

Owner:	Head of Student Services
Version number:	Version 1.2
Date of approval:	April 2016
Approved by:	Chief Operating Officer
Effective date:	1 May 2016
Date of last review:	New
Due for review:	April 2021

RELIGION AND BELIEF POLICY

1. SCOPE AND PURPOSE

- 1.1 BU is committed to a working and learning environment that is free from physical, verbal and non-verbal harassment and bullying of individuals on any grounds. All staff, students and visitors have a right to be treated with dignity and respect, providing a positive and satisfying learning and working environment.
- 1.2 The University is proud to be a diverse community made up of staff and students from a wide range of backgrounds. We recognise that individual perceptions of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour at work or study may differ. The University aims to create a working and studying environment where different values and beliefs can be freely expressed and openly discussed and will do what it can to encourage open and respectful debate around Equality and Diversity issues.
- 1.3 BU has and will continue to develop and grow a culture of valuing Dignity, Diversity and Equality of all individuals. BU will continue to uphold and, where possible, exceed the provision of equality legislation to reflect sector best practice. All students, staff and visitors have a duty to comply with this policy and so will need to be aware of their personal obligations in eliminating all forms of what the University considers to be unacceptable behaviour.
- 1.4 This policy and its appendices applies to all staff, students and other members of the BU community. Any person found to be in breach of this policy (including its Appendices) will be subject to the appropriate disciplinary procedures or sanctions.

2. KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- 2.1 The Chief Operating Officer has executive responsibility for Chaplaincy operations, estates management and Equality and Diversity at BU.
- 2.2 The Associate Director of Human Resources has overall responsibility for the provision of faith facilities and chaplaincy services for staff and for staff health & wellbeing.

- 2.3 The Head of Student Services has overall responsibility for the provision of faith facilities and chaplaincy services for students and for student health and wellbeing.
- 2.4 The Equality and Diversity Steering Group has overall responsibility for developing and embedding BU's strategic commitment to Equality and Diversity.
- 2.5 The Equality and Diversity Advisor has overall responsibility for the daily operation of this policy.
- 2.6 The University Chaplain is responsible for the day to day management of Chaplaincy and Prayer Facilities at BU.
- 2.7 The Interfaith Group is responsible for considering the needs of all different faith groups are considered at BU.
- 2.8 All BU line managers have responsibility for BU staff welfare.

3. DEFINITIONS

3.1 Religion and belief is defined as a protected characteristic under the Equality Act. For the purposes of this policy religion 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.

3.2 Examples of different belief systems are listed below:

- Atheism
- Baha'i
- Buddhism
- Candomblé
- Christianity
- Hinduism
- Islam
- Jainism
- Jehovah's Witnesses
- Unitarianism
- Judaism
- Mormonism
- Paganism
- Rastafari
- Santeria
- Shinto
- Sikhism
- Spiritualism
- Taoism
- Zoroastrianism

This list is not exhaustive and there will be other religious/faith-based beliefs that will fall within the definition provided.

- 3.3 Currently BU asks students on a **voluntary** basis to disclose their religion and belief as part of on-line registration.

Staff are asked on a **voluntary** basis to disclose their religion and belief when they apply to work at the University and as part of the Staff Survey.

- 3.4 All equality data is reported on as part of the Equality and Diversity Annual Report.

4. SERVICES AND SUPPORT

The following services are generally available to support students and staff:

4.1 Students

- [Multi-Faith Chaplaincy](#)
- [Equality and Diversity Adviser](#)
- [Student Wellbeing](#)
- Buddhist Society
- Catholic Society
- Christian Union
- Jewish Society
- Humanist & Atheist Society
- Islamic Society

The student societies are hosted by the Students' Union ([SUBU](#)).

4.2 Staff

- [Multi-Faith Chaplaincy](#)
- [Equality and Diversity Adviser](#)
- [Occupational Health](#)
- [Employee Assistance Programme](#)

5. RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE

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

5.1 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 [BU Mitigating Circumstances policy](#).

