

Suggested Revisions to Temporary Policy 08/25/23 appear in green. Notes related to suggested changes appear in maroon.

SALISBURY UNIVERSITY

RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION POLICY

I. POLICY

The University's programs, services, and employment shall be available to qualified students, faculty, and staff, regardless of their religious beliefs. Whenever reasonable accommodations may be made, students, faculty, and staff shall not be penalized because of religious observances.

A calendar identifying a variety of religious holidays is included with the [campus calendars](#). While useful, this calendar will not be inclusive of all possible holidays. The Office of the Registrar maintains this calendar.

II. PURPOSE

This policy and its procedures are intended to instruct students, faculty, and staff employees about how to request religious accommodations and how to proceed if reasonable accommodations are not provided. This policy and procedures are intended to comply with University System of Maryland Board of Regents III – 5.10 Policy Concerning the Scheduling of Academic Assignments on Dates of Religious Observance, state law, and federal law.

III. RULES AND PROCEDURES

A. Supervisors of employees are responsible for providing accommodations to employees with appropriate processing of the accommodations occurring through the Office of Human Resources ("HR").

1. When feasible, employees shall request religious accommodations, in writing, through their immediate supervisor, prior to the end of the academic semester preceding the date for which they need a religious accommodation. If this long-term notice is not feasible, employees must make a request for religious accommodations, in writing, through their immediate supervisor, no less than two weeks prior to the date for which they need religious accommodations.
2. Faculty and their department chairs or program directors, with appropriate support from HR, shall work together to develop reasonable accommodations. Faculty who will not be present when they are expected to perform duties will need to use alternate or online instruction and/or collegial coverage, annual leave, or leave without pay in accordance with Chapter 3 of the [SU Faculty Handbook](#). (note this link goes directly to chapter 3)
3. Faculty who are not satisfied with the accommodations provided may follow the SU Policy on Faculty Grievances as provided in Chapter 2 of the [SU Faculty Handbook](#). (note the link goes directly to the grievance policy)
4. Staff and their immediate supervisors, with appropriate support from HR, shall work together to develop reasonable accommodations. Staff who will not be present when they are expected to perform duties will need to request to use annual leave, personal leave, unpaid leave, or leave without pay in accordance with Section III of the [SU Staff Employee Handbook](#). (note this link just goes to the handbook, not directly to section III)
5. Staff who are not satisfied with the accommodations provided may follow the SU Policy on Grievances for Exempt and Nonexempt Staff Employees as provided in Section II of the [SU](#)

[Staff Employee Handbook](#). (note this link just goes to the handbook, not directly to Section II)

6. Employees who believe they are facing religious discrimination may file complaints with the Office of Institutional Equity in accordance with the [Salisbury University Policy Prohibiting Non-Sex-Based Discrimination](#).

B. Individual instructors and professors are responsible for providing accommodations to students. Faculty will, whenever feasible and reasonable, provide accommodations to students who request accommodations in accordance with this policy and its procedures. Students must request accommodations in advance of an event.

1. To ensure that accommodations may be made, students who plan to miss class for a religious holiday must inform their instructors as soon as possible prior to the last day of drop/add for the semester. A student will need an opportunity to adjust their schedule should the accommodation “fundamentally alter the essential nature of the course or program,” “impose an undue hardship upon the institution,” or seem likely to impact student success in the course.¹ Contacting a faculty member on the last day of drop/add will be too late to permit a reasonable discussion regarding the accommodation.
2. For other religious observances, to ensure that accommodations may be made, students who will miss class must inform their instructors in writing no later than two weeks prior to the observance date.
3. Accommodations are determined by the instructor. Accommodations may include the ability to make up missed assignments, to complete alternate assignments, to have extended deadlines, to have some assignments excused, or any reasonable approach determined by the instructor.
4. In courses where a certain number of absences without penalty are allowed, or a certain number of assessments are excluded, absences for religious observances may be included in that number. If, during a semester, the total number of missed classes or assessments requested in accordance with this policy exceeds the number permitted without penalty, an instructor must “consider whether increasing the maximum number of allowed absences” or missed assessments “would be a reasonable accommodation.”¹ However, if during a semester, the total number of missed classes or missed assessments exceeds the number permitted without penalty, penalties may be enacted for missed classes or assessments not in accordance with this policy or the Emergency Absence Policy.
5. Students should be aware that missing classes for religious observation does not exempt students from completion of assignments or from understanding material covered. Students should also be aware that even if accommodations are made, those accommodations may not provide the same experience as attending class or completing activities in the manner designed for the class. Thus, it is possible that, even when accommodations are made, student success in a course may be impacted by time missed. In some courses, missing more than a week’s worth of classes (or even fewer classes during shorter terms), even when accommodations are made, may hinder the feasibility of successful completion of the course. If religious accommodations could cause a student to miss significant critical components of a course, the student should consider enrolling in a different section of the course, a different semester, or a different course with reduced impact.
6. Students who feel that the accommodations provided were not adequate may file a grievance following the grievance policy identified at <https://www.salisbury.edu/administration/academic-affairs/grievance-policy.aspx>.

¹ Quotes are from USM III-5.10 Policy.

7. Students who believe they are facing discrimination based on their religions may file complaints with the Office of Institutional Equity in accordance with the [Salisbury University Policy Prohibiting Non-Sex-Based Discrimination](#).

IV. RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENTS

- A. [Supervisors, with appropriate support from](#) the Office of Human Resources, are responsible for providing employment accommodations to employees.
- B. Faculty members are responsible for providing academic accommodations to students.
- C. The Office of Institutional Equity is responsible for handling reports of noncompliance with this policy in accordance with the [Salisbury University Policy Prohibiting Non-Sex-Based Discrimination](#).