



## **Kingsley Religion and Belief Equality Policy**

This policy provides guidance on how your needs with respect to religion and belief, are to be met by Kingsley and the staff that work with you.

The policy does not intend to be comprehensive; rather it addresses some important issues that may arise in this context. Kingsley recognises that the spiritual and moral systems that religions and beliefs offer can often be of fundamental importance to the wellbeing of students.

Kingsley also recognises that religious rituals, such as dress, diet and prayer, can be an integral part of religious life. It is important that, where reasonably practicable, the needs of students from all religious backgrounds, and also of students with no religious affiliation, are met. It is also important to be clear when the needs of religious students may impinge upon the needs and freedoms of others, and therefore cannot be accommodated.

### **Kingsley History and Ethos**

Kingsley is a secular higher education institution that prides itself on its long-standing commitment to equalities and diversity. Kingsley's commitment to religious equality in particular is integral to its identity and heritage.

Kingsley does not have any religious affiliation or endorse any particular denomination or faith. The secular values that Kingsley upholds are as relevant today as they were at its inception. Kingsley is committed to providing an inclusive learning and working environment where students and staff of all religions, and none, can thrive. Kingsley is a global HE Provider. It has a rich mix of students from a wide variety of cultural and religious backgrounds. It is this diversity and complexity that contributes to Kingsley being a world-class institution.

### **Policy Framework**

This policy covers any religion, religious belief or similar philosophical belief, but does not ordinarily cover political belief.

There is no exhaustive definition of these beliefs, but in case law it has been determined that in order to be protected by law a belief must be “cogent, serious and worthy of respect in a democratic society”

The legal instruments that relate to religion and belief equality for students are:

the Equality Act 2010

the Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006

the Human Rights Act 1998

This policy follows and reinforces the religious equality provisions in KINGSLEY’s Equal Opportunities Policy, and Harassment and Bullying policies.

### **Academic Freedom and Freedom of Thought, Conscience and Religion**

Kingsley is an academic institution that places high value on open and reasoned debate. Kingsley recognises the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. These rights are absolute but manifestations of these beliefs are not. The right to manifest a belief may be qualified by the need to show respect for the differing worldviews, lifestyles and identities of others. The Kingsley has an over-arching responsibility to promote pluralism and tolerance and will seek to intervene in instances where manifestations of a belief constitute harassment or create conflict that goes beyond open and reasoned debate.

Religious belief will not be used to justify discriminatory behaviour. Instances of this nature will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Code and Procedure in Respect of Students. Guest speakers can be invited to speak on campus within the framework set out in the Kingsley’s Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech and where relevant should be made aware of the provisions of this policy.

### **Religious Dress**

Kingsley welcomes the diversity of different attire worn by its students. In particular situations some students will not be able to wear certain religious dress due to health and safety considerations and/or to the need for communication between individuals. This may especially apply, for example, in medical and laboratory-based disciplines. In order to comply with health and safety regulations, specific items of clothing such as overalls, protective clothing etc may also need to be worn. The need to comply with health and safety will be given priority over the need for religious expression. Every effort will be made to reach a mutually acceptable solution. Individual cases can be referred to the CEO.

When students are working directly with the wider public, Kingsley considers that it is not appropriate in most situations to wear clothing that obscures the face, as this can impede communication. Student ID cards must have photographs which are

compliant with the UK passport standards. Security and examination requirements mean that students may have to be authenticated against their ID cards. If headwear obstructs the face, the temporary removal of such items may be necessary. This will be done in an appropriate location by a staff member of the same sex.

## **Recruitment and Selection**

Students' religious affiliation is not monitored at the admissions stage or at any other stage of the student life cycle. As Kingsley does not currently monitor religious affiliation, we have no data to indicate whether there are any differences in the likelihood in securing a place at Kingsley or in educational outcomes.

Religious discrimination in the recruitment and selection of students will not be tolerated and any allegations of this nature will be fully investigated.

## **Teaching, Learning and Assessment**

### **Enrolment**

Kingsley will endeavour to organise enrolment days and times that do not clash with major religious festivals. Where a clash is unavoidable, alternative days for enrolment will be provided if possible.

### **Timetabling**

Kingsley has a common timetable which has been designed to ensure that teaching and learning requirements are delivered efficiently and effectively within the available time and space. For these reasons, the timetable cannot accommodate the diversity of religious observance requirements on campus. The normal teaching day runs from 9 am to 6 pm from Monday to Friday. Kingsley understands that there may be certain occasions when a student may be absent due to religious observance. It is expected that this will not be a common occurrence, however, and students should be aware that requests to miss a compulsory class, practical or tutorial can be refused by staff.

### **Assessment deadlines**

Assessment deadlines are given in advance to students. Students who are observing religious festivals around the time of the deadline will need to plan their work so that it is completed in good time.

### **Examination schedules**

As far as is practicable, examinations will be scheduled to avoid religious festivals where work is prohibited. Examination dates will be given in advance. If an examination clashes with a religious festival that a student observes, every reasonable effort will be made to find alternative arrangements. The onus is on the student to speak with their personal or programme tutor about this issue at the earliest opportunity.

### **Extenuating circumstances**

Kingsley will not accept religious observance, for example fasting, as a valid extenuating circumstance.

### **Extended Leave for Religious Festivals**

Kingsley will not normally allow students to take extended leave for religious events. However, students can make a formal request to their tutor within a reasonable timeframe providing justification for their request. Consideration will be on a case-by-case basis

### **Work Placements**

When students are on work placement, they are expected to adhere to the policies and practices of their host organisation. The onus is on the student to research these practices and facilities in advance before agreeing to a work placement programme.

### **Food and drink**

Events organised by Kingsley will have vegetarian options when food is provided. Some Kingsley events serve alcohol but there will always be non-alcoholic drinks provided.

### **Harassment**

Harassment and discrimination of students on the grounds of religion, belief or non-belief will not be tolerated and will be dealt with under Kingsley policy as a disciplinary matter. Harassment is defined in law as “unwanted conduct ...which has the purpose or effect of either violating the claimant's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them”.

Harassment on the grounds of religion or belief can occur for a variety of reasons, for example:

on the grounds of a person's belief or non-belief

on the grounds of the belief or non-belief of someone with whom they associate

to join or leave a particular faith

to express or not express their faith

because they have changed or renounced their religious/belief allegiance

### **Implementation**

This policy applies to all Kingsley students and responsibility for its implementation is held with staff, contractors, security staff, service providers and any other individual associated with the functions of Kingsley.

The SMT have a responsibility to raise the profile of the policy and to ensure that all their staff or students are aware its contents and requirements. Guidance is available from Kingsley's Equal Opportunities Policy that takes responsibility for ensuring that issues relating to equality, broadly construed, are appropriately represented in Kingsley's decision-making processes.

### **Complaints**

Any complaints of discrimination, based on the provisions outlined in this policy, should be made in the first instance to the CEO, Dr Bakht.

### **Communication**

The policy will be notified and made accessible to all students and relevant staff. It will be available on the Kingsley website.

### **Monitoring, evaluation and review**

The policy will be reviewed at least every three years by the Provost

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