

## Religious Observances Policy

University of Cincinnati holds to the principle that an institutional climate of respect for cultural and ideological diversity extends to the variety of religious practices in our community. Religious practice is for many individuals an important element of personal identity, intellectual development and psychological well-being, and is in many cases inseparable from cultural identity. UC considers each individual's decision to either engage in or refrain from religious worship to be worthy of respect and consideration. As the diversity of our community has increased, additional religious holidays now affect a significant number of students. Consistent with our commitment to creating a Just Community that is respectful of and welcoming to persons of differing backgrounds, University of Cincinnati believes that every reasonable effort should be made to allow members of the UC community to observe their holidays without jeopardizing the fulfillment of their academic obligations.

Any UC student who is unable to attend classes or participate in any examination, study or work requirement on some particular day(s) because of his or her religious belief will be given the opportunity either to make up the work that was missed or to do alternative work that is intrinsically no more difficult than the original exam or assignment — provided that the makeup work does not create an unreasonable burden upon University of Cincinnati. Upon request and timely notice, students shall be provided reasonable accommodation. University of Cincinnati will not levy fees or charges of any kind when allowing for the student to make up missed work. In addition, no adverse or prejudicial effects will result to UC students because they have made use of this provision.

### Faculty Responsibilities

- Faculty are expected to consider potential conflicts with religious holidays when scheduling exams, project due dates, field trips or other activities, and are asked to avoid scheduling these on religious holidays whenever possible.
- If it is impractical to avoid scheduling on religious holidays, faculty are expected to allow a reasonable and comparable alternative for students whose religious practice creates a conflict with their academic obligations. Students will be given information needed to make up classes and work that were missed or to take the examinations on an alternate, acceptable day.
- Faculty should provide course syllabi at the beginning of each term that specify dates of exams and due dates of assignments. In their syllabi, instructors should include information about accommodation and the deadline for requesting such accommodation.
- Faculty must accept the student's claim of a religious conflict at face value. Students are not required to supply evidence of their attendance at the religious services or events to qualify for any accommodation granted to them. Yet, instructors may expect a reasonable limit to the number of requests made by any one student.
- Attendance policies allowing for a specific number of dates to be missed without impact on a student's grade should not count within that number absences for religious observance.

### Student Responsibilities

- Students must review instructor syllabi as soon as they are distributed and must consult the faculty member(s) promptly regarding any possible conflicts.
- Students planning to be absent from class due to religious observance should notify the instructor(s) as soon as possible upon receiving the class syllabus, but they are required to notify their instructors in writing at least two (2) weeks in advance of the day(s) in question.
- Once the instructor and student have agreed to an accommodation, the student must abide by the terms of that accommodation. The student must complete in full the makeup work, assignment, examination, project, etc., no later than the agreed upon alternate date(s). The instructor may assign a failing grade to work not submitted by this deadline.

In most cases, issues such as those raised in this statement are successfully handled by informal discussions among students, faculty, and administrators, when necessary. In the event, however, that agreement cannot be reached through informal means, the student should bring the issue to the office of the relevant college dean, or to the Ombuds Office. A student who then believes that he or she has been unreasonably denied an accommodation arising from his or her religious beliefs or practices may seek redress through the student grievance procedure.