

## Results of Brunel University's Multifaith Survey 2011

### Overview and background

- Survey Background;
- Why equality data is important;
- Multi-faith Survey Key Highlights;
- Why do a multifaith survey?
- Reflective Questions.

#### **Multifaith Survey Background**

##### Governmental and Statutory

- Equality Act 2010 - Religion and belief is a protected characteristic ; General duty; Specific duty; Multiple disadvantage;
- Human Rights Act 1998 - Right to freedom of thought, consciences and religion.

##### **National**

- Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) - Religion and belief in HE: researching the experiences of staff and students;
- Religious Literacy Leadership in HE;
- HESA / HEFEC / UCAS;
- NSS and Student experience;
- National Union of Students.

##### **Local**

- Brunel's Internationalisation Agenda;
- Collecting evidence to inform planning and development ;
- Brunel does religion;
- Understanding religion and belief is part of Brunel's identity;
- Wellbeing Positive student experience / Staff satisfaction;
- New Meeting House – Multi-faith building.

#### **Project initiated by**

- Equality and Diversity Office;

#### **Consulted with**

- Chaplaincy;
- Union of Brunel Students;
- Equality Strategy Group;
- External Partners – ECU, London Universities, HELEN etc.

#### **About the Multi-faith Survey**

- Electronic questionnaire;
- January – March 2011;

- Divided into 3 parts;
  - Religious Affiliations;
  - Use of Brunel's Multi-faith spaces;
  - Brunel's Chaplaincy Service.

## Religious affiliations

- **1579** Staff and Students responded (**9%** of Brunel's population)
- **536** Staff (**19%** of total staff population)
- **1043** Students (**7%** of total student population)
- **1043 students** made up a majority of **66%** respondents
- **536** Staff members made up **34%** of respondents
- **37%** of the respondents said they were Christians
- The second self-identified religion by respondents was Islam (**24%**)
- The third self-identified group were those who do not associate themselves with a religion, faith or belief (**21%**)

### Staff

- Just under **50%** of Staff identified as Christians
- Similar to ECU / Sector – **46.8%**
- A significant (**29%**) of staff did not associate with any religion, faith or belief
- Again, similar to ECU / Sector – **36.5%**

### Students

- **34%** of students identified as Muslims
- This is significantly different from ECU / Sector (**9%**)
- Those who identified as Christians made up the second largest group (**31%**)
- **17%** of Brunel students do not associate with any religion, faith or belief . ECU / Sector is **31.4%**

### Home/ EU and International Students 1034 (%)

#### Calculations were based on 762 Home / EU students and 272 International Students

- There is 30% gap between the percentage of Muslim Home / EU students and International Muslim students
- Significant difference (between Home / EU students and International students) in the % of students who do not associate with a religion faith or belief (10%), and those who identified as Christians (12%)

### Other Religions at Brunel

- Alevi
- Kemetic Tradition
- Karma
- Bahai Faith
- Humanitarian
- Orthodox
- Serbian Orthodox
- Rastafarianism
- Satanism
- Deism
- Taoism
- Humanist
- Pagan
- Unitarianism

- Spiritualist
- Jehovah's Witness
- 7th Day Adventists
- Jedi
- Jainism
- Unificationism

## Brunel's Multi-faith spaces

### Where respondents live and worship

- Regardless of their residential location, **155 (9.8%)** respondents only worshiped 'On Campus'
- Regardless of their residential location, a significant number of respondents **491 (31%)** only worshiped 'Off Campus'

### Where respondents live and worship

- In total, **509** respondents worship 'On Campus' – Some also worship elsewhere
- In total, **176 (34%)** of those worship on Campus live on Campus, some of these people may also worship elsewhere

### Religion and Campus Worship

- **Over half of respondents** who worship on Campus identified as Muslims;
- **Just under one-third of respondents** who worship on Campus identified as Christians;
- **1.5%** of those who said they 'Do not associate with a religion or belief', said they worship on Campus.

### Days of worship

Based on **509** people.

- A significant **36%** said they worshiped daily
- Another said **38%** worshiped at least once a week but did not have fixed days
- Space for Friday Prayers

### When respondents pray

- **23%** of respondents said that they do not have a fixed time and pray at any time.
- A similar number of people pray Mid-day, Afternoon and Evenings
- **5%** of respondents pray at Night

## The Chaplaincy Service

### Expectation from the Chaplaincy Service

- Staff and students want the Chaplaincy (as a space and as a service) to perform a variety of functions;
- Equal value

### Use of the Chaplaincy's Space

- The Meeting House is more than a religious space
- Again, equal value is attached to the way respondents view the use of Chaplaincy's space

### Why do a multifaith survey?

- Monitoring data and planning further engagements
- Curriculum development and discussion
- Timetable & Examination e.g. Friday lectures after 4pm, Ramadan and examination planning
- Prevent Agenda / Balancing the right to freedom of speech

- Alcohol / Alcohol free spaces and the student experience

## **Reflective Questions**

### **Participation and access**

- What role should Brunel take to support teaching that is both aware of religion or belief positions and sensitive to how they may intersect with the curriculum?
- Can food be labelled more appropriately to enable people with religion or belief to make more informed decisions about what they eat?
- How far do catering arrangements meet the needs of students and staff, given the diversity of dietary requirements?
- Should the University / UBS routinely provide non-alcoholic options in the programme at freshers' events and other events?
- Is there value in providing alcohol-free alternatives that engage students and staff from all religion or belief groups?

### **Religious observance**

- When planning the academic timetable, should the University accommodate individuals' requirements for religious observance?
- What provision does the University make available for worship, meditation, prayer and celebration space? How is this space allocated and how are priorities decided between different groups?
- How is information about facilities for worship, meditation, prayer and celebration communicated to new staff and students?

### **Religious observance**

- What religion or belief occasions does the University celebrate/mark? How have these celebrations been chosen and have any religion or belief positions been left out?
- Should the University provide clear guidance around religious dress codes to address potential conflicts with health and safety requirements?
- Should the University have a clear policy about the use of photographic identity cards? Should alternative procedures be put in place for those who wish to cover their face as part of their religious observance?

### **Discrimination and harassment**

- How is the University preventing the creation of a 'hostile atmosphere', in line with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010? Are these measures merely reactive, or are they in line with the positive equality duty to foster good relations?
- Which stakeholders should be consulted when developing policies around religion or belief?
- Does the University need to explore further the approaches used to collect data on religion or belief and on incidents of discrimination and harassment on the grounds of religion or belief?
- Should Brunel work with community organisations such as the Community Security Trust and LBH to feed into broader community-based reporting mechanisms?

### **Good relations**

- Should the University develop policies and strategies to facilitate good relations between members of different religion or belief groups?
- What effects do certain sorts of discourse (and in some cases, harassment and discrimination) have on the ability of others in a university community to practise their right to freedom of speech? Does this have an impact on their right to express their belief or religion on campus?
- When tensions between equality areas occur, does the University have the tools to deal with these?
- Should there be guidelines to clarify commitments to freedom of speech?