

 <p><b>Category:</b> Administration</p> <p><b>Policy applicable for:</b> Faculty/Employees/ Students</p>	<p><i>Policy Title:</i> <b>Student Religious Accommodations for Courses Policy</b></p> <p><b>Effective Date:</b> April 3, 2023</p> <p><b>Enabling Acts:</b> R.C. 3345.024</p>	<p><i>Policy Number:</i> <b>1.3.7</b></p> <p><b>Policy Owner:</b> <b>Vice President for Equity, Inclusion &amp; Community Impact</b> <b>Office of the Provost</b> <b>Office of General Counsel</b></p> <p><b>Responsible Office(s):</b> Office of the Provost Office of Equal Opportunity &amp; Access</p>
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**PURPOSE:**

This Policy applies to University of Cincinnati (“University”) students and employees, including but not limited to faculty.

Ohio Revised Code 3345.024 requires each public university in Ohio to adopt a policy regarding reasonable accommodations for sincerely held religious beliefs and practices with regard to examinations or other academic requirements and absences. In addition to the requirements set forth in R.C. 3345.024, the University has and will continue to abide by all federal, state, and local laws and regulations that require the provision of reasonable accommodations to students for reasons of faith or religious or spiritual belief system.

**POLICY:**

Pursuant to R.C. 3345.024, the University adopts the following Policy that reasonably accommodates the sincerely held religious beliefs and practices of individual students with regard to all examinations or other academic requirements and absences for reasons of faith or religious or spiritual belief system:

- (1) A student may be absent for up to three days each academic semester to take holidays for reasons of faith or religious or spiritual belief system or participate in organized activities conducted under the auspices of a religious denomination, church, or other religious or spiritual organization. A student needing to be absent more than three days during an academic semester for reasons of faith or religious or spiritual belief system or to participate in organized activities conducted under the auspices of a religious denomination, church, or other religious or spiritual organization may make a request for such additional days. The instructor will review the particular request and engage in the interactive process with the requesting student as appropriate to determine whether and how the request for more than three days can be accommodated. The University shall not impose an academic penalty as a result of a student being absent as permitted in this Policy.

- (2) A student may be provided with alternative accommodations with regard to examinations and other academic requirements missed due to an absence described in section (1) of this Policy, if both of the following apply:
  - a. The student's sincerely held religious belief or practice severely affects the student's ability to take an examination or meet an academic requirement.
  - b. Not later than fourteen days after the first day of instruction in a particular in-person course, or not later than fourteen days after the first day of the semester session for classes taught in a hybrid or online format, the student provides the instructor with written notice of the specific dates for which the student requests alternative accommodations. Students providing notice within this fourteen-day window will be granted up to three days to take holidays for reasons of faith or religious or spiritual belief system or to participate in organized activities conducted under the auspices of a religious denomination, church, or other religious or spiritual organization. A student may request an alternative accommodation outside of the fourteen-day window, but the request should be made as soon as reasonably practicable and must be made prior to when the student expects to be absent. The instructor will review the particular request and engage in an interactive process with the requesting student as appropriate to determine whether and how the request can be accommodated.
- (3) An instructor shall accept without question the sincerity of a student's religious or spiritual belief system. The instructor shall keep requests for alternative accommodations confidential consistent with applicable laws including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. The instructor shall schedule a time and date for an alternative examination, which may be before or after the time and date the examination or other academic requirement was originally scheduled but shall do so without prejudicial effect.
- (4) This Policy will be posted on the University's Office of Equal Opportunity and Access ("OEOA") website with the contact information of an individual from OEOA who can provide more information about the Policy.
- (5) OEOA will post a list of major religious holidays or festivals for the next two academic years. The posted list is non-exhaustive, and the list may not be used to deny accommodation to a student for a holiday or festival of the student's faith or religious or spiritual belief system that does not appear on the list.
- (6) Instructors must include in each course syllabus a statement regarding this Policy. The statement shall include both of the following:
  - a. A description of the general procedure for requesting accommodations.
  - b. Contact information for an individual whom a student may contact for more information about this Policy.

This Policy shall not be construed in such a way as to conflict or impair any right or activity protected by the U.S. Constitution or other applicable federal law. Nothing in this Policy, and no inclusion or exclusion of a religious holiday or festival on the list posted by the University (as set forth in section 5 of this Policy), shall preclude a student from full and reasonable accommodations for any sincerely held religious beliefs and practices with regard to all examinations or other

academic requirements and absences for reasons of faith or religious or spiritual belief system.

**PROCEDURE:**

Any student with concerns about an alleged violation of this Policy is strongly encouraged, but not required, to first discuss those concerns with their instructor. Students may also report their concerns to OEEOA.