

STRICT RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE OBLIGATIONS GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS

Purpose

The guidelines outline the process of accommodating Monash College students with strict religious observance obligations.

Scope

The guidelines apply to all Monash College (the College) staff and students involved with assessment activities.

The guidelines provide guidance for International Partners who are required to comply with the College policies as per the Third-Party Arrangement contracts between the College and Partners.

The guidelines do not apply to Vocational Education and Training, Professional Year or Non-accredited training programs.

Guidelines

1. Principles

- 1.1. Where a student identifies to the College the requirement of religious observance obligations, Monash College may:
 - require evidence from the student of their strict observance obligations; and
 - seek advice from recognised leaders of a particular faith regarding strict religious observance requirements.
- 1.2. The College accepts that there will be circumstances when potential conflict is unavoidable. In such circumstances, the College will make all reasonable attempts to accommodate the student's religious observance obligations by providing alternative means to complete the assessment or program activity.
- 1.3. Accommodation of requests will be considered on a case-by-case assessment. Students must complete and submit a special consideration application form outlining a request for accommodation as set out in section 4 of the Assessment Procedure. Approval will be subject to whether the student can meet the requirements of their program and whether the College has resources available to support the accommodation.

2. Supporting students

Ref	Process Steps	Responsibility
2.1	Where a unit/program timetable is provided in advance, choose the class that reduces potential conflicts as far as possible.	Students
2.2	Where the detailed unit outline/student guide outlining the assessment requirements is provided to the students, inform their Unit Leader(s) (or equivalent) or delegate of their religious observance obligation as soon as possible.	Students
2.3	<p>Where necessary, students may be required to explain the conflict between the program/assessment requirements and the religious observance obligations, and the accommodations that the students are seeking.</p> <p>Where required, students will need to complete and submit a special consideration application outlining their request for accommodation and providing supporting evidence as set out in section 4 of the Assessment Procedure. The College may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • require written evidence of the religious observance obligations; and • consult with a relevant religious leader to explore possible alternative arrangements. <p>The College will not normally extend the deadlines of assessed work for religious observance obligations. The College expects that students will schedule their study time to meet these assessment deadlines.</p> <p>Where the College is unable to accommodate the religious observance obligations due to specific nature of the program requirements or limitations on flexibility for legitimate discipline related or operational reasons, the College will support the students to reduce negative impact on a student's program progression.</p> <p><i>Reasonable accommodation</i> is offered to students with the intention that students are able to meet their program requirements and practise their religion.</p>	<p>Program Leader or Unit Leader(s) or equivalent or delegate</p> <p>Students</p>
Creating an inclusive environment for those with religious observance obligations		
2.4	<p>Religious Attire:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect the wearing of religious attire. • Where certain forms of religious attire may create a risk to health and safety, the risk should be assessed and a determination made as to whether it is possible to make accommodations while ensuring a safe learning 	Monash College staff

	<p>environment. Monash College Occupational Health and Safety can be consulted in such situations for advice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where the College is obliged to check a student's identity (including obtaining a student card, sitting final examinations), the student will be requested to reveal their face to a person of the same gender in a private area for this purpose. Monash College discourages staff and students from wearing clothing that displays potentially offensive material. 	
2.5	<p>Strict religious observance:</p> <p>A religious observance obligation may be the requirement and need to pray. Impacted students should discuss with their teacher if they have any special prayer requirements that impact on or coincide with their study requirements.</p> <p>Any conflict between study requirements and prayer obligations are to be addressed according to these guidelines.</p> <p>The College provides dedicated prayer spaces for students to be used at any time. The location of the prayer rooms can be found at the Student Hub on Level 4.</p>	Students
<i>How to support students with strict religious observance obligations</i>		
2.4	Teachers should be sensitive to cultural considerations, including that some students may not feel comfortable speaking about their religious observance obligations.	Teachers
2.5	Make students aware of the relevant team who they can contact to discuss any special requirements they may have.	Student Administration
2.6	Where a Program Leader or Unit Leader (or equivalent) or delegate becomes aware of a student's religious observance obligations that conflicts with compulsory program requirements, deadlines or assessment requirements, arrange to meet with the student to determine appropriate arrangements as soon as possible.	Program Leader or Unit Leader (or equivalent) or delegate
2.6.1	The Program Leader or Unit Leader (or equivalent) or delegate may request supporting evidence from the student outlining their strict religious observance obligations. This is to understand the impact on the student's ability to meet the specific requirements of the unit/program.	Program Leader or Unit Leader (or equivalent) or delegate

