



Guidelines and best practices to help the Oxford Colleges cater for students from diverse dietary backgrounds

Report of the Domestic Bursars' Committee
BAME Dietary Requirements Working Group

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Providing catering services and self-catering facilities for students from diverse dietary backgrounds: guidance for colleges

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I. Introduction and background

This guide outlines the legal requirements for College catering settings when providing food and drinks for students from diverse racial, ethnic, religious, and belief backgrounds and recommends best practices that can help colleges to offer inclusive provision in compliance with the Equality Act 2010. The sections below, 'Policy recommendations for Colleges,' 'Recommendations for Conference of Colleges committees,' and 'Tools for Colleges,' set out recommendations and tools that are intended to help colleges develop clear policies and procedures for handling requests for a special diet.¹

This guidance has been prepared by a working group of the Conference of Colleges Domestic Bursars' Committee to assist colleges and their catering departments as they consider how to plan and deliver their provision for students from diverse dietary backgrounds. The guidelines refer particularly to the Equality Act 2010 and an assessment undertaken by the Working Group of the satisfaction of Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) and observant religious students with their colleges' catering provision in Michaelmas Term 2017 (**Annexe A**).

A. The Equality Act 2010 and the responsibilities of higher education catering service providers

The Equality Act 2010² prohibits direct and indirect discrimination, victimisation, and harassment against a person in the provision of goods, facilities and services because of any protected characteristic, including their racial or ethnic background, religion, belief, or disability. This unlawful conduct includes **refusing someone a service, or offering a service of inferior quality, or in a hostile or less courteous way, or on less favourable terms**, on grounds of religion, belief, or race.³ Case law has expanded the definition of belief, and philosophies such as vegetarianism, veganism, and environmentalism have been judged to be protected, subject to certain criteria.⁴ It is also unlawful to advertise goods, facilities, and services in a way that indicates an **intention** to

Example from the EHRC Guidance

*A shop decides to apply a 'no hats or other headgear' rule to customers. If this rule is applied in exactly the same way to every customer, Sikhs, Jews Muslims and others who may cover their heads as part of their religion will not be able to use the shop. Unless the shop can **objectively justify** using the rule, this will be **indirect discrimination**.*

Source: Equality and Human Rights Commission guidance, 'Equality Act 2010: Summary Guidance on Services, Public Functions and Associations' (p 7)

¹ Colleges are asked to note that the special dietary requests for medical reasons (such as allergies) or disability do not fall specifically within remit of the current report, but many of the procedures and practices outlined here are intended to be helpful to colleges as they manage requests in response to these circumstances.

² <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act/equality-act-2010>

The Equality Act 2010 introduced the concept of the public sector equality duty which came into force in April 2011. The equality duty covers all the protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act, with the exception of marriage and civil partnership: age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex, and sexual orientation. The general duty requires Colleges to have 'due regard' to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, victimisation, and harassment and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people from different protected groups, including:
 - Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics;
 - Meeting the needs of people with protected characteristics;
 - Encouraging people with protected characteristics to participate in areas where their representation is low;
- Foster good relations between people from different protected groups, including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

The above are also known as the **three aims** of the general equality duty.

³ The service provider must not discriminate against a person:

- as to the terms in providing the service
- by terminating the provision of the service
- by subjecting the service user to any other detriment

(<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/29>)

⁴ <https://www.ecu.ac.uk/guidance-resources/inclusive-environment/providing-support/religion-belief/>

discriminate or indirectly discriminate unlawfully. Customers are protected both when requesting a service and during the course of being provided with a service.

The legal requirement to have 'due regard' for students' protected characteristics includes consciously considering ways to eliminate discrimination and meet the needs of people with these characteristics as part of decision-making processes and when reviewing or developing policies. Service providers in the higher education sector have a duty to: remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics; take steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people; and encourage people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

The Equality Act also allows higher education institutions to provide separate targeted provision to different groups on the basis of race, religion, and belief where current support is not appropriate.⁵ Sometimes a College will have reasonable justification for not providing targeted catering facilities and services. Such decisions carry a requirement to be communicated through an open and transparent process with all parties involved.

The Equality Act includes a separate requirement that service providers must take positive steps to remove barriers faced by people with disabilities who need to access services and facilities. In this area, colleges may find it useful to consult the collegiate University's [Common Framework on Supporting Disabled Students](#). This duty includes changing physical features of facilities to make them more accessible (for example, adding ramps and widening doorways to make them wheelchair accessible, or making sure that your signage and labelling is accessible to diners with sight problems); considering seating placement; providing extra aids, equipment, or assistance; and working with diners to manage their specific dietary needs.

Colleges should refer to legislation and case law as it develops in this area.

B. Implications for Colleges

The Equality Act sets out that service providers, including those working within higher education settings (such as college catering services), must comply with the public sector equality duty. This duty includes taking reasonable steps to ensure that students are not directly or indirectly excluded from accessing the same quality of provision on the basis of their religious observance or personal beliefs. The duty also directs service providers to make reasonable adjustments to their provision and facilities that will support disabled students to access the same quality of provision. For these reasons, the Working Group recommends that colleges take reasonable steps to cater for all special diets that relate to protected characteristics, including diets requested by students for reasons of religion, belief, medical need, or disability, as part of their own provision or through provision shared with another college(s).

Why is this important? Assessing the impact of your provision on students with special dietary needs

The collegiate University has been known to 'march on its stomach.' During 2017-18, the Working Group has heard from many BAME students about the isolating social and financial impact of not being able to eat the food provided by their college, of having repeated negative experiences when trying to access catering provision, and/or of not being able to access the same quality of provision as their peers (**Annexe B**). The Working Group encourages everyone working in a collegiate University kitchen environment to read these impact case studies and consider the ways that your college catering department can take action to promote an inclusive and positive collegiate University experience for all students, regardless of their needs. The text of this guidance includes highlights from some of these examples to illustrate why some of the recommendations are considered important by the Working Group.

⁵ <https://www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/equality-act-2010-revised/>

Budgetary impact of specialist provision

The Working Group also noted the concerns that have been expressed by colleges about the challenging impact that specialist provision can have on colleges' catering budgets. The Group's view is that in the same way that the Equality Act legally requires colleges to make reasonable adjustments for disabled students, the current equality and diversity legislation extends this standpoint to providing for different religious and belief backgrounds without passing on extra costs to the diner. Colleges are already moving increasingly towards complying with this legislation, which includes taking reasonable steps (either as individual colleges or on a shared basis to spread costs) to ensure that provision for BAME and observant religious diners is made available at every meal. The Working Group recommends that ways to spread and reduce the costs of specialist provision be considered by the Domestic Bursars' Committee on behalf of colleges (see section III), below).

The benefits of inclusive catering provision

The Working Group noted that having inclusive practices in place in catering provision carries substantial benefits for colleges. Having a strong understanding of a range of possible dietary requirements, how to manage them, and advance knowledge of diners' requirements means that catering departments will be able to plan and deliver meals that already anticipate those requirements. An inclusive food policy also allows a college to demonstrate to its community a commitment to attracting students from all backgrounds, particularly students from minority ethnic backgrounds and disabled students. Equally, there are advantages in being able to share policies and procedures with commercial customers that establish confidence that a college can handle a range of different dietary needs. Ultimately, the Working Group recommends inclusive catering practice to colleges on the basis that communities can become stronger in an environment in which every student and staff member has the opportunity to participate and flourish in college life.

