**Owner:** Director of Student Services

**Version number:** Version 3.0

**Date of approval:** August 2023

**Approved by:** UET  
**Effective date:** August 2023   
**Date of last review:** August 2019  
**Due for review:** July 2025



**RELIGION, BELIEF AND NON-BELIEF POLICY**

# SCOPE AND PURPOSE

* 1. The University is proud to be a diverse community made up of staff and students from a wide range of backgrounds. We aim to create an environment where different values, beliefs and non-beliefs can be freely expressed and openly discussed.
  2. One of the University’s core values is Inclusivity and we are committed to fostering a culture of diversity in all aspects of its provision.

# As well as our commitment to inclusivity and diversity, BU is also required to comply with the Equality Act and will investigate allegations of unlawful behaviour on the grounds of discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation of any person on account of their religion or belief, in accordance with the appropriate disciplinary policy

# In the Equality Act 2010, religion or belief can mean any religion, as long as it has a clear structure and belief system. The legal protection of religion or belief under the Equality Act 2010 refers to a religion or belief or non-belief.

# The definition of a ‘religion or belief’ is not clearly defined in the Act and has developed over time through the courts. Therefore, there are some beliefs that are philosophical in nature and may be protected. The Equality Act 2010 provides that a belief must be genuinely held and more than an opinion. It must be cogent, serious and apply to an important aspect of human life or behaviour. The Equality Act also says that a belief must be worthy of respect in a democratic society and not affect other people’s fundamental rights. For the purposes of this policy, religion and belief is defined as any religion, religious belief, or belief, which has a clear belief system or profound belief that affects the way of life or view of the world of the believer. This description is not exhaustive and there will be many religious and other beliefs that will fall within the definition given in this policy

# This policy and its appendices applies to all staff, students and other members of the BU community.

# KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

* 1. The Chief Operating Officer has executive responsibility for faith provision at BU.
  2. The Director of Student Services has responsibility for the provision of faith facilities on campus.
  3. The Head of Student Support and Wellbeing has responsibility for the daily operation of this policy.
  4. The Faith and Reflection team are responsible for the day to day management of faith facilities at BU.

# DEFINITIONS

* 1. For the purposes of this policy faith and belief is defined as any religion, religious belief or philosophical belief that has a clear belief system or profound belief that affects the way of life or view of the world.

# SERVICES AND SUPPORT

* 1. Currently BU asks students and staff to disclose their religion on a voluntary basis when they enrol or apply for a post at BU. This allows the university to monitor equality data and take any steps as appropriate to ensure fair and equal treatment of all
  2. The following services are available to support students and staff:

# Students

* [Faith and Reflection facilities](http://studentportal.bournemouth.ac.uk/health/chaplaincy/index.html)
* [Student Wellbeing](https://www1.bournemouth.ac.uk/students/health-wellbeing/student-wellbeing)
* [Student societies (hosted by SUBU)](https://www.subu.org.uk/involved/clubs_societies/)
* EDI Manager

# Staff

* [Faith and Reflection facilities](http://studentportal.bournemouth.ac.uk/health/chaplaincy/index.html)
* [Occupational Health](https://staffintranet.bournemouth.ac.uk/workingatbu/healthsafetywellbeing/occupationalhealthwellbeing/occhealth/)
* [Employee Assistance Programme](https://staffintranet.bournemouth.ac.uk/workingatbu/healthsafetywellbeing/occupationalhealthwellbeing/employeeassistanceprogramme/)
* EDI Manager

# RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE

BU will make reasonable efforts to provide a suitable place for prayer and ablution if practical and wherever possible. In reality this may result in individual requirements being met by using facilities available within the community.

# Students

The University will make reasonable efforts to accommodate religious observance by students. Where religious observance causes difficulties in submitting or sitting an assessment it may be possible to accommodate this under the [Exceptional Circumstances Policy and Procedures](https://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/pandptest/6j-exceptional-circumstances-policy-and-procedure.pdf?_gl=1*1m29vxz*_ga*MTA5NTMwNTU1MC4xNjc4MzU0NTkw*_ga_DDEJC1N1ZN*MTY4ODQ4NTI5Ny4xLjEuMTY4ODQ4NTM1NS4wLjAuMA..)

