

MARYVALE HIGHER INSTITUTE OF RELIGIOUS SCIENCES (HIRS)



STATUTES 2026

Maryvale Institute
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Preamble

History

Maryvale Institute was founded in 1980 by the Archbishop of Birmingham, initially as the diocesan catechetical centre, but since 1990 also as a Higher Education provider, offering first-cycle degrees in theology and philosophy, teaching qualifications, and eventually M.A.s and Ph.Ds., mainly to lay students (not all of them Catholics) but also to candidates for the diaconate, religious studying for the priesthood, and priests themselves. These degrees were civilly validated by the Open University which specialises in providing Higher Education by distance learning to mature students.

The Institute was based at Maryvale House in Birmingham, which was Saint John Henry Newman's first home as a Catholic and owes its name to him. It was previously known as Oscott Manor and was the residence of Vicars Apostolic during the penal times. After Newman it became Oscott Seminary and later an orphanage.

The main aim of the Institute is to educate and train men and women in Catholic Theology, Scripture, Religious Education, Catechesis, Liturgy, Spirituality, and other related disciplines, to equip them intellectually and spiritually for their personal and professional lives.

In 1989, Maryvale Institute was granted official recognition by the Holy See through the Catechetical Office of the Congregation of the Clergy. In 1990, it began a postgraduate diploma course validated by the University of Oxford. That same year, Maryvale was recognised by the Congregation for Catholic Education as an Institute affiliated to the Pontifical University, St Patrick's College, Maynooth, Ireland and the distance-learning, five-year B.A. (Divinity) degree in Theology was launched, validated by Maynooth, and ran successfully until 2013. In 1998, a Cert. HE in Applied Theology was validated by the Open University, which, in 2000, became the B.A. (Hons) in Applied Theology. This was revalidated in 2006, with the highest commendations.

As well as the Open University, Maryvale Institute also has recent links with Liverpool Hope University and collaborates with St Mary's University, London.

Maryvale Institute was erected as a Higher Institute of Religious Sciences by a Decree of the Congregation for Catholic Education dated 25 March 2011. This allowed the establishment of the Ecclesiastical Bachelor of Divinity Degree and a Licence in Catechetical Sciences.

On 29 September 2016 the Congregation renewed its approval of the HIRS and confirmed its new Statutes as an entity within, but distinct from, Maryvale Institute.

Maryvale Higher Institute of Religious Sciences is extremely proud of its link with Faculté Notre Dame in Paris which is under the umbrella of the École Cathédrale, part of the Archdiocese of Paris. Like Maryvale, Faculté Notre Dame teaches both clergy, religious and laity. Over the years we have developed a strong and most cordial

working relationship, demonstrating the value of the cross-cultural co-operation advocated by *Veritatis Gaudium*, 4.¹

In 2019 Maryvale Institute became an integral part of the Archdiocese of Birmingham rather than a separate legal entity.

Having served as the base for the Institute for more than four decades, Maryvale House has now been deemed to be no longer fit for purpose. Other changes have come too, more particularly developments of new Internet platforms, which, stimulated by the Covid emergency, have transformed the possibilities of distance learning.

Mission and Methodology

Change has been the norm for the Church for two millennia and the global Catholic community in twenty-first century England is not that of the Victorian era or of the later twentieth century. However, that change has to be rooted in the past if its values and identity are to remain and evolve: this is what St John Henry Newman referred to as 'authentic or true' development. His reference was to doctrine, but the idea has a wider reality.

In fact, Maryvale's purpose was clearly foreseen by Newman when he wrote in 1851, 'What I desiderate in Catholics is the gift of bringing out what their religion is. I want a laity ... who know their religion, who enter into it, who know just where they stand, who know what they hold and what they do not, who know their creed so well that they can give an account of it, who know so much of history that they can defend it.'²

Our mission today as in the past is to bring people to the joy of the Truth, which is Jesus Christ, through theological and philosophical reflection on the mystery of faith, so as to bring us closer to God and each other, to contribute to the challenge of evangelization in this time of change and 'epochal shift' (VG, 3), and to offer a 'contribution of leaven, salt and light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the living Tradition of the Church, which is ever open to new situations and ideas'. This involves contemplation and dialogue, and benefits from an interdisciplinary approach and co-operation with other institutions of scholarship and research (VG, 4).

Maryvale's teaching method of collaborative learning was specially developed for adult part-time students. It derives from the Open University's distance-learning methodology, specially adapted in accordance with the pedagogical principles outlined by the Holy See and adapted to the specific situation of Maryvale Institute. It has been used for over twenty-five years with the guidance of the Open University, and benefits from the training and experience gained in developing and delivering collaborative-learning courses at all levels.

Many elements make up this learning strategy, including written Coursebooks, study guides and handbooks, online lectures, one-to-one online contact between students and staff, teaching periods, contacts with fellow students and Maryvale's facilities for supporting students at a distance such as the library services and the Canvas platform.

¹ Apostolic constitution, *Veritatis Gaudium* on ecclesiastical universities and faculties, 2017. Henceforth VG.

² *The Present Position of Catholics in England*.

This strategy also has significant effects on staffing. Maryvale has always operated with a small core of full-time and part-time employed academic staff and a much larger number of part-time associate teaching staff who are not legally employees but work on annual contracts. This allows the service of very senior academics from eminent institutions all over the world, thus greatly enhancing the quality of teaching.

