



March 15, 2023

RE: Supporting observant students, faculty, and staff during Ramadan

Dear Colleagues,

Ramadan begins this year on the evening of March 21 and continues until the evening of April 21. This is a holy time for our Muslim colleagues and students, along with other Muslims in the world, and it is observed with fasting, prayer, and charity. Those participating in fasting refrain from food and drink (including water) from dawn until sunset. In Utah, this is around 15 hours, roughly from 5 a.m. to 8-8:30 p.m.

To support our students and colleagues observing Ramadan, please consider the following resources and practices:

For Faculty and Staff

- Units may wish to be sensitive when scheduling lunch meetings or events that center around meals. From March 21 through April 21, you may want to consider serving meals at the end of the event so that individuals can attend the main event and leave before food is served.
- Units should be ready to process requests for accommodations relating to work schedule adjustments as appropriate and should consult with [Human Resources \(hr@usu.edu\)](mailto:hr@usu.edu) and the [Office of Equity](#) as needed.

For Students

- Academic units may wish to consider arrangements that allow students to take exams or submit assignments earlier in the day rather than afternoon, and/or be ready to process requests for accommodations, as appropriate. Units may wish to consult with the [Division of Student Affairs](#) and consider reviewing the USU policy on students' [Sincerely Held Core Beliefs](#).
- Units may wish to be sensitive to the timing when scheduling activities that require students to be outdoor in the sun or involving strenuous activity.
- If your class requires a final project presentation, consider allowing students to provide a video recording of their presentations as opposed to presenting in person.
- Encourage students to contact you directly if they need a different kind of accommodation.

Additional Tips

- Units may wish to bear in mind that individual preferences about disclosing religious practices and/or about speaking about these issues may vary. Consequently, it is generally best to let individuals decide what they are comfortable sharing and to allow individuals to initiate accommodation requests and discussion as needed.
- Units should avoid making assumptions about who is or is not observing Ramadan and in discussing aspects of religious affiliation in general.
- Units should follow university policy and practices in discussing religious practices and in processing requests for accommodations—or in making more general programmatic adjustments.

Finally, please keep in mind that USU offers the following resources for students and employees:

- A reflection room located in the Taggart Student Center, room 310 (across from Inclusion Center) and is open to anyone.
- The [USU Interfaith Initiative](#) works to create a sense of connectedness through an appreciation of the diversity of faith, tradition, and culture.
- **The USU Interfaith Initiative will host a series of panel discussions, a keynote address entitled “Islam, Islamophobia and their American and Global Intersections” by Dr. Khaled Beydoun (Wayne State University), and a community iftar.** These events are co-sponsored by multiple units. Information about all these events, including tickets to the community iftar, can be found on the [USU Interfaith website](#).
- The Student Nutrition Access Center (SNAC) will provide after-hours to-go meals for iftars, which can be reserved four days per week by logging in to [AggiePulse](#).
- USU Dining Halls (Junction and Marketplace) close before sunset, but meals can be purchased as take-out options earlier in the evening.
- Students with a Housing Semester 110 Meal Plan may request for a partial refund for the unused portion of their plan during Ramadan if they feel they were unable to use it effectively. These requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Students are requested to contact Dining Services at alan.andersen@usu.edu after Ramadan to make this request.

Please share this information with others in your college or division as you feel appropriate. Diversity makes our community stronger and enriches everyone’s learning experience at USU. I hope you will join me in celebrating our diversity at Utah State University and that your units are able to access supportive resources to help best meet the needs of students, faculty, and staff.

Sincerely,



Jane Irungu
Vice President, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion