

Overview of recognised religious holidays at UAntwerpen

According to article 10.3.6 of the Education and Examination Regulation, students may request not to be examined on legally recognised religious holidays.

10.3.6 In no event should exams be taken on Sundays or holidays. Students may invoke respect for all recognized ideological convictions under the Belgian Constitution in order not to be evaluated on particular days (including for instance compulsory laboratory sessions). This goes for all recognized ideological convictions under the Belgian Constitution. The list of days and dates is made available at the start of the academic year. Students should file an application by Friday of the third week of the first semester at the latest. Students who file an application during the second semester do so by Friday of the third week of the second semester.

Students follow the guidelines for religious accommodations to obtain a religious certificate. When planning schedules, deadlines and exams, we recommend that religious holidays are proactively considered (where possible). Below is an overview of the religious holidays for the 2024-2025 academic year.

Religious rest days

Religious holidays take place once a year, while religious rest days take place weekly (usually on Friday, Saturday or Sunday for recognised religions). You cannot request religious accommodations for days of rest and moments of prayer. The Christian rest days on Sunday are already included in the academic calendar. However, we recommend that, where possible, the weekly rest days for Muslim students (Jumma) and Jewish students (Sabbath)¹ are also considered when planning compulsory courses, practical assessments or other assessment periods².

¹ The Sabbath begins approximately two hours before sunset on Friday, according to the practical understanding of the Jewish communities in Antwerp. The exact time varies greatly throughout the year.

In Islam, the day of rest (Jumma) is observed on Friday.

For practicing Muslims, the Friday afternoon prayer is therefore an important time. If possible, we recommend trying to schedule as little as possible on Fridays and Saturdays.

² Read the institution-wide recommendation ['How to deal with applications for religious accommodations'](#) for more tips (Dutch version).

Anglican, Catholic and Protestant holidays

Catholic holidays are already included in the academic calendar. The Protestant and Anglican religions do not have differing public holidays.

Islam

Islamic holidays start a week and a half earlier than the previous year³. The exact dates vary according to the religious community to which the student belongs, but always start within a specific timeframe⁴. Students can select 'their' holiday (1 day within the pre-determined timeframe, not a combination of 2 or more possible days).

Eid al-Fitr (**1 day**) and Eid al-Adha (**1 day**).

- **Eid al-Fitr** (Feast of Breaking the Fast): The timeframe is **Sunday March 30th to Tuesday April 1st** in 2025. Select one day of your choice based on your religious community⁵. The exact date of Eid al-Fitr (Feast of Breaking the Fast) is usually announced on the eve of the holiday. This date marks the end of the month of Ramadan.
- **Eid al-Adha** (Feast of Sacrifice): The timeframe is **Friday June 6 to Tuesday June 10** in 2025. Select one day of your choice based on your religious community. The exact date of Eid al-Adha (Feast of Sacrifice) is usually announced about 10 days before the holiday begins. This date is marks the 10th day of the month of Dhoe al-Hidzhah.

³ The Hijra (Islamic lunar calendar) is 10 to 11 days shorter than the Gregorian calendar.

⁴ An Islamic holiday is determined by the sighting of the new crescent. The announcement of the exact dates depends on the region and/or country of origin of the student. Some follow the purely scientific, astronomical method of pre-determining when the new moon begins. Others follow the traditional method of observing the new crescent over the western horizon with the bare eye just after sunset. This means that within the Muslim community, it is possible to celebrate holidays on dates other than those announced by the Muslim Council of Belgium.

⁵ Students choose a limited number of days that are in accordance with the interpretation of the religious community they belong to.

Judaism

Rosh Hashanah (**2 days**), Yom Kippur (**1 day**), Sukkot (**2 days**), Hoshana Rabbah (**1 day**), Shemini Atseret (**1 day**), Simchat Torah (**1 day**), Purim (**1 day**), Passover (**4 days**) and Shavuot (**2 days**). Jewish holidays usually begin moments before sundown⁶ on the eve of the holiday, when a new day begins according to the Jewish calendar.

- **Rosh Hashanah** (Jewish New Year): **Thursday 3 October and Friday 4 October**
- **Yom Kippur** (Day of Atonement): **Saturday 12 October 2024**
- **Sukkot** (Feast of Tabernacles): **Thursday 17 October to Wednesday 23 October 2024.**
Select two days of your choice based on your religious community.
- **Hoshana Rabbah** (Great Salvation): **Wednesday 23 October 2024**
- **Shemini Atseret** (Assembly of the Eighth day): **Thursday, 24 October 2024**
- **Simchat Torah** (Rejoicing in the Law): **Friday, 25 October 2024**
- **Purim** (Festival of Lots): **Friday, 14 March 2025**
- **Pesach** (Passover): **Sunday 13 April 2025 to Sunday 20 April 2025.**
Select four days of your choice based on your religious community.
- **Shavuot** (Festival of the Weeks): **Monday 2 June 2025 and Tuesday 3 June 2025.**

Orthodox religion

Christmas (**1 day**), Easter (**1 day**), Easter Monday (**1 day**), Ascension (**1 day**), Pentecost (**1 day**) and Whit Monday (**1 day**). Orthodox Easter, Ascension and Pentecost are celebrated on the same days as Catholic holidays this academic year.

- **Christmas: Tuesday 7 January 2025.**

⁶ The exact time before sunset can vary according to the interpretation of a Jewish community. Usually the celebrations begin approximately two hours before sunset.