

Religion and Belief Policy

1. Religion and Belief Statement

- 1.1. Oxford Brookes University celebrates and values the diversity provided by individual members of the University community, and aims to create an environment where the cultural, religious and non-religious beliefs of all are respected.¹
- 1.2. We expect all members of the University community to respect the beliefs and life choices of other people, even when they are very different from their own.

2. Freedom of Speech

- 2.1. Oxford Brookes University is committed to the values of open and respectful debate.
- 2.2. The University expects every member of the University community to observe the requirements of the law on freedom of speech.
- 2.3. The University is committed to protecting and promoting the rights of every member of the University community to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, freedom of expression and freedom of association. This policy embraces the definition of religion as contained in Article Ten 1 of the Equality Act 2010 and United Nations Resolution A/RES/36/55 25 November 1981 declaration on The Elimination of all Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief².

¹ Religion or belief

(1) Religion means any religion and a reference to religion includes a reference to a lack of religion.

(2) Belief means any religious or philosophical belief and a reference to belief includes a reference to a lack of belief.

(3) In relation to the protected characteristic of religion or belief—

(a) a reference to a person who has a particular protected characteristic is a reference to a person of a particular religion or belief;

(b) a reference to persons who share a protected characteristic is a reference to persons who are of the same religion or belief.

² Preamble contains the following

Considering that it is essential to promote understanding, tolerance and respect in matters relating to freedom of religion and belief and to ensure that the use of religion or belief for ends inconsistent with the Charter of the United Nations, other relevant instruments of the United Nations and the purposes and principles of the present Declaration is inadmissible.

Convinced that freedom of religion and belief should also contribute to the attainment of the goals of world peace, social justice and friendship among peoples and to the elimination of ideologies or practices of colonialism and racial discrimination.

UN Resolution 36/55, 25 Nov 1981, Article One further states

1. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have a religion or whatever belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in

- 2.4. These rights apply to people with or without formal religious affiliation, of all faiths and none.
- 2.5. This policy should be read in the context of the University's Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech, which can be found at:

<http://www.brookes.ac.uk/about/structure/governors/codeofpracticefreedomofspeech>

3. Legal Obligations on Religion and Belief

- 3.1. The following legislations set out the legal obligations of the University in regards to people of all faiths and none:
 - The Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006
 - The Equality Act 2010
- 3.2. The Employment Equality (Religion and Belief) Regulations 2003 and the Equality Act 2010 make it illegal for the University as an employer and a provider of services to discriminate against someone because of their faith or beliefs.
- 3.3. Under the Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006, it is illegal to incite hatred on religious grounds.

4. Guidelines on Religion and Belief

- 4.1. This policy should be read in context of the relevant policies and guidelines in place at Oxford Brookes University. The following list is not exhaustive:
 - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
 - Dignity and Respect Policy
 - Work-Life Balance for all
 - Guides to Support Inclusive Teaching and Learning
 - Changes to Assessment Arrangements regulations

5. Accommodating Religious Observance

- 5.1. The University expects staff and students to make an effort to accommodate their religious observance outside normal working or teaching hours, but recognises that this will not always be possible.
- 5.2. There may be times of the year when people increase their religious observance. The University will try to accommodate this, so far as is possible, in accordance with its rules and regulations, including the Changes to Assessment Arrangements.
- 5.3. The University will:
 - Treat all disclosures of religious observance in confidence.

community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching.

2. No one shall be subject to coercion which would impair his freedom to have a religion or belief of his choice
3. Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health or morals or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.

- Ensure that all teaching staff and other staff with management responsibilities are familiar with the terms of this policy.
- Be sensitive to dietary requirements and periods of fasting when arranging events, or providing refreshments.
- Ensure that appropriate space and facilities for complying with religious obligation are available to staff and students on all campuses, as far as possible.

5.4. Teaching and research staff will:

- Endeavour to accommodate absence for religious reasons for holy days, feasts or religious festivals, or funerals (including travel abroad), unless there is a legitimate reason for not doing so.

