

3341-3-82 Ohio Public Policy on Student Religious Accommodations.

Applicability	All University Students, Faculty, and Staff
Responsible Unit	Office of the Provost
Policy Administrator	Provost

(A) Policy Statement and Purpose

This University policy affirms the public policy principles set forth in Ohio Revised Code 3345.024. That statute requires each state institution of higher education to adopt a policy that reasonably accommodates the sincerely held religious beliefs and practices of individual students with regard to all examinations or other academic requirements and absences for reasons of faith or religious or spiritual belief system.

(B) Policy Scope

This policy pertains to course absences and examinations and other academic requirements and applies to all enrolled students of Bowling Green State University and all University faculty and staff.

Employment-related religious accommodations for student employees of the University are addressed by section (G) of this policy.

(C) Definitions

- (1) An “Excused Absence” is an absence taken under Section (D)(1) of this policy.
- (2) An “instructor” means any person, whether or not the person is compensated by the University, who is tasked with providing scholarship, academic research, or teaching. For purposes of this policy, the term "instructor" includes tenured and nontenured professors, adjunct professors, visiting professors, graduate student

instructors, and those in comparable positions, however titled. For purposes of this section, the term "instructor" does not include persons whose primary responsibilities are administrative or managerial unless the matter involves a course in which the person is the instructor of record.

- (3) An "other academic requirement" is any required academic assignment, including homework, projects, and presentations.

(D) Policy

- (1) Excused Absence

A student may be absent for up to three days each academic semester to take holidays for reasons of faith or religious or spiritual belief system or participate in organized activities conducted under the auspices of a religious denomination, church, or other religious or spiritual organization.

The University shall not impose an academic penalty as a result of a student being absent as permitted in this policy.

- (2) Alternative Accommodations

The University shall provide a student with alternative accommodations with regard to examinations and other academic requirements missed due to an Excused Absence if both of the following apply:

- (a) The student's sincerely held religious belief or practice severely affects the student's ability to take an examination or meet an academic requirement; and

- (b) Not later than fourteen calendar days after the first day of instruction in a particular course, the student provides the instructor with written notice of the specific dates for which the student requests alternative accommodations.

- (3) Handling a Request for Alternative Accommodations

An instructor shall accept without question the sincerity of a student's religious or spiritual belief system.

An instructor shall keep requests for alternative accommodations confidential, as required by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and University policy.

An instructor shall schedule a time and date for an alternative examination or other academic requirement, which may, at the instructor's discretion, be before or after the date and time the examination or other academic requirement was originally scheduled. This scheduling shall be without unfavorable effect.

(4) Required Information in Course Syllabus

An instructor shall include in each course syllabus a statement that includes the following information:

- (a) A statement that religious accommodations are available to students and a hyperlink to this policy as posted in the "University Policies" section of the Office of General Counsel website;
- (b) A description of the general procedure for requesting religious accommodations; and
- (c) Contact information for the Dean of Students whom a student may contact for more information about this policy.

(E) Posting of Policy and List of Holidays; Contact Information

As required by University policy and applicable Ohio law, the University shall post this policy in the "University Policies" section of the Office of General Counsel website. Any questions about this policy may be directed to the **Dean of Students**.

The University shall also post a list of major religious holidays or festivals for the next two academic years on the **Registration & Records** webpage.

This list of major religious holidays or festivals is not exhaustive. The University may not use the list to deny accommodation to a student for a holiday or festival of the student's faith or religious or spiritual belief

system that does not appear on the list. Nothing in Ohio Revised Code 3345.024, and no inclusion or exclusion of a religious holiday or festival on the list, shall preclude a student from full and reasonable accommodation for any sincerely held religious beliefs and practices with regard to all examinations or other academic requirements and absences for reasons of faith or religious or spiritual belief system provided under Ohio Revised Code 3345.024.

(F) Complaints of Violation of this Policy

A student may use the following means to notify BGSU of any complaint with regard to the implementation of this policy.

(1) Informal resolution

Students are encouraged to seek informal resolution with the instructor directly involved. Many issues can be resolved by making an appointment with an instructor and calmly and honestly communicating the student's concerns.

In an informal resolution, the parties may use any suitable mode of communication to engage in discussion about the issues and focus on achieving an outcome that is mutually acceptable. In situations where students need assistance in formulating their concerns, an academic advisor or a staff member of the Office of the Dean of Students may be able to provide guidance or additional information.

(2) Formal resolution

(a) Filing a formal complaint

If the student or other university community member elects not to seek informal resolution, or if the informal process does not lead to an agreed outcome, they may make a formal complaint using the to the **See It. Hear It. Report It. incident reporting portal**.

The formal complaint must be received within thirty calendar days after the event or decision that gave rise to the complaint.

(b) Review by the Office of the Provost

The Provost or designee will review the formal complaint and offer to discuss it with the complainant. This discussion may be in person, by phone, or by web conference. If a staff member is also a subject of the complaint, the Provost or designee may consult with the Office of Human Resources and/or the appointing authority.

The Provost or designee may also seek information from any faculty or staff member identified in the formal complaint and any identified witness or other person with relevant knowledge.

After appropriate inquiry and consideration, the Provost or designee will render a written decision and communicate it to the complainant and the other affected parties at their respective BGSU email accounts. In most cases, the decision will be made and communicated within one month after receipt of the formal complaint.

Any corrective action with respect to an instructor will be undertaken by the Provost or designee. Any corrective action with respect to a staff member will be undertaken by the Office of Human Resources and/or the appointing authority.

(3) Retaliation Prohibited

It is a violation of this policy for any employee to retaliate against or take adverse action toward any person for submitting a complaint or participating in an investigation or hearing regarding an alleged violation of this policy. Any person within the scope of this policy who engages in retaliation is subject to a separate charge of retaliation under this policy.

(G) Student Employment

BGSU employs students in many areas, including instructional and research roles (such as graduate teaching and research assistants), as resident advisors in residence halls, and in on-campus University employment opportunities offered through the Office of Student Employment Services.

In an effort to reasonably accommodate the needs of its student employees while also protecting the interests of the University as employer, BGSU will allow a student to request to be excused from their student employment (on an unpaid basis) for up to three days each academic semester to take holidays for reasons of faith or religious or spiritual belief system or participate in organized activities conducted under the auspices of a religious denomination, church, or other religious or spiritual organization.

The student employee must make this request to their immediate supervisor at least one week before the date of the absence.

If the request is timely the supervisor will grant it unless allowing the absence would cause undue hardship in the conduct of university business.

If the request is disallowed, the student employee may ask their next-level supervisor to review it. That supervisor's decision will be final.

(H) Equity Impact Statement

The policy has been assessed for adverse differential impact on members of one or more protected groups.

Registered Date: March 16, 2023