The distance-learning methods had to change recently when it became impossible to meet frequently at Maryvale House. The development of interactive internet classes, discussions, and also some online liturgical prayer together has preserved the human personal contacts between staff and students (a vital part of Maryvale's ethos) and allowed much greater flexibility in responding to students' learning needs. It is recognised, however, that while online teaching may be more effective academically and pastorally, something of the human is missing. Therefore, the resumption of periods of residential personal contact allowing for increased human contact and living Catholic life together has now begun.

Academic standards at Maryvale Institute have been monitored and approved by the Open University, the Pontifical University of Maynooth, Liverpool Hope University, as well as by the British Accreditation Council, the UK Higher Education Council and the Quality Assurance Agency. The use of academics from other Higher Education providers as External Examiners and members of academic committees promotes the maintenance of standards, the sharing of educational best practice, and an ethos of interdisciplinary research and scholarship.

Experience shows that collaborative learning produces graduates of the highest quality, sometimes from applicants with very limited previous formal educational qualifications, and it also enables staff to have close personal knowledge of students so as to respond pastorally and charitably to their personal and educational difficulties. In fact, the academic quality of this method of teaching has been commended several times by validating universities and quality assurance bodies.

Future

Following the sale of the Maryvale Institute civil degrees to St Mary's University, Maryvale HIRS is the only continuing provider of Higher Education at Maryvale Institute. Maryvale HIRS will continue to co-operate closely with St Mary's University.

Maryvale has also recently successfully negotiated with St Mary's College, Oscott CIO (the Seminary of the Archdiocese of Birmingham) to become part of the Oscott charity, but separate from the canonical entity of Oscott seminary, which is also part of the charity. This transfer was warmly approved by the Archdiocese and took place on 31 August 2025.

These new Statutes have been revised in accordance with *Veritatis Gaudium* in the light of the current situation.

Legal Definitions are set out at the end of this document.

1. Nature, Purpose and Promotion of Maryvale HIRS

- 1.1 Maryvale HIRS was canonically erected on 25th March 2011, linked with Faculté Notre Dame de Paris. These Statutes are based on the Instruction “Reform of the Higher Institutes of Religious Sciences” promulgated by the Dicastery for Culture and Education in 2008.
- 1.2 The purpose of Maryvale HIRS lies in the formation of the faithful, both lay and religious, that they might enrich their Christian lives, that they might give reason to their faith, that they might strengthen their apostolic work and, in particular, that they might participate in evangelisation. At the same time, it prepares professionals active in the heart of the culture and society to actively co-operate, within their own specific competencies, with the ordained. It also provides academic formation to candidates for the permanent diaconate where this is permitted by the rule for their formation issued by the competent ecclesiastical authority and when requested by their ordinaries.
- 1.3 Responsibility for the promotion and progress of Maryvale HIRS falls to:
 - 1.3.1 the Archbishop of Paris as Chancellor of Faculté Notre Dame and the Archbishop of Birmingham as Moderator of Maryvale HIRS, particularly in regard to the safeguarding and promotion of the Catholic faith, to the research and the qualification of the teaching body, and assessment of the financial viability of Maryvale HIRS.
 - 1.3.2 the Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales, particularly for those areas corresponding to the pastoral objectives of the Conference. This supervision is in close collaboration with the Dicastery for Culture and Education in that which concerns the verification and the supervision of the implementation of pastoral goals.
 - 1.3.3 Faculté Notre Dame shall warrant, for the Dicastery for Culture and Education, the academic quality and the adherence to approved goals of the HIRS.

2. Governance of the HIRS

- 2.1 Maryvale HIRS shall observe the general law of the Roman Catholic Church, the relevant civil law and these Statutes.
- 2.2 Maryvale HIRS shall be subject to the *Instruction on the Reform of the Higher Institutes of Religious Sciences* of 28 June 2008 and to any other regulations laid down by the Dicastery for Culture and Education.
- 2.3 Authorities applicable to Maryvale HIRS in common with Faculté Notre Dame consist of the Chancellor, the President, and the Council of Faculté Notre Dame.
- 2.4 Authorities specific to Maryvale HIRS are the Moderator, the HIRS Director (and Deputy Director if circumstances suggest it) and the HIRS Council.
- 2.5 Maryvale HIRS is accountable to the Trustees in financial, employment, and all other civil law matters.

3. Academic Authorities

Maryvale HIRS is linked with Faculté Notre Dame which assumes the academic responsibility for the HIRS.

3.1 **HIRS academic management.** Responsibility for overall academic quality within Maryvale HIRS lies with the HIRS Council. It falls to the HIRS Council, therefore, not only to ensure that both doctrinal orthodoxy and just freedom in teaching and research under the authority and guidance of the Moderator are maintained; but also to ensure that programmes of study offered by Maryvale HIRS meet the requirements of the Holy See and the UK Quality Assurance Agency. To this aim, Maryvale HIRS may seek the collaboration of Faculté Notre Dame.

3.2 **The Chancellor of Faculté Notre Dame.** It pertains to the Chancellor of Faculté Notre Dame to:

- 3.2.1 present the plan of studies and the Maryvale HIRS Statutes, including any subsequent substantial modifications, for approval by the Dicastery for Culture and Education;
- 3.2.2 inform the Dicastery for Culture and Education about key issues and send a report on the status and the activity of Maryvale HIRS to the Dicastery every five years;
- 3.2.3 name the Maryvale HIRS Director, choosing from a *terna* of (three) permanent Lecturers of Maryvale HIRS, previously named by the Council, approved by the Council of Faculté Notre Dame and then given the *nihil obstat* by the Moderator.

