

Policy Manual: Accommodations

Accommodations Office

Student Success Center

Mid-America Christian University

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# Accommodations Policy

## University Policy

Mid-America Christian University (MACU) seeks to create an environment where all capable students are provided access to educational opportunities. Reasonable and appropriate accommodations, both in and out of the classroom, will be provided for those students who qualify under the American with Disabilities Act as having a disability, unless doing so creates an undue burden for the institution or fundamentally alters a program. A reasonable accommodation may include an adjustment to policies, practices, or procedures to ensure access.

## Definition of a Disability

Disability means, with respect to an individual, a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of such individual; a record of such an impairment; or being regarded as having such an impairment.

- The phrase physical or mental impairment means –
  - Any physiological disorder or condition, cosmetic disfigurement, or anatomical loss affecting one or more of the following body systems: neurological; musculoskeletal; special sense organs; respiratory, including speech organs; cardiovascular; reproductive; digestive; genitourinary; hemic and lymphatic; skin; and endocrine;
  - Any mental or psychological disorder such as mental retardation, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, and specific learning disabilities;
  - The phrase physical or mental impairment includes, but is not limited to, such contagious and noncontagious diseases and conditions as orthopedic, visual, speech, and hearing impairments, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, cancer, heart disease, diabetes, mental retardation, emotional illness, specific learning disabilities, HIV disease (whether symptomatic or asymptomatic), tuberculosis, drug addiction, and alcoholism;
  - The phrase physical or mental impairment does not include homosexuality or bisexuality.
- The phrase major life activities means functions such as caring for one's self, performing tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working.

- The phrase has a record of such an impairment means has a history of, or has been misclassified as having, a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.
- The phrase is regarded as having an impairment means –
  - Has a physical or mental impairment that does not substantially limit major life activities but that is treated by a private entity as constituting such a limitation;
  - Has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits major life activities only as a result of the attitudes of others toward such impairment; or
  - Has none of the impairments defined in paragraph (1) of this definition but is treated by a private entity as having such an impairment.
- The term disability does not include –
  - Transvestism, transsexualism, pedophilia, exhibitionism, voyeurism, gender identity disorders not resulting from physical impairments, or other sexual behavior disorders;
  - Compulsive gambling, kleptomania, or pyromania; or
  - Psychoactive substance use disorders resulting from current illegal use of drugs.

Source: Americans with Disabilities Act Title III Regulations, Department of Justice, September 15, 2010

### **Statement of Nondiscrimination**

The University does not discriminate on the basis of handicap in the recruitment and admission of qualified students, the recruitment and employment of faculty and staff, and the operation of any of its programs and activities, as specified by federal laws and regulations. The designated coordinator for University compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is the Dean of Student Success and Accommodations Director.

### **Responsible Parties**

The Dean of Student Success and Accommodations Director is the Accommodations Officer at MACU and is responsible for overseeing accommodations procedures for all MACU students, including students in the College of Adult and Graduate Studies (CAGS) and the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS). Individuals with questions regarding accommodations for students with

disabilities should contact the Dean of Student Success at [accommodations@macu.edu](mailto:accommodations@macu.edu). A Coordinator of Student Success is designated as the back-up person responsible for accommodations and can also answer basic accommodations questions.

### **Grievance Procedure for Discrimination**

A student who has a complaint against a student, faculty member, staff member, or other individual involving a violation of this policy or of retaliation should contact the Dean of Student Success and Accommodations Director. Although there is no specific time limit for reporting a suspected violation of this policy, a student who believes that he or she has been subjected to conduct that violates this policy or another student or employee has been subjected to a violation, is encouraged to contact the Dean of Student Success and Accommodations Director as soon as possible after the alleged act to discuss the available options for proceeding. If the violation has been addressed with the Dean of Student Success and Accommodations Director and has not been adequately resolved, individuals may appeal to the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

### **General Accommodations Use Policies**

It is the student's responsibility to discuss accommodations and request the use of accommodations in each class with each instructor. Failure to discuss and request the use of accommodations with the instructor in a reasonable time frame prior to needed use may result in a delay in the use of accommodations.

