

Ramadan

Guidance for staff and students

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Introduction

Many Muslim students and staff will be fasting during Ramadan. This resource provides guidance for people observing Ramadan on staying well and where to find support at King's if they need it. It also provides educational material on Ramadan and guidance for managers to accommodate the needs of Muslim colleagues during this time.

Muslim staff and students will manage their own observance of Ramadan and observance may vary between individuals due to health, travel, and other personal circumstances.

What is Ramadan?

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar and the month when the Holy Qur'an was revealed to the Islamic prophet Muhammad.

The month traditionally begins and ends based on the sighting of the new moon. In 2024, the month-long fast of Ramadan begins around 10 March and ends around 8 April.

Ramadan is a holy month of religious reflection and fasting during Ramadan is one of the Five Pillars of Islam. During this month Muslims are encouraged to increase their good deeds, from acts of charity and community engagement to increasing good values such as generosity, solidarity, kindness, patience, and forgiveness. Fasting means not eating or drinking between the hours of sunrise and sunset.

How is it observed?

Ramadan is considered one of the holiest months of the year for Muslims. In Ramadan, Muslims commemorate the revelation of the Qur'an, and fast from food and drink during the sunlit hours as a means of drawing closer to God and cultivating self-control, gratitude, and compassion for those less fortunate.

Ramadan is a month of intense spiritual rejuvenation with a heightened focus on devotion, during which Muslims spend extra time reading the Qur'an and performing special prayers.

Eid ul-Fitr

At the end of Ramadan, Muslims celebrate one of their major holidays called Eid ul-Fitr or the 'Festival of the Breaking of the Fast.' In 2024 the holiday is expected to be on 10 April. A special prayer and sermon are held the morning of Eid day, followed by a community celebration usually in a park or large hall. Food, games and presents for children are important parts of the festivities, as friends and family spend the day socializing, eating and reuniting with old acquaintances.

The greeting **Eid Mubarak** means 'blessed holiday!'

Staying healthy during Ramadan

The dates of Ramadan vary from year to year, currently it falls within Semester Two. People may find managing work, study and personal commitments alongside their health and nutrition while observing Ramadan challenging.

The British Nutrition Foundation have information and resources on having [A Healthy Ramadan](#) which may be helpful. In addition, our Kings Sports & Wellness team have prepared [practical guides for nutrition and exercise](#) to help those in our community observing Ramadan stay healthy.

Guidance on observing Ramadan for those with health conditions

People for whom fasting would be a hardship are exempted from fasting. This includes anyone who is sick or traveling; women who are pregnant, nursing, or on their period; or older people who are too weak or ill to fast. They can make up the fast later, except for those who cannot fast due to age or chronic illness. Anyone unsure about being well enough to fast should professional medical advice from their GP.

What to do if someone becomes unwell while fasting

If someone becomes unwell during Ramadan, they should stop fasting and seek medical advice by visiting [111.nhs.uk](https://www.nhs.uk) or their GP practice's website. Alternatively, they can call 111 or phone their practice directly.

How does the University support Muslim staff and students?

Meet the Chaplains

Staff and students who would like to discuss their thoughts and approach to Ramadan and fasting during their work and studies can contact our Muslim Chaplains [Imam Abdul Mumin Choudhury](#) and [Romana Kazmi](#).

[All our Chaplains](#) are available to talk one-to-one with anyone at King's. They are here to provide pastoral support to anyone who needs it. For general support, advice and guidance please contact chaplaincy@kcl.ac.uk.

KCLSU Islamic Society

Students can connect with the Muslim community through the [KCLSU Islamic Society \(ISOC\)](#).

Support services

King's provides all staff with access to a free service, our [Employee Assistance Programme](#) (EAP), which includes telephone support – 24 hours a day, 365 days a year – and an online hub where you can find factsheets, videos and podcasts.

Visit Student Services Online for details of the full range of [support services for our students](#).

