

POLICY ON RELIGION, BELIEF, VALUES AND PRACTICES

Originator name:	Jo McCarthy-Holland
Section / Dept:	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
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Related documents:	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2015-17 Dignity at Work and Study Policy Grievance Policy Disciplinary Policy Flexible Working Policy Widening Participation and Outreach Strategy Freedom of Speech Policy Prevent Policy Timetabling Policy Data Protection Policy Health and Safety Policy Management of Work Related Stress Policy Academic Regulations namely: A1: Regulations for taught programmes A2: Regulations for research degrees A3: Regulations for research degrees on the basis of published works A4: Regulations for higher doctorates Codes of Practice: Code of Practice for Personal Tutors Student Regulations namely: Regulations for extenuating circumstances Regulations for academic appeals Procedure for Complaints Fitness to Study Fitness to Practise Disciplinary Regulations Student Charter Examination Adjustments
Related websites:	Equality Act 2010 Public Sector Equality Duty Religion and Belief in higher education: the experiences of staff and students Faith Communities

Policy history:	2007
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Version History

Version	Author	Revisions Made	Date
1	Jo McCarthy-Holland	First draft	16 Nov 2017
1.1	HR Policy	Interim review	1 st November 2022

Approval History

Equality Analysis

Version	Reviewed by	Comments	Date
1	Jo McCarthy-Holland	Positive impact on equality	October 2017

Committee Sign Off

Version	Committee Name	Date of Sign Off
1	Equality and Diversity Committee	23 November 2017

Executive Board Sign Off

Version	Committee Name	Date of Sign Off
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1	Introduction
	The University of Surrey is a multicultural, global community. Many of those who work, study or visit the University of Surrey adopt particular religious or philosophical outlooks on the whole of life, within which distinctive beliefs, values and practices are interwoven. The University celebrates and values this cultural, religious, spiritual and philosophical diversity and recognises the opportunity it provides for intellectual enrichment and cultural exchange, for growth in understanding, and building of good relations between people of different religions, beliefs, values and practices.
1.1	Purpose
1.1.1	This policy recognises that adherents of a given religion or belief may seek to give external expression to individual and shared frameworks of belief and value. The principle of respect for rights of the 'other' is central to the pursuit of such good relations. Diversity of belief represents a responsibility for all members of the University community and requires a commitment by all – whether 'religious' or otherwise, staff, student or visitor – to respect the presence, beliefs, values and practices of others. Through this policy, the University welcomes the diverse character of its community and, as part of its commitment to equality and diversity, and in accordance with its obligations under the Equality Act 2010, seeks to promote the equal treatment of, and respect for, all members of the University community.
1.2	Scope
1.2.1	This policy includes in its scope all staff and students of the University as well as all visitors to the University and its campuses.
1.3	Equality Analysis
1.3.1	It is not anticipated that this policy will have any negative impact on any protected groups. It complies with the Public Sector Equality Duty and requires all staff, students and visitors to respect the University's values, be sensitive to the diversity of the University community and to show respect to all sections of that community. Therefore, the policy will have a potentially positive impact in terms of all protected characteristics. Ongoing assessment will be undertaken at least quarterly as to the impact of this policy in terms of issues arising around adjustments made for observance of religion and belief.
1.4	Definitions
1.4.1	For the purposes of this policy, 'religion, belief, values and practices' is given an interpretation consistent with the University's obligations under human rights legislation and the definitions and requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Religion or belief is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010 and is understood as relating to any 'weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour'. This policy covers individual thought, conscience or religious belief, and also manifestation of that opinion or belief whether individually or collectively with others. The Equality Act 2010 requires that public bodies must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to: • eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act. • advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. • foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
1.5	Legislative context
1.5.1	This policy represents the implementation at the University of Surrey of the Equality Act 2010, which prohibits "discrimination on the basis of religion, religious belief or any similar philosophical belief". However, the spirit of the policy is to promote a positive University community based on mutual respect and understanding. It is expected that all members of