3.3 **The President of Faculté Notre Dame.** It falls to the President of Faculté Notre Dame to:

- 3.3.1 convoke and preside over the Council of Faculté Notre Dame in response to questions concerning Maryvale HIRS;
- 3.3.2 resolve, jointly with the Maryvale HIRS Director, matters concerning both the Faculté Notre Dame and Maryvale HIRS;
- 3.3.3 preside, either directly or through delegation, at qualifying exams for Maryvale HIRS programmes;
- 3.3.4 provide an annual report on Maryvale HIRS to the Council of Faculté Notre Dame;
- 3.3.5 present, every five years, a report on the status and the activity of Maryvale HIRS to the Council of Faculté Notre Dame. Such report is to be prepared by the Maryvale HIRS Director for the approval and response of the Chancellor, who will transmit it to the Dicastery for Culture and Education;
- 3.3.6 sign Maryvale HIRS academic awards.

3.4 **The Council of Faculté Notre Dame.** It falls to the Council of Faculté Notre Dame to:

- 3.4.1 examine and approve the plans of study, the Statutes, and the Regulations of Maryvale HIRS, any subsequent modifications included, and to propose any changes in the Statutes or plans of study to the Dicastery for their confirmation.
 - 3.4.2 give its opinion on the suitability of Lecturers of Maryvale HIRS in view of their appointment and development as permanent Lecturers;
 - 3.4.3 examine and approve the report provided by the President each year on the progress of Maryvale HIRS;
 - 3.4.4 verify the consistency and the proper functioning of the structures and resources of Maryvale HIRS, especially regarding the library;
 - 3.4.5 approve the quinquennial report on the state and the activities of Maryvale HIRS as prepared by the Maryvale HIRS Director;
 - 3.4.6 give its consent to the nomination of the Maryvale HIRS Director;
 - 3.4.7 propose to the Chancellor, were Maryvale HIRS to fail, that the Dicastery for Culture and Education suspend it.
- 3.5 **The Moderator.** It falls to the Moderator to:
- 3.5.1 ensure that Catholic doctrine be integrated and faithfully transmitted;
 - 3.5.2 appoint permanent Lecturers after having received a positive opinion from Faculté Notre Dame; name other Lecturers of Maryvale HIRS; and deal with requests to grant the *missio canonica* and/or the *venia docendi* where it is required;
 - 3.5.3 revoke the *missio canonica* and/or the *venia docendi* should circumstances demand it and where necessary for gross misconduct suspend a Lecturer;
 - 3.5.4 deal with requests for the *nihil obstat* for the nomination of the Director;
 - 3.5.5 safeguard the doctrinal and disciplinary progress of Maryvale HIRS, referring such matters to the Chancellor;
 - 3.5.6 report to Faculté Notre Dame such issues as seem to him to pose difficulties, inviting Faculté Notre Dame to take appropriate measures;
 - 3.5.7 approve the annual financial projected budget, the actual budget, and extraordinary administrative actions of Maryvale HIRS;
 - 3.5.8 approve the employment of staff;
 - 3.5.9 if he so wishes appoint a delegate, who shall where necessary be a member of the Trustees, to carry out his obligations under these Statutes;
 - 3.5.10 sign HIRS academic awards, along with the President of Faculté Notre Dame and the HIRS Director.
- 3.6 **The HIRS Director.** The term of the HIRS Director is five years and can be renewed for a second consecutive term. It falls to the HIRS Director to:
- 3.6.1 represent and report on Maryvale HIRS to the Moderator, to academic authorities from Faculté Notre Dame;

- 3.6.2 represent Maryvale HIRS to civil authorities, where necessary in collaboration with any institute in which the HIRS may be civilly associated;
- 3.6.3 direct and co-ordinate the activities of Maryvale HIRS;
- 3.6.4 convoke and preside at any meetings of the HIRS Council;
- 3.6.5 draft the annual report to Faculté Notre Dame on the state of Maryvale HIRS and its activities;
- 3.6.6 draft the quinquennial report to Faculté Notre Dame on the state of Maryvale HIRS and its activities;
- 3.6.7 sign Maryvale HIRS academic awards, along with the President of Faculté Notre Dame and the Moderator;
- 3.6.8 examine the requests and representations of Lecturers and students. In serious cases that cannot be resolved by the HIRS Council, the Director shall seek to resolve issues with Faculté Notre Dame.
- 3.6.9 convoke and preside at meetings of the Admissions Committee.
- 3.6.10 The Director shall not be employed full-time in any other institution.

3.7 **The HIRS Council** is composed of:

- The HIRS Director,
 - The Deputy Director if there is one,
 - All permanent Maryvale HIRS Lecturers,
 - Two representatives of the Maryvale HIRS non-permanent Lecturers, elected by their peers for a term of two years,
 - The President of Faculté Notre Dame or his delegate,
 - A delegate of the Moderator,
 - Two regular students elected by their fellow students for a term of one year,
 - The Academic Registrar or an Academic Administrator (as clerk).
- 3.7.1 The Director shall convoke the HIRS Council at least twice a year. In addition, in the event of extraordinary circumstances the Director shall convoke the HIRS Council in response to the request of a majority of the HIRS Council.
 - 3.7.2 A meeting of the HIRS Council shall also be held when summoned by the Moderator.
 - 3.7.3. Decisions of the HIRS Council require a simple majority of those present and, for issues of personnel, a two-thirds majority. When addressing questions regarding a Lecturer or an individual student, the student representatives shall participate neither in the discussion nor in the voting.
 - 3.7.4. For a meeting of the HIRS Council to be quorate there shall be present at least one third plus one of the HIRS Council members, excluding the

student members. Of this number, one of whom shall be the HIRS Director, at least one shall be a permanent Lecturer and one shall be the delegate of the Moderator. No business may be transacted at a meeting of the HIRS Council that is not quorate.

