
Academic Accommodations for Religious, Indigenous and Spiritual Observances

New Policy - Effective September, 2021

Land Acknowledgement



Anishinaabe art by [Bruce K. Beardy for Ontario College of Teachers](#)

St. Lawrence College is situated on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee peoples.

May we always be grateful to live and learn on these lands.

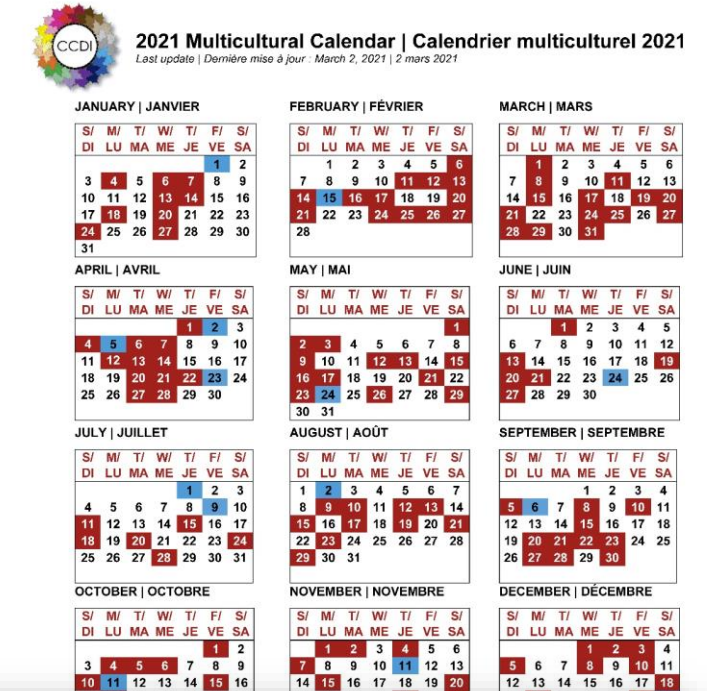
Policy Need

- As part of the value of **Belonging**, SLC supports an inclusive teaching and learning environment that respects and values the diversity of our students.
- Under the Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC), every individual has the right to be ‘treated equally based on creed, and to freely hold and practice creed beliefs of one's choosing.’
- Like accommodations under other OHRC grounds, such as disability, we have a duty to accommodate to the point of undue hardship.
- This new Policy provides a clear, consistent structure and practice to support individuals’ rights and delineates institutional obligations relating to faith observances under OHRC.



Key Highlights

- New Policy, AC836, Effective, September, 2021.
- Policy relates to students and academic accommodations.
- The Workplace Observance Accommodations Policy exists for staff members of SLC.
- Policy contains a link to our interfaith calendar, although this resource is not exhaustive of all possible observances
<https://www.stlawrencecollege.ca/about/belonging-equity-diversity-and-inclusion-at-slc/upcoming-events-and-calendar>
- Preplanning re key dates may be a valuable mitigation strategy e.g., Nov. 4,5 – Diwali / Vikram New Year (Hindu).
- Personal information relating to a student’s creed is confidential and cannot be shared without consent.



Key Highlights (CON'T)


- Observance-related academic accommodation requests should be taken 'in good faith' as per the Ontario Human Rights Code.
- In exceptional cases, faculty may request substantiating documentation when there are reasonable grounds to believe that the policy is being abused.
- All planning relating to religious, Indigenous or spiritual accommodations occurs between the student and faculty directly.
 - Only accommodations which may pose a health and safety risk require consultation with Student Wellness & Accessibility and approval by Associate Dean and/or Dean. e.g., garment / machinery



Accommodation Process

- Request is submitted by student to faculty through the **“Accommodation for Observance Student Request Form”**.
- Form can be found at **S:\AccommodatingStudents\Observances Form**
- One form is required for each course.
- Form should be submitted within first two weeks of semester start, wherever possible.

