



# STUDENT HANDBOOK 2025-2026

## **Accreditation**

Mercy College of Health Sciences is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). Please visit the college website (<https://www.mchs.edu/About/Accreditation>) to find additional accreditation information.

## **Disclaimer**

Mercy College of Health Sciences reserves the right to change, at any time and without notice, their services, policies and procedures, and other related matters addressed in this handbook.

The Mercy College of Health Sciences Student Handbook for the 2025-2026 academic year is an informational document to help guide students through services, policies, and procedures that apply to all students enrolled at the College. This document is not a contract.

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# Student Handbook

Mercy College of Health Sciences is here to serve and support you, both academically and personally. This Student Handbook, along with the Catalog and other department publications, will help to acquaint you with Mercy College's policies and services. If you need additional information or clarification, please consult the appropriate academic or administrative staff.

## Reception Desk:

(515) 643-3180

## Mailing Address:

928 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue

Des Moines, IA 50309

## College Website:

<https://www.mchs.edu/>

# Student Responsibility Statement

Welcome to Mercy College of Health Sciences. We are excited you have chosen Mercy College as your educator for a future in healthcare.

As an institution of higher education, Mercy College of Health Sciences has rights, responsibilities, and a corporate culture to which our faculty, staff, and students are all expected to subscribe. The Student Handbook is an excellent resource to reference at the beginning of and throughout your time at Mercy College.

Student responsibility begins when students recognize that they are accountable for their own academic success and take an active role in learning. When students make choices and take actions that lead them toward their educational goals, they're demonstrating student responsibility.

***Every student is responsible for understanding and applying the information in the Student Handbook.***

Mercy College of Health Sciences reserves the right to change, remove, or supplement any material contained in this handbook as necessary. Any changes apply to both current and perspective students. The College will make reasonable efforts to notify students of changes. The most recently published handbook is available on the Mercy College student website.



# **Vision, Mission, and Values**

## **Vision**

Mercy College of Health Sciences will be a locally and regionally recognized leader, transforming students into healthcare professionals who live out and extend our ministry of healing.

## **Mission**

Mercy College of Health Sciences prepares graduates for service and leadership in the healthcare community by integrating its core values into a professional liberal arts and sciences education.

## **Values**

Mercy College of Health Sciences is a Catholic institution of higher education, rooted in the heritage of the Sisters of Mercy, and guided by our core values of knowledge, reverence, integrity, compassion, and excellence.

# **Institutional Commitments**

Guided by its core values, Mercy College of Health Sciences supports the following institutional commitments for all students:

## **Knowledge Acquisition, Construction, Integration, and Application**

- Gains core knowledge and skills to build capacity for life-long learning
- Applies knowledge to new situations and settings
- Demonstrates critical thinking

## **Communication**

- Reads and listens to gain comprehension
- Writes and speaks effectively in a variety of forms and settings
- Collaborates respectfully with others to accomplish common goals

## **Servant Leadership**

- Exhibits personal and social accountability as a servant leader
- Addresses community, national, and global needs through service

## **Evidence-Based Continuous Improvement**

- Gains insights through assessment data
- Makes data-informed decisions and promotes change to improve outcomes
- Monitors progress of intended outcomes

# General Information

## Facility Resources

### Campus Ministry: Chapel

Campus Ministry provides opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to explore, develop, and live out their faith. Rooted in the heritage of the Sisters of Mercy, Campus Ministry promotes the school's Catholic Christian values, unifying the community with service events, friendship, and prayer.

Students are invited to use the Chapel in Brennan Hall for individual and group worship, reflection, and solitude. It's open to all members of the campus community.

The Chapel in Brennan Hall has the Blessed Sacrament in the Tabernacle for Adoration, Stations of the Cross for prayer, and weekly Mass offered by a Priest of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Des Moines. Please consult the Campus Ministry webpage to see times for Mass and other liturgical celebrations throughout the year: [Campus Ministry - Mercy College \(mchs.edu\)](http://mchs.edu/campus-ministry)

### Lactation Room

The lactation room, located in Brennan Hall: Room 126 (next to the Chapel), is available for new and expecting parents as needed. The lactation room has a sign on the door where students can indicate if the room is "In Use" or "Vacant."

### Computer Resources

Please refer to the Technology and Support webpage for more information: [Technology and Support - Mercy College \(mchs.edu\)](http://mchs.edu/technology-and-support)

### Study Areas

Mercy College provides students with the following areas for study:

- Academic Center for Excellence (ACE), 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> floor lobbies
- Brennan Hall Commons
- Student Success Center (in ACE), Room 184
- Sullivan Center, Student Commons, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor
- Library

### Recovery Room and Vending Machine Refunds

The Recovery Room is a grab-and-go vending area for light meals, snacks, and drinks. It is open 24/7 for anyone at Mercy College. The Recovery Room is at the south end of Brennan Hall. For information or questions about the Recovery Room, see the College's receptionist, located at the main desk in Sullivan Center. If utilizing the College Hill lobby vending machines, contact the property manager for information on refunds or to report an issue. The property manager's office is on the first floor of College Hill, east of the Admissions Department.

## Campus Hours of Operation & Student Badge Access

Hours of operation are subject to change and do not reflect holidays or times of the year when classes are not in session. Evening hours available by appointment.

<b>College Building Access Hours</b>	Monday-Thursday Employee Student	5:30 a.m. to 10:05 p.m. 6:15 a.m. to 10:05 p.m.
	Friday Employee Student	5:30 a.m. to 8:05 p.m. 6:15 a.m. to 8:05 p.m.
	Saturday (everyone)	7:30 a.m. to 2:35 p.m.
	Sunday (everyone)	12:30 p.m. to 7:35 p.m.
	Holidays	CLOSED
<b>Business Office</b> (515) 643-6629	Monday-Friday	8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
<b>Registrar, Financial Aid, and Admissions</b> (515) 635-1133 <a href="mailto:registrar@mchs.edu">registrar@mchs.edu</a> <a href="mailto:financialaid@mchs.edu">financialaid@mchs.edu</a> <a href="mailto:admissions@mchs.edu">admissions@mchs.edu</a>	Monday-Friday	8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
<b>Sullivan Center Reception Desk</b> (515) 643-3180	Monday-Friday	7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
<b>Testing Center</b> (515) 635-1133 <a href="#">Student Success Center Request Form</a>	Monday-Friday	8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
<b>To request alternative testing times, please contact</b> <a href="#">Student Success Center Request Form</a>	Friday (Summer Term Only)	8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
<b>Josephine Norkaitis Success Center</b> (515) 635-1133 <a href="mailto:studentsuccess@mchs.edu">studentsuccess@mchs.edu</a>	Monday-Friday	7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
<b>Library</b> <a href="mailto:library@mchs.edu">library@mchs.edu</a>	Monday-Tuesday Wednesday-Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday	7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. 7:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. CLOSED

# College Vendors

## Bookstore and Uniform Vendors

Many books can be purchased through the online bookstore. To shop for textbooks, go to <https://www.mchs.edu/Students/Mercy-College-Bookstore>.

Mercy College has two official uniform vendors. Valley West Uniforms, located at 4100 University Ave., Suite 230, West Des Moines (515-223-9090) and the M-SHOP, [Shop Mercy College Gear \(mchs.edu\)](https://www.mchs.edu/Students/Mercy-College-Gear). These vendors provide professional, program-specific uniforms in a range of sizes. Valley West Uniforms also offers a selection of medical equipment used by healthcare professionals.

## Parking

The College provides students with free parking in the following three designated lots:

- **Sullivan Center North** – located between 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 7<sup>th</sup> Street on the north side of Sullivan Center
- **Sullivan Center South** – located on 7<sup>th</sup> Street on the south side of Sullivan Center
- **Crocker Student Lot** – located west of 7<sup>th</sup> Street with entrances on Crocker and 8<sup>th</sup> Street
  - This lot is gate-controlled, and students must have a current student ID badge to access it. The College reserves the right to leave the gates open for any reason it deems necessary. This lot is equipped with three telephone stations linked directly to MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center Public Safety in the event of an emergency. Exterior video cameras allow Public Safety to maintain visual contact with callers at each station.

## Parking Stickers

To provide safe and secure parking for Mercy College students, all vehicles must display an appropriate parking permit. To register a vehicle, students need to complete an online form available at: <https://mercycollegeiowa.wufoo.com/forms/student-photo-id-and-parking-registration/>.

Once the form is processed, students will be contacted by the Mercy College receptionist via email with information about how to pick up their parking sticker. Failure to display the appropriate permit/sticker is a parking violation, and students may be subjected to a fine or towing.

*Disclaimer: Mercy College of Health Sciences is not liable for loss or damage to any vehicle or personal property while the vehicle is in a Mercy College or MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center lot. Students must lock car doors and keep valuables out of sight. Please contact (515) 643-3180 to report a parking lot gate problem or a non-functioning parking lot light.*

## Parking at College Hill

This lot is between 5th Avenue and 6th Avenue to the north of Crocker Street. The lot is owned by Newbury Living, **not** Mercy College, and **students are not permitted to utilize this lot** unless they are renting an apartment at College Hill. Newbury Living issues parking stickers only to authorized tenants, and any car parked in this lot without the appropriate sticker may be towed. Mercy College is not liable for any towing expenses or damage to any vehicle/personal property caused by towing while the vehicle is at this location.

### **Parking at MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center**

Students may park in the lot located at 6th and Laurel and the lots immediately north of the Medical Center on the north side of University Avenue and east and west of 4th Street. These lots may be used at any time.

### **Parking in MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center Employee Lots**

Students are permitted to park in employee lots between 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m., Monday-Friday and any time on Saturday and Sunday. Students may not use these lots between 6:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m., Monday-Friday. Students who park in employee lots outside of the permitted hours will be ticketed by MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center Public Safety. Failure to pay the ticket by the due date will result in removal of badge access privileges.

### **Parking in MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center Visitor and Physician Lots**

Students are not allowed to park in visitor or physician lots on the Medical Center campus. Students using these lots will be ticketed by MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center Public Safety. Failure to pay the ticket by the due date will result in removal of badge access privileges.

City streets north of University Avenue are not monitored by MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center Public Safety, and Mercy College strongly discourages parking on those streets. If you have questions or are uncertain about parking, please contact Public Safety at (515) 247-3111.

## **Printing**

Printing is available in the Printing and Copy Center in SC 115 (next to the Library) and in the Academic Center for Excellence (ACE), 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, outside Room 215. Students receive a \$10 printing allowance each semester to cover essential printing and may add money to their account for additional copies. Student email login is required to activate the printing system.

## **Reception Desk**

Students may leave mail with appropriate postage at the Reception Desk on the main campus for pickup by U.S. postal employees.

The Reception Desk does not accept personal messages or deliveries for students such as food, flowers, cookie bouquets, etc. Any deliveries will be returned to the vendor.

## **Campus Safety**

Security policies and procedures are in accordance with the MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center Public Safety Department. Questions about College safety policies should be addressed to the Vice President of Business and Regulatory Affairs or the designee at the College.

## **What to Do in an Emergency**

In an emergency that requires immediate assistance, contact the Des Moines Police Department (9911), and specify the location on campus, including the address or building name.

## **Safety Contact Information**

**Emergencies: 911** (If calling from campus, dial 9-911. Specify the location on campus, including the address or building name.)

**MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center Public Safety:** (515) 247-3111

**General campus safety questions or concerns call:** (515) 643-3180

## **College Communication and Emergency Procedures**

### **Bomb Threat/Code White**

Evacuate the area, and notify MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center Public Safety Office at (515) 247-3111. An immediate search will be conducted by Public Safety personnel. An object suspected of being a bomb should never be disturbed; trained personnel will handle all suspicious objects.

### **Campus Accessibility**

Mercy College of Health Sciences is committed to providing access and reasonable accommodation for individuals with disabilities. The College campus is handicap-accessible with designated handicapped parking, accessible doors for each building, and elevators, ramps, and bathrooms that have been modified for accessibility. Curb cuts are available at street intersections. Curb cuts or ramps are available near handicapped parking for accessibility to sidewalks and building entrances. For information related to campus or facility accessibility, or to request accommodation, contact the Dean of Student Affairs.

### **Cell Phones**

Cell phones must be powered off in class, laboratory, library, chapel, and clinical settings. Cell phones and text messages may be checked during breaks.

### **Controlled Access to Facilities**

Access to Mercy College campus buildings is restricted at all times. A Mercy College ID is required for entrance. No entrance is permitted during holidays. Refer to the *Hours of Operation, Badge Access Hours* policy for questions.

### **Disclosure of Campus Security Policies and Crime Statistics**

The Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act requires institutions receiving federal financial support to prepare an annual campus security report. This report contains statistics concerning the occurrence of certain crimes on campus, in or near certain non-campus buildings or property, and on public property. Crime statistics are reported to the U.S.

Department of Education annually. The report also includes statements of Mercy College's policies and procedures for campus security and the reporting of crimes.

In accordance with the law, campus crime reports and policies are made available on the College website, and the Mercy College Annual Security Report is located online at <https://www.mchs.edu/About/Campus-Safety>. Crime statistics are submitted to the U.S. Department of Education annually and can be viewed on the Office of Postsecondary Education's website: <https://ope.ed.gov/campussafety/#/>.

### **Evening Security Staff**

Throughout the academic semester, a private security officer is stationed on campus to respond to student and staff needs. The officer is available from 4:30 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. The officer patrols the campus and provides a campus security presence to support MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center Public Safety staff. Students are encouraged to contact the evening security officer to report concerns or to request escorts to student vehicles.

### **Fire Alarm/Code Red**

Should a fire alarm sound on the main campus or in the Academic Center for Excellence (ACE), close all doors and use the stairs to exit the building. Do not use elevators. Fire extinguishers, sprinklers, and alarms are located throughout all campus buildings. Diagrams are posted in hallways on the main campus with their locations.

### **Hazardous Materials**

In the case of a hazardous material spill, contact the Reception Desk at (515) 643-3180 immediately to provide information about the location of the spill and, if known, what chemicals are involved. If the spill occurs after hours, contact MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center Public Safety at (515) 247-3111 and inform them of the nature of the hazard and the location on the College campus.

### **ID Badge Requirement**

The Mercy College Student Identification Badge (ID Badge) must be visibly worn by students when on campus or in clinical settings. To obtain an ID Badge, students need to complete an online form available at: <https://mercycollegeiowa.wufoo.com/forms/student-photo-id-and-parking-registration/>.

Once the form is processed, students will be contacted by the Mercy College receptionist via email to have their photograph taken. ID Badges are required to access campus buildings, parking lots, and MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center clinical areas and to obtain printing access. Replacement ID Badges are available from the Reception Desk on the main campus. There is a fee for replacement of lost or stolen ID Badges (cost subject to change).

### **Lost and Found**

A lost and found service is maintained at the Reception Desk on the main campus and at MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center Public Safety, and missing articles should be reported to them. Mercy College and MercyOne Public Safety are not responsible for money, jewelry, or any other articles lost on campus.

## **Materials Safety Data Sheets/Safety Data Sheets**

Materials Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) or Safety Data Sheets (SDS) are designed to provide both staff and emergency personnel with the proper procedures for handling or working with a particular substance. MSDS/SDS include information such as physical data (melting point, boiling point, flashpoint, etc.), toxicity, health effects, first aid, reactivity, storage, disposal, protective equipment, and spill/leak procedures. These sheets are available at the Reception Desk on the main campus.

## **Potential Criminal Activity**

In the case of potential criminal activity, students can contact MercyOne Public Safety at (515) 247-3111. MercyOne Public Safety will take appropriate, immediate action to ensure the safety of all students.

## **Procedures for Campus Emergency Notification**

Mercy College utilizes a Campus Emergency Notification System to notify staff and students of emergencies. During orientation, students may provide the College with their cell phone number and/or email information should campus-wide communication be necessary. Students may update their preferred communication method or cell phone number/email address by contacting the Registrar's Office.

## **Student Email Use**

Students at Mercy College are assigned a student email account (i.e., student.name@my.mchs.edu). For privacy reasons, and to comply with the College FERPA Policy, students are expected to use their college-assigned email account exclusively when corresponding with faculty and staff.

## **Tornado Warning**

In case of a tornado warning, stay away from windows, and do not use elevators. The following procedures should be followed:

- Sullivan Center, 1<sup>st</sup> floor: proceed to Wellmark Room (SC 102), restrooms, or interior study rooms in the Library; 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor: proceed to hallway or restrooms.
- Sullivan Center (also known as Building 1): proceed to stairwells and the basement.
- Brennan Hall: proceed to the Student Commons lower level or classrooms 132 and 133.
- Academic Center for Excellence (ACE): proceed to the inner hallway of the garden level, north of the elevators.

## **Vandalism**

Students should promptly report any vandalism or security incidents to the Facilities Manager. Between the hours of 4 p.m. and 7 a.m., incidents should be reported directly to the MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center Public Safety Office at (515) 247-3111.

## **Weather Emergencies**

Official cancellations, delays, or closings are infrequent events. In certain circumstances, such as inclement weather, power outages, or other extreme conditions, the appropriate College administrators will make the decision regarding class cancellations, delays, or closings. Notification will be made via the Campus Emergency Notification System, Mercy College Facebook, or other media services. It is important to distinguish between class/lab/clinical cancellations, delays, and



closings. Notice will not be made if the College will remain open. Click the following link for more information: <https://mchs.edu/Academics/Campus-Services/Closing-Policy>

# College Policies & Procedures

## Academic Policies

### Academic Integrity Policy

Mercy College is a learning community dedicated to the core values of knowledge, reverence, integrity, compassion, and excellence.

**Knowledge** is gained through coursework, labs, and clinical experiences and measured through assignments, written papers, and examinations.

**Reverence** is demonstrated through respectful behaviors to all in the classroom, patient care settings, and community.

**Integrity** requires honesty in all academic, laboratory, and clinical work since honesty and trust form the foundation for the ethical standards of all healthcare professions.

**Compassion** is displayed through honest, caring concern for classmates, colleagues, and patients and their families and through service to the wider community.

**Excellence** requires continuous effort toward doing the highest quality work in academic, clinical, and personal settings.

Mercy College students are entering healthcare professions where honesty, integrity, and the highest ethical standards are required. These same standards are required in all academic and clinical work/documentation alongside strict confidentiality.

Every enrolled student must acknowledge in writing their understanding and commitment to the Academic Integrity Policy, including honesty and trustworthiness in their academic and clinical work.

### Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty is a serious violation of Mercy College's core values and healthcare professional ethics. Academic dishonesty harms fellow students, faculty, and most importantly, patients whose care may be jeopardized by the student's resulting lack of knowledge and ethical integrity. Violations of this policy are considered a breach of the Student Code of Conduct, and consequences will follow the Student Discipline Procedure.

Examples of academic dishonesty include cheating or plagiarism, such as but not limited to:

- Copying answers from another student during an exam or assignments
- Using unauthorized resources for quizzes, tests, written work, or assignments
- Copying or sharing test questions, materials, or assignments without instructor permission
- Working with others on assignments where instructions state that the assignment is to be completed independently
- Submitting work as one's own that was written by someone else
- Providing a paper or assignment for another student to submit

- Using phrases from a source without proper use of quotation marks and citation
- Failing to fully rewrite and sufficiently cite paraphrased information from a source
- Submitting the same (or nearly the same) paper in more than one course without instructor permission: this is considered **self-plagiarism**.
- Giving a false reason for missing classes, clinicals, tests, or exams
- Failing to report cheating incidents that are personally witnessed in or outside of class or in clinical settings
  - Standards in healthcare require the reporting of any unethical behavior that is witnessed, and this professional practice begins upon entry into healthcare education.

## ***Plagiarism***

**Definition:** Plagiarism is the representation of another person's ideas, statements, or research as one's own; this includes having another person write a paper or do an assignment, or copying, summarizing, or paraphrasing another's work without appropriate citation.

**Types of Plagiarism:** Plagiarism can take many forms. Mercy College encourages students to take time to better understand how plagiarism can be avoided to preserve academic integrity. The most common forms of plagiarism are direct plagiarism, accidental or unintentional plagiarism, and self-plagiarism. Below are examples of other forms of plagiarism, but it is not an all-inclusive list:

- Copying and pasting work as one's own
- Giving a student an assignment to submit as one's own
- Purchasing an assignment and submitting as one's own
- Using graphs, videos, or images with no citation
- Recycling assignments or self-plagiarism
- Insufficient citations
- Using ChatGPT or other AI tools to develop a written assignment to submit as own work

## **Avoiding Plagiarism**

1. Understand what plagiarism is and the importance of giving credit where it's due.
2. Properly cite all sources, including quotations when necessary.
3. Paraphrase correctly. If unsure, seek advice from an expert.
4. Learn and develop your own ideas. If information cannot be changed, be sure to cite sources.
5. Utilize a plagiarism checking platform.

## **Plagiarism Analysis Software: Turnitin**

*Turnitin* plagiarism analysis software is utilized by Mercy College instructors to encourage academic integrity by preventing submissions with improperly cited content. The software service checks written works against internet content, several databases, and previously submitted work. *Turnitin* will provide an Originality Report that identifies what, if any, portion of the work matches other sources. Some faculty may also use the *Turnitin* software to provide grades or feedback. The faculty of the course will inform students how to use *Turnitin*.

## **Training for Avoiding Plagiarism**

Mercy College provides an opportunity for students to learn how to avoid plagiarism. Should a student be found violating the academic integrity policy for plagiarism, a student may be mandated to

complete a session with the campus writing specialist, watch a video on *Plagiarism*, or be subject to penalty assigned by the instructor or Dean involved in the case.

