The University’s Calendar has been developed to celebrate the diverse nature of its community, promoting respect and understanding between different groups.

“Diversity is the one true thing we all have in common. Celebrate it every day.”

Author Unknown

By understanding and embracing difference we can help to create an environment based on the principles of dignity, fairness, equality and respect.
INTRODUCTION

The University’s award winning diversity calendar is a practical resource that includes details of all the main religious festivals and major national and international days of celebration or memorial. It can help us to ensure that meetings and events are not planned when key sections of the workforce, student population or customer base may not be able to participate.

We have focused on the six major world faiths currently represented within our community - Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism. This does not mean we do not recognise that there are many more faiths equally as important. We also recognise that a large proportion of our University community may have no religion or belief.

We are continually trying to improve the information we provide, therefore if you have any constructive feedback or suggestions, please don’t hesitate to contact us.

Thank you.

NOMINATED CHARITY: GREATER MANCHESTER IMMIGRATION AID UNIT

This year we asked people to nominate a charity for our Diversity Calendar. From all the entries chosen we have selected the Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit. This is a voluntary organisation committed to challenging inequality and promoting the rights of refugees, migrants and other minority communities within the region. GMIAU provides immigration legal advice, support and representation to over 5000 people each year, many of whom are fleeing conflict and/or persecution. The Unit’s team of highly committed staff and volunteers demonstrate all that’s best about community commitment and solidarity to support people in need. Find out more about their work and how you can support them here: http://gmiau.org/
We have a number of diversity champions across campus – without their support and commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion a lot of our activities could go unnoticed.

“I am deeply committed to the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion and I am proud to be President and Vice-Chancellor of a University that champions these principles as part of its approach to every aspect of its work. Many areas of the University are doing great work leading us forward in this and I look forward to building on this in 2018.”

PROFESSOR DAME NANCY ROTHWELL – PRESIDENT & VICE CHANCELLOR

‘The Diversity Calendar offers wonderful week by week highlights of cultural and religious events important to staff across the institution. It is a great reminder of the diversity of the University and the value we attach to an environment where all colleagues are respected regardless of their values or beliefs. In particular, in my role as BAME Champion, the calendar provides a clear vision that the strength of the institution is located in its inclusivity and commitment to equality.’

JAMES THOMPSON - PROFESSOR OF APPLIED AND SOCIAL THEATRE | VICE PRESIDENT - SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND SENIOR CHAMPION FOR BAME STAFF NETWORK

“I am proud to support ALLOUT throughout the year on their activities including the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index where we have achieved a top 100 position for the last three years. I’ll be working closely with them throughout 2018 to maintain this great achievement!”

KAREN HEATON – DIRECTOR OF HR AND SENIOR CHAMPION FOR ALLOUT
Every year the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team contribute to the University’s Annual Performance Review (APR) by collecting and analysing data from around the University. By analysing anonymous data from applications, short listing, appointments and promotions we are able to identify areas that might require particular action.

It is important that we hold the most current and complete data to facilitate analysis, ensure equality of opportunity, provide an inclusive culture and benefit from a workforce with a diverse population. Why not start the New Year by checking and refreshing your equality data. You can do this through the MyView portal (where you collect your salary information).

All reported data is anonymous and there are measures in place to ensure people can not be identified (i.e. we never report numbers where the figure is lower than 10). With a full data picture at institutional, faculty, school and local levels we can ensure all staff are treated equally and fairly with resources being used correctly.

Anonymity and protection of your personal data is secured by Information Governance Coordinators who are team members specifically assigned to make sure that processing of your personal information is in line with the data protection regulations.

Data campaigns such as the one in this image (FSE 2016) highlight how important accurate data is so we have a true picture of our staff makeup.

