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Developed by: Planning, Design and Construction Office

Reviewed by: Space Committee

# Meditation Room Space Guidelines

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## Rationale

These guidelines aim to develop a campus-wide approach to establishing inclusive, multi-functional areas accessible to students, staff and faculty. These guidelines aim to develop a framework that allows for accessible and versatile spaces at key locations within the Harvard Medical School (HMS) campus. These areas will serve as spaces for prayer, meditation, and quiet reflection, fostering a culture of wellness and belonging campus-wide.

## Statement

Harvard Medical School aims to provide access to space on campus for students, staff, and faculty use in the pursuit of wellness. These guidelines are intended to outline best practices for creating multi-purpose, equal access, and inclusive meditation spaces that cater to the varying needs of our community. By establishing areas for activities such as prayer, meditation, and quiet reflection, we aim to promote a culture of holistic well-being and inclusivity across all campus locations.

These guidelines target the design of dedicated meditation spaces, which should be the primary resources for activities such as prayer, meditation, and quiet reflection. When a dedicated meditation space is unavailable or unsuitable, other central or departmental meeting spaces, offices, or support spaces may be used for these functions. Users should refer to the Harvard Medical School Room Scheduling Guidelines for making reservations in centrally scheduled spaces.

### Location of meditation rooms across Harvard Medical School:

- For ease of access and wayfinding, locate meditation spaces off main building entrances or corridors so as not to embed them within departmental space.
- Consider locations and layouts that allow accessible pathways, entry, and clearances.
- Consider proximity to restrooms with a sink for ritual cleansing.

### Recommended for Harvard Medical School meditation rooms:

- Signage designating the space as “Meditation Room”
- Sufficient space to leave coats, shoes, and bags at entry
- Carpeted flooring or area rug(s)
- Flexible and comfortable seating option(s) provided in support of multipurpose room use – e.g. chairs, zabutons, yoga mats, prayer rugs, and sufficient storage for these items
- Provide storage for denominational items such as movable liturgical furnishings, art, books, decorations, etc.



**Not recommended in Harvard Medical School meditation rooms:**

- Sinks
- Wash stations for ritual cleansing (e.g. wudu)
- Trash & recycling bins
- Denominational focal points or permanent fixtures such as altars

**Additional space considerations for Harvard Medical School meditation rooms:**

- Cushioned seats preferred
- Consider the use of white noise machines for auditory comfort
- Visual privacy (e.g. frosted windows, window coverings)
- In spaces with higher capacities, consider using mobile partitions to create zones for private use
- In spaces with lower capacity, consider using a vacant/occupied indicator for the door, either hardware or paper signage

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**Review Period**

Guidelines to be reviewed and updated on an as-needed basis.

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**Related Resources/ Referral Links**

- Map of Quiet Spaces at Harvard: <https://wellness.huhs.harvard.edu/mindfulness>
  - List of Harvard University prayer and meditation paces: <https://studentunionization.harvard.edu/faq/non-residential-spaces>
  - List of mindfulness and meditation spaces on the Harvard Longwood Campus: <https://hlc.harvard.edu/mindfulness-and-meditation/>
  - Countway Meditation Room Guidelines: <https://countway.harvard.edu/news/countway-meditation-room>
  - Whole Building Design Guide (WBDG) Place of Worship: <https://www.wbdg.org/space-types/place-worship>
  - Dunster House Meditation Room: <https://dunster.harvard.edu/mediation-room>
  - Employee Development and Meditation: <https://hlc.harvard.edu/>
  - Harvard Building Interiors Review Policy
  - Harvard Building Interiors Inventory Summary of Interior Spaces
  - Harvard Medical School Room Scheduling Guidelines
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