### **Procedure and Sanctions**

Mercy College is committed to producing future healthcare providers that embrace the institutional value of integrity. Should a student be found in violation of the Academic Integrity Policy, the faculty member of the course and The Dean of Liberal Arts will utilize the following process:

1. The faculty member will document the academic dishonesty and report it to the Dean of Liberal Arts.
2. In the case of plagiarism, the faculty member and the Dean will determine if the violation was intentional or unintentional.
3. If an unintentional violation of plagiarism has occurred, the faculty member will ask the student to redo the assignment. The student will also need to complete the mandatory training on *Plagiarism* within 14 days from the date the determination was made. The misconduct will be documented and reported to the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA). Should the student fail to resubmit the assignment or fail to complete the training within the specified time, the student will earn a failed course grade.
4. If the integrity violation was intentional and is a first offense by the student, the faculty member will determine a proportional sanction. The most severe sanction that can be assessed at this stage is assignment failure. In the case of intentional plagiarism, the student will need to complete a training on *Plagiarism* within 14 days from the date determined. The student will also submit a written statement agreeing to act with integrity in all situations moving forward. The misconduct will be documented and reported to the Dean of Liberal Arts and placed in the student's permanent academic file.
5. If the integrity violation was a second intentional offense, the student will fail the course. The misconduct will be documented and reported to the Provost/VPAA and placed in the student's permanent academic file.
6. If the integrity violation was a third intentional offense, the student will be suspended for the remainder of the term. The misconduct will be documented and reported to the Provost/VPAA and placed in the student's permanent academic file.

A student found in violation of the Academic Integrity Policy may file an academic grievance.

## **Academic Grievance Policy**

### **Purpose**

Students at Mercy College of Health Sciences **may initiate the academic grievance procedure if they believe a policy has not been followed with respect to academic matters.** Academic matters are instructional activities, grading procedures, or other incidents related to academic affairs. This policy does not address issues regarding student behavior or sexual harassment; it deals with academic grievances only. Students should be aware that clear evidence is needed to contest a grade. Belief that a subject or text was too difficult is not grounds for a complaint.

A student must have evidence that a specific policy was violated or that the student was treated in a prejudicial or capricious manner. This policy does not limit the College's right to change rules, policies, or practices.

## Process

**Step 1:** Students must first contact the faculty member who allegedly violated their rights to determine if there can be a resolution. Contact must be made by the student within 2 business days of the event, excluding observed holidays. The student must provide a written document to the faculty member which includes:

1. A statement concerning the nature of the complaint
2. Any evidence on which the complaint is based
3. The student's suggested resolution/preferred outcome

The student and faculty member will then meet within 2 business days to determine if a resolution can be reached. If a resolution cannot be reached, the student should submit their concern using the form at <https://mchsstudentsuccess.wufoo.com/forms/m8f57uj1iw10s5/> so that a record is made of the nature and time frame of the incident.

**Step 2:** If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of their meeting with the faculty member in *Step 1*, the student may file a written appeal to the Program Chair\* within 2 business days. The Program Chair will meet with the student and faculty member within 2 business days to determine if a resolution can be reached.

*\*If the faculty member is a Nursing Program Chair, the student may file a written appeal to the Dean of Nursing.*

*\*If the faculty member is a Program Chair in any program other than Nursing, the student may file a written appeal with the Dean of Liberal Arts.*

**Step 3:** If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of *Step 2*, the student may file a written appeal to the Dean of Liberal Arts within 2 business days. The Dean of Liberal Arts will lead an Academic Response Team comprised of two faculty members, the Dean of Student Affairs, the Dean of Nursing or the SDIRAA, and the Dean of Liberal Arts. The Academic Response Team will meet with the student and the faculty member within 2-3 business days. The team will investigate as appropriate and may seek assistance or information from other personnel. All discussions and submitted written documents will be treated as strictly confidential. After this review, the Academic Response Team will issue a decision to the student, the faculty member, and the Program Chair.

**Step 4:** If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of the Academic Response Team, the student may file a written appeal to the Provost/VPAA within 2 business days of the decision from the Academic Response Team. The Provost/VPAA will provide a written response within 2 business days. The Provost/VPAA's decision is final.

## Attendance Policies

## **Attendance Policy**

Mercy College students are expected to attend all assigned classes, laboratories, and clinical sessions, whether online or in-person, and to be punctual. It is the student's responsibility to follow specific procedures as outlined in the course syllabus for notifying instructors of absences, in advance if possible. Please note that instructors have their own procedures for missing class, tests, exams, and late assignments. Legitimate reasons for absence may include serious illness, documented compassionate leave, jury duty, and cancellation of classes due to weather emergencies.

Students must verify their course enrollment by attending class(es) the first week of each term. Students enrolled in online courses must have meaningful interaction in their online course(s) the first week of the term to verify enrollment. Failure to verify enrollment may result in a student being dropped from class(es) for non-attendance.

When weather is severe, students are advised to comply with the recommendations of the Iowa Highway Patrol on road conditions and travel safety. If class is missed due to severe weather, refer to the course syllabus for makeup or attendance policies.

## **Absence from Classroom Lectures or Skills Laboratories Policy**

A student who shows symptoms commonly associated with seasonal flu should self-isolate and refrain from attending classes to limit the disease's spread to other members of the class or the instructor(s). It is the student's responsibility to notify the instructor(s) regarding the absence. The absence from class for a reported case of the flu will only count as one (1) occurrence (regardless of the number of days a student is away). The classroom teachers will then communicate with the student electronically to determine what areas of class content the student can and should make up while the student is away from the classroom. It is the student's obligation to follow up with classroom instructors to ensure that required missed content is completed as outlined in course syllabi. Failure to complete required makeup content may lead to a lower grade or failure of the course.

## **Generative AI Policy**

The use of Generative AI tools (such as ChatGPT) in academic work must adhere to the following guidelines, except in cases where the course instructor has explicitly prohibited the use of such tools:

1. **Citation:** If a student utilizes a Generative AI tool to complete any portion of an assignment, the student must clearly cite the tool's usage, following appropriate citation guidelines.
2. **Disclosure:** If a student paraphrases, summarizes, or quotes any text generated by a Generative AI tool in their final submission, the student must not only cite the tool but also include a complete transcript of the AI conversation as an appendix to the submitted work.
3. **Course-Specific Instructions:** Students must consult course syllabi and adhere to any additional instructions or restrictions related to the use of Generative AI tools in the context of specific courses.

## **Alcohol & Drug Policies**

## **Alcohol and Illegal Drug Use Policy**

The laws of the State of Iowa regulating the purchasing, dispensing, possession, and consumption of alcoholic beverages apply to the entire College community. Each person is expected to abide by these laws and will be held responsible by civil law enforcement for their own actions in any situation involving violations of these laws. Students found breaking this policy will be referred to the [Code of Conduct](#) and meet with the Dean of Student Affairs.

- Alcoholic beverages may not be consumed, possessed, distributed, or sold on campus without specific authorization.
- Alcoholic beverages may not be served or consumed by students on campus.

## **Alcohol Concern**

The use of alcoholic beverages, though acceptable for persons of legal age, is a matter of concern for Mercy College. The College is committed to maintaining an academic and social environment conducive to the intellectual and personal development of students and to the safety and welfare of all members of the College community. The College cannot deny persons of legal age the right to consume alcoholic beverages; however, it sees itself as responsible for preventing the abuse of alcohol by encouraging individuals to behave in an appropriate and responsible manner while consuming it.

It is expected that Mercy students who consume alcohol will:

- be of legal age,
- make healthy choices, avoiding high-risk behaviors, and
- maintain self-control.

Mercy College does not condone alcohol use that results in:

- abuse to oneself, others, or property
- compromised control of oneself
- negative effects on academics, health, or relationships
- a pattern of problems
- violation of the law

Consistent with Mercy College's core values, it is expected that students will take ownership of and responsibility for establishing and reinforcing community alcohol standards by creating and maintaining a view on alcohol that:

- avoids making alcohol the focal point of any activity
- supports an individual's decision not to drink
- understands that students who drink together have an obligation to be informed, supportive peers who look out for one another's welfare

As part of a responsible alcohol educational effort, all students will receive information on:

- alcohol standards and policies
- signs of alcohol problems
- how to explore and understand their own drinking choices
- available campus and off-campus resources
- levels of alcohol impairment

- effects of tolerance on alcohol consumption
- effects of other drugs on alcohol consumption
- how to calculate blood-alcohol levels
- emergency responses and procedures
- issues that drive substance abuse

### **Drug-Free Schools Act**

The Federal Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act and the Higher Education Amendments of 1998 (Section 120) require all students and employees to be informed of the institution's drug and alcohol policy guidelines. The following is Mercy College's policy relating to a drug-free campus environment, which applies to all Mercy students, faculty, and staff. Should a student have any questions, please contact the Dean of Student Affairs or designee.

### **Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Policy**

1. Mercy College prohibits the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol by students and employees on its property or as a part of any of its programs or activities. Students and employees who engage in prohibited or illegal conduct face sanctions, including suspension, dismissal, expulsion, termination of enrollment and/or employment, and referral for prosecution.

Health risks associated with the use of illicit drugs and alcohol abuse vary with the nature of the substance and pattern of abuse and include, but are not limited to:

- a. depression and/or mood swings
- b. dependency
- c. organ damage
- d. mental problems, hallucinations, and confusion
- e. accidents
- f. violent reactions

Further information concerning the use of and penalties associated with controlled substances is summarized below. Materials outlining health risks in detail are available from the Office of Student Affairs.

2. The unlawful use, possession, or distribution of illicit drugs and alcoholic beverages may result in local, state, and federal legal sanctions, which may include fines, imprisonment, or both. Legislation is extensive in this area, and penalties vary with the type of illicit drug and/or alcohol abuse. Ordinances and statutes collected in local, state, and federal codes should be consulted (including, but not limited to, Title 21, Chapter 13 of the United States Code, Chapters 123, 124, 124A, and 124B of the Iowa Code, and Chapters 10 and 70 of the Municipal Code of the City of Des Moines). A partial description of applicable sanctions is listed below.
3. Drug and alcohol counseling is available from the Josephine Norkaitis Student Success Center. Violators of the Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention Policy begin the Student Discipline Procedure at Step 3. Students on campus, in clinical settings, or participating in College-sanctioned activities will be subject to the College's disciplinary procedures if they:

- a. Use, possess, distribute, or sell alcohol
  - b. Are under the influence of alcohol
  - c. Possess, manufacture, distribute, dispense, buy, transfer, sell, or use illegal drugs or legal drugs without a physician's prescription
  - d. Engage in off-campus possession, manufacture, distribution, dispensing, buying, transferring, selling, or using of illegal drugs resulting in a conviction
4. Parental notification: The College is responsible for helping students when they are believed to need assistance. This responsibility extends to the possible notification of parents.
  5. If a student at Mercy College is convicted of any violation, the student is required to inform the Dean of Student Affairs or designee within five days of the conviction. Drug or certain alcohol-related convictions may result in disciplinary measures for the student, up to and including expulsion.
  6. The Dean of Student Affairs or designee will notify all appropriate agencies and registries of relevant drug or alcohol-related convictions within thirty days of receiving the information. Students licensed as LPNs or Allied Healthcare providers are additionally subject to all sanctions imposed by the Iowa Nurse Practice Act and Allied Health Licensure Guidelines and will be referred for disciplinary action where appropriate.

### **Federal Penalties and Sanctions**

21 U.S.C. 844(a): 1st conviction up to 1-year imprisonment and fined at least \$1,000 or both. After 1 prior drug conviction at least 15 days in prison, not to exceed 2 years, and fined at least \$2,500, or both.

After 2 or more prior drug convictions at least 90 days in prison, not to exceed 3 years, and fined at least \$5,000, or both.

21 U.S.C. 853(a)(2) and 881(a)(7): Forfeiture of personal and real property used to possess or to facilitate possession of a controlled substance if that offense is punishable by more than 1 year of imprisonment. (See special sentencing provision re: crack.)

21 U.S.C. 881(a)(4): Forfeiture of vehicles, boats, aircraft or any other conveyance used to transport or conceal a controlled substance, and any real property used to facilitate such crime.

Revocation of federal licenses and benefits are vested with the authorities of individual federal agencies.

Note: Federal penalties for manufacture or distribution of controlled substances include various prison sentences ranging up to life in prison and various fines ranging up to \$2 million. 21 U.S.C. 960.

### **State Penalties and Sanctions**

Iowa Code §123.46: (consumption of alcohol in public places; public intoxication). Either imprisonment, not to exceed 30 days, or a fine of at least \$50, but not more than \$100.



Iowa Code §§123.47: (Providing alcoholic liquor, wine, or beer to persons under age 21; possession or control by persons under age 21). First offense: fine of \$200 to \$1,000. Second offense: fine of \$500 and completion of substance abuse evaluation or suspension of driver's license for up to 1 year. Third and subsequent offenses: fine of \$500 and suspension of driver's license for up to 1 year.

Iowa Code §123.49: (Providing alcoholic liquor, wine, or beer to an intoxicated person). Imprisonment not to exceed 30 days or fine not to exceed \$625.

Iowa Code §124.401(1) and (2): (Manufacture, delivery, or possession with intent to manufacture or deliver a controlled substance or counterfeit or simulated controlled substance). Depending on the nature and amount of substance, penalties range from imprisonment for periods not to exceed 2 years, 5 years, 10 years, 25 years, or 50 years and/or fines not to exceed \$5,000, \$6,250, \$7,500, \$50,000, \$100,000 or \$1,000,000.

Iowa Code §124.401(5): (Possession of a controlled substance). Substances other than marijuana: imprisonment not to exceed 1 year and/or fine not to exceed \$1,875. Marijuana: imprisonment not to exceed 6 months and/or fine not to exceed \$1,000. Suspended sentences may include probation and required participation in a drug treatment program.

Iowa Code §124.406: (Distribution of a controlled substance to a person under age 18). Depending on the nature of substance and ages of parties, penalties range from imprisonment for periods not to exceed 25 years, 10 years, 5 years, or 2 years and/or fines not to exceed \$5,000, \$6,250, \$7,500, or \$10,000.

Iowa Code §124.407: (Sponsoring, promoting, or assisting with a gathering with knowledge that controlled substance will be distributed, used, or possessed there). Controlled substances other than marijuana: imprisonment not to exceed 5 years and/or fine not to exceed \$7,500. Marijuana: imprisonment not to exceed 1 year and/or fine not to exceed \$1,875. Second or subsequent offenses of most of the above-referenced offenses may be punished by imprisonment for a period up to three times the term otherwise authorized and/or a fine of up to three times the amount otherwise authorized.

Iowa Code §124A.4: (Manufacture, delivery, or possession with intent to deliver an imitation controlled substance). Depending on the age of the participants, penalties may range from imprisonment for periods not to exceed 1 year, 2 years or 5 years and/or fines not to exceed \$1,875, \$6,250 or \$7,500.

Iowa Code §124B.9: (Sale, transfer, furnishing or receipt of a "precursor substance" with knowledge or intent it will be used to unlawfully manufacture a controlled substance). Imprisonment not to exceed 10 years and/or fine not to exceed \$10,000.

### **Local Penalties**

Violations of local ordinances dealing with alcohol consumption, such as public intoxication and similar offenses, are generally punishable by fines not to exceed \$500 or imprisonment not to exceed 30 days.

Please see the Student Code of Conduct Section of the Student Handbook for disciplinary procedures concerning drug or alcohol violations.

## **Clinical Policies and Procedures**

### **CastleBranch**

CastleBranch is an online record-keeping site for documents such as vaccination records, background checks, and drug testing. For questions related to CastleBranch, please email [Castlebranch@mchs.edu](mailto:Castlebranch@mchs.edu).

When seeking admission to an academic program with clinical, preceptorship, or internship opportunities, students will be required to establish an account with CastleBranch. CastleBranch account instructions can be found at <https://www.mchs.edu/castlebranch>. Students are required to pay the necessary fees directly to the vendor for all requirements.

Students are responsible for maintaining their records in CastleBranch. All students must have compliant CastleBranch accounts 10 business days prior to the start of any new term in which there is a clinical component for their program to be considered for clinical placement. Students may be dropped from clinical classes if requirements are incomplete. Students are not permitted to attend clinical until their records are up to date. Clinical absences by students with non-compliant CastleBranch accounts may be subject to the clinical make-up fee(s). Fees are determined by the program of enrollment.

Students who are unable to meet the physical clinical standards of the profession may also be unable to participate in a specific academic program.

### **Background Check**

A national criminal background check, and child and dependent adult abuse checks, will be conducted for each student seeking admission to an academic program that includes a clinical, preceptorship, internship, or similar experience that requires patient interaction. These background checks ensure the safety of all clients served by Mercy College students, and they're required to meet the regulations of our clinical partners. Students who decline these checks or are found to have criminal backgrounds may not be able to participate in an academic program.

A student's background is checked based on information obtained from the student's residency history. When the College is notified by the vendor that a student has a criminal record, the student will be expected to provide clarifying information about each conviction listed on the record for further evaluation by the Mercy College Background Check Review Committee. Students who have a criminal record may be denied admission to an academic program. They may be considered for admission only after undergoing a review by the Iowa Department of Human Services and/or an evaluation by the Mercy College Background Check Review Committee.

If the student wishes to dispute the findings reported by the vendor, they will be granted an opportunity to do so as outlined under the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA), guided by the vendor's

instructions. Denial of admission may be appealed to the Provost/VPAA if documentation of a resolution to the case can be made. Criminal and abuse registry documents are maintained by the vendor and must be accessible while the student is enrolled at the College. Criminal records are not part of a student's permanent academic record.

Various licensing boards may restrict eligibility for professional licensure/certification if a person has been convicted of a felony or has participated in other illegal or unethical behaviors. Students under these situations should contact the appropriate licensure/certification board before seeking admission to an academic program. In cases where a licensure/certification board does grant permission to eventually test for certification/licensure following successful graduation from a Mercy College academic program, the College makes no guarantees about the ability of the student to find employment with the certification/licensure within the relevant career field.

These regulations are based on the standards of The Joint Commission (TJC) relating to student participation in clinical site rotations and comply with state and federal laws. Failure to disclose a criminal record or founded case of abuse, regardless of expungement, may also result in denial of admission to an academic program.

## **CastleBranch Clinical Drug Testing Policy**

All students admitted to an academic program that has a clinical component will be required to undergo a drug test upon admission to the program. Mercy College students enrolled in a program that does not have a clinical component will not be required to undergo drug testing. Students will be notified by email about the testing requirement and deadline.

The College requires a 10-panel drug test to be completed via urine sample. The standard 10-panel test will determine the presence of cocaine, marijuana, PCP, amphetamines, opiates, benzodiazepines, barbiturates, methadone, propoxyphene, & Quaaludes. Results of the drug screening will be released to both the student and the College. Final determination about the results of the screening will be made by the medical director at the collection site, independent of Mercy College of Health Sciences.

Drug screening will be facilitated through the CastleBranch Platform. The two testing sites used by CastleBranch are:

- Labcorp (<https://www.labcorp.com/labs-and-appointments>)
- Quest Diagnostics (<https://www.questdiagnostics.com/>)

Students can change their testing facility to find a more convenient lab site, but this must be facilitated through the CastleBranch website or by contacting CastleBranch directly.

If there is reason to believe that test results were inaccurate, the student will have 48 hours to appeal for a re-test. The Dean of Student Affairs or Dean of Liberal Arts will review the appeal. If a second test is permitted, the student will be responsible for any costs incurred with analysis. Students who fail the drug screen will have to wait 6 months to reapply.

Further drug testing may be required at the discretion of Mercy College or the clinical agency. Students have the right to refuse to consent to initial and follow-up drug testing. However, students declining the drug test will not be allowed to progress in their program. The cost of drug testing for cause or any subsequent tests will be the student's responsibility. A student away from the College for three consecutive terms will be subject to a new-student drug screening.

Each student is responsible for maintaining a drug-free working and learning environment through voluntary adherence to this policy. Questions concerning the interpretation or implementation of this policy should be directed to the Dean of Student Affairs. For further information and program-specific policies, students should consult their program-specific handbook. If you are struggling with addiction, help is available by contacting the [Student Success Center](#). Further resources, including a hotline for assistance with addiction, are available at <https://yourlifeiowa.org/>.

## **CastleBranch Vaccination Policy & Information**

### **Seasonal Vaccination Policy**

Effective July 1, 2025 Iowa Law (Iowa Code §256.183(1) 2025) requires each accredited private institution located in Iowa to adopt a policy that requires the institution to include in any communication to students that is related to immunization requirements information regarding exemptions to such requirements.

Mercy College does not require enrolled students to obtain the influenza or COVID-19 vaccinations. However, students may be enrolled in an academic program that requires clinical education and/or practicum experiences to be completed at locations such as medical centers, hospitals, clinics, and/or long-term care centers. These locations are not controlled by the College and may require employees, students, and volunteers at its location to obtain vaccinations, including but not limited to the influenza and COVID-19 vaccinations. Many locations allow religious and medical exemptions, and some locations allow an individual to decline vaccinations. Through this Policy, Mercy College is assisting students who desire an exemption or who wish to decline a vaccination in submitting the necessary exemption or declination documentation. In the event a location does not permit exemptions or declinations and is unwilling to allow the student to use appropriate personal protective equipment in lieu of vaccinations, then the College will strive to locate a suitable alternative location for the student.

Students enrolled in clinical or practicum experiences in clinical settings may be required to obtain and provide documentation of a seasonal influenza and/or COVID vaccination by October 1<sup>st</sup>, the end of the second week of the spring semester, or the student's clinical start date: whichever is first. Students not enrolled in clinical education will not be required to obtain the vaccinations as a condition of enrollment. Students enrolled in clinicals or practicums who fail to obtain a seasonal influenza and/or COVID vaccination at the times set forth above may be excluded from participation in clinical or practicum settings until the vaccination(s) are obtained. Students requesting a vaccination exemption must submit all documentation prior to the timeline identified above.

