 <b>NORTHEAST OHIO MEDICAL UNIVERSITY</b>	<b>Policy No: 3349-5-77</b>
<b>POLICY TITLE: Accommodations for Student Religious Observations</b>	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023</b>
<b>RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENTS: Office of the General Counsel and Student Affairs</b>	<b>APPLIES TO: Students</b>

**(A) PURPOSE**

Northeast Ohio Medical University respects the religious practices and beliefs of all students and seeks to provide a learning environment that reasonably accommodates its students' sincerely held religious beliefs, while simultaneously complying with the statutory requirements of Ohio Revised Code Section 3345.026.

**(B) SCOPE**

This policy applies to all enrolled students who seek to be excused from academic requirements, including class attendance or examinations, based on a sincerely held religious belief. Student employees should refer to the University's Legal Holiday and Religious Observances policy with respect to his/her employment obligations on days of religious observation.


**(C) DEFINITIONS**

(1) "Academic Semester" refers to the Summer term, Fall, and Spring Semesters as established by each individual college or degree program and published by the Office of the Registrar (also known as an "academic term"). Maymester is an intersession following Spring Semester.

**(D) POLICY STATEMENT**

(1) Excused Absences

(a) A student may be excused from class for up to three (3) days of academic requirements or examinations per Academic Semester to take holidays for reasons of faith or religious or spiritual belief systems to participate in organized activities conducted under the auspices of a religious denomination, church, or other religious or spiritual organization.

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(b) The University shall not impose any academic penalty as a result of utilizing an excused absence for the foregoing purposes and shall accept, without question, the sincerity of a student's religious or spiritual belief system.

(2) Requests for Alternative Accommodation


(a) The University shall keep requests for alternative accommodations authorized under this policy confidential, in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. The information regarding such requests and alternative accommodations will only be shared with those individuals and offices that have a need to know for educational purposes.

(b) Students requesting an alternative accommodation under this policy shall do so by completing an online request form. The University shall provide a student with alternative accommodations for examinations and other academic requirements that will be missed based upon the excused absence if the following requirements are met:

(i) The student's sincerely held religious belief or practice severely affects the student's ability to take an examination or meet an academic requirement; and

(ii) The request is submitted to the University not later than fourteen (14) calendar days after the first date of instruction of the semester in which the excused absence will occur.

(c) The Course Director and/or Testing Services will be notified of the request and related approval and will accept without question the sincerity of a student's religious or spiritual belief system. All students will receive confirmation of the approval as well as specifics related to the alternative accommodation via email from the University identifying the time, date, and location for a make-up or alternative examination, which may be before or after the time and date the examination or other academic

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requirement was originally scheduled, but shall do so without prejudicial effect.

(3) Notification

(a) The syllabus for every course shall include the following information:


- (i) a statement that religious accommodations are available to students and a hyperlink to this policy, located on the policy portal within the Office of the General Counsel's website;
- (ii) a description of the general procedure for requesting alternative accommodations based on a sincerely held religious belief or practice; and
- (iii) contact information for the Office of Academic Affairs and Student Services should a student need more information about this policy.

(b) A non-exhaustive list of major religious holidays or festivals for the next two years shall be posted with this policy, separately identified on the policy portal within the Office of the General Counsel's website. The list may not be used to deny accommodation to a student for a holiday or festival of the student's faith or religious or spiritual belief system that does not appear on the list.

(4) Complaints

(a) Students may notify the University of any complaint under this policy by contacting:

- (i) Office of Academic Affairs and Student Services;

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- (ii) The Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost; or
- (iii) by submitting a complaint online to [compliance@neomed.edu](mailto:compliance@neomed.edu).