



# MASTERS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMME

## Introducing the Culham St Gabriel's Masters Scholarship

*Learn, grow and challenge yourself in the study of religion and worldviews*

*I am more away of community groups that support RE. My Masters has been recognised locally and this means it has been a springboard to other new opportunities e.g. blogging, writing articles (Secondary Teacher)*

*I've really enjoyed the networking links made through my Masters study, and can see how accessible research is for teachers (Primary teacher)*

*I've increased my religion and worldviews subject knowledge and am more confident to teach Key Stage 5 (Secondary Teacher)*



CULHAM ST GABRIEL'S

**Deadline for applications Masters Scholarship 2021-22 is  
Friday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2021.**

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## Introduction

**What is the Culham St Gabriel's Masters Scholarship?** The Culham St Gabriel's Masters Scholarship is a way to help teachers of religion and worldviews (RE) to take a relevant part-time Masters course in an affordable, manageable way. It is a unique programme based on a four-way partnership between the teacher/TA/HLTA, their school, the university and Culham St Gabriel's Trust. It offers the teacher an opportunity to take Masters-level professional development at reduced cost, and to see the impact of it in their own teaching, in a local network and/or nationally. There are a limited number of scholarship places allocated each year.

**What is the four-way partnership?** The scholarship programme involves partnership working between the Trust, the school and the teacher/TA/HLTA and your chosen university.

**Culham St Gabriel's Trust** – contribute up to £1950 of the fee per year for two years<sup>1</sup>, provide a virtual community of practice and consultant support.

**The school**- agree to allow the teacher three days of non-contact time during term-time per annum to work on their Masters study (see Appendix 2)

**The teacher/TA/HLTA** – pay the remainder of the fee

**The university provider** – leading and supporting you in your Masters study

**Who are Culham St Gabriel's Trust?** We are an endowed charitable foundation. Our vision is for a broad-based, critical and reflective education in religion and worldviews contributing to a well-informed, respectful and open society. The Trust is committed to providing teachers of religion and worldviews with the support, connections, challenges and professional development they need. For more information see Appendix 1.

**What is Culham St Gabriel's offering?** Culham St Gabriel's will pay up to £1,950 per year of your fees for up to two years for a Masters course<sup>2</sup>. This course **must relate to religion and worldviews**, and align with the Culham St Gabriel's vision, mission and current strategic objectives. You will become a member of the Culham St Gabriel's Masters Scholarship virtual community of practice. This community will be meet virtually together on a regular basis providing opportunities for you to discuss your research and disseminate your findings. Participants will also be encouraged to network more informally.

**What is expected of the school?** The teacher's school is expected to contribute to the scholarship programme in kind. The headteacher will asked to sign an undertaking declaring that they will release the teacher for 3 days (or equivalent e.g. half days) during term time per annum to undertake Masters study. This could be one day per term, three days in one term or whatever works best in your school.

**What is expected of the teacher?** You are asked to make up the university fee i.e. the difference between the bursary funding and tuition fee total required by the university. You

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<sup>1</sup> Or £1300 per annum if the course is 3 years part-time.

<sup>2</sup> Or £1300 per annum if the course is 3 years part-time.. If you have any questions please contact the Culham St Gabriel's Office [scholarship@cstg.org.uk](mailto:scholarship@cstg.org.uk)

may want to ask your school to contribute to this, and can seek grant funding elsewhere if you wish. You are expected to contribute to a virtual community of practice with your time. There will also be other optional opportunities to contribute to the religion and worldviews community such as writing a blog for RE:ONLINE or sharing your research findings through an online seminar hosted by Culham St Gabriel's.

**Am I eligible for the Masters Scholarship? You need to be:**

- employed as a qualified teacher, teaching assistant or HLTA in a school in the UK;
- intending to take a part-time Masters-level Certificate, Diploma or complete Masters programme, that **relates directly to the teaching of religion and worldviews** in your classroom and school. More detail about this criterion is given in the following section;
- intending your accredited study to directly lead to development, innovation and improvement in religion and worldviews in your school, local area or region and/or nationally;
- supported by your employing school agreeing to release you for 3 days per annum during term time for the length of your course in order to undertake your studies.

## For teachers of religion and worldviews (RE)

**Do I have to be a qualified specialist RE teacher?** No. You need to be teaching religion and worldviews (RE) in a primary, secondary or special school or academy in the UK, and you need to be a qualified, serving teacher, Teaching Assistant or HLTA.

**Which Masters course can I choose?** You can choose **any classroom-relevant part-time Masters course** which provides an opportunity for you to focus on religion and worldviews either through module work and/or as a dissertation. A small number of Masters programmes offer specific religion and worldviews (RE) pathways. Other Masters courses are more generic focussing more widely on education, or educational leadership, or theology and religious studies. You will be required to show clearly how your chosen course aligns with the Culham St Gabriel's vision, mission and strategic objectives on the application form. These criteria are set out in Appendix 1. Many part-time Masters courses are delivered through twilights, weekends or distance learning to support teachers who are also working full or part-time.