## **Seasonal Influenza Vaccination Exemption Request**

Students may request exemption based on (1) a medical contraindication to the immunization or (2) a religious practice or creed that prohibits immunization. In the event an exemption is granted, the student may be required to use appropriate personal protective equipment identified by the clinical site. Students can apply for an exemption by using the following link:

<https://mchsstudentsuccess.wufoo.com/forms/m101ief21xn5af6/>

## **Exemption Based on a Medical Discrepancy**

To request an exemption, upload the following items for review through the exemption request form:

1. Medical documentation signed by the healthcare provider describing the medical condition and an explanation as to why the condition prevents the student from receiving the vaccination.
2. Exemption suggestions from the healthcare provider to safely continue student responsibilities without a vaccination.

## **Exemption Based on Religious Practice**

To request an exemption due to religious practice or creed, submit the following items for review:

1. Documentation that supports and demonstrates how the student's religious practice or creed prevents them from receiving the vaccine.
2. The following form:

[https://iris.iowa.gov/docs/Certificate\\_of\\_Immunization\\_Exemption\\_Religious.pdf](https://iris.iowa.gov/docs/Certificate_of_Immunization_Exemption_Religious.pdf)

Documentation for medical or religious exemption must be submitted to the Dean of Student Affairs prior to clinical start date. Requests for exemption will be reviewed, and students will be notified of a decision.

If a student experiences an illness with symptoms that include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, or fatigue, then the student should stay at home for at least 24 hours after they are free of fever without fever-reducing medications. This could take from five (5) to seven (7) days after the onset of symptoms. Mercy College does not require a medical doctor's note to return to class or clinical experiences.

## **Clinical Reporting Policy for Patient Care**

When students witness or suspect patient abuse or other inappropriate conduct in a clinical setting, students must contact their clinical instructor as soon as possible. Students that neglect to report suspected patient abuse, protect HIPAA information, or follow other clinical responsibility policies will meet with the Dean of Student Affairs and be referred to the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

## **Clinical Responsibility and Compensation Restrictions Policy**

In a clinical setting/session, students must not take the responsibilities or place of qualified staff. However, after demonstrating competency, students may be permitted to undertake certain defined activities under appropriate supervision and direction. Students may be employed in a clinical setting outside regular educational hours, provided the work does not interfere with regular academic responsibilities. The work must be at the student's discretion, paid, and subject to standard employment policies.

## **Confidentiality of Patient Information Policy/Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)**

Students must maintain patient confidentiality at all times without exception. Students must comply with regulations in the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). Students are legally responsible for maintaining patient confidentiality and are personally liable for all breaches of patient confidentiality. A breach of patient confidentiality is considered a [Student Code of Conduct](#) violation and will fall under that policy.

### ***Students must follow these confidentiality rules:***

- Do not discuss clients off the unit. This means *anywhere* off the unit (other locations in the medical center, in the cafeteria, in the elevator, in the student's car, in other public places, at a second place of employment, in the mall, at home with family or friends, in the classroom, and/or any other settings).
- Do not walk off the unit and say a client's name for any reason.
- If a student knows a client or the client's family on a personal basis (neighbor, classmate, friend, current or former colleague, family, etc.), notify the instructor or contact person immediately.
- If a student knows a client or the client's family on a professional basis (has taken care of them in another medical setting), notify the instructor or contact person immediately.
- Students should not acknowledge a client if seen outside the unit or in any other setting (church, the mall, the medical center, party, school, etc.). Do not nod, smile, greet, or acknowledge the client casually in any way unless the client first nods, smiles, or greets the student. Limit casual acknowledgement to polite acknowledgement only.
- Do not discuss anything with the client related to his/her hospital stay anywhere off the unit even if the client initiates the conversation. Students should simply indicate that, for confidentiality reasons, they cannot enter any conversation.
- Do not discuss clients with an instructor other than the instructor assigned to the unit.
- Do not send information about clients via email; this includes sending assessments, care plans, or journals.
- Do not use client names or their families' names in assessment care plans.
- Do not use client names with other clients or with their peers. If a student is approached by a client who wants to discuss another client, refer them to staff immediately.

## **College or Professor Cancellation Policy**

If a professor is not present at the beginning of a scheduled class session, students should remain in the classroom for at least 10 minutes. If the College receives late notice of a course, laboratory session, or clinical cancellation, the College will attempt to post notice of the cancellation outside the assigned classroom. Students should also check the learning management system site for the course (Canvas) for further instructions concerning makeup plans.

## **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) Policies**

## Policy Statement

The following constitutes College policy concerning student rights of access to personal educational records and confidentiality in compliance with FERPA. Certain definitions, guidelines, and principles contained in the law are as follows:

- A student is defined as one who has attended, or is attending, Mercy College of Health Sciences and whose records are in the files of the College. Attendance is defined as the date of first enrollment at the College or participation in a College-sponsored program or activity, whichever occurs earlier.
- Educational records do not include files retained by individuals that are not accessible to any other person except a designated or replacement party.
- Directory (public) information is limited to name, local and permanent address, telephone number, email address, college, class, major field of study, dates of attendance, enrollment status, anticipated graduation date, degrees and awards received, the most recent educational institution attended, and a photograph of a student taken for college purposes. Directory (public) information also includes class rosters listing students in College academic courses (Desire to Learn). Such rosters may only be used for the purpose of conducting that course.
- Record means any information or data recorded in any medium, including but not limited to, handwriting, print, tapes, computer files, microfilm, or microfiche.

### Introduction and Purpose

To inform students of their rights and responsibilities pertaining to their College records, in compliance with federal notification requirements; to protect the privacy of student records; and to articulate definitions relating to student records, how they may be accessed and disclosed, the complaint procedure, and other information relevant to the student record. The official FERPA form (Permission to Release Student Information) can be found [here](#).

### Scope and Applicability

Policies apply to College employees (faculty, staff, and student employees) and other covered individuals (affiliates, vendors, independent contractors, etc.) accessing and handling student records, data, or information in any form (paper, digital text, image, audio, video, microfilm, etc.) during the course of conducting College business (administrative, financial, teaching, research, or service). This policy shall apply to all offices and divisions of Mercy College of Health Sciences and to all current or former students at the College.

### Release of Directory Information

Directory information may be released unless the student files the appropriate form in the Registrar's Office requesting that directory information not be released. Directory information that cannot be restricted includes whether the individual was ever enrolled and degrees awarded.

### Release of Grades

Reports of a student's grades are not routinely mailed. Students may access their grades electronically on the MyMercy website. The posting of a student's grades must be done in a manner designed to maintain confidentiality. Grades or evaluations linked to personal identifiers (names, College ID numbers, or social security numbers) may not be publicly disclosed without specific



permission from the student. Grades or evaluations may only be posted on office doors or on websites by using randomly generated codes or numbers.

## **Record Storage**

Students have records in one or more of the following offices:

- Registrar's Office
- Financial Aid
- Student Accounts
- Division of Student Affairs
- Division of Enrollment Management
- Human Resources (Federal Work Study)

## **Record Access and Exceptions**

A student's record is open to the student except as listed below. Any reference to student records or access to student records in this document is subject to these exceptions:

- Confidential letters of recommendation placed in files before January 1, 1975.
- Financial records of the student's parents or any information contained therein.
- Employment records, except for those cases in which the employment is required as part of the student's program.
- Medical and psychological records.
- Letters of recommendation or other documents that carry a waiver of the student's right to access.
- Records compiled by campus security solely for law enforcement purposes.

Student education records are open to College officials with a legitimate business/educational interest in the information therein.

- A College official is an employee or other agent of the College.
  - A College official may also be a person or company with whom the College has contracted to carry out a function on the College's behalf.
- The determination of a legitimate business/educational interest will be made by the person responsible for the maintenance of the record. This decision will be made scrupulously and with respect for the individual whose records are involved.
  - A legitimate business/educational interest means that the individual seeking access requires the requested information to perform a job function.

## **Conditions of Access Waivers for Student References**

To ensure the confidentiality of references, certain documents may carry waivers signed by the student relinquishing the right of access to the document. Waivers are subject to the following conditions:

- Waivers can be signed only for the specific purposes of application for admission, candidacy for honor or honorary recognition, and candidacy for employment.
- Waivers cannot be required.
- The student shall be told, upon request, the names of those supplying references.
- All items in the academic record not covered by waivers are open to the student.



- Material not covered by waivers may not be protected by keeping it out of the student's file.

### **Third-Party Access**

Records can only be released to/accessed by third parties (anyone not a member of the faculty or staff) with the written consent of the student.

Without the consent of the student, releases to third parties may be given only as follows:

- To federal officers as prescribed by law.
- As required by state law.
- To research projects on behalf of educational agencies, providing that the agencies guarantee no personal identification of students.
- To accredited agencies carrying out their functions.
- In response to a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena.
- By Campus Security to other law enforcement agencies in the investigation of a specific criminal case.
- To parents of students who are dependents as defined and verified by IRS standards.
- To a student's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) regarding the student's use or possession of alcohol or a controlled substance if there has been a determination by the College that the student's use or possession of alcohol or a controlled substance constitutes a violation of a College rule or regulation
  - The student must also be under the age of 21 at the time of disclosure to the parent(s) or legal guardian(s).
- To a student's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) in connection with an emergency.
- To appropriate persons if the knowledge of such information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other persons.

### **Continued Record Maintenance**

Nothing in this College FERPA policy requires the continued maintenance of any student record. However, if under this policy a student has requested access to the record, no destruction shall be made before access is granted to the student.

### **Records of Deceased Students**

FERPA rights cease upon death. However, it is the policy of the College that no records of deceased students be released after the date of death unless specifically authorized by the executor of the deceased's estate, by the next of kin, or as stipulated in the Record Access and Exceptions section of this policy.

### **Record Correction Requests**

Students have the right to ask to have records corrected that they believe are inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of their privacy rights. The procedures are as follows:

- The student must ask the custodian of the record to amend the record. The student should identify the part of the record that they want changed and their reasoning.
- Mercy College of Health Sciences may comply or may decide not to comply with the request. If not, the College will inform the student of the decision and advise the student

of the right to a hearing. Requests for a hearing are to be sent to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Upon request, the College will arrange for a hearing and so notify the student.

- The hearing will be conducted by a hearing officer who is a disinterested party. However, the officer may be an official of the institution. The student may be assisted by one or more individuals.
- The College will prepare a written decision based solely upon the evidence presented at the hearing. The decision will include a summary of the evidence and the reasons for the decision.
- If the College decides that the challenged information is not inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the student's right to privacy, it will notify the student that they have a right to place in the record a statement commenting on the challenged information or set forth reasons for disagreeing with the decision.
- The statement will be maintained as part of the student's record if the contested portion is maintained. If the College discloses the contested portion of the record, it must also disclose the statement.
- If the College decides that the information is inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the student's right of privacy, it will amend the record and notify the student in writing that the record has been amended.

### **Creation, Permanence, and Disposal of Student Records**

The following are general guidelines regarding the disposal of student records:

- Only such records as are demonstrably and substantially relevant to the educational purposes of the College shall be generated or maintained.
- Permanent retention of student records is limited to those of long-range value to the individual or the College.
- All duplicate copies of permanent records, other than those maintained by the custodian of the permanent records, shall be maintained only for the minimum period required to serve the basic official function of the individual or department generating or maintaining them. Such records shall be destroyed as soon as they are no longer needed (within one year following graduation or two years after the last date of attendance). A student will be granted access to their records before their destruction when they have an unsatisfied outstanding request.

### **Directory Information**

In compliance with federally enacted regulations and College policies, directory information regarding students attending Mercy College of Health Sciences shall include:

- Student's name
- Local address
- Permanent address
- Email Address
- Telephone listings
- Year at the college
- Dates of attendance
- Academic college and major field of study

- Enrollment status
- Participation in officially-recognized activities and sports
- Degrees, honors, and awards received
- Most recent educational agency or institution attended
- Photographic or electronic pictures or images

Public information pertaining to any individual student may be released by the Registrar upon inquiry unless the student has not agreed to release directory information. Partial or whole lists of students by name and address will not be released for commercial purposes.

Each major administrative unit shall define the kinds of reports and information that may be released to the public.

Information contained in the personal files of the student is considered confidential information. Except for the information noted above, all student records are confidential and are open only to College personnel (individuals under contract) who need the information to carry out their official responsibilities (assigned duties and functions).

Although College personnel are authorized to access this information on a “need-to-know” basis (to perform specific duties and functions), they are not permitted to release information to persons outside the College unless authorized in writing by the student, by a court order, or according to the exceptions listed in the Record Access and Exceptions section.

Only the official or designated person responsible for the records has the authority to release them. Records may be disclosed to a third party only if the recipient party will not permit others to access the information without the student's written consent.

### **Rights of Access and Review of Records**

Students have the right to inspect, review, or receive an interpretation of copies of their educational records, except as excluded below. This right may be exercised by completing a written request to access the records. Such requests should be honored as quickly as possible and are normally addressed within 48 hours; if detailed documentation and/or interpretation is required, the request should be honored within ten (10) days. In all cases, requests for such information must be honored within forty-five (45) days.

If a copy or copies of a portion or all of the records in a student's file are requested, the custodian of the records may charge a fee for copies made, provided the fee does not effectively prevent students from exercising their right to inspect and review (under supervision of a College employee) their records. No fee will be charged to the student to search for or to retrieve records. Each custodian of records is responsible for requesting proper identification of the individual making the request about their records.

### **Custodians of Student Records**

The Office of the Registrar shall be responsible for the proposal, interpretation, enforcement, and publication of general policies and procedures consistent with state and federal laws and guidelines

as they relate to the creation, maintenance, use, dissemination, and destruction of records of students who are attending or have attended Mercy College of Health Sciences and shall coordinate the development of general policies and procedures with the appropriate College officials listed below.

***Each type of student record is the responsibility of a designated College official, and only that professional staff member or designate has authority to release records.*** Please note that some student records listed below are outside the scope of the Office of the Registrar. The responsible officials are:

Academic and Admissions Records (after attendance)

Official: Registrar

Location: Office of the Registrar

Admissions Records (after admission, prior to attendance)

Official: Director of Admissions

Location: Division of Enrollment Management

Alumni Records

Official: Manager of Alumni Affairs

Location: Office of Alumni Affairs

Disciplinary Records

Official: Dean of Student Affairs

Location: Division of Student Affairs

Employment (Work-Study and Student Employment)

Official: Human Resources

Location: Human Resources

Financial Aid

Official: Director of Financial Aid Services

Location: Office of Student Financial Aid

Security Records

Official: Vice President of Business and Regulatory Affairs

Location: Office of the Department of Business and Regulatory Affairs

Student Accounts

Official: Vice President of Business and Regulatory Affairs

Location: Business Office

Student Activities

Official: Dean of Student Affairs

Location: Office of Student Affairs

Veterans Records

Official: Registrar

Location: Registrar's Office

**Special Considerations for Online Course Environment(s)**

FERPA policy for online and blended courses typically includes areas of focus and details regarding the protection of student information and the information that is shared between an instructor and student as part of the online course.

- Faculty teaching online courses for the College will use the institutional Learning Management System (LMS) to deliver the course to ensure student work and grade security.
- Faculty teaching online courses for the College will use the College's secure online system for electronically submitting grades to the Registrar.
- All emails between the instructor and students in an online course need to occur through the LMS or via the College email system so that communications between the instructor and student (grades, feedback on student work, etc.) remain confidential and protected by the College.
- LMS account information must be kept secure by faculty and students enrolled in online courses. Students in a course cannot access other students' work or grades. Faculty and students cannot share their personal LMS login information with anyone or give access to the course in the LMS to others who are not officially enrolled in the course.
- Exceptions are allowed for other College faculty and administration to access a course when the appropriate justification is provided and approved.
- Faculty teaching in the online environment will follow all College FERPA guidelines for sharing educational record information with other College faculty, staff, and others outside the College.
- During the online course, and once it is archived, all student information is protected, including course data and participation.

## **Complaint Procedure**

If a student believes the College is not in compliance with FERPA, the student should check first with the office involved and/or the Dean of Student Affairs. Concerns will need to be submitted through the [Student Concern/Student Complaint](#) form. The student will receive a response within 24 business hours.

If a student wishes to file a complaint with the federal government concerning the College's failure to comply with FERPA, they must submit the complaint, in writing, to the Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-5920 ([www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/students.html](http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/students.html)). The Family Policy Compliance Office will notify the student and the College when the complaint has been received. They will investigate the complaint and may require further information. Following its investigation, they will provide written notification of its findings and the basis for such findings. In the event the College is found non-compliant, it will be afforded the necessary time to comply. If it does not then comply, additional action may be taken by the Family Policy Compliance Office. For guidelines concerning this complaint procedure, see 34 CFR Paragraph and the subsequent regulations of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

## **Exclusions or Special Circumstances**

Faculty, staff, and/or student employees who violate this College policy may be subject to disciplinary action for misconduct and/or performance based on the administrative process appropriate to their employment.

Students who violate this College policy may be subject to proceedings for non-academic misconduct based upon their student status.

Faculty, staff, student employees, and/or students may also be subject to the discontinuance of specified information technology services based on the policy violation.

**Contact:**

Office of the Registrar  
Mercy College of Health Sciences  
(515) 643-6744

## Information Policy

Mercy College reserves the right to make changes as necessary, including changes in requirements, programs, policies, and fees. Changes shall go into effect whenever appropriate with such notice as is reasonable under the circumstances. Students may be notified of changes and updates via their student email and/or the College website.

## Jury Duty Policy

Students that have received a jury summons that impacts the student's ability to attend class or clinical need to contact the Director of Student Engagement.

The student must provide a copy of their jury summons to the Director of Student Engagement as soon as a summons is received. The student's instructors will be notified. Students working to have their summons deferred are encouraged to plan and not assume a deferment will be granted because they are a student.

Send Jury Summons to: [Studentsuccess@mchs.edu](mailto:Studentsuccess@mchs.edu)

## Military Leave Policies & Procedures

### Military Leave Policy

The following policies and procedures apply to students called to active duty in the United States armed services.

### Military-Sanctioned Leave: Short Term Assistance

Students who have received orders and would like to request short term assistance because their orders impact their ability to attend class, attend clinical, or complete coursework on time, must start by submitting a [Declaration of Military Orders](#) for consideration. This includes monthly drill documentation. Orders need only be submitted to the Director of Student Engagement. A student may withdraw their declaration at any time.

1. The student will submit the *Declaration of Military Orders*.
2. The student is contacted by the Office of Student Affairs to discuss the impact of orders on course work and expectations.
3. The Office of Student Affairs will notify applicable instructors of leave dates.
4. The student will put the plan for coursework, makeup exams, etc. in writing and send it to applicable instructors.

The Office of Student Affairs will only share dates of leave with course instructors and the clinical coordinator, if necessary. Clinical instructors are not contacted. Therefore, the student and clinical coordinator must work together to inform their clinical instructors.

If the student is unable to complete the required work by the last day of their course, they may be required to take an “I” for the course. See the Incomplete policy for further guidance.

If military orders require the student to be away for a longer period of time, they will be referred to the Registrar for long-term arrangements.

### **Military Leave Procedure: Long Term**

Within seven (7) calendar days of receipt of orders, the student will:

1. Complete a Request for Military Leave form, submit it to the Registrar’s Office, and provide a copy of the military orders for the student’s file.
2. Contact the appropriate program chair for academic program guidelines related to future program start dates to assist with program reentry planning.
3. Contact the Business Office to complete appropriate documents regarding tuition assistance.
4. Contact the College’s Financial Aid Office.

### **Returning from Military Leave Procedure**

Veterans returning after military leave will be readmitted to the same academic status achieved when last in attendance at Mercy College, provided the absence does not exceed five years.

1. Apply for Readmission when appropriate as outlined in the Readmission to the College Policy after Voluntary Leave in the *Mercy College Catalog*.
2. The student’s re-entry point is dependent on the program course placement examinations they pass, and that point cannot be beyond the program course semester completed at the time of their withdrawal. Students must pass in sequence all program course placement examinations for any one semester before progressing on to the program course placement examination for the next program course level.
3. Should a student pass some but not all program course placement examinations for one semester, the student will be required to repeat all program courses for that semester and all subsequent semesters.
4. Students needing to repeat program courses in which they have earned a “C” or better to regain knowledge and clinical skills are not subject to tuition charges for repeated program courses if students have:
  - a. applied for readmission within one year after return from active duty; and
  - b. began the program courses they need to repeat the first semester they are offered after readmission.
5. Students will not be subject to tuition charges for repeated program courses but will be subject to tuition charges for other courses they may take during these semesters.
6. Students needing to repeat program courses to regain knowledge and clinical skills and who do not apply for readmission within the allowable period (one year after return from active duty) will be assessed tuition charges for all courses they take, including repeated program courses.

7. Students holding scholarship awards through Mercy College will retain their scholarship awards provided they apply for readmission within one year following return from active duty and use the scholarship immediately following readmission. Students who delay readmission will need to reapply for scholarships.

## **Student Code of Conduct Policies**

### **Discipline Policies and Procedures**

The Student Code of Conduct promotes an environment conducive to learning at Mercy College, including all clinical education sites. In cases where a student engages in inappropriate conduct, the student will be subject to disciplinary action.

Inappropriate conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Academic dishonesty and plagiarism
- Possession of alcohol, controlled substances, and/or weapons
- Violations of tobacco-free environment policy
- Property damage, arson, or vandalism
- Assault
- Inappropriate computer use, including accessing pornography on campus
- Disorderly conduct
- Tampering with fire alarms/emergency equipment
- Gambling
- Hazing
- Possession of unauthorized keys or identification badge
- Breach of patient confidentiality
- Perjury and/or submitting fraudulent records
- Harassment or abuse (including hate crimes based on race, color, culture, ethnic origin, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, veteran status, or disability)
- Stalking
- Theft
- Trespassing
- Use of foul language
- Inappropriate dress

Acts in violation of city, county, state, or federal ordinances, regulations, or laws may violate the Student Code of Conduct. The College may begin the disciplinary process whether the act results in an arrest and/or conviction. Alternate transportation from the reporting site will be arranged for the student if the conduct observed involves substance abuse.

