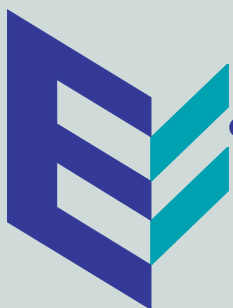



# Employing People in Higher Education: Religion and Belief

## Guidance

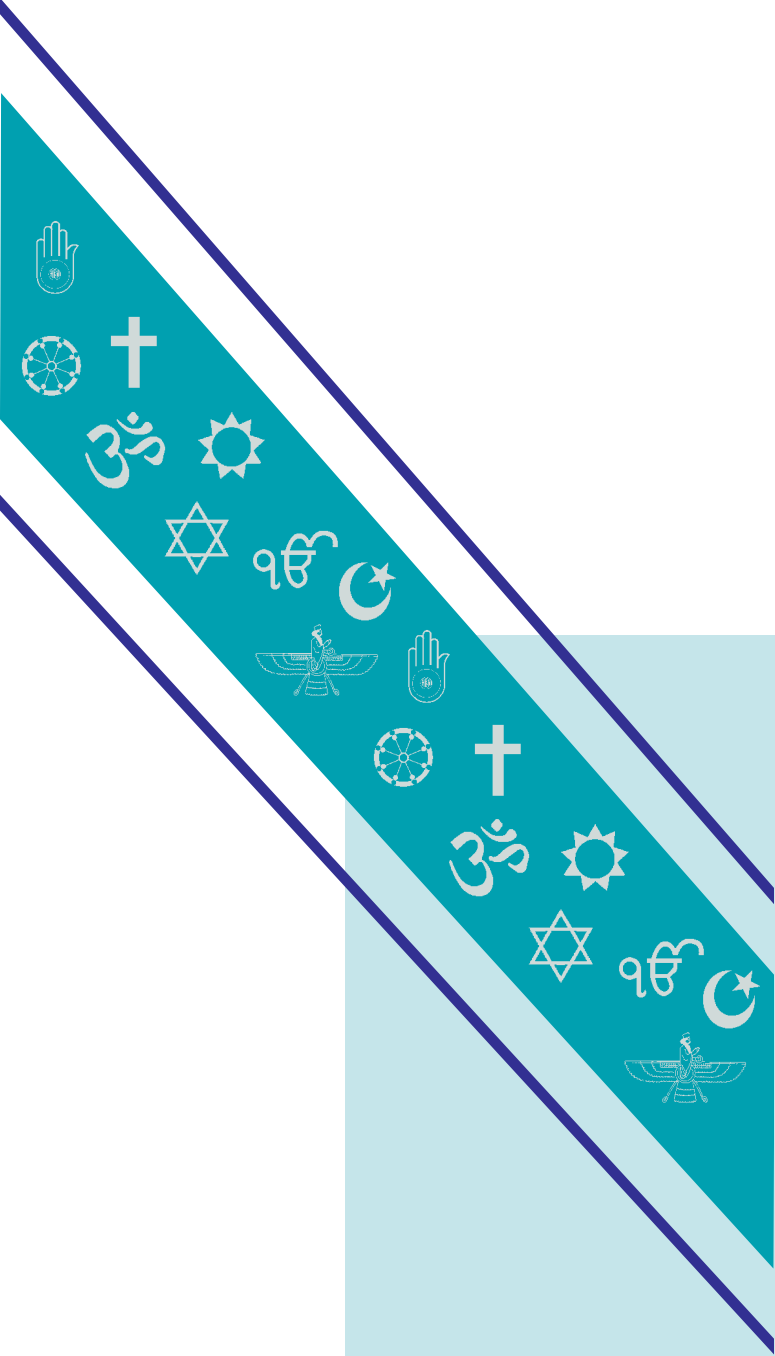


equalitychallengeunit



**“The opportunity lies before us to work together to build a society rooted in the values we treasure. But this society can only be built on a sure foundation of mutual respect, openness and trust. This means finding ways to live our lives of faith with integrity, and allowing others to do so too.”**


Code on Building Good Relations Between People  
of Different Faiths and Beliefs  
The Inter Faith Network of the United Kingdom



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Employing people in  
Higher Education:  
**RELIGION AND BELIEF**

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**The Equality Challenge Unit** was established in 2001 to improve equal opportunities for all who work or seek to work in the UK higher education sector. It is funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC), the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW), the Department for Employment and Learning Northern Ireland (DELNI), Universities UK (UUK) and the Standing Conference of Principals (SCOP).

EMPLOYING PEOPLE IN HIGHER EDUCATION:  
RELIGION AND BELIEF

Equality Challenge Unit  
SEPTEMBER 2005

For their contribution to these guidelines, the ECU would like to thank the following institutions and organisations who responded to the consultation process: University of Durham, University of Bath, University of Cambridge, University of Loughborough, University of Hertfordshire, University of Bradford, University of Coventry, De Montfort University, University of Kent, Bishops Grossteste College, University of Ulster, University of Manchester, HEEON, Association of Northern Ireland Colleges, Learning and Teaching Scotland, Commission for Racial Equality, NATFHE, AUT, Church of England Board of Education, Inter Faith Network of the United Kingdom, Student Christian Movement, Presbyterian Church of Wales Assembly Education Committee, British Humanist Association, CWA: Research & Learning, HEFCE. Particular thanks are extended to St Martin's College and the University of Westminster for providing examples of good practice. This guidance was legally proofed by Eversheds.

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# Foreword

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The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations were introduced in December 2003, and provide a means by which people can be protected against discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief.

Forthcoming legislation against discrimination in the area of goods, facilities and services, along with the possibility of protection against incitement to religious hatred, means that Higher Education Institutions should adopt a holistic approach to promote good relations between people of different religions, beliefs and none, and to ensure that staff and students do not face discrimination in this area.

These guidelines are therefore timely and welcome. They provide a comprehensive overview of the current and prospective legal position in the area of religion or belief and offer institutions practical ways to prevent discrimination from occurring and to facilitate good relations between people of different backgrounds on the basis of religion and belief.



Lord Herman Ouseley

# Overview

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1. This publication develops initial guidance produced by the ECU that looked specifically at the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003.<sup>1</sup> The initial guidance was concerned with policy formation, and information leaflets intended for widespread dissemination were produced.
2. This guidance is part of the ECU series looking at equalities issues in higher education employment, and is informed by our continuing liaison with religious, belief and non-belief organisations along with particular issues that have been raised by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).
3. The area of religion and belief is one of great complexity, and HEIs need to consider how best, as employers and providers of learning, to respond appropriately to this complexity through the relevant legal requirements. This document provides an overview of the current legislative context and recommends practical approaches to implementation of the requirements in ways that will be beneficial to both staff and students. These approaches are rooted in the premise that all HEIs are seeking to provide an employment and learning context which is not only free of unlawful discrimination and harassment, but is also supportive more generally of the religious needs of staff and students and the need to promote good relations between people of different religion and belief backgrounds. This can help convey a sense of an academic community that respects and values all its members.





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4. In order to present these complex issues as practical advice, the guidance is divided into the following sections:

- **Section 1 – Background**

This section provides background information in the area of religion or belief, outlines the benefits of effective implementation, and sets out the context within which the legal provisions operate.

- **Section 2 – First Steps**

This section suggests appropriate tools for the implementation of the legal requirements within an institutional setting.

- **Section 3 – Theory into Practice**

This section combines the information and suggested approaches from the previous sections and applies them to actual scenarios within various institutional settings.

5. It is hoped that the structure will enable the reader to see the particular factors that need to be taken into account when considering religion or belief within the local institutional context. This approach also allows the reader to refer to individual sections, although it is recommended that the guidance be read in its entirety in order to obtain a full understanding of how the legal provisions fit into the higher education setting.

6. The guidance provides a practical framework in the area of religion or belief that can be implemented once an institution has ascertained local needs. Given the ECU's current remit, the main focus is on employment issues in the area of religion and belief, although reference is made to issues concerning students. Furthermore, although every attempt has been made to ensure that the guide remains as comprehensive as possible, the breadth and scope of the subject matter mean that there will inevitably be some omissions. It is nonetheless hoped that the advice given will be universally applicable within the institutional context and will be easily transferable to situations not explicitly addressed within the following pages.

# Overview

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7. For the purposes of this guidance, the terms 'religion or belief' and 'religion and belief' should be taken to mean the full diversity of religious and belief affiliations within the UK. This term also includes non-religious beliefs, such as atheism, agnosticism and humanism.

## **Who should read this Guidance?**

8. The practical focus of the guidance means that it is a useful reference and guidance tool for people working at all levels of an institution.
9. The ECU welcomes feedback and queries on any aspect of this guidance, along with case studies of good practice. Those interested in contacting the ECU for this purpose should do so via email at [religionandbelief@ecu.ac.uk](mailto:religionandbelief@ecu.ac.uk). We will also produce a summary of good practice in this area, which will be available on the ECU website ([www.ecu.ac.uk](http://www.ecu.ac.uk)) shortly.

# Section I – Background

# 1

10. Before looking at implications of religion or belief for HEIs, it is important to look at the relevant demographic, social, political and legal contexts:

## Demographics – Religion and Belief in the UK

11. The 2001 Census was the first time that data on religious identity had been collected in Great Britain, although information on this area had previously been collected in Northern Ireland.<sup>2</sup>
12. The results of the Census demonstrated that the UK has a high level of religious diversity, with greater variety in the range of religious communities than elsewhere in Europe. Of those who responded:
- 77% identified themselves as having a religious affiliation. Within this figure, those who identified themselves as Christian were in the majority, followed by those identifying themselves as Muslim, Hindu, Sikh and Jewish.
  - 15.5% of people identified themselves as having no religious affiliation.<sup>3</sup>
13. With the local, regional, national and international reach of many HEIs, the Higher Education sector can reflect a microcosm of this diversity. In order to ensure that the staff and student experience maintains a high standard within this context, institutions need to have a good understanding of diverse religious and faith backgrounds.

## The Social Context

14. Across recent decades in the UK there has been a growing level of awareness of different religions and beliefs and, overall, there has been an improvement in the equitable treatment of individuals and inter faith relations. However, discrimination on the basis of religion and belief, prejudice, intolerance or even hatred linked to religious identity can still occur in many ways and, in some areas such as Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, has increased over recent years.

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<sup>2</sup> National Statistics Online – [www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=293](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=293)

<sup>3</sup> Local Inter Faith Activity in the UK: a survey, The Inter Faith Network of the United Kingdom

# Background

The following list identifies some of the ways in which such discrimination can occur:

## **Who prejudice can be directed against**

- Religious sectarianism between denominations of one religion
- Prejudice against a particular religion (e.g. Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia)
- Prejudice against people who do not believe or who question the existence of a higher being (e.g. those who are atheist or agnostic).