5.5. Line managers will:

- Endeavour to accommodate absence for religious reasons for holy days, feasts or religious festivals, or funerals, including travel abroad, unless there is a legitimate reason for not doing so.
- Endeavour to accommodate flexible working to facilitate worship when appropriate.
- Seek guidance from the Directorate of Human Resources on making an equitable response to staff requests.

5.6. Students will:

- Disclose where a religious observance will conflict with an assessment date or deadline in accordance with the Changes to Assessment Arrangements Regulations.

5.7. Staff will:

- Act in accordance with the University's leave policies, including Annual leave, Dependent care, Domestic emergency and bereavement leave, and Special leave.

6. Review and Update Arrangements

6.1. This policy will be reviewed regularly by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Group and may also be amended from time to time to reflect and take account of changes in legislation and best practice.

6.2. Any feedback or concerns about the policy and its implementation should be passed to: chaplaincy@brookes.ac.uk

6.3. This policy is available in alternative formats on request, please email: eod@brookes.ac.uk

7. Further information

7.1. Oxford Brookes University is not responsible for the content of external websites.

7.2. Guidance on the Equality Act (2010)

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/equalities/equality-act-publications/equality-act-guidance/>

7.3. EHRC Guidance on Religion at Work (updated February 2013)

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/guidance-for-employers/religion-or-belief-new-guidance-february-2013/>

7.4. Managing the Interface: Sexual Orientation and Faith

http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/hr/equality/documents/managing_the_interface.pdf

APPENDIX I: FACILITIES AND GOVERNANCE

1. University Facilities

1.1 In addition to the Chaplaincy provision at Headington, other facilities may be set aside for prayer or religious observance. These currently include:

- The Westminster Chapel at Harcourt Hill
- The prayer room attached to the Westminster Chapel at Harcourt Hill
- The multi-faith quiet room in the School of Health and Social Care at Marston Road
- The multi-faith quiet room at Wheatley
- Other facilities may be made available on an as-needed basis.

1.2 If a space is used for specific worship (e.g. Muslim prayer), the University is responsible for ensuring it is fit-for-purpose with guidance from the relevant Chaplain and / or the Multifaith Advisory Board, or the Ecumenical Chaplaincy Council, as appropriate.

2. Chaplaincy Space

2.1 The Chaplaincy is a space for people of all faiths and none to seek pastoral care, or to sit quietly and pray, meditate, or just be.

2.2 A ministry of hospitality is at the heart of the work of the Chaplaincy, and space suitable for sustaining this ministry should be available to the Chaplaincy.

2.3 The worship and prayer facilities in the Chaplaincy are available to all on an as-needed basis, and may be booked for corporate worship by request.

3. Chaplains and Faith Advisers

3.1 The Chaplains will be appointed by the University for the spiritual and pastoral care of the University community.

3.2 The Ecumenical Chaplain will be employed by the University.

3.3 The resident Chaplain at the Harcourt Hill Campus will be an ordained Methodist minister appointed in accordance with the terms of the merger agreement between Oxford Brookes University and the Methodist Church.

3.4 The Catholic Chaplain will be appointed by the Archbishop of Birmingham to serve Oxford Brookes University at the Catholic Chaplaincy designated by the Archdiocese.

3.5 Other Chaplains will be appointed as associate members of staff.

3.6 A faith or belief, or non-belief, community wishing to nominate a Chaplain should approach the Head of Wellbeing or the Ecumenical Chaplain. Assessment and / or an interview will be arranged by these officers, as appropriate. Other members of the Multifaith Advisory Board and / or Ecumenical Chaplaincy Council may be invited to take part in any interview or assessment.

3.7 Any decision to appoint a Chaplain will be submitted in writing, with a CV and references if requested, to the Multifaith Advisory Board or the Ecumenical Chaplaincy Council for

approval. Normally any person appointed as a Chaplain will be subject to a probationary period of six months.

