

# Religion and Belief Guidance Document

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### 1. Introduction

King's College London is committed to creating an inclusive environment that promotes equality of opportunity for everyone in its community. King's values the diversity of its staff and student body and recognises that this is both a strength and a defining feature of King's as a London university in a global context.

Equality, diversity and inclusion are cornerstones of [King's Strategic Vision 2029](#). King's does not tolerate discrimination, victimisation or harassment based on a person's religion or belief, or non-belief and aims to provide an inclusive environment where everyone in the King's community can thrive.

This document provides practical guidance to support the commitments and expectations set out in the [Religion and Belief Policy](#). This guidance document will be reviewed periodically and is owned by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team.

#### Legislative context

King's is subject to several legal frameworks in relation to religion and belief. These are detailed in the [Religion and Belief Policy](#).

#### Consultation

This guidance document has been developed and consulted on with a range of colleagues including the Dean and Chaplaincy, faculty and directorate colleagues, King's College London Students' Union (KCLSU), HR People Partners, staff networks and the Freedom of Expression Standing Advisory Group.

#### Definitions

The [Religion and Belief Policy](#) includes a list of definitions relevant to the policy and this guidance, including outlines of what we mean by 'religion' and 'belief'. The Policy also includes definitions of Antisemitism and Islamophobia. The definition for Antisemitism adopted by King's in 2018 is from the [International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance \(IHRA\)](#). Also adopted in 2018, the university accepts the definition of Islamophobia as defined by Dr Chris Allen from the University of Birmingham, presented to the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee in 2016. For further information see the [Frequently Answered Questions \(FAQ's\) arising from the joint statement by King's and KCLSU on Freedom of Expression](#).

### 2. Dean and Chaplaincy

#### Dean of King's College London

Reflecting the religious foundation of the university, the Dean of King's College London is an ordained minister of the Church of England. The Dean is responsible for overseeing the

spiritual development and pastoral welfare of all students and staff, regardless of religion, belief or non-belief. You can find out more about the role of the Dean on the [Dean's Office webpages](#) and in the [Religion and Belief Policy](#).

### The Chaplaincy

King's has a Chaplaincy team, led by the Dean, that is available for the whole of the King's community. The team is made up of individuals from a range of religious backgrounds and they are available for all individuals, regardless of faith or no faith. Currently the team includes Christian, Muslim and Jewish Chaplains and there are plans to appoint Chaplains for the Dharmic faiths. The Chaplains work across the campuses - there is a Chaplain based at each campus and a Chaplaincy space on each campus. The Chaplaincies on each campus are available to anyone who wants to talk to a Chaplain or just use the space for some time out.

The chaplaincies are located at:

- **Denmark Hill** – IoPPN Main Building room W1.19.
- **Guy's campus** – room G2, next to the Student Services area of the [Henriette Raphael Building](#).
- **Strand campus** – K2.34 (along the corridor from the Chapel towards the [Strand building](#)).
- **St Thomas' campus** – 2nd Floor of [St Thomas' House](#).
- **Waterloo campus** – [Franklin-Wilkins Building](#) room 1.1.

(Accessibility information, where available, can be found by clicking on the room, chapel or building name.)

Chaplains are public figures in the university, helping to shape a vibrant, caring and compassionate community at King's. They work to support wellbeing and resilience for students and staff, including offering pastoral listening and prayer, and offer opportunities for relaxation and refreshment throughout the academic year.

Chaplains walk alongside people who are going through dark periods, struggle and grief. They also work closely with all other support and service colleagues across King's to ensure that everyone's wellbeing - physical, mental, emotional as well as spiritual - is looked after and nurtured during what can be an uncertain time. You do not have to be in spiritual crisis to meet with a Chaplain: they are practiced listeners and have a wealth of experience in supporting people through relationship, work and study difficulties, spiritual and vocational issues. If they are unable to help, they often know who can.

The Chaplaincy hold [regular services](#) to ensure that, day by day, the sacred is celebrated in our midst and the members and work of King's are prayed for. They also hold [special services and events](#) throughout the academic year and the Chaplaincy are also available to

mark significant life events such as weddings, baptism and confirmation and memorial services. All staff and students are welcome to attend any services and events that are hosted by the Chaplaincy.

