

## **Policy and Procedure**

### **Requesting Accommodation for Religious Purposes, Other Than an Excused Absence**

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to acknowledge respect for the religious diversity of PCOM students by providing opportunities, where possible, for accommodation in cases where conflicts exist between students' religious beliefs/practices and educational activities. Such accommodations must honor, where applicable the primacy of a commitment to patient care, not unduly burden faculty or disproportionately affect the general student population involved in the affected educational activity, while ensuring that the requirements of the prescribed curriculum are upheld.

Applicability: This policy applies to any PCOM student who, because of religious beliefs or practice, believes that she or he is unable to participate in an activity, or in other ways fulfill an educational requirement of any course, clinical activity, experiential activity/event, clerkship or other required activity.

Policy: Recognizing that the religious diversity of its students may result in conflicts between students' religious beliefs/practices and certain educational or other required activities, PCOM will attempt to make accommodations that honor, where applicable, the primacy of a commitment to patient care and does not unduly burden faculty, students, or others involved in the affected educational activity.

Procedure: Students who believe they have a need for religious accommodation, other than requesting an excused absence, during any course, clinical activity, experiential activity, clerkship or other required educational activity shall notify the relevant instructor/preceptor as soon as possible after an impending conflict becomes apparent – **prior to or at the beginning of the course or other educational activities during the didactic portion of the curriculum and before the start or at the beginning of any experiential activity, clinical activity or clerkship, during the experiential or clinical portion of the curriculum, in order to avoid scheduling conflicts.** The student request for accommodation must be in writing.

1. To the following
  - A. During the student's didactic portion(s) of the curriculum:
    - a. Course Director
    - b. Chief Student Affairs Officer in Philadelphia or Director of the Center for Student Affairs in Georgia, as appropriate
    - c. Dean of the student's program
  - B. During the student's experiential or clinical portion(s) of the curriculum
    - a. One of the following, as appropriate to the student's program
      - i. Assistant Dean of Undergraduate Clinical Education for School of Osteopathic Medicine in Philadelphia or Georgia as appropriate

- ii. Clinical Director for the Physician Assistant Program
  - iii. Assistant Program Director for the Forensic Medicine
  - iv. Director of Clinical Training for the Clinical PsyD Program
  - v. Director of Clinical Training for the School Psychology Program
  - vi. Associate Director of the Program for the Master of Science in Mental Health Counseling Program
  - vii. Director of Experiential Education for the School of Pharmacy students in Georgia
- b. Chief Student Affairs Officer in Philadelphia or Director of the Center for Student Affairs in Georgia, as appropriate or his/her designee
  - c. Dean of the student's program or his/her designee

C. Include the following

- a. A description of the aspect of the curriculum the student is requesting not to participate in and the reason for the request.
- b. The date of the request and the student's signature.

If the student requests religious accommodation:

1. For a course or other educational activity that occurs during the didactic portion of the curriculum
  - a. The Course Director will review the written request and discuss any potential problems with the student, the Chief Student Affairs Officer in Philadelphia or Director of the Center for Student Affairs in Georgia and the Dean of the requesting student's program.
  - b. A panel that includes the following individuals will review the written request and discuss any potential problems with the student, the Course Director, the Chief Student Affairs Officer in Philadelphia or Director of the Center for Student Affairs in Georgia as appropriate and a member of the Disability and Other Special Needs Sub-Council, will review any student's written request, decide if there is a need to grant reasonable accommodation for religious purposes, and whether granting an accommodation will unduly burden faculty, staff or others involved with the affected activity or will unacceptably compromise the rigor of the educational requirements. A written response to the student request will be issued by the pane.

2. For a clinical activity, experiential activity or other educational activities that occur during the clinical portion of the curriculum:
  - a. The appropriate person for each program, as listed in (2.B.a.) will review the written request and discuss any potential problems with the student, the Chief Student Affairs Officer in Philadelphia or Director of the Center for Student Affairs in Georgia and the Dean of the requesting student's program.
  - b. A panel that includes the following individuals will review the written request and discuss any potential problems with the student, the appropriate person for each program as listed in (2.B.a.), the Chief Student Affairs Officer in Philadelphia or Director of the Center for Student Affairs in Georgia and a member of the Disability and Other Special Needs Sub-Council, will review any student's written request, decide if there is a need to grant reasonable accommodation for religious purposes, and whether granting an accommodation will unduly burden faculty, staff or others involved with the affected activity or will unacceptably compromise the rigor of the educational requirements. A written response to the student request will be issued by the panel.
3. A copy of the written student request and the panel's response to the student's written request, will be filed and maintained in the student's academic file.