

Accommodations for Religious Observances Indiana University East

Introduction

It is the policy of Indiana University, as it is also federal law, that instructors must reasonably accommodate students who want to observe their religious holidays at times when academic requirements conflict with those observances. University Faculty Council requires each campus to determine procedures for implementing this policy. Therefore, the Faculty Affairs Committee recommends adoption of the following policy and procedures.

Policy

Indiana University respects the right of all students to observe their religious holidays and will make reasonable accommodation, upon request, for such observances.

Procedures

The Office of Academic Affairs will prepare a list of dates for the major religious holidays (as specified by leaders of the local religious communities). This list will be included each semester in the *Schedule of Classes* along with this policy and with a note to the effect that students wanting accommodations for observance of other religious holidays should contact their instructors. The Office of Academic Affairs will send out, well in advance of any given semester, the dates of those same holidays, with the added information that detailed descriptions of the major holidays and of what is or may be involved in the observance of them is available on the IU web pages. The Office of Academic Affairs will write regularly to the various deans and chairs, indicating that they, in turn, are to inform the faculty under their supervision concerning this policy and of the importance of observing it.

If a conflict with a religious observance exists, a student must normally make a written request for an accommodation for that observance at least two weeks before the date of the observance. In the case of events occurring in the first two weeks of classes, or if the instructor announces an examination, quiz, or deadline less than two weeks in advance, the request should be made as soon as possible. The written request should specify the name and date of the religious holiday and the reason for the conflict (e.g., because work is prohibited on this holiday); it may also suggest a specific accommodation, such as a make-up exam. The Office of Academic Affairs will develop a request form to be used for this purpose, and copies of that form will be made widely available.

The instructor and the student should discuss what a reasonable accommodation should include in a given case. Generally, it is insufficient to require a student to forego taking an exam or doing some other major assignment even if the instructor agrees to average the remaining exams or other assignments. The student must be given the opportunity to do appropriate make-up work that is intrinsically no more difficult than the original exam or assignment.

If the instructor and student agree on the accommodation, the plan should be carried out.

If, after discussion, there is no consensus on the accommodation, the instructor must state in writing what accommodation he or she will allow. The student may appeal the instructor's decision to the chairperson of the division, the Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs, and the Admissions and Academic Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate, in that order.

This policy is to be fully implemented in time for it to go into effect in Fall 2002. Partial implementation of it will begin as soon as possible.

Recommendations:

We recommend that the policy and procedure above be printed in a revised version of the *Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct*.

All instructors are encouraged to include on the syllabus and to announce at the beginning of the semester the policy and procedure as it applies to religious holidays. We recommend that orientation programs for new students inform incoming students about this policy and urge them to check for conflicts before the deadline for informing their instructors.

Adopted by IUE Faculty Senate, December 11, 2001