




FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
OFFICE OF FACULTY DEVELOPMENT AND ADVANCEMENT

MEMORANDUM

To: Deans, Directors, and Department Chairs

From: Janet Kistner 
Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement

Date: Monday, August 15, 2019

Subject: Policy on Observance of Religious Holy Days

Florida State University welcomes students, faculty, and staff of all religious faiths and is committed to accommodating class absences stemming from observance of religious holy days. The policy below is intended to delineate what rights must be granted to students who wish to observe a holy day, not to restrict instructors in granting flexibility to students. With that purpose in mind, please attend to the University policy on the observance of holy days and remind your faculty members and instructional staff of this policy. All reasonable efforts should be made to ensure that observers of religious holy days are not penalized for absences created by holy day observance. The policy is located in the *Faculty Handbook* at <http://facultyhandbook.fsu.edu/>, Section 7, under *Religious Holy Days*, and in the *General Bulletin* at <http://registrar.fsu.edu/bulletin/undergraduate/information/integrity/>. *Note: This language takes precedence over the 2019-20 Bulletin, which was published before temporary changes took effect.* This memorandum will be posted on the Office of Faculty Development and Advancement website at <http://fda.fsu.edu/> under *Academic Resources* in *Academic Policies*.

Instructors should avoid scheduling important academic assessments during holy days typically observed by students.

Florida State University policy on student observance of religious holy days provides:

1. Each student shall, upon notifying their instructor as soon as possible upon receipt of the course syllabus, but no later than two weeks before the religious holy day observance, be excused from class to observe a religious holy day of their faith.
2. While the student will be held responsible for the material covered in their absence, each student shall be permitted a reasonable amount of time to make up the work missed.
3. Instructors and University administrators shall in no way arbitrarily penalize students who are absent from academic or social activities because of religious holy day observance.

Two links will be helpful to instructors as they respond to students requesting to be absent: <https://interfaithcouncil.fsu.edu/> and <https://diversity.missouri.edu/religions/holidays.php>.

Students who believe that this policy has been improperly applied in specific instances should be referred to the Grievance Procedure in the *General Bulletin* at <http://registrar.fsu.edu/bulletin/undergraduate/information/integrity/>.

Florida State University policy also provides that "a faculty member who wishes to observe a religious holy day shall notify the department chair or academic dean as soon as possible in order that arrangements may be made for the meeting of classes and the performance of other scheduled activities."

cc: Provost Sally McRorie
Vice Presidents
Dr. Kimberly Barber, Registrar
Dr. Kristine Harper, Faculty Senate President and Professor
Renisha Gibbs, Associate Vice President