

10<sup>th</sup> June, 2022

Professor Ian Campbell  
Vice-Chancellor, University of Wolverhampton  
Cc. Professor Julia Clarke, Deputy Vice-Chancellor

Dear Prof. Campbell,

We write as representatives of the British Association for the Study of Religions and the Society for the Study of Theology to communicate our strong concern at the University of Wolverhampton's plans to suspend courses in the humanities, including those in philosophy and religion.

It is a vital task of all universities to enable the study of subjects that are crucial to sustain the goods of a diverse and pluralistic society. Our colleagues working in the study of religion at Wolverhampton enable the University to make a substantial contribution to this task. They have expertise in religious traditions that are most significant in the University's locality: Islam, Sikhism, and Hinduism. They study these religions as lived traditions, enabling students to visit local religious communities and engage in conversation with their members. Their work establishes the University as a unique space in which diverse religious traditions encounter one another in a secular space on equal terms.

All universities have stringent responsibilities in relation to diversity and inclusion. Religious literacy is a precondition for all work in this area, especially in a local context as religiously diverse as Wolverhampton. The expertise of academics with detailed knowledge of diverse traditions and local networks with religious communities is a vital asset for the University's work in this area. Religious literacy is also a key employability skill for anyone seeking roles that engage this diverse public. The governmental Department for Levelling Up incorporates the brief for religion and is moving to Wolverhampton, which represents a new strategic opportunity for the University, provided it is prepared to retain its valuable asset of academic researchers with this essential expertise.

We recognise that the University is not unique in needing to respond to challenges in relation to changing patterns of undergraduate recruitment. We encourage you to consider ways in which the University may retain its unique expertise and networks in relation to local religious communities while generating the income required to sustain them. There may be opportunities to replace income from current falls in undergraduate recruitment with income from shorter intensive courses providing professional service qualifications. Another indication of demand for the subject is the current severe shortage of qualified secondary teachers in Religious Education with degree-level expertise in the subject. The study of religion is not a subject in decline; the expertise it enables is more urgently required than ever.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Suzanne Owen  
Secretary  
British Association for the Study of Religions



Professor David Clough  
President  
Society for the Study of Theology