



Ensuring Student Voice in the development of: **Inclusive approaches to teaching and learning during Ramadan**

Dr Liam J.B. Hill

MA Psychology | MSc Public Health | PhD Child Health



@liamjbhill.bksy.social



liam.hill@ed.ac.uk

Research Profile: ORCID.ORG/0000-0002-4069-5121

Research Team

- ▶ **Nasriya Ahmed El-Hosny**, BA Social Work student, Oxford Brookes University
- ▶ **Rakiya Raza**, MA Social Work student, Oxford Brookes University
- ▶ **Zain Ajmal**, MA Social Work student, Oxford Brookes University
- ▶ **Louise Taylor**, Professor, School of Psychology, Social Work and Public Health, Oxford Brookes University
- ▶ **Kay Kempers**, Lecturer, Carnegie School of Education, Leeds Beckett University
- ▶ **Zayba Ghazali-Mohammed**, Lecturer, School of Psychology and Neuroscience, University of Glasgow
- ▶ **Fatima Malik**, Senior Clinical Teacher in Optometry, University of Manchester
- ▶ **Deborah Hall**, Professor of Psychology, School of Social Sciences, Heriot-Watt University
- ▶ **Liam J. B.Hill**, Teaching Fellow, Moray House School of Education and Sport, University of Edinburgh
- ▶ **Rebecca Page-Tickell**, Director of Education and Experience, Royal Docks School of Business and Law University of East London
- ▶ **Anna Sedda**, Associate Professor, School of Social Sciences, Herriot-Watt University
- ▶ **Shuai Zheng**, Senior Lecturer, School of Computing, Ulster University

There are c363,000 Muslim students in HE in the UK (12%)
(HESA, 2026)

Substantial awarding gaps
(AdvanceHE, 2020):

Awarded a 1st or 2:1 degree class?

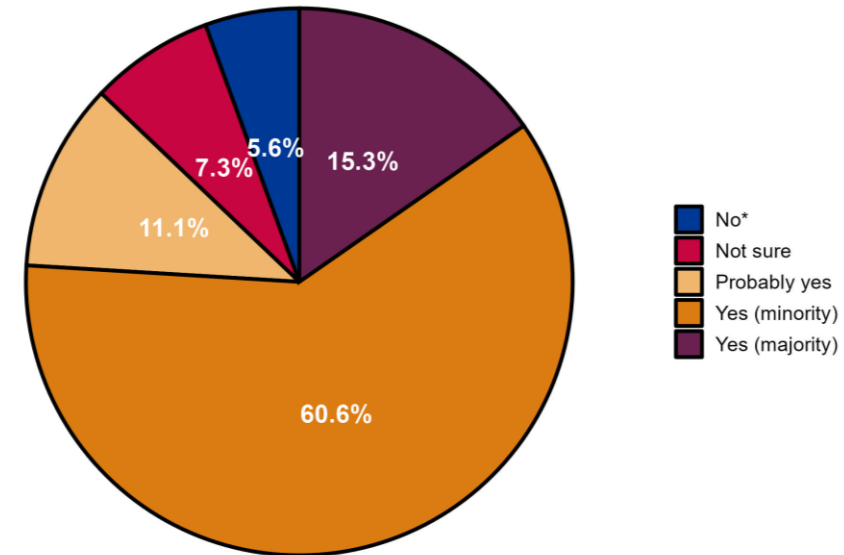
- Overall 76.3%
- Muslim students 64.9%

A lot of work to do to break down barriers to inclusion in HE:

“I really have to be careful how I speak or what I do, limiting my authentic self in case it reflects negatively for hiring committees. It’s so tiring”

Amina (Social Sciences, Russell Group)

Do you have any Muslim students...



*This category also includes 'Probably no' responses.

