



The Religious Festivals Calendar 2017-18

Many UK public holidays coincide with Christian religious festivals and holiday arrangements. As part of our commitment to promoting equality, the University aims to take into account a diverse range of religious festivals when planning events and activities.

The religious festivals calendar lists a selection of holidays and festivals which take place throughout the academic year. These dates have been selected based on their significance within the diverse range of religions represented within UAL.

The Calendar indicates if a particular festival involves fasting or a restriction on work, in order to highlight dates that are likely to have a particular impact on participation or attendance.

University departments are encouraged to consider the festivals calendar when planning major events. There are a range of ways in which the festivals calendar can be used to inform the planning of inclusive events, including:

- Scheduling events to avoiding particular times or days.
- Ensuring participants are aware of University facilities such as Quiet Spaces for prayer and reflection.
- Arranging alternative ways of participating in the event e.g. through making resources available online.
- Referring students and staff to the [UAL Chaplaincy](#) or [Student Societies](#) who may host events to make particular religious festivals.

This resource has been developed as part of the UAL Religious Literacy Programme. For more information, please visit:

<https://myintranet.arts.ac.uk/staffandstudents/diversity-at-ual/religious-literacy/>

Contact

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<http://www.arts.ac.uk/about-ual/diversity/>

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Regional customs and moon sightings may cause variation of the dates for Islamic and Jewish holidays, and these **begin at sundown on the date specified for the holiday**. The Islamic calendar is lunar and the days begin at sunset, so there may be one-day error depending on when the new moon is.

Date	AUTUMN (September – December 2017)
Thurs 31 st Aug – Mon 4 th Sept	Eid ul-Adha Muslim * <i>Holiday with work restriction</i> Eid al-Adha is a four day festival that celebrates the willingness to make sacrifices in the name of one's faith.
Wed 20 th Sept – Fri 22 nd Sept	Rosh Hashanah Jewish * <i>Holiday with work restriction</i> Jewish New Year. A two-day festival during which work is not permitted.
Fri 22 nd Sept	Autumn Equinox Pagan Celebrated when day and night are of equal duration.
Fri 29 th Sept – Sat 30 th Sept	Yom Kippur Jewish * <i>Fasting</i> * <i>Holiday with work restriction</i> Yom Kippur is often considered the holiest day of the year within the Jewish faith, and the day is dedicated to atonement and abstinence. Fasting before sundown until after sunset.
Wed 4 th Oct – Wed 11 th Oct	Sukkot Jewish * <i>Holiday with work restriction</i> A week-long celebration which begins with the building of Sukkah.
Thurs 19 th Oct	Diwali Hindu (A five day festival of Light) <i>General Practices:</i> Lighting oil lamps and candles, setting off fireworks, and prayer. <i>Celebrated by Hindus, Sikhs and Jains.</i>
Sat 4 th Nov	Birthday of Guru Nanak Dev Sahib Sikh Birthday of the founder of the Sikh religion.
Tues 12 th Dec – Wed 20 th Dec	Hanukkah Jewish Hanukkah is the Festival of Lights and marks the restoration of the temple by the Maccabees in 164 BCE.
Thursday 21 st Dec	Winter Solstice Winter solstice marks the day with the shortest period of daylight and the longest night of the year.
Mon 25 th Dec	Christmas Day Christian * <i>National holiday in the UK</i> The day when western Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. Celebrated by Orthodox Christians on 7th January

Date	SPRING (January – April 2018)
Sun 14th Jan	Makar Sankranti Hindu Celebrates the sun's journey into the northern hemisphere. One of the most important festivals of the Hindu calendar.
Weds 14th Feb	Ash Wednesday Christian The first day of Lent for Western Christian churches. There are special church services on this day. Some Christians abstain from eating meat.
Thurs 15th Feb	Parinirvana (Nirvana Day) Buddhist Mahayana Buddhist festival marking the anniversary of Buddha's death. Pure Land Buddhists call the festival "Nirvana Day".
Fri 16th Feb	Chinese New Year Confucian, Taoist, Buddhist <i>* Holiday with work restriction</i> People gather together for festive meals.
Fri 2nd March	Holi (Holi Mohalla) "Festival of Colours," Hindu Hindus often sprinkle coloured water and powder on others and celebrate with bonfires and lights.
Weds 21st March	Spring Equinox / Pagan Celebration of a renewal of life in spring.
Thurs 29th March	Mahavir Jayanti Jain Celebrates the day of Mahavira's birth.
Fri 30th March – Sat 7th April	Pesach (Passover) Jewish <i>* Holiday with work restriction</i> The start of the season of Passover when Jews commemorate the liberation of the Children of Israel who were led out of Egypt by Moses.
Fri 30th March	Good Friday Christian <i>* National holiday in the UK</i> Good Friday commemorates the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Celebrated by Orthodox Christians also on 14th April.
Sun 1st April	Easter Sunday Christian <i>* National holiday in the UK</i> The most important Christian festival celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Also Orthodox Christian Easter on 16th.
Sat 14th April	Vaisakhi Sikh Sikh new year and harvest festival.

