Faith Spaces Across London Campuses

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What do you want?

Should QMSU lobby QMUL to bring its faith spaces up to standard across its London campuses?

The Union should lobby QMUL to carry out Recommendation 4 of the Union's Faith Survey and to provide faith space on each of its London campuses where students are taught. Under the Memorandum of Agreement, QMUL is responsible for building maintenance and repairs and runs a Help Desk to log faults (Annex 5). The Executive Officers should, within existing budgets:

1. Ask QMUL and the Union's managers for the spaces the Union runs for the upgrades Recommendation 4 lists, starting with the ablution facilities.

2. Ask QMUL and the Union's managers for the spaces the Union runs for clear signs to every faith space and a notice at each one saying where to report repairs and cleaning problems for that space, as survey respondents suggested.

3. Ask QMUL for women-only ablution facilities and storage in faith spaces wherever the layout allows.

4. Ask QMUL to block-book a lift-accessible room at Whitechapel every Friday lunchtime in term, sized in consultation with the relevant faith societies to meet demonstrated demographic demand, and to list it on its faith pages as it does for Mile End.

5. Ask QMUL to include a lift-accessible faith and contemplation room with ablution facilities in the brief for every new building or major refurbishment, or to record why not, consulting the Union and faith societies at that stage. Start with the Whitechapel life sciences site, and ask QMUL to act on its equality analysis of the new Queen Mary Business School building (1 Canalside) by setting aside a room there for faith use, as well as its contemplation space, before it opens.

6. Ask QMUL, before it decides the future of the Temporary Building at Mile End, to assess the building for faith and contemplation use, including as a dedicated multi-faith chaplaincy and welfare centre with women's facilities; to consult the Union and faith societies before deciding; to keep the building available until that assessment is complete; and to publish the equality analysis behind its decision.

7. Ask QMUL for contemplation rooms at West Smithfield and Ilford, where its faith pages list no faith space, and to list on those pages the multi-faith rooms at Charterhouse Square and Lincoln's Inn Fields. At the London City Institute of Technology, a partnership between QMUL and Newham College, ask QMUL to work with the College and the Institute's student support staff to formally recognise the room students already use for prayer and equip it properly: separate spaces for men and women or a partition that divides the room fully, proper prayer mats or carpet, audio-visual equipment suitable for large congregational services, and a listing on QMUL's faith pages.

Why do you want it?

Faith spaces and chaplaincies are critical assets for student mental health and pastoral care. While QMUL successfully provides fully staffed, professional pastoral infrastructure for certain demographics (such as the St Benet's Chaplaincy), the lack of equivalent, fully equipped multi-faith spaces across all campuses leaves

the university's largest minority demographics relying on under-resourced, student-led societies for their welfare and spiritual needs. This creates an institutional imbalance in QMUL's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) commitments.

The Faith Survey records broken taps and flooding in washing areas, and empty or broken soap and paper dispensers there, along with worn or dirty carpets and audio systems that do not work. Users were unsure who was responsible for maintenance and cleaning, so they did not know how to report problems.

Only 42.8% of Muslim respondents said the washing facilities fully met their needs, and 18.8% said they did not. Women asked for women-only washing facilities and storage for privacy before and after using the spaces (Faith Survey).

The survey's Recommendation 4 is to upgrade washing facilities, flooring and audio systems, which have recurring problems, and to "implement a maintenance reporting system to address ongoing maintenance needs".

QMUL says it is "committed to using all reasonable endeavours to provide a place on campus for students and staff to meet" on Fridays. The arrangements it lists are all at Mile End. At Whitechapel, the only faith space it lists is on the third floor of the Garrod Building (QMUL Faith pages). The Faith Survey says it has no lift access and is about 35 to 40% smaller than the multi-faith centre it replaced in the BLSA Building. In November 2026, after checking with Whitechapel Security, QMUL's Student Life team confirmed to student representatives that the room has no step-free access (QMUL Student Life, email correspondence, November 2026).

The Union's Faith Survey says space for Friday observance "remains a concern on the Whitechapel Campus". The survey found that at Whitechapel this took place in the Union's Recovery Room in the Garrod Building, which has "significantly limited capacity for women". It also notes that students often cannot travel off campus because of teaching straight before or after.

The Union has done this before. Its 2020 policy to block-book the Blomeley Rooms on Friday lunchtimes at Mile End was embedded in February 2022 and is marked completed (QMSU policy page).

QMUL faith pages list no faith space at Charterhouse Square, West Smithfield, Lincoln's Inn Fields or Ilford (QMUL Faith pages; QMUL, How to find us). At the London City Institute of Technology, students use a former classroom as a faith space, furnished by apprentices at their own expense. It is not listed on QMUL's website. When student spaces moved into the refurbished Garrod Building, "no faith facilities were included in the initial plans" (Faith Survey). QMUL's own equality analysis of the new Queen Mary Business School building (1 Canalside), due in 2027, found a negative impact on religion or belief because the building has no room that can be set aside for faith use, only a contemplation space, and said QMUL would explore using other rooms flexibly (QMUL, Equality Analysis: SBM Canalside new build, January 2025). QMUL is also planning new life sciences space at Whitechapel (QMUL, July 2025).

While QMUL refurbished its Informatics Teaching Laboratory, the laboratory's facilities were moved to the Temporary Building (QMUL EECS, ITL facilities). The refurbished laboratory opened in phases from January 2026 (QMUL news, 26 January 2026). In November 2026, student welfare site visits observed rooms being cleared in the Temporary Building, a three-storey block with step-free access and toilets on every floor (AccessAble; Student welfare site visit, November 2026). In March 2024, the joint QMUL and QMSU MoA Review Panel noted that a utilisation survey had found occupancy of booked spaces "lower than would be expected", and its minutes add that "Other benefits included being able to repurpose space" (MoA Review Panel draft minutes, 13 March 2024). The Union's own 2023 footfall study found the Multi-Faith Centre "often saw overcapacity usage at multiple points throughout every day during which the survey was conducted" (SU President's report to Council, March 2024).

What impact will this have?

Faith spaces would work properly for everyone who uses them, and problems would be fixed faster because users would know who to tell. Students at Whitechapel could attend congregational observance on campus in a room that fits them without missing teaching, and new buildings would include faith space from the start. The motion mainly asks QMUL to act, and anything that falls to the Union, such as audio equipment in rooms it runs, stays within existing budgets. QMUL would also weigh faith use, and hear from students and faith societies, before deciding what happens to the Temporary Building, instead of settling it without them.

Sources:

QMSU, "It feels like a test of faith to get to the room to begin with": a review of faith and contemplation spaces at Queen Mary (October 2025)

Memorandum of Agreement (March 2024), Annexes 5 and 7

QMUL Faith pages, rooms page (qmul.ac.uk/faith)

Blomeley Rooms policy (2020)

QMUL Equality Analysis: SBM Canalside new build (January 2025)

QMUL Council, unconfirmed minutes of 9 July 2026, minute 2025.097 (naming of 1 Canalside)

QMUL: life sciences capacity at the Whitechapel campus (July 2025)

QMUL: How to find us

QMSU policy register

QMUL: Informatics Teaching Laboratory facilities

AccessAble: Temporary Building access guide

Student welfare site visit to the Temporary Building, with dated photographic evidence (November 2026)

QMSU President's report to QMUL Council, March 2024 (QM2023/35), with the MoA Review Panel minutes

Account from apprentices at the London City Institute of Technology (November 2026)