

Resolution Adding Handbook Language Implementing the Testing Your Faith Act

Resolution of Handbook Policy - EPSA

May 8, 2023

PASSED

Whereas Section 3345.024 of the Revised Code “Testing Your Faith Act” requires that each state institution of higher education, as defined in section 3345.011 of the Revised Code, shall adopt a policy that reasonably accommodates the sincerely held religious beliefs and practices of individual students with regard to all examinations or other academic requirements and absences for reasons of faith or religious spiritual belief system;

Whereas Section VIII.C of the Ohio University Faculty Handbook describes how students are to notify their instructors of the cause of an absence, and

Whereas the Testing Your Faith act speaks to how students are allowed to notify instructors of absences due to sincerely held religious beliefs or practices, as well as the required accommodations,

Therefore, be it resolved, that Section VIII.C. of the handbook be modified to read as follows:

C Notification of Causes of Absence

Students may document reasons for their absences as follows:

1. If you are participating in an authorized University activity (departmental trip, music or debate activity, ROTC function, or athletic competition), you can obtain notification from the sponsoring office. If you are in the military reserves and reserve training including reasonable travel time to training locations may fall upon class days, a letter from the commander of your military reserve unit showing the date of the absence and the reason for it will serve for prior notification.
2. Students who receive medical or dental care from OhioHealth O’Bleness Hospital, Ohio University Campus Care or other health care facilities are expected to request official notification from the staff at the time of their visit stating that they were seen on a particular day, in order to present the instructors of classes necessarily missed for this reason verification of the date(s) and times they received such care. It is the responsibility of the student to request and obtain such notification.
3. Students may be absent for up to three days each academic semester to take **time off** for reasons of faith or religious or spiritual belief system or participate in organized activities conducted under the auspices of a religious denomination, church, or other religious or spiritual organization. Faculty shall not impose an academic penalty because of a student being absent nor shall faculty question the sincerity of a student’s religious or spiritual belief systems. Students are expected to notify faculty in writing of specific dates requested for alternative accommodations no later than fourteen days after the first day of instruction. Faculty are expected to keep requests for alternative accommodation confidential. Absences for reasons of faith or religious or spiritual belief systems are considered in addition to other legitimate and unexcused absences permitted by the instructor. **Students or faculty should contact the University Equity and Civil Rights Compliance Office with questions.**

4. Students returning to a class after a legitimate absence can expect their instructor's assistance within the limits of the instructor's established attendance policy. In cases of legitimate absence—such as illness, death in the immediate family, religious observance, jury duty, involvement in University-sponsored activities —some accommodation (e.g., makeup work, excused absences, change of grade computation) will be arranged subject to previously announced limitations. There are occasions where the size or nature of the course makes it necessary to set limits on the number of excused absences or the availability of makeup work, particularly for exams or special events such as field trips or outside speakers. Such limitations will be explained in the instructor's statement of attendance policy at the beginning of each course. Students with scheduled activities must check with the instructor as early as possible to clarify that there will be no conflict with the policy.