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DIVERSITY EVENTS CALENDAR 2016/17

* Please note that in traditions that follow the lunar calendar for religious purposes, the timing of festivals will change from year to year and the start will go with the first sighting of the moon. Jewish festivals begin on the evening before the dates cited here as the 'day' begins with sunset (being a lunar calendar).

Please note that the majority of the religious days and events listed in this calendar are not considered national public holidays in the UK.

This list of notable days is by no means exhaustive and can be seen as suggested guidance. This calendar should be used in conjunction with the AoC Joint Agreement on Guidance on Equality in Employment in Further Education Colleges.

If there is an event or festival that you think should be included in this calendar, please email employment@aac.co.uk

August 2016

Dates	Name of Event	Religion/Event	Significance/Sponsors
1	Lughnasadh - Lammas	Pagan	A harvest festival and one of the Pagan festivals of Celtic origin which split the year into four.
12	International Youth Day	Event	An awareness day designated by the United Nations.
15	Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary	Christian	A largely Roman Catholic festival celebrating their belief that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was taken body and soul into heaven.
17	Birthday of Marcus Garvey	Rastafari	Marcus Mosiah teachings of black self-empowerment are credited as being the sources behind the founding of the religion.
17	Jamshedi Noruz (Shenshai)	Zoroastrian	Celebrated as the Iranian New Year in Islamic Iran, although without the religious connotations.
18	Raksha Bandhan	Hindu	Festival that celebrates brotherhood and love. It is celebrated on the full moon in the month of Sravana in the lunar calendar.
22	Khordad Sal	Zoroastrian	This festival is considered one of the most important in the Zoroastrian calendar. This is known as the 'Greater Noruz' and happens six days after Noruz.
29	Beheading of John the Baptist	Christian	Commemorating the martyrdom of John the Baptist. The Orthodox Church keeps this day as a strict fast day.

September 2016

1	Guru Granth Sahib	Sikh	Celebrate the installation of the Guru Granth Sahib (Sikh Scripture) in the Golden Temple in Amritsar in 1604.
5	Ganesha Chaturthi	Hindu	The birthday of Lord Ganesh, or Ganesha, and the celebration may continue for up to ten nights.
5	Janmashtami – Shri Krishna Jayanti	Hindu	Festival marking the birth of Krishna, one of the most popular Gods in the Hindu pantheon. For the 48 hour period Hindus are likely to forego sleep.
8	Nativity of the Theotokos/ Birthday of the Blessed Virgin Mary	Christian	Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches celebrate the birth of Mary, mother of Jesus.
8	International Literacy Day	Event	UNESCO reminds the international community of the status of literacy and adult learning globally. Celebration of the 50th anniversary of the International Literacy Day
10-17	Paryushan	Jainism	Most important Jain festival of the year and is celebrated in the Indian month of Bhadra (August/September). It's a 10 day festival when religious ascetics settle in communities for the monsoon season.
11	Ethiopian New Year	Rastafari	The start of the New Year in Ethiopia is recognised because Rastafarians believe Ethiopia to be their spiritual homeland.
13-15	Rosh Hashanah	Jewish	Jewish New Year festival and commemorates the creation of the world. It lasts 2 days during which work is not permitted.
14	Onam	Hindu	The state festival of Kerala. The festive season of Onam, is a ten-day carnival for Malayalees.
15	Mid-Autumn Festival / Chinese Moon Festival	Chinese	Chinese people believe that on that day, the moon is the biggest, roundest and brightest.
15	International Day of Democracy	Event	The International Day of Democracy provides an opportunity to review the state of democracy in the world.
21	International Day of Peace	Event	The International Day of Peace, a.k.a. "Peace Day" provides an opportunity for individuals, organizations and nations to create practical acts of peace on a shared date.
23	Jeans for Genes Day	Event	Wear your jeans, make a donation and help children with genetic disorders.

23	Yom Kippur	Jewish	Day of Atonement and is the holiest date in the Jewish calendar. It's observed with a 25-hour period of fasting and intensive prayer.
23	Autumn Equinox	Pagan	This is one of the least celebrated of the Pagan festivals although a harvest festival may be held to thank the Goddess for giving enough food to last the winter.
23	Eid-Al-Adha	Muslim	The festival of sacrifice – marks the pilgrimage to Mecca. This is a four-day public holiday in Muslim countries.
27	Sukkot (The Feast of Tabernacles)	Jewish	Commemorates the years that the Jews spent in the desert on their way to the Promised Land. Jewish families build an open air structure in which to live during the holiday. Sukkot lasts for seven days, and work is not permitted on the first two days.
29	Michaelmas/St Michael, St Gabriel and St Raphael's Day	Christian	A feast day in honour of the archangel Michael.

