

WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT RELIGIOUS, INDIGENOUS, AND SPIRITUAL OBSERVANCES (RISO) ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

How to request accommodation for Academic Obligations:

- You must submit a RISO form (available on your Faculty website) to your Faculty Office within **ten (10)** working days from the start of the semester in which the accommodation is necessary. For observances for which specific dates/details are not known in advance, inform your Faculty Office of the potential conflict.
- Your Faculty Office will notify you and your instructor that the request has been approved within **five (5)** working days after submission.
- You must then contact your instructor as soon as possible to work out the details of your accommodation (at least **five (5)** working days before the date of the conflict). The instructor must respond to you within **ten (10)** working days of you reaching out to them.
- In situations where you must leave class for short periods (e.g., to pray), you should work with your instructor to make mutually agreeable arrangements.

How to request accommodation for a Registrar-Invigilated Final Exam:

- You must submit a RISO final exam form, which is available only in-person at the Registrar’s Office (Gilmour Hall 114) at least **ten (10)** working days before the start of the exam period.
- The Registrar will respond to your request at least **five (5)** working days before the start of the exam period.
- Late requests will be attempted by the Registrar’s Office, but you may be referred to your Faculty Office to make arrangements for writing your exam outside of the official exam period.

What do “alternative arrangements” include?

- Rescheduling an academic obligation
- Providing an alternative academic obligation
- Re-weighting, providing that no one component of the course becomes worth 75% of the final grade or greater
- Extending a deadline
- And more

Instructors should try as much as possible to avoid arrangements such as:

- Requiring you to submit an academic obligation prior to the deadline
- Requiring you to have someone else submit your academic obligation on your behalf
- Re-weighting where one component of the grade becomes worth 75% of the final grade or greater

At any point during the process you may seek assistance from the Office of Human Rights & Equity Services (HRES), www.hres.mcmaster.ca.

Policies and resources related to academic accommodation of religious, Indigenous and Spiritual Observance:

- Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Harassment: Prevention and Response Policy: http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/General/HR/Discrimination_Harassment_Sexual_Harassment-Prevention&Response.pdf
- McMaster University Multifaith Resources: <https://mcmastermultifaithresources.wordpress.com/>
- Policy on Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous and Spiritual Observances: <http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicAccommodation-Observances.pdf>

This fact sheet provides general information about accommodation to McMaster University students, staff, and faculty members and should not be construed as legal advice. If there is a discrepancy between this fact sheet and the policy, the policy has primacy.