**What do we mean by education in religion and worldviews?** Our understanding of religion and worldviews is aligned with the proposed Statement of Entitlement in the Commission on RE Report (2018)<sup>3</sup>. The Trust advocates for the importance of education in religion and worldviews because it prepares pupils for life in a complex world. It enables them to become free thinking, respectful, critical participants of public discourse, who can make academically well-informed judgements about important matters of religion and belief. To secure funding you need to be able to demonstrate that you share this understanding.

**How might it support my personal professional learning?** There are a number of different reasons why you might want to undertake Masters study for your own professional learning. For example, to:

- Develop your subject knowledge to be more confident in teaching religion and worldviews;
- Use research perspectives to improve the quality of religion and worldviews in your school;
- Undertake your own action-based research to improve the quality of religion and worldviews in school
- Understand how the purpose, planning, teaching and assessment of religion and worldviews have changed in the light of national and international developments;
- Work and network with other professionals in religion and worldviews, and other subjects;
- Develop your CV and prepare for greater responsibility as a subject coordinator or head of department.

**What is the virtual community of practice?** In 2020-21 we set up a virtual community of practice for Culham St Gabriel's Scholars. This is a forum to share/discuss your research and/or ask questions about others' research. The group includes those in their second/third

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<sup>3</sup> Commission on RE (2018) p.12-13

year of a Masters course so you can learn from them as you begin your course. You will receive details about this once you are accepted onto the programme. In addition to this, you will be supported by our Lead Consultant for Research, Dr Kevin O'Grady. Kevin will have brief one-to-one conversations with you to offer support, encouragement and sometimes challenge about once a term.

**What impact will my research have? How will I disseminate it?** As the Trust is providing grant funding for you to undertake a Masters programme it will want to see the impact your studies have. What outcomes are you expecting? Do they relate to you, your school and the wider education community? How will you measure the extent to which you have achieved these outcomes? We realise that when you complete the application form your ideas around this may be tentative. However, it is important that you have considered these questions carefully. In addition, think about how you can utilise current networks and hubs that you are involved with to disseminate your research, as well as new ways that you may not have considered before such as through RE:ONLINE blogs or RE Today Magazine.

**What if I change my dissertation research focus part way through my course?** You will be asked on the application form to give some ideas about your dissertation. We realise that these ideas are not fully formed when you apply. Usually the dissertation is agreed at the beginning of a second year of a part-time Masters, although this can vary from University to University. In addition, we are aware that your context might change or that your school may have particular priority areas. For this reason, you will be asked to confirm your dissertation title with the Trust prior to beginning work on it. As long as your title is related to religion and worldviews, and aligns with the Trust vision, mission and strategic objectives any change would normally be approved. Please note: If the focus of your dissertation is not about religion and worldviews funding may be withdrawn.

**What do I receive at the end of the Masters scholarship programme?** We hope of course, that you will be awarded your Masters qualification, but in addition you will receive a certificate from Culham St Gabriel's stating that you have become one of our scholars. Your name will also be published on our website as someone who has been part of the scholarship programme.

## For Head Teachers and School Governors

**What benefits will this Masters scholarship programme bring to my school?** Masters study brings many benefits for the individual teacher, but also to the school. Teachers who undertake Masters study will reflect on their practice and improve their teaching skills. They will develop research methods which can be shared with colleagues. Masters study helps teachers in their ability to analyse data sets and become up to date with policy developments both within and beyond their own discipline. In addition, the teacher's dissertation may be linked to a school priority. For example, if a school has a priority area such as improving outcomes for dyslexic pupils, the teacher of RE could focus on this area from an RE perspective.

**How can Masters study support Ofsted preparation?** Recent Ofsted reports<sup>4</sup> have highlighted the need for subject specific high-quality professional development for teachers of RE. In particular reports have noted the need for curricula to be well planned and sequenced enabling pupils to learn RE in depth so they can remember and apply what they have learned. Ofsted have also stressed the valuable contribution RE makes to pupils' personal development, as well the development of respect and preparing pupils for life in modern Britain.

**Why Religion and Worldviews (RE)?** An education in religion and world views is more important now than ever before. We live in a world that is increasingly diverse. Understanding religious and non-religious worldviews is essential if people are to live and work well together in our communities. The Commission on RE (2018) cites a number of reasons why the subject is important. These include: to develop pupils' ability to engage with important aspects of human experience; provide insights into science, culture, history and politics, develop values such as respect and empathy; challenge stereotypes and promote community cohesion.

**How much will this cost my school?** There is **no monetary contribution** required from the school. The school is asked to commit to providing three days of non-contact time per annum during term time for the teacher to undertake their Masters work. There are a variety of ways a school may manage this. For example, this might be half a day per half term, or a day a term. It may be easier in secondary schools for the days to be blocked e.g. after GCSE/A level exams. The school is required to sign an undertaking agreeing to this provision.

