

# Mercer University Student Handbook

Last revision: July 7, 2023

The Mercer University Student Handbook sets forth the major policies and procedures affecting students. Because the University is a dynamic institution, changes are inevitable. This Handbook will be revised as new policies and procedures are adopted. The latest edition will supersede all former editions unless stated otherwise in the text.

In addition to the Mercer University Student Handbook, the individual colleges and schools and/or campuses may develop supplemental student handbooks which may contain additional operating guidelines and procedures. Links to the supplemental student handbooks are located on the Provost's website (<https://provost.mercer.edu/resources/handbooks/student-handbooks/>). In the event of ambiguity or inconsistency, the provisions of the current Mercer University Student Handbook supersede collegiate and campus policies and procedures.

Wherever the University has chosen to adopt policies and principles similar to, or incorporating portions of, statements of the American Association of University Professors or other external bodies, the University reserves the right to interpret such policies or principles for itself and is not bound by external interpretations.

## Table of Contents

<b>Student Affairs Designees .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>General Information.....</b>	<b>3</b>
Accreditation .....	3
Federal Disclosure Requirements.....	3
Mission .....	4
<b>Policies and Procedures.....</b>	<b>4</b>
Academic Integrity .....	4
Access and Accommodation .....	4
Anti-Hazing.....	5
Attendance.....	6
Bicycle, Rollerblade, and Skateboard Policy.....	6
Cell Phones and Pagers .....	6
Children and Guests .....	6
Communication, Official.....	6
Community of Respect.....	6
Conduct: Off-Campus Behavior.....	7
Conduct: University Student Code of Conduct.....	7
Crime: Awareness and Campus Security .....	19
Crime: Campus Statistics .....	20
Crime: Reporting Crimes and Emergencies .....	20
Drug and Alcohol.....	20
Drug Free Workplace and Campus Program.....	21

Emergency Preparedness Plan.....	21
Firearms, Weapons, Fireworks/ Explosives .....	22
Grievance Policies and Procedures .....	23
Health and Welfare of Students, Mental and Physical .....	26
Health Insurance.....	26
Honor System.....	27
Housing Without Active Enrollment.....	27
Immunization .....	27
Information Technology.....	28
Intellectual Property .....	29
International Students.....	31
Minors Policy .....	32
Missing Student.....	32
Motorized Vehicle.....	33
Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy.....	33
Parking and Traffic Regulations.....	33
Religious Observance.....	34
Rights of Students .....	34
Rights Pertaining to Educational Records .....	34
Service Animals and Emotional Support Animals .....	35
Sexual Misconduct (Title IX) Policy and Procedures .....	35
Tobacco and Smoke-Free Environment .....	36
Voter Registration Requirements of the Higher Education Amendments.....	37
Withdrawals, Administrative or Medical .....	38
<b>Alma Mater.....</b>	<b>38</b>

## Student Affairs Designees

Macon campus (undergraduate)	Vice President & Dean of Students	(478) 301-2685
Atlanta campus	Associate Dean of Students	(678) 547-6823
Business	Associate Dean	(678) 547-6010
Education	Associate Dean	(678) 547-6333
Nursing	Associate Dean	(678) 547-6733
Pharmacy	Associate Dean	(678) 547-6383
Theology	Associate Dean	(678) 547-6460
English Language Institute	Associate Director	(678) 547-6455
Health Professions	Associate Dean	(678) 547-6167
Law	Assistant Dean	(478) 301-2586

School of Medicine—Macon	Associate Dean	(478) 301-2531
School of Medicine—Savannah	Assistant Dean	(912) 350-1739
Regional Academic Centers	Director of Operations & Business Manager	(678) 547-6370
	Assistant Director of Operations	(678) 547-6551
Macon Center	Center Coordinator	(478) 301-2980
Douglas County Center	Center Coordinator	(678) 547-6516, (678) 547-6489
Henry County Center	Center Coordinator	(678) 547-6521, (678) 547-6522
Newnan Center	Center Coordinator	(770) 683-6115, (678) 547-6551
Online Students		
Macon	Vice President and Dean of Students	(478) 301-2685
Atlanta	Assistant Dean of Students	(678) 547-6823
Regional Academic Centers	Director of Operations & Business Manager	(678) 547-6370

## General Information

### Accreditation

Mercer University is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award bachelor's, master's, and doctorate degrees. Contact the Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call (404) 679-4500 for questions about the accreditation of Mercer University.

For the most current information on Mercer University's accrediting bodies, please refer to the catalogs or online at <http://oie.mercer.edu/accreditations/accred-list/>.

### Federal Disclosure Requirements

Mercer University's Federal Disclosure Requirements are available on the University's website at <http://disclosure.mercer.edu/>. This website contains the following information:

- Campus Security: Jeanne Clery Disclosure for Campus Security, campus crime statistics, Campus Sex Crime Prevention Act, and fire safety
- Campus Emergency Procedures
- Drug and Alcohol Policies
- Financial Assistance and Cost of Attendance Information
- Health and Safety Information: immunization and missing persons information
- Institutional Information: accreditation, characteristics of students, degree programs, degree program improvement plans, ACCESS and Accommodation services, FERPA information, retention and graduation rates, peer-to-peer file sharing, post-graduate employment information, readmission of veterans, transfer of credit, withdrawal procedures, voter registration, and satisfactory progress standards

Paper copies of these reports are available upon request. Please contact the Office of Institutional Effectiveness by mailing inquiries to:

Office of Institutional Effectiveness  
Mercer University  
1501 Mercer University Drive  
Macon, GA 31207

## Mission

Mercer University's mission is to teach, to learn, to create, to discover, to inspire, to empower and to serve.

In fulfilling this mission, the University supports undergraduate, graduate, and professional learning as well as basic research and its application in service to others. As a university committed to excellence and innovation, Mercer challenges members of its community to meet and exceed high standards in their teaching, learning, research, scholarship and service.

Founded by Baptists in 1833, Mercer is an independent university that remains grounded in a tradition that embraces freedom of the mind and spirit, cherishes the equal worth of every individual, and commits to serving the needs of humankind. As a reflection of this heritage:

- We encourage our students to discover and develop fully their unique combination of gifts and talents to become leaders who make a positive difference in the world.
- We seek to inspire members of our community to live virtuous and meaningful lives by using their gifts and talents to serve the needs of humankind as an expression of their love for God and neighbor.
- We seek to enrich the mind and spirit by promoting and facilitating an open and rigorous search for truth and understanding, including an examination of the moral, religious and ethical questions of this and every age.
- We affirm and respect the dignity and sacred worth of every person and celebrate both our commonalities and our differences.

## Policies and Procedures

### Academic Integrity

Mercer University strives to be a *Community of Respect*, which includes respect for academic integrity. Students operate under an honor system and will exhibit the values of honesty, trustworthiness, and fairness regarding all academic matters. Students, faculty, and staff are expected to report any violations, including but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and academic dishonesty, to the honor council appropriate for their campus and program.

Procedures related to Honor Systems and Academic Integrity are outlined in the specific handbooks for each campus and can be found on the Provost website at <https://provost.mercer.edu/office-of-the-provost/honor-system/>.

### Access and Accommodation Services for Students

Mercer University is committed to making all of its programs, services, and activities fully accessible to all students. Students requesting accommodations for a diagnosed physical, medical (chronic health condition), psychological or learning disability and temporary injuries must first self-identify by applying for accommodations with the Office of Access and Accommodation. Students requesting accommodations for pregnancy, childbirth, lactation, and any medical condition related to pregnancy or childbirth must also follow the process set forth herein by self-identifying and applying for accommodations with the Office of Access and Accommodation. Student requests are reviewed on an individual case-by-case basis, after the submission of the application, documentation and completion of an interview, in the order received. Please be aware that accommodations are not retroactive in nature. The Office of Access and Accommodation for students also offers voter registration information and assistance.

#### How to Apply for Accommodations

Students requesting accommodations must complete the verification process as outlined:

##### Verification Process

1. Students disclose a disability by completing the online application requesting accommodations found at <http://access.mercer.edu/students/new>.
2. Students submit documentation from a qualified provider (to assist in gathering documentation you may download our disability verification form and have your treating professional complete). Healthcare providers must note

specifically what accommodations are needed for both the classroom and the clinical environment.

3. Meet with the Director/Coordinator to discuss experiences, needs, and requested accommodations.

4. Following the review of all information meet with Director/Coordinator to discuss approval of accommodations (accepting accommodations and acknowledging policies and procedures), how the accommodations work and the process to implement in the learning environment and the testing environment.

Each semester - approved students must request their approved accommodations by logging into “Accommodate” and completing a semester request for accommodation forms. Student must meet with faculty/coordinators following the delivery of the accommodation form to discuss the implementation of the accommodations.

Please know that depending on the time of year requests may take longer to review due to the volume of students applying. Students should contact the Access Office as early as possible (ideally just after acceptance) to begin our process.

#### **Change of Accommodation Requests:**

At any time, students may request a change of accommodations by logging into their “Accommodate” account and submit a new accommodation request. Students will identify the requested accommodation and provide a description of the need related to their disability. Following the submitted request the Office of Access will review the request and documentation on file. Please know that additional discussions with the student may be requested as well as additional documentation and accommodations are not provided retroactively.

#### **Appeal of Accommodation Decision:**

Students can appeal the decision of accommodations from the Office of Access through an appeal to the Dean of Student Affairs. An appeal should be submitted in writing and include the requested accommodation and a description of the need as it relates to the student’s disability.

Students who allege discrimination or harassment as a result of requesting accommodations for pregnancy, childbirth, lactation, or any medical condition related to pregnancy or childbirth may file a complaint with the Title IX Coordinator. The contact information for the Title IX Coordinator is located at <http://titleix.mercer.edu>.

#### **Report Physical Access Barriers:**

Please report any problems with physical access, such as non-working elevators, accessible door buttons and other barriers on campus, to the Office of Access and Accommodation immediately. Students who believe they have been discriminated against or denied access to a program or service because of a disability should contact the Office of Access and Accommodation. Further information on policies, procedures and documentation requirements may be obtained by contacting the Director of Access and Accommodation at 478-301-2810 Additional information including Disability Grievance Procedures may be found at <http://access.mercer.edu>.

#### **Campus Event Accessibility Policy**

All events that take place on campus must meet accessibility standards in accordance with the ADAAA, and Section 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. All event organizers must be familiar with this policy, comply with its scheduling and notice requirements, and make every effort to accommodate attendees at event who have disabilities.

## **Anti-Hazing**

Mercer University believes that the safety and wellbeing of the student body and Mercer community are of utmost importance to foster a positive educational environment that upholds the University’s Community of Respect doctrine. Hazing is a serious violation of this goal and potentially undermines and threatens the mental and physical wellbeing of our students. Therefore, Mercer is actively committed to addressing hazing and maintains an Anti-Hazing Policy in accordance with the Max Gruver Act that was adopted on July 1, 2021 in the State of Georgia.

Hazing is strictly prohibited at all Mercer campus locations and in all programs and organizations affiliated with Mercer, whether on or off campus. All reports of suspected hazing are investigated under the Student Code of Conduct. Student organizations suspected of hazing will be investigated as outlined under our procedures for Non-Academic Misconduct Process for Student Organizations. If a student or student organization is in violation of the

Anti-Hazing Policy, the student or organization may be subject to discipline, including but not limited to probation, suspension or expulsion.

The policy can be found at this link: <https://policies.mercer.edu/anti-hazing-policy/>

## Attendance

Consult the Student Affairs Designee for your school or program for the attendance policy.

## Bicycle, Rollerblade, and Skateboard Policy

Bicycles, rollerblades, and skateboards are permitted on the University campus and for use on pedestrian pathways only, but users do so at their own risk and must give right of way to pedestrians. Riders should wear appropriate safety equipment, including helmets, when riding and operate under control at all times. Acrobatic tricks, and/or use of curbs, benches, railings, or other features for stunts is strictly prohibited.