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

Please contact diversity@kcl.ac.uk if you have any queries or concerns regarding equality, diversity and inclusion for Muslim members of the King's community.

Prayers and praying facilities

Prayers fall into timeslots and according to some schools of thought, if there are extenuating circumstances for some Muslims it may be permissible for prayers to be combined.

***For example:** Duhr (Midday) and Asr (late afternoon) prayers can be combined and offered at either Duhr or Asr time.*

Maghreb (Sunset) and Isha (Night) prayers can be combined and offered at either Maghreb or Isha time.

[Approximate Prayer Timings during Ramadan](#)

Prayer Facilities

We have prayer facilities for the use of all staff and students to use enabling everyone to fulfil the requirements of their faith. The prayer rooms are open during King's Campus' opening hours as well as for Friday prayers [Muslim Prayer Rooms](#)

Guidance for managers and staff

As part of King's commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion, we aim to support all staff of all beliefs and backgrounds to observe their religious practices.

- In keeping with [King's Religion & Belief Policy](#), all staff are expected to be respectful of colleagues and students who are fasting and mindful of some of the challenges they may experience. **Managers have a responsibility to positively engage with, acknowledge and enable Muslim staff to observe Ramadan.**
- **Muslim staff members are entitled to request flexibility in the arrangement of shifts, break times and working patterns during Ramadan.** Requests for flexibility will vary depending on the staff member's circumstances but might include shorter or more frequent breaks or more time than usual to take part in prayer. Managers should sympathetically consider these requests and try to accommodate them wherever it is reasonably practicable to do so, subject to business needs.
- Some Muslim staff will wish to take leave from work to participate in Eid-ul-Fitr, the festival that marks the end of Ramadan. The exact date of Eid is dependent on the sighting of the moon. **Managers are asked to be reasonable and flexible where possible with staff members who may not be able to request a specific leave date in advance for Eid-ul-Fitr.**

- **Muslim staff members who wish to make flexible working requests are also asked to be reasonable, flexible, and sympathetic to the demands of their job.** When requesting leave, it is helpful to give managers as much notice as possible, even if only an estimation of dates is possible.
- **It is considerate to avoid scheduling staff social activities or working lunches during Ramadan.** As always, it is good practice to ensure that [meeting times](#) are as inclusive as possible for the majority of attendees and mindful of non-standard working patterns.

For further advice, please contact your local [HR People Partner](#). Staff with questions about any faith, belief or religion are also encouraged to [contact the Chaplaincy](#), whose team of Chaplains are available to speak to any member of King's community in confidence.

Guidance for students

This year Ramadan begins during the semester two teaching period and ends during the spring holiday. See the [King's Academic Calendar](#) for details.

Although students and staff will be managing their own observance of Ramadan and observance may vary between individuals, we are aware fasting may have an impact upon students' preparation and submission of coursework and revision. Students concerned about the impact of Ramadan on their studies are encouraged to speak to their Personal Tutor and department as soon as possible and familiarise themselves with the [Mitigating Circumstances](#) guidance.

Students who feel that observance of Ramadan has had a significant adverse impact, along with other specific and individual circumstances, upon their ability to study for, prepare and submit an assessed piece of work or study and prepare for an exam should consider submitting a mitigating circumstances form (MCF).

This guidance has been developed by the Students & Education Directorate with the support of:

- The Dean and Chaplaincy
- Organisational Development (Human Resources)
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (Human Resources)
- King's Sport (Estates & Facilities)
- Summer Programmes (School of Professional & Continuing Education)
- KCL Islamic Society (student society)

King's College London is committed to creating an inclusive environment that promotes equality of opportunity for everyone in our community and recognises religion and belief as a protected characteristic. King's values the diversity of our staff and student body and recognises that this is both a strength and a defining feature of King's as a London university in a global context. You can find out more about equality, diversity & inclusion at King's on the [EDI webpages](#).

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