



University of Leeds

Briefing on the observance of Ramadan 2016

Our students and staff from a Muslim faith will be observing the month of Ramadan (a period of fasting) this year over the period **6th June – 5th July** 2016. The exact date depends on the moon sightings based on the lunar calendar.

This briefing, written in response to requests from colleagues asking for guidance on how to support staff and students observing Ramadan, aims to raise staff awareness of this important event for our students, staff and visitors and its impact on workplace and student education activities. It provides practical information on the significance of this period, what it involves, arrangements in place on our campus, contact details of relevant staff and further sources of information, advice and guidance.

The Equality Policy Unit has also developed a range of other guides on the major faith communities in the UK, as well as a religious festival & events calendar. They are available at: www.equality.leeds.ac.uk/for-staff/resources-and-toolkits/ and www.equality.leeds.ac.uk/festival-events-calendar/.

Ramadan – key points

1. The dates of Ramadan this year are 6th June – 5th July 2016.
2. Muslims abstain from taking any food or drinks from dawn to sunset on each individual day over this month. The times of the fast for each day are approximately 2.50am (when the fast commences) to 9.30pm (when the fast ends/is opened). More detailed information on timings can be found at: www.salahtimes.com/uk/leeds/ramadan.

In practice this means that Muslims fast over this period for approximately 19 hours a day.

3. During this time, Muslims try to follow a normal work/study routine as far as possible, but generally have responsibilities for devotion to extra prayers and readings to their otherwise daily religious commitments.
4. Students and staff will most likely take personal responsibility for managing their commitment to Ramadan themselves.

Purpose and significance

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

- To give particular emphasis to charity and generosity - this is especially encouraged during this month.

Ramadan is also a time for significant community and family spirit and providing support. Many individuals and families will pray and eat together and support each other in many ways throughout. At the end of Ramadan, all Muslims observe the festival of Eid ul Fitr with their families and communities.

What provision is the University making?

The University has many Muslim students and staff. We are very keen to provide a safe and inclusive environment and facilities and arrangements to ensure that they are able to observe Ramadan alongside their studying, working and living on campus. The arrangements we have in place this year are:

1. There are three Islamic prayer areas: the Green Room, located beside the Edge Sports Centre, Room 13.08 in the Edward Boyle Library and Cemetery Lodge, which is adjacent to the Faculty of Engineering buildings. The rooms are open 8am-8pm (Monday-Friday) and a key for the Edward Boyle Library room is held in the Library reception. Access to the Green Room and Cemetery Lodge is controlled by key codes and these can be obtained from: equality@leeds.ac.uk.
2. The University's Chaplaincy Team offers support to staff and students. Further information about the University's chaplaincy service is available at: <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/chaplaincy/>
3. The University's Muslim Student Adviser is offering talks, information, advice, guidance and support. Her details are: Farhat Yaqoob - 0113 343 5071, f.yaqoob@leeds.ac.uk
4. Facilities and services are available nearby at the Grand Mosque in Leeds. More information can be found at: <http://www.leedsgrandmosque.com/>
5. Advice, support and guidance is also available to managers, staff and students from the Equality Policy Unit: 0113 343 3964 or at equality@leeds.ac.uk

Guidance for managers for supporting staff

Staff will manage their own observance of Ramadan. Practices may vary between individuals due to health, travel and other personal circumstances. Individual members of staff may request leave over this period, for example, to work half-days and/or shorter working weeks to enable them to observe Ramadan. Others may request more flexible working arrangements. Leave requests are also likely to be made to enable staff to celebrate Eid with their families at the end of Ramadan. These requests should be managed in line with all existing University HR policies.

Managers are advised to demonstrate empathy, sensitivity and understanding to balance supporting our staff to manage their Ramadan commitments alongside ensuring we meet all our business needs. Managers may otherwise wish to consider meeting times over this period which enables the contribution of most staff.

Further information, advice or support

Students, staff and visitors are welcome to contact any of the following student/staff members for any further information or enquiries:

Leeds University Student Islamic Society	http://www.leedsuniversityunion.org.uk/groups/isoc/
Sabiha Patel/Maria Ayaz Equality and Inclusion Managers Equality Policy Unit	epusp@leeds.ac.uk 0113-343-3964 m.ayaz@leeds.ac.uk 0113-343-7546 or equality@leeds.ac.uk
Farhat Yaqoob Muslim Student Adviser	f.yaqoob@leeds.ac.uk 0113 343 5071
Universities' Chaplaincy in Leeds	chaplaincy@leeds.ac.uk 0113-343-5071
Faculty/Service HR Managers	Local contacts

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