

Religious Accommodations

As our mission statement states, Converse draws much of its character from its Christian heritage, liberal and tolerant, as expressed in the Founder's Ideal. Following in that tradition, we are inclusive. We welcome all those in the great historical religious traditions as well as those in newer expressions or those who have no religious affinities. Converse University will make a good faith effort to provide reasonable religious accommodations to students whose sincerely held religious beliefs and practices conflict with an academic requirement unless such an accommodation would create an undue hardship on the college community.

As a guide to instructors in planning their courses and assignments, a list of religious holidays where observance may compete with the demands of the academic calendar can be found at {insert link to calendar}. This list is not a designation of religious holidays recognized by the college; it is simply an aid for planning purposes. Instructors should accommodate religious rituals and holidays that are both listed and not listed on this schedule. Please note that there are rituals of some religions that may not be scheduled very far in advance. Any instructor with concerns regarding a given holiday, or the academic implications of a particular student's religious observance, may seek guidance from the chair of their department, dean of their school, the Provost, or the University Chaplain.

Definitions

A. Religion: Beliefs and practices associated with The Sacred. This includes both traditional, organized religions and also those that are new, uncommon, or not part of a formal church or sect. Religious observances perform ways of being religious that may be personal or communal, private or public, daily or occasional.

B. Sincerely held: A meaningful belief to the individual requesting an accommodation with the understanding that: (1) each individual has the right to determine for themselves how to practice their religion or combination of religions; and, (2) the ways individuals are religious vary not only between religions but also within religions.

C. Reasonable Accommodation: An adjustment to the academic environment that enables a student to observe a religious practice or belief without undue hardship on the college community. Regardless of any accommodation that may be granted, students are responsible for satisfying all academic objectives, requirements, and prerequisites as defined by the course coordinator/instructor and by Converse University.

Examples of reasonable accommodations for student absences may include:

1. Providing a time and/or place to pray
2. Adjustment in attendance requirements without academic penalty
3. Rescheduling an exam or giving a makeup exam for the student in need of a religious accommodation
4. Altering the day or time of a student's presentation
5. Allowing assignments to substitute for missed class work. Note: the alternative work must not be more difficult than the missed class work.
6. Not dropping a student from a class roster when a religious holiday occurs during the first week of the semester

D. Undue Hardship: Significant difficulty or expense based on the college's resources and circumstances in relationship to providing a specific accommodation. Undue hardship may refer to accommodations

that are unduly expensive, substantial, disruptive, a violation of the law, or that would fundamentally alter academic requirements. In addition, accommodations which interfere with the safe and efficient operation of the campus may present an undue hardship.

Request Procedure: Students should inform their instructors in writing of their need to observe a religious holiday or rite reasonably well in advance of the absence, preferably at the beginning of the semester and no fewer than 10 business days before the absence. Exceptions may be made for certain religious observances that are by their nature unpredictable, such as funerals and other death rites.

Retaliation is Prohibited. Converse University prohibits retaliation against students and employees requesting a religious accommodation, participating in an approved accommodation, or otherwise engaging in protected conduct under this policy. Any person who violates this anti-retaliation provision may be subject to disciplinary and/or corrective action.