



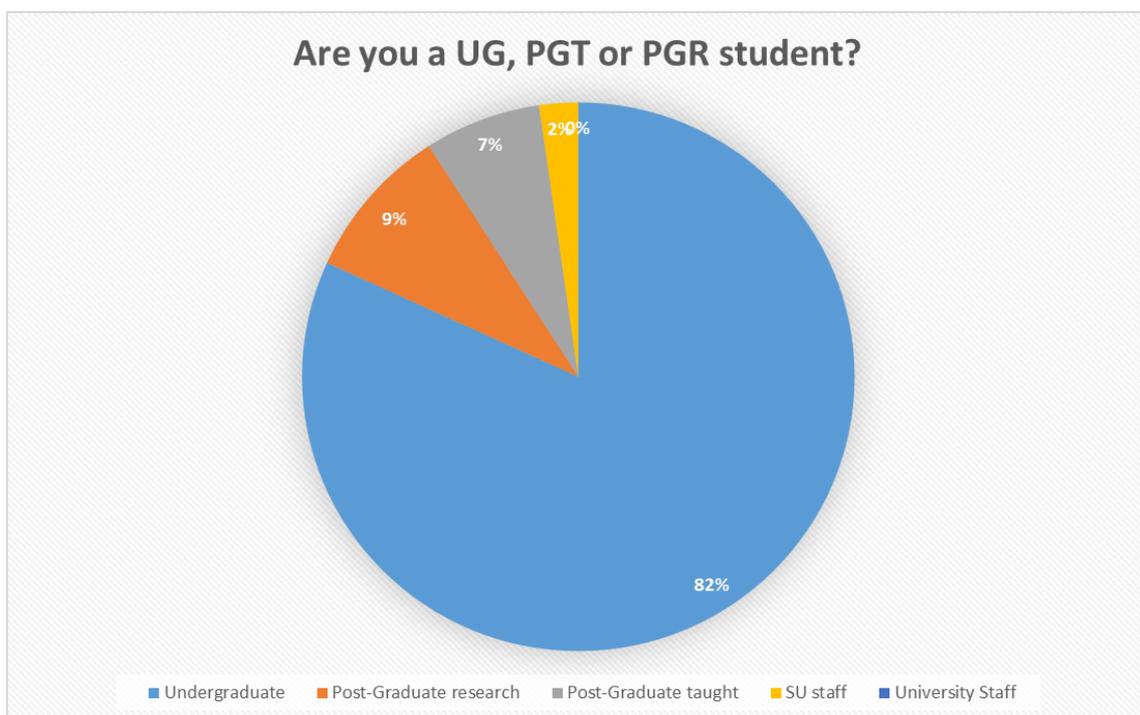
**RELIGIOUS MINORITIES
SURVEY RESULTS
2021/22**

