

Procedure Title: Absence due to Religious Holy Days Observance

Procedure Number: 05-2015-0003

Board Policy Reference: I.B. Educational Opportunities

NWCCU Standard:

Accountable Administrator: Vice President, Instruction

Position responsible for updating: Director, Instructional Operations

Original Date: 07/27/2015

Date Approved by Cabinet: 09-08-15

Authorizing Signature: *original signature on file*

Date Posted on Web: 09-11-15

Revised: Reviewed:

Purpose:

The Religious Observance Policy is designed to communicate the College's official policy and to provide guidance to students regarding how to support requests for religious observance while maintaining the College's commitment to its academic mission.

Principles:

1. BMCC respects the religious beliefs of all members of the student body.
2. BMCC affirms student's rights to observe religious holy days.

Definitions:

The college policy is to support any student who requests an absence due to the demands of religious holiday observance. Nothing in this policy exempts a student from meeting course requirements or completing assignments, so the student will have to negotiate with the instructor any make-up work. Students cannot be penalized due to absence from class. Students who are excused are not required to provide a second party certification of the reason for the absence.

Accommodations are to be dealt with on the basis of individual requests from students. Religious holidays are numerous, and no holiday is privileged above another for the purposes of the BMCC policy. More information on accommodations can be found on the college website.

Parameters:

All revisions to this procedure will be recommended to the Office of Instruction and forwarded to the Cabinet for final approval.

Guidelines for Appeals:

If a student feels that she/he has been unreasonably denied an education benefit due to religious beliefs or practices, she/he may seek redress through the student grievance procedure. If after speaking with the department head, the student feels that reasonable accommodation is being denied, she/he should discuss the issue with the Vice President of Instruction who will serve as the final authority. Students can seek advice or guidance at any point by speaking with the Vice President of Academic Affairs.

Procedures:

Responsibilities of the instructor include:

1. Faculty should provide course syllabi at the beginning of each term that specify dates of exams and due dates of assignments. It is the student's responsibility to review these syllabi as soon as they are distributed and to consult the faculty member promptly regarding any possible conflicts.
2. Faculty will make sure that work missed for a religious holiday can be made up by the student. Students should not be penalized for class absences because of religious holidays.
3. Faculty will articulate clear guidelines for how a student may make up missed work.
4. Faculty will make students aware of the way in which an attendance policy allows for making up work missed for a religious holiday.
5. Faculty may give an exam on a religious holiday provided that there is an appropriate way for student to make up the exam if it is missed due to the observance of religious holiday.

Responsibilities of the student include:

1. Students are required to identify to the instructor in **advance**, that their absence will be for excused religious reasons.
2. Students must make these arrangements with their instructor in a timely fashion and in a way that allows for the instructor to plan how missed work will be made up.
3. Students are required to make up any work that is missed.
4. Students must take responsibility for honestly representing their religious commitments when missing a class.