



## **RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE POLICY**

In order to be in compliance with New York State Education Law 224-a, the University has adopted the following statement regarding respect for students' religious beliefs.

"As provided in New York Education Law Section 224-a, students who choose not to register for classes, attend classes or take exams on certain days because of their religious beliefs will be given an equivalent opportunity to register for classes or to make up the work requirements or exams they miss, without penalties or additional fees."

If the requested accommodations in effect require or result in students not participating in required educational experiences, the MSPRB will be convened to evaluate the reasonableness of the requested accommodations and if granting such will substantially alter the depth and integrity of the educational requirements for University of Rochester medical students.

School of Medicine and Dentistry students who anticipate absences from scheduled educational activities due to religious observances, are required to provide written notification to the Registrar's Office by the listed deadlines of the anticipated days they will be absent for the academic year. The approved accommodations are for the actual days of the observance(s) and do not include additional time for out of area travel to participate in an observance.

Deadlines for Requesting Accommodations for Religious Observance: Accepted candidates July 15 (note: candidates offered admission after July 15, must advise the school about their request for religious observance at the time of accepting the offer of admission) Year II July 15 Years III and IV Due by the deadline for submitting the next year's schedule

All requests should be made via the Orientation Website (incoming students) or current students at <http://bit.ly/1xtuY4W>. Students are also encouraged to discuss their anticipated approved religious observance absences with their course and/or clerkship directors.

If the requested accommodations in effect require or result in students not participating in required educational experiences, the MSPRB will be convened to evaluate the reasonableness of the requested accommodations and if granting such will substantially alter the depth and integrity of the educational requirements for University of Rochester medical students.

## **OPTING OUT OF EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES DUE TO CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTIONS**

(Effective March 11, 2009)

To be consistent with the URM/Strong Memorial Hospital's policy, a URSMD medical student who desires not to participate in specific health care and/or research procedures in non-emergency situations, and who has complied with the \*existing notification and approval process,

shall not be required by faculty, residents, the hospital or a member of its medical staff to participate in any health care or research activity related to the conscientious objections.

Students cannot opt out of participating in educational experiences that involve emergency health care.

Because students with conscientious objections must participate in the care of patients during emergency situations, they will not be exempted for being evaluated on the educational content and must demonstrate (via means other than the actual procedures of the area of objection) the expected level of competence. The URSMD is not responsible for providing tutoring and/or academic support to assist a student with meeting the academic standards.

### **\*PROCEDURES FOR ADVISING THE SCHOOL ABOUT CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTIONS**

A student with conscientious objections must:

1. Advise the school each year in writing, about his/her conscientious objection
2. Identify and explain the reasoning in support of the conscientious objection
3. Indicate the specific (non-emergency) educational experiences he/she anticipates opting out of

If a student's conscientious objection and anticipated absence or non-participation in educational experiences, substantially alters the depth and integrity of the educational requirements for University of Rochester medical students, a review committee will determine the reasonableness of the anticipated non participation. The student may appeal an adverse review committee decision to the MSPRB, whose decision will be final.

### **STRONG MEMORIAL HOSPITAL POLICY**

No employee of Strong Memorial Hospital or member of its medical staff, who has previously informed the hospital of their decision not to participate, shall be required by the hospital or a member of its medical staff to participate in any health care or research activity which is contrary to their religious beliefs or moral convictions, except in emergency situations. (This includes, but is not limited to, abortions and sterilization procedures.)

In cases where such conscientious objection causes operational or service disruption, the hospital will make reasonable attempts to reassign the employee or staff member to avoid such disruptions.

Description:

1. Any member of the Strong Memorial Hospital medical or nursing staff who does not wish to give advice with respect to, or participate in, any induced termination of pregnancy, sterilization procedure, or any other specific health care or research activity should inform their department of that fact, in accordance with department policy, upon appointment if possible.

2. However, to fulfill the hospital's legal and ethical obligation to provide high quality care at all times, staff must agree to provide care in any emergency circumstances, particularly in situations which have a high probability of being or are life-threatening.
  3. Other hospital employees who refuse to participate in specific health care or research activities should inform their department, in accordance with department policy, upon employment if possible.
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### **RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE FORM**

If the requested accommodations in effect require or result in students not participating in required educational experiences, the Medical Student Promotions and Review Board will be convened to evaluate the reasonableness of the requested accommodations and if granting such will substantially alter the depth and integrity of the educational requirements for University of Rochester medical students.

International Visiting Medical Students who anticipate absences from scheduled educational activities due to religious observances are required to provide written notification to Student Enrichment Programs of the anticipated days they will be absent during the time of their scheduled electives. Notification must be sent with the application packet.

This information will not be reviewed by the International Medicine Faculty Advisory Committee and will in no way influence their recommendation for acceptance.

**I anticipate I will be absent from classes for religious observances on the following dates:**

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**Other information:**

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*I have read and understand the above content.*

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Signature

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Date

## References

10 NYCRR §405.3 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Title 42, §300a-7

SMH Policy 9.4, "Abortion"

Personnel Policy Manual

Department of Obstetrics/Gynecology Policy Manual

13.6 History

7/83 Policy number changed from 5.7.2.

9/86 Reviewed by Legal Affairs and Risk Management and Ob/Gyn Nursing.

2/92 Revised by Policy Development to include all health care and research activities per Federal law

3/92 Reviewed and recommended for approval by Policy Development Group. 30

6/92 Reviewed and recommended for approval by Policy and Procedure Committee with some changes

7/92 Reviewed and approved by Patient Care Policy Committee

4/01 Reviewed by Human Resources and Policy Management Team

10/04 Reviewed by Human Resources 3/07 Reviewed by Human Resources

3/07 Reviewed and approved by Policy Management Team