3.8 It falls to the HIRS Council to:

- 3.8.1 establish the plan of studies, the Statutes, the Regulations and the administration of Maryvale HIRS, provided that any modifications shall be submitted for approval to the Council of Faculté Notre Dame and, in the case of changes to the Statutes or plans of study, to the Dicastery;
- 3.8.2 choose from the permanent Lecturers a *terna* for nomination to the post of Director and to propose the *terna* to the Moderator;
- 3.8.3 propose names of Lecturers to the Moderator;
- 3.8.4 approve the annual and quinquennial reports prepared by the HIRS Director on the state of Maryvale HIRS and its activities.

3.9 The **Academic Council** shall be composed of the permanent Lecturers and up to two non-permanent Lecturers co-opted by the HIRS Council for a term of up to two years. The Academic Council may itself co-opt up to two further members for a particular meeting. The Academic Registrar shall also be invited to all meetings. The Academic Council shall:

- 3.9.1 facilitate the day-to-day running of Maryvale HIRS in a collegial way;
- 3.9.2 propose matters for discussion at the HIRS Council;
- 3.9.3 advise the HIRS Director and Programme Directors on the management of Programmes;
- 3.9.4 receive a report on student admissions and approve any exemptions and advanced standing;
- 3.9.5 in the case of individual students, consider medical or other evidence for special consideration;
- 3.9.6 agree guidelines for the conduct of examinations and other forms of assessment and for moderation within all approved academic courses;
- 3.9.7 carry out such other duties as are prescribed in the Regulations.
- 3.9.8 The Academic Council may delegate its powers in some matters to at least two members. Any exercise of delegated powers shall be reported to the next meeting of the Academic Council.

4. **HIRS Academic Staff**

- 4.1 All HIRS Lecturers, whatever their position, should always be distinguished by their knowledge of their fields, by an upright life, the integration of doctrine, and the commitment to their work, such that they might more effectively contribute to the mission of Maryvale HIRS. The teaching should be animated by a commitment to Divine Revelation, by fidelity to the Magisterium of the Church and respect for scientific truth.

- 4.2 Those who teach disciplines in Maryvale HIRS concerning faith and morals should receive the *missio canonica* and/or the *venia docendi*, in accord with Art 10b of the Norms.
- 4.3 The HIRS Lecturers are divided into two groups.
- 4.4 The first, **permanent Lecturers**, devote themselves mainly to the students and to research. They may not be full-time lecturers in other ecclesiastical or civil institutions. It is required of a permanent Lecturer:
 - 4.4.1 that he be distinguished by his doctrinal commitment, by the witness of his life and his sense of ecclesiastical and academic responsibility;
 - 4.4.2 that, for ecclesiastical disciplines, he be in possession of a suitable doctorate obtained in an Ecclesiastical Institution (Norms 14.2.b). For non-ecclesiastical disciplines the required degree shall be Master's level or above;
 - 4.4.3 that he show the capacity for research, demonstrated by publication of work in the areas and goals of Maryvale HIRS;
 - 4.4.4 that he has demonstrated capability in teaching.
 - 4.4.5 Maryvale HIRS shall have at least five permanent Lecturers, one for each of the following disciplines: Sacred Scripture, dogmatic theology, moral and pastoral theology, philosophy, and human sciences.
- 4.5 The second, **non-permanent Lecturers**, support the work in a more temporary and part-time way. A non-permanent Lecturer for ecclesiastical studies should be in possession of at least a canonical licence from an Ecclesiastical Institution, or an equivalent degree, and should have a good aptitude for teaching.

5. Appointments

- 5.1 When a post for a permanent Lecturer is to be filled, an Appointment Committee shall draw up a job description and advertise the vacancy, examine the credentials of all applicants, make a shortlist of interviewees from such applicants if necessary and interview such applicants as are short-listed. The Appointment Committee shall then propose applicants to the HIRS Council for appointment to the relevant vacancy. The Appointment Committee shall be appointed by the Director with the consent of the Academic Council, or by the HIRS Council.

The Moderator shall have the right to be represented on the Committee.
- 5.2 A permanent or non-permanent Lecturer must satisfy article 14 of the Norms.
- 5.3 Part-time non-permanent Lecturers may be appointed by the Director with the consent of the Moderator provided they satisfy the requirements of these Statutes. The HIRS Council shall propose full-time Lecturers to be appointed to the Moderator or his delegate, who may proceed to the appointment. The appointment of permanent Lecturers requires the positive opinion of Faculté Notre Dame.

- 5.4 No permanent or non-permanent Lecturer shall teach a programme concerning faith or morals without making a Profession of Faith and receiving from the Moderator or his delegate a *missio canonica* for this work. Other permanent or non-permanent Lecturers shall not teach unless they have first received a *venia docendi* from the Moderator or his delegate.
- 5.5 No person who is known to be under a declared or imposed ecclesiastical censure shall be eligible for appointment to any role within Maryvale HIRS.
- 5.6 The Director shall satisfy himself that any permanent or non-permanent Lecturer, or anyone invited to speak on a programme or provide written materials bearing the name of Maryvale HIRS is able to satisfy article 14 of the Norms.

