

Exemption FAQ

Intro Statement: In accordance with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Illinois Health Care Right of Conscience Act, Parkland College respects the religious beliefs and practices of all students and employees and will make, on request, an accommodation for such observances when a reasonable accommodation is available that does not create an undue hardship on the College.

Questions:

1. Can an employee or student request a religious exemption from the COVID vaccination requirement?

Answer:

Parkland's current implementation of the Executive Order does not require employees or students to be vaccinated *UNLESS they are enrolled or working in a specific program that requires full vaccination (e.g. many health professions programs)*. Thus, in general, students and employees do not need to seek exemptions from vaccination unless they are enrolled or working in a specific program that requires it.

2. What if I am a student or an employee enrolled in a specific program that requires individuals to be fully vaccinated and I wish to request a religious exemption from vaccination?

Answer: In cases where a specific program requires vaccination of employees and students (e.g. many health professions programs), an employee or student may submit a written request for a religious exemption. The written request will include the type of religious conflict that exists and the employee or student's suggested accommodation. Upon receipt of the accommodation request form, the appropriate college office will evaluate the request considering whether a work conflict exists due to a sincerely held religious belief or practice **and** whether an accommodation is available that is reasonable **and** that would not create an undue hardship for the College to implement. In general, an accommodation based on religious beliefs may involve a change in job or academic program, taking a leave of absence, allowing an exception to the dress and appearance code that does not affect safety requirements, enrolling for remote-only learning, or for other aspects of the learning and work environments. After the review is complete, then a decision will be communicated in writing to the employee or student. Employees and students will have an opportunity to appeal the decision.

3. Can a student or employee request a religious exemption from the COVID-19 testing requirement?

Answer: Currently, the Governor's Executive Order 2021-22 does not provide for any exemptions from *testing*.

According to the Executive Order,

e. Individuals are exempt from any requirement to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 if (1) vaccination is medically contraindicated, including any individual who is entitled to an accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act or any other law applicable to a disability-related reasonable accommodation, or (2) vaccination would require the individual to violate or forgo a sincerely held

religious belief, practice, or observance. Individuals who demonstrate they are exempt from the vaccination requirement shall undergo, at a minimum, weekly testing as provided for in Subsection (d).
([Executive Order Display \(illinois.gov\)](#))

If a student or employee would still like to submit a written request for an exemption from testing, they have the right to do so; however, they may do so with the understanding that the accommodation requested may not be granted but that the college will attempt to provide a reasonable accommodation that does not create an undue hardship on the college. For example, if the College were to allow exemptions from testing, then the College would be in violation of the Governor's Executive Order 2021-22 thus imposing an undue hardship on the College. In cases where a student or employee would still like to submit a written request for a religious exemption from testing, the written request must include the type of religious conflict that exists and the employee or student's suggested accommodation. Upon receipt of the accommodation request form, the appropriate college office will evaluate the request considering whether a work or class conflict exists due to a sincerely held religious belief or practice and whether an accommodation is available that is reasonable and that would not create an undue hardship for the College to implement. In general, an accommodation may involve a change in job or academic program, taking a leave of absence, withdrawal from course or program, allowing an exception to the dress and appearance code that does not affect safety requirements, enrolling in remote-only classes or programs, or for other aspects of the learning and work environments. After the review is complete, then a decision will be communicated in writing to the employee or student. Employees and students will have an opportunity to appeal the decision.