

MANCHESTER
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The University of Manchester

Rosh Hashanah Guidance for Employees and Students 2024

What is Rosh Hashanah?

Rosh Hashanah is the first of the Jewish High Holidays. It is a celebration of the creation of the world and marks the first and second days of the Jewish New year. Rosh Hashanah literally means 'head of the year'.

During this time, Jewish people are expected not to work. The festival is a time for reflection on the past year and a time to ask for forgiveness.

It is also a time for judgement; Jewish people believe that God balances their good and bad deeds from the past year and this decides what their coming year will be like.

When will Rosh Hashanah take place?

In 2024, Rosh Hashanah begins at sundown on Wednesday 2nd October and continues through to nightfall on Friday 4th October.

In the Jewish calendar, Tishrei is the first month of the year and, in 2024, Tishrei begins on October 2nd at sundown. The Jewish or Hebrew calendar is a luni-solar calendar based on lunar months of 29 days, alternating with 30 days.

How is Rosh Hashanah celebrated?

On both mornings of Rosh Hashanah, the shofar is blown (unless one of the days falls on the Shabbat). This is normally done in synagogue as part of the day's services. The shofar has many different symbolic meanings, one of them being that it signifies the crowning of God as king of the world.

Food is an important part of Rosh Hashanah and festive feasts include traditional food such as round challah breads and apples dipped in honey. The sweet foods symbolise the wish for a sweet year ahead. Nuts are prohibited during Rosh Hashanah.

During Rosh Hashanah, candles are lit in the evenings and work is not expected.

During Rosh Hashanah...

Many Jewish people visit the Synagogue during Rosh Hashanah to mark the beginning of the High Holy Days. Many prayers are said and scripture from the Torah is read.

A prayer called 'Tashlich' is performed over a body of water to cast away sins. This is usually performed on the first day of Rosh Hashanah, unless the first day falls on the Shabbat.

The greeting 'Shanah tovah' is used which means 'Good Year'. This greeting can be used throughout Rosh Hashanah.

Supporting students observing Rosh Hashanah:

- Learn more about Rosh Hashanah- a glossary of terms and useful links will be provided at the end of this Guidance.
- Consider adjustments such as reminding students of the podcasting service for lectures to allow them to watch/listen another time.
- Allow more flexibility where possible for scheduling and bear in mind that Jewish students may not be able to attend meetings, lectures, etc. over the duration of Rosh Hashanah.
- Have a look at the [University's Policy on Religious Observance](#) for students.

Supporting employees observing Rosh Hashanah:

- **Get educated about Rosh Hashanah - a glossary of terms and useful links will be provided at the end of this Guidance.**
- **Be mindful and plan intentionally to avoid meetings being booked over Rosh Hashanah.**
- **If you are providing catering during this time, consult Jewish colleagues about dietary restrictions.**
- **Don't make assumptions. Not all Jewish colleagues will take time off during this time for personal reasons, however they may still observe Rosh Hashanah in other ways. If you are unsure, ask if they need any support during this time.**

Reminders for Students:

- You can find out how to apply for leave for religious observance here: <https://www.regulations.manchester.ac.uk/academic/policy-on-religious-observance/>
- Please feel free to contact your Multi-Faith Chaplain with any questions around support available over Rosh Hashanah. You can also contact Steph Danson (stephanie.danson@manchester.ac.uk) in the EDI Team who will be able to signpost and help out if needed.

Glossary Of Key Terms:

Shanah tovah - A common greeting for Rosh Hashanaa which means “Good Year” in Hebrew

Shofar - a trumpet/horn made from the horn of a kosher animal.

Mitzvah - Meaning ‘Commandment’, e.g. it is a mitzvah to hear the shofar being blown during Rosh Hashanah

Tishrei- the Hebrew month in which Rosh Hashanah falls and the first month of the Hebrew calendar.

Torah - Judasim’s sacred scroll and teachings

Shabbat - Sabbath - the day of rest on the 7th day of the week

Useful links:

- The [Multi-Faith Chaplains](#)
- The University of Manchester Jewish Society [JSoc](#)
- [Chabad.org](#) - [Rosh Hashanah 2024](#) - [What is Rosh Hashanah?](#)
- [Student and Staff support](#)
- <https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/equality-diversity-inclusion/equality-groups/religion-or-belief/support/>
- <https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/equality-and-diversity/>