

## **Position Statement on Prayer and Religious Observance**

This position statement has been prepared by Student Support and Wellbeing as the University service which has responsibility for student Equality and Diversity as well as Chaplaincy. It relates to our current faith provision on campus. The University, whilst a secular organisation, recognises that for many of our staff and students, faith is an integral part of their University experience and we have in place a range of facilities and policies to ensure that work and study can be effectively balanced with the requirements of religious observance. The University acknowledges that faith traditions have different requirements for prayer and observance and that every individual may interpret their faith differently. We are committed to supporting staff and students meet these requirements. It is important to note that for a variety of reasons the University has drawn a distinction between individual and group prayer.

### **Group prayer**

The University has a duty of care to ensure the safety and security of all its staff and students. As part of this it is vital that we understand the requirements of all faith traditions for collective worship, including days and times, sizes of gathering and any equipment and facilities which are needed. This ensures that we can provide adequate facilities which are properly managed and also understand the ongoing needs of our students. As such all acts of group prayer on campus which may disturb other building users or encroach upon our health and safety obligations must take place in the University's provided faith facilities or the Students Union. Our current faith facilities are located at:

- The Multi-Faith Chaplaincy on the fourth floor of Wynne Jones Building
- The Quiet Room at Coach Lane Campus (Room A109)
- The Prayer Room at London Campus
- The Muslim Prayer Facility located at the rear of Claude Gibb Hall and
- Bede House Catholic Chaplaincy, Windsor Terrace, which is provided by the diocese for the shared use of Northumbria and Newcastle University students

The University acknowledges the limitations of our current provision and actively works to support students of faith who require additional facilities. For example we actively support our Islamic Society to ensure an appropriate venue is provided every week for Jumu'ah (Friday Prayers). Please contact Student Support and Wellbeing if your requirements for group observance cannot be met by our existing facilities.

## **Individual Prayer**

The University understands that individuals may wish to pray during the working or study day. An individual may pray where they are on the University campuses providing their activities do not disturb other building users or contravene any of the University's legal requirements or health and safety policies. Our faith facilities are of course available for private reflection, prayer or other observance during their opening hours and staff and students are encouraged to make use of these facilities. When 2 or more individuals wish to pray together, the requirements for group prayer as outlined above apply.

## **Further information**

For further information on this policy statement please see our webpages

[www.northumbria.ac.uk/ssw](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/ssw) or contact Simon Lee, Student Support Manager (0191 243 7226) / [simon.a.j.lee@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:simon.a.j.lee@northumbria.ac.uk)