



University of
**Southern
Queensland**

13 July 2023

Multi-faith Services Framework

Multi-faith Services - Support for Learning

1.0 Overview

Multi-Faith Services is part of the University's integrated approach fostering academic excellence and a positive student experience through healthy socio-spiritual initiatives. The University of Southern Queensland recognises the importance of spirituality to good health and wellbeing among its students and staff. Multi-Faith Services provide students and staff with guidance and resources to fulfil their spiritual needs in meaningful and practical ways. Chaplains serving under Multi-Faith Services are co-opted in conformity with the diversity of religious beliefs represented at the University thereby ensuring equitable service to all students and staff.

The overarching goal is to promote student success and enable students and staff to thrive in a religious and spiritually diverse University community through the practise of individual faiths in a safe environment. The Multi-Faith team respects the integrity of different faith traditions and individual spiritual beliefs and seek affinity with aspects of more than one religion, philosophy or worldview, providing equal opportunity to all. Multi-Faith Services sits within a larger student support framework within Support for Learning.

The Framework adopts an inclusive culture, client-focussed strategy and virtue-based evaluation of outcomes. The Framework fosters consultation with University Executive, reputable faith practitioners from community, academic staff and students to foster spiritual growth in all its forms. The unique attributes of all faiths associated with the University are respected in all Multi-Faith dealings. This inclusive approach aims to stimulate critical thinking and spiritual and academic fulfilment among clients.

2.1 The Strategy

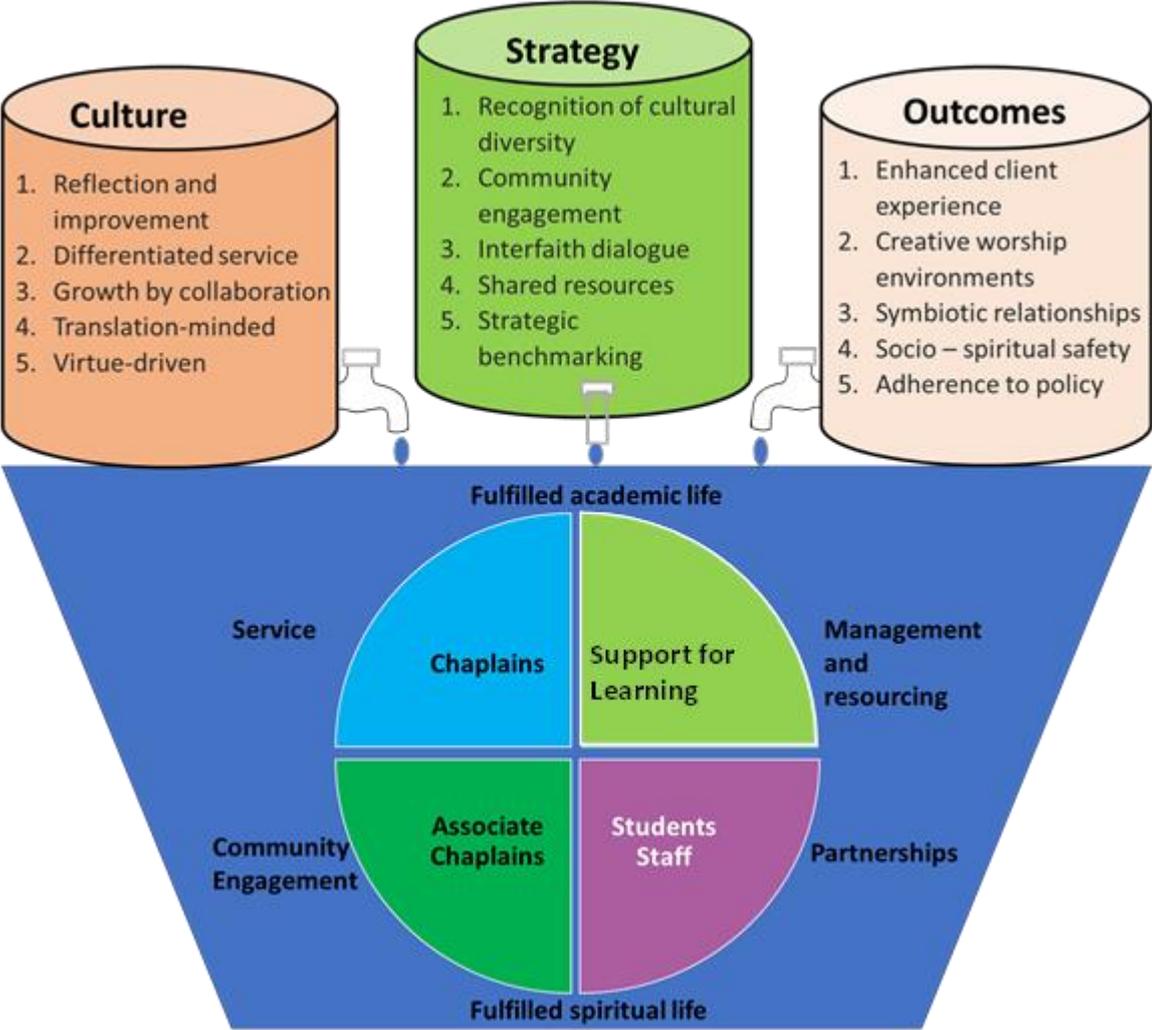
The Multi-Faith Services Framework is recognition of cultural and religious diversity among the University community. The Framework promotes interfaith dialogue through University Management-supported forums where faith leaders and their members, non-believers, academia and social justice practitioners congregate around themes that promote harmony. The Framework encourages community engagement through participation of students and staff at city, state or country-wide multi-faith and multi-cultural programs. Multi-Faith Services is a functional unit of the University which facilitates sharing of resources including prayer rooms and meeting places with on-campus faith groups and their affiliated community partners as a means to fulfilling the spiritual needs of students and staff. The Framework depends on continuous strategic benchmarking to ensure best practice and enhanced client experience.

