z        |               |  |          |          |
| <table border="1" style="margin: 5px auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="background-color: #fff2cc; padding: 2px;">P1 A – C</td></tr> <tr><td style="background-color: #d9ead3; padding: 2px;">R 423 – 999</td></tr> </table>          | P1 A – C        | R 423 – 999   | <table border="1" style="margin: 5px auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="background-color: #fff2cc; padding: 2px;">P1 F – I</td></tr> <tr><td style="background-color: #fff2cc; padding: 2px;">P1 I – J</td></tr> </table> | P1 F – I | P1 I – J |
| P1 A – C   |                 |               |  |          |          |
| R 423 – 999  |                 |               |  |          |          |
| P1 F – I   |                 |               |  |          |          |
| P1 I – J   |                 |               |  |          |          |
| <table border="1" style="margin: 5px auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="background-color: #d9ead3; padding: 2px;">R 280 – 422.03</td></tr> <tr><td style="background-color: #d9ead3; padding: 2px;">R 225.7 – 280</td></tr> </table>  | R 280 – 422.03  | R 225.7 – 280 | <table border="1" style="margin: 5px auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="background-color: #fff2cc; padding: 2px;">P1 J – M</td></tr> <tr><td style="background-color: #fff2cc; padding: 2px;">P1 M</td></tr> </table>     | P1 J – M | P1 M     |
| R 280 – 422.03   |                 |               |  |          |          |
| R 225.7 – 280  |                 |               |  |          |          |
| P1 J – M   |                 |               |  |          |          |
| P1 M   |                 |               |  |          |          |
| <table border="1" style="margin: 5px auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="background-color: #d9ead3; padding: 2px;">R 220.7 – 225.7</td></tr> <tr><td style="background-color: #d9ead3; padding: 2px;">R 000 – 220.7</td></tr> </table> | R 220.7 – 225.7 | R 000 – 220.7 | <table border="1" style="margin: 5px auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="background-color: #fff2cc; padding: 2px;">P1 M – R</td></tr> <tr><td style="background-color: #fff2cc; padding: 2px;">P1 S – Z</td></tr> </table> | P1 M – R | P1 S – Z |
| R 220.7 – 225.7  |                 |               |  |          |          |
| R 000 – 220.7  |                 |               |  |          |          |
| P1 M – R   |                 |               |  |          |          |
| P1 S – Z   |                 |               |  |          |          |

▼ OS bottom two shelves (entire row)

|              |                |
|--------------|----------------|
| OS 270 – 999 | 253.5 – 261    |
| OS 000 – 269 | 252.03 – 253.5 |

▲ OS bottom two shelves (entire row)

|              |             |
|--------------|-------------|
| 248 – 252.03 | 236.1 – 248 |
|--------------|-------------|

|               |             |
|---------------|-------------|
| 232.8 – 236.1 | 231 – 232.8 |
|---------------|-------------|

|                   |                   |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| 230.044 – 230.996 | 227.406 – 230.044 |
|-------------------|-------------------|

|                  |                |
|------------------|----------------|
| 225.77 – 227.406 | 221.8 – 225.77 |
|------------------|----------------|

|                |              |
|----------------|--------------|
| 220.09 – 221.8 | 192 – 220.09 |
|----------------|--------------|

|           |                    |
|-----------|--------------------|
| 000 – 192 | ISSR SEM 000 – 999 |
|-----------|--------------------|

▲ ISSR top two shelves (entire row)

OS bottom two shelves (entire row) ▼

|                 |             |
|-----------------|-------------|
| 261 – 261.7     | OS P1/R/SEM |
| 261.7 – 261.873 | T 204       |

T 204 bottom two shelves (entire row) ▲

|                      |                |
|----------------------|----------------|
| 261.873 – 265.940973 | 266 – 267.3924 |
|----------------------|----------------|

|                  |                    |
|------------------|--------------------|
| 267.4 – 270.2092 | 270.20935 – 274.15 |
|------------------|--------------------|

|                    |                    |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 274.15 – 280.40947 | 280.40947 – 284.24 |
|--------------------|--------------------|

|                   |                |
|-------------------|----------------|
| 284.24 – 286.1438 | 286.1438 – 292 |
|-------------------|----------------|

|             |                 |
|-------------|-----------------|
| 292 – 306.6 | 306.6 – 823.912 |
|-------------|-----------------|

|               |                              |
|---------------|------------------------------|
| 823.912 – 999 | New Acquisitions T 000 – 999 |
|---------------|------------------------------|

▲ T top and bottom three shelves (the rightmost section is staff use only)

*Library Entrance*

- The **Microfilm Cabinet** and the **Pamphlet Cabinet** are located in the front area of the library. Access to these resources is only allowed when the librarian is present.
- Some of the **Treasure** material is located in the librarian's workspace and can only be used under the librarian's supervision.
- Please note that T 204 is not located with the rest of the Treasure section.
- **New Acquisitions** will be shelved in the general collection once a year in February. Until that time, limited borrowing might be possible. Please talk to the librarian.

