



WILLIAM & MARY

OFFICE OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Inclusive Leader Insights

Religious Diversity at William & Mary

As our institution becomes more diverse, it is essential to recognize and respect the religious diversity of the members of our community. In the weeks after we return from Spring Break, there are several religious holidays that will take place. Passover, Ramadan, and Easter are a few of the faith traditions that will overlap, which presents an opportunity for us to promote interfaith understanding and inclusivity within the William & Mary community.

Ramadan is a month-long Islamic holiday that commemorates the revelation of the Quran to the Prophet Muhammad. During Ramadan, a time of fasting, prayer, and reflection will take place beginning the evening of March 22 through the evening of April 21. Muslim students, faculty, and staff may fast from sunrise to sunset, and may request accommodations such as flexible work hours or a quiet space for prayer.

Passover is a Jewish holiday that commemorates the Israelites' liberation from slavery in Egypt. The holiday lasts for eight days and typically falls in late March or early April. This year it begins at sunset on April 5. During this time, families will hold a seder on the first and sometimes second night of Passover. Jewish students, faculty, and staff may observe dietary restrictions or request time-off to prepare for and/or attend a seder.

Good Friday and Easter are Christian holidays that commemorate the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Easter falls on the first Sunday after the first full moon following the Spring equinox, which is typically in late March or early April (on April 7 for 2023). Christian students, faculty, and staff may request time off to attend religious services and celebrate with family and friends.

Here are some tips for creating a welcoming environment for people of all faiths:

1. Understand the diverse religious beliefs and practices of William & Mary and the surrounding Hampton Roads communities. Educate yourself and your teams about different religions, customs, and traditions to avoid misunderstandings, stereotyping, or discrimination.
2. Avoid scheduling important events or deadlines during significant religious holidays. Be mindful of the religious holidays and observances that those in our community celebrate and make accommodations to ensure that their religious beliefs and practices are respected and honored.
3. Offer reasonable accommodations for religious practices. Accommodate requests for time off for religious holidays, flexible work schedules, or prayer breaks.
4. Foster a culture of mutual respect and understanding. Encourage open dialogue, curiosity, and empathy among students, faculty and staff to enhance cross-cultural understanding and teamwork.
5. Address discrimination or harassment based on religion. Review the [Guidelines for Religious Accommodations](#) and [Discrimination Policies](#), and provide training to promote compliance.

By promoting religious diversity and inclusivity, we are able to create a welcoming and supportive community where all feel a sense of belonging regardless of their religious beliefs.

For more information, please contact wmdiversity@wm.edu.