“We’re always put in positions where we have to choose between our religion, our identity or ultimately succeeding in HE”

Rahima (Psychiatry, Oxbridge)

Ramadan and its potential implications

- ▶ **Student priorities may shift towards personal worship, as well as community.**
 - ▶ Fasting during daylight hours (no food or drink)
 - ▶ More likely to require time during the day to pray.
 - ▶ Likely to be absent to celebrate Eid.
- ▶ **Impact on learning likely to fluctuate** *(during the day and during the month)*
 - ▶ Mixed evidence for effects of fasting (dependent on country).
 - ▶ More consistent evidence for negative effects of sleep disruption.

(see Faris et al., [2020](#), Kerkeni et al., [2024](#))
- ▶ **Risks of not making reasonable adjustments for Ramadan's impact?**
 - ▶ Could be considered indirect discrimination under the Equality Act (2010)?

Our Project :

2 surveys before and during Ramadan 2025

Staff Survey: Dec 2024-Jan 2025 – short survey of 287 Student Educators.

Student Survey: Jan 2025-Mar 2025 – short survey of 220 HE students.

“Nothing about us, without us!”

Both explored:

1. Staff/student awareness of Ramadan.
2. Staff/Student views on the need for changes or adjustment to teaching and learning practices during this period.
3. Staff/Student experiences of adjustments being implemented.

What is valued...

... and what is not?

Student survey: Respondent Demographics

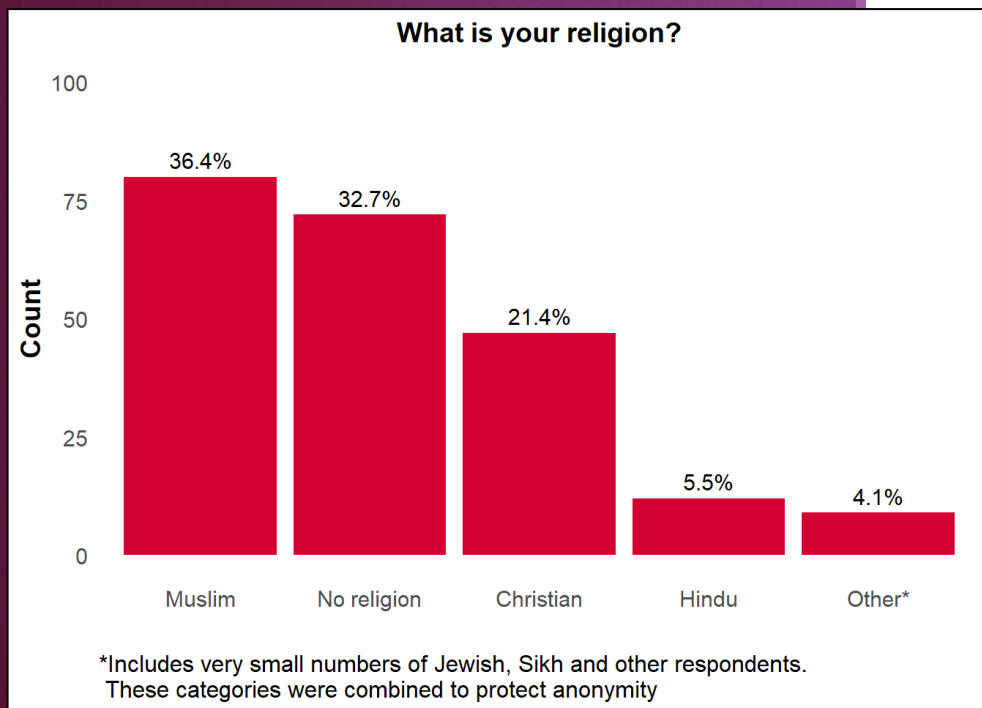


Table 1

Sample demographics (N = 220)

