

HIGHER EDUCATION RAMADAN GUIDE

SUPPORTING MUSLIM STUDENTS, STAFF, AND FACULTY DURING RAMADAN



The background features a white background with several decorative elements. There are three hanging lanterns, each containing a lit candle. The lanterns are dark purple with intricate metalwork. There are also several small, dark purple stars hanging from thin lines. A string of small, dark purple dots is strung across the top of the page, forming a series of connected arches.

Ramadan Guide

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide is designed to help educational institutions better understand and support their Muslim students, staff, and faculty during Ramadan. It provides practical recommendations, actionable strategies, and educational insights to foster an inclusive campus environment. By addressing the unique needs of Muslim community members during this sacred time, institutions can create equitable spaces where everyone feels valued and respected.



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ABOUT RAMADAN

Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar, is a sacred period observed by Muslims worldwide. It is a time for fasting, prayer, spiritual reflection, and acts of charity. Fasting during Ramadan, one of the Five Pillars of Islam, is a core religious practice that involves abstaining from food, drink, and other physical needs from dawn to sunset each day.

The day begins with a pre-dawn meal called suhoor and concludes with iftar, the evening meal at sunset. During Ramadan, Muslims also engage in heightened worship, including nightly taraweeh prayers, often performed in congregation at mosques or at home. These prayers can extend late into the night, leaving fewer hours for rest.

Ramadan shifts approximately 10–12 days earlier each year due to the Islamic lunar calendar. In 2025, fasting hours will vary across the United States, lasting between 11 and 14 hours depending on location. The physical and mental demands of fasting, coupled with daily responsibilities, can make this a particularly intense time for those observing.

Eid al-Fitr, the "Festival of Breaking the Fast," marks the end of Ramadan. It is a day of communal prayers, celebratory meals, and charitable giving. Institutions can support this observance by recognizing the holiday and offering accommodations for students, staff, and faculty celebrating it.

