

Religious Accommodation Policy

Legal Authority

The University of Akron (the “University”) welcomes individuals from all different faiths, philosophies, religious traditions, and other systems of belief. The Ohio Administrative Code (“OAC”), Section 3359-11-13, includes a prohibition against discrimination on the basis of religion. In conjunction with OAC 3359-11-13, and pursuant to Ohio Revised Code Section 3345.026 (aka “The Testing Your Faith Act”), the University hereby adopts this Policy to reasonably accommodate the sincerely held religious beliefs and practice of all University students. This policy shall apply equally to all University students regarding examinations or other academic requirements as well as absences for reasons of faith or religious or spiritual belief system. This Policy shall apply if the student’s sincerely held religious belief or practice severely affects the student’s ability to take an examination or meet an academic requirement.

Student Absences

Under this Policy, and upon advance request, each student will be excused from class for up to three (3) days per academic semester to take holidays for reasons of faith or religious or spiritual belief system to participate in organized activities conducted under the auspices of a religious denomination, church, or other religious or spiritual organization. The University shall not impose an academic penalty as a result of a student being absent as protected and permitted under this Policy.

Request Procedure

To request excusal under this policy, a student must notify their faculty course instructor, in writing, during the first fourteen (14) days of the semester, of the date(s) of each proposed absence or request for alternative accommodation. The student’s request must clearly state that the proposed absence is for the student to participate in religious activities. The request must provide that it is a request for a religious accommodation and identify the particular accommodation(s) the student desires. The request need not provide, and the faculty instructor shall not require students to disclose, additional details about the nature of the student’s religious beliefs or their activities on the date of the proposed absence. In other words, it shall be enough that the student has made the request.

If the student’s request is for an alternate examination date, the faculty instructor shall schedule a time and date for such alternative examination, which may be before or after the time and date the examination or other academic requirement was originally scheduled. This shall occur without prejudicial effect.

The faculty instructor will notify the student if the request is approved, or, if it is approved with modification. This is expected to be a collaborative process between the faculty member and individual student.

Before denying any request, the faculty instructor must determine whether any mutually acceptable alternatives may be identified. In doing so, the faculty member is encouraged to reach out to the University of Akron Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action Office (“EEO Office”) or the Dean of Students Office for guidance. The EEO Office and/or the Dean of Students Office will work with the faculty instructor in conjunction with the Office of General Counsel on any such request.

Sincerely Held Religious Belief

The faculty instructor will accept, without question, the sincerity of a student’s religious or spiritual belief system and shall keep requests for alternative accommodations confidential. The information regarding such request and accommodation will only be shared with those individuals and offices that have need to know for educational purposes.

As used in this policy, the term “religious” includes traditional tenets of established faiths, and also deeply held personal moral or ethical beliefs as to what is right and wrong, which are sincerely held with the strength of traditional religious views. As mentioned, for purposes of administering this policy, the University shall accept without question the sincerity of a stated belief.

Required Postings

The EEO/AA Office shall cause this policy, as well as a non-exhaustive list of major religious holidays for the next two academic years, to be posted and published prominently on its webpage.

The non-exhaustive list appears at: <https://uakron.edu/hr/eoaa/religious-accommodations>

This list includes a list of common major religious holidays to be used as guidance. This list is non-exhaustive and shall not be used to deny reasonable accommodation(s) 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. Nothing in this policy, and no inclusion or exclusion of a religious holiday or festival on the posted list, shall preclude a student from full and reasonable accommodation(s) 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 provided under this policy.

Course Syllabi

All instructors must include in each course syllabus a statement referencing this Policy on religious accommodations. The statement shall include both of the following:

1. A description of the general procedure for requesting accommodations from the course instructor; and
2. Contact information for an individual whom students may contact for more information about this Policy.

It is recommended that a link to this Policy also be included in the syllabus statement.

It is suggested that the following statement be included by faculty on each course syllabus:

The University prohibits discrimination on the basis of religion and welcomes individuals from all different faiths, philosophies, religious traditions, and other systems of belief. Pursuant to Ohio Revised Code Section 3345.026 (aka “The Testing Your Faith Act”) you may request a religious accommodation to be excused from class up to three (3) days for reasons of faith or religious or spiritual belief system to participate in organized activities conducted under the auspices of a religious denomination, church, or other religious or spiritual organization. You will not be penalized as a result of any of these excused absences.

The request for excusal must be made, in writing, during the first fourteen (14) days of the semester and include the date(s) of each proposed absence or request for alternative accommodation. The request must clearly state that the proposed absence is to participate in religious activities. The request must also provide the particular accommodation(s) you desire. For example, you may request to be excused from class to participate or observe a religious holiday or you may request an alternate examination date. An alternative examination date may be established, which may be before or after the time and date the examination or other academic requirement was originally scheduled.

You will be notified by me if your request is approved, or, if it is approved with modification. I will work with you in an effort to arrange a mutually agreeable alternative arrangement.

The following is a link to the Policy: <https://uakron.edu/hr/eeoaa/religious-accommodations>

For more information regarding this Policy you may contact the University EEO Office at:

***Office of Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action
University of Akron***

*The Administrative Services Building
185 East Mill Street
Room 138
Akron, OH 44325
(330) 972-7300 | Phone
(330) 972-5816 | Fax
EEOcompliance@uakron.edu*

Complaints

The procedure for handling student complaints under this Policy shall be as follows:

The student should first contact the Department Chair in the Department in which the course is being taught. If the complaint is unable to reach resolution through the Department Chair, the student should next contact the Dean of the College in which the course is being taught. If contacting the Dean of the College in which the course is being taught is unsuccessful in resolving the student’s complaint, the student should contact the Office of Academic Affairs. If the student’s

complaint remains unresolved, a formal complaint may be filed with the University's EEO/AA Office.

Such complaint must set forth, in sufficient detail, the nature of the student's complaint, including the requested accommodation and all attempts to reach resolution.

Contact Information

Further information about this policy is available from the University's Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Office at: [Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Office | Home page : The University of Akron, Ohio \(uakron.edu\)](#).

Office of Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action University of Akron

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Contacts:

Tami Hannon, Director EEO/AA
tlz2@uakron.edu

Kelsea Homer, EEO/AA Specialist
kld67@uakron.edu

Dean of Students Office University of Akron

Jean Hower Taber Student Union
Room 152
Akron, OH 44325
(330) 972-6048 | Phone
deanofstudents@uakron.edu

Contacts:

Mr. Michael Strong, Assistant Vice President and Dean of Students
mstrong@uakron.edu

Dr. Bryan Robinson, Assistant Dean of Students
brobinson@uakron.edu

Effective: April 1, 2023