

POLICY ON RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS

Questions and Answers

1. Why did GU adopt a new policy?

In the 2019 legislative session, the Washington State Legislature passed and Governor Inslee signed into law [Substitute Senate Bill 5166](#) that amends [RCW 28.10.039](#) and requires colleges and universities to adopt policies requiring faculty to reasonably accommodate students who, due to the observance of religious holidays, expect to be absent or endure a significant hardship during certain days of the academic course or program. The University's "Policy on Religious Accommodations for Students" is consistent with RCW 28.10.039.

2. Does the Office of Inclusive Excellence have to approve the accommodations requested by a student?

Each request is reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Faculty determine the academic impact regarding the academic program. Under the policy and state law ([RCW 28.10.039](#)), the University is required to reasonably accommodate students who, due to the observance of religious holidays, expect to be absent or endure significant hardship during certain days of the academic course or program. The University, however, is not required to implement a requested accommodation if it (a) fundamentally alters the academic course or program or (b) creates an undue hardship on the University. To determine whether a requested accommodation fundamentally alters the academic course or program, faculty may evaluate the impact on the standards or structure of the course or program. Prior to determining the existence of an undue hardship, faculty should consult with their dean. The Office of Inclusive Excellence will engage all parties when reviewing accommodation requests.

3. Are faculty required to notify students of the policy?

Yes, faculty are required to notify students of the policy by including a copy of the policy or a link to the policy in their course syllabi. This is a specific requirement under the amended RCW 28.10.039. The Gonzaga policy is available at <https://www.gonzaga.edu/academics/academic-resources/registrars-office/policies-procedures/academic-policies-procedures>

4. How do students submit a request for a Religious accommodation?

The student fills out the Student Religious Accommodation Request Form (located at <https://www.gonzaga.edu/academics/academic-resources/registrars-office/policies-procedures/academic-policies-procedures> under the Religious Accommodations for Students Policy menu) and submits the request to the course instructor within the first two (2) weeks of the semester. A separate form must be submitted to each instructor from whom the student is making a request. The Office of Inclusive Excellence will notify the student of their decision within five (5) calendar days of receiving the request.

5. Who do I contact if I have questions about the policy?

Please contact the Office of Inclusive Excellence at InclusiveExcellence@Gonzaga.edu or College Hall, 240.

6. Is there an appeals process?

Students may appeal a decision regarding a request to the Provost at Provost@Gonzaga.edu.