



<b>POLICY TITLE</b>	<b>Belief Accommodations</b>	<b>Policy Number</b>	153
<b>Section</b>	Governance, Organization, and General Information	<b>Approval Date</b>	May 11, 2026
<b>Subsection</b>	Individual Rights	<b>Effective Date</b>	May 11, 2026
<b>Responsible Office</b>	Office of the Vice President of People and Culture	<b>Last Review</b>	May 11, 2026

**1.0 PURPOSE**

1.1 Utah Valley University is committed to providing an academic and work environment that honors each student’s and employee’s religious or conscientious belief. As part of this commitment, the University will reasonably accommodate students and employees whose religious or conscientious belief conflict with aspects of the school or workplace setting.

**2.0 REFERENCES**

- 2.1 *Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended*
- 2.2 *Exercise of Religion, Utah Code § 63G-33*
- 2.3 *Reasonable Accommodations for Government Employees, Utah Code § 67-27-106*
- 2.4 *Religious Liberty Protections, Utah Code § 34A-5-112*
- 2.5 *Student Religious and Conscience Accommodations, Utah Code § 53H-7-903*
- 2.6 *Utah Antidiscrimination Act as amended, Utah Code § 34A-5-106*
- 2.7 *Utah Administrative Code R765-264 Student Belief Accommodations*

**3.0 DEFINITIONS**

**3.1 Accommodation Review Committee:** The Director of Accessibility Services, the Employee Accommodations Coordinator, and the Director of Employee Relations (or their designees). This committee reviews formal grievances from denied accommodation requests under procedures described in UVU Policy 152 *Accommodations for Individuals with Disabilities*.

**3.2 Employee Accommodations Coordinator:** The individual designated by the division of People and Culture to receive employee accommodation requests, assess such requests, engage



in an interactive process with the requesting employee and supervisor, and approve or disapprove accommodations in accordance with this policy.

**3.3 First responder:**

- 1) a law enforcement officer, as that term is defined in Utah Code 53-13-103;
- 2) an emergency medical technician, as defined in Utah Code 53-2e-101;
- 3) an advanced emergency medical technician, as defined in Utah Code 53-2e-101;
- 4) a paramedic, as defined in Utah Code 53-2e-101;
- 5) a firefighter, as defined in Utah Code 53H-11-306; or
- 6) a dispatcher, as defined in Utah Code 53-6-102.

**3.4 Fundamental alteration:** A change so significant in an examination or assignment that the change (1) alters the essential nature, objectives, or standards of a class, program, or degree; and (2) negatively impacts the student's ability to master essential learning outcomes of the course, program, or degree; or acquire the knowledge, skills, or competencies necessary to pass the course, program, or degree.

**3.5 Undue hardship:** A substantial burden, privation, or adversity on the University that would result from granting an employee's request to be relieved from performing a certain task, expression, action, or inaction when considering all relevant factors, including:

- 1) impact on the University's core mission or ability to conduct business in an effective or financially reasonable manner;
- 2) impact on co-workers and resulting disruption to university operations (excluding disruption due to co-worker resentment or religious animus).
- 3) University's ability to provide training and safety instruction for the job
- 4) the practical impact on the governmental entity in light of the nature, size, and operating cost of the University;
- 5) the disruption of the University's operations;
- 6) the nature of the employee's duties;
- 7) the number of employees the University will be required to grant a request to if the University grants the employee's request;
- 8) the type of workplace; and
- 9) the number of requests by the employee in the preceding 12 months from the day on which the employee submitted the request.

**3.6 Reasonable accommodation:** For purposes of student religious or conscientious belief accommodations, reasonable steps to modify expectations for a student's participation in an examination or other academic requirement, including by excusing participation, offering an alternative deadline or schedule, or offering an alternative examination or assignment.

**3.7 Religious or conscientious belief:** A sincerely held belief as to the rightness or wrongness of an action or inaction. This includes religious, non-religious, theistic, or non-theistic moral or



ethical beliefs. It further includes observances, practices, and abstentions arising from the belief, such as attending worship services, praying, wearing religious garb or symbols, displaying religious objects, adhering to certain dietary rules, proselytizing or other forms of religious expression, and refraining from certain activities. It does not include isolated social, political, economic philosophies, or mere personal preferences that are not part of a comprehensive belief or ethical system. Whether a practice arises from a religious or conscientious belief depends on the individual's motivation. One person might engage in a practice for religious reasons and another person might engage in the same practice for purely practical or aesthetic reasons (e.g., dietary restrictions, tattoos, etc.).

**3.8 Retaliation:** For students, any action or threat designed to dissuade a reasonable person from asserting their rights under this policy, or to inflict retribution for assertion of rights under this policy. For employees, retaliation is any of the following actions taken by the University against an employee as a result of the employee filing a request for accommodation of religious or conscientious belief:

- 1) a dismissal;
- 2) a reduction of compensation;
- 3) a failure to increase compensation by an amount that the employee is otherwise entitled to or
- 4) was promised;
- 5) a failure to promote if the employee would otherwise be promoted; or
- 6) a threat to take any action listed above

## 4.0 POLICY

### 4.1 Policy Statement

**4.1.1** UVU commits to reasonably accommodating each student's and employee's religious and conscientious beliefs in the manner described below.

