

Hertfordshire Students' Union

Name of policy: Inclusivity for Jewish Students Policy

Proposer: Jodeci Joseph

Secunder: Shira Reich

The issue:

- Exams can be scheduled on a Friday evening and Saturday. This can cause difficulty for Jewish students due to the obligation of keeping the Sabbath. The Sabbath necessitates the up keeping of laws such as no writing and travelling which is an inhibitory factor for the completion of exams by practicing Jewish students on the Sabbath. Exams can also occur on Jewish festivals, this also makes it difficult for observant Jewish students to complete the exams for reasons mentioned above.
- Many social and political events held by the Students Union do not consider Observant Jewish Student Needs. For example, hustings was held on a Friday night, coinciding with Shabbat, if an observant Jewish student was running for a position, they would be at a disadvantage. Also, events held by the Students Union and University did not provide kosher food for Jewish students. As a result, Jewish students were not able to eat during the event, whilst other faiths were catered for.
- Accommodation at the University does not take into consideration Jewish student's needs. For example, the use of electric keys makes living on campus during the Sabbath difficult, as they cannot leave the accommodation; this would be considered desecrating the Sabbath. Also, Jewish students require careful consideration in relation to the laws of keeping kosher, standard accommodation can make it difficult for Jewish students to keep Kosher within accommodation.
- Many Jewish students have experienced antisemitism on campus. As a result, some Jewish students do not feel safe on campus such as being called a 'Jew' in a derogatory manner whilst walking around campus. As the lines of what is considered antisemitism are blurred, students do not feel they can report it to the Students Union, as they are scared it won't be dealt with adequately.

Why this is important to University of Hertfordshire Students:

You need to demonstrate why this is important to Hertfordshire Students e.g.

- University should be accessible to all people, regardless of their background. Exams on Friday evening, Saturday and Jewish festivals means that often, Jewish students are unable to fully participate in Student life. As a student community, we should be supportive of each other and ensure that we all have the best possible chance of succeeding at the University of Hertfordshire.
- All University student should have the opportunity to be involved in student politics and integrate socially at University. Events held on religious observance days, can incur unnecessary feelings of exclusion. As a student community, we should ensure all students have an equal chance of being involved in the University socially and politically.
- University should be a place where all students can live freely and comfortably, regardless of their background. Current Accommodation can make life on campus difficult for certain groups, to the point, that certain groups wouldn't live on campus. Therefore, by making accommodation more accommodating to certain student, a greater sense of a student community will be reached.
- No student on campus should feel unsafe, regardless of background, ethnicity or faith. Therefore, having a clear message of no tolerance to racism of any kind will ensure that all students feel part of the student community.

Action:

Please outline, in as much detail as possible, what action you would like to see undertaken by the Students' Union – e.g.

- The Union should seek to represent all students by lobbying the university to consider examinations being scheduled on Saturdays and Jewish observances, both in individual cases and more broadly.
- The Union should take all measures possible to avoid holding events on Jewish festivals, including but not limited to hustings, candidate briefings, freshers' fairs or other campus-wide activities, where commercially possible.
- The Union should commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day on 27th January every year, in collaboration with the J-Soc, to remember the systematic genocide of 6 million Jewish people, as well as 5 million people of Roma and Cinti descent, disabled individuals, LGBTQ+ individuals, political opponents, ethnic Poles and Slavs and other minorities.
- Lobby the Union to serve kosher food at events where commercially possible.
- The Union should adopt the [International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance \(IHRA\)](#) definition of Antisemitism, and actively promote the intolerance of antisemitism.