October 2016

1-31	Black History Month	Event	Held every October in Britain and February in USA and Canada. The aims are to promote knowledge of the black history, culture and heritage.
3	Rosh Hashana	Jewish	Jewish New Year
4-6	Simchat Torah	Jewish	Rejoicing of the Law. This holiday marks the completion of the yearly cycle of weekly Torah readings
5	World Teachers' Day	Event	Education International and its member organisations celebrate the profession and to promote international standards for the teaching profession.
6	National Poetry Day	Event	A day for poetry readings, events, competitions, quizzes, exhibitions, commissions, creations, recitations and more, all planned and launched by the poets and poetry lovers of the UK.
9	Confucius' Birthday	Chinese	The birthday of Confucius, one of China's most influential philosophers
10	World Mental Health Day	Event	Promotes the advancement of mental health awareness and prevention of mental disorders
10	Chung Yeung	Chinese	Family Remembrance Day.
12	Yom Kippur	Jewish	The Day of Atonement. Even Jews who are not particularly religious will want to attend synagogue on Yom Kippur.
13	World Sight Day	Event	International day of awareness, to focus attention on the issue of avoidable blindness and visual impairment.
13	St Edward's Day	Christian	Edward the Confessor was King of England. He built Westminster Abbey.
13-22	Navaratri	Hindu	One of the greatest Hindu festivals which is celebrated for nine days. Navratri is also known as Durga Puja.
14	Al-Hijra	Muslim	First day of Muharram, the first month in the Islamic calendar, and the first day of the Islamic New Year.
21	Wear it Pink Day	Event	Wear it pink day is Breast Cancer Campaign's biggest fundraising event.
31	Hallowe'en (All Hallows' Eve)	Christian	All Hallows' Eve is the day before All Hallows' Day, also known as All Saints' Day in the Christian calendar.

31	Samhain (Hallowe'en)	Pagan	The Feast of the Dead. The festival is believed to have been a celebration of the end of the harvest, and a time of preparation for the coming winter. Many Pagans also celebrate it as the old Celtic New Year.
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November 2016

1	All Saints' Day (Hallowmas, All Hallows')	Christian	Remembrance of all saints and martyrs, known and unknown, throughout Christian history. As part of this day of obligation, followers are required to attend church and try not to do any servile work.
2	All Souls Day	Christian	Roman Catholics and Anglo-Catholic churches commemorate the faithful departed.
2	Coronation of Emperor Haile Selassie	Rastafari	Haile Selassie I, was considered as the leader to return blacks to Africa.
3-9	Dyslexia Awareness Week	Event	Campaigning for a dyslexia friendly society that will enable all dyslexic people to reach their potential.
11	Armistice Day	Multi faith	Remembrance Day for all who have fallen in the two World Wars and other conflicts, marked by at 11am by a two minute silence, observed at war memorials and other public spaces across the UK.
11	Diwali	Jain/ Hindu/ Sikh	Festival of lights.
12	Birth of Baha'u'llah	Bahá'í	Celebrating the birth of the prophet Bahá'u'lláh.
13	Birth of the Bab	Bahá'í	Celebration of the birth of Ali Muhammad, one of the founders of Baha'i. One of the nine Holy Days on which work is to be suspended.
14-18	Anti-Bullying Week	Event	Shines a spotlight on bullying and encourages all children, teachers and parents to take action against bullying throughout the year. theme this year is 'Power for Good'
18	Children in Need	Event	BBC fundraising for grants to projects in the UK which focus on children and young people who are disadvantaged.
19	International Men's Day	Event	Key issues that will be focussed upon at a national level for 2016 will be the educational underperformance of boys and also a continuation of the attention on male suicide.
20	Universal Children's Day	Event	Celebrated to honour children.
21-27	Road Safety Week	Event	An international awareness week to focus attention on the importance of Road Safety.
23	Niinamesei	Shinto	A national Shinto holiday and celebration as a labour-thanksgiving day.
25	Birthday of Guru Nanak (Lunar Calendar)	Sikh	A remembrance of the birth of the founder of the Sikh religion This festival may be celebrated by some on the date fixed by the Nanakshahi calendar: April 14.
27	Advent Sunday	Christian	The beginning of the season before Christmas.