II. Policy recommendations for colleges

A. Best practices in provision

The Working Group recommends that colleges write policies that define clear procedures for handling special dietary requests and requirements in both their serviced catering and self-catering provision. It is also good practice for these requirements to be written into any contracts with external caterers, although some providers may already have their own policies and procedures in place. Consultations with students and a survey of BAME students at Oxford regarding their satisfaction with colleges' provision during 2017-18 have highlighted a number of areas of good practice that the Group believes can help colleges to comply with current legislation and establish good working relationships with students and other diners who have special dietary needs. This section highlights a number of procedures that have been seen to work particularly well for both colleges and students. The Working Group recommends that examples of college 'inclusive food policies' should be collected and annexed to these guidelines as part of the 'Tools for Colleges' (Section IV).

Communication in advance with students and registering their requirements on a central system (with their consent and appropriate privacy notifications)

- 1. Communicate in advance with students about their dietary requirements before they join the University.** Students have reported that they find it helpful when colleges have requested information from diners about their dietary requirements in advance as part of the student registration process, before they joined the collegiate University, and recorded this information so that catering staff can be made aware of what diners can and cannot eat. For example, some colleges have reported that they ask students to complete an online form on the college website as part of their registration with a series of pre-defined dietary options to choose from. Colleges have reported that it is considered good practice to use, as a minimum, a centralised booking system that records special requirements.
- 2. Where needed, contact students individually and make a plan.** Where a student's requirements may be challenging to provide for, college catering staff should ask to meet with or speak to students individually to come up with a clear plan on how to manage their specific dietary requirements. This could include identifying foods from the existing menu that are appropriate, agreeing how existing recipes could be adapted to make them suitable, or agreeing how suitable foods can be prepared or supplied.

Example

At Pembroke College, the academic office asks students to register their dietary needs in advance online, including religious preferences, as part of their registration before joining the college. The college catering department then produces diet cards for students with special requirements, which they must keep with them to show at meals in Hall. The college tries to have a halal meat option available at every meal, although if a student wishes to bring guests with special requirements they would have to contact the college's catering staff in advance.

Impact case studies: communicating with diners about food ingredients

A student shared with the Working Group that after some debate to establish that a dish could be considered halal, they were served a risotto at a College dinner. Only after being served and starting to eat the dish did it become evident that it had been made with wine, an ingredient that the student was not allowed to consume.

A student was disappointed that in their college, routinely none of the Hall staff on duty had enough knowledge of the dishes being served to advise on what dishes' ingredients were.. They would need to go and check most times, leading to the student regularly feeling that he was holding up his peers and the sometimes the whole service, leading to embarrassment.

Establishing clear systems to communicate with and train your staff about diners' special dietary requirements

- 3. Establish effective systems to communicate diners' special requirements to catering staff and front of house staff – in advance, during preparation, and at point of service.** Consider appropriate systems to ensure that all catering staff are fully informed (and fully understand) students' special dietary requirements, and how these are being met, so they can ensure the right food is provided. You will want to ensure that clear information is available so that all catering and serving staff are aware of a student's special dietary requirements – for example, by providing diners with diet cards to show in Hall.
- 4. Organise appropriate training.** Consider whether your college's catering and serving staff need specialised training to understand particular dietary needs and how to ensure diners are provided with food appropriate for their needs. The Working Group recommends that the Domestic Bursars' Committee consider ways in which all college catering staff could be provided with common training on key requirements, especially as there is normally a high turnover of catering staff across colleges (see section III, below).

Establishing inclusive practices in planning and delivering your menu

5. **Have high quality options, including at least one nutritionally balanced vegan option that does not contain alcohol, available for registered special diets at every meal.** Develop a clear plan for managing special requirements that ensures that nutritionally balanced options are available to diners at every regular meal without having to book in advance, either through your college's own provision or on a shared basis. For example, the Working Group noted comments from vegetarian students that many options relied heavily on cheese and pasta/potatoes or other carbohydrates.
6. **Check and label food ingredients for diners.** Ensure that the food you provide reflects the written recipes and ingredient information by making sure staff follow standard recipes. Have a process in place to update ingredients information when products are changed or reformulated. Student diners with special requirements have reported that they find it especially useful for key ingredients that they cannot (or can) eat to be clearly labelled at the point of service.
7. **Avoid cross-contamination.** In some observant religious diets, it is very important to avoid cross-contamination, such as using utensils that have touched cooked meat to serve vegetables. This can be avoided with good hygiene (effective cleaning practices) as well as separation and labelling of ingredients.
8. **Avoid passing on the added costs of targeted provision.** The Working Group noted that some costs of individual specialist provision may be passed on to students, for example recovering the added costs of providing a kosher meal from Jewish students. The Group recommends to avoid this practice, and Colleges may wish to take further legal advice in this area.

Providing self-catering facilities for students who declare strict dietary requirements

9. **The helpfulness of having access to suitable self-catering facilities, such as a dedicated kitchen.** The Working Group recognises that colleges' self-catering facilities vary substantially and recommends that wherever possible, students who declare strict dietary requirements should be prioritised for dedicated self-catering facilities that include lockable storage areas. The Group recommends that colleges consider ways to improve upon their existing self-catering provision to ensure that observant religious students who may not always be able to access serviced provision in the Hall because of their requirements have appropriate and adequate cooking facilities that will allow them to avoid cross-contamination of foods and cooking equipment.

**Impact case studies:
planning menus for high
quality and nutritionally
balanced options**

Some students found that although food was offered on a regular basis that technically met their requirements it was a comparatively poor choice. For example, to meet quite a strict Kosher requirement, often the only hot meal available was a vegetarian option. There was just one choice, and sometimes that one dish was not suitable either, making Hall a much less attractive a place to go and eat for the Kosher student.

**Impact case study: self-
catering facilities**

Whilst living in college accommodation with a shared kitchen, a Muslim student found out that a neighbour had 'borrowed' their pan to cook sausages and had used their cup to drink wine.

Targeted provision for students who fast for religious or medical reasons

10. Arrange appropriate targeted/alternative provision for students who fast for religious or medical reasons. Fasting is considered an act of worship of great spiritual, moral, and social significance for people of many different faiths, including Muslims, Hindus, and some Christians. Often, festivals and religious days are based on the lunar calendar (such as the month of Ramadan), and thus the exact dates of fasting periods can sometimes coincide with dates of student residence in term. Fasting practices vary but may include foregoing all food and drink from sunrise to sunset. The Working Group recommends that colleges have a clear policy for managing provision for any student who fasts during normal operating hours (please also see 'Catering provision during Ramadan' below).

11. Avoid kitchen establishment charges during fasting periods if no provision is available. The Working Group has noted concerns that some colleges may continue to charge fasting students a college kitchen establishment charge in situations where no targeted alternative provision is available to the student. The Group recommends that this practice be avoided, and colleges may wish to seek further legal advice on this topic.

Communicating with your community

12. Find ways to communicate your policies effectively to your community and your current students. Once you have a policy in place for managing special dietary requirements, you will need to find ways to communicate this prominently both to the current community of college diners and others who use the college's catering services. Students have reported that even when provision is available, they have not been aware of the provision and that avenues are available for requesting special provision. The Working Group also recommends that colleges help the student body to become more aware of special dietary needs in the context of inductions.

13. Update your admissions information for prospective students and induction information for arriving students. The Working group recommends that colleges consider how they would like to make this information available to applicants to the University and incoming students via their admissions, outreach, and communications teams, keeping in mind that students' choices of college may be strongly influenced by what catering provision is available – for example, some Muslim and Jewish applicants have found it necessary to telephone colleges individually to ask about their provision where no information is available on the college website. The Working Group recommends that colleges update their Handbooks for incoming students to include information about their special dietary requirements provision.