**Can our school apply for more than one teacher to go on the scholarship programme?** Yes, more than one teacher from a school can apply. Each application will be considered on its own merit.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.natre.org.uk/uploads/Photos/Ofsted%20Primary%20Reports%20Autumn%202019.pdf> and <https://www.natre.org.uk/uploads/Free%20Resources/Ofsted%20Update%20-Religious%20Education.pdf>

## Applying for the Masters Scholarship programme

**You can apply for the Masters Scholarship between January and June 2021. The deadline for applications is 25<sup>th</sup> June 2021. You will be notified about the outcome of your application by 31<sup>st</sup> July. Scholarship places are limited and each application is considered on its merit and alignment with the Trust's strategic objectives.**

1. Select a university and Masters course. Choose a university with the right course for you and the right mix of provision, i.e. twilight, school-based or weekends. Have a conversation with the relevant course leader. Make them aware of the scholarship programme.
2. Apply for a place on the relevant Masters programme.
3. At the same time, talk to your Head or senior leader in charge of professional development. You need to ensure that they will agree to releasing you for three days per annum as part of the scholarship programme. Remember that Culham St Gabriel's will only pay its share of the fees (up to £1,950 per year for two years) if the school promises to release you for this amount of time.
4. When a Masters place is offered, you must contact Culham St Gabriel's by completing the [scholarship application form](#). This application form asks you to state clearly how your course relates to religion and worldviews, as well as with the Trust vision, mission and strategic objectives (see Appendix 1). There are [guidance notes](#) accompanying the form which we encourage you to read. There are conditions of the funding which you must agree to in your application.
5. Once you have submitted your form, send the following to the Culham St Gabriel's Office [scholarship@cstg.org.uk](mailto:scholarship@cstg.org.uk)
  - i. Documentary proof of your school's commitment to release you for three days per annum (See Appendix 2)
  - ii. Documentary proof of your having accepted a place on a Masters programmes (i.e. an offer letter, details of the course and your acceptance)
6. When we have received your application form and two supporting documents, we will request two references. Names of referees will have been named on your application form.
7. All applications, supporting documents and references are then considered by the Trust after 25<sup>th</sup> June 2021.
8. You will be notified by 31<sup>st</sup> July whether you have successfully been accepted on to the programme. If you are unsuccessful, we will discuss other options with you.

9. When you are accepted on to the programme it is very important that you ask your university finance department to send two invoices, one to Culham St Gabriel's and one to you. It is very important that you make clear to the university finance department exactly who they should send invoices to, and how much they should charge in each case.

10. Culham St Gabriel's will send you a welcome pack explaining how to become part of the virtual community of practice and details of ongoing support and advice offered for scholars.

# Appendix 1

## Culham St Gabriel's Trust

### Our Vision

Our vision is for a broad-based, critical and reflective education in religion and worldviews contributing to a well-informed, respectful and open society.

### Our Mission

As a Trust we will work towards this vision by:

- Increasing public understanding of religion and worldviews education
- Engaging with, informing and influencing decision makers
- Creating well-informed, empowered and influential educationalists
- Establishing and building strategic and collaborative partnerships and networks
- Commissioning and publishing focused and accessible research
- Championing and developing inspired and well-resourced teaching and learning

### Our Values

Our mission is underpinned and expressed through our values, rooted in our Christian foundation. These are:

**Integrity:** We aim to be honest, ethical, authentic, kind, dependable and trustworthy in the way we work.

**Openness:** We aim to be transparent; listening to others, valuing diversity and sharing our work

**Stewardship:** We aim to ensure a good return on our investments, and use time and resources effectively

**Service:** We aim to be responsive, generous and available to all our partners

**Collaboration:** We aim for positive relationships with an emphasis on partnership and collaborative working

**Empowerment:** We aim to facilitate others to grow in confidence, be creative and bring about change

### Our Strategic Objectives

1. Promoting positive public perception of an education in religion and worldviews
2. Influencing government policy in supporting religion and worldviews, including the recommendations of the Commission on RE (2018)
3. Advocating for the importance of a high-quality education in religion and worldviews within the education world
4. Developing excellent leadership and teaching of religion and worldviews
5. Facilitating the Religion and Worldviews community to work more cohesively.

## Appendix 2

This form is available to download as a pdf [here](#)

### Headteacher Undertaking \*

I \_\_\_\_\_ (name)

On behalf of \_\_\_\_\_ (name of school)

Address \_\_\_\_\_ (address of school)

.....

agree to

1. support (name of teacher/TA/HLTA) in their application to the Culham St Gabriel's Masters scholarship programme

and

2. to release (name of teacher/TA/HLTA) for three days per annum for the next two academic years during term time to undertake their Masters study.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

This form can be completed electronically with an electronic signature (but not typed) and emailed to [scholarship@cstg.org.uk](mailto:scholarship@cstg.org.uk)

\*If you work in more than one school you must have the agreement of all headteachers. They will each need to complete a form. If you lead and teach RE across a MAT or cluster of schools you must have the signed agreement of your MAT lead, Executive Head or Principal as appropriate.