



UT Health Science Center:

SA107 Accommodations for Religious Beliefs Practices and Observances

Version 1

Publication Date: 05/27/2022

No./Title: SA107 – ACCOMMODATIONS FOR RELIGIOUS BELIEFS, PRACTICES & OBSERVANCES	Resp. Office: STUDENT AFFAIRS Approval Body: CASA	Effective Date: 12/18/2012
Category: Students	Last Review: 03/05/2019	Next Review: 03/05/2022
Contact: Darrylann Todd, Associate Vice Chancellor Student Affairs Office	 901.448.2010	 dtodd7@uthsc.edu
Related Information:	More information is also available at http://www.uthsc.edu/oed/file-complaint.php .	

POLICY

The University of Tennessee Health Science Center acknowledges the diversity of its students and respects the rights of students to observe their religious beliefs and practices. UTHSC will endeavor to provide reasonable accommodations relating to religious beliefs and practices in response to a formal written student request. However, accommodations cannot be guaranteed in instances where such would create an undue burden on faculty, a disproportionate negative effect on other students who are participating in the scheduled educational activity or jeopardize patient care.

PROCEDURE

Students beginning new programs or courses of study in a particular college will be advised by that college as to college-, program- or course-specific procedures that should be followed to obtain an accommodation for religious practices or observances. Students are encouraged to be proactive in reviewing college-, program- and course-specific assignments/activities in advance of matriculation/registration to determine whether these requirements might in some way conflict with their religious beliefs, practices or observances. Should such conflicts be in evidence, students should discuss possible options with the appropriate college official or faculty member. Reasonable accommodations may not be feasible in instances where there is a direct and insurmountable conflict between religious beliefs or observances and requirements of a given program.

It is the student's responsibility to make arrangements with the course instructor or clerkship/experiential director within 30 days or as defined by the college, in advance of the religious holiday during which the student is requesting to be accommodated. It is also the student's responsibility to meet all course obligations. Such requests are required for any and all educational activities scheduled for the date(s) in question, e.g. classroom exercises, laboratory assignments, exams, clinical/experiential assignments, etc. Finally, students are obligated to abide by the policies and procedures on religious practices and observances of any given patient-care institution (i.e., hospital, clinical setting) in which they are completing a portion of their educational experience. If a potential conflict between a student's religious beliefs, practices or observations and institutional policy is identified, the student is to bring such to the attention of the clerkship/experiential director as soon as possible.

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It is the course instructor or clerkship/experiential director's responsibility to negotiate with a student the parameters of reasonable accommodations. The accommodations should be no more difficult than the originally scheduled activity or assignment, and the student should be given a reasonable amount of time to make up the assignment. Instructors or experiential directors are not obligated to provide materials or experiences to students that would not normally be provided to all other students. In the event a student and instructor or clerkship/experiential director cannot reach an agreement regarding reasonable accommodations, the student may request a review of the request by a designated college official. The designated college official must handle requests for reasonable academic accommodation for religious observance in a confidential manner. If upon a good faith evaluation of the course/assignment objectives the designated college official does not believe a reasonable academic accommodation is possible, the designated college official must contact the Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) before denying the request.

Any student who believes his or her religious beliefs and/or practices are not being accommodated or who has experienced discrimination or harassment on the basis of religion may report a violation of this policy to the Office of Equity and Diversity at (901) 448-2112 or hsc-oed@uthsc.edu. The Office of Equity and Diversity is available to provide guidance and direction regarding accommodations for religious beliefs, practices and observances. More information is also available at <http://www.uthsc.edu/oed/file-complaint.php>.

Suggested Syllabus Statement:

OED recommends that faculty members include information in course syllabi to alert students to their rights and responsibilities as relates to academic accommodations for religious observance. The following is a sample statement:

Students who wish to request academic accommodation for a religious observance should complete and download the form accessible at <http://uthsc.edu/oed/documents/religious-accommodation-request-form.pdf>,

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and submit the completed form within 30 days or as defined by the college to the Assistant/Associate Dean of Student/Academic Affairs. If you have questions or concerns about your request, you can contact the Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) at hsc-oed@uthsc.edu or 901-448-2112. Accommodations do not relieve you of the responsibility for completion of any part of the coursework/clinical rotation you miss as the result of a religious observance.

APPROVAL HISTORY

Effective: December 18, 2012

Revision: November 2, 2015, Committee on Academic and Student Affairs (CASA)

Approved: November 9, 2015, Chancellor

Revised: March 5, 2019, CASA

Approved: March 25, 2019, Chancellor