

RAMADAN & EID GUIDELINES 2020



Why provide these notes? (1)

These notes are intended for managers and teaching staff that supervise staff or teach students who are Muslim and will be fasting during the month of Ramadan. It is intended to increase understanding about the month of Ramadan and offers advice on how to be supportive of colleagues/students who are fasting.

What and when is Ramadan?

- Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic Calendar. In the month of Ramadan observant adult Muslims will give up food or drink during the hours of daylight.
- Fasting is the fourth pillar of Islam. The fast is an act of worship and there are also many other spiritual benefits associated with the month. Individuals will endeavour to increase acts of charity, good deeds and community engagement.
- They will awake before dawn for a meal called "Suhur". At sunset most Muslims will open the fast with a meal called Iftar. It is customary to open the fast with dates and water followed by a normal meal.

Key Dates

Ramadan:

- **Start: 23 April 2020**
- **End: 23 May 2020**

Eid-al-Fitr:

- **Start: 23 May 2020 (evening)**
- **End: 24 May 2020 (evening)**

Eid-ul-Adha:

- **Start: 30 July 2020**
- **End: 3 August 2020**

General advice for managing staff and students that are fasting

The fasting, combined with disturbances in normal sleep patterns, can leave individuals feeling a little bit more tired than normal particularly towards the end of the day. Also towards the latter part of the day, some individuals that are fasting might feel a little light-headed.

Agreement to requests for slight adjustments to the working day during Ramadan will be appreciated by Muslim staff members, if it is possible to accommodate requests e.g. changes to working hours, such as starting earlier and finishing earlier or vice versa.

The effects of fasting may be felt most strongly in the afternoon, so it can help to use the morning for meetings and intellectually challenging work, and perform routine tasks later. Also when Ramadan falls in the summer months, it can be particularly challenging as the days are longer.

Be cognisant that towards the end of the working day that Muslim staff may be tired, as a result of fasting, and so may not respond immediately to last-minute requests.

The NHS has provided a useful guide to a healthy Ramadan with guidance for individuals on best practice throughout this month. Please see the below link for further details. https://warwick.ac.uk/services/equalops/a-z/a_guide_to_healthy_fasting.pdf

Queen Mary may have Muslim staff who remain working on campus. They might wish to offer prayers during the day. This will normally be 2 - 3 times a day for a few minutes each for which the staff members and students can use the Multi-faith Centre prayer rooms equipped with washing facilities in the student hub:

<http://www.qmsu.org/news/article/6965/Multi-Faith-Rooms/>
<http://www.faith.qmul.ac.uk/Faiths>

What happens when Ramadan ends?

The end of Ramadan is marked by the festival of **Eid-al-Fitr**. This year Eid-al-Fitr will occur from the **evening of 23 May to evening of 24 May**.

Muslim staff members may wish to take a day's annual leave from work (as some schools may close for Eid and so staff may have their children at home on that day.)

The Islamic calendar is a lunar calendar so the actual day that Eid falls on will depend on when the new moon is sighted. For this reason it might not be possible for the staff member to be very specific about the day he/she would like to be away from work. This year Eid-al-Adha is anticipated as falling between **30 July to – 3 August 2020**.

What is Eid-al-Adha?

The festival commemorates the Prophet Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice his son when God ordered him to and shows his commitment to submit to God.

People celebrate this festival with an Eid prayer on the morning of the first day. An animal is also sacrificed as an act of worship and submission. The meat is shared with relatives and the poor.

It is a three day festival that will start approximately on **30 July** this year.

Muslim staff members may wish to take a day's annual leave from work. Muslim students celebrating Eid may not come into their lectures on that day.



Further Information

The links below are a useful guide for Muslim staff who would like some guidance and tips for how to manage the working day during this month.

Advice for Muslim staff: <https://mcb.org.uk/resources/ramadan/>

General advice for staff and employers: <https://www.nhsemployers.org/news/2020/04/ramadan-2020>

For further information, please contact the Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Team:
hr-equality@qmul.ac.uk

QMUL Websites – information on religion and belief
<http://www.faith.qmul.ac.uk/policies-and-guidance>

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We note that it may be appropriate to promote understanding of other faiths and will issue other notes if requests received illustrate that need.