

## **LSE policy for engagement with external religious organisations**

### **1. Particular and universal faith provision**

LSE recognises religion and belief as a protected characteristic within the Equality Act. At LSE we welcome the opportunity for members of the LSE community to explore and celebrate their faith and spiritual journeys and to feel safe and supported in doing this. To achieve this aim, we are committed to ensuring appropriate provision and signposting for staff, students and wider community of alumni and friends.

LSE Faith Centre is an interfaith initiative within the School that provides programmes and services for students and staff of all faiths and none with equal opportunity. By contrast, this policy relates to partnerships with external religious organisations in order to meet particular needs of the diverse communities that make up LSE. This may be in terms of religious provision or pastoral support relating to a faith identity. This provision is not, therefore, expected to be universal but meets the needs of a specific group within the staff and student body.

### **2. The criteria for forming partnerships with external religious organisations**

LSE is frequently approached by external religious organisations who wish to form partnerships for reasons of their own promotion or status. But our single most important justification for forming such a partnership is the identification of clear and long-term need *within* the School. This should be demonstrated over a number of years as groups of students (or staff) may voice a need that disappears when they move on. Demonstration of sustained need is more important than size of community.

We therefore expect that:

- a) A religious or specific pastoral need should be identified that is not met by existing LSE provision.
- b) This need should be demonstrated over a number of years.
- c) It should be demonstrated that student experience and/or staff and student wellbeing will be enhanced by the forming of the partnership.

### **3. Requirements of the external religious organisation**

Religious organisations are complex and vary greatly. Faith communities have different systems of representation and different approaches to social issues and pastoral care. We therefore have some specific requirements of the kinds of religious organisations with which LSE will form partnerships.

- a) The organisation should be a registered charity, demonstrating good governance and regulated by the UK Charities Commission. The charity should have appropriate

safeguarding, health and safety, whistleblowing, safer recruitment and a complaints policy.

- b) If the organisation is providing chaplaincy services, they should demonstrate good line management of personnel and career development opportunities.
- c) The organisation will be expected to subscribe to the LSE Ethics Code, particularly noting its requirement that all people are treated with dignity and respect and that “no person will be treated less favourably because of her/his role at the School, age, disability, gender (including gender reassignment identity), ethnicity and race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity and social and economic background.” It should be clear that this does not require religious organisations to change their teaching on any of these matters, but it sets the clear tone with which they can be discussed, and affirms the School’s commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion and all current equality legislation.
- d) While addressing the needs of a particular religious group, the organisation should demonstrate the greatest inclusivity possible within that faith group, and should evidence good relationships across faiths. We expect external religious partners to fully support and promote the interfaith work of LSE Faith Centre and in no way undermine it.

#### **4. Chaplaincy**

If the external religious organisation is providing chaplaincy services, the LSE’s relationship is with the organisation itself and will not line manage or give any employee status to the chaplain. They will be given an associate staff card but should use an email address provided by the partner organisation. Room booking rights are not given.

#### **5. Financing of partnerships with external religious organisations**

LSE will only fund universal and not particular faith provision (as described above). If the provision is funded by a donor, this should adhere to the School’s Policy for Philanthropy and Alumni Engagement and the donor should not influence such provision or have any involvement in appointment of chaplains.

The Faith Centre Director should consult the Centre’s Advisory Board before making a recommendation for partnership under this policy for consideration by the Ethics Management Board of SMC, who will periodically review this policy.