THE MANCHESTER MUSLIM MEDICAL STUDENT GUIDE

SECOND EDITION



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UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER
ISLAMIC SOCIETY

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For any general enquiries about this guide or any questions or comments please email us on **muslimmedicguide@gmail.com**

To download a digital copy of this guide visit **www.manchesterisoc.com**

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About this guide

Congratulations on making it to medical school! Your dedication and hard work have led you to this exciting milestone. As you embark on this new journey, you will encounter a mix of highs, lows, challenges, and most importantly, countless new opportunities. These years ahead will likely be some of your most memorable and we have developed this guide to assist you as you navigate through them.

We understand that the transition to university can be intimidating and as a Muslim medical student you may encounter unique challenges related to your faith.

This guide is written for medical students by medical students. Its purpose is to provide practical tips, guidance and answers to frequently asked questions tailored to the needs of Muslim students. For the second year running, our colleagues, Mohammed Ullah (the University Muslim Chaplain) and Dr Enam Haque (The MBChB Programme EDI Co-Lead), have carefully reviewed the guide to ensure its accuracy and utility as a valuable resource throughout your medical school journey.

Our primary aim is to empower you and offer the necessary support to address any challenges related to your faith that may arise during your time in Medical School.

May Allah (SWT) bestow His blessings upon your medical school journey, making it a source of benefit for you in this world and the Hereafter.

What's new in the second edition of the Manchester Muslim Medical Student Guide:

- Fresh additions include sections covering financial assistance, guidance for international students, advice for postgraduate/intercalating students, and information for students allocated to LTHTR.
- You'll find expanded details on FFP3 fit testing and a greater focus on well-being.
- We've also taken the time to update contact details and provide information about available prayer room spaces on campus and in placement.

Starting University

Freshers

“Freshers week” is one of the most exciting times of the year, with so much to do and so many new people to meet. It's nice to be able to make use of freshers events with your fellow course-mates, and the Freshers Welcome Afternoon Tea organised by the medical school is a highlight!

However, many of the events organised for the first-year medics often involve alcohol and are in environments which can be uncomfortable for Muslim students.

Here are some common questions you may have at the start of medical school regarding freshers:

“My PBL group are all going to the Medics Pub Crawl and are inviting me along, I don't want to go because of the alcohol and the club environment. What should I do?”

Don't feel you have to take part in anything you’re uncomfortable with. In this case, just explain to them that you can’t take part due to your religious beliefs. You can also speak to your academic advisor or student pastoral support services, who can support you - you could drop them a private message.

Moreover, there is no harm in suggesting alternative ways to meet up with friends and colleagues, such as coffee shops or restaurants. You will be pleasantly surprised at how accommodating people are.

So are there any alternative fresher events on campus?

Definitely! There are other societies on campus that host a variety of events. For example the UoM Islamic Society runs many Muslim friendly fresher events and continues to do so throughout the year. From Go Karting to social link ups, and food crawls to theme park trips, there's always something to do! So come along, it's a great place to make new friends. For the latest events be sure to check out their instagram page @manchesterisoc

Meeting new people and making friends

University can be a daunting experience at first, but making friends is a lot easier than it seems. Here's some tried and tested suggestions for how you can meet new people:

- **Join Facebook/ Whatsapp groups for your course or accommodation** - These group chats tend to be set up before starting the course and will help you get acquainted with those you'll be studying with

- **Sit with people in your lectures and start up a conversation** - This might seem scary but it really does work, just introduce yourself to the person next to you - you might end up becoming friends.

- **After teaching sessions go out with people** - Invite people to get coffee or food, go to the library, or even just on a walk

- **Join societies** - During Freshers Week, societies put on a range of events. Its a fantastic way to meet people you might not otherwise from other courses and year groups

- **Volunteering** - Volunteering is an opportunity to do good as well as expand your social circle. There's a range of societies that provide volunteering opportunities, as well as organisations in the local community as well.

- **Get a job** - A part-time job is a nice way to meet people you wouldn't normally have the chance to. Just make sure you'll be able to balance it with your studies.

- **If you live in halls, speak to your flatmates and neighbours**

- **Host a gathering** - Invite people to your accommodation and tell them they're welcome to bring their own friends. This is a really good way to network and meet new people.

- **Most important don't isolate yourself**

Remember, everyone is in the same boat - finding your people might take some time, but when you do it'll be amazing!

Accommodation

Moving into new accommodation can be a very exciting experience for any student. This may be your first time moving away from home and living with strangers, so it's important to set your boundaries and expectations from the beginning.

After submitting your accommodation application form, you can email **accommodation@manchester.ac.uk** to request to be allocated to a 'lifestyle moderated area.' These are areas provided by the university where students have requested to adopt a moderated lifestyle in respect of alcohol, parties, and noise, etc. The University cannot guarantee a permanently quiet or alcohol-free environment but by grouping like-minded people together it is hoped that they can at least provide a 'space' where a moderated lifestyle might flourish.

I have been placed into a mixed gendered flat for the year. Is there anything I can do to switch to a same gendered flat?

There are currently no single-gendered halls available at the University of Manchester. However, you can request a single gender flat using the email above. Please note, though, there is no guarantee that you will get one.

I have been placed into Owens Park Tower and I'm extremely uncomfortable being in this environment. Is there anything I can do to switch halls?

To switch halls visit **www.accommodation.manchester.ac.uk/current/here/info/** and scroll down to the section "Transfer Between Halls" where all the relevant information can be found. For issues that are unable to be resolved through the website email the accommodation manager for more help.