All files, documents, and additional items obtained as part of an accommodation may only be used by the student for purposes related to the course. Copying or distributing materials received for the purposes of accommodating a disability is strictly prohibited.

The accommodations granted for the student only apply to MACU. Testing, including licensing examinations, CLEP examinations, and placement examinations, that is conducted outside of a MACU course may be subject to different standards. Students may not be granted accommodations with outside testing organizations. Additionally, some course testing regulations may be in place to prepare students for such external examinations. MACU is not responsible for accommodations for these exams, nor is MACU liable for a student's ability or inability to complete testing in a designated time frame due to granted accommodations at MACU.

# Process for Granting Accommodations

## Student Discloses Disability

A student may disclose a disability to any University Representative. A University Representative is anyone that the student would recognize as a representative of the University, including Faculty, Staff, and student staff.

When a student discloses a disability to a University Representative, the representative is responsible to do the following:

- Refer the student to the Accommodations Office
- Contact the Accommodations Office to notify the office of the disability disclosure.

## Intake of Information

The Accommodations Office will contact the student and provide information about accommodations at Mid-America Christian University, encouraging the student to complete the Accommodations Request Process:

### Complete the Accommodations Request Form

- The Accommodations Request Form (<https://macu.wufoo.com/forms/accommodations-request-form/>) is designed to provide the Accommodations Office with initial information about the student, the disability, and requested accommodations.
- Students who complete the Accommodations Request Form will be contacted by the Accommodations Office to schedule an Accommodations Interview.
- By completing the Accommodations Request Form, the student grants the Accommodations Office permission to discuss the information provided with University personnel necessary to process the request.
- Students who have already been granted accommodations at the University and wish to make adjustments to those accommodations may do so by completing a new Accommodations Request Form.

**Complete an Accommodations Interview with Accommodations Officer**

- This interview is designed to be a discussion between an Accommodations Officer and a student where a variety of information is gathered, including, but not limited to, the following:
  - The disability
  - How the disability impacts the student's life and academic pursuits
  - Barriers related to the disability and the campus environment
  - Accommodations and assistive technologies that have been used and/or helpful in the past
  - Challenges that the student may face at MACU related to the disability
  - Accommodations that may be that may be helpful and appropriate at MACU.
- The student or the Accommodations Officer may include other individuals in the Accommodations Interview, as appropriate and available.
- The interview may be conducted in person, over the phone, or via video technology.
- The interview is semi-structured, meaning the Accommodations Officer has a predetermined set of questions to go through with the student; however, the Accommodations Officer may ask additional, probing questions as needed.
- Students who wish to receive the list of predetermined questions prior to the interview should make this request in writing to the Accommodations Office prior to the interview.

**Provide any Requested Information and/or Documentation**

- Following the interview, the Accommodations Officer reviews the Accommodations Request Form, notes from the Accommodations Interview, and other information deemed applicable. The Accommodations Officer may request additional documentation related to the disability from the student to aid in determining appropriate and reasonable accommodations, including but not limited to the following:

- Medical verification of disability
- Expected longevity of the diagnosis
- Recommended accommodations from a medical professional
- Copies of test results
- Requests for additional information or documentation will be made in writing and sent to the student via email.
- Documentation should be from a state in which the student is a resident.
- Additional information may be requested as part of a request for an Assistance Animal. For more information on Assistance Animals, see the [Policy Manual for Assistance Animals at MACU](#).

### **Processing of Request**

#### **Determination of Accommodations**

The Accommodations Office is responsible for determining what accommodations are considered reasonable and appropriate for each student. This determination is based on the following:

- A review of the Accommodations Request Form, the Accommodations Interview notes, and provided documentation.
- A review of the disability and best practices for providing accommodations for the specific disability
- A review of the barriers resulting from the disability as it relates to the campus environment
- A review of limited access due to the disability and ways in which access can be granted.
- A review of whether or not essential elements of the program, class, service, activity, etc. may be compromised by the accommodation.
- A consultation with other professionals, if necessary. Consultants may include the College Dean or Associate Dean, the School Chair, or other appropriate parties as deemed necessary by the Accommodations Officer.

- The expertise of the Accommodations Officer.