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Religion	Muslim	80	36.36
	No religion	72	32.73
	Christian	47	21.36
	Hindu	12	5.45
	Other ¹	9	4.09
Gender Identity	Woman	170	77.27
	Man	39	17.73
	Non-binary	6	2.73
	Other ²	5	2.27
Subject Area ³	Social Sciences	151	68.64
	Health & Social Care	45	20.45
	STEM	13	5.91
	No response	7	3.18
	Arts & Humanities	4	1.82
	UK HEI (UK campus)	143	65.00
University	UK HEI (undisc. campus) ⁴	55	25.00
	UK HEI (intl. campus)	16	7.27
	Unclassifiable ⁵	6	2.73

Additional Notes

¹ Includes very small numbers of Jewish, Sikh and other respondents. These categories were combined to protect anonymity

² Includes very small numbers of respondents that did not response or identified as 'prefer not to say' or 'in another way'. These categories were combined to protect anonymity.

³ Responses were categorised into broad discipline clusters that are used by Advance HE

⁴ UK HEI (undisc. campus) responses are students studying at a UK HEI with international campuses that did not disclose which campus they studied at.

⁵ Unclassifiable responses include instances of non-response as well as unclear responses.

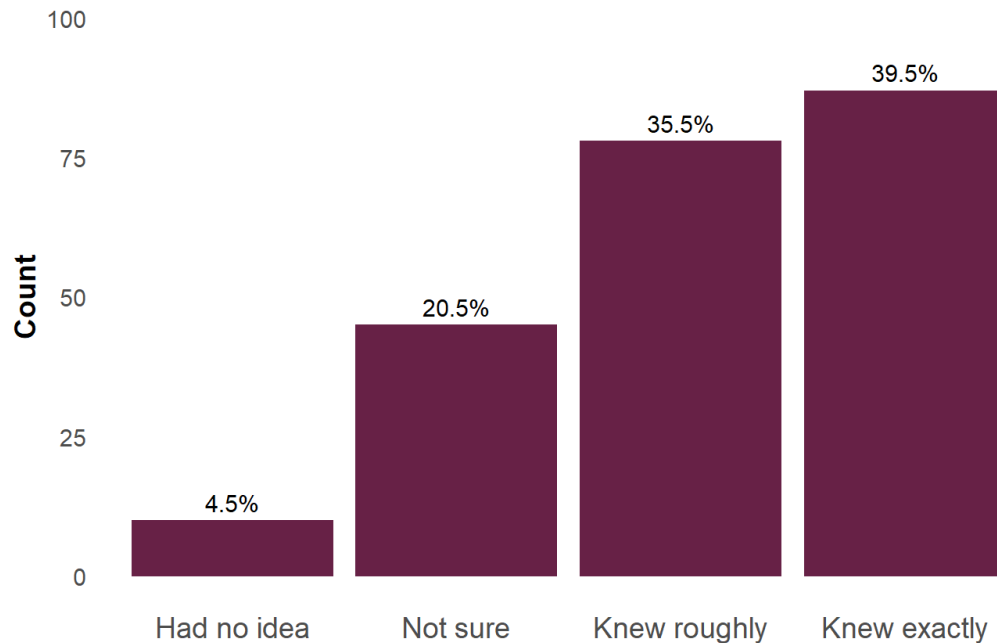
Student survey: Awareness

Note: with significant differences between Muslim and non-Muslim students

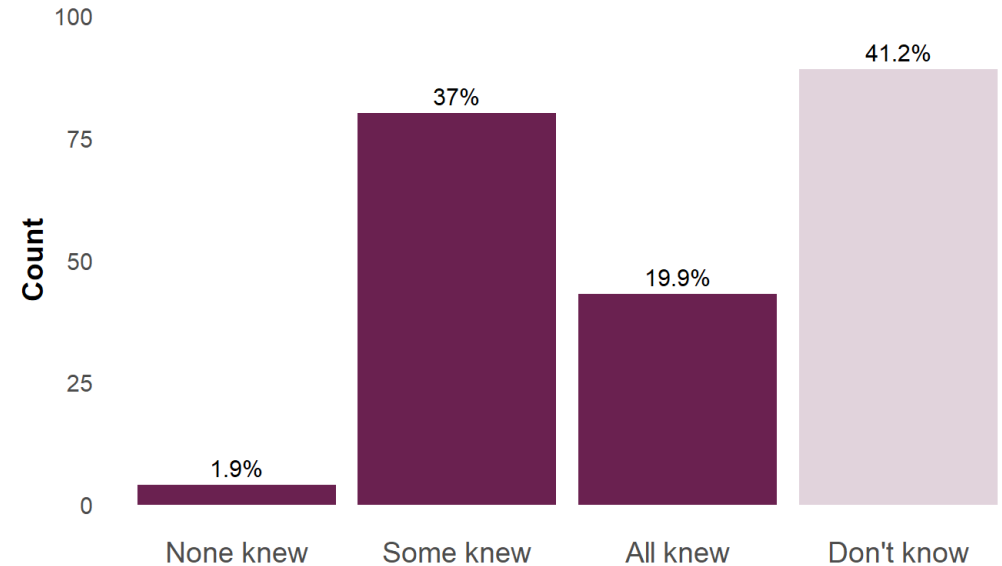
"It would have been nice if someone had acknowledged it; instead, I felt quite alone."

"just something we deal with quietly."

Were you aware of when Ramadan was taking place last year (2024)?

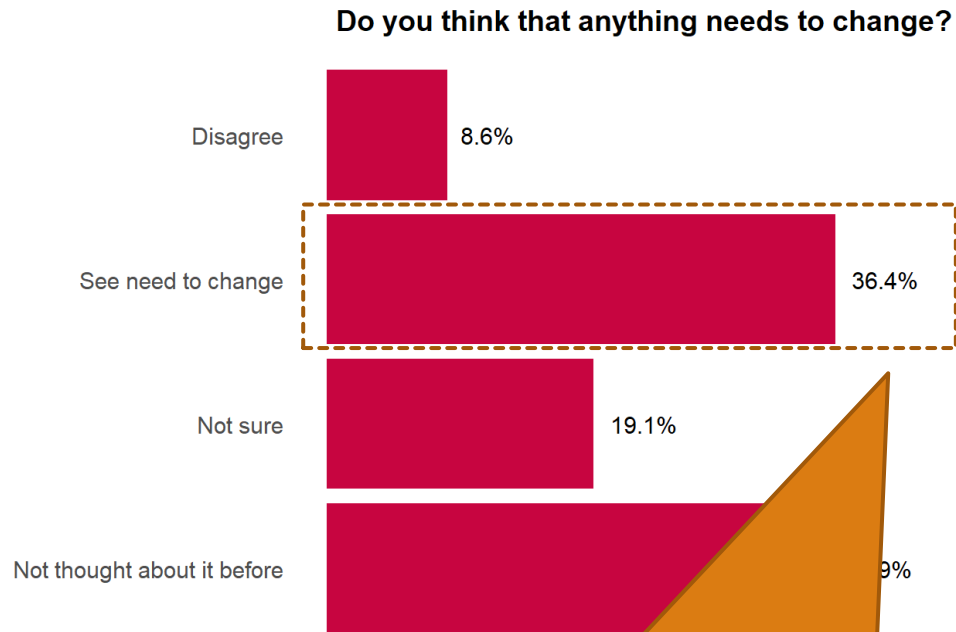


Do you think that your non Muslim lecturers tutors were aware that it was Ramadan?



Note: Four participants responded that none of their lecturers were non-Muslim

Student survey: Views and Experiences



Note: Muslim students responded that "change was needed" more frequently (statistically sig. difference, $p < .01$)

"I know of a friend who was not allowed to change tutorial time for Ramadan as lecturer didn't allow this ."

