Ramadan

In support of our staff, students, faculty and postdocs, this information is offered as a resource about the Muslim observance of Ramadan.

MAY 5–JUNE 4, 2019

HISTORY AND MEANING
Ramadan is the holiest month of the year for Muslims. It is believed to be the month during which the Quran (the Muslim holy book) was revealed by God to the Prophet Muhammad. Muslims fast during the month of Ramadan. Fasting is not only physical but spiritual as well. Ramadan is a time of spiritual reflection, a time to purify the soul and a time when Muslims refocus their attention on Allah or God. The act of fasting is a practice in self-control and is done to increase empathy for those who may not have the luxury of food and water, among other reasons.

TYPICAL OBSERVANCES
• During Ramadan, Muslims fast from dawn to sunset each day for the entire month. This means Muslims do not eat, drink, take oral medication or smoke during the daylight hours.
• Muslims may want to pray more frequently during Ramadan, so providing a private space for prayer is important. Many may want to take time off for the conclusion of Ramadan, called Eid al-Fitr. This is a time of celebration with gift giving and traditional foods.
• While students are not automatically excused from class for this observance, they may work with their course instructors to make accommodations, such as considerations for students who may be fasting. Graduate and professional students must refer to their own school and departmental vacation policies and calendars for more specific information.
• Staff members may request paid time off for this observance. Support their preference to take leave for their religious observance.

RESOURCES FOR MANAGING WELL-BEING AND MENTAL HEALTH
People feel many types of emotions during the holidays—joy, peace, stress and depression, to name a few. Whatever you feel, know you are not alone, and Vanderbilt has resources to help you through these challenges.

Faculty, Staff and Postdocs
Work/Life Connections-EAP
(615) 936-1327
vumc.org/health-wellness/work-life

Students
Office of Student Care Coordination
(615) 343-9355
vanderbilt.edu/carecoordination/

For more information, please contact Equity, Diversity and Inclusion at edi@vanderbilt.edu. For more information on the university’s policy on religious holy days and observances, contact the Office of the University Chaplain and Religious Life at religiouslife@vanderbilt.edu or Human Resources at human.resources@vanderbilt.edu.

This resource is part of a toolkit created by Equity, Diversity and Inclusion to highlight religious and cultural observances that members of our community may practice. This toolkit is not meant to be exhaustive, but instead to provide a general overview of how we can support staff, faculty, students and postdocs. We continually refine this information and welcome your suggestions.

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