# Staff

All staff regardless of their religious beliefs are required to work in accordance with their contract. Line managers should make every reasonable attempt to ensure that those whose religion requires them to pray at certain times during the day are free to do so. It would be expected that staff making any such requests would inform their line manager in good time to enable arrangements to be made.

# LEAVE

6.1 All requests for absence **during term-time to observe religious festivals** will be considered sympathetically. Further information about religious festivals can be found at [www.interfaith.org.uk](http://www.interfaith.org.uk)**.**

6.2 Some religious festivals are linked with lunar activity and therefore will change on an annual basis. As a result the dates for some festivals will not become clear immediately. Staff and students who are aware that they will wish to celebrate a festival where this is the case should highlight this to their line manager/programme leader at the start of the year and then give as much notice as possible.

6.3 If a student or a member of staff requests leave of absence for the purpose of going on pilgrimage, the programme leader or line manager should attempt to accommodate the request. For staff, if the extended leave exceeds the [annual holiday entitlement](http://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/policy/annual-leave-policy-and-entitlements.doc) the additional days will be viewed as unpaid leave.

6.4 Students and staff may have particular religious/cultural leave needs for births, weddings or deaths. Programme leaders and line managers would be expected to agree to these requests if reasonable.

# DRESS CODE

7.1 The University recognises that students and staff will wear a variety of individual styles of clothing. BU views the wearing of items as a result of particular cultural and religious norms such as clerical collars, sari, turbans and hijab part of this acceptance

7.2 Limitations to the above may apply for health and safety requirements which require certain pieces of clothing to be worn for specific tasks..

7.3 The wearing of slogans or symbols that could be considered discriminatory such as racist or sexist is not acceptable and may result in disciplinary action being taken.

# DIETARY REQUIREMENTS

# The University will provide food that meets religious dietary requirements (e.g. vegetarian, kosher, halal) according to the demand for it.

# TITLES

9.1 Recognised or ordained ministers or leaders of religious communities may have specific titles such as Iman or Reverend. These titles may be used in the University on internal directories, calendars, email signature files.

# DUTIES

# BU undertakes many activities which in some circumstances an individual may object to on the grounds of their religious or other belief. The University accepts that such situations may occur because it is a diverse community. Where this occurs and a student or member of staff is required as part of their duties or studies to undertake activities that they object to on the grounds of religious or other belief they should inform their programme leader or line manager stating the reasons why the required activity is considered objectionable on religious grounds. Whilst every effort will be made to accommodate objection, the core competencies of the programme and the requirements of the employment contract still need to be met.

# LINKS TO OTHER BU DOCUMENTS

* [Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech](https://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/documentsrep/CoPFoS%202022.23.docx?Web=1)
* [Prevent Policy](http://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/policy/BU%20Prevent%20Policy.doc)
* [Guidelines for room bookings](https://www.bournemouth.ac.uk/students/learning/request-study-room-campus)
* [Staff Disciplinary Procedures](http://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/policy/Disciplinary%20Procedure.docx)
* [Student Disciplinary Procedures](https://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/pandptest/11K-student-disciplinary-procedure.pdf)

# REFERENCES

[Prevent Duty Guidance for Higher Education Institutions in England and Wales,](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance/prevent-duty-guidance-for-higher-education-institutions-in-england-and-wales) HM Government,

**APPENDIX 1: POLICY FOR USE OF THE FAITH AND REFLECTION FACILITIES AT BU**

# LOCATION

1.1 Talbot Campus

Faith and Reflection is located on the first floor of Talbot House, Talbot Campus. The centre is open daily and there is a member of the Faith and Reflection Team on duty most days during office hours. Facilities include:

* + Communal space for those wishing to meet others
  + Quiet space for those wishing to reflect and pray,
  + Islamic Prayer room with wash facilities.
  + Bookable meeting room

1.2 Lansdowne Campus

Being centrally located in Bournemouth there are a number of public faith facilities available locally. Specifically for BU staff and students Lansdowne campus offers:

Prayer and contemplation room in BGB (401).

