

3354:1-60-04.1 Religious Accommodations Procedure

(A) Religious Accommodation Requests for students.

(1) The College is committed to making reasonable accommodations for the religious identities of its students and prevent adverse academic consequences based upon religious beliefs or observances that conflict with academic requirements.

(2) In accordance with Ohio's Testing your Faith Act, the College shall permit a student to be absent for up to three days each academic semester to take holidays for reasons of faith, or religious or spiritual belief system, or to participate in organized religious activities conducted by a religious denomination, church or other religious or spiritual organization. The College will not impose an academic penalty as a result of a student being absent as permitted by Ohio law.

(a) Students seeking an accommodation for absences permitted under Ohio's Testing Your Faith Act must provide the instructor with written notice of the specific dates for which the student requires an accommodation and must do so not later than fourteen (14) days after the first day of instruction.

(b) The College shall provide accommodations for examinations and other academic requirements missed due to absence(s) permitted by Ohio's Testing your Faith Act.

(c) A student who believes they have not received an excused absence, accommodation, or feel they experienced an adverse academic penalty as a result of an absence or accommodation permitted by Ohio law, may file a complaint with the College as detailed in section (D) of this procedure.

(3) Students who seek a reasonable religious accommodation not covered by Ohio's Testing Your Faith Act should make the request for accommodation directly to their course instructor. In the request, the student must include an explanation of the conflict that exists, as well as the requested accommodation. The student should make the request to the course instructor as early as possible; preferably within the first week of the course. Certain programs may require accommodations to be made at the start of the semester. A course instructor shall not question the sincerity of a student's religious or spiritual belief system when evaluating a religious accommodation request.

(a) The course instructor will determine the reasonableness of accommodations on an individual basis and depending on the circumstances, which may include the type of program, the duration of the course, and the nature of the accommodation requested. The College will make a good faith effort to accommodate the student's request unless such an accommodation would create an undue hardship or would fundamentally alter the nature of the program or course in question.

(b) Examples of accommodations include, but are not limited to, rescheduling an exam or giving the student a make-up exam, adjusting a due date, or assigning make-up work that is no more difficult than the original assignment. Accommodations that involve an alternative examination time or date must be provided in a comparable format and difficulty to the examination given to the entire class.

(c) Course instructors who determine the request is reasonable may approve the request. An instructor may not unilaterally deny a request for a religious accommodation and must consult with their Associate Dean if they have concerns about the student's requested accommodation. Associate Deans are encouraged to consult with the Executive Director of Diversity & Inclusion or Legal Services for additional guidance regarding the requested accommodation.

(d) The course instructor will inform the student in writing if their request was approved, denied, or if the College will provide an alternative accommodation to the one requested. The College may provide an alternative reasonable accommodation rather than the student's proposed accommodation, so long as it still allows for the student to observe or practice their religious belief.

(B) Religious Accommodations for students in Clinical Education settings.

Students who believe they need a reasonable religious accommodation in a clinical setting must inform their program director, or College employee in an equivalent position, in writing of the need for the accommodation prior to the start of the clinical experience. The College requests, but does not require, that the student submit their request at least five (5) business days before the start of the clinical experience. The program director will consult with the College's Executive Director of Diversity & Inclusion or Legal Services, as needed. The College will make a good faith effort to notify and work with clinical education partners (i.e. hospitals, schools, internship providers, etc.) to provide reasonable religious accommodations in the clinical environment that do not create an undue hardship on the clinical facility.

(C) Religious Accommodations for employees.

(1) In accordance with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Cuyahoga Community College (the “College”) will reasonably accommodate the religious beliefs, observances, and practices of its employees, e.g., accommodate a religious belief, observance, or practice which conflicts with an employment requirement, provided the accommodation does not pose an undue hardship on the College.

(2) Employees must direct requests for accommodation via email to the College’s Manager of Employee and Labor Relations. An employee may request an accommodation(s) that is for a specific, limited period of time or one that is continuous. If the proposed accommodation involves time off work, the College requests, but does not require, that the employee submit the request seven (7) business days prior to any missed days. The College may require that the employee utilize paid time off for an accommodation that involves an absence from work. The College will provide reasonable accommodations if it can do so without undue hardship on the conduct of College operations.

(3) The Manager of Employee and Labor Relations or their designee will review submitted requests for accommodation as timely as staff and resources allow, consult with the Executive Director of Diversity & Inclusion, as appropriate, and use reasonable efforts to issue a determination within a reasonable time such that the College may fairly evaluate the request. The College will determine the reasonableness of an accommodation on an individual basis and depending on the circumstances. The College may provide an alternative reasonable accommodation rather than employee’s proposed accommodation, so long as it still allows for the employee to observe or practice their religious belief.

(D) Complaint Procedure

(1) Students who disagree with a determination regarding a request for religious accommodation must file an appeal within 10 (ten) business days of the date the College issues its decision. The appeal must be requested, in writing, to the Dean of Academic Affairs at the faculty’s campus of record. The Dean of Academic Affairs, or their designee, with assistance from the Office of Legal Services, as necessary, may confirm the decision of the course instructor or overturn the decision and approve the initially requested accommodation or an alternative accommodation. The Dean of Academic Affairs or their designee will issue their determination within fifteen (15) business days of receiving the appeal.

- (2) Employees who disagree with a determination regarding a request for a religious accommodation must file an appeal within 10 (ten) business days of the date the College issues its decision. The appeal must be requested, in writing, to the College's Vice President of Human Resources. The Vice President of Human Resources or their designee, with assistance from the Office of Legal Services, as necessary, may confirm the decision of the Manager of Labor Relations or overturn the decision and approve the initially requested accommodation or an alternative accommodation. The Vice President of Human Resources will issue its determination within fifteen (15) business days of receiving the appeal.
- (3) Employees and students who disagree with a determination regarding a request for a religious accommodation, and who believe they have been treated in a discriminatory manner, should follow the complaint process detailed in the College's Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, Title IX and Retaliation Complaint Procedure (3354: 1-60-02).
- (E) The president or the president's designee is hereby directed to take all steps necessary and appropriate for the effective implementation of this procedure.

Effective date: March 30, 2023
Procedure amplifies: 3354:1-60-04