

Policy – The use of university premises

There are a number of 'quiet rooms' at a university that can be booked for time slots of up to one hour. However, recently concerns have been raised that these rooms have been used for activities such as meetings and debates, which is not their purpose. A number of students and staff have voiced concerns that the meetings could take place in other rooms available for events, and that they're not the appropriate use for the quiet room.

Factors to consider

- Each room that can be booked for a period of time on campus should have an appropriate policy in place to ensure procedures are followed
- All room booking policies and procedures should be transparent and widely available so there can be no confusion over the rights and responsibilities of those booking or using the room
- All those staff with responsibilities for booking rooms for societies should have training and be made aware of the appropriate policies and procedures
- Those booking rooms should be made aware that they may need to give information as to the agenda of their booking and that a contravention of policy with regards to the booking may result in sanctions
- There should be a clear process for raising concerns about the use of the rooms that are outside of the agreed procedures

University reflections

“We had a problem with prayer rooms being used for speeches or talks. Also one faith group was taking them up solely. [I informed everyone that] prayers should be the process that happens in these rooms, for all faiths. They should not be used to promote views or hold talks. I had to make sure everyone was aware that these rooms at prayer times were for prayers only, not common rooms, not a resting room, not for talks and activities. Once the rules are established it was much better, and now there's much more of the groups regulating themselves effectively” University Iman

“[we have engaged with the local community through] use of the University's prayer room facilities by members of the local community. Use of the University's main prayer room is monitored on a day-to-day basis by security staff. The University intends to establish a liaison group to oversee the broader aspects of the operation of the prayer room”. Respondent – Universities UK members survey, 2010