

**UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH**

**POLICY FOR RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE IN TEACHING,  
LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT**

**1. Scope**

1.1 This policy applies to all University of Plymouth students. The University recognises that partner institutions may have their own local religious observance policies. If a partner institution wishes to use a local religious observance policy, this must be agreed formally with the University. In the absence of a local policy, the central University of Plymouth policy (this document) will apply.

1.2 For the purposes of this policy, a religion or belief means any religion, religious belief or absence thereof. Political beliefs are not included in this policy.

1.3 This policy covers only those aspects of religious observance related directly to students' teaching and learning, and to assessment.

1.4 This policy should be read in conjunction with the University's Equality and Diversity policy and its Religious Diversity policy, both available at our: [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion](#) web page

**2. Principles**

2.1 The University is a secular institution that has a commitment to diversity. It recognises it operates in a multi-cultural and religious environment and it responds to the increasing breadth of awareness needed to ensure potential discrimination and misunderstanding do not take place.

2.2 The University community is committed, where reasonable and practicable, to accommodating religious observance on each campus and will consider adjustments to working and learning practices wherever reasonably possible in order to accommodate a more diverse community.

2.3 The University will make every reasonable effort to avoid timetabling the main assessments at the end of Semester 1 and Semester 2 on major religious festivals. Students should be aware there may be occasions on which this is not always possible.

2.4 Notwithstanding the University's anticipatory duty under the Equality Act (2010), it is the student's responsibility to inform the School, Doctoral College or Partner Institution far enough in advance if religious observance affects his or her ability to participate fully in any assessment so reasonable adjustments may be made where possible. If religious observance affects a student's ability to participate fully in any learning activity, it is the student's responsibility to catch up on any material missed.

2.5 The University respects each student's right to wear lawful items arising from cultural and religious norms (including, for example, sari, turbans, hats, skullcaps, hijab, kippah, mangal sutra, crucifix, crosses and clerical collars). However, there may be occasions when a student is expected to remove such items. These occasions may include, but are not restricted to:

- a) Identification purposes, including entry to examinations. Arrangements will be made in these cases for authentication procedures to be conducted by staff of the same sex as the individual concerned.
- b) Occasions on which protective clothing needs to be worn, or on which health and safety is likely to be compromised by religious dress.
- c) Patient contact in the clinical environment.
- d) The specific requirements of a placement provider or employer.

2.6 This policy must not be interpreted by any group or individual as sanctioning a right to engage in activities or acts that have a negative impact on the rights of others.

2.7 Questions about the practical implementation of this policy, and any associated procedures, should be directed to the relevant Faculty Registrar, Doctoral College Manager or Partnerships Operations Manager in the first instance.

### **3. Monitoring & Record Keeping**

3.1 All Faculties, the Doctoral College and Partner Institutions will keep a record of all student requests for religious accommodations to be made. This information will include:

- the student's programme
- the student's religion or belief
- the nature of the accommodation requested
- if and how the accommodation was made, or the objective justification for not being able to do so.

3.2 Data collected under 3.1 above will be used to support the University's obligations the Public Sector Equality Duty, Equality Act 2010

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2014-15 v1.0	September 2014	Kate Ellis		
2015-16 v1.0	September 2015	Kate Ellis	2014-15 v1.0	
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