Days of Religious & Spiritual Significance (2021)

The following are some dates of religious and/or spiritual significance that students, faculty and staff members may choose to consider when making scheduling decisions; for example, when planning dates for class requirements, examinations, or events.

Please note that this list is not exhaustive, but highlights some of the key dates of importance. Religious and spiritual observances are a protected ground under the Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC), and as such the University of Waterloo has a duty to accommodate. This list of dates should not be used to vet the legitimacy of requests for accommodations related to religious or spiritual days of observance but is designed to be a guide for planning purposes and may signal to instructors potential conflicts with course requirements. Some of the days may vary a few days before or after the date indicated, due to lunar calendars, time zone differences, incompatibility with the Western Gregorian calendar, government or ecclesiastical declarations, date reporting conflicts etc.

Some of the dates listed are specifically important to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. Indigenous spirituality is also protected under the OHRC as a ground for accommodation, and as such students, faculty or staff may require time off to recognize these important dates.

Please contact the Equity Office if you have any questions or concerns about this list, and consider consulting the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion (CCDI)’s 2021 calendar for a more fulsome list, or brief description of these dates.
Winter Term 2021

January 2021

- Wednesday, January 6  
  Christmas (Armenian Apostolic Church)
- Thursday, January 7  
  Christmas (Christian-Coptic & Eastern Orthodox)
- Thursday, January 14  
  Orthodox New Year (Orthodox Christian)
- Wednesday, January 20  
  Bodhi Day (Buddhism)

February 2021

- Tuesday, February 16  
  Vasant Panchami (Hindu)
- Wednesday, February 17  
  Ash Wednesday, Start of Lent (Christian)
- February 25-26  
  Purim (Jewish)
- Friday, February 26  
  Magha Puja (Buddhism)
- Saturday, February 27  
  Chotrul Duchen (Tibetan Buddhists)

March 2021

- March 1 – March 19  
  Nineteen Day Fast (Bahá’í)
- Thursday, March 11  
  Maha Shivaratri (Hindu)
- March 19-March 20  
  Nowruz/New Year (Bahá’í)
  Persian New Year
- March 27-April 4  
  Passover/Pesach (Jewish)
- Sunday, March 28  
  Palm Sunday (Christian)
• Sunday, March 28  Palm Sunday (Christian)  
  Birth of Prophet Zarathustra (Zoroastrian) 
• Monday, March 29  Holi (Hindu) 

April 2021 
• Friday, April 2  Good/Holy Friday (Christian, Eastern Orthodox) 
• Sunday, April 4  Easter (Christian) 
• Monday, April 5  Easter Monday (Christian) 
• Monday, April 12  Hindu New Year (first day of Chaitra) 
• April 12-May 11  Ramadan (Islam) [sundown April 12-sundown May 11] 
• Wednesday, April 14  Baisakhi (Sikh) 
• April 20-May 2  Feast of Ridvan (Bahá’í) [1st, 9th & 12th days’ work is suspended] 
• Wednesday, April 21  Ram Navami (Hindu) 
• Sunday, April 25  Mahavir Jayanti (Jainism) 
• Tuesday, April 27  Theravada New Year (Buddhism)
Spring Term 2021

May 2021

• Saturday, May 1  Holy Saturday (Coptic-Christian & Eastern Orthodox)
• Sunday, May 2  Easter/ Pasha (Coptic-Christian & Eastern Orthodox)
• Monday, May 3  Easter Monday (Coptic-Christian & Eastern Orthodox)
• Friday, May 7  Vesak (Buddhist)
• May 12-13  Eid-al-Fitr (Islam)
• May 16- May 18  Shavuot (Jewish)
• Sunday, May 23  Declaration of the Bab (Bahá’í)
• Friday, May 28  Ascension of Bahá’u’lláh (Bahá’í)

July 2021

• Friday, July 9  Martyrdom of the Bab (Bahá’í)
• Sunday, July 11  Imamat Day (Islam Ismailli)
• Tuesday, July 20  Eid-Al-Adha (Islam)
• Saturday, July 24  Asala (Dharma Day) (Buddhist)

August 2021

• Tuesday, August 10  Muharram (Islam)
• Saturday, August 21  Raksha Bandhan (Hindu)
• Sunday, August 22  Raksha Bandhan (Hindu)
• Monday, August 30  Krishna Janmashtami (Hindu)
Fall Term 2021

September 2021

- Friday, September 4  Paryushan- Parvarambha (Jain)
- September 6-8  Rosh Hashanah (Jewish)
- Friday, September 10  Ganesh Chaturthi (Hindu)
- September 15-16  Yom Kippur (Jewish)
- September 20-27  Sukkot (Judaism)
- September 27-29  Shmini Atzeret (Judaism)

October 2021

- October 7-14  Navaratri (Hindu)
- Friday, October 15  Dussehra (Hindu)
- Monday, October 18  Mawlid al Nabi (Islam)

November 2021

- Thursday, November 4  Diwali (Sikh, Hindu, Jain)
- Saturday, November 6  Birth of the Bab (Bahá’í)
- November 6-7  Birth of Bahá’u'lláh (Bahá’í)
- Friday, November 19  Guru Nanak’s Birthday – Bikrami (Sikh)
- November 27-28  Ascension of Abdu’l-Bahá (Bahá’í)
- November 28-December 6  Hanukkah (Jewish)
- Nov 28-Jan 6 2022  Nativity Fast (Eastern Orthodox & Eastern Catholic)
December 2021

- Monday, December 13  
  Aga Khan’s Birthday (Islam Ismaili)
- Thursday, December 24  
  Christmas Eve (Christian)
- Friday, December 25  
  Christmas Day (Christian)
- Saturday, December 26  
  Death of Prophet Zarathustra (Zoroastrian)