



Religious Accommodations for Students (Testing Your Faith Act), 4.5.10

College Policy

Applies to: Students

Responsible Office

Academic Affairs

POLICY STATEMENT

The college is committed to making reasonable accommodations for the religious and spiritual identities of its students, so they do not experience adverse academic consequences based upon religious or spiritual beliefs or observances that conflict with academic requirements.

Purpose of the Policy

To reasonably accommodate 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, in accordance with Ohio Revised Code §§3345.026.

Policy Details

- I. A student shall be permitted to 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.
- II. No academic penalty shall be imposed by the college as a result of a student being absent as permitted by this policy.
- III. Students will be provided with alternative accommodations with regard to examinations and other academic requirements missed due to an absence described in I of this section, 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 14 days after the first day of instruction in a particular course, the student provides the instructor with written notice of the specific dates for which the student requests alternative accommodations.

PROCEDURE

- I. The college shall post in a prominent location on the website:
 - A. This policy including the contact information of an individual who can provide further information on the policy, and
 - B. A nonexhaustive list of major religious holidays or festivals for the next two academic years.
 1. The list is nonexhaustive and 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.
 2. No inclusion or exclusion of a religious holiday or festival on the list posted by a state institution 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.
- II. The following policy statement shall be included in each course syllabus.
 - A. COTC is committed to students' freedom to practice their sincerely held religious beliefs. The college has adopted College Policy 4.5.10 Religious Accommodations for Students, which complies with the Testing Your Faith Act, Ohio Revised Code 3345.026. Students are given up to three days of absences per term for activities or holidays conducted under the auspices of a religious denomination, church, or other religious or spiritual organization. The religious belief or practice must severely affect a student's ability to take an exam or complete an academic requirement on the due date. To receive reasonable alternative accommodations,



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students must submit their written request, including requested dates for alternative accommodations, within 14 calendar days of the first day of class. An instructor shall schedule a time and date for an alternative accommodation (i.e., examination, etc.), which may be before or after the time and date the examination or other academic requirement was originally scheduled without penalty or academic harm to the student. Alternative accommodations are not retroactive. No academic penalty will be imposed for an absence under this policy. These requests for alternative accommodations will be kept confidential. For further questions or information about this policy, please refer to College Policy 4.5.10 Religious Accommodations for Students (hyperlink to be added) or contact the Provost, Dr. Gregory Ferenchak, Ferenchak.7@mail.cotc.edu, 740.755.7827, Hopewell Hall, room 56.

- III. An instructor shall accept without question the sincerity of a student's religious or spiritual belief system.
 - A. An instructor shall keep requests for alternative accommodations confidential.
 - B. An 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.
- IV. To request a religious accommodation under the Testing Your Faith Act, a student must provide the instructor with written notice no later than 14 days after the first day of instruction in a particular course of the specific dates for which the student requests alternative accommodations.
- V. Grievance procedure:
 - A. A student may notify the college of any grievance with regard to the implementation of the policy.
 - B. Any student who is concerned that this policy may have been breached may contact the appropriate dean to disclose their concern.
 - C. After having made inquiries with the appropriate academic dean, an individual student may submit a written complaint to the Provost which contains, at a minimum:
 - a. The name and contact information of the student
 - b. The name of the faculty member alleged to have breached the policy,
 - c. The section number, course title, and meeting times, and
 - d. A description of the alleged breach(es) of the policy.
 - 2. Upon receipt of the complaint, the Provost will review the complaint to determine whether the complaint falls within the scope of the policy. The Provost may request further information from the complainant and make inquiries in order to assess whether there are reasonable grounds for the complaint.
 - 3. The Provost will investigate the alleged violation.
 - 4. If the Provost determines the college policy has been violated, the Provost shall determine a resolution to address the violation.
 - 5. If any faculty member of the college is found to have knowingly failed to reasonably accommodate the sincerely held religious beliefs and practices of individual students with regard to examinations or other academic requirements and absences for reasons of faith or religious or spiritual belief system, the faculty member may be subject to discipline, up to and including termination under the applicable policies, procedures, collective bargaining agreements, and Ohio law based on the totality of the facts.
 - 6. Retaliation against any student of the college who files such a complaint is prohibited, and any founded instance of founded retaliation is subject to discipline or other sanctions.

Responsibilities

Position or Office	Responsibilities
Office of Academic Affairs	1. Post this policy and a nonexhaustive list of major religious holidays or festivals for the next two academic years on a prominent location of the college's website.



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Position or Office	Responsibilities
Faculty members	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Accommodate without penalty examinations and other academic requirements missed due to an absence permitted under this policy. 2. 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 without prejudicial effect. 3. Include the religious accommodation statement in each course syllabus. 4. Accept without question the sincerity of a student's religious or spiritual belief system. 5. Keep requests for alternative accommodations confidential.
Student	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide the instructor with written notice no later than 14 days after the first day of instruction in a particular course of the specific dates for which the student requests alternative accommodations under this policy.
Academic Dean	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discuss with an individual student who has expressed concern that this policy may have been breached.
Provost	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Receive and investigate written complaints from individual students alleging policy violation. 2. Determine resolution for violations.

Resources

Ohio Revised Code 3345.026, The Testing Your Faith Act, <https://codes.ohio.gov/ohio-revised-code/section-3345.026>

Contacts

Subject	Office	Telephone	E-mail/URL
General policy questions from students	The Office of the Provost	740-366-9357	Hindel.10@mail.cotc.edu

History

Issued: 04/19/2023

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