

Guide to Major Religious Observances in the UK in 2021 & 2022 Likely to Impact on Learning and Working in a Higher Education Context

This guide to major religious observances in the world religions represented at Durham University has been compiled by the Chaplaincy Network with the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Unit. It identifies the key observances that are likely to impact on the learning and working of students and staff at the University. In developing this guide, we aim to encourage staff and students to be more mindful in scheduling and planning activities to facilitate faith/belief inclusion and to help foster good relations.

We acknowledge the support of various internal and external stakeholders in shaping this document and our understanding of the major religious observances and their impact on working and learning in a Higher Education context. These include the University's Buddhist, Eastern Orthodox, Hindu, Jewish and Muslim Chaplains, and Sikh colleagues in the North East.

It should be noted that this guide is not simply an exhaustive list of religious observances but rather those that are likely to impact on learning and working in the University. For a comprehensive calendar with a wide range of EDI observances and celebrations, see the [Durham University Inclusion Calendar](#).

For the purpose of this guide, we categorise and define impact as follows:

High Impact: The observance has a major working/learning impact on staff and students observing it. Whenever possible, scheduling of University work and learning activities should be avoided on these dates. If it is not possible to avoid these dates, reasonable considerations should be made for individuals impacted by the observance.

Moderate Impact: If it is necessary to schedule University work or learning activities on these festival dates, alternative arrangements may be required for some people.

2021

January 2021

5 January 2021
6 January 2021

Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh (Sikh) – HIGH
The Baptism of the Lord (Orthodox Christian) – MODERATE

March 2021

11 March 2021
28 & 29 March 2021*
29 March 2021

Maha Shivratri (Hindu) – MODERATE
Pesach (Passover) (Jewish) (first 2 days of the festival) – HIGH*
Holi (Hindu) – MODERATE

April 2021

2 April 2021
3 & 4 April 2021
4 April 2021
12 April 2021 (expected)
13 April 2021
21 April 2021
30 April 2021

Good Friday (Christian) - HIGH
Pesach (Passover) (Jewish) (final 2 days of the festival) – HIGH*
Easter Sunday (Christian) – HIGH
Ramadan begins – lasts 30 days (Islam) - MODERATE
Vaisakhi/Baisakhi (Sikh) - HIGH
Ram Navami (Hindu) - MODERATE
Holy Friday (Orthodox Christian) – HIGH

May 2021

2 May 2021
12 May 2021 (expected)
17 & 18 May 2021*
26 May 2021

Pascha/Easter Day (Orthodox Christian) – HIGH
Eid-ul-Fitr (Islam) - HIGH
Shavuot (Pentecost Festival of Weeks) (Jewish) - HIGH*
Wesak (Buddha Day) (Buddhist) - MODERATE

June 2021

16 June 2021
20 June 2021

Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev (Sikh) – MODERATE
Pentecost (Orthodox Christian) – MODERATE

