

# Multi-Faith Centre Use Policy

## The Facilities

In accordance with the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 and the University Equality and Diversity Policy the University of Northampton provides and maintains a range of facilities on Waterside Campus and has use of a room at the Development Hub for Prayer, as well as one at Scholars' Green

These facilities are under the day-to-day management of the University Chaplain and are maintained by First Degree Facilities on behalf of the University.

The Multi-Faith Centre at Waterside comprises two Prayer/Quiet Rooms, the larger of which is reserved for Muslim use, provided with mobile screens (allowing such segregation as is allowable by law), an open access kitchen, two toilets, two *wudu* washrooms, inner and outer lobbies and a reception/common area. In addition to those terms detailed below, by virtue of their location within a Hall of Residence, the facilities at Waterside fall within the common university regulations concerning the prohibition of smoking, use of naked flame, incense, fire and evacuation procedures etc.

While the Prayer/Quiet Rooms are *not* ritually clean areas, and users are advised of the significance e.g. that shoes *are* permitted to be worn within them, food and drink are *not* permitted in the larger of the rooms at Waterside (CB3.00.MF.01).

A modest amount of storage space for materials to enable the normal running of the Multi-Faith Centre & Multi-Faith Chaplaincy Team, and for the storage of faith-related artefacts and materials, is provided and managed by the Team (primarily at Waterside). Shoe racks are provided.

At the Development Hub the First Aid Room (041) is available for prayer when not in use for medical purposes, with toilets located in close proximity. The door access code is available from Reception. The un-numbered room at Scholars Green is located within Simon Senlis Hall and is accessible via door 7c. Scholars Green residents who do not reside in that Hall can obtain a key for entrance door 7c from Scholars Green Student Village Reception in exchange for their student ID (which will be returned to them when the key is handed back). Both these rooms are also subject to common access, usage, safety and evacuation procedures for their respective buildings.

## Eligible Users

The Multi-Faith Centre facilities are provided by the University of Northampton for the use of staff, students and others on legitimate university business, irrespective of faith and belief, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, mental/physical health/disability or age. They are not provided for the usage of the general public.

"Staff, students" is understood to mean current members of university staff & associated service providers (including, but not limited to, First Degree Services, contractors and Uno Bus staff), and currently enrolled students.

The category of "legitimate university business" is taken to include visitors to the university for the purposes of lecturing, teaching, staff/student support, interview or Open Day (either by a potential student, potential staff member or accompanying family/friend/carer). It also extends to former staff and students engaged in legitimate visits, e.g. for careers advice.

All those entering or leaving the Waterside Multi-Faith Centre pass through the reception/common area. Although the desk is rarely staffed, the outer lobby, reception/common area and kitchen are under surveillance by internal security cameras, and the doors controlled by the university standard SALTO system.

## **Hours of Opening**

Waterside Multi-Faith Centre is not a 24/7 facility, the repeated presence of overnight sleepers sadly requiring out of hours closure by the duty Night Security Team. There is no guarantee of staff presence within the Centre at any time, though contact details are displayed when the University Chaplain is on-site but absent from the Centre.

When team members are present the Centre is actively managed to ensure fairness of room use, regulation of noise levels and maintenance of a welcoming and responsive environment.

The Development Hub is open Mon-Fri 0800 – 2200 and on Saturday 1000 – 1600. Outside of those days and hours it is impossible to access the building without the aid of Security.

The door of the Scholars Green prayer room is open 24/7, subject to the access conditions detailed in the section above.

## **Waterside Prayer/Quiet Room Use**

### **Day time**

Users may occupy a Prayer/Quiet Room for ritual, devotion, meditation, quietness or similar use for a period not exceeding 30 minutes under normal circumstances. Members of the Multi-Faith Chaplaincy Team have priority usage, to undertake confidential counselling, daily prayer, acts of worship and devotion and one-to-one meetings as appropriate. Other members of university staff may use the Meeting/Quiet Room for confidential meetings by prior agreement.

Signage is displayed detailing expected levels of cleanliness etc. Users are expected to leave the room in a tidy condition with all symbols, accessories, books and literature restored to the correct locations.

Overnight sleeping is not permitted, although it remains an infrequent occurrence: students have also been known to work through much of the night in the library, enter for the Muslim sunrise prayer and sleep until woken by staff.

### **Friday (Jummah) Prayers**

Muslim Friday (Jummah) Prayers are facilitated by the University Islamic Society in collaboration with the Students' Union and the University Chaplain and Multi-Faith Chaplaincy Team, reflecting the importance of the observance of faith to staff and students. Jummah Prayers are explicitly open to both male & female worshippers.

The facilities of the Multi-Faith Centre are too small to accommodate such prayers on most occasions and arrangements are evolving for the use of other spaces such as the Town Hall or the Sports Dome.