2.2 The Outcomes

Creative worship environments where free expression of worship presents at spiritual meetings is a desired outcome. By promoting a culture that seeks the common good of

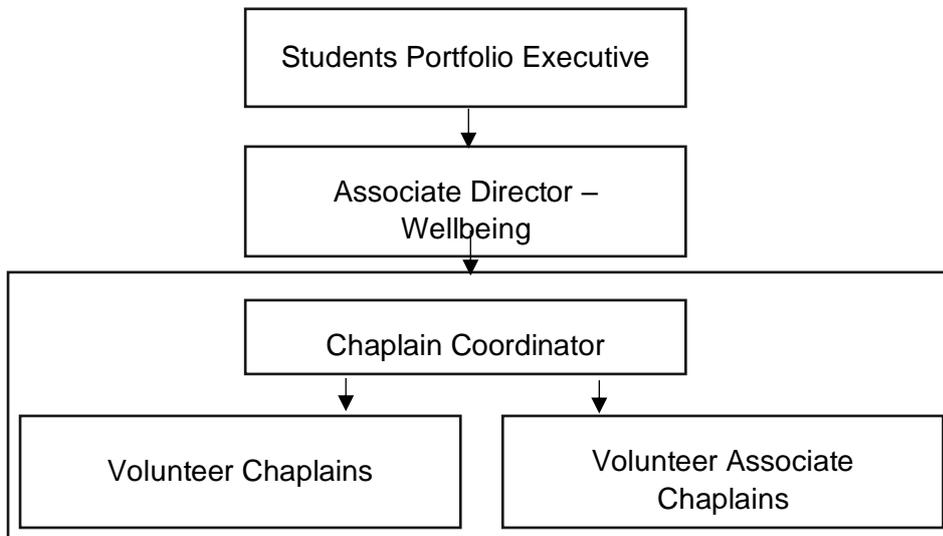
mankind, inter and intra-faith symbiotic relationships are nurtured and with such relationships comes harmony. In terms of the academic enterprise of the University, a desired outcome of the Framework strategy is the adherence to policy by faith providers and their congregations and socio-spiritual safety of the University community.