28	Ascension of Abdu'l-Baha	Bahá'í	Marks the death of the son of Baha'u'lláh. This is a minor holy day and work is not suspended.
30	St Andrew's Day	Event	Saint Andrew is the patron saint of Scotland, Greece and Russia.

December 2016

1	World Aids Day	Event	Help raise awareness to tackle HIV prejudice and help stop the spread of HIV.
2	International Day of for the Abolition of Slavery	Event	Marks the date of the adoption, by the General Assembly, of the United Nations Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others.
3	International Day of Persons with Disabilities	Event	Aims to increase the understanding of the issues around disabilities and attention to the dignity, rights and well-being of persons with disabilities.
6-13	Hanukkah	Jewish	Festival of Lights.The Jewish midwinter festival of Hanukkah marks an important part of Jewish history.
8	Feast of the Immaculate Conception	Christian	Celebrated by Roman Catholics who remember Mary's conception as being without sin, therefore, immaculate.
8	Bodhi Day	Buddhist	On Bodhi day some Buddhists celebrate Gautama's attainment of enlightenment under the Bodhi tree at Bodhgaya, India.
10	Human Rights Day	Event	Anniversary of the presentation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
29	Milad ul Nabi	Muslim	Birthday of the Prophet Muhammad.
13	St Lucy's Day	Christian	Saint Lucy's Day or the Feast of St. Lucy is marked by Catholics and Orthodox Christians and also celebrated by members of the Lutheran Church.
21	Winter Solstice - Yule	Pagan	The Winter Solstice falls on the shortest day of the year.
24	Christmas Eve	Christian	Preparation for the birth of Jesus.
25	Christmas Day	Christian	Marks the birth of Jesus, the son of God.
26	Boxing Day	Secular	Traditionally the opening of church poor boxes.
26	Zartusht-no-Diso	Zoroastrian	Zoroastrians remember the death of their prophet, Zoroaster

January 2017

1	New Year's Day	Secular	
1	Oshogatsu (or Shogatsu)	Shinto	Shinto New Year.
6	Epiphany	Christian	Commemoration of the visit of the three Wise Men to the infant Jesus. Christians celebrate the coming of God in human form through his son, Jesus Christ.
7	Christmas Day (Orthodox)	Christian	Most Orthodox churches use the Julian rather than the Gregorian version of the Western calendar. As a result, they celebrate Christmas 13 days later than other Christian churches.
7	Christmas Day (Ethiopian)	Rastafari	Ethiopian Christmas.
9	Baptism of the Lord	Christian	Commemorates the baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan by John the Baptist.
15	Seijin Shiki (Adults' Day)	Shinto	On this day those Japanese who have had their 20th birthday in the previous year attend a shrine to give thanks. 20 is the age of legal adulthood in Japan.
14	Makar Sankranti	Hindu	Makar Sankranti is one of the most important festivals of the Hindu calendar and celebrates the sun's journey into the northern hemisphere.
16	Religious Freedom Day	Event	Religious Freedom Day is officially proclaimed on January 16 each year by an annual statement by the President of the United States. This day is commemorated by the First Freedom Center in Richmond, Virginia by an annual First Freedom Award banquet.
28	St Thomas Aquinas	Christian	Doctor of the Church and patron saint of students and theologians.
28	Chinese New Year	Chinese	The year of the Rooster.

February 2017

1-28	Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender History Month	Event	To encourage everyone to see diversity and cultural pluralism as the positive forces.
2	Imbolc	Pagan	Imbolc (pronounced 'im'olk' also known as Oimelec) is a special time for Pagans in recognition of the natural.
2	Candlemas	Christian	Candlemas commemorates the ritual purification of Mary, 40 days after the birth of her son Jesus.
3	Rissun (Setsubun)	Shinto	Marks the beginning of spring.
9	Shrove Tuesday	Christian	The day before Ash Wednesday when Lent starts.
10	Ash Wednesday	Christian	The start of Lent, a time of abstinence and reflection. Lent is the period of 40 days which comes before Easter in the Christian calendar.
10	Tu B'Shevat	Jewish	Jewish 'New Year for Trees'. It is one of the four Jewish new years (Rosh Hashanahs).
11	Our Lady of Lourdes	Christian	Marks the day in 1858 when St Bernadette had her first vision of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
13-18	Go Green Week	Event	Go Green Week is the UK's largest week of student climate action.
14	St Valentine's Day	Christian	Saint Valentine's Day embraces a time of year that is historically associated with love and fertility.
15	Parinirvana - Nirvana day	Buddhist	Marks the death of the Buddha. It is also known as Nirvana Day.
22-28	Student Volunteering Week	Event	This national all-sector-engaging campaign raises awareness of student volunteering and the infrastructure that supports it.
25	Mahashivratri (also known as Shivaratri)	Hindu	Festival dedicated to Shiva, one of the deities of the Hindu Trinity. Devotees of Shiva observe a fast during Mahashivratri and stay up all night at a place of worship.