July 2021

20 July 2021 (expected)

Eid-ul-Adha (Islam) – HIGH

August 2021

15 August 2021

Dormition of the Mother of God (Orthodox Christian) -
MODERATE

18 August 2021

Ashura (Islam [Shia]) - **MODERATE**

30 August 2021

Krishna Janmashtami (Hindu) – **MODERATE**

September 2021

7 & 8 September 2021*

Rosh Hashanah (Jewish) **HIGH***

16 September 2021*

Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) (Jewish) – **HIGH***

21 & 22 September 2021*

Sukkot (Tabernacles) (Jewish) - **HIGH***

28 September 2021*

Shemini Atzeret (8th Day of Assembly) (Jewish) – **HIGH***

29 September 2021*

Simchat Torah (Jewish) – **HIGH***

October 2021

15 October 2021

Vijaya Dashami (Hindu) - **MODERATE**

18 October 2021

Mawlid al-Nabi (Birthday of Prophet Muhammad) (Islam) –
MODERATE

November 2021

4 November 2021

Diwali (Hindu) & **Bandi Chor Divas** (Sikh) – **HIGH**

19 November 2021

Birthday of Guru Nanak Dev Ji (Sikh) - **HIGH**

24 November 2021

Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur (Sikh) – **MODERATE**

December 2021

25 December 2021

Christmas Day (Christian) - **HIGH**

Saturday every week*

Shabbat (Sabbath) (Jewish) – **HIGH**

2022

January 2022

5 January 2022

Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh (Sikh) - **HIGH**

6 January 2022

The Baptism of the Lord (Orthodox Christian) – **MODERATE**

March 2022

1 March 2022

Maha Shivratri (Hindu) – **MODERATE**

18 March 2022

Holi (Hindu) – **MODERATE**

April 2022

2 April 2022 (expected)

Ramadan begins – lasts 30 days (Islam) - **MODERATE**

10 April 2022

Ram Navami (Hindu) – **MODERATE**

14 April 2022

Vaisakhi/Baisakhi (Sikh) - **HIGH**

15 April 2022

Good Friday (Christian) - **HIGH**

16 & 17 April 2022

Pesach (Passover) (Jewish) (first 2 days of the festival) – **HIGH***

17 April 2022

Easter Sunday (Christian) – **HIGH**

22 April 2022

Holy Friday (Orthodox Christian) – **HIGH**

22 & 23 April 2022

Pesach (Passover) (Jewish) (final 2 days of the festival) – **HIGH***

24 April 2022

Pascha/Easter Day (Orthodox Christian) – **HIGH**

May 2022

3 May 2022 (expected)

Eid-ul-Fitr (Islam) - **HIGH**

27 May 2022

Wesak (Buddha Day) (Buddhist) - **MODERATE**

June 2022

5 & 6 June 2022*

Shavuot (Pentecost Festival of Weeks) (Jewish) - **HIGH***

12 June 2022

Pentecost (Orthodox Christian) – **MODERATE**

16 June 2022

Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev (Sikh) - **MODERATE**

July 2022

10 July 2022 (expected)

Eid-ul-Adha (Islam) – **HIGH**

August 2022

8 August 2022

15 August 2022

19 August 2022

Ashura (Islam [Shia]) - **MODERATE**

Dormition of the Mother of God (Orthodox Christian) - **MODERATE**

Krishna Janmashtami (Hindu) – **MODERATE**

September 2022

26 & 27 September 2022*

Rosh Hashanah (Jewish) - **HIGH***

October 2022

4 October 2022

5 October 2022

8 October 2022

10 & 11 October 2022*

17 October 2022*

18 October 2022*

24 October 2022

Vijaya Dashami (Hindu) – **MODERATE**

Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) (Jewish) – **HIGH***

Mawlid al-Nabi (Birthday of Prophet Muhammad) (Islam) – **MODERATE**

Sukkot (Tabernacles) (Jewish) - **HIGH***

Shemini Atzeret (8th Day of Assembly) (Jewish) – **HIGH***

Simchat Torah (Jewish) – **HIGH***

Diwali (Hindu) & **Bandi Chor Divas** (Sikh) – **HIGH**

November 2022

8 November 2022

24 November 2022

Birthday of Guru Nanak Dev Ji (Sikh) - **HIGH**

Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadar (Sikh) – **MODERATE**

December 2022

25 December 2022

Christmas Day (Christian) – **HIGH**

Saturday every week*

Shabbat (Sabbath) (Jewish) – **HIGH**

***Note:** These festivals start at sundown on the day before the date shown therefore, on RED dates, University work and learning activities should not be scheduled for the late afternoon or evening of the day before.

Other sources of information relating to religious obligations during times of work or study:

- 1) In relation to exam timetabling, please note that students are required to complete a **Religious Observance Form** each academic year before the deadline of 31 October. See [6.2.10 : Religious Observance](#).
- 2) Guidance for Students Sitting Exams during Ramadan can be found at [here](#). Dr Mahshid Turner, Muslim Chaplain, is able to provide specific advice regarding Islamic observances: m.f.turner@durham.ac.uk
- 3) Guidance on staff requests for annual leave for religious reasons can be found [here](#).
- 4) Academic and teaching staff who would like to request some flexibility around their teaching responsibilities due to religious observance can refer to the [Teaching Availability Request Policy](#).