

School of Health Sciences

Statement on Religious Observance

The University of Liverpool is a secular organisation which welcomes staff and students from all faiths and none. The University is committed to providing a respectful environment for anyone who may seek to give their particular religion or belief external expression. It acknowledges that religion is both belief and practice. All University staff and students should respect the opinions and human rights of others thus creating a welcoming environment for all staff and students. We must ensure that discrimination on the grounds of religion is addressed and all are able to work and study within a safe and supportive institution. At the same time, students are still required to fulfil all course requirements. For information on Religion and Belief, see the University guidance on the subject at: www.liv.ac.uk/hr/diversity_equality/documents/Religion_and_belief_guidance_.doc.

The School of Health Sciences serves a diverse student population. While we support the individual student's right and wish to practise his/her faith, we have an over-riding duty to ensure that students complete the requirements of the programme and are practitioners fit for practice. Given the complexity of our curriculum, it is not possible to design a timetable which allows for all religious observance. As certain components of the curriculum are regarded as core and compulsory, permitting students to be absent from these components may disadvantage them when it comes to examination. Students should therefore note that:

1. In any academic year where religious observance coincides with a compulsory component of the curriculum, students affected by the relevant event are required to request permission to be absent by submitting a **request for authorised absence form** at least 14 days prior to the event to the Director of Studies. Students will be informed of the decision within seven days of the event. Requests submitted less than fourteen days prior to an event will not normally be approved.
2. In the case of religious observance that cannot be predicted fourteen days in advance then the student must submit the **request for authorised absence form** as soon as possible.
3. In cases where absence is approved, the Director of Studies shall be responsible for informing all members of academic or clinical staff who will be affected by the student's absence. Staff should be sympathetic and make available to the student notes/materials etc.

Students are responsible for ensuring that any course work missed due to religious observance is covered at a subsequent time. Missing course work because of religious observance will not be accepted as mitigating circumstances for failure in exams.

Examinations

Examinations organised by the Directorate

Efforts will be made by the School of Health Sciences to avoid a student being required to sit an examination on the day of religious observance. However due to the constraints of the timetable the School reserves the right to hold examinations on such days if no alternative time is convenient. Students should consult programme and clinical examination schedules at the start of each semester so that any possible conflicts can be identified before actual individual examination dates have been timetabled by the individual directorate and placement sites. Students must complete a **Request for Examination Arrangements to Accommodate Religious Observance application form**. This form

must be submitted to the Director of Studies no later than the **THIRD WEEK** of the semester in which an examination might take place. It may not be possible to accommodate any requests received after that date.

Examinations organised by Student Administration and Support (SAS)

Again students should consult programme examination schedules at the start of each semester so that any possible conflicts can be identified before actual individual examination dates have been timetabled by SAS. Students must complete a **Request for Examination Arrangements to Accommodate Religious Observance application form**. This form must be submitted to the Director of Studies no later than the **THIRD WEEK** of the semester in which an examination might take place. It may not be possible to accommodate any requests received after that date. Efforts will be made by the Director of Studies and/or Examinations Officer to liaise with SAS for an arrangement that avoids examinations being on that day. However due to constraints of the timetable and numbers of students involved in some examinations there may be no alternative but to hold examinations on such days.

Assignments

In the case of an assignment hand in date conflicting with the need for religious observance, it is anticipated that the student will hand in the assignment before this date.

Professional Practice Placements

Students on practice placements on days of religious observance should request permission to be absent from the Practice Placement Tutor by submitting a **request for authorised absence form** and the student will be responsible for arranging alternative times, by mutual agreement, with their Practice Educator. The student is required to inform the Practice Placement Tutor in writing at least 14 days prior to the day of what alternative arrangements have been made. In the case of religious observance that cannot be predicted fourteen days in advance then the student must submit a **request for authorised absence form** and inform their Practice Educator and Practice Placement Tutor as soon as possible.

Students who are absent because of religious observance, without prior approval by the Director of Studies or the Practice Placement Tutor as outlined above, will be deemed to be absent without approval and will have the absence recorded as unauthorised in their files. Unauthorised absence for more than three compulsory sessions may lead to a formal warning for attendance.

