

1. GENERAL

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University to accommodate faculty absences for religious holy days. A refusal to accommodate is justified only when the employer can demonstrate that an “undue hardship” would result from the accommodation.

Per Section 51.925 of the Texas Education Code, “religious holy day” means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20 (Religious Organizations), Tax Code.

Accommodation for observance of religious holy days is facilitated when a substitute faculty member with substantially similar qualifications agrees to assist with the teaching of classes or when an alternative activity or assignment, as approved by the chair, is provided to students.

2. PROCEDURES

2.01 A faculty member wishing to observe religious holy days that coincide with scheduled workdays will notify the head of the academic administrative unit in writing of the faculty member’s desire to be absent and the day(s) involved.

- a. The written notification will be submitted prior to the start of the semester or summer session during which the absence is requested.
- b. The head of the academic administrative unit will make a reasonable effort to assist in the accommodation of the faculty member’s request. However, it is the faculty member’s responsibility to obtain a substitute for classes or duties to be missed during the faculty member’s absence. The faculty member may provide the class an alternative activity or assignment during an absence due to a religious holy day as appropriate.
- c. The head of each academic administrative unit is responsible for encouraging an atmosphere of cooperation and accommodation among the faculty members within the academic unit in such cases.

2.02 A reduction in a faculty member’s salary will not be made during the periods of authorized absence for the observance of holy days.

APPROVED: <signed>
Alisa White, Ph.D., President

DATE: 01/03/2023

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

This academic policy statement (APS) has been approved by the reviewer(s) listed below and represents SHSU's Division of Academic Affairs' policy from the date of this document until superseded.

Original: September 15, 1986
Reviewer(s): Academic Affairs Council

Review Cycle: Five years*
Review Date: Fall 2027

Approved: <signed>
Michael T. Stephenson, Ph.D.
Provost and Sr. Vice President
for Academic Affairs

Date: 12/19/2022

*Effective January 2018, Academic Policy Statements will be reviewed on a rotating 5-year schedule. To transition to a distributed review load, some policies may be reviewed prior to the 5-year timeframe, with subsequent reviews transitioning to the 5-year schedule.