## Cell Phones and Pagers

Out of courtesy for all those participating in the learning experience, all cell phones and pagers must be turned off before entering any classroom, lab, or formal academic or performance event. The faculty or staff member in charge of the class, lab, or academic/performance event is responsible for ensuring that their cell phone number has been registered for emergency text alerting and for monitoring their cell phone for emergency text messages.

## Children and Guests Policy

The campuses, regional academic centers, and all other facilities of Mercer University are restricted to students, faculty, staff, and guests of the University, except when all or part of the University location, its buildings, or facilities are open to the general public for a designated time and purpose.

A “guest” of the University is a person invited by an officer, employee, or student to visit the campus at a specific time and place for a designated purpose. Personal guests of students are permitted as long as they restrict the length of their campus visits and abide by all appropriate guidelines and policies related to their visit, including those pertaining to Housing and Residential Life.

Arranging childcare is the personal responsibility of students who have children. Students are not authorized to bring children to a Mercer facility for extended periods of time. Frequent or lengthy visits of children are not permitted, as they may create disruptions and distractions and present a liability to the University for their safety. Children, other than those specifically enrolled in a youth specific program, may not attend class, use University equipment, or be left unattended on University property.

Childcare issues frequently arise when Mercer holidays and those of the child’s school do not match, or when a child is sick and cannot attend school or daycare. Students must plan for these challenges in advance. Asking a faculty member to allow a child in class is not an option as faculty members are not authorized to allow children to attend class.

## Communication, Official

All students are assigned a Mercer e-mail address. Mercer University will use this address for any official e-mail correspondence to students. In the event of an emergency, Mercer will utilize multiple methods, including emergency text messaging, to notify students. Students are expected to maintain and update their cell phone numbers via MyMercer.

## Community of Respect

Mercer University strives to be a *Community of Respect* where everyone is held in mutual high regard. Because every human being is created in the image of God, each person deserves to be treated with respect and civility. Standards of conduct are based on the values of mutual respect:

### *Respect for Academic Integrity*

We value a community that encourages an academic atmosphere. We believe that honesty is important to learning.

### *Respect for Other Persons*

We value the worth of every individual in the community and we respect the dignity of each member in the community. We take responsibility for the consideration of the rights of others.

### *Respect for the University Community*

We value showing respect for the rights and property of others. We take responsibility to act to maintain University property.

### *Respect for Community Authority*

We acknowledge and value our privileges and rights as members of the University community. We take responsibility for acting to uphold community standards.

## **Conduct: Off-Campus Behavior**

Mercer University and its members are subject to all local, state, and federal laws and statutes. Alleged violations of local laws and statutes, which occur on or off campus, are subject to internal University investigation, review, and action, in addition to any action by proper civil authorities. Each student is individually responsible for being informed of the law. Ignorance of federal, state, or local laws will not be accepted as an excuse for prohibited behaviors.

All students residing on or off campus, including study abroad and international students, are expected to comply with University regulations set forth in the Mercer University Student Handbook. Alleged violations of University regulations that occur on or off campus may be investigated and appropriate action taken without regard to the status of any civil or criminal proceeding.

## **Conduct: University Student Code of Conduct**

### **COMMUNITY OF RESPECT**

Mercer University strives to be a *Community of Respect* where everyone is held in mutual high regard. Because every human being is created in the image of God, each person deserves to be treated with respect and civility. Standards of conduct are based on the values of mutual respect:

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### *Respect for the University Community*

We value showing respect for the rights and property of others. We take responsibility to act to maintain University property.

### *Respect for Community Authority*

We acknowledge and value our privileges and rights as members of the University community. We take responsibility for acting to uphold community standards.

These values are codified into the following Student Code of Conduct, which includes a general overview of the process, a listing of unacceptable student conduct, possible sanctions, and other key information. This Student Code of Conduct applies to all students on all campuses, including online programs, and supersedes any student conduct policies and procedures previously used by colleges or programs. Program-specific regulations and policies (including professional standards) may apply to students beyond those outlined here and may be found in supplemental handbooks. Nothing in this policy prohibits these academic programs from pursuing additional review and action of professional standards as appropriate to their professions. Students are expected to be aware of and conduct themselves in a manner that is in compliance with all applicable policies found in the University Student Handbook

and related campus supplements. Academic violations are handled through a separate process found in the academic Honor Code.

### **GENERAL POLICY**

Mercer University is dedicated to the advancement of knowledge and learning and to the development of ethically responsible persons. University students are expected to uphold appropriate standards of behavior and to respect the rights and privileges of others. The University invites students to participate in the formulation of behavioral policies and to share in the responsibility for conduct decisions. These standards and procedures have been established to protect the University's educational purpose, to foster a sense of responsibility to the community, to provide for orderly conduct of its activities, to protect the members of the University from disrespect, and to safeguard the interest of the University community. Student conduct is expected to be lawful and in accordance with all federal, state, and local laws, and University regulations.

In keeping with Mercer University's values, sanctions imposed on students found to be in violation of the Student Code of Conduct are designed to promote the University's educational mission, maintain community standards, and promote individual civility and positive growth.

Sanctions are also intended to maintain the safety of the University environment and the integrity of the University community. The processes for adjudicating violations of federal, state, and local laws and violations of the Student Code of Conduct are separate and may be pursued independently of one another. The conduct of students both on campus and in the wider community is ordinarily of University concern when (a) the conduct interferes with the University's responsibility for ensuring members of the University full and equal opportunity to obtain their educational objectives, (b) the conduct interferes with the University's responsibility to protect the health, safety and general welfare of persons in the University community, or (c) the conduct negatively impacts the University's image and/or academic integrity. The University is not required to postpone disciplinary proceedings pending the outcome of any criminal proceeding.

The Student Code of Conduct applies to all University students in settings, which includes, but is not limited to, study abroad, international travel, and online, and off-campus educational opportunities. The Vice President for Student Affairs (or designee) may modify non-substantive procedures in an effort to adjudicate violations.

Student organizations will be held responsible for the behavior of their members, alumni, or guests when their actions evolve from or are in any way related to their association with activities of the organization on or off campus. Student organizations may be adjudicated in addition to any charges levied against the individual members. Student organizations that condone or encourage behavior that violates University or state regulations may be held responsible for such violations. See Non-academic Misconduct Process for Student Organizations.

Authority for student discipline ultimately rests with the University President. For cases involving non-academic conduct violations, the President delegates this authority to the Vice President for Student Affairs who in turn delegates it to the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs to oversee, review, and pursue violations of the Student Code of Conduct.

Students enrolled in online courses will be adjudicated in Macon or Atlanta as determined by the educational program in which they are enrolled. Should conflicts arise, that location will be determined by the Vice President for Student Affairs. Modifications to procedures to adapt to the physical location of the student may be implemented as long as the student is notified of the charges against them and provided with an opportunity to respond to the charges.

The Vice President for Student Affairs (or designee) has the authority to notify the person listed as the student's emergency contact (or other appropriate person) in cases of emergency or life-threatening incidents.

The Vice President for Student Affairs (or designee) may order any student or organization to cease and desist from any activity adjudged to be disruptive to the University. If the student or organization fails to cease and desist from such activity, the Vice President for Student Affairs (or designee) may immediately suspend the student pending a conduct hearing. Student organizations should refer to the "Non-Academic Misconduct Process for Student Organizations".



## **RESPONSIBLE ACTION GUIDELINES**

The health and safety of students under the influence of alcohol and /or drugs should always supersede concerns related to conduct violations and/or subsequent University action. The University urges all students to recognize that violations of the law and University policy have consequences, but that these possible consequences should never outweigh or override the decision for providing proper care for the health and well-being of a fellow student in crisis.

In a health crisis situation involving alcohol and/or drugs, students are expected to notify the appropriate staff to evaluate the situation immediately. Amnesty for minor violations of the student code of conduct will be considered in cases where a student is acting in good faith to rectify a situation, or when the situation involves a more egregious infraction that warrants reporting. Amnesty may mean waiving formal conduct action, or imposing less ~~harsh~~ severe sanctions, and is at the discretion of the Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students, or designee.

Additional guidelines pertaining to amnesty on reported hazing allegations can be found under Mercer University's Anti-Hazing Policy, as outlined by the Max Gruver Act.

## **DEFINITIONS\***

University. Mercer University includes the main campus, all branch campuses, centers, and University international programs.

Student. Includes all persons either registered or taking courses at Mercer University, both full-time and part-time, pursuing undergraduate, graduate, or professional studies, and those who attend post-secondary educational institutions other than Mercer University or who may reside in Mercer University residence halls. This includes non-degree seeking students. Persons who are not officially enrolled for a particular term but who have a continuing relationship with Mercer University are considered students (i.e. students enrolled in another college for a term, between semesters, internships, etc.)

Charged Student. Any student who has been formally charged with an alleged violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

Complainant. An individual reporting an alleged violation.

Respondent. An individual alleged/ suspected of violating a university policy.

Faculty Member. Any person hired by Mercer University to conduct classroom activities.

Staff Member. Any person hired by Mercer University in a professional position to conduct University activities.

Member of the Mercer University Community. Any person who is a student, faculty member, or employed by Mercer University.

Mercer University Premises. Includes all land, buildings, facilities, and other property in the possession of or owned, used, or controlled by Mercer University (including adjacent streets and sidewalks).

Organization. Any group that has been formally recognized by Mercer University as an organization.

Hearing Body. Any Mercer University official or panel authorized to review and evaluate student conduct charges and to impose sanctions upon students found to have violated the Student Code of Conduct.

Appeals. Appeals can be heard by any person or persons authorized by the Vice President for Student Affairs to consider an appeal from a hearing body's determination that the student has violated the Student Code of Conduct.

Student Justice. Student members trained in the procedures of the adjudication process, and in the mechanics of preparing for a case.

Faculty/Staff Justice. Faculty/Staff members trained in the procedures of the adjudication processes and in the mechanics of preparing for a case.

Shall. Is used in the imperative sense.

May. Is used in the permissive sense.

Preponderance of the Evidence. The weight of evidence used to adjudicate student conduct violations. This standard means that the evidence, taken as a whole, supports that it is more likely than not that the violation occurred or did not occur.

Investigator(s)\*. The person assigned by the University to gather the facts and details related to an alleged violation of the Student Code of Conduct. Investigators may serve as witnesses to any case for which they investigated.

\*Definitions in this section are defined for uses under the Student Code of Conduct, for definitions related to Sexual Misconduct (including sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, stalking, sexual exploitation and gender/discrimination/harassment) violations, please refer to the Sexual Misconduct Policy & Procedures found at <https://titleix.mercer.edu/policy.cfm>.

## **NON-ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT PROCESS FOR STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS**

Student organizations are expected to operate in accordance with the law, student organizational guidelines (as outlined by the Office of Campus Life), and all University policies including the Student Code of Conduct. Student organizational recognition is not a right and can be evaluated and rescinded by the University at any time for any reason. Organizations are expected to self-report any violations of the Student Code of Conduct. Please refer to the Campus Life web page to report anonymously at [https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?MercerUniv&layout\\_id=3](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?MercerUniv&layout_id=3).

When the University becomes aware of any allegation of misconduct by a student organization, the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs may assign a staff member, Mercer Police, and/or National Office for the organization, to investigate and review the allegation(s), as needed, by meeting with any individual the staff member determines is warranted. In cases involving sensitive or confidential reporting (e.g., cases involving hazing, hospitalizations, etc.), the staff member investigating the case may use appropriate discretion in releasing information placed in the report to protect the identity and confidentiality of the reporting or involved student or witness. That staff member will meet with the organization to review the allegations related to the organization before making a recommendation back to the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs on his or her evaluation of policy infraction(s) and proposed sanctions if any (including suspension or expulsion of an organization). The prior disciplinary history of the organization, the forthrightness and cooperation of the organization and its members during the proceedings and the severity of the allegations may all be evaluated as part of this recommendation.