## **How such prejudice can manifest itself**

- Verbal abuse or violence against people on the basis of their religious or belief background
- Discrimination in employment practices and services
- Negative portrayals of religious and belief groups including informal communications (e.g. conversations) and more formal methods (e.g. in the media)
- Unwitting use of faith identities in an inappropriate way, e.g. the use of religious symbols in an unsuitable context.

## **Who can exhibit prejudice**

- Individuals
- Groups.

15. The above table, which is informed by the 1997 and 2004 reports by the Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia,<sup>4</sup> attempts to distil some of the key ways in which prejudice can occur. Although by no means exhaustive, it identifies areas that institutions should be alert to when ensuring that discrimination on the grounds of religion and belief does not occur. Indeed the events of July 2005 have highlighted the need for institutions to work proactively in promoting good relations between people of different religious and belief backgrounds.

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<sup>4</sup> Islamophobia: a challenge for us all, Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia (summary downloadable from [www.runnymedetrust.org/publications/pdfs/islamophobia.pdf](http://www.runnymedetrust.org/publications/pdfs/islamophobia.pdf)) and Islamophobia: issues, challenges and action, Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia, 2 June 2004 (available from [www.trentham-books.co.uk/pages/islamophobia.htm](http://www.trentham-books.co.uk/pages/islamophobia.htm))

16. This guidance does not deal explicitly with the issue of extremism, intolerance and hate crimes on campus. However, the ECU, Universities UK and the Standing Conference of Principals will be producing appropriate guidance on this matter in Autumn 2005.<sup>5</sup>
17. Given this complex background, a person or group's negative perceptions of different religious and belief systems can become increasingly problematic if they are transferred into an organisational or institutional setting, and can lead to an environment where institutional discrimination is able to thrive.<sup>6</sup> Education, along with other areas of life such as employment and the media, is where religious discrimination is more likely to be experienced, and is therefore not immune to such influences.<sup>7</sup>

### Religious affiliation

18. As well as the more general landscape of religion and belief it is also worth noting that, in a more specific sense, people may choose to practise their respective religion or belief in diverse ways.
19. Observance of a religion or belief system can encompass elements on an individual and/or group setting, and can have different characteristics within both the private and public domain that may involve personal, ethnic and national elements. In view of this, institutions should consider implementation in the context of diverse religious affiliation. For example, whilst there may be staff and students with a more obvious religious/belief affiliation or no such affiliation, there will also be members of staff and students with a less obvious religious/belief affiliation. The difference between those with a 'more obvious' and 'less obvious' religious/belief affiliation lies in the individual's willingness/desire to make known that affiliation in the public

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<sup>5</sup> Updates will be available on the ECU website at [www.ecu.ac.uk](http://www.ecu.ac.uk)

<sup>6</sup> Religious Discrimination in England and Wales, Home Office Research Study 220 , P.vii

<sup>7</sup> Religious Discrimination in England and Wales, Home Office Research Study 220 - P.viii

# Background

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domain. There will be members of staff and students at institutions who will reflect this diversity, and it is important that the diverse needs are understood and met as appropriate.

20. As religious affiliation will vary, it is important that institutions consider the ways in which staff and students can feel comfortable enough to talk about issues relating to religion or belief. This is very much related to the environment within the institution. A key way of moving positively in this area involves the creation and maintenance of a culture of mutual trust and respect, which is underlined by effective consultation and communication methods. More information on this area can be found at Section 2.
21. Multiple identities – As well as the need to understand the particular factors affecting those from a certain religious or belief background, institutions should also be aware of how these factors interplay with other equalities areas. An approach that looks at the ways in which race, gender, sexual orientation, disability and age interact with issues of religion and belief will enable not only a more comprehensive understanding of equalities issues in the institutional environment, but will also help ensure that this understanding can better meet the diverse needs of staff and students.

## **The Legal Context**

22. The previous paragraphs have looked at the ways in which the diverse issues of religion or belief feature within the social context. The following legal context will look at relevant provisions in this area, and will outline examples of how unlawful discrimination can occur within the institutional environment.

## **The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003**

23. Before the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003 (EE(RB)R), the situation concerning protection on the

grounds of religion or belief could at best be described as patchy. People from particular religious faiths (such as Sikhism and Judaism), which are conventionally perceived as being mono-ethnic, were afforded protection by being legally defined as part of an ‘ethnic group’ under the Race Relations Act 1976. However, people from other faiths or none were not given the same level of protection.<sup>8</sup> This, in effect, led to inequitable results. Although a certain degree of protection was provided under Article 9 of the Human Rights Act 1998, this was quite limited, and laws covering blasphemy are restricted to the tenets and beliefs of the Church of England.

24. Steps towards a consistent solution came in the form of the Framework Directive of 2000 from the Council of Europe, which aimed to establish a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation.<sup>9</sup> Covering age, disability, sexual orientation and religion or belief, the general aim of the Directive was to provide ‘a minimum threshold below which the Member States must not fall, but beyond which they may introduce or maintain provisions which are more favourable to the protection of the principle of equal treatment.’<sup>10</sup>
25. In the area of religion or belief, the Directive came into force in Great Britain in December 2003 through the EE(RB)R, and marked the start of a comprehensive approach towards issues in this area, particularly in the area of employment and, in higher education, towards all students.

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<sup>8</sup> Crown Suppliers (PSA) Limited v Dawkins [1993] ICR 517 CA

<sup>9</sup> COUNCIL DIRECTIVE 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000, establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation  
([europa.eu.int/eur-lex/pri/en/oj/dat/2000/l\\_303/l\\_3032000l202en00l60022.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/pri/en/oj/dat/2000/l_303/l_3032000l202en00l60022.pdf))

<sup>10</sup> A legal instrument to challenge religious discrimination in employment: the employment directive, Emmanuelle Bribosa, Institut d’Etudes Europeennes, Universite Libre de Bruxelles)  
([www.enar-eu.org/en/events/regdisc/Emmanuelle%20Bribosia%20EN.pdf](http://www.enar-eu.org/en/events/regdisc/Emmanuelle%20Bribosia%20EN.pdf))

# Background

26. Responsibility under the EE(RB)R and its scope (protection, prohibited acts and exceptions) is below.

## **Responsibility and Scope**

### **Who is legally responsible for the EE(RB)R?**

It is unlawful for an institution to subject a prospective or current student or staff member to discrimination or harassment on the grounds of religion or belief. Ultimate legal responsibility lies with the institution's Governing Body. The institution is responsible for anything done by an employee in the course of his/her employment, and should also, wherever possible, protect its staff from potential harassment by third parties.<sup>11</sup> In a practical sense, it would therefore be advisable for the Governing Body to ensure that tasks and responsibilities are delegated appropriately, clearly and effectively.

### **Who is covered under the EE(RB)R?**

The EE(RB)R applies to both staff and students in Higher Education.

### **How can claims under the EE(RB)R be made?**

Ultimately, if matters cannot be resolved internally, employees can pursue claims through the Employment Tribunals. Students cannot pursue a claim through the Employment Tribunal, but will have to go through the County Courts (or Sheriff's Court in Scotland) instead.



## Areas of protection

The EE(RB)R covers the area of religion or belief and similar philosophical belief in the following ways:

<p><b>Terms</b></p> <p><b>Religion</b> – Although it will ultimately be for the courts to decide what constitutes a religion or belief, the EE(RB)R provide protection for <b><i>all religions and beliefs with a clear structure and belief system</i></b>. The courts will therefore focus on the clarity of a religion or belief’s structure and belief system.</p>	<p><b>HE examples</b></p> <p>An employee who is a convert to the Church of Scientology may be afforded the same level of protection as a person of the Hindu, Christian, Jewish or Islamic faiths.</p>
<p><b>Similar philosophical belief</b> – The EE(RB)R also protects those who do not believe in, or who question, the existence of a higher being. Under the EE(RB)R the term for such beliefs is <b><i>similar philosophical belief</i></b>, which gives people with atheist or agnostic beliefs the same level of protection.</p>	<p><b>HE examples</b></p> <p>A student who is being subjected to verbal abuse by fellow students on the grounds of her atheistic beliefs will be protected under the EE(RB)R.</p> <p>A member of staff who is subject to similar abuse on the grounds of his Pagan background will also be protected under the EE(RB)R.</p>

27. The EE(RB)R does not list religions and beliefs that are covered, but instead concentrates on the manner in which the religious or belief systems operate, which in turn determines whether protection can be afforded. It is anticipated that more specific interpretation will occur through future case law. In addition, the perception of the discriminator is what will be looked at, and not whether the person that has been discriminated against is of a particular religious or belief background.

# Background

**Prohibited Acts** – There are four Prohibited Acts, which can be defined as follows:

<b>Prohibited Act</b>	<b>HE examples</b>
Direct Discrimination – Where a person experiences less favourable treatment on the grounds of religion or belief.	Refusing a student’s application for admission on the grounds of religion or belief, or refusing promotion to a member of staff on the grounds of religion or belief.
Indirect Discrimination – When a general provision, criterion or practice is applied to all, but disadvantages people on the basis of religion or belief, and which cannot be justified as a legitimate aim. Under indirect discrimination both formal and informal areas are included. <sup>12</sup>	Regular Friday night team visits to the pub may be included. Although such visits can be an ad hoc practice, it could also be an informal way of discussing particular work issues, or may even be a networking opportunity. If there are people who, due to reasons of religion or belief, would not attend a pub gathering at all, such a practice could constitute indirect discrimination if it affects chances of promotion or career progression.
Victimisation – Where a person is subjected to less favourable treatment because they have brought an action, given evidence under, or done anything under or by reference to the EE(RB)R.	If a person in a department gives evidence in support of a colleague who has brought an action against the institution and is subsequently ignored by her colleagues because she has given evidence, victimisation will have occurred.

<sup>12</sup> However, if the provision, criterion or practice is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim (say on the grounds of business efficacy or health and safety) then it may be justified.

<p><b>Prohibited Act</b></p> <p>Harassment – Where a person is subjected to unwanted verbal or physical actions (such as jokes or demeaning behaviour) which results in violating that person’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.</p>	<p><b>HE examples</b></p> <p>If a student is subjected to jokes that he finds offensive by his tutor on the grounds of his beliefs as a Jehovah’s Witness, this would constitute harassment.</p>
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28. The above examples are by no means exhaustive, as the nature of religion or belief is such that discrimination can occur at many different stages of the staff or student cycle. Institutions should therefore consider all stages of these cycles to ensure that discrimination does not occur.

