Supporting Students of Every Faith Equally

Proposer: Kevin Lopez Mercado

Seconder: Kehinde Abdul-Rasaq Gafar

What do you want?

Should QMSU lobby QMUL to support students of every faith equally?

The Union should lobby QMUL to carry out Recommendations 14 and 15 of the Union's Faith Survey and to act on its findings on harassment, so that students of every faith have pastoral support and a voice in QMUL's equality work. The Executive Officers should:

1. Ask QMUL, through QMUL's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group and the President's reports to QMUL's Council, and through the Faith and Spirituality Forum if it meets, for a costed options paper by the end of 2026–27 on paid or honorary chaplains or faith advisers for other major faiths, starting with the largest groups.

2. Ask that new chaplains or advisers get the same recognition as the current ones, including a listing on QMUL's faith pages and set hours on campus, and that the relevant faith societies are consulted on appointments.

3. Ask QMUL's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group to set up a faith and belief equality group, with places for faith society representatives and a Union officer, to oversee QMUL's response to the Faith Survey and to reports of religious harassment.

4. Ask QMUL to publish its Report + Support hate-incident data broken down by faith, and to include religion or belief in its student equality data.

5. Ask QMUL to state that students can ask for a counsellor who understands their faith, and to report each year how often such requests are met.

Why do you want it?

The chaplains listed on QMUL's faith pages are all Christian. Its faith contact page names three Christian clergy, two of them titled Chaplain, and points people to St Benet's, QMUL's Christian chaplaincy at Mile End. Students of any other faith are told to get in touch, and "we'll do our best to help" (QMUL Faith: Contact us).

The Union's Faith Survey found that Christians are "the only group with a chaplain on campus". It notes that non-Christian students "may not be aware of or feel comfortable with the idea of approaching someone of a different faith for pastoral care". It recommends considering how the Christian provision "can be mirrored for other major faith groups" (Recommendation 14).

The survey says this may contribute to a satisfaction gap. 62.5% of Christian respondents said the faith spaces fully met their needs when surveyed, against 34.6% of Hindu and 29.9% of Muslim respondents, and the survey points to Christians having both a dedicated space and a chaplain.

The Union's Faith Survey recommends creating "a Faith Equality Action Group, similar to those for gender and race equality, as a subgroup of the Equality and Diversity Action Group" (Recommendation 15).

QMUL's university-level equality body is its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group. Its terms of reference name equality groups for gender and race, among others, and seat six staff networks, none of them for religion or belief (QMUL, EDI Steering Group terms of reference). The joint QMUL and Union Faith and Spirituality Forum says it "formally reports to Equality and Diversity Steering Group", but the Steering Group's terms of reference don't mention it, and in November 2026 its page said there were "currently no Faith & Spirituality forum meetings scheduled for this term" (QMUL, Faith and Spirituality Forum). QMUL's Student Life team has since told QMISoc that the Forum hasn't met since 2023 (QMUL Student Life, email to QMISoc, November 2026). QMUL's EDI Impact Report for 2023–25 doesn't mention religion at all (QMUL, EDI Impact Report 2023–2025), and its student equality data report for 2020 covers age, disability, ethnicity and sex, but not religion or belief (QMUL, Student EDI Annual Data Report 2020).

The survey found that 5.7% of respondents had experienced harassment or discrimination on campus. Islamophobia, antisemitism and hinduphobia were the concerns raised most often, and students were unsure how and where to report incidents. A standing group would give these issues an owner. It could also take forward the Union's existing policy to adopt an Islamophobia definition and lobby QMUL to do the same (policy page).

QMUL's Report + Support tool already records religion. In 2024/25, religion or belief was selected in 60.9% of hate reports, but QMUL's annual report doesn't say which faiths these reports concerned (Report + Support annual report 2025).

QMUL lets students ask for a counsellor "from a specific background or gender", but its counselling page doesn't explicitly mention faith (QMUL, Counselling).

What impact will this have?

Students of every major faith could in time have someone from their own tradition to turn to, and faith would get a standing place in QMUL's equality work, as gender and race already have. The motion asks QMUL to act, so it needs no new spending by the Union.

Sources:

QMUL Faith: Contact us

QMUL Faith pages, rooms page (St Benet's ownership)

QMUL Equality, Diversity and Inclusion governance

EDI Steering Group terms of reference

EDI Impact Report 2023–2025

Report + Support annual report 2025

QMUL Counselling

Students' Union policies

QMSU policy: Islamophobia definition (March 2025)

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)

QMUL Student EDI Annual Data Report 2020

QMUL Faith and Spirituality Forum

QMUL Student Life, email to QMISoc (November 2026)