

**THE
QUB
MUSLIM
MEDICAL
STUDENT
GUIDE**



**QUEEN'S
UNIVERSITY
BELFAST**



The image features a minimalist geometric design. The top half is a solid teal color. Below this, a large red triangle points downwards from the left edge. In the center, a smaller teal triangle points upwards, overlapping the red triangle. To the right of the teal triangle, another red triangle points downwards, overlapping the teal one. The bottom half of the image is a solid red color. The text is centered in the lower portion of the red area.

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Endorsed by the Senior Management Team, Centre for Medical Education (CME)

Authored by:

Ashna Arif (Fourth Year Medical Student)

Muhammad Hamza Shah (Fourth Year Medical Student)

Najma Ali (Third Year Medical Student)

Hamad Hejazi (Third Year Medical Student)

Maeesha Billah (Third Year Medical Student)

Daheem Wayn (Fourth Year/Intercalating Medical Student)

Husnaa Fathima Ali Azamathullah Khan (Fifth Year Medical Student)

Sakina Ladha (Fourth Year Medical Student)

For any general enquiries about this guide or any questions or comments please email Dr Mairead Corrigan (m.corrigan@qub.ac.uk)

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About this guide

In the name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful, the Healer, and the Maintainer of Life

Congratulations on making it to Medical School! This marks the beginning of the marathon called medicine. You will face a whole set of challenges and experience a rollercoaster of emotions which shape and refine your character and skills to be able to, one day, provide a great service to your community and save people's lives. These will be some of your best, yet tricky, years (before life gets real!) and this guide aims to help you navigate your way through them.

We know that coming to university can be a daunting experience, and as a Muslim medical student, you may face certain challenges related to your faith.

This guide is written **for** medical students **by** medical students. It aims to help Muslim students by offering some practical tips, advice, and answers to frequently asked questions. Our colleagues, Anwar Abdel Hameed Mady (Islamic Centre, Belfast) and academic staff from the Centre for Medical Education (CME) have reviewed the guide, to ensure it is a useful and accurate resource, to help you throughout your journey at Medical School.

We want this guide to empower you as Muslim students and give you the support you need to overcome any issues you may face due to your faith during your time at medical school.

May Allah swt bless your journey through Medical School and allow it to be a means of benefit for you in this world and the next!

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. 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 CBL group are all going to the Pub and are inviting me along; I don't feel comfortable going because of the alcohol and 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 Student Support Lead, whose details you can find on the [Medical Education Portal](#) under Support.

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! Other societies on campus host a variety of events. For example, the QUB Islamic Society runs many Muslim-friendly fresher events and continues to do so throughout the year such as bowling night and a treasure hunt! So come along, it's a great place to make new friends. For the latest events be sure to check out their Instagram page [@qub.isoc](#) for other events such as Charity Week, Discover Islam Week and ISOC socials!

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 are some 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 CBL or your other classes 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, and this is a fantastic way to meet people you might not otherwise meet 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 give volunteering opportunities as well as organizations 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
- **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 importantly, don't isolate yourself from people** - Remember, everyone is in the same boat - finding friends might take some time, but when you do it'll be amazing!

****Please follow Queen's University, Belfast, and UK Government guide-lines on safe interactions during Covid-19, to keep everyone safe**

Accommodation

Moving away from home can be a roller coaster of sorts and comes with its own set of challenges with regards to the adjustment process. You will be moving into a new environment that's likely not to follow the rules and principles of a traditional Muslim household. Therefore, it's important to set your boundaries and expectations from the beginning.

When applying for Queen's accommodation, you will be given the option to choose lifestyle options catered to your preference. These include opting for an alcohol-free area where consumption of alcohol won't be allowed and single-sex accommodation with all-female/male flat mates. These options are available across all Queen's accommodation buildings - BT1, BT2, BT9 and Queen's houses. Please keep in mind that your flat could still be in close vicinity of other living spaces where students may consume alcohol so be aware of this when exiting or entering your building/floor.

Can I move into an alcohol-free/single sex flat after being placed into another one?