You can find out more about the Chaplaincy, the Chaplains and the support they offer on the [Chaplaincy webpages](#).

### 3. Prayer, worship and religious observance

In line with its ethos and heritage, the university encourages and supports members of the King's community of all religions and beliefs in observing their religious practice, especially those which are considered obligatory.

#### Where to pray

The following places on campus and in the university's associated NHS Hospital Trusts are available for all staff and students to drop in for private reflection and prayer.

(Accessibility information, where available, can be found by clicking on the room, chapel or building name.)

- **Denmark Hill campus:** King's College Hospital Chapel, the Maudsley Hospital prayer room – the Sanctuary and IoPPN Main Building room W1.19.
- **Guy's campus:** [The Chapel of Thomas Guy](#), opposite Boland House and the hospital [multi-faith prayer room](#), ground floor, Tower wing.
- **Strand campus:** The College Chapel, the main building of the [Strand site](#), Bush House Quiet Room, North East Wing room 1.03, and [Virginia Wolf Building](#) Quiet Room, room 3.33.
- **St Thomas' campus:** the [Hospital Chapel](#) on the first floor of Block 5, [South Wing](#), [multi-faith prayer room](#), ground floor, South Wing and the Chaplaincy, 2nd Floor, [St Thomas' House](#).
- **Waterloo campus:** Prayer and Quiet Room, room 1.2, [Franklin-Wilkins Building](#).

The university has dedicated Muslim prayer and ablution facilities which are open to all staff and students, who are requested to observe the Code of Practice displayed in each facility:

- **Guy's campus:** Doyle's House, the basement of the [Hodgkin Building](#).
- **Strand campus:** the first basement at the [Strand](#) room 1.03.
- **Waterloo campus:** the first floor of [Franklin-Wilkins Building](#) at Waterloo, opposite the Prayer and Quiet room.
- **St Thomas' campus:** Muslim prayer room in the hospital.
- **Denmark Hill campus:** IoPPN Main Building room W1.07.

A Dharmic Prayer Room for our Hindu, Jain, Sikh and Buddhist communities at Kings is located in the [New Hunts House](#), first floor, opposite the lifts, on Guy's Campus.

For the latest information on which facilities are open please go to the [where to pray Chaplaincy webpages](#).

In addition to these official spaces for prayer and contemplation, staff and students might use other quiet spaces around the university. Members of the King's community should be respectful in such instances.

### **Religious observance**

King's aims to encourage and support all staff and students of all beliefs and backgrounds in observing their religious practices.

Some religions have holy days in the week where spiritual or religious observance or duties are expected. All members of the King's community should avoid organising important meetings, events or routine meetings on Fridays to allow flexibility for Jews observing Shabbat (may need flexibility on Friday afternoons, particularly in autumn and winter, to travel home by sunset) or Muslims wishing to take extended lunch breaks to attend the Jumma Friday prayers (13:00-14:00). In accordance with the [Timetable Policy](#), efforts should also be made to avoid scheduling teaching at these times as well as at the times of the College Eucharist and Roman Catholic Mass (Wednesdays and Thursdays 13:00-14:00).

The dates of the [Islamic holy month of Ramadan](#) vary but are expected to overlap with the university's exam period until at least 2023. More information can be found on the [Religious Observance webpage](#) which is annually updated by the Dean and Chaplaincy.

Managers have a responsibility to positively engage, acknowledge and enable participation in religious convictions, beliefs or practices where it is important to individuals. As outlined in the [Religion and Belief Policy](#), all staff members are entitled to request flexibility in the arrangement of shifts, rotas and working hours to enact religious observance as outlined in the [Terms and Conditions of Employment](#) for both academic and non-academic staff. Whilst legislation does not require employers to provide time for prayer, [guidance from ACAS](#) makes it clear that refusing a request without a good business reason could amount to discrimination. Managers should sympathetically and reasonably consider these requests and be as reasonable and flexible as possible. The staff member making the request should also be reasonable, flexible and sympathetic to the demands of their job. More information on flexible working can be found on the [Flexible Working at King's intranet pages](#).

