

Faith Provision for students and staff at Univ

The place of religion in the history of the College

Univ was founded in 1249 by William of Durham, a medieval theologian, who gave money to support the study of Christian theology in Oxford. Other subjects were not studied and taught in the College until the sixteenth century. The origins and history of the College explain why it has a chapel and a chaplain, and the College Statutes (our constitution) include a requirement for us to provide public liturgy (Christian worship).

Provision for religious observance today

University College welcomes students and staff of all faiths and none. This reflects our commitment to being a diverse community that reflects the world outside the College and in which we all benefit from engagement with a wide range of opinions and experiences. We wish to provide an environment in which people of different religious faiths and beliefs and people who have no religious faith or belief will thrive and may learn from each other. One way in which we do this is through facilities and events that we provide or organise in the College, as set out below. Another is through making students and staff aware of some of the different faith communities and faith societies in the University and the City of Oxford, and providing contact details for chaplains and representatives of different faiths, beliefs and traditions. More information about these communities and their representatives is also set out below.

Calendar and festivals

The College works with students and staff to observe a wide range of religious and cultural festivals that fall during university terms, and students are encouraged to contact us if there may be events that they would like to organise, either by themselves or with the support of the College.

In recent years we have had formal halls for Diwali and Chinese New Year, and iftars during Ramadan. Students have also observed Holi in the college grounds and have lit a hanukkiah and sung prayers in Hall or elsewhere for Hanukkah. There are carol services and Christmas dinners at the end of Michaelmas term, and there is worship in the Chapel throughout the year

Students wishing to book a room or an event will need to do so through the normal system for booking rooms and events. Before doing that they may wish to speak informally to the Chaplain or to the Domestic Bursar or to the Head of Conferencing and Events about what they may wish to plan, and about how the College may be able to help.

Space for corporate prayer

The College Chapel is open every day, from early in the morning until late at night. It is available for all students and staff to use as a place in which to pray, reflect or be still. Our regular college services are those of the Church of England, in keeping with the history of the College, and our ethos is welcoming and inclusive. Anyone who wishes to attend or to participate in any service in Chapel is welcome to do so; our chapel choir and our regular congregation include students who are Christians, as well as others who are members of other faiths, or who describe themselves as having

no religion, or as agnostic or enquiring. Our main service (usually Choral Evensong) takes place on Sunday evenings during term, and there are morning prayers Monday to Friday during term and much of the vacations. A Roman Catholic Mass, organised by the University Catholic Chaplaincy, takes place once a term, usually on Tuesday of 4th week at 6pm.

The College's Muslim Prayer Room is open and available for use during the day and also at night. It is most used by Muslim students who do not live on the main site and wish to pray during the day while they are here. There is running water in the room, and space to leave shoes outside, but we do not have dedicated Wudu facilities.

Dietary needs

The Chefs cater for a wide range of dietary requirements and preferences, including those of a religious nature. Students are welcome to contact the Executive Chef to discuss their individual requirements.

During Ramadan students may book meals which they can access and eat when it is time to break their fast. Details about how to book these meals and where to collect them will be circulated at the time; the College will provide a fridge and a microwave and other facilities in a location that is suitable for the number of students wishing to make use of this facility.

The College can source halal meat, but we do not have a dedicated halal kitchen. Meals containing meat that was certified halal by the supplier are marked as H* on our menu sheets. For a fuller explanation see Appendix 1 of this document.

The College can source and serve kosher meals, but we do not have a dedicated kosher kitchen.

Some students prefer to cook for themselves for some or all of their meals. Kitchens for student use are located in different parts of the College; anyone may request to have access to a kitchen even if there is not one in the building in which they live. Students wishing to request access to a kitchen should contact the Accommodation Office in the Domestic Bursary.

Accommodation

First-year students are allocated study-bedrooms on a random basis. Students in other years who are eligible for college accommodation choose their rooms according to their own preferences in an order determined by a ballot.

Almost all of our study bedrooms on the main site have a sink and running water, but only a small number are ensuite. Rooms that are not ensuite have bathrooms or shower rooms nearby. Most of our study bedrooms on the Staverton site have a sink and shower in a room adjacent to the room, accessible from within the flat in which the study bedroom is located. We do not allocate ensuite rooms on religious grounds but all students will have access to running water in or near their study-bedroom.

