

MICA

Student Disability Accommodation Policy

Policy Statement

MICA is committed to providing equal access to educational opportunities to qualified students with documented disabilities in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. This policy applies to all types of MICA students – undergraduate, graduate, non-degree seeking, or any other students enrolled in MICA-sponsored educational courses and programs. Only students who self-identify as having a disability and seek accommodation following this policy and the accompanying procedures through the MICA Learning Resource Center (LRC) are eligible for disability accommodations. Informing other College offices, faculty, or staff does not substitute for direct contact with LRC staff. Students who have been accepted to MICA but have not matriculated are encouraged to contact the LRC to discuss the disability accommodation process. Any questions about disability accommodations should be directed to the LRC at (410) 225-2416 or LRC@mica.edu.

Definitions

Accommodation is any reasonable modification or adjustment to a course, program, service, activity or facility required for a student, by virtue of the specific functional limitations of a disability, to have equal access to MICA's programs and activities, inside or outside the classroom.

An accommodation does not fundamentally alter curricular requirements, the essential learning goals and outcomes of a course, and/or the nature of a service or program. In the case of academic classes, the accommodation cannot be so significant that it alters or substantially modifies the essential nature or standards of the course as determined by the faculty member and MICA. Services of a personal nature, such as personal attendants, homework assistance and private tutors, do not qualify as accommodations at the college-level.

Disability is a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. The term *substantially limits* means the individual is restricted with regard to the condition, manner, or duration with which a major life activity is performed compared to most people in the general population.

Qualified student means a person who, with or without reasonable accommodation, meets the academic and technical standards for admission to or participation in an educational program, activity, or service.

Request and Documentation

LRC staff work with students directly, individually and confidentially on all aspects of disability accommodations to facilitate an interactive process and the timely exchange of information. Final authority for determining the most reasonable and effective accommodation rests with the College based on an individualized assessment of the nature of the course, program or service and the individual student's documented disability.

When making a request for accommodations, MICA requires every student to submit relevant documentation. Please note that a prior history of accommodation does not mean that similar

accommodations will automatically be provided at MICA. Because federal laws governing eligibility for disability accommodations in grades K-12 differ from the laws applicable to post-secondary education, documentation submitted at MICA must focus on a student's current level of functioning and include recommendations corresponding to college-level curricular demands. If documentation is not current or sufficiently comprehensive, the College may require that additional information be provided, including through an updated evaluation (the student will be responsible for the cost). Students should understand that reasonable accommodations are implemented to provide students with equal access; they do not guarantee success. Accommodations will not be implemented retroactively.

MICA also requires students to review this policy and the accompanying procedures and understand that the responsibility for requesting and managing disability accommodations falls on the student. Unlike high school, parents and faculty members do not initiate disability accommodation requests. It is up to the student to choose whether or not to disclose a disability and to make decisions about using approved accommodations on campus.

In addition to academic accommodations, the LRC manages accommodation requests and determinations for other college programs and activities, such as housing in Residence Life, and works with other College offices, such as Facilities Management, Operations, Student Engagement and Enrollment Services, to address special access and service issues related to a student's educational experience. Certain requests relating to medical or health issues may arise as disability accommodation requests or may be processed through the Office of Student Affairs, including academic leave of absences and medical withdrawals.

Procedure for Requesting Accommodations

In order to request a disability accommodation, a student must submit a fully completed and signed request to the LRC using the online accommodation request form <https://assets.mica.edu/files/resources/request-for-accommodation-of-disability-form.pdf>. The student must also submit appropriate documentation of a disability and the need for accommodation due to the specific functional limitations of the disability. Students should review the applicable MICA guidelines for documentation of disabilities and provide a copy to a diagnosing/treating professional as necessary.

It is the responsibility of the student to request disability accommodations in a timely manner. In order to ensure sufficient time for the eligibility and accommodation assessment process and to make arrangements for appropriate academic accommodations, current MICA students should contact the LRC and submit all request documents during the initial three weeks of the fall or spring academic semesters. Requests submitted after the third week of either academic semester or requests submitted with incomplete documentation (including insufficient testing data) could result in delayed consideration and action. Requests for housing-related accommodations generally must be made within the time limits established by the Residence Life housing lottery process. Students are strongly encouraged to submit housing-related accommodation requests no later than mid-March for the following academic year.