In the absence of an Imam or Muslim Team member the prayers are led by senior members of the Islamic Society under the guidance of our former Imam, who remains in contact. Conventionally there is no sermon or teaching without the presence of an Imam. Out of Undergraduate semester timetables it is preferable that worshippers attend the local

mosques, and for those who do not or cannot it is traditional for the senior-most Muslim to lead the prayers of those who remain, but to deliver no sermon/teaching.

## **Waterside Campus Kitchen Use**

A fully equipped kitchen is available for use, with free hot drinks available whenever the Centre is open (subject to stock levels). Users are welcome to prepare meals, or reheat food, for their own use. A fridge is provided. Notices are clearly displayed indicating that the Multi-Faith Chaplaincy takes no responsibility for the safe storage, or edibility, of any food items left within the fridge or cupboards, reserving the right to dispose of any items at will.

The kitchen may not be booked, and is subject to a similar set of expectations of cleanliness and good use to those applying to the Centre as a whole.

## **Display of Posters, Flyers & Literature**

No posters may be displayed except those posted by Team members, or (for a temporary period) by prior Team consent.

Flyers may be displayed within communal areas, subject to prior Team consent. No such material is to be displayed within the Prayer/Quiet Rooms, except for those relating to officially sanctioned events (e.g. meetings led by Team members).

There is bookshelf space provided within the larger Prayer/Quiet Room at Waterside. This contains literature belonging to the Multi-Faith Chaplaincy or donated by individuals. Individual books are marked as to whether they may be borrowed, (by arrangement with the office) or are reference works and not to be removed. Bibles and Qur'ans are included within this collection.

These materials are subject to Team review, and we reserve the right to remove any unauthorised or inappropriate material.

## **Conflict Resolution and Complaints Handling**

In case of conflicting interests over room use a member of the Multi-Faith Chaplaincy Team will adjudicate. An individual faith community might receive strenuous reminders and/or instruction, but good will and community spirit are our primary levers.

The responsibility for ensuring suitable training for Multi-Faith Chaplaincy Team members rests with the University Chaplain, in association with the Head of Student Centre and sponsoring faith bodies.

## **External Speakers.**

Student Faith Society events, where such societies are Student Union societies (such as ISoc and Christian Union), are covered by the SU Policy on external speakers and as such face vetting procedures informed by PREVENT. Any other request for external speaker approval must be submitted in accordance with the University External Speaker policy.

It is recognised that Student-led faith-based groups that are not members of the Students' Union may exist, as may informal staff groups. However, under current policies such groups **may** book the smaller Prayer/Meeting room within the Multi-Faith Centre. Any group wishing to invite an external speaker would need to apply for approval using the University External Speaker and Events policy.

Rev Dr Stuart Mousir-Harrison  
University Chaplain, April 2023

**Multi-Faith Centre, Booking Conditions** *(to be retained by signatory)*

**Bookings are only permitted for University students and staff for the purpose of faith-based meetings (and associated practices) that are not open to the general public. (No under 18s are permitted unless under supervision of a student/staff parent/guardian).**

**No External Speakers are permitted without express written permission of the University management.**

1. Only the small Prayer/Meeting Room (Quiet Room) room may be booked.
2. Bookings are based upon half hour time slots and no more than two hours of concurrent slots may be booked without the express written permission of the Chaplains.
3. The room is intended for prayer, devotion, practice or faith instruction and should be treated as such, with due reverence being shown to the existing property and furnishings contained therein.
4. As the adjacent room may be being used by others for prayer excessive noise should be avoided. Whilst quiet musical accompaniment may be acceptable the use of the rooms for instrumental rehearsal is forbidden.
5. Any religious or faith symbols, icons or artefacts required by the group or person booking the room must be removed/stored immediately once the booking finishes. Large or difficult to store items (such as prayer mats) must either be removed or tidily stored as directed by the Multi-Faith Centre Team.
6. Food and drink may be consumed in the room, but all cups, glasses, cutlery and plates must be cleared away at the end of the booking, as should food waste and refuse. Any utensils from the Centre kitchen should be washed-up and tidied away.
7. If refreshments are to be served as part of the booking the kitchen area will be the responsibility of the group making the booking (in the absence of any Chaplains). It should always be checked for cleanliness and tidiness before leaving. Breakage, loss or theft of Centre items should be reported in writing (or via email) as soon as possible and in any event within twenty-four hours.
8. Failure to use a room for an agreed booking for two consecutive weeks without prior notification will result in the cancellation of the booking and may lead to future reservations being refused. If a room is booked and subsequently not required please contact us as soon as possible.

**These conditions are intended to provide a basic framework of 'good neighbourliness' for those who wish to use the premises. They cannot be exhaustive and we ask you always to remember the potential effect you may have upon others using the premises.**

**Any breach of the conditions or justifiable complaint from other users may result in your permission to make future bookings being withdrawn.**

*I confirm that I have read and agreed the attached conditions*

Full Name.....