

Religious Fasting During Examination Periods

Information for students who are undertaking a Religious Fast at the University of Portsmouth during examination periods

This document is an addendum to the University of Portsmouth's Religion and Belief Policy and should be read in conjunction with that document which can be found either [here](#).

The University of Portsmouth community includes people from many different religious groups. In some years, either the main examination period or the re-sit examination period overlaps (at least partially) with Ramadan or one of the other periods of religious fasting. The University is aware that certain religious festivals coincide with key events in the academic timetable. However given this wide diversity it is regrettable that it is not possible for the University to change the dates of the examination periods as these are fixed a long time in advance and any changes would have very significant effects on other venues in the annual academic year.

Although the University recognises that obligatory fasting is an important event within many religious observances it does not deem religious fasting to be a legitimate extenuating circumstance or reason for claiming mitigating circumstances for examinations unless fasting significantly effects your health and/or you have a medical condition which may impair your performance or prevent you from attending an examination. In such cases you will need to provide documentary evidence to support your claim for mitigating circumstances to be accepted with good cause. Further information can be found at [Department of Student and Academic Administration – Extenuating Circumstances](#)

However it must be noted that extenuating circumstances cannot be submitted for either Second Attempt Assessments or Deferred First Attempt Assessments and any that are submitted will be rejected.

The University would not wish to dictate to religious students how they should address this situation however in order to manage your studying whilst fasting you will need to prepare effectively for your examinations. Short gentle breaks between your scheduled examinations will help to increase strength of mind in all areas of your life, including food, sleeping and effective use of time. Research and consultation have identified the following options:

- Some students may decide not to take any particular steps and to continue with their fast as usual.
- Some students, in consultation with their religious advisor, may consider that their examinations are sufficient justification to permit them not to Fast, either just on examination days or perhaps for the whole examination period. The period of fasting can often be undertaken at a later time or some other arrangement could be considered.

Should you wish some further support you can contact the Chaplaincy Department at the University of Portsmouth on chaplains@port.ac.uk. Not only can they provide you with practical advice during before and after this time they would be able to refer you to faith leaders that they have strong relationships with in the wider Portsmouth community.

For further information on fasting, specifically relating to the Muslim festival of Ramadan, please follow this link to [Ramadan Health Guide](#). Although this comprehensive guide is aimed at the Muslim community during the feast of Ramadan, the advice contained within it would prove useful to many others observing a fast as part of their faith.

Other good sources of information on fasting can be found at the following websites:

Equality Challenge Unit: [Accommodating Religious Practice during the exam period](#)

NHS Direct: [Fasting and Health](#)

Beliefnet Fasting Chart – providing information on all religions who observe the practice of fasting:
[Fasting Chart](#)

You can also access information Equality and Diversity at the University of Portsmouth from this link:
[E&D Reports](#)

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