

# ACADEMIC RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS

## Academic Religious Accommodations For Students

*The information below is accurate as of the date of publication of the Bulletin. For the current version of the University's Academic Religious Accommodations Process for Students, please visit the Academic Religious Accommodations webpage (<https://studentaffairs.du.edu/get-connected-support/request-accommodation-religious-observance/>).*

*The process below addresses students' requests for religious accommodations in the academic context. Students seeking accommodations for a disability, medical, and/or mental health condition should contact Accessible DU: Student Disabilities Services (SDS) (<https://studentaffairs.du.edu/disability-services-program/>).*

The University is committed to creating and maintaining a welcoming and inclusive learning environment in which students are treated with dignity, decency, and respect. The University honors and respects students' observance of sincerely held religious beliefs or practices. As part of this commitment, the University provides reasonable accommodations for students' observance of sincerely held religious beliefs or practices through the process set forth below.

The University recognizes that some courses are regularly scheduled at times or employ overall delivery methods or pedagogies that may conflict with a student's sincerely held religious beliefs or practices. In such cases, the student is encouraged to register for alternate course sections or courses.

When considering a request for a religious accommodation, the University

- will not grant an accommodation that would fundamentally alter the educational program or academic requirements that are essential to a program of study or to fulfill licensing requirements.
- may select any accommodation that eliminates the conflict with the student's observance of sincerely held religious beliefs or practices, and the University is not required to accept the student's requested, preferred accommodation.

## Academic Religious Accommodations Process

### Student Responsibilities:

To request academic religious accommodations, a student must follow the process below:

#### 1. Identify Potential Conflicts with Observance of Sincerely Held Religious Beliefs or Practices

By the end of the second week of a course, and in advance of any requested accommodation(s), students are expected to examine the course syllabus to identify potential conflicts with the student's observance of sincerely held religious beliefs or practices. In the case of exams or assignments that are added to the syllabus or otherwise announced after the first two weeks of the course, students should identify potential conflicts with their observance of sincerely held religious beliefs or practices as soon as possible and in advance of the requested accommodation(s).

For courses that are shorter than the traditional quarter or semester, within the first week of the course, and in advance of any requested accommodation(s), students are expected to examine the course syllabus to identify potential conflicts with the student's observance of sincerely held religious beliefs or practices. In the case of exams or assignments that are added to the syllabus or otherwise announced after the first week of the course, students should identify potential conflicts with their observance of sincerely held religious beliefs or practices as soon as possible and in advance of the requested accommodation(s).

Requests for accommodations for an internship, externship, field placement, or other practical learning experience outside the classroom will be assessed on an individual, case-by-case basis in consultation with the University placement supervisor and the field placement supervisor. Students who receive an accommodation may be required to make up the hours or work that they missed from an internship, externship, field placement, or other practical learning experience. Students who have conflicts with the overall schedule for an internship, externship, field placement, or other practical learning experience are encouraged to consider scheduling the internship, externship, field placement, or other practical learning experience at another time. The student should consult with the University placement supervisor for the program regarding such scheduling needs.

#### 2. Submit Religious Accommodations Request

Students must complete and submit the Student Academic Religious Accommodations Request online (<https://studentaffairs.du.edu/get-connected-support/request-accommodation-religious-observance/>), which alerts the student's instructor(s) and Director of Spiritual Life to the request. If a student does not receive a response from their instructor(s), the student should follow up with the instructor(s) or the Director of Spiritual Life. If the request is denied, the student may submit an appeal as described below.

#### 3. Address Missed Material/Assignments If an Accommodation is Granted

Students are responsible for fulfilling the course requirements, including obtaining the materials and information provided during any missed class(es), and for working with course instructors in advance on an appropriate timeline to submit any missed assignments, take any exams, or complete organized activities.

## **Instructor Responsibilities:**

### 1. Check Email for Student Religious Accommodations Requests

Instructors will receive an email when a student in their class has submitted a Student Academic Religious Accommodations Request related to their course. The Director of Spiritual Life will also receive an email about the request and is available to consult with the instructor regarding the request.

### 2. Review the Request

Instructors must promptly consider the request and determine whether the accommodation is reasonable and does not fundamentally alter the curriculum or academic program. The instructor should evaluate the request on a case-by-case basis, taking into account relevant factors including, but not limited to:

- the fundamental requirements of the applicable academic program and/or related technical standards;
- the requirements of the course;
- the requirements of the department or major;
- the potential effects of the accommodation on the individual student and fellow students;
- the duration of the accommodation request; and
- the availability of alternative accommodations.

If an instructor needs assistance in evaluating a request, they may contact the Director of Spiritual Life.

### 3. If Granting a Requested Accommodation

If an instructor grants the requested accommodation (without modification), the instructor must notify the student that the accommodation is granted and notify the student of the opportunity to submit the missed assignments, take any exams, or complete organized activities, as applicable. In providing this opportunity to complete missed work, the instructor should provide options that are substantially equivalent to the original assignment, exam, or activity.

### 4. If Offering an Alternative Accommodation or Denying a Requested Accommodation

If an instructor is planning to offer an alternative accommodation or deny a request for religious accommodation, before contacting the student with their final decision, the instructor should consult with the Director of Spiritual Life.

## **Appeals Process for Students**

A student may appeal an instructor's decision denying a request for religious accommodation in writing to the department chair, or program director, as applicable, within five (5) Business Days of receiving the instructor's decision. The department chair or program director must: (a) consult with the Director of Spiritual Life and/or the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs or their designee; and (b) within five (5) Business Days of receiving the appeal, issue a decision in writing, which shall include the reasons for the decision.

A student may appeal the decision of the department chair or program director in writing to the dean of the appropriate academic unit (or the dean's designee) within five (5) Business Days of receiving the decision. The dean (or designee) must: (a) consult with the Director of Spiritual Life and/or the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs or their designee; and (b) within five (5) Business Days of receiving the appeal, issue a decision in writing, which shall include the reasons for the decision.

The decision of the dean (or designee) is final.

For purposes of this appeals process, Business Day refers to any weekday Monday through Friday in which the University is in operation, including days when the University is in operation, but classes are not in session. For example, University holidays are not Business Days.

### *CONCERNS OF DISCRIMINATION OR HARASSMENT*

*Students who believe that they have experienced discrimination or harassment may contact the Office of Equal Opportunity & Title IX (<https://www.du.edu/equalopportunity/>).*