More information can be found at: 
www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/services/equality-anddiversity/equalityinformation/equalityreports
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**Christianity**
- 2 - Candlemas
- 13 - Shrove Tuesday
- 14 - St Valentine’s Day
- 14 - Ash Wednesday
- 14 - Lent Begins

**Judaism**
- 14 - Ash Wednesday
- 14 - Lent Begins
- 14 - Shrove Tuesday

**Buddhism**
- 15 - Parivarinivana Day
- 16 - Losar (Tibetan)

**Hinduism**
- 12 - Kumbha Sankranti
- 13 - Shivaratri

**Judaism**
- 28 - Fast of Esther

**Other**
- 16 - Chinese New Year (Year of the Dog)

**Next Month:** DIVERSITY IN RECRUITMENT
The 2018 theme for LGBT History Month is Geography – Mapping Our World. LGBT History Month and the events that surround it are an opportunity for us to look at different experiences of being LGBT or being an LGBT ally. Whilst it is no longer illegal to be gay in the UK, there are still 72 countries which have anti-LGBT laws. Under some systems of law, homosexuality is even punishable by death.

Throughout February we’ll be asking people to map out their own LGBT experiences – whether directly or indirectly. Have you experienced or witness homophobic, biphobic or transphobic abuse? Do you have a heart-warming story to tell about something that’s happened?

We are very fortunate to live in a more tolerant and accepting society and whilst we should celebrate this we also need to keep raising awareness of LGBT issues and how we can influence and help those who are not in the same position.

You can make a difference by joining in the activities of ALLOUT or by becoming an ALLOUT ally – more information can be found here: www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/allout

Cristian-Emanuel Buda designed this year’s logo and said ‘The compass suggests that LGBT people can find their way in a world that is not always accepting. It is emphasizing that love wins and their unity is important because only together they can fight for their rights and “travel” with honour in their life journey.'
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**DIVERSITY IN RECRUITMENT**

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<tr>
<td>1 - St. David's Day</td>
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<td>8 - International Women’s Day</td>
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<td>17 - St Patrick’s Day</td>
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<td>29 - Maundy Thursday</td>
<td>18 - Rama Navami</td>
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**NEXT MONTH: PASSOVER**
One of the ways that we can ensure diversity of our staff and student population is to employ diversity in our recruitment processes. When we talk about recruitment, we naturally assume this is employment, but we should also keep in mind that we recruit students to attend courses too.

We are proud of our diverse recruitment methods for both staff and students and these come in many different guises:

- Using different methods of recruitment that appeal to different sections of the population and our local community;
- Supporting/funding employment initiatives such as ‘The Works’;
- Advertising in a variety of publications and using different media;
- Using different assessment methods;
- Ensuring any internal promotions or opportunities are available to all;
- Attending a cross section of schools and colleges around the world;
- Ensuring anyone on any recruitment panel is fully trained up in both equality and diversity issues as well as unconscious bias.

By checking these activities against our applications, shortlists and appointments we can always be sure that we are employing the fairest method of recruitment and ensuring our own population is reflective of the local community.
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**Christianity**
- 23 - Easter Day

**Hinduism**
- 3 - Mahavir Jayanti

**Islam**
- 13 - Isra and Mi’raj

**Judaism**
- 12 - Yom HaShoah
- 18 - Yom Hazikaron
- 19 - Yom HaAtzmaut

**Buddhism**
- 30 - Theravadin New Year

**Sikh**
- 14 - Baisakhi (Vaisaki)

**ATHENA SWAN**

**DEADLINE**

**NEXT MONTH: MENTAL HEALTH / WELLBEING**

**EASTER BREAK 23 MAR - 15 APR**

**APRIL 2018**
Passover is the eight day festival that marks the liberation of the Jewish people from the Slavery of Egypt and their establishment as an independent nation. It occurs in the spring with the date varying due to the differences between the Jewish calendar and the regular one. The first two days are celebrated by a special meal, “The Sedar,” which features a telling of the story with special foods eaten that echo the tale. No bread or leavening is allowed the entire time and Matzo unleavened bread is eaten instead.