### **Professional and Ethical Conduct Examples**

Professional and ethical conduct means that students will demonstrate:

- Honesty
- Accountability
- Confidentiality



- Respect for all persons
- Adherence to all College policies and procedures
- Active participation in the learning process
- Behavior that supports learning for all students
- Safe practice when caring for clients
- Appropriate requests for supervision/guidance
- Accountability for the conduct of personal guests

Examples of inappropriate professional or ethical conduct include, but are not limited to:

- Disruption of the educational process/atmosphere in the classroom, at clinical sites, and on all College property, including, but not limited to:
  - Interfering with the instructors' ability to teach and students' ability to learn
  - Refusal to comply with faculty or staff requests regarding vocal or physical behavior
- Abuse and/or neglect of clients and patients
- Accessing pornography at the College
- Unsafe clinical practices
- Cheating or plagiarism
- Unauthorized entry, obstruction, or occupation of any room, building, or area of the College
- Falsifying reports
- Breach of patient confidentiality or HIPAA information
- Use of inappropriate or threatening language
- Bullying or cyberbullying
- Physical assault
- Chemical or emotional impairment
- Conviction of any crime involving illegal drugs, child abuse, or moral turpitude
- Possession of dangerous weapons
- Use of computers or software in violation of the Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources Policy
- Discrimination/harassment of any kind, including that which is based on a protected class status
- Violation of Tobacco-Free Environment Policy
- Failing to comply with a reasonable request of a College official
- Violation of Information Technology Policies

## Information Technology Policies

### Copyright

Educational use of copyrighted materials permits only limited copying for study and research.

"Copyrighted materials" can refer to books, articles, pictures, music, videos, software, computer files, and graphic images. Additional copyright information can be found at

<https://libguides.mchs.edu/copyright>.

### Peer-to-Peer File Sharing

File sharing programs allow users to share files online. Examples of such programs are eMule, BitTorrent, and Gnutella clients like LimeWire. The use of file sharing to share copyrighted music,

games, and movies over the Internet without permission violates the Digital Millennium Copyright Act and is illegal. Using a computer to distribute copyrighted materials can incur legal penalties for those offering materials and those downloading them. Criminal penalties for violation of federal copyright law include fines of up to \$1 million and a maximum jail sentence of 10 years.

### **Privacy and Monitoring**

The College reserves the right to monitor and access any data, including the contents of any College computer, activity logs, or College communications for legitimate reasons, including but not limited to: security, performance, backup, and troubleshooting. Inquiries concerning academic integrity may be made after obtaining approval from the Program Chair. Disclosure of information (without notice to the user) will also be made when required by court order, other legal authority, or when the College determines there is an urgent and compelling need.

### **Examples of Prohibited Behavior**

This list is not intended to be comprehensive but to provide selective examples of prohibited behavior:

- Attempting to obtain passwords or access other user accounts, sharing a personal username and password with any other person, or using another person's account.
  - Impersonating another user or otherwise falsifying a username via email.
- Circumventing any security system or procedure; this includes any unauthorized activities intended to compromise system or network security, such as hacking.
- Using information technology resources to obtain unauthorized access to records, data, or other forms of information owned, used by, or pertaining to the College or individuals.
- Modifying system or network facilities or attempting to crash systems or networks.
- Deliberately introducing a computer virus, worm, spyware, or other malicious software into information technology resources that belong to Mercy College.
- Tampering with software protections or restrictions placed on computer applications or files.
- Using the College computer systems or network to send spam, pranks, chain letters, pyramid schemes, or other similar types of broadcast messages.
- Sending messages that are malicious, harassing, threatening, or intentionally inflammatory.
- Accessing, transmitting, or otherwise making use of pornographic materials of any kind available over the Internet.
- Using College information technology resources for personal, for-profit purposes.
- Duplicating or transmitting copyrighted material beyond Fair Use without permission.
- Physically damaging information technology resources.
- Using information technology resources in a manner that is disruptive to the educational purpose of the College or which otherwise hinders the effectiveness of the institution.

### **Social Media Policies**

Social media and networking sites (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, blogs, etc.) are dynamic communication tools that help people connect and communicate with various groups and individuals.

The College supports student participation in online communities as a communication, learning, and networking tool. Students may be disciplined for personal use of social media when usage violates other Mercy College policies.

Because social media is ever-changing, the following guidelines have been developed to help students navigate online spaces while following College policies and procedures and protecting their personal and professional reputation.

The following “best practices” have been compiled to serve as a guide for students who participate in social networking for a college group or as individuals.

## **General**

*When participating in social networking sites, students should:*

- Be honest about their identity, participating only under their own name.
- Have all the facts before posting something.
- Cite sources where applicable.
- Be respectful and courteous in posting and communicating.
- Think carefully before posting.
  - There is no such thing as a “private” social media site. Search engines can turn up posts years after the publication date. Comments can be forwarded or copied. Archival systems save information even after it has been deleted.
- Maintain confidentiality.
  - Never post patient, confidential, or proprietary information.

## **Protecting Student Identity**

While students should be honest about themselves, they should not provide personal information that identity thieves could use against them. Students should not list their home address, personal or work telephone number, or personal or work e-mail address.

## **Student Rights Policy and Procedures/Student Code of Conduct**

A student accused of a violation of the Student Code of Conduct has the following rights:

- To receive documentation of the charge of the alleged inappropriate conduct within a reasonable period.
- To file a grievance form contesting the allegation.
- To hear all the evidence upon which the allegation is based and to respond to the allegation.
- To remain silent about any incident in which the accused is a suspect based on self-incrimination.

## **Student Discipline Procedure**

Mercy College reserves the right to initiate discipline at any step of the disciplinary process depending on the severity of the inappropriate conduct.

Students admitted to or seeking admission to a distance education program follow the same procedure, and their meetings may occur via phone, conference call, internet conference, or utilizing web camera technology.

**Step 1: Informal Resolution** College staff or faculty who observe or are notified of an act of student misconduct shall attempt to resolve minor inappropriate conduct with the student privately. The

incident will be [documented](#) with a report forwarded to either the appropriate Program Chair (for academic issues) or the Dean of Student Affairs (for nonacademic misconduct violations).

**Step 2: Verbal Warning** The Office of Student Affairs will meet with the student to discuss the incident and expectations moving forward. The meeting will be documented and sent to the student following the meeting.

**Step 3: Written Warning** If the student misconduct is unresolved, or if additional violation(s) of the Student Code of Conduct are observed, the misconduct shall be reported to the appropriate Program Chair or Dean of Student Affairs in writing. The original violation(s) should also be documented. If the observing party is the Program Chair, and the matter is academic, the behavior or violation should be reported to the Dean of Liberal Arts.

Upon a second offense The Dean of Student Affairs or Dean of Liberal Arts will meet with the student, prepare a written warning, and develop a written action plan as warranted, stating the consequences of the violation and any future violations. The student may be referred to the Josephine Norkaitis Student Success Center if necessary. A copy of this warning and written action plan will be placed in the student's file and removed at graduation if there are no further violations. The Program Chair or appropriate Dean will monitor the student's conduct.

**Step 4: Discipline** Serious and/or illegal misconduct may warrant automatic progression to Step 4 of the Disciplinary Procedure. Students with unresolved or repeated inappropriate conduct will meet with the appropriate Dean.

Students may be temporarily suspended during an investigation of any alleged incident of serious and/or illegal inappropriate conduct. The Dean of Students or Vice President will decide on the disciplinary action to be imposed.

- The College will also report illegal conduct to the appropriate authority for legal action.
- The student shall be provided with notice of the written action plan.
- The student may file a grievance as set forth in the Student Code of Conduct Grievance Procedure if the student would like to contest the outcome of the procedure.

Further repeated violations or inappropriate conduct can result in temporary suspension, suspension, dismissal, or expulsion from the College.

Violations of the Academic Integrity Policy may result in a lower grade for the class, failure on the test or assignment, temporary suspension, suspension, dismissal, or expulsion.

Disciplinary action may continue for Student Code of Conduct violations that occurred prior to a student's withdrawal from Mercy College.

Mercy College reserves the right to refer a student to the Josephine Norkaitis Student Success Center, temporarily suspend, suspend, dismiss, or expel a student from the College or a College-related activity if the student's conduct is inappropriate.

## **Student Discipline Definitions**

**Interim Measures:** At any time after receiving a report regarding a violation of the Student Code of Conduct, the Dean of Student Affairs may determine that interim remedies or protections for the parties involved, or witnesses, are appropriate. These interim remedies may include separating the Complainant and Respondent, placing limitations on contact between the Complainant and Respondent, suspension, or making alternative class-placement or workplace arrangements.

After conducting an individualized safety and risk analysis, the College may remove a student from campus when there is an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of any individuals stemming from the allegations of Student Code of Conduct violation(s). The College will notify the Respondent of the decision and allow an opportunity to challenge it within 24 hours after the removal.

Failure to comply with the terms of the interim remedies or protections may constitute a separate violation of this policy or other Mercy College policies.

**Suspension:** A student can be suspended from all College classes and activities and not permitted to be on College property or assigned clinical sites for a specified period due to an infraction of the Student Code of Conduct. Should a student be suspended from a class, the student is not allowed to partake in class discussions, engage course faculty, complete testing, or submit course assignments.

**Dismissal:** A student dismissed from a program or the College may be permitted to return to the college through the Readmission Policy to the College for Academic and/or Disciplinary Reasons (see page 24 of the College Catalog <https://mchs.edu/calendar>.)

**Expulsion:** A student expelled from the College is not permitted to return to the College. Disciplinary action may continue for actions or events that occurred prior to a student's withdrawal from the College.

## **Student Code of Conduct Grievance Procedure**

Students disputing a decision regarding the student's breach of the Student Code of Conduct may file a Student Code of Conduct Grievance Form with the Student Affairs Office no later than seven (7) working days following notification of the final decision or written action plan as set forth in the Student Discipline Procedure.

The Grievance Form can be obtained from the Dean of Student Affairs.

Students who are admitted to or who are seeking admission to a distance education program will follow the same procedure, and their meetings may occur via phone, conference call, or internet conference.

### **Student Grievance Committee**

The Student Grievance Committee is an ad hoc committee appointed by the Dean of Student Affairs. The members include the Dean of Student Affairs or designee and three (3) voting members consisting of faculty members from various areas of the College that the student has not had instruction from.

## **Student Grievance Committee Procedure**

**Step 1:** Upon receipt of a timely filed grievance, the Dean of Student Affairs or designee will arrange a meeting of the Student Grievance Committee within seven (7) academic/working days of receipt of the written grievance. The seven academic/working day deadline may be extended if circumstances warrant an extension. The Dean of Student Affairs shall inform all parties involved in the initial grievance of the date, time, and place of the committee meeting and provide necessary materials to all parties involved. The student and any other party involved in the original grievance will attend and be given a reasonable time to present relevant information. Both the student and the other party to the original grievance may ask a non-attorney support person to accompany them to the Grievance Committee meeting. The non-attorney support person does not serve as an advocate on behalf of the student or other party, and the student must agree to maintain the confidentiality of the process.

**Step 2:** The Dean of Student Affairs or designee shall preside over the Student Grievance Committee, which shall review relevant materials, hear discussion presented by all parties, and consider the matter. The voting members of the Student Grievance Committee shall make a recommendation to the Dean of Student Affairs or designee presiding.

**Step 3:** The Dean of Student Affairs or designee, at their discretion, shall be free to accept or reject the recommendation of the Committee. The Dean shall decide and inform all parties in writing of the decision within five (5) academic/working days of receipt of the recommendation of the Student Grievance Committee. The five academic/working day deadline may be extended if warranted. The decision of the Dean shall be final and binding unless appealed as set forth below.

**Step 4:** The Dean shall place a signed and dated copy of the written decision in a separate grievance file maintained with the Provost/VPAA's Office.

Any student who filed a Student Code of Conduct Grievance should continue to attend all classes, labs, and clinical sessions unless notified otherwise.

## **Student Code of Conduct Grievance Appeal Procedure**

Students disputing the Dean of Student Affairs' or designee's decision regarding a Student Code of Conduct Grievance may file a written appeal letter with the Provost/VPAA no later than five (5) academic/working days following notification of the Dean/designee's decision.

**Step 1:** The appeal must state the reasons justifying further consideration of the decision rendered by the Dean or designee.

**Step 2:** The Dean of Students and the Provost/VPAA shall review the Student Grievance Committee records and the student's written appeal. If warranted, additional information may be requested by the Vice President from the participants of the Student Grievance Committee.

**Step 3:** The Provost/VPAA will inform the student in writing of the decision within ten (10) academic/working days of the receipt of the Student Code of Conduct Grievance Appeal Letter from the student. The ten academic/working day deadline may be extended if warranted. The decision of the Provost/VPAA regarding the Student Code of Conduct Grievance Appeal shall be final and binding.

# **Title IX/Sexual Misconduct Policies**

## **Sexual Harassment Policy**

Mercy College (henceforth “College”) fosters respect and dignity for all members of the College community by providing an educational and working environment that is free from discrimination and harassment, including Sexual Harassment.

The College prohibits discrimination based upon race, ethnicity, religion, color, national origin, sex (including Sexual Harassment), marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, religion, genetic information, disability, veteran or military status, or any other protected status or characteristic protected by law.

Consistent with the U.S. Department of Education’s implementing regulations for Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (“Title IX”) (see 34 C.F.R. § 106 et seq.), the College prohibits Sexual Harassment that occurs within its Education Programs or Activities.

The College provides persons who have experienced Sexual Harassment ongoing remedies as reasonably necessary to restore or preserve access to the Mercy College Education Programs or Activities.

### **Scope**

Sexual Harassment, whether verbal, physical, or visual, that is based on sex is a form of prohibited conduct. For purposes of this policy, Sexual Harassment includes Quid Pro Quo Sexual Harassment, Hostile Environment Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, and Stalking. Specific definitions, including examples of such conduct, are listed below.

This policy applies to all members of the College community (employees, students, applicants for employment, customers, third-party contractors, and all other persons) that participate in the College’s Education Programs or Activities, including third-party visitors on campus.

Mercy College’s prohibition on Sexual Harassment extends to all aspects of its Educational Programs, Activities, and operations, including, but not limited to, admissions, employment, academics, and student services.

This policy does not apply to Sexual Harassment that occurs off-campus, in a private setting, and outside the scope of the College’s Education Programs or Activities; such sexual misconduct may be addressed in employee and student conduct policies.

Consistent with the U.S. Department of Education’s implementing regulations for Title IX, this policy does not apply to Sexual Harassment that occurs outside the geographic boundaries of the United States, even if the Sexual Harassment occurs in Mercy College’s Education Programs or Activities. Members of the College community who commit Sexual Harassment are subject to the full range of discipline including verbal reprimand; written reprimand; mandatory training or counseling; mandatory

monitoring; partial or full probation; partial or full suspension; fines; permanent separation from the institution (that is, termination or expulsion); physical restriction from Mercy College property; cancellation of contracts; and any combination of the same.

### **Reporting Sexual Harassment**

The College has designated the following Title IX Coordinators to coordinate its compliance with Title IX and its implementing regulations and to receive inquiries regarding Title IX, including reports of Sexual Harassment. Any person may report Sexual Harassment to the Title IX Coordinators. Reports may be made in person, by regular mail, telephone, electronic mail, or by any other means that result in the Title IX Coordinator receiving the person's verbal or written report. In-person reports must be made during normal business hours, but reports can be made by regular mail, telephone, or electronic mail at any time, including outside normal business hours.

#### **Title IX Coordinator**

Helen Smith, BSN, RN  
Sr. HR Partner, Colleague Relations  
515-643-5241  
515-247-3100 (*Human Resources*)  
411 Laurel Street, Suite 3265  
Des Moines, IA 50314-2611  
[Helen.Smith001@mercyoneiowa.org](mailto:Helen.Smith001@mercyoneiowa.org)

#### **Deputy Title IX Coordinator: Students**

Lyneene Richardson  
Dean of Student Affairs  
(515) 218-9687  
ACE-181  
928 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue Des  
Moines, IA 50309  
[lyneene.richardson@mercyoneiowa.org](mailto:lyneene.richardson@mercyoneiowa.org)

Reports of Sexual Harassment may also be filed with the United States Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights by calling (800) 421-3481 or visiting:

<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/complaintprocess.html>.

## **Definitions**

**Complainant:** An individual who is alleged to be the victim of conduct that may constitute Sexual Harassment. The Complainant must be, at the time of filing of the Formal Complaint, participating or attempting to participate in the College's Education Programs or Activities.

**Respondent:** An individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that could constitute Sexual Harassment. The Respondent must be participating or attempting to participate in the College's Education Programs or Activities.



**Formal Complaint:** A document filed by a Complainant and/or signed by the Title IX Coordinator alleging Sexual Harassment against a Respondent and specifically requesting that the College investigate the allegation of Sexual Harassment in accordance with this policy. A “document filed by a Complainant” means a document or electronic submission (such as an email) that contains the Complainant’s physical or electronic signature or otherwise indicates that the Complainant is the person filing the Complaint. A parent, friend, or other third party cannot file a Formal Complaint on behalf of a Complainant. However, the Title IX Coordinator may sign a Formal Complaint if the decision to do so is clear and reasonable.

**Title IX Team:** Members of Mercy College who participate in the investigation of a Formal Complaint.

**Hearing Panel:** A panel of individuals, free of a conflict of interest or bias, responsible for issuing a written determination of responsibility after a live hearing.

**Administrative Resolution:** Investigation of a policy violation and recommended finding by an administrator with an opportunity to appeal.

**Administrative Officer:** The individual who will conduct the Administrative Resolution process and determine the resolution. This individual will not be the Title IX Coordinator or Investigating Officer.

**Investigating Officer:** An individual, free of a conflict of interest or bias, tasked by the Title IX Coordinator with gathering facts about alleged Sexual Harassment, assessing relevance and credibility, and preparing a written report.

**Advisor:** An individual chosen by the Complainant and Respondent (or appointed by Mercy College) to accompany the party to meetings, provide advice to the party, and conduct cross-examination for the party at the hearing.

**Preponderance Standard:** The standard of “more likely than not” used to determine if the allegation occurred.

**Sexual Harassment:** Sexual Harassment is conduct based on sex that constitutes Quid Pro Quo Sexual Harassment, Hostile Environment Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, or Stalking.

**Quid Pro Quo:** Quid Pro Quo Sexual Harassment is when an employee of Mercy College conditions an aid, benefit, or service of the College to an individual who participates in unwelcome sexual contact.

**Hostile Environment:** Hostile Environment Sexual Harassment is unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person access to Mercy College Education Programs or Activities.

In determining whether a hostile environment exists, Mercy College will consider the circumstances, including factors such as the actual impact the conduct has had on the Complainant; the nature and severity of the conduct at issue; the frequency and duration of the conduct; the relationship between

the parties (including whether one individual has power or authority over the other); the context in which the conduct occurred; and the number of persons affected. The College will evaluate the circumstances from the perspective of a reasonable person in the Complainant's position. A person's adverse, subjective reaction to conduct is not sufficient, in and of itself, to establish the existence of a hostile environment.

Some specific examples of conduct that may constitute Sexual Harassment if unwelcome include, but are not limited to:

- Unreasonable pressure for a dating, romantic, or intimate relationship or sexual contact.
- Unwelcome kissing, hugging, or massaging.
- Sexual innuendos, jokes, or humor.
- Displaying sexual graffiti, pictures, videos, or posters.
- Using sexually explicit profanity.
- Asking about, or talking about, sexual fantasies, sexual preferences, or sexual activities.
- Email, internet, or other electronic uses that violate this policy.
  - Sending sexually explicit emails, text messages, or social media posts.
- Leering or staring at someone in a sexual way, such as staring at a person's breasts or groin.
- Commenting on a person's dress in a sexual manner.
- Giving unwelcome personal gifts (such as lingerie) that suggest the desire for a romantic relationship.
- Insulting, demeaning, or degrading another person based on gender or gender stereotypes.

**Sexual Assault:** Sexual Assault includes the sex offenses of Rape, Sodomy, Sexual Assault with an Object, Fondling, Incest, and Statutory Rape. <sup>1</sup>

- **Rape** is the carnal knowledge of a person, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of their age or temporary/permanent mental or physical incapacity. There is "carnal knowledge" if there is the slightest penetration of the vagina or penis by the sexual organ of the other person. Attempted Rape is included.
- **Sodomy** is oral or anal sexual intercourse with another person, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of their age or temporary/permanent mental or physical incapacity.
- **Sexual Assault with an Object** is using an object or instrument to unlawfully penetrate, however slightly, the genital or anal opening of the body of another person, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of their age or temporary/permanent mental or physical incapacity. An "object" or "instrument" is anything used by the offender other than the offender's genitalia.
- **Fondling** is the touching of the private body parts of another person for the purpose of sexual gratification, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of their age or temporary/permanent mental or physical incapacity.
- **Incest** is sexual intercourse between persons who are related to each other within the degrees wherein marriage is prohibited by Iowa law.

- **Statutory Rape** is sexual intercourse with a person who is under the statutory age of consent as defined by Iowa law.

<sup>1</sup>The College's definition of "Sexual Assault" is mandated by federal regulations implementing Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Those regulations require the College to adopt a definition of "Sexual Assault" that incorporates various forcible and non-forcible sex crimes as defined by the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting System. See 34 C.F.R. § 106.30(a).

**Domestic Violence:** Domestic Violence is the felony or misdemeanor crime of violence committed by a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim; by a person with whom the victim shares a child in common; by a person who is cohabitating with or has cohabitated with the victim as a spouse or intimate partner; by a person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim under the domestic or family violence laws of Iowa; or by any other person against an adult or youth victim who is protected from that person's acts under the domestic or family violence laws of Iowa.

**Dating Violence:** Dating Violence is violence committed by a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim and where the existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on a consideration of the length of the relationship, the type of relationship, and the frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship.