14. Put systems in place to monitor student feedback and satisfaction. Students have reported that they do not always know how they can share their experiences with their college's provision with college staff unless there is a serious problem. Colleges will want to consider what procedures they would like to put into place to make sure their policy is working. This could be a series of questions

Positive feedback from students about their catering provision

In the Working Group's survey of BAME students, students highlighted several points of positive feedback on their colleges' provision, including:

- Good meal booking systems that allowed for different requirements – students found some college systems to be simple to use, efficient, and working well in practice

- Students appreciated their colleges' tasty meals and high quality of food

- Students liked having a varied selection of good quality vegetarian food available in their college at every meal

- Students highlighted the price and affordability of meals in some colleges, with 'pay as you go' options seen to be an especially helpful way to eat in college on a budget.

added to your college's general student satisfaction survey, one to one chats with students who have special requirements, or something more targeted. The Working Group recommends that BAME/religious observant students' satisfaction with catering provision be incorporated into colleges' existing annual equality monitoring and reporting procedures.

15. Encouraging awareness and good relations: consider putting on events in Hall with your JCR/MCR.

The Working Group's surveys have indicated that celebrations of different religious festivals in colleges involving food are often received positively by students and can contribute in a helpful way to building greater awareness of the backgrounds of students from different faiths (as well as helping a college to meet the 'fostering good relations' requirement of the Public Sector Equality Duty).

B. Recommendations relating to specific diets

16. Strict Kosher diets (Jewish students). The Working Group discussed that colleges have encountered substantial difficulties in providing kosher meals to strictly observant Jewish students. Some local suppliers of kosher meals have been found to be unreliable, expensive, and unable to deliver meals to colleges, and college chefs have also become concerned about colleges' potential legal liability as they cannot test the food prior to service. The Working Group therefore recommends that the Domestic Bursars' Committee should consider collective procurement options to assist colleges, such as identifying a collective supplier through Foodbuy. This could include, for example, frozen meals or coming to an arrangement with other local organisations.

17. Catering provision during Ramadan (Muslim students). The Working Group has discussed that colleges have a widely varying range of provision for Muslim students who fast during Ramadan, ranging from no provision out of normal operating hours to targeted provision such as leaving wrapped salad plates for students; extending college café hours so that hot food would be available to Muslim students breaking fast after sunset; providing breakfast packs or continental breakfasts with items such as fruit and granola bars for students to take to their rooms the evening before; and providing figs to students (which are traditionally eaten in some Muslim cultures to break the fast). Where the dates of Ramadan coincide with students' residence in college, the Working Group recommends that colleges should take every reasonable possible step to explore what targeted provision, out of hours provision, or alternative facilities can be provided (such as breakfast packs, extended hours, or an agreement with another college for shared provision). If it is not possible to provide targeted provision, this should be discussed transparently with Muslim students in your college.

18. Halal meat (Muslim students) and non-halal meat (students who cannot eat ritually slaughtered meat). The Working Group has discussed that the Equality Act extends protection to the beliefs of both Muslim students, who eat halal (ritually slaughtered) meat, and to students who object to eating ritually slaughtered meat for personal or religious reasons. The Group therefore recommends that a range of options be made available at every meal, wherever reasonable and possible, and that both halal and non-halal meat options should be clearly labelled for diners.

III. Recommendations for Conference committees for shared initiatives to assist colleges

From the recommendations above, the Working Group has proposed several actions to be taken forward by the Domestic Bursars' Committee or other relevant committees of Conference.

- Consider collective procurement options to assist colleges to alleviate the cost burden of procuring specialist meals and ingredients, particularly Kosher meals. This might include investigating how the

Epsys system/Foodbuy could be used to source food collectively at a better price. This initiative would carry the additional advantage of allowing participating colleges to offer consistent certifications (for example, Kosher/Halal certification) across their provision. The Working Group suggests that Kosher meal options to consider might include the purchase of frozen kosher certified meals to keep in stock or arriving at a legally acceptable shared procurement arrangement with a local organisation.

- Consider ways to make common training available to catering staff from all colleges on key BAME, religious/belief-related, medical, and disability-related dietary requirements, especially as there is normally a high turnover of catering staff. This might include, for example, inviting specialist chefs to provide training on provision for specific diets.
- Prospective applicants have encountered substantial problems when they try to decide on which college they can apply to based on their dietary requirements, with many of them resorting to telephoning each college individually or consulting student societies. The Working Group therefore recommends that some key details about colleges' provision be collated in a way that can be provided to prospective students through the University website, Conference of Colleges website, and/or on student societies' websites.
- The Working Group discussed that the delivery of the recommendations will be heavily dependent on the practical support that can be provided to college catering departments to 'translate' the guidelines into useful resources and good practice (for example, to facilitate menu production and share helpful practices on gathering information from diners). The Group recommends to convene a specialist working party of college catering and hospitality staff to develop practical tools, resources, and support for colleagues that can be annexed to this guidance as part of the 'Toolkit.'
- The Working Group recommends that relevant committees and groups within the Conference of Colleges continue to take items regularly on provision in this area; the DBC may wish to conduct a further survey of colleges' provision and of BAME/observant religious student satisfaction in Trinity Term 2019 or a later date to evaluate progress.

IV. Tools for college catering departments

Annexe C - Helpful guidance on the different dietary requirements linked to religious observance and beliefs: Interfaith Network UK - Catering and Faith Based Dietary Practice

Annexe D - HELPP Australia Fact Sheet: Religious Food Requirements, including additives and food groups prohibited by the halal diet

The Working Group recommends several further resources for development, which should be annexed to this guidance.

- Examples of college inclusive food policies
- Templates and key resources developed by college Catering Managers and Hospitality Services managers
- List of key questions that colleges should ask when requesting information from students about dietary requirements

V. Further information and resources

<i>Source</i>	Title of document	URL
Equality and Human Rights Commission	Equality Act 2010	https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act/equality-act-2010
Equality and Human Rights Commission	Statutory code of practice for services, public functions, and associations	https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/services-public-functions-and-associations-statutory-code-practice
Interfaith Network	Catering and Faith Based Dietary Practice (includes a helpful fact sheet of what ingredients people of different faiths can and cannot eat)	https://www.interfaith.org.uk/uploads/Catering-and-Faith-Based-Dietary-Practice.pdf
Equality Challenge Unit	Religious observance in higher education: facilities and services	https://www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/religious-obs-facilities/
TUCO	Providing catering for international students 2015	www.tuco.ac.uk/images/zoo/uploads/documents/H2O_TUCO_Catering_for_International_Students_Research_080715_LR_FINAL.pdf

ANNEXE A: BAME Dietary Requirements Working Group Survey of BAME students regarding their dietary requirements: summary of responses

Prepared for the meeting of 14 February 2018

Background

At its meeting of 20 October, the BAME Dietary Requirements Working Group agreed that it would issue two surveys, including a survey of college Domestic Bursars on colleges' current level of provision for students with the dietary requirements that had been discussed; and a second anonymous survey of BAME students, circulated via OxfordSU and representatives on the Working Group to reach college JCRs, MCRs and societies, assessing students' level of satisfaction with their colleges' current provision. This summary provides an overview of the results of the survey of BAME students asking them to rate their colleges' catering provision for their specific dietary requirements.

The survey of students was circulated via email as an online questionnaire prepared on the Bristol Online Surveys Platform. A link to the survey was forwarded to college JCRs and MCRs by OxfordSU and by student representatives on the BAME Dietary Requirements Working Group to some student societies. The text of the survey instructions and questions is given in Annexe A (a separate document accompanying this paper). Responses to this survey were self-selecting. The survey opened on the Bristol Online Surveys platform on 10 November 2017 and closed on 15 December 2017.

Summary of responses

96 students from 35 different Colleges and Permanent Private Halls responded to this survey. Among the students who responded, approximately 56% reported that they followed a strict Halal diet; 18% followed a strict Kosher diet; 20% were vegetarian; and 6% were pure vegetarian or vegan. Students' ratings of their satisfaction with their colleges' provision were extremely varied, ranging from the lowest possible ratings of '1' or '2' (23 responses in total for these ratings, or 24%) to '9' or '10' (14 responses, or 14.6%).