We are lucky to work in a multi-cultural, multi-faith establishment and we should embrace this diversity, see what we can learn from different religious festivals and be prepared to adapt our timetables wherever it’s possible.

We have created a special factsheet about the celebration:

http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=20128

To find out more about different faith groups at the University please visit:

www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/equality-and-diversity/equality/equality-groups/religion-or-belief-including-lack-of-belief/
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**Christianity**
- 10 - Ascension Day
- 20 - Pentecost
- 21 - Whit Monday
- 27 - Trinity Sunday
- 31 - Corpus Christi

**Islam**
- 20-21 - Shavuot
- 31 - Lag B’Omer

**Buddhism**
- 29 - Visakha Puja
- 29 - Vesak/Buddha Day

**Judaism**
- 10 - Lailat al Bara’ah
- 16 - Ramadan begins
- 17 - IDAHOBIT (International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia)
- 28 - Spring Bank Holiday

**Other**
- 7 - Early May Bank Holiday
- 10 - Staff Network Group Day
- 28 - Spring Bank Holiday

**MAY 2018**

**MENTAL HEALTH / WELLBEING**

**EARLY MAY BANK HOLIDAY**

**SUGGESTED EVENTS**
- **NEXT MONTH: GENDER**

**MEN’S HEALTH WEEK**
Looking after our physical wellbeing also has a knock on effect to our mental wellbeing. This issue is often hidden, unexplored and stigmatised. The truth is we all have mental health - so it's important to take this opportunity to evaluate what we do to look after our mind.

1 in 4 people will have a mental health problem in any one year and 9 out of 10 will face discrimination as a result. It is important for us to all understand that just because mental health problems are hidden, this doesn't mean they are not real. By understanding that some people have non-physical disabilities we can become more aware and make sure that people are not isolated and excluded from activities. It is easy to forget that 4 in 4 of us have mental health. When we think about mental health, we usually think about people living with mental health problems, but good mental health isn't simply the absence of a diagnosable problem.

8th-14th May is Mental Health Awareness Week

www.mentalhealth.org.uk/tags/mental-health-awareness-week

At a University level, you can find out more about the six ways to Wellbeing here and how you can be involved in different events and activities throughout the year. www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/wellbeing/
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**GENDER: MEN’S HEALTH WEEK AND NATIONAL WOMEN IN ENGINEERING DAY**

**SUMMER BREAK 8 JUN - 16 SEP**

**NEXT MONTH: CHARTER MARKS AND ACCREDITATIONS**

- **Islam**
  - 15 - Eid al Fitr
  - 22 - Lailat al Kadr

- **Sikh**
  - 16 - Guru Arjan Martyrdom

- **Other**
  - 17 - Father’s Day
  - 21 - Summer Solstice
  - 23 - NWED - National Women in Engineering Day

**#GOHOMEONTIME**
Men’s Health Week runs from 11-17 June 2018. Past themes of this annual event have focused on topics which particularly affect men such as the complications of excessive belly fat, the impact of stress and work, and promoting healthy living. The week-long event aims to raise awareness around the statistic that 1 in 5 men die before the age of 65, and offer support for improving health and wellbeing. The importance of promoting Men’s Health is further supported by some alarming facts:

On average, men die 3.7 years earlier than women... on top of which, the average life-expectancy for men in the UK is region specific; 10 years shorter in Glasgow than in Kensington & Chelsea. Men are twice as likely as women to die prematurely from diabetes and 67% more likely to die from the common cancers.

Men go to the doctor less than women... ’reluctance to take time off work’ cited as a common reason for not having regular check-ups1. Whilst the number of appointments is comparable between genders post-retirement age, a third of working-age men would be embarrassed or ashamed to take time off work for mental health issue such as anxiety or depression compared to only 13% for a physical injury.