The Multi -Faith Framework:



3.0 Roles:

The human resource structure:



3.1 Specific roles:

Students Portfolio Executive

The Students Portfolio Executive is the approving body for Chaplains. The Executive provides guidance on matters of policy and procedures relevant to Multi-Faith Services.

Associate Director – Wellbeing

The Associate Director, Wellbeing oversees the functions of Multi-faith Services and provides strategic direction to the Chaplain Coordinator. He/she is the link between the Students Portfolio Executive and the Chaplain Coordinator and ensures adherence to policy.

Chaplain Coordinator:

- a) Acts as first point of contact and provides individual or group advice to students and staff on religious and spiritual matters;
- b) Coordinates and manages activities including the development and delivery of Multi-Faith programs with all chaplains appointed by the University and religious communities
- c) Promotes Multi-Faith Services both within the University and externally
- d) Engages with community to secure collaborations that may interest students and staff

Volunteer Chaplain:

A Volunteer Chaplain is a person (lay or ordained) who has been appointed by their faith community and is officially recognised by the University to provide spiritual support and

pastoral care to students and staff on campus. Whilst Volunteer Chaplains represent a faith community, their service is not limited to their community and will be expected to function in the broader sense of a multi-faith chaplain. Volunteer chaplains are committed to helping people come to terms with questions of life and faith.

- Multi-Faith Services are available to all student and staff of the University. Chaplains therefore have the dual role of contributing to the overall spiritual life of the University as well as relating as Chaplains to the University members of their own faith community.
- Chaplains are obliged to act in accordance with University Policy and Procedure on discrimination, bullying and harassment.
- Chaplains collaborate with other faith communities in a wide range of cooperative undertakings to address needs and aspirations common to those communities.

Volunteer Chaplains are obliged to discuss their programs with the Chaplain Coordinator before commencement of such activities or programs. Chaplain programs are approved or declined based on the core values of the University.

Volunteer Associate Chaplain:

A Volunteer Associate Chaplain is a person (lay or ordained) who has been appointed by their faith community. In consultation with the Multi-Faith Coordinator, the Volunteer Associate Chaplains operate specific programs within their faith area. These specific programs are available to University students and staff. These programs operate under the principle: to respect the dignity of all, regardless of their religion, as well as non-believers.

3.2 Chaplains' administrative relationships:

Except for the Chaplain Coordinator, Chaplains are not employees of the University. However, they are formally recognised by the University and function within service and legislative frameworks of the University.

- Chaplains are to be familiar with the University's Mission and Values statements, and with institutional policies and regulations governing areas such as Staff and Student Codes of Conduct, Workplace Health and Safety, Harassment and Discrimination.
- Chaplains will meet as a group with the Multi-Faith Services Coordinator at least annually to review and plan the operations of the Multi-Faith Services and to hear reports of work done and yet other work that needs to be done.

3.3 Recruitment of Chaplains

A Chaplain is nominated by their faith community and referred to the Student Portfolio Executive for approval. Chaplains from different faith communities may be known in practice

by different titles. The title used in practice will be agreed upon between the University and the faith community concerned as part of the appointment process.

- Nominations will be accepted ONLY from commissioning bodies which:
 - a. Indicate that the Chaplain would have a significant pastoral role amongst members of that body within the University, and have general acceptance within the University as a whole.
 - b. Have been declared to be a religious body and recognised denomination by Proclamation of the Governor-General in accordance with the provisions of S.26 of the Commonwealth Marriage Act, 1961 (as amended).
- A Chaplain must be recognised by their own faith community as a member in good standing and have the ability to relate their faith to the special needs of the University, students and staff.
- Records of the appointment process for each Chaplain will be held by the University, including a certified copy of the Chaplain's Blue Card details.

