



Requesting a Religious / Philosophical Exemption from Required Immunizations

Stanford University requires all new students to be immunized against measles, mumps, and rubella, a policy that is consistent with United States public health recommendations. Immunization is required because universal immunization of a close-knit campus community creates “herd immunity” and protects all students. When many individuals are not immunized, “herd immunity” is weakened, putting community members at risk.

At the same time, Stanford University recognizes and supports students’ religious or philosophical commitments. Students may be exempted from the immunization requirement in order to adhere to legitimate religious practices and beliefs or philosophical positions. A student’s personal attitudes, beliefs, or preferences are not grounds for an exemption.

To request a religious or philosophical exemption a student must complete, sign and submit the form, “Request for Religious/ Philosophical Exemption from Required Immunizations” to the Director of Vaden Health Center. A University panel will evaluate your request.

In assessing your request the committee will be looking for a full and succinct explanation of the following points:

- Your religious practices and beliefs emerge from a wider religious community as a part of its religious obligation. Practices that originate in one's family of origin or local community are not accepted as religious in nature.
- Your philosophical position is an established and rational intellectual position shared with others and based on coherent, justifiable philosophical principles. A framework based upon your individual views will not be accepted.
- Your religious belief or philosophical position is deeply held and consistently guides and influences your life.
- Sacred texts, religious authorities in your wider religious community, or philosophical writings indicate that immunization is prohibited. Your personal interpretation will not be considered sufficient.
- You consider and address ethically the tension between your desire not to be immunized and your social obligation to participate in creating “herd immunity.”

Questions may be directed to the Director, Vaden Health Center, 866 Campus Drive, Stanford, CA 94305-8580



Request for Religious/ Philosophical Exemption from Required Immunizations

Name (print):

Birth date:

Local address:

Student ID #:

I am requesting a Religious / Philosophical Exemption from required immunizations.

1. What is the name of your religion or philosophy?

2. How long ago and how did you come to follow or subscribe to it?

3. How does your religion or philosophy manifest itself in your choices and the way you lead your daily life? Give a specific example not having to do with immunization.

4. What sources (e.g., sacred texts, religious authorities, philosophical writings) indicate that immunization is prohibited? Please give specific references.

5. How does your religion / philosophy address your social obligations to your broader community? What if by declining immunization you contributed to harming others? Would you, for example, voluntarily quarantine yourself in the event of an outbreak of measles or rubella?

Signature:

Please use more space, as needed, on the back of this page.

Forward to Director, Vaden Health Center, 866 Campus Drive, Stanford, CA 94305-8580