

University Policies for Religious Holidays, Observance Days, and Related Absences

On behalf of the Office of the Dean of the Faculty and the Office of Spiritual and Religious Life, we would like to take this opportunity to remind you of the policies related to religious holidays, observance days, and related absences. These policies can also be found in the *Student and Faculty Handbooks* and on the Spiritual and Religious Life website (www.southwestern.edu/life-at-southwestern/spiritual-and-religious-life/holidays/).

Religious Holidays: The University recognizes the following traditional religious holidays in respect of the diverse faith traditions of our campus community and in an effort to allow as many people as possible to attend commonly observed religious holidays. One-time University events should not be scheduled during the following holidays; these are events which either (1) require attendance, (2) may not be mandatory, but those not attending would miss an important opportunity to be included in a campus event, and/or (3) are one-time opportunities for participants to receive the services offered. Please note that these are the North American dates and the Islamic holidays are tentative and subject to change, based on the best visibility estimates of the lunar crescent.

- Eid al-Fitr, June 4, 2019 (begins at sundown June 3)*
- Eid al-Adha, August 11, 2019 (begins at sundown August 10)*
- Rosh Hashanah, September 30, 2019-October 1, 2019 (begins at sundown September 29)
- Yom Kippur, October 9, 2019 (begins at sundown October 8)
- Christmas Day, December 25, 2019
- Pesach (Passover), April 9-10 (first two days, begins at sundown on April 8)
- Good Friday, April 10, 2020
- Easter, April 12, 2020

Chapel Services: In addition to the above religious holidays, the following dates and times have been identified for Chapel services during the 2019-2020 academic year. These are priority events which no student, faculty, or staff member may be denied the opportunity to attend because of a conflicting class, meeting, or event.

- Orientation worship service, Sunday, August 18, 2019, 11:00am-12:00pm
- Homecoming worship service, Sunday, October 6, 2019, 10:30am-11:30am
- Candlelight worship services, Thursday, December 5, 2019, 6:00pm & 8:00pm
- Ash Wednesday worship service, Wednesday, February 26, 2020, 12:30pm-1:00pm
- Baccalaureate worship service, Friday, May 8, 2020, 7:00pm-8:00pm

Religious Absences: Because the religious holidays listed above reflect some, but not all, of the most commonly observed holidays, the University policies also permit any student to miss class in order to observe any religious or cultural holidays that are part of their tradition, including holidays that are not listed above. Students are expected to notify their professor of religious absences as far in advance as possible and fulfill missed assignments prior to the absence.

Additionally, University policies permit faculty and staff, including student employees, to miss work in order to observe religious and cultural holidays that are part of their tradition, including holidays that are not listed above. This time off may be without pay or taken as accrued vacation time, and in the case of student employees, it can include a change in work hours within a pay period to accommodate the absence. The University policy notes that faculty members are still expected to meet their class schedules and should work with their Department chair or the Dean of the Faculty to arrange these absences.

Please feel free to contact Alisa Gaunder, Dean of the Faculty, (gaundera@southwestern.edu) or the University Chaplain, (512-863-1056) if you have any questions.