

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

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** or **General Reasoning** requirements with and 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, the student may petition the Dean's Ad Hoc Committee for an exception to academic policy to fulfill the intent of this graduation requirement when all of the following criteria have been met:

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1. The student has completed the disability determination process and has been deemed eligible for accommodations, auxiliary aids, and services. Appropriate, disability-related documentation has been submitted which establishes a clear connection between the request for exception to academic policy and the student's area of disability.
 2. A student must have accumulated 8 course units **and** have achieved at least a 2.0 overall grade point average in order to petition. Petitions for first-year students will be heard only if the student is currently enrolled in the class in question. All petitions should be submitted as soon as possible, but petitions for adjustments to the **General Reasoning** and **Foreign Language** requirements should be submitted no later than the end of the sophomore year.
 3. Significant difficulty or good faith effort in the course or sequence of courses in question must be documented, either at the high school and/or college level. Previous grades or statements from teachers/faculty, learning specialists, evaluation data, and/or tutors could evidence verification of difficulty.
 4. In the case where a student is currently enrolled in the course in question, the student must demonstrate a good faith effort by regularly attending class, enlisting the assistance of faculty, Learning Specialists, and/or tutors, completing all assignments on schedule, and utilizing requested accommodations.

Student Procedures

1. The student will work with a Learning Specialist who will present the petition to the Dean's Ad Hoc Committee that will include:

A. A letter of petition, written by the student, to the Dean of the College for Academic Life requesting the exception to policy. The letter and one copy must be delivered to the Dean of the College for 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 it 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 properly signed and dated. Supporting documentation, such as assignments or examinations, may be included.

General Information

1. Petitions for exceptions to academic policy by substitution or pass/fail for **Foreign Language** requirements and pass/fail for the **General Reasoning** requirement may only be made in student programs where these courses are not central requirements for the program major, program minor, or certification.

2. Courses enrolled on a pass/fail basis will not be used in computing the GPA but will be counted as units towards graduation. Students may take a maximum of 3 courses on a pass/fail basis inclusive of any course granted a pass/fail based on a Request for Exception to Academic Policies. Courses required in a declared major or minor *are not eligible* for pass/fail designation except those which are cognate or prerequisites.

3. The Dean's Ad Hoc Committee will review student data at a petition meeting within the given semester. Petitions can be heard until the end of the semester but must be requested in writing no later than twenty-one (21) calendar days prior to the start of the final exam period.

4. The Dean's Ad Hoc Committee will make final determination on all petition requests. Decisions will be mailed to the student within one week of the Committee's decision. If the request is granted, the student will schedule an appointment with the Dean of the College for Academic Life to discuss appropriate courses.

5. For good cause, such as illness, closings, or other circumstances, the College may extend the timeframe for hearing a petition and rendering a decision.

6. 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).

7. Although the requested exception to academic policy will fulfill the requirements for Muhlenberg College, it may impact future applications to graduate school and employment.