

William Paterson University Policy

University Policy

SUBJECT:	University Religious Inclusion Policy		TITLE:	University Religious Inclusion Policy	
CATEGORY:	Board of Trustees	University	Functional	School/Unit	
Check One	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Responsible Executive:	Chief Diversity Officer		Responsible Office:	Equity & Inclusion	
CODING:		ADOPTED:	2/25/25	AMENDED:	

I. PURPOSE

This Religious Inclusion Policy (“Policy”) acknowledges that many University students, staff and faculty observe religious traditions from a variety of religions. As a proud and diverse community, William Paterson University is committed to advancing our mission to support an inclusive environment.

II. ACCOUNTABILITY

The Chief Diversity Officer is responsible for oversight of this policy.

III. APPLICABILITY

Religious Inclusion: Requests for religious inclusion should be supported unless they cause undue hardship to the University’s operational needs or academic requirements.

Reasonable requests to support religious inclusion may include approving individual leave for religious observances, providing a time and place to pray, or allowing the flexibility to wear religious attire to work. Other examples of requests to support inclusion for religious beliefs might include scheduling changes, voluntary substitutions of shifts or hours with supervisory approval, and appropriate job reassignments.

For students, requests to support religious inclusion may include an absence or modification of a submission of an assignment, including rescheduling an exam or giving the student a make-up exam, allowing an individual or group presentation to be made on a different date, adjusting a due date or assigning the student appropriate (to be determined by the professor) make-up work that is intrinsically no more difficult than the original assignment. Student employees may likewise speak with supervisors to request schedule changes for religious reasons.

IV. DEFINITION(S) (THIS SECTION IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.)

V. BACKGROUND

Possessing and mastering a range of thoughtful perspectives is necessary for open inquiry and a healthy community. Recognizing this, William Paterson University seeks to include, engage, and support a diverse group of students, faculty, and staff. The institution values a multiplicity of opinions and backgrounds and is dedicated to incorporating multiple voices and experiences into every aspect of its operations. We are committed to building institutional capacity by providing an inclusive environment for all.

While only religious holidays recognized by the State of New Jersey have official status at the University, when scheduling major university-wide events (as well as department and unit activities), planners should consult this list of religious holidays to help avoid scheduling events that conflict with religious holidays or

observances. <https://www.wpunj.edu/osdi/Religious-and-Spiritual-Resources/>

VI. POLICY

Individuals may not be discriminated against because of their religious beliefs or practices, or because they lack religious beliefs or practices. Anyone who believes they have been discriminated against by the denial of a request to take leave or some modification based on a religious observance may contact the Office of Institutional Equity & Diversity at 973-720-2851.

VII. PROCEDURES TO REQUEST RELIGIOUS BASED SCHEDULE MODIFICATIONS

Staff and faculty should make schedule modification requests based on religious observance directly to their supervisors with as much notice as possible. A supervisor may only deny leave when an employee's absence from work would create undue hardship on the department's operations.

Depending on the situation and with supervisory approval, an employee requesting schedule modification based on a religious observance may use accumulated leave such as vacation, compensatory time, or leave without pay. In some circumstances, the leave may take the form of an alternative work schedule approved in advance by the employee's supervisor.

Students must make their schedule modification requests based on a religious observance to the instructor or faculty member in charge of the course. Students are asked to examine the course syllabus for potential conflicts at the start of the semester and promptly notify the instructor of any anticipated needs, providing as much notice as possible. If an instructor asks that requests be made in a certain way (such as by e mail), the student is expected to make the request in that manner. Students are responsible for arranging in advance to make up missed work or material in a timely manner.

Nothing in this policy exempts a student from meeting course requirements or

completing assignments. The faculty member may respond appropriately if the student fails to satisfactorily complete the make-up assignment or exam.