### Exceptions to the EE(RB)R

29. Exceptions to the EE(RB)R cover the following areas:

**Genuine Occupational Requirement** – Genuine Occupational Requirements (GORs) apply in the following limited circumstances:

- i Where a job requires the job holder to be of a particular religion or belief – This means that institutions need to consider the nature of the work and the context within which it is carried out. As jobs may change over time institutions should continuously consider whether the GOR applies. It should be noted that the GOR can also operate in situations where a person’s sexual orientation may appear to conflict with the tenets of a particular religion or faith system. This exemption was challenged by some trade

# Background

unions, including NATFHE, UNISON and AMICUS, who feared that it could be used against staff and students in institutions. Although the High Court upheld the legality of the legislation, it reaffirmed that its provisions should be applied narrowly. The exemption only applies if there is a GOR and must not be used in a discriminatory way. Case law will help determine what GORs exist in this area.<sup>13</sup>

- ii Where an organisation has an ethos based on a religion or belief – If an institution can show that it is founded on such an ethos it may be able to apply a GOR to certain positions in order to adhere to the ethos of the organisation. The nature of the job and the context within which it is being carried out is important. Again, this GOR should be interpreted very narrowly.

**Positive Action** – Employers may give special encouragement to, or provide specific training for people from religions and beliefs that are under represented in the workplace. However, all decisions to appoint or admit in the area of religion and belief should be based entirely on merit. Further information on positive action measures can be found in *Equality is Challenging: Positive Action*.<sup>14</sup>

## **HE example**

If an institution *reasonably* believes that there is an underrepresentation of employees of the Hindu faith within a particular part of the institution and that such prospective employees are disadvantaged from applying for positions, it will be entitled to pursue measures to encourage prospective Hindu applicants, such as talks at the local mandir or temple or by placing advertisements in a Hindu publication.

<sup>13</sup> Further information on issues concerning sexual orientation can be found in *Employing People in Higher Education: Sexual Orientation* (downloadable from [www.ecu.ac.uk](http://www.ecu.ac.uk))

<sup>14</sup> *Equality is Challenging: Positive Action*, Equality Challenge Unit, (downloadable from [www.ecu.ac.uk/publications](http://www.ecu.ac.uk/publications))

**Indirect Discrimination** – There may be particular policies, provisions, criterion or practices that disadvantage people of a particular religion or belief, but that can have a proportionate and legitimate rationale on the grounds of, for example, business efficiency or health and safety. Such measures may be justified in some cases. The measure in question has to have a **legitimate** aim, and have been applied in order to achieve that aim; and it must be **proportionate** to apply the measure. If it is possible to adopt another measure with a less discriminatory effect, then this should be done. To fail to adopt a less discriminatory, and available, measure may be disproportionate, and therefore discriminatory.<sup>15</sup>

#### **HE example**

An institution customarily closes for the Christmas break from 23 December until the first week of January. Time off during this period is not taken out of employees' leave entitlement. During this time the institution's buildings are closed. There are some members of staff (three in total) who are not Christian and who wish to work during this period, which would involve opening the institution's offices as normal. The costs involved in opening during this period for these members of staff would not be reasonable. This, along with the accompanying health and safety issues, means that there is adequate justification for not opening the institution's offices during this period. However, as a longer term measure the institution should consider alternative ways of working for those who do not observe Christmas but who do wish to work during this period, such as opportunities for working at home.

#### **Other legal provisions**

30. Institutions should also be aware of the following current and forthcoming legal provisions in the area of religion or belief:

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<sup>15</sup> Blackstones Guide to The Employment Equality Regulations 2003, Nicholas De Marco, P24-27

# Background

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## Current legal provisions

31. Human Rights Act 1998 – Article 9 of the Human Rights Act 1998 covers freedom of thought, conscience and religion as a qualified right. Under Article 9, a person can hold any religious belief, and cannot be forced to change their religion or belief, follow a particular religion or stopped from changing their religion. The Act covers the broader definition of religion used with the EE(RB)R, and also includes beliefs such as veganism and pacifism.
32. Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001 – Religiously aggravated offences and harassment are covered under the Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001. This means that if offences such as assault, criminal damage and harassment include a religious element (for example, where the offender shows hostility towards the victim on the grounds of their presumed membership) it will be taken into account. Further information on dealing with instances of hate crimes, intolerance and extremism within the higher education setting can be found in a forthcoming ECU, Universities UK and Standing Conference of Principals publication which will be published in Autumn 2005.

## Forthcoming legislation

33. The above provisions offer a certain level of protection for people on the grounds of religion or belief. Issues of incitement and protection against discrimination in the area of goods, facilities and services are not covered by the EE(RB)R.
  - i. **Equality Bill** – The Equality Bill provides protection in the area of goods, facilities and services in the area of religion and belief. When the Bill comes into force, institutions will need to understand how different requirements in the area of religion or belief should be incorporated in areas such as accommodation etc.
  - ii. **Racial and Religious Hatred Bill** – In July 2004 the Home Secretary announced plans to introduce legal provisions protecting people of all faiths and none against incitement to religious hatred. This provision, which was in

the Serious Organised Crime and Police Bill, would have made it unlawful to incite hatred against people on the grounds of religion or belief.<sup>16</sup> However, after the 2005 General Election was announced, the Government withdrew these provisions from the Bill.

The provisions resurfaced under the Racial and Religious Hatred Bill, which provides protection for people of all faiths and none by creating a new offence of Incitement to Religious Hatred in England and Wales under Part 3 of the Public Order Act 1986. An offence will be committed when threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour are used by someone who intends to stir up hatred against a group of people defined by reference to religious belief or lack of religious belief, or it is likely that such hatred will be stirred up. The provision will not affect people who offend, criticise or ridicule faiths. Rather, protection will be provided from incitement to hatred against people because of their faith.<sup>17</sup>

34. These Bills are currently subject to Parliamentary approval. The ECU will monitor further developments in both of the above areas and will provide updates when further information is known.

### Considering a positive agenda

35. **Thinking holistically: thinking effectively** – The way in which prejudice and intolerance can occur in the institutional setting, along with the current and forthcoming legal provisions, means that HEIs need to consider the following issues in order to eliminate unlawful discrimination and the promotion of good relations between different religions and beliefs:
- the need to undertake a holistic and consultative approach

<sup>16</sup> There was a degree of resistance to elements of this provision, particularly focused on artistic freedom. The wording of this provision was therefore changed from “Incitement to Religious Hatred” to “Hatred on the Grounds of Religion and Belief”.

<sup>17</sup> Protecting our communities from hatred, Government News Network ([www.gnn.gov.uk/Content/Detail.asp?ReleaseID=159029&NewsAreaID=2](http://www.gnn.gov.uk/Content/Detail.asp?ReleaseID=159029&NewsAreaID=2))

# Background

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- the importance of embedding work in this area into institutional functions
  - the need to understand that positive change in this area will also involve attitudinal change at all levels
  - that religious and faith groups and individuals are enabled to retain and affirm their unique identity in positive ways
  - that these groups and individuals are encouraged to interact in a constructive way
  - that there is active promotion on campus of the importance of inter faith understanding and respect, among both staff and students
  - that there is increased awareness of different religions and beliefs.
36. Although HEIs are, in the main, secular bodies, such an approach should be seen as complementary to institutions' aims to protect staff and students from prejudice and discrimination, and to promote good relations internally and externally. HEIs should therefore consider the ways in which they can pre-empt actions that could lead to unlawful activity, and meet the needs of staff and students in a positive and proportionate way. This, together with the existing positive legal provisions in Northern Ireland, and the movement of equalities legislation to a more proactive stance in Great Britain, means that the adoption of a positive agenda is recommended. Essentially this entails moving beyond compliance of the law and towards ensuring that there is sufficient understanding and dialogue between people of different faiths and those with none.
37. Institutions in Great Britain should consider how they have begun to implement the General Duty and Specific Duties under race equality, and see how the forthcoming general duties in disability and gender will be incorporated into the institution. With appropriate modifications, and with an approach that encompasses the legal understanding of reasonableness and proportionality, the tools of policy formation and maintenance,



impact assessment, monitoring and publishing can assist institutions to ensure that discrimination, victimisation and harassment in the area of religion or belief do not occur. Further information on these points can be found at Section 2.

### **HE example**

An institution is aware that a far right organisation has been organising local and regional meetings where speakers denounce Islam, and indirectly urge those listening to attack any Muslims they come into contact with. A representative from the organisation is invited to speak on campus by a student group. Given the nature of the meeting and its likely consequences, the institution should prevent the representative from speaking at the institution. Accordingly, its policy on religion or belief should be very clear that it will not tolerate words, actions or behaviour that could constitute harassment against people on the grounds of religion and/or belief.

## **Benefits for Higher Education Institutions**

38. The following benefits of correct implementation can be identified:

### **The institutional benefits**

If work in this area is effectively mainstreamed, the following benefits can be obtained:

- Informing and enhancing other institutional strategies
- Enabling further cohesiveness between different functions
- Ensuring that other strategies do not breach legal provisions and the institution's responsibilities regarding religion and belief
- Creating and maintaining high levels of morale

- Allowing staff and students to reach their respective potential, thereby retaining current staff, students and attracting potential staff and students
- Enabling a work and learning environment of trust and confidence
- Enhancing the institution's image and reputation as an 'institution of choice' amongst existing students and staff.

### **The legal benefits**

As mentioned above, work in the area of religion or belief should go beyond the issue of compliance, and look at ways in which a proactive approach can be facilitated. This will have the following benefits:

- A complementary approach to the current and forthcoming positive duties
- Greater understanding of issues concerning multiple identities.

### **The social benefits**

HEIs do not operate in isolation, but rather as part of a local, national and international community, as providers of learning and employment and as part of a dynamic sector.

Understanding what needs to be addressed in the area of religion or belief enables HEIs to understand this reach more effectively, and also provides the following benefits:

- Greater understanding of the local context
- Facilitating collaborative working, both internally and externally
- Greater information sharing.

39. Section I has shown that religious discrimination can occur in a variety of different areas and ways. Institutions' legal responsibilities (both current and forthcoming) in the area of religion or belief mean that careful planning needs to precede implementation in a three-stage process.

## Section 2 – First Steps

# 2

The following section will look at the appropriate planning and approaches as a next step towards implementation.

- The way in which issues of religion and belief manifest themselves is complex
- Prejudice in the area of religion and belief can permeate institutional life, thereby facilitating institutional discrimination
- The EE(RB)R requires institutions to protect staff and students against direct and indirect discrimination, victimisation and harassment on the grounds of religion or belief
- Supplementary and forthcoming legislation in this area means that institutions adopt a holistic and proactive approach to work in this area, which focuses on promoting good relations between people of diverse religious and faith backgrounds.

