

EVERGREEN

The Evergreen State College - Olympia, Washington 98505

Policy Approval Form

This is the official approval form for College Policies and Procedures. When completed and signed, this form will reside with the finalized policy. Completed and approved policies will be posted on the College Policies Web site (www.evergreen.edu/policies).

(Proposed) Policy Title: Holidays for Reasons of Faith or Conscience

Policy Steward: Provost and VP for Student and Academic Life

Summary of New Policy/Changes for Updated Policy

Background and the current legislation: Just last year, in a process stewarded by Greg Mullins, Evergreen adopted a new policy to bring the institution into compliance with similar legislation, [RCW 28B.10.039](#), which directed faculty to accommodate *two* holidays for reasons of faith or conscience and *did not include the directive that the policy be included in syllabi*. The substitute bill, [Substitute Senate Bill 5166](#), *does not cap* the number of such holidays and requires us to publicize the policy in syllabi, as well as posting it institutionally.

Summary Senate Bill 5166, Effective 7/29/19

Student absences at a postsecondary educational institution for reasons of faith or conscience, or for an organized activity conducted under the auspices of a religious denomination, church, or religious organization, may be taken after written notice to faculty. Notice must be given within the first two weeks of the beginning of the course and provide specific dates the student requests accommodation. Postsecondary institutions include the public baccalaureates and the CTCs, degree-granting institutions, private vocational schools, beauty and cosmetology schools, and any entity that offers academic credit for apprenticeships. An institution's policy must require faculty to reasonably accommodate students who, due to observance of religious holidays, expect to be absent or endure a significant hardship during certain days of the course or program. A postsecondary educational institution must publish its policy on its website and reference the policy in course or program syllabi. The notice must also include notification of the institution's grievance procedure. A student must not be required to pay a fee for seeking reasonable accommodation.

Beyond the policy and syllabus inclusion, in the deans' note that went out over summer, we encouraged faculty encouraged to:

- Plan program syllabi to minimize the possibility that students will need to seek accommodation for critical program activities (such as field trips, labs, and examinations), referring to the University of Washington's helpful [Calendar of Religious Holidays and Observances](#).
- Include the policy in any summer letter and as a question on any pre-program/first-week student questionnaire so that students can plan and notify faculty accordingly.

Date of Senior Leadership Meeting when policy or revision was approved: September 24, 2019

Date Policy posted to Web: September 27, 2019