Students were asked to comment on how their college's provision could be improved and highlighted several consistent themes in their comments. The most prominent of these themes included:

- a desire for halal or kosher food either to be introduced into daily provision or for existing options to be expanded;
- a need for clearer labelling of ingredients, especially alcohol, gelatine, and certain allergens;
- ensuring that nutritionally complete and non-alcoholic vegetarian options were available when no halal/kosher option was provided;
- greater availability of more substantial and nutritionally complete vegan meal options (e.g., more protein options, desserts that are not always fruit);
- desire for a greater range of healthy vegetarian options that were not reliant on carbohydrates, cheese, and/or egg; and
- an increase in the provision of non-alcohol containing foods.

Respondents were also asked to comment on what aspects of their college's serviced catering and other catering provision currently worked well. While there were many different types of comments which are given below under 'detailed survey responses' and in the full response data, the most frequently cited themes of good practice included the following areas:

Serviced catering: students commented most upon

- Good meal booking systems that allowed for different requirements – students found some college systems to be simple to use, efficient, and working well in practice;
- Their appreciation for tasty meals and high quality of food being provided in some colleges;
- Their satisfaction with having a varied selection of good quality vegetarian food available in their college at every meal;
- In some colleges, having at least one vegetarian option available at every meal;
- The price and affordability of meals, with ‘pay as you go’ options seen to be especially helpful.

Other catering provision: students commented most upon

- The helpfulness of student rooms’ having access to a kitchen

It should be noted that respondents also used this question as an opportunity to complain about a low standard of provision or did not see that any aspect of the college’s other catering provision worked well.

Detailed survey responses

A more detailed summary of students’ responses to this survey is given below.

1. 96 students in total responded to the survey. Among these students, 71% of respondents (68 students) self-identified as BAME, and 78% of respondents (75 students) reported that their faith or beliefs had an impact on their dietary requirements. Eight students (8.3% of respondents) reported that neither of the above applied.
2. When asked to indicate their college, respondents gave the names of 35 different colleges (of a total of 44 Colleges and Permanent Private Halls).
3. The 96 respondents indicated that their dietary needs included:

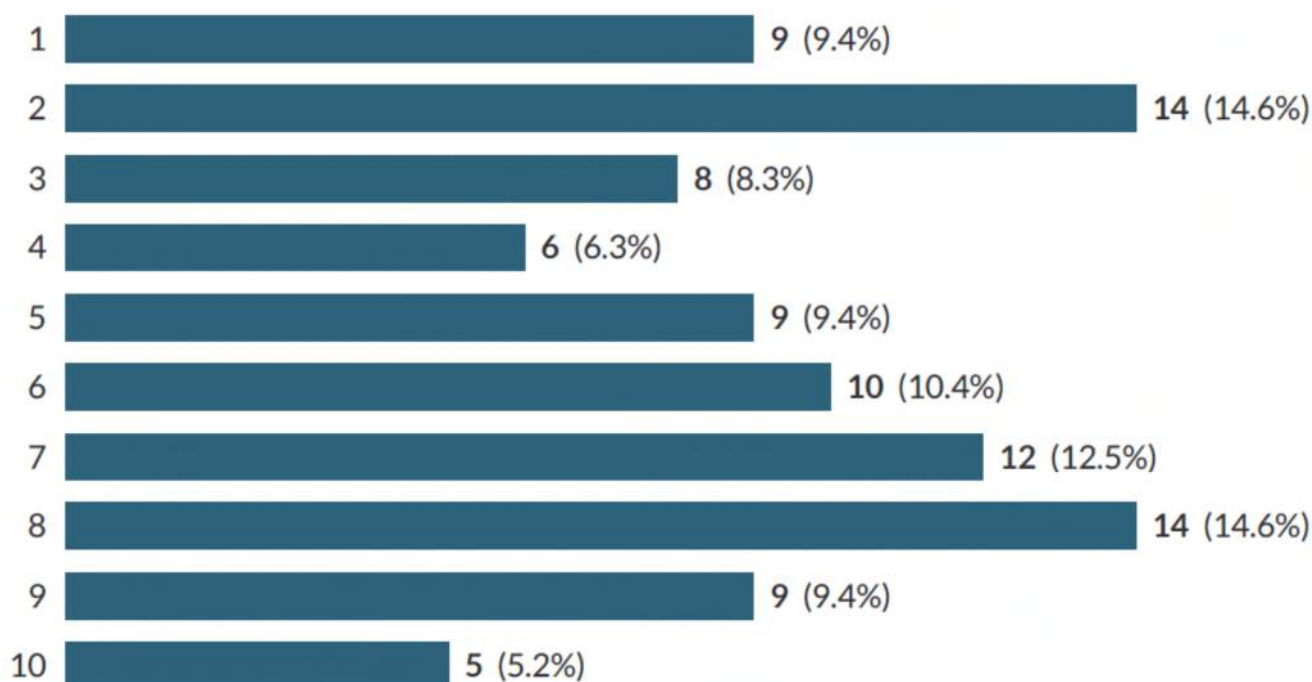
Indications of dietary background:

 - Strictly Halal diet: 54 respondents (56.3% of all responses)
 - Strictly Kosher: 17 respondents (17.7% of responses)
 - Vegetarian or pure vegetarian: 25 respondents (26% of responses), of which 6 respondents were pure vegetarian / vegan
 - East Asian dietary background: 3 respondents (2% of responses). Respondents in this group provided additional information about their requirements, including one student’s preference for well cooked food (as in not raw or half-cooked), and the use of rice as the main staple ingredient of a meal.

Specific dietary requirements surveyed:

 - No alcohol: 37 respondents (38.5% of respondents)
 - No beef: 2 respondents (2% of respondents)
 - No dairy: 4 respondents (4.2%)
 - Gluten free: 4 respondents (4.2%)
 - Other specific requirements: 6 respondents (3.9%)
4. On a scale of 1 to 10, the students who responded to the survey rated their satisfaction with their college’s provision. The ratings given by students were as follows (with 1 being the lowest score and 10 being the highest score):

Table 1. Students' ratings of their satisfaction with their college's provision on a scale of 1-10



5. Where students responded that their level of satisfaction was less than a '10,' they were asked to indicate what it would take to make this answer a '10.' 87 students responded to this question, and a summary of the themes and overall content of the responses is given below by identifying the topics that students chose to comment upon.

Table 2. Students' indications of what they would like to see in their catering provision in order to rate their college at a '10'

	<i>Number of students who highlighted this issue in their comments</i>
Labelling of ingredients, staff training	
Clearer labelling of ingredients in food (especially alcohol, non-FODMAP, gelatine, allergens)	8
Concerned that college catering staff do not have an understanding of halal or kosher requirements - having to explain	2
Halal food	
Introduction or greater availability of Halal food in Hall (particularly introduction of halal meat), preferably at every meal, without having to order in advance	34
Introduction of an improved range of halal meat options	17
Ensuring that nutritionally complete and non-alcoholic vegetarian options are available when no halal/kosher option is provided	6
Greater availability of Halal food options specifically at Formal Halls	5
Improved recipes when preparing halal food, including greater availability or inclusion of spices	2
Would like to take Hall food away for fasting days such as Ramadan or late lectures/labs, as students are still paying for meals in these circumstances	1
Increased advertisement to students of availability of halal food	1