The Associate Vice President for Student Affairs will then choose to accept that recommendation, modify it, or conduct further inquiry on his or her own before finalizing the decision. This decision will then be communicated to the organization in writing. This decision is final; however, in cases in which a group can clearly substantiate that an egregious and obvious error occurred at some point in the determination, it may request the Vice President and Dean of Students to review the decision. This request must be made in writing within three days of receiving the decision and clearly outline and substantiate the error that was made. The Vice President and Dean of Students may then choose but is not obligated, to review the case and make any modifications as deemed appropriate.

Nothing in this section prohibits the University from implementing an “interim suspension” as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct while the case is being investigated. Nothing in this policy prohibits the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs or Vice President for Student Affairs from reviewing a case directly at any point.

## **NON-ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT PROCESS FOR STUDENTS**

### Procedure for Reporting Violations

All students and student organizations are expected to adhere to the standards of the Community of Respect. In affirmation of these standards, every student subscribes to the following pledge:

**"Having been accepted as a member of the Community of Respect of Mercer University, I pledge myself: to hold each person in high mutual regard; to uphold, respect, and defend the rights of every individual in the community; and to respect the community as a whole. I further pledge that I will not allow to go unreported any violation of the standards of our community."**

Each student is responsible for reporting any and all infractions of the standards valued by the Community of Respect. All students accept this responsibility when they enroll. If a student sees, knows, or hears of a violation, he/she is responsible for reporting the suspected violation to Mercer Police, the Vice President of Student Affairs, or an appropriate faculty/staff member of Mercer University.

### Procedures for Reporting Allegations

This process for review is initiated by either (1) the filing of a police report with Mercer University Police Department (or other law enforcement agency), (2) providing a signed written statement directly to the Vice President of Student Affairs (or designee), or (3) by filing an incident report or written statement with the Office of Housing and Residence Life. This information will then be reviewed by the Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students and/or designee to determine the most appropriate action to be taken. This may result in conducting further investigation into the incident, resolving the conflict in an informal manner, referring the case to Housing, or initiating charges in accordance with the procedures contained in this code. Charges should be filed within ten (10) working days after

receipt of all available information regarding the complaint. Charges cannot be filed that exceed one (1) year after the discovery of the incident.

The University takes requests for confidentiality seriously and will evaluate a complainant's request for confidentiality in the context of the University's responsibility to provide a safe and nondiscriminatory environment for all students, including the complainant.

In compliance with Title IX and the University policy, cases involving sexual misconduct supersede any listed here. Please refer to the procedures outlined in the Sexual Misconduct Policy & Procedures for complete information on these procedures. Should any policy or procedural guidelines conflict between these two policies, the Vice President for Student Affairs in consultation with the Title IX Coordinator is the final arbiter of procedural decisions.

#### Charges

When a determination to charge is made, the designated office (primary designee) shall notify the student in writing of the charge(s) and the allegation(s) on which the charge(s) are based. This notice shall inform the student that he or she has five (5) regular business days in which to contact the designated office outlined in their charge letter to schedule an informational session, and to select the type of hearing forum in which to adjudicate the violation (unless pre-selected by the University). The informational session is a courtesy to students. If a student does not contact the University during this time, the University shall make a determination regarding the choice of hearing and will proceed with adjudication.

#### **PROCESS FOR SEXUAL MISCONDUCT VIOLATIONS**

Students are notified that the University has a separate policy for adjudicating all sexual misconduct-related violations. The policy, procedures, and definitions related to sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, stalking, sexual exploitation, and gender/discrimination/harassment, can be found at [titleix.mercer.edu](http://titleix.mercer.edu).

#### **HEARING BOARD OPTIONS**

The charged student may have charges heard by a University Hearing Board or by a designated University Administrator selected and trained by the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs or designee on the Macon or Atlanta campus. The Hearing Board or Administrator will review the case and make a recommendation to the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs with regard to responsibility and sanctioning. (The Associate Vice President for Student Affairs may hear cases directly if they choose to and do not have any clear conflicts of interest.) In electing one hearing forum, the student waives the right to the other. The University retains the right to pre-select the hearing forum at any point in the process. University Hearing Boards may consist of two Mercer employees (either faculty and/or staff) and a student trained in university proceedings.

When two or more individual cases stem from the same incident, the same hearing body shall hear all cases, when possible. Procedural modifications are permitted when incidents involve more than one individual charge or corresponding organizational charges. In such cases, the University may either pre-select the hearing body or consult with the students involved before making the determination. This hearing body will hear individual cases separately. In cases involving multiple students charged from the same incident, information obtained at one hearing may be used at another hearing provided that the charged student involved has the opportunity to review and to respond to any information that will be used against them, when possible.

For cases handled by the University's Office of Student Conduct Resolution in Macon, a board consisting of all students is an additional option for adjudicating minor student cases as determined by the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs.

Decisions of all hearing bodies (University Hearing Boards and University Administrative) are recommendations to the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs, who in the interest of fairness, clarity, or consistency may choose to accept or modify the recommendations as necessary or refer a case back to the hearing body for further review. The Associate Vice President for Student Affairs may consult with the appropriate staff or the academic dean of a particular academic program before accepting or modifying the recommendation of a student in that program. The hearing officer/board in its review of a case, may request to re-open a hearing, if needed, to gain additional information in order to make a recommendation of a decision to the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs.

## **RIGHTS OF THE CHARGED STUDENTS**

1. Notice. Students charged with violations of the Student Code of Conduct will be provided notice via their official university e-mail address of the charge(s) against them and the allegations upon which the charge is based.
2. Hearing. Students shall be entitled to a prompt hearing. Students will be given an opportunity to testify, present information and request witnesses, during a fair and impartial hearing.
  - The student may inspect documentary evidence presented at the hearing, may hear and question available adverse witnesses testifying at the hearing, and may present evidence and call witnesses.
  - Witnesses for the hearing will be required to wait outside of the hearing until their point of participation.
  - The University may require any student or employee with information relevant to the charges to participate in the investigative process, provide any such information to the University investigators, attend the hearing and present that information to the hearing body for consideration.
3. Advisement. Charged students have the right to have an advisor present with them during the hearing.
  - The advisor shall not serve as a witness or be charged in the case and cannot speak on the charged student's behalf.
4. Decision. Students shall be notified, in writing, of a decision within ten (10) business days of the hearing.

## **CONDUCT HEARING GUIDELINES**

All hearings are governed by the following guidelines. The purpose of this hearing is to determine the facts of the case, determine responsibility, and consider appropriate sanctions if necessary. Procedures may be modified to expedite the proceeding as long as they do not jeopardize the charged student's fundamental rights or the fairness of the hearing.

1. Burden of Proof. The burden of proof rests with the University. The standard of proof shall be the "preponderance of the evidence." This standard means that the evidence, taken as a whole, supports that it is more likely than not that the violation occurred.
2. Pre-hearing informational session. To assist the student in preparing for the hearing, a pre-hearing informational session will be available for the student. The informational session is a courtesy to students and not a requirement. This informational session will discuss the hearing procedures, inform the student of their rights and responsibilities, and allow the student the opportunity to review the available written information that will be presented at the hearing by the University. The student and his or her advisor shall have the opportunity to inspect the information at least three (3) regular business days in advance of the hearing whenever possible. Upon notification of the student's choice for a hearing body, the university shall schedule a hearing and notify the student in writing of the date, time, and location of the hearing at least three (3) regular business days in advance. A student may choose to waive, in writing, the three (3) regular business day notice and proceed with a hearing.
3. Decisions. Decisions of "responsible" or "not responsible" on the charge(s) shall be based solely on the evidence presented at the hearing. When multiple students are charged with the same violation and it is determined that an individual identified was not responsible for that specific violation, but was present and/or had knowledge that the violation was occurring, the hearing board/officer has the authority to find that student responsible for the lesser charge of "failure to report" without recharging the student and having a separate hearing.
4. Confidentiality. All hearings shall be closed and confidential. To protect the integrity of the conduct process no audio or visual recordings of the hearing may be made other than by the hearing body.
5. Failure to Appear. If the charged student fails to appear at the hearing, the hearing may proceed in the student's absence and a decision rendered provided that the student has been properly notified of the hearing.
6. Official Record. An official record of the hearing shall be made by the presiding hearing officer for internal University use only. The record of the hearing may exist in written or audible form. No transcript

- is made. Students may request to inspect their record of testimony and case file after the hearing is closed. Records will be redacted to protect other students' FERPA rights. Written records are kept on file for 7 years, with the exception of suspension, and expulsion, which are kept permanently.
7. Deliberations. Deliberations are closed and shall include only those members involved in the decision-making process (including anyone assisting the University with the conduct process).
  8. Notice of Decision. A written decision shall be available to the student within ten (10) regular business days following the hearing. This time may be extended in cases in which additional time is necessary for deliberations. If additional time is necessary, the charged student shall be notified. The decision letter shall contain a decision on each charge, the finding of fact and any recommended sanctions (if applicable).
  9. Hold on Student Records. The university may place a hold on the transcripts and/or registration of any student who fails to respond to a disciplinary notice or to ensure resolution of the case prior to transfer or conferring of a degree. All pending disciplinary matters must be resolved prior to a student receiving their degree, transferring from, or continuing education at Mercer University. Holds may also be placed on records after graduation if the University becomes aware of any unresolved disciplinary issues.
  10. Disabilities. Any student with a documented disability may request that reasonable accommodations be provided during the conduct process. This request must be made at least three (3) regular business days in advance of the hearing, and the accommodations must be approved by the Office of Access and Accommodation and the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs.
  11. Advisement. Students charged with a violation are permitted to bring one advisor of their choice to the hearing. The advisor shall serve as a consultant, and cannot speak on behalf of the student during the proceedings. Students are required to address the hearing body in person on their own behalf. Consultation must take place in a manner that does not disrupt the proceedings. The advisor shall not serve as a witness or be charged in the case. Students must notify the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs on the applicable campus at least five business days prior to the hearing if they will be bringing an attorney as an advisor. When multiple students are charged from the same incident (or a related incident), students are not allowed to have the same advisor and/or person of support at any point during the conduct proceedings.
  12. Witness. A witness is any student, staff, faculty member or individual who has, or is believed to have, relevant knowledge to an event related to an alleged violation of the Student Code of Conduct.
  13. Testimony. Testimony is expected to be provided orally in person. Relevancy of testimony is determined by the hearing board. In situations where a witness is unable to be physically present, testimony may be obtained via telephone or video-conferencing. In cases where a witness cannot testify in person, their written statement and/or the testimony provided to a University investigator may be utilized and weighted accordingly. The University reserves the right to exempt certain witnesses from being called to provide testimony.

## **VIOLATIONS OF THE VALUES OF THE COMMUNITY OF RESPECT**

Violation of any of the following, or the aiding, abetting, condoning, or attempting to commit these offenses by a student and/or student organization constitutes an offense that will result in disciplinary action. Please consult the online University Student Handbook found at <http://provost.mercer.edu/handbooks/studenthandbook.cfm> for the most up-to-date and applicable definitions.

1. Forgery. Alteration or misuse of documents, records or electronic communications.
2. Alcohol Misconduct.
  - A. Possession and/or consumption of alcoholic beverages including empty containers on Mercer University property or at University-sponsored events. (Professional and graduate programs may adopt policies related to alcohol that are more in line with the profile of their student body, as long as these policies are reviewed and approved in advance by the Provost).
  - B. Any conduct taken under the influence of alcohol that endangers one's own health or safety or the safety of others.
  - C. Buying, selling, or distributing alcoholic beverages to individuals under the age of 21.
  - D. Possession and/or consumption of alcohol or alcohol paraphernalia by individuals under the age of 21.
  - E. Possession, consumption, and/or distribution of alcohol by student organizations to individuals under the age of 21 and/or that leads to health and safety concerns for attendees.

