

## Multi-faith Statement - University of Salford

(adapted in parts from Building Good Relations with People of Different Faiths and Beliefs, © Inter Faith Network for the UK 1993, 2000)

### 1. Faith provision in the University

At the University of Salford people of many different faiths and none work and study side by side. The University recognises the diversity of religious commitment within its community and therefore supports the provision of a Multi-Faith Chaplaincy service. This excellent resource contributes to university life for many staff and students alike.

At the University of Salford Multi-Faith Chaplaincy, Chaplains from different religions and denominations work together as a team and strive for inter-religious understanding and co-operation without blurring the differences and disagreements that exist between and also within faith groups.

The role of the Multi-Faith Chaplaincy Service shall be:

- To offer hospitality, support and pastoral care to all those who wish to seek it.
- To work within the student support network.
- To act as a "signpost" for any student wishing to make contact with a particular faith community and to provide information about all faith communities for the University.
- To provide support and spiritual counsel for individuals or their representatives at times of need or crisis (e.g. illness, accident, bereavement) when requested.
- To respond to the needs of those who wish to belong to a denominational chaplaincy or faith community.
- To provide opportunities for prayer and worship as and when appropriate.
- To encourage and support those who wish to explore issues of faith, ethics and spirituality, recognising this as an important part of their personal growth and development.
- To promote contact, encounter and conversation between religious groups and faith communities.
- To show a care and concern for the quality of experience offered by the institution in its many forms and to contribute to the well-being of the institution as and when appropriate.
- To liaise with local churches and faith communities, promoting an understanding of the work and aims of the University.

### 2. How we work

The Multi-faith Chaplaincy sees our diversity as an opportunity rather than a threat and wants to contribute to building a community founded on mutual respect, openness and trust, where people can live their lives of faith with integrity, while allowing others to do so too. In our dealings with people of other faiths and beliefs this means exercising good will and:

- Respecting other people's freedom within the law to hold and express their beliefs and convictions
- Learning to understand what others actually believe and value, and letting them express this in their own terms
- Respecting the convictions of others about food, dress and social etiquette and not behaving in ways which cause needless offence
- Recognising that all of us at times fall short of the ideals of our own traditions and never comparing our own ideals with other people's practices
- Working to prevent disagreement from leading to conflict
- Tolerating no violence in our relationships

When we talk about matters of faith with one another, we need to do so with sensitivity, honesty and straightforwardness. This means:

- Recognising that listening as well as speaking is necessary for a genuine conversation
- Being honest about our beliefs and religious allegiances
- Being able to give and respond to challenge and criticism in a respectful way
- Not misrepresenting or disparaging other people's beliefs and practices
- Correcting misunderstanding or misrepresentations not only of our own but also of other faiths whenever we come across them
- Being straightforward about our intentions
- Accepting that in formal inter faith meetings there is a particular responsibility to ensure that the religious commitment of all those who are present will be respected

### **3. Pastoral Care**

In a fast moving and increasingly impersonal world the Chaplaincy offers a personal approach. Our Multi-Faith Chaplaincy offers care and support to people of all faiths and none. We work with communities with a strong sense of belonging and we offer opportunities for worship, prayer and spiritual exploration.

In pastoral encounters with people of faiths and denominations different from our own we are sensitive to the expressed needs of the other and open about our own background. Differences in religious convictions will always be recognised and respected. Where appropriate, and within the boundaries of confidentiality, referrals to Chaplains of the respective faith or denomination will be made.

### **4. Sharing Faith**

All of us want others to understand and respect our views. Some people will also want to persuade others to join their faith. In a setting such as the University of Salford, where people of different traditions and faiths live and work together, the attempt to do so should always be characterised by self-restraint and a concern for the other's freedom and dignity. This means following these guidelines:

- Respecting another person's expressed wish to be left alone
- Avoiding imposing ourselves and our views on individuals or communities who are in vulnerable situations in ways which exploit them
- Being sensitive and courteous
- Avoiding violent action or language, threats, manipulation, improper inducements, or the misuse of any kind of power

- Being alert and attentive to cultural differences in our conversations
- Avoiding inviting people to an event under false pretences
- Producing publicity material for an event which is overt about its aims
- Respecting the University's regulations on leafleting and fly-posting
- Avoiding making random and unsolicited visits to students' rooms
- Respecting the right of others to disagree with us

## 5. Shared values

Living and working together is not always easy. Religion harnesses deep emotions, which can sometimes take destructive forms. Where this happens, we will draw on our faith to bring about reconciliation and understanding.

We have a great deal to learn from one another, which can enrich us without undermining our own identities. Together, listening and responding with openness and respect, we can move forward to work in ways that acknowledge genuine differences but build on shared hopes and values.

