

Briefing on the Observance of Ramadan 2017

A number of our students and staff from the Muslim faith may be observing the month of Ramadan (a period of fasting) this year over the period of **26/27th May 2017- 25/26th June**. Different dates are indicated at each side of the period as the exact date depends on the moon sightings based on the lunar calendar. As such, the exact date of the start and end of Ramadan will only be determined on the late evening of the 26thth May and Eid will be determined on 25thth June respectively.

This briefing aims to raise awareness of this important event to our students, staff and visitors and aims to provide practical information to everyone on the significance of this event, what it involves, the arrangements in place on our campuses, contact details of relevant staff and further sources of useful advice and information.

Ramadan – Key Points

1. The dates of Ramadan are **26/27th May 2017- 25/26th June 2017**
2. Muslims abstain from taking any food or drinks from Dawn to Sunset on each individual day over this month. In practice this means that Muslims fast over this period for up to 18 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 take responsibility for managing their commitment to Ramadan themselves.

Purpose and Significance

- To attain nearness and closeness to God through devotion and commitment to fasting and prayers.
- To experience and appreciate those who are less fortunate than them.
- 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 Provisions are our University Making?

Our University has many Muslim students and staff including UK and International students who will be based in Leeds over the summer and therefore for the duration of Ramadan too. We are very keen to provide a safe and inclusive environment and facilities and arrangements to enable them to ensure that they are able to observe

Ramadan alongside their studying, working and living on campus arrangements. The arrangements we have in place this year are-

1. Our current prayer space provision is as follows:

City Campus – Faith Space, Woodhouse Building, Floor 2 with access via swipe card.
Headingley Campus – The Grange, Ground floor with access via swipe card

2. The Universities in Leeds Chaplaincy Team offers support to staff and students of all faith and none. Further information about the Chaplaincy service is available at: <http://unichaplaincy.org.uk/> and <http://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/studenthub/chaplaincy/>
3. Facilities and services at the nearby Grand Mosque in Leeds. Further information and details of prayer timetables can be found at: <http://www.leedsgrandmosque.com/> Also the Leeds Makkah Masjid mosque at <http://www.makkahmasjid.co.uk>
4. The University's Muslim Faith Advisors are Mumtaz Khan, M.A.Khan@leedsbeckett.ac.uk and Rehana Bakhat R.Bakhat@leedsbeckett.ac.uk
5. Advice, support and guidance is also available to managers, staff and students from the Equality and Diversity Team by emailing equality@leedsbeckett.ac.uk or from the Student Union Islamic Society at <http://www.leedsbeckettsu.co.uk/groups/isoc>

Degree Ceremonies – July 2017

This year Ramadan ends before our degree ceremonies begin on 24th July. Our prayer facilities will be accessible to staff, students and visitors throughout the graduation period.

Guidance for Managers

Staff will manage their observance of Ramadan themselves and 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, working 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 simply advised to demonstrate empathy, sensitivity and understanding to balance supporting our staff in managing their Ramadan commitments alongside ensuring we meet all our business needs.

Managers may also wish to consider meeting times over this period which enables the participation of most staff.

We thank colleagues at University of Leeds and Leeds Beckett Faith Forum for this guidance.