3. Threatening and Harassing behavior.
  - A. Threatening Behavior. Intimidation, hostility, coercion, or threats of physical violence.
  - B. Harassment. Language and/or physical acts that degrade, insult, taunt, or challenge another person by any means of communication that places another reasonable person in a state of fear, anxiety, or emotional distress, or interrupt the academic and/or social aspects of the University environment. This includes communication of threats, use of profanity, verbal assaults, derogatory comments, racist remarks, or behavior.
  - C. Bullying. Aggressive behavior is when one person (or group of people) deliberately intimidates, abuses, or coerces an individual with the intention to hurt that person physically or emotionally. Acts of bullying can be physical, verbal, or relational.
  - D. Cyberbullying. Aggressive behavior where one person (or group of people) deliberately intimidates, abuses, degrades, insults, taunts, challenges, or coerces an individual with the intention to hurt that person physically or emotionally, that occurs through digital technology, such as text messages, e-mail, and/or material posted on social media sites.
4. Physical Assault. To injure or harm another person using violence or force (which includes fighting).
5. Endangerment. Actions that endanger one's own health or safety, the health or safety of another person, or the community.

The following six definitions (\*) are violations of the Sexual Misconduct Policy & Procedures. Full definitions, as well as critical information on how these six violations are investigated, processed, and adjudicated at this university, can be found at <https://titleix.mercer.edu/titleix.cfm>.

6. Sexual Harassment\*
7. Sexual Assault\*
8. Sexual Exploitation\*
9. Stalking\*
10. Dating/Domestic Violence\*
11. Gender Discrimination/Harassment\*
12. Retaliation. Any adverse action taken in response to an individual who has filed a report or complaint testified, assisted, or participated in any manner in an investigation or proceeding under any Mercer University Policy. Retaliation includes intimidation, coercion, threats, harassment, discrimination, or any type of adverse action taken against any individual, for the purpose of interfering, in the attempt to deter them from addressing, reporting, providing information, or testifying. This includes action taken against a bystander who intervened to stop or attempt to stop discrimination or harassment.
13. Destruction/Damage of Property. Destruction, damage or misuse of public or private property.
14. Theft or Possession of Stolen Property. Taking, possessing, or using property without proper authorization or permission.
15. Drug Misconduct.
  - A. Possession and/or consumption of drugs or any controlled substance prohibited by law.
  - B. Manufacturing, buying, selling or distributing drugs or any controlled substance prohibited by law.
  - C. Possession of drug paraphernalia.
  - D. Any conduct taken under the influence of drugs that endangers one's own health or safety or the safety of others.
16. Possession and/or Use of Weapons, Firearms. Possession or use of weapons, firearms, fireworks, or explosive devices (except for use in the Department of Military Science and in the rifle range). This includes but is not limited to-BB guns, stun guns/Tasers, air rifles, air pistols, paintball guns, edged weapons (i.e. blades no more than 2 inches), bows and arrows, and martial arts weapons. \*\*Weapons may be stored at Mercer Police. They may not be left in personal vehicles or rooms.
17. Disorderly Conduct/Disruptive Activity. Disruption or obstruction of teaching, research, administration, or other University activities that negatively impact the campus, community, and/or health and safety of individuals on or off campus. Disorderly Conduct/Disruptive Activity may include, but is not limited to:
  - a. Any behavior in class or out of class, which for any reason interferes with the class work of others, involves disorder, or otherwise disrupts the regular and essential operation of the University, or campus community, which includes but is not limited to, any residential community.
  - b. Leading or inciting others to disrupt scheduled and/or normal activities on University premises or disrupting the residential living environment.

- c. Classroom behavior that seriously interferes with either (a) the faculty member's ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program.
  - d. Acting in a violent manner in a public place toward another person causing reasonable fear of safety, or conduct that puts a person's property in danger of being damaged or destroyed.
  - e. It also includes the use of abusive or inciting words toward another person intended to provoke violence or escalate a situation (also called "fighting words") without provocation.
  - f. It also includes using obscene and/or vulgar language in a public setting or when communicating with professional staff, and/or interrupting an event, program, academic, or living environment without appropriate cause.
18. Conduct Unbecoming. Any conduct which is determined to be potentially detrimental to the University's reputation or is in violation of the University's Community of Respect statement. This includes the display of indecent or offensive material, or engaging in indecent or lewd conduct and/or speech.
19. Hate Offenses. Offenses committed against a person or property, which is motivated in whole or in part, by the offender's bias. Bias is a preformed negative opinion or attitude toward a group of persons based upon the following, including, but not limited to sex, sexual orientation or preference, gender, gender identity, race, color, religion, national origin, creed, citizenship status, ancestry, age, marital status, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, medical conditions including genetic characteristics, mental or physical disability, and veteran status.
20. Failure to Report. Being present or having knowledge that a violation has occurred and failing to report the incident. [The University retains the right to find a student responsible for this charge in lieu of another if the hearing body determines that the student(s) involvement was sufficiently passive and/or warrants consideration for this lesser charge for any reason. In such cases, the University is not required to recharge the student or rehear the case to find the student responsible for this charge.]
21. Computer Misuse/Unauthorized access. Any misuse of or unauthorized access to a computer, distribution of falsified documents, computer system, network, software or data; or the unauthorized alteration, copying or distribution of software or data.
22. Hazing. Any act which endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student, or which destroys or removes public or private property, for the purpose of initiation, admission into, affiliation with, or as a condition for continued membership in, a group or organization. The express or implied consent of the victim will not be a defense. Apathy or acquiescence in the presence of hazing is a violation of this rule. Specific examples of acts which may constitute hazing include, but are not limited to:
- A. The wearing of signs or advertisements;
  - B. Quests, treasure or scavenger hunts that serve a non-educational purpose and/or single out a select group within the organization;
  - C. Acts of servitude;
  - D. Acts that embarrass, harass, or ridicule an individual;
  - E. Acts that create excessive fatigue (which includes but is not limited to: forced exercising, congregating at odd hours of the night, and staying awake for long periods of time);
  - F. Morally degrading or humiliating games or activities;
  - G. Acts which destroy or remove public or private property;
  - H. Acts which violate federal or state law;
  - I. Consuming any food, liquid, alcoholic liquid, drug, or other substance in a manner which subjects the student to a risk of emotional, mental, or physical harm, including sickness, vomiting, intoxication, or unconsciousness;
  - J. Experiencing threatened or actual exposure to physical injury, including injury resulting from whipping, beating, paddling, branding, dangerous physical activity, or exposure to elements;
  - K. Experiencing threatened or actual exposure to mental injury, including injury resulting from activity adversely affecting the mental health or dignity of the individual, sleep deprivation, exclusion from social contact, or conduct that could result in extreme embarrassment; or
  - L. Any action not covered above but defined as hazing in the Max Gruver Act, O.C.G.A. § 16-5-61.
- Further information about Hazing can be found under the Mercer University Anti-Hazing Policy in compliance with the Max Gruver Act.
23. Unauthorized Entry or Use of Facilities. The unauthorized access to an area, room or building.
24. Fire Alarms and Fire Safety Misconduct.

- a. Inappropriate activation of any emergency warning equipment or the false reporting of any fire emergency.
  - b. Removal, damage or tampering with fire safety or other emergency warning equipment belonging to a student, student organization, the University or the Macon community.
  - c. Initiating and/or igniting a fire.
  - d. Failure to evacuate during a fire alarm.
25. Possession and/or use Fireworks, and Explosive Devices. Possession and/or use of fireworks, or explosive devices.
26. Furnishing False Information. Knowingly providing false or misleading information to a university official, to a hearing body, on a university document, or to a law enforcement agent or agency.
27. Failure to Comply. Noncompliance with the reasonable direction of university officials acting in the performance of their duties.
28. Campus Elections and Referendums Misconduct. Casting more than one vote in any campus election or referendum, or otherwise circumvent the prescribed procedures in an election process.
29. Student Identification Misconduct.
- a. Failure of a student to carry their Mercer identification cards at all times or to allow anyone else to use their identification card.
  - b. False Identification. Using an ID in any form that is forged, altered, or otherwise intends to establish the false identity of a student. It includes knowingly using a fake ID to obtain access to events and/or resources or to purposely provide a false identity verbally.
  - c. Identity Theft. Deceptively using another student, non-student, or faculty/staff member's identification to access resources on or off campus, which includes ID cards, credit cards, email addresses, passwords, etc.
  - d. Unauthorized Representation. Unauthorized representation is when a student or organization falsely uses an emblem, name or falsely claims membership or affiliation with an organization such as any benevolent, fraternal, social, humane, or charitable organization which is entitled to the exclusive use of that name or emblem. This includes, but is not limited to, wearing badges, buttons, paraphernalia, logos as well as the unauthorized use of letterhead, symbols or hand gestures associated with the organization being falsely represented.
  - e. Misrepresentation. Assuming or facilitating the use of another person's identity, role, or access through deception or without proper authorization. This includes communicating or acting under the guise, name, identification, access, email address, or signature.
30. Refusal to Vacate. Refusal to vacate a building, sidewalk, driveway, or private facility being used by the University for a student or department-sponsored activity when directed to do so by an authorized officer of the University.
31. Advertising/Media Misuse. Circulation or display of any media (i.e. electronic or paper) that contains matter that violates or is contrary to University policies or community values. This includes, but is not limited to, the display or promotion of alcoholic liquors, wines, or beers. This also includes displaying materials or information without proper approval from the University.
32. Solicitation/Fundraising. The solicitation of sales, services, memberships or gifts on campus without the permission of the Office of Campus Life.
33. Unauthorized Visitation/Campus Housing. No unauthorized student, group of students, or organization shall enter or remain in restricted areas of residential facilities during non-visitation hours, as published in the Housing Handbook.
34. Contempt and/or Disregard for Conduct Procedures.
- a. Failure to fully comply with all instructions and imposed sanctions of the university conduct system and Honor Council.
  - b. Coercing a student or organization member to give false information.
  - c. Engaging in conduct that disrupts the proceedings, lessens their authority or dignity, or otherwise obstructs justice on campus.
35. Unsanitary or Unsafe Facilities. Failure to maintain a student organization, facilities, property, or surrounding property so as to prevent potential danger to the health and safety of members of the University community.
36. Cruelty to Animals. Intentionally or recklessly causing physical abuse or any form of suffering to animals.



37. Violation of Published University Regulations. Violation of any published Mercer University policies, rules, or regulations. This includes but is not limited to housing policies, computer policies, or other university policies directly related to departments, organizations or clubs.
38. Violation of Local, State, or Federal Law. Any violation of any local, state, or federal law.
39. Fraternity/Sorority Program Policy Violation and/or Unauthorized Recruitment/Membership Intake
  - A. Failure to comply with all the instructions that guide membership into FSP organizations, which includes, but is not limited to recruitment, timelines, events, activities, documentation, etc.
  - B. Participating, arranging, or engaging in unauthorized recruitment or intake processes known as “underground pledging.” This includes coercing a student or organization to facilitate a process as well as students willingly engaging in a process not approved by the University or the affiliated national organization.
40. Unauthorized Recording: No unauthorized audio or video recording of any kind is permitted during formal or informal meetings, interviews, or hearings with members of the university community.