### Stage 1 – Planning

When considering how the provisions will be implemented, it is recommended that institutions look at the following factors:

Area	Points to consider
<b>Understanding work to be done</b> – The institution will need to have a good understanding of the legal requirements, and how such requirements fit into the local context.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● How the institution’s functions relate to the legal provisions</li><li>● How policies will be reviewed</li><li>● Whether there are any policies that breach the legal provisions, and corrective action that needs to be taken.</li></ul>
<b>Other areas to consider</b> Communication, consultation and research Support structure	

## Stage I – Planning

Area	Points to consider
<b>The institution's support structure</b> – HEIs should consider their existing support structure of individuals and organisations who can provide information and/or support, which will enhance the comprehensive understanding of needs in the area of religion and belief, such as ensuring that implementation in this area is effective and discussing possible changes to institutional policies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Whether the institution has appropriate communication and consultation links with staff, student, trade and student unions, chaplains and spiritual advisers along with religion and belief organisations.</li></ul>
<b>Other areas to consider</b> Communication, consultation and research	

Area	Points to consider
<b>Ensuring commitment</b> – Effective implementation requires visible commitment at all levels of the institution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● To ensure that senior management are in a position to endorse, champion and take responsibility for projects and initiatives</li><li>● Whether staff, students and stakeholder organisations at all levels are aware of their respective rights and responsibilities.</li></ul>
<b>Other areas to consider</b> Communication, consultation and research Resources and planning	

Area	Points to consider
<p><b>Resources and planning</b> – Institutions should ensure that a sufficient level of resources is allocated to equalities areas, including that of religion and belief, and that such resources are also embedded within the institution’s long-term planning processes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Whether staff, students and stakeholder organisations at all levels are aware of their respective rights and responsibilities</li> <li>● Whether there is a sufficient level of understanding of the work that needs to be done</li> <li>● Ensuring that planning processes cover work in the short-term and long-term.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Other areas to consider</b> Understanding work to be done Support structure</p>	<p>Religion and Belief Policy Religion and Belief Working Group</p>

### HE case study

In order to ensure that it was not discriminating under the legal provisions, an institution undertook a mapping exercise in order to find out which of its functions and processes are relevant in the area of religion and belief. It started by looking at the legal requirements under the provisions, and then looked at its functions as an institution. As part of this process, the institution undertook research to find out which religious and belief systems were likely to be held, through open consultation with staff, students, stakeholder organisations such as the trade unions and student unions, and local religious and faith organisations. It used this information to look at potential areas that could be affected. This provided the institution with a robust foundation of information that it could use to ensure that it was meeting the legal provisions.

## Stage 2 – Approaches

### Stage 2 – Approaches

40. As a means of meeting the provisions in the institutional context, the following approaches should be considered once planning has taken place:

Area	Points to consider
<p><b>Mutual trust and respect –</b> An open, clear and constructive environment, where people are aware that they are able to provide information, can be extremely beneficial in an institutional context, as it allows people to provide views without fear of negative repercussions and helps to promote greater understanding between people of different faiths and none.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● The effectiveness of the communication and consultation links within the institution</li><li>● Awareness of developments within the institution</li></ul>
<p><b>Other areas to consider</b> Ensuring commitment Support structure</p>	

Area	Points to consider
<p><b>Effective communication, consultation and research into precise needs –</b> It is important that research takes place in order to implement the legal provisions in a proportionate way. A key part of this research involves undertaking effective consultation with stakeholders which is complemented by a thorough method of communication.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The interplay between those who are being consulted and those who are facilitating the communication, consultation and research processes. Sensitivity in matching the parties in terms of religious practice and none and other equalities related characteristics is advised.</li> <li>● How the institution will elicit accurate information about the local context, which will facilitate the greatest degree of understanding of the institution's work in this area</li> <li>● What is required to be done in terms of the legal requirements</li> <li>● Good practice that will complement implementation</li> <li>● How consultation in this area will be embedded into the institution's long-term strategy.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Other areas to consider</b> Support structure Resources and planning Mutual trust and respect</p>	

## Stage 2 – Approaches

Area	Points to consider
<p><b>An inclusive approach –</b> In order to work in a collaborative way, it is recommended that institutions work in a way that allows views to be expressed from different sources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Whether an inter faith/multi faith approach is appropriate (See Appendix B)</li> <li>● Whether the consultative systems in place take into account the views of all, including differences within religions and beliefs.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Other areas to consider</b> Communication, consultation and research Mutual trust and respect</p>	

Area	Points to consider
<p><b>Religion and Belief Policy –</b> This is a particularly important foundation towards implementation, as it shows the standard from which the institution operates in the area of religion and belief, and demonstrates a clarity of purpose that can identify well-defined plans of action, responsibilities, and next-steps in the event of the policy being breached. It is recommended that a separate policy covers this area and that it is clearly linked to, and complemented by, other Equal Opportunity and employment policies and procedures.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Policy should cover the following areas:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>A statement on the institution’s stance on religion and belief</b> – this should outline the institution’s aims, values, commitments and responsibilities, and a summary of the main issues relating to religion or belief for the institution.</li> <li>– <b>Responsibilities for implementation</b> – This should outline the respective responsibilities, from the Governing Body, staff and students to contractors and service providers</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



### Points to consider (continued)

- **Monitoring, impact assessment and publishing arrangements** (if appropriate)
- **Corporate elements** – How the policy will be embedded into the institution’s strategic plan and other relevant functions
- **Institutional functions** – How the institution will ensure that discrimination will not occur in the following areas, how it will ensure that good practice is developed and how it will raise awareness of opportunities/changes under the following headings:
  - Career development
  - Reflective training interventions at all levels of the institution
  - Academic timetabling
  - Welfare
  - Dress codes
  - Religious observance
  - Dietary requirements
  - Bullying and harassment
  - Complaints and grievances
  - Breaches of the policy
  - Recruitment and admissions
- **Promoting good relations** – As a means of good practice, institutions should outline their approaches in the following areas:
  - Engaging with community events
  - Celebrating religious diversity within the local context.

(see Appendix D for further details)

### Other areas to consider

Communication, consultation and research	Monitoring
Resources and planning	Impact assessment
	Publishing

## Stage 2 – Approaches

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Although the above measures are not exhaustive, they indicate sound principles of good practice for incorporation into institutional life. The key aspect is for institutions to engage with staff, students, stakeholder organisations and the wider community to see how the above provisions can meet the needs of all within the institutional setting, and to let individuals' requirements contribute substantially to and shape the enquiry, rather than the institution's desire to gather information.

### **HE case study**

As part of its commitment to embracing diversity and promoting equality amongst its staff and students, the University of Westminster recognises the importance of mutual respect for religious and cultural beliefs. It therefore developed a statement on building good relations between people of different faiths and beliefs and following on from this has now developed two key policies and a code of practice. The entire Religion and Belief Policy now comprises a number of elements including:

- Statement on Building Good Relations Between People of Different Faiths and Beliefs
- Religion and Belief Policy for Staff
- Religion, Belief and Study: Code of Practice to Support Students
- Policy on the Provision of Quiet and Prayer Rooms.

These policies have been developed in the spirit of promoting a better understanding, together with the implementation of good practice of Religion and Belief in the University community.

### **Stage 3 – Implementation**

41. The preceding parts of this section have shown how careful and considered preparation can lead to a long-lasting and robust foundation in the area of religion or belief. A critical factor that can determine the success of such preparation lies with effective

implementation. The next part will look at the particular areas, in which such a foundation can be used, with reference to issues that are of relevance to institutions.

Area	Points to consider
<p><b>Religion and Belief Working Group</b> – It is recommended that institutions form a subgroup from their Equal Opportunities (or equivalent) group tasked with implementation in this area, and that it is made up of staff and student representatives at all levels of the institution, along with representation from the unions, and representatives from those of different faith backgrounds and those with no religious beliefs at the institution.</p> <p>Although this group can be formed at the planning stage, some institutions may choose for the Group to be formed once resources etc. have been ascertained.</p> <p>In order to ensure that equalities groups within institutions have a focussed and effective approach, such groups need to be provided with sufficient resources (and that involvement is duly rewarded and celebrated).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Representation on the Group</li> <li>● Who the group is accountable to</li> <li>● Whether the remit of the group includes the following points:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Prioritised actions</li> <li>– Consultation and communication exercises</li> <li>– Measures to raise awareness</li> <li>– Reporting back to Equal Opportunities Working Group, along with those the RBWG liaises with</li> <li>– Measures to facilitate capacity building</li> <li>– Mainstreaming and embedding religion and belief issues within the institution</li> <li>– Responsibilities for implementation</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">(continued overleaf)</p>

## Stage 3 – Implementation

There is also a growing trend for institutions to create and facilitate inter faith dialogue groups for staff and students, which can provide a good forum for debate. Such groups can also have an advisory function to the Religion and Belief Working Group.

- Appropriate timescales for implementation
- How often to report back
- Whether representatives on the group are able to voice the actual views of each of the institution's key functional and/or departmental areas.

### Other areas to consider

Resources and planning  
Mutual trust and respect  
Impact Assessment

Monitoring  
Communication, consultation and research

### Area

### Points to consider

**Monitoring** – Finding out the representation of prospective and current staff and students from different religious and belief backgrounds is a useful first step towards identifying potential needs. However, people may not feel comfortable about providing information on their personal religious or belief system, due to concerns about how the information will be used, whether it will remain confidential and whether it could potentially be used against them.<sup>18</sup> Some people

- How the institution will ascertain whether monitoring can take place at that point, i.e. through consultation with stakeholder organisations such as the unions and staff and student groups to ascertain particular views and agreements on monitoring in the area of religion and belief
- If it is possible for institutions to monitor, how the monitoring activity will take place. For example, any monitoring activity should be

<sup>18</sup> Counting Religion: Religion, Statistics and the 2001 Census, Paul Wellar and Ahmed Andrews, [www.multifaithnet.org/images/content/seminarpapers/CountingReligionReligion,Statisticsandthe2001Census.htm](http://www.multifaithnet.org/images/content/seminarpapers/CountingReligionReligion,Statisticsandthe2001Census.htm)

may also feel that such information is not relevant in an institutional setting. Although there is currently no legal requirement to monitor in this area, the process of monitoring should be seen as a long-term planning goal that can help institutions in responding to particular needs.

