Policy

UNIVERSITY POLICY HR-28.00-09/26

TO: The University of West Florida Community

FROM: President Manny Diaz, Jr.

SUBJECT: Religious Accommodations

RESPONSIBLE OFFICE: Human Resources

I. Purpose:

The University of West Florida ("University" or "UWF") recognizes and values the rights of employees to observe and practice their religious beliefs. This policy provides information on how an employee may request a Religious Accommodation for a Sincerely Held Religious Belief.

The University maintains a separate policy regarding discrimination on the basis of religion, UWF Policy P-13, Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation.

II. Definitions:

Interactive Process: A good-faith conversation between the University and the employee to determine if a Religious Accommodation can be made for a Sincerely Held Religious Belief.

Religious Accommodation: A reasonable modification or adjustment to a work requirement that will allow an employee to comply with a Sincerely Held Religious Belief, which need not be confined to traditional concepts of religion.

Sincerely Held Religious Belief: A belief or practice, including a moral or ethical belief, which is sincerely held with the strength of a religious view by an employee.

Undue Hardship: Arises when the burden of granting a Religious Accommodation would be substantial in the overall context of UWF business or the mission of UWF. An Undue Hardship may include, but is not limited to, substantial increased costs, reduced productivity, or infringements on other employees' job rights, such as a Religious Accommodation that threatens to create a hostile work environment or creates a substantial risk to workplace safety, health, or security.

III. Policy:

A. Religious Accommodations

UWF is committed to fostering a work environment that respects Sincerely Held Religious Beliefs. UWF will engage in the Interactive Process with an employee who requests a Religious Accommodation for a Sincerely Held Religious Belief, including a practice, ethical or moral belief that conflicts with a workplace policy or work requirement on a case-by-case basis to determine if the requested Religious Accommodation causes an Undue Hardship to UWF.

The following sequence of events reflects the process of requesting a Religious Accommodation:

1. The employee should contact Human Resources to request a Religious Accommodation for a Sincerely Held Religious Belief.
2. Human Resources will engage in the Interactive Process with the employee and the relevant University official or department to discuss a possible Religious Accommodation.
3. Through the Interactive Process, UWF will determine if a Religious Accommodation is available.

The University prohibits retaliation against employees requesting a Religious Accommodation or participating in a Religious Accommodation.

B. Appeals

Employees who believe a request was improperly denied, or that an approved Religious Accommodation does not reasonably meet their needs based on a Sincerely Held Religious Belief, may appeal within ten (10) business days by submitting a written appeal to the Equal Opportunity Officer in Human Resources. The appeal must clearly state the reason for the appeal and the remedy sought. The Equal Opportunity Officer, or designee, will render a written determination within twenty (20) business days of receipt of the appeal. The determination may uphold, amend, or overturn the original decision. The determination of the Equal Opportunity Officer, or designee, is the University's final determination.

Approved by: _____ **Date:** 9/30/26
President Manny Diaz, Jr.

Authority: Florida BOG Regulation 1.001, University Board of Trustees Powers and Duties
Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
Florida Civil Right Act of 1992

Cross Ref.: UWF Policy P-13, Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation

History: Created September 2026

Last Review: September 2026