## **SANCTIONS**

The determination of sanctions is made in light of the unique facts and circumstances surrounding each individual case and the previous conduct history of the student. The Students found responsible of violation(s) of the Student Code of Conduct will be subject to one or more of the following sanctions:

1. Warning: Formal written notice to the student and official recognition that a violation has occurred.
2. Counseling Assessment: A recommendation to be evaluated by psychological services to help the student deal more effectively with his/her conduct issue.
3. Community Service: Performance of a preapproved service location for a prescribed number of hours to the local or university community.
4. Creative/Educational Sanctions: Attendance at educational programs, interviews with appropriate officials, planning and implementing educational programs, research papers and other educational activities related to the violation.
5. Restriction: The withdrawal of specified privilege(s) for a definite period of time. Restrictions may include, but are not limited to requirements such as: not entering certain areas of housing or the campus, not contacting a certain individual or group, or not operating a motor vehicle on campus. Students may also be restricted from holding office in any student organization or participating in some activities, including commencement.
6. Fines: Not to exceed \$150 per individual or \$300 per student organization.
7. Restitution: A payment of financial injury in cases involving theft, destruction or property or deception.
8. Probation: A period of time during which any further violations of the Student Code of Conduct may impact or jeopardize the student’s status in a specific manner. The four types of probation that can be imposed are as follows:
  - A. Conduct Probation. A specified period of time in which any future violations of the Student Code of Conduct can result in increased sanctions being imposed that exceed those of a student who is not on conduct probation.
  - B. Housing Probation. A specified period of time in which any future violations of the Student Code of Conduct will result in the termination of housing privileges and access to any university owned housing facilities.
  - C. Social Probation. Notice to an organization or student that all or a portion of social functions must cease for a designated period of time.
  - D. University Probation. A specified period of time during which any further violation of the Student Code of Conduct may result in suspension or expulsion. As part of this probation, students may be restricted from holding certain leadership positions and/or participating in some activities.
9. Forced Change of Residence. The temporary or permanent relocation of a student within housing.
10. Eviction from University Housing. Permanent removal from the housing system.
11. Suspension. The termination of the student’s attendance or an organization’s representation at the university for an indefinite or specified period of time. A suspension means that students may not be on University property or that an organization is prohibited from being recognized at any time without prior approval from the Vice President for Student Affairs or designee. Stipulations may be applied to either the student or organization as a condition for ending the suspension.
12. Expulsion. The permanent separation of the student from the University.

13. Deferred Degree. The holding of an academic degree for a specified period of time with or without conditions.
14. Withholding Degree. The withholding of a student's diploma for a specified period of time and/or indefinitely.
15. Revocation of Degree. Revoking a degree awarded from the University for fraud, misrepresentation or other violation of University policies, procedures or directives in obtaining the degree, or for other serious violations committed by a student prior to graduation.

### **APPEALS PROCEDURE**

For cases involving non-academic appeals, a student may appeal the original decision to the Vice President for Student Affairs within three (3) working days after receipt of the written decision (additional time may be requested for extenuating circumstances). The Vice President may choose to hear the appeal or designate an appropriate staff member from the academic program or location in which the student is enrolled to review the appeal and make a recommendation. No person may hear or decide an appeal if he or she participated in the hearing process. The appeal shall consist of a review of the prior proceedings; it shall not be another hearing. The student shall receive a written decision regarding the appeal. To file an appeal, the student must complete the appeal request form found on the Office of Student Conduct Resolution website: <http://conduct.mercer.edu/resources.cfm> or directly at this link: [https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?MercerUniv&layout\\_id=4](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?MercerUniv&layout_id=4), which will be forwarded directly to the Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students for review. For appeals related to sexual misconduct charges, please refer to the [Sexual Misconduct Policy & Procedures](#).

Grounds for appealing a decision are:

1. A significant error in adhering to Mercer's procedural process, which prejudiced the accused to the extent that the student was denied a fundamentally fair hearing as a result of the error. Procedural flaws alone are not grounds for an appeal. Significant procedural errors that may have affected the verdict or sanction will be considered.
2. The emergence of new evidence that could not have been previously discovered and that, had it been represented at the initial hearing, would have substantially affected the original decision of the hearing body.
3. The imposition of sanctions which are disproportionate to the offense.

Student status. The student's status on campus will remain unchanged pending the final decision and appeals process, except in cases involving interim suspensions (see Interim Suspension). The Vice President shall have the authority to act *de novo* to determine the issues of both responsibility and sanction(s). The decision of the Vice President for Student Affairs is final.

### **INTERIM SUSPENSION OF A STUDENT OR ORGANIZATION**

In certain circumstances involving a student or organization's actions that may affect the safety, health, or general welfare of the student or the university community, the Vice President for Students Affairs, the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs, or Student Affairs designee on each campus may impose an interim suspension prior to the student or organizations conduct hearing. The Vice President for Student Affairs, the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs, Student Affairs designee on each campus, and the Director of Housing and Residence Life has the authority to cancel a student's university housing contract under a separate process.

An interim suspension means that a student cannot be on university property, cannot attend classes, and cannot use university facilities unless otherwise stipulated. An interim suspension requires that the student or organization be notified in writing by the university. For organizations it means immediate suspension of all or some of the activities associated with the organization as determined by the university.

The student or organization has the right to request a hearing on the interim suspension with the Vice President for Student Affairs. If requested, the hearing will be conducted within three (3) regular business days from the receipt of the student's written request by the Vice President for Student Affairs or designee. The scope of this hearing is solely on whether the interim suspension should continue until a hearing is conducted on the facts of the case. Student disciplinary charges will be filed either when the interim suspension is imposed or as soon as possible thereafter. Student organizations should refer to the Student Organization Policy.

For cases in which a student is placed on interim suspension, but subsequently found not responsible for all violations, the university will take the following steps: (1) correct any record of the change in enrollment status in the student's permanent records and reports in a manner compliant with state and federal laws; and (2) refund to the student a pro rata portion of any fees, charges for tuition, or other university specific fees and charges, as appropriate due to the temporary change in enrollment status.

### **PARENTAL NOTIFICATION POLICY**

Mercer University, like many other colleges and universities, is concerned about the health and safety of its students specifically where there is use and abuse of drugs and alcohol. Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), institutions are permitted to release any and all information to parents, without the consent of the student, "if the student is a dependent for tax purposes under the IRS rules." FERPA allows colleges and universities to disclose information to parents if there is a health or safety emergency involving their student as well as to disclose information if the student is under the age of 21 and "has violated any law or policy concerning the use or possession of alcohol or a controlled substance." The Vice President for Student Affairs or designee will be the responsible University official to contact the parent or guardian. Students whose parents are divorced or separated have the option of designating the parent to be contacted. The Vice President for Students Affairs or designee may use discretion regarding parental notification in incidents where it is determined that extenuating circumstances exist that would directly and conclusively impact the situation negatively. Alternative guardian contact determinations will be made by the Vice President for Student Affairs or designee. The process of adjudicating any violations will be handled in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

Mercer University has opted to contact parents and/or legal guardians under the following conditions:

1. Mercer students, under the age of 21, found responsible for first time minor offenses involving alcohol in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct will be dealt with directly, without notification of their parents. "Minor offenses" are defined as non-life-threatening, non-threatening to the community, and not involving any other significant violations of the law or the Student Code of Conduct.
2. Enrolled students, under the age of 21, found responsible for two or more offenses involving alcohol will result in parental notification.
3. Enrolled students, under the age of 21, found responsible for offenses involving drugs will result in parental notification.
4. Incidents related to alcohol and/or drugs that are determined to be life-threatening to the student, threatening to the community, or involving other significant violations of the law or the Student Code of Conduct may result in parental notification regardless of the number of offenses. An incident in which a student is transported to the hospital as a result of alcohol and/or drugs may also be determined to constitute a threat or disruption to the campus community depending on the circumstances.

### **NON-ACADEMIC CONDUCT RECORDS**

The Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs in Macon and the Assistant Dean of Students in Atlanta are the official custodians of all records involving non-academic misconduct. Student files involving cases that do not result in suspensions or expulsions shall be expunged seven (7) years after a decision is reached on a charge. Cases that result in suspensions or expulsions will be kept permanently. Statistical data and database information may be kept permanently at the university. Students have the right to view their files. Students found "not responsible" for cases or in cases where charges are dropped are considered not to have a disciplinary record.

### **Crime: Awareness and Campus Security**

Mercer University places a high priority on keeping its campuses/regional academic centers safe for its students, employees, and visitors. The Mercer Police Department has primary responsibility for the security of the campus. All Mercer Police officers are certified by the Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council as having met the qualifications and training requirements for police officers in Georgia. They are authorized to exercise law enforcement powers, including the power of arrest, on all campuses.

Students, employees, and campus visitors are subject to all federal, state, and local criminal laws, in addition to campus regulations. The Mercer Police Department maintains a cooperative working relationship with the local and state

police to ensure that all laws are enforced. Mercer police officers may arrest individuals suspected of campus crimes or may detain such individuals for arrest by the local police. Local police agencies also provide back-up assistance to the University for any emergency that might require extensive police services.

The Mercer Police Department is a service-oriented department. Officers are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. In addition to routine patrols, the Department is happy to escort students or employees on campus at night as a safety precaution. Mercer Police can be reached at 478-301-4357 (Macon campus) or 678-547-6358 (Atlanta campus).

## Crime: Campus Statistics

Statistics concerning certain criminal offenses reported to have occurred on Mercer's campuses/ regional academic centers during the most recent calendar year are posted on the Mercer Police Department's website at <https://police.mercer.edu/security/>. A printed copy of the report is available upon request in the Human Resources Office, the Mercer Police Department, and the Student Affairs designee for your school.

## Crime: Reporting Crimes and Emergencies

All students and employees of the University should take an active role in keeping the campuses and regional academic centers safe. Please report any incident or unusual activity on or near the campus to Mercer Police. If you have any doubts as to whether to report an incident that has occurred, you should report it. The Mercer Police Department can then determine whether the event requires further action.

All crimes should be immediately reported. Crime alerts are published when incidents on or near the campus could present threats to the University community. Your cooperation in making reports promptly assists the University in issuing timely warnings to the Mercer community.

Mercer allows victims or witnesses of crimes to confidentially report those crimes. Furthermore, Mercer encourages pastoral and professional counselors, if and when they deem it appropriate, to inform the persons they are counseling of the procedures for confidentially reporting criminal activity.

When reporting a crime, suspicious activity, or other emergency on campus, be sure to provide the following information:

- Your name
- Location of the incident you are reporting
- A description of the scene and/or suspects
- A description of any vehicles involved in the incident, especially a license plate number if possible
- Your telephone number and address, for report purposes

Before hanging up, be certain the dispatcher has all the needed information. Do not take matters into your own hands as this could result in serious injury.

## Drug and Alcohol Policy

The possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages by students is prohibited on campus and at University-sponsored events. Public intoxication, consumption, or display of alcoholic liquors, wines, or beer on campus is prohibited. Use or possession of illegal drugs and drug paraphernalia is also prohibited.

Mercer University shares the widespread national concern with the serious threat to health, safety, and welfare posed by the unlawful use of drugs and the abuse of alcohol, especially in the workplace and on college campuses. Excessive use of alcohol and illegal drugs can cause serious health problems, and it can negatively affect the success of students in the educational and social areas of university life. For this reason, the University is adamantly opposed to alcohol and drug abuse, and the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of drugs by members of the University community. Mercer University strictly prohibits such activities. The University conducts educational programs designed to lead its students into an understanding of the problems associated with drug and alcohol abuse and to enable them to make responsible choices on personal and social levels.

In addition to abiding by the regulations prescribed by the Mercer University Student Handbook, students must abide by all local, state, and federal laws pertaining to drug and alcohol use. Violations of such laws, whether they occur on or off campus, are subject to internal University investigation, review, and action. For more information about Mercer University's policy concerning drugs and alcohol, refer to the section titled "Drug-Free Workplace and Campus Program."

## Drug-Free Workplace and Campus Program (General)

### Introduction and Purpose

Mercer University shares the widespread national concern with the serious threat to health, safety, and welfare posed by the unlawful use of drugs and the abuse of alcohol, especially in the workplace and on college campuses.