5.2 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.

6. 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.

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 absence for the purpose of going on pilgrimage the line manager or programme leader should attempt to accommodate the request. If the extended leave exceeds the [annual holiday entitlement](#) the additional days will be viewed as unpaid leave.

6.4 Staff may have particular religious/cultural needs for births, weddings or deaths. Line managers would be expected to agree to these requests if reasonable.

7. 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 being worn for specific tasks. If such clothing produces a conflict with an individual's religious belief, the issue will be sympathetically considered by the line manager or academic member of staff.

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

8. **DIETARY REQUIREMENTS**

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

9. **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.

10. **DUTIES**

- 10.1 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 member of staff or student 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 line manager or programme leader. When informing your line manager or programme leader you should state the reasons why the activity you are being required to undertake are objectionable on religious grounds. Every effort will be made to accommodate your objection.

11. **LINKS TO OTHER BU DOCUMENTS**

- [Chaplaincy Operational Policy](#)
- [Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech](#)
- [Prevent Policy](#)
- [Guidelines for external bookings](#)
- [Staff Disciplinary Procedures](#)
- [Student Disciplinary Procedures](#)
- [Dignity and Respect policy](#)
- [Reporting of alleged hate incidents and crimes](#)
- [Equality and Diversity policy](#)

12. **REFERENCES**

[Managing the Risks with External Speakers](#), NUS, July 2011

[Prevent Duty Guidance for Higher Education Institutions in England and Wales](#), HM Government,

APPENDIX 1: MULTI-FAITH CHAPLAINCY BEHAVIOUR CHARTER

Chaplaincy seeks 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, Chaplaincy 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 (Chaplaincy, SUBU, BU, AUB). See [Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech](#)

APPENDIX 2: POLICY FOR USE OF CHAPLAINCY AND PRAYER FACILITIES AT BU

1. LOCATION

1.1 Talbot Campus

The [Chaplaincy](#) is located on the first floor of Talbot House, Talbot Campus. The centre is open daily and there is a Chaplain 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:

- Chaplaincy Office in BG04, Bournemouth House
- Prayer room, B237

2. USE OF CHAPLAINCY FACILITIES

2.1 All use of chaplaincy facilities must adhere to the Multi-Faith Chaplaincy Behaviour Charter (see Appendix 1)

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 Chief Operating Officer.

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 [University's Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech](#)

4. BOOKING CHAPLAINCY 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](#). The exception is the main Chaplaincy room (T133) which is booked directly through Chaplaincy.

- 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](#) 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](#)), 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 3 - INTERFAITH GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE

Delegated Authority and Purpose	To ensure that the needs of all different faith groups are considered at BU
Main responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To consider the faith provision at BU, to refer any relevant issues for discussion at the Equality and Diversity Steering Group and to make recommendations to the Head of Student Services for the future provision of faith spaces To consider issues of religious importance such as the observation of religious customs. To refer relevant issues for discussion at the Equality & Diversity Steering Group and to make recommendations to the University Leadership Team To consider block bookings of university rooms for the purposes of presentation, discussion or debate focused on faith issues To consider any issues arising from the use of BU's Chaplaincy and prayer facilities
Duration	Permanent
Chair	Head of Student Services
Deputy Chair	
Membership	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Head of Facilities Management Associate Director of HR University Chaplain Equalities and Diversity Adviser SU President SU Welfare Officer President of any SUBU religious societies Staff faith representatives
Quorum	40% of the membership
Usual Number of Meetings	Three per year
Reporting Line	Equality & Diversity Steering Group
Minutes	Matters reported via the Chair to E&DSG
Sub-committees	None
Publication	Non-confidential confirmed minutes are routinely published and are made available via the intranet.
Notes	

Policy and Committees use only:

Final approval by:		Version number:	
Approval date:		Notes:	

