

# Code of Practice on Religious Activities and Observance on Campus

## 1. Introduction

1.1 The University of East Anglia (UEA) is a secular institution and has no religious affiliation. UEA fully embraces principles of diversity, acknowledges the need for persons of faith to practise their religious beliefs, and seeks to encourage mutual tolerance of religious practice and belief.

1.2 UEA also greatly values and encourages academic freedom, including individuals' lawful rights to discuss and debate matters of politics, religion and ethics. It is therefore very important that all students, staff and guests understand these principles of freedom and mutual tolerance as vital elements in the University's academic and social life.

## 2. Conduct and Activities

2.1 The University will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that its activities cultivate an atmosphere of mutual respect, tolerance and understanding between different religious beliefs. The University is committed to the prevention of all forms of discrimination, including religious, ethnic and racial discrimination, and has a duty to protect groups and individuals from discrimination on the grounds of protected characteristics which include religious belief.

2.2 The University recognises freedom of religious belief and practice within the law, and sees such freedom as an enrichment of University life. At the same time, the concept of academic freedom underpins the University's research and teaching. The University encourages free speech and discussion, and recognises that this can include the critical exploration of questions of religious belief, non-belief and scientific and other forms of enquiry.

2.3 The University asserts its right to protect the wellbeing of staff and students and to meet its statutory obligations, and to this end will seek to protect individuals and groups from the following:

- aggressive, manipulative, covert or insistent proselytism; or
- proselytism aimed specifically at identified groups; or
- exposure to extremist views (views in opposition to fundamental values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths

and

- beliefs) which may risk drawing individuals into terrorism;
- derogatory, aggressive and/or deliberately provocative comments or slogans (in leaflets, posters, t-shirts, images, graffiti, placards etc.), including any designed to threaten particular groups with the protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act 2010.

2.4 Religious groups must cooperate fully with the University in meeting the objectives set out in

this Code, in particular in their use of the University's facilities. Religious groups must be open with the University authorities and be prepared for activities to be visible to them. The University may deny the use of facilities to religious groups which are not prepared to conduct their activities in this way or pose the risks set out in paragraph 2.3.

2.5 Where religious groups distribute information about their faiths or faith activities, this information should be open, honest and clear about its aims.

### **3. Facilities**

3.1 Subject to resources and in line with its duties under the Equality Act 2010, the University is committed to making reasonable provision (in terms of both space and time) for religious observance, prayer and spiritual/pastoral care on campus. This is also recognised as supporting the well-being of our students and staff.

3.2 The organisation and management of facilities for religious observance, prayer and spiritual/pastoral care must be carried out in such a way as to ensure that facilities are safe, secure and properly managed to accommodate a reasonable range of users fairly. The leadership of religious observance and other activities must be conducted in a way that is measured, responsible and consistent with this Code.

3.3 It is the University's preference that, in the first instance, faith groups make use of the Multi-Faith Centre for meetings and events. In instances when the Multi-Faith Centre is not suitable, because of lack of availability or inadequate capacity, the University will seek to make other rooms available for student faith groups where practicable.

### **4. Summary**

4.1 This statement is the University's code of practice for students and staff on religious activities and practices on campus.

4.2 Where disciplinary actions, complaints or other disputes arise in the University, reference may be made to this document as a code of practice. However, these guidelines comprise a policy, not a set of regulations. The University's regulations take precedence in all cases.

4.3 This Code is designed to foster and protect social tolerance and respectful relations between different religious or secular groups in the University and should be read in this spirit.

3 November 2015