

RYERSON UNIVERSITY
POLICY OF SENATE

**ACCOMMODATION OF STUDENT RELIGIOUS, ABORIGINAL AND SPIRITUAL
OBSERVANCE**

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| Policy Number: | 150 |
| Approval Date: | October 1, 2013 May 5, 2009; November 8, 2005; October 2, 2001 |
| Originally Submitted By: | Ad Hoc Committee to Review Policy on Accommodation of Student Religious Observance Obligations |
| Implementation Date: | Fall, 2013 |
| Policy Review Date: | Fall 2014 |
| Responsible Office: | Provost and Vice President Academic |

Preamble

Ryerson is a community which celebrates diversity and places a high value on inclusion and respect for differences. Ryerson recognizes that the religious, Aboriginal or spiritual observances of students may conflict with their academic obligations and could potentially lead to a disadvantage if an accommodation is not arranged. Ryerson also accepts that sincerely held beliefs by members of the same religious group or Aboriginal peoples (from different nations) often engender different types of commitments for observance practices. In accordance with the principles of the Ontario Human Rights Code, which requires accommodations based on creed, this policy outlines how accommodations for the religious, Aboriginal or spiritual observances of Ryerson students will be determined.

Policy

Religious, Aboriginal or spiritual observances are often highly personal and subjective. This requires that instructors accept the sincerely held beliefs of students at face value and accommodate and address issues, through informal or formal procedures detailed in this policy. In responding to requests for accommodation, instructors will enable the observing student to meet the academic obligations of the course as presented in the course outline while ensuring that academic integrity is maintained. Accommodations should prevent academic disadvantage or penalty to the student in question. Instructors are encouraged to consult with the Discrimination and Harassment Prevention Office for further information.

This policy deals exclusively with academic requirements including, but not limited to, lectures, labs, tests, assignments, practicum and final examinations. Observance may restrict participation in course activities, including:

- absence from class
- absence from scheduled exams
- absence from scheduled placement
- following specific dress codes
- temporary absence from class for daily prayers, fasting or breaking a fast during class
- other required activities outlined in the course syllabus.

If a student is requesting accommodation due to a religious, Aboriginal and/or spiritual observance, he or she must submit a Request for Accommodation of Student Religious, Aboriginal, and Spiritual Observance AND an Academic Consideration form within the first two weeks of the class or, for a final examination, within two weeks of the posting of the examination schedule.

If the required absence occurs within the first two weeks of classes, or the dates are not known well in advance as they are linked to other conditions, these forms should be submitted with as much lead time as possible in advance of the required absence. Both documents are available at <http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/forms/reobservforminstr.pdf>. Full-time or part-time degree students must submit the forms to their own program department or school. Certificate or non-certificate students taking courses through the Chang School must submit the forms to the staff at the front desk of the Chang School.

To facilitate timely requests and decision making, the University will take all practical steps to ensure that students and instructors are aware of the policy and related observance issues.

In cases where the timing of the submission of the request cannot be resolved with the instructor, the student should consult with the Chair or Director of the department responsible for the course.

To minimize potential conflict between religious and academic obligations, instructors are strongly encouraged to consult the Ryerson Religious Observance calendar at <http://www.ryerson.ca/humanrights/religious-cultural-observances/> to review religious observances prior to finalizing the course outline.

Instructors will respond to written accommodation requests in writing within five (5) business days of receiving the request.

In any case where a mutually agreed upon accommodation cannot be reached, students have the right to appeal decisions made by the instructor to the Chair/Director of the academic unit responsible for the course in question. Decisions of the Chair/Director may be appealed to the Dean of the Faculty.