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Policy Information

Effective Date:

October 26, 2015

Policy Number:

HR-202

Reference:

Classified Staff Manual 409.0

University Handbook for Appointed Personnel 2.27

Student Employment Manual 120.0

Responsible Unit:

Office of Institutional Equity

Email:

equity@arizona.edu [1]

Policy

The University of Arizona requires its administrators and faculty to reasonably accommodate the religious needs, observances, and practices of their employees and students upon request. An individual's request for reasonable religious accommodations, including requests for time off from work or school activities, is justified unless University operations would suffer unduly by granting the individual's request.

Individuals may not be discriminated against because of their religious beliefs or practices, or because they lack religious beliefs or practices. Anyone who believes they have been discriminated against by the denial of a requested religious accommodation should contact the Office of Institutional Equity by [email](#) [2] or by telephone at 520-621-9449.

Frequently Asked Questions*

What is a religious accommodation?

A religious accommodation is a change in work or school schedule or environment, or in the way tasks or assignments are customarily done, made to enable a student or employee to participate in

their religious practice or belief without causing undue hardship to University operations or activities.

What factors are considered in determining religious accommodations?

Factors considered in determining religious accommodations include business needs; academic requirements; and considerations of cost, safety, efficiency, and the rights of others. The University is not required by law or policy to accommodate religious beliefs when such accommodation would violate other laws or interfere with the safety and security of our campus (for example, a religious practice related to use of illegal drugs or carrying a weapon might not be reasonable to accommodate). The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) [3] provides guidance.

What are some examples of religious accommodations for employees?

Reasonable accommodations for employees might include granting individual leave for religious observances, providing a time and place to pray, or allowing the flexibility to wear religious attire to work. Other examples of accommodations for religious beliefs might include scheduling changes, voluntary substitutions of shifts or hours with supervisory approval, and appropriate job reassignments or lateral transfers. Reasonable accommodations are necessarily determined on an individual basis and depend on the particular circumstances.

How does an employee request time off from work or other kinds of religious accommodations at work?

Employees should make accommodation requests directly to their supervisors (for faculty, this may include deans or department heads) with as much notice as possible. A supervisor may only deny leave when an employee's absence from work would create an undue hardship on the department's operations.

What type of leave applies to absence from work due to a religious accommodation?

Depending on the situation and with supervisory approval, an employee requesting a religious accommodation may use accumulated leave (such as vacation leave), compensatory time, or leave without pay. In some circumstances, the leave may be accommodated by an alternate work schedule approved in advance by the employee's supervisor.

Which religious holidays are accommodated at the University?

Religious holidays have no official status at the University, and any sincerely held religious belief, observance, or practice will be accommodated where reasonable, including holy days. Faculty members may wish to consult an interfaith calendar in advance for planning coursework, syllabus dates, and deadlines.

What are some ways to accommodate a student's need to miss class for religious reasons?

Reasonable accommodations are necessarily determined on an individual basis and depend on the circumstances. They might include rescheduling an exam or giving the student a make-up exam, allowing an individual or group presentation to be made on a different date, letting a student attend a different discussion section for the same class that week, adjusting a due date, or assigning the student appropriate make-up work that is intrinsically no more difficult than the original assignment.

As a student, how should I ask my instructor for a religious accommodation?

A student should make their religious accommodation request to the instructor or faculty member in

charge of the course. Students are asked to examine the course syllabus for potential conflicts at the start of the semester and promptly notify the instructor of any anticipated accommodation needs, providing as much notice as possible. If an instructor has asked that requests be made in a certain way (such as by e-mail), it is best to make the request in that manner; in any case, clearly specify the reason for the requested absence or other accommodation. Students are responsible for arranging in advance to make up missed work or material in a timely manner.

As a supervisor or instructor, what are my responsibilities under the Religious Accommodation Policy?

Supervisors and instructors are expected to reasonably accommodate individual religious practices. A refusal to accommodate is justified only when undue hardship to the University's legitimate business purposes would result from each available alternative for reasonable accommodation (e.g., requires more than ordinary administrative costs, diminishes the efficiency in other jobs, infringes on other employees' job rights or benefits, or impairs campus/workplace safety).

If I have other questions about the Religious Accommodation Policy, where may I get assistance?

The Office of Institutional Equity (OIE) can provide guidance and direction regarding all aspects of the Religious Accommodation Policy. Please contact OIE at (520) 621-9449 or by [email](mailto:equity@arizona.edu) [2] for assistance. More information is also available on the [OIE website](https://equity.arizona.edu/) [4].

Revision History*

11/08/2023: Updated links.

06/06/2023: Pronouns changed to gender neutral.

10/26/2015: Policy effective date.

Source URL:<https://policy.arizona.edu/human-resources/religious-accommodation-policy>

Links

[1] <mailto:equity@arizona.edu> [2] <http://equity.arizona.edu> [3] <https://www.eeoc.gov/religious-discrimination> [4] <https://equity.arizona.edu/>