Anyone who wishes to discuss how their religious needs or preference might relate to their accommodation is encouraged to contact the Chaplain and/or the Accommodation Manager.

Academic adjustments (including teaching and exams)

The College tries to avoid scheduling activities at the same time as religious festivals. Students who have teaching or other academic or college activities scheduled at a time that clashes with their religious observance are encouraged to speak to their tutor or to the Senior Tutor or the Chaplain, in the expectations that reasonable adjustments will be made to accommodate their needs.

The University makes adjustments to timetables for public exams in order to accommodate religious observance. Such adjustments may be anticipatory (avoiding scheduling on certain dates) or made in response to individual requests (e.g. to avoid exams scheduled on Shabbat, or to have exams only in the morning during Ramadan). Students who wish to request an adjustment to the scheduling of their exams on the grounds of religious observance must contact the Academic Office (academic.office@univ.ox.ac.uk) before the end of week 4 in Michaelmas Term. The University may not be able to accommodate requests received after this time.

The University will take account of any effects of religious observance, for example, if fasting has an effect on a student's academic performance. Students who wish to alert examiners to any such effects may submit a Mitigating Circumstances notice via Student Self-Service.

Students who wish to ask for information or advice on what may be most appropriate in their situation may contact the Chaplain or the Academic Office.

Chaplaincy

Chaplains of different faiths and traditions (including the College Chaplain) meet together as part of the University's Student Ministry Forum. They include a Hindu chaplain, a Jewish chaplain, a Muslim chaplain, a Buddhist chaplain, a Quaker chaplain, as well as college chaplains (most of whom are Christians, predominantly clergy of the Church of England, because of the history of the colleges and their place in the wider history of Christianity in England) and chaplains from a range of different Christian traditions and denominations. Contact details for many of these chaplains are on the [Chaplaincy](#) page on the University website.

The Chaplain of this college is a priest in the Church of England but has a college-wide role in which he works with students and staff of all faiths and none. He can put people in touch with chaplains and representatives of different faiths and beliefs and is glad to talk about issues to do with religious belief and practice if asked to do so. As a member of the Welfare Team, and in keeping with the diversity of the College, most of his work takes place in a context of pastoral support in which he makes no assumptions about whether individuals hold or practice any form of religious faith or observance or not.

Faith communities in the University and City of Oxford

Oxford is home to people of many different faiths and beliefs and there is a wide variety of places and forms of religious worship and practice in the city. The University provides information about [Faith societies, belief groups, or religious centres within Oxford University](#). It also provides links to the [days and times of religious services](#) of a range of different faiths, including services that are not conducted in English.

Appendix: Halal** Food at Univ

Codes of practice for the production and service of halal dishes

The following codes of practice apply to all Halal** dishes identified on our menus by the letter 'H'.

- Some meat supplied by our nominated butchers is slaughtered under Halal guidelines, other meat we purchase through the same supplier is classed as haram. Some of our nominated butchers have Halal Certification, certificates are available. Halal food is vacuum packed to avoid cross contamination but is delivered in the same van and might be in the same delivery trays as haram meat.
- Halal meat is covered, labelled and segregated (within the same refrigerator / freezer) from other Haram products in the kitchen at University College.
- Staff wash their hands before the preparation of all dishes, including Halal** products.
- Where appropriate, staff wear new disposable gloves before the preparation of all dishes, including Halal** products.
- Preparation surfaces, boards, knives and equipment are washed and sanitised before the preparation of all dishes, including Halal** products.
- We can guarantee that the dish **does not contain**:
 - alcohol
 - pork or pork derivatives e.g. bacon, ham, sausage
 - gelatine from animal source
 - lard
- All oils and fats used in the preparation and cooking of Halal** dishes are of vegetable origin.
- Cheese used as part of the dish is vegetarian i.e. does not contain rennet from animal origin.
- Halal food is not cooked in a separate oven. However the Halal** food is placed above other dishes to minimise the risk of cross contamination from splashes.
- During service separate utensils are used for the service of all dishes, including Halal** dishes.
- All production and service staff are trained in the above codes of practice.

Halal** as indicated in the above document - we are not able to certify that we can offer halal food. The word indicated Halal** is in reference to all of the guidelines listed above.