It is useful to note that public authorities, including HEIs, in Northern Ireland have monitored community backgrounds for many years. A combined approach of clarity and sensitivity has ensured that resulting response rates are high.

accompanied with a clear statement, outlining the reasons for monitoring, what will be done with the information received, along with a clear statement that confidentiality provisions will be maintained. It is advisable that institutions ensure that there is a sufficiently comfortable and open culture of information-sharing within the local context.

- What can be learnt from monitoring activity in other equalities areas, such as race
- Institutions will need to be acquainted with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998.<sup>19</sup>

### **Other areas to consider**

Religion and Belief Working Group

Religion and Belief Policy

Ensuring commitment

Communication, consultation and research

Publishing

<sup>19</sup> Further information on this can be found at [www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk/](http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk/)

## Stage 3 – Implementation

Area	Points to consider
<p><b>Impact assessment</b> – Impact Assessment provides a useful and systematic means through which institutions can consult, and ascertain and deal with negative impact on staff and students. Institutions should be well acquainted with the impact assessment process through the statutory duty in race (in Great Britain) and across the equalities areas (through Article 55 reviews) in Northern Ireland. Institutions in Northern Ireland conduct Equality Impact Assessments, and there are institutions in Great Britain that conduct similar impact assessments in order to assess impact in a discrete but comprehensive way.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Institutions should note the importance of linking work in the area of monitoring with the impact assessment process. Linking data trends from monitoring activity with impact assessment can help institutions to ascertain underlying issues more effectively.</li> <li>● Effective consultation with HE stakeholders is key to assessing adverse impact. It is important that institutions consult in order to ascertain needs, and also if provisions are to be introduced or changed.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Other areas to consider</b>            Religion and Belief Working Group            Religion and Belief Policy            Ensuring commitment</p>	<p>Communication, consultation and research            Publishing</p>

Area	Points to consider
<p><b>Publishing</b> – Publishing should be seen as means of raising awareness of the institution’s initiatives, along with the results of these initiatives. For example,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What media will the institution use to publicise its work in this area?</li> </ul>

the institution can disseminate the results of consultations and potential changes to policies, whilst the broad thematic results of monitoring can be disseminated in an accessible way.

- How it will ensure that these media are effective, i.e. that the information reaches all relevant stakeholders.

#### **Other areas to consider**

Communication, consultation and research

Ensuring commitment  
Resources and planning

#### **Area**

#### **Points to consider**

**Responses** – As well as ensuring that the institution responds effectively to the legal provisions, it is important to provide satisfactory responses to the requirements of staff and students, whether through individual queries or consultation events. Institutions need to keep records of consultations conducted, along with information and queries received, and the corresponding response provided. This will provide the institution with a valuable bank of information that it can use in order to implement in the area of religion and belief, with due regard to Data Protection Act 1998 issues as appropriate.

- How the institution will analyse responses against the legal provisions
- How such analysis will be recorded, and used in the long-term to chart progress

#### **Other areas to consider**

Communication, consultation and research

Publishing

## Stage 3 – Implementation

Area	Points to consider
<p><b>Reviewing progress and requirements at regular intervals</b> – The process of ensuring that institutions comply with legal requirements should not be viewed as static. Rather, any work that is undertaken should be seen as part of a dynamic, regular and ongoing process, to ensure that the institution is meeting the requirements of staff and students. In order to facilitate this, it is recommended that the review process be conducted on a minimum three-yearly cycle, with interim reviews as appropriate. This should allow enough time for changes to be embedded and real progress to be achieved and measured, whilst still allowing for potential problem areas to be identified and resolved in the intervening period.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● How often the institution will review progress and requirements</li><li>● How it will use experiences from previous review exercises to enhance future exercises</li><li>● How review processes as a whole will be co-ordinated.</li><li>● How progress will be recorded</li></ul>
<p><b>Other areas to consider</b> Impact Assessment Monitoring</p>	<p>Resources and planning</p>



### HE case study

In order to understand faith issues in the local context and to show that it wanted to engage with local religious and faith organisations, an institution conducted research into local events taking place. Through liaising with the local authority, it was able to find out what events were taking place, and which organisations were organising them. It then made contact with these organisations, and through sustained contact was able to have a presence at the events managed by these organisations. This contact and presence enabled the institution to have mutually beneficial links with local organisations, who were able to provide input into the institution's activities and vice versa.

- It is recommended that institutions approach work in this area using a three-stage process.
- **Stage 1** (planning), involves understanding what needs to be done, who needs to do it, and how resources will be allocated.
- **Stage 2** (approaches), involves creating or enhancing a culture of mutual respect at the institution, conducting research (primarily through consultation) and looking at appropriate ways of working in this area.
- **Stage 3** (implementation) involves using tools such as policy formation and maintenance, impact assessment, monitoring and publishing (if appropriate) in order to meet not only the EE(RB)R and supplementary legislation, but also to prepare institutions for the forthcoming development of the law in this area.

# Notes

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## Section 3 – Theory into Practice

# 3

42. The preceding sections have shown the issues that institutions should consider in this area of religion or belief, along with the standard that should be worked towards. Effective implementation in the area of religion or belief need not be a minefield, and a stage-by-stage approach can have effective outcomes. Indeed, past research that asked people from religious groups about ways forward found that small adaptations were what were required, and that a change of attitude can improve situations considerably.<sup>20</sup>
43. The following extended case studies are based on queries received by the ECU from institutions, and reflect the situations faced by institutions and the answers provided, which in turn were also informed by religious and faith organisations. They are referred to in the planning, approaches and implementation stages in Section 2, so as to guide the reader through the process of implementation in a stage-by-stage manner.

### Case study 1: The provision of multi faith rooms

**Scenario** – University X has a mix of students and staff members from different religious and faith backgrounds, along with a substantial number of staff members and students who are agnostic or atheist. The University received requests from Hindu and Christian students, along with Muslim members of staff, for an appropriate prayer room, and some students who are atheist also asked for a quiet contemplation room. The University could only provide one large room and one smaller room for these purposes.

**Planning** – The RBWG agreed the requirements of the task, its timescale and desired outcomes, and undertook desktop research. This research found that direct or indirect discrimination could potentially occur, as there were available rooms.

**Approaches** – The RBWG ascertained precise requirements through a variety of consultation methods, which found that there was a need for a quiet room, whilst allowing people from different

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<sup>20</sup> Religious Discrimination in England and Wales, Home Office Research Study 220

# Theory into Practice

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religious and belief systems the opportunity for communal prayer. The consultation also found that there were prescribed daily Muslim prayer times, and that the Christian students were required to pray on consecrated ground. Most consultees agreed that religious artefacts should not be on display, but locked away and taken out during times of prayer.

**Reporting back** – Feedback and recommendations were provided to the institution, and the agreed course of action communicated to all those consulted, both verbally and in written form. On this basis, the smaller room was used by Muslim members of staff and students, whilst the other room was primarily a quiet room that was also used by other religious groups. Links were made with the local parish church so that Christian staff and students had easier access to prayer in an appropriate venue. It was agreed that there should be a standard of conduct and use for both rooms that all users had to abide by.

**Implementation** – As a result of the preparatory work undertaken, the University implemented the findings, once they were approved by the Working Group and according to the required specifications. In order to ensure that people who used the rooms were happy, feedback forms were made available along with a named point of contact within the University. The use of the rooms was reviewed on a formal consultative basis every three years to ensure that it was meeting requirements.

## **Case study 2: Setting up an inter cultural group – holding the first meeting**

**Scenario** – Z College wanted to set up an inter cultural group, which would better inform the provision of services for people of different religions and beliefs. Although the College had a long-standing Christian chaplaincy, links with groups from other backgrounds were limited.

**Planning** – The provision of such a group would help to meet legal requirements by enabling greater understanding of the needs of

people from different religious and belief backgrounds, and providing a focused way for the institution to progress its work in the area of religion or belief. The creation of the group would also show that the institution was actively promoting work in the area of religion and belief, thereby attracting a wider talent base of staff and students.

**Approaches** – The institution’s RBWG raised awareness of the forthcoming network through internal communication methods (such as notices in communal areas, canteens, information in payslips and on the intranet), and also worked with the trade and student unions to look at alternative ways of publicising it. On an external level, the RBWG obtained information about local religious and belief organisations from the local council.

With this information, the RBWG arranged a series of open fora (both internal and external) where further information on the network was provided. This feedback, together with the Inter Faith Network’s Code on Building Good Relations Between People of Different Faiths and Beliefs, enabled the Group to tailor the nature and format of the meetings to suit the institutional context.

**Implementation** – All groups who expressed an interest in the network and who signed up to The Inter Faith Network’s Code (see Appendix C) were invited to the first meeting, which was arranged on a day and time to suit all those attending. Although the first meeting was chaired by a member of the RBWG, it was stressed that there would be a rotating chair for each meeting. Although not many people attended the first meeting, successive meetings were well attended after the remit and work of the RBWG was promoted throughout the institution.

At the first meeting, the Terms of Reference for the Group were agreed, having been greatly informed by the earlier consultative process. The Group had an advisory function to the RBWG, and provided valuable information to the Group in the area of religion or belief. The presence of the Group also proved complementary to institution-wide consultation exercises.

# Theory into Practice

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## Case study 3: Expressing religious beliefs

**Scenario** – A group of students wished to promote understanding of their religion on their institution's campus, which would involve a stand being placed on campus, where people could ask questions and obtain further information on the religion. The students also wished to enter halls of residence and knock on students' doors, to facilitate an informal chat and promote their religion (proselytising). The institution was concerned that these activities would create an uncomfortable environment for those who did not practice this religion.

**Planning** – The RBWG looked into the legal implications of the students placing a stand on campus, along with proselytising. It was found that a stand placed on campus, with the students providing information on their religion would not be unlawful. However, it was important that the stand (or the information supplied) did not violate anyone's dignity or create an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for others (the definition of harassment under the EE(RB)R). Proselytising in halls of residence was a more complicated issue, as this would have involved students being contacted when they were in their private dwellings. A complaint of harassment would be more likely in this situation. From the information gathered, the institution therefore decided that it would not be appropriate to allow students to proselytise by knocking on other students' doors for this express purpose.

**Approach** – The institution consulted with students and student bodies, which included anonymous surveys that were disseminated in communal areas, and visits to meetings of various student societies. The institution also consulted with regional HE and FE institutions, to see what type of approach they were taking.

**Implementation** – With the above information, the institution found that it was important to create an institution-wide standard on both these issues, which would show that all viewpoints had been considered. It was also important that this standard provided a means by which any concerns could be addressed. The institution therefore

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produced a short Code of Conduct, which was based on its Policy on Religion and Belief. Everyone who wished to have a stand on campus, including the group of students above, had to sign up to this Code. The institution made it clear that a breach of its Policy or the Code would be dealt with under its disciplinary procedure. The Code also made it clear that discussions between students of different faiths and none could take place, as long as students respected the rights of others in discussions. This meant that, even if students did not agree with a viewpoint given, there should be acceptance of people's entitlement to voice their opinions, as long as it did not contravene the law (e.g. harassment) and the institution's standard under the Code.

