



Student Council Motion: **Supporting Muslim students (and those of other faiths) to ensure that campuses are inclusive and accessible, in relation to their religious needs.**

Proposer: **Fran Storey**

Seconded:

Date: **26<sup>th</sup> April 2016**

**Student Council Notes:**

1. Students from religious minority groups attend the University of Worcester, and this number will rise as the student intake increases.

Religious Identity	2014/15	%	2015/16	%
No religion	4697	44.65%	5027	46.73%
Christian	4691	44.60%	4547	42.27%
Information refused	503	4.78%	496	4.61%
Muslim	218	2.07%	242	2.25%
Any other religion/belief	119	1.13%	120	1.12%
Spiritual	106	1.01%	132	1.23%
Sikh	85	0.81%	92	0.86%
Hindu	45	0.43%	41	0.38%
Buddhist	39	0.37%	47	0.44%
Jewish	16	0.15%	14	0.13%
Grand Total	10519		10758	

*\*Copy of Religious breakdown 15/16, University of Worcester (provided by Fiona Haworth)*

2. The data collection sheet is voluntarily and therefore does not represent exact numbers of students, Fiona Haworth has stated that she is aware of approximately 280 Muslim students, across campuses.
3. All campuses should be inclusive and accessible to all students regardless of gender, race or religion.

**Student Council Believes:**

1. The needs of students in relation to their religious beliefs should be accommodated within their student experience, including housing, prayer spaces, dietary requirements and education/placement.
2. The prayer spaces already on campuses are inadequate for the needs of students: 12 at St. John's campus, 12 at City Campus, and as yet none at any other location.
3. Muslim students have to perform washing rituals before prayers and no adequate area is dedicated to this.
4. More needs to be done by the university and SU to tackle religious diversity to enable inclusivity and accessibility.

**Student Council Resolves:**

1. **Accommodation:** the SU to support students with their accommodation needs on campuses, and liaison with accommodation and Fiona Haworth. Some examples where support may be needed include:
  - ensuring that students are not placed in mixed accommodation;
  - the necessity for separate storage areas and fridges so that cross contamination of food does not occur;
  - the possible introduction of alcohol free zone halls;
  - the possibility that those who share the same religion could be placed together in accommodation;
  - religious celebrations where fasting occurs, eg Ramadan, students do not eat or drink between sunrise and sunset. This means that they will be cooking quite late and sharing a meal with fellow Muslims which could prove problematic to other residents.
2. **Access to prayer space:** the SU to assist and support the students in opening a dialogue with the University regarding adequate prayer space across all campuses that have adequate washing facilities in close proximity. The washing facility areas will need low level basins (to enable washing of feet), running water (ie not sensorised taps that turn off after a few minutes), and access to towels.
3. **Dietary requirements:** the SU to support students in meeting with Aramark regarding the issue of suitable food being available in all of the eateries, including adequate dietary information labels. This will not just benefit current students, but will be accessible and inclusive to visitors and prospective students attending open days. Dietary requirements may include: vegetarian, vegan, dairy free, halal, kosher, etc.
4. **Education:** the SU to support and be available for advice to students and lecturers where religious observance may require dispensation for non-attendance at a lecture, eg Eid al Adha. To support students on placement who maybe encountering abuse because of their religion.

Signed by Proposer

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