As a matter of University policy, growing out of the University's historic mission and character, and in keeping with Drug-free Schools and Campuses Act, the University has a Drug-free Workplace and Campus Program that delineates 1) Standard of Conduct; 2) Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention; 3) University Sanctions; and 4) Federal and State Legal Sanctions.

To access the Drug-Free Workplace and Campus Program in its entirety, please visit the Federal Disclosure Requirements website at <https://disclosure.mercer.edu/health/drug-alcohol-policies.cfm>.

## Emergency Preparedness Plan

### Emergency Response Guidelines

#### General Emergency Response Guidelines:

1. All emergencies are different. Your first priority is to exercise caution and ensure your safety and the safety of the people in the immediate vicinity of the emergency.
2. Collect as much information about the situation as possible (nature of the emergency and specific location).
3. Immediately notify Mercer Police, the local police (911), or the Regional Academic Center (RAC) Coordinator for a RAC not located on the Macon or Atlanta campuses of the situation.

### Quick Emergency Contact Guide

#### Mercer Police

Macon Campus (478) 301-2970

Atlanta Campus (678) 547-6358

#### Information Hotlines

Macon Campus (478) 301-5335

Atlanta Campus (678) 547-6111

#### Regional Academic Center Coordinators:

Douglas County (678) 547-6200

Henry County and Newnan (678) 547-6100

In the event of a broad emergency that has the potential to harm people and/or facilities, it is important for students, faculty and staff to be aware of the following information:

Communication: In the event of an emergency, Mercer Police and the administration will provide alerts and vital information using a variety of formats including emergency text messages, emails, and the office phone system. It is important to note the following:

1. All Mercer faculty, staff, and students are strongly urged to register for emergency text messages.
  - Contact MU Information Technology (478-301-7000) or visit the website <http://it.mercer.edu/student/> for details on emergency alert registration
2. Faculty with policies prohibiting student cell phone use in the classroom should actively monitor their own cell phones for emergency text messages.
3. Initial notifications may be based on partial data, with the goal to inform campus or RAC occupants of a developing situation requiring immediate action to protect life, safety and facilities.
4. The messaging system will be used to deliver additional emergency information, or that the dangerous event and/or conditions are under control, or "all clear".

**Building Evacuation Instructions:** When information about a threat is received in a building or facility, evacuation may be ordered by Mercer Police or RAC Coordinator/local emergency response personnel for a RAC not located on the Macon or Atlanta campuses.

1. When a fire alarm is activated, evacuation is mandatory.
2. Do not use elevators in an evacuation.
3. Close doors as you exit.
4. All individuals should move away from the building and/or facility in danger (500 feet, or follow instructions from emergency responders).

**Examples of Evacuation of Facility / Clearance of Area**

Fire / Gas Leak / Hazardous Material Release or Spill / Suspicious Package / Bomb Threat

**Active Shooter Instructions:** How to respond (options) if an active shooter is in your vicinity:

1. Run: if there is an accessible escape path, attempt to evacuate the premises.
2. Hide: if evacuation is not possible, find a place to hide where the active shooter is less likely to find you.
3. Fight: as a last resort, and only when your life is in imminent danger, attempt to disrupt and/or incapacitate the shooter.

**Lockdown (Violent Acts):** Should the University experience a violent act (such as an active shooter), a lockdown of the University may be ordered by Mercer Police or the RAC Coordinator/local emergency response personnel for a RAC not located on the Macon or Atlanta campuses. In such a situation you should:

1. Immediately go to the closest enclosed area. If possible, choose a room without windows that has a locking door.
2. Lock and/or blockade the doors.
3. Turn out lights and draw blinds.
4. Silence your cell phone, remain quiet, and stay out of sight.
5. Wait for an “All Clear” signal or notice from Mercer Police and/or local emergency response personnel.
6. If outside during the notification, consider leaving the campus if possible.

**Stay in Place (Severe Weather)**

1. If possible, move to designated severe weather areas of the building.
2. Do not use elevators.
3. Avoid glass doors and windows.
4. Wait for an “all clear” signal or notice from Mercer Police and/or local emergency response personnel.

**Examples of Lockdown/ Stay-in-Place**

Tornado/ Severe Weather/ Active Shooter/ Civil Disturbance/ Riot

## **Firearms, Weapons, Fireworks/Explosives**

Firearms/weapons are not allowed on Mercer University campus or Regional Academic Center (RAC) facilities except when required for students who are in uniform (police, law enforcement officers, etc.) in an official duty status.

All other weapons are prohibited including, but not limited to, hunting weapons, BB guns, stun guns, air rifles, air pistols, paintball guns, bowie knives, daggers, dirks, slingshots, leaded canes, metal knife sharpeners, switchblade knives, blackjacks, metallic knuckles, and any sharp, pointed or edged instrument (except instructional supplies, unaltered nail files and clips, and tools used solely for preparation of food, instruction, and maintenance).

All fireworks or explosives (defined as any substance prepared for the purpose of producing visible or audible effects by combustion, explosion, or detonation) are forbidden.

**Exception Policy**

A Mercer student attending class/conducting Mercer business while in uniform and determined to be in an official duty/ emergency recall status by a local police and/or law enforcement department/agency (city police department, county sheriff, Georgia Public Safety, etc.) may have a firearm/weapon. The student must initiate a request to have the firearm/weapon at a Mercer facility. Police or law enforcement department/agency must certify the officer-student

is required to have the firearm/weapon while in uniform and on duty/emergency recall status and submit request to Mercer Police for approval to have firearm/weapon in a Mercer facility.

### Procedures

1. Mercer student completes formal request to have firearm/weapon while in class or conducting other business with Mercer in a Mercer Campus or Regional Academic Center (RAC) facility.
2. The Police/Law Enforcement/Public Safety department/agency requiring the officer (Mercer student) to have a firearm /weapon while in class or conducting business in Mercer facilities (Campus or Regional Academic Center) certifies the requirement and sends request to Mercer University Police (MERPO) at the following address:  
Director of Mercer University Police  
1765 Winship Street  
Macon, GA 31207
3. Director of Mercer Police or Mercer Police designee approves the request. Approved requests are maintained in police files on the Macon and Atlanta campuses. MERPO forwards a copy of the approved request to the Dean of the officer-student's college/school for notification of faculty and to the Director of Operations, Regional Academic Centers for officer-students attending Regional Academic Center classes in Atlanta, Macon, Douglas County, Henry County, or Newnan.
4. Director of RAC Operations maintains a file of the approved requests of uniform officers having firearms/weapons and provides a confidential list (Name, Student Number, Badge Number) to each RAC location center coordinator where student could attend class/conduct Mercer business.
5. Mercer staff or faculty may question an individual with a firearm/weapon to insure Mercer Police has approved his or her having the weapon/firearm in a Mercer University facility.

All other weapons are prohibited including, but not limited to, hunting weapons, BB guns, stun guns, air rifles, air pistols, paintball guns, bowie knives, daggers, dirks, slingshots, leaded canes, metal knife sharpeners, switchblade knives, blackjacks, metallic knuckles, and any sharp, pointed or edged instrument (except instructional supplies, unaltered nail files and clips, and tools used solely for preparation of food, instruction, and maintenance). All fireworks or explosives (defined as any substance prepared for the purpose of producing visible or audible effects by combustion, explosion, or detonation) are forbidden.

## **Grievance Policies and Procedures**

### **Academic Grievances and Appeals**

Policy: Students have the right to bring grievances against a faculty member or an administrator and to appeal decisions concerning academic matters. A “grievance” is typically a complaint relating to some allegedly improper action or behavior. An “appeal” is typically a request for review of a routine judgment or decision. Such matters may include, but are not limited to failure to abide by requirements described in the course syllabus, arbitrary awarding of grades, discrimination based on race, color, national origin, disability, veteran status, sex, sexual orientation, genetic information, age, or religion (except in limited circumstances where religious preference is both permitted by law and deemed appropriate as a matter of University policy).

Time Frame: For grievances and appeals of any kind, students are required to initiate them with the appropriate faculty member no later than thirty (30) days from the completion of the term in which the course was offered. Grievances or appeals received after this period will not be honored.

Informal Resolution Procedure: Student grievance and appeal procedures encourage each student to handle complaints as close to the source as possible. If a student has a complaint against a faculty member, the student should first attempt to resolve the issue by an informal meeting with the faculty member involved. If this is not satisfactory, or if the student believes that he or she cannot discuss the complaint with the instructor, the student may follow the Formal Resolution Procedure.

Formal Resolution Procedure: The following protocol should be followed:

1. The student should meet with the appropriate department chair or program director after submitting to this person a formal written account of the grievance or appeal. This narrative must be submitted no later than thirty (30) days from the date on which the student was formally notified of the instructor's decision.

2. If the grievance or appeal is not satisfactorily resolved by the department chair or program director, the student should meet with the associate dean after submitting to the associate dean a formal written account. This narrative must be submitted no later than thirty (30) days from the date on which the student was formally notified of the department chair's or program director's decision.
3. If the grievance or appeal is not satisfactorily resolved by the associate dean, the student should meet with the Provost after submitting to the Provost a formal written account of the grievance or appeal. This narrative must be submitted no later than thirty (30) days from the date on which the student was formally notified of the associate dean's decision.

If the student has a grievance or appeal involving a dean, he or she should schedule an appointment with that dean in an attempt to resolve the matter. If the matter is not resolved or if the student believes that he or she cannot discuss the issue with that dean, the student may address the grievance or appeal to the Provost. In all academic grievance and appeal procedures, the decision of the Provost is the final University decision.

Once the University grievance or appeal procedure has been exhausted, the student can seek a solution outside the University by filing a complaint with the Georgia Nonpublic Postsecondary Education Commission (GNPEC). The details for filing a complaint with the GNPEC are located on their website and require a specific form. The student can access <https://gnpec.georgia.gov/> and click on "File a Complaint" for this information.

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and program accreditors can be contacted to file a complaint if a student believes accrediting standards were violated or grievance procedures were unfair and applied inappropriately and inconsistently. The student can access SACSCOC at <https://sacscoc.org/?s=complaint> and click on "Complaint Procedures Against SACSCOC or Its Accredited Institutions" for more information. A listing of all University accreditors with contact information can be found in the Mercer University catalog. [Note: The procedures associated with the accrediting agencies are not intended to be used to involve the agency in disputes between individuals and member institutions, or cause the agency to interpose itself as a reviewing authority in individual matters of admission, grades, granting or transferability of credits, application of academic policies, fees or other financial matters, disciplinary matters or other contractual rights and obligations.]

### **Nonacademic Grievances**

**Policy:** Mercer University recognizes the importance of providing an efficient procedure for a timely and fair resolution of a nonacademic grievance. Students are encouraged to use the process to resolve allegations concerning (1) a University employee, (2) administrative policies or procedures, and/or (3) a University program, service, or activity.

**Informal Resolution Procedure:** Many grievances can get resolved via informal personal meetings, phone calls, or e-mails directly with the employee or office responsible for the grievance. Whenever possible, students are encouraged to exercise these avenues of communication first. However, should these avenues not rectify the grievance, or the student wishes to bypass the informal resolution process, then the formal grievance process below should be implemented.

**Formal Resolution Procedure:** When a student wishes to file a formal grievance that is nonacademic in nature and does not already have a stated appeal or grievance process as prescribed by law or the institution, he or she should follow this procedure:

1. The student should submit the grievance in writing to the supervisor of the University employee responsible for the action or event that forms the basis of the grievance. This statement should contain a brief statement of the grievance and the remedies sought, and be clearly labeled "Formal Grievance" for tracking purposes. A copy of the statement must also be presented to the Associate Vice President of Human Resources and the Vice President for Student Affairs. The grievance should be submitted to the employee's supervisor within ten (10) days of the action or event that forms the basis of the grievance.
2. The supervisor will meet with the respondent to discuss the grievance within ten (10) days of receipt of the written grievance. The employee's supervisor will reply in writing to the student with the results of the discussion and plans for further action, if any, within ten (10) days of the meeting. A copy of this reply will be provided to the Associate Vice President of Human Resources and the Vice President for Student Affairs.



