



UCCS CAMPUS POLICY

Policy Title: Accommodation for Religious Observations

Policy Number: 100-008

Policy Functional Area: ADMINISTRATION/ORGANIZATION

Effective: January 5, 2011
Approved by: Pam Shockley-Zalabak, Chancellor
Responsible Vice Chancellor: Chancellor's Office
Office of Primary Responsibility: Chancellor's Office
Policy Primary Contact: Chancellor, 719-255-3436
Supersedes: N/A
Last Reviewed/Updated: N/A
Applies to: Administration, Faculty, Staff and Student Employees

Reason for Policy: To define the process for absence from class or work because of religious observance and to provide guidance for the scheduling of UCCS events other than classes on religious holidays.

I. INTRODUCTION

This policy has been created to provide for the effective administration of the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs.

II. POLICY STATEMENT

A. Authority for the creation of campus administrative policies is found in *The Laws of the Regents*, 2007, Article 3 Section B.5(A) which states:

The chancellor of each campus shall be the chief academic and administrative officer responsible to the president for the conduct of affairs of their respective campus in accordance with the policies of the Board of Regents. The chancellor shall have such other responsibilities as may be required by these *Laws*, or regent policy, or as may be delegated by the president.

B. Purpose:

UCCS is comprised of students, faculty, and staff who celebrate a variety of religious and spiritual traditions. As an inclusive campus, the university acknowledges the importance of these traditions to its campus members, and will provide reasonable accommodations for staff, faculty, and students whose sincerely held religious or spiritual beliefs, practices and ceremonial obligations conflict with work schedules or academic activities. As a public institution, the university neither promotes any particular

form of religion nor discriminates against students, staff, or faculty on the basis of their religious viewpoints.

In addition, in scheduling university-sponsored events, the university will strive to avoid conflicting with major religious holidays, whenever possible.

C. Procedures:

1. Academic accommodations for religious holidays (Section V-A. is incorporated in this policy pending revision of the Campus Class Attendance Policy 200-018. When policy 200-018 is revised to include accommodations for religious holidays, this section will be removed.)
 - a. Students are required to provide advance and timely notification, preferably during the first week of classes, to instructors regarding necessary absences for religious or spiritual observances and are responsible for making up the work or exams according to an agreed-upon schedule¹.
 - b. Faculty are to excuse without penalty students who are absent from class because of religious observance, and to allow the make-up of work missed because of such absence. Examinations and special required out-of-class activities shall ordinarily not be scheduled on those days when religiously observant students refrain from participating in secular activities. Absences for reasons of religious or ceremonial obligation shall not be considered unexcused.
 - c. When scheduling tests, faculty members are encouraged to take cognizance of religious holy days which fall on University class days. In addition, faculty should include in their syllabi information regarding the policies for handling conflicts between classroom activities (attendance, tests, etc.) and religious and spiritual observance. Such policies must be consistent with University policies.²
2. Employment accommodations for religious holidays.
 - a. The University recognizes state holidays by closing all departments and offices except where continuous service is essential. These holidays are assigned by the State of Colorado or are UCCS assigned floating holidays. Floating holidays are assigned to specific days in order to maximize utility savings:
 - New Year's Day
 - Martin Luther King Day
 - Memorial Day
 - Independence Day
 - Labor Day
 - Thanksgiving Day
 - Day after Thanksgiving (President's Day observed)
 - Christmas Eve (Columbus Day observed)
 - Christmas Day
 - New Year's Eve (Veteran's Day observed)
 - b. Supervisors are to allow employees the use of vacation leave to be absent from work for religious observance on days they are normally scheduled to work. This does not apply to those positions designated as "essential services personnel" (see definitions).