<i>Kosher food</i>	
Greater availability and better presentation of fully kosher food and meat options in Hall	10
Ensuring that nutritionally complete and non-alcoholic vegetarian options are available when no halal/kosher option is provided	6
Greater availability of hot Kosher food options and kosher wine specifically at Formal Halls	3
Access to food provided by faith organisations	1
College should subsidise the expense of kosher food in the same way that other types of food are subsidised	1
Ability to bring guests who eat kosher into Formal Hall at the same price as regular guests	1
Providing greater clarity on the process for ordering kosher meals outside of formal Hall	1
<i>Vegetarian and vegan alternatives to meat</i>	
Greater availability of more substantial and nutritionally complete vegan meal options (e.g., more protein options, desserts that are not always fruit)	10
Greater range of healthy vegetarian options that are not reliant on carbohydrates and cheese and/or egg	10
Better coordination of vegetarian mains with side dishes available - e.g., avoiding combinations of pasta and potatoes	3
More than one vegetarian option at every meal	2
Worried about cross-contamination of vegetarian options with meat (e.g., in salad bar, same cutlery used to serve food, café environments)	2
Improving the quality of vegetarian food served at formal Hall	1
Less tomato based sauce in vegetarian options	1
<i>Use of alcohol</i>	
More non-alcohol containing foods, especially in formal Hall	6
Improved non-alcoholic drink options at Formal Halls	1
Formal Hall pricing option that does not include alcohol	1
<i>East Asian diets</i>	
Requested improvements to the consistency of rice served - less coarse	1

6. Students were also asked about which aspects of their college's catering provision they felt currently worked well. 76 students responded to this question, and a summary of students' positive feedback on their colleges' provision is given below:

Table 3. What did respondents feel worked well in their colleges' serviced catering provision?

	<i>Number of students who highlighted this issue in their comments</i>
<i>Good practices and positive feedback on overall provision</i>	
Good booking systems that allow different requirements - simple to use, efficient, works in practice	8
Menu options are tasty / high quality of food is appreciated	8
Respondent says they are happy with informal meals provided in hall	4
College staff are responsive / provide good feedback to students with special dietary needs	3
Satisfied with everything about the college's provision	3
Large variety of main and side dishes available	3
Meal times are sufficiently long	2

Menus are sent out a week in advance	2
Ingredients in dishes are explicitly labeled	1
College goes out of its way to cater well for students' dietary needs	1
<i>Satisfaction with provision at specific meals</i>	
Lunches are catered well by the student's college	4
Satisfied with variety of options available for breakfasts/brunches	2
<i>Comments about cost and 'pay as you go' provision</i>	
Pay as you go system allows for flexibility, affordability, and choice	4
Meals are considered affordable	5
Respondent liked the college's café or buttery provision	4
<i>Comments about halal provision</i>	
Well executed, sensitive halal provision at informal and formal hall	4
Respondent liked the availability of halal chicken at some informal meals	3
Respondent liked fish and seafood options available	4
Usually no alcohol is used in the cooking of food and vegetarian options, increasing the options available	2
Happy that halal has been introduced for formal Halls	2
<i>Comments about kosher provision</i>	
Able to provide kosher food for special events	1
Students allowed to bring own food into Hall	1
<i>Comments about vegetarian or vegan alternatives/provision</i>	
Satisfied with varied selection of good quality vegetarian food available at every meal	9
Happy that a vegetarian option is provided at every meal	8
Vegetarian options are placed away from meat options to avoid cross-contamination	1

7. Students were also asked to indicate what aspects of their college's other catering provision (for example, availability of self-catering facilities) they considered worked well. 52 students responded to this question, and a summary of the themes of responses is given below:

<i>Comments on what respondents considered worked well with respect to other college catering provision</i>	<i>Number of students who highlighted this issue in their comments</i>
Most student rooms have access to a kitchen with basic cooking facilities	10
None / negative feedback on availability or ability to use self-catering provision	8
Response of n/a or not sure	8
Range of good options available	6
Café/buttery/bar increases the available food options	5
Some student rooms have access to a kitchen with basic cooking facilities	4
Good' kitchen available (not just basic cooking facilities)	3
Provision is generally good	2
Relatively cheap	1

Lots of options available	1
Availability of refrigerators in student rooms	1
College staff are helpful	1
Wide choice of snacks	1
Satisfied with all aspects of the college's provision	1

8. Finally, students were offered an opportunity to provide general comments on provision. 24 students offered comments, and the content of these responses is given below.

<i>Free text comments (23 respondents)</i>	
It is Catholic practice to abstain from meat (except fish) on Fridays. Having a fish option on Fridays is always lovely to see from a Catholic point of view, even though of course there is always a vegetarian option so it doesn't change accessibility.	
Colleges need to think more about BAME students when it comes to food, we simply aren't catered to at all in many smaller colleges even though we pay just as much as other students	
Kitchens are urgently required for first and second years, it is very difficult to manage	
oxford does not do enough to make itself accessible for students, I'm expected to just eat a vegetarian diet rather than have my dietary needs catered for	
I just want to eat meat in hall please	
Kitchens should be improved so that each one has an oven, freezer and microwave as well as hob, fridge and sink. It's really important for people with dietary requirements to be able to cook for themselves otherwise they will become malnourished because they can't realistically get all of the nourishment they need from hall.	
The self-catering facilities at Balliol are really poor - if all kitchenettes at least have an oven (even if its a little one!) that would be really handy. But otherwise - I totally appreciate there isn't much space.	
Would be good to have access to a microwave in Tommy White 2	
There are quite a few cuisines that the Hall could look into. Vegetarian options often contain cheese.	
I think this is a hugely important topic - for Muslim students the thought of struggling for halal food can make many apply to universities near their homes instead.	
Main thing is clarity of what is in each meal, if it's halal, make it clear, same goes for if it has gelatin or alcohol.	
Formal food usually isn't great because they add alcohol to foods, thus they are no longer halal.	
Keep up the willingness to be diverse	
Each college should have halal/kosher etc as standard.	
Just tired of eating terrible vegetarian food everyday.	
Even if halal meat is used it is never advertised so that would be a good improvement.	
Having halal options is very important and appreciated, and I hope to see the options expanded in the self-catering facilities.	
I was initially told my college offer halal options and so I specified this option at my first dinner. I was first given a non-halal meal and when I asked for the halal option, they seemed confused. I then asked for vegetarian but they didn't have any more, so they made me an omlette for my main. I think maybe overall there's a lack of awareness of other dietary requirements, especially when they are faith-based. It would also be fantastic if halal meals are offered more often.	
Please get halal food. :(
need more communal kitchens, or at least toasters and kettle provision on each staircase	
Vegetarian monday sucks	
The self catered kitchens are quite small and no oven for baking!	
Only four kitchens for the whole college; only space for 3 to sit in each kitchen.	

ANNEXE B: Case studies on the isolating impact on Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) students on being excluded from college catering provision

At the BAME Dietary Requirements Working Group's first meeting, a number of experiences were recounted which collectively highlighted the kinds of issues that have come up in colleges recently. They are set out below.

- a) Whilst living in college accommodation with a shared kitchen, a Muslim student found out that a neighbour had 'borrowed' their pan to cook sausages and had used their cup to drink wine.
- b) A student was at a college that requires pre-payment of Hall meals. If there is an acceptable reason for exemption from the meal, a refund would be retrospectively issued. However, the process to gain exemption was run in quite an adversarial way and the student in question felt intimidated to claim back the money for meals she couldn't eat.
- c) A student was at a college in which routinely none of the Hall staff on duty would have enough knowledge of the dishes being served. They would need to go and check most times, leading to the student concerned regularly feeling that he was holding up his peers and the sometimes whole service leading to embarrassment.
- d) After some debate to establish that a dish could be considered halal, a student was served a risotto at a College dinner. Only after being served and starting to eat the dish did it become evident that it had been made with wine.
- e) In a college trying to make accommodating arrangements for candidates coming up for admissions interviews, there was nowhere in the process for candidates to explain about any dietary requirements. And actually, the members of staff working to make these arrangements didn't know enough about the kind of things they might get asked for, or that would be served in all.
- f) Several students found that although food was offered on a regular basis that technically met their requirements it was a comparatively poor choice. For example, to meet quite a strict Kosher requirement often the only hot meal available was a vegetarian option. There was just one choice, and sometimes that one dish was not suitable either, making Hall a much less attractive a place to go and eat for the Kosher student.