Upon receipt of all required information and documentation from the student, LRC staff will make a determination on eligibility and accommodation through an interactive process with the student, and in consultation with other educational, medical or psychological professionals, as deemed necessary for appropriate evaluation on a case-by-case basis. As soon as possible, generally within two business weeks of

receiving all required information and documentation, the LRC will issue a written response, either outlining eligible accommodations or explaining why the student was found ineligible.

Procedure for Approved Accommodations

For academic accommodations, LRC staff will prepare a letter of accommodation to be signed by the Director of the LRC and the student. The letter specifies approved accommodations and clarifies that the student is responsible for communicating with faculty members regarding accommodations they wish to use in classes and that the student and faculty member are generally responsible for implementation. Students with approved accommodations are strongly encouraged to meet with faculty members during the first week of classes to discuss the implementation of accommodations. Any student who needs assistance with such communication due a disability should speak with LRC staff. Faculty members are required to provide reasonable accommodation(s) in accordance with the LRC letter of accommodation as requested by the student. If a student or faculty member encounters any problems with the implementation of an accommodation, the LRC should be promptly contacted.

Housing-related accommodation decisions will be conveyed to the Office of Residence Life after the student is notified of the decision and given an opportunity for reconsideration and/or appeal. If approval involves an Emotional Support Animal as a disability accommodation, the student must follow the Requirements and Responsibilities to Implement ESA Approval as detailed in MICA's Emotional Support Animal Policy <https://assets.mica.edu/files/resources/emotional-support-animal-policy.pdf>.

Students must renew academic accommodation requests at the beginning of each academic year or at the point in the academic year when the student returns to campus if not present at the start of the fall semester. Students should renew housing-related accommodations no later than mid-March for the following academic year. If the accommodation request has not changed, the renewal process is typically straightforward, requiring a new request form but utilizing previously submitted documentation. If requested accommodations need to be revised or new accommodations considered, updated documentation or other information may be required.

Procedure for Reconsideration and Appeal

A student who disagrees with the decision of LRC staff or who seeks clarification of the decision may, within five business days of the decision, request an informal meeting to discuss. If, after the meeting, the student still disagrees with the decision, the student may request formal reconsideration by submitting a detailed written explanation of the reasons for the disagreement to the Associate Vice President for Academic Services (aservices@mica.edu) within three business days of the meeting. The AVP for Academic Services will reconsider the matter based on the student's statement and LRC records of the accommodation request. Following reconsideration, the AVP for Academic Services will notify the student in writing of any change in the decision, generally within five business days of receiving the formal request for reconsideration. Thereafter, if the student still disagrees with the decision, the student may appeal the decision, in writing, to the Provost (academic accommodations) or the Vice President of Student Affairs and Dean of Students (non-academic accommodations) within five business days of the written reconsideration notification from the AVP for Academic Services. The written appeal must explain in the student's own words and in sufficient detail why the student disagrees with the decision. The Provost or Vice President of Student Affairs will review the appeal, the reconsideration decision and all supporting documentation; meet with the AVP for

Academic Services, LRC staff and the student as necessary; and may obtain any additional information deemed relevant. The Provost or Vice President of Student Affairs will render a decision to the student as soon as possible, generally within two business weeks of receiving the appeal. The decision of the Provost or Vice President of Student Affairs is final.

First-Year and Transfer Student Early Requests

Incoming students who have not matriculated may initiate the request process early by submitting all request documents prior to arrival on campus. Pre-matriculation consideration of requests and documentation is done for the convenience of incoming students in a reasonable time frame. All decisions based on such requests are provisional until matriculation. None of the deadlines contained in this disability accommodation policy apply to provisional decisions and there will be no reconsiderations or appeals until the student arrives on campus and enrolls as a student. Deadlines for reconsideration and appeal run from the first date of the academic term.