	<p>Where attendance of classes or assessment is impacted by religious observance obligations, possible solutions to be considered are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> flexible mode of delivery; or rescheduling assessment where possible; or allocating assessment tasks on dates or at times when the student is able to attend. 	
2.6.2	Where a student's strict religious observance obligations prevent attendance at final examinations, students are required to submit their request for accommodation as set out in section 4 of the Assessment Procedure.	Students
2.6.3	<p>Prior to rejecting a request for adjustment, refer the request to the other Program Leader/Discipline Leader/Team Leader (or equivalent) or delegate to ensure all reasonable options have been considered before rejecting the request.</p> <p>Where a request is rejected due to no alternative arrangements, the consequences of a student's decision to maintain strict religious observance on the student's program progression should be discussed with the student.</p>	Program Leader or Unit Leader (or equivalent) or delegate
Assessing the request		
2.7	<p>Consider the following when assessing the request:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> maintenance of academic standards and impact on program progression; providing reasonable accommodations, where possible, will avoid discrimination. Approved accommodations should not provide an advantage to the students requesting accommodation of religious observance obligations, but enable the student to observe and practise the religion while continuing to meet the program requirements. upholding the privacy of the student. Information about religious and cultural observance is sensitive and must be taken into consideration when considering and discussing possible accommodations. sufficient notice time has been provided by the student for alternative arrangements to be made. 	
Complaints		
2.8	A student who is dissatisfied with the outcome of their request for an accommodation due to their strict religious observance obligations may lodge a complaint. Refer to the Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure for the complaints/appeals processes.	Students

3. Unacceptable behaviour or discrimination

Ref	Process Steps	Responsibility
3.1	Treat others with respect, and refrain from any forms of unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation or vilification based on race or religion. This includes harassment or coercion which relates to current or historical conflict between people of different religious groups, and inciting hatred or serious contempt or ridicule of others based on race or religion.	All Monash College staff and students
3.2	Any attempt to intimate others to comply with a particular religious viewpoint (e.g., through hate publicity, offensive remarks and/or misuse of the Monash College services or facilities, or actions that may bring Monash College into disrepute) may result in disciplinary action.	All Monash College staff and students

Related Documents

Parent Policy	Assessment Policy
Legislation and Standards	Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (Cth) Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 Foundation Program Standards 2021 ELICOS Standards 2018 Privacy Act 1988
Reference Policies, Procedures and Supporting Documentation	Assessment Procedure

Definitions

Reasonable accommodations	For the purposes of this Procedure, reasonable accommodations are adjustments made to support the observance of religious obligations, while enabling staff and students to fulfil their work or study responsibilities and participate in the many professional, learning and social opportunities offered by the University.
Special Consideration	Students who are unable to undertake or complete an

	assessment task due to immediate and exceptional circumstances beyond their control are eligible to apply for special consideration.
Strict religious observance obligations	Are practices required by a religious doctrine to be precisely obeyed by followers of the religion. These are recognised in Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights .

Version control and accountability table

Version Control and Accountability table

Accountable Area	Education			
Responsible Officer	Executive Director, Education			
Review Date	March 2026			
Approved by				
Senior Leadership Team (SLT) member DATE 24/04/2023				
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Version	Authored by	Brief Description of the changes	Date Approved	Effective Date
2.0	Senior Coordinator Education - Policy and Procedures	Minor amendments to make reference to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">the special consideration application process,remove the 'Wellbeing' section,update the definition table, andreformat the document to be aligned with the current academic policy suite.	24/04/2023	12/06/2023
1.0	Director, Governance	Document created	02/02/2018	02/02/2018