

**Muhlenberg College**  
**Office of Disability Services**  
**Exceptions to Academic Policy for Students with Disabilities**

Muhlenberg College offers a broadly based liberal arts education that provides the student with the intellectual perspective, problem solving experience, and communication skills necessary to adapt to a changing world. The general academic requirements at Muhlenberg College are designed to furnish students with effective writing, speaking, and reasoning skills in all academic disciplines. Academic requirements have been established so that all students may have the opportunity to achieve competency in these skills in their college experience.

As an integral part of a liberal arts education, Muhlenberg College requires students to have some knowledge of a language other than English. The **Foreign Language** requirement offers students an opportunity to acquire or advance the understanding of foreign culture, literature, and societies through listening, speaking, reading, and writing in the language. Muhlenberg College academic requirements also include a **General Reasoning** course which develops the ability to understand and utilize mathematical and/or logical relationships, to analyze data, to construct and assess arguments, and to make sound judgments.



The majority of students with disabilities are able to fulfill the **Foreign Language** and **General Reasoning** requirements with or without accommodations. Muhlenberg College recognizes that the nature and severity of the documented disability may affect learning in the general reasoning or foreign language area even with reasonable accommodations and may interfere with the student's ability to meet the expectations of the course with a passing grade. In these cases, students with disabilities may petition the Dean's Exception to Academic Policy Committee to fulfill the intent of the graduation requirement.

**Exception to Academic Policy Committee Considerations**

The Dean's Exception to Academic Policy Committee will consider the following information when deliberating the student's petition:

1. The degree of difficulty in the course or sequence of courses in question, either at the high school and/or at the college level. Previous grades or statements from teachers/faculty, Disability Services Specialists, evaluation data, and anecdotal notes from tutors will be considered as a body of evidence in the verification of difficulty.
2. In the case where a student is currently enrolled in the course in question, consideration will be given to the student's demonstration of a "good faith" effort which may include:
  - ▶ regular class attendance,
  - ▶ attendance at scheduled workshop sessions, if available for the course in question
  - ▶ enlisting the assistance of faculty during office hours or other scheduled sessions
  - ▶ enlisting the assistance of other campus resources such as Disability Services Specialists and/or tutors

- ▶ completing assignments as assigned and on schedule
- ▶ history of completion and utilization of Accommodation Plans

## Student Procedures

1. A student requesting an exception to policy through the Exception to Policy process must have completed the disability determination process and been determined eligible for accommodations, auxiliary aids, and services. Appropriate, disability-related documentation has been submitted which establishes a clear connection between the request for an exception to academic policy and the student's area of disability.
2. The student will work with the Office of Disability Services Staff who will present the petition to the Exception to Policy Committee that will include:
  - A. A letter of petition, written by the student, to the Dean of Academic Life requesting the exception to policy. The letter must be delivered or emailed to the Dean of Academic Life in order to activate the petition process.
  - B. The letter should include the following information: the student's name, address, the exception being requested, an explanation of the disability, how the disability affects this particular course, history of difficulty in this course of study, description of the student's good faith effort, and any recommendations from the instructor or evaluator. The letter must be signed and dated. Supporting documentation, such as assignments or examinations, may be included.
3. Students are encouraged to discuss their petition requests with one of the professional staff members in the Office of Disability Services as soon as possible in their academic experience. It is recommended that petitions be submitted no later than the end of the sophomore year.



## General Information

1. **Foreign Language** petitions may request either a course substitution or a pass/fail option. If a substitution is granted for one or two **Foreign Language** courses, then the student must complete, one or two culture courses in a chosen area with the Dean's approval. (Asian, German, Hebrew, etc.)
2. Petitions for the **Reasoning** requirement may only request a pass/fail for a reasoning course.
3. Exception will not be made for courses that are requirements for the student's major, minor, or certifications.
4. Courses enrolled on a pass/fail basis will not be used in computing the GPA but will be counted as units toward graduation. Students may take a maximum of three courses on a pass/fail basis. Courses required in a declared major or minor are not eligible for the pass/fail designation except those which are cognate or pre-requisites.
5. The Exception to Policy Committee will review student data at a petition meeting within the given semester. **Exception to Policy petitions must be requested in writing no later than the date set**

**for the course withdrawal deadline.**

6. The Exception to Policy Committee will make a final determination on all petition requests. Decisions will be emailed to the student within one week of the Committee's decision. If the request is approved, the student will schedule an appointment with the Dean of Academic Life to discuss the appropriate next steps.
7. The Dean may extend the time frame for hearing a petition and rendering a decision.
8. A student may appeal any decision by writing a *Letter of Appeal* to the Vice President of Human Resources (see Grievance and Appeal Procedures for Students with Disabilities).
9. Although an approved exception to policy will fulfill the requirements for Muhlenberg College, students should be aware that **Exception to Policy** may impact a student's choice of major, and/or future academic opportunities.



## **Exceptions to Academic Policy**

### **Release Form**

I understand that information from disability-related documentation contained in my confidential file will be discussed as part of the process of submitting a petition request to the Exceptions to Academic Policy for Students with Disabilities. I understand that the results of the Committee's decision will be shared with my academic advisor and the Registrar's Office. Further, I acknowledge that approval of the petition for an exception to academic policy may impact my choice of major, and/or future academic opportunities.

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_