Queen's accommodation tries to meet all transfer requests; however, this is subject to availability considering how many applications they receive from returning students in that particular year. Despite that, sharing your concerns with the accommodation staff would help in facilitating a transfer down the line.

I have been asked to quarantine and I don't know whether I can request halal food with Queen's accommodation.

Campus Food & Drink is responsible for delivering food to students who are quarantining in Queen's accommodation, and they have several halal options available. When you agree to pay for the quarantine package, you will be asked to specify any dietary requirements. It's always better to follow up your application with an email just to confirm the accommodation staff know about your request.

I am concerned about cross-contamination in shared kitchen spaces and my flat mates being messy

Having these concerns is natural and the best way to approach this issue is by having a conversation with your flat mates earlier on. Explain to them that you don't feel comfortable with certain foods being left in the shared food preparation spaces and the area needs to be clean for you to make your meals. Most students understand that different cultures come with their own set of limitations and would help to make your stay as comfortable as possible. Furthermore, there are some changes that you can make yourself including,

- Bringing your own plates, cutlery, cups, pans, and cleaning equipment (e.g., sponges, scrubbers etc.)
- Trying to section off a part of the fridge for your use only.
- Using sealed containers, different cooking utensils, foil on the grill pan etc.

Don't forget to also have a chat with the staff who clean the shared living spaces and inform them that they should avoid cross-contaminating dirty plates/utensils with your kitchen items, etc.

My flat mates only ever invite me to go out for drinks or want to meet in social settings I am not comfortable in

There is a myriad of different activities you could suggest instead of a traditional bar meet-up. These involve going to the movies, hanging out in a nice restaurant, or going for a walk around Botanic Gardens. You can refer to the following article from [Belfast Live](#) for other ideas and recommend these to your flat mates instead.

As always, don't feel coerced into engaging in activities you are not comfortable with, and it would be worthwhile explaining this to your flat mates at the start of the academic year. Furthermore, you don't have to just socialize with your flat mates, and you will find like-minded people in common rooms across all the Queen's accommodation buildings. You can also try joining QUB Fresher's group chat on Facebook and Queen's Islamic Society might also have a meet-and-greet for Muslim students in the first few weeks of the new academic year.

My flat mates are loud during prayer times and I don't know how to communicate this

This is a relatively common issue and is faced by most Muslim students living in student accommodation across the UK. The best way to proceed is to sit your flat mates down and explain

why you need quiet surroundings to offer your prayers. You can even make a list of your prayer times and pin it up on the noticeboard to remind them to be quiet during these times. Give yourself at least 30 minutes to offer your prayers and that shouldn't be too much of an inconvenience for your flat mates as well. Remember to let them know that a little noise is fine, but it would be better if loud music was avoided at these times.

Can I use quiet rooms in BT1 & BT2 for prayers?

Quiet rooms in BT1 and BT2 are multi-purpose and can be used for prayers as well. Keep in mind that if you decide to use these rooms, make sure you cover the glass section of the door or people in the corridor will be able to see you praying and your privacy won't be guaranteed.

I don't know where I should pray in student accommodation, and I am worried about people coming in and out of my room with their shoes on

Since your room is likely to be your own space, it's the most suitable place for prayers because students are likely to wear shoes in other parts of the flat. If your halls come with cleaning staff, do talk to them, and explain that outdoor shoes on your floor will make it unclean for prayer. They are unlikely to know unless you speak to them.

Where should I perform ablution in Queen's accommodation?

Since ablution involves foot-washing and there are no low-level sinks in Queen's accommodation, you need to be mindful of your flat mates if sharing bathrooms with them. You should explain to the other students that you will need to use the hand wash basins for washing feet. Always remember to wipe down any excess water and clean the basin after use. Alternatively, if you have an ensuite bathroom this should not be an issue.

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?

Queens has a zero-tolerance policy for any form of discrimination on university premises and it's vital for you to speak to someone regarding this issue. For more information, see the reporting procedures mentioned in the Islamophobia section.