	the University community will adhere to this policy and behave in ways that demonstrate respect for religion, beliefs, values and practices of colleagues and students.
1.5.2	Breaches of this policy All members of the University community have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. However, if beliefs are promoted in a way that impinges on the rights and freedoms of others, this may result in disciplinary action. Any member of the University community who considers they have been treated in ways that breach this policy should undertake the following: • Discuss their situation with their line manager / personal tutor in order to seek a resolution. If this proves unsuccessful, individuals should access the procedure appropriate to their situation, e.g. staff and students can seek advice on harassment and bullying. Harassment or bullying on the grounds of religion or belief will not be tolerated and will be dealt with under the University's Dignity at Work and Study Policy and Grievance Policies; • Students who wish to make a complaint under this policy can seek help from their Academic Supervisor, Personal Tutor, Executive Dean, the Head of Security and the Students Union. Please see Procedure for Complaints. • The Equality and Diversity team, Chaplaincy, Human Resources, Students Union and Trade Union representatives (Unison, UCU and Unite) are available to provide advice if required.
1.6	Health & Safety Implications
1.6.1	The University has duties under the relevant legislation to ensure the health & safety and welfare at work of all staff and that its operations do not expose staff, students, and visitors to risks to their health & safety. As such the normal principles contained within the University's Health and Safety Policy will apply.
2	Policy
2.1	Principles
2.1.1	As a secular institution that privileges no religious faith or organisation, the University affirms that all members of the University community have the right, within the law, to freedom of religion, conscience, thought and speech and to the peaceful practice and expression of their religion, belief, values and practices. Intrinsic to equality of belief at this University, is an expectation and requirement that all persons on campus should respect the rights of others to choose, hold and express religion, belief, values and practices, and that the basic tenets of academic freedom should be upheld providing this is done within the laws of the UK. Recruitment, promotion, admissions and selection should be based solely on relevant criteria, which do not include religion and belief (except in the case of a Genuine Occupational Requirement, see Section 4.2.1 below). As far as is considered reasonable within this organisation, University staff and students should be allowed to observe their religion, belief, values and practices. The legitimate right of persons, within UK law, to freedom of belief and the peaceful practice and expression of their religion and/or belief should be exercised with thoughtful self-restraint, and with a concern for the freedom and dignity of others. In practice this necessitates: • Respect for another person's expressed wish to be left alone; • The avoidance of the imposition of religious or other views on individuals who are in vulnerable situations in ways which exploit these; • The avoidance of violent action or language, threats, manipulation, improper inducements or the misuse of any kind of power; • Respect for the right of others to disagree.
2.1.2	Disregard for any of the above will be considered a breach of the fundamental principle of respect for others, and may constitute harassment and the University Complaints, Grievance or Disciplinary procedures will need to be followed.

3	Reasonable Adjustments
3.2	Reasonable Accommodation
3.2.1	The expression of freedom of thought, conscience or of religion, belief, values and practice is not an absolute right, and intervention may be justified where this is considered necessary to protect the rights of others. This policy must not be interpreted by any group or individual as sanctioning a right to engage in activities or acts that have a negative impact on the rights of others. Religious or philosophical belief cannot be used to justify discriminatory behaviour against other individuals or groups of staff, students or visitors, for example: • Refusal to provide services to individuals or groups of people with protected characteristics; • Making derogatory or discriminatory comments about individuals or groups of people; • Showing reluctance or refusing to meet with or work with staff, students or visitors to the university because they have a protected characteristic; • Attempting to coerce or threaten others into compliance with a particular set of religious or other beliefs, values or practices, for example, spreading or inciting others to spread extremist views/ideology (including violent extremism), extremist propaganda or materials and/or forcing these views/opinions on others through unauthorised distribution of propaganda or through threats or offensive remarks. The University of Surrey does not tolerate instances of this nature and those responsible may be liable to disciplinary action under the respective disciplinary policy and regulations for staff and students respectively (See Dignity at Work and Study Policy, Freedom of Speech Policy, Prevent Policy, Disciplinary Policy and Disciplinary Regulations). Where such instances of this nature relate to visitors to the University then action taken may include intervention by the Police, removal of the perpetrator from the University premises, a ban from returning to the University. If the perpetrators are from another institution then that institution will be informed of the issues.
3.2.2	Dress Code The University of Surrey imposes no dress code (apart from where uniform is required) on its employees or students, and in this regard welcomes the rich diversity in ethnic, cultural and religious dress exhibited on campus (e.g. hijab, kippah, niqab, mangalsutra and clerical collar). Limitations to the above: a) Health and safety requirements may mean that for certain tasks specific items of clothing such as overalls, protective clothing etc. need to be worn. If such clothing produces a conflict with an individual's religion or belief, values and practices the issue will be sympathetically considered by the line manager or academic supervisor, with the aim of finding a satisfactory resolution that does not compromise the health and safety of any University staff or students. b) Examination requirements may mean that on occasion the temporary removal of veils and clothing that cover the head and face is necessary to authenticate identity. Arrangements will be made in these cases for authentication procedures to be conducted in accordance with any beliefs and values associated with the wearing of particular clothing e.g. by staff of the same sex as the individual concerned. c) Wearing slogans or symbols which are discriminatory (e.g. racist, homophobic or sexist) is a disciplinary offence and will be dealt with accordingly.
3.2.3	Observance of Religion and Belief For many religious people the daily practice of corporate, personal or private prayer is a primary responsibility. Adherents of a religion should advise their Head of Department, personal tutor or line manager, if they have any special requirements in this regard. Executive Deans, Heads of Schools and Department and line managers are responsible