**Stalking:** Stalking is engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a) a reasonable person to fear for their safety or the safety of others or b) suffer substantial emotional distress.

The conduct would include two or more acts, including but not limited to, acts in which the stalker directly, indirectly, or through third parties, by any action, method, device, or means follows, monitors, observes, surveils, threatens, or communicates to or about a person or interferes with a person's property.

**Consent:** Consent refers to words or actions that a reasonable person, from the perspective of the Respondent, would understand as agreement to engage in sexual activity. Consent is a voluntary and knowing act. A person who is incapacitated is not capable of giving consent. Lack of consent is critical in determining whether Sexual Harassment has occurred. Consent must be given for each form of sexual contact and with each sexual partner. Consent requires affirmative, clear, unambiguous acts or statements by each person involved. Consent is not passive.

- If coercion, intimidation, threats, and/or physical force are used, there is no consent.
- If a person is mentally or physically incapacitated or impaired by alcohol or drugs, such that the person cannot understand the fact, nature, or extent of the sexual situation, there is no consent.
- If a person is asleep or unconscious, there is no consent.
- Consent to one form of sexual activity does not imply consent to other forms of sexual activity.
- Previous consent for sexual activity does not give consent for future sexual activity.
- Consent can be withdrawn at any time. A person who initially consents to sexual activity is deemed not to have consented to any sexual activity that occurs after he or she withdraws consent.
- Within Iowa, consent cannot be given by a minor under 16 years of age.

**Incapacitation:** Incapacitation is a state where an individual cannot make an informed and rational decision to consent to engage in sexual contact because the individual lacks conscious knowledge of the nature of the act (to understand the “who, what, where, when, why, or how” of the sexual interaction) and/or is physically or mentally helpless, which can be due to drug or alcohol consumption, medical condition, or disability. An individual is also considered incapacitated when asleep, unconscious, or otherwise unaware that sexual contact is occurring.

Incapacitation can only be found when the Respondent knew or should have known that the Complainant was incapacitated when viewed from the position of a sober, reasonable person. One's own intoxication is not an excuse for failure to recognize another person's incapacitation.

Incapacitation may result from the use of alcohol and/or other drugs; however, consumption of alcohol or other drugs, inebriation, or intoxication alone are insufficient to establish incapacitation. Incapacitation is beyond mere drunkenness or intoxication. The impact of alcohol or drugs varies from person to person, and evaluating incapacitation requires an assessment of how consumption of alcohol and/or drugs impacts an individual's:

- Decision-making ability.
- Awareness of consequences.
- Ability to make informed judgments.
- Capacity to appreciate the nature of the circumstances of the act.

No single factor determines incapacitation. Some common signs that someone may be incapacitated include slurred speech, confusion, shaky balance, stumbling or falling, vomiting, and unconsciousness.

**Supportive Measures:** Supportive measures are non-disciplinary, non-punitive, individualized services offered, as appropriate, and reasonably available, and without fee or charge, that are designed to restore or preserve equal access to Mercy College's Education Programs or Activities without unreasonably burdening another party. These measures are designed to protect the safety of all parties implicated by a report, as well as Mercy College's education environment, and to deter Sexual Harassment. Supportive measures may include contact information for counseling, community resources for Sexual Harassment, and law enforcement. They may also include mutual restrictions on contact between the parties implicated by a report.

**Retaliation:** Retaliation is intimidation, threats, coercion, or discrimination against any individual for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX and its implementing regulations or because an individual has made a report or complaint, testified, assisted, or participated or refused to participate in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing under this policy.

**Education Programs or Activities:** Education Programs or Activities refers to all the operations of the College, including in-person and online educational instruction, employment, research activities, extracurricular activities, and community engagement and outreach programs. The term applies to all activities that occur on campus or on other property owned or occupied by Mercy College. It also includes off-campus locations, events, or circumstances over which Mercy College exercises substantial control over the Respondent and the context in which the Sexual Harassment occurs.

## **Preliminary Assessment**

After receiving a report, the Title IX Coordinator will conduct a preliminary assessment to determine:

- Whether the conduct, as reported, falls or could fall within the scope of this policy; and
- Whether the conduct, as reported, constitutes or could constitute Sexual Harassment.

If the Title IX Coordinator determines that the conduct reported *could not* fall within the scope of the policy, and/or could not constitute Sexual Harassment, even if investigated, the Title Coordinator will close the matter and may notify the reporting party if doing so is consistent with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (“FERPA”). The Title IX Coordinator may refer the report to other College offices as appropriate.

If the Title IX Coordinator determines that the conduct reported *could* fall within the scope of the policy, and/or could constitute Sexual Harassment if investigated, the Title IX Coordinator will proceed to contact the Complainant.

As part of the preliminary assessment, the Title IX Coordinator may take investigative steps to determine the identity of the Complainant if it is not apparent in the report.

### **Contacting the Complainant and Respondent**

If a report is not closed as a result of the preliminary assessment and the Complainant’s identity is known, the Title IX Coordinator will promptly contact the Complainant to discuss Supportive Measures available, to discuss and consider the Complainant’s wishes with respect to Supportive Measures, to inform the Complainant about the availability of such measures with or without filing a Formal Complaint, and to discuss the process of filing and pursuing a Formal Complaint.

The Complainant will also be provided with options for filing complaints with the local police and information about resources available on campus and in the community.

During this time, the Respondent will be notified of a Formal Complaint by the Title IX Coordinator and will be notified of the availability of Supportive Measures for the Respondent. Mercy College will offer and make available Supportive Measures to the Respondent in the same way it offers and makes them available to the Complainant.

The College will also offer and make available Supportive Measures to the Respondent prior to the Respondent being notified of a Formal Complaint if the Respondent requests such measures.

Confidentiality of Supportive Measures provided to either a Complainant or Respondent will be maintained to the extent that maintaining such confidentiality does not impair the College’s ability to provide the Supportive Measures in question.

## **Filing a Formal Complaint**

A Complainant may file a Formal Complaint with the Title IX Coordinator requesting that the College investigate and resolve a report of Sexual Harassment in person, by regular mail, or by email using the contact information specified above.

In any case, including a case where the Complainant does not want the investigation to take place or does not want to file a Formal Complaint, the Title IX Coordinator may file a Formal Complaint on behalf of the College if doing so is not clearly unreasonable. The Title IX Coordinator will evaluate the allegation to ensure the safety of the campus and to comply with federal or state law.

The Title IX Coordinator has the discretion to determine if an investigation should be initiated and may sign a Formal Complaint to initiate the investigation after completing a violence risk assessment. Such action will be taken in limited circumstances involving serious or repeated conduct or where the alleged perpetrator may pose a continuing threat to the College community.

If the Complainant or the Title IX Coordinator files a Formal Complaint, the College will begin an investigation and proceed to resolve the matter. In all cases where a Formal Complaint is filed, the Complainant will be treated as a party, regardless of the party's level of participation.

In a case where the Title IX Coordinator files a Formal Complaint, the Title IX Coordinator will not act as a Complainant or otherwise as a party for the purposes of the investigation and resolution.

Mercy College may consolidate Formal Complaints against more than one Respondent, or by more than one Complainant against one or more Respondents, or by one party against the other party, where the allegations of Sexual Harassment arise out of the same facts or circumstances. Where the investigation and resolution involve more than one Complainant or more than one Respondent, references in this policy to the singular "party," "Complainant," or "Respondent" include the plural, as applicable. A Formal Complaint of Retaliation may be consolidated with a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment.

## **Conduct that Constitutes a Crime**

Any person who wishes to make a complaint of Sexual Harassment that also constitutes a crime—including Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, or Stalking—is encouraged to make a complaint to local law enforcement. If requested, the College will assist the Complainant in notifying the appropriate law enforcement authorities. An alleged victim may refuse to notify such authorities. In the event of an emergency, contact 911.

Parties who have obtained a legal temporary restraining order or no contact order against the Respondent should provide the information to the Title IX Coordinator. The College will take all reasonable and legal action to implement the order.

## **Special Guidance Concerning Complaints of Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, or Stalking**

A victim of Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, or Stalking should do everything possible to preserve evidence by making certain the crime scene is not disturbed.

Victims of Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, or Dating Violence should not bathe, urinate, douche, brush teeth, or drink liquids until after they are examined and, if necessary, a rape examination is completed. Clothes should not be changed. When necessary, victims should seek immediate medical attention at an area hospital and take a full change of clothing, including shoes, for use after a medical examination. Preservation of evidence may be necessary for proof of the crime or in obtaining a protection order.

For cases of stalking, it is important to take steps to preserve evidence to the extent that such evidence exists. This evidence may be in the form of letters, emails, or text messages rather than evidence of physical contact or assault. This type of non-physical evidence will also be useful in all types of Sexual Harassment investigations.

Once a report of Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, or Stalking is made, the victim has several options, including, but not limited to:

- Obtaining Supportive Measures.
- Contacting parents or a relative.
- Seeking legal advice.
- Seeking personal counseling.
- Pursuing legal action against the perpetrator.
- Filing a Formal Complaint.
- Requesting that no further action be taken.

### **No Retaliation**

It is a violation of this policy to engage in Retaliation against any member of the Mercy College community who: reported or assisted in making a report or Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment; participated in an investigation; testified at a hearing; filed an appeal; tried to interfere with an individual's Title IX rights; or refused to participate in an investigation of a Formal Complaint.

Persons who believe they have been retaliated against in violation of the policy should file a complaint with the Title IX Coordinator. Complaints of Retaliation may be subject to the same procedures as Formal Complaints of Sexual Harassment.

### **Academic Freedom**

The College will construe and apply this policy consistent with the principles of academic freedom. In no case will a Respondent be found to have committed Sexual Harassment based on expressive conduct that is protected by the principles of academic freedom.

The exercise of the principles of academic freedom does not constitute Retaliation.

## **Timing of Complaints**

The College encourages timely reporting of Sexual Harassment. A delay in filing a report may limit the ability to investigate and respond to the conduct appropriately.

## **Confidentiality**

Every effort will be made to preserve the confidentiality of the identity of any individual who has made a report or Formal Complaint, the parties involved, and witnesses (except as required by this policy, permitted by FERPA, or as required by law). The College will also maintain the confidentiality of its various records generated in response to reports and Formal Complaints, including information concerning Supportive Measures, notices, investigation materials, adjudication records, and appeal records.

However, the identity of any person or the contents of any record, if permitted by FERPA, may be revealed if necessary to carry out the College's obligations under Title IX and its implementing regulations, including the conduct of any investigation, resolution, or appeal under this policy or any subsequent proceeding or as otherwise required by law. The involved parties of a report or Formal Complaint will be given access to investigation and resolution materials in the circumstances specified in this policy.

While confidentiality will be maintained as specified in this section, the College will not limit the ability of the parties to discuss the allegations at issue in a particular case. Parties are advised, however, that the manner in which they communicate about or discuss a particular case may constitute Sexual Harassment or Retaliation in certain circumstances and may be subject to discipline according to the processes specified in this policy.

Certain types of Sexual Harassment are considered crimes for which Mercy College must disclose crime statistics in its Annual Security Report that is provided to the campus community and available to the public. These disclosures will be made without including personally identifying information.

Mercy College reserves the right to designate which Mercy College individuals have legitimate educational interest in being informed about incidents that fall within this policy.

## **Bad Faith Complaints and False Information**

While Mercy College encourages all good faith complaints of sexual harassment, it has the responsibility to balance the rights of all parties.

It is a violation of this policy for any person to submit a report or Formal Complaint that the person knows, at the time of filing the complaint, to be false or frivolous. It is also a violation of this policy for anyone to knowingly make a false statement during an investigation, resolution, or appeal under this policy. Violations of bad faith complaints and/or false information are not subject to the investigation and resolution processes in this policy; instead, they will be addressed under other policies and standards.

Making a false statement in bad faith, even if made during an investigation, is not considered Retaliation.



## **Education and Training**

Mercy College offers educational programming and awareness programs for members of the College community. Educational topics include relevant definitions, procedures, policies, safe and positive options for bystander intervention, and risk reduction information.

Annual training will be provided for members of the Title IX team on issues related to Sexual Harassment. The training will include information on conducting investigations and complaint resolutions and processes to protect the victim's safety and promote accountability. Team members will also be trained to use relevant technology during any live hearing and the relevance and permissible use of sexual history, as well as any other requirements outlined in 34 C.F.R. § 106.45(b)(1)(iii) and any other applicable federal or state law.

## **Investigation and Resolution of the Formal Complaint**

Members of the Title IX team participating in the investigation shall be relieved of their obligations under these complaint resolution processes within a reasonable time. If a member of the team determines that they cannot apply these processes fairly and impartially because of the identity of a Complainant, Respondent, or witness, or due to any other conflict of interest, the Title IX Coordinator will designate another appropriate individual to participate in the processes.

Mercy College reserves the right to utilize external resources to assist in the investigation and resolution of the Formal Complaint.

The purpose of the investigation is to determine whether it is more likely than not that the alleged behavior occurred and, if so, whether it constitutes Sexual Harassment in violation of this policy.

In a case where the Complainant files a Formal Complaint, the Title IX Coordinator will evaluate the Formal Complaint and must dismiss it if the Title IX Coordinator determines:

- The conduct alleged in the Formal Complaint would not constitute Sexual Harassment, even if proved; or
- The conduct alleged in the Formal Complaint falls outside the scope of the policy.

If the Title IX Coordinator determines the Formal Complaint should be dismissed, the Title IX Coordinator will provide written notice of dismissal to the parties and advise them of their right to appeal. The Title IX Coordinator may refer the subject matter of the Formal Complaint to other College offices as appropriate.

Within five (5) business days of the Title IX Coordinator receiving a Formal Complaint, the Title IX Coordinator will send a written notice to the Complainant and Respondent that includes:

- A physical copy of this policy or a hyperlink to this policy.
- Sufficient details, including (if known) the identities of the parties, the conduct at issue, and the date and location of the alleged incident.
- A statement indicating that the Respondent is presumed not responsible for the alleged Sexual Harassment and that a determination of responsibility will not be made until the conclusion of the resolution process and any appeal.

- The requirement that all statements must be accurate.
- The parties' right to an advisor of their choice. Should a party not have an advisor, one will be provided, free of charge, for the purpose of conducting the cross examination.
- Information for the Complainant and Respondent of their right to inspect and review evidence and information about resources available on campus and in the community.

Should Mercy College elect, at any point, to investigate allegations that are materially beyond the scope of the initial written notice, an additional written notice will be provided describing the additional allegations to be investigated.

After the written notice of Formal Complaint is sent to the parties, an Investigating Officer will be selected by the Title IX Coordinator, who will undertake an investigation to gather evidence relevant to the alleged misconduct, including inculpatory and exculpatory evidence.

The Investigating Officer will begin the investigation as soon as is practical. During the investigation, the Investigating Officer may receive counsel from College administrators, the College's attorneys, or other parties as needed.

The burden of gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination/resolution lies with Mercy College and not with the parties.

Parties of the investigation and any witnesses will receive a written notice of any interview, meeting, or hearing they are expected to attend with sufficient notice to prepare. The notice will include dates, time, location, the participants, and the purpose.

During the investigation, both parties will have equal opportunity to present witnesses, including both fact and expert witnesses, along with relevant evidence and other inculpatory and exculpatory evidence. The investigator retains discretion to limit the number of witness interviews conducted if the investigator finds that testimony would be unreasonably cumulative, if the witnesses are offered solely as character references and do not have information relevant to the allegations, or if the witnesses are offered to provide information that is categorically inadmissible, such as information concerning sexual history of the Complainant. The investigator will not restrict the ability of the parties to gather and present relevant evidence on their own.

A party that is aware of and has a reasonable opportunity to present evidence and/or identify witnesses during the investigation, and elects not to, will be prohibited from introducing any such evidence during the resolution absent a showing of mistake, inadvertence, surprise, or excusable neglect.

All parties and witnesses involved in the investigation are expected to cooperate and provide complete and truthful information.

The investigator will take reasonable steps to ensure the investigation is documented. Interviews of the parties and witnesses may be documented by the investigator's notes, audio recorded, video recorded, or transcribed. The method utilized to record the interviews of the Complainant,

Respondent, and witnesses will be determined by the investigator's sole discretion; however, whatever method is chosen shall be used consistently throughout a particular investigation.

The Complainant and the Respondent have the right to be accompanied by an advisor of their choice during interviews and meetings.

The Complainant and the Respondent have an equal opportunity to inspect and review any evidence gathered during the investigation related to the allegations in the Formal Complaint, including any evidence the College does not intend to rely upon in a hearing. Each party and the advisors will be sent the evidence electronically and will have ten (10) business days to submit a written response. The Complainant, Respondent, and their advisors can review the evidence solely for this process and may not duplicate or disseminate it.

The Investigating Officer will review the statements and evidence presented, review documentary materials, and take any other appropriate action to gather and consider information relevant to the Formal Complaint. The investigation will end in a written report that will be submitted to the Hearing Panel.

After the period for the Complainant, Respondent, and their advisors to provide a written response has expired, the investigator will complete another written investigation report that summarizes the various steps taken during the investigation, relevant evidence collected, material facts on which the parties agree, and material facts on which the parties do not agree. When the investigation report is complete, the investigator will send a copy to the Title IX Coordinator. The investigator will also send the investigation report to each party and their advisor in either electronic or hard copy form.

Although the length of each investigation may vary depending on the circumstances, the College strives to complete each investigation within thirty (30) to forty-five (45) business days of sending the written notice of Formal Complaint.

### **Administrative Resolution**

After the Investigating Officer has sent the report to the parties, the Title IX Coordinator will send a notice to each party advising them of two different resolution processes: a live hearing, which is the default process, and an Administrative Resolution process. Administrative Resolution occurs in lieu of a live hearing. The Complainant and Respondent must consent to utilizing the Administrative Resolution process. A written consent form will be sent to the Complainant and Respondent, who will have three (3) business days, from the date of the consent form, to return the signed form. If the Complainant, Respondent, or both do not return the signed consent form within the timeframe, it will be determined that the Administrative Resolution process is not desired, and a live hearing will be used. The Complainant and Respondent are encouraged to seek advice from their advisor or others prior to consenting to an Administrative Resolution process.

The Title IX Coordinator will appoint an Administrative Officer. The Administrative Officer will send written notice to the Complainant and Respondent of their appointment; a deadline for the Complainant and Respondent to submit any written response to the investigation report; and a date and time to meet with the Administrative Officer (separately). The meetings will not be held any earlier than ten (10) days from the date of the written notice.

The written response must include the extent the Complainant or Respondent disagrees with the report; if any evidence should be excluded from consideration; whether any allegations are supported by a preponderance of the evidence; and whether the allegations constitute Sexual Harassment.

After reviewing the written responses, the Administrative Officer will meet separately with each party to provide an opportunity to make any statements or ask questions. After reviewing the information, the Administrative Officer will determine the resolution.

## **Hearing**

The investigation will be followed by a live hearing in which the hearing panel, Complainant, Respondent, advisors, and witnesses attend. Hearings will be recorded and available to the parties of the investigation for inspection and review upon reasonable notice, including for use in preparing any subsequent appeal. The Title IX Coordinator will provide the Hearing Panel a copy of the investigation report and a copy of all evidence sent to the parties by the investigator.

The Title IX Coordinator will select the appropriate Hearing Panel depending on whether the Respondent is an employee or a student. One of the panelists will be appointed as Hearing Panel Chair.

After the Hearing Panel is appointed, the Chair will promptly send a written notice to the parties notifying them of:

- The Hearing Panel appointments.
- The deadline to submit any written responses to the investigation report.
- The date of the pre-hearing conference.
- The date and time for the hearing.

Neither the pre-hearing conference, nor the hearing itself, may be held any earlier than ten (10) business days from the date this written notice was sent.

The Complainant's or Respondent's written response to the investigation report must include:

- The extent to which they disagree with the investigation report and any argument/commentary regarding the disagreement.
- Any argument that evidence should be categorically excluded from consideration at the hearing based on privilege, relevancy, the prohibition on the use of sexual history, or for any other reason.
- A list of any witnesses that the Complainant and Respondent want to be sent an attendance notice to attend the hearing.
- A list of any witnesses attending the hearing without an attendance notice issued by the Hearing Panel Chair.
- Any objection to the policy or procedures.
- Any request that the Complainant and Respondent be separated physically during the prehearing conference and/or hearing.
- Any other exemption with respect to the pre-hearing conference and/or hearing.

- The name and contact information of the advisor who will accompany the Complainant and Respondent at the pre-hearing conference and hearing.
- If an advisor is not available, a request that the College provide an advisor for purposes of conducting questioning.

A written response to the investigation report may also include:

- Information regarding whether any of the allegations in the Formal Complaint are supported by a preponderance of the evidence; and
- Information regarding whether any of the allegations in the Formal Complaint constitute Sexual Harassment.

Prior to the hearing, the Hearing Panel Chair will conduct a pre-hearing conference with the Complainant, Respondent, and their advisors. The pre-hearing conference will be conducted live, with simultaneous participation by the Complainant, Respondent, and their advisors. However, upon request of the Complainant or the Respondent, separate rooms can be used for the two parties. Technology will be used to enable them to participate simultaneously by video and audio.

At the Hearing Panel Chair's discretion, the pre-hearing conference may be conducted virtually, by use of video and audio technology, where all participants participate simultaneously.

During the pre-hearing conference, the Hearing Panel Chair will discuss the hearing procedures; address matters raised in the written responses to the investigation report, as the Hearing Panel Chair deems appropriate; whether any stipulations may be made to expedite the hearing; the witnesses that will be present during the hearing, including those that were served with notices of attendance and those that were not; and any other matters that the Chair determines should be resolved prior to the hearing.

After the pre-hearing conference, the Hearing Panel Chair will send notices of attendance to the witnesses. The notice will advise the individual of the date and time of the hearing and to contact the Hearing Chair immediately if there is a material and unavoidable conflict.

