



Mercyhurst University values inclusion and is committed to the goal of providing equal opportunities for all. Mercyhurst abides by federal, state, and local laws in admissions, employment, and all services and programs provided. Mercyhurst complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Amendments Act (ADAAA), Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the Fair Housing Act to ensure that a person with a disability is granted reasonable accommodations, when such accommodations are necessary, to afford that person equal opportunity in employment, education, and use of university facilities.

To receive accommodations through the university, the requesting individual is required to complete the [Accommodations Application](#) and submit supporting documentation from a medical or other qualified provider for review by the Mercyhurst ADA Committee. The university cannot provide accommodations that are not requested through this process.

Once the Accommodations Application is completed, the ADA Coordinator contacts the requesting individual to schedule an intake meeting (in-person, via telephone, or via Zoom) to learn about their unique situation and explain supporting documentation requirements. Once supporting documentation is received, the ADA Coordinator presents all information to the Mercyhurst ADA Committee to determine whether a covered disability exists. To be protected, a person must have, have a record of, or be regarded as having a substantial, as opposed to a minor, impairment. A substantial impairment is one that significantly limits or restricts a major life activity such as hearing, seeing, speaking, walking, breathing, performing manual tasks, caring for oneself, learning, concentrating, or working.

In cases where a covered disability exists, the ADA Coordinator will continue the interactive process with the requesting individual to provide reasonable accommodations. For a student, reasonable accommodations are adjustments that remove barriers and create equal access to programs, activities, or the learning platforms without fundamentally altering the academic content or learning objectives or posing an undue hardship to the university. For an employee, reasonable accommodations are any change to the application or hiring process, to the job, to the way the job is done, or to the work environment that allows a person with a disability who is qualified for the job to perform the essential functions of that job and enjoy equal employment opportunities. Accommodations are considered reasonable if they do not create an undue hardship or a direct threat.

Please note that the university need not provide the exact accommodation requested by the individual. The university may provide an alternative accommodation as long as it is reasonable and appropriate to make the university's programs, activities, services, and facilities accessible to that individual. Accommodations are not retroactive and may only be used after eligibility has been determined. Accommodations may not be applied to anything prior to eligibility determination.

Finally, the individual will be notified by the ADA Committee of the determination of eligibility and approval of reasonable accommodations via email. All applications/requests and documentation will be maintained in accordance with the confidentiality requirements of the Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA).

Please refer to the [Mercyhurst Animal Policy](#) for detailed information related to any animals on campus including service service animals and assistance/emotional support animals (ESAs).

Once determined eligible, an individual may continue to use reasonable accommodations without need for redetermination with the following exceptions:

- Housing
 - Students determined eligible who opt to no longer to use reasonable accommodations for housing will be required to submit new supporting documentation for redetermination of eligibility should they want to use the accommodations again in the future. Request for redetermination may be submitted to the ADA Coordinator by email ada@mercyhurst.edu or phone 814-824-2362.
 - Students have the option to go through the Housing Selection process and choose a housing option that meets their needs OR work directly with Residence Life regarding availability of specific housing. Not all housing accommodations require a pre-placement or assignment prior to the opening of Housing Selection. Once determined eligible for reasonable housing accommodations, students should contact Residence Life by email reslife@mercyhurst.edu or phone 814-824-2422 prior to the start of the Housing Selection process to discuss specific housing availability and possible need for pre-placement.
- Assistance Animal/Emotional Support Animal (ESA)
 - Request to renew eligibility for an ESA is necessary before the start of each new academic year. The ADA Coordinator will email those determined eligible annually in early summer to provide necessary forms. Completed forms must be submitted for review/redetermination at least 10 days before move-in/return to campus.

Steps to Request Reasonable Accommodations

1. Complete the [Accommodations Application](#)
2. Obtain supporting documentation from a medical or other qualified provider.

Mercyhurst University recognizes that every person has their own unique path regardless of their disability status or particular diagnosis. This may involve working with various medical, mental health, and educational professionals. We accept documentation from a wide range of professionals and in many different forms. This helps us remove barriers to access and take an individualized and holistic approach to provide supports. We do, however, have minimum criteria that all documentation must meet to be considered. All documentation must:

- Be provided on professional letterhead, signed, and include the name, title, and professional credentials.
- Confirm a diagnosis/the presence of a disability or chronic health condition.
- Describe the nature of the impairment and potential impact on the individual's ability to participate in the university's educational programs and services - i.e., limitation of major life activities.
- Reflect an evaluation recent enough to provide comprehensive information about the disability that may still be deemed relevant. Documentation from childhood or early adolescence may not be considered applicable to a higher education or workplace setting.
- Contact the ADA Coordinator with any questions about supporting documentation.

NOTE: *As an alternative to a letter or previous evaluation report, the following forms can be requested by email to ada@mercyhurst.edu :*

- ***Student Disability Verification Form***
- ***Employee Medical Information Request and Verification Form***

The appropriate form for student or employee should be completed in its entirety by a physician or other qualified provider to ensure that the ADA Committee is provided with the necessary information to determine eligibility for reasonable accommodations.

3. Submit supporting documentation via one of the options listed below:

STUDENT or EMPLOYEE

- Upload with the Accommodations Application
- Email: ada@mercyhurst.edu

MEDICAL or QUALIFIED PROVIDER

- Fax: 814-824-2020 ATTN: ADA Coordinator

If the documentation provided does not meet the university's requirements, it will not be accepted as the official documentation. The requesting individual will receive notice and will be asked to provide alternative supporting documentation. Individuals requesting additional accommodation after their initial approval may be asked to provide additional documentation.

Appeal Process

If the requesting individual is not satisfied with the determination of the ADA Committee, that individual may submit an appeal within seven (7) calendar days of the decision. Appeals should be submitted in writing to the ADA Coordinator via email at ada@mercyhurst.edu. Appeals will be reviewed by an ad hoc ADA Appeals Committee composed of three (3) university representatives not involved in any way with prior determinations. Decisions of the ADA Appeals Committee are final.

Grievance Procedure

Any individual who believes they have been denied the protections provided for in the [Non-Discrimination Policy](#) by the university should download and submit the [Non-Discrimination Grievance Form](#) to the ADA Coordinator. This form is available on Mercyhurst's [Student Consumer Information](#) page. Should you not be able to complete this form online, a verbal complaint may be made to the ADA Coordinator at 814-824-2362 or a written complaint may be submitted by email to ada@mercyhurst.edu.

Contact Information

Susan Reddinger, ADA Coordinator

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Phone 814-824-2362

Fax 814-824-2020

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ada@mercyhurst.edu

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