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Presidential Statement On The Secular University

From its inception in 1959, York University was created as a secular institution. York's Mission Statement emphasizes its multicultural nature, and the value it places on tolerance and diversity. It also emphasizes a commitment to testing the boundaries and structures of knowledge and to cultivating the critical intellect. It is in this context that the university is governed and its curriculum developed and delivered.

What this can mean in practice is that those who have strong commitments to various faith communities or political ideologies may find their beliefs challenged by others and/or they may find that material presented in the curriculum criticizes or offends some of their values. This is to be expected in a pluralistic society. The university is a reflection of our society and more: it is a place where knowledge and beliefs are subject to critical assessment.

York University is committed to providing a place of study and work which upholds the democratic and pluralistic values of Canadian society. The university's policies and procedures, including its academic rules and regulations, are designed to be fully in compliance with all legal requirements, specifically the Ontario Human Rights Code, in providing accommodation for the observance of significant religious occasions by its faculty, staff and students. This position is reflected in the Senate Policy on Sessional Dates which confirms the university's respect for such observance and its commitment to accommodation in the scheduling of examinations. It is the responsibility of students, faculty and staff to comply with Senate policy in both requesting and providing such accommodation. For further information go to: <https://w2prod.sis.yorku.ca/Apps/WebObjects/cdm.woa/wa/regobs>