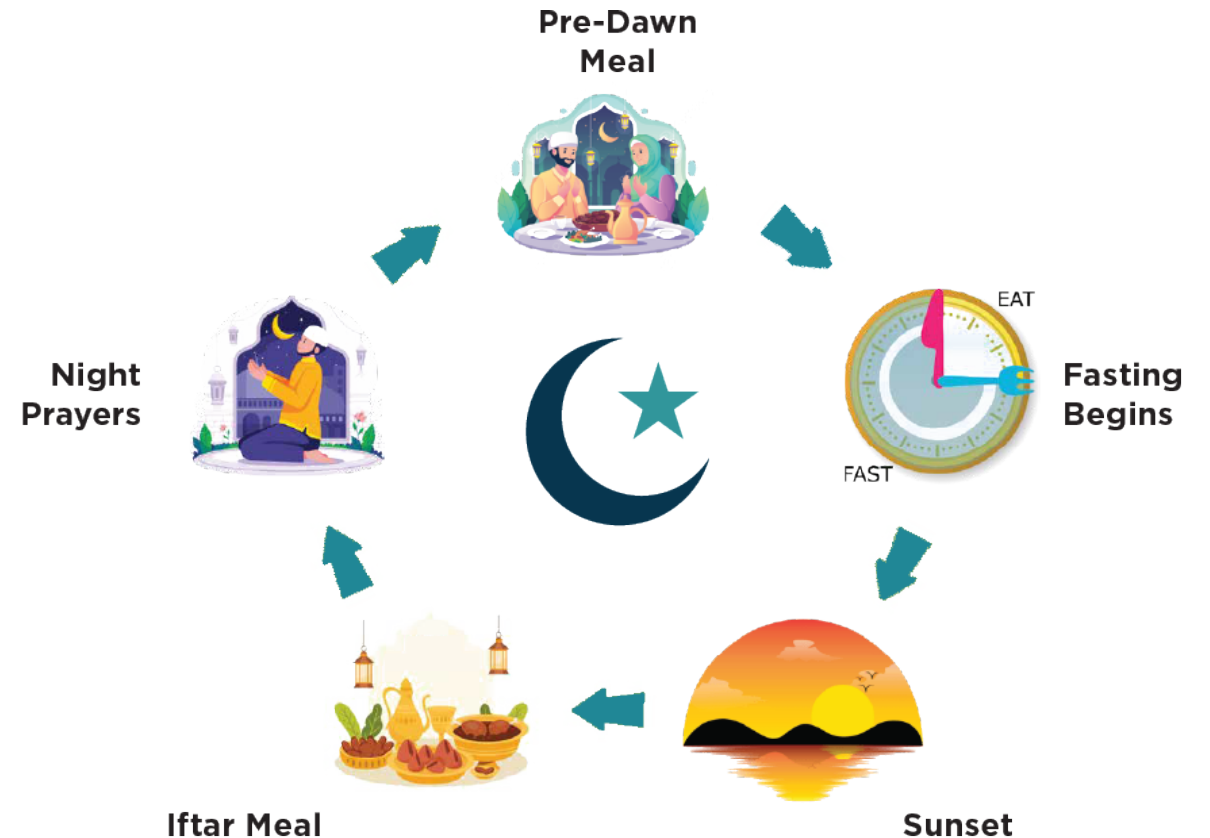


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TENTATIVE RAMADAN AND EID DATES

The start of Ramadan is determined by the Meal sighting of the new moon, which may vary slightly depending on location. In 2025, Ramadan is tentatively expected **to begin on February 28 and conclude on March 30.**

Following Ramadan, Muslims celebrate Eid al-Fitr on **March 31, 2025.** Eid is a joyous holiday that includes communal prayers, festive meals, and gatherings with family and friends. It is customary for Muslims to take the day off from work or school to fully participate in the celebrations. Institutions can demonstrate inclusivity by acknowledging the holiday and providing flexibility for those observing.



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HOW RAMADAN SHAPES THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Muslim students observing Ramadan face unique challenges as they balance fasting with their academic responsibilities. Long fasting hours can affect energy levels, focus, and productivity.

Evening classes may overlap with iftar (breaking the fast), and late-night taraweeh prayers or preparations for suhoor (pre-dawn meal) can leave students with limited rest.

PROS VS CONS



Religious Observance



Spiritual Growth



Community Bonding



Fatigue



Class Conflicts



Exam Challenges



Limited Rest



Instructor Awareness



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WAYS TO SUPPORT STUDENTS IN THE CLASSROOM

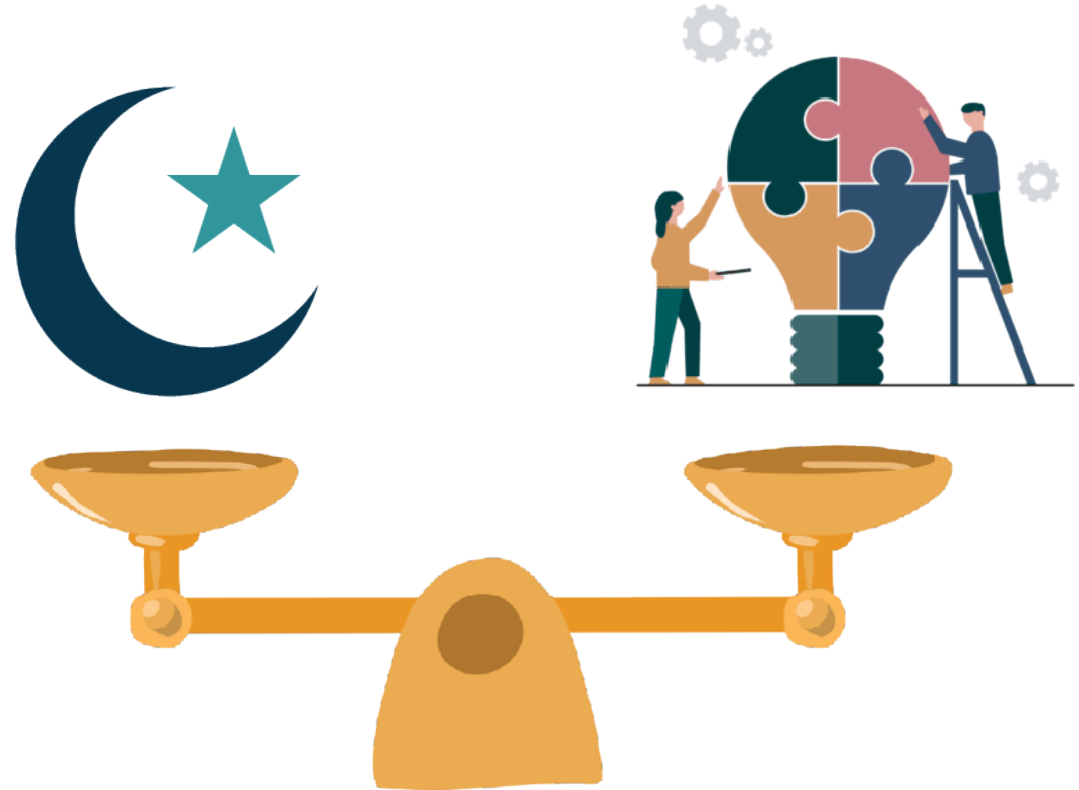
Acknowledge Ramadan: Include a note in your syllabus or address it in class to show awareness and encourage dialogue about accommodations.

Provide Scheduling Flexibility: Adjust exam times, assignment deadlines, and presentations to align with students' energy levels, ideally scheduling them earlier in the day.

Offer Breaks During Evening Classes: Allow students to step out briefly to break their fast and hydrate if needed.

Avoid Major Deadlines: Where possible, avoid scheduling high-stakes assignments or exams during Ramadan, particularly in its final days.

By implementing these measures, instructors can help create an inclusive learning environment that supports students during this significant observance.



**Balancing Awareness and Flexibility
for Student Support**

SUPPORTING STAFF AND FACULTY OBSERVING RAMADAN

For Muslim staff and faculty, balancing work responsibilities with the physical and spiritual practices of Ramadan can be taxing. Long fasting hours may lead to fatigue, and finding time for daily prayers or evening worship can be challenging.

Ways to Support Staff and Faculty:

Flexible Work Schedules: Allow earlier start times or shorter lunch breaks so staff can leave earlier and manage energy levels effectively.

Remote Work Options: Offer remote work flexibility, if feasible, to reduce physical strain and accommodate personal schedules.

Avoid Food-Centric Events: Refrain from scheduling working lunches or social events involving food during fasting hours.

These accommodations demonstrate respect for religious practices while fostering a supportive and inclusive workplace culture.



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WHAT YOUR INSTITUTION CAN DO

