

The needs of Muslim Women at QUT

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to examine issues facing female international Muslim students and spouses of international Muslim students at QUT. The needs of these women were identified and recommendations made to better support Muslim women at QUT. Methods used included key informant interviews with academic and professional staff who engage regularly with female international Muslim students, an online survey and focus group discussions with female Muslim international students and female spouses of Muslim students.

Findings indicate that Muslim women at QUT have concerns about being misunderstood by non-Muslims and some difficulties in interacting with them. There are challenges that Muslim women face in regard to dietary needs; feelings of social marginalization; lack of suitable facilities to fulfil their religious obligations; working with male counterparts; support for women raising children; language barriers and the higher than expected cost of living.

Suggestions elicited to meet these needs included forming a Muslim women's support group; education for women on how to deal with mixed group work situations; arranging social activities; provision of information on locating cheaper groceries, halal food and prayer facilities, publication of a booklet providing information of general Muslim beliefs and culture to reduce misconceptions and conducting employment workshops.

Key Words

Female Muslim International Students, Muslim female spouse, challenges, needs