



RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION FOR APPLICANTS AND EMPLOYEES POLICY

Policy # HR.009.2

Responsible Executive: Vice President for
Administration &
Finance

Responsible Office: Human Resources

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I. Policy Statement

The University of Louisiana at Lafayette (“University”) is committed to providing a welcoming and inclusive environment that is respectful of the Religious Beliefs and Practices of all members of the University community. As part of this commitment, the University will make good faith efforts to provide reasonable Religious Accommodation to individuals covered by this Policy whose sincerely held Religious Beliefs and Practices conflict with a University policy, procedure, or employment requirement unless such accommodation would create an Undue Hardship or is contrary to the University’s commitment to diversity and inclusiveness.

The University is committed to diversity and nondiscrimination and supports the employment of all qualified Employees and Applicants, regardless of religious affiliation or beliefs. This commitment is in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations, including Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and its accompanying regulations, as well as the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission’s Guidelines on Discrimination Because of Religion.

II. Purpose of Policy

The purpose of this Policy is to affirm the University’s long and deliberate tradition of inclusion and commitment to diversity and equal opportunity in employment, regardless of religious affiliation, and provide procedures regarding Religious Accommodation for qualified Employees and Applicants in accordance with state and federal law.

A. Religious Accommodation

The University will make good faith efforts to provide reasonable Religious Accommodation for the sincerely held Religious Beliefs and Practices of Employees and Applicants unless providing such an

accommodation would impose an Undue Hardship or would undermine the University's commitment to diversity and inclusiveness.

B. Responsibilities

Employees and Applicants are responsible for initiating a request for Religious Accommodation by submitting a Religious Accommodation Request Form to the Senior Benefits/ADA Coordinator in the Office of Human Resources Compliance. Employees and Applicants should submit such forms at least ten (10) business days in advance or immediately upon becoming aware of the need for a Religious Accommodation. In submitting their request, Employees and Applicants shall adhere to the procedures herein (see Section V).

The Senior Benefits/ADA Coordinator and Office of Human Resources Compliance are responsible for facilitating the request between the Employee or Applicant requesting the Religious Accommodation, the Employee's supervisor (if applicable), and applicable management to consider if the request is reasonable, whether the request will be approved or denied, or if alternative accommodation(s) can eliminate the religious conflict.

Employee supervisors are responsible for working with the Senior Benefits/ADA Coordinator to evaluate the request for Religious Accommodation, including review of the Employee's essential functions, identification of alternative accommodation(s), and facilitation of an approved Religious Accommodation.

C. Discrimination and Retaliation

The University prohibits discrimination based upon religion under its Non-Discrimination Policy. Failure to provide a reasonable Religious Accommodation under this Policy may constitute discrimination or harassment based on religion under the Non-Discrimination Policy.

The University also prohibits retaliation against Employees for requesting a Religious Accommodation, participating in an approved accommodation, or otherwise engaging in protected conduct under the Non-Discrimination Policy. The University will take strong responsive action against any retaliation. Retaliation will be grounds for a separate violation of the University of Louisiana System Policy on Preventing and Addressing Retaliation (Policy Number: M-(12)).

III. Applicability

This Policy applies all University Employees and Applicants.

IV. Definitions

1. **Applicant**: is an individual pursuing an employment opportunity with the University by submitting appropriate application materials for a specific, vacant position.
2. **Documentation**: are those documents that may be requested for consideration of a Religious Accommodation, including but not limited to the Religious Accommodation Request Form and documentation or other authority regarding a Religious Belief or Practice.
3. **Employee**: is any University employee including faculty, staff, administrators, and student employees, including hourly, salary, part-time, and full-time employees.
4. **Good Faith**: is a more than negligible effort to accommodate the Employee's or Applicant's request for Religious Accommodation.

5. **Religious Accommodation**: is any change in the application process, work schedule or environment, or in the way work assignments are customarily done, that enables an Employee or Applicant to participate in their Religious Practice or Belief without causing Undue Hardship to the University or contradicting the University's commitment to diversity and inclusiveness.
6. **Religious Belief and/or Practice**: is a belief, practice, or observance that includes moral or ethical beliefs as to what is right and wrong, that is sincerely held with the strength of traditional religious views, even if no religious group espouses such beliefs, or the religious group to which the individual professes to belong may not accept such belief. Social, political, or economic philosophies, as well as mere personal preference, are not protected by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and are not considered Religious Beliefs or Practices for the purposes of this Policy.
7. **Undue Hardship**: in relation to Religious Accommodation, is shown when a burden is substantial in the overall context of the University's operation, such as an action is costly, compromises workplace safety, decreases workplace efficiency, infringes on the rights of other Employees, or requires other Employees to do more than their share of potentially hazardous or burdensome work.