3.4 Specific services rendered by Chaplains:

- a. Chaplains may be required to attend or officiate at any matter deemed as critical incidents that may accrue in association with the university; accidental death, murder, suicide, sexual assault, terminal illness or any serious injury to a student, staff or members of the public. This also includes any major disaster, terrorist attack, hostage situation or vandalism to or on university property.
- b. Chaplains are professional women and men who provide support during times of personal crisis, spiritual direction, and opportunities for worship and prayer. They also nurture faith, organise groups for discussion and support, and work closely with particular student groups. Overall, they respond to the spiritual and pastoral needs of individuals and groups within the University, provide a caring presence and support a positive sense of community.
- c. Due to the diversity of the University student and staff population, Chaplains are required to maintain a multi-faith focus that ensures that Multi-Faith Services are accessible by all members of students and staff of the University. Multi-Faith Services have a particular role in meeting the needs of students and staff who might otherwise feel isolated, marginalized and/or misunderstood away from home and family.
- d. Chaplains will be mindful of instituting support strategies for external students and resident overseas students who span a wide range of age, experience and lifestyle and who bring unique challenges to the delivery of professional services.
- e. Chaplains may communicate with external students online or by other appropriate means utilising University infrastructure; providing updates of activities, services, personal support opportunities, self-development courses and counselling options.

- f. Chaplains work to promote mutual respect among those with differing beliefs and make every effort to accommodate cultural and religious diversity within the University.
- g. Chaplains provide Multi-Faith services to students and staff who request it and may refer on to appropriate counsellors, agencies or services as required.
- h. Chaplains will work in collaboration with the University, Chaplain Coordinator, Student Guild, Student Life, People Services, Facilities Management and other University sections as appropriate to ensure that Multi-Faith Services are delivered effectively and function as part of the University's integrated range of services to students and staff.
- i. Chaplains conduct educational activities that engender understanding, cooperation and respect between religious groups.
- j. Multi-Faith Services operates within the remit of the Students Division. As such, opportunities will arise for Volunteer Chaplains to contribute to programs and special events organized by the division.
- k. Chaplains acknowledge and involve local churches and religious groups in the support of students, staff and the University.
- l. Chaplains may provide programs that will foster collaboration among religious groups and the University in areas that encourage integration and cooperation in shared goals.

3.5 Shared spaces

In the context of this framework, collaboration between the chaplaincy and the faith community includes availing select University facilities to the faith community for worship purposes. Such facilities may include but not limited to meeting halls, conference rooms, open spaces and audio-visual equipment. Facilities will be shared based on the common understanding that:

- a. University core functions such as residential schools will be prioritised over other forms of room bookings.
- b. Specialised equipment such as audio-visual equipment shall only be operated with permission or after receiving training from ICT Services.
- c. Facilities shall be used only for activities assessed to be part of worship and may include, scripture reading and discussion, group prayers, worship services, interfaith conferences, seminars and choir practice. The following activities are not considered part of worship and shall therefore not be allocated rooms under Multi-faith Services bookings:
 - i) Weddings
 - ii) Ticketed events
 - iii) Parties

- d. Users of University facilities shall abide by room usage guidelines prescribed by Facilities Management.

The goal is to enable associate chaplains to conduct on-campus services in much the same way as they would off-campus.

3.6 Modification History

Date	Source	Details
24.03.2007		Commencement of Multi-Faith Services
20.06.2007		Commencement of Advisory Committee
16.04.2018		Recommencement of the Multi-Faith Services Advisory Committee
19.07.2018		Revision of Multi-Faith Framework
19.07.2018		Revision of Multi-Faith Advisory Committee
14.09.2018		Revision of Multi-Faith Framework, Multi-Faith Services Advisory Committee composition and Terms of Reference
08.12.2020		Revision of Multi-Faith Framework
18.11.2022		Revision of Multi-Faith Framework
13.07.2023		Revision of Multi-Faith Framework



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