Men are three times more likely to die from suicide than women...... disturbingly, suicide is the biggest cause of death for men under 45 and the incidences of suicide in men over the age of 50 are similar. However men only account for 36% of referrals for psychological therapies. Whilst personality traits have a role in susceptibility, other factors which increase the risk of suicide among men are alcohol/drug abuse, marriage/relationship breakdowns, mid-life unhappiness, emotional illiteracy, socio-economic factors (particularly unemployment)2.

Men’s Health Week was founded by The Men’s Health Forum who carry out research and challenge health agencies to address these concerning data. Some of the ways in which you can champion this campaign are: reading and supporting the Men’s Health Manifesto3, donating to the Men’s Health Forum to help fund their research and resources, encouraging the men in your life to access the articles and online discussions hosted by the Men’s Health Forum4, by raising awareness through using the Men’s Health Week logo in your email signature or by using social media to raise awareness of this week.

Above all else, start the conversation.

1 2016 survey of 1,112 employed men conducted by Opinion Leader for the Men’s Health Forum // 2 Review by the Samaritans 2012 (Men, Suicide and Society) // 3 www.menshealthforum.org.uk/mens-health-manifesto // 4 www.menshealthforum.org.uk/male-health
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**Judaism**
- 22 - Fast of Tammuz
- 22 - Tish'a B'av

**Buddhism**
- 28 - Asala Dharma Day

**Hinduism**
- 9 - Guru Purnima

**Next Month:** Career Progression & Development

**Summer Break:** 8 Jun - 16 Sep
The University holds several awards and accreditations which fall under the equality and diversity umbrella. It is important for our institution to recognise that there is still work to be done in certain areas and by applying for certain accreditations we can ensure that these issues are on the University’s agenda.

We can address issues of gender inequality through the Athena SWAN Charter - the University currently has a bronze award with many of our 17 schools already achieving silver; By signing up to the Disability Confident Scheme we can ensure that both mentally and physically disabled candidates are encouraged to apply for university positions and once here they have the extra support offered by the university having signed the Time to Change pledge.

The Stonewall index recognises that there is still work to be done for LGBT equality in the workplace and we are proud to have featured in the Top 100 for the past three years. In 2015 we were one of a handful of Universities to be awarded the Bronze level of the Race Equality Chartermark ensuring we progress equality via a three year action plan for BAME staff.

We have won several awards for our work and campaigns showing that the efforts made by teams around the University do have a positive impact both internally and externally.

By signing up to these accreditations and charter marks the university is showing its commitment to equality for everyone at the university – whether they be a member of staff, a student or a visitor.

Find out more about all of these awards here: www.manchester.ac.uk/connect/jobs/equality-diversity-inclusion/awards/
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**Christianity**
- **6** - Transfiguration of the Lord
- **15** - Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

**Islam**
- **20** - Waqf al Arafah - Hajj Day
- **22-25** - Eid al Adha

**Buddhism**
- **26** - Obon (Ullambana)

**Hinduism**
- **3** - Radha Govinda Jhulana Yatra
- **7** - Jhulana Yatra ends
- **15** - Krishna Janmashtami
- **26** - Raksha Bandhan

**Other**
- **27** - Summer Bank Holiday

**NEXT MONTH:** STUDENT AMBASSADORS
Who is responsible for developing your career? Your manager? Your mentor? You?

If you don’t take control of your own career development, then maybe no-one will. Or worse still, someone else might. By taking control of your career development you can plan the direction you want to take. Your plans may not always work and you may experience set-backs along the way, but you are more likely to be able to deal with set-backs if you believe in your plan and take control yourself.

To begin your career development planning take a look here: www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/staff-learning-and-development/pss-library-and-cultural-institutions/personal-skills-and-development/career-development/

Learning and development opportunities arise in many situations, from a chance conversation with a colleague, to a formal workshop in a training room. We are learning all the time through a combination of formal and informal situations and through other people.