V. Policy Procedure

A. Requesting a Religious Accommodation

1. To request a Religious Accommodation, an Employee or Applicant must submit the [Religious Accommodation Request Form](#). Upon submitting the Form, it will be sent to the Senior Benefits/ADA Coordinator for consideration.
2. Requests must be submitted at least ten (10) business days in advance or immediately upon becoming aware of the need for a Religious Accommodation.
3. Supervisors who become aware of an Employee's request for Religious Accommodation should direct the Employee to contact the Senior Benefits/ADA Coordinator.

B. Documentation

Employees and Applicants who request Religious Accommodation should submit Documentation in support of their Religious Belief and/or Practice with their Religious Accommodation Request Form. If no documentation is included or additional documentation is necessary for consideration of their request, the University may request such Documentation or other authority. Additionally, the University may need to verify the nature of the Religious Belief and/or Practice with another party or parties who is/are knowledgeable about the individual's beliefs, which may include, but not be limited to, spiritual leaders or fellow adherents to address the request for a Religious Accommodation.

C. Consideration of Requests

Requests for Religious Accommodation will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with the requesting Employee's supervisor as appropriate, taking into account relevant factors including, which may include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. The essential functions of the requesting individual's position;
2. The duties of others in the department or job group;
3. The requirements of the department;

4. The potential effects of the accommodation on the requesting individual, their co-workers, and the University;
5. The duration of the accommodation request; and
6. The availability of alternative accommodations.

The University is not required to provide a requested preferred accommodation if there is more than one option that exists that eliminates the religious conflict.

D. Determination

Decisions of the approval or denial of a request for Religious Accommodation will be provided in writing to the requesting Employee or Applicant. If approved, the written determination will include details regarding the specific accommodation(s) granted, the duration of the accommodation(s), and if necessary, an implementation plan. If denied, the written determination will provide an explanation of the reason for denial. An Employee or Applicant who is not satisfied with the decision regarding their request for accommodation is encouraged to contact the Senior Benefits/ADA Coordinator and/or Director of Human Resources Compliance and EEO Programs to resolve any disputes.

E. Reporting Religious Discrimination or Retaliation

Any individual who believes they have experienced discrimination based on Religion, or retaliation related to Religious Accommodation, is encouraged to contact the Director of Human Resources Compliance and EEO Programs by submitting the Referral Form located at https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UnivofLouisiana&layout_id=0 (maxient.com).

The detailed procedures for filing complaints related to discrimination may be found in the University's Non-Discrimination Policy and Procedures. The detailed procedures for filing complaints related to retaliation may be found in the University of Louisiana System Policy on Preventing and Addressing Retaliation (Policy Number: M-(12)).

VI. Enforcement

The Associate Vice President of Administration and Finance and Chief Human Resources Officer is responsible for enforcement of this Policy.

VII. Policy Management

Upon adoption, the Vice President for Administration and Finance shall be the Responsible Executive for this Policy. The Associate Vice President of Administration and Finance and Chief Human Resources Officer is the Responsible Officer for this Policy. The Responsible Office is the Office of Human Resources Compliance and Equal Employment Opportunity Programs.

VIII. Exclusions

Not applicable.

IX. Effective Date

This Policy shall apply to all requests for Religious Accommodation reported on or after the date of adoption of this Policy.

X. Adoption

This Policy is hereby adopted on 4/5/2024.

DocuSigned by:

Joseph Savoie

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Dr. E. Joseph Savoie
President

XI. Appendices, References and Related Materials

- ✦ [Employee's Guide to Religious Accommodation Process](#)
- ✦ [Religious Accommodation Request Form](#)
- ✦ [Referral Form: Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, and Retaliation](#)
- ✦ References:
 1. [Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#)
 2. [EEOC Guidelines on Discrimination Because of Religion](#)
 3. [UL Lafayette Non-Discrimination Policy](#)
 4. [UL System Policy on Preventing and Addressing Retaliation](#)

XII. Revision History

- ✦ Original adoption date of Policy: November 2, 2021.
- ✦ HR.009.2: On 4/5/2024, the Policy was updated in light of the recent Supreme Court decision made in *Groff v. DeJoy*, 600 U. S. 447 (2023).