For more information regarding accommodation at Queen's, click on this link [Accommodation](#) where you can find detailed guidance on how to proceed with the application process or arrange viewings prior to accepting your offer.

The Importance of Salah

Salah is the second of the five pillars of the Islamic faith and a form of worship that requires Muslims to pray five times a day. As university students it's important that we take time out of our day to fulfil this obligation.*

Religion and belief are protected characteristics in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. This means that although universities tend to be secular, they will still accommodate the needs of their students. This includes offering quiet rooms on campus.

Daily Prayers

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. **Top Tip:** Be diligent and considerate for your fellow peers and leave the washing area clean and dry after performing ablution.

Sometimes breaks may happen at a time not suitable for prayer, or the break may be taken off to increase the teaching time. To try and avoid these problems we recommend contacting the relevant year Lead at the beginning of the semester. Email them (see template below) explaining the importance of observing your prayer during this allocated break time. They will try to help accommodate time for prayer however in some instances this may not be guaranteed.

*Salah, or prayer, consists of a set of movements at specified times during the day: Fajr (pre-dawn until sunrise), Dhuhr (after the sun is at the highest point), Asr (late afternoon), maghrib (just after sunset), Isha (until midnight)

*Not all Muslims choose to pray all 5 prayers

*Wudhu is a ritual ablution that is compulsory and constitutes part of the prayer.

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 or supervisor 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 it is perceived to be disruptive to others. However, they will be much more accommodating if you have had a one-to-one discussion with them directly. You may also want to consider the prayer window and if possible, conduct your prayers after the teaching session as you will be responsible for catching up on any missed content (we understand that during the winter months this may be more difficult as prayer windows are shorter).

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 only solution is to ask your tutor to be excused for 5 minutes so that you may go 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 be understanding. In some situations, it may not be possible to leave for 5 minutes, for example if you have already scrubbed in for theatre.

Top Tips: (1) 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 quiet room that's far away. (2) Don't forget to communicate with your tutor before the teaching session. This will help accommodate requests for prayers. (3) Get in touch with the relevant University staff, if you feel that you are being discriminated against.

Friday Prayers (Jummah)

In Islam, the Friday prayer is an obligatory prayer for Muslims. It consists of a short sermon and a short prayer that follows. Throughout the year it takes place in the Islamic Centre (see the section Prayer Spaces outside Campus) at 1pm. 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?

We recommend you email (see template below) the allocated year admin lead at the medical school or base hospital and explain that you have a religious commitment at this time every Friday. They will be able to advise you further on the logistics of maintaining this commitment.

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 (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. Please note that all timetabling and allocation changes MUST be approved by CME, and it is not guaranteed your request will be granted.

Prayer Obligations 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 as I would like to pray during the scheduled breaks in the timetable. I understand that these breaks may be cancelled, or my prayer times may sometimes fall outside of this schedule so I would just like to make you aware that I may have to leave for a few minutes during the session or I may be a few minutes late. I would appreciate your understanding and consideration in this matter as it is an important commitment.

Many thanks,

Jumma 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 session. Alternatively, could you please tell me who I should contact if I am going to be late.

Many thanks,

We hope these templates are 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 an 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 must 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 below 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.
- 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.
- Discuss with your CPS the possibility of not having to attend working lunches.
- Ask your CPS 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. Dehydration can lead to people passing out and potentially hurting themselves and others.
- The care of patients is important. If you find that your ability to care for your patients is impaired by your fasting, speak to your CPS and the imam at the Islamic center to see what can be done to help you out.
- If you are ill, pregnant, or travelling far distances you should seek medical and spiritual advice before fasting.

****Please bear in mind that your CPS 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?

To request a day off at the end of Ramadan for Eid, you need to complete the Absence Proforma, which can be downloaded from the [Medical Education Portal](#) under the Tabs Professionalism - Absence. In some circumstances, it may be possible for you to negotiate and make these days up when others are away for Bank Holidays, such as Christmas or New Year Holidays. In other situations, it may not be possible for any time off to be allowed if the clinical or learning experience can't be made up at any other time.

I have an exam during Ramadan, what do I do?