6. Withdrawal of the *missio canonica* or *venia docendi*

The procedure for withdrawing the *missio canonica* or *venia docendi* from any permanent or non-permanent Lecturer shall be as follows:

- 6.1 The HIRS Director shall (in consultation with the President of Faculté Notre Dame if the case concerns a permanent Lecturer) write to the Lecturer stating the detailed reasons why withdrawal is proposed. He shall give six months' notice of the withdrawal, unless the Moderator, on the grounds of gross misconduct, immediately suspends the Lecturer for the duration of the regular procedure.
- 6.2. The HIRS Council, and if the case concerns a permanent Lecturer subsequently also the Council of Faculté Notre Dame, shall hear the case and convey the minutes of the discussion and its judgement to the Moderator, to the President if the case regards a permanent Lecturer, to the HIRS Director and to the Lecturer.
- 6.3. In the event that the judgement of the HIRS Council or, in the case of a permanent Lecturer, the Council of Faculté Notre Dame is appealed by the Lecturer, an Appeals Committee appointed by the Moderator shall hear the case and convey the minutes of the discussion and judgement to the Moderator, to the President if the case regards a permanent Lecturer, to the HIRS Director and to the Lecturer.
- 6.4 The Moderator shall issue his decision in writing and this shall be conveyed directly to the Council, to the President if the case regards a permanent Lecturer, to the HIRS Director and to the Lecturer.
- 6.5 In the case of the removal of the *missio canonica* or *venia docendi* from the HIRS Director, the delegate of the Moderator shall take the place of the HIRS Director in 6.1–6.4 and the HIRS Director shall not be able to vote in regard to his own case.
- 6.6 The decision of the Moderator is final, subject to Statute 6.7.
- 6.7 If the Lecturer has recourse to the Holy See from the final decision of the Moderator in accordance with norms issued by the Holy See and the Holy See reinstates the *missio canonica* or *venia docendi* of the permanent or non-permanent Lecturer then his position shall be reinstated.
- 6.8 The rights of the Lecturer concerned shall be as follows:
 - 6.8.1 to receive written notice of the case in accordance with Statute 6.1 by post;

- 6.8.2 to be heard by the HIRS Council, and the Faculté Notre Dame Council in the case of a permanent Lecturer and, on appeal, by the Appeals Committee, in accordance with Statute 6.3;
 - 6.8.3 to be represented before the HIRS Council, and the Faculté Notre Dame Council in case of a permanent Lecturer, and the Appeals Committee by a person of his or her choice;
 - 6.8.4 to receive a copy of the minutes of the discussion and the judgement submitted to the Moderator by the HIRS Council, by the Faculté Notre Dame Council in case of a permanent Lecturer, and on appeal by the Appeals Committee;
 - 6.8.5 to receive a copy of the Moderator's decision;
 - 6.8.6 to have recourse from the Moderator to the Holy See.
- 6.9 All written communications to a Lecturer required by this Statute shall be made on paper.

7. Complaints against Lecturers

- 7.1 Any complaints shall be dealt with in accordance with the complaints policy applicable to the Maryvale HIRS at that time.
- 7.2 If the complaint concerns the HIRS Director the matter should be referred to the Moderator, who shall consult with the Chancellor and the President of Faculté Notre Dame.
- 7.3 All written communications to a Lecturer required by this Statute shall be made on paper.

8. Vacation of post

- 8.1 A post is vacated by death, retirement, resignation, by the expiry of the time defined in the appointment, or in accordance with Statute 8.3 and Statute 9.
- 8.2 Permanent or non-permanent Lecturers who wish to resign shall give three months' notice before their resignation is to take effect, subject to Statute 8.5.
- 8.3 A permanent or non-permanent Lecturer who becomes the subject of a declared or imposed ecclesiastical censure under canon law shall be suspended from teaching and the question as to whether the appointment should be continued shall be dealt with by the procedure established in Statute 9 below.
- 8.4 A permanent or non-permanent Lecturer who is a cleric and who loses his clerical status by dismissal according to canon law shall be suspended by the Moderator from teaching in the Maryvale HIRS and the question of the continuance of his appointment shall be dealt with by the procedure established below.
- 8.5 A permanent or non-permanent Lecturer who is a cleric and who petitions the Holy See for a rescript of laicisation according to canon law is deemed to have

given notice of resignation from the HIRS Lecturers. The date of notification shall be construed as the same date as that of the petition.

- 8.6 All written communications to a Lecturer required by this Statute shall be made on paper.

9. Termination of appointment

- 9.1 The suspension of Lecturers or the termination of appointments before their full term has elapsed are the responsibility in the first instance of the Moderator and shall be governed by the procedures contained in the contract of employment or service level agreement held by the Lecturer and in accordance with the civil law applicable at the time.
- 9.2 The suspension or termination of appointment of a permanent Lecturer must be confirmed by the HIRS Council by a simple majority in a secret ballot, and by the Council of Faculté Notre Dame.
- 9.3 The suspension or termination of appointment of a non-permanent Lecturer who is paid by the Trustees or appointed thereto by that person's Ordinary must be confirmed by the HIRS Council by a simple majority in a secret ballot.
- 9.4. The procedure for appointments and their termination set out in these Statutes is in addition to any statutory rights that the staff member may have and to the extent that there is any inconsistency the Civil Law shall prevail without prejudice to the right of the Moderator to remove the *mission canonica* or *venia docendi*.
- 9.5 All written communications to a Lecturer required by this Statute shall be made on paper.

