

# Augusta University

## Policy Library

### Religious Holiday Policy

**Policy Manager: Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost**

#### **POLICY STATEMENT**

Augusta University supports the right of faculty, staff, and students to observe religious holidays that are not covered by the university's regular holiday schedule. This policy describes procedures to be used for faculty and staff to request leave for a religious holiday and for students to request a class or other activity absence for a religious holiday.

As a member of the University System of Georgia (USG), Augusta University (AU) adheres to fair and legal employment practices. While federal and state law do not require that the university provide paid time off, the USG provides both paid and unpaid leave and allows institutions to establish 12 paid holidays per calendar year.

#### **AFFECTED STAKEHOLDERS**

*Indicate all entities and persons within the Enterprise that are affected by this policy:*

- Alumni     Faculty     Graduate Students     Health Professional Students  
 Staff     Undergraduate Students     Vendors/Contractors     Visitors  
 Other:

#### **DEFINITIONS**

- **Religious Holiday** – Refers to an officially recognized holiday of any faith.
- **AU Holiday Schedule** – The official holiday schedule of Augusta as allowed by the policy of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia.
- **Academic Calendar** – The official academic calendar of Augusta University as posted.

#### **PROCESS & PROCEDURES**

##### **Request for Leave or Absence**

**Faculty:** Regular, benefits eligible faculty may be allowed to take leave for religious holidays not covered by the existing holiday schedule, if taking leave on the requested day will not impose an undue hardship on the work or business of the University. Faculty must:

1. Request leave for the religious holiday well in advance from their immediate supervisor, who will evaluate and respond to the request timely. For faculty with patient care responsibilities, such a request will usually need to be made not less than forty-five (45) days prior to the holiday. The employee is responsible for stating their leave is based on a religious holiday. Where possible, the leave should be granted.

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**Executive Sponsor: Executive VP for Academic Affairs and Provost, Enterprise VP for Human Resources**

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2. For faculty who accrue annual leave, specify in the request to their immediate supervisor if the request is to use annual leave, if eligible and available, or if the request is to substitute a holiday from the holiday schedule.
3. Record the holiday as either annual leave or deferred holiday based on the request.

Temporary and otherwise non-benefits eligible faculty may also request leave as noted above; however, such leave shall be unpaid. Institutional and business needs will be considered and may not allow leave to be granted.

**Staff:** Regular, benefits eligible staff may be allowed to take leave for religious holidays not covered by the existing holiday schedule, if taking leave on the requested day will not impose an undue hardship on the work or business of the University. Staff must:

1. Request leave for the religious holiday well in advance from their immediate supervisor, who will evaluate and respond to the request timely. For staff with patient care responsibilities, such a request will usually need to be made not less than 45 days prior to the holiday. The employee is responsible for stating their leave is based on a religious holiday. Where possible, the leave should be granted.
2. Specify in the request to their immediate supervisor if the request is to use annual leave, if eligible and available, or if the request is to substitute a holiday from the holiday schedule.
3. Record the holiday as either annual leave or unpaid leave or deferred holiday based on the request.

Temporary and otherwise non-benefits eligible faculty and staff may also request leave as noted above; however, such leave shall be unpaid. Institutional and business needs will be considered and may not allow leave to be granted.

**Students:** All students may be eligible to have an excused absence for a religious holiday. Students should follow these steps to inform their faculty of the upcoming religious holiday:

1. Students should inform their professor at the beginning of the semester when the holiday will fall. Students should inform their professor in writing, providing the date of the holiday so there is a record of the request.
2. Faculty should work with the student to ensure any missed schoolwork, lab, clinical, or other hours can be completed at a different time and will not disrupt the student's course of study.
3. If the request involves missing an exam, faculty will attempt to accommodate a request for a student to take a scheduled on an alternate date upon receipt of such request.
4. Students who fail to inform faculty of a religious holiday in a timely fashion may not have their request granted when time is not provided for accommodations.

**Students:**

Appeal Process for Faculty, Staff, and Students

If a request is denied, the immediate supervisor or professor and/or course director must state the reason for the denial.

Faculty and staff have the ability to appeal to the next level supervisor for consideration. The next level supervisor has final authority, and no additional appeals will be allowed.

Students have the right to appeal to the dean of the college in which the course resides, who has final authority.

**REFERENCES & SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS**

Augusta University Holiday Schedule

<https://www.augusta.edu/hr/campusscheduledholidays.php>

Augusta University Academic Calendar

<https://www.augusta.edu/registrar/academiccalendar/>

Appendices

Board of Regents Policy Manual, Section 3.4.3, Religious Holidays

**RELATED POLICIES**

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**APPROVED BY:**

Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, Augusta University

Date: 4/16/2021

President, Augusta University

Date: 4/16/2021