Individuals that receive notices of attendance should alert their manager or instructor if attendance at the hearing conflicts with job duties, classes, or other obligations. Managers and instructors must excuse the individual from the obligation or provide another exemption so that they may attend the hearing.

Mercy College will not issue a notice of attendance to any witness who is not an employee or student.

Participants at the hearing include the Hearing Panel Chair, the Hearing Panel, any additional panelists (if applicable), the hearing facilitator (if applicable), the Investigating Officer, the Complainant and Respondent, advisors, witnesses, the Title IX Coordinator, and anyone providing authorized exemption or assistive services as determined by the College. Except as otherwise permitted by the Hearing Panel Chair, the hearing will be closed to all persons except those identified above. Except for the Investigating Officer, the Complainant, and the Respondent, witnesses will be sequestered until they have completed their testimony.

The Complainant and Respondent will be given the names of individuals participating in the hearing, all pertinent evidence, and the final investigation report at least ten (10) business days prior to the hearing. The names of the Hearing Panel will be given to them at least five (5) business days before the hearing. Objections to the Hearing Panel must be submitted to the Title IX Coordinator no later than one (1) business day prior to the hearing. The Title IX Coordinator will determine if the objection is one of bias or conflict of interest and thus warrants removal from the hearing process.

The Hearing Panel will be given a list of the names of the Complainant and Respondent, witnesses, and advisors at least five (5) business days before the hearing. Any panelist who cannot make an objective determination must recuse themselves from the hearing.

The hearing will be conducted live, with simultaneous participation by the Complainant, Respondent, and their advisors. By default, the hearing will be conducted with the participants together in the same physical location. However, upon request of either party, the parties will be separated into different rooms with technology enabling them to participate simultaneously by video and audio.

At the Hearing Panel Chair's discretion, the hearing may be conducted virtually, by use of video and audio technology, where all participants participate simultaneously by use of technology.

Each Complainant and Respondent will have the opportunity to address the Hearing Panel directly and to respond to questions posed by the Hearing Panel.

Advisors will be permitted to cross examine the other party and any witnesses with relevant questions and follow-up questions, including those bearing on credibility. The Complainant and Respondent are not allowed to cross examine. Cross examination must occur in real time, directly and orally. The Complainant and the Respondent will have the opportunity to raise objections to testimonial or nontestimonial evidence and to have such objections ruled on by the Hearing Panel Chair and a reason for the ruling provided.

The Complainant, Respondent, and their advisors will have access to the investigation report and evidence. While the Complainant and Respondent have the right to attend and participate in the hearing with an advisor, a Complainant, Respondent, and/or advisor who materially and repeatedly violates the rules of the hearing in such a way as to be materially disruptive may be barred from further participation and/or have their participation limited at the discretion of the Hearing Panel Chair.

Subject to the minimum requirements specified in this section, the Hearing Panel Chair will have sole discretion to determine the manner and particulars of any given hearing, including the length of the hearing, the order of the hearing, and questions of admissibility. The Hearing Panel Chair will independently screen questions for relevance in addition to resolving any objections raised by the parties and will explain the rationale for any evidentiary rulings.

The hearing is not a formal judicial proceeding, and strict rules of evidence do not apply. The Hearing Panel Chair will have discretion to modify the procedures when good cause exists to do so, provided the minimal requirements specified in this section are met.

The Complainant and Respondent will have an opportunity to submit evidence that the party did not present during the investigation due to mistake, inadvertence, surprise, or excusable neglect.

If the Complainant, Respondent, and/or witnesses prefer not to attend or cannot attend the hearing in person, they should request alternative arrangements from the Title IX Coordinator at least five (5) business days prior to the hearing. The Title IX Coordinator will allow remote testimony without compromising the fairness of the hearing.

Should the Complainant, Respondent, or witness refuse to submit to cross-examination, that individual's statement will not be considered, and a decision will be reached based on the remaining relevant evidence. A conclusion will not be reached solely because the individual refused to be cross examined.

The Complainant and Respondent will be given the opportunity to make a brief closing argument. After the hearing is complete, the Hearing Panel will objectively evaluate all relevant evidence collected during the investigation, including both inculpatory and exculpatory evidence, together with testimony and non-testimony evidence received at the hearing, and ensure that any credibility determinations made are not based on a person's status as a Complainant, Respondent, or witness. The Hearing Panel Chair will take care to exclude any evidence ruled inadmissible at the pre-hearing conference or during the hearing. The Hearing Panel will resolve disputed facts using a preponderance of the evidence standard and reach a determination regarding whether the facts that are supported by a preponderance of the evidence constitute one or more violations of the policy as alleged in the Formal Complaint.

If the Hearing Panel determines the Respondent is responsible for violating this policy, the Hearing Panel Chair will, prior to issuing a written decision, consult with an appropriate College Cabinet member with disciplinary authority over the Respondent. This individual will determine any discipline to be imposed. The Hearing Panel Chair will also, prior to issuing a written decision, consult with the Title IX Coordinator, who will determine whether and to what extent ongoing support measures or other remedies will be provided to the Complainant.

At the hearing's end, the Hearing Panel will issue a written determination of responsibility using preponderance of the evidence. The determination will include identification of the allegations potentially constituting Sexual Harassment made in the Formal Complaint; description of the process taken upon receipt of the Formal Complaint, including notification to the parties; interviews with the parties and witnesses; site visits; methods used to gather non-testimonial evidence; the date, location, and people who were present at or presented testimony at the hearing; findings of fact made under a preponderance of the evidence standard that support the determination; a statement and rationale for each allegation that constitutes a separate potential incident of Sexual Harassment, including a determination regarding responsibility for each separate potential incident; a statement of any disciplinary actions taken; whether any ongoing support measures or other remedies will be provided to the Complainant; and a description of the appeal process and grounds for appeal.

The Hearing Panel Chair's written determination will be sent to the Complainant and the Respondent, which concludes the hearing process, subject to any right of appeal as specified below.

Although the length of each resolution by hearing will vary depending on the circumstances, the College strives to issue the Hearing Panel Chair's written determination within fourteen (14) business days of the conclusion of the hearing.

Notice of outcome will be shared with the Complainant, Respondent, and advisors within seven (7) business days of receiving the determination from the Hearing Panel Chair. The notice will include the determination, rationale, and any applicable sanction(s).

The written determination will become final when:

- the parties are notified of the determination on appeal; or
- the time to file an appeal has passed with neither party appealing.

### **Dismissal During Investigation or Resolution**

Mercy College will dismiss a Formal Complaint at any point during the investigation or resolution process if the Title IX Coordinator determines that one or more of the following is true:

- The conduct alleged in the Formal Complaint would not constitute Sexual Harassment, even if proved; or
- The conduct alleged in the Formal Complaint falls outside the scope of the policy.

A Formal Complaint may be dismissed at any point during the investigation or resolution process if the Title IX Coordinator determines that any one or more of the following is true:

- The Complainant provides the Title IX Coordinator written notice that the Complainant wishes to withdraw the Formal Complaint or any discrete allegations therein (in which case, those discrete allegations may be dismissed;) or
- The Respondent is no longer enrolled or employed by Mercy College; or
- Specific circumstances prevent Mercy College from gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination as to the Formal Complaint or any discrete allegations therein (in which case, those discrete allegations may be dismissed.)

If the Title IX Coordinator dismisses a Formal Complaint pursuant to this Section, the Title IX Coordinator will provide written notice of dismissal to the parties and advise them of their right to appeal. The Title IX Coordinator may refer the subject matter of the Formal Complaint to other College offices as appropriate. A dismissal pursuant to this Section is presumptively a final determination as it pertains to this policy unless otherwise specified in writing by the Title IX Coordinator in the written notice of dismissal.

### **Treatment Records and Other Privileged Information**

During the investigation and resolution processes, the Investigating Officer and Hearing Panel are not permitted to access, consider, disclose, permit questioning concerning, or otherwise use (unless the College has obtained the party's voluntary, written consent for the investigation and resolution process):

- A party's records that are made or maintained by a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or other recognized professional or paraprofessional, which are made and maintained in connection with the provision of treatment to the party; or
- Information or records protected from disclosure by any other legally recognized privilege, such as attorney-client privilege.



The Investigating Officer and/or Hearing Panel may consider any such records or information otherwise covered by this Section if the Complainant or Respondent holding the records consents to disclosing these records or information to support their allegation or defense.

### **Sexual History**

During the investigation and resolution processes, questions regarding a Complainant's sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior are not relevant (unless such questions and evidence are offered to prove that someone other than the Respondent committed the conduct alleged or if the questions and evidence concern specific incidents of the Complainant's prior sexual behavior with respect to the Respondent and are offered to prove consent). A Complainant who uses information otherwise considered irrelevant by this Section to support their allegations will be determined to have waived the protections of this Section.

### **Interim Measures**

At any time after receiving a report of Sexual Harassment, the Title IX Coordinator may determine that interim remedies or protections for the parties or witnesses involved are appropriate. These interim remedies may include separating the Complainant and Respondent, placing limitations on contact between the Complainant and Respondent, suspension, or making alternative class placement or workplace arrangements.

After conducting an individualized safety and risk analysis, the College may remove a Respondent from campus when there is an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of any individuals stemming from the allegations of Sexual Harassment. The College will notify the Respondent of the decision and allow an opportunity to challenge it within 24 hours after removal.

In the case of a Respondent who is a non-student employee, the College may (at its own discretion) place the Respondent on administrative leave at any time after receiving a report of Sexual Harassment (for a period leading up to the investigation and resolution process).

For all other Respondents, including independent contractors and visitors, the College retains broad discretion to prohibit such persons from entering its campus and other properties at any time, and for any reason, after receiving a report of Sexual Harassment or otherwise.

Failure to comply with the terms of the interim remedies or protections may constitute a separate violation of this policy or other Mercy College policies.

### **Pending Criminal**

Some instances of Sexual Harassment may also constitute criminal conduct. In such instances, the Complainant is also encouraged to file a report with the appropriate law enforcement authorities. The pending criminal investigation does not relieve the College of its responsibilities under the law. Therefore, to the extent that doing so does not interfere with any criminal investigation, the College will proceed with its own investigation and resolution of the Formal Complaint.

### **Sanctions and Remedies**

The College will impose reasonable steps to correct the effects of such conduct on the Complainant and others and to prevent the recurrence of discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. Those

include no-contact orders, change in class schedule for students, the provision of counseling or other support services, training, and discipline for appropriate parties, including up to termination for employees or dismissal from the College for students.

## **Appeals**

The Complainant or Respondent may appeal the determination of a resolution or dismissal of a Formal Complaint on one or more of the following grounds:

- Procedural irregularity that affected the outcome
- New evidence not reasonably available at the time responsibility was determined that could affect the outcome of the matter
- The Title IX Coordinator, the Investigating Officer, or the Hearing Panel had a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents or against the individual Complainant or Respondent that affected the outcome of the matter.

No other grounds for appeal will be allowed.

### **Method of Appeal**

An appeal must be filed with the Title IX Coordinator within seven (7) business days of receipt of the written report determining the outcome of the complaint. The appeal must be in writing and contain the following:

- Name of the Complainant.
- Name of the Respondent.
- A statement of the determination of the complaint, including corrective action, if applicable.
- A detailed statement of the basis for the appeal including the specific facts, circumstances, and argument in support of it.
- Requested action, if applicable.

An Appeal Chair will be designated to determine if the request meets the grounds for appeal. Upon receipt of an appeal, the Appeal Chair will conduct an initial evaluation to confirm that the appeal has been filed in a timely manner and falls under at least one of the permitted grounds for appeal. If the Appeal Chair determines that the appeal is not timely, or that it does not fall under a permitted ground for appeal, the Appeal Chair will dismiss the appeal and provide written notice of the same to the Complainant and Respondent.

If the grounds for an appeal are met, the Appeal Chair will provide written notice to the Complainant and Respondent. The individual not appealing will have five (5) business days to respond to the appeal. The Appeal Chair will obtain (from the Title IX Coordinator) any records from the investigation and resolution processes necessary to resolve the grounds raised in the appeal.

Upon receipt of any opposition, or after the period for sending an opposition has passed without one being filed, the Appeal Chair will decide the appeal and send a written decision to the Complainant and Respondent that explains the outcome of the appeal and the rationale.

The determination of a Formal Complaint, including any discipline, becomes final when the time for appeal has passed with no party filing an appeal or, if any appeal is filed, at the point when the Appeal Chair has resolved the appeal, either by dismissal or by sending a written decision.

No further review beyond the appeal will be allowed.

Although the length of each appeal will vary depending on the circumstances, the College strives to issue the Appeal Chair's written decision within fourteen (14) business days of an appeal being filed.

## **Informal Resolution**

At any time after the Complainant and Respondent are provided written notice of the Formal Complaint and before the completion of any appeal, the parties may voluntarily consent, with the Title IX Coordinator's approval, to engage in mediation, facilitated resolution, or other forms of dispute resolution with the goal of determining a final resolution of the allegations raised in the Formal Complaint and agreed upon by the Complainant and Respondent in writing.

Informal resolution may be used in lieu of the formal investigation and determination procedure.

The Title IX Coordinator will consider the following factors to assess whether an informal resolution is appropriate:

- The amenability to the informal resolution by the Complainant and Respondent.
- The likelihood of a resolution, considering the dynamics between the Complainant and Respondent.
- Cleared violence risk assessment/ongoing risk analysis.
- Disciplinary history.
- Complaint complexity.
- Rationality of the Complainant and Respondent.
- Goals of the Complainant and Respondent.

Prior to initiating an informal resolution process, the Complainant and Respondent will be given a written notice of the allegations; a description of the informal resolution process; information regarding the individual responsible for facilitating the informal resolution (Title IX Coordinator or designee); explanation of the effect of participating in informal resolution and/or reaching a final resolution and how it will affect their ability to resume the investigation and resolution of the allegations at issue in the Formal Complaint; and description of any other consequence resulting from participation in the informal resolution process, including a description of records that will be generated, maintained, and/or shared.

During the informal resolution process, the investigation and resolution processes that would otherwise occur are halted and all related deadlines are suspended.

The Complainant will not be required to resolve the issue directly with the Respondent.

If the Complainant and Respondent reach a resolution through the informal resolution process, and the Title IX Coordinator agrees that the resolution is not clearly unreasonable, the Title IX Coordinator will provide a written document with the terms of the agreed resolution and present the resolution to the Complainant and Respondent for their written signature. Upon their signatures and the Title IX Coordinator's signature, the resolution is considered final, and the allegations addressed by the

resolution are considered resolved and will not be subject to further investigation, remediation, or discipline by the College, except as otherwise provided in the resolution itself, absent a showing that the Complainant or Respondent induced the resolution by fraud, misrepresentation, or other misconduct.

The Complainant or Respondent may withdraw their consent to participate in informal resolution before it is finalized.

Absent an extension by the Title IX Coordinator, any informal resolution process must be completed within twenty-one (21) business days. If an informal resolution process does not result in a resolution within twenty-one (21) business days, and there has been no further extension, temporary suspension, or other contrary ruling by the Title IX Coordinator, the informal resolution process will be deemed terminated, and the Formal Complaint will be resolved using the investigation and resolution processes. The Title IX Coordinator may adjust any time periods or deadlines in the investigation and/or resolution process that were suspended due to the informal resolution.

Informal resolution cannot be used in situations in which an employee is accused of Sexual Harassment against a student.

## **Recordkeeping**

Throughout all stages of the investigation, resolution, and appeal, the Investigating Officer, the Title IX Coordinator, and Appeal Chair are responsible for maintaining documentation of the case. This includes documentation of all proceedings conducted under these complaint resolution procedures, which may include written findings of fact, transcripts, and audio recordings. Mercy College will maintain all documentation pertaining to the case for seven (7) years.

## **Intersection with Other Processes**

These complaint resolution processes are the exclusive means of resolving complaints alleging violations of the Sexual Harassment Policy. To the extent there are any inconsistencies between this process and other Mercy College grievance, complaint, or discipline processes, this complaint resolution process will control the resolution of complaints alleging violations of this policy.

This policy applies only to Sexual Harassment. Complaints of other forms of sex discrimination are governed by Mercy College's Employee and Student Code of Conduct policies.

## **Title IX/Rights of Pregnant and Parenting Students**

Under Title IX, an institution that receives federal funding "shall not discriminate against any student or exclude any student from its education program or activity, including any class or extracurricular activity, on the basis of such student's pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy or recovery from any of these conditions." Title IX also prohibits a college from applying any rule related to a student's parental, family, or marital status that treats students differently based

on their sex. Appropriate treatment of a pregnant student includes granting student leave “for so long a period of time as is deemed medically necessary by the student’s physician” and then effectively reinstating the student to the same status as was held when the leave began.

## Disclosure of Pregnancy

Students are not required to declare pregnancy or any other protected status; however, for assistance to be considered, the student must provide medical documentation from a licensed physician that provides a diagnosis and outlines assistance needed. A student should begin a *Declaration of Pregnancy* by filling out the [Pregnancy Under Title IX](#) form. Should a student have a concern regarding the process for pregnant or parenting students, they should submit their concern here: [Student Concern/Student Complaint](#).

## Requesting Pregnancy Assistance

Pregnant students should attend classes and participate in all educational activities. Students may request reasonable assistance when necessary to enable the student to complete coursework and other educational requirements. If a student has obtained medical documentation, all medical documentation needs to be uploaded to the [Medical Documentation](#) form.

### Reasonable Assistance for Pregnancy and Parenting Students

At a minimum, the following reasonable assistance may be granted when appropriate:

- Allow opportunities to make up for missed work, extend deadlines, and earn credit for tests, assignments, participation, and attendance.
- A larger desk.
- Breaks during class, as needed.
- Allowing a pregnant student to maintain a safe distance from hazardous substances.
- Modifications to the physical environment, such as accessible seating or elevator access.
- Reasonable time and space to pump breast milk in a location that is private, clean, and accessible.

### Process for Handling Requests for Assistance

- To request pregnancy-related or parenting assistance, students should contact the Dean of Student Affairs in the Student Success Center. Additional documentation may be needed to provide the assistance requested.
- Students with child caretaking/parenting responsibilities who wish to remain engaged in their coursework while adjusting their academic responsibilities because of the birth or adoption of a child or placement of a foster child may request an academic modification period during the first 6 months from the time the child has entered the home. Extensions may be granted where additional time is required by medical necessity or extraordinary caretaking/parenting responsibilities.
- The Student Success Center will communicate all requests under this policy to the student’s faculty and will coordinate assistance-related efforts with the student. The student is encouraged to work with faculty to reschedule course assignments, lab hours, examinations, or other requirements and/or to reduce the student’s overall course load as appropriate (once

authorization has been received from the Student Success Center). If caretaking/parenting students cannot work with faculty to obtain appropriate modifications, students should alert the Student Success Center as soon as possible.

### **Leave of Absence**

- An enrolled student may elect to take a leave of absence for up to 6 weeks because of pregnancy, childbirth, adoption, or placement of a foster child. The leave term may be extended in the case of extenuating circumstances or medical necessity. Students must contact the Student Success Center to request a leave of absence.
- A student taking a leave of absence will provide notice of the intent to take leave thirty (30) calendar days prior to the initiation of leave or as soon as is practical.
- When medically necessary, intermittent leave may be taken with the advance approval of the Student Success Center and the student's academic department(s).
- To the extent possible, Mercy College will take reasonable steps to ensure that, upon return from leave, the student will be reinstated to their program in the same status as when the leave began.
- Scholarships or Mercy College funding awarded for the leave term will be reevaluated based on the student's registration status and the policies of the funding program. Students will not be negatively impacted by or forfeit their future eligibility for their scholarship or similar Mercy College funding by exercising their rights under this Policy.

## **Tobacco-Free Environment Policy**

All College property and grounds are tobacco free. The use of all tobacco products (including cigarettes, cigars, chewing tobacco, snuff, pipes, e-cigarettes, etc.) on College property is prohibited. Prohibition includes all buildings of the College, grounds, parking lots, sidewalks, or plazas. While on campus or on campus property, College students shall not use tobacco products. Students found in violation of this policy will be referred to the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

## **Weapons Policy**

### **Weapon Definition**

A weapon is any chemical, toxic, or biological device; all firearms; sharp-edged instruments; martial arts weapons; and any other item that may be used with the intent to commit violence against a person or property. If a student is unsure whether an item is considered a weapon under this policy, the student should contact MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center Public Safety.

### **Weapons Permit Policy**

Unless permitted by Iowa Code 724.2, Mercy College prohibits anyone from using, possessing, carrying, or storing weapons of any kind on Mercy College property, or in privately-owned vehicles parked in Mercy College parking lots and parking spots leased by Mercy College, even if there is no intent to use the item as a weapon.

## **Wellness Policies**

# **General Wellness Policies and Information**

## **CPR Certification**

Students (except MLS) must submit proof of completion and current certification in the American Heart Association CPR for Healthcare Provider or the American Red Cross Basic Life Support (BLS) prior to the start of clinical education.

## **Health Insurance**

All students enrolled at Mercy College are financially responsible for their medical care. Students may be required to provide verification of insurance coverage for participation at some clinical sites. Failure to demonstrate health insurance coverage may prevent clinical access and jeopardize course completion.

Students will be near patients and other individuals who may exhibit unpredictable anger, aggression, or agitation that could result in physical injury. Additionally, students may be exposed to patients and/or patient bodily fluids (including blood) that could expose them to communicable disease(s).

The risk of being injured or becoming ill is real. To mitigate these risks, every student should obtain private health insurance. The cost of health insurance is the sole responsibility of each student. The College does not have a health insurance policy that covers student injury or illness. Any student who elects not to obtain private health insurance will be solely responsible for all healthcare expenses that may be incurred.

## **Professional Malpractice/Liability Insurance**

Students who are currently enrolled in a Mercy College degree/certificate program who are functioning within the scope of their practice, and are being supervised by an approved instructor/preceptor during a scheduled clinical experience on MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center's campus (or with a contracted affiliate), are covered under the Professional Malpractice Insurance of MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center.