If you have identified a development need, take time to reflect on whether this need is related to a knowledge/skill/motivation gap and then consider whether the best way for you is:

- **Learning through experience,**
  - Volunteering for a task or project where you can share your skills with others
  - Joining a working group outside your normal role
  - Using just in time online resources like Sixty Second Skills, eMentor or Ted Talks
- **Learning through others,**
  - Your line manager, mentor or coach
  - Networking/Action learning groups
  - Shadowing an expert
- **Formal learning**
  - Webinars
  - Face to face workshops
  - External professional qualifications

For a range of learning and development opportunities check the L&D Website: www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/staff-learning-and-development/
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**Hinduism**
- 1 - Sri Balarama (Appearance)
- 4 - Nandotsava
- 12 - Ganesh Chathurthi
- 17 - Radhastami
- 21 - Sri Vamana Dvadasi

**Islam**
- 11 - Al-Hijra-Muharram

**Judaism**
- 10-11 - Rosh Hashanah
- 12 - Fast of Gedalliah
- 19 - Yom Kippur
- 23-24 - Sukkot

**Other**
- 7 - Stonewall Submission Date
- 22 - September Equinox
- 17-21 - Welcome Week
- 23 - Bisexual Visibility Day

**NEXT MONTH:** BLACK HISTORY MONTH
The University, in collaboration with the Students Union, launched its ‘Diversity and Wellbeing Student Ambassador Programme’ in the School of Health Sciences, Social Sciences, Arts, Languages and Cultures and Materials in October 2017.

The Programme is part of a wider ‘Diversity and Inclusion Student Ambassador Programme’, funded by the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE). With the University as lead we are working with our partners, the University of Birmingham and Manchester Metropolitan University, and their respective Students ‘Guild and Union’.

The Programme responds to the HEFCE (2015) report on the ‘causes of differential outcomes’ which highlights differences in outcomes and experiences for these groups even after controlling for other potential influencing factors. It aims to promote wellbeing and improve outcomes, specifically attainment and student experience, for Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) under-graduate students and those from low-socio-economic groups.

It uses a co-production model that brings students and staff together to:

- **Belonging.** Increase student’s sense of belonging by building meaningful relationships between students and between students and staff through the development of internal and external networks.
- **Safe Spaces.** Create safe spaces and open a dialogue on inclusive learning and teaching environments, academic support and feedback and wellbeing.
- **Speak Up Stand Up.** Empower students to tackle the negative effects of stereotyping and micro-aggressions and safely challenge racism, sexual harassment and other forms of discrimination on campus through an active bystander campaign.

To get involved or find out more visit our blog: [https://diversityandwellbeingambassadors.blog/](https://diversityandwellbeingambassadors.blog/)
OCTOBER 2018

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犹太教
1 - Shemini Atzeret
2 - Simchat Torah

印度教
9 - Navaratri
19 - Dasara
31 - Halloween

基督教
28 - Reformation Sunday

伊斯兰教
29 - Ashura

其他
10 - World Mental Health Day
Decolonizing the University and Curriculum

There have been a number of student campaigns in Higher Education to “decolonize” the university and its curriculum. The most recent campaigns have been the Rhodes Must Fall movement in South Africa, which inspired protests such as Rhodes Must Fall at Oxford to remove the Cecil Rhodes statue and “Why is My Curriculum White” at UCL. These movements have found affinities with expanding struggles around race, gender, and class on North American campuses and with the upsurge of interest in decolonisation within professional academia.¹

Additional calls to “decolonize the university” and “decolonize education” are part of the wider student campaign which call for discussions around the curriculum, teaching and support more positive outcomes for BAME students.² The principles of decolonizing education are centred on critically responding to imperialism and colonialism assumptions, motivations and values and overturning the Whiteness Eurocentric domination of knowledge within the curriculum. Together with including more Black, Asian Minority Ethnic authors, theorists and updating reading lists in response to the changing diverse student population. Many debates argue that decolonization is contentious and is a call to simply replace White authors however; opposing arguments clearly state decolonization is not about replacing Eurocentric texts but more about broadening student’s perceptions and considering a range of non-white approaches in the curriculum.

