

What is chaplaincy?

HE and FE Chaplaincy provides spiritual support and pastoral care for staff and students of all faiths and none. Chaplaincy teams are usually comprised of chaplains and faith advisors, providing support and advice including in times of stress, crisis, bereavement or illness.

Chaplaincy in HE

There is a great variety in Higher Education Chaplaincy posts. Employed chaplains may be appointed by the Church, by the University, by an Ecumenical Organisation or by any combination of these. Most of the substantive posts are for ordained ministers, but there is an increasing number of lay chaplains and Student Workers, some of whom are employed by local churches. A Chaplaincy Assistant is usually a former student who works with the chaplaincy for a brief period before moving on – some chaplaincies also make use of volunteers. Increasingly chaplains work in teams with one person acting as the “co-ordinating chaplain”. Chaplaincy teams will be ecumenical and most are now multi-faith. Employed chaplaincy posts would normally be advertised in the church press, whereas volunteers are more likely to be recruited directly by a chaplaincy team.

Most chaplaincies are linked in some way to a university department offering support services for students and this often includes providing multi-faith facilities and prayer rooms. University chaplaincy is very rarely about ministering to a congregation of students, where these do exist they are only a small part of the chaplain’s work and often there is no settled group of students connected to the chaplaincy. Higher Education Chaplains seek to minister and witness to the whole institution - students and staff, to build links between the university and faith communities, and to uncover the presence of God in the complicated world of the secular university.

There are strong national ecumenical networks for chaplains. Each year the [Churches Higher Education Liaison Group](#) (CHELG) offers both a study day and a residential course for new chaplains. CHELG is a focus for the church’s work in higher education. Its executive is composed of staff members of denominations which are part of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) and who have, as part of their job description, the co-ordination of university and higher education college chaplaincy. The group comprises Anglican, Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist, Orthodox, Quaker (Society of Friends), Roman Catholic, and United Reformed Church members.

The Church of England’s (CoE) involvement with universities is long-standing and profound. The CoE Education Division’s work in Higher Education is concentrated in three main areas. Resourcing Chaplaincy, Higher Education Policy Issues and the Anglican Foundation Universities. The National HE Adviser [Duncan Myers](#) is available to help with each of the above areas.



Chaplaincy in FE

Chaplaincy in today's colleges responds to the needs of today's students, often from very varied faith backgrounds, and to the local context of the college. Around half of all FE colleges in England have some form of chaplaincy provision.

FE chaplaincy has always been ecumenical in character and is now generally multi-faith, both in principle and practice. All chaplaincies are established as a partnership between colleges and faith communities, to meet the needs of all students of any faith, or none.

FE chaplains are there to help students in their spiritual and moral development, to explore faith, and to seek meaning and purpose in life. Where appropriate, chaplaincies can act as signposts to local faith communities.

FE chaplaincies exist for the benefit of all in the college:

Students

- to be a resource for spiritual and moral development
- to help individuals at times of spiritual need or crisis
- To help all groups and communities which wish to practice their faith.

Staff

- to be a resource at times of spiritual need or crisis
- to facilitate curriculum input on spiritual, moral or religious issues
- To facilitate partnerships and links with communities.

Colleges, principals and senior management teams

- to maintain an ethos of learning that nurtures the whole person and the whole community
- to enable the college to meet Ofsted and Children Act requirements
- To support access, retention and recruitment of students from all communities, especially those from deprived and marginalized communities.

Spiritual and moral development in further education

Unlike sixth-forms in maintained schools there is no statutory entitlement in further education to RE. A major web-based initiative, [All Faiths and None](#) (AFAN) is designed specifically for 16 to 18-year-olds in further education and represents a creative response from the faith communities to this legal anomaly. Since 2007 this online educational resource - supplemented by in-college support from members of the AFAN team - has proved to be an invaluable resource for colleges' formal and informal curriculum offer.

Further support

The CoE Education Division supports a network of college chaplains through dedicated support and professional development training opportunities (including a monthly e-bulletin, annual summer conference and new chaplains training residential) and the facilitation of regular diocesan level networking events. The CoE's engagement with the sector is reflected in its support both for chaplains in colleges and the development of FE strategy and policy. For information on the Church's work in Further Education, please contact [Rev. Garry Neave](#)

A key partner in the development of chaplaincy in colleges is the [National Council of Faiths and Beliefs in FE](#) (fbfe). A presence in the sector for over 25 years, fbfe works alongside government and the faith communities in support of multi-faith chaplaincy provision and initiatives relating to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) of learners. The charity has produced and co-authored many resources available on their website.

The Learning Skills Council produced *Faiths and Further Education: a handbook* which can be found [here](#).

Further FE chaplains training, resources and support can be found on the [FE Chaplains training website](#) which includes training on becoming a chaplain.