

Religious Observance Policy

2025/26

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1 Purpose of Policy

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to set out arrangements for how teaching activities, and examinations and assessments, will be organised and made accessible to students on taught undergraduate and postgraduate programmes where a request for consideration of alternative arrangements for religious requirement observance is made.

1.2 This Policy will apply to partnership provision unless specific alternative arrangements have been agreed between Wrexham University and the partner institution and included in the Memorandum of Agreement for the partnership and any student handbooks.

1.3 Wrexham University is enriched by embracing a diverse population of students and staff of different religions, religious beliefs or absence thereof. It acknowledges the desire and right of students to observe their own religion. The University aims to facilitate this, where it is reasonable and practical to do so, while remaining committed to academic standards and the delivery of high- quality teaching, learning and research.

1.4 Wrexham University recognises the commitment of individual students to pursue a spiritual or religious practice and actively support their right to do so in an atmosphere of tolerance and respect.

1.5 Wrexham University's [Student Academic Engagement Policy](#) states that students are expected to attend all classes and assessments as required by their programme.

1.6 Wrexham University's academic calendar is built around national public holidays. As far as is possible, the academic timetable and examinations calendar will be scheduled to avoid important religious festivals. However, the academic timetable and exams calendar cannot accommodate all the diversity of religious observance which all members of our community may wish to undertake.

1.7 The purpose of this policy is to set out arrangements for how teaching and learning activities, examinations and assessments will be organised and made accessible to students, where a request for consideration of alternative arrangements for religious requirement observance is made.

1.8 This policy provides for religion and belief as defined in [section 10 of the Equality Act 2010](#). Legislation relating to matters of equality in the [Human Rights Act 1998](#) and the [Equality Act 2010](#) prohibits discrimination and victimisation against a person on grounds of religion, belief and non-belief.

1.9 Please note that the Religious Observance Policy may not apply to specific programmes or modules such as Degree Apprenticeship's and Work-Related Learning Modules. As well as those which have alternative Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements. The PSRB may provide its own policy. Students on these programmes should check with their Programme Team for further details and guidance.

2 General Principles

2.1 Wrexham University will focus at all times on providing support and enabling speedy resolution. This will include clarity in language and process.

2.2 Fairness, consistency and natural justice in the treatment of the student body as a whole, as well as for particular individuals, will be maintained. This will include:

- Considering application requests for alternative arrangements without reference to, or sight of, individual marks.
- Ensuring decisions regarding alternative arrangement requests for teaching, examinations and assessments are taken by those without conflicts of interest.
- Ensuring that students are neither disadvantaged nor advantaged when compared to their peers as a result of the alternative arrangements.
- Upholding impartiality in decisions and the integrity of academic judgement when making decisions about requests for alternative arrangements for examinations or assessment.

2.3 Maintaining awareness of the opportunity to apply for alternative arrangements for examinations and assessments through collaboration with student support services, the Students' Union and the Chaplaincy.

2.4 The University will maintain awareness of the opportunity to apply for alternative arrangements for examinations and assessments through collaboration with Student & Campus Life, the Students' Union and the Chaplaincy.

2.5 Appropriate services and information will be visible, accessible and made available to students at relevant key points in the academic year.

2.6 The University will ensure that requests will be appropriately recorded, taking into consideration appropriate levels of confidentiality and protection of sensitive and personal data including seeking relevant permission, as appropriate, to enable effective and necessary information sharing.

2.7 As Wrexham University learns from requests for alternative arrangements based on religious observance it will seek to improve the student experience including through appropriate training for decision makers under this policy at the University.

3 Scope

3.1 This policy covers those aspects of religious observance that students can inform the University of in advance of their teaching activities, assessments and examinations. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Religious observance such as festivals, events and other religious days within a defined period.

- Other practices or observance required at a specific date(s) or time(s).

3.2 Unforeseeable or unpreventable events (e.g. where particular religious observance is required when the death of a close relative occurs and when specified forms of mourning are required) should be handled under the arrangements for considering Extenuating Circumstances.

3.3 The [Extenuating Circumstances Procedure](#) can also be used in cases where a student's welfare is impacted as a result of activities undertaken due to religious observance (e.g. fainting during an examination as a result of fasting) and have a detrimental effect on a student's performance during an examination.

3.4 Religious observance that is not required at a specific date(s) or time(s) should be managed around your studies.

3.5 Where it is deemed appropriate to do so, cases of religious observance may also be dealt with under the [Suspension of Studies Policy](#).

4 Teaching & Learning Activities Process

4.1 Students should check term dates and their academic timetable as soon as these become available to identify dates where their university commitments might conflict with a date on which they would like to undertake important religious observance. Term dates are published in advance of the academic year on the website.

