

Ramadan and Eid Guidelines 2023 for Staff and Students

Our staff and students from the Muslim faith will be observing the month of Ramadan (a period of fasting).

Fasting is an integral part of religious life, discipline, and an experience of every faith. Ramadan is one of the five pillars of Islam. For Muslims, Ramadan is a very spiritual month; it is a month of special blessings, love and care for others. During this month, Muslims around the globe will be fasting and showing extra kindness to those who are less fortunate. As well as becoming more God-conscious, which results in suppressing the desires for food, drink and sexual activity, staying hungry will build empathy for those less fortunate who go days without food. This empathy will motivate the fasting person to take extra steps in looking after loved ones by supporting them in times of need.

Ramadan 2023 will commence on **Thursday 23 March 2023** and will continue for 29/30 days until **Thursday 20 April 2023** (subject to lunar observation).

The festival of Eid al-Fitr 2023 will be celebrated on **Friday 21 April 2023** (subject to lunar observation).

In the Muslim calendar, a day begins on the sunset of the previous day, so observing Muslims will begin observing Ramadan on the sunset of Wednesday 22 March 2023. After the completion of Ramadan, the day of Eid will be celebrated.

This document aims to raise awareness of this important month for the benefit of our Muslim staff who will be observing.

Key points

- Muslims abstain from taking any food or drink from dawn to sunset on each individual day over the month of Ramadan. The times of the fast for each day will vary between 4am (when the fast commences) to 8.30pm (when the fast is closed and opened). These change daily throughout the month. In practice, this means that Muslims can fast for more than 17 hours a day.
- During this time, Muslims try to follow a normal work/study routine as far as possible but have responsibilities for devotion to extra prayers and readings to their otherwise daily religious commitments.
- Special prayers during the night known as *Taraweeh Salah* is emphasised throughout Ramadan.

Purpose and significance of Ramadan

- To attain nearness and closeness to Almighty God through devotion and commitment to fasting and prayers.
- To experience and appreciate those who are less fortunate than them.

- To give emphasis to charity and generosity - this is especially encouraged during this month.
- To harbour, discipline and harness one's free-will; thereby controlling blameworthy traits such as violence, anger, backbiting etc. and avoiding all sins in general.
- Ramadan is also a time for significant community and family interaction. Many individuals and families will pray and eat together and support each other in many ways, throughout the month.
- After the completion of Ramadan, Muslims celebrate Eid al-Fitr (Holiday of Breaking the Fast) with their families and communities.
- Because Ramadan is a month of refraining from eating and drinking during the daylight hours, Eid is about celebrating the hard work. During Eid, Muslims are prohibited from fasting and therefore must eat, drink and enjoy the day with families and friends.
- The day of Eid begins with the morning Eid prayer which is read anytime between sunrise and noon. Many staff request time away from the university to attend this important prayer and/or to visit families during this sacred Muslim celebration.

Ramadan and Eid arrangements at Preston Campus

The University is keen to provide a safe and inclusive environment, facilities, and arrangements to enable Muslim colleagues and students to observe this practice alongside your working arrangements. The arrangements we have in place this year are:

- Oasis Faith and Spirituality Centre (Kirkham Street) will be accessible to colleagues from 7:30am to 12am midnight, Monday to Sunday.
- Colleagues are welcome to use the prayer room within the Oasis Centre over this period.
- Please call security on 01772 892068 if you have any problems accessing Oasis Centre during this period.
- Traditionally, Muslims open their fast in the evening with dates and water. These will be available to colleagues in the Oasis Centre.
- A full existing kitchen facility will be available at the Oasis Centre.
- You will be expected to bring your own meals if you wish to open the fast with others in the Oasis Centre.
- Anyone using the Oasis Centre during this period is responsible for making sure that the Centre is clean and tidy at the end of each day.
- The prayer timetable for Ramadan will be displayed in the prayer rooms and can also be downloaded from the [Faith, beliefs and spirituality page](#) of the Student Hub.
- Prayer timetables for the Preston Mosques can be found on the [Salah Times website](#).
- Colleagues of all religious backgrounds, beliefs or none are welcome to attend the Oasis Centre over this period to explore, observe or simply come and ask questions.
- Colleagues can also visit the local Mosques for Taraweeh and Eid prayer.
- Eid prayer will take place in the morning of Eid day in the local Mosques.

