

# RAMADAN – TEN QUESTIONS ANSWERED

## 1. What is Ramadan?

Ramadan is the name for the ninth month in the Islamic calendar. It is a holy month for Muslims when they abstain from eating and drinking and any other physical needs during the daylight hours. As a time to purify the soul, refocus attention on God, and practice self sacrifice. Ramadan is much more than just not eating and drinking.

## 2. When is Ramadan?

As the Islamic calendar is based on lunar sightings, Ramadan falls on different dates each year—these are summarised overleaf.

## 3. How long does Ramadan last

It lasts for approximately one month. The dates change every year and are based on the lunar calendar.

## 4. Why does Ramadan start on a different day each year?

This is because the dates are decided according to the Islamic calendar. The length of the days change throughout the seasons.

## 5. Does fasting make you different within your community?

No we all have different religious views depending on the religion and Muslims shouldn't be treated any differently during this period. They are still able to interact within our community

## 6. Should all Muslims fast?

Fasting is mandatory on every Muslim who is sane, adult, able and resident. The following exemptions apply: the insane; children who are not adolescent yet; the elderly and chronically ill for whom fasting is unreasonably strenuous; pregnant and nursing women (may postpone the fasting at a later time); the ill and travellers can also defer their fasting; Women during the period of menstruation or of post childbirth confinement

## 7. Is fasting harmful when a woman is expecting a baby? Must pregnant women fast?

There's medical evidence to show that fasting in pregnancy is not a good idea. If a pregnant woman feels strong and healthy enough to fast, especially during the early part of the pregnancy, she may do so. If she doesn't feel well enough to fast, Islamic law gives her clear permission not to fast, and to make up the missed fasts later. If she is unable to do this, she must perform fidyah (a method of compensation for a missed act of worship).

## 8. What is Eid?

Muslims celebrate Eid twice a year. The first is known as Eid Al-Fitr. It marks the end of Ramadan and is celebrated with family members. It is similar to Christmas in many ways gifts are distributed and families have a big dinner together. The second is known as Eid Al-Adha. This is celebrated because it marks the end of the holy pilgrimage for Muslims known as Hajj. It is celebrated in the same mannerism and is generally two months after Eid-Al-Fitr.

## 9. Can you drink water during the fasting period?

No, this is not permitted. Things like chewing gum are also forbidden. There are also special rituals that should be followed if one wishes to 'break the fast' before sunset.

## 10. Does fasting have an effect on energy levels?

Fasting does not curb energy for productive work, except in the last few hours of the fast. It is encouraged to work or study as usual till 2 or 3 hours before sunset. Some practices include taking a short rest (siesta) after the second prayer of the day.

## RAMADAN GLOSSARY OF TERMS:

**Dhuhr** – the second prayer of the day  
**Eid** – the celebrations after Ramadan and Hajj  
**Fajr** – the first prayer of the day after Sahur  
**Fidyah** – a method of compensation for a missed act of worship  
**Hajj** – a holy pilgrimage for Muslims  
**Iftar** – the meal and prayer taken to break the fast each day  
**Maghrib** – the fourth prayer of the day  
**Qur'an** – the holy book of the Muslim faith  
**Sahur** – a meal taken before fasting begins  
**Tarawih** – special prayers held each night of Ramadan at mosques

### Ramadan Dates and Exams 2015-2019

We acknowledge at times there may be some overlap between religious celebrations and examinations. Therefore, in the table below we have prepared a schedule for the coming years, so dates and potential clashes can be easily identified.

Year	Ramadan		Exams		Resits		Clashes
	Start*	End*	Start	End	Start	End	
2015	18 June	17 July	14 May	3 June	24 August	4 September	none
2016	6 June	5 July	19 May	8 June	22 August	2 September	6/7/8 June
2017	27 May	25 June	18 May	7 June	21 August	1 September	27 May -7 June
2018	16 May	14 June	16 May	6 June	20 August	31 August	16 May—6 June
2019	6 May	4 June	15 May	5 June	19 August	30 August	15 May—4 June

\* dates are approximate (depending on initial sighting of the moon)

The University offers support to all staff and students who have a religion or belief (including no belief). During a festival such as Ramadan there will be extra provisions that need to be considered. We will endeavour to provide extra prayer facilities if these are needed and the exams team will be sympathetic to students and do their best to schedule exams accordingly, but this may not always be possible. This dedicated team can also provide information if you believe you have grounds for requesting to be excused from the exam. More details can be seen here: [www.exams.manchester.ac.uk/exam-timetable/#religious-observance](http://www.exams.manchester.ac.uk/exam-timetable/#religious-observance)

### Location of Prayer Rooms

South Campus: McDougall Centre (Building 91 on campus map)  
 North Campus: Sackville Street Building (Building 1 on campus map)

There are also Volunteer Muslim Chaplains assigned to The University of Manchester. They provide pastoral support, guidance and a listening ear to Muslim students and staff. Please find below contact details:

Miss Madiha Ashruf: [madiha.ashruf@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:madiha.ashruf@manchester.ac.uk)  
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Further information available at:

[www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/equality-and-diversity/](http://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/equality-and-diversity/)  
[www.manchesterisoc.com](http://www.manchesterisoc.com)