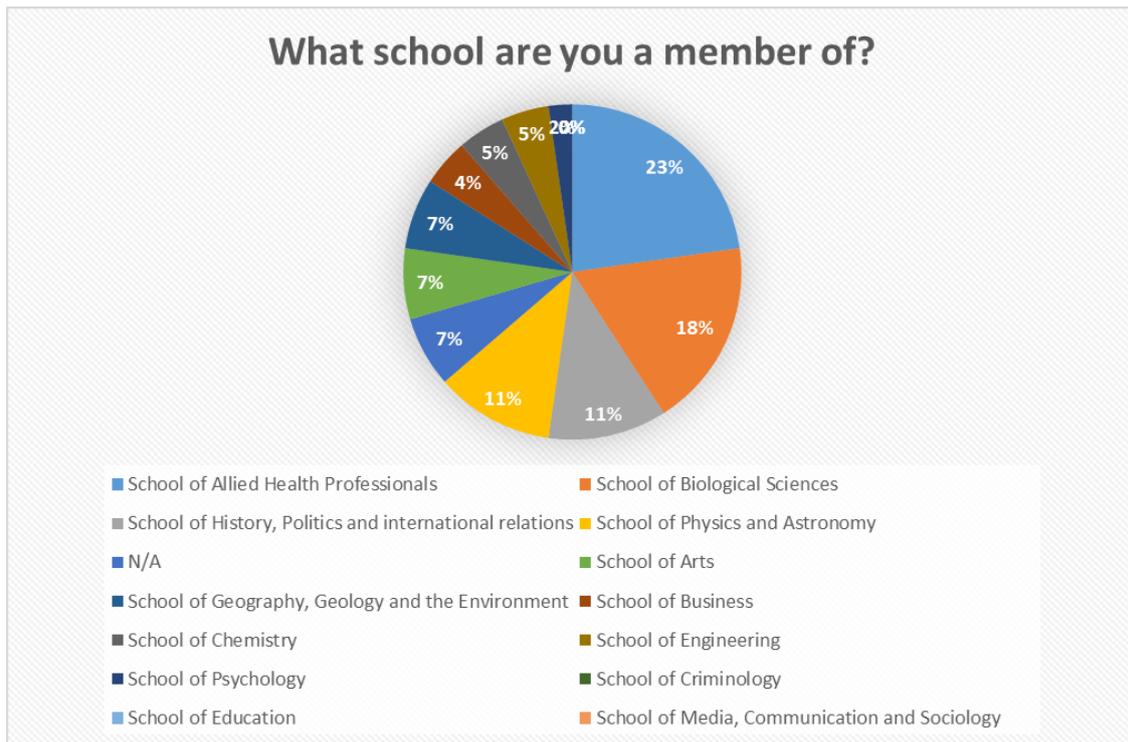
The goal of this survey was to collect responses from students at University of Leicester, especially **those students who consider themselves to be religious**. The reason for this was to gain insight into this subgroup's experience of life both on campus and within the wider community, in order to understand which resources they access, whether University or community based, and if they are aware of the current areas of support that are available. As well as this, the survey aimed to uncover the strengths and weaknesses of the current support on offer to religious minority studies in areas ranging from academic timetables to social activities.

Overall, there were 44 responses to this survey which was shared online via the Students' Union's social media accounts, the Union activities newsletter and the Students' Union newsletter. The survey was also shared directly through course representatives and those affiliated with religion-based societies, such as the Islamic society.

Results

The majority of the respondents were Undergraduates (82%), this is not an unexpected result since undergraduate students make up the majority of the university's population. This is followed by Postgraduate Research (9%) and Postgraduate Taught (7%). The lowest number of responses came from SU Staff (2%)





When the number of respondents is broken down by school, the largest number comes from the school of allied health professionals (23%). Followed by the School of Biological Sciences (18%), the School for History, Politics and International Relations (11%) and the School of Physics and Astronomy (11%). There was no response from students belonging to the School of Criminology, School of Education nor School of Media, Communication and Sociology. This suggested, future surveys should aim to encourage students belonging to these schools.

We first asked the respondents to identify their religion, there were two reasons for this; the first was to gain a glimpse into the number of different religions and belief systems held by students of the university. The second was to be able to breakdown how the experiences of students differ depending on their religion.

The majority of the respondents identified themselves as either Christian (39%), Islamic (20%) and Muslim (14%). Other religions identified by respondents include Jewish Christian (Christian of Jewish Origin, 2%), Roman Catholic (5%), Norse Pagan (2%), Satanism (2%), Hinduism (2%), Sikh (2%) and Jewish (2%). One respondent referred to themselves as Atheist (no belief in the existence of god/gods).