- Eid prayer times will be sent out closer to the day. Alternatively, they can also be found on the [Salah Times website](#).

Ramadan and Eid arrangements at Burnley Campus

- Oasis Burnley (Room VM134) will be accessible to colleagues for prayers from 7am to 8pm, Monday to Friday excluding Bank Holidays.
- Please call security on 01772 896060 or 01772 892068 (out of hours) if you have any problems accessing Oasis Burnley during this period.
- Traditionally, Muslims open their fast in the evening with dates and water. These will be available at Burnley Campus.
- You will be expected to bring your own meals if you wish to open the fast with others in the Burnley Campus.
- The prayer timetable for Ramadan will be displayed in Oasis Burnley and can also be downloaded from the [Faith, beliefs and spirituality page](#) of the Student Hub.
- Colleagues of all religious backgrounds, beliefs or none are welcome to attend Oasis Burnley over this period to explore, observe or simply come and ask questions.
- Colleagues can also visit the local Mosques for Taraweeh and Eid prayer.
- Eid prayer will take place in the morning of Eid day in the local Mosques.
- Eid prayer times will be sent out closer to the day.

Ramadan and Eid arrangements at Westlakes Campus

- Oasis Westlakes (Room SLB109) will be accessible to colleagues for prayers from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday excluding Bank Holidays
- Please call security on 01772 892068 if you have any problems accessing Oasis Westlakes during this period.
- Traditionally, Muslims open their fast in the evening with dates and water. These will be available to colleagues at Westlakes Campus.
- Summergrove Halls will also be available for colleagues to break their fasts, however, you are expected to bring your own meals if you wish to open the fast with others in Summergrove Halls.
- Taraweeh Salaah will take place in the local Mosque and the local hospital:
 - Whitehaven Bangladeshi Welfare Association, Freemasons Hall, 2 College St, Whitehaven, CA28 7EG. Tel: 07801651402 (Yusuf Miah - Mosque Secretary)
 - West Cumberland Hospital, Homewood Rd, Whitehaven, CA28 8JG. Dr Sulayman Sakha - Tel: 07834705043 Email: Suleyman.sakha@ncic.nhs.uk
Dr Tughral Abdur Rahman - Tel: 07766413781 Email: gariftar@hotmail.com
- The prayer timetable for Ramadan will be displayed in Oasis Westlakes and can also be downloaded from the [Faith, beliefs and spirituality page](#) of the Student Hub.
- Colleagues of all religious backgrounds, beliefs or none are welcome to attend Oasis Burnley over this period to explore, observe or simply come and ask questions.

- Eid prayer will take place in the morning of Eid day in the local Mosque.
- Eid prayer times can be attained by contacting the Mosque Secretary on 07801651402

Guidelines for colleagues during Ramadan

1. Awareness and understanding of Ramadan and other religious festivals can be aided by posting information on staff notice boards or newsletters etc.
2. Some Muslims may feel they are unable to perform this religious obligation. There may be individuals who will be exempt from fasting due to illness, travelling, etc. As a result, for these people, it is essentially a personal decision after receiving advice by an Imam based on the criteria set by Islamic teachings.
3. Many Muslims increase their worship during Ramadan. A quiet and private space to pray and/or rest is often much appreciated. If available, please inform the Muslim colleagues and students about any quiet worship or multi-faith centers that are on site.
4. Where possible, consider allowing Muslim colleagues and students to take a break at sunset for *iftaar* (breaking the fast and evening meal) and prayer.
5. Where possible, consider arranging a suitable space for Muslim colleagues and students to break their fasts and have their meals.
6. As per Islamic teachings, and recent scientific research, a powernap is highly beneficial for the body and mind. If the placement of a student is in a hospital or clinic where rest space is available, expect the Muslim students to take some rest time during their lunch break since they will not be eating. This means Muslim students may prefer to make use of any quiet rooms available.
7. It will be helpful for Muslim colleagues and students to be exempt from non-essential evening functions or significant travel away from home during Ramadan. In the case of students, for the purposes of their placement.
8. If possible, where the working pattern is during the night, consider allowing Muslim colleagues and students some time for late night prayers (*Taraaweeh Salah*). Again, this will have to be weighed against healthcare and educational needs.
9. Anticipate and, if possible, facilitate requests from colleagues and students for time-off at the end of Ramadan for the Eid Al-Fitr celebration.