I've moved into catered halls and I don't know if they can provide me with halal food.

In halls, halal food can be provided if you order it pre-arrival. It's a bit frustrating sometimes having to ask for it every time. But gradually the staff get to know your face and are ready with your dish as you get there. **All catered halls do provide halal food** and if you have any issues make sure you take it up with the accommodation manager. If necessary you can email the head of catering on **alison.shedlock@manchester.ac.uk** to make any issues known.

I'm really worried that my flatmates are going to be messy and they're going to contaminate our shared kitchen spaces with pork and alcohol.

This can be an awkward conversation to have, but trust us, every Muslim living in halls has had to go through this! Try approaching your flatmates in a friendly manner, Explain to them that you don't feel comfortable with alcohol/pork being left on the shared food preparation spaces, and that it's important that they can thoroughly clean all the equipment they have used. Most students are helpful in preventing cross-contamination between halal and haram foods. This includes using sealed containers, different cooking utensils, foil on the grill pan, etc. Additionally, try to section off a part of the fridge for your use only. If you don't feel comfortable, then check your halls of residence guidance on bringing your own fridge to your room!

When moving into halls, bring your own plates, cutlery, cups, pans, and cleaning equipment (e.g. sponges, scrubbers). If your halls come with cleaning staff, it can be helpful to talk to staff who clean the shared living spaces to avoid cross-contaminating dirty plates/utensils with your kitchen items, etc. They are unlikely to know unless you speak to them!

My flatmates only want to socialise in an environment that I am not comfortable in (ie alcohol, clubbing etc.)

It's important to know that you shouldn't ever feel pressured into doing something that you're not comfortable with. At the beginning of your tenancy, it would be good to explain to your flatmates how you feel about the nature of these gatherings as early as you can. The majority of students we have met tend to respect your decision and will try to make changes. You can always offer alternatives if you want to get to know your flatmates/neighbours in a different environment, such as going to a restaurant for a meal or watching a movie.

You don't have to just socialise with your flatmates. Meeting people in your hall's common room or joining your halls of residence Facebook group is also a way to find like-minded people living in your building.

I'm worried about where I can pray in my halls and people coming in and out of my room with their shoes on

In accommodation, your room is probably the only suitable place for prayers, but always ask if there is a designated space. Other students are likely to wear shoes in other parts of the accommodation. If your halls come with cleaning staff, it can be helpful to talk to staff who clean your room and explain that outdoor shoes on your floor will make it unclean for prayer, etc. They are unlikely to know unless you speak to them.

Where can I perform ablution in my halls of residence?

There are unlikely to be low-level sinks in university accommodation, making foot-washing a challenge. If you have en suite accommodation this should not present any difficulties. However, if you are in a shared bathroom accommodation you may have to explain to other students that you need to use the hand wash basins for washing feet. And remember, always be considerate and wipe down any excess water. Leave it as clean as you found it!

A member of the accommodation staff has made a racist or Islamophobic comment towards me. What can be done and who should I report this to?

The University has measures in place to combat any form of discrimination on university premises. It is really important to speak to someone about any incidents that have taken place. For more information see the reporting Islamophobia section page.

For more information about rented and leased properties in Manchester, you can visit https://www.manchester.ac.uk/study/experience/accommodation/ where the university provides more detailed advice on accommodation.

You can also access the University of Manchester Islamic Society's accommodation guide at manchesterisoc.com -> Useful info -> Guides

Prayer (Salah)

Salah (prayer), one of the five pillars of Islam, stands as a cornerstone of our faith, requiring all eligible Muslims to perform it five times a day. Alongside salah, wudhu (ritual ablution) is a mandatory prerequisite for prayer. As university students, it is essential that we allocate time in our daily lives to fulfil this sacred obligation.

These obligatory prayers are performed at specific periods throughout the day: Fajr (pre-dawn until sunrise), Zuhr (after the sun is at the highest point), Asr (late afternoon), Maghrib (immediately after sunset), and Isha (until midnight).

Religion and belief are protected characteristics under the Equality Act of 2010, which means that universities, despite being secular institutions, are required to accommodate the needs of their religiously diverse student body. This should include the provision of prayer rooms or multi-faith spaces.

Daily Prayers

We understand that timetables change frequently, especially during clinical years, and it can be hard to observe the five daily prayers. Here are some common situations you may find yourself in during medical school;

How can I make sure that I'm able to pray during any teaching sessions which have a designated break time?

There will be teaching sessions that have breaks in the middle. Utilise this break time to make wudhu* and pray.

However, the break may happen at a time not suitable for prayer, or the break may be taken off to reduce the teaching time. Both of these examples can be problematic. Therefore, at the beginning of the semester or placement, we recommend that you email (see template below) your tutor explaining the importance of observing your prayer during this allocated break time. They will do their best to ensure that you have the time for prayer.

***What is wudhu? It is a ritual ablution that is compulsory and constitutes part of the prayer.**
Top Tip: Be diligent and considerate for your fellow peers and leave the washing area clean and dry after performing ablution.

How can I make sure I'm able to pray when I have back to back teaching sessions/lectures?

The solution to this will depend on the nature of your session. Praying in between sessions/lectures may result in you being 5-10 minutes late for your next teaching session. In this case, informing the tutor beforehand will allow you to observe your prayer without any issues. Often the issue arises when the tutor is unaware of why a student is turning up late to their teaching and feel they are disruptive to others. However, they will be much more accommodating if you have had a one-to-one discussion with them directly.

How can I make sure I don't miss praying on time during an overlapping teaching session without any breaks?

