

### **What is Ramadan?**

- The month of Ramadan is a time when practicing Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset every day.
- The Islamic calendar is based on a lunar system, and the beginning of every month is determined by observing the new moon. For this reason, the exact Islamic calendar dates for Ramadan are always future estimates.
- This year, it is estimated that Ramadan will begin on **April 12<sup>th</sup>** and end **May 12<sup>th</sup>**.
- Fasting can last between 11-16 hours based on daylight hours and where people live in the world.

### **What does fasting entail for Muslims?**

- Fasting means no eating or drinking (even water) during daylight hours.
- It is a time for Muslims to recharge their spirituality, reflect on the past year, and reevaluate how one can do better.
- It is a month to cleanse one's soul. Communally it is a time to pray, eat together, give back to the community, and participate in charity.

### **How does Ramadan affect work?**

- In predominantly Muslim countries, work hours are often adjusted during Ramadan. However, this is not always an option in predominantly non-Muslim countries.
- As the Muslim population in America grows, it is more important now more than ever for this month to be included in academic calendars, for example. Our students, faculty, and staff could be fasting, and being more knowledgeable about what this entails can help make for stronger and more culturally aware working environment.

### **Here are some considerations when working with Muslim employees during Ramadan:**

- Consider flex hours. Maybe the staff member could work in the earlier hours of the morning and end the workday at 2:00pm. Or maybe the employee would want to work additional hours after sunset.
- Since those who are fasting will not be taking a lunch, consider allowing them to work through lunch and leave work early.
- If possible, avoid having lunch or coffee meetings during Ramadan that are mandatory for those employees.
- Practicing Muslims pray multiple times a day. Consider providing a private prayer (safe) space to observe their prayers. If this is not available, allow them the option to go to a nearby mosque for their prayers.
- If it is difficult for some to balance fasting and work, allow for sick days, or Paid Time Off.
- Since the date of the end of Ramadan, the holiday which is called Eid ul Fitr, is again based on the sighting the moon, know that if an employee is requesting vacation time, this date could change the night before.

### **For more information:**

Ramadan: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Ramadan>

History of Muslims in America: <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2021/2/10/muslims-in-america-always-there>