¹ Adapted from Rutgers New Brunswick <http://scheduling.rutgers.edu/religious.shtml>

² Adapted from the University of Iowa

- c. At the option of the employee, supervisors are to allow employees absent from work for religious observance the opportunity to make up the work through an alternative work schedule. For non-exempt employees requesting an alternative work schedule, the time must be flexed over the work week in which the holiday was taken and in a manner that does not incur overtime compensation. The flex time would be in lieu of a vacation day. This does not apply to those positions designated as “essential services personnel” (see definitions).
 - d. When vacation leave or alternative work scheduling is not possible, a leave of absence without pay may be permitted. This does not apply to those positions designated as “essential services personnel” (see definitions).
 - e. Administrative time off is not an authorized accommodation for religious or spiritual observance.
 - f. Faculty members who wish to engage in religious or spiritual observance must arrange equivalent alternate instruction.
 - g. Officers, exempt professionals and classified staff are required to provide advance and timely notification to their supervisor in order for their request to be accommodated.
 - h. Student employees and other employees not eligible to earn vacation or holiday pay are to work with their supervisor on alternative scheduling options. Whenever possible, supervisors are to allow non-benefitted employees an opportunity to make up work through alternative work scheduling. Again, advance and timely notification to the supervisor is required.
3. Scheduling accommodations for University sponsored events for major religious holidays.
- a. In order to avoid conflicts in scheduling events that fall on major religious holidays, UCCS faculty, staff and student organizations and other programming groups are strongly urged to be mindful of major holy days in their scheduling³.
 - b. When scheduling event space through the University Center scheduling office, every reasonable effort will be made by scheduling staff to inform UCCS and other event planners of a potential conflict with a religious holiday. In addition to providing direction to multi-cultural calendars, the following non-inclusive list will be specifically referenced.⁴:

Rosh Hashanah	Jewish**
Eid al Fitr (End of Ramadan)	Islam*
Yom Kippur	Jewish**
Dusserah (Dushahara)	Hindu/Vedic
Diwali (Deepawali)	Hindu/Vedic
Ganesha Chaturthi	Hindu
Birth of the Bab	Baha’i***
Birth of Baha’u’llah	Baha’i***
Eid Al-Adha	Islam*
Feast of the Nativity (Christmas)	Roman Catholic, Protestant
Pesach	Jewish**
Good Friday	Roman Catholic, Protestant & Orthodox
Easter	Roman Catholic, Protestant & Orthodox

***Observance of Buddhist, Hindu/Vedic, and Islamic holy days is dependent on the sighting of the moon. Please note that the dates listed above may not be the**

³ Adapted from the University of Denver and the University of Iowa

⁴ Adapted from American University

exact dates but the closest approximates. Buddhists observe the new moon and full moon as holy days.

****Observance of Jewish holy days begins at sundown of preceding day and ends at one hour after sunset of the last day.**

*****Observance of Baha'i holy days begins at sundown of preceding day and ends at sunset of the holy days.⁵**

- c. The University Center scheduling office will make every attempt to include the following information on the scheduling reservation forms:

Event Planners,

To confirm that your event date does not conflict with a religious holiday, please reference the following websites:

<http://diversitynet.org/>

<http://interfaithcalendar.org/>

- 4. The Office of the Associate Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Inclusiveness will send electronic communication to faculty twice a year, in July and January, reminding faculty to be cognizant of scheduling class activities and exams on culturally significant days and referencing the above listed interfaith calendar sites.

III. KEY WORDS

- A. Colorado Personnel Rules and Administrative Procedures (Chapter 3)
- B. Essential Services Personnel
- C. Religious and spiritual observance

IV. RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES, FORMS, GUIDELINES, AND OTHER RESOURCES

- A. Administrative Policy Statements (APS) and Other Policies
 - 1. Campus policy 400-001 Facilities Use Policy
 - 2. Campus policy 300-004 Alternate Work Schedules
 - 3. Campus policy 200-018 Class Attendance
 - 4. UCCS Holiday Schedule
- B. Procedures
- C. Forms
- D. Guidelines
- E. Other Resources (i.e. training, secondary contact information)
 - 1. List of Religious Holidays, please see the Interfaith Calendar located at <http://www.interfaithcalendar.org>

⁵ Descriptions are from American University

F. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

V. HISTORY

Initial policy approval January 5, 2011