Policy Name:	Policy and Procedures for Implementing Reasonable Accommodations and Academic Adjustments for Students		
Associated Form(s):	Intake Forms in the Student Health Portal	**Policy Number**:	2026-19
Reviewed:	Non-Academic Policy Committee	**Approved:**	September 18, 2026
Approval Authority:	President 	**Adopted:**	September 19, 2026
Responsible Executive(s):	Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs	**Revised:**	Policy on Reasonable Accommodations for Students (2017, 2021, 2023, 2024)
Responsible Office(s):	1. Office of ACCESSibility 2. Office of Title IX and Title VI/Equity Compliance	**Contact(s):**	1. Executive Director/Director of ACCESSibility 2. Director of Title IX and Title VI/Equity Compliance

I. Policy Statement

Mercy University (the "University") is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and academic adjustments to allow qualified students the opportunity to participate in courses/programs and activities at the University. Requests require a process with the request being made to and considered by the Office of ACCESSibility, with the opportunity for an appeal, as provided for in these procedures. These procedures apply to reasonable accommodations and academic adjustments in connection with a permanent disability or serious injury/illness that is temporary in nature.

- Accommodations relating to religious practices are addressed under the University's *Religious Accommodations Policy*.
- Accommodations relating to pregnancy, childbirth, or a medical condition related to pregnancy or childbirth, including breastfeeding, students are addressed under the *University's Policy on Sexual Misconduct and Non-Discrimination, Including Title IX and Title VI*.
- Food allergy and dietary accommodations are addressed under the *Policy on Meal Plan Exemptions and Other Food Allergy and Dietary Accommodations for Students*.
- Requests related to Emotional Support Animal ("ESA") accommodations in housing are addressed under the *Emotional Support Animals Policy and Agreement for Students* policy.
- Requests for accommodations relating to participating in the University's' Residential Life Program are addressed under the *Residential Life Housing Accommodations Policy*.

All of these policies can be found on the University's policies webpage, at:
https://mercy.edu/about/mercy-university-policies

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ("Section 504") prohibits discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities in federally-funded programs and activities and requires the University to "make such modifications to its academic requirements as are necessary to ensure that such requirements do not discriminate or have the effect of discriminating."[1]

The University will enter into an interactive process with a student who discloses a disability and/or condition and who requests accommodations based on a qualifying condition and/or disability. This interactive process will include intake, assessment and determination of reasonable accommodations.

The University will thoroughly review all requests on a case-by-case basis in accordance with applicable federal, state and local laws, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended, and the Westchester County and New York State and City Human Rights laws.

[1] C.F.R. 104.44

The University prohibits retaliation against individuals for requesting reasonable accommodations or academic adjustments, appealing decisions concerning such requests, or for making or participating in claims of discrimination.

All requests for accommodation and academic adjustments as well as all supporting documentation, including but not limited to medical information, are considered confidential and will be shared with University officials only on a need-to-know basis. Such documentation will only be used to evaluate the requested accommodation. Student accommodation documentation will be kept in the Office for ACCESSibility and stored on Health Information Privacy Protection Act ("HIPPA") compliant database. When necessary, as a part of a related process or procedures, the student's accommodation documentation may be shared and thus retained by the Office of the Provost or the Office of the Title IX and Title VI/Equity Compliance.

While the University will not share any request for an accommodation or academic adjustment under this Policy except as on a need-to-know basis, the Office of ACCESSibility may suggest that the student inform their Professional Advising & Coaching Team ("PACT") mentor, University Opportunity Program, or other counselor about the student's need for an accommodation or academic adjustment provided pursuant to this Policy so as to more fully assist the student in all of their needs.

The University recognizes observable as well as non-observable disabilities, affirming that some observable disabilities may, by their nature, amend the accommodation process detailed by the Policy.

II. Definitions

A. Academic Requirements: Established minimal standards or technical standards defined for a specific program of study and for which tasks a qualified student shall meet in order to progress in a program of study. Some examples of technical standards include the ability to analyze information, the ability to differentiate color, or the ability to lift, carry, or otherwise move objects.

B. Academic Adjustments: Changes to an academic program via approved reasonable accommodations that provide equal access to programs and activities without a fundamental alternation of the academic requirements.
   - Examples of academic adjustments may include but not be limited to providing auxiliary aids, reasonable accommodations such as extra test taking time, a note taker, ability to record lectures, or modifications of the classroom environment, seating, or access.

