

POLICY ON STUDENT ABSENCE DUE TO RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE

Massachusetts law and Boston University policy require faculty and staff to accommodate students who are absent due to religious observance.

Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 151C, Section 2B, states:

Any student in an educational or vocational training institution, other than a religious or denominational educational or vocational training institution, who is unable, because of his religious beliefs, to attend classes or to participate in any examination, study, or work requirement on a particular day shall be excused from any such examination or study or work requirement, and shall be provided with an opportunity to make up such examination, study, or work requirement which he may have missed because of such an absence on any particular day; provided, however, that such makeup examination or work shall not create an unreasonable burden upon such school. No fees of any kind shall be charged by the institution for making available to the said student such opportunity. No adverse or prejudicial effects shall result to any student because of his availing himself of the provisions of this section.

The University implements this law as follows:

1. Students are permitted to be absent from class, including classes involving examinations, labs, rehearsals, and other special events, for purposes of religious observance. Missed work shall be made up in consultation with the student's instructors. All religious observances, within all religious traditions, are subject to this accommodation. A list of religious groups currently active on campus may be found at the [Religious Life](#) link on the University's website.
2. Once a student informs an instructor of a conflict due to religious observance, the instructor and student should seek to arrive at mutually acceptable alternative arrangements for class work and examinations. In general, the student must be given the opportunity to do appropriate make-up work that is equivalent to the original examination, assignment or other academic exercise. This could be the same work with a different due date, or a substantially similar exercise at another time. Make-up examinations and work should be arranged so as not to create an unreasonable burden upon either the student or the instructor or school. To avoid misunderstandings, the agreed-upon arrangement should be put in writing. If, after discussion, the instructor and the student cannot agree on an accommodation, the advice of the college Dean's office should be sought.
3. Students or teachers who would like advice or counsel about religious observance may call or email the Dean of Marsh Chapel (Robert Allan Hill, 617-358-3394, rahill@bu.edu) or the Director of Marsh Chapel (Raymond Bouchard, 617-358-3390, dymphna@bu.edu) for help in the administration of this policy.

A full list of religious holidays may be found at the Religious Life website (<http://www.bu.edu/chapel/religion/>).