**ACCOMMODATION FOR OBSERVANCE
STUDENT REQUEST FORM**



Student ID:		Date Submitted:	
Student Name:		Faculty Name:	
Course and Section:		Program:	
SLC Email Address:			
Relevant Semester (Select one):	<input type="checkbox"/> Fall	<input type="checkbox"/> Winter	<input type="checkbox"/> Spring / Summer
Year:			

ACCOMMODATION FOR OBSERVANCE DURING THE TERM		
Date of Conflict	Observance	Accommodation Requested

It is understood that this information will be treated in a confidential manner, except to the extent that the information is false, fraudulent, is required to be used in any claim of academic misconduct against the student or is required to be disclosed to defend St. Lawrence College in any claim or potential claim involving the student or the suspicion of fraud.

Accommodation Process (CON'T)

- Page 2 of the **Accommodation for Observance Student Request Form** contains Student and Faculty Instructions.
- Student and faculty sign, date and each retain a copy of the form.
- Faculty respond to submitted form within two weeks or one week prior to observance date.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR OBSERVANCE

Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous and Spiritual Observances

This form is to be used to request a formal academic accommodation based on a student's declaration of religious, Indigenous or spiritual observance ("Observance"). It is understood by all parties concerned that this information will be kept strictly confidential and will not be used for any other purpose. The mutual agreement reached between the student and the instructor must meet the College deadlines for grade submission.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR STUDENTS

Complete one form for each course where Religious, Aboriginal and Spiritual Observance Accommodation is required. Sign and date the form(s).

1. If, after reviewing the Course Outline details for a course, you determine that there is a conflict between an academic activity and your Observance, you should complete the form entitled "Accommodation for Observance" and submit it to your Instructor. A separate form must be submitted for each course within the first two weeks of the term if possible or at a minimum within two weeks of the conflict. If there is a required absence occurring within the first two weeks of classes or the dates are not known well in advance as they are linked to other conditions, this form should be submitted with as much lead time as is possible in advance of the required absence. Describe, in as much detail as possible, the requirements of your observance and a description of the requested accommodation.
2. You should consult with your Faculty to reach an agreement on a reasonable means to address the Accommodation. Both you and your Faculty must complete, sign and date the agreement, and both should retain a copy of the form for a minimum of one semester after the term within which it was filed.
3. If you do not feel that your request for accommodation has been dealt with appropriately, you may take the matter forward to the Dean or Associate Dean of the School, within five (5) days of receipt of this form from the Faculty. If after consultation with their Associate Dean / Dean, a mutually agreeable accommodation is not reached, students may launch an appeal through the College's complaint [process](#).
4. If you have not received a response from the Faculty within the first three (3) weeks of classes, you may also refer this to the Dean or Associate Dean of the School.
5. Your signature on this form attests to the fact that you are submitting a bona fide claim.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FACULTY

1. Accept Accommodations for Observances in good faith, unless there is specific evidence to indicate an abuse of the policy.
2. You should consult with the student to reach an agreement on a reasonable means to address the Accommodation. Both you and the student must complete, sign and date the agreement, and both should retain a copy of the form for a minimum of one semester after the term within which it was filed.
3. If you have any questions regarding the Observance indicated by the student, please review the inter-faith calendar found [here](#) for relevant dates associated with the Observance identified.
4. When making the alternative arrangements (e.g., rescheduling an examination), you must ensure that the academic obligation can be met as soon as possible before the end of the semester, and that it is conducted equitably and in a suitable environment.

Accommodation Process (CON'T)

- Where a mutually agreeable accommodation cannot be reached, students may have faculty decisions reviewed by Associate Dean and/or Dean
- Within five days of faculty feedback, if no resolution can be achieved, students may launch an appeal through the College complaint process
- **Faculty objections should be rare, given our duty to accommodate in good faith.**



Accommodation Process (CON'T)

- Recommend that course outlines and learning plans reference this policy and clearly state students' rights and obligations.
- Students are responsible to obtain any lecture notes or other pertinent information missed in class.
- Students must be given opportunity to make up missed academic work or assessment, in a way that is intrinsically equitable and does not result in an academic disadvantage, as soon as possible before the end of semester.



Examples

- Absence from class or placement
- Deferral of an assessment or assignment
- Absence from scheduled exams with a deferral
- Following a specific dress code
- Temporary absence from class or placement for daily prayers, fasting, breaking a fast or religious observance
- Absence and/or deferral of other required activities as outlined in a course syllabus



Questions



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