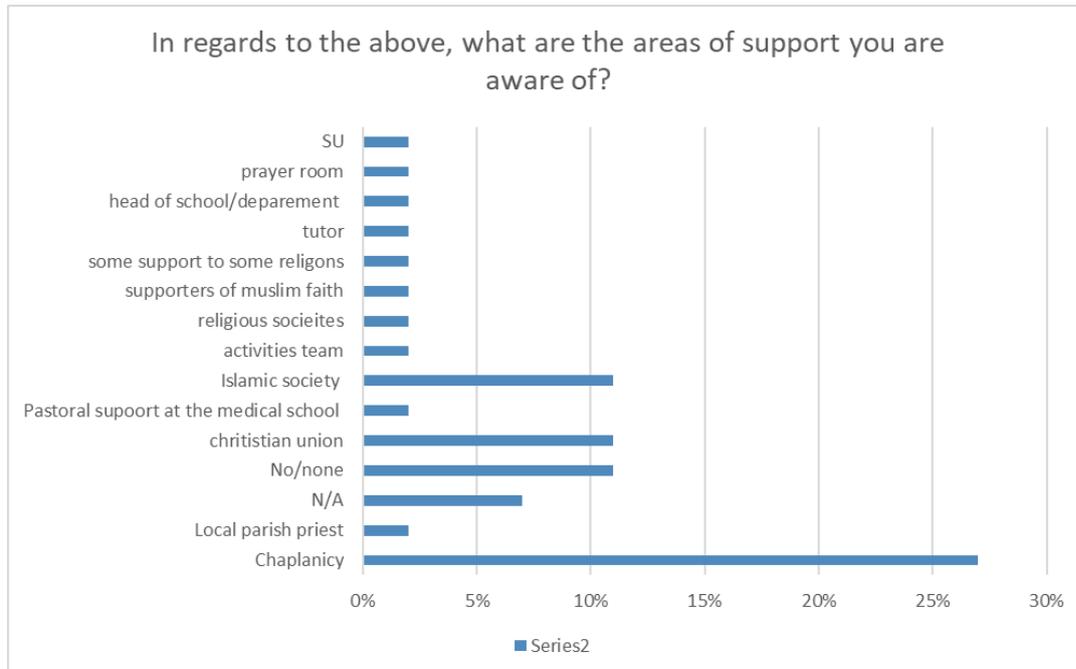
The data on the University of Leicester's student's religions/beliefs as presented in the 2022 EDI ¹ report, published under the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010) reveals that 27.8% of students identify as Christian, 14.4% identify as Muslim, 0.3% as Jewish and 7.6% as Hindu. 37.6% of student's stated that they have no religion and 5.9% refused to disclose information regarding their religion/faith.

The data gathered in this survey is somewhat representative of the student population given that the majority of respondents either identity as Christian (39%), Islamic (20%) and/or Muslim (14%), which according to the EDI information report are the most represented religions on campus. However, there was little engagement from student's identifying as Hindu despite this being one of the more common faiths/regions represented within the student population.

¹ University of Leicester. (2022). *University of Leicester Equality Information*. Leicester: University of Leicester.

Support

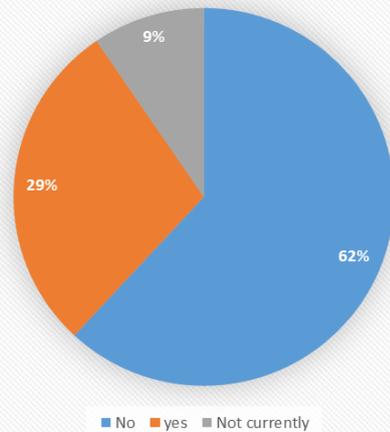
An overwhelming 60% of students stated that they did not know who they could contact in regards to issues they may face due to their religion, a further 11% stated that they are unsure of who they can contact and only 25% stated that yes, they know who to contact. This suggests that more needs to be done to make students aware of the resources that are on offer in regards to their religion/faith needs.



Once broken down into the areas of support that the respondents are aware of, it is revealed that most students are aware of the Chaplaincy (27%) and some of the societies that correspond to their religion/faith. In fact, 11% stated either *no or none* indicating that they are completely unaware of the areas of support available to them, while 7% stated N/A, again indicating that there is little awareness of the support currently on offer for religious students.

The pastoral support offered by the medical school (2%) was also directly referenced, suggesting that students may and can find support directly though the members of their school and/or college.

Are there any religious /faith observances that clash with your current timetable?

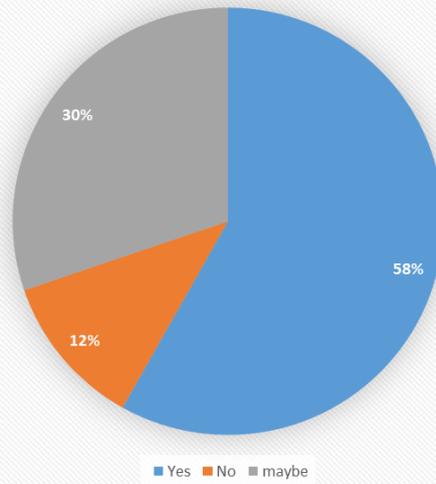


When asked to further explain what causes a clash with their timetable, respondents stated a variety of reasons including:

- Friday prayers occurring during timetabled hours (5%)
- Exams falling during Eid (2%)
- Compulsory tutorial during Friday prayers (2%)
- Islamic School 5 till 7 (2%)
- Morning classes clash with Ramadan (2%)