Bart Ashton
November 2017

CATERING AND FAITH BASED DIETARY PRACTICE

Some key principles

Faith based dietary practice is taken very seriously by many people of faith in Britain today. It is an important and positive aspect of their personal commitment to living out their faith.

It is important for people to be free to live out their personal beliefs, whether religious or non-religious, including in matters of dietary practice. It is not appropriate for choices of food and drink to be imposed on people regardless of their religious, cultural, social or ethnic background. Sensitivity and care should therefore be exercised when catering for those who follow particular dietary practice for reasons of their belief, whether religious or non-religious.

There is a move towards more inclusive provision for differing dietary requirements, reflecting and respecting the diversity of multi-faith Britain. This is to be encouraged and welcomed.

To assist in supporting and broadening the pattern of catering provision for multi faith contexts and deepening understanding of faith based dietary needs, the Inter Faith Network for the UK (IFN) has worked with member faith community representative bodies to draw together some guidance designed to help those catering in public and private institutions for people of a range of different faith backgrounds. In addition to the broad principles outlined above, this includes:

1. Some general points on catering for a religiously diverse clientele
2. Some more detailed points about particular issues
3. A chart setting out dietary practice in relation to a range of ingredients. The chart has a glossary of key terms

1. SOME GENERAL POINTS ON CATERING FOR A RELIGIOUSLY DIVERSE CLIENTELE

- a) It is important that public institutions, such as schools, hospitals and prisons, ensure that the different dietary practices of those served by them are properly met in what is provided for them. This is especially important in the case of institutions like prisons, hospitals and some schools where those being served are unable to eat elsewhere.
- b) It is also desirable for private sector firms providing catering facilities for public institutions or facilities used by the general public (such as sports facilities or entertainment complexes) to familiarise themselves with the wide range of dietary needs of the diverse population of modern Britain, and to ensure a suitably broad range of provision.
- c) It is recommended that when catering for people of faith, institutions be clear about specific requirements their clientele have so that they are aware of the range of dietary practice with which they are working. It is recognised that mass catering for the full range of specific dietary requirements can be complex. One way for public institutions to approach the issue is to invite all those using their catering service on a regular basis to fill in forms regarding their dietary practices so that the available options can be adjusted accordingly.
- d) In institutions that cater for people from a wide range of faith communities it is good practice to have meat and vegetarian options (in the case of main courses a full vegetarian dish and not just vegetable side dishes); and, where required, correctly slaughtered meat (on which there is further information below). Vegan options will desirably be readily available.
- e) Public institutions, private sector firms and restaurants should be aware of issues surrounding the correct labeling of meat slaughtered in accordance with religious guidelines: *dhabihah* (Islamic) or *schechita* (Jewish) slaughter processes that results in *halal* and *kosher* meat respectively. This is an important part of the religious practices of these religions.²
- f) It is also important to be aware that those Sikhs who eat meat (not all do) follow guidance in the *Rehit Maryada* which prohibits the eating of meat slaughtered in accordance with guidelines of other religions (*kutha*) such as *halal* and *kosher* meat.
- g) Institutions should be aware of the views of Jews, Muslims and Sikhs on slaughter and should take care to source their meat and other foodstuffs

² The Christian-Muslim Forum released a detailed briefing on this issue in November 2010 that is available at: www.christianmuslimforum.org/index.php/working-together/news/halal-statement

accordingly, making sure that they have traceability of the origins of their meat to ensure a defensible procurement procedure.

- h) Institutions should also be able, as necessary, to respond to queries about ingredients in food which may be inappropriate for some following faith based dietary practice which does not permit eating of particular items, for example eggs or egg derived products.
- i) If alcohol is served in an institution it is important to be sensitive to the needs of clients who do not drink alcohol for religious reasons.
- j) Restaurants will offer a particular menu of their choice and customers will choose whether to eat there or not. However, it is important that restaurants are able to inform customers on request what ingredients are used in their dishes as well as to provide other relevant information, including whether or not meat used has been slaughtered in accordance with particular faith defined regulations (for example *kosher* or *halal* slaughter).

2. SOME MORE DETAILED POINTS ABOUT PARTICULAR ISSUES

- a) Particular dietary practices are to be found in a whole range of faiths, including some branches of Christianity. The attached chart offers a broad outline of dietary practice in the Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Islamic, Jain, Jewish, Sikh and Zoroastrian faith traditions.²
- b) While in many faith communities the majority of observant members will follow the same practice, such as the consumption of 'halal' food by most Muslims, there are communities in which dietary practices may differ between different followers of the same faith. For example, while most Hindus follow a vegetarian diet, a significant minority will eat meat, though all are likely to avoid beef because of respect in the Hindu tradition for the cow.
- c) The way food is prepared and served is an essential part of faith based dietary practice in some traditions. This is especially important in Judaism where during the preparation of *kosher* meals different sets of preparation implements, preparation surfaces and storage areas for meat and dairy products can be required by those who adhere to *kashrut* law. When catering for Jewish clients who keep *kosher* it is often advisable to purchase specially prepared and sealed *kosher* meals from a certified supplier to avoid complications³.
- d) When catering for a mixed faith group care should be taken to ensure that during the preparation, cooking and serving of food, kitchen implements and

² Faith communities presently linked at the national level by IFN.

³ Advice is available from the website of the London *Beth Din Kashrut* division at: (<http://www.kosher.org.uk/>).

serving utensils have not come into contact with ingredients that some clients would not be able to consume. For example, strict practitioners of Hindu or Jain faiths or Sikh vegetarians may require that equipment and utensils have not come into contact with meat, fish or egg and when catering for Muslims cookery implements and eating utensils that have come into contact with pork, other non-halal meats or alcohol should not be used. During the preparation of *kosher* meals implements that have come into contact with non-*kosher* substances should not be used and separate implements should be used for meat and dairy products. Some of the complications that arise from this can be avoided by the use of disposable plates, cutlery and serving implements.

- e) Where there are foodstuffs present that some will not consume it is advisable to keep these separate when in storage, preparation and serving.
- f) There are some faiths, such as Jainism, in which some strictly observant adherents may wish to eat food prepared in their own kitchen. It is advisable to find out whether this is the case and to make arrangements for those who wish to bring their own food to do so if they wish.
- g) In a number of faiths, including Hinduism, Jainism and Judaism, some observant members will not eat cut fruit. It is, therefore recommended to supply some whole fruit in mixed faith settings.
- h) When catering for people of diverse faiths, caterers will find it helpful to be aware of whether members of particular faiths are marking festivals or fast-days as faith based dietary requirements can alter during periods of religious observance and celebration. This can involve changes to the times of meals: for example, Muslims must eat after sundown during Ramadan and Jains will often fast for the duration of Paryushana and any food that is consumed must be eaten between sunrise and sunset. Festivals can also change what is eaten: for example, in the run-up to and during Pesach observant Jewish people will avoid all biologically fermented (*chametz*) foodstuffs. Other people of faith may also have special observances or observe more closely than usual their faith's food laws during festival periods. For example, many Hindus will maintain a vegetarian diet during Diwali and Navratri even though they might eat some meat at other times and many Sikhs who normally eat meat will not do so on festive occasions.

