

Background Information Deputy Lead Chaplain

The work of the Chaplain is based at the Luton and Bedford campuses of the University of Bedfordshire but may require travel to other sites. The University of Bedfordshire was formed in August 2006, by a merger between the University of Luton and De Montfort University situated at Bedford campus. Although a relatively new university, it remains an institution with a rich heritage. The Bedford campus dates back to 1882, which was the founding of the Bedford Training College for Teachers, and the Luton campus has academic roots that date back to 1904. The University of Bedfordshire has around 20,000 students and 1100 staff in the UK and overseas, making it the largest provider of undergraduate and postgraduate education in Bedfordshire (figures from University data 2023).

The largest campus is in the centre of Luton, next to St Mary's Church, and offers a wide range of courses, from undergraduate through to post-graduate, and a mix of full-time and part-time study. The Bedford campus is a mile east of Bedford town centre and currently specialises in teacher education and sport and a range of business and science courses. There has been extensive investment in facilities at both campuses in recent years. The University teaches post graduate business courses at the Putteridge Bury Campus and has smaller sites at Milton Keynes, specialising in Business, IT, HR, and Psychology Courses, at Stoke Mandeville, near Aylesbury, specialising in nursing training, and Study Hubs in Birmingham and London specialising in Business and Health Care courses.

It will be seen from the above that the University of Bedfordshire offers a wide range of courses. It also recruits a wide range of students, of all ages, ethnicities, and faiths, both home and international, at undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

The university is a secular institution which welcomes diversity and recognises the vital part religion and spirituality can play in the lives of its members and the wider community. It has an emphasis on widening participation and opportunities for all.

Chaplaincy forms part of the Student Experience Directorate and sits within Student Support. The Chaplaincy gives support through the Chaplaincy Assistants, and by offering a safe space within the Treehouse (Luton) and Treehouse (Bedford) all students regardless of faith are able to spend time with each other supported by the Chaplains and Chaplaincy Assistants.

The chaplaincy plays a vital part in supporting this increasingly diverse student body and seeks to accommodate and support spiritual practice whilst facilitating interfaith dialogue thus supporting retention and progression at the University.

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