## 6. The Chaplaincy Team

In supporting the provision of a Multi-Faith Chaplaincy service, the University recognises the following roles\*:

- **Chaplains:** Individuals appointed either by external bodies with the involvement of the University, or by the University itself, to work on a full-time or part-time basis as Chaplains to the University. They are required to work with other Chaplains within the service. The University may also authorise the use of a title appropriate to a particular faith community if requested.
- **Visiting Chaplains:** Individuals who have a recognised role (for example, Rabbi, Imam, Priest) within an external faith community and who are authorised by the University to support the Chaplains in their work on campus, usually with a designated group, location or in an advisory capacity.
- **Chaplaincy Volunteers:** Individuals who offer a voluntary commitment to the Chaplaincy Service and operate with the support and under the oversight of one or more of the Chaplains (for example leading a group for students, being a chaplaincy contact in a particular building, assisting at Chaplaincy events etc.)

\*These roles are indicative rather than exhaustive and chaplains will make the final decision

The University will require that the appointment and selection of Chaplains, Visiting Chaplains and Chaplaincy Volunteers include appropriate checks and procedures. Those who operate within the chaplaincy service agree to abide by this Multi-Faith Chaplaincy Service Statement and must sign to confirm this. Faith representatives working with the Chaplaincy service will, where appropriate, be required to be nominated and supported by a recognised member of their Faith community who can be contacted if any issues arise.

Individuals occupying the above roles can only indicate affiliation to the University of Salford when authorised to do so by the Human Resources Division. Individuals not authorised by HR are not permitted to use titles that indicate or imply affiliation to the University or its members.

The University will publicise contact details for the Multi-Faith Chaplaincy service contacts in University or Students' Union publications [following consultation with the Chaplains].

## **Agreement to the University of Salford Multi-Faith Statement**

### **To be signed by all Chaplains, Visiting Chaplains and Chaplaincy Volunteers**

At the University of Salford I will follow the Multi Faith Chaplaincy Service and Multi Faith Statements in my work as a:

Chaplain

Visiting Chaplain

Chaplaincy Volunteer

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

As a member of the nominating and supporting Faith community I agree that we will support this Chaplain / Visiting Chaplain / Chaplaincy Volunteer in their work:

Signed on behalf of the faith community by:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact details: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Appendix – Further Guidance

## 1. The University

The University of Salford does not have any religious affiliation or endorse any particular denomination or faith. The University recognises the right to freedom of thought consciousness and religion; but the right to manifest beliefs is qualified by the need to protect the rights and freedom of others.

The University’s mission as an educational institution means that it is committed to providing a supportive context in which students and staff of any belief system, religious, philosophical and cultural background, can explore new ideas and experiences and engage critically with each other in a safe and respectful learning environment.

In keeping with the 1988 Education Reform Act, the University’s Charter states:

*‘The University shall not discriminate against any person on the grounds of race, nationality, ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, age, religion, social background or political belief’.*

## 2. The Law

The Equality Act 2010, outlaws discrimination on the grounds of religion/belief or none  
The Act states that it is unlawful to:

Directly Discriminate	Treating people less favourably than others on the grounds of their religion or belief
Indirectly discriminate	Applying a provision, criteria or practice which disadvantages people of a particular religion or belief and which is not a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
Harass	Unwanted conduct that violates people’s dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment
Victimise	Treating people less favourably because of a protected act. E.g. harassing someone because they were/are/ or going to give evidence in a disciplinary proceeding
The Equality Act also introduced two new provisions	
Discriminate by perception	e.g. treating someone with an Asian name less favourably
Discriminate by association	e.g. treating someone less favourably because they are married to a Christian

## 3. Definition of Religion

The definition of Religion is a complex one as they are always evolving and developing; however under the Equality Act the following are outlined:

Baha’i	Buddhism
Christianity	Hinduism
Islam	Jainism
Judaism	Rastafarianism
Sikhism	Zoroastrianism

Denominations or sects in a particular religion are also covered under the Act, for example, Catholics or Protestants in Christianity. Less known faiths such as Parsee, Shamanism or Shinto are also covered. In the explanatory notes, published with the Equality Act, advice is given that a religion must have a clear structure and belief system.

People from less known religious beliefs should be treated with the same respect and understanding as those from more known religions.

#### **4. Definition of Belief**

The definition of Belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.

If a philosophical belief is to be afforded protection it must:

- Be genuinely held
- Be a belief and not an opinion or viewpoint based on the present state of information available
- Be a belief as a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour
- Attain a certain level of cogency, seriousness, cohesion and importance
- Be worthy of respect in a democratic society and not incompatible with human dignity and/or conflict with the fundamental rights of others

Case law has, to date, concerned beliefs that were around vegetarianism, animal rights and environmentalism. Other protected beliefs could be belief in new age spirituality or secular humanism, but does not include membership of a political party or anything that is at odds with the rights of others e.g. belief in racial supremacy.

People with philosophical beliefs should be treated with the same respect and understanding as those from more known religions.

#### **5. Religious Observance**

[LINK] [Absence for religious festivals](#)

[LINK] [Timetabling](#)

[Formal assessments / examinations](#)

[LINK] [Religious dress](#)

[LINK] [Food and drink](#)

[LINK] [Room bookings](#)

[LINK] [Freedom of Speech](#)