This can be a potential problem depending on the time of the year. During short days (in winter), it can be hard to pray on time if your teaching session runs through the entire allocated time. In this case, the solution is to ask your tutor to allow you 5 minutes, so that you may go to pray. The idea of asking can be daunting. However, you should feel confident knowing that this is an important religious act and, if asked respectfully, the tutor will understand.

Top Tips:

- In any situation where you have excused yourself to go pray in the middle of a session, try to find an empty room nearby rather than going to a designated prayer room that's far away.
- Don't forget to communicate with your tutor before the teaching session. This will help accommodate requests for prayers.
- Get in touch with the relevant University staff, if you feel that you are being discriminated against

For a comprehensive list of prayer spaces on campus and during placements, visit the "Prayer Spaces On Clinical Placement" section at the end of the guide.

Friday Prayers (Jummah)

The friday prayer is an obligatory prayer for Muslims to attend on Fridays, it consists of a short sermon and a short prayer that follows. Throughout the year it takes place around 1pm on campus. We know that Friday prayers are very important for Muslim students, and sometimes there can be timetable clashes. This can be difficult to navigate for many students.

I've received my timetable for the upcoming semester and every Friday during Jummah time, I have a scheduled session. What should I do?

Look out for an email from the Medical School that is sent out before the academic year starts/semester, asking students to list any commitments they have that they want the timetabling staff to account for. This includes sporting commitments etc and Friday prayers are definitely something that the medical school encourages you to mention. If you don't receive that particular email just email (see template on the next page) the allocated year admin lead at the medical school or base hospital.

I've just noticed that I have a timetabled session that clashes with Friday Prayers time. What should I do?

Email your year admin lead and inform them as soon as you can that you have Friday Prayers at this particular time. Ask them if your timetable can be amended to accommodate for this (see email template below). This issue can often be resolved, if the admin team has enough advance notice. For example, you may be able to attend the same session at a different time, or your session lead will be aware that you will be coming late to teaching.

Top Tips:

1. There are many local mosques and hospital prayer rooms that offer Friday prayers at various times. So it is worth checking their websites or display boards before attending.
2. CC the University Muslim Chaplain (mohammed.ullah@manchester.ac.uk) in the email, as he will be able to support you.

Friday Prayers Email Template

Send this email to your allocated admin lead for your year group at the medical school, base hospital or clinical placement supervisor.

Good Morning/Afternoon

Hope you are well. I'm emailing you about the "timetabled session" which I have on Friday at "time". Unfortunately, this will make it difficult for me to attend Friday prayers, which is an important religious commitment. I would be grateful for your help in helping me to attend both the Friday prayers and the teaching.

Many thanks,

We hope this template is helpful, the most important thing with faith related issues and concerns is to speak up about them to the right people, in the right way, at the right time.

Ramadan

Ramadan is one of the holiest months in the Islamic Calendar, it is a month of fasting, refraining from eating and drinking (yes not even water), reflection and self-purification. It is a month that Muslims look forward to and seek to develop themselves. Fasting during Ramadan is one of the pillars of the faith and an obligation for all Muslims (with some exceptions), so forms a really important part of a Muslim's calendar.

"O, Believers! Fasting is prescribed for you - as it was for those before you - so perhaps you will become mindful of Allah" [Quran 2:183]

I really want to make the most out of Ramadan, through worship and prayer, but university and placements take up a lot of time. How do I strike that balance?

This is a common question amongst students, and those who have to go to work during Ramadan. In the Quran, Allah says: **"Once the prayer is over, disperse throughout the land and seek the bounty of Allah. And remember Allah often so you may be successful."** [Quran 62:10]

Seeking the bounty of Allah means seeking a livelihood. There is a balance in Islam between spirituality and work/study. The two are not mutually exclusive. You can make the intention of your studying and time at university or placement to be a form of worship and hopefully, it will count as such because you're studying and learning to earn a living, as well as helping improve the lives of others.

University can be tiring during Ramadan. Do you have any practical advice?

It can be hard to adjust to early clinical placements or long hours spent at university, especially with late iftars*, early suhoors*, and late night taraweeh* prayers. Have a read of our top tips on how to cope in Ramadan **...**

*Iftar: The meal eaten at dusk to break the fast
*Suhoor: The meal eaten before dawn, before the fast starts
*Taraweeh: These are late night prayers that happen in congregation and usually last one to two hours.

Quick tips for students on placement in Ramadan:

- Be aware when Ramadan is approaching and let your Clinical Placement Supervisor (CPS) or tutor know that you will be fasting if needed.
- Maintain good sleeping habits; having a nap when you come back from uni/placement is a good energy booster
- Where possible avoid committing yourself to evening functions or significant travel away from home unless it is essential to your placement.
- Ask the person who supervises your placement if there is a quiet and private space where you can pray.
- Hydrate and eat well during the night and at suhoor (pre-dawn meal) and after iftar (evening meal) so that you don't get dehydrated while you are on placement/working.
- Avoid overeating at iftar, so that you do not feel bloated.
- During suhoor, eat healthy foods that will provide you with energy throughout the day.
- If you have an exam or a long session coming up in the day, make sure that you conserve your energy in the morning and avoid any laborious activities.
- If you are ill, pregnant or travelling far distances, you should seek medical and spiritual advice before fasting.

**Please bear in mind that your supervisor will have lots of different priorities and it may not be possible to grant your requests immediately. So give them as much notice as possible of any requests to make changes to your placement during Ramadan.

Eid is coming up, can I take a few days off to celebrate?