March 2017

1	St. David's Day	Christian	Saint David, or Dewi Sant as he's called in the Welsh language, is the patron saint of Wales.
1	Nineteen Day Fast (start)	Bahá'í	A 19-day period of fasting immediately before the Bahá'í New Year.
6	Mothering Sunday	Christian	The fourth Sunday of Lent, traditionally a day when children, mainly daughters, who had gone to work as domestic servants were given a day off to visit their mother and family.
8	International Women's Day	Event	Events are held throughout the world to inspire women and celebrate achievements.
13	Hola Mohalla (Lunar Calendar)	Sikh	Guru Gobind Singh started this festival as a day for Sikhs to practise their military exercises and hold mock battles.
14	Nanakshahi New Year	Sikh	This day marks the beginning of the year 548 in the Sikh Nanakshahi calendar.
17	St Patrick's Day	Christian	The Patron Saint of Ireland.
20	Spring Equinox - Easter	Pagan	Spring Equinox celebrates the renewed life of the Earth that comes with the Spring.
20	Palm Sunday	Christian	The beginning of the most solemn week of the Christian year, Holy Week is the week leading up to Easter, and is the week during which Christians particularly remember the last week of Jesus' life.
20	Shubun-sai - Equinox day	Shinto	A day for visiting graves. Also associated with Buddhism in Japan.
21	Naw-Ruz	Bahá'í	Bahá'í new year festival.
21	Noruz (Fasli)	Zoroastrian	Zoroastrian New Year celebration.
23	Purim	Jewish	Festival celebrating Queen Esther who saved the Jews of Persia from a massacre. Starts at sunset of the night beforehand. Concludes at sunset the following day.
23	Holi	Hindu	The Festival of Colours' Holi welcomes the Spring and celebrates the new life and energy of the season.
23	Lord's Evening Meal	Jehovah's Witnesses	The Lord's Evening Meal is the most important day of the year for Jehovah's Witness Christians. It is an evening of observance in the memorial of Jesus' Last Supper and death.

25	Annunciation	Christian	Marks the visit of the angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary, during which he told her that she would be the mother of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
28	Khordad Sal (Fasli)	Zoroastrian	The birthday of Zoroaster. This festival is considered one of the most important in the Zoroastrian calendar.

April 2017

4	Rama Navami	Hindu	Hindu's celebrate the birth of Lord Rama. Rama Navami is one of the most important Hindu festivals.
9	Mahavir Jayanti	Jain	Most important religious holiday for Jains. Celebrates the birth of Mahavira, a contemporary of the Buddha
9	Palm Sunday	Christian	Marks the beginning of Holy Week - the week leading up to Easter. Christians remember Jesus's arrival in Jerusalem
10	Hanuman Jayanti	Hindu	Commemorates the birth of Hanuman Ji, the monkey God.
11	First day of Passover	Jewish	Passover (Pesach) lasts for eight days in the United Kingdom. Passover marks the Israelites' liberation from slavery and their exodus from Egypt around 3000 years ago.
13	Maundy Thursday	Christian	The Thursday before Easter. Christians remember it as the day of the Last Supper.
14	Baisakhi	Sikh	One of the most important dates in the Sikh calendar, it is the Sikh New Year festival.
14	Good Friday	Christian	Good Friday is the Friday before Easter. It commemorates the Passion: the execution of Jesus by crucifixion.
16	Easter Sunday	Christian	Easter Sunday is the culmination of Holy Week. Easter commemorates the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is the most important Christian festival.
16	Easter Day	Orthodox	Easter is the most sacred time of year for the Orthodox Church, beginning with Great Lent seven weeks before Easter Day
17	Easter Monday	Christian	The Monday after Easter
18	Last day of Passover	Jewish	The Last Day of Passover is the seventh or eighth and final day of the Jewish observance of Passover in the United Kingdom.
16	World Voice Day	Event	Celebrates healthy voices and highlights the importance of voice at work and in society.
21	Festival of Ridvan	Bahá'í	Remember the 12 days that their founder, Bahá'u'lláh, spent in the Garden of Ridván. The first (April 21), ninth (April 29) and 12th (May 2) days are celebrated as holy days when work is suspended.
21	Anniversary of Haile Selassie's visit to Jamaica	Rastafari	Marks the date Haile Selassie I visited Jamaica in 1966. The visit was the only time the Emperor visited Jamaica.

