

The Compass Center

Multifaith Communities | Interfaith Engagement | Meaning and Purpose | Spiritual Life

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE CALENDAR

Accommodation Guide & Religious Accommodation Policy

Academic Year 2026-2027

Supporting thoughtful planning and religious accommodation across Butler University.

BUTLER'S COMMITMENT

Butler University is home to students, faculty, and staff from a wide variety of religious, spiritual, and secular worldviews. Religious observances are an important part of many people's lives, shaping identity, community, worship, and daily practice. As part of our commitment to fostering a welcoming and inclusive campus, The Compass Center provides this guide to increase awareness of major religious observances represented within our community and to support thoughtful planning across the University.

Using This Guide

This guide is intended to support thoughtful planning and the reasonable accommodation of religious observance across all areas of university life.

Religious observances can influence participation in classes, examinations, campus events, performances, competitions, travel, interviews, meetings, student organization activities, and other co-curricular experiences. When planning significant academic or campus activities, faculty and staff are encouraged to consider the observances listed in this guide and work collaboratively with students when accommodation is needed.

Not every observance listed will require an accommodation, and practices may vary among individuals within the same religious tradition. Students are responsible for communicating accommodation requests in accordance with university policy, and faculty and staff are encouraged to respond with flexibility and mutual respect whenever reasonable.

No calendar can represent every religious observance or every tradition. This guide highlights observances that are most likely to affect participation in academic or campus life based on Butler's campus community.

Thoughtful planning begins with awareness. Considering major religious observances in advance helps create a campus where students can fully participate in both their education and their religious, spiritual, or cultural commitments.

Before You Schedule a Class, Program, or Event

- Is this a required or high-impact course requirement, program, event, meeting, or experience?
- Could the date or time conflict with worship, fasting, travel, family, or community obligations?
- Is food central to the class, program, meeting, or event, and might participants be fasting or observing dietary restrictions?
- Could the requirement or experience be scheduled at another time or offered through a reasonable alternative?
- Have dates, expectations, and participation requirements been communicated early enough for students to raise potential conflicts?
- Is there a clear and accessible process for requesting flexibility or accommodation?

When a Student Requests an Accommodation

- Thank the student for communicating the need.
- Listen without asking the student to defend or explain their beliefs in detail.
- Clarify which course requirement, program, event, meeting, or experience creates the conflict.
- Work collaboratively toward a reasonable alternative that preserves the essential purpose of the requirement or experience.
- Communicate the agreed-upon plan clearly and in writing when appropriate.
- Consult the appropriate academic leader, supervisor, program organizer, or The Compass Center if questions remain.
- Ensure that students are not disadvantaged for requesting a religious accommodation.

Religious Observances: Academic Year 2026-2027

Date	Observance	Description and Accommodation Considerations
September 11-13, 2026*	Rosh Hashanah <i>Judaism</i>	The Jewish New Year and beginning of the High Holy Days. Planning considerations: Many observers attend worship and share festive meals with family or community. Consider avoiding major exams and required events, particularly from sundown Friday through Sunday night.
September 20-21, 2026*	Yom Kippur <i>Judaism</i>	The Day of Atonement and the holiest day of the Jewish year. Planning considerations: Many observers refrain from work, attend worship, and fast from food and drink for approximately 25 hours. Avoid major academic and co-curricular obligations when possible.
September 25-October 2, 2026*	Sukkot <i>Judaism</i>	A harvest festival commemorating divine presence and provision. Planning considerations: Some observers refrain from work during the first two days, attend worship, eat in a sukkah, or participate in evening observances. Flexibility may be needed, especially September 25-27.
November 8, 2026	Diwali <i>Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism, and other traditions</i>	The Festival of Lights, observed across South Asia and around the world. Planning considerations: Students may participate in worship, family gatherings, or community celebrations. Consider avoiding major required activities on the principal day of celebration.
December 4-12, 2026*	Hanukkah <i>Judaism</i>	An eight-day Festival of Lights commemorating the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem. Planning considerations: Observance commonly includes evening candle lighting and family or community gatherings. Academic absence is not generally required, but evening availability may be affected.
December 25, 2026	Christmas <i>Christianity</i>	Celebration of the birth of Jesus and a principal Christian holy day. Planning considerations: Many observers attend worship and gather with family or community.

