

2026-27 Calendar of Festivals, Observances and Awareness

At Essex, we recognise that our community is enriched by people from a wide range of backgrounds, identities, cultures, beliefs, and experiences. We encourage colleagues and students to use this calendar as a starting point for learning and for considering inclusion, accessibility and belonging when planning events, teaching, meetings, and activities. Each month also features an educational spotlight on a festival or awareness event that supports greater understanding of communities that have historically experienced exclusion or disadvantage.

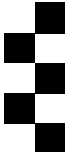
This calendar is not meant to be an exhaustive source, and dates for some observances may vary according to local traditions, lunar calendars, or regional practice. We have endeavoured to make this document as accessible as possible. If you would like to suggest something for inclusion in the 2027-28 calendar, or request alternative accessible formatting, please email EDICalendar@essex.ac.uk.





September 2026

■ Women in the UK continue to earn less on average than men, making equal pay a key issue for workplace equality.



September 2026

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	September (All month): ▪ East and Southeast Asian Heritage Month ▪ World Alzheimer’s Month 10 Sep: World Suicide Prevention Day 11 Sep: Ethiopian New Year (Rastafari) 11-13 Sep: Rosh Hashanah (Judaism) 14 Sep: Tzom Gedaliah (Judaism) 14-20 Sep: National Inclusion Week 15 Sep: World Afro Day 18 Sep: International Equal Pay Day 21 Sep: Yom Kippur/Day of Atonement 21 Sep: World Alzheimer’s Day 23 Sep: Autumnal Equinox (Paganism) 23 Sep: Bisexual Visibility Day 26 Sept - 2 Oct: Sukkot (Judaism)
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Spotlight

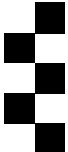
International Equal Pay Day (18 September)

On this day the United Nations highlights global efforts to attain equal pay for work of equal value, focusing on tackling the persistent gender pay gap and advancing the economic empowerment of women and girls. [Click here to see our commitment to pay equality.](#)

A person wearing a red long-sleeved shirt and dark pants stands on a paved path in a park. They have their hands raised behind their head, looking up towards the sun. The sun is low in the sky, creating a bright, hazy glow that filters through the trees on the left. The path leads into the distance, flanked by green grass and trees with some autumn-colored leaves. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and contemplative.

October 2026

■ One in four people will experience a mental health problem at some point in their lives.



October 2026

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	October (All month): - ADHD Awareness Month - Black History Month (UK) - Breast Cancer Awareness Month - Down Syndrome Awareness Month - Global Diversity Awareness Month - World Menopause Month 25 Sept-2 Oct: Sukkot 1 Oct: International Day of Older Persons 3 Oct: Shmini Atzeret (Judaism) 4 Oct: Simchat Torah (Judaism) 5-11 Oct: Dyslexia Awareness week 10 Oct: World Mental Health Day 11 Oct: National Coming Out Day 11-17 Oct: OCD Awareness Week 11-20 Oct: Navaratri / Sharad Navaratri (Hinduism) 12-18 Oct: Dyspraxia Awareness Week 13-15 Oct: Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah (Judaism) 16-21 Oct: Durga Puja 21 Oct: International Pronouns Day 31 Oct - 1 Nov: Samhain (Paganism)
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World Mental Health Day (10 October)

Spotlight

World Mental Health Day raises awareness of mental health and encourages open conversations about wellbeing, helping to reduce stigma and promote support for those experiencing mental health challenges. Find out more about the University of Essex's commitment to mental health and wellbeing as demonstrated via our [University Mental Health Charter Award](#).



November 2026

■ Men are less likely than women to access psychological therapies, making awareness and early support especially important.

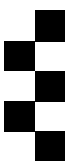
November 2026

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	November (All month):
						1	▪ Islamophobia Awareness Month ▪ Movember (Men’s Health Awareness) ▪ UK Disability History Month (19 Nov-19 Dec) 2-6 Nov: International Stress Awareness Week 4 Nov: Stress Awareness Day 8-15 Nov: Interfaith Week (UK) 11 Nov: Remembrance Day 13-19 Nov: Transgender Awareness Week 16 Nov: International Day of Tolerance 16-20 Nov: Anti-Bullying Week 19 Nov: International Men’s Day 20 Nov: Transgender Day of Remembrance 25 Nov: International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women 29 Nov: Advent Sunday (Christianity)
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30	November (All month) Spotlight Movember is a global movement that raises awareness of men's health, with a particular focus on mental health, suicide prevention, prostate cancer, and testicular cancer. The month encourages people to start conversations, seek support when needed, and take positive steps towards improving their physical and mental wellbeing.						



December 2026

■ Human Rights Day marks the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations in 1948.



December 2026

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	December
	1	2	3	4	5	6	1 Dec: World AIDS Day 3 Dec: International Day of Persons with Disabilities 4-11 Dec: Chanukah (Judaism) 8 Dec: Bodhi Day (Buddhism) 10 Dec: Human Rights Day 18 Dec: International Migrants Day 20 Dec: Asara b'Tevet (Judaism) 21 Dec: Winter Solstice / Yule (Pagan) 25 Dec: Christmas Day (Christianity) 26 Dec - 1 Jan: Kwanzaa (African diaspora)
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Spotlight

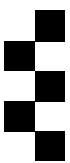
Human Rights Day (10 December)

The annual United Nations observance encourages people worldwide to know, claim, and protect their inherent human rights.



January 2027

■ Braille is used in more than 130 languages worldwide, enabling millions of blind and partially sighted people to read, write, and access information independently.



January 2027

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	January (All month): ▪ Dry January ▪ Veganuary 4 Jan: World Braille Day 6 Jan: Epiphany (Christianity) 7 Jan: Ganna - Orthodox Christmas Eve/Day (Christianity) 15 Jan: Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh (Sikhism) 15 Jan: Makar Sankranti (Hinduism) 17 Jan: World Religion Day (Baha'i) 18 Jan: Brew Monday (Samaritans) 18-24 Jan: Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (Christianity) 23 Jan: Tu Bishvat (Judaism) 23-24 Jan: Lailat al-Bara'ah (Islam) 24 Jan: Int'l Day of Education 27 Jan: Holocaust Remembrance Day
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Spotlight

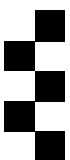
World Braille Day (4 January)

This day marks the birthday of Louis Braille (1809), who invented the tactile reading and writing system used by blind and partially sighted people worldwide. Braille uses a six-dot cell configuration and represents letters, numbers, punctuation, as well as scientific, mathematical, and musical symbols.



February 2027

■ Sexual abuse and sexual violence can affect people of any age, gender, background, or identity. Support is available.



February 2027

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	February (All month):
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	- LGBT+ History Month - Ramadan (Islam) (8 Feb - 8 / 9 March (estimated)) - Lent (Christianity) (10 Feb - 27 Apr) 1 Feb: World Hijab Day 1 Feb: Imbolc (Paganism) 1 Feb-7 Feb: Sexual Abuse and Sexual Violence Awareness Week; Children's Mental Health Week; UK Race Equality Week 5 Feb: Time to Talk Day 7 Feb: Lunar New Year / Chinese New Year 9 Feb: Shrove Tuesday / Mardi Gras (Christianity) 10 Feb: Ash Wednesday (Christianity) 11 Feb: Int'l Day of Women and Girls in Science 15 Feb: Parinirvana (Buddhism) 21 Feb: Magha Puja (Buddhism) 28 Feb: Rare Disease Day
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Spotlight

Sexual Abuse and Sexual Violence Awareness Week (1-7 February)

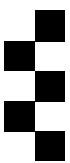
This week is dedicated to increasing awareness of sexual abuse and sexual violence and aims to challenge/change societal norms / attitudes, stereotypes, and misconceptions surrounding these issues. If you have experienced the above and require support, please contact us anonymously or contact an advisor using the [Report + Support platform](#).



TRANSGENDER

March 2027

■ Historian and professor Susan Stryker helped establish Transgender Studies as a recognised academic field, transforming how gender diversity is studied in universities worldwide.



March 2027

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	March (All month): ▪ Women's History Month 4 Mar: Holi (Hinduism) 6 Mar: Maha Shivratri (Hinduism) 6 Mar: Lailat ul-Qadr/The Night of Power (Islam, Shi'a) 8 Mar: International Women's Day 9 Mar (estimated, subject to moon sighting): Eid al-Fitr / Feast of Fast Breaking (Islam) 15-19 Mar: Neurodiversity Celebration Week 20 Mar: Spring / Vernal Equinox (Paganism) 21 Mar: World Down Syndrome Day 21 Mar: Palm Sunday (Christianity) 22 Mar: Ta'anit Esther 22-23 Mar: Purim (Judaism) 26 Mar: Good Friday (Christianity) 28 Mar: Easter (Christianity) 30 Mar: World Bipolar Day 30 Mar - 6 Apr: World Autism Acceptance Week 31 Mar: Transgender Day of Visibility
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Spotlight

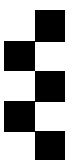
Transgender Day of Visibility (31 March)

This day is dedicated to celebrating the transgender community and non-binary people, along with their achievements. It also raises awareness of the discrimination and challenges they face in society, economically and legally, and advocates for their protected rights.



April 2027

■ The Sikh term *Khalsa* is a Punjabi word that means 'pure', and members of the Khalsa commit themselves to values including equality, service, and justice.



April 2027

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- April (All month):**
- Stress Awareness Month
 - Autism Acceptance Month
- 2 Apr:** World Autism Awareness Day
8 Apr: International Romani Day
14 Apr: Vaisakhi (Sikhism)
15 Apr: Rama Navami (Hinduism)
19 Apr: Mahavir Jayanti (Jainism)
21 Apr: Ta'anit Bechorot (Judaism)
21 Apr–2 May: Ridvan (Baha'i)
21–29 Apr: Passover (Judaism)
26 Apr: Lesbian Visibility Day
28 Apr: International Guide Dog Day

Spotlight

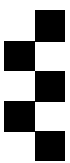
Vaisakhi (14 April)

Vaisakhi (Baisakhi) is the festival which celebrates the founding of the Khalsa (Sikhism) and the Sikh community in 1699. It was originally a harvest festival that takes place in springtime in the Punjab until it became Sikhism's most important festival.



May 2027

■ Diverse teams are consistently linked with greater creativity, innovation, and problem-solving, highlighting the importance of creating inclusive workplaces where everyone can thrive.



May 2027

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- May (All month):**
- National Walking Month
- 1 May:** Beltane (Pagan)
- 6 May:** Ascension Day (Christianity)
- 9-15 May:** Christian Aid Week
- 10-16 May:** Black Inclusion Week; Mental Health Awareness Week
- 12 May:** National Day for Staff Networks
- 14-18 May (estimated):** Hajj (Islam)
- 16 May:** Pentecost / Whit Sunday (Christianity); **(estimated, subject to moon sighting):** Eid al-Adha (Islam)
- 17 May:** International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT)
- 20 May:** Buddha Jayanti / Vesak (Buddhism)
- 20 May:** Global Accessibility Awareness Day
- 21 May:** The World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development

Spotlight

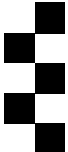
Black Inclusion Week (10-16 May)

This weeklong event celebrates the achievements of the Black community in the UK and focuses on increasing inclusion and representation in the workplace and communities.



June 2027

■ The University of Essex was awarded the status of University of Sanctuary in 2020. This title recognises our ongoing commitment to promoting a culture of welcome, safety and inclusion for refugees.



June 2027

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June (All month):

- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month
- Pride Month (UK)

5 Jun: Al-Hijra/Islamic New Year (Islam - estimate)

7 Jun: Tourette’s Awareness Day

10-12 Jun: Shavuot (Judaism)

14-20 Jun: Men’s Health Week; UK Learning Disability Week

16 Jun: Neurodiversity Pride Day; Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev (Sikhism)

18 Jun: Autistic Pride Day

20 Jun: World Refugee Day

21 Jun: Summer Solstice (Paganism)

22 Jun: National Windrush Day

Spotlight

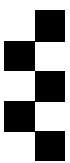
World Refugee Day (20 June)

World Refugee Day was founded by the United Nations to honour the courage, strength and resilience of those who have been forced to flee their homeland because of conflict and persecution. [Click here to find out how we’re helping refugees.](#)



July 2027

■ More than 5 million people in England and Wales identify with a South Asian ethnic group, making South Asian communities an important part of modern British society.



July 2027

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- July (All month):**
- **Disability Pride Month**
 - **South Asian Heritage Month**
- 1 Jul:** Dharma Day (Buddhism)
- 10 Jul:** Martyrdom of the Báb (Bahá'í)
- 14 Jul:** International Non-Binary People's Day
- 18 Jul:** Nelson Mandela International Day
- 22 Jul:** Shivah Asar b'Tammuz
- 23 Jul:** Birthday of Haile Selassie I (Rastafari)
- 24 Jul:** International Self-Care Day

Spotlight

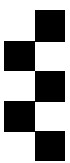
South Asian Heritage Month (All month)

A month of celebrations dedicated to highlighting the contributions of South Asian communities within the UK. It celebrates the cultures, histories, and contributions of people with roots in the sub-continent.



August 2027

■ Indigenous Peoples make up less than 6% of the world's population but help protect many of the world's most biodiverse regions.



August 2027

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	August
						1	1 Aug: Lammas / Lughnasadh (Paganism) 9 Aug: International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples 11-12 Aug: Tisha B'Av (Judaism) 12 Aug: International Youth Day 17 Aug: Raksha Bandhan (Hinduism) 23 Aug: International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition
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Spotlight

International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples (9 August)

International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples is celebrated annually to protect indigenous rights and raise global awareness.

Stay Connected with the University EDI Calendar

A live version of the University Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) calendar is available online, featuring all EDI events, key dates, and observances. You can access it here: <https://www.essex.ac.uk/staff/edi-resources/edi-key-dates> or by adding the EDICalendar shared Outlook calendar to your staff or student Outlook account.

If you would like an event added to the live Outlook calendar, or if you would like to request an additional festival or observance be included, please email: edicalendar@essex.ac.uk.



University of Essex