

RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION

Bethel University recognizes and respects the diverse faith traditions represented among students. The university is committed to fostering an environment that supports students' rights to observe their faith traditions.

To support this commitment, all university offices and faculty are asked to consider the needs of students observing recognized religious holidays or practices such as Salah, Eid, Diwali, Passover, and others. Faculty are asked to consider how they could make reasonable accommodations that allow students to meet their academic obligations without compromising their religious commitments. Examples of accommodations may include opportunities to make up missed exams, assignments, or other requirements.

Accommodations cannot be guaranteed. No accommodation can place a burden on other students; disrupt learning; have a negative effect on non-Bethel personnel supporting internships, practica, clinical experiences, or other activities; or create unmanageable additional work for faculty or staff.

Note: Accommodations are made due to religious observances. Accommodations are not made to relieve students of the obligation to complete assignments. Students may not use religious commitments or beliefs as the basis for avoiding readings, lectures, or any other assignments (e.g. dissection of certain animals or clinical experiences with people of a given gender or sexual orientation).

Guidelines for Accommodations

Accommodations will be considered based on the following criteria:

1. The observance must be commonly recognized/observed by adherents to the student's faith tradition.
2. The observance must be short-term and not result in chronic absences (e.g., not most Fridays of a class).
3. The student must be able to meet all essential course outcomes with the accommodation.
4. The accommodation must be reasonable in light of the course requirements and impact on other students, academic partners, faculty, and university support services.
5. Students must request the accommodation by the deadline listed below.

The university recognizes that certain courses, such as labs, internships, practica, clinicals, field experiences, and student teaching, may be structured so that accommodations are not possible because they will disrupt essential learning processes or outcomes and/or create unresolvable requests for faculty, staff, or non-Bethel personnel.

Process

To request accommodations, students are required to notify their instructors of their needs by the following deadlines:

- For courses requiring fieldwork, clinical, or student teaching placements: At least 30 days before the class begins. The director of the program or the department chair should be included in this request.

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- For all other courses: By the end of the first week of class or at least two weeks before the requested date.

Students must submit their requests in writing using the Bethel University Religious Observance Accommodation Request Form which can be found on the Registrar's Office Website.

- The form must be emailed to the faculty member.
- Students may consult their academic or student success advisor or the Registrar's Office for guidance.

Advising Support

Students, especially those new to the university or participating in PSEO, should consult their advisors when planning their schedules. Advisors can provide guidance to help students balance their academic requirements with their religious commitments.

Appeals Process

If a faculty member is unable to provide or denies appropriate accommodation, students may appeal the decision to their academic dean over their school or college, or, for nursing or education students, their associate dean who oversees their program of study. The appeal should include:

1. A copy of the original request to the instructor.
2. The instructor's reply to the request.
3. Any other correspondence regarding the decision.

Students can contact the dean's office for additional information about the appeals process and support during this step. Advisors can help students navigate the appeals process.