

# Time Off for Religious Observance

## **Policy:**

In accordance with its Procedures for Implementing Reasonable Accommodations and Academic Adjustments, the City University of New York (CUNY) is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for the religious needs of employees requesting time off for religious observance.

CUNY staff encompasses a diverse multi-cultural community, for whom religion is defined broadly and includes religious beliefs and practices that may be unfamiliar to the Office of Human Resources.

As noted in CUNY's accommodations procedures, employees requesting time off for religious observance may be required to submit an intake form to the Human Resources Director. CUNY generally will not question that a request of religious accommodation is based on a sincerely held belief. However, if CUNY has genuine reason to doubt that a belief qualifies as religious, or is sincerely held, CUNY may make a limited inquiry, asking for supporting documentation. The documentation submitted may include the employee's first-hand explanation, or explanation from others, such as a religious official or clergy member, who are aware of the religious practice or belief, and which would support the basis for the requested time off for religious observance.

## **Procedure:**

Leave for religious observance may be charged against annual, unscheduled holiday balances, or compensatory leave balances.

Employees with no balances in the previously listed leave accrual categories may, at the discretion of the Human Resources Director be advanced leave time to be charged against **future** annual leave accruals to a maximum of **3** days per year.

Request for time off should, because of business necessity, be made in sufficient time prior to the observance to permit the affected department to make appropriate schedule changes. In general, approval will not be considered unless requested at least 10 working days prior to the day of the religious observance.

Colleges must schedule adequate support staff to insure that the operations of all departments and service to the public are not adversely affected. In general, time off for religious observances will be granted in whole days. However, at the discretion of the Human Resources Director upon the request of an employee, the employee may be granted approval to have his/her work hours on the day(s) *temporarily* rescheduled. This will be considered only in instances where the employee's request is for time off of less than a full day on either a one time basis or regular basis.

The City University of New York

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