23	St George's Day	Christian	Patron saint of England.
23	Yom Hashoah	Jewish	The Jewish Holocaust Memorial Day.
29	Ridvan - ninth day	Bahá'í	The 1st, 9th and 12th days of The Ridván Festival are especially holy days. They commemorate the arrival of Bahá'u'lláh at the Ridván Garden, the arrival of his family and his departure.

May 2017

1	Easter (Pascha) (Orthodox)	Christian	Orthodox Christians celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ - his return from death after the Crucifixion. The most important Christian festival.
1	Beltane	Pagan	Celtic fire festival that celebrates of the coming of summer and the fertility of the coming year.
2	Ridvan - twelfth day	Bahá'í	The 1st, 9th and 12th days of The Ridván Festival are especially holy days. They commemorate the arrival of Bahá'u'lláh at the Ridván Garden, the arrival of his family and his departure.
10	Vesak / Buddha day	Buddhist	The most important of the Buddhist festivals, it celebrates the Buddha's birthday.
11	Lailat al Bara'a	Muslim	Night of Forgiveness - takes place two weeks before the beginning of Ramadan.
17	International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT) Day	Event	This is an annual day dedicated to the fight against homophobia, biphobia and transphobia. May 17th is regarded as a symbolic day for the lesbian and gay communities as it commemorates the removal of homosexuality from the International Classification of Diseases of the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1990.
24	Declaration of the Bab	Bahá'í	The Báb's declaration of the coming of Bahá'u'lláh.
25	Ascension Day	Christian	Ascension Day is normally celebrated 40 days after Easter. The Catholic Church in England and Wales celebrates it on the following Sunday instead. Marks the last earthly appearance of Christ after his
27	Ramadan (start)	Muslim	Ramadan is the Muslim month of fasting.
29	Ascension of Baha'u'llah	Bahá'í	It commemorates the anniversary of the death of the founder of the Bahá'í faith, Bahá'u'lláh, and his teachings.
30	Shavuot	Jewish	One of the Jewish harvest festivals, also known as the festival or feast of 'Weeks' which takes place seven weeks (fifty days) after the first day of the spring festival of Passover.

June 2017

4	Pentecost	Christian	The feast commemorating the Descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles, fifty days after the Resurrection of Christ.
11	Trinity Sunday	Christian	The first Sunday after Pentecost. Christians meditate on the nature of God as "Three in one".
15	Corpus Christi	Christian	Roman Catholic festival celebrating the "real presence of Christ in the Eucharist".
16	Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev (Nanakshahi calendar)	Sikh	Guru Arjan Dev was the fifth Sikh Guru and the first Sikh martyr. He also compiled the Sikh holy scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib.
21	Summer Solstice - Litha	Pagan	Longest day of the year.
21	Lailat al Qadr	Muslim	Marks one of the 10 nights in which on one of those days, the Qur'an was first revealed to the Prophet Muhammad by Allah. It is a time that Muslims spend in study and prayer. Some will spend the whole night in prayer or in reciting the Qur'an.
26	Eid al-Fitr	Muslim	Marks the end of the month-long fast during the Islamic month of Ramadan

July 2017

10	Martyrdom of the Bab	Bahá'í	This major holy day commemorates the events surrounding the death of the Báb. This is also a day of rest, when Bahá'ís should not work.
15	St Swithin's Day	Christian	Swithin (or Swithun) was a Saxon bishop in the 9th century. Legend has it that the weather on his feast day, 15 July, will determine the weather for the next 40 days.
19	Asala - Dharma Day	Buddhist	Dharma Day marks the beginning of the Buddha's teaching.
22	St Mary Magdalene	Christian	Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran and Eastern Orthodox churches consider the first person to see Jesus at his resurrection a saint. She is also important in the Bahá'í faith.
23	Birthday of Haile Selassie	Rastafari	Haile Selassie was the Emperor of Ethiopia. Rastas believe Haile Selassie is God, and that he will return to Africa members of the black community who are living in exile.
24	Pioneer Day	Mormon	Pioneer Day on July 24th is a major Mormon occasion in Utah, USA. It is also known as Covered Wagon Days and Days of '47. It honours the arrival of Brigham Young and his followers to the Salt Lake Valley on July 24th 1847.