The university closes for the Christian religious festivals of Christmas and Easter. The [Terms and Conditions of Employment](#) outline that staff are entitled to request annual leave or unpaid leave if they require time off for religious or cultural observance. Staff practicing other

religions, or holding other beliefs, may therefore request to take their holiday entitlement on the dates of most significance to them. Wherever possible, these requests should be granted.

Staff may also request extended leave for religious observance, for example, to go on pilgrimage and again, the line manager should accommodate the request where practicable. For all staff, regardless of any religious or other belief, the number of annual days overall will remain as in the contract of employment. Therefore, if the extended leave exceeds the annual holiday entitlement, the excess days, if agreed, will be unpaid leave.

Staff are asked to give as much notice as possible for any leave they want to take for religious observance, but it is understood that this is not always possible as some religious festivals are not confirmed until the night before (for example, the Muslim festival of Eid depends on sightings of the moon). In these cases, line managers should be reasonable and flexible and staff members should inform managers of these situations.

If line managers are unsure how to respond to requests for flexible working or leave for religious observance, they should seek the advice of [People Partners](#).

Managers should include understanding of religion and belief observance in staff induction processes and information on available prayer spaces, places of worship and catering requirements should be shared with new staff members. Managers should also talk to their team about which religious observances are important to them and include them in their team diary.

Students wishing to observe religious holidays that do not coincide with university holidays should make a formal request to their department for leave of absence. Students should also inform their department of any observances that will prevent them from travelling to campus or work. At the start of the academic year students should inform their department of their intentions for religious observance so that together they can determine the best arrangements to manage the absence. If it is not possible to negotiate arrangements to manage absence students may need to formally interrupt their studies if they wish to continue with the leave of absence. More information on the process for interrupting studies can be found on the [Taking a Break webpage](#).

It is important to note that the rules and customs of religious observance vary greatly between and within religious groups and therefore the types of requests from staff and students may vary. If staff need advice when supporting and accommodating requests from staff or students, they should contact the [Dean's Office](#).

The Dean's Office keep an annually updated [religious observance webpage](#) that outlines key religious holidays that staff and students may observe and which may impact on university activities.

#### **4. Student societies and staff networks**

KCLSU has several faith-related student societies, including Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Islamic, Jewish, Jain and Sikh. These groups book centrally timetabled rooms for prayer, worship, and regular activities, and may also book chaplaincy spaces. Information on these groups is available on the [KCLSU Activity Groups webpages](#) (search by the 'Faith & Spirituality' category).

If a particular religious or faith-related society doesn't currently exist, students are able to set these up as long as they follow KCLSU's internal procedure. KCLSU can provide support for this process.

There are a range of staff networks which are run independently by staff from across King's and provide a supportive environment for staff to discuss common experiences and concerns. Information on the staff networks can be found on the [Networks EDI webpage](#) and on Yammer.

#### **5. Dietary requirements**

Each campus has catering services that provide food and drink for a range of dietary requirements. Vegetarian and vegan food is widely available and gluten free, Halal and other dietary requirements are accommodated wherever possible. You can find out about the restaurants and cafes across all the King's campuses on the [King's Food intranet page](#).

The university understands that some faiths have specific dietary laws regarding alcohol and any member of the King's community organising events should ensure these restrictions are considered to minimise conflict between an individual's ability to engage in activities and their religion or belief. Event organisers should ensure non-alcoholic drinks are available and a range of Halal, Kosher and vegetarian food should be provided. King's venues are able to facilitate such requests and more information is available on [King's venues webpages](#).

Event organisers should also consider the types of events being held to ensure a reasonable mix of functions with and without alcohol as some members of the King's community may not feel comfortable attending events where alcohol is being served. Members of the King's community have a responsibility to consider how they can ensure event hospitality can be inclusive for people from all religious and non-religious backgrounds.

Members of the King's community should also be aware that some staff and students may require separate utensils or separate places to store and heat their food. All members of the King's community should be respectful of this and help provide mutually acceptable solutions where this is required.