- 3.8 The University may from time to time make arrangements with recognised bodies representing certain faith communities (e.g. the Archdiocese of Birmingham, University Jewish Chaplaincy, Friends International, the British Humanist Association, the National Secular Society), through which chaplains are appointed without requiring further approval by either the Multifaith Advisory Board or the Ecumenical Chaplaincy Council.
- 3.9 A Faith Adviser is a nominated representative of a faith community who is available to advise on issues pertinent to their faith, and to offer some support to the University community. A Faith Adviser may be appointed by the same means as a Chaplain, if a community does not feel it has the resources to offer a Chaplain.
- 3.10 All Chaplains and Faith Advisers will sign a formal ministry agreement with the University that sets out their role and responsibilities. (Appendix II)

4. Chaplaincy Governance

MULTIFAITH ADVISORY BOARD

- 4.1 The Multifaith Advisory Board will have responsibility for the multifaith dimensions of the work of the Chaplaincy; it will have no responsibility for oversight or governance of the work of the Ecumenical Christian Chaplaincy.
- 4.2 The Multifaith Advisory Board will be responsible for being alert to and considering issues affecting the faith communities of the University and consider responses.
- 4.3 The Multifaith Advisory Board will report at least annually to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Group and / or the Academic Enhancement and Standards Committee as appropriate.
- 4.4 The Multifaith Advisory Board will be available to make recommendations on matters of religion to any group within the University community.
- 4.5 The Multifaith Advisory Board will approve the appointment of Chaplains and Faith Advisers from non-Christian traditions.
- 4.6 The Multifaith Advisory Board will have oversight of the programme of multifaith work undertaken by the Chaplaincy.
- 4.7 The Multifaith Advisory Board will have oversight of any budget for multifaith work undertaken by the Chaplaincy.
- 4.8 The Multifaith Advisory Board will be a forum for religious dialogue and support; in its work and in its discussions it will be respectful and non-proselytising.
- 4.9 The membership of the Multifaith Advisory Board will be:
- Head of Wellbeing (chair)
 - Ecumenical Chaplain (secretary)

- The Chaplain in Residence at Harcourt Hill
- The Catholic Chaplain appointed by the Archbishop of Birmingham
- All other Chaplains
- Faith Advisers
- The County Ecumenical Development Officer for Churches Together in Oxfordshire (or a nominee)
- The Chair of the Oxford Council of Faiths (or a nominee)
- The Associate Dean (Student Experience) from each Faculty (or a nominee)
- A member of the International Student Advice Team (ISAT)
- A member of staff from the Directorate of Human Resources, with responsibility for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Representatives of the student community as follows:
 - One officer of the Students' Union
 - One representative from each faith and belief society affiliated to the Students' Union
- Representatives of the staff community as follows:
 - One representative appointed by each staff union recognised by the University
 - Any other member of University staff co-opted by the Board

ECUMENICAL CHAPLAINCY COUNCIL

- 4.10 The Ecumenical Chaplaincy Council will report at least annually to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Group and / or the Academic Enhancement and Standards Committee as appropriate.
- 4.11 The Ecumenical Chaplaincy Council is a Local Ecumenical Project that contributes to the ecumenical work of the Chaplaincy; Council meetings will uphold the agreements made in the formation of that partnership.
- 4.12 The Ecumenical Chaplaincy Council will be available to make recommendations on matters of Christian faith to any group within the University community.
- 4.13 The Ecumenical Chaplaincy Council will approve the appointment of Chaplains and Faith Advisers from Christian traditions.
- 4.14 The Ecumenical Chaplaincy Council will have oversight of the programme of ecumenical Christian work undertaken by the Chaplaincy.
- 4.15 The Ecumenical Chaplaincy Council will have oversight of the budget for ecumenical Christian work undertaken by the Chaplaincy.
- 4.16 The Ecumenical Chaplaincy Council will be a forum for ecumenical dialogue and support; in its work and in its discussions it will be respectful and non-proselytising.