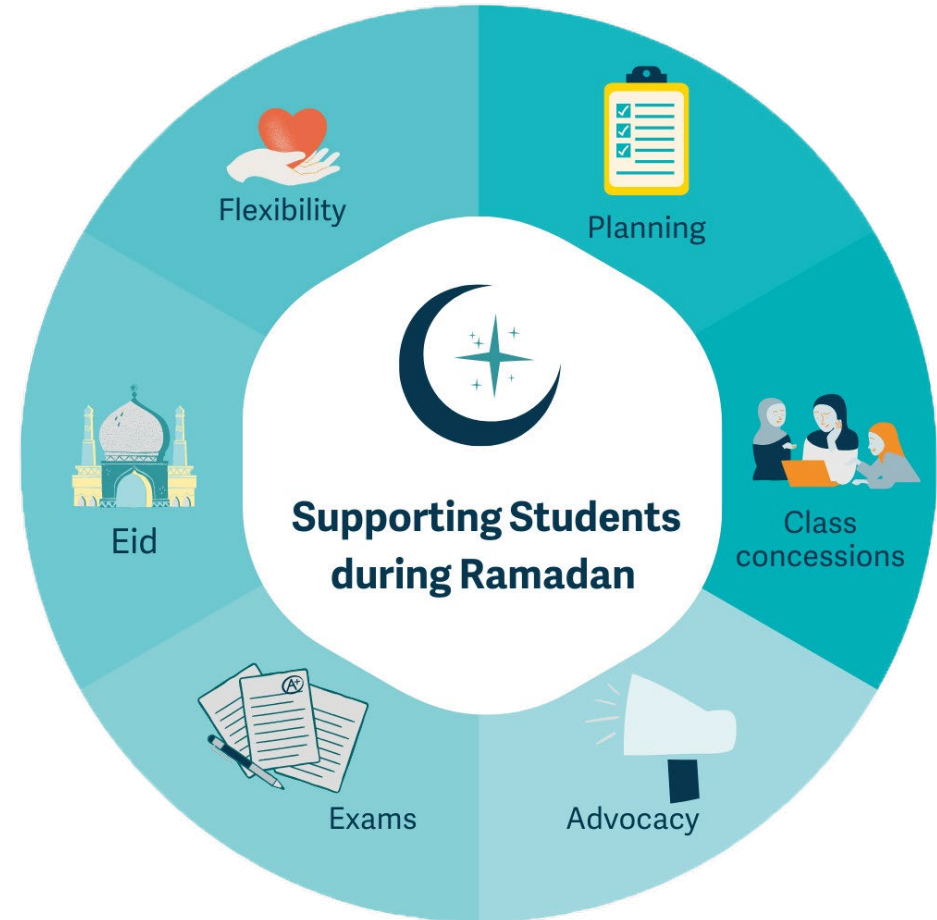
Institutions have a vital role in supporting Muslim students, staff, and faculty during Ramadan and Eid. Thoughtful actions and visible support foster a sense of belonging and ensure all community members feel respected and valued.

Dining Services

- Extend dining hall hours to accommodate suhoor (pre-dawn meal) and iftar (breaking the fast).
- Provide halal food options that are clearly labeled and accessible.
- Work toward making the institution halal-certified and consider partnering with halal-serving restaurants to expand options.

Prayer and Reflection Spaces

- Designate quiet, accessible spaces for prayer. Public institutions can refer to these areas as “meditation” or “mind-body-spirit” spaces to remain inclusive and compliant with non-endorsement requirements.
- Ensure these spaces are private, comfortable, and available throughout the day and evening, especially during iftar and nighttime prayers.



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WHAT YOUR INSTITUTION CAN DO

Awareness and Education

- Send an institution-wide message at the start of Ramadan to acknowledge the observance, express support, and share resources.
- Offer workshops, webinars, or campaigns to educate the campus community about Ramadan and Islamic practices.
- Address Islamophobia by implementing anti-bias training and cultural competency programs.

Community Engagement

- Host institution-wide iftar events to encourage interfaith dialogue and foster connections between Muslim and non-Muslim community members.
- Decorate shared spaces with Ramadan symbols, such as crescent moons and lanterns, to create a welcoming and celebratory atmosphere.



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WHAT YOUR INSTITUTION CAN DO

Affinity Group Support

- Support Muslim student organizations by providing resources and opportunities for engagement.
- Create faculty and staff affinity groups to offer spaces for connection, collaboration, and institutional support.

Long-Term Commitments

- Collaborate with local Islamic centers or organizations to enhance campus resources and engagement.
- Develop ongoing initiatives to address systemic challenges and promote cultural and religious inclusivity.

By taking these steps, institutions can build a culture of equity, belonging, and respect that supports their Muslim community members during Ramadan and beyond.



CONTACT INFORMATION

For questions, support, or additional resources regarding Ramadan accommodations, please contact:

Southwest Minnesota State University Office of Diversity and Inclusion

Email: erin.kline@smsu.edu

Phone: (507) 537-6657

Office Hours: Monday – Friday, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion is committed to fostering an inclusive and supportive environment for all members of the SMSU community. Feel free to reach out for guidance on implementing accommodations, creating inclusive spaces, or learning more about Ramadan observances.

