

# REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT FOR STUDENT RELIGIOUS BELIEFS PROCEDURE

This procedure exists to facilitate the adjustment for student religious beliefs within instructional and student activities.

Students who have religious beliefs, dress and/or practices that require exemption from participation in specific classroom activities, examinations, or other academic requirements or an absence will be subject to the following rules.

## Student Responsibilities

1. Students are responsible to meet with the relevant instructor/staff member to discuss their request for an adjustment based on their religious beliefs. This should occur after course competencies, curriculum, and expectations have been discussed with the class. If the adjustment involves modifications to a student's schedule, the student should provide the proposed modifications to the instructor at the start of the term/class/activity.
2. A student whose religious practice conflicts with an academic/event requirement is responsible for notifying the instructor/staff of their request for an adjustment at least one week prior to the event, unless such notice is impracticable under the circumstances. If the student's religious practice conflicts with the course calendar requirements and the student wishes to request an adjustment, that student must make the request in writing prior to the date of the assessment or activity.

## Instructor/Staff Member Responsibilities

The instructor or staff member is expected to treat information conveyed by a student about his/her religious beliefs as confidential to the extent practicable.

Reasonable adjustments for religious beliefs may include, but are not limited to:

- Allowance for University approved absences from class;
- Ability to reschedule academic work or deadlines;
- Permitting dress or grooming related to religious beliefs; or
- Access to private spaces for prayer.

The instructor or staff member and the student should discuss what a reasonable adjustment should include in all given cases. At a minimum, reasonable adjustments must provide that the student who is absent on days of examinations or class assignments or activities due to a religious observance for which an adjustment was approved will have an opportunity to make up the work or activity without penalty.

The College will allow dress or grooming related to religious beliefs so long as they do not pose a safety hazard in the instructional environment.

If the instructor or staff member and student agree upon a reasonable adjustment, the adjustment is then documented by the instructor or staff member via a written email or letter to the student and is forwarded to the

Director of Diversity, Accessibility and Student Support for final approval for implementation.

The instructor may appropriately respond if the student does not satisfactorily complete any alternative assignment or examination provided as part of the reasonable adjustment. In the case of the agreed upon adjustment of a student activity, if a student does not follow through on the completion of the activity as agreed upon in the adjustment, the staff member will have no further obligation to offer another substitute activity.

Excused absences from classes or examinations for religious observances will be counted against the mandatory program hours attendance requirements. Excused absences do not relieve students from responsibility for any part of the course work required during the period of absence.

If the instructor or staff member denies the student request for a reasonable adjustment, or only agrees to provide an adjustment that is unsatisfactory to the student, the student and the instructor will meet with the Dean/Director for the instructional/functional area.

If the parties cannot reach a consensus, the student may file a written grievance directly to the Director of Diversity, Accessibility and Student Support (Equal Opportunity Officer for Students) within five calendar days after the meeting with the Department Dean.

Upon receipt of a written complaint, the Director for Diversity, Accessibility and Student Support will schedule a conference with the student and the instructor. The student and the instructor will each be given an opportunity to present their respective positions in person. The Director will use reasonable efforts to resolve the appeal and issue a written decision prior to the date of the relevant religious observance.

A student adversely affected by the decision of the Director for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion may appeal that decision, in writing, to the Moraine Park Technical College District Board within 30 calendar days of issuance of the decision. The Board hearing and decision shall be subject to review pursuant to Chapter 227 of the Wisconsin Statutes and Chapter WTCS (Wisconsin Technical College System) 4 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code.