10. HIRS Students

- 10.1 Study at Maryvale HIRS is open to all faithful Catholics (as referred to in Canon Law) – lay and religious – marked by their moral conduct and the prior studies they may have done in this area (see Statute 11.1). Non-Catholics may also be enrolled and study. Seminarians may not be enrolled.
- 10.2 For clergy and Religious, testimony as to their moral life is to be given by their own Ordinary, Hierarch or Superior, or by one delegated by them. For lay students this testimony should be given by an appropriate church person.
- 10.3 The Maryvale HIRS normally operates with a minimum of 75 students; maximum numbers are dictated by resources available.
- 10.4 Regulations relating to conduct, use of resources and matters relating to the teaching, administration, and assessment of the programmes shall be approved by the HIRS Council. Temporary ordinances may also be approved by HIRS Council.
- 10.5 By virtue of enrolment in a particular programme a student becomes subject to the HIRS Regulations and must faithfully observe them.
- 10.6 Maryvale HIRS shall supply students with details of the Statutes and the Regulations affecting students before enrolment.

- 10.7 Where there is a question of suspension of a student from certain rights (including the award of a degree or certificate or academic award of any other type) or of the expulsion of a student from a Programme, the matter shall be dealt with in accordance with these Statutes and the relevant Regulations.

11. Categories of Students

Students of the HIRS consist of the following categories:

- 11.1 Ordinary students are those who follow and complete successfully all exercises and assessments related to their chosen programme of study.
- 11.1.1 Candidates for admission to the baccalaureate programme in Religious Sciences as ordinary students must satisfy the Admissions Committee with documentary proof that they possess the necessary qualifications for undergraduate study.
- 11.1.2 Candidates for admission to the Licence programme as ordinary students shall normally have successfully completed the baccalaureate programme or an equivalent ecclesiastically recognised programme.
- 11.1.3 Students applying for admission to the Licence programme having completed an undergraduate programme other than the baccalaureate shall where necessary be required to complete a “bridging” programme to ensure a sufficient knowledge of Catholic theology.
- 11.2 Extraordinary students are those aspiring to be ordinary students who do not possess the requisite academic qualifications for admission as such and are enrolled on a foundation programme which, if successfully completed, will allow enrolment as ordinary students.
- 11.3 Occasional students are those that attend programmes seeking academic credit but without seeking any academic award whether by way of degree, diploma, or certificate.
- 11.4 In accordance with standard UK higher educational practice, the Director may issue certificates and diplomas to those completing only some of the years required for a degree.

12. Admissions Committee

- 12.1 Applications for admission to the HIRS programmes shall be considered and responded to by the Admissions Committee. This committee shall comprise:
- The HIRS Director or his delegate
 - One permanent Lecturer chosen by the HIRS Director or his delegate
 - One permanent or non-permanent Lecturer (programme related) chosen by the HIRS Director or his delegate
 - The Academic Registrar or the Academic Administrator (as non-voting clerk).

12.2 The committee shall discuss each application, considering previous study and suitability for study on ecclesiastical programmes; and shall agree terms of enrolment, including any need for “bridging” programmes.

12.3 Applicants shall be informed of the decision in writing by the HIRS Director.

13. Organisation of Studies

13.1 The HIRS Council shall take care that the organisation of studies is inspired by the principles and norms of the Catholic Church, the relevant documents of the Holy See, and shall seek the approval of Faculté Notre Dame for its plan of studies according to articles 22–25 of the Norms.

13.2 Maryvale HIRS shall give due place to teaching and research. This shall be done in such a way that the special nature and method of each discipline and the organic unity of all of them may be apprehended by the students.

13.3 The academic staff shall carry out its work of teaching and research in union with the authoritative Magisterium of the Catholic Church.

13.4 The freedom that befits the method of each discipline shall be allowed to the academic staff in their research and in their teaching.

14. Academic Degrees

14.1 HIRS degrees are conferred on registered students by the Faculté Notre Dame. These degrees are:

14.1.1 Baccalaureate in Religious Sciences (in local terminology Ecclesiastical Bachelor of Divinity), requiring 180 ECTS.

14.1.2 Baccalaureate in Religious Sciences (in local terminology Ecclesiastical Bachelor of Divinity), pathway in Ecclesial Service, requiring 180 ECTS.

14.1.3 Licence in Religious Sciences (in local terminology Ecclesiastical Licence in Divinity), pathway in Catechetical Sciences, requiring 120 ECTS.

14.2 In order to receive the Ecclesiastical Baccalaureate in Religious Sciences (Bachelor of Divinity) degree the student must have:

14.2.1 attended the required lectures and tutorials, completed all assignments and have passed all required examinations for each discipline;

14.2.2 acquired the knowledge of a modern language in addition to his own, so as to be able to read and to understand texts in that foreign language.

14.2.3 composed a written dissertation in an area of research of his choice, but related to one of the key themes of study. The student is expected to demonstrate the capacity to formulate and present a logical argument. This work shall be presented and defended before a committee of at least three people, to include a representative from Faculté Notre Dame as an external examiner.

- 14.3 In order to receive the Ecclesial Licence in Religious Sciences (Ecclesiastical Licence in Divinity) degree the student must have:
- 14.3.1 attended the required lectures and tutorials and completed all assignments for each discipline;
 - 14.3.2 acquired the knowledge of two modern languages in addition to his own, so as to be able to read and to understand texts in those foreign languages;
 - 14.3.3 composed a written dissertation in an area of research of his choice, but related to one of the key themes of study. The student is expected to demonstrate an intellectual maturity in the chosen field of specialisation. This work shall be presented and defended before a committee of at least three people, to include a representative from Faculté Notre Dame as an external examiner.
- 14.4 The HIRS Council may, with the consent of Faculté Notre Dame, validate Further Education courses below the level of a baccalaureate in subjects taught in Maryvale HIRS. Such courses must be in accord with Catholic teaching and be taught in institutions in good standing in the Church. Regulations must be enacted by the HIRS Council and approved by Faculté Notre Dame to ensure the courses are of the appropriate academic standard for ecclesiastical validation.

15. Administration and Resources

- 15.1 Maryvale HIRS shall where financially viable have the services of an Academic Registrar, a Financial Officer, a Librarian, and at least one Academic Administrator provided by the Trustees.
- 15.2 **Deputy Director.** With the consent of the HIRS Council, the Director may have the assistance of a Deputy Director. The Deputy Director shall be appointed (for a term not exceeding that remaining to the current Director) from among the permanent Lecturers by the Moderator having heard the opinion of the Director. A Deputy Director shall assist the Director in carrying out his functions as the Director shall request.
- 15.3 The programmes of Maryvale HIRS shall be allocated an annual budget within the overall budget of the Trustees. Part of this budget shall be allocated by the HIRS Council in order to develop its collection of books and academic journals, as required by the needs of teaching and research, and to deepen knowledge and instruction in the academic disciplines of the Maryvale HIRS.
- 15.4 **Finance Committee.** There shall be a Finance Committee to set the annual fees, approve the annual budget for presentation to the Moderator, and monitor and control expenditure. It shall comprise a Delegate of the Moderator (who shall have the right to chair it), the Director, the Deputy Director, the Academic Registrar, and the Financial Officer.
- 15.5 Should the Finance Committee be unable to agree a budget unanimously, the matter shall be referred to the HIRS Council for resolution.

- 15.6 The Trustees shall furnish Maryvale HIRS with a bank account and shall agree with the HIRS Council the amount of money that may be spent by the Director without reference to the Trustees, the Delegate of the Moderator, or the Finance Committee.
- 15.7 In order to provide for the education of intellectually gifted students who give good hope of one day being most useful to the Church, there shall be a Bursary and Scholarship Fund-
- 15.8 To ensure consistency, the annual fees of all programmes, run by Maryvale HIRS, shall be set by the Finance Committee in agreement with the Trustees. Students contribute to the cost of Maryvale HIRS through full and prompt payment of their fees.

16. Information and Teaching Facilities

- 16.1 In order to achieve its proper purposes, especially in regard to research, Maryvale HIRS must have access to adequate library resources, in keeping with the needs of the Lecturers and students. These must be correctly organized and equipped with an appropriate catalogue.

17. Title of Fellow

- 17.1 The HIRS Council may confer the Title of Honorary Fellow on distinguished individuals who have given exceptional service to Maryvale HIRS.
- 17.2 The HIRS Council may confer the Title of Emeritus Fellow on members of the staff who have served Maryvale HIRS or Maryvale Institute with distinction for at least ten years.
- 17.3 The Fellows shall have the right to promote the aims of Maryvale HIRS and its fidelity to Catholic teaching.

18. Amendment of Statutes and the Plan of Studies

- 18.1 Any change to these Statutes or to the plan of studies must be approved by the HIRS Council and the Council of FND, and then proposed to the Dicastery for Culture and Education for its approval.

19. Legal Definitions and Abbreviations

These definitions are included for legal reasons.

In these Statutes the following words or phrases bear the meanings ascribed to them:

“Academic Registrar” – the person appointed to act as such for Maryvale HIRS.

“Canon Law” – the body of legislation governing internal administration and other matters of the Roman Catholic Church.

“Chancellor” – the person designated as such for the Ecclesiastical Theology Faculty to which Maryvale HIRS is attached.

“Civil Law” the state law applicable in England and Wales from time to time.

“Dicastery for Culture and Education” or “the Dicastery” – the body so named within the Roman Curia ‘which develops the fundamental principles of education regarding schools, Catholic and ecclesiastical institutes of higher education and research, and is competent for hierarchical recourses in these matters’ (*Praedicate Evangelium*, 153.2) or the body which previously held a like competence.

“Director” – the principal bearer of academic and administrative authority in Maryvale HIRS appointed from time to time to act as such in accordance with the provisions of Statute 3.6.

“Ecclesiastical Theology Faculty” – the ecclesiastical theology faculty, canonically erected, to which the Institute is linked as a requirement of being a Higher Institute of Religious Sciences

“Faculté Notre Dame” – the Faculté Notre Dame de Paris being the Ecclesiastical Theology Faculty to which the HIRS is linked.

“Finance Officer” – the person appointed to have responsibility for financial matters and financial transactions for Maryvale HIRS.

“HIRS Council” – the body set out in Statute 3.7.

“Higher Institute of Religious Sciences” or “HIRS” – an Ecclesiastical Institute for lay people and religious erected with its own Statutes by the Dicastery for Culture and Education according to the Instruction “Reform of the Higher Institutes of Religious Sciences” promulgated by the Dicastery for Culture and Education in 2008.

“Holy See” – the Roman Pontiff and also the Secretariat of State, the Council for the Public Affairs of the Church, and other institutes of the Roman Curia (Code of Canon Law, canon 361).

“Maryvale HIRS” – the HIRS governed by these Statutes.

“Maryvale Institute” – referred to in the foreword.

“*Missio canonica*” – the canonical mission granted by the Moderator to a permanent member of staff, in accordance with the necessary conditions, to teach Sacred Sciences.

“Moderator” – the title given to the Archbishop of Birmingham or the person canonically appointed to administer the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham in accordance with the Norms for the Erection of an HIRS, 2008, also Chair of Trustees of Birmingham Diocesan Trustees and Chair of Trustees of St Mary’s College Oscott.

