Briefing on the observance of Ramadan 2019

This briefing aims to raise awareness of the importance of Ramadan, and the implications for Muslim students and staff observing this holy month.

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic lunar year. The exact dates shown below (which could vary one day either side) depend on the moon sightings based on the lunar calendar.

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 themselves.
- A time of charity and generosity - this is especially encouraged during this month.
- It is also a time for community and family spirit and providing support. Individuals and families will pray and eat together and support each other.

Key points

- The dates of Ramadan in 2019 are 5 May to 4 June.
- Muslims who are observing Ramadan abstain from any food and drink between dawn and sunset on each day of this month. The times of the fast for each day are approximately 03:00 to 21:00 or 21:30. This means that Muslims fast over this period for approximately 18 hours a day.


- During this time Muslims try to follow a normal study/work routine as far as possible, but have responsibilities for devotion to extra prayers and readings to their daily religious commitments.
- The end of Ramadan is marked by the festival of Eid ul Fitr a celebration with family and community.
- Students and staff are expected to take personal responsibility for managing their commitment to Ramadan.

What provision is the University making?

The University aims to provide an inclusive campus environment and has put in place the following facilities and arrangements to ensure that students and staff are able to observe Ramadan together with their study, work and life on campus and in the city of York:

- There are a number of facilities for prayer and reflection on campus.
- Contacts for support and advice:
  - Students - the York Islamic Society (ISOC).
  - Staff - the Staff Race Equality Forum.
• See information about prayer times and facilities at the York Mosque that is located in Bull Lane, Lawrence Street, York, YO10 3EN.

• As Ramadan in 2019 coincides with the examination period between 13 May and 1 June, the Exams Office provides information for students wishing to observe a religious commitment on a particular day during the published examinations periods. The University will make every effort to accommodate requests though it cannot guarantee that they will all be met.

**Practical advice on supporting students and staff**

Individual students and members of staff will manage their own observance of Ramadan - this may vary due to health, travel and other personal circumstances.

Managers, colleagues and staff supporting students are advised to demonstrate empathy, sensitivity and understanding to balance supporting students and members of staff to manage their Ramadan commitments alongside ensuring that all the University’s business needs are met.

- **Prayers**
  
  Students and members of staff may wish to offer prayers during the day (there may be up to two prayers that may impact upon the timings of a study and working day). More specific information on the daily times for York can be found at [www.yorkmosque.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/ymic-May-2019-Prayer-Timetable.pdf](http://www.yorkmosque.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/ymic-May-2019-Prayer-Timetable.pdf)

- **Annual leave for staff**

  Members of staff may request flexibility around their working arrangements, for example, to work shorter days and/or working weeks during Ramadan. There will also be leave requests so members of staff can celebrate Eid at the end of Ramadan with their families.

- **Meetings/ events**

  Meeting organisers may wish to consider timing over this period to enable as many students and/or members of staff as possible to attend. It is also considerate to try to avoid holding day-time events that involve food and drink during the month of Ramadan, where possible.

  It is fine for individuals to eat and drink in the presence of Muslims that are fasting, but it would be courteous to apologise in advance.

**Further information, advice or support**

- York Islamic Society (ISOC) - [www.yorkisoc.co.uk/](http://www.yorkisoc.co.uk/)
- Staff Race Equality Forum (SREF) - equality@york.ac.uk
- The University’s Chaplaincy Team - [www.york.ac.uk/students/support/faith/chaplaincy/](http://www.york.ac.uk/students/support/faith/chaplaincy/)
- Equality and Diversity Office - equality@york.ac.uk or 01904 324680

Equality and Diversity Office, May 2019