**Ramadan factsheet**

Page Content

These notes are intended to inform practice about the needs of their Muslim students on placement with them who will be fasting during the month of Ramadan. It is intended to increase understanding about the month of Ramadan and offers advice on how to support your students who are fasting.

**When is Ramadan?**

The dates of the month of Ramadan vary each year as it is determined by the lunar calendar and the sighting of the new moon.

**What do Muslims do?**

Fasting during the month of Ramadan is one of the Pillars of Islam. During the hours of daylight Muslims abstain from: food and drink, smoking (including passive smoking), sexual activity.

Muslims will try to shape their daily activities in order to accommodate a timely breaking of the fast each day and perhaps attending a mosque to pray. Some individuals are exempt from the fast, such as the sick, those who are travelling, and women who are pregnant or breast-feeding.

It is important to know that fasting is about more than just not eating and drinking. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him [pbuh]) said that: ‘There are many who fast and gain nothing from their fast except hunger and thirst’. In essence, Muslims must try to be model human beings during Ramadan. They will try to refrain from any negative tendency, such as verbal conflict, fighting, eavesdropping, backbiting, lying and slander. Instead, they will aim at cultivating positive virtues in the hope of retaining these qualities throughout the year.

During Ramadan Muslims will awake before dawn for a meal called "Suhur". When daylight is over most Muslims will eat dates and water following the example of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). This is then followed by a meal called “Iftar” (the breaking of the fast), which is an occasion for family, friends and the community to get together.

**Information and Advice**

The combination of fasting combined with a disturbed sleeping pattern may cause individuals to feel tired, weak or light-headed, particularly towards the end of the working day. This may have some impact on their performance.

Following early discussion with placement staff, it should be possible to agree slight adjustments to the working day during Ramadan. Students will be very appreciative of being able to discuss either earlier or later start times or taking a shorter lunch break in order to finish in time to end the fast with their families.

It is not always absolutely necessary to refrain from eating and drinking in front of Muslims who are fasting. In this situation, a polite “excuse me whilst I eat” will be acceptable.

Please do refrain from smoking in the presence of someone who is fasting.

Many Muslims will practice their faith more rigorously during Ramadan. This may involve praying more regularly during the day for which they will require a small private area.

**How to mark Ramadan**

Showing your Muslim colleagues and students that you know it is Ramadan and that they are fasting is likely to please them. Posting an acknowledgement on your website, in newsletters or simply a notice in your reception area is a good idea. Something like this would be appropriate:

‘Ramadan Mubarak to all our Muslim friends. Best wishes to you and your family for this the holy month of Ramadan. We hope that you find joy, peace and happiness and achieve all your objectives for the month.’

**What happens when Ramadan ends?**

The end of Ramadan is marked by the festival of Eid-Ul-Fitr for which Muslim students may wish to take a day off placement. It may not be possible to give much notice and some flexibility will be necessary.

*(adapted from information provided for UWE staff on the UWE website by Kate Stancombe, 29.7.15)*