To find out more about the Student Union Liberation Campaigns please visit:

https://manchesterstudentsunion.com/liberation

² www.soas.ac.uk/blogs/study/decolonising-curriculum-whats-the-fuss/
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**Christianity**
- 1 - All Saints Day
- 2 - All Souls Day
- 30 - St. Andrews Day

**Islam**
- 4 - Waqf al Arafah - Hajj Day
- 23 - Eid al Adha
- 30 - Mawlid An Nabi

**Sikh**
- 7 - Bandi Chhor Divas
- 22 - Birthday of Guru Nanak Dev Sahib
- 23 - Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur

**Other**
- 11 - Remembrance Sunday
- 20 - Trans Day of Remembrance
- 30 - Athena Swan Deadline

**NEXT MONTH:** IDPD - International Day of People with Disability
The ‘Speak Up Stand Up’ initiative, a collaboration between the University and the Students Union, aims to encourage people to take action on all forms of hate crime, harassment, sexual harassment, sexual assault, and discrimination. Whether it is in person or online we believe that these behaviours are never ok.

It builds on the successful ‘We Get It’ campaign and calls for all members of our community to become active bystanders. With an emphasis on empowerment, the campaign intends to equip people with the necessary skills and confidence, to safely challenge problematic and abusive behaviours.

To support this initiative an active bystander social media campaign and an educational programme will be launched in September 2018. By using a combination of online digital media and face-to-face activity we will encourage people to:

**See it!** We want to equip people with the facts on hate crime, harassment, sexual harassment, sexual assault, and discrimination.

**Know it’s a problem.** We want to help people to recognise those at risk of negative behaviours, when those behaviours are problematic and the negative impacts they can have.

**Take responsibility.** We want to encourage people to address their own attitudes and beliefs, and increase empathy for those who may have experienced problematic behaviours, encouraging an individual and collective sense of responsibility.

**Take action.** We want to equip people with the necessary skills to be confident that they can interrupt, speak out and help when problematic behaviours occur.

**Be the Change.** To find out more about the campaign and how to get involved visit the University Report and Support Platform.

**Remember!** You can report problematic behaviours either anonymously or you can get support from a University Harassment Support Advisor by using the Report and Support Platform. [www.reportandsupport.manchester.ac.uk](http://www.reportandsupport.manchester.ac.uk)
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**Christianity**
- 2 - Advent begins
- 24 - Christmas Eve
- 25 - Christmas Day

**Judaism**
- 3 - First Day of Hanukkah
- 10 - Hanukkah (final day)

**Other**
- 1 - World AIDS Day
- 3 - International Day of People with Disabilities (IDPD)
- 26 - Boxing Day
- 27-29 - University Closure Day
- 31 - New Year’s Eve
IDPD (December 3) is a worldwide observance day promoted by the United Nations since 1992. The aim of the day is to involve groups of people from all sections of society in upholding the rights of persons with disabilities and to celebrate their contribution to society. In 2017 we celebrated by asking people to wear purple and lighting up university buildings.

We are fortunate to work for an organisation that can provide support to many people (including current staff and students, potential staff and students and visitors) through the Disability Advisory and Support Service (DASS). Any disabled staff member or student can register with DASS and receive support from their specially trained advisors. More information can be found here: www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/personalsupport/disabled-staff/

We also have a very active Disabled Staff Network Group (DSN). They run a confidential mailing list organise meetings and awareness raising events throughout the year. You can find out more here: www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/equality-and-diversity/staff-network/disabled-staff-network-group/

We should also recognise that disability extends beyond a physical or mobility related impairment. Mental Illness will impact on a quarter of us all and therefore it’s important for the University to be an active member of Time to Change – the charter that aims to end mental health discrimination. You can find out more about this and all other services available here: www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/services/equality-and-diversity/equality-groups/disability/
TRAINING

We have a bespoke on-line training resource for both staff and students which can be completed at any time. This online module intends to support you to become familiar with equalities legislation; gain an understanding of the broader issues of equality and diversity; to know your responsibilities and rights as a member of staff or a student of the University.

