

## Conscientious Religious Observance Policy

### **Policy:**

Skidmore College acknowledges that our community is one of many faiths with a diverse range of practices and observances important to each tradition. In order to fulfill Skidmore College's mission to educate a diverse population of talented students and the College's commitment to inclusion<sup>1</sup> regardless of religious and spiritual tradition, we seek to practice an equitable and consistent approach in providing religious accommodations. Additional guidance on this approach comes from New York State law<sup>2</sup> and College policies and practices developed to ensure equity and inclusion.

Students shall not suffer academic, athletic, or employment penalties because of the conscientious observance of any religious day or days. Penalties include reduction of grades, exclusion from class projects, reduction in number of other excused absences, bias in evaluation, suspension or termination from play or work, and other preventable negative consequences. Religious observances that may require accommodation include but are not limited to attendance at services, fasting, set prayer times, and other practices that would impede a student's normal participation in classes, labs, other course-related work, athletic participation and student employment.

Accommodations may include excused absences, adjusted exam times, permission to eat during class time, changes to due dates and project schedules, and other reasonable adjustments to course schedules and activities. Accommodations should not reduce the overall expectations of a course nor unduly burden the student requesting accommodation.

### **Process:**

Students whose conscientious religious observance requires their absence from class, campus employment, athletic practice, and/or game days or necessitates accommodations should notify their faculty, coaches, or supervisors prior to the holiday. Although not required, it is highly recommended that students submit written notification of the pending religious holiday, using the form below, preferably at the start of the semester or at least one week before the holiday. Distributing the written notification during the first week of classes, campus employment, or at the start of the athletic season will give the student, faculty, coach, or supervisor the most time to prepare for the absence. A student missing an examination due to religious observance will be permitted to take a makeup exam without penalty. A student with an assignment due on a religious holiday will be permitted to submit that assignment by an agreed upon due date, without penalty. A student will be able to make up academic work and/or campus employment requirements, without penalty.

### **Violations of the Policy:**

If a student, supervisor, coach, or faculty member feels the policy is being violated, they should contact the Dean of Faculty Office at 518-580-5705 located at Palamountain 416, the Dean of Students Office at 518-580-5760 located at Case Center 313 or Human Resources at 518-580-5800 located at Barrett Center first floor.

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<sup>1</sup> Skidmore College Statement on Diversity and Inclusion: <https://www.skidmore.edu/diversity/about.php>

<sup>2</sup> New York State Education Law, Article 5 Section 224—a: <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/EDN/224-A>



**Conscientious Religious Observance Policy Form**

**TO:**

**FROM:**

**RE:** Religious Holiday Observance

**DATE:**

In order to facilitate proper communications between Skidmore students and their professors, coaches and supervisors, \_\_\_\_\_ is submitting this form as notice of missed class time, work, practice, or game time or need for accommodation for religious holiday observance.

**Date(s) of Religious Observance:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Note the following:**

- Although not required, it is highly recommended that students submit this form to the faculty, coach, or supervisor regarding absences or needs for accommodation.
- Faculty, coaches, and supervisors should receive the form during the first week of classes, campus employment, or at the start of the athletic season.
- The student is responsible for making up any missed academic work, athletic practice, or work shifts during the absence, as arranged with the relevant faculty, coach, or supervisor.

By signing your name below, you are stating that you understand the above policies.

\_\_\_\_\_  
STUDENT SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE