

# Assistant Professor in Ethics, Philosophy of Religion, or Systematic Theology, specialising in Existential Sustainability

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## Strategic Context

**Existential sustainability** is an interdisciplinary research field that complements the social, economic, and environmental ambitions of the United Nations's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) by addressing a dimension often left implicit: the human search for meaning, dignity, and hope in the face of vulnerability and insecurity. While the SDGs aim to alleviate poverty, inequality, injustice, and environmental degradation, existential sustainability focus on how people sustain meaning in conditions of uncertainty and suffering and how societies can foster hope, belonging, and recognition in a secular, technologized, and market-driven world.

In this sense, existential sustainability is concerned with the sustainability of human meaning-making itself. It acknowledges the inevitabilities of human existence and vulnerability: people struggling with economic, physical, social, racial, and normative vulnerability in society, but also with contemporary processes of commodification and technologization in which fundamental human needs are set aside for economic gain and industrial rationality. It is also to recognize that people respond to these challenges in creative and unexpected ways. Research into existential sustainability seeks to understand how processes of meaning-making intermingle with, or emerge as a result of, innovative and vernacular practices that are attempts to counter the challenges of the contemporary world. Particular emphasis can be placed on the valuing and exploration of alternative and displaced forms of knowledge.

The Center for Theology and Religious Studies hosts a growing research environment on existentiell sustainability. A multi-disciplinary team with close links to School of Design and Architecture, and Birgit Rausing Centre for Medical Humanities, BRCM are currently engaging in innovative research on existential perspectives on senior living as well as healing in nature based medical care. Through workshops, cross-faculty collaborations, and research networks, the environment actively cultivates a shared research agenda that integrates theological, philosophical, artistic, and practice-based perspectives on human vulnerability, resilience, and hope. Over the coming years, the department aims to consolidate existential sustainability as one of its signature research areas. This includes expanding interdisciplinary collaborations across the humanities, social sciences, medicine, design, and other fields; developing externally funded research programmes; strengthening international partnerships; and building platforms for societal engagement and policy-relevant dialogue. The ambition is to position the department as a leading hub for research that investigates how meaning, ethics, and human flourishing can be sustained in times of social, ecological, and technological transformation.

## **The Role and Responsibilities of the Assistant Professor**

The department accommodates research with various methodological approaches – historical, anthropological, ethnographical, sociological, philosophical, ethical, and theological – to the study not only of religious traditions, but also of the vulnerable human existence. We welcome scholars with a background in systematic theology, ethics or philosophy of religion with a specific interest in cross disciplinary cooperation on existential sustainability. The role of the Associate Professor will be to further develop and consolidate the research area in interdisciplinary collaborations, teaching and public outreach. The successful candidate will be expected to contribute actively to the department's growing research environment, to initiate and participate in externally funded research projects, and to help shape the long-term academic ambitions in this emerging field.