Studying for any exam is tough, let alone when you're fasting. Don't despair. Allah will always reward those who strive despite difficulties they are facing and that includes fasting students who are studying for exams. A tip is to use a calendar to plan your revision schedule, to spread the work and manage your time effectively. The timing of written exams cannot be changed. However, for the OSCE exam, the assessment office e-mails students to ask if any require a specific time for their exam. You can ask for your OSCE exam to take place in the morning. If you want to inform the assessment of this request at the start of the semester, you can contact them at paoenquiries@qub.ac.uk. Make sure you're properly rested to keep your mind sharp. Use nap times to your advantage and consume nutritious foods at suhoor (the pre-dawn meal) to provide your body and brain the nutrients you need to study and retain important information. You have got this covered!

CSEC Sessions

The Clinical Skills Education Centre (CSEC) at the MBC holds regular sessions in Years 1 and 2 to practice skills on fellow peers or ‘simulated patients’ played by actors. You will learn histories, examinations, and clinical skills, such as measuring BP, venipuncture, administering insulin, and more! These valuable sessions equip us to be more efficient medical students before hospital placements in Years 3, 4 and 5.

Some CSEC sessions will require you to pair up with a colleague to practice examinations. If pairing up with the opposite gender is uncomfortable for you, have a look through your allocation list beforehand

and ask someone you've gotten to know if they would like to be your partner in advance of the session. As a rule of thumb, you cannot be examined without explicit consent. If you do not feel comfortable being physically examined on, then you reserve the right to politely refuse which you will notice other students do in some cases as well (e.g., male, and female students paired up for a cardiac exam).

As for simulated patients, please note that they can be both male or female, so that students are provided with the opportunity to practice and perfect their skills on both genders before performing them on real patients in a hospital environment.

If any issues arise, we advise you to speak to your tutor in private to explain your reasons.

Modesty within the Clinical Environment

Hijab and Modesty

The Hijab is an obligation from Allah swt. 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 when on the wards. The nurses in charge may tell you to roll your sleeves up, to ensure you're 'bare below the elbows.*' Understandably, this can be a compromising issue and we suggest that in this situation that you use disposable sleeves, which should be available on placement. These should be worn in the same way as disposable gloves and must be discarded in the same way as disposable gloves after each individual patient interaction. Strict adherence to washing hands and wrists must be observed before and after use. Each Trust in Northern Ireland has its own dress code policy, which you should familiarize yourself with before attending. You should seek guidance from your relevant year lead if you have any questions. Professional dress code and adherence to infection control principles are also expected in the primary care setting.

The dress code policy for CSEC is found on the [Medical Education Portal](#) under Clinical Skills - Uniforms and Workwear. The CSEC dress code has been adapted to reflect religious obligations. CSEC also has disposable sleeves which students can wear in CSEC.

*The 2020 NHS England Guidance on uniforms and workwear (released in April 2020) states that 'Uniforms may include provision for sleeves that can be full length when staff are not engaged in direct patient care activity.' However, this guidance does not relate to Northern Ireland.

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 have heard that I cannot wear my Hijab in the Theatres. How do I still attend without compromising my beliefs?

Another issue that 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 cannot 'scrub in' whilst wearing your Hijab. Again, in this situation, it is important to be aware that there are no current Trust guidelines in Northern Ireland regarding wearing hijabs, so practices may vary. Below is guidance...

- Students can wear a smaller scarf / hood. Normal cloth headscarves may be worn for each theatre attendance. If using their own scarf, then a theatre cap is required on top, and they must not rearrange the scarf once in the theatre. Headscarves should be washed at 60C. Students can use the female changing room to put on the scarf / hood.
- Orthopedic hoods need to be opaque and cover the chest to fully meet faith requirements by tucking it into the scrub top. If garments are secured neatly, this is considered reasonable from an infection control point of view. Alternatively, single use theatre disposable headscarves approved by infection control may be worn. The BIMA Theatre Hijab and BBE team are looking forward to the use of disposable hijabs in the future, however, this is not available nationally.
- If observing, students must still wear a small scarf tucked into scrub top or a hood and cap.
- Students who feel uneasy with exposed forearms can scrub and gown in a different room.
- Some students will wear a short-sleeved t-shirt under the scrub top to avoid exposing the neck, but they must be careful that the sleeve does not come down below the scrub sleeve or touch the forearm with elbow bent (just like with the scrub top).
- Many of the students and trainees will help each other and often have good tips.
- Face coverings other than surgical masks are not permitted.

