
TITLE: **Leave or Absences for Reasons of Faith and Conscience Policy**

NUMBER: **401**

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: **Chapter 168, laws of 2014; WAC 82-56-010; WAC 357-31-052**

APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES: 2/18/2015; revised 4/8/2020

Employees: Whatcom Community College allows all employees two unpaid holidays per calendar year for a reason of faith or conscience or an organized activity conducted under the auspices of a religious denomination, church, or religious organization unless the employee's absence would impose an undue hardship on the College or the employee is necessary to maintain public safety.

Students: Per RCW 28B.137.010 (resulting from 2019 Senate Bill 5166), Whatcom Community College will grant reasonable accommodations so that grades are not affected for students who are absent for reasons of faith or conscience or an organized activity conducted under the auspices of a religious denomination, church, or religious organization. Such absences should be requested in writing, following these processes:

- Requests for absences from a course should be sent directly to the faculty member during the first two weeks of the quarter (or course start date, for courses starting in the middle of the academic quarter).
- For leave dates which fall during the first class meeting(s), the student is encouraged to make the request prior to the start of the course, but must inform the faculty member in writing no later than the first day in which the student is able to attend class following the leave for reasons of faith and conscience.
- For situations which cannot be predicted during the first two weeks of the quarter, the student may submit a request to the office of the vice president for student services, as soon as possible prior to the requested date. If approved by the vice president for student services or designee, the respective faculty will be notified by the office of the vice president for student services of the approval for leave.

The reasonable accommodations established by the faculty may not incur additional fees or expenses for students. Faculty will include the language referencing this policy in their syllabi. Students who have concerns about approval or an affected grade may use the student complaint process to file their complaint.

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