3. If the student is not satisfied with the results from the supervisor and wants the grievance to be considered further, the student will have an opportunity for appeal as follows:
  - (a) In the case of grievances concerning employees, policies, procedures, or programs of a nonacademic nature within a specific school or college, the student may appeal to the Dean with responsibility for the employee's unit and request a meeting in order to seek a resolution. This appeal must begin within ten (10) days after the employee's supervisor has completed consideration of the grievance and responded in writing to the student. A written reply from the Dean indicating the results of the meeting and including further action, if any, to be taken will be sent to the student within ten (10) days after consideration of the grievance. A copy of the appeal and the response from the Dean must be provided to the Associate Vice President of Human Resources and the Vice President for Student Affairs.

If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the Dean, the student may appeal in writing to the Provost with responsibility for the school or college and request a meeting. The appeal must begin within ten (10) days of the date the Dean has completed consideration of the grievance and responded in writing to the student. A written reply by the Provost indicating the results of the meeting and including further action, if any, to be taken will be sent to the student within ten (10) days after consideration of the grievance. The decision of the Provost with responsibility for the employee's unit will be the final University decision on the grievance. A copy of the appeal to the Provost and the Provost response will be copied to the Associate Vice President of Human Resources and the Vice President for Student Affairs.

Once the University grievance or appeal procedure has been exhausted, the student can seek a solution outside the University by filing a complaint with the Georgia Nonpublic Postsecondary Education Commission (GNPEC). The details for filing a complaint with the GNPEC are located on their website and require a specific form. The student can access <https://gnpec.georgia.gov/> and click on "complaint form" for this information.

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and program accreditors can be contacted to file a complaint if a student believes accrediting standards were violated or grievance procedures were unfair and applied inappropriately and inconsistently. The student can access SACSCOC at <https://sacscoc.org/?s=complaint> and click on "Complaint Procedures Against SACSCOC or Its Accredited Institutions" for more information. A listing of all University accreditors with contact information can be found in the Mercer University catalog. [Note: The procedures associated with the accrediting agencies are not intended to be used to involve the agency in disputes between individuals and member institutions, or cause the agency to interpose itself as a reviewing authority in individual matters of admission, grades, granting or transferability of credits, application of academic policies, fees or other financial matters, disciplinary matters or other contractual rights and obligations.]

- (b) In the case of grievances concerning employees, policies, procedures, or programs of a nonacademic nature outside of the administrative organization of a specific school or college, the student may appeal to the Vice President with responsibility for the employee's unit and request a meeting in order to seek a resolution. This appeal must begin within ten (10) days after the employee's supervisor has completed consideration of the grievance and responded in writing to the student. A written reply from the Vice President indicating the results of the meeting including further action, if any, to be taken will be sent to the student within ten (10) days after consideration of the grievance. The decision of the Vice President with responsibility for the employee's unit will be the final University decision on the grievance. A copy of the grievance and their response will be submitted to the Associate Vice President of Human Resources and the Vice President for Student Affairs.

Once the University grievance or appeal procedure has been exhausted, the student can seek a solution outside the University by filing a complaint with the Georgia Nonpublic Postsecondary Education Commission (GNPEC). The details for filing a complaint with the GNPEC are located on their website and require a specific form. The student can access <https://gnpec.georgia.gov/> and click on "complaint form" for this information.

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and program accreditors can be contacted to file a complaint if a student believes accrediting standards were violated or grievance procedures were unfair and applied inappropriately and inconsistently. The student can access SACSCOC at <https://sacscoc.org/?s=complaint> and click on “Complaint Procedures Against SACSCOC or Its Accredited Institutions” for more information. A listing of all University accreditors with contact information can be found in the Mercer University catalog. [Note: The procedures associated with the accrediting agencies are not intended to be used to involve the agency in disputes between individuals and member institutions, or cause the agency to interpose itself as a reviewing authority in individual matters of admission, grades, granting or transferability of credits, application of academic policies, fees or other financial matters, disciplinary matters or other contractual rights and obligations.]

The Dean of Students or student affairs designee on each campus serves as a resource for students seeking assistance with grievance procedures.

### Other Grievances

A number of specific grievance policies and procedures that are prescribed by law, accrediting body, or organization are available to students.

- Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Policy/Title IX (Contact Human Resources)
- Disability Policy and Grievance Procedure <http://studentaffairs.mercer.edu/disabilityservices> (Contact ACCESS and Accommodations)
- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) complaints are directed to the US Dept. of Education (Contact Office of the Registrar)
- Sexual Misconduct or Relationship Violence (Contact Title IX Coordinator)
- Accrediting bodies (Specific contact information for each accrediting body is listed in the Mercer Catalogs)

## Health and Welfare of Students, Mental and Physical

Mercer University recognizes that the challenges and stresses associated with attending college can be overwhelming at times. In order to provide confidential counseling, support, and guidance to students who seek assistance, Mercer University maintains counseling services on the Macon and Atlanta Campuses (both provide services to Regional Academic Center Students). However, when it is determined that a serious threat of harm exists for a student, either to themselves or to others, the University is obligated to take proactive action to address this threat.

The University considers any situation in which a student poses a risk for harm to self or others as a serious matter. In cases involving attempted suicide or other life-threatening behavior, the University’s first priority is to ensure the student’s safety and well-being. If you know that a student has or is attempting to harm himself/herself, immediately notify Mercer Police. The Dean of Students or Student Affairs Designee on each campus will then be contacted to evaluate the situation. At any point, Mercer Police and/or the Dean of Students or Student Affairs Designee may make the determination to notify the parents of a student if they believe a substantial health and safety risk exists. A student attempting suicide or exhibiting other life-threatening behavior will not be allowed to return to the University campus or the residence halls until he or she has received approval from the Dean of Students or Student Affairs Designee.

## Health Insurance

University policy mandates that all students enrolled in 3 or more hours (except those in regional academic centers) must maintain health insurance coverage. All International students must carry active health insurance regardless of hours enrolled or campus attended. Students are automatically charged by the University for health insurance when they register for classes. This charge can be removed by completing the online waiver form before the end of the waiver period. To complete the waiver process, go to <https://bursar.mercer.edu/studentinsurance/>. Students must complete the waiver before the stated deadline. Failure to complete this form before the deadline will result in insurance being purchased for you and charged to your account.

## Honor System

Procedures related to Honor Systems and Academic Integrity are outlined in the specific handbooks for each campus and can be found on the Provost's website at <https://provost.mercer.edu/office-of-the-provost/honor-system/>.

## Housing without Active Enrollment

Mercer University policy stipulates that individuals not registered in courses are ineligible to reside on campus or use the University's facilities or services. Individuals not registered for classes will be actively evicted from housing.

However, Mercer recognizes the need to offer a grace period to non-enrolled individuals who are actively seeking to address and correct reasonable financial or registration issues during the official add/drop period. Therefore, the following policy will apply:

1. The Office of the Bursar will notify the Office of Residence Life one day after add/drop of any non-enrolled individuals who have accrued charges for room and board but are not registered for courses during that term.
2. Residence Life will then contact each of these individuals and notify them (in person or by email notification) that they have 48 hours to correct their registration and/or financial obligations.
3. If the situation is not resolved at the end of the 48-hour period, these individuals will be required to immediately vacate their housing premises. Verification of resolution must be in writing from the office in question, or by direct phone call from that office, to the Office of Residence Life.

## Immunization Policy

The Mercer University Immunization Form is required. It must be completed and signed by the student and then returned to the Campus Health Center along with an official copy of the student's immunization (vaccine) record. Students are encouraged to keep a copy of the documents for their personal records.

All students born after 1956 must provide a statement of immunization against Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR), giving the month, day, and year of immunization. A statement of "up to date" is not sufficient. Two doses of Measles (Rubeola) vaccine, two doses of Mumps vaccine, and one dose of Rubella are required. Students must have been at least 12 months old when the first Measles dose was received

If a student is unable to provide dates of immunization to Measles, Mumps, and Rubella, he or she may document immunity by blood test, at the student's expense. If this testing shows no immunity to Measles, Mumps, or Rubella, the student may register following documentation of the first dose of MMR, with the second to follow in thirty (30) days, if required.

A completed Tuberculosis (TB) screening questionnaire is required of all new students (page 2 of the Mercer Immunization form). Students at risk for TB will be required to have a PPD skin test (Mantoux). The Tine Tuberculosis test is not acceptable. Students should be tested regardless of prior BCG vaccination. Any student with a positive skin test will be required to provide a report of a normal chest x-ray (done after the positive PPD) to be eligible to register. A physician should evaluate individuals with a positive tuberculosis skin test.

Do not assume that childhood immunizations are adequate; requirements have changed during the past several years. Medical facilities in the U.S. and in other countries are required to keep records of vaccinations. Additional sources of immunization information include doctors' offices, health departments, and schools. Students should make copies of the completed health form for their own files, and then mail/email/fax the original forms. Do not rely on health care providers, family members, or other colleges to mail the forms.

Exemptions from compliance with the immunization policy include:

1. Religious exemption: The student must provide a notarized letter from an official of the religion, such as an ordained minister or priest, affirming that the required immunizations are in conflict with the beliefs or practices of the religion. Then name of the organization must be specified in the letter, and the letter must be provided on the organization's letterhead.
2. Medical exemption: Must be written on office stationery, signed by a MD (not a relative of the student), and stamped with his/her office stamp. The letter should state the reason for the exemption, and whether the exemption is temporary or permanent.

Immunizations for the following diseases are recommended, but not mandatory: chickenpox (varicella), hepatitis A, hepatitis B, polio, and tetanus. The most recent tetanus booster should have been within the past ten (10) years. Immunization against meningococcal meningitis is recommended for college students.

Some academic programs have additional immunization requirements. Students are advised to check with their college or school program for any additional requirements. Forms and policies may be found at <https://campushealth.mercer.edu/immunization-and-health-forms/>.

## Information Technology Policy

The Mercer University Information Technology Policy (the “Policy”) contains Mercer’s philosophy and requirements governing use of its information technology resources by students, faculty, staff, and others who have been given authorization, either explicitly or implicitly, to access those resources. Mercer University expects each member of the community to use Mercer’s information technology resources, including connections to resources external to Mercer that are made possible by Mercer University’s information technology resources, responsibly, ethically, and in compliance with the Policy, relevant laws, and all contractual obligations to third parties. The use of Mercer University’s information technology resources is a privilege. If a member of the Mercer community fails to comply with this Policy or relevant laws and contractual obligations, that member’s privilege to access and use Mercer’s information technology resources may be revoked. The use of Mercer University’s information technology resources to send communications to Mercer or non-Mercer persons or entities typically identifies the sender as belonging to the Mercer University community. Each member of the community should, therefore, recognize that any such communication might reflect on how Mercer University is perceived by the Mercer community and the public at large.

By adopting the Policy, Mercer University recognizes that all members of the Mercer community are bound not only by the Policy, but also by local, state, and federal laws relating to electronic media, copyrights, privacy, and security. Other Mercer University policies that relate to this Policy and also apply to Mercer University students, faculty, and staff (collectively, the “community”) can be found in the Mercer University Student, Faculty, and Employee Handbooks. Each member of the Mercer University community is expected to be familiar with this and all other relevant policies. A complete copy of Mercer’s Information Technology Policy can be found at [http://it.mercer.edu/student/internet\\_network/it\\_access\\_and\\_use\\_policy.htm](http://it.mercer.edu/student/internet_network/it_access_and_use_policy.htm).