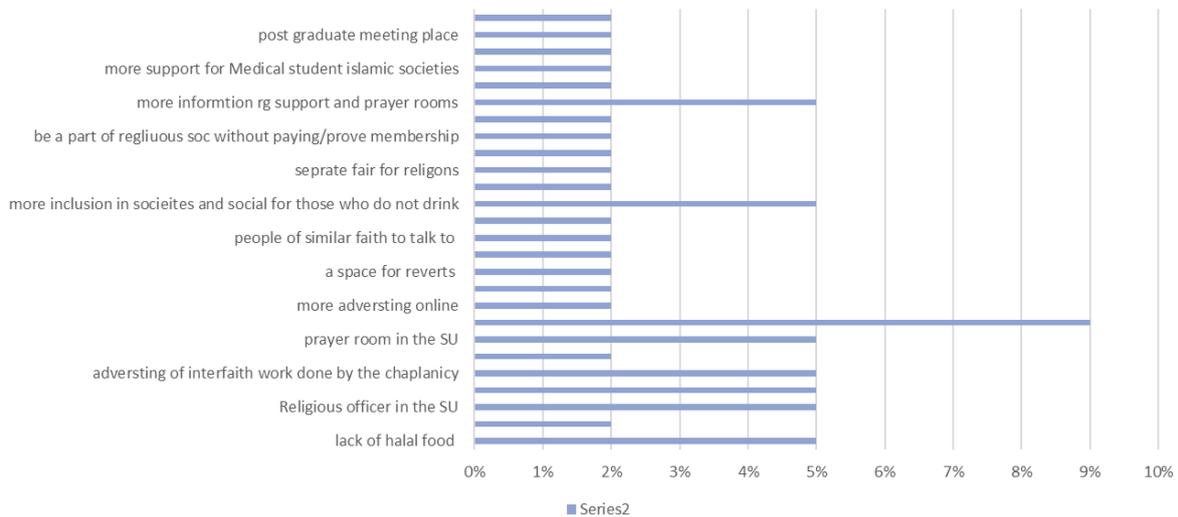
These results suggest that more could be done to accommodate religious minority students in situations where events such as Friday prayers clash with timetabled hours and tutorials, exams during Eid or morning classes during Ramadan occur.

Do you think there is more that the SU/University could do to support your religious/ faith needs?



Overall, this result suggests that for the majority of religious minority students there is not enough in place to support their religious/faith needs, nor is there an awareness of the support that is currently in place. Therefore, changes need to be made in order to increase the support available and ensure this support meets the needs of religious minority students. There also needs to be more information and/or advertising of the support this is currently available for religious students.

If you feel that more support is needed, what would you like to see implemented?



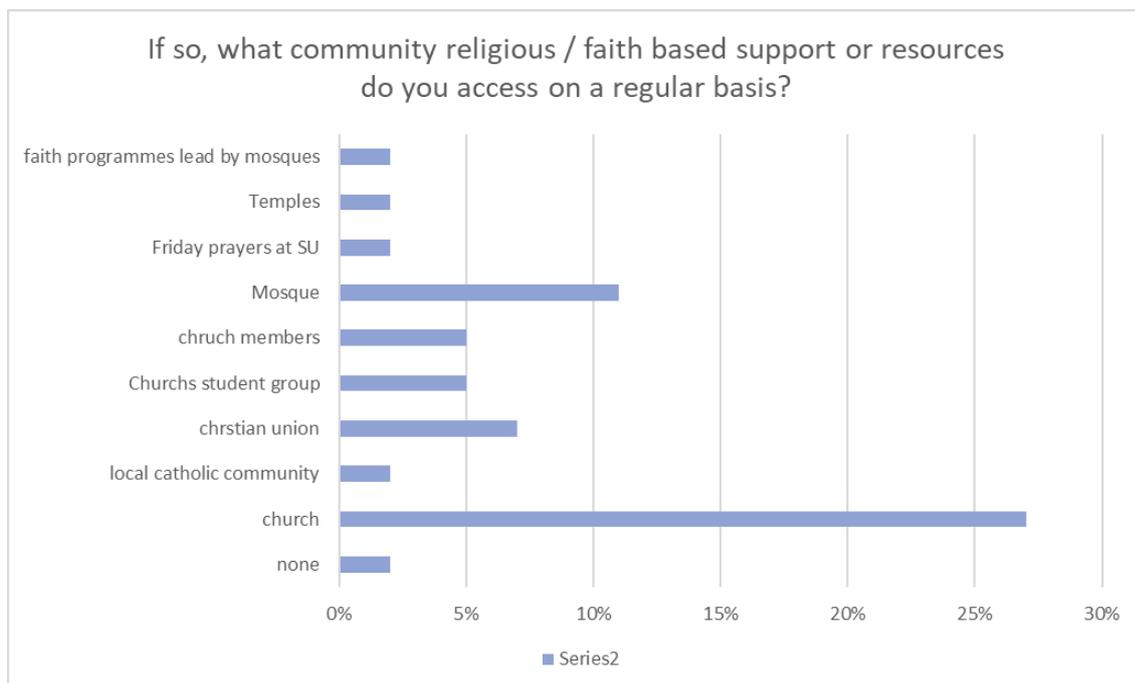
Students who responded 'yes or maybe' to the previous question were then promoted by the question 'If you feel that more support is needed, what would you like to see implemented?' The aim of this was to ensure that there is an understanding of where provision and support lacks, as well as changes that can be made to better support religious minority students.