Contact the Years 1 and 2 lead or the hospital dean in years 3-5, if you wish to request a day off for Eid. They will consider your request on a case by case basis.

Clinical Teaching Sessions

These are consultation and skills sessions, where you can perform examinations or take histories with 'simulated patients' played by actors and practice clinical skills on colleagues.

In our CSLC sessions we were asked to practice physical examinations on the opposite gender. This isn't something I'm comfortable with. What can I do?

You can request your tutor provide single gendered groups during physical examination teaching. The tutors will ensure that the curtains are closed, and will not enter without the permission of the group.

As a rule of thumb, if you do not feel comfortable being physically examined, then you reserve the right to politely refuse. You cannot be examined without explicit consent. If any issues arise, we would advise you to speak to your tutor in private, to explain your reasons. Failing this, please speak to or email the Academic Lead for Early Clinical Experience, Dr Sarah Shepherd (sarah.shepherd@manchester.ac.uk)

Modesty within the Clinical Environment

Hijab and Modesty

The Hijab is an obligation from Allah SWT. Therefore, for medical students who wear the Hijab, it is important for them to navigate the challenges that can arise in clinical environments and not feel like they need to compromise on their values.

I'm worried about having to be 'Bare Below the Elbows' in clinical environments as this is something that goes against my religious dress code, what should i do?

This is an extremely common issue faced whilst on placement. Members of staff on the ward may ask you to roll your sleeves up and ensure that you're 'bare below the elbows.' Each trust will have its own dress code policy. However, it is important to know what the NHS advice. The 2020 NHS England Guidance (released in April 2020) clearly states that 'Uniforms may include provision for sleeves that can be full length when staff are not engaged in direct patient care activity.'...

... Therefore, if you are being asked to roll up your sleeves when you're just on the wards reading patient notes etc, then explain the above guidelines to them. However, in line with national guidelines, you will need to roll up your sleeves when in direct patient care. Understandably, this can still be a compromising issue and we suggest that in this situation you may choose to use disposable sleeves. These should be worn in the same way as disposable gloves; in the patient area and immediately disposed of after individual patient interaction.

After extensive discussions with the medical school we are now delighted to announce that there are now disposable sleeves available for use during their CSLC sessions in the Stopford building.

Top Tips for placement clothing

- Long sleeve tops are allowed under scrubs, as long as you roll up the sleeves when in direct patient contact.
- Make sure that any full or three-quarter length sleeves are not loose or dangling. They must be able to be rolled back and kept securely in place during hand-washing and direct patient care.
- Discuss with your CPS and the clinical skills team at the start of your placement to find out what alternatives are available.

I've heard that I can't wear my Hijab in the Theatres. How do I still attend without compromising my beliefs?

Another issue which can arise during clinical years and beyond, is wearing your Hijab in theatres. Due to the sterile nature of theatres, you may find consultants or scrub nurses saying you can't 'scrub in' whilst wearing your Hijab. Again, in this situation, it is important to be aware that trust guidelines state that you are able to wear the Hijab in theatres, as long as it is a new hijab that has been washed at 60 degrees.

For more information, you can refer to the helpful infographic from BIMA, which outlines how to wear the Hijab in theatre, available at https://britishima.org/guide/hijab-bare-elbow-infographics/.

The Beard and Fit-Testing

For some Muslims, maintaining the beard is an important part of their faith and is viewed to be in line with the prophetic tradition.

I've got a surgical placement coming up and I have been emailed that I need to get Fit Tested to be able to go into theatre. This requires a clean shave but I want to keep my beard for religious reasons. What should I do?"

'Fit testing' is a mask fitting procedure that requires a clean shave so that a tight seal can be formed to prevent leakage of contaminated air. This is especially important when dealing with COVID positive patients or in aerosol-generating procedures (AGP's). This can be an issue for Muslim students as facial hair prevents the formation of a tight seal.

If you are on a surgical placement, you may be asked to shave for fit testing. If you would prefer not to on religious grounds, it is worth emailing/speaking to your consultant supervisor to liaise with your placement admin to enquire about whether the hospital you are placed at can provide a hood. Hospitals do not routinely provide these hoods however we are aware of some hospitals that have provided this alternate arrangement to medical students.

According to NHS guidance, NHS organisations should ensure they have appropriate PPE available to make reasonable adjustments as needed.
supporting-fit-testing-steps-actions-to-be-undertaken-use-of-ffp3-masks.pdf (england.nhs.uk)

Additionally, it is important to note that not all surgical procedures necessarily involve AGP's (hence don't need an FFP3 mask). It is worth speaking to your consultant supervisor to discuss which surgeries or procedures can be attended where an FFP3 mask is not needed and a surgical mask alone suffices.

Again, be mindful that different trusts have different guidelines and so it's important to read up on what those guidelines are and to once again speak/email your CPS or clinical skills tutor, at the start of your block, to see what the best course of action is.

Email Templates regarding the Beard and Fit Testing

Enquiring about FFP3 Alternatives;

Good Morning/Afternoon

Hope you are well. I'm emailing you to ask about FFP3 mask alternatives at “named hospital” as I'm scheduled for theatre on “dates and times” with “named consultant” . The reason I am asking is because I am a Muslim and so I cannot shave my beard for religious reasons.

I am aware that some hospitals may be able to provide alternatives such as hood masks and was wondering if this is an option you can provide. I would be grateful if you could get back to me with information on this.

Many thanks,

Enquiring about Surgeries that can be attended without FFP3;

Good Morning/Afternoon

I hope you are well. I have fit testing scheduled for "dates and times" and I am also set to shadow you in the theatre during the same period. I am a Muslim and I cannot shave my beard for religious reasons.