C. Accommodation Memo: A document that establishes the type and form of accommodation or academic adjustment to be provided to the student. This Memo will be updated as needed based on the student's disclosed disability or condition as it specifically relates to application within the academic environment, taking into consideration any change of condition that may occur during the course of enrollment.

D. Office of ACCESSibility: The University department that is responsible for ensuring that accommodation requests from students are processed in accordance with defined University policy and procedures.

E. Director of Title IX and Title VI/Equity Compliance: The University employee who is responsible for overseeing compliance with all laws and regulations related to non-discrimination and the University's Policy on Sexual Misconduct and Non-Discrimination, Including Title IX and Title VI , providing guidance and information as well as investigating complaints of unlawful discrimination.

F. Disability: The term disability means, with respect to an individual, a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of such individual; a record of such an impairment; or being regarded as having such an impairment.[2]

G. Interactive Process/Cooperative Dialogue: When a decision-maker at the campus works with the student to identify existing barriers to the student's access to academic and non-academic programs and activities at the University with the intention of finding an academic adjustment or reasonable accommodation to address those barriers. .

H. Qualified Individual with a Disability: A qualified individual with a disability under this Policy is a student who meets the academic and technical standards required for admission or participation in the chosen program with or without a reasonable accommodation or academic adjustment.

I. Reasonable Accommodation: Adjustments to policy, practice, and programs that provide equal access to the University's academic and non-academic programs and activities for a qualified individual with a disability and are addressed on a case-by-case basis. In the academic setting, reasonable accommodations shall not alter the course objectives or expectations, should not create an undue burden on the institution or student (as defined in J below), and reasonable accommodations should not impact the health and safety of others.

[2] Americans With Disability Act, Section 3: Definitions: 2 A-C

J. Undue Hardship: An action that would require significant difficulty or expense when considered in light of a number of factors, including the nature and cost of the accommodation in relation to the size, resources, nature and structure of the employer's operation, or an action that would fundamentally alter policy and procedures, and/or the fundamental nature of the academic program. An accommodation need not be granted where it would impose an undue hardship on the University. If a particular accommodation imposes an undue hardship, the University will consider whether a reasonable alternative accommodation is available that would not impose an undue hardship.

III. Requesting a Disability/Serious Injury Accommodation or Academic Adjustment

A. Student Registration

In order for a student to receive an accommodation or academic adjustment under this Policy, the student must register with the Office of ACCESSibility. To register with ACCESSibility, the student must submit an Application for Accommodations and appropriate supporting documentation to the Student Health Portal. Students should review the ACCESSibility Documentation Guidelines for guidance on what supporting documentation must include. Students may visit the webpage, contact ACCESSibility staff at (914) 674-7764 or by email at accessibility@mercy.edu for further information, including what documentation is required and the process for submission. Students can also visit the ACCESSibility office located in Main Hall, Room 121 on the Westchester Campus, room 2153 at the Bronx Campus, room 418 at the Manhattan Campus, or set-up an appointment at another campus with an ACCESSibility staff member.

After a request is submitted, the Office of ACCESSibility staff memer, and the student will engage in an interactive process, which may include a consideration of a number of factors, such as the student's accommodation history, current course enrollment and the academic or other program requirements, as well as accessibility needs while on campus with the goal of finding a reasonable accommodation Reasonable accommodations may include, but are not limited to, providing the student with assistive technology or other auxiliary aides as well as many other means to reduce or remove barriers that may prevent equitable access for students.

The Office of ACCESSibility staff memermay, when necessary and in a confidential manner, consult with appropriate University officials, such as the instructor, Program Director, Dean, Provost and/or PACT/opportunity programs or other counselor, as well as departments that may include facilities and housing to determine program requirements and appropriate accommodations. A determination regarding the student's request will be made as soon as practicable, taking into account the nature of the request. The student will be notified of the outcome of their request in writing to their Mercy University email account.

Reasonable accommodations shall not fundamentally alter the nature of a course, course expectations, or competencies to be achieved within a course. Reasonable accommodations should not create an undue burden on the student or the institution. Reasonable accommodations should not interfere with the health and safety of others. While the accommodation preference of the individual with the disability will be taken into consideration, the University is not required to provide the preferred accommodation as long as an alternative accommodation is reasonable, effective and provides equitable access. The University is not responsible for providing services of a personal nature, or for providing prescribed devices or services such as a private care attendant or aide.

