



Policy Name:	Policy on Meal Plan Exemptions and Other Food Allergy and Dietary Accommodations for Students		
Associated Form(s):	1) Application for Accommodations 2) Medical Form Substantiating Dietary Restriction or Food Allergy	Policy Number:	2020-13
Reviewed:	Non-Academic Policy Review Committee	Approved:	December 22, 2020
Approval Authority:	President	Adopted:	December 23, 2020
Responsible Executive(s):	Vice President for Student Affairs	Revised:	September 24, 2021
Responsible Office(s):	Office of ACCESSibility	Contact(s):	Director, ACCESSibility

I. Introduction

This Policy sets forth guidelines for students seeking an exemption from Mercy's required meal plan for residential students with severe food allergies, as well as procedures for individuals with food allergies or dietary restrictions who may need other accommodations as it relates to food purchased at Mercy's dining services, whether through the College's meal plan or otherwise.

II. Accommodations for Students with Food Allergies and Dietary Restrictions

Mercy College recognizes that certain individuals in our community have (potentially severe) allergies to food, or other dietary restrictions. If an individual has been diagnosed by a physician with a life-threatening food allergy, this may constitute a disability under the Americans with Disability Act (ADA). Mercy has an obligation under the ADA to make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, and procedures when necessary to accommodate students.

- Students with medical documentation indicating a life-threatening food allergy may apply for an accommodation, up to and including an exemption from the College's required meal plan.
- Students with other allergies and/or dietary restrictions may seek other accommodations of the meal plan, including but not limited to having options that meet their dietary needs and/or having an individualized meal plan.
- *Only in circumstances where no accommodation can be made under the current meal plan would students be exempt from the College's meal plan.*

III. Procedures for Students Seeking Food Allergy and/or Dietary Accommodations

Dining services at Mercy's Dobbs Ferry and Manhattan and Bronx campuses can accommodate individuals with food allergies or special diets. While students can speak directly with dining services about their need, Mercy encourages students to work with the Office of ACCESSibility to ensure their particular needs are met. Students are strongly encouraged to make the College aware of these food allergy and dietary needs as early as possible. Once a student contacts the Office of ACCESSibility, the following procedures will take place:

1. The student will be asked to complete the Application for Accommodations, in which they will provide a statement of their dietary restriction or food allergy.

2. Students shall also submit the Medical Form Substantiating Dietary Restrictions or Food Allergies, completed by their health care provider to the Office of ACCESSibility.
3. Students will then arrange to meet with the Office of ACCESSibility staff to register as a student with a documented disability. During this meeting, the student must sign a general release form so information related to their food allergies can be shared with other necessary Mercy College and dining services staff.
4. Upon receipt of the signed release, the Office of ACCESSibility will schedule a meeting with the relevant dining services manager to develop an appropriate response to dietary requests, in dialogue with the student.
5. After the interactive dialogue takes place between the ACCESSibility, the student and dining service manager, an Acknowledgment and Agreement of Dietary Restrictions will be created for the student with a food allergy or dietary restriction. This Agreement will outline the College's responsibility and student's responsibility for safely managing food allergies and dietary restrictions while attending classes or functions or residing on campus. The Agreement will be provided to the manager of the relevant dining services. Students with food allergies must review any changes in their medical condition with the Director of ACCESSibility, who will in turn notify the dining services manager of any necessary modifications to the student's dietary Agreement.
6. Students may request a meal accommodation at any point during the semester. Accommodations are not retroactive, however, and accommodations are valid from the time of approval moving forward.

III. Appeals of Accommodations

If a student is dissatisfied with the accommodation they have received under this Policy, they may appeal the matter to the College's Equity Compliance Specialist. All appeals and complaints will be taken seriously and followed through to resolution. All complaints will be addressed in a manner that is prompt, impartial, confidential, and free from retaliation. Mercy College will not discriminate or retaliate against any individual because of exercising their right to come forth with a complaint or against individuals who participate in an investigation. After reviewing the matter,

the Equity Compliance Specialist will make a recommendation to the Vice President for Student Affairs. The Vice President of Student Affairs or their designee will make the final determination of an appeal.