Please note that in the case of placements, some hospitals and other medical centers may already have a policy in place for their employees who wish to fast in Ramadan.

FAQs on health issues whilst fasting

Blood Tests: Drawing blood from the body does not invalidate the fast.

Covid-19 Tests: Taking a Covid-19 test does not invalidate the fast.

Flu/Covid-19 Jab: It is permissible to receive a Flu or Covid-19 jab whilst fasting.

Injections: It is permissible to take an injection while fasting. However, there is a difference of opinion on nutritional injections. In the case of dentistry, oral injections will nullify the fast if any fluid or blood is swallowed.

Pregnancy: For Muslim women who fast during their pregnancy in the month of Ramadan, if fasting does not have any adverse medical effects on her and the unborn child, then it is permissible for her to fast, but she should be aware of the safest way of doing so. However, if fasting does have adverse medical effects on either mother or child, then it is discouraged for her to fast highlighting points from a medical perspective. Generally, religious leaders say pregnant women should avoid fasting in the long summer days as it may put the health of their unborn child at risk.

Covid-19 symptoms: If a fasting person struggles to continue their fast due to contracting Covid-19 symptoms, it is permissible to break the fast and make up for it later. Individuals with confirmed/suspected Covid-19 with moderate-severe symptoms or severe underlying health conditions can postpone their fasts to a later date. A strong likelihood of falling extremely ill also permits postponing the fasts. In the above cases, if a person thinks they may be able to fast or they are unsure, then they are encouraged to fast. During the day, if they struggle, they can break the fast and make up for it later.

Fidyah: A person who does not fast, or discontinues their fast due to a valid excuse, is required to make up for the fast(s) at a later date. If their condition is such that they are unable to fast perpetually, then they will be required to give Fidyah (charitable form of compensation for each fast missed). The price of Fidyah is the same as Sadaqah Al-Fitr. Fidyah does not discharge the obligation if a person is able to fast at a later date (e.g., in winter months when the days are shorter).

Exemptions: The following are exempt from fasting in the month of Ramadan:

- Travellers (*Shar'ee Musafir*)
- Minor children
- People with unmanageable diabetes
- People who are ill (physically or mentally)
- People with incurable diseases
- People with unmanageable chronic diseases
- Women who are menstruating or with lochia discharge
- Women who are pregnant or lactating and have credible concerns about their own or their child's health
- People who provide care to Covid-19 patients and are at real risk of dehydration due to wearing PPE for long hours

Please note that some of the people listed above will be required to make up for their fasts on other days when they regain their full health. Should you have any queries regarding your medical status, please consult your medical GP in conjunction with the University Imam who will be happy to assist.

Further information about Ramadan

- 1) UCLan Student Hub
<https://msuclanac.sharepoint.com/sites/StudentHub/SitePages/Faith,-beliefs-and-spirituality.aspx>
- 2) Ramadan Resources
<https://mcb.org.uk/resources/ramadan/>
- 3) British Islamic Medical Association
<https://britishima.org/ramadan/>
- 4) Ramadan Diet
<https://mcb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Ramadan-Dietician-talk-23rd-May.pdf>
- 5) An Introduction to the Month of Ramadan
https://youtu.be/irZk6zy_31g
- 1) For information on what nullifies the fast and what does not, please visit:
<https://islamicportal.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/What-nullifies-the-fast-and-what-does-not.pdf>

Guidance prepared in consultation with Muslim colleagues and students at UCLan and in conjunction with UK Higher Education Muslim Chaplains.

Staff are welcome to contact the Imam should they require further information on Ramadan.

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Updated in February 2023