Faith Based Dietary Practice - a chart for caterers

Faith	Meat/Poultry	Seafood	Eggs	Dairy Products	Vegetables	Fruit/Nuts	Alcohol	Caffeine	Additives	Other
Baha'i							Observant Bahai's will not consume alcohol			
Buddhism	Some Buddhists practise vegetarianism, often linked to an interpretation of the first principle of 'do no harm'. Buddhists may also follow the advice of the Buddha against eating certain animals not commonly consumed including boar and horse. There is great regional variation in Buddhist consumption of meat, fish and poultry. Some Buddhists practise a form of vegetarianism that precludes the eating of eggs.			Dairy products that contain animal derived ingredients (such as animal rennet in some cheeses) will not be consumed by vegetarian Buddhists.	Some Buddhists, often from China or Vietnam, will not eat the 'five pungent spices' - onions, garlic, leeks, chives, scallions.		Some Buddhists will not consume alcohol.		Vegetarian Buddhists will not eat additives derived from animal products.	
Christianity	A small minority of Christians interpret strict observance of their faith to include practising vegetarianism and the non-eating of meat slaughtered in accordance with the guidelines of other religions.						Some Christians interpret strict observance of their faith to include not drinking alcohol.			
Hinduism	Many Hindus practise vegetarianism and avoid all meat, poultry and seafood. While some Hindus may consume meat, observant Hindus will avoid beef out of respect for the cow and others may avoid pork and some shellfish. Hindus practise a form of vegetarianism that precludes the eating of eggs.			Dairy products that contain animal derived ingredients (such as animal rennet in some cheeses) will not be consumed by vegetarian Hindus.	Strictly observant Hindus may avoid consuming onions, garlic and mushrooms/fungi.	Strictly observant Hindus may avoid consuming cut fruit and shelled nuts.	DRWP 18/08 Strictly observant Hindus will not consume alcohol.	Strictly observant Hindus may avoid consuming tea, coffee or other caffeinated products.	Vegetarian Hindus will not eat additives derived from animal products	
Islam	Observant Muslims will never consume pork products and only consume <i>halal</i> meat and poultry slaughtered in accordance with the <i>dhabihah</i> religious guidelines.	Some observant Muslims will not consume shellfish, although some make an exception for shrimp and prawns.		Observant Muslims will not consume dairy products that contain animal derived ingredients from pork or other non <i>dhabihah</i> slaughtered animals.			Observant Muslims will not consume alcohol.		Observant Muslims will not consume additives that are derived from any non- <i>halal</i> source. A list of the <i>halal</i> status of additives can be found here: http://tinyurl.com/9z7rwee	
Jainism	Observant Jains follow a strict dietary code based on the principle of <i>ahimsa</i> (non-violence) and will therefore not consume any meat, poultry, seafood or eggs.			Observant Jains will not consume dairy products that contain animal derived ingredients.	Strictly observant Jains will avoid eating root vegetables, garlic, onions, leeks, chives, scallion and mushrooms/fungi. Vegetables that contain many seeds (such as aubergines) may also be avoided.	Strictly observant Jains will avoid eating fruits that contain many seeds (such as figs). They may also not consume cut fruit and shelled nuts.	Observant Jains will not consume alcohol.	Strictly observant Jains will avoid consuming tea, coffee or other caffeinated products.	Observant Jains will not eat additives derived from animal products.	Observant Jains will avoid consuming honey, and avoid un-boiled water to minimise the consumption of microscopic organisms.
Judaism	Observant Jews will only consume <i>kosher</i> meat (usually beef/lamb and never pork) or poultry as prescribed by <i>kashrut</i> law. All must be slaughtered in accordance with the <i>schechita</i> religious guidelines.	Observant Jews will only consume fish with fins and scales. They will not consume any shellfish.		While observant Jews will consume dairy products, dietary practice laws require the separation of meat and dairy products in the preparation of food.		Strictly observant Jews may avoid consuming cut fruit and shelled nuts.	Some observant Jews will only consume grape derived alcohol which has been prepared under <i>kosher</i> conditions.		Observant Jews will not consume additives that are derived from any non- <i>kosher</i> source. The <i>kosher</i> status of additives is given here: http://tinyurl.com/v8ncq .	
Sikhism	Sikhs who eat meat will not eat meat slaughtered according to guidelines of other religions (<i>kutha</i>). Because of their respect for the sensitivities of Hindus and Muslims, some who do so may avoid the eating of beef and pork.	Sikhs who practise vegetarianism will consume neither seafood nor eggs.		Dairy products that contain animal derived ingredients (such as animal rennet in some cheeses) will not be consumed by vegetarian Sikhs.			Observant Sikhs will not consume alcohol.		Vegetarian Sikhs will not eat additives derived from animal products.	
Zoroastrianism										

Glossary

Halal Something that is *halal* is something that is permitted for Muslims, the opposite being something that is forbidden (*haram*). In the context of dietary practice *halal* refers usually to ingredients but it is important that food is not contaminated by *haram* products such as alcohol.

Dhabihah The permitted method of slaughter in Muslim law.

Kosher For something to be considered *kosher* it must adhere to Jewish *kashrut* law. In the context of dietary practice this can mean the ingredients themselves and the methods of preparation and serving.

Kutha Sikh term from the *Rehit Maryada* that refers to meat slaughtered in accordance with guidelines of other religions - for example meat slaughtered in accordance to *dhabihah* (Muslim) and *schechita* (Jewish) guidelines that result in *halal* meat and *kosher* meat respectively). Sikhs will not consume *kutha* meat.

Schechita The permitted method of slaughter and butchery in Jewish *kashrut* law

Ultra-Observance

Within the prescribed dietary practice of a faith community there can be a wide range of interpretation and adherence. This chart aims to show what is commonly observed as well as common variations of practice.

Within every faith community with dietary practice rules there are those who are 'ultra observant' in their dietary practice, taking the guidelines further than others within the community when putting them into practice. The range of ultra observance is not covered in this chart as in each case only a minority will adhere to these models. However caterers should be aware that some people of faith may be ultra observant and should take every reasonable step to accommodate them wherever possible.

Chart

This chart covers the dietary practices of the Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, and Zoroastrian traditions presently linked in membership by the Inter Faith Network at the national level. It has been compiled with the assistance of these faith communities.

This chart is designed to be read in conjunction with the text of the briefing note on 'Catering and Faith Based Dietary Practice.'


Where a field is blank this means that those from the faith community in question are likely to have no issue eating these ingredients.

Further Information

National faith community bodies can provide more detailed advice on the dietary practices of their traditions should this be required as well, in some cases, on the acceptability or otherwise of particular additives.

To contact faith community bodies in membership of the Inter Faith Network visit: www.interfaith.org.uk/members/national-faith-bodies

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helpp fact sheet

HELPP
Healthy Eating Local
Policies and Programs



Religious Food Requirements

Food is an important part of life and in multicultural Australia there are various religious and cultural practices around food. Food is used in celebrations and helps to maintain ties with tradition and family. Listed below are some widely known religions and their food guidelines. This is by no means an exhaustive list and individuals may differ on how strictly they follow the guidelines. A summary table is also attached (Appendix A), however it is always best to confirm requirements with individuals.

Buddhists do not have set dietary rules, however vegetarianism is common as The Five Precepts of Buddhism that govern the moral conduct of followers states “that all living beings have a right to life.”

Christians observe lent, which is a 40 day period prior to Easter when Christians fast or give up luxuries in penance for their sins and reflect on the sacrifice and suffering of Jesus Christ. Lent runs from Ash Wednesday to Maundy Thursday, which is the day before Good Friday when Christ is said to have died on the cross. Traditionally meat is replaced by fish on Good Friday and the resurrection of Christ is celebrated on Easter Sunday. Easter falls between 22 March and 25 April each year. The timing changes according to the lunar cycle (the first Sunday after the full moon which occurs on or next after 21 March).

Hindu dietary practices may vary quite a bit depending on individual beliefs. Food plays a significant role in worship and fasting is also commonly practiced as a way of enhancing meditation and worship. All food should be offered to God before eating (prasada). Although eating meat is allowed, most Hindus avoid beef (as the cow is sacred) and eating pork is rare. Hindus believe all living things are sacred, therefore vegetarianism is common. In addition some Hindus believe other foods such as onion, garlic, mushrooms, alcohol, caffeine, eggs and very spicy foods are detrimental to meditation, so they are avoided.

