Introduction to the policy:
Royal Holloway, University of London, is a secular institution committed to the pursuit of learning. It does not ally itself with any particular faith or culture. It does however commit itself to an active support for the peaceful study, expression and celebration of mainstream religious faiths within its community, recognizing that such celebration is a source of individual strength, communal resource and intellectual and artistic excellence.

An intrinsic part of this commitment to religious equality and tolerance is the expectation and requirement that religious groups and adherents of all faiths and beliefs should accord full tolerance and respect for the religious faith, beliefs, values and practices of others and that they should adhere to College policies on issues such as race, equality and ethnicity.

The College will actively discourage the activities of groups that could reasonably be judged to be harmful either to individual members or to the aims of the College as a whole. This policy covers any religion, religious belief or similar philosophical belief, but does not ordinarily cover political belief.

Legal Framework
There is no exhaustive definition of Religion and Beliefs, but in case law it has been determined that in order to be protected by law a belief must be “cogent, serious and worthy of respect in a democratic society”
The legal instruments that relate to religion and belief equality for staff and students are:

- the Equality Act 2010
- the Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006
- the Human Rights Act 1998

Scope and Purpose of this policy:
This policy includes in its scope all staff and students of Royal Holloway, University of London and all visitors to the College and its premises.

This policy recognises that a diversity of belief requires a commitment by all whether religious or otherwise to respect the beliefs, values and practices of others. Under its obligations to the Equality Act 2010 the College seeks to promote the equal treatment of, and respect for, all members of the College community.
Policy:
Royal Holloway, University of London values religious and cultural diversity amongst its staff and students and aims to create an environment of dignity and respect, where the cultural, religious and non-religious beliefs of all are respected. All staff and students are expected to proactively support these values. The College is an academic institution committed to the values of open and rational debate that remains within the law and to challenging discrimination and harassment.

The College recognises that the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion is absolute, but the right to express beliefs is qualified by the need to protect the rights and freedoms of others. This means for example, not using religion to justify harassment on the grounds of gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation or disability.

In order to create an environment of dignity and respect, where the cultural, religious and non-religious beliefs of all are respected the College seeks to provide where possible:

- Active welcome and support for students and staff seeking to observe any recognised mainstream religion in order to meet the cultural and religious needs of staff and students.

- Support for academic, artistic and other endeavours to increase our understanding of religion, refine the practice of religion and to promote dialogue between religions, beliefs and cultures.

The College also requires that:

- Those who undertake the support of a religion or belief within the College also commit themselves to the active support of those following different religions or beliefs and should offer, where appropriate, care to all students, irrespective of their faith or beliefs.

- Ministers of religion who come onto campus, or who offer support to our staff and students, should act in accordance with this policy and follow College safeguarding procedures. Such visiting ministers should only conduct an act of worship or religious event on our premises with the agreement of the Multifaith Chaplaincy and at the request of the Chaplaincy or one our Students Union Societies.

- Acts of worship conducted within the College Chapel should take place only with the agreement of the Multifaith Chaplaincy and by ministers who belong to churches that are members of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, or by special
exception who are in good standing with local ecumenical leaders (as agreed by the Chapel Committee 17 May 2004).

- A commitment to oppose within College negative expressions of religion, including disrespect for the beliefs of others, harassment of individuals, recruitment of individuals to causes that might reasonably be expected to be harmful to them and others, and attempts to stifle free academic study and debate.

Rev Cate Irvine
Coordinating Chaplain

April 2019