I would like to know if the surgeries I am scheduled for are considered aerosol-generating procedures (AGP). If they are, is it possible for me to shadow another consultant who is not performing AGP surgeries instead? If these surgeries are not AGP, I just wanted to confirm if wearing a surgical mask is sufficient.

I would appreciate it if you could provide me with this information.

Many Thanks

International Students

Navigating the exciting journey of studying abroad can be a thrilling yet challenging experience for international students. Abdulrahman Shandala, a final year international student from the UAE shares his experiences on this commonly asked question.

"I'm an international student who has just come to the UK. I am quite nervous about living in a completely different country. What advice do you have for me as an international student?"

Coming to Manchester to study medicine while previously living in a Muslim country was a drastic change and made me have to adapt to a new culture with a different new healthcare system.

One of my biggest concerns was finding people with similar values and interests to me. Over the first few days, I realised that there was a supportive community of Muslim medical students from different years, they not only guided us on how to improve academically but also provided us with solutions to common issues that as a Muslim student you might face, such as timetables clashing with prayer times.

Manchester has a large Muslim community, making it very accessible for other Muslims in terms of daily needs, like prayer spaces and mosques, as well as halal restaurants and shops.

My advice to any new incoming international students is to try and attend the welcome events held by the different societies at university, especially the Islamic Society (ISoc) - this will help you make new friendships and you will meet other Medical students in your year group as well as other years.

Every year there are also Whatsapp group chats that brings all Muslim students on campus together,and there usually is a group that is made with Medical students specifically. This Is also handy to join in case you have a problem that arises that some other student has gone through or some senior medical students can give their advice on it.

Post Graduate and Intercalating Students

Many students intercalate in their clinical years. It can be an excellent opportunity to explore an area of medicine further, get a qualification that can strengthen your future application to specialty training or just a break from your medical studies. One of our students, Nadin Hawwash, a final year MB-PhD Student in Cancer Sciences returning to Year 4 of Medicine, shares her experiences on this commonly asked question.

I'm a current fourth year student thinking of intercalating next year but I am not too sure what to expect and how different it will be to my current degree. What advice do you have for me?

- **Remember to schedule annual leave for Eid and Ramadan in advance**

Informing your supervisor/s of the holy month of Ramadan and Eid in advance will allow you to schedule your workload around this time period to suit your needs. This is of course project specific where some projects require specific hours in the lab etc. I would also recommend informing your research group in advance about Ramadan and that you will be fasting during this holy month. This helps with scheduling social events, such as celebratory dinners, outside the month of Ramadan where possible or, if the time is suitable to, schedule the meal at the time of breaking fast. It is a great conversation to have with others explaining further and talking about your experiences.

- **Encourage inclusion of non-drinking culture for social events and propose other ideas for social events.**

Generally I have requested the inclusion of non-drinking orientated events, in particular those done as part of faculty/research group/doctoral academy. This was very well received and also highlighted that non-drinkers for other reasons, such as wishing to stop drinking due to past experiences etc, may avoid drink-oriented events.

Generally speaking, be mindful you do not need to attend every social event and only attend those which you are comfortable with. Usually, recommending socials over brunch, coffee or evening meals are well received. Socialising during your PhD is fundamental because it can be isolating at times during a postgraduate/intercalated degree. I would highly recommend attending coffee mornings or virtual/in-person quizzes etc with your research group. Coffee mornings are fantastic because not only do you socialise with others in a similar position to you but you can also bring up any queries or concerns you have on your work which others may be able to advise you on **...**

... Remember social events are a great networking and team building opportunity. If you can't attend for any reason, do mention this as a great team is happy to work around this.

- **Continue to attend society events at University**

Your postgraduate degree or intercalated degree may be based primarily off-campus. Generally to maintain a good work-life balance and social life during your degree; I would recommend you continue to attend society events of your interest such as ISOC etc. For postgraduate students, you do not need to go to every postgraduate social event and only go to those of interest and that you are comfortable with.

- **Always ask for help**

Generally as a postgraduate/ intercalating BSc/MSc/MRes you may feel like you are expected to know everything from day one, but you aren't. What you find is that it is an ongoing learning opportunity through the duration of your degree and you learn from your error codes or failed experiments - it's all part of research. What is important is acknowledging where you went wrong and learning from that. Always ask for help when you need it, no matter what your degree level, there is never a wrong question.

- **Lift as you climb**

As you progress in your education generally I feel this is the most fundamental skill to gain. Recognise the opportunity Allah has given you in learning and be the mentor you had/wished you had for others. You not only have the privilege of helping others but Subhanallah despite giving without an expected return, you also acquire skills whilst doing so that benefit you. There are various ways to do this whether through volunteering to be a mentor, giving talks that inspire the next generation at schools or volunteering with a society. If you are a PhD student, consider becoming a co-supervisor of a project if your supervisor is happy to support this.

Islamophobia

The University of Manchester firmly believes that no student, regardless of their faith or background, should ever experience discrimination based on their beliefs. Unfortunately, prejudice and discrimination still exists, and sadly some of our students and staff experience these types of incidents. Here is some advice if this happens to you or a colleague;

What can islamophobia actually look like in a clinical setting?

In our conversations at placement or university, it can be tricky to tell whether questions about our faith are asked because of genuine curiosity or an indirect attempt to offend and belittle.

Genuine questions, even if they seem surprising or bizarre at first, can turn into really healthy and open conversations about certain topics relating to your faith. It can be a good way to tackle misconceptions and educate others about your beliefs and practices.

