

<b>Title</b>	Accommodation of Religious Observances Policy
<b>Policy Owner</b>	Student Affairs Policy No. 5.18
<b>Applies to</b>	Students
<b>Campus Applicability</b>	All Campuses
<b>Effective Date</b>	08/01/2022
<b>For More Information Contact</b>	Dean of Student Affairs Office
<b>Contact Information</b>	deanofstudents@cod.edu
<b>Official Website</b>	

**Reason for Policy**

The purpose of this policy is to set forth the College of DuPage’s policy for responding to requests from students for religious observances. This policy is in accordance with relevant laws and regulations regarding religious beliefs.

**Applies to**

All students on all Campuses.

**Definitions**

*Religious Accommodation:* A reasonable change in the work or academic environment that enables a student to practice or otherwise observe a sincerely held religious practice or belief without undue hardship on the College. A religious accommodation may include, but is not limited to: time for prayer during a school day; the ability to attend religious events or observe a religious holiday; or any necessary modification to College policy, procedure or other requirement for a student’s religious beliefs, observance or practice; provided such accommodation is reasonable and does not cause undue hardship.

*Religious Practice or Belief:* A sincerely held practice or observance that includes moral or ethical beliefs as to what is right and wrong, most commonly in the context of the cause, nature and purpose of the universe. Religion includes not only traditional, organized religions, but also religious beliefs that are new, uncommon, not part of a formal religious institution or sect, or only subscribed to by a small number of people. Social, political, or economic philosophies, as well as mere personal preferences, are not considered to be religious beliefs.

*Undue Hardship:* More than a minimal burden on the operation of the College. For example, an accommodation may be considered an undue hardship if it would interfere with the safe or efficient operation of the learning environment and/or would result in the inability of the student to perform an essential function of the position or course of study.

The determination of undue hardship is dependent on the facts of each individual situation, and will be made on a case-by-case basis.

## **Policy Statement**

### **Accommodation of Religious Observances- Policy No. 8.18**

The College will reasonably accommodate the religious observances of Individual Students with respect to admissions, class attendance, and the scheduling of examinations and work requirements.

The College will adopt and maintain Administrative Procedures implementing this Policy, including reasonable notice requirements for Students to make a request for accommodation and grievance procedures for Students who believe they have been denied a reasonable accommodation. Those Administrative Procedures will be published by the College in the Student Handbook and College Catalog and provided to the Faculty. Along with those Administrative Procedures, the College will publish a copy of section 1.5, 110 ILCS 110/1.5, of the Illinois University Religious Observances Act, 110 ILCS 110/0.01 et seq. (the "Act"). The Assistant Provost of Student Affairs, in conjunction with the Provost and with the approval of the President, is authorized to develop and implement Administrative Procedures consistent with this Policy and all applicable federal and state laws and regulations, and shall be responsible for ensuring proper publication of those Administrative Procedures and section 1.5 of the Act.

### **Illinois University Religious Observances Act, 110 (110 ILCS 110/1.5)**

Sec. 1.5. Absence of student due to religious beliefs.

(a) In this Section, "institution of higher learning" has the meaning ascribed to that term in the Higher Education Student Assistance Act.

(b) Any student in an institution of higher learning, other than a religious or denominational institution of higher learning, who is unable, because of his or her religious beliefs, to attend classes or to participate in any examination, study, or work requirement on a particular day shall be excused from any such examination, study, or work requirement and shall be provided with an opportunity to make up the examination, study, or work requirement that he or she may have missed because of such absence on a particular day; provided that the student notifies the faculty member or instructor well in advance of any anticipated absence or a pending conflict between a scheduled class and the religious observance and provided that the make-up examination, study, or work does not create an unreasonable burden upon the institution. No fees of any kind shall be charged by the institution for making available to the student such an opportunity. No adverse or prejudicial effects shall result to any student because of his or her availing himself or herself of the provisions of this Section.

(c) A copy of this Section shall be published by each institution of higher learning in the catalog of the institution containing the list of available courses.

(Source: P.A. 97-1038, eff. 1-1-13.)

In keeping with the College's commitment to building and maintaining a welcoming and

inclusive learning environment, the College will consider religious accommodations requests by students based on the totality of the circumstances.

The College of DuPage prohibits discrimination, harassment, and retaliation on the basis of religion. For more information, refer to the Anti-Discrimination and Harassment Policy No. 3.10.

**Enforcement**

Violations of this policy may result in appropriate disciplinary measures in accordance with College Policies and Procedures.

**Policy History**

Adopted 03/19/2009. Amended 1/21/21.

## **College of DuPage Accommodation of Religious Observances Policy Procedures**

### **Procedures for Students**

The College of DuPage grants students excused absences from class or other organized academic activities for observance of a sincerely held religious practice or belief as a religious accommodation, unless the accommodation would create an undue hardship.

Students whose religious holidays are not recognized by the College's calendar should provide the instructor or academic activity organizer with the dates they will be absent in advance of the absence.

Students should make the request directly to their instructor with as much notice as possible. Students should complete the **Student Religious Exceptions and Non-Attendance Request** form or submit their request to the instructor in a mutually-agreed upon manner (in-person, email, BlackBoard, etc).

Students anticipating an absence or missed coursework due to a sincerely held religious practice or belief should use best efforts to inform their instructor in writing no later than the third week of class, or at least one week before the absence if a conflict occurs during the first three weeks of class. Being absent from class or other educational responsibilities does not excuse students from keeping up with any information shared or expectations set during the missed class(es). Students are responsible for obtaining the materials and information provided during any class(es) missed. The student can work with the instructor to determine a schedule for making up missed work.

### **Procedures for Faculty / Course Instructors in Responding to Student Requests**

Instructors should outline course obligations, dates and foreseen calendar of examination(s) as early as possible on course syllabus. Instructors should instruct students to inform them of any conflicts in accordance to the Accommodation of Religious Observances policy.

Course instructors are strongly encouraged to make reasonable accommodations in response to student requests to complete work missed by absence resulting from observation of religious holidays. Such accommodations should be made in ways that do not dilute or preclude the requirements or learning outcomes for the course.

Course instructors should bear in mind that religion is a deeply personal and private matter and should make every attempt to respect the privacy of the student when making accommodations (for example, it is not appropriate to announce to the class that a student is doing a presentation or making up an exam at a later date because of their religious observance). Course instructors should not ask a student for proof that their religious practices or beliefs are sincerely held or for determining a religious accommodation.

Examples of religious accommodations include: rescheduling of an exam or giving a make-up exam for the student in question; altering the time of a student's presentation; allowing extra-credit assignments to substitute for missed class work or arranging for an increased flexibility in assignment due dates.

The student should be given the opportunity to complete appropriate make-up work that is equivalent and intrinsically no more difficult than the original exam or assignment. 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.

If there are concerns about the requested accommodation, the instructor should consult their department head or dean for assistance and determination of whether a reasonable accommodation can be provided. If an agreement cannot be reached after consulting with the department head (or dean) the matter will be referred to the Dean of Student Affairs or designee, who will make the final determination following consultation with the Office of the General Counsel.

**Contacts:**

Students, Faculty and Staff who have questions or concerns regarding the College of DuPage Accommodation of Religious Observance Policy may contact the Dean of Student Affairs Office:

[deanofstudents@cod.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@cod.edu) or 630-942-2485