## **Health Records**

If it is necessary for a student to submit health-related documentation to the Dean of Student Affairs, the records become the property of the College and cannot be returned. All student health records are maintained in a separate confidential file and do not become part of the student's permanent file.

## **Serious Disease Definition**

Serious diseases for the purposes of this policy include, but are not limited to: cancer, heart disease, multiple sclerosis, hepatitis, tuberculosis, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), and acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS). The College will support, where feasible and practical, educational programs to enhance student awareness and understanding of serious diseases.

## **Serious Disease Policy**

Students with infectious, long-term, life-threatening, or other serious diseases may continue to attend the College if they are physically and mentally able to meet their academic responsibilities without undue risk to their own health or the health of other students, patients, or employees.

## **Serious Disease Procedure**

The mere diagnosis of a communicable disease, including but not limited to, HIV, AIDS, AIDS-Related Complex (ARC), or AIDS virus antibodies, or any other serious communicable disease, is not in itself sufficient basis for imposing limitations, exclusions, or dismissal from College programs. Harassment of individuals with or suspected of being infected with any disease is not acceptable behavior at the College and is strictly prohibited.

In working with students diagnosed with HIV, AIDS, or any other serious communicable disease, the College will proceed on a case-by-case basis. With the advice of medical professionals, these factors will be considered in determining the student's enrollment eligibility:

- The condition of the person involved and the person's ability to perform clinical or academic responsibilities.
- The probability of infection and consequences to other members of the College community is based on the expected interaction of the person in the College setting.
- Reasonable exemptions and modifications necessary to meet the individual's needs.
- Risk to the person's health by remaining in the College community.
- Other appropriate factors (any additional factors the College, its professors, and/or clinical instructors deem necessary).

Any determination with respect to a student's enrollment eligibility will be made following consultation with the affected student, the student's treating physician (if available), and other persons as needed. Disclosure will take place only if deemed medically advisable and legally permissible. The appropriate Health Department will be informed of all cases of diseases required to be reported under state or federal law.

## **Medical Excuses: Short Term with Medical Documentation**

The Josephine Norkaitis Student Success Center does not issue medical excuses without a medically documented need. It is the student's responsibility to meet all course and program objectives when a medically-documented need has been submitted to the Student Success Center and assistance has been granted. Issued assistance from the Student Success Center depends on documentation, program and course objectives, college and program policies, and timing. Medical documentation does not automatically grant assistance.

A student that has been granted medical assistance is responsible for contacting their instructor(s) to determine a make-up plan for any missed coursework, labs, or clinical hours.

Incompletes and medical withdrawals are a last resort. If either an incomplete or medical withdrawal is necessary, the student will be referred to their academic advisor.



## Medical Excuse Procedure: Short Term

1. For medical consideration, students must submit documentation to the [Request for Absence](#) form located in the Student Success Canvas course under the Request for Absence tab. Assistance is intended for students with a diagnosis that will impact their ability to attend lectures, lab, and/or clinical.

Supporting medical documentation **MUST** include:

- Diagnosis
  - Dates excused
  - Return date
  - Any restrictions that impact the student's ability to attend lectures, labs, or clinical shifts.
2. Within 2 business days, the Student Success Center staff will contact the student to discuss short-term medical assistance and options.
  3. If the Student Success Center does assist, the student's applicable instructors will be notified via email of the necessary assistance. The student is sent the instructor notice via student email.
    - a. If the Student Success Center determines that no assistance will be granted, the student is notified in writing via student email, and no further action will occur.
    - b. Failure to communicate: Students that are ill or injured need to contact their instructors if they are going to be absent. Absences where students fail to call or do not show without providing notice will be subject to program or course policies. This includes point reductions and charges.
    - c. Requests without supporting medical documentation submitted to the Office of Student Affairs will be denied. Requests with incomplete information will be denied.

## Medical Withdrawal Policy & Procedure

A medical withdrawal request may be made in extraordinary cases in which serious illness or injury prevents a student from continuing his or her classes. Medical withdrawal pertains to all courses the student is enrolled in for the remainder of the semester. All documentation must be submitted to the Dean of Student Affairs no later than the Friday before the last week of the term.

Students seeking a medical withdrawal must present a Request for Medical Withdrawal to the Dean of Student Affairs along with a Request for Medical Information from a physician, physician's assistant, nurse practitioner, or licensed mental health care provider. The latter of these must specify the medical diagnosis that the student believes necessitates the request for a medical withdrawal because of serious physical or psychological illness. The College may, at its own expense, require a second opinion from a different healthcare provider chosen by the College. If there is a conflict of opinion, the College, at its own expense, may require a third opinion from a provider jointly designated by the College and the student. All medical information will be kept confidential. The Dean of Student Affairs will communicate the approval or non-approval of a medical withdrawal to the student. If approved, the Dean of Student Affairs, Dean of Liberal Arts, Registrar, Financial Aid, Business Office, and the student's course professors will be notified.

## Medical Withdrawal Procedure

1. Contact the Dean of Student Affairs to initiate and discuss a request for medical withdrawal and to acquire the appropriate forms.
2. Contact the appropriate academic advisor and the Financial Aid office to determine the impact of the medical withdrawal on financial aid and academic performance.
3. Contact the Business Office to determine the impact of the medical withdrawal on existing financial obligations.
4. Submit a completed Request for Medical Withdrawal and a completed Request for Medical Information form to the Dean of Student Affairs. These forms must be submitted in a timely manner.
5. The Dean of Student Affairs will evaluate the completed documents, determine the approval or non-approval of the medical withdrawal, and inform the student of the determination. The Dean of Student Affairs will communicate the approval via email and send a Medical Withdrawal Determination Form to the Registrar, Financial Aid, Business Office, and the student's professors. If approved, the effective date is determined by the Dean of Student Affairs based on the documentation provided by the student and the healthcare provider.
6. Before returning to Mercy College, the student must submit a medical release from the health care provider to the Dean of Student Affairs to register for courses. The Dean of Student Affairs will review the documentation and work with the Registrar to remove the student's registration medical hold, if appropriate. All guidelines and deadlines for readmission to Mercy College as stated in the College Catalog must be followed.

## Bereavement

Students should contact the Director of Engagement or designee to request a compassionate leave and may be granted up to three (3) calendar days due to death of the following: biological/adopted or step- mother or father, spouse, child, brother, sister, grandparent, grandchild, mother-in-law, or father-in-law. Students will be required to provide verification (obituary, funeral bulletin) to the Student Affairs Office. These absences will require clinical makeup. Submit requests to the [Leave of Absence](#) form.

## Student Resources

### Josephine Norkaitis Student Success Center

[Studentsuccess@mchs.edu](mailto:Studentsuccess@mchs.edu)

The Josephine Norkaitis Student Success Center (SSC) provides students with opportunities to enhance their education through academic advising, personal counseling, tutoring services, testing accommodations for students with disabilities, and other academic support services. The SSC is designed to provide free services to help students who may need additional support during their academic experience. The SSC is at the south end of the first floor of Academic Center for Excellence (ACE).

## Academic Advising

All students are assigned to an academic advisor who will be a consistent resource throughout the college experience. Advising begins at orientation and continues through graduation. Advisors assist students with academic and career goals, course planning and registration, explanation of college policies and procedures, and evaluating resources for student success. Advisors are a student's guide as they navigate a program's requirements, but each student is responsible for assuring that all academic requirements for graduation are met.

## Career Services

Mercy College Career Services is led by the Student Engagement office in the Student Success Center. Career Services offer a wide range of services that include resume and cover letter reviews, writing letters of intent, interview preparation and mock interviews, interview attire resources, online job boards, and job fairs. Students may request career assistance at any time but are encouraged to begin their job search preparation at the start of their time at Mercy College. For assistance, begin by emailing [Careerservices@mchs.edu](mailto:Careerservices@mchs.edu).

- **Resume/Cover Letter/Letter of Intent Review Process:** Students can submit one or more documents to the Student Engagement office for review. Documents are then reviewed by the Director of Student Engagement, a review team, and the writing tutor, and students will receive direct feedback based on the review(s). The review process can be managed fully online for convenience and timeliness of responses.
- **Mock Interviews:** Students may request to participate in mock interviews at any time throughout the year. Mock interviews are conducted in-person, via video, and/or by phone. Tips on interview preparation are available through the Career Services page on the Mercy College website.
- **Interview Attire:** Career Services has a wide variety of community resources where students can potentially obtain affordable interview attire. Students are encouraged to view the [Community Resource Guide](#) for resources.
- **Online Job Board:** Career Services is frequently sent job postings applicable to healthcare. When positions become available, Career Services works to post new positions on the Mercy College job board. For more information, see: <https://mchs.edu/students/student-job-board>.
- **Job Fairs:** These fairs typically occur during the fall and spring terms each year. Students will have an opportunity to meet participating employers and gather information from employer tables. Job fairs generally last a full week to provide opportunities for students to participate at a time convenient for them. Various employers offer to provide resume reviews and give feedback to the student. Students are encouraged to take full advantage of job fair opportunities to explore job opportunities and future places of employment.

## MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center Employment

MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center Des Moines is an equal opportunity employer. A wide variety of Medical Center positions are available to students, many with flexible hours to fit student schedules. Students may apply online at <https://www.mercyone.org/careers/>.

## Counseling

The Student Success Center offers personal counseling through the support of the Uwill online teletherapy platform. Each academic year, all enrolled students will receive 180 credits for teletherapy services. Students can make an appointment by going to <https://app.uwill.com/>.

Students must utilize their student email address to sign up for an account. From there, the student can specify counseling needs, preferred therapist attributes, day/evening/weekend appointment times, and schedule an appointment to be held via video call, phone call, or text message. For questions, please email [studentsuccess@mchs.edu](mailto:studentsuccess@mchs.edu).

## Disability Services

### [Request for Reasonable Accommodation Consideration](#)

Mercy College of Health Sciences is committed to providing accommodative services to physically, emotionally, and/or cognitively challenged students in compliance with federal laws: Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) of 1990. This policy applies to all students with disabilities regardless of location, delivery, or timeframe of scheduling for the classes involved.

### ADA Services

ADA Services are an extension of the Student Success Center (SSC) at Mercy College of Health Sciences. The goal of ADA Services is to promote and support students' self-advocacy: the ability of a student to articulate information concerning a physical, emotional, sensory, or learning challenge to the appropriate College personnel for the purpose of obtaining accessibility to the programs and services offered at Mercy College. The following information should guide the College community, working collaboratively with ADA Services, to assist such students.

Accommodation is intended to be used proactively. Instructors must work with students and the Student Success Center (SSC) in a good faith effort to determine reasonable accommodations. However, an accommodation is not reasonable if it constitutes a fundamental alteration of an essential academic requirement of the program or class. Please note that granted accommodations are not effective retroactively. Students will not be able to re-do assignments or re-take exams with accommodations that were originally completed prior to accommodations being asked for and granted.

### Eligibility

Mercy College of Health Sciences complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendment Act of 2008 (ADAAA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Fair Housing Act, and other applicable federal and state laws that prohibit discrimination based on disability. These laws define a disability as a physical or mental impairment that *substantially limits* one or more major life activities. Eligibility for academic accommodations is based on documentation that clearly demonstrates that a student has one or more functional limitations in an academic setting and that one or more accommodations is needed to achieve equal access. The ADAAA is a federal civil rights statute that supports the rights of individuals with disabilities to access employment, state and local government

programs and services, and public services. It is the policy of Mercy College of Health Sciences for students with disabilities to register with the ADA Services in the Student Success Center (SSC). Students must register to access these rights and determine eligibility for accommodation. ADA Services take into consideration the student's history, and supporting documentation related to the disability, when making accommodation determinations.

The disability service model in higher education is quite different from the one that students (and parents) are accustomed to in K-12 school districts. Students' self-advocacy responsibilities increase within postsecondary education due to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Parents need to foster this change and encourage students to utilize appropriate skills to be self-reliant in advocating for services. Responsibility for the postsecondary experience lies in the hands of the student.

Disability documentation is confidential information from an appropriately certified professional who is knowledgeable about the student's condition. Such professionals include physicians, educational psychologists, therapists, mobility specialists, and rehabilitation counselors. Documentation is used to determine eligibility for disability services and accommodations.

Documentation must include the following components:

- Completed by a licensed or credentialed examiner (not a family member).
- A description of the disability, including the diagnosis and history.
- A description of the current impact in daily living and in an educational setting.
- A description of past service use.

Examples of disability documentation, include, but are not limited to:

- Educational, psychological, or medical records.
- Reports and assessments created by healthcare providers, psychologists, or an educational system.
- Documents that reflect education and accommodation history, such as Audiology Reports and Vision Assessments.
- Student Success Center (SSC) verification form of a disability.
- Statement from a health or other service professional.
- Vocational Assessment.

### **Testing Anxiety Documentation Guidelines**

Beginning with the revisions to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 2008, test anxiety is no longer considered a disability under federal law.

Students applying for academic accommodations related to anxiety must have a diagnosis of an anxiety disorder (such as Generalized Anxiety Disorder), and documentation must include examples of an area of life in which anxiety creates a disability beyond the testing situation.

### **ADHD Documentation Guidelines**

The ADHD Disability Assessment must be completed as thoroughly as possible by a qualified healthcare professional. A qualified healthcare professional is typically a licensed clinical psychologist, neuropsychologist, psychiatrist, or a medical provider trained in mental health

assessment. This professional should have comprehensive training and relevant experience in the full range of psychiatric disorders and use a differential diagnostic practice to arrive at the ADHD diagnosis.

### **Applying for Accommodations**

Not completing all parts of the application process will delay requested consideration.

**Step 1:** The student must complete the [Request for Reasonable Accommodation Consideration](#) and submit it to the Dean of Student Affairs – Student Success Center, ACE 181.

**Step 2:** Students must provide The Student Success Center (SSC) with documentation from a healthcare provider that specializes in the disability for which the request has been made. The Dean of Student Affairs will review the documentation regarding eligibility status. To be reviewed, students must either be currently enrolled or a prospective student who has been accepted and plans to start the following term. The Dean of Student Affairs reviews the recommendations in the professional report submitted on the student's behalf and determines eligibility for services. Please allow 10 business days from when all materials have been received for this review.

**Step 3:** Once student eligibility status has been confirmed, the student will be invited to schedule an intake appointment to discuss services. During the intake appointment, approved accommodations will be outlined, and the Confirmation of Accommodation (COA) form <https://mchsstudentsuccess.wufoo.com/forms/m154j6n11w6w45g/> requesting accommodation for specific classes will be completed by the student.

**Step 4:** Each semester, students renew the Confirmation of Accommodation (COA) form <https://mchsstudentsuccess.wufoo.com/forms/m154j6n11w6w45g/>. Students will take the form to instructors for each class in which they will use accommodation(s) and work with the instructor to determine how the accommodation(s) will best be utilized in each class.

### **Rights and Responsibilities**

#### ***Student Rights***

*Students have the right to:*

- Equal access to academic courses.
- Receive reasonable accommodation in a timely manner.
- Confidentiality regarding disability-specific information.
- Appeal decisions related to accommodation determinations.
- Request changes or additions to current accommodation.
  - Please allow one week from the time the materials have been received for the re-evaluation process.
- Self-select which approved accommodations are most appropriate to use in each class.
  - **Students must give 24 hours' notice if choosing to utilize different accommodations, unless specified in the COA. (Example: opting to take a quiz in class, not using extra time)**
- Request information be available in accessible formats, including accessible instructional materials.
- Be free from discrimination and/or retaliation.

- Utilize informal and/or formal grievance procedures if one or more of the above rights is not afforded.

### ***Student Responsibilities***

*Students are required to:*

- Accurately portray approved accommodations to instructors.
- Register with ADA Services as an individual with a disability by contacting the SSC at (515) 674-6659.
- Request Confirmation of Accommodation forms (COA) for each class in which the student would like to use accommodations.
- Meet with instructors as soon as COA forms are received from the SSC.
  - Best practice is to meet with the SSC and instructors at the beginning of the semester.
- Review COA with instructors and discuss implementation of accommodations in the respective class(es).
- Understand that academic accommodations are not retroactive.
- Assume any costs associated with obtaining testing, reports, and examinations, etc. associated with documenting a disability.
- Talk to the instructor first if problems or concerns arise regarding accommodation. If the situation cannot be resolved, then notify the Dean of Student Affairs.

### ***Instructor Rights***

*Instructors have the right to:*

- Require that a student provide them with a Confirmation of Accommodation form (COA) from the SSC before providing any requested accommodations.
- Require that a student meet with them to discuss accommodation at the beginning of the semester or as soon as the student receives the COA form.
- Question the SSC regarding accommodations that they believe may result in a fundamental alteration to an essential component of the course.

### ***Limitations to Instructors Rights***

*Instructors do not have the right to:*

- Deny a student reasonable accommodation(s) listed on their Confirmation of Accommodation form (COA).
- Ask students questions about a disability, including the diagnosis or nature of the disability.
- Ask if the accommodation is necessary.
- Request documentation of a disability.

### ***Instructor Responsibilities***

*Instructors are required to:*

- Ensure instructional materials are in accessible formats, which may include captioned videos, text readable documents, etc.
- Finalize textbooks and reading lists in a timely manner to allow time for books to be converted into an accessible format.
- Include a statement in the syllabus as to how students can receive accommodation.



- Announce the preferred method of communication regarding disabilities and accommodations to the class at the beginning of each semester,
- Meet with students **individually and privately** to discuss the implementation of approved accommodations, as outlined on the Confirmation of Accommodation (COA) form provided by the SSC. *(Meeting should not take place in an open classroom with others present or in the hallway where others may overhear the discussion.)*
- **Allow students to self-select which approved accommodations are most appropriate to use in each class. Students must give 24 hours' notice if choosing to utilize different accommodations, unless specified in the COA. (Example: opting to take a quiz in class, not using extra time)**
- Provide accommodation in a timely manner.
- Refer students who self-identify as having a disability, but are not registered, directly to the SSC.
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality of accommodation notifications and communications regarding students' disabilities.
- Contact the SSC with any questions or concerns about approved accommodation(s) or how to best work with a student who has a particular disability.

## Testing Center

Testing Center hours are Monday through Thursday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. with limited make-up testing on Fridays. Testing services can be provided no later than 7:00 p.m. by special request only.

The Testing Center is on the first floor of the ACE building on the College Hill side (at the northeast corner of 6th and Crocker). To find the Testing Room, enter through the double doors on the West side of the building. From the main lobby, take a right to go toward the Josephine Norkaitis Student Success Center (SSC), which is badge accessible. The Testing Center is in Room 185. Please check in with the test proctor in Room 186.

Faculty and students can book space in Student Success Testing Center for ADA accommodations, make-up testing, and academic integrity monitoring.

Student requests must be made 48 business hours in advance of the exam to guarantee space. If exams fall on Monday, requests must be submitted no later than Thursday noon the week before. ADA accommodations will have priority placement. All students should reserve space using the following link: <https://mchsstudentsuccess.wufoo.com/forms/s10e56o71kyjn44/>. Once the request is submitted, the student will receive confirmation via Mercy College email. Students should bring their own computers.

Faculty must complete and turn in a Proctor Test Form no later than 24 hours prior to each exam scheduled in the Testing Center. The Proctor Test Form can be found at the following link: <https://mchsstudentsuccess.wufoo.com/forms/s1alm8df03sxwk3/>

Faculty and students using the Testing Center should be familiar with the following policies and procedures:



- Each student is responsible for consulting with their instructor regarding exam times and dates. We encourage students to take exams during the regularly scheduled class testing time. (Please note: some students must start the exam in the Success Center prior to the class if being ADA accommodated.)
- Once the request is approved and scheduled through the SSC, both the student and instructor will receive a Mercy College email confirmation.
- Students are expected to arrive in the SSC 10 minutes prior to the time indicated by the instructor on the Proctor Test Form.
- The SSC Testing Center will adhere to the test times submitted on the Proctor Test Form.
- Electronic exams must be open and ready for the student at the designated time indicated on the Proctor Test Form. Paper exams must be provided to the Testing Center at least 24 hours in advance.
- Students and faculty must remember the dates and times for exams.
- If the exam materials are not received from the instructor 24 hours before the scheduled exam, the SSC reserves the right to cancel the scheduled exam.
- Students that are late to a scheduled exam will not have extended time unless requested and verified by the instructor or in the case of technical issues.
- If a student is unable to take a scheduled exam, the student must notify the SSC and the instructor as soon as possible. It is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor to reschedule the exam. (The SSC will confirm a rescheduled exam at a time agreed upon by all parties.)
- All personal belongings and/or any materials not indicated on the Proctor Test Form must be stored in the storage lockers, located outside of the exam area.
- Once an exam begins, students may only leave the testing room for a quick restroom break or if breaks are allowed as part of the designated accommodation.
- Limited food or drink is allowed in the testing room unless it is designated as accommodation.
- If a student drops a course for which exams have been scheduled, the student should notify the SSC as soon as possible. Other students may need the previously reserved time and space.
- All the SSC testing facilities are monitored by closed circuit cameras with recording capabilities.
- Mercy College of Health Sciences takes the issue of cheating very seriously. If cheating or other academic dishonesty is observed or suspected, the instructor will be notified immediately. The Mercy College Code of Conduct can be found in the College Student Handbook.

## **Common Accommodation Descriptions**

### ***Allow audio recording of classes***

Students may audio record lectures and discussions. Video recording of classes is not permitted. Students are responsible for providing their own recording device. *The SSC has a limited number of recording devices that can be checked out on a semester-by-semester basis, according to availability.*

### ***Allow short breaks during class or exams***

A student may require a short break during class or exams. The nature of the break will depend on the needs of the individual.

## **Class Notes**

The goal of the Class Notes accommodation is to ensure that students with qualifying conditions have notes comparable to what they would take if their disability did not interfere with note taking. This accommodation is not a substitute for attendance.

