



## **GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION PROCEDURE**

Georgia State University is committed to diversity and inclusiveness. A reasonable religious accommodation in the employment setting is any adjustment to the work environment or in the way tasks or responsibilities are customarily done that enables an individual to participate in his/her sincerely held religious practice or belief without undue hardship on the conduct of Georgia State University's business or operations. For questions regarding the Religious Accommodation Procedure, please contact the Office of Opportunity Development and Diversity Education Planning (ODDEP) at 1 Park Place South, Suite 527 Atlanta, GA 30303 or at 404-413-2563 / [equalopportunity@gsu.edu](mailto:equalopportunity@gsu.edu).

### **PROCEDURE:**

Employees seeking accommodations for sincerely held religious beliefs should contact the Office of Opportunity Development and Diversity Education Planning. If a supervisor, academic representative, or Human Resources representative receives a verbal or written request for an accommodation, he/she must consult with ODDEP.

Note: Whenever possible, such requests should be made at least thirty (30) days in advance of the desired accommodation.

The Office of Opportunity Development and Diversity Education Planning will provide the employee with a Religious Accommodation Request Form, which the employee should complete and return. The form asks for information on the specific religious belief or practice for which the employee is requesting an accommodation, as well as the requested accommodation or modification to policy, practice, or schedule.

### **INTERACTIVE PROCESS:**

Once an employee has requested an accommodation, the University will engage the employee and the employee's department in a dialogue known as "the interactive process" to determine what accommodation, if any, is appropriate.

Note: No specific accommodation is guaranteed. Rather, accommodations are determined on an individualized basis and must be tailored to match the needs of the employee, without placing an undue hardship on the department.

In making this determination, the Office of Opportunity Development and Diversity Education Planning, in conjunction with the appropriate departmental supervisor or official may consider a number of relevant factors including:

- The nature and duration of the requested accommodation.
- The impact of the requested accommodation on the performance of the employee's essential functions or core work-related duties.
- The financial impact of the requested accommodation.

- The impact of the requested accommodation on other employees, students, or university operations. Note that this may include consideration of seniority within the same unit or department.
- Any alternative accommodations.

The Office of Opportunity Development and Diversity Education Planning may require an employee to submit additional documentation related to the tenets of the religious practice or belief to support the request. Documentation requested may vary depending on the nature of the accommodation requested.

Within ten (10) calendar days of receipt of the Religious Accommodation Request Form, the employee will receive a written decision. However, extenuating circumstances may extend the time-frame beyond the 10-day period. If no reasonable accommodation can be made, the employee will be notified in writing.

#### **WORK PLAN:**

If an accommodation is deemed appropriate and reasonable, both the employee and the departmental representative are notified and a religious accommodation work plan is implemented for the duration specified.

The Office of Opportunity Development and Diversity Education Planning will monitor the work plan and review it on occasion to ensure the accommodation enables the employee to complete the necessary work tasks to ensure effectiveness.

#### **APPEALS:**

If an employee wishes to appeal ODDEP's decision regarding a religious accommodation request, the employee must complete the Religious Accommodation Appeal Form and submit it to the Associate Vice President for Human Resources/ODDEP within five (5) calendar days. The appeal form should be completed in its entirety and submitted via email to: [equalopportunity@gsu.edu](mailto:equalopportunity@gsu.edu) with attention to the Associate Vice President for Human Resources/ODDEP. Appeal forms may be found on ODDEP's website at: <http://odaa.gsu.edu/>.

The employee is responsible for the completion and submission of the appeal form within the applicable deadline. Within ten (10) calendar days of receipt of the Religious Accommodation Appeal Form, the employee will receive a final written decision from the Associate Vice President for Human Resources/ODDEP. Extenuating circumstances may extend the time-frame beyond the ten (10) calendar days.

#### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:**

##### **Q: What is a religious accommodation?**

A religious accommodation is a change to an employee's work, schedule, environment, or in the way tasks or assignments are customarily done to enable an employee to participate in his/her religious practice or belief, without causing undue hardship to University operations or activities.

**Q: What factors are considered in determining religious accommodations?**

Factors considered in determining religious accommodations include business needs, as well as considerations of cost, safety, efficiency, and the rights of others. The University is not required by law or policy to accommodate religious beliefs when such accommodation would violate other laws or interfere with the safety and security of our campus (for example, a religious practice related to use of illegal drugs or carrying a weapon might not be reasonable to accommodate). The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) provides guidance at: [www.eeoc.gov/laws/types/religion.cfm](http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/types/religion.cfm)

**Q: What are some examples of religious accommodations for employees?**

Reasonable accommodations for employees might include granting individual leave for religious observances, providing a time and place to pray, or allowing the flexibility to wear religious attire to work. Other examples of accommodations for religious beliefs might include scheduling changes, voluntary substitutions of shifts or hours with supervisory approval, and appropriate job reassignments or lateral transfers. Reasonable accommodations are determined on an individual basis and depend on the particular circumstances.

**Q: How does an employee request time off from work or other kinds of religious accommodations at work?**

Employees seeking accommodations for sincerely held religious beliefs should contact the Office of Opportunity Development and Diversity Education Planning (ODDEP). If a supervisor, academic representative, or Human Resources representative receives a verbal or written request for an accommodation, he/she must consult with ODDEP.

**Q: What type of leave applies to absence from work due to a religious accommodation?**

Depending on the situation and with supervisory approval, an employee requesting a religious accommodation may use accrued leave (such as vacation/annual leave), compensatory time, or leave without pay. In some circumstances, the leave may be accommodated by an alternate work schedule approved in advance by the employee's supervisor.

**Q: As a supervisor, what are my responsibilities under the Policy on Accommodation of Religious Practice?**

Supervisors are expected to reasonably accommodate individual religious practices. A refusal to accommodate is justified only when undue hardship to the University's legitimate business purposes

would result from each available alternative for reasonable accommodation (e.g., requires more than ordinary administrative costs, diminishes the efficiency in other jobs, infringes on other employees' job rights or benefits, or impairs campus/workplace safety).

**Q: If I have other questions about the Policy on Accommodation of Religious Practice and/or the procedure, where may I get assistance?**

For questions regarding the Policy on Accommodation of Religious Practice, please contact ODDEP at: 1 Park Place South, Suite 527 Atlanta, GA 30303 or at 404-413-2563 / [equalopportunity@gsu.edu](mailto:equalopportunity@gsu.edu)