**Georgia College & State University**

**Proposed Religious Observance Policy**

Student are permitted by Georgia College & State University (GC) policy to be absent from class to observe a religious holiday. The Religious Observance Policy reflects the GC’s commitment to diversity and respect for spirituality in its student population. This policy provides procedures required by students who wish to exercise their rights under this policy.

**POLICY**

Students are permitted to miss class in observance of religious holidays and other activities observed by a religious group to which the student is a member without academic penalty. Exercising of one’s rights under this policy is subject to the GC Honor Code. Students who miss class in observance of a religious holiday or event are required to make up the course work missed (e.g., assignments and exams) resulting from the absence. The nature of the make-up assignments and the deadline for completion of such assignments are at the sole discretion of the instructor. Failure to follow the prescribed procedures voids all student rights under this policy.

**DEFINITIONS**

***Absence*** includes the non-attendance of a scheduled class meeting or event that is required under the course syllabus.

***Academic penalty*** refers to any action by an instructor that would cause a student to be in a lesser academic position (e.g., reduction in points earned).

***Make-up work*** is any alternative assignment given by the instructor in lieu of an assignment missed by a student due to the observance of a religious holiday. Make-up work may or may not be in like kind.

***Religious holiday*** includes any time required to observe a mandated religious tradition. For detail information about religious holiday refer to sources such as <http://www.interfaithcalendar.org>.

**LIMITATION**

This policy is limited to religious holidays observed by a religious institution to which the student is a member.

Relief under this policy is limited to the observance of a religious holiday; supplement time (i.e., travel time to go home to observe holiday with family) is not eligible for accommodation under this policy.

Given the time limitations inherent in completing end-of-semester assignments and final exams, this policy **does not apply during finals week**. Students are expected to take final exams at the scheduled times and complete end-of-semester work by the deadlines set by each instructor.

**PROCEDURES**

It is the student’s responsibility to notify each instructor of his or her intent to miss a class in observance of a religious holiday. **Failure to follow the prescribed procedures outlined below voids all student rights under this policy.**

1. Notification of religious observance must be in writing using the Religious Observation Notification Form (see Exhibit A). The form must be completed in accordance with instructions, and a signed and dated original provided to each instructor. Failure to comply with requirements of notification (Exhibit A) may result in the lost of accommodation under this policy.
2. Student must petition for relief under this policy (i.e., submit completed Religious Observation Notification Form) within one week of the beginning of the semester in which the request applies.
3. Reconsideration of actions taken by an instructor under this policy is subject to the GC academic appeal process*.*
4. Application for relief under this policy is subject to the GC Honor Code.

**FACULTY RESPONSIBILITY**

1. The Board of Regents (BOR) mandates that universities have a policy “regarding special arrangements for students for religious holiday.” The responsibility of the instructor as it applies to this policy is in compliance with the spirit of BOR mandate.
2. Instructors are required to notice students of the Religious Observance Policy in the course syllabus. Instructors are not required to provide students with a copy of the policy, but may direct students to the Student Handbook available on the GC website.
3. Upon receipt of a correctly executed Religious Observation Notification Form prior within the first week of the beginning of the semester, students cannot be academically penalized for an absence in observance of a religious holiday.
4. The nature of make-up work and deadlines for completion of such work are at the sole discretion of the instructor.
5. If a student violates a provision of this policy, and therefore is not eligible for relief under the policy, the instructor should notify the student as soon as reasonably possible.

**Exhibit A**

**Religious Observation Notification Form**

**INSTRUCTIONS**

* Please complete one form for **each religious holiday**.
* A **signed, dated original** form is required for **each class**.
* Complete all requested information. This information (course name, course number, instructor’s name) may be found on the MYCATS website.
* Complete and submit this form within the first week of the beginning of the semester.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ GC ID: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Contract Information:

Email: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Religious Holiday:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) you will Monday: \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_ Tuesday: \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

miss class: Wednesday: \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_ Thursday: \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

Friday: \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

Courses:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No.** | **Course Name** | **Course Number** | **Instructor Name** |
| 1 |  |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |  |
| 4 |  |  |  |
| 5 |  |  |  |
| 6 |  |  |  |
| 7 |  |  |  |

By signing this form, I acknowledge that I have read the Religious Observance Policy and understand the conditions for accommodation under the policy. I further affirm that this notification is in compliance with the GC Honor Code.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_