## APPENDIX 4

### Moodle Policy

The IBTS eLearning environment, Moodle, is provided for the purposes of teaching and learning. In using the environment, you need to be aware of the following conditions of use and comply with the following rules and guidelines:

1. All users must be registered as students or staff at the International Baptist Theological Study Centre Amsterdam or have a current personal or institutional subscription to any of our journals.
2. Users will only be allowed access to the courses that are relevant to the nature of their relationship with IBTS.
3. Users are not allowed to distribute any of the electronic resources available through Moodle. The resources are intended strictly for personal and educational use.
4. Users are responsible for maintaining security around your login to Moodle. Under no circumstances should you give out your password to others or allow others to login under your account.
5. Moodle users are prohibited from composing, or submitting via attachments, any material that is, unlawful, threatening, abusive, or encourages conduct that would constitute a criminal offence. E-mail, messaging or chat must not be used to harass, intimidate, or otherwise annoy another person.
6. Moodle must not be used for any form of commercial gain (e.g. promotion, solicitation) that is not approved by IBTS.
7. Use of the platform is logged, and records are kept of all activities and contributions to the site. As with all online sites, activity on Moodle should not be regarded as private or confidential.
8. Users must not misrepresent IBTS or bring it into disrepute in any way through the use of the IBTS Moodle.
9. Users are expected to respect the right to privacy of others. No inappropriate use should be made of others' personal information or post private information or contact details (e.g. address, email) about another person.
10. Personal contact information that users choose to update or record on this site may be used for communication regarding your contact with IBTS. IBTS will never pass on personal details to any external organisation for marketing purposes.
11. IBTS reserves the right to remove messages, images or other content at its discretion should these be deemed to contravene this acceptable use policy.
12. These terms and conditions are subject to change without prior notice and at the discretion of the institution.

A violation of any of the above terms will result in immediate suspension or removal of your access to this site.

## APPENDIX 5

### The VU FRT PhD Programme Key Dates

|  | Summer Cohort                     | Winter Cohort                    |
|--|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Deadline for submitting registration documents to join the Graduate School | 1 February (year 1)               | 1 September (year 1)             |
| Start of Graduate School membership  | 1 June (year 1)                   | 1 January (year 1)               |
| Start of PhD trajectory  | 1 September (year 1)              | 1 February (year 1)              |
| Deadline for submitting proposal to the PPAC                               | 1 September (year 1)<br>+ 1 year  | 1 February (year 1)<br>+ 1 year  |
| Deadline for the go/no-go moment Start of Graduate School membership       | 1 September (year 1)<br>+ 2 years | 1 February (year 1)<br>+ 2 years |
| Deadline for submitting dissertation                                       | 1 September (year 1)<br>+ 8 years | 1 February (year 1)<br>+ 8 years |

Note: The years (year 1 etc) in this table relate to the Graduate School timeline (with year 1 for the Summer cohort beginning on 1 February and for the Winter Cohort on 1 September), which is different to the years numbered in the IBTS/VU timeline (appendix 6) that shows the process starting from the earlier date of submission of pre-proposals, something which precedes the other registration documents.