Date	SUMMER (May – August 2018)
<p>Tues 15th May - Thurs 14th June</p> <p><i>(Tentative)</i></p>	<p>Ramadan Muslim</p> <p><i>*Fasting</i></p> <p>Ramadan is an occasion to focus on faith through fasting and prayer, and is one of the most important Muslim holidays. Students and staff observing Ramadan will be fasting during the day (continuously for 30 days) and will likely have less stamina as a result.</p>
<p>Sat 19 May – Mon 21st May</p>	<p>Shavuot / Jewish * <i>Holiday with work restriction</i></p> <p>Shavuot is the second of three pilgrim festivals and it follows the Passover by 50 days. It is also known as the Festival of Weeks, the Feast of Weeks, or the Feast of the Harvest.</p>
<p>Tues 29th May</p>	<p>Vesak, ('Buddha Day') Buddhist</p> <p>The most important of the Buddhist festivals. It celebrates the Buddha's birthday, and, for some Buddhists, also marks his enlightenment and death.</p>
<p>Sun 20th May</p>	<p>Pentecost (Whitsun) Christian</p> <p>The seventh Sunday after Easter, commemorating the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples and the birth of the Christian Church.</p>
<p>Thurs 14 June – Fri 15 June</p>	<p>Eid al-Fitr Muslim * <i>Holiday with work restriction</i></p> <p>Eid al-Fitr means "break the fast", and is the last day of Ramadan, marking the end of a month of fasting. Muslims often pray, exchange gifts, feast, and celebrate with friends and family. Staff are likely to request annual leave on this day, and such requests should be granted where possible.</p>
<p>Sat 16th June</p>	<p>Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev Sikh (Nanakshahi calendar)</p> <p>Guru Arjan Dev was the fifth Sikh Guru and the first Sikh martyr. He also compiled all of the past Gurus' writings into one book, which is now the Sikh holy scripture: the Guru Granth Sahib.</p>
<p>Thurs 21st June</p>	<p>Summer Solstice Pagan, Wiccan, Druid</p> <p>A celebration of the longest day of the year and the beginning of summer. Marked by lighting to bonfires and watching the sun rise.</p>

Calendar reference sources:

<http://www.timeanddate.com/calendar>

<http://www.interfaithcalendar.org/index.htm>

<http://www.hinduism.co.za/newpage3.htm>

<http://projectinterfaith.org/page/interfaith-calendars>

Religious Literacy Resources



**The British Sociological Association
Sociology of Religion Study Group (SocRel)**

<http://socrel.org.uk/faith-guides/>

SocRel has brought together a broad range of subject specialists who can draw upon their personal experiences of and interactions with specific faith groups and individuals, acquired through their own academic work, and in some cases utilising personal experiences as members of a particular tradition. On this page you will find a number of Faith Guides developed by the [Higher Education Academy's Philosophical & Religious Studies Subject Centre](#).



Religious Literacy in HE

<http://religiousliteracyhe.org/>

The Religious Literacy Leadership Programme aims to assist Higher Education leaders to develop outlooks and strategies that engage positively with faith, promoting universities as places that can lead and shape informed responses to faith in wider society. The Programme is a partnership between the [Faiths & Civil Society Unit](#) at Goldsmiths, University of London and the [Cambridge Inter-Faith Programme](#) at the University of Cambridge. It is funded by [HEFCE](#) (Higher Education Funding Council for England).

Lokahi Foundation

<http://www.lokahi.org.uk/>



The Lokahi Foundation is a social impact charity that envisages a more dynamic and robust society that embraces religious and cultural diversity with respect and understanding. Lokahi's work builds and shares skills with those who will further mutual understanding and help their communities find solutions to their problems.