**2. USE OF FAITH AND REFLECTION FACILITIES**

2.1 All use of faith and reflection facilities must adhere to the Behaviour Charter (see Appendix 2)

**3. VISITING CHAPLAINS AND EXTERNAL SPEAKERS**

3.1 All appointments to the position of Chaplain, Associate Chaplain, visiting Chaplain or other faith leader at BU will be made by the Director of Student Services or her nominee.

3.2 All faith advisors and external speakers using faith or prayer facilities at BU are required to abide by all BU rules, regulations, policies and procedures. Of particular importance is the compliance with our Prevent duty.

**4. BOOKING UNIVERSITY SPACE**

4.1 Any person wishing to book University space for the purposes of religious presentations, debate or discussions must follow the [room bookings procedures.](https://itservices.bournemouth.ac.uk/services/book-a-meeting-room.aspx) The exception is the T133 which is booked directly through the Faith and Reflection team.

4.2 A record of all bookings made through the Faith and Reflection team, including details of purpose, participation and responsible lead person will be kept in line with the Universities duty under Prevent.

4.2 Only BU staff or students are permitted to book rooms, external visitors need to be sponsored by a current staff or student member and the [Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech](https://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/documentsrep/CoPFoS%202022.23.docx&action=default&_gl=1*1en8yvv*_ga*MTA5NTMwNTU1MC4xNjc4MzU0NTkw*_ga_DDEJC1N1ZN*MTY4ODQ4NTI5Ny4xLjEuMTY4ODQ4NTczNS4wLjAuMA..) must be followed.

4.3 The Interfaith Group will meet periodically to consider any block bookings.

4.4 Where BU faith or prayer facilities are to be used for a Designated Activity (as defined in section 6.3 of the [Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech](https://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/documentsrep/CoPFoS%202022.23.docx&action=default&_gl=1*1en8yvv*_ga*MTA5NTMwNTU1MC4xNjc4MzU0NTkw*_ga_DDEJC1N1ZN*MTY4ODQ4NTI5Ny4xLjEuMTY4ODQ4NTczNS4wLjAuMA..)), the principal organiser of the Designated Activity must comply with the requirements in the Code for obtaining approval to the Designated Activity proceeding. These requirements apply to both individual and block room bookings.

.

**APPENDIX 2: FAITH AND REFLECTION BEHAVIOUR CHARTER**

**The Faith and Reflection team seek to:**

* + Challenge, inspire and support our students as individuals, to grow intellectually, personally and spiritually
  + Prepare our students to be responsible citizens and leaders in a fast- changing, complex world
  + Be committed to serving the needs of local communities
  + Encourage learning, creativity and the arts as ways of nurturing the human spirit and improving the quality of life
  + Engage in the pursuit of truth through reason, research and debate based on freedom of thought and expression
  + Promote equality, diversity, mutual respect and understanding
  + Engage in worship, reflection and prayer
  + Explore the tenets of particular faiths and the relationships between faith groups with and in the contemporary world
  + Develop a wider understanding of social issues of critical importance to faith groups, such as justice, human rights, power and authority
  + Develop and experience mutual respect, awareness and understanding
  + Develop as unique individuals, receiving the pastoral and spiritual support necessary for this
  + Become a valued, valuable and supportive part of the university and reflect and provide for the needs of the wider community
  + Provide pastoral support as part of the University’s overall welfare provision
  + Be open and accessible to all members of the University, staff as well as student in places where students and staff spend time as well as in our dedicated space
  + Give clear expression to the faith traditions represented in the University
  + Encourage a questioning / critical approach to received wisdom and assumptions
  + Help people to feel valued as individuals.

**However, the Faith and Reflection facilities must not be used:**

* + To encourage division or discord, disunity or lack of respect
  + For the purposes of proselytization - the deliberate attempt by one faith group to convert others to their own beliefs.
  + To promote an agenda contrary to the University’s values, policies or regulations
  + Invite outside speakers without appropriate risk assessments and approval by related organisations. See [Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech](https://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/documentsrep/CoPFoS%202022.23.docx&action=default&_gl=1*1en8yvv*_ga*MTA5NTMwNTU1MC4xNjc4MzU0NTkw*_ga_DDEJC1N1ZN*MTY4ODQ4NTI5Ny4xLjEuMTY4ODQ4NTczNS4wLjAuMA..)