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 have 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.

Please note, there are currently no alternative options available on clinical placements, but this is something that is being explored for the future. There are some resources available in the following links but may have limited information -

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/respiratory-protective-equipment/fit-testing-basics.htm>

<https://www.hseni.gov.uk/topic/respiratory-protective-equipment-rpe> (The Northern Ireland version)

Also, as per [NHS public health guidelines](#), FFP3 masks (that require fit testing) are required in AGP's or when a patient is known/suspected to have a Covid infection. Not all surgeries involve AGP's, and it is worth speaking to your consultant supervisor to discuss which surgeries 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 is important to read upon what those guidelines are and to speak to/email your relevant year Lead or clinical tutor at the start of your block to see what the best course of action is.

Islamophobia

What can islamophobia 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 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, headscarf, topi) that is **not okay**. This is discrimination. Even if the person did not mean to offend, if you feel like you are 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?

In CME students can Raise a Concern through the link on the [medical education portal](#) from each year page under the Tabs Professionalism - Raising Concerns. You can report acts of hate, harassment, and discrimination through the university [Student Wellbeing Report and Support](#) where you can report anonymously should you not wish to be identified.

Wellbeing

Support and Wellbeing

Queen's University Belfast Medical School takes its academic and pastoral support of students very seriously.

If you are struggling with your studies or with settling into university or you are concerned about your mental health, it is important that you speak to someone who can advise you. In CME you can speak with your year Student Support Lead, whose contact details are under the Support Tab on the [Medical Education Portal](#), where you will also find contact details of the Advisor of Studies for your year if you require academic support. On clinical placement you can also contact your clinical supervisor if you want someone to talk to. You can speak to a university student wellbeing officer or a counsellor whose contact details you can find on the university's [Student Wellbeing](#) webpage. The student wellbeing website and the portal contain self-help information and online resources, which you might find useful. You can also make an appointment to speak to your GP.

Disciplinary Procedures

There is a Professionalism/Fitness to Practice Panel which some students may be invited to attend. If you are invited to attend, we recommend that you reach out for support and guidance to your year Student Support Lead. The panel is comprised of senior academic staff, who are experienced in addressing issues, and will be able to suggest the next course of action which best suits your situation. You can read about the Professionalism/Fitness to Practice panel on the [medical education portal](#) under the Tab Professionalism.

Clinical Placements

In your first year, you will have small group-based teaching that will allow you to learn and practise many examinations, history taking and procedural skills. You will also be allocated to a General Practice or a hospital teacher for your clinical skills experience course that will take place during the spring semester. Then in second year you will have further clinical skills experience teaching delivered in the General Practice or hospital setting.

From year three onwards, you will be placed in a teaching hospital, rather than learning on campus. This is so you can experience real clinical situations with real patients and train in the same environment you will eventually work in.

The 5 base teaching trusts are:

- Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
- Northern Health and Social Care Trust
- Southeastern Health and Social Care Trust
- Southern Health and Social Care Trust
- Western Health and Social Care trust

Within each trust, you can be allocated to any of the hospitals outlined below:

- Belfast Health and Social Care Trust - Belfast City Hospital, Royal Victoria Hospital, Mater Hospital, Musgrave Park Hospital
- Northern Health and Social Care Trust - Antrim Area Hospital, Causeway Hospital, Holywell Hospital
- Southeastern Health and Social Care Trust - Ulster Hospital, Downe Hospital
- Southern Health and Social Care Trust - Craigavon Area Hospital, Daisy Hill Hospital, Lurgan Hospital, South Tyrone Hospital
- Western Health and Social Care Trust - Altnagelvin Hospital, South West Acute Hospital

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

If you need to be absent (see reasons that are usually acceptable on [the absence pro-forma](#) on the portal) from a clinical placement, please inform your clinical supervisor, GP tutor or speciality contacts, whose details are in the year student handbook.