Judaism follows the guidelines set out in the Talmud. Kosher is the Hebrew word for ‘fit or lawful’ and describes foods that are permitted according to the regulations of kashrut (Jewish dietary law). Foods that are not kosher are called trefe.

The basic kosher rules are as follows:

- Meat of animals may only be eaten if:
 - The animal has been slaughtered in the prescribed way
 - The animal does not kill other animals – definition includes an animal that:
 - > chews its cud (ox, sheep, goat)
 - > has split (cloven) hooves
 - > is not a bird of prey
- Only fish with both fins and scales are kosher, which means that shellfish are not permitted
- Eggs (without blood spots), milk and cheese must only be from kosher animals
- Meat and milk products must not be cooked, served at the same table or eaten together
- Once meat is eaten there should be a delay of three hours before eating milk products
- Separate utensils, pots and cutlery are used for meat and milk products; and in some homes there are separate kitchens
- As most insects are not kosher (trefe) fruit and vegetables should be checked carefully prior to eating for contamination by insects
- Certified kosher wine is permissible to drink.

Muslim followers are culturally diverse. The term halal refers to foods that are permitted or lawful according to Islamic law. For meat to be halal the animal must be slaughtered in a way that observes Sharia law. Haram foods are those foods that are forbidden according to Islamic law. These are listed below:



Contact HELPP: P (08) 7421 9975 E helpp@flinders.edu.au

Haram foods (forbidden):

- Meat from an animal that is already dead
- Blood
- Pork
- Predatory animals

- Alcohol
- Animal fat and dairy made with animal fat
- Any food additive from non-halal sources*

A more detailed list of Muslim food requirements is included in Appendix B.

Haram (forbidden) food additives*

Name	Code ^	Origin	Uses
Bone phosphate	542	Haram if obtained from pork or non-halal sources	Anti-caking agent and emulsifier – added to products to prevent clumping (e.g. seasoning) and products that combine water and oil to prevent separation (e.g. margarine)
Cochineal	120	Extracted from a female Mexican scale insect that lives on a cactus plant	Red food dye – added to beverages, jelly, confectionery, yoghurt, flavoured milk, meat products, pickles and sauces
Emulsifiers	470 – 483	Haram if obtained from pork or non-halal sources	Added to products that combine water and oil to prevent separation (e.g. margarine)
Gelatine	441 <i>The number is rarely used now as gelatine is considered a food, not an additive</i>	Derived from the bones and/or hides of cattle and/or pigs	Stabiliser (added to solid or semi-solid products to maintain uniformity) and bulking agent (adds to the volume of foods) – jubes, marshmallow, liquorice, yoghurt, cream desserts, spreads, ice cream, mousse, jelly and meat products
Glycerol or Glycerin	422	Haram if obtained from pork or non-halal sources	Humectant added to prevent food from drying out (e.g. icing)
Rennet	No number	Enzyme-containing substance from the stomach of a calf	Used to set cheese during the cheese making process
Shellac	904	Resin from the lac insect	Glazing – added externally to enhance appearance

^ The same code numbers are used worldwide. Some codes have an 'E' prefix, which stands for European. Foods manufactured in Australia may not use the prefix.

* For a more detailed list of haram and halal additives visit http://www.muslimconsumergroup.com/e-numbers_list.html or <http://special.worldofislam.info/Food/numbers.html>



APPENDIX A – Summary table of religious food requirements for selected religions

Food	Buddhism (Buddhist)	Christianity (Christian)	Hinduism (Hindu)	Islam (Muslim)	Judaism (Jewish)
Milk, yoghurt, butter, cheese	✓	✓	✗ if made with rennet	✗ if made with rennet	✗ if made with rennet ✗ if eaten within 3 hours of eating meat
MEAT					
Beef	✗	during lent some people do not eat meat	some people	halal	kosher
Chicken	✗		some people	halal	kosher
Lamb	✗	some people do not eat meat on Fridays	some people	halal	kosher
Pork	✗	✓	rarely	✗	✗
SEAFOOD					
Fish	some people	✓	✓ only those with fins/scales	✓	✓ only those with fins/ scales and a backbone
Shellfish	✗	✓	some people	✓	✗
OTHER					
Eggs	some people	✓	some people	✓ not with blood spots	✓ not with blood spots
Fruit	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Vegetables	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Alcohol	✗	some people	✗	✗	✓ kosher wine
Tea and coffee	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Animal fats	✗	✓	some people	✗	✓ kosher



APPENDIX B – Muslim religious food requirements

Muslims include people from a broad range of cultures and as such not all Muslims adhere to the same requirements. The following is a list of common religious food requirements; however it is important to consult with individual Muslims or groups to clarify their dietary requirements. According to the Muslim faith, food is either considered halal (permitted) or haram (forbidden).

Food group	Halal (permitted)	Haram (forbidden)
Meat	All meats (e.g. chicken, beef, lamb, goat) that are halal certified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pork and all pig products (bacon, ham, salami) - Any meat that is not halal certified - Meat of an animal that has died of natural causes - Carnivorous animals - Blood
Seafood	All	None
Dairy	<p>Milk, yoghurt, ice cream etc. made without animal fats</p> <p>Cheese made with non-animal rennet</p>	<p>Ice cream yoghurt, gelato, etc. that contains animal fat, and emulsifiers*</p> <p>Cheese that contains animal rennet</p>
Breads and cereals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All breakfast cereals, bread cakes and biscuits prepared without animal fat other than butter - Rice and pasta cooked without animal fat 	Containing animal fat or cooked in animal fat, gelatine, emulsifiers* and glazing agents from an unknown source
Fruit and vegetables	All raw, dried, frozen, canned or cooked fruit and vegetables using water, vegetable fat or butter	Cooked in animal fat
Fats and oils	Margarine from plant-based oils and vegetable derived emulsifiers Butter	Lard, dripping, suet or other animal fats (except butter) and any other foods made with or cooked in animal fat, emulsifiers* or gelatine
Beverages	Tea, coffee, water, juice, soft drink, cordial	Any drink containing alcohol, gelatine or emulsifiers*
Soup	Any made with vegetable stock or vegetable derived emulsifiers	Any soup made with meat stock (including chicken), prohibited fats and emulsifiers*
Desserts		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Any desserts made with alcohol - Prohibited fats, gelatine and emulsifiers*
Miscellaneous	<p>Herbs, spices, raw nuts, honey</p> <p>Vegetable derived emulsifiers</p> <p>Non-animal rennet</p> <p>Halal gelatine</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Essence (alcohol based) - Gelatine (unknown source) - Emulsifiers*(see attached list) - Not specified as halal - Animal Rennet - Illicit drugs - Glazing agents - Some colouring agents

This table has been adapted from information supplied by the Muslim Women's Association



APPENDIX B – Muslim religious food requirements (continued)

If you require further information please contact:

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Cultural Diversity and Inclusive Practice

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Please note that ingredients vary from store to store e.g. breads in some Woolworths branches list vegetable derived emulsifiers whilst in other stores this is not mentioned for the same variety of bread. If in doubt please call the manufacturer.

*List of haram additives with 'E' prefix – E120, E140, E141, E252, E422, E430, E431, E470, E471, E472(a), E472(b), E472(c), E472(d), E472(e), E473, E474, E475, E477, E478, E481, E482, E483, E491, E492, E494.

Haram additives without 'E' prefix – 120, 140, 160(a), 161, 252, 300, 301, 422, 430, 431, 433, 435, 436, 441, 470, 471, 472(a,e), 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 481, 482, 483, 491, 492, 494, 542, 570, 572, 631, 635, 920.



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