**Frequently Asked Questions About Religious Accommodation Guidelines**

**Do religious accommodations give some students an advantage over the rest of the class?**

*No. Religious accommodations give students of all faiths an equal opportunity to succeed academically by ensuring that students’ grades are not lowered as a result of religious observance.*

**What if faculty suspect that a student’s profession of faith and need for an accommodation is insincere?**

*State and federal law regarding religious accommodation extends not only to traditional, organized religions, such as Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism, but also encompasses sincerely held religious beliefs that are “new, uncommon, not part of a formal church or sect, only subscribed to by a small number of people, or that seem illogical or unreasonable to others.” See EEOC Compliance Manual § 12-I(A)(1).*

*A student’s beliefs must be accommodated if they are sincere, meaningful, and occupy a place in the life of the student similar to that filled by organized religion. A belief in God is not required for a student to have a sincere religious belief which requires accommodation.*

*Practically speaking, it is extremely difficult to establish that a student’s professed faith-based need for an accommodation is insincere.*

*Faculty concerned about sincere belief and need for an accommodation should contact OIE for guidance and assistance.*

**What should students do if they are concerned about whether they are receiving a reasonable and effective religious accommodation that does not disadvantage them as compared to their peers who are not practicing their faith in the same way?**

*Contact OIE for assistance at oie@csuohio.edu, 216-687-2223 or extension 2223, or drop by AC 236. OIE will listen to the students’ concerns, and identify options and strategies for addressing them. OIE will then contact the faculty member with the goal of identifying an accommodation that is acceptable to the faculty member and the student.*