Did all your lecturers

Count

100
75
50
25
0

None did

Some did

All did

Don't know

35.5%

18.6%

3.6%

"The lecturer gave us a short break at sunset so we could break the fast together."

Further Key Findings and Themes

"People were considerate and didn't eat in front of us — it was nice but not expected."

▶ **Non-Muslim student perspectives...**

- ▶ Inconsistent flexibility (between lecturers) was commented on by non-Muslim students too.
- ▶ Non-Muslim students commented on benefits of increased flexibility too!

"The extra break helped everyone refocus."

▶ **Acknowledgement**

"Just saying 'Ramadan Mubarak' at the beginning made a huge difference — it showed they were aware."

- ▶ Supports relatedness and **contributes to student belonging** (Ryan & Deci, 2017; Gilani, 2023).

▶ **Compassionate Allyship**

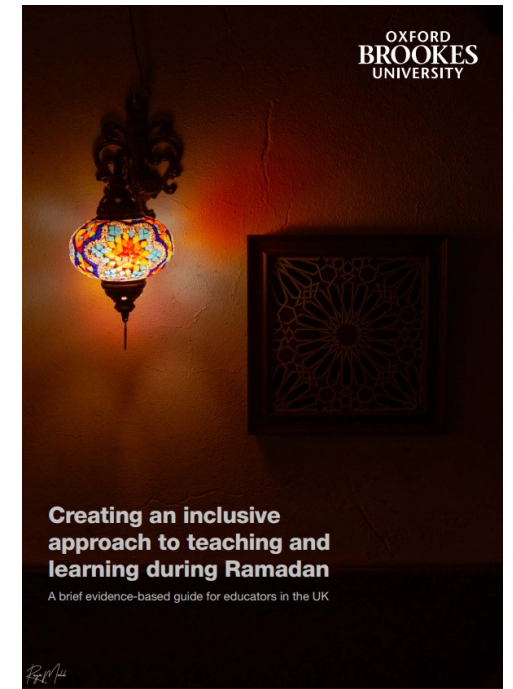
- ▶ Acts of solidarity often interpreted more as courtesy than as a request, **communicating awareness and respect**.
- ▶ Even more important on UK than International Campuses?
 - ▶ Cultural context changes what counts as 'inclusive' versus 'routine' practices (e.g. in Dubai, Malaysia)

Sharing what we learned

Convened a panel of Muslim students, educators and religious leaders.

Co-produced the following “good-practice” guide:

Creating an inclusive approach to teaching and learning during Ramadan: A brief evidence-based guide for educators in the UK. <https://doi.org/10.25416/NTR.28381739>



Key take-aways

Key messages in the guide:

1. **Acknowledge Ramadan AND celebrate it!**
2. **Avoid making assumptions when trying to foster inclusivity.**

Further Steps:

- ▶ Could and should we do more within our UoE guidance/policies?
- ▶ **UoE guidance [here](#).**
 - ▶ We have no explicit provision for religious observance in our EC policy.
 - ▶ TAR instruct students to individual seek out support, from Student Advisers.

One simple suggestion...

[Link to post here](#)



► ... and a friendly Reminder!

- Ramadan 2027 will begin on the 7th of Feb, with Eid-al-fitr on Monday 8th March.*

*Exact dates contingent on the sighting of the moon.



Thanks for Listening!

Any questions?

Additional Links/Resources

- ▶ Link to the full guide, accessible from the National Teaching Repository:

Taylor, L., Ahmed El-Hosny, N., Hall, D., Hill, L. J. B., Kempers, K., Malik, F., Mathers, H., Page-Tickell, R., & Raza, R. (2025). *Creating an inclusive approach to teaching and learning during Ramadan: A brief evidence-based guide for educators in the UK*. <https://doi.org/10.25416/NTR.28381739>

- ▶ Free printable posters/resources link here:

https://figshare.edgehill.ac.uk/articles/poster/Ramadan_Resources/28330607