

## **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 and to provide them with a reasonable opportunity to make up an examination, study, or work requirement missed due to their religious observance, if such accommodation does not create an unreasonable burden.

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 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, excursions, and other special events, for purposes of religious observance. In-class, take-home and lab assignments, and other 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; this list, however, is not exhaustive. In cases where clarification is needed, faculty should contact the Dean of Marsh Chapel [Robert Hill](#), or the Director of Marsh Chapel, [Raymond Bouchard](#).
2. When preparing syllabi, instructors should be mindful of major days of religious observance, a [list of which](#) is provided by the Religious Life Office.
3. It is recommended that instructors provide students with the dates and times for examinations and other major course obligations at the beginning of the semester or summer session. Students are required to inform instructors, in writing, of conflicts with the course schedule and requirements due to their religious observance as early as possible in the semester, and in any case no later than one week in advance of the conflict, so that accommodations can be made.
4. 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 place an unreasonable burden upon either the student or the instructor or school. 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. To avoid misunderstandings, the agreed-upon arrangement should be put in writing. If the student and instructor are unable to find a mutually acceptable solution, the matter should be referred by the instructor to the Associate Dean of the school or college.