## APPENDIX 6

### Timeline VU FRT PhD Trajectory

VU Winter Cohort   VU Summer Cohort

| Year 1   | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May              | June | July | Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov              | Dec |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|------------------|------|------|-----|------|-----|------------------|-----|
| Pre-proposals to GS  |     |     |     |     | VU Winter cohort |      |      |     |      |     | VU Summer cohort |     |
| Registration documents to GS (deadline 01.09)                    |     |     |     |     |                  |      |      |     |      |     |                  |     |
| VU supervisors assigned  |     |     |     |     |                  |      |      |     |      |     |                  |     |
| IBTS supervisors assigned  |     |     |     |     |                  |      |      |     |      |     |                  |     |
| Submit TSP final version (by 15.12)                              |     |     |     |     |                  |      |      |     |      |     |                  |     |
| Year 2   | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May              | June | July | Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov              | Dec |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> In-person supervision team meeting               |     |     |     |     |                  |      |      |     |      |     |                  |     |
| Registration documents to GS (deadline 01.02)                    |     |     |     |     |                  |      |      |     |      |     |                  |     |
| VU supervisors assigned  |     |     |     |     |                  |      |      |     |      |     |                  |     |
| Submit TSP final version (by 15.05)                              |     |     |     |     |                  |      |      |     |      |     |                  |     |
| Acceptance into the GS (member of the GS)                        |     |     |     |     |                  |      |      |     |      |     |                  |     |
| Start of VU PhD Trajectory                                       |     |     |     |     |                  |      |      |     |      |     |                  |     |
| GS Q&A session for students & supervisors                        |     |     |     |     |                  |      |      |     |      |     |                  |     |
| VU Scientific Integrity course                                   |     |     |     |     |                  |      |      |     |      |     |                  |     |
| Year 3   | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May              | June | July | Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov              | Dec |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> In-person supervision team meeting               |     |     |     |     |                  |      |      |     |      |     |                  |     |
| Deadline for proposal to PPAC* (01.02/01.09)                     |     |     |     |     |                  |      |      |     |      |     |                  |     |
| Official Hora Finita Registration (doctoral student)             |     |     |     |     |                  |      |      |     |      |     |                  |     |
| Year 4   | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May              | June | July | Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov              | Dec |
| Deadline for go/no-go moment (01.02 / 01.09)                     |     |     |     |     |                  |      |      |     |      |     |                  |     |
| Year 9   | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May              | June | July | Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov              | Dec |
| Deadline for dissertation submitted to Hora Finita (01.02/01.09) |     |     |     |     |                  |      |      |     |      |     |                  |     |

\* if required, after ethical clearance.

GS = Graduate School  
 PPAC = PhD Proposal Advisory Committee  
 Q&A = Question and Answer  
 TSP = Training and Supervision Plan

## APPENDIX 7

### Gender-inclusive language at IBTS

IBTS is a growing and changing research and learning community. One area of development is that IBTS is looking to increase the number of women students on the PhD programme. Women currently are a numerical minority within the student body of the doctoral programme, something that is visible within individual student cohorts and at our annual colloquium. This low visibility is also often reflected in our speech, not least in our times of worship together, when we use gender-exclusive language, which does not recognise women's presence in the community and amplifies men's presence. At IBTS we seek to be a Christ-centred space; in part, this means being attentive to dynamics such as these that exclude and distort, and working to ensure that IBTS is a hospitable place for women scholars.

Language both shapes and reflects social and cultural (including religious/theological) attitudes, structures and behaviours. 'Seeing speech as a kind of action'<sup>1</sup> is helpful in understanding the part language plays in our lives. The language we use can help or hinder women's access to, and participation in, theological education; hence, language plays its part in the pursuit of justice. At IBTS, therefore, we foster the use of gender-inclusive or gender-neutral language when speaking of humanity in our worship, research, conversations, communications and community.

Among the diversity of languages spoken by members of the IBTS community, there are different types of grammatical gender, which adds complexity for those working with more than one language:

**Grammatical gender languages** (such as Bulgarian, Czech, French, German, Italian, Russian, Spanish and Ukrainian). In these languages, every noun has a grammatical gender and the gender of personal pronouns usually matches the reference noun. It is not possible to talk about a book, mountain, or grapefruit, for example, without each having a grammatical gender assigned.

**Natural gender languages** (such as Danish, English and Swedish). In these languages, personal nouns are mostly gender-neutral (book, mountain and grapefruit are not gendered) and there are personal pronouns specific for each gender ('he, him, his' for males and 'she, her, hers' for females).

**Genderless languages** (such as Estonian, Finnish and Hungarian). These languages have no grammatical gender and no pronominal gender.