## 6. Religious dress and symbols

King's welcomes the cultural and religious diversity in our community and wants to ensure all individuals are able to dress according to their faith and belief. There may be some circumstances in which this is limited, for example due to health and safety or uniform requirements. If dress regulations or guidelines present a conflict with an individual's religious belief, the manager or the student's supervisor should consider the issue sensitively and try to find a mutually satisfactory arrangement.

Examples of where dress requirements may conflict with religious dress requirements include:

- Where health and safety requirements dictate that certain types of clothing need to be worn. For example, if a student is undertaking a clinical placement, then health and safety and patient care will be the overriding principle and students will need to follow the appropriate regulations, particularly in relation to infection control and patient handling guidelines. In these circumstances the individual should speak to their line manager or supervisor to explain the issue. The line manager or supervisor should carefully consider the issue and try to find a mutually satisfactory arrangement.
- Where a uniform is required for the job. Uniforms should include the option of wearing trousers and if a uniform includes headwear, then the wearing of religious head coverings should not be prohibited unless there is an over-riding health and safety requirement.
- Where there is a need to check the identity of a member of staff or student. If a photo identification card cannot establish an individual's identity and, for reasons of security an individual's identity needs to be verified, the individual may be asked to remove their religious wear privately and with the appropriate staff of the same gender. For examination checks, the university [Academic Regulations](#) state that students wearing religious headwear may be required to prove their identity, by removing their headwear to reveal their head and face to an invigilator of the same gender, in private if necessary.

It should be noted that photographs for university ID badges can be taken by photographers of the same gender as the student or staff member, in private if necessary, upon request.

King's aims to create an environment of respect and members of the King's community should avoid wearing clothing that contains slogans, writing, symbols or images that may be offensive to those with a religion or belief. If an individual wears an offensive or inflammatory garment they should be informed that it goes against the university's policy on creating an environment of respect and asked not to wear the item on campus. If an individual persists in wearing offensive or inflammatory garments, then this may be treated as a disciplinary offence under the relevant



student and staff regulations. These are the [G27 Misconduct Regulation](#) (for students), [Interim Capability and Disciplinary Procedures: Research, Teaching-only and Professional Services Staff](#), [Academic Staff Disciplinary Regulation](#) and [Academic Staff Grievance Regulation](#) and in line with the [Dignity at King's – Bullying and Harassment Policy](#).

## 7. Staff recruitment, support and training

### Recruitment

King's is committed to ensuring our recruitment practices are inclusive and provide equality of opportunity for all applicants, including those with a religion or belief, in line with our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality duty.

Applicant-facing information used in the recruitment process should clarify the inclusivity of a range of faiths, beliefs and none at the university and it may be beneficial to include a statement about the relationship between the religious origins of the institution and the current plurality of faiths and beliefs that now makes up the King's community. Recruiters should also consider how they can make job adverts and recruitment information inclusive of a range of religions and beliefs, for example by linking to relevant policies and facilities.

The Equality Act 2010 permits the use of occupational requirements in relation to religion and belief. However, these can only be used in very limited circumstances and in the context of King's they are likely to only be used for roles within the Chaplaincy. For more information on occupational requirements see the [Advance HE Religion and Belief Guidance](#).

### Selection and interview

All staff involved in interviewing candidates should complete the Diversity Matters training for managers (see below) and recruitment panels should reflect the diversity of the university with every attempt made to ensure panels are balanced and representative. If this is not possible, other colleagues from similar areas should be asked to contribute. More information on recruitment can be found on the [HR recruitment webpages](#).

Recruiters should consider the religious needs of any interviewees when on site, for example, the location and availability of prayer spaces, places of worship and catering requirements. The timings of interviews should also be considered and wherever possible key religious dates and days of rest for different religions should be avoided (see section 3). This supports both the diversity of the interviewees but also the interviewers. Consideration should also be given to ensure any checking of ID for applicants wearing a head or face covering is done in a respectful way (see section 6).

