



Joseph J. McCarthy  
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**TO:** All University of Pittsburgh Faculty Members  
**FROM:** Joseph J. McCarthy, Interim Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor  
**DATE:** September 6, 2023  
**SUBJECT:** Religious Observances during the Academic Year

The University of Pittsburgh recognizes that religious observances of members of the University community may conflict with University activities. Examples of such occasions are Yom Kippur, Muharram, Diwali, and Good Friday, but other days of religious observance may also conflict with scheduled academic activities.

In an effort to continue to foster an inclusive environment and to respect the beliefs and values of all of our community members, pre-communicated conflicts should not result in penalized absences for either students or faculty\*. Mandatory faculty meetings should not be scheduled.

Faculty/students should communicate about potential conflicts as early in the term as possible. When modifications are requested, all affected parties should make a reasonable effort to reach mutually agreeable arrangements to accommodate the conflict. Typical accommodations can include, but are not limited to, rescheduling the academic activity, providing a substitute activity or evaluation, or creating asynchronous content that addresses the missed activity.

Please refer to the Faculty Handbook ([https://www.provost.pitt.edu/faculty-handbook/ch2\\_emp\\_uni\\_holi](https://www.provost.pitt.edu/faculty-handbook/ch2_emp_uni_holi)) for more information about religious observance guidelines.

A religious holiday calendar, while not all-inclusive, is accessible on the Office of Diversity and Inclusion website at: <https://www.diversity.pitt.edu/events/holiday-calendar>. It is a helpful tool to assist in identifying dates on which you might avoid scheduling exams, meetings, or major projects.

Please note that, in past years, this memo has also addressed support for student well-being. In an effort to maintain clarity and to expand that focus to encompass the well-being of all University community members, a separate memo discussing well-being will be forthcoming.

Thank you for your ongoing dedication to the University community.

\*This consideration should also be given to all graduate students, post-docs, and staff under your direction.

cc: All deans and regional campus presidents