Different types of language require different approaches to being gender-inclusive or gender-neutral. In English, the common language used at IBTS, not excluding women in language can involve both gender-inclusive (sometimes called gender-sensitive) phrasing, such as 'The women and men on the PhD Programme at IBTS', and gender-neutral language, such as, 'The

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<sup>1</sup> Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen, ed., *After Eden: Facing the Challenge of Gender Reconciliation* (Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans: 1993), p. 344.



students on the PhD Programme at IBTS'. Gender-neutral language is often more succinct than gender-inclusive language ('students' is shorter than 'women and men'). On the other hand, gender-inclusive language gives linguistic visibility to women, and therefore actively contributes to challenging the unspoken assumption that maleness represents the human norm, which remains unchallenged when hidden behind gender-neutral language. For, when we think of a representative human person, the tendency is to think male; we have the English idiom 'man in the street' to mean a typical or ordinary person. And when we use neutral terms like 'people', 'human being', 'adult', 'person', 'citizen', 'voter', 'resident', it is usually a male figure we imagine. Therefore, using gender-neutral phrasing is less able to disrupt the male-as-human-norm bias embedded in our culture. (Maleness as the human norm, with the inbuilt assumption that femaleness is a deviation from or subordinate to the norm, is the rationale behind claiming the terms 'man' and 'men' can refer to women – something that is inconsistent with the claim that English is a natural gender language.)

How we speak of God can reinforce these same dynamics that occur in our language for each other. As humanity is made up of female and male persons, it is a matter of justice that this is reflected in our language for one another. As humanity is created in the image of God, it is also a matter of justice to reflect the fullness of that humanity in our metaphorical language for God.

While it takes time to inculcate changes so they become rooted in our practice and hence get used in spontaneous situations (such as conversations and extemporary prayer), where prepared worship, presentations and academic work are concerned, ensure you pay attention to using gender-inclusive or gender-neutral language when speaking of human beings. You might also think about the language you use for the divine. To pay attention to the language we use is to participate in creating a Christ-centred space that witnesses to the Christian story of the worth and dignity of every human person as those created in the image of God.

### **Suggestions and Resources**

If gender-inclusive or gender-neutral English language is new to you and English is not your first language, this can seem like one more task to take on in producing academic work in English. However, the sooner you begin to adopt gender-inclusive or gender-neutral terminology, the more you will get used to it, and it will help you in the long run by not having to make changes in your academic work later on.

**Using 'they' as a personal pronoun.** One of the most common phrasing issues that arises for us in our speaking and writing is dealing with pronouns for someone in a general category – such as: a church member, a reader, a leader, a student, a supervisor, a theologian. It has been standard practice to use: 'Should a reader care to investigate, he will find this out for himself.' Or, 'How a theologian approaches his task, will determine the work he produces.' Such wording may be intended to include women as well as men, but as noted above, it carries with it both the invisibility of women and fosters the idea that women as theologians is not normative.

In English, the use of 'they' and 'themselves' is grammatically correct to refer to plural and singular. Hence, 'Should a reader care to investigate, they will find this out for themselves.'

Or, 'How a theologian approaches their task, will determine the work they produce.'  
Publishing and editing conventions accept 'they' as a useful and accurate pronoun for both plural and singular situations.

Publishers and editors tend not to like switching between using he/him and she/her in an effort to show balance or be inclusive. This is very strongly discouraged. As is using he/she, or s/he, for example, 'should the reader care to investigate, he/she will find this out'. Rather, use, 'Should the reader care to investigate, they will find this out.'

There are occasions when a particular use of personal pronouns is made as part of an argument. For example, a feminist discourse may use feminine forms as generic terms in order to illustrate a point. In such instances, the particular use can be explained to both clarify and reinforce the point being made.

An alternative approach to using personal pronouns is to reword the sentence to avoid using them at all. So, 'Should the reader care to investigate, they will find this out' becomes 'Further investigation would show this to be the case'.

**Bias-Free Language.** Gender-inclusive language fits within the broader area of bias-free language, which is about referring to all people with respect and being careful in our writing neither to exclude people nor to perpetuate (however unintentionally) demeaning stereotypes or derogatory attitudes.

**Resources.** Unfortunately, the three books listed are not available as e-books. However, there is a useful online publication that gives a variety of examples you may find helpful, and which also has links to other online resources. You may also find that guides to the referencing style you use contains helpful information about inclusive and/or bias-free language.

- [Non-Sexist Language Manual: A Tool for Inclusive Language](#), produced by metropolis.org.
- *The Handbook of Nonsexist Writing*, by Casey Miller and Kate Swift, 2d ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1988)
- *Guidelines for Bias-Free Writing*, by Marilyn Schwartz and the Task Force on Bias-Free Language of the Association of American University Presses (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995).
- *The Dictionary of Bias-Free Usage: A Guide to Non-discriminatory Language*, by Rosie Maggio (Phoenix: Oryx Press, 1991).