

## Request for Remote Learning

### Purpose/Rationale:

To permit eligible students to continue their academic study at Muhlenberg College via remote instruction if unable to attend and participate in in-person instruction for the semester at the College. A student is eligible for up to two semesters of remote instruction while at the College.

### History:

Generally, the College expects all full-time, degree-seeking students enrolled at the College to experience residential living and in-person learning. However, in very limited circumstances, the College recognizes that there may be a few students who need to remain home due to medical, mental-health, or other personal circumstances for the duration of a semester. The College has a very successful Medical Leave policy that utilizes a committee-review process. We will draw from that process to inform this new policy. Ultimately, students will need the approval of both the Dean of Academic Life and the Dean of Students to remain remote beginning in Fall 2021. Currently, we have no policy in place for these students and instead rely on ad hoc conversations between students and faculty, with no formal process for approval, management during absence, or re-entry to campus.

### Policy:

A student with an extraordinary reason for needing to continue instruction remotely for a semester may apply by completing the [application](#). This [application](#) will be reviewed by the Dean of Academic Life, Dean of Students, and any other appropriate members of the [CARE team](#) (i.e., Director of Counseling Services, Director of Disability Services, Executive Director of Health and Counseling Services). The student will provide supporting documentation from appropriate healthcare providers, therapists, visa application, etc. in support of their application. The student and a parent/guardian will then have an individual meeting with the review committee to further discuss the request and potential limitations of this mode of study. The committee will then make a decision about the request and will notify the student.

One important note: Students will work with their academic advisor(s) and the Dean of Academic Life to determine what courses best fit their course of study. Allowing students to participate remotely in a particular course will be at the sole discretion of the instructor of the course.

### Process

1. The [application](#) for a request for remote learning will be available by April 1 (for fall) or October 1 (for spring) for all new and returning students. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis. Normally, applications must be submitted by August 1 or December 1, respectively. After a term begins, a student will not be eligible for approval for remote learning for the remainder of the semester under any circumstances. Students for whom issues arise during the semester have full access to support resources, and can seek additional accommodations through the temporary absence policy or pursue a Leave of Absence or Medical Leave of Absence.
2. The student completes the [application](#) requesting to study remotely and includes supporting documentation for consideration.
3. A meeting is held with the appropriate committee members, the student, and a parent/guardian, if appropriate.
4. During this meeting, the following items will be discussed:
  - a. the student's reasons for requesting remote study;

- b. a review of the student's health/mental health or other personal circumstances to determine the most appropriate accommodations;
  - c. a review of the student's course of study and discussion of courses that may or may not make sense for remote learning, course availability and graduation requirements;
  - d. a discussion of student expectations, faculty expectations, and available support resources for remote learning and health/wellness; and
  - e. other unique, case-specific information.
5. The Committee will review all information and documentation and make a **PRELIMINARY** determination about the application.
6. The student will be notified and will then work with the Dean of Academic Life, Office of Disability Services, and faculty directly to determine which courses the student can enroll in.
  - a. In the case of approved remote access, the Dean of Academic Life will work with faculty and academic departments on behalf of the student, on a course-by-course basis, to determine if remote access would constitute a *fundamental alteration* or *undue administrative burden*, thus rendering it an *unreasonable* request. If an instructor is willing to allow a remote student to register for a course, the faculty member will choose the appropriate form of course instruction to deliver the material that best fits their course-learning outcomes and teaching style.
  - b. The Dean of Academic Life and faculty/departments may choose to use the rubric below in making determinations about the reasonableness of a request for remote learning given the pedagogical design of the courses.
7. Once courses are selected, the Dean of Academic Life and Dean of Students will finalize approval for remote instruction for the semester.

## Appendix A: Internal Rubric to Guide Course Decisions

	<b>Reasonable</b>	<b>Fundamental Alteration and/or Undue Administrative Burden</b>
Instructional Content Delivery	<p><b>Asynchronous</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Asynchronous content/materials is available or does not require additional burden to create</li> </ul> <p><b>Synchronous Access</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Instruction is primarily lecture-based and a participant can “Zoom-in” and not be disadvantaged nor require an alteration of course instruction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Instructor would have to produce new online content</li> <li>- Existing online course content is primarily interactive, collaborative, or discussion based and requires a group of remote students to participate in in order to be effective, but only a single student is enrolled remotely.</li> </ul>
Applied Activities (Laboratory, Studio, and Field Activities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sufficient online content/materials from prior online course sections is readily available</li> <li>- Department has established access to suitable web-based lab platform</li> <li>- Activity is primarily observational, and a participant can “Zoom-in” and not be disadvantaged nor require an alteration of course instruction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Material or facility only available in person for student to complete activity</li> <li>- “Zoom-In” from a live lab/studio or performance only captures instructor and precludes necessary peer interaction</li> <li>- Instructor would have to produce new online content</li> </ul>
Other Graded Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Exams &amp; Quizzes can be delivered via Canvas or remote-proctored easily.</li> <li>- Faculty member would not need to create / record separate lectures or demonstrations for remote student</li> <li>- Discussion/Participation can be assessed remotely (live Zoom</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assessment activities involve in-person use of special equipment, materials, or facilities (lab practical exams, specimen identification, etc.)</li> <li>- Student’s inability to attend in-person meetings also affects participation in performances, field trips, site visits, and other out-of-class expectations</li> </ul>
Instructor & Peer Interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Low frequency of highly interactive activities, for example, seminar/discussion, breakout work (partners, small groups, lab partnering), peer reviews or critique, demonstration, rehearsal, performance, out-of-class collaborations (group projects, field trips, site visits)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- “Zoom-In” to a live course only captures instructor and precludes peer interaction</li> <li>- Frequency of interactive activities is enough (daily, weekly), that facilitating online access or devising alternate activities is not feasible for instructor, academic department, or IT.</li> </ul>