Date	Observance	Description and Accommodation Considerations
December 26, 2026-January 1, 2027	Kwanzaa <i>Cultural / secular, with some religious expressions</i>	A celebration of African American and Pan-African heritage, family, community, and seven guiding principles. Planning considerations: Students may participate in family or community gatherings and daily observances.
January 7, 2027	Orthodox Christmas <i>Eastern Orthodox Christianity</i>	Celebration of the Nativity by many Orthodox Christian communities following the Julian calendar. Planning considerations: Many observers attend worship and gather with family or community. Some students may request schedule flexibility.
February 6, 2027	Lunar New Year <i>Cultural and religious traditions across East and Southeast Asia</i>	The beginning of the lunar year, celebrated by Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and other communities. Planning considerations: Students may travel or participate in family, cultural, or religious celebrations.
February 7-March 8, 2027*†	Ramadan <i>Islam</i>	A holy month of fasting, prayer, reflection, and community. Planning considerations: Many Muslim students fast daily from dawn until sunset and may attend evening prayers. Consider the timing of food-centered events, late-day assessments, and mandatory evening programs. Avoid major events during the first evenings when possible.
February 10, 2027	Ash Wednesday <i>Christianity</i>	The beginning of Lent for many Western Christians. Planning considerations: Some observers attend worship or receive ashes and may begin fasting or other devotional practices. Schedule flexibility may be appropriate.
March 9-10, 2027*†	Eid al-Fitr <i>Islam</i>	The Festival of Breaking the Fast, marking the conclusion of Ramadan. Planning considerations: Many observers attend congregational prayer and celebrate with family and community. Avoid major exams and required events when possible.
March 21-28, 2027	Holy Week and Easter <i>Western Christianity</i>	The most significant week of the Christian year, commemorating Jesus' final days, death, and resurrection. Planning considerations: Palm Sunday is March 21; Maundy Thursday, March 25; Good Friday, March 26; Holy Saturday, March 27; and Easter Sunday, March 28. Worship, fasting, and travel may affect availability, especially Thursday evening through Sunday.
March 22-23, 2027†	Holi <i>Hinduism and South Asian cultural traditions</i>	A spring Festival of Colors associated with renewal, joy, and stories from Hindu tradition. Planning considerations: Students may participate in religious, family, or community celebrations. Dates and local celebrations may vary.
April 14, 2027	Vaisakhi <i>Sikhism and Punjabi cultural traditions</i>	A harvest festival and major Sikh observance commemorating the founding of the Khalsa in 1699. Planning considerations: Students may attend worship at a gurdwara or participate in family and community celebrations.
April 21-29, 2027*	Passover (Pesach) <i>Judaism</i>	An eight-day observance commemorating the Exodus from Egypt. Planning considerations: Many observers participate in Seder meals during the first two evenings, may travel home, and observe dietary restrictions throughout Passover. Avoid major obligations on the first two days when possible.
April 25-May 2, 2027	Orthodox Holy Week and Pascha <i>Eastern Orthodox Christianity</i>	The principal observance of the Christian year for many Eastern Orthodox Christians. Planning considerations: Holy Friday is April 30 and Pascha is May 2. Worship, fasting, and travel may affect availability, particularly from Thursday evening through Sunday.

Date	Observance	Description and Accommodation Considerations
May 16-17, 2027*†	Eid al-Adha <i>Islam</i>	One of Islam's two major festivals, commemorating Abraham's devotion and coinciding with the Hajj pilgrimage. Planning considerations: Many observers attend congregational prayer and gather with family and community. Avoid major exams and required activities when possible.
May 20, 2027†	Vesak (Wesak Day) <i>Buddhism</i>	A commemoration of the Buddha's birth, enlightenment, and passing, observed differently across Buddhist traditions. Planning considerations: Students may attend temple services, meditate, make offerings, or participate in community celebrations. The date may vary by tradition and region.

* The observance begins at sundown on the first date listed unless otherwise noted.

† Dates are based on lunar or regional calendars and may vary by a day or more depending on religious authority, tradition, location, or local observation.

Butler University Religious Holiday Accommodation Policy

Butler University passed a Religious Holiday Accommodation policy through the Faculty Senate on November 6, 2012. The policy states:

Butler University respects all students' right to religious observance and will reasonably accommodate students' religious practice with regard to class attendance, examinations, and assignments when requests are made in a timely manner.

Butler University recommends that each class should have a syllabus that provides a schedule of activities for the class. It is the student's responsibility to inform instructors of course conflicts resulting from religious observations at least two weeks in advance of the observance, so that accommodations can be made. Requests must be made in writing, and the student should include a proposed alternative due date, examination date, or make-up outline.

The professor should review the request and if the student's proposed suggestion is acceptable, he/she should notify the student of the agreement. Any solution that is mutually agreeable to both student and faculty member is acceptable.

If accommodations cannot be agreed upon, the instructor and students should seek the advice of the associate dean in the appropriate college. No adverse or prejudicial effects will result to students because they have made use of these provisions.

The policy can also be found at <https://www.butler.edu/registrar/religious-holidays>.

QUESTIONS OR CONSULTATION

The Compass Center welcomes questions about religious observances, accommodations, and campus planning. The Center is available to consult with faculty, staff, student organizations, and campus partners on supporting students of diverse religious, spiritual, and secular worldviews. The Compass Center is also available to provide educational programming and consultation regarding religious literacy, religious accommodations, and inclusive planning.

Contact:

Aziel Núñez

Director, The Compass Center
anunez@butler.edu