



OHIO
UNIVERSITY

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Date: October 7, 2019
To: Ohio University Faculty
From: Howard Dewald, Associate Provost for Faculty and Academic Planning

Subject: Religious Accommodations and *Faculty Handbook* Policy on Legitimate Absences

You are receiving this memorandum from a student in your class in respect and honor for religious diversity. It is likely that this student will miss certain class periods and possibly some assignments because of religious holy days coinciding with their classroom assignments.

Accordingly, absences for religious observance are considered university-sanctioned activities, as legitimate absences. The *Faculty Handbook* states in section VIII.C.3 “Students returning to a class after a legitimate absence can expect their instructor’s assistance within the limits of the instructor’s established attendance policy. In cases of legitimate absence—such as...University-sponsored activities—some accommodation... will be arranged subject to previously announced limitations.”

If you have an attendance policy, please note that the *Faculty Handbook* also states (section IV.B.3) “The policy must not contradict the student regulations on absences as given in the Undergraduate Catalog and reproduced herein (see Section VIII.C). Within their established attendance policies, instructors are expected to accommodate students returning to class after a legitimate (see Section VIII.C.5) absence. This accommodation may take the form of make-up work, recalculation of the student’s grade based on remaining work, or other means as specified in the policy.” To read the sections in full, you can access the Faculty Handbook online at:

<http://www.ohio.edu/facultysenate/handbook/current-handbook.cfm>

Please honor this language in the *Faculty Handbook*. Students should be given consideration and support for personal observation of religious holidays and religious expression with an accommodation and/or the opportunity to make up assignments within the parameters stated in your course syllabus. It is the responsibility of each student to ensure that you have notification of absences.

If you have questions regarding these handbook policies, or if I may assist you in addressing specific concerns you have regarding accommodations for students with religious observations, please do not hesitate to contact me (dewald@ohio.edu; 740-593-2577).

Thank you.

Howard Dewald