A recurring result of this question was the need for more prayer spaces. 2% asked for more space to pray between classes, while 5% asked for a prayer room within the SU itself. 9% stated that they would like to see prayer rooms for all faiths and 2% asked for a gender-neutral payer space. These results suggest that a new prayer space that are both gender neutral, and for all faiths, spread across multiple locations including the Students' Union/Percy Gee building would be largely beneficial for students. Students also stated that they would like to see more information regarding the existing prayer rooms (5%) that are available on campus, suggesting that as well as new prayer rooms, effort could be taken to advertise the prayer rooms that currently available for student use.

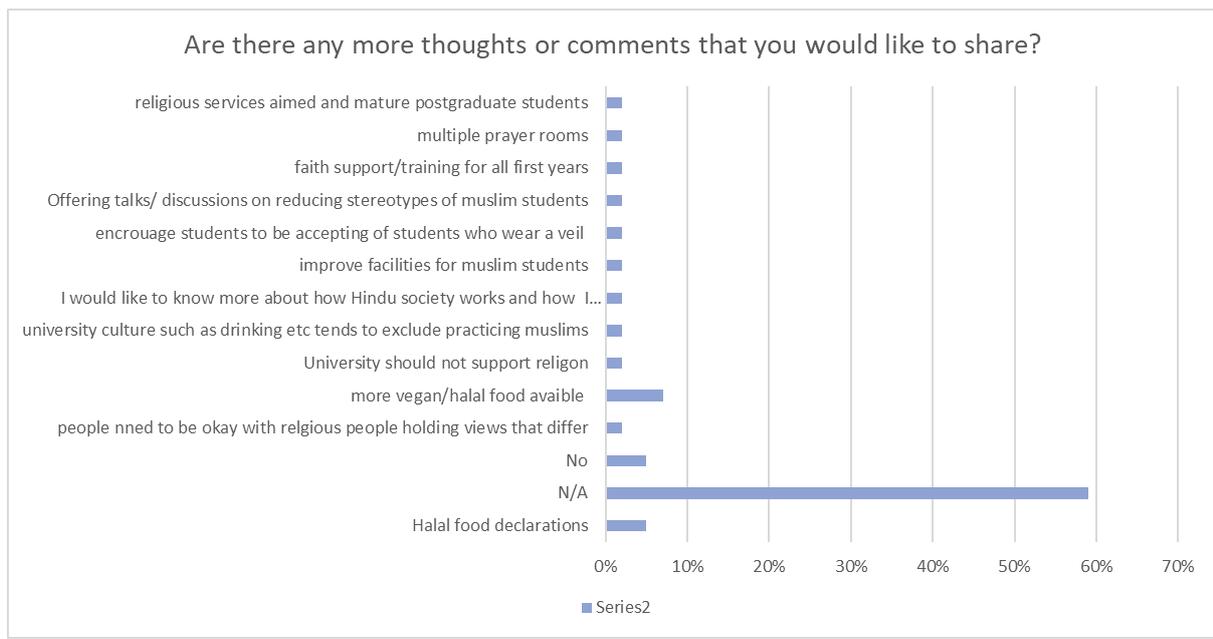
Students also stated that they would like to see:

- More halal food options (5%)
- A religious officer in the SU (2%)
- Welcoming and inclusive talk on religion (2%)
- Adverting of interfaith work done by the chaplaincy (2%)

56% of respondents stated that they access religious/faith based support or resources from the wider community, while 34% stated the opposite.