However, If you are getting asked and being singled out about what your viewpoints are on the conflicts in the Middle East or an aspect of your faith is being belittled (beard, hijab, topi) that is not okay. This is discrimination. Even if the perpetrator did not mean to offend, if you feel like you're being put in a vulnerable position and feel hostility towards you or your beliefs then please do speak up about it!

What reporting procedures are there?

There are various reporting procedures here are some below:

Report and Support - This is an initiative whereby you can report acts of hate, harassment, and discrimination either anonymously or by speaking confidentially to an advisor, who will talk you through the various options you have. **https://www.reportandsupport.manchester.ac.uk/**

Speak to the University Muslim Chaplain - Our University is very fortunate to have a Muslim Chaplain, Mohammed Ullah, who you can speak to about any issues you may be having with your faith, wellbeing, academically and more. To reach out you can email him at **mohammed.ullah@manchester.ac.uk**

Submitting a Complaint - This University procedure is for students to report another student or staff member within 40 days of an incident occurring. This is a 2 stage process, the first being an Informal Stage whereby you email an informal concern to your CEC or CBME team, and write about the incidents that have occurred and the possible outcomes you wish to see. If you aren't happy with the outcome of your informal complaint, or wish to take things further, you can go to the Formal Stage. Again, please contact your CEC or the CBME team, who will follow their concerns. In extreme circumstances, you may wish to complete an official University complaint form. You will have to write about the incidents that have occurred, the steps you took to resolve it informally, why the response to the informal complaint was unsatisfactory, and what outcomes you wish to see.

- https://manchesterstudentsunion.com/academic-advice/student-complaints-procedure
- http://www.regulations.manchester.ac.uk/academic/regulation-xvii-student-complaints-procedure/

Wellbeing

Salman Al Farsi, a revered companion of the Prophet Muhammad, said "Your Lord has a right upon you, and you have a right upon yourself, and your family has a right upon you, so give each its right." Recognising your right upon yourself includes the responsibility of nurturing your physical and mental well-being.

We have to ensure we have balance so that we can fulfil our obligations. This includes blocking out time to take care of ourselves too, with time to do physical activity, getting out in nature, eating wholesome food, getting enough sleep and rest, and finding ways to recharge.

It is important for us to recognise when we are struggling. This self-awareness means we know when to seek support. It's normal to have good days and bad days, but if you are having mainly bad days, or finding everything a daily struggle, then it's important to seek support and take care of yourself. Please don't struggle alone, we know there is a lot of evidence to show that the treatments we have for mental health are very effective, we would really encourage you to please access support (examples below).

Mental Health Support

Seeking support for illnesses, whether they are physical or related to your mental health, is a fundamental principle in Islam. Just as it would not be acceptable to continue walking on a broken leg without treatment or support, the same applies to mental health.

We are aware that many students may not seek mental health support, partly due to a lack of understanding about mental illness and the societal stigma associated with it, particularly in our communities and cultures. Sometimes, this hesitation arises from a well-intentioned but exclusive reliance on spiritual means as the sole source of mental health support.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) who, when asked about seeking treatment, replied: "Yes. O! Slaves of Allah, seek treatment. Indeed, Allah has not sent any illness without sending a cure for it, except for old age."

There are many people, services, organisations, both within The University of Manchester and the medical school, as well as external entities, who offer diverse support services to assist you. Below, you will find contact information for some of these resources:

- Speaking with close friends and family
- Speaking with your GP
- Accessing support through the university Counselling service - **https://www.counsellingservice.manchester.ac.uk/**
- The UoM Muslim Chaplain: **mohammed.ullah@manchester.ac.uk**
- Contacting the Central or Clinical Education Campus Student Pastoral Support team
  - **Central SPS team**
    - med.sps@manchester.ac.uk
  - **Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust – Oxford Road**
    - MFTOR.sps@manchester.ac.uk 0161 276 4734
  - **Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust**
    - SPSWythenshawe@mft.nhs.uk 0161 291 4304
  - **Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (LTHTR):**
    - Email: pastoral.supportteam@LTHTR.nhs.uk
    - Phone: 01772 716565 (switchboard); 07842618930 (on call)
    - There are 3 Muslim Chaplains on site at LTHTR:
      - 1) Imam Khalid Ibrahim – khalid.ibrahim@LTHTR.nhs.uk
      - 2) Imam Naeem Toorawa – Naeem.toorawa@LTHTR.nhs.uk
      - 3) Aishah Siddiqah Patel – Aishah.Patel@LTHTR.nhs.uk
  - **NCA - Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust**
    - srft.sps@manchester.ac.uk 0161 206 2192
- Muslim Youth Helpline is a helpline service for young Muslims, offering support and signposting seven days a week by phone, Whatsapp, webchat, and email. This service is open seven days a week, 4 pm –10 pm. It is free and confidential. https://myh.org.uk/

Professionalism

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, “I have been sent to perfect good character.” [al-Muwatta’ 1614]. Being a doctor means embracing professionalism, a value of utmost importance. These principles are not only integral to the practice of medicine but also resonate deeply with the values of Islam.

Probity is the quality of having strong moral principles; honesty and decency. Your conduct on campus, in classrooms and in your interactions with staff, fellow students and during clinical placements is so important.

Punctuality during teaching and placements also is an important aspect of professionalism. If, for any reason, you find yourself running late, promptly communicate the delay and its cause to your supervisor.

Additionally, it is worth noting when submitting assignments (APEP/QEPEP), it's crucial to be diligent about proper referencing to avoid plagiarism concerns. The University uses plagiarism softwares to scan all submissions for similarities with other sources automatically. If it detects significant similarities, it will prompt a need for an explanation and, in certain instances, could lead to disciplinary actions against a student.