	for ensuring that if other staff or students are affected by an individual's needs (arising from their particular religious beliefs, values and practices), a reasonable degree of respect and understanding is exercised between them. It is the responsibility of the Heads of Services and Facilities and the Executive Deans of Faculties to ensure that no member of staff, student or visitor is unfairly disadvantaged as a result of accommodations made to other staff, students or visitors in this respect. Where specific requirements are sought by staff or students in accordance with their religion and belief, values and practices, the University will make a reasonable effort to provide such requirements, where appropriate. The advice of the University's Multi Faith Chaplaincy team should be sought by the relevant Executive Dean or line manager in such cases. It will be the responsibility of the University to ensure that the requirements requested meet with Health and Safety standards where applicable. All staff, without distinction, are required to work in accordance with their contract of employment, although there is normally some flexibility over how the hours are worked (see Flexible Working Policy). Those having responsibility for scheduling programmes, teaching hours, examinations and assessments will ensure that where possible reasonable adjustments are made to alleviate potential conflicts for staff between the proper conduct of their contractual duties and those pertaining to their religion and belief, values and practices. Observance of religion and belief will be considered where appropriate in planning, infrastructure and timetabling. Information on religious festivals and other practices is available from the Equality and Diversity website. This policy will be published on the University Policies website and for students, will be published on SurreyLearn in their handbooks.
3.2.4	Dietary Requirements The University will assess the demand for food that meets dietary requirements arising from religion, belief, values and practices (e.g. vegetarian, vegan, kosher and halal) in consultation with the relevant groups. It will make efforts where possible to provide such food in University catering outlets according to the demand for it.
3.2.5	The University Chaplaincy Recognising the dignity of every human being, chaplaincy staff offer confidential, non-judgmental pastoral care and support to all staff, students and visitors irrespective of religion or belief. Chaplains are representative practitioners, who true to their own faith or belief, engage openly and honestly with those of all faiths and none. Our faith and belief communities include the following (not mutually exclusive): Buddhist, Christian (Anglican, Greek Orthodox, Methodist/URC and Roman Catholic), Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh.
3.2.6	Religion and Belief Societies Those societies working within the policy and guidelines of the University and affiliated to the Students' Union or to University of Surrey are free to invite guest speakers from their relevant communities outside the university within the framework set out in the Freedom of Speech Policy and the Prevent Policy.
4	Governance Requirements
4.1	Responsibility
4.1.1	University Responsibility The University will aim to provide: • Information on festivals and brief background information about religion, belief, values and practices (via the University's Multi Faith Chaplaincy); • Wherever possible, appropriate accommodation, catering facilities and other resources to meet the legitimate needs of members of the University community arising from their culture and/or from their religion, belief, values and practices;

	• Students who wish to make a complaint under this policy can do so via the Complaints Procedure. This will ensure that complaints are handled within normal University procedures in a just, fair, open and timely manner; • Regular review of the equality impact of the grievance procedure which relates to staff raising a complaint under this policy in relation to religion and belief. This will take place in consultation with appropriate University services, individual staff from the University's Chaplaincy, the recognised campus trades unions and the equality working groups; • Opportunities for staff and students to disclose faith and belief via data collection methods to enable appropriate planning and provision of relevant services. Disclosed information will be treated in the strictest confidence in line with the University's Data Protection Policy.
4.1.2	Responsibility for Observance All managers are responsible for: • ensuring staff, students and visitors are aware of this policy All staff and students are responsible for: • familiarising themselves with this policy and other relevant University Regulations and Policies; • arranging with the Head of Department or line-manager to ensure that their working hours or learning opportunities missed because of absences for observance of religion and belief are covered or re-arranged; • participating in training courses which support the implementation of the policy, as appropriate; • following it in matters such as requests for leave/changes to work patterns, teaching and assessment schedules.
4.2	Exceptions to this Policy
4.2.1	Exemptions/Genuine Occupational Requirements The University of Surrey may apply a Genuine Occupational Requirement to certain posts within the University. In determining whether a Genuine Occupational Requirement applies to a particular post, the University will assess whether being an adherent of a particular religion or other beliefs is a genuine and determining occupational requirement and it is proportionate to apply that requirement in a particular case having regard to the nature of the employment or the context in which it is carried out. Any such requirement and the reason for it will be clearly stipulated in associated recruitment advertising and related literature. Further advice on this can be obtained from the Human Resources department.