The 56% of respondents stated that they access religious/faith based support or resources from the wider community, where then asked to clarify which support or resources they accessed on a regular basis. 27% stated that they regularly access their local church, while 11% regularly access their local mosque. Some mentioned that, as well attending the local place of worship they also access faith programmes/groups led by either their church (5%) or mosque (2%), as well as the social support system offered by the church members themselves (5%).



7% of respondents stated that they would like to see more vegan/halal food options and 5% stated that they would like to see halal food declarations, this suggests that more can be done to accommodate students who eat halal by both providing more suitable halal and vegan options. As well as ensuring that it is clear at all food outlets which offerings are/aren't halal.

The need for multiple prayer rooms (2%) was also addressed here, again suggesting that the addition of new, multi faith prayer rooms on campus would be beneficial for students.

Some statements made by students suggest that more can be done to encourage and facilitate inclusivity, especially when it comes to relations between religious groups and non-religious students.

These statements are as follows:

'Encouraging students to be more open minded and accepting of students in a veil. Offering talks/ discussions on reducing stereotypes when it comes to religious/ Muslim students. I believe all students before starting their first year should be obliged to attend a meeting on faith within the uni, accepting and encouraging students to have an open mind when seeing their peers'

'I find it extraordinary that the higher education sector, which SHOULD promote tolerance and demand evidence for any claims, panders to beliefs which have no evidential basis and actively discriminate against women and those of non-traditional sexuality and gender identity. The University should be campaigning against ignorance and prejudice, and educating wider society so that, one day, we may put the poison of religion in the past where it belongs.'

'People need to be okay with religious people holding different views than cultures'

'the Islamic Society has always been moving around in the past for Friday Jumu'ah prayers since I've been here which has led to flashes with room bookings of even abusive students (when using the sports hall for example), not enough space, or confusion for attendees, so it would be awesome if the SU could support us in asking the university to provide a permanent space that the Islamic Society can use to fit the attendees weekly for Friday congregations and other big events such as the Ramadan night prayers.'

Summary

First and foremost, these results make it clear that religious minority students are unaware of support and resources that are available to them, they are also unaware of who to contact should an issue arise.

In fact 60% of respondents stated that they did not know who they could contact if they had issues or concerns regarding practicing their religion/faith and a further 11% stated that they are unsure of who to contact. While 43% of respondents stated that they are unaware of the support that is available to them and a further 43% stated that they are only somewhat aware.

This suggests that more needs to be done to make students aware of both the support available and who they should contact with their concerns. This could be done though:

- Advertising the chaplaincy
- Another is to ensure that there is support available for non-Christian students and that this support is clearly advertised online though both the university and Students' union website, as well as though social media.

Another issue that has arisen from these result is a lack of support available for religious minority students. 57% stated that they believe more could be done to support religious faith needs and another 30% stated maybe, suggesting that they also do not feel completely supported.

Suggestions for possible avenues of support that could be implemented include:

- Working with LSP to Increase the number of available of halal food options
- Working with LSP to ensure that food is clearly labelled as halal/not halal
- Prayer rooms available for all faiths
- More prayer rooms available on campus, including a payer room in the Percy Gee/Students' Union.

Statements made by respondents also reveal that there may be an underlying issue when it comes to inclusivity and how students of different faiths or no faith interact with each other. Therefore more could be done to support religious minority students and foster feelings of acceptance including:

- providing a safe and dedicated place for students to take part in large scale prayer sessions
- running a campaign, possibly via social media that aims to tackle harmful stereotypes
- faith support/training for incoming students

When it comes to timetabling 30% of respondents stated that they did not experience any instances of their timetable clashing with religious/faith observances, however 14% stated that they had experienced a clash with their current timetable and 5% stated that they had previously experienced a clash. Examples given for causing a clash include Friday prayers occurring during timetabled hours (5%), exams falling on Eid (5%) and tutorials scheduled during Friday prayers (2%). Possible solutions to these issues include making allowances for students who wish to attend Friday prayers, not scheduling tutorials and/or meeting with students during the same time slot as Friday prayers and possibly changing when exams take place in order to ensure that they do not clash with Eid.

----- END OF ANALYSIS -----