Financial Difficulty

If you are struggling financially, please access the UoM Living Cost Support Fund. The Students Union can support you in applying for this - information on how to apply can be found via **:https://www.studentsupport.manchester.ac.uk/finances/funding-opportunities/all/living-cost-support-fund/**

Contact your Clinical Education Campus/ Central SPS team to see what other support you could access, this may include the Medicine Hardship fund (apply for the living cost support fund first).

The Manchester Muslim Student Fund

The Manchester Muslim Student Fund, a local charity founded by former medical students at the University of Manchester and the university's Muslim Chaplain, is dedicated to supporting Muslim students in various ways. Their mission encompasses providing financial assistance, supporting community projects and rewarding excellence.

One of the initiatives of the charity is the Muslim Student Hardship Fund, which offers grants designed specifically for students facing financial difficulties. This might occur if your student maintenance loan falls short of covering your essential living expenses or if you encounter unexpected one-time expenses in unique circumstances. Eligible individuals can access grants of up to £500.

For further details, please visit their website at **https://mmsf.org.uk/hardship-fund/.**

Disciplinary Procedures

During medical school, we hope that students do not have to go through any disciplinary procedures. However, every year, a proportion of students attend the Fitness to Practice Panel. If this happens to you, then remember, you are not alone! Reach out for support – the quicker you can reach out the better - and you will be guided through the process.

The most important thing to remember is the panel is trying to find out more about the issues that you face, and explore ways to help you. They comprise of senior academic staff, who are experienced in addressing issues, and will be able to suggest the next course of action. Remember to prepare for the panel meeting, and maintain a polite and professional approach throughout.

Concerns for Others

If you are concerned about a fellow student please also use one of the above to alert the University about them.

Clinical Education Campus (CEC) Allocation

In your first year, you are allocated your CEC for clinical years 3 to 5. This means you will be placed at a teaching hospital, rather than learning on campus at Manchester. This is so you can experience real clinical situations with real patients and train in the same environment you'll eventually work in. During your clinical years, it is easiest if you live within 10 miles of your base hospital.

The four base teaching hospitals are:

- **Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust (Oxford Road Campus)**
- **Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust (Wythenshawe)**
- **Lancashire Teaching Hospitals (Preston)**
- **Northern Care Alliance NHS Foundation Trust (Salford Care Organisation)**

As well as your base teaching hospital, you'll also train in district general hospitals, specialist hospital trusts, GP practices, and community teams. In many of these placements, you will be expected to travel to and from the location daily.

If any personal or religious circumstances will preclude you from being at that CEC, please let the medical school know or contact the Muslim Chaplain for support, as issues are dealt with on an **individual case basis.**

Clinical years at Preston (LTHTR)

Hussain Bux, a final year student at the University of Manchester based in Preston, shares his experiences and invaluable advice to help you make the most of your time in this vibrant city.

Preston is a city that warmly embraces diversity, and this is especially evident among its thriving Muslim community, particularly students. With its wide array of halal dining options and the added convenience of being just a 40-minute train ride away from the bustling city of Manchester, Preston is the place to be.

One of the standout features of studying clinical medicine in Preston is joining the established Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (LTHTR). In Hussain's biased opinion, it's the best teaching hospital you could hope for. Here's why:

1. Stability in Placement Locations: While some of your peers may find themselves shuttling between different sites and hospitals during their placement blocks, LTHTR students have the advantage of primarily being based in one of two hospitals. This stability allows you to familiarise yourself with the environment and build meaningful connections with the staff.

2. A Supportive System: At LTHTR, you're not left to navigate the clinical world alone. You'll have both a supervisor and a facilitator to guide you through your placements - a unique feature that sets Preston apart.
Supervisor: Typically, your supervisor will be a consultant. They play a pivotal role in marking your placement and providing essential teaching.
Facilitator: Your facilitator, often a specialist nurse in your placement area, takes care of logistics. They organise your timetables, facilitate your learning experience and serve as your main point of contact during your placement.

3. Friendly Student Community: Moving to a new city and adapting to a different learning environment can be overwhelming. However, you're far from alone in this journey. Hussain encourages incoming students not to hesitate when spotting a senior medical student. They are more than willing to offer their guidance and support. Remember, you're part of a close-knit community that understands the challenges of medical education.

In addition to the exceptional support within the medical community, Preston also caters to the diverse needs of its students. Whether you're looking for prayer facilities or organising Friday prayers at LTHTR, you'll find ample resources and information to meet your religious needs.

The wellbeing section of the guide will further connect you with students and staff who can provide assistance and guidance when you need it most.

Embrace this opportunity, and you'll find your time in Preston to be a truly enriching and memorable experience. **Welcome to your medical journey in Preston - enjoy every moment!**

Prayer Spaces on Campus



McDougall Prayer Hall
Burlington St, Manchester, M15 6WP
Number 91 on campus map

Cavendish Prayer Room
All Saints Building, Manchester, M15 6BH

Alliance Manchester Business School
Second Floor - Room 2.014
Number 29 on campus map

Coupland Building 3
First Floor - Room 1.105
Number 47 on campus map

Ellen Wilkinson Building
Second Floor - Room 2.30Z
Number 77 on campus map

Engineering Building A
Ground Floor - Welfare Room
Number 24 on campus map

Stopford Building
Third Floor - Room 3.400
Number 79 on campus map

St. Peter's House Chaplaincy
First Floor - Chaplaincy Quiet Room
Number 32 on campus map

University Dental Hospital of Manchester
Second Floor - Multi-Faith & Prayer Room
Number 41 on campus map

Univeristy of Manchester Students' Union
Second Floor - Faith Space
Number 68 on campus map

Map Legend

Main UoM Prayer Hall

Extra UoM Prayer

MMU Prayer Room

Prayer Spaces in Clinical Placement

Royal Bolton NHS Foundation Trust - The hospital has a multi-faith chaplaincy team that offers spiritual, pastoral, and cultural care to patients, relatives, and staff. There is a chapel, temple, and prayer room on site which are open 24 hours a day.

