

Religious Holiday Class Absence Policy: adapted from the University of Chicago:
November 11, 2021

As home to students, faculty, and staff of all the world's major religions and as a non-sectarian institution, Washington University in St. Louis values the rich diversity of spiritual expression and practice found on campus. It is therefore the policy of the university that students who miss class, assignments, or exams to observe a religious holiday should be accommodated as follows:

- (i) **absences should be counted as excused in any course in which attendance is a measure of academic performance;**
- (ii) **reasonable extensions of time should be given, without academic penalty, for missed assignments;**
- (iii) **exams should be reasonably rescheduled without academic penalty.**

To ensure that accommodations may be made, students who plan to miss class for a religious holiday must inform their instructors in writing **before the end of the third week of class**, or as soon as possible if the holiday occurs during the first three weeks of the semester.

Absence for religious reasons does not lessen students' responsibility for course work or material covered during their absence. It is incumbent on the student who misses a class to catch up on any material discussed and assignments given during that class period. If you believe you have not received a reasonable accommodation despite engaging with your instructor on the topic, please follow the course grievance process outlined by your school.

A list of religious holidays that fall within the academic year may be found [here](#). This list is not a designation of religious holidays recognized by the University, nor is it meant to be comprehensive; it is simply a guide to help students and instructors plan their courses and assignments.

For faculty:

Every effort should be made to avoid scheduling exams on religious holidays, particularly those with work restrictions as noted on the [holiday calendar](#).

Faculty should be supported in establishing a teaching schedule that allows them to avoid conflict with their observance of religious holidays. Where this is not possible, faculty should make up any missed class in the method most appropriate to student learning in their course; e.g., rescheduling for an alternate time, providing asynchronous material, or engaging a guest lecturer. Appropriate advance notice should be provided to students.

Any instructor with concerns regarding either a given holiday or the academic implications of a particular student's religious observance of holidays may seek guidance from the chair of their department, dean of their school, or the Director for [Religious, Spiritual & Ethical Life](#).