

To: All Faculty and Staff

Dear colleagues,

Section 221-a of New York State Education Law mandates make-up work for students who cannot register or attend classes due to religious beliefs. The law covers examinations and all other credit-bearing assignments as well. For your information, I have appended the latest guide to days of religious observance that are recognized by the university through 2006-2007. The guide also contains the relevant sections of the state law, for your information and reference. This guide is not meant to be completely inclusive, but it will apply to the great majority of affected students. Please pay attention to the dates listed in the guide when making up schedules for examinations and other assignments.

Robert McGrath,
Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

Guide to Religious Holidays

For academic years
2006-2007

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This guide is for the use of University faculty and administrators in scheduling of activities and course work which some students may have to miss due to religious beliefs or obligations.

Both holidays which generally fall during official University recesses as well as those that normally coincide with class days are listed. Major holidays that typically fall on scheduled class days during which some students may be required to miss course work are noted with "##"

Also included is Section 221-a of New York State Education Law which mandates make up work for students who cannot register or attend classes due to religious beliefs.

For questions, please contact the Office of the Provost or the Interfaith Center.

2006 – 2007

Sep. 23-24	Rosh Hashanah**	Falls on weekend
Sep. 24	First Day of Ramadan	
Oct. 2	Yom Kippur**	Classes not in session
Oct. 7-8	Sukkot**	Falls on weekend
Oct. 14-15	Shemini Atzeret/Simchat Torah**	Falls on weekend
Oct. 20-21	Lailatul Kadar***	
Oct. 23-24###	Eid-ul-Fitr***	
Nov. 1	Feast of All Saints	
Dec. 8	Feast of the Immaculate Conception	
Dec. 16-23	Hanukah	
Dec. 25	Christmas*	Intersession
Jan. 1-2	Eid-ul-Adha***	Intersession
Jan. 1	Feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary	Intersession
Feb. 21###	Ash Wednesday*	
Mar. 4	Purim	Falls on weekend
Apr. 3-4	Passover, first two days**	Classes not in session
Apr. 5	Holy Thursday	
Apr. 6	Good Friday*	Classes not in session
Apr. 6	Orthodox Good Friday*	Classes not in session
Apr. 8	Easter*	Falls on weekend
Apr. 8	Orthodox Easter*	Falls on weekend
Apr. 9-10###	Passover, last two days**	
May 17	Ascension Thursday	
May 23-24###	Shavuot**	
May 27	Pentecost	Falls on weekend
Aug. 15	Feast of the Assumption of Mary	

* Most important Christian holy days

** Major Jewish festival; writing and other activities not permitted

*** Major Muslim holy day. Date is approximated to sighting based on lunar calendar

New York State Education Law, Section 221-a. Students unable because of religious beliefs to register or attend classes on certain days.

1. No person shall be expelled from or be refused admission as a student to an institution of higher education for the reason that he or she is unable, because of his or her religious beliefs, to register or attend classes or to participate in any examination, study, or work requirements on a particular day or days.
2. Any student in an institution of higher education who is unable, because of his or her religious beliefs, to attend classes on a particular day or days shall, because of such absence on the particular day or days, be excused from any examination or any study or work requirements.
3. It shall be the responsibility of the faculty and of the administrative officials of each institution of higher education to make available to each student who is absent from school, because of his

or her religious beliefs, an equivalent opportunity to make up any examination, study, or work requirements which he or she may have missed because of such absence on any particular day or days. No fees of any kind shall be charged by the institution for making available to the said student such equivalent opportunity.

4. If registration, classes, examinations, study, or work requirements are held on Friday after four o'clock post meridian or on Saturday, similar or makeup classes, examinations, study, or work requirements, or opportunity to register shall be made available on other days, where it is possible and practicable to do so. No special fees shall be charged to the student for these classes, examinations, study, or work requirements, or registration held on other days.

5. In effectuating the provisions of this section it shall be the duty of the faculty and of the administrative officials of each institution of higher education to exercise the fullest measure of good faith. No adverse or prejudicial effects shall result to any student because of his or her availing himself or herself of the provisions of this section.

6. Any student who is aggrieved by the alleged failure of any faculty or administrative officials to comply in good faith with the provisions of this section shall be entitled to maintain an action or proceeding in the supreme court of the county in which such institution of higher education is located for the enforcement of his or her rights under this section.

6a. It shall be the responsibility of the administrative officials of each institution of higher education to give written notice to students of their rights under this section, informing them that each student who is absent from school, because of his or her religious beliefs, must be given an equivalent opportunity to register for classes or make up any examination, study, or work requirements which he or she may have missed because of such absence on any particular day or days. No fees of any kind shall be charged by the institution for making available to such student equivalent opportunity.

7. As used in this section, the term "institution of higher education" shall mean any institution of higher education, recognized and approved by the Regents of the University of the State of New York, which provides a course of study leading to the granting of a postsecondary degree or diploma. Such term shall not include any institution which is operated, supervised, or controlled by a church or by a religious or denominational organization whose educational programs are principally designed for the purpose of training ministers or other religious functionaries or for the purpose of propagating religious doctrines. As used in this section, the term "religious belief" shall mean beliefs associated with any corporation organized and operated exclusively for religious purposes, which is not disqualified for tax exemption under section 501 of the United States code.