The training will take approximately one hour. Full details can be found using the links below:
www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/services/equality-and-diversity/training/

There are other training resources available including an online module on Unconscious Bias, Supporting Trans Staff in the Workplace DVD’s, books and case studies. In 2018 we’ll be rolling out a new face to face training session entitled Transfer: A Journey looking at the experiences of Trans staff and students. Please contact equalityanddiversity@manchester.ac.uk to discuss other training requirements.

STAFF NETWORK GROUPS

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team facilitates a number of staff network groups. As a member of staff you can participate in any of the network group activities – ranging from meetings, to social events, to awareness raising on campus. As a staff member you are entitled to attend up to 3 meetings per year as a part of your normal working hours:

www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/equality-and-diversity/staff-network/

*Trans is an umbrella term encompassing all those who do not identify with the sex they were assigned at birth, including but not limited to those who are transgender, genderqueer, agender and non-binary.
CHRISTIANITY

Christianity is the largest religion in the UK. There are many Christian denominations, such as the Church of England, Roman Catholic, Evangelical and Pentecostal churches. The three main Christian festivals are Christmas (Jesus’ birth), Easter (Jesus’ death and resurrection), and Pentecost (descent of the Holy Spirit).

BUDDHISM

Buddhism is the fourth largest religion in the world. At the last census there were around 152,000 Buddhists in the UK. It is an atheistic religion and its extensive collection of ethical and spiritual teaching and practices are known as the Dharma. For the majority of Buddhists the most important festival is Wesak or Buddha Day – this will be celebrated on May 29 in 2018.

HINDU

Hinduism is most widely practised in India and it is the third largest religion in the UK with over half a million followers and close to 900 million worldwide. It is a ‘pluralistic’ religion and emphasises that as we are all different, the way we think and approach reality will be ultimately different. Hindus believe in the law of ‘karma’, which is the law of actions and consequences. The most distinct festival of the year is Holi where coloured powder or water is thrown to mark the arrival of spring.
ISLAM

With 1.4 billion followers worldwide and over 1.6m in the UK, Islam is the second largest religion. Followers of this religion are ‘Muslims and this translates as ‘one who submits himself to, and enters into peace with God’. Muslims live a responsible Islamic life by following Five Pillars which are interwoven into their daily lives. One of the most important months for Muslims is Ramadan – this 30 day period of fasting and prayers takes place in the 9th month of the Islamic calendar.

JUDAISM

There are over a quarter of a million practicing Jews in the UK making it the 5th largest religion. Jews believe they have a covenant with God and these laws and commandments are revealed in their Holy Book – the Torah. Much like other beliefs, there are different branches of Judaism all with different interpretations of the faith. Their day of rest (Shabbat) begins at sunset on each Friday.

SIKH

With just over 350,000 practising Sikhs in the UK, this is considered the fourth largest religion in the country. Sikhs believe in one God and they respect the equality of all people regardless of colour, creed or gender. All initiated Sikhs vow to wear five items of dress all beginning with the letter ‘K’ – they are commonly referred to as ‘the Five K’s’. The most important festival in the calendar is Vaisaki which falls on 14th April.

NO BELIEF

Approximately 15% of the UK population state they have ‘no belief or religion’. This makes it the second largest group in the country. Not having a religion or belief can come in many formats – agnosticism, anticlericalism, anti religion antitheism, apatheism, atheism, freethought, ignosticism, nontheism secular humanism, and religious skepticism. Just because someone chooses not to follow a religion does not mean that their beliefs and ideals should not be taken into account.

We have listed the major festivals for the six largest religions – here is a list of some other festivals which are also important to many staff and students at the university: