

Religious Accommodations

“Formation in faith is a central element in the Marianist tradition of education. The Marianist tradition emphasizes not only the important intellectual dimensions of faith – faith seeking understanding – but faith as a disposition of the heart, an openness to the transcendent and the ability to experience faith as both a gift from God and as a relationship with God. Faith grows not only through rigorous exploration and reflection but also in the religious practices of the faith community – in both common worship and in the solitude of prayer and reflection.”

Common Themes in the Mission & Identity of the University of Dayton

As a Catholic university, the University of Dayton strives to be a place where people of all religious traditions live, learn, and deepen their faith. Many of the world’s religious traditions are represented in the University of Dayton campus community. This diversity of faith expression enriches the community and offers a great witness of solidarity among people from different religious perspectives to the campus and the world.

Students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to observe their faith traditions during their time at the University of Dayton. Authentic observance of religious traditions may require reasonable accommodation to classroom or workplace schedules, environment, or in the way tasks or assignments are customarily completed. The following serve as recommendations for the campus community to support observance of diverse faith traditions.

Recommendations for the Campus Community

All are expected to *make every effort* to be supportive of those who make requests for religious accommodation in order to respect the rights of faculty, staff, and students to observe religious traditions and to support the diversity of faith expression in the campus community.

Those who request reasonable accommodations are expected to give advance notice of their request (e.g. within the first two weeks of class, as soon as meeting conflicts are identified, etc.) to the appropriate person (professor, chair, direct supervisor, etc.).

Everyone at the university is expected to be sensitive to and consider the religious needs of faculty, staff, and students when scheduling meetings and events, so as not to exclude the participation of others who may otherwise expect to or need to be present.

Given the complexity of robust campus schedules, classroom requirements, and workplace needs, there may be reasonable limits to the extent that religious accommodations can be extended. Two-way communication is important, in any case, to consider circumstances and determine possibilities or limits, when necessary.

Requesting Religious Accommodations

Students

Communicate information about your religious traditions directly with professors and supervisors so that they can more easily work with you to arrange a religious accommodation when you need it.

Discuss your need for religious accommodation and make arrangements with professors and supervisors as early as possible – as soon as you are aware of the need (generally within the first two weeks of the course/semester) by examining course syllabi/work schedule for potential conflicts. This allows faculty and staff supervisors to work with you in the best way possible.

Complete assignments or alternative work as agreed upon by the faculty member.

Recognize that it may be difficult to arrange appropriate accommodations in some kinds of courses (e.g. some laboratories or courses with experiential learning components) or in some work environments (e.g. when handling certain foods is required).

If questions or challenges emerge through the process of arranging a religious accommodation, contact the department chair or director of the program. If you suspect that you are being treated unfairly or with bias, you may consult the University's Equity Compliance Office by submitting a report online.

<https://www.udayton.edu/finadmin/campus/nondiscrimination/>

If anyone who receives a request for religious accommodation is uncertain regarding the reasonableness of the request, they are encouraged to consult with the Equity Compliance Office, the Provost's Office, Human Resources, or Campus Ministry.

Staff and faculty

Communicate information about your religious traditions with your supervisor/chair and colleagues so that they may consider these needs when scheduling major events so as not to adversely impact your participation.

Inform your supervisor/chair of your needs as early as possible and as soon as you are aware of the need. This allows them to work with you to accommodate your needs in the best way possible.

If questions or challenges emerge through the process of arranging a religious accommodation, contact your department chair, director, or Human Resources. If you suspect that you are being treated unfairly or with bias, you may report the incident through UD's Bias related incident (BRIT) process. <https://www.udayton.edu/finadmin/campus/nondiscrimination/>

Inclusive Practices for the Campus Community

Include a statement in every class syllabus inviting students to communicate when academic responsibilities conflict with religious observance. The faculty handbook allows or and encourages faculty to excuse such absences. Take steps to provide students with the opportunity to make up work when feasible. Recognize that classroom accommodations for religious reasons should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Examples of accommodations that might be appropriate include:

- Re-scheduling exams or giving make-up exams
- Adjusting due dates for assignments
- Planning and allowing for alternative or make-up assignments
- Scheduling group presentations so all members can be present
- Allowing a student to attend a different section of class or laboratory
- Providing pre-recorded lectures for make-up or otherwise allowing the lecture to be recorded

If questions arise regarding an appropriate accommodation for a given student situation, you may consider consulting with your chair, the Equity Compliance Office, Provost's Office (faculty), Human Resources (staff), or Campus Ministry, as appropriate.

Familiarize yourself with important celebrations, holidays, and holy days for the students in your classroom, with members of your department, division, or student organization. Ask at the beginning of the term or activity to know of important celebrations, including religious, that are important to participants. Invite students/faculty/staff to share this information privately if they prefer.

Learn about other important aspects of faith practices such as diet, fasting, food preparation, etc. and strive for inclusion by being aware of how these practices impact planning or the need for accommodation. For example, some faith traditions follow vegetarian diets, while others do not eat certain types of meat or other foods. Having only pepperoni pizza available for a celebration may unintentionally exclude participants. Serving an afternoon meal for those observing the festival of Ramadan (Muslims, who fast from sunrise to sunset daily during the month of Ramadan) would not be advisable. Catholics, who observe Ash Wednesday and Good Friday as fasting and days of abstinence, may not eat meat and eat only two very small meals on these days.

Determine if any planned classroom, laboratory, or department activities may necessitate a reasonable religious accommodation for anyone participating.

Be supportive as a supervisor when faculty/staff members request a religious accommodation and/or vacation or unpaid personal time off for religious observance. Workplace accommodations for religious reasons should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Examples workplace accommodations that may be appropriate include:

- Allowing for flexible scheduling, voluntary shift substitutions or swaps (mindful of relevant FLSA requirements regarding pay periods and overtime pay for non-exempt staff).
- Modifying workplace policies or practices,
- Scheduling break-time for prayer or around fluctuating energy levels during days of fasting,
- Granting leave/vacation requests for religious observances
- Making workplace requirements clear on position descriptions (e.g. handling meat) to avoid potential conflicts
- Scheduling alternative activities for class when faculty need to miss class for religious reasons (e.g. pre-taping lectures, arranging for a substitute or guest speaker, scheduling a “Don’t Cancel Your Class” program, etc.)

If questions arise regarding an appropriate accommodation for a given faculty or staff situation, you may consider consulting with the Equity Compliance Office, Provost’s Office (faculty), Human Resources (staff) or Campus Ministry, as appropriate.

Avoid scheduling meetings or events at times that exclude the participation of those who have conflicts because of religious observances who would otherwise be expected to or desire to be present.

Celebrate: Some classes or activities may be conducive to content related to celebrations. When incorporating education around religious holidays, care should be taken so that no individual is made responsible to educate others as the sole spokesperson. Still, some may be interested in sharing perspectives and celebrating together. Communication privately with individuals about their interests and comfort level is recommended.

Foster open dialogue: Whether you are working with students or colleagues from diverse faith backgrounds, creating an environment of openness, by seeking to understand the religious needs and observances of others is an important sign of Marianist hospitality and inclusivity. Recognizing that reasonable limits may exist in some circumstances is also important. Two-way communication is advisable.

Typical holy days for some traditions represented at UD.

Muslim: Eid al-Adha, Ramadan, Eid al-Fitr

Jewish: Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, first 2 days and last 2 days of Passover

Catholic/Christian: Christmas, Good Friday, Easter Sunday

Orthodox Christian: Orthodox Easter, Orthodox Christmas

Hindu: Diwali, Holi, Navaratri

Buddhist: Vesak

Asian traditions: Lunar New Year/Spring Festival

This list is not inclusive of all days that members of our diverse community may wish to observe. In addition, some observances vary by the lunar calendar or by cultural tradition. If there is an important holiday that you wish to add to this list, please contact [Brad Seligmann](#), Campus Minister for Interfaith Engagement.

More information and specific dates for religious holidays across a variety of traditions may be found at the links for Multifaith Calendars below.

Multifaith calendars and further information:

<http://www.xavier.edu/jesuitresource/online-resources/Calendar-Religious-Holidays-and-Observances.cfm>

<https://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/calendar-of-observances>

<http://www.interfaithcalendar.org/index.htm>

<http://www.rochester.edu/calendar-highlights/multicultural-calendar/>