4.17 The membership of the Ecumenical Chaplaincy Council will be:

- Head of Wellbeing (chair)
- Ecumenical Chaplain (secretary)
- The Chaplain in Residence at Harcourt Hill
- The Catholic Chaplain appointed by the Archbishop of Birmingham
- The County Ecumenical Development Officer for Churches Together in Oxfordshire
- Representatives of local church traditions which form the Local Ecumenical Project.
- Other representatives of local churches who may be co-opted by the Council
- One representative from each student Christian society affiliated to the Students' Union
- At least one member of University staff co-opted by the Board

APPENDIX II: MINISTRY AGREEMENT

Section I

(Please print name)

as a member in good standing of *(please print name of Faith Community)*

_____ has

been appointed by Oxford Brookes University as a Chaplain / Faith Adviser *(delete as applicable)* within the Multifaith Chaplaincy.

On behalf of Oxford Brookes University I confirm this appointment and acknowledge the responsibility of the University to support them in their work.

Signed

(Ecumenical Chaplain)

(Please print name)

Date

Countersigned *(On behalf of Oxford Brookes)*

(Please print name)

(Post)

Date

In signing this agreement, I indicate my intention to carry out the responsibilities outlined below (section II), and to conduct myself in accordance with the Oxford Brookes University Code of Conduct.

Signed *(Faith Adviser / Chaplain):*

Date

A copy of this agreement must be filed with a designated responsible person within the faith community of which the Chaplain / Faith Adviser is a part.

Name of Faith Community Contact

Contact Details

Section II: Duties and Responsibilities

The Chaplain / Faith Adviser will:

1. Attend Chaplaincy team, Ecumenical Chaplaincy Council (if appropriate), and Multifaith Advisory Board meetings in order to contribute to the effective working of the Multifaith Chaplaincy, and of the University. The Chaplain / Faith Adviser will be expected to make attendance at these meetings a priority, and to clearly communicate to the Ecumenical Chaplain when they are unable to attend.
2. Through these meetings, keep the Ecumenical Chaplain and the rest of the team informed of his/her activities at Oxford Brookes University.
3. Agree to an enhanced DBS check as part of their appointment, which will be coordinated by Oxford Brookes University.
4. Assist with, and take active part in, Chaplaincy team activities.
5. Be available for students of their denomination or faith community, in order to provide spiritual or religious support.
6. A Chaplain will aim to spend about 3 hours on average a week during term-time in contact with, or being available for, students or staff of any faith or of none (this is not a requirement for a Faith Adviser).
7. Share with the Ecumenical Chaplain a named member of their faith community (named above) who is responsible for their supervision and pastoral care.
8. Agree to undertake, from time to time, such other reasonable duties as may be negotiated and agreed (e.g. major incident response).

Chaplains and Faith Advisers are responsible to the Ecumenical Chaplain and thus, via the Head of Wellbeing, to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs. In case of disciplinary proceedings taking place, the ultimate sanction will be removal from the Chaplaincy team by the joint decision of these officers. Any appeal against this decision may be made to the Ecumenical Chaplaincy Council and/or the Multifaith Advisory Board (as appropriate).

The Ecumenical Chaplain will:

1. Keep the Chaplain / Faith Adviser informed of Chaplaincy and other relevant University activities and policies.
2. Include him/her in decision-making in matters that relate to his/her work.
3. Provide administrative support to the Chaplain / Faith Adviser to facilitate his/her activities at Brookes.
4. Be available to answer his/her queries and, as far as possible, provide him/her with all necessary information to do his/her work.
5. Any complaint about the Ecumenical Chaplain's fulfilment of these conditions should be addressed in the first instance to the Head of Wellbeing.

For further information about this policy, please contact the Head of Wellbeing.

Approved by: Academic Board and Executive Board, July 2013

Last updated: Academic Enhancement and Standards Committee, April 2015