

University of Bristol Multifaith Chaplaincy



Multifaith Statement

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

At the University of Bristol people of many different faiths and none work and study side by side. The Multifaith Chaplaincy sees this 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.

At the University of Bristol Multifaith 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.

Faith in the University

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.

Pastoral Care

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.

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 Bristol, 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
- Respecting the right of others to disagree with us

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.

Agreement

I intend to follow these guidelines in my work as Chaplain to Bristol University:

Name _____ Position _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Appointed and Supported by

We the appointing and supporting faith community support our Chaplain in their work.

Faith community _____

Signed on behalf of the faith community by:

Name _____ Position _____

Signature _____ Date _____