### Supporting staff

There are a number of ways managers and team leaders can create an inclusive environment and support staff in their religion and/or belief. The [Religion and Belief Policy](#) should be included in induction information alongside other Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policies and statements. It is also good practice for managers to include understanding of religion and belief observance in staff induction processes. This should include sharing information on available prayer spaces, places of worship and catering requirements as well as talking to the new staff member about any particular requirements they may have to enable them to practice their faith (see section 3). Managers should also talk to their team about which religious observances are important to them and include them in their team diary. Understanding the important observances and celebrations enable a team to support one another and to share celebrations of particular faith events.

### Staff training

The Equality, Diversity & Inclusion function offers two training courses that have been specifically developed for all King's staff. This training provides information on the Equality Act 2010, including religion and belief, as well as the benefits of inclusive working. It also provides advice on how to tackle microaggressions, unconscious bias and inappropriate language, including those that may involve religion or belief.

- Diversity Matters: Staff Training
- Diversity Matters: Manager Training

The manager training covers not only the material above, but also guidance on how to create a diverse and inclusive team and how to address specific inclusion issues managers may face.

We recommend that all staff take part in at least one of the courses. Further details on the training are available on the [EDI training webpages](#).

Staff can also engage in self-education to enable them to better understand different religions and beliefs and how to create an inclusive environment. Increasing religious literacy is particularly important so that staff can support their colleagues and students and to ensure valid expression of religion and belief is not misinterpreted. It is recommended that all staff members read the [Religion and Belief Policy](#) and this accompanying guidance. A range of further resources that can be explored are also listed below.

## 8. Student accommodation and loans

### Accommodation

King's Residences seek to embed diversity and inclusion practices into all its activities, so residents have the opportunity to live and excel in a safe and supportive environment.

Students that require single gender accommodation for religious reasons are asked to indicate this in their application, as per the [King's Residences Accommodation Policy](#). Further information is available on the [King's Accommodation webpages](#).

### Student loans

King's acknowledges that some students may not be able to take on a student loan for religious reasons. There is a [policy statement](#) on this situation which provides further information. In such cases, students (both undergraduate and postgraduate) should submit the declaration form which can be found under the policy statement. Further support and advice can also be found on the same page.

Alternatively, students can contact the [Advice & Guidance](#) team in Student Services.

## 9. Bullying, harassment and hate crime

King's is committed to providing and promoting a positive environment for all members of the King's community, which is free from all forms of bullying, harassment, victimisation and hate crime – including those motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a person's religion or belief, or a perceived religion or belief. Harassment on the grounds of religion or belief is unacceptable and the university will seek to address any such instances in accordance with the [Dignity at King's - Bullying and Harassment Policy](#).

A hate crime is any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim or another person to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a person's race or perceived race; religion or perceived religion; sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation; disability or perceived disability and any crime motivated by hostility or prejudice against a person who is transgender or perceived to be transgender. If a hate crime based on, or perceived to be based on, someone's religion or belief is experienced or witnessed, [emergency help](#) should be sought. Members of the King's community are also encouraged to report any hate crime to the university. There are a range of reporting and disclosure mechanisms for [staff](#) and [students](#) to follow.

The [Dignity at King's - Bullying and Harassment Policy](#) outlines that harassment related to the protected characteristics, which include religion and belief, is unlawful. The Policy outlines that harassment on the grounds of religion or belief may include (without limitation):

- Jokes about a particular religious group.
- Behaviour which fails to tolerate, acknowledge or allow participation in religious convictions, beliefs or practices.
- Intrusive questions about a person's religion or beliefs.

Further information on what constitutes bullying and harassment, unacceptable behaviours, what to do if you experience or witness bullying and harassment and where to go for support can all be found in the [Dignity at King's - Bullying and Harassment Policy](#) and on the [Dignity at King's webpages](#). The Dignity at King's Policy applies to all of the King's community (staff, students and visitors, both on our campuses and online).

Staff members may receive disclosures from students regarding bullying, harassment, victimisation or hate crime. For advice on how to handle disclosures confidently and effectively staff should access the [Handling Student Disclosures Guidance](#).

## **10. Freedom of expression, the sharing of religion and belief and good relations**

### **Freedom of expression**

In line with Article 10 of the Human Rights Act and Section 43 of the Education Act 1986, the university and KCLSU are committed to the values of freedom of expression, freedom of thought, academic freedom, freedom of conscience and religion and freedom of assembly.