Extended absence for religious observance during critical events such as the death of a relative will be dealt with under the University's **mitigating circumstances procedure**. This can be accessed via the link: http://www.liv.ac.uk/tqsd/pol_strat_cop/

Dress

The University acknowledges that some people will wish to wear religious dress (including, for example, turbans, skullcaps, hijabs, Sikh 5Ks and clerical collars). The wearing of religious dress is permitted provided it is consistent with the University's pursuit of its legitimate aims. Where a student is required to wear overalls, protective clothing or uniforms, the University will make efforts to accommodate the wearing of religious dress safely. If, in exceptional circumstances, wearing of religious dress may compromise the health and safety of a student or others, it may be necessary that the person does not wear that dress. Such cases should be dealt with sensitively. There are some circumstances where the wearing of religious dress by students is discouraged by external bodies. Where this is the case, students are expected to adhere to the dress codes of the environment in which they are studying and will be expected to adhere to the Trust or placement

site code of dress. NHS Employers advise that “If a rule is likely to conflict with an employee's religion or belief then there must be clear evidence to demonstrate objective justification. This analysis may be required on a case by case basis” (NHS Confederation [Employers] – Dress and Discrimination. August 2007).

Students are expected to discuss any particular difficulties or concerns with their Practice Placement Tutor and such issues should be dealt with sensitively, with respect to an individual's rights to freedom, whilst protecting patient and staff safety and professional standards.

Duties

The University is a diverse and international community which engages in a wide range of activities and research projects. Should a situation arise where an individual is required, as part of their duties, to undertake activities that they object to on the grounds of their religion or belief, they should inform their Director of Studies of this as soon as possible. All practical efforts will be made to reorganise duties or studies where at all possible to accommodate such objections. The directorate Diversity and Equality tutors can provide advice for such situations in the first instance.

Contacts and procedures

If a student feels that they are being treated unfairly with regard to their religion and belief the Directorate Diversity and Equality tutors can provide advice.

Directorate Diversity and Equality Tutors	
Medical Imaging Radiotherapy	Zainab Hussain zay@liv.ac.uk Flora Al-Samarraie falsam@liverpool.ac.uk
Nursing	Vicky Garner vgarner@liv.ac.uk
Occupational Therapy	Alison Armfield (School Diversity & Equality Tutor) or Maria Tiffin mtiffin@liv.ac.uk
Orthoptics	Jignasa Mehta jigs@liv.ac.uk
Physiotherapy	Helen Lean hlean@liv.ac.uk

Students should also refer to the **University's Religion and Belief policy**

http://www.liv.ac.uk/hr/diversity_equality/documents/PDF_policies/RB_policy_statement.pdf

and the University's **Dignity at Work and Study policy**

http://www.liv.ac.uk/accommodation/downloads/Dignity_at_Work_and_Study_Policy_and_Procedure.pdf

Facilities

Staff should accommodate, where possible, student's needs to pray or observe their religious practice during their time at the University and placement.

http://www.liv.ac.uk/hr/diversity_equality/documents/PDF_policies/RB_policy_statement.pdf

Faith Express, located next to the Foundation Building, is the 'shop front' for chaplaincy at the University. Faith Express holds information about faith activities in Liverpool and a faith contact list, and seeks to help staff and students of any faith background.

Chaplaincies (Staff and Students)

The role of the Chaplains includes supporting the University in its pastoral care of students as well as staff. The support of the Chaplains is not limited to Christians but is available to all without distinction or obligation.

- Anglican Chaplain
Chaplain: Dr James Harding
Email: angchap@liv.ac.uk
Address: Chaplaincy Office, Mulberry Court, Mulberry Street, Liverpool L7 7EZ
- Catholic
Fr. Ian McParland
Tel: 0151 709 3858
Email: imcp@cathchap.org.uk
Address: Catholic Chaplaincy, Philip Neri House, 30 Catharine Street
Liverpool L8 7NL
- Methodist
Rev. John Lansley
Email: john.lansley@methodist.org.uk;
Address: Faith Express, University of Liverpool, Foundation Building, Brownlow Hill,
Liverpool, L69 7ZX
- Elim Pentecostal
Rev. Carol Canter
Email: c.canter@liv.ac.uk

Prayer Room

The University currently has a prayer room. This is based in the Reilly Building within the Guild and is a facility available to both staff and students.