# Notes

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# Appendix A

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# A

## Links and further information

This guidance does not include summaries of the major religions and beliefs, as different people have different ways of observing their faith, and such summaries may not capture the full diversity contained within a religious or belief system. Instead, it is recommended that institutions contact the organisations listed above for a more comprehensive outline, and refer to the Useful Resources section.

## Baha'i

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### **National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United Kingdom**

27 Rutland Gate  
London SW7 1PD

Tel: 020 7584 2566  
Fax: 020 7584 9401  
Email: [nsa@bahai.org.uk](mailto:nsa@bahai.org.uk)  
[www.bahai.org.uk](http://www.bahai.org.uk)

## Buddhist

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### **Network of Buddhist Organisations (UK)**

6 Tyne Road  
Bishopston  
Bristol BS7 8EE

Tel: 0845 345 8978  
Email: [secretary@nbo.org.uk](mailto:secretary@nbo.org.uk)  
[www.nbo.org.uk](http://www.nbo.org.uk)

### **The Buddhist Society**

58 Eccleston Square  
London SW1V 1PH

Tel: 020 7834 5858  
Fax: 020 7976 5238  
Email: [info@thebuddhistsociety.org](mailto:info@thebuddhistsociety.org)  
[www.thebuddhistsociety.org](http://www.thebuddhistsociety.org)

## Christian

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### **Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain (Orthodox Christian)**

Thyateira House  
5 Craven Hill  
London W2 3EN

Tel: 020 7723 4787  
Fax: 020 7224 9301  
[www.nostos.com/church](http://www.nostos.com/church)

# Appendix A

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## **Baptist Union of Great Britain**

Baptist House  
PO Box 44  
129 Broadway  
Didcot, Oxon OX11 8RT

Tel: 01235 517700  
Fax: 01235 517715  
Email: [info@baptist.org.uk](mailto:info@baptist.org.uk)  
[www.baptist.org.uk](http://www.baptist.org.uk)

## **Catholic Education Service for England and Wales**

39 Eccleston Square  
London SW1V 1BX

Tel: 020 7901 4880  
Fax: 020 7901 4893  
Email: [general@cesew.org.uk](mailto:general@cesew.org.uk)  
[www.cesew.org.uk](http://www.cesew.org.uk)

## **Church of England Board of Education**

Church House  
Great Smith Street  
London SW1P 3NZ

Tel: 020 7898 1500  
Fax: 020 7898 1520  
Email: [john.hall@c-of-e.org.uk](mailto:john.hall@c-of-e.org.uk)  
[www.cofe.anglican.org](http://www.cofe.anglican.org)

## **Church in Wales Division for Education**

The Church in Wales  
39 Cathedral Road  
Cardiff CF11 9XF

Tel: 029 2034 8200  
Fax: 029 2038 7835  
[www.churchinwales.org.uk](http://www.churchinwales.org.uk)

## **Church of Ireland General Synod Board of Education – Northern Ireland**

The Church of Ireland  
Education Centre  
1-3 Cadogan Park  
Belfast BT9 6HG

Tel: 028 9068 2946  
Fax: 028 9068 7283  
Email: [coieduc@iol.ie](mailto:coieduc@iol.ie)  
[www.iol.ie/~coieduc](http://www.iol.ie/~coieduc)

## **Council of African and Afro-Caribbean Churches**

31 Norton House  
Sidney Road  
London SW9 0UJ

Tel: 020 7274 5589  
Fax: 020 7274 4726

## **Free Church Education Unit**

Free Church Education Unit  
27 Tavistock Square  
London WC1H 9HH

Tel: 020 7529 8130  
Fax: 020 7529 8134  
Email: [education@cte.org.uk](mailto:education@cte.org.uk)  
[www.freechurcheducation.org.uk](http://www.freechurcheducation.org.uk)

**Moravian Church in Great Britain and Ireland**

Moravian Church House  
5 Muswell Hill  
London N10 3TJ

Tel: 020 8883 3409/1912  
Fax: 020 8815 0105  
Email: [office@moravian.org.uk](mailto:office@moravian.org.uk)  
[www.moravian.org.uk](http://www.moravian.org.uk)

**Presbyterian Church of Wales Assembly  
Education Committee**

33 Ty Mawr  
Menai Bridge  
Anglesey LL59 5LJ

Tel: 01248 714488  
Fax: 01248 715891  
Email: [rheinallt@heulfryn.fsbusiness.co.uk](mailto:rheinallt@heulfryn.fsbusiness.co.uk)  
[www.ebcpcw.org.uk](http://www.ebcpcw.org.uk)

**Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)**

Friends House  
173-177 Euston Road  
London NW1 2BJ

Tel: 020 7663 1000  
Fax: 020 7663 1001  
[www.quaker.org.uk](http://www.quaker.org.uk)

**Russian Orthodox Diocese of Sourozh**

6 Maiden Place  
London NW5 1HZ

Tel: 020 7272 9898  
Fax: 020 7272 9898  
Email: [gillian@crow.co.uk](mailto:gillian@crow.co.uk)  
[www.sourozh.org](http://www.sourozh.org)

**United Reformed Church**

86 Tavistock Place  
London WC1H 9RT

Tel: 020 7916 2020  
Fax: 020 7916 2021  
Email: [urc@urc.org.uk](mailto:urc@urc.org.uk)  
[www.urc.org.uk](http://www.urc.org.uk)

**Student Christian Movement**

University of Birmingham  
Unit 308F  
The Big Peg  
120 Vyse Street  
The Jewellery Quarter  
Birmingham B18 6NF

Tel: 0121 200 3355  
Email: [scm@movement.org.uk](mailto:scm@movement.org.uk)  
[www.movement.org.uk](http://www.movement.org.uk)

# Appendix A

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## **Methodist Student Link Support Group**

Methodist Church House  
225 Marylebone Road  
London

Email: [info@methodiststudent.org.uk](mailto:info@methodiststudent.org.uk)  
[www.methodiststudent.org.uk](http://www.methodiststudent.org.uk)

## **Hinduism**

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### **National Council of Hindu Temples (UK)**

c/o Bhaktivedanta Manor  
Hilfield Lane  
Aldenham  
Watford  
Herts WD2 8EZ

### **Vishwa Hindu Parishad (UK)**

48 Wharfedale Gardens  
Thornton Heath CR7 6LB

Tel: 020 8684 9716

### **National Hindu Students Forum**

PO Box 46016  
London W9 1WS

Tel: 07092 377 304

Email: [info@nhsf.org.uk](mailto:info@nhsf.org.uk)

### **Hindu Council (UK)**

126-128 Uxbridge Road  
London W13 8QS

Tel: 07740 400700

Email: [info@hinducounciluk.org](mailto:info@hinducounciluk.org)

## **Humanism**

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### **British Humanist Association**

1 Gower Street  
London WC1E 6HD

Tel: 020 7079 3580

Fax: 020 7079 3588

Email: [info@humanism.org.uk](mailto:info@humanism.org.uk)

[www.humanism.org.uk](http://www.humanism.org.uk)

## **Inter faith**

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### **Inter Faith Network for the United Kingdom**

8A Lower Grosvenor Place  
London SW1W 0EN

Tel: 020 7931 7766

Fax: 020 7931 7722

Email: [ifnet@interfaith.org.uk](mailto:ifnet@interfaith.org.uk)

[www.interfaith.org.uk](http://www.interfaith.org.uk)

**Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum**

Email: [interfaithni@stran.ac.uk](mailto:interfaithni@stran.ac.uk)

**Scottish Inter Faith Council**

Email: [admin@interfaithscotland.org](mailto:admin@interfaithscotland.org)

[www.interfaithscotland.org](http://www.interfaithscotland.org)

**Inter Faith Council For Wales/Cyngor Rhyng-grefyddol Cymru**

Email: [aschwartz@clara.co.uk](mailto:aschwartz@clara.co.uk) Tel: 029 2075 0990

**Council of Christians and Jews**

1st Floor Camelford House Tel: 020 7820 0090

87-89 Albert Embankment Email: [cjrelations@ccj.org.uk](mailto:cjrelations@ccj.org.uk)

London SE1 7TP [www.ccj.org.uk](http://www.ccj.org.uk)

**Maimonides Foundation (Jewish-Muslim relations)**

Nour House Tel: 020 7518 8282

6 Hill Street Email:

London W1J 5NF [info@maimonides-foundation.org](mailto:info@maimonides-foundation.org)

**Islam****Islamic Cultural Centre**

146 Park Road Tel: 020 7724 3363

London NW8 7RG Fax: 020 7724 0493

[www.iccuk.co.uk](http://www.iccuk.co.uk)

**Muslim Council of Britain**

Suite 5, Boardman House Tel: 020 8432 0585/6

64 Broadway Fax: 020 8432 0587

Stratford Email: [admin@mcb.org.uk](mailto:admin@mcb.org.uk)

London E15 INT [www.mcb.org.uk](http://www.mcb.org.uk)

**Union of Muslim Organisations of UK and Eire (UMO)**

109 Campden Hill Road Tel: 020 7229 0538 / 020 7221 6608

London W8 7TL

**The Federation of Student Islamic Societies**

38 Mapesbury Road Email: [info@fosis.org.uk](mailto:info@fosis.org.uk)

London, NW2 4JD [www.fosis.org.uk](http://www.fosis.org.uk)

# Appendix A

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## Multi Faith

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### Multi Faith Centre

University of Derby  
Mickleover  
Derby DE3 5GX

Tel: 01322 622 222 ext 2026  
Fax: 01332 514 323  
[www.multifaithnet.org](http://www.multifaithnet.org)

## Judaism

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### Board of Deputies of British Jews

6 Bloomsbury Square  
London WC1A 2LP

Tel: 020 7543 5400  
Fax: 020 7543 0010  
Email: [info@bod.org.uk](mailto:info@bod.org.uk)  
[www.bod.org.uk](http://www.bod.org.uk)

### The Union of Jewish Students

Hillel House  
1 & 2 Endsleigh Street  
London WC1H 0DS

Tel: 020 7387 4644  
Email: [info@ujts.org.uk](mailto:info@ujts.org.uk)  
[www.ujts.org.uk](http://www.ujts.org.uk)

## Paganism

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### PEBBLE (Public Liaison Body for British Paganism)