This is demonstrated in the [King's Strategic Vision 2029](#) where one of the eight guiding principles is to 'demonstrate open-mindedness and tolerance and expect to challenge and be challenged in protecting the freedom of expression'. As outlined in the [King's and KCLSU Joint Statement on Freedom of Expression](#), academic and professional services staff, students and visitors are expected to respect and promote this guiding principle.

Whilst the university recognises the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, manifestations of these beliefs should be respectful to the multiplicity of world views, lifestyles and identities that exist at King's.

### **Room bookings and external speakers**

To protect and uphold freedom of expression, King's and KCLSU have a [Room Bookings: External Speakers policy](#). This policy outlines the university's expectations on a range of issues including (but not limited to): gender segregation at events, briefing external speakers and the role of the Freedom of Expression Standing Advisory Group.

### **Promotion and sharing of religious beliefs**

The university recognises that the promotion and sharing of a religious belief may be important for some groups and that such activities are generally permitted within laws on freedom of speech. This can, however, be unwelcome to individuals of other religions or beliefs, or those of no belief. Members of the King's community should not apply any unreasonable pressure and respect when the sharing of belief or faith is unwanted. Unwanted behaviour, such as persistent proselytising, may constitute bullying or

harassment. Religious belief, or no belief, cannot justify discriminatory behaviour and instances of such behaviour will be dealt with under the [G27 Misconduct Regulation](#) (for students), [Interim Capability and Disciplinary Procedures: Research, Teaching-only and Professional Services Staff](#), [Academic Staff Disciplinary Regulation](#) and [Academic Staff Grievance Regulation](#) and in line with the [Dignity at King's – Bullying and Harassment Policy](#).

### Prevent

King's is legally obliged to participate in the [Prevent Duty](#). Our approach to having a due regard to the Prevent Duty is primarily one of safeguarding the welfare of our students, staff and King's community. The university takes a proactive, proportionate and risk-based approach to the Prevent Duty, which covers welfare, events, training and partnerships. The university is committed to ensuring that the Duty is balanced against our fundamental commitment to academic freedom, freedom of expression and other key legislations, such as, the Human Rights Act and the Equality Act 2010. It is also committed to ensuring the Duty does not become a tool for Islamophobic actions, or for persecuting any community's valid faith expression.

### Interfaith relations

King's recognises the importance of interfaith dialogue in building good relations between different groups at King's and is committed to facilitating and encouraging interfaith dialogue across our entire community.

KCLSU have an Interfaith Committee that is led by representatives from student faith societies. The Committee works with students on interfaith events and activities for the King's community. Further information on the committee and their contact details are available on the [KCLSU webpages](#).

The Dean's Office celebrates the diversity of faiths in the university, offering a programme of [multi-faith activities](#) and working with the KCLSU faith societies and Interfaith Officer. Events hosted by the Chaplaincy include monthly Scriptural Reasoning events exploring the similarities and differences of sacred texts from various traditions. The Chaplaincy also provides opportunities for the King's community to gather for festivals across faiths that celebrate shared moments.

Multi-faith networks and activities at King's exist in order to:

- Support students and staff of all faiths and none.
- Promote mutual understanding and respect between people of different faiths and beliefs, sharing together the riches of each tradition.
- Emphasise community, hospitality and care while also valuing difference and diversity.

- Offer an inclusive space for worship, prayer, mediation, relaxation and spiritual exploration across traditions.
- Promote justice and acceptance over and above exclusion or discrimination. In particular, the Dean's Office recognises Islamophobia and Anti-Semitism as unacceptable and irresponsible.
- Enable greater understanding of our own beliefs and faith traditions.
- Give the adherents of different religious traditions an opportunity to encounter and understand the beliefs and practices of others.

### 11. Additional resources

- [Acas guide to religion and belief discrimination – key points for the workplace](#)
- [Advance HE – Religion and Belief guidance and research](#)
- [BBC A-Z of religions](#)
- [Employment Equality \(Religion or Belief\) Regulations 2003 \(2003\) London: HMSO](#)
- [Interfaith calendar](#)
- [Inter Faith Network for the UK](#)