

INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS UNIVERSITY (IBU)

POLICY CONTROL

Policy Number	1016 (previously 110)
Policy Title	Accommodation for Religious Observances Policy
Policy Owner / Responsible Offices	Office of the Registrar and Enrolment Services
Approval Authority	Board of Directors
Applies To	All domestic and international students; employees, faculty, and staff of IBU
Approval Date	December 23, 2024
Effective Date	December 23, 2024
Review Date/s	December 23, 2025 (1st review)
Revision Date/s	—
Revision Implementation Date/s	—

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

International Business University (“IBU”, “us”, “we”, and/or “our”) is focused on cultivating a nurturing culture and work environment for both students and staff. IBU affirms the right of all individuals to receive equal treatment, free from discrimination based on creed.

2. PURPOSE

IBU is committed to achieving a culture and work environment that is supportive of employees and students. IBU recognizes that students and employees have a right to equal treatment without discrimination on the basis of creed. Ensuring fair and equal treatment may require that accommodation measures be taken to facilitate the practice of religious observances.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

IBU will accept all requests for accommodation of religious observances as bona fide, unless there is specific evidence to indicate an abuse of the policy. IBU's duty to accommodate will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

4. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all domestic and international students registered in a program at IBU along with all staff, employees and faculty of IBU.

This policy is available to all past, current, and prospective domestic and international students of IBU.

5. DEFINITIONS

Accommodation

In the context of this policy, accommodation is an adaptation or adjustment made to enable a person to facilitate the practice of religious observances.

Undue Hardship

The Ontario Human Rights Code prescribes three considerations in assessing whether accommodation could cause undue hardship: cost, outside sources of funding, and health and safety considerations. Information on the concept of undue hardship can be accessed on the Ontario Human Rights Commission website:

<http://www.ohrc.on.ca/english/publications/disability-policy-fact4.shtml>

Religion or Creed

Creed is interpreted to mean religious creed or religion. It is defined as a professed system and confession of faith, including both beliefs and observances or worship. A belief in a God or gods, or a single supreme being or deity, is not a requisite.

Religious Observance

Religious observance refers to commitments or obligations based on a person's religion or creed. This may include, but is not limited to, religious holidays, attire requirements, or observances related to foods, rites, and rituals.

6. POLICY

The obligation not to discriminate on the basis of religion (“creed”) is a statutory duty arising from the Ontario Human Rights Code and carries with it the obligation to accommodate religious requirements where doing so does not cause undue hardship to IBU.

Religious accommodation includes integrating individuals into employment and academic-learning activities in a manner that respects their dignity, autonomy, and self-esteem. Managers and faculty shall ensure that individuals are not disadvantaged because they have sought or require accommodation.

It is the policy of IBU to arrange reasonable accommodation for the needs of staff, faculty, and students who observe religious holidays other than those already accommodated by ordinary scheduling and statutory holidays.

Employees must discuss their need for religious accommodation with their manager or supervisor.

Faculty must discuss their needs for religious accommodation with the Dean/Vice-President (or designate).

Students must submit their request for accommodation to their faculty within ten (10) business days of distribution of their course outlines if there are any conflicts between their required religious observances and scheduled tests, exams, or other class requirements. Request forms are available from Enrolment Services. Faculty must provide alternative arrangements that do not disadvantage the student.

Students who have a religious obligation that conflicts with their final examination must submit a request for a deferred examination to Enrolment Services within ten (10) business days of publication of the final examination schedule.

It is most important that no student be seriously disadvantaged because of their religious observances. However, in the scheduling of academic and other activities, it is also important to ensure that the accommodation of one group does not seriously disadvantage other groups within the IBU community.

Examples of requests that students may make to be excused from classes or examinations include, but are not limited to: Holy Days; Fridays at 1:00 p.m. for Muslim community prayers; or the Jewish Sabbath (from one-and-a-half hours before sunset Friday to one-and-a-half hours after sunset Saturday).

Letters or documentation from faith leaders to support requests for accommodation may not be requested. IBU does not request such documentation because doing so would imply an assessment of the sincerity of religious practice, and not all faith traditions require participation in an organized faith community.

Shared accountability includes a partnership between the individual requiring accommodation, faculty, academic administrators, supervisors, senior management, and IBU.

Respect for dignity ensures accommodation meets specific circumstances while supporting general accessibility. Consultation involves only relevant stakeholders. Inclusion ensures the individual is involved in the accommodation process. Respect for confidentiality ensures accommodation may be sought privately.

7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITY

All members of the IBU community are responsible for supporting this policy and its objectives. Supervisors, managers, chairs, directors, deans, and senior executives bear special responsibility for ensuring compliance with this policy and applicable legislation, including the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act.

MANAGER

A Manager is an individual with supervisory responsibility or hiring authority. When approached with a request for accommodation, the Manager must respond within ten (10) business days by:

- Working toward resolution by notifying Human Resources and utilizing their support
- Demonstrating commitment to addressing accommodation requests expediently

Managers are accountable for:

- Ensuring consistent and fair application of the policy
- Accepting accommodation requests in good faith
- Notifying Human Resources immediately
- Maintaining records and confidentiality
- Implementing accommodations to the point of undue hardship

EMPLOYEES

Employees requesting accommodation are responsible for:

- Advising their Manager, preferably in writing
- Participating in discussions on accommodation solutions

- Complying with the accommodation plan
- Advising of any change in circumstances

STUDENTS

Students requesting accommodation are responsible for:

- Advising faculty within ten (10) business days of class commencement
- Participating in discussions and cooperating with required processes

HUMAN RESOURCES

Human Resources is responsible for:

- Providing front-line support
- Ensuring legislative compliance
- Liaising with internal and external resources as needed

FACULTY

Faculty are responsible for:

- Accepting student requests in good faith
- Adjusting curricular delivery and evaluation
- Maintaining records and confidentiality
- Working collaboratively to implement accommodations
- Advising the Dean of extraordinary circumstances

8. REVIEW

This policy shall be reviewed annually following its initial implementation and thereafter in accordance with the established review cycle or as required by legislative or institutional change.

9. COMPLIANCE PROCEDURES

Compliance with this policy is mandatory. Any failure to adhere may result in corrective action consistent with institutional procedures and applicable legislation. All accommodation decisions must align with the Ontario Human Rights Code and institutional standards.

10. EVALUATION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored through review of accommodation requests, resolution timelines, and feedback from students and employees. Findings may inform policy review, training, and institutional planning.

11. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Ontario Human Rights Code
- Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Guidelines
- Workplace Safety and Insurance Act