Prayer Spaces on Campus

Keeping up with prayer can be a daunting, yet necessary, task for young Muslims in medical school. It is an admirable job to have concern for your 5 daily prayers and the religion commends effort. In this section, we will explore spaces which you can utilize to pray, both on and off campus while pursuing your education at Queen's. It is worth mentioning that whenever you ask to be pardoned for 5 - 10 minutes for prayer, you are responsible for catching up on any work you might have missed while on prayer break.

On campus, there are a few quiet rooms located at various strategic locations which can be used to pray in between classes, lectures and tutorials. Some of these are shown in the following section.

MBC - Quiet Rooms

The MBC, where most preclinical classes are carried out at Queen's, has 2 quiet rooms that can be utilized for prayer. These rooms are both located on the ground floor and are labeled as rooms 0G 209A and 0G 210A. If you can't find these rooms, you can ask CSEC staff, who can direct you to them as they are located close to CSEC.

Elms BT1 and BT2

These accommodations have a diverse group of students living in them and hence have quiet rooms on the ground floors. These are multipurpose and can be used to pray if you are visiting a friend.

Computer Science Building

The Computer Science Building also has a quiet room available that can be used for prayer.

16 Malone Road

This is another quiet room on campus that can be utilized for prayer.

Prayer spaces outside campus

As students won't always be on campus, it's important to know about some prayer spaces and centres in the area. A few prayer spaces near and around campus are listed below.

Belfast Islamic Centre

38 Wellington Park, Belfast BT9 6DN

Contact: 028 9066 4465

<https://www.facebook.com/belfastislamiccentre/>

Belfast Islamic Centre was established in 1978 by a group of Muslims from the local community to provide a focus for all Muslims living in Northern Ireland. It is open every day for prayer and there are Jummah prayers conducted on Fridays at 2 separate times at 12:30 PM and 1:15 PM. Eid celebrations also take place over here.

NIMFA Prayer Hall

7 Rugby Road, BT7 1PS

Contact: 028 9031 5784 · 07768 028072 (President)

nimfabelfast@aol.com

NIMFA is a community centre which provides services and activities for the Muslim community in NI. They are dedicated to maintaining Islamic culture and values whilst integrating into the wider community. They provide many services including Arabic and Islamic school, for 4-year-olds to GCSE students along with many other social activities. NIMFA is open to the Muslim community and general public for a wide variety of services and support.

Ihsan Youth and Family Centre

143 University St, BT7 1HP

Contact: <https://www.ihsanyouth.org.uk/contact-us>

Ihsan Youth centre is an organisation established to supporting Muslim youth and their families throughout Northern Ireland, through advancing Muslim values, education, community development, poverty alleviation and promotion of Islamic arts/heritage, religious/racial harmony and advocating for civil progress.

Prayer Spaces in Clinical Placement

There are multi-faith prayer rooms in the hospitals. You might be able to pray in an empty consultation room, but you need to first seek permission. If none of these are accessible or occupied, another option is to inform your clinical supervisor that you will be needing to head back to your room for 5-10 minutes and since accommodation will usually be located on site, this can be another accessible option

For GP Placement, at induction, we would advise that you speak to your GP in charge or the Practice Manager, to offer a space for you to pray. This could be the practice library or a free room. You can use toilet facilities to make wudhu

Email Template to GP Placement

Send this email to your GP tutor 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 **First Edition of The Belfast 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 may not have covered. If they do, please get in touch with Dr Mairead Corrigan (m.corrigan@qub.ac.uk).

And lastly, we pray that this guide highlights that being both a Muslim and a medical student are not mutually exclusive. Rather we should be confident and comfortable of our Muslim identity and remember that Allah (س) always facilitates a way for us if we strive towards being a better version of ourselves!

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