The determination process is normally completed within 5-10 business days of receiving all necessary information.

### **Notification of Student**

The Accommodations Office notifies the student via email regarding the determination of accommodations. Students who are not satisfied with the outcome of the determination may request that their file be reviewed again. This additional review may include additional personnel of the Accommodations Office, and additional interviews or documentation may be requested.

### **Completion of Accommodations Acceptance Form**

The Accommodations Acceptance Form is provided to students who have been granted accommodations. The form includes the following:

- A list of accommodations that have been granted.
- An area for the student to acknowledge that they understand the accommodations granted.
- An area for the student to indicate how instructors will be notified about the accommodations.
- An area for the student to grant permission for the Accommodations Office to discuss their accommodation needs with University personnel, as necessary to provide the accommodations granted.
- An area for the student to acknowledge specific aspects of the Accommodations Policy.

Students must complete and sign the form prior to accommodations being implemented.

### **Provision of Official Accommodations Memo**

After completing the Accommodations Acceptance Form, the student will be provided with a memo detailing the specific accommodations that the student has been granted. This memo can also be provided to instructors as evidence of the student's registration of a disability in the MACU Accommodations Office.

# Process for Notification of University Personnel

## Notification of University Personnel

Specific University personnel will be notified of students with accommodations and the specific accommodations as it is deemed necessary for the completion of their jobs. This will take place within five (5) business days of the completion of the Accommodations Acceptance Form and at predetermined intervals.

University personnel will only be notified of accommodations with which they will be expected to assist in providing, for example:

- Information regarding academic accommodations will be distributed to the College Dean and Associate Dean, applicable School Chair, and applicable Faculty members and/or instructors.
- Information regarding residential accommodations will be distributed to the Director of Student Life.
- Information regarding dietary accommodations will be distributed to the Director of Student Life and the Food Services Director.

An updated list of students with accommodations and the specific accommodations will be provided throughout the year.

## Notification of Instructors

The student may choose to either notify instructors personally or have the Accommodations Office provide notification. Notification includes providing a copy of the student's Official Accommodations Memo to the instructor. This decision is noted on the Accommodations Acceptance Form and may be changed by the student at any time by updating and re-signing the Accommodations Acceptance Form and re-submitting it to the Accommodations Office or notifying the Accommodations Office via email at [accommodations@macu.edu](mailto:accommodations@macu.edu).

## Student Notification of Instructors

If the student chooses to notify instructors personally, the student is responsible for providing instructors with a copy of the Official Accommodations Memo. Paper copies of the Official Accommodations Memo can be provided by the Accommodations Office at the student's request. The student may choose to notify the instructor at any point in the semester.

## **Accommodations Office Notification of Instructors**

If the student chooses for the Accommodations Office to notify instructors, the Accommodations Office will do so within five (5) business days of the start of a course. The student is responsible for notifying the Accommodations Office of changes to his or her schedule that are made after the first day of class. Failure to do so may result in new instructors not receiving a copy of the Official Accommodations Memo.

## **Changes to Accommodations**

### **Requesting Additional Accommodations**

At any point, students who have already been granted accommodations may seek additional accommodations. Students who wish to make adjustments to their current accommodations may do so by completing a new Accommodations Request Form. Any change may require an additional Accommodations Interview or documentation, as determined by the Accommodations Office.

### **Changing Notification Preferences**

The student may choose to either notify instructors personally or have the Accommodations Office provide notification. This decision is noted on the Accommodations Acceptance Form and may be changed by the student at any time by updating and re-signing the Accommodations Acceptance Form and re-submitting it to the Accommodations Office or notifying the Accommodations Office via email at [accommodations@macu.edu](mailto:accommodations@macu.edu).

### **Reactivation of File**

Files for students who have stopped out of classes for more than four (4) months will be considered inactive. If a student returns to school and wishes to reactivate accommodations and notifications, he or she should contact the Accommodations Office via email at [accommodations@macu.edu](mailto:accommodations@macu.edu). The student will not need to complete an Accommodations Request Form or an Accommodations Interview or provide additional documentation unless additional or different accommodations are being requested or if the timeline for the accommodations has expired.