B. Accommodation Memo Process

If an accommodation or academic adjustment is granted, the Office of ACCESSibility will provide the student with an "Accommodation Memo." The purpose of this document is to inform the faculty or a staff member or campus office that the student has been granted accommodations, to specifically define the reasonable accommodations, and to provide guidance to apply the defined accommodation approved by the Office of ACCESSibility. The Memo does NOT cite the specific disability nor disclose medical information. If the initial Accommodation Meeting is taking place before the student has enrolled at the University, in most circumstances, the Memo will be provided to the student before the start of their first term. This process repeats each term that the student is actively enrolled *and* requests accommodations.

Each Accommodation Memo is semester specific and is only valid for the term that it was issued. The University will engage the student in active dialogue, or interactive case management, to foster this process. Before the start of each new semester thereafter, the student must download a new Accommodation Memo from the Student Health Portal. Should a student be unable to download the Memo, an alternative action to obtain the Memo would be to appear at the Office of ACCESSibility and request a hard copy. The updated current semester Memo should be presented to faculty members within the first two weeks of the current academic term or as soon as possible, in order for timely implementation of the detailed accommodations to occur and/or to foster discussion to resolve any concerns by faculty or the student regarding implementation of the accommodations. The student and faculty member are encouraged to review the Memo together leading to the faculty member's signature at the bottom of the Memo. The signed Memo must be returned to the Office of ACCESSibility by either uploading it to the Student Health portal or returning the signed Memo to the Office of ACCESSibility.

C. Timing of Requests

Students may request accommodations and academic adjustments at any point during the semester; however, the University encourages students to begin this process prior to the start of the semester. For newly entering or transferring students, this process may begin after acceptance and registration for classes. Once a student has completed the intake process and has been granted

accommodations, the accommodations will be implemented at the University. In some cases, some forms of accommodation may be immediately implemented while others may require the Office of ACCESSibility to interface with other University offices, such as in the case of food or housing accommodations. The University will, in as much as is practicable, work with the student during this implementation period.

The student is encouraged to advocate with University staff and faculty as necessary regarding the implementation of their individualized accommodations. However, at no time will the student be required to disclose the nature and specifics of their condition or disability to any other University personnel outside the Office of ACCESSibility. The University affirms that a student has the right to disclose or not to disclose their disability to staff or a faculty member and to withhold submission of an Accommodation Memo from a faculty member when the student believes the detailed accommodations are not necessary in a course. Students should be aware that accommodations are not retroactive in such instances. Any grades already annotated in the student's class record or tests taken *prior* to the submission of an Accommodation Memo to the faculty member shall not be changed nor can the assignments be repeated with accommodations. Academic accommodations are valid from the time of approval by the Office of ACCESSibility *and* signature by the faculty member.

D. Withdrawal of Request

Accommodations will remain in place each semester moving forward unless the student:

1. Formally withdraws their request for accommodation in writing to the Office of ACCESSibility;
2. Requests that the accommodation process be revisited due to a change in condition or other factor impacting their disability or condition in which case the University may request additional information to support additions, removals, or alternation to existing accommodations; or,
3. Withdraws from the University altogether.

Students who withdraw from the University are welcome to revisit the accommodation process upon re-entry as an active student.

IV. Appeals Under this Policy

Students may appeal a denial of a request for any type of accommodation under this Policy by filing a complaint with the Office of Title IX and Title VI/Equity Compliance. The Director of Title IX and Title VI/Equity Compliance, or a designee, will mediate to try to resolve the issues between the individual student and the staff, faculty, or department to find an acceptable accommodation. If a mutually acceptable accommodation cannot be determined, then the Director

of Title IX and Title VI/Equity Compliance, or a designee, will initiate an investigation following all required stipulations of notice to the named parties in the complaint and will then make a recommendation to the Provost. The Provost, or their designee, is assigned to make the final determination of an appeal, which will serve as the final decision of the University.

V. Filing Complaints with the Office of Title IX and Title VI/Equity Compliance or Outside Agencies

Students who believe that a decision to deny the request for a reasonable accommodation or academic adjustment was based on unlawful discrimination may file a complaint with the Office of Title IX and Title VI/Equity Compliance online pursuant to the *Policy on Sexual Misconduct and Non-Discrimination Policy, Including Title IX and Title VI,* or may avail themselves of any and all of their rights under law without fear of retaliation, including contacting one or more of the outside agencies listed below.

- U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights
- U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
- New York State Division of Human Rights
- New York City Commission on Human Rights
- Westchester County Human Rights Commission