

## VOICE FILE NAME: Professor O'Donovan

Hello, my name is Oliver O'Donovan and I am Director of the Postgraduate School of Divinity here at the University of Edinburgh. The Postgraduate School of Divinity was founded in 1919 and is therefore one of the oldest in the United Kingdom. And it was founded in response to the needs of a mainly international community coming to the University of Edinburgh. And it retains a very strong international component to this day. Seventy five percent of our graduate students in the School are from outside the United Kingdom. We are also one of the largest in the United Kingdom. We have an intake of around seventy postgraduate students each year. Of whom, thirty will be coming into the PhD programme. What draws people here? Well...it's what draws people to do research in any really worthwhile place. It is the character and quality of the scholars who are assembled here in this place. We have a full time academic staff of twenty seven members. And in the last research assessment exercise conducted within Britain, the published work was deemed to be thirty percent world leading in terms of originality, significance and rigour. This is a very high accolade. And places Edinburgh in the first three or four of Divinity Schools in the United Kingdom. But even more important, it seems to me, in a major University is the penumbra of scholars, visiting, retired, engaged in teaching in other institutions whom naturally gather around this place, use its facilities, join in its conversations. Make it more than it's core staff. Make it a real University with constant discussions going on. Edinburgh is a place where you meet the most interesting and world leading figures in the field who will come through here at some stage giving lectures, giving seminars, generally wanting to meet up with the community here. This is what draws students to us. And of course where students are drawn other students are drawn. And one of the most important parts of a graduate school education, a research programme is fellow students. To know that you are going to be working with and talking to some of the most able people in your field and in your generation. And many of us as we look back on our own postgraduate years remember not only our mentors and our teachers but also our fellow students who are frequently leading the subject elsewhere in the world. People are drawn here by a world class library with some very rare and exciting volumes in it. Many of them historical. Right on site here at New College in the heart of the city of Edinburgh where we do our work. Ten paces away from the front door. I should say something about the structure of British PhD programmes because many of you who are watching this may join in enquiries in the next couple of days, will be from overseas and our expectations will not be immediately familiar to you. The standard form of a doctoral programme in Britain is referred to economically as one plus three. That is it's expected that it will be a programme of about four years, of which the first will be a probationer or masters year. And when people apply to us and we suggest they do a masters programme, this isn't a brush off. This is very frequently the best way in to doing some really serious and well focused research. Our concern in all our admissions programmes is to make sure that people are really ready to get the best out of their time in Edinburgh. And sometimes the best way in is through a tailored masters programme that is conceived deliberately as the way into a research programme. We have five taught masters programmes here which we offer regularly as well as research based masters programmes. Our taught programmes are in ethics, theology and history, world Christianity, religious studies and biblical studies. And also there is a programme in ministry that is offered every second year. Within these programmes people get into the research areas that occupy our academic staff. And are able to prepare themselves to add to that great research effort. Our subject areas are in theology and ethics, in biblical studies, ecclesiastical history, world Christianity again and religious studies. And I do want to stress that besides what are seen as the classic disciplines of Christian theology, systematic theology, historical theology, biblical studies, we also take very seriously the empirical study of religion. We have a number of scholarships based in the School of Divinity. Everyone who is given a formal offer of a place here in a graduate programme is then automatically considered in for the scholarships. For a scholarship, our School scholarships tend to be designed to help people rather than to clear the way for them. Therefore, they are assumed to be a contribution to a financial effort which will also involve funds from other sources. The University and the College of Humanities and Social Sciences has a smaller range of more generous scholarships for very able students. They are very competitive but for those who win them they more or less clear the way for three years spent here. What's the best way to proceed? Well I hope that some of you will be engaged in discussions with our representatives

and staff members on our live sessions in the next day or so. And will be able to ask a few questions then and have them answered. But please let me encourage you to look at the web pages. All the information we think it's important for you to know is laid out there. And supremely if you look there you will be able to take a look at our staff list, what their interests are, where our research focuses lie. And this is very important. We always say to people thinking to apply, especially to a research programme, do contact a member of the staff first. Someone who looks as though they are working in the area you are interested in. Explain as fully as you can where your research interests lie and seek advice. Because we essentially want to give you the best start and that means giving you the best guidance as to how you might prepare yourself for work here beforehand. I hope to meet some of you when you come here as our students. Thank you for joining in this programme and our very best wishes when you come to Edinburgh or to some other major University for your work.