### 4.2 Scope of Policy

**4.2.1** This policy applies to all students in attendance at UVU and all employees of UVU.

### 4.3 Relationship to Policy 165 and Other Policies

**4.3.1** Religious and conscientious accommodations are subject to this policy. Employees and students who believe that they have been denied a requested accommodation in violation of this policy or have otherwise been discriminated against based on religious or conscientious belief may file a complaint with the UVU's Equity and Title IX Office for resolution under UVU Policy 165 *Discrimination and Harassment*.



#### 4.4 Employee Accommodations

**4.4.1** UVU grants employees their reasonable requests to be relieved from performing certain tasks, expressions, actions, or inactions if (1) performing the task would conflict with, burden, or offend the employee's sincerely held religious or conscientious beliefs; (2) the employee follows the procedures for requesting an accommodation outlined in section 5.2; and (3) none of the exceptions listed in section 4.5.2 apply.

**4.4.2 Exceptions.** UVU will not grant an employee's request if exempting the employee from the task, expression, action, or inaction would impose an undue hardship on the University, including when

**4.4.2.1** The request would substantially interfere with the University's core mission or its ability to conduct business in an effective or financially reasonable manner;

**4.4.2.2** the request is to be relieved from performing a task that is part of training or safety instructions directly related to the employee's job;

**4.4.2.3** granting the request would create an unavoidable conflict with an existing legal obligation;

**4.4.2.4** the employee is a first responder and the requested accommodation is to be relieved from performing a task that involves protecting the safety of the public; or

**4.4.2.5** the employee's asserted religious or conscientious belief is being asserted for an improper purpose, such as for a reason other than religious or conscientious belief, or to receive pay for work not performed.

**4.4.3** Any time off for an accommodation of religious or conscientious belief is unpaid; however, accrued paid time off may be used in place of unpaid time off. Employees who anticipate being absent from work because of religious or conscientious belief must submit their request for time off in advance and as soon as they become aware of the need.

#### 4.5 Student Accommodations

**4.5.1** For any course, the University shall reasonably accommodate a student's absence from an examination or other academic requirement, or otherwise accommodate a conflict with the timing of an examination or other academic requirement, when the conflict is due to either:

1) the student's sincerely held religious or conscientious belief; or

2) the student's participation in an organized activity conducted under the auspices of the student's religious tradition or religious organization.



**4.5.2** To receive an accommodation under this section, the student must provide written prior notice to the instructor of the course.

**4.5.3** For a course that the University requires for graduation or for an academic major, the University shall reasonably accommodate a student's objection to a required examination or assignment for reasons of the student's sincerely held religious or conscientious belief if the requested accommodation does not create a fundamental alteration.

**4.5.4** For an elective course that the University does not require for graduation or for an academic major, an instructor may, but is not required to, grant a student's request for an accommodation based on the student's sincerely held religious or conscientious belief. An instructor who denies such a request must not do so for arbitrary, capricious, or illegal reasons.

**4.5.5** A reasonable accommodation may include excusing participation, offering an alternative deadline or schedule, or offering an alternative examination or assignment. When more than one accommodation would effectively eliminate the conflict with the student's sincerely held religious or conscientious belief, the instructor may select among the feasible accommodations.

**4.5.6** A reasonable accommodation for a student's absence from an examination or other academic requirement may not adversely impact the student's academic opportunities.

**4.5.7** An instructor shall respond to a request for accommodation as soon as practicable and in accordance with the procedures set forth in section 5.3.3.

**4.5.8** The Office of Accessibility Services is the University's point of contact for information about student religious or conscientious belief accommodations. The University shall designate one or more neutral arbiters with academic and subject-matter expertise to review denials of student accommodation requests and determine whether a requested accommodation would create a fundamental alteration.

## **4.6 Retaliation Prohibited**

**4.6.1** No university employee or student may retaliate against a student or employee for requesting an accommodation for religious or conscientious belief.

## **5.0 PROCEDURES**

### **5.1 Employee Belief Accommodations**

**5.1.1 Making a Request.** An employee seeking to be relieved from performing a certain task, expression, action, or inaction because of a conflict with their religious or conscientious belief shall, as soon as practicable, submit an accommodation request to the employee's supervisor and the Employee Accommodations Coordinator. The request must be delivered in writing no more than two days after receiving the objectionable assignment (unless the employee has less than



two days' notice to perform the assignment, in which case the accommodation request may be oral, but must be delivered immediately). The request must explain how the task, expression, action, or inaction would conflict with the employee's religious or conscientious belief.

**5.1.1.1** The supervisor and the Employee Accommodations Coordinator shall keep the employee's request for accommodation confidential.