Chorley and South Ribble Hospital - Located on level 3, closest to the Preston Road entrance. Summer months: Jummah – 13.30pm. Winter Months: Jummah – 13.15pm.

The Christies Hospital - The chapel, prayer room (with ablution facilities), and multi-faith room are located in department 57 on the first floor. They are open 24 hours a day.

Fairfield General Hospital - There is a Muslim Prayer Room and a Quiet Room (both on the second floor of G Block). Muslim Friday prayers are led by a member of staff at 1 pm in the Prayer Rooms.

Macclesfield District General Hospital - St Lukes Chapel can be located on the ground floor, a short distance from the main reception. There is a multi-faith Prayer Room, located on the ground floor main corridor near to the admissions desk, with prayer mats/rugs provided.

Manchester Royal Infirmary - The Multi-faith Centre is located on the ground floor of the new Manchester Royal Infirmary by Entrance 2, off the Hospital Boulevard. Two Multi-Faith Prayer Rooms in the Royal Manchester Children's Hospital. One is on the ground floor opposite the Children's Outpatients Department and the other is on the first floor near Paediatric Intensive Care.

North Manchester General Hospital - Muslim Prayer Room and a Quiet Room (both on the second floor of G Block)... Muslim Friday prayers are led by a member of staff at 1pm in the Prayer Rooms.

Royal Oldham Hospital - The Muslim Prayer room has a women's area and is open 24 hours (D Block, near the Garden Entrance). Muslim Friday prayers are led by Chaplain Numan Ahmed at 1 pm.

Royal Preston Hospital - The Multi-Faith Prayer Room is located on the Green Street corridor, It is accessible via the Green Street corridor entrance and the main hospital entrance. on the ground floor, near Charters Restaurant.

- Summer months: 1st Jummah – 13:30pm; 2nd Jummah – 14:00pm
- Winter Months:1st Jummah – 12:45pm; 2nd Jummah – 13:15pm

Rochdale Infirmary - The Oasis Multi-Faith room is a quiet space that is available for all (located on the top floor). There is also a Muslim prayer room with a women's area. This facility is open access 9 am-5 pm, Monday – Friday. Access is also available with a staff card or via security all other hours.

Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust - The chapel is located on the third floor of the Hope Building and is open from early morning to evening.

Stepping Hill Hospital, Stockport - The hospital chapel, a multi-faith room, is situated in the Chaplaincy Centre on the main corridor. The chapel is always open for quiet prayer.

Tameside and Glossop Integrated Care NHS Foundation Trust - There are two multi-faith prayer rooms in the Ladysmith Building with resources there for different faith communities. Ablution (Wudu) facilities are available in one of the rooms. The multi-faith prayer room in the Ladysmith building has a dedicated Wudhu facility and a screen for ladies who utilise the prayer room. Prayer mats and Qurans are available.

Trafford General Hospital - Muslim Prayer Room is available on the ground floor opposite Ward 1.

Wigan Royal Albert Edward Infirmary - There is a prayer room inside the chapel close to the main entrance. Friday Prayers are held regularly at 1:30pm.

Wrexham Maelor Hospital - There is a multi faith room next to the restaurant and cash office

Wythenshawe Hospital - The Chapel and Prayer Room is open 24 hours for the use of anyone to pray. The Chapel is located on the first floor of F block near Moment To café. The Prayer Room is the A block, opposite the Subways.

General Practice Placement - At induction, we would advise that you speak to your GP CPS or the Practice Manager, to offer a space for you to pray. This could be the practice library or a free room. You can utilise toilet facilities to make wudu.

Email Template to GP Placement

Send this email to your clinical placement supervisor before you begin the rotation.

Good Morning/Afternoon

Hope you're well,

My name is _____ and I have been attached to your GP clinic for my next rotation starting __/__/__.

I would really appreciate it if there is a quiet room I can pray in that can accommodate my religious needs.

Many thanks,

Conclusion

So, there you have it, our **Second Edition of The Manchester Muslim Medical Student Guide.** We hope that the content covered throughout this guide has provided you with solutions and practical advice to ease your experience through medical school.

We appreciate that additional issues may arise, which this guide hasn't covered. If they do, please get in touch using some of the contact information found throughout the guide.

Lastly, we hope this guide emphasises the importance of being confident in our Muslim identity as medical students. We should take pride in who we are and what we believe in, whether we are at the university or during placements. Remember, this guide is a resource, and the responsibility ultimately lies with us, the students, to be proactive, vocal and ensure our voices are heard.

The medical school has taken a role in crafting this guide, with the aim of providing a comfortable and empowering experience for Muslim students throughout their medical school journey. Should you encounter any specific challenges during your studies, it is important to notify the school so that improvements can be implemented.

The Manchester Muslim Medical Student Guide team remains committed to making a positive change and is also here to provide assistance and support. If you have any questions, concerns or suggestions, please feel free to reach out to us at muslimedicguide@gmail.com.

