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III-22.10 Religious Diversity and the University Calendar

(3/99; 11/00; 8/9/19)

Effective August 9, 2019, paragraph a has been moved to [IV-8 Absences from Class](#). For the most current version of this policy without redlining, return to [III-22.10](#).

Religious history, religious diversity, and spiritual values have formed a part of The University of Iowa's curricular and extracurricular programs since the founding of the University. In order to advance religious diversity on campus, the University makes reasonable accommodations for ~~students~~ ~~student~~ ~~employees~~, staff, and faculty whose religious holy days coincide with their work schedules and classroom assignments. As a public institution, the University neither promotes any particular form of religion nor discriminates against ~~students~~ ~~student~~ ~~employees~~, staff, or faculty on the basis of their religious viewpoints.

University holidays are not religious holy days, although a religious holy day may coincide with a University holiday. The University is prepared to make reasonable accommodations in its work assignments, ~~test schedules, and classroom attendance expectations~~ in a manner which is consistent with the University Policy on Human Rights (see II-3) and does not unfairly burden employees ~~and students~~.

- a. ~~Students~~. See [IV-8.2 Absences for Religious Holy Days](#).

~~Students. With regard to classroom attendance, students who notify the faculty (including teaching assistants) of a religious holy day conflict in a timely manner shall be excused from class or other scheduled academic activity to observe a religious holy day of their faith. Where attendance is mandatory, students compelled by their religious convictions to refrain from attending class on specific days must notify their instructors during the first few days of the semester or session, and no later than the third week or one week before the absence if a conflict occurs before that time.~~

~~Students who notify their instructors of a religious holy day conflict in a timely manner shall be permitted a reasonable amount of time to make up the material or activities covered in their absence, including tests. Students who receive an exemption on religious grounds cannot be penalized for failing to attend class on the days exempted. The instructor may, however, appropriately respond if the student fails to satisfactorily complete any alternative assignment or examination.~~

~~In those cases where a request for an excused absence based upon a religious holy day conflict is denied by the instructor, a student may pursue a grievance under "Student Complaints Concerning Faculty Actions" (see Policies and Regulations Affecting Students). Where a timely request is made but denied by the instructor, the grievance process shall be~~

~~expedited as much as reasonably possible to ensure that a student pursuing a religious holy day accommodation is not unduly disadvantaged by the passage of time.~~

~~Students with attendance conflicts may be required to notify an instructor in writing. An instructor who requires written notice must inform the class of this expectation in the class syllabus. An instructor may deny a student's request for an excused absence on the ground that the request was not made within a reasonable time period, that is, no later than the third week of class or one week before the absence if a conflict occurs before that time.~~

- b. Faculty. Faculty members have "the responsibility to meet classes as scheduled and, when circumstances prevent this, to arrange equivalent alternate instruction" (see III-15.2 Responsibilities to Students). Faculty members who wish to observe religious holy days must fulfill the above-mentioned policy and satisfy any other responsibilities regarding off-campus time, including proper notice, in accordance with their standard departmental procedures.

When scheduling tests, instructors are encouraged to take cognizance of religious holy days which fall on University class days. In addition, faculty should include in their syllabi information regarding the policies for handling conflicts between classroom activities (attendance, tests, etc.) and religious holy days. Such policies must be consistent with University policies (see paragraph a above).

- c. Staff (including student employees). Staff members may request accommodation for religious observances through their immediate supervisor. Accommodation may be in the form of scheduled leave or an alternate work schedule. Approved absences will be recorded as vacation. In cases when vacation is not available or an alternative work schedule is not possible, a leave of absence without pay may be permitted. Departments will attempt to accommodate such requests, balancing the request to accommodate with the particular needs of the work unit.

In order to best meet staff needs in an area, appropriate advance notice is required.