**5.1.2 Responding to a Request.** Unless the University and employee agree in writing to waive or extend the time limit, the Employee Accommodations Coordinator, in consultation with the supervisor, shall respond to the request as soon as practicable but at least five calendar days before the certain task, expression, action, or inaction is required to be performed.

**5.1.2.1** The response to an employee request must be sent to the employee's official University email account.

**5.1.2.2** If a request for accommodation is not initially granted, the University's initial response must include an interactive process in which the employee, supervisor, and Employee Accommodations Coordinator communicate with one another to define the nature of the conflict or burden and effective accommodative possibilities, including possibilities that are not the employee's first preference. The supervisor and Employee Accommodations Coordinator may seek additional information to better understand the nature of the conflict and accommodation request.

**5.1.3** The employee is not entitled to a requested or preferred accommodation when there are multiple or other accommodations that would eliminate the conflict, burden, or offense. In such cases, the University, in its sole discretion, will choose which accommodation it will grant.

**5.1.4 Denials.** If the Employee Accommodations Coordinator denies an employee's request for accommodation, they shall include the following in their written response:

- 1) an explanation of the decision, including how an exception listed in section 4.5.2 applies;
- 2) the process for grieving the denial in accordance with section 5.3.2 of this policy; and
- 3) a statement that the employee may seek redress in a court as described in Utah Code 67-27-106(6) after they have exhausted the process provided in this policy.

## **5.2 Student Belief Accommodations**

**5.2.1 Making a Request.** A student requesting an accommodation under section 4.6 shall provide written prior notice to the instructor of the course for which the student seeks the accommodation. The written request must identify the religious or conscientious belief and the requested accommodation based on the student's sincerely held religious or conscientious belief.



To support recordkeeping, the University may require the student to complete a religious or conscientious belief accommodation form.

**5.2.1.1** The instructor and the Office of Accessibility Services shall keep the student's request for accommodation confidential, unless disclosure is permitted by law.

**5.2.2 Timing of Request.** A student should submit the request as early as possible. Requests should generally be submitted no later than 30 days before the accommodation is needed, absent good cause. An instructor may deny a request if sufficient notice is not provided and no good cause exists for the delay.

**5.2.3 Responding to a Request.** The instructor, in consultation with the Director of Accessibility Services or designee, or other relevant program personnel as needed, shall respond to the request as soon as practicable. Late requests may result in delayed accommodation.

**5.2.3.1** The response to a student request must be sent to the student's official University email account.

**5.2.3.2** If the request is not immediately granted, the initial response must include an interactive process where the student, instructor, and Director of Accessibility Services or designee, meaningfully engage with one another to define the nature of the conflict and effective accommodative options, including options that are not the student's first preference. The instructor and Director of Accessibility Services or designee may seek additional information to better understand the nature of the conflict and accommodation request.

**5.2.3.3** The student is not entitled to a requested or preferred accommodation when there are multiple accommodations that would eliminate the conflict with the student's sincerely held religious or conscientious belief. In such cases, the instructor will choose among the feasible accommodations.

**5.2.4 Denials.** If the instructor denies a student's request for accommodation, the instructor shall, as soon as practicable, notify the student and the Director of Accessibility Services of the denial, including:

- 1) the reason(s) for the denial; and
- 2) the process for grieving the denial in accordance with section 5.4.3 of this policy.

### **5.3 Grievances**

**5.3.1** Reasonable effort should be made to resolve disputes before entering the grievance process.



**5.3.2 Employee Grievances**

**5.3.2.1** Within 30 days of receiving notice of a denied request, the requesting employee may request further review by the Accommodation Review Committee under the procedures described in UVU Policy 152 *Accommodations for Individuals with Disabilities*. Affected supervisors or faculty members may also grieve awarded accommodations under the same procedure to resolve any concerns or problems with the implementation of approved accommodations.

**5.3.2.2** All employee grievances must be submitted in writing to the Office of People and Culture at [leaveofabsence@uvu.edu](mailto:leaveofabsence@uvu.edu).

**5.3.3 Student Grievances**

**5.3.3.1** All student grievances must be submitted in writing to the Director of Accessibility Services at [accessibilityservices@uvu.edu](mailto:accessibilityservices@uvu.edu).

**5.3.3.2** The Provost or designee shall designate one or more neutral arbiters with the academic and subject-matter expertise necessary to review a denial of a student accommodation request and determine whether the requested accommodation constitutes a fundamental alteration.

**5.3.3.3** The Director of Accessibility Services or designee shall submit a student grievance arising from a denied accommodation request to the designated neutral arbiter(s).

**5.3.3.4** The neutral arbiter(s) shall issue a written decision no later than five business days after receipt of the grievance and shall send that decision to the student and the Director of Accessibility Services for recordkeeping and reporting.

<b>POLICY HISTORY</b>		
Date of Last Action	Action Taken	Authorizing Entity
June 18, 2025	New policy approved.	UVU Board of Trustees
May 11, 2026	Compliance change approved UVU President's Council	UVU President's Council
June 23, 2026	Approved by Board of Trustees	UVU Board of Trustees