BM WiccaUK  
London WC1N 3XX

Tel: 0845 456 1870  
Email: [info@pagan-network.org](mailto:info@pagan-network.org)  
[www.pagan-network.org](http://www.pagan-network.org)

## Sikhism

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### Sikh Divine Fellowship

46 Sudbury Court Drive  
Harrow  
Middlesex HA1 3TD

Tel: 020 8904 9244  
Email:  
[hardip@harrow46.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:hardip@harrow46.freeserve.co.uk)

### World Sikh Foundation

33 Wargrave Road  
South Harrow, Middlesex HA2 8LL

Tel: 020 8864 9228  
Fax: 020 8864 9228

**Network of Sikh Organisations (UK)**

Suite 405, Highland House  
165 The Broadway  
Wimbledon  
London SW19 1NE

Tel: 020 8544 8037  
Email:  
nso@sikhismuk.fsnet.co.uk

**Zoroastrianism****The Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe**

Zoroastrian House  
88 Compayne Gardens  
London NW6 3RU

Tel: 020 7328 6018

**North London Zoroastrian Association**

1 Salisbury Mansions  
St Ann's Road  
London N15 3JP

**Religion and gender****Women's Interfaith Network**

www.wominet.co.uk  
Email: gilda.levy@wominet.co.uk

**Religion and sexual orientation**

Stonewall provides information on organisations and resources in this area

46 Grosvenor Gardens  
London SW1W 0EB

Tel: 020 7881 9440  
Fax: 020 7881 9444  
E-mail: info@stonewall.org.uk  
www.stonewall.org.uk

**Religion and race****Commission for Racial Equality**

Head Office  
St Dunstan's House  
201-211 Borough High Street  
London SE1 1GZ

Tel: 020 7939 0000  
Fax: 020 7939 0001  
Email: info@cre.gov.uk  
www.cre.gov.uk

# Appendix A

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## Further resources

### **The Equality Challenge Unit**

3rd Floor, 4 Tavistock Place  
London WC1H 9RA  
Tel: 020 7520 7060  
Fax: 020 7520 7069

Email:  
religionandbelief@ecu.ac.uk  
www.ecu.ac.uk

### **Department for Trade and Industry**

Enquiry Unit Tel: 020 7215 5000

### **Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS)**

London Office: Tel: 020 7210 3613  
Welsh Office: Tel: 02920 76 2 636  
Scottish Office: Tel: 08457 47 47 47  
www.acas.org.uk

### **HEEON** (Higher Education Equal Opportunities Network)

University College Worcester Tel: 01905 855267  
Henwick Grove Fax: 01905 855132  
Worcester WR2 6AJ www.heeon.ac.uk

## Student Unions

### **National Union of Students**

PO Box 52611 Tel: 0871 221 8221  
London N7 6XX Fax: 020 7263 5713

## Trade Unions

### **UNISON**

1 Mabledon Place Tel: 0845 355 0845  
London WC1H 9AJ www.unison.org.uk

### **AUT** (Association of University Teachers)

Egmont House Tel: 020 7670 9700  
25-31 Tavistock Place www.aut.org.uk  
London WC1H 9UT



**NATFHE**

27 Britannia Street  
London WC1X 9JP

Tel: 020 7837 3636  
[www.natfhe.org.uk](http://www.natfhe.org.uk)

**Amicus**

General Secretary  
Senior Management Team  
35 King Street  
London WC2E 8JG

Tel: 020 7420 8900  
[www.amicustheunion.org](http://www.amicustheunion.org)

**GMB**

National Office  
22/24 Worpole Road  
London SW19 4DD

Tel: 020 8947 3131  
[www.gmb.org.uk](http://www.gmb.org.uk)

**T & G**

Transport House  
128 Theobald's Road  
London WC1X 8TN

Tel: 020 7611 2500  
[www.tgwu.org.uk](http://www.tgwu.org.uk)

**The Educational Institute of Scotland**

46 Moray Place  
Edinburgh EH3 6BH

Tel: 0131 225 6244  
[www.eis.org.uk](http://www.eis.org.uk)

**British Medical Association**

BMA House  
Tavistock Square  
London WC1H 9JP

Tel: 020 7387 4499  
[www.bma.org.uk](http://www.bma.org.uk)

**British Dental Association**

64 Wimpole Street  
London W1G 8YS

Tel: 020 7935 0875  
[www.bda-dentistry.org.uk](http://www.bda-dentistry.org.uk)

# Appendix A

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## Useful resources

### Calendars outlining religious events

It is recommended that institutions have access to calendars that provide information of religious events, which aids institutional timetabling. As some religions (such as Islam) are based on the lunar calendar, it is important that up to date sources of information are used. Examples (in no particular order) are provided below:

World Religions The Open University  
[www.open.ac.uk/Arts/a213/dates.htm](http://www.open.ac.uk/Arts/a213/dates.htm)

Inter faith Calendar - [www.interfaithcalendar.org](http://www.interfaithcalendar.org) - Provides dates of festivals up to 2010.

Multifaith calendar – BBC –  
[www.bbc.co.uk/religion/interactive/calendar/index.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/interactive/calendar/index.shtml)

Multicultural matters – [www.multicultural-matters.com](http://www.multicultural-matters.com)

SHAP Working Party calendar – This comprehensive calendar is not available online, but can be purchased from the SHAP office at:  
PO Box 38580, London SW1P 3XF  
Tel: 020 7898 1494, Fax: 020 7898 1493

### Publications and other resources

**Department for Trade and Industry** – Explanatory notes for the *Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003* and *Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003* –  
[www.dti.gov.uk/er/equality/so\\_rb\\_longexplan.pdf](http://www.dti.gov.uk/er/equality/so_rb_longexplan.pdf)

**Blackstone's** Guide to the Employment (Equality) Regulations 2003,  
Nicholas De Marco, Oxford University Press

**Home Office** Research Study 221 – Tackling religious discrimination: practical implications for policy-makers and legislators – [www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs/hors221.pdf](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs/hors221.pdf)

**Home Office** Research Study 220 – Religious discrimination in England and Wales [www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs/hors2001.html](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs/hors2001.html)

**Muslim Council of Britain** – A good practice guide for Employers and Employees [www.mcb.org.uk](http://www.mcb.org.uk)

**Board Of Deputies Of British Jews** – Employing Jewish People [www.bod.org.uk/bod/publication/freepub/72571%20Jew%20Empymnt%20hbk%2016pp.pdf](http://www.bod.org.uk/bod/publication/freepub/72571%20Jew%20Empymnt%20hbk%2016pp.pdf)

**Inter Faith Network of the United Kingdom** – Connect: Different Faiths Shared Values – Downloadable free from [www.interfaith.co.uk/connect/index.htm](http://www.interfaith.co.uk/connect/index.htm)

**Inter Faith Network of the United Kingdom** – Building Good Relations with People of Different Faiths and Beliefs. Downloadable free from [www.interfaith.co.uk/ifresources.htm](http://www.interfaith.co.uk/ifresources.htm)

**Inter Faith Network of the United Kingdom** – Inter Faith Organisations in the UK: A Directory – Inter Faith Network of the United Kingdom, ISBN: 1 902906 1 79

**Inter Faith Network of the United Kingdom** – Local Inter Faith Activity in the UK: a survey – Inter Faith Network of the United Kingdom, ISBN: 1902906 1 1X

**ACAS** – Religion or Belief and the Workplace – [www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk)

**Association of University Administrators' Equality Advisory Group, the Higher Education Equal Opportunities Network, and the Equality Challenge Unit** – A-Z of Diversity – [www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/guidancepublications](http://www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/guidancepublications)

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### **Other resources**

#### **Cohesion and Faiths Unit (Home Office)**

[www.homeoffice.gov.uk/comrace/faith/index.html](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/comrace/faith/index.html)

**BBC** – Religion and Ethics page – [www.bbc.co.uk/religion](http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion)

**The Religious Education Directory** – [www.ther DIRECTORY.org.uk](http://www.ther DIRECTORY.org.uk)

**Diversiton** – Diversiton is a consultancy firm that provides useful information on its website free of charge – [www.diversiton.com/religion](http://www.diversiton.com/religion)

**Equality Commission for Northern Ireland** – [www.equalityni.org/aboutus/index.htm](http://www.equalityni.org/aboutus/index.htm)

## Inter faith and multi faith approaches

As mentioned in Section 2 of this guidance, there may be occasions where people of different faiths and none will differ in viewpoints on issues. In order to ensure that institutions are able to promote good relations between people of different religions and beliefs and implement the legal provisions in an effective manner, it is recommended that an inter faith and/or multi faith approach is followed:

### What is an inter faith approach?

An inter faith approach is one where the relationship between religious or faith groups is the emphasis and in which the development of understanding and respect, as well as cooperation in pursuit of common social goals in the HEI context is encouraged.

### What is a multi faith approach?

A multi faith approach characterises situations where groups or members of the different faiths are present together but not necessarily with the primary purpose of interaction between them.

Both approaches have many advantages:

- Allowing for religious and faith groups to retain their unique identity, whilst still interacting in a constructive way.
- Increasing awareness of different religions and beliefs through the promotion of greater dialogue and understanding.
- Allowing for more organised and co-ordinated interactions and work in the area of religion or belief.

They are complementary to the proactive approach recommended in this guidance, as they allow individuals and groups to retain their unique identity in the area of religion and belief, whilst still interacting in a constructive way. They can also increase awareness of different religions and beliefs through the promotion of greater dialogue and understanding, and allow for more organised and co-ordinated interactions and work in the area of religion or belief by HEIs. Regardless of whether an inter faith, multi faith or a combination of the two approaches is used, institutions should ensure that people

## Appendix B

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with secular beliefs are not excluded from this process.

It is important that institutions have a good level of understanding of the types of religious and belief organisations operating in the locality and on a national level, and consider such organisations as key stakeholders. From this understanding, institutions should make contact with the relevant organisations and develop a forum where issues of religion or belief can be discussed in a constructive way.

The Inter Faith Network of the United Kingdom recommends the following as means of finding out if there are inter faith groups in the local area:

- Look up the relevant listings of known local groups and councils in *Inter Faith Organisations in the UK: A Directory, 2005*.<sup>21</sup>
- Contact the office of the Inter Faith Network for the United Kingdom, which keeps an extensive database of local contacts.
- Contact the local library, town information centre, local Racial Equality Council, and the Local Authority, including the Mayor's Office.
- Ask at local places of worship whether anyone knows of a local group or informal meeting of people of different faiths.<sup>22</sup>

In addition to the above points, institutions may also wish to consider contacting the ecumenical and inter faith officers of religious organisations. Although such officers are generally appointed on a national basis there are some areas where local officers operate.

