

# **UNIVERSITY OF READING CHAPLAINS: Guidelines to appointments, role, oversight, and expenses**

**The University of Reading Chaplaincy consists of chaplains drawn from a diverse range of churches. Each chaplain is ultimately responsible to their own sponsoring body. The following notes are intended as guidelines to be used wisely and flexibly. (Note the appointment of the Muslim chaplain, as an employee of the University is handled separately, currently by the Dean for Diversity).**

## **1a Appointment process for new chaplains from a denomination not previously represented in the Chaplaincy Team**

Initial enquiries regarding a new appointment of chaplain should normally be directed to the Coordinating Chaplain. If appropriate, the Coordinating Chaplain may then initiate an appointment process in consultation with the sponsoring faith community, the wider Chaplaincy Team, the Chaplaincy Board and the candidates themselves.

In the course of the appointment process candidates will typically be requested to provide an application letter, CV and details of referees, and to attend an interview with at least two existing chaplains and a representative of the Board. Throughout, evidence is sought in support of the characteristics listed in the Person Specification and with reference to the Role Description (as below).

If appropriate, the appointment process may include a trial period in which a candidate spends an agreed length of time as a guest exploring the role and their suitability.

Ultimately, the Coordinating Chaplain shall make a recommendation to the Chaplaincy Board which shall decide whether or not to appoint a candidate as a chaplain.

Once an appointment has been agreed, the Coordinating Chaplain shall arrange for the new chaplain to be granted visiting staff status and to be inducted into their role. As part of this process, the "Code of Conduct for University of Reading recognised Chaplains and Faith Advisors" shall be signed and a copy kept in the Chaplaincy Office.

## **1b Appointment process regarding the succession of chaplains whose churches are already represented in the Chaplaincy Team**

Greater flexibility may be permitted in the process of replacing a chaplain from a church with an existing relationship with the Chaplaincy. In the first instance the nominating church should approach the Coordinating Chaplain with details of the proposed candidate. Discussion with the individual will explore the characteristics listed in the Person

Specification and Role Description. Once both parties are satisfied, the Chaplaincy Coordinator will present the candidate for acceptance at the Chaplaincy Board.

## 2 Chaplain Role Description

The University of Reading Chaplaincy seeks to serve students and staff of all faiths and none.

Its **vision** is: “A University open to the life of God”.

This translates into a **mission statement**: “To provide opportunities for individuals to experience the presence of God through: (1) good quality pastoral care, (2) open hospitality, (3) thought-provoking teaching and learning opportunities, (4) times of prayer, civic rituals, spiritual direction and retreats.”

Chaplains are appointed to help fulfil the Chaplaincy’s vision and mission by *contributing* to:

### 1. **Good quality pastoral care of individuals and groups**

- providing good quality confidential pastoral and spiritual support to individuals
- collaborating with and making appropriate and timely referrals to other support services on campus and beyond
- facilitating ceremonies that are both accessible and of a standard of quality to mark significant life events (e.g. bereavement)

### 2. **Hospitable support for the institution**

- supporting the provision of inclusive and welcoming spaces for individuals and groups within the University (including helping to cover the staffing of the Chaplaincy Centre for a period of time)
- providing specialist religious and/or cultural representation, interpretation and advice to individuals and the University
- developing good relationships across the University
- engaging with developments in Higher Education and wider society (e.g. in matters of social justice)
- helping faith communities both on and off campus to understand the University and the needs of its members

### 3. **Opportunities for learning about and reflecting on faith**

- hosting or supporting learning events that explore faith and its connection with wider learning and lived experience (e.g. lectures, talks, visits)
- responding to invitations to contribute to teaching or research

### 4. **Opportunities to practice faith and spirituality**

- organising or supporting events focused on the practice of faith and spirituality (e.g. times of prayer)
- providing support and meeting space for faith societies and groups in the Chaplaincy Centre and elsewhere on campus and beyond
- signposting faith organisations and activities available locally

Note: not every chaplain is expected to be equally active in all of these areas and allowance is to be made for personal giftings and limits of time. A healthy team will together be able to cover all areas.

### 3 Chaplain Person Specification

Individual chaplains may possess a range of skills; in addition, nominating bodies may have specific understandings of the ministry of chaplaincy and the intentions they have in nominating a chaplain. To assist in the process of appointment, the Board commends the following characteristics that would *normally* be expected in a chaplain:

1. The authority and ability to represent a particular religious tradition, offering relevant activities, information and guidance. (This would normally consist of having undertaken formal theological training and evidence of prior ministerial experience).
2. The ability to engage effectively with students and staff of all faiths and none, offering pastoral and spiritual support within and beyond the Chaplaincy Centre.
3. The ability to work as part of a diverse team, respecting differences and being willing to work collaboratively to shape and fulfil a shared vision of Chaplaincy.
4. The availability to reliably and realistically fulfil Chaplaincy commitments, including a set number of hours per week.
5. The commitment to undertake on-going training to sustain and develop professional skills (e.g. in pastoral care).

In addition, it is essential that each chaplain present evidence of an up-to-date DBS certificate (renewed every three years), evidence of up-to-date Safeguarding training and, where necessary, any other Health and Safety certificates (e.g. food hygiene). Copies of these documents will be kept in the Chaplaincy office.

### 4 Chaplain Status, Oversight and Expenses

Chaplains are accorded visiting staff status, which allows chaplains the right to book rooms on campus, have a University email address, join the library, and be invited to sit *ex officio* on certain University committees.

While working in their capacity as a chaplain (whether on campus or virtually), chaplains are subject to the University's policies and regulations as laid out in the "Code of Conduct for University of Reading recognised Chaplains and Faith Advisors".

Each chaplain is ultimately responsible to their nominating body. Operational oversight at the University level is provided by the termly-meetings of the Chaplaincy Board. This body consists of representatives from each nominating body.

Chaplains are required to present to the Board, via the Chaplaincy Coordinator or individually, a termly report of their activities.

In the event of a complaint or other matter concerning the good conduct of a chaplain, the Chaplaincy Board may choose to suspend or withdraw the title of chaplain pending the resolution of an issue by the nominating body.

The personal expenses of chaplains are expected to be provided for by their nominating body. Nominating bodies may choose to contribute to the central Chaplaincy Centre funds ("the University of Reading Chaplaincy Centre Trust" registered charity 1071305) in which case expenses proportionate to the nominating body's donation may be claimed directly from the Trust.

*This document was approved by the Chaplaincy Board on 14 March 2023 and will be reviewed annually.*