It is important to initially determine if note-taking services are needed for a course. In some cases, they may not be needed, for example:

- Due to the nature of the course, notes are not necessary.
- A course pack may be available that contains complete notes for the course.
- Notes are already available online through other means, such as Canvas or the website.

The instructor is responsible for providing a thorough copy of class notes. These notes need to be more thorough and comprehensive than a PowerPoint or outline.

Here are three options for how that may happen:

1. An instructor may provide a copy of teaching notes.
2. An instructor may arrange for notes to be provided by a volunteer student in the class. For more information about identifying a volunteer student note-taker, contact the SSC.
3. Where practical, an instructor can assign a group or groups of students to take notes and to upload them for access by the whole class, including student(s) with a disability. This can provide the additional benefit of students working together to develop their understanding of the material and provide the instructor with rapid feedback regarding what students are understanding and viewing as important from course lectures.

## **Disability-Related Absence and Deadline Modification**

All disability-related accommodation is designed to provide equal access to the student. Reasonable accommodation preserves both the integrity of the course and the student's right to participate in classroom activities. Appropriate accommodation does not change or lower the essential academic elements of the course.

There are several ways for the student to meet essential course requirements while using this accommodation. Flexibility may be accomplished by adjusting course policies on attendance, work deadlines, or exam or quiz schedules.

Courses have specific syllabus information regarding attendance, exam schedules, and assignment deadlines. This accommodation requires a course-by-course assessment to determine what is reasonable and appropriate. Not every class can or will be flexible in the same way. There may be reasonable limits to flexibility based on the design and structure of each course and the specific course learning objectives. This accommodation should not result in a fundamental alteration of the course. If this accommodation is deemed necessary, the instructor will be contacted by the SSC to discuss reasonable accommodations prior to the student approaching the instructor with the COA form.

**Extended Time for Exams and Quizzes**

Students will be provided with extended test-taking time: (50%) more time for in-class tests, quizzes, and exams. Unlimited time is not an available accommodation and does not apply to competency skills and check off exams.

**Grammar/Spelling**

Students that have a disability that may impact their ability to produce in-class writing assignments or exams that are correct in terms of grammar and/or spelling will not have points subtracted for this unless it is a fundamental component of the class to produce writing samples on demand.

**Large Print**

The material should be available with enlarged text such as 18-point with bold font.

**Leaving the Classroom When Symptoms Occur**

Some students with medical conditions may need to leave the class if problems due to their medical condition occur. It is recommended that students who have issues during class email or contact their instructor as soon as possible after the incident occurs and then work with the instructor to make up any missed work. If this happens continuously, the SSC recommends that the instructor arrange a conference with the SSC and the student to determine appropriate action.

**Occasional Exceptions to the Absentee/Tardiness Policy**

The student is required to notify the faculty member and the SSC as soon as possible (prior to the beginning or directly after a class). Each faculty member determines how many absences are acceptable to pass the class.

**Preferential Seating**

Students may select a seat in a location most beneficial for their classroom learning. Students with visual impairment may select a seat closer to the front of the room so that they can more easily access the instructor and visual aids used for instruction (bulletin boards, posters, etc.). Students with hearing impairment may select a seat closer to the instructor to better hear their voice. Please notify the instructor if there is difficulty obtaining preferential seating in class.

**Reduced Distraction Environment for Exams and Quizzes**

A distraction-reduced testing environment is a setting outside the usual classroom that limits interruptions and other environmental influences.

**Use of a Calculator**

In some cases, students with very specific learning disabilities in math may be approved to use a basic 4-function calculator in class and on exams. Instructors can determine if this fundamentally alters course objectives.

**Emergency Resources**

## **Catherine's Cabinet**

Catherine's Cabinet is Mercy College's on-campus student food pantry, providing supplemental support to students who are facing food insecurity and need assistance. Catherine's Cabinet offers non-perishable food and some non-food items and operates on a "take what you need," first-come, first-served basis. There are two campus locations: ACE 184 and SC 122. PLEASE NOTE:

Catherine's Cabinet located in ACE 184 requires students to complete this [one-time Intake Form](#) prior to accessing. Follow-up visits to this location will require a badge scan/sign-in on the tablet provided. Catherine's Cabinet located in SC 122 will continue to provide food and other items with NO sign-up required.

## **Community Resource Guide**

Mercy College has compiled a Community Resource Guide that provides a variety of non-academic resources that are available in Des Moines and surrounding areas. A link to the most current guide can be found at: <https://mchs.edu/crg>.

## **Mercy College Student Emergency Needs Fund**

The Mercy College Student Emergency Needs Fund offers up to \$575 in financial assistance once per academic year to eligible students who are facing a non-academic financial emergency. A financial emergency is defined as an unforeseen expense that, if not quickly resolved, could impact a student's ability to attend class or remain enrolled at Mercy College. To be eligible, students must be currently enrolled full- or part-time and have a qualifying financial emergency expense. Eligible expenses include housing/rent, utilities, automobile/transportation expenses, childcare, and medical/dental expenses. Academic expenses such as tuition, fees, or books are **not** covered. Approved funding is paid directly to the vendor providing the service. Eligible students must submit an application and provide supporting documentation of the expense. For more information, visit our website: [www.mchs.edu/student-emergency-funds](http://www.mchs.edu/student-emergency-funds).

## **Steps to Success Program & Seminars**

### **Steps to Success Program**

The Steps to Success program is a free program designed to assist first time Mercy College students with their academic preparedness while connecting the participant with a member of the Josephine Norkaitis Student Success Center. The Steps program is customized to the individual student once they have filled out the [Getting to Know You](#) survey. The student is then contacted by a Student Success team member to discuss their needs and begin working together. Students are encouraged to fill out the survey before the start of their first term but can utilize Student Success resources at any time while attending Mercy College. For questions, please contact [Studentsuccess@mchs.edu](mailto:Studentsuccess@mchs.edu).

## **Tutoring**

Tutoring is an academic support service available to all Mercy College students at no charge. The Student Success Center employs peer tutors and professional tutors to assist students by reviewing course material, answering questions, and helping them prepare for exams. Tutors do not tutor skills. Tutor-led study sessions are provided for a variety of courses, and individual tutoring may be arranged upon request each semester based on tutor and course availability. For the current tutoring

schedule, visit <https://www.mchs.edu/tutoring>. Tutors are most easily contacted via Teams chat for scheduling. Please allow 24-48 hours for a tutor to respond if requesting an appointment via email.

## **Student Engagement**

### **Student Organizations**

Student clubs and organizations are overseen by the Student Engagement office in the Josephine Norkaitis Student Success Center. From program-specific to general campus organizations, students are encouraged to take part in at least one student organization. Being a member of a student organization can assist with professional networking, resume building, leadership development, and building the campus community. For more information, visit the [website](#).

### **Mercy College Association of Nursing Students (MCANS)**

The nursing faculty of Mercy College support the concept of nursing students enhancing their professionalism through student participation in professional organizations. In support of this, all nursing students in any nursing program are encouraged to become members of the Mercy College Association of Nursing Students (MCANS). Student membership includes membership in the Iowa Association of Nursing Students (IANS) and the National Student Association (NSNA). Students learn about the values and culture of the nursing profession through active involvement in the NSNA. Students in MCANS will be involved in fundraising and community service activities and social and professional events. They will have the chance to serve as officers of the organization, be committee chairpersons or members, and attend state and national conventions as delegates or alternates. The benefits of NSNA membership are outlined in the registration form.

### **Student Diversity Organization**

The Diversity Organization provides a support system for students from diverse backgrounds and offers an opportunity for students to gather to learn from each other. This organization interacts with various groups throughout the campus and the greater Des Moines metro area.

## **Personal/Club Sites**

- In personal posts, students should be clear that they are sharing their personal views and are not representing Mercy College, or a Mercy College student organization, if the students mention in their postings that they are enrolled at the College.
- Students are legally liable for what they post on their own sites and on the sites of others. For example, individual bloggers have been held liable for commentary deemed to be proprietary, copyrighted, defamatory, libelous, or obscene (as defined by the courts). Additionally, employers are increasingly conducting web searches for job candidates before extending offers. Therefore, students should be sure that what they post today will not cause concerns in the future.
- Do not use the logo, name, or any College marks or images on a personal or club site. The College logo and name are copyrighted and for official use only.
- Students should only use photos of people who have given them permission to do so. Do not post photos from course materials, campus-based presentations, or any photographs of a medical or personal nature even if they are de-identified. Students should use good judgment when posting photos of themselves on sites that prospective employers may be able to view.

- Never post copyrighted material of any sort.

## Honor Societies

### Alpha Beta Kappa National Honor Society

Mercy College sponsors a chapter of the Alpha Beta Kappa National Honor Society to reward intellectual accomplishment. <https://www.abkhs.org/>

### Alpha Eta National Honor Society

Mercy College sponsors a chapter of the Alpha Eta National Honor Society to reward intellectual accomplishment by students enrolled in Allied Health programs. <https://www.alphaeta.net/>

### Sigma Theta Tau International-Zeta Chi Chapter

Nursing recognizes the academic achievement of BSN (Bachelor of Science in Nursing) students by inviting selected students to join the nursing honor society, Sigma Theta Tau International-Zeta Chi Chapter. Students enrolled in a nursing program and that meet the following criteria are invited to join one of Sigma's chapters worldwide.

Undergraduate students must:

- have completed ½ of the nursing curriculum.
- achieve academic excellence (at schools where a 4.0 grade point average system is used, this equates to a 3.0 or higher).
- rank in the upper 35 percent of the graduating class.
- meet the expectation of academic integrity.

<https://zetachi.sigmanursing.org/zetachichapter/home>

## Professional Societies

### The Society of Diagnostic Medical Sonography

The Diagnostic Medical Sonography program offers students the opportunity to participate in the Society of Diagnostic Medical Sonography (SDMS), a professional organization that works to promote, advance, and educate its members and the medical community in the science of diagnostic medical sonography. It provides board preparation, career resources, and grants.

<https://www.sdms.org/>

### American Society of Echocardiography

The Diagnostic Medical Sonography program offers students the opportunity to participate in the American Society of Echocardiography (ASE), a professional organization that works to advance cardiovascular ultrasound and improve lives through excellence in education, research, innovation, advocacy, and service to the profession and the public. <https://www.asecho.org>

## **The American Society of Radiologic Technologists**

The Associate of Science in Radiologic Technology program offers students the opportunity to participate in the American Society of Radiologic Technologists, a professional organization that promotes professional consciousness. <https://www.asrt.org/>

## **American Association of Medical Assistants**

The Medical Assistant Program offers students the opportunity to participate in the American Association of Medical Assistants (AAMA), a professional organization that provides the medical assistant professional with education, certification, credential acknowledgment, networking opportunities, scope-of-practice protection, and advocacy for quality, patient-centered health care. <https://www.aama-ntl.org/>

## **American Physical Therapy Association and APTA Iowa**

The Physical Therapist Assistant Program offers students the opportunity to participate in the American Physical Therapy Association and APTA Iowa. APTA Iowa engages and empowers members to be a leading voice in the healthcare industry and supports the continued growth of members. APTA Iowa serves members and the public with excellence and integrity by advancing and promoting the practice of physical therapy through the coordination of advocacy, education, and resources. <https://www.apta.org/> and <https://www.iowaapta.org/>

## **American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science**

The Medical Laboratory Science Program offers students the opportunity to participate in the American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science (ASCLS) and American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science – Iowa (ASCLS-IA). The ASCLS works to advance the expertise of clinical laboratory professionals who deliver quality, consumer-focused, outcomes-oriented laboratory services through all phases of the testing process to prevent, diagnose, monitor, and treat disease. ASCLS promotes high standards of practice by holding the profession accountable to a Code of Ethics, by providing educational programs, and through publications. ASCLS advocates on behalf of current and future laboratory professionals and provides a voice to legislators and regulators. <https://www.ascls.org/>

The ASCLS-IA provides professional support, continuing education, leadership opportunities, scholarships, and advocates for the laboratory profession and patients through involvement in national and state legislation. <https://ascls.connectedcommunity.org/iowa/home>

## **Constitution Day**

The College recognizes Constitution Day every September 17 (or the adjacent workday.) This federal observance recognizes the adoption of the United States Constitution. Educational programming and activities are announced to the campus community, and all are encouraged to participate.

## **Voter Registration**

Registration information is available at <https://www.mchs.edu/Students/Voter-Registration>. Voter registration forms can be downloaded from the Secretary of State's website for the state in which you reside. In Iowa, these forms are found here: <https://sos.iowa.gov/elections/voterinformation/voterregistration.html>.

Students are encouraged to learn more about voter registration by calling 888-SOS-VOTE.

## Student Services

### Financial Aid

Financial Aid is administered according to the regulations of the current U.S. Department of Education Financial Aid Handbook, available [at this link](#). Financial aid awards and other resources can be found via the “Financial Aid Checklist” section of MyMercy. The Financial Aid staff will assist students in understanding and applying for federal and state aid and private financial assistance.

### Work Study Program

The federal work study program offers employment opportunities for eligible students currently enrolled and in good standing. Positions may be available in various areas of the College. Contact the Financial Aid Office for additional information at (515) 635-1133.

### Library Information

The Mercy College Library provides the College community instructional consultation, research support, and access to information to promote lifelong learning and encourage the development of information literacy throughout the College experience. For assistance, students may email [library@mchs.edu](mailto:library@mchs.edu) or stop in the library. Additional information regarding library services is available at <https://mchs.edu/Students/Library>.

### Library Hours

#### *Available under Campus Hours of Operation and Student Badge Access Hours*

Online resources are available 24/7 at <https://mchs.edu/Students/Library>.

### Holidays and Breaks

The library and the computer labs are closed over holiday weekends, and hours are limited during semester breaks.

### Circulation Policy

A Mercy College identification badge or other photo ID is needed to check out physical items.

### Circulation Periods

#### *Material Checkout Period for Students*

Books.....	14 days
Journal Issues.....	7 days
DVDs.....	7 days

#### *Maximum number of items checked out concurrently per student*

Books.....	5
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Journal Issues.....	10
DVDs.....	2

If hold requests have not been placed for items, materials may be renewed up to two times by calling the library circulation desk. This does not apply to special collections or reserves.

### **Interlibrary Loan and Document Delivery**

Students may request an Interlibrary Loan (ILL) for any book or article the library does not own. There is no charge for this service.

### **Library Study Rooms**

The library offers four study rooms. Students can reserve study rooms by making a request at [library@mchs.edu](mailto:library@mchs.edu)

### **Online Library Services**

To access the library's online collections off campus, students, faculty, and staff log in to access the library databases with their O365 login. It is a violation of the College's license agreements to publish passwords or provide them to non-authorized users.

### **Open Access Program**

Mercy College students may go to more than 600 participating libraries in Iowa and borrow from those libraries with their Mercy College identification badge. The student may return borrowed items to the College Library, and the College library staff will see that the owning library gets them back at no charge to the student. Local participating libraries include the Des Moines Public Library, Des Moines Area Community College, Grand View University, Simpson College, the State Library of Iowa, West Des Moines Public Library, and the Urbandale Public Library.

### **Procedure for Overdue Items**

The first overdue notice is sent by email one day after the due date. Students are asked to return the materials. The second overdue notice is sent seven days after the first notice is sent. The third notice is sent seven days after the second notice. If the materials are not returned, a "library hold" will be placed on the student's academic record. The student will not be able to enroll, re-enroll, or graduate, until the library hold is cleared.

Library staff will notify the Registrar to release the library hold when materials are returned or charges paid. See below for details regarding how charges are determined.

### **Reference Assistance**

Ask the library for help via email, phone, text message, or chat. Students can email the library at [library@mchs.edu](mailto:library@mchs.edu) or use the reference question form [here](#). Students can expect an emailed response within 24 hours of receipt. The library reference desk phone, (515) 643-6613, is answered during the library's open hours. Text the library at (515) 303-4275 (515-303-4ASK). The library monitors the text queue during its open hours.

## **Replacement of Lost Items**

Books: Cost of replacement plus \$5 processing fee for each book lost. If replacement is not an option, a \$50 fee will be charged.

## **Restricted Borrowing**

The Mercy College Library may limit both circulation periods and the number and types of items checked out by a student with overdue or lost materials to assure equitable access for all patrons. Patrons with a record of not returning items after receiving multiple notices will be placed on blocked status.

## **Use of Library Computers**

Computing and networking facilities in the Mercy College Library are provided to support the educational and curriculum-related research needs of students and staff. The library supports free access to research materials and the use of computing technologies to identify, locate, and use scholarly resources.

The number of computer workstations in the library is limited. The library reserves the right to claim workstations being used for personal or recreational purposes to reassign them to patrons who need to locate or access research materials or complete coursework assignments. *The Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources Policy* applies to all student use of library computers.

## **Laptop Loans**

Wireless laptops are available for check out by individuals or groups using the study rooms in the library. Please keep the following in mind:

- Laptop use is on a first-come, first-serve basis. The laptop must be checked out by an individual who will take responsibility for its use and safe return to the desk.
- The laptop must stay in the library and should not be left unattended.
- Wireless access provides an Internet connection but does not provide share drive or student drive access or printing.

## **Office of the Registrar**

The Office of the Registrar maintains the academic records of all students. This office is Mercy College of Health Sciences' official agent for matters such as enrollment certification, course registration, academic transcripts, and veteran benefits.

## **Registration**

Registration dates are listed in the Academic Calendar at <https://mchs.edu/calendar>, and students should register during the assigned registration period. Students must contact their academic advisor before registration to plan their course of study. The academic advisor will email students with the assigned registration date and time.

Program and graduation requirements are specified in the College Catalog.

- Use the Degree Audit and Search for Sections functions in MyMercy to determine what courses still need to be completed and to view available course sections with days and times.

A link to a pdf copy of the course schedule can be found at <https://mchs.edu/Students/Course-SchedulesRegistration>.

- Refer to the Course Descriptions in the *College Catalog* to make sure all course pre-requisites are met.
- Meet with an academic advisor (name and contact information are listed in MyMercy) to determine appropriate course load and course sequencing.
- Be sure to check the class schedule in MyMercy prior to the start of classes since classroom assignments may have changed since registration.

### **Adding/Dropping Courses**

- Schedule changes following initial submission are not official until a completed Schedule Change Form is received by the Registrar's Office. The Schedule Change Form can be found at: [https://www.mchs.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Students\\_Schedule-Change-Form2018\\_1.pdf](https://www.mchs.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Students_Schedule-Change-Form2018_1.pdf). Guidelines for schedule changes are as follows:
  - Students may not register for a course after the first week of the term without instructor permission.
  - Enrollment in a course will not appear on a student's transcript if the student drops the course before the end of the first week (or the equivalent of the first week for shorter sessions or terms).
  - All changes in course schedules after the first week of classes should be signed off on by both the student and the student's advisor.
  - Students who drop a course after the first week and before the stated last day to drop as specified in the academic calendar will receive a grade of "W." Withdrawals after this time will result in a grade of "F." Students may withdraw from a course that is shorter than 15 weeks with a "W" after 6.7% of the course is completed and before 60% of the course is completed. Refer to the Academic Calendar for specific term dates.
  - Students receiving financial assistance should consult with the Financial Aid Office regarding financial consequences before changing schedules.
  - Students that have questions about adding or dropping a class are encouraged to speak with their academic advisor.

### **Change of Name/Address**

Students are responsible for notifying the Registrar's Office of changes in their name, address, email, and/or telephone number(s). Name changes can be made by completing the [Name Change Form](#) and submitting it along with the required documentation to the Registrar's Office. Students can submit changes to address, email, and/or telephone number at <https://www.mchs.edu/Students/Change-ofAddress>. The College will not assume responsibility when student correspondence is undeliverable.

### **College Withdrawal**

Students withdrawing from the College must refer to the Withdrawal from the College section of the current [College Catalog](#).

## **Commencement Ceremony**

The commencement ceremony is held in the spring of each year. Candidates for graduation will receive information regarding graduation events from the Registrar's Office. Other graduation details will be posted to the College website and emailed to students throughout the semester. All graduates are encouraged to attend the commencement ceremony. A graduation fee must be paid regardless of whether students participate in the commencement ceremony.

## **Emergency Contact Updates**

During orientation and registration, students can provide the College with information for an emergency contact person to reach if someone is needed to act on the student's behalf. Students may also update this information at any time by contacting the Registrar's Office.

## **Grades**

Grades are recorded at the conclusion of each term and posted in MyMercy. Grades cannot be given by telephone. Faculty may post unofficial grades within the College Learning Management System (LMS) (Canvas), but official grades are posted in MyMercy.

Faculty will post midterm grades of C or lower in MyMercy within four days after the midterm date stated in the academic calendar. A student who receives a midterm grade is responsible for arranging meetings with instructors and/or an advisor to discuss the grades and what actions the student should take to improve his or her success. The student is encouraged to contact the Josephine Norkaitis Student Success Center to use available resources.

## **Graduation**

Students must complete an Application for Graduation Form the semester before their intended graduation. Verification of eligibility will be determined by the Registrar's Office. The Application for Graduation Form can be found in MyMercy.

Students must complete the graduation requirements listed in the *College Catalog* at the time of initial enrollment (after admission) to the College. They may, however, choose to follow the requirements in the catalog at the time of graduation. Students who are readmitted to the College will follow the graduation requirements listed upon enrollment (after *readmission*), or they may choose to follow the requirements in the catalog at the time of graduation.

## **Priority Registration for Student Veterans**

Mercy College offers priority registration to students receiving veteran's educational benefits and to veterans and military members who submit appropriate documentation. This allows veterans to be among the first students to register each semester.

Veterans and dependents using veteran's educational benefits will automatically be assigned priority registration.

Students not using veteran's educational benefits can receive priority registration by submitting proof of veteran status (i.e., DD-214, US Armed Forces Active-Duty Orders, Military I.D. Card) to the Registrar's Office.

Once a student's military status is verified, the eligibility for priority registration continues.