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<sup>21</sup> Available from the Inter Faith Network of the UK ([www.interfaith.co.uk](http://www.interfaith.co.uk))

<sup>22</sup> The Local Interfaith Guide ([www.interfaith.co.uk/localguide.pdf](http://www.interfaith.co.uk/localguide.pdf))

### **St Martin's College – Multi Faith Centre**

The Multi Faith Centre is a dedicated open access space for prayer and contemplation with ablution facilities and signage for orientation to Mecca. There is also a separate social space with catering facilities. Further facilities are available to accommodate men and women who wish to pray separately.

All students receive information about the Centre at induction and open days. Staff receive information on application to the College and at induction.

A website run by the Chaplaincy service provides further information on the local faith communities. This information is provided in collaboration with Lancaster University Chaplaincy. All major faiths are included along with links to national websites such as the Islamic Society and Interfaith.

Plans are currently being considered to develop the Multi Faith Centre further with a new building to contain, in addition to the facilities available now, a resources library and more flexible space.

# Notes

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## **Managing beliefs in the institutional context**

While legitimate disagreement should be part of constructive discussions, institutions should ensure that approaches follow multi faith/inter faith principles in an appropriate manner.

The Inter Faith Network's Code on Building Good Relations with People of Different Faiths and Beliefs<sup>23</sup> provides excellent guidance for institutions in the area of religion or belief, as it contains principles for inter faith work that can be utilised in a practical way. The Network has advised the ECU that the code is equally applicable to relations between people of different religious beliefs and those of none.

In the UK today, people of many different faiths and beliefs live side by side. The opportunity lies before us to work together to build a society rooted in the values we treasure. But this society can only be built on a sure foundation of mutual respect, openness and trust. This means finding ways to live our lives of faith with integrity, and allowing others to do so too. Our different religious traditions offer us many resources for this and teach us the importance of good relationships characterised by honesty, compassion and generosity of spirit. The Interfaith Network offers the following code of conduct for encouraging and strengthening these relationships (see overleaf).

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<sup>23</sup> [www.interfaith.co.uk/code.htm](http://www.interfaith.co.uk/code.htm)

## Appendix C

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*As members of the human family, we should show each other respect and courtesy. 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 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*
- *Always seeking to avoid 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*
- *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.*

*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 multi faith society where this is permitted, the attempt should always be characterised by self-restraint and a concern for the other's freedom and dignity. This means:*

- *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 these*
- *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.*

*Living and working together is not always easy. Religion harnesses deep emotions which can sometimes take destructive forms. Where this happens, we must draw on our faith to bring about reconciliation and understanding. The truest fruits of religion are healing and positive. 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.*

The Code provides a useful framework for people of different religions and beliefs to interact and work together in the institutional environment. However, there may be instances where people are not able to resolve different viewpoints or beliefs. Nonetheless, it is still the case that people of different faiths and beliefs operate within the institutional context, and that interaction is not only a necessary, but also a beneficial means of promoting greater understanding. A divisive approach can severely hinder work in this area.

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Previous ECU guidance in this area<sup>24</sup> recommends that institutions adopt a standard whereby everyone has the right to their own belief system, but not force it on others. The right to manifest beliefs is qualified by the need to protect the rights and freedoms of others. A line should be drawn between, on the one hand, the promotion of a particular religion, and on the other, the aggressive attempts to impose it on other people. That line is a hard one to draw, but arguably it is crossed when an individual, or group of individuals, moves from enthusiastic commendation of their own beliefs to people who do not share them, but who are willing to listen and respond equally robustly with their own views, into a situation where religious views are being forced upon those who do not wish to hear them or who are in a vulnerable situation and feel that advantage is being taken of them.

The benefits of embracing a diverse staff and student base can be tempered by conflicts, particularly in the area of religion or belief. Different approaches to resolving such issues include that of Churches Together in England (CTE), which recommends that its members engage in inter faith dialogue based on mutual understanding and trust. The CTE also stresses the importance of:

- working for understanding between people of faith
- learning about the beliefs and practices of different religions
- being equipped to talk about their own faith<sup>25</sup>.

Proselytising by any religion or belief can, if taken to its extreme, constitute harassment under the EE(RB)R and can also breach Article 9 of the Human Rights Act 1988. The CTE urges members to evangelise sensitively in a multi faith world, whilst maintaining the integrity of the Christian faith. In essence, the approach advocated by the Inter Faith Network of the United Kingdom and the CTE constitutes good principles of practice that can be used across the range of religions and beliefs that may operate in the institutional context.

With the above point in mind, it is recommended that institutions consider their legal responsibilities in this area, and ensure that people of different religions and beliefs are able to learn or work at the institution without fear of discrimination, particularly harassment. The institution's standard of conduct in this area will need to be made clear, showing that it celebrates the diversity of its workforce and student body, but that others' rights not to be coerced should be respected. This is necessary, not only as a means of avoiding unlawful activity, but also for respecting differences between people of different faiths and none.



# Notes

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## **Institutions' policies on religion and belief: points to consider**

Section 2 identified areas that institutions should look at when creating a policy on religion and belief. Further detail on these areas is provided below.

**Recruitment, admissions and development** – Institutions should consider the ways in which people from different backgrounds have access to opportunities within the institution, and to review recruitment and admission practices to see if they may unintentionally exclude people from certain backgrounds. The medium of raising awareness is a particularly important aspect in this area. For example, are local opportunities advertised through specialist media and through religious and faith organisations? Are prospective students from diverse religious and belief backgrounds aware of the opportunities for study at the institution? It should not be assumed that jobs should not be advertised more widely through local religious and faith groups communications channels simply because 'it is not that type of job', perhaps because it is thought that people from a particular background would not be interested in applying. Instead, the opportunity for attracting a wider talent base and enhancing staff and student experience should be the main areas of focus. Similarly, the same principles should apply when looking at staff and student progression.

**Training interventions** – In order to show people how religion and belief affects the institutional setting, it is important that training interventions raise awareness of the legal provisions in this area, along with consideration of how they affect practices within the institution, particularly where there is scope for discrimination to occur. Training should cover different levels, from raising awareness of this area and showing how a proactive agenda can be pursued, to targeted training for people in highly relevant positions at the institution. Training should also be seen as a reflective intervention, which allows people to look at their own perceptions of different faiths and none, and how such perceptions can affect institutional activity. Recruitment and admission practices are prime examples of

## Appendix D

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relevant positions and it is therefore highly recommended that institutions train all members of staff involved with recruitment and admission.

**Academic timetabling** – It is important that HEIs consider the institution's timetable against the faith requirements of staff and students. This means that, as a long-term measure, such requirements will need to be incorporated as appropriate within the institutional timetable when the timetable is being devised. Students and staff also have a responsibility to inform the institution of any particular clashes that may occur, but with sufficient notice. For example, it would not be reasonable for a student to inform an institution that she will not be able to sit an exam the following week because of a religious festival, if the institution cannot arrange alternative measures without incurring a great deal of expense. The student should inform the institution of approximate date(s) of the festival as soon as they are known, so that appropriate measures can be taken. Once the timetable has been agreed and finalised, the dates should be publicised appropriately. Information on multi faith calendars can be found in Appendix A.

**Welfare** – Appropriate support measures for staff will need to be considered within the context of religion and belief. For example, it may be the case that a Muslim female member of staff would prefer to approach a female Welfare Officer, and so provision should be made. Accordingly, staff working in areas such as staff and student welfare and support services may need to receive training in order to ensure that they are aware of particular religious and faith factors affecting people from different backgrounds within the institution.

**Dress codes** – This is an emerging area within the institutional context, and care should be taken to ensure that discrimination does not occur through the restriction of certain clothing. It is recommended that institutions welcome 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 institutions to consult with staff who may be affected by a restriction to see if an appropriate compromise can be reached.

**Religious observance** – Members of staff may wish to observe their faith within the institutional setting. As a result, institutions should try to ensure that members of staff who, due to the requirements of their religion or belief system, need to pray at certain times of the day, can do so as far as is reasonably practicable. If this means that the member of staff in question is away from his or her desk during office hours, for example, discussions should take place on how the time out of the office can be made up. This should not cause disproportionate and negative impact on the office, as many prescribed prayers during work hours (e.g. in Islam) are very short. Once the discussions have taken place, the revised office practice should be communicated to all relevant staff. Institutions should ensure that any such arrangements are compatible with the Working Time Regulations 1998 (as amended).<sup>26</sup>

**Dietary requirements** – It is recommended that institutions ensure that appropriate provision is made to cater for particular dietary requirements within the institution. In order to facilitate this, institutions will need to consult with staff and stakeholder organisations to find out what particular dietary needs are. From this, institutions ought to try (as far as reasonably practicable) to cater for these requirements. It may not be possible to meet all dietary needs, and so it is advisable that vegetarian and vegan menus are available for those who may not have provided information during the consultation period.

**Bullying and harassment** – Members of staff and students will need to have the opportunity to provide information about breaches of the legal provisions and policies of the institution, and this should be covered in the institution's policy on religion and belief.

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<sup>26</sup> [http://www.dti.gov.uk/er/work\\_time\\_regs/wtr2.htm#section2](http://www.dti.gov.uk/er/work_time_regs/wtr2.htm#section2)

# Appendix D

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Institutions should also consider incorporating a separate ‘whistle-blowing’ policy for such instances, with accompanying confidentiality provisions. The procedures in this area need to be clear and easily accessible, and widely publicised through the institution as well as the policy on religion and belief itself.

**Complaints and grievances** – As with other equalities areas, institutions will need to identify clear complaints and grievance procedures that individuals can refer to and use. These procedures need to be clearly identified in the institution’s literature, particularly the policy on religion and belief, and linked to other areas such as welfare etc. As with instances of bullying and harassment, confidentiality provisions will need to be incorporated.

**Breaches of the policy** – As with institutions’ race equality policies, policies in the area of religion and belief should identify how breaches will be handled, outlining clear processes and contact points.

## **Good practice – areas to consider**

**Engaging with community events** – This is a good way of making links with the local community, and showing that the institution is one which is proud to celebrate the religious diversity within which it operates. The first steps in this area include finding out what local faith events are taking place, and how the institution can provide input. This type of interaction provides institutions with an opportunity to make constructive and mutually valuable links with local community organisations.

**Celebrating diversity** – Institutions should look at the proactive ways in which the diverse religions and beliefs at the institution can be celebrated, so as to promote greater understanding. Measures can include inclusive events to raise awareness of different religions and beliefs, identifying and rewarding achievements by individuals and groups in promoting good relations in this area and communicating key changes at the institution.



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