



Religion and Belief Policy

www.bradford.ac.uk/equality

Religion and Belief Policy Statement

As part of the University of Bradford's core commitment to promoting equality and diversity, we aim to operate in an environment where the religious and non-religious beliefs of all individuals are respected (www.bradford.ac.uk/equality/policy).

The University demonstrates this commitment by ensuring that, wherever it is consistent with the University meeting its agreed objectives and staff and students pursuing their legitimate activities, the following applies:

- Individuals are not treated less favourably than others because of their (or your own) actual or perceived religion or belief or non-belief;
- Practices or provisions apply equally to persons of all religious beliefs or non-belief;
- Practices or provisions do not put people of the same religion or belief at a disadvantage when compared to other persons.

The University provides a diverse environment, to encourage discussion, and embrace the critical exploration of questions concerning religion, belief and non-belief.

The University expects individuals and groups on campus to respect the freedom of others to express their convictions, religious beliefs or non-belief in their own terms. It is also committed to the principles of free enquiry and free speech within the law. The University is committed to preventing religious discrimination. This includes the duty to protect students and staff from aggressive, manipulative or covert forms of proselytism.

The University of Bradford seeks to ensure that:

1. The University's policies on students and staff are based on relevant criteria, which do not discriminate on grounds of religion, religious belief or similar philosophical belief (except in the case of a genuine occupational requirement).
2. Individuals and groups are treated with dignity and fairness whatever their religious and/or other beliefs may be.
3. Where possible, appropriate services are provided to meet the cultural and religious needs of all staff and students.

The right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion is absolute, but the right to express beliefs is qualified by the need to protect and recognise the rights and freedoms of others to work and study.

Religion and Belief Policy



Guidance on the Implementation of the Policy on Religion and Belief

1 Religious Observance

- 1.1 The University will consult with staff and students so that religious observance can be accommodated into the institutional timetable as far as is practicable.
- 1.2 Reasonable provision of space and facilities for religious observance will be accommodated wherever it does not cause undue inconvenience to others as far as is practicable.
- 1.3 All staff and students, regardless of religious belief or similar philosophical belief, are required to work/study in accordance with their contract. Requests for temporary adjustments to work/study arrangements will be facilitated as far as is practicable, subject to sufficient notice of religious observance requirements.

2 Religious Leave

- 2.1 Statutory and customary holiday arrangements include Christmas and Easter, both of which are Christian religious festivals. Those staff practising other religions or comparable philosophical belief will normally be entitled to take three days of their holiday entitlement on the dates of most significance to them. Further requests for holiday entitlement to be taken at times of religious significance will be treated sympathetically.
- 2.2 For all staff, regardless of any religious belief or similar philosophical belief, the number of annual leave days overall will remain as in the contract of employment.
- 2.3 The University will consider the circumstances for leave of absence on religious grounds and will inform the member of staff of the reasons if leave is to be refused.

3 Learning and Working in a Diverse Society

University Policy on Religious Diversity and Examinations

- 3.1 The Policy should be consistently applied across all Schools, as it is based on the equity of the student experience.
- 3.2 No University examinations will be scheduled in the examination timetable between 13.00 and 15.00 on Fridays or during major religious festivals to be attended by large numbers of students. This includes the observance of Jummu'ah prayer.
- 3.3 The implementation of the Policy takes into consideration the following factors:
 - 3.3.1 The formal definition of what constitutes a 'major religious festival' to be identified on an annual basis to be formally approved by appropriate internal and external religious advisers and University Committees prior to the development and publication of examination schedules and timetables;
 - 3.3.2 The integration of the University's Policy on Religious Diversity and Examinations into appropriate planning processes, and widespread dissemination across the University to help raise cultural awareness and future development, i.e. made available on the Year Planner as appropriate;
 - 3.3.3 The implications of pressure on accommodation and resources associated with examinations which needs to be taken into consideration, and the long-term effects on the examination periods which needs to be managed effectively by the University;
 - 3.3.4 The Policy will be informed by the implementation of the University's Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy, with its core values of equity of access and learning and working in a diverse society;

3.3.5 The University will assess the calendar regarding teaching and assessment in relation to religious observance of diverse faiths and will reasonably accommodate specific requests as and when necessary;

3.3.6 So far as is practicable, due consideration will be paid to major religious celebrations, festivals and ceremonies, to avoid any possible impairment of the student learner experience. Students and staff should inform the University of approximate date(s) of the festival as soon as they are known, so that appropriate measures can be taken.

4 Dress Code

The University welcomes the diversity of appearance that people from different religious and belief backgrounds can bring. However, there may be health and safety considerations that would restrict certain modes of dress in particular contexts. In such cases, it will be necessary for the University to consult with staff/students who may be affected by a restriction to see if an appropriate compromise can be reached.

5 Food Requirements

The University of Bradford responds positively to requests for food that meets staff and students' dietary requirements (e.g. vegetarian, kosher, halal). Wherever practicable it will provide such food according to demand.

6 Implementation and Responsibilities

6.1 The Vice-Chancellor has ultimate executive responsibility for the effective development and implementation of this Policy.

6.2 The University Secretary and Legal Adviser has responsibility for ensuring that the University has Policies and Procedures that comply with national laws relating to equality and diversity.

6.3 The Director of Human Resources has responsibility in relation to staff.

6.4 The PVC Learning and Teaching has responsibility in relation to students on matters concerning programmes of study, and the Director of Student Engagement in relation to students on all other matters.

6.5 Deans/Directors are responsible for the implementation of the Policy in relation to their operational activities.

6.6 All line managers are responsible for familiarising themselves with this Policy, and for following it in matters such as requests for leave.

6.7 All individual students and members of staff are responsible for familiarising themselves with this Policy, for informing appropriate colleagues of their particular requirements, and for making up any time lost as a result of cultural/religious observance.

6.8 The University has Chaplains and Faith Advisers who provide support to staff and students. Contact Student Services or www.bradford-chaplains.org.uk

7 Offensive Actions or Behaviour/Harassment

Any discriminatory behaviour, including harassment or bullying (www.bradford.ac.uk/equality/policy), ("unwanted conduct that violates people's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.") by individuals or groups will be regarded as serious and could be grounds for disciplinary action, which may culminate in expulsion or dismissal.

8 Complaints

8.1 Staff and students who believe that they have been discriminated against, or feel that they have not been treated fairly in accordance with this Policy, should follow regulations for staff/student complaints or grievance procedures.

8.2 Complaints from staff, visitors and others associated with the University should be addressed to the Director of Human Resources. Complaints from students should be addressed to the Director of Student Engagement.

9 Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

9.1 The University's Equality and Diversity Committee will monitor and evaluate this Policy.

9.2 The University's Policy on Religion and Belief will be reviewed not less than every three years.