4.2 If students have mandatory religious requirements that may affect their attendance at normal teaching and learning activities, they should discuss the issue with their Programme Team.

4.3 A student who would like to request approval for absence from the University to observe a religious festival or undertake other religious practice should make a request by email to their Programme Leader at the earliest possible opportunity and no later than three weeks before the date of the absence requested. Your Programme Team will aim to process your request within ten working days of receipt.

4.4 The Programme Team will give consideration to cases from students whose mandatory religious observance would otherwise cause them to miss scheduled teaching or learning activities in circumstances where religious observance occurs over a restricted period and will try to make reasonable alternative arrangements, if at all possible.

4.5 However, adjustments can only be made provided they maintain the standard of the student's degree (e.g. students will not simply be excused from parts of the programme affected by religious observance or from satisfying the overall learning outcomes).

4.6 If no reasonable alternative can be found, adjustments to scheduled teaching or learning activities will not be possible.

4.7 If a student fails to attend a class or other university activity without prior approval this will be treated like any other unauthorised absence.

5 Examinations & Assessments Process

5.1 If Religious Observance is likely to affect your attendance at an examination or assessment you must apply for alternative arrangements at the earliest possible opportunity and no later than three weeks before the start of the exam period (for examinations) or the assessment deadline.

5.2 To request alternative arrangements under this policy you should submit your request via email to your Programme Leader (alongside supporting evidence) at least three weeks before the start of the examination period or the affected assessment deadline. An example of evidence may be a supporting letter from the faith leader of the community with which you practice advising the significance of the event and your participation.

5.3 Once a request is submitted, you are advising the University you are unable to sit the examination or assessment at the originally scheduled time and will therefore take up the alternative arrangements where it is possible for the University to offer them.

5.4 The University will consider all requests on a case-by-case basis.

5.5 Your request for alternative arrangements will be considered and approved alongside the following considerations:

- The duration of the religious observance.
- If and when there will be a further opportunity to sit the examination or assessment in the module.
- Whether the next available opportunity to sit the examination or assessment will impact the time it would take to progress and/or complete the programme.
- The academic integrity and academic standards of the examination or assessment, including the need to preserve assessment security.
- Any other relevant factor which may impact on the request.

5.6 Where your request is approved, the University will make every effort to reschedule the examination or assessment to accommodate your needs. However, it may not always be appropriate or possible to grant a request for alternative arrangements, for example a group work assessment where approval of the request may have detrimental consequences on other members of the group.

5.7 Approved requests for alternative arrangements will be arranged within the same examination or assessment period, where possible.

5.8 Where it is possible to make alternative arrangements within the same examination or assessment period, a separate assessment will be sat. This will be moderated to ensure it is in line with the other assessment arrangements.

5.9 It may not always be possible for the University to rearrange the assessment during the same examination or assessment period. In this instance you may be offered an opportunity to take the assessment at a future date, which will normally be at the next available opportunity for the affected examination or assessment.

5.10 Should you be offered an alternative date for your examination or assessment at the next available opportunity, this may mean that you will not be able to progress to the next academic year or graduate as planned. This will depend on when the next available opportunity is for the assessment or examination take place. Where this is the case, your Programme Team will let you know so you can make an informed decision about when to take the affected assessments and/or examinations. For more information, please contact your Programme Leader.

5.11 If you sit and fail an examination that was offered to you as a result of a successful application for alternative arrangements, you will need to wait until the next available opportunity to resit the examination or assessment. This depends on when the assessment or examination will next take place. In such cases, it may mean that you will not be able to progress to the next academic year or graduate as planned.

5.12 Should you wish to request a resit examination or assessment to be rescheduled, you will need to be aware that if it is not possible to rearrange it within the same period, you will not be able to take your resit until the next available opportunity. This may increase the time it takes for you to progress or graduate.

5.13 The University will work with and offer support to students nearing their maximum period of registration who make a request for alternative examination or assessments. In this instance, any support provided will be considered by taking a case-by-case approach in line with the [Academic Regulations](#) and [Assessment Policy](#).

5.14 If you are a postgraduate Research student, you must discuss your circumstances with your supervisor as early as possible. Oral examination dates are mutually agreed with you the student, and you should make every effort to ensure that you inform your Supervisor of your Religious Observance commitments before a viva date is set.

6 Complaints Process

6.1 Should you wish to submit a complaint about decisions regarding requests for alternative arrangements for examinations or assessments you should follow the procedures set out in the University's [Complaints Procedure](#).

7 Accessibility

7.1 Wrexham University strives to be a supportive and trauma-informed university in the design and operation of all our processes and procedures. If you need adjustments to access this procedure or have any other comments to make on the accessibility, wording or any part of this procedure, please do email us on quality@wrexham.ac.uk.