



VICE PRESIDENT FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

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MEMORANDUM

TO: General Faculty, Assistant Instructors, and Teaching Assistants

FROM: Steven W. Leslie, Executive Vice President and Provost
Juan C. González, Vice President for Student Affairs

SUBJECT: Observance of Religious Holy Days

Handwritten signatures of Steven W. Leslie and Juan C. González in black ink.

Religious holy days sometimes conflict with class and examination schedules. Sections 51.911 and 51.925 of the Texas *Education Code* address absences by students and instructors for observance of religious holy days.

Section 51.911 states that a student shall be excused from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence.

Section 51.925 prohibits the university from discriminating against or penalizing an instructor who is absent from class for the observance of a religious holy day. Proper notice must be given to the department chairman. Prior to the beginning of classes each semester, the instructor must provide the department chairman a list of classes that will be missed due to observance of a religious holy day. The list must be personally delivered, acknowledged and dated by the chairman, or sent certified mail, return receipt requested. Consistent with regular University policy, the instructor is responsible for finding a Qualified substitute UT Austin instructor for any missed class(es).

The University does not maintain a list of holy days. If you have questions about a certain holy day, several calendars can be found online including the one at <http://www.interfaithcalendar.org/>.

SWL/JCG/lrd