



QUALITY ASSURANCE DOCUMENT QA 71 – RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE POLICY

Introduction

Arden University is dedicated to promoting Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) for all students and staff, irrespective of their spiritual, philosophical, political and religious beliefs (including those of no faith).

The university supports and encourages individuals to pursue their spiritual or religious practice. The institution does not have any religious associations or endorse any denomination or faith. However, Arden University aims to provide a safe, supporting environment of acceptance and respect for individuals to practice their beliefs.

This policy seeks to guide staff, students and stakeholders regarding particular aspects of religious observance, including religious observance on campus, spiritual expression through dress, attendance of classes, and preparation for examination and assessments.

1. Religious observance on campus

- 1.1 Arden University is committed to supporting students to practice their faith on campus and whilst studying remotely. Arden University will support students to the best of its ability through the provision of contemplation rooms, washrooms on site for ablution, and breaks during teaching.
- 1.2 Students attending a campus should have their ID badge on their person at all times. Ideally this will be worn on a lanyard, but for students who are not comfortable having a picture of their face or identity on display, this may be concealed in a wallet, bag or pocket.
- 1.3 Security and campus managers may ask to view students' ID. Should students wish to have an ID check from someone of the same gender and in a private space, they should disclose this to the staff member attempting to carry out the safety check.

Arden University will aim to find an appropriate member of staff and place to carry out an ID check where possible. However, in some instances, staff availability may be limited.

2. Identity, belief and dress

- 2.1 Students and staff are encouraged to wear their religious and cultural dress and jewellery should they wish to do so. This includes, but is not limited to the wearing of crosses, karas (bangles), kipas (skull caps), hijabs (head scarves), niqab (face veil) and turbans on campus or on display in online sessions.
- 2.2 Arden University supports individuals in wearing appropriate clothing that expresses their gender identity. This includes clothing that expresses gender or religious identity which may be different to those the individual was assigned at birth.



2.3 Articles such as tattoos, henna painting and piercings are not prohibited by Arden University.

2.4 Arden University does not permit the display of offensive material or discriminatory images and text on clothing, tattoos, badges, and screensavers. Breach of this may lead to disciplinary action.

3. Attendance

3.1 As part of Arden University's commitment to provide high quality student experience is the encouragement of attendance and engagement with all teaching and learning activities. Arden University recognises there is a correlation between students who engage with all their learning and teaching experiences and academic success.

3.2 There may be times that students require a period of time away from their studies or a break from learning in order to complete a religious observance (for example, a religious pilgrimage, mission work, or another similar religious event.) If a student wishes to do this, they should follow the [Break in Learning Policy](#) and apply for a Break in Learning. An application must have a valid reason with supporting evidence, such as flights, travel visa, itinerary, etc.

Students should be aware that a Break in Learning will not normally be permitted in the first 6 months of study and students may apply for leave up to a maximum of 12 months. They will normally be permitted one break in learning period during their programme of study.

3.3 If a student has a mandatory religious requirement or religious holiday that may affect their attendance and engagement of their normal teaching and learning activities, then they must contact the Attendance Team (attendance@arden.ac.uk) as soon as possible to notify them of their absence (Apprenticeship students should email apprenticesupport@arden.ac.uk). It is the student's responsibility to check their academic calendar and timetabling to identify as soon as possible any dates that may conflict with their religious observance.

Arden University will give consideration to students whose mandatory religious observance (e.g., Ramadan) is likely to take place over a period of time and cause students to miss scheduled teaching and learning activities. The University will make every attempt to make reasonable adjustments; for example, students may be able to request a change in their timetables as per the [Attendance and Engagement policy](#). (e.g. to avoid Friday classes or afternoon classes during Ramadan.) Students should contact the Attendance Team for guidance.

3.4 If there are any regular mandatory religious requirements (such as attending Friday Jumah prayer) that may affect students' attendance and engagement with normal teaching and learning activities, referenced in the [Attendance and Engagement policy](#), students must contact the Attendance Team as early as possible to arrange this.



3.5 Students must maintain the standards of the [Attendance and Engagement Policy](#) where possible, as we need to ensure that students' learning is not negatively affected by any absences. For example, students observing Ramadan may be required to review lesson materials missed at a different time of the day and engage with the activities to comply with the overall learning outcomes.

4. Examinations and Assessments

4.1 Students are encouraged to complete examinations and assessments on time and to the best of their ability. Arden University recognises that students may rely on their faith more during these somewhat stressful periods. Support on campus is available for students, such as contemplation rooms.

4.2 If a religious observance means a student is unable to attend an examination or meet an assessment deadline, they should apply for an extension following the [Extension to Assessment Deadline Policy](#). Should students require a longer extension, they must refer to the [Extenuating Circumstances Policy](#).

Please note that the Religious Observance Policy may not apply to modules which have Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements. PSRBs may specify their own policy, and students on those programmes should check with their lecturers in the school.

4.3 If a student is unable to prepare for an assessment due to a religious observance that had a disadvantageous effect on the student's concentration or preparation time, such as fasting, students may be able to apply for an extension.

4.4 If unforeseeable events related to religious observance have taken place e.g., period of mourning for the death of a loved one, a funeral, or fainting during an examination due to fasting, students should consult [the Extenuating Circumstances Policy](#).

4.5 Students may require ID checks at times, e.g., for online examinations. Should students wish to have an ID check from someone of the same gender, they should disclose this to a staff member. Arden University will aim to find an appropriate member of staff to carry out an ID check where possible.

5. Complaints

5.1 Should students have any complaints in relation to religious observance, they should follow the [Students Complaints Procedure](#). Complaints will be dealt with trust, compassion and fairness as a university that values its diverse student body and commitment to EDI.



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