



Approving University Official(s): Academic Council, Academic Cabinet, Board of Governors
Responsible Office: Dean of Student Success, Academic Accommodations and Accessibility Office
Effective date: March 23, 2016
Last Reviewed Date: December 20, 2021
Next review date: 3 years

[AD- Accommodations for Religious Observances Policy]

Purpose

This Accommodations for Religious Observances Policy (the “Policy”) identifies the ways Yorkville University and Toronto Film School, and their affiliates (collectively, “Yorkville”) meet their commitment to providing Accommodation measures related to the practice of Religious Observances.

Audience

This policy relates to all students in all diploma and degree programs at Yorkville.

Definitions

Capitalized terms used throughout this Policy are defined below:

- Accommodation is an adaptation or adjustment made to enable a person to perform the essential duties or requirements of a position.
- Creed/Religion a comprehensive and overarching system of beliefs that govern one’s conduct and practices. It also relates to having a sincerely, freely, and deeply held belief system, and includes Indigenous spirituality. This may include affiliation/connection to an organization or community that professes a shared system of belief. Creed is integrally linked to a person’s self-definition and spiritual fulfilment, and addresses ultimate questions of human existence, including ideas about life, purpose, death, and the existence

or non-existence of a creator and/or a higher or different order of existence.

Religious Observance refers to commitments or obligations based on a person's religion or creed. This can include, but it is not limited to, the celebration of religious holidays, requirements concerning attire, prohibitions, or observances related to events (ex. death of a family member).

*The President may direct that definitions be amended from time to time to ensure consistency with public policy and community expectations and standards.

Policy Statement

Yorkville welcomes and includes students, staff, and faculty from a wide range of backgrounds, cultural traditions, Creeds, and Religions. It is Yorkville's policy to arrange reasonable Accommodation for the needs of students who observe religious holy days other than those already accommodated by ordinary scheduling and statutory holidays.

It is important that no student be seriously disadvantaged because of their Religious Observances. However, in the scheduling of academic and other activities, it is also important to ensure that the Accommodation of one group does not seriously disadvantage other groups within the Yorkville communities or cause undue hardship to Yorkville. When a student does not request accommodation within the period of time that corresponds to the initial 20% of the course's term or where accommodating the request would cause undue hardship to Yorkville or other students, the request might be denied. However, every reasonable effort will be made to provide Accommodations. If compulsory activities are unavoidable, every reasonable opportunity will be given to these students to make up work that they miss. When the scheduling of tests or examinations cannot be avoided, students will be informed of the procedure to be followed to arrange to write at an alternate time.

Yorkville also recognizes that religious and spiritual calendars operate on different cycles and that flexibility may be required with respect to holidays that cannot be precisely determined due to their tentative nature (i.e. holidays based on lunar calendars, etc.). Yorkville also recognizes that each individual's needs are unique and must be considered afresh when an Accommodation is requested, as an arrangement that might work for one individual may not work for others.

Responsibilities

Curriculum Managers and Production and Development

Those responsible for the design and publication of course syllabi and material in the learning management system are responsible for:

- Including in syllabi and online course sites a notice advising students that they will be given the opportunity to make up work or examinations without penalty that are missed due to Religious Observances;
- Advising students in syllabi and online course sites of their obligation to notify the Academic Accommodations and Accessibility Office and the Student Success Centre's academic accommodations and success specialists that they will be absent or unable to meet a course obligation due to Religious Observances within the period of time that corresponds to the initial 20% of the course's term; and
- Specifying in syllabi, course schedules, and online course sites dates and times for examinations and other major course obligations.

Faculty

Faculty who have the role of an instructor of a course are responsible for:

- Reminding students of the dates and time for examination and other major course obligations at the beginning of the semester;
- Advising students of their obligation to notify the Student Success Centre's academic accommodation and accessibility specialists that they will be absent due to a Religious Observance; and
- Advise students that they will be given the opportunity to make up work or examinations without penalty if they choose to observe a Religious Observance.

Students

Students who will be absent or unable to meet a course obligation because of Religious Observances are responsible for:

- Advising the Academic Accommodations and Accessibility Office and the Student Success Centre's academic accommodations and success specialists of the need for an accommodation within the period of time that corresponds to the initial 20% of the course's term.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Office

The Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Office will maintain a yearly Diversity Calendar on MyYU/MyTFS which is accessible by all faculty, students and staff. Faculty, students and staff may refer to it when planning in advance for days of Religious Observance and any related absences.

Implementation

Please refer to the Accommodation of Religious Observances Procedures document.

Related Information

Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures
Student Code of Conduct
Academic Accommodations and Accessibility Policy and Procedures
Accessibility Policies

Contacts

The following [individual(s)/office(s)] can address questions regarding this policy:

Accessibility and Academic Accommodations Office

Email: accessibility@yorkvilleu.ca

Revision Log

V1 December 20, 2021

Policy URL

<https://www.yorkvilleu.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Accommodations-for-Religious-Observances-Policy.pdf>