“*Nihil obstat*” – has the meaning ascribed to it by the Holy See, that is, that there is no opposition to the appointment or decision to which the *nihil obstat* refers.

“Non-permanent Lecturers” – those members of staff who fall within the specifications in Statute 4.5.

“Norms” – the Instruction entitled “Reform of the Higher Institutes of Religious Sciences” promulgated by the Dicastery for Culture and Education on 28 June 2008.

“Ordinary” – a diocesan bishop, archbishop, or other person so described in accordance with canon 134 of the Code of Canon Law.

“Permanent Lecturers” – those members of staff with responsibilities for students and who fall within the specifications in Statute 4.4.

Praedicate Evangelium – the Apostolic Constitution on the Roman Curia and its service to the church in the world promulgated by Pope Francis on 19 March 2022.

“President” – the President of the Ecclesiastical Theology Faculty to which Maryvale HIRS is attached.

“Regulations” such regulations as are approved by the Council of Faculté Notre Dame from time to time

“Roman Curia” – the institution that ordinarily assists the Roman Pontiff in exercising his supreme pastoral office and universal mission in the world. (*Praedicate Evangelium*, 1).

“St Mary’s College Oscott” a charitable incorporated organisation registered as a charity in England and Wales with charity number 1172979 being the civil law entity in England and Wales of which Maryvale HIRS forms part.

“The Trustees” – The Trustees of St Mary’s College Oscott.

“*Venia docendi*” – the permission granted by the Moderator to teach human sciences in an Ecclesiastical Institute.

“ECTS” – the standard units for academic credit of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System.

20. Legal Interpretation

20.1. In these Statutes words importing the singular where the context so admits include the plural and vice versa.

20.2. Words importing one gender include both.

20.3. Unless otherwise specified, a reference to a particular law and a reference to Canon Law is a reference to it as it is in force for the time being, taking account of any amendment, extension, application or re-enactment and includes any subordinate laws for the time being in force and all notices, orders, codes of practice and guidance made under it.

20.4. A reference to laws in general is to all local national and directly applicable supra-national laws in force for the time being, including canon law, taking into account any amendment, extension, application or re-enactment and includes any subordinate laws for the time being in force made under them and all orders notices codes of practice and guidance made under them.

20.5. References to “written” and/or “in writing” include e-mail or other forms of electronic communication, except where explicitly stated to the contrary and for communications to a Lecturer subject to proceedings under Statutes 6, 7, 8 and 9.

20.6. A reference to a Statute or clause is a reference to a Statute or clause in this document unless a contrary intention appears.

20.7. Headings in this document do not affect its interpretation.



DICASTERIUM
DE CULTURA ET EDUCATIONE

1002.2026-141645

Vatican, le 27 janvier 2026

Prot. N. 00450/2026-25/2011

(Citer ce numéro dans la réponse)

Excellence,

Le Dicastère pour la Culture et l'Éducation accuse bonne réception de votre courrier du 19 mai dernier dans lequel vous avez demandé le renouvellement du rattachement de l'Institution Supérieure de Sciences Religieuses de Maryvalle à la Faculté Notre-Dame de Paris.

Après les échanges de courriers et d'un temps de travail en visio, la nouvelle documentation remplit les conditions requises. Nous sommes donc heureux de vous informer qu'après avoir examiné les documents présentés, le Dicastère pour la Culture et l'Éducation décrète le renouvellement du rattachement dudit Institut à la Faculté ci-dessus mentionnée. Le rescrit porte le même numéro de protocole et la même date que cette lettre. Nous voudrions juste faire noter qu'au niveau des statuts (14.3), il faudrait mettre *Religious Sciences (Licence in Divinity)*.

En vous priant de transmettre nos encouragements à la Faculté de Théologie pour l'accompagnement constant à cet Institut de Birmingham, nous vous exprimons, Excellence, notre entier dévouement dans le Seigneur.

José Tolentino Card. de Mendonça

José Tolentino Card. DE MENDONÇA
Préfet

Matthias Ambros

Mgr Matthias AMBROS
Sous-Secrétaire

Son Excellence Mgr Laurent ULRICH
Archevêque Métropolitain de Paris
Grand Chancelier de la Faculté Notre-Dame
= FRANCE =



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DICASTERIUM DE CULTURA ET EDUCATIONE, lectis perpensisque Statutis Instituti Superioris Scientiarum Religiosarum «Maryvale Institute» in civitate Birminghamiensi siti, sub potestate et ductu Pontificiæ Facultatis Theologicæ «Notre-Dame» constituti, ad normam Instructionis de *Institutis Superioribus Scientiarum Religiosarum* eiusdem Congregationis die XXVIII mensis Iunii a. D. MMVIII emanatæ recognitis, quæ in eorundem XX articulis definiuntur ac statuuntur, **rata habet** et **ad aliud quinquennium approbat**, iisque ad quos pertinet, ut rite observentur præcipit, ceteris servatis de iure servandis, contrariis quibuslibet minime obstantibus.

Datum e Civitate Vaticana, ex ædibus eiusdem Dicasterii, die XXVII mensis Ianuarii, a. D. MMXXVI.

Josephus T. Card. de Rendus-

PRÆFECTUS

Roberto Poma

SUBSECRETARIUS

Prot. N. 00450/2026-25/2011



DICASTERIUM
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Datum e Civitate Vaticana, ex ædibus eiusdem Dicasterii, die XXVII mensis Ianuarii, a. D. MMXXVI.

Josephus T. Card. de Wendels.

PRÆFECTUS

Roberto Amato.

SUBSECRETARIUS

Prot. N. 00450/2026-25/2011