## Peer-to-Peer File Sharing

### Prohibition against Unauthorized Distribution of Copyrighted Material

Mercer University strictly prohibits any form of copyright infringement including the illegal uploading and downloading of copyrighted works through peer-to-peer (P2P) file sharing. Copyright infringement is the act of exercising, without permission or legal authority, one or more of the exclusive rights granted to the copyright owner under section 106 of the Copyright Act (Title 17 of the United States Code). These rights include the right to reproduce or distribute a copyrighted work. In the file-sharing context, downloading or uploading substantial parts of a copyrighted work without authority constitutes an infringement.

Penalties for copyright infringement include civil and criminal penalties. In general, anyone found liable for civil copyright infringement may be ordered to pay either actual damages or “statutory” damages affixed at not less than \$750 and not more than \$30,000 per work infringed. For “willful” infringement, a court may award up to \$150,000 per work infringed. A court can, in its discretion, also assess costs and attorneys’ fees. For details, see Title 17, United States Code, Section 504, 505.

Willful copyright infringement can also result in criminal penalties, including imprisonment of up to five years and fines of up to \$250,000 per offense.

For more information, please see the Web site of the U. S. Copyright Office at <https://www.copyright.gov/>, especially the FAQ’s at <https://www.copyright.gov/help/faq/index.html>.

In addition to the civil and criminal penalties outlined above, students, faculty, staff, and visitors who engage in illegal downloading or unauthorized distribution of copyrighted materials using the University’s information technology systems will be referred to the Office of Judicial Education or other appropriate authority.

## **Institutional Plans to Combat the Unauthorized Distribution of Copyrighted Material**

The [Mercer University Information Technology Access and Use Policy](#) describes the measures that the University has developed and implemented to effectively combat the unauthorized distribution of copyrighted material. These measures include the following:

- On an annual basis, enrolled students are notified by email of the institutional policies and sanctions related to the unauthorized distribution of copyrighted material. This notice includes the exact electronic address at which this information is posted and a statement that the University will provide a paper copy of this information on request.
- In order to use Mercer computing resources, all members of the University community endorse the Information Technology Access and Use Policy, which includes a section on copyright compliance. The Policy is included in numerous University publications, and links to the Policy are included in numerous departmental websites.
- Mercer Information Technology periodically briefs members of Student Government about copyright, illegal file sharing, and related issues.
- Mercer Information Technology leverages network equipment and software systems such as firewalls, intrusion detection devices, and bandwidth managers to block inbound and outbound P2P traffic.
- Mercer provides a timely response to all notices of copyright infringement under the Digital Millennium Copyright Act.

## **Alternatives to Illegal File Sharing**

There are a number of organizations that provide links to websites offering legal alternatives for viewing music, movies, and other copyrighted materials online. Some examples include:

- EDUCAUSE Legal Sources of Online Content (<http://www.educause.edu/legalcontent>)
- Recording Industry of America (RIAA) Legal Music Sites (<https://www.riaa.com/resources-learning/for-students-educators/>)
- Motion Picture Association of America (<http://www.mpaa.org/contentprotection/get-movies-tv-shows>)

## **Intellectual Property**

### **Policy on Inventions, Patents, and Licensing**

#### **Preamble and Objectives**

Mercer University is dedicated to teaching, research and the expansion of knowledge. Although the University does not undertake research or developmental work principally for the purpose of developing patents and commercial applications, patentable inventions sometimes result from the research activities carried out wholly or in part with University funds and facilities. It is the policy of the University to assure the utilization of such inventions for the common good and, where appropriate, to pursue patents and licenses to encourage their development and marketing.

Mercer University has established the following policies and procedures with respect to inventions, patents and licensing in order to:

- promote the University's academic policy of encouraging research and scholarship;
- serve the public interest by providing an organizational structure and procedures through which inventions which arise in the course of University research may be made available to the public through established channels of commerce;
- encourage, assist, and provide tangible rewards to members of the University community — faculty, staff, and students — who make inventions processed under this policy;
- establish principles and uniform procedures for determining the rights and obligations of the University, inventors, and research sponsors;
- enable the University to retain title to inventions resulting from federally sponsored research; and
- produce funds for further investigation and research and for the overall needs of the University.

#### **Ownership of Inventions**

- Inventions arising from research financed by the Government are controlled by the terms of the applicable grant or contract. Where the University is permitted to retain title to such inventions and chooses to do so, University patent policies will control.

- Inventions arising from research or other work sponsored by nongovernmental entities are controlled by the terms of the sponsored agreement, if applicable, and if not, by University patent policies.
- Inventions arising from research or other work conducted by University employees or students on their own time and without significant use of University funds or facilities shall be considered the sole property of the inventor and may be commercialized by the inventor at his or her own expense. However, by mutual agreement such inventions may be managed by the University under the terms of this policy. The University will not construe the payment of salary from unrestricted funds or the provision of office or library facilities as constituting significant use of University funds or facilities.
- Inventions resulting from research or other work conducted by University employees or students on University time or with significant use of University funds or facilities shall be considered the property of the University. Any income received by the University as a result of licensing or otherwise commercializing these inventions shall be shared with the inventor as provided below. If the University does not wish to undertake patenting and commercialization of such an invention, and if there are no restrictions by any outside sponsor, the University may release its proprietary interest to the inventor.
- Any use of the University's name in connection with the commercialization of an invention by an individual shall be approved in advance by the University.

#### Division of Income

- Any income resulting from inventions managed by the University under this policy shall be shared as follows:
  1. First \$10,000 of Net Income received:
    - (a) 75% to the inventor
    - (b) 15% to the inventor's College or School
    - (c) 10% to the University
  2. Net Income received above \$10,000:
    - (a) 50% to the inventor
    - (b) 25% to the inventor's College or School
    - (c) 25% to the University
- "Net Income" is defined as gross royalties and/or other receipts minus the costs incurred by the University for the patent application, interferences, development, licensing and patent enforcement.
- Co-inventors share the inventor's portion in proportions agreeable to themselves.
- The College or School share shall be administered by the Dean to support research programs in the inventor's department or division.
- Fifty percent (50%) of the University's share, after defrayment of patent-related costs not otherwise covered, shall be used to support, or offset the costs of, research in the inventor's College or School, with the advice and counsel of the Dean.

#### Disclosure

- Inventions arising in the course of sponsored projects should be promptly disclosed to the Office of the Senior Vice Provost for Research, with simultaneous disclosure to the principal investigator or project supervisor where applicable. The circumstances of the invention will be reviewed with those involved and the inventor will be notified in writing of the proposed disposition.
- Inventions falling within Section D of Article II above, or about which there is a doubt as to ownership, or which the inventor wishes to have managed by the University, should be promptly disclosed to the Office of the Senior Vice Provost for Research. Within six weeks of the receipt of the disclosure, the inventor will be notified in writing of the determination of ownership (if in doubt) and the proposed disposition.

#### Invention Management

- For all inventions managed by the University under this policy, the University will at no expense to the inventor make reasonable efforts to evaluate the interest of others in commercializing the invention, seek licenses and options for licenses, have applications for patents filed and prosecuted, and otherwise manage the inventions or arrange for their management by recognized patent management organizations.
- The University will normally evaluate potential commercial use of an invention prior to the filing of a patent application. Options to license and other contractual arrangements appropriate in the circumstances will normally be sought as early as possible as a validation of potential commercial use. If the University determines that neither commercial possibilities nor the potential contribution to the public good warrants

proceeding further, the invention will be returned to the inventor and shall belong to the inventor unless such action is precluded by prior agreement with sponsors.

- In licensing, sale or other disposition of rights to inventions, the University will seek to guard against repressive practices. Royalty rates shall be reasonable and consistent with the goal of effectively transferring technology in the public interest. Where feasible, the University will grant nonexclusive, reasonable royalty-bearing licenses to all qualified licensees. The University recognizes, however, that nonexclusive licensing may not always be effective in bringing the invention to the commercial market in a satisfactory manner, and thus may grant an exclusive license if it determines that such is required in the public interest to encourage the marketing and eventual public use of the invention. In all cases, the University shall reserve to itself a non-exclusive, royalty-free license to make or have made and to use the invention within Mercer University for its own purposes.
- In those cases where the University has obtained a patent without obligation to sponsors, if no arrangement has been made for commercial development within a reasonable period from the date of issuance of the patent, ownership of the patent will revert to the inventor upon request.

### Publication

Inventors should be aware that a publication disclosing the invention prior to the filing of a U. S. patent application is a bar to the grant of certain foreign patents and can bar the grant of a U. S. patent if the publication occurred a year prior to the filing date. Accordingly, the University may request a temporarily delay in a publication which discloses an invention to permit a U. S. patent application to be filed, but in no event longer than three months.

### Disputes

Any disagreement between an inventor and the Office of the Senior Vice Provost for Research concerning rights in an invention shall be resolved by the President, who may appoint an ad hoc committee to make findings of fact and recommendations to him.

### Revision or Termination

This policy may be changed or discontinued at any time by action of the Board of Trustees. Any such change or discontinuance shall not affect rights accrued prior to the date of such action.

### Patent Agreements

This policy, as amended from time to time, shall be deemed to be a condition of initial or continuing employment of every University employee and a condition of enrollment and attendance of every student who works on any research project under University control. All such employees and students will be expected, upon request, to sign agreements incorporating the terms of this policy. Failure to sign such agreements, however, shall not affect the applicability of the policy nor relieve any employee or student from the obligations imposed.

### Copyright Policy

Mercer University's academic mission is to teach, to learn, to create, to discover, to inspire, to empower, and to serve. This mission is best promoted by creating an intellectual environment that encourages and rewards creativity and innovation. Mercer supports the development, production, and dissemination of intellectual property by its faculty, staff, and students.

Mercer affirms its commitment to the personal ownership of original works of authorship by their individual creators, whether the creators work alone or with others, and whether they work privately or as members of the Mercer community (faculty, staff, and students). Accordingly, copyright to unpublished works is held by the author or creator, or heirs or assigns, unless a written transfer of copyright has been made to another party.

## **International Students Policy**

The Office of International Programs is an academic support unit of the University. Its mission is to advance global educational opportunities that inspire purposeful learning and engage Mercerians in communities worldwide. Mercer University's International Programs Office manages our traditional study abroad programs and services for international student on F-1 or J-1 visas, visiting scholars, and hosts a program for English language learners.

## Study Abroad

Information about study abroad opportunities and policies governing student eligibility and participation in study abroad may be found at the Mercer Abroad website: <http://www.mercerabroad.com>. To be eligible for study abroad, students must maintain a minimum of 2.5 GPA, have a clean judicial record, and a balanced student account. Programs exist in most countries around the world and for all majors, though specific choices may be limited. Contact the study abroad advisor for more details by emailing [studyabroad@mercer.edu](mailto:studyabroad@mercer.edu).

## International Students and Scholar Services

The ISSS office prepares international student for the visa application process, facilitates the student's introduction to campus, supports cultural learning, and advocates for student needs while on campus. A quick overview of services may be found on our website: <http://international.mercer.edu/international-student-and-scholar-services/>.

For information on the appropriate international student advisor, visit the staff contact page:

<http://international.mercer.edu/international-student-and-scholar-services/contact-us/>

## English Language Institute

The English Language Institute is located on the Atlanta campus. Students who enroll in this program have the opportunity to live on campus and interact with other Mercer students. For information on the program, or to support the program by volunteering as a conversation partner, contact us at [eli@mercer.edu](mailto:eli@mercer.edu). Website: [Http://international.mercer.edu](http://international.mercer.edu)

## Minors Policy

Mercer provides a variety of programs for minor children (defined as any individual under the age of 18), such as summer camps, after-school programs, and enrichment activities. The University recognizes it has a special duty of care and supervision when working with minors and is committed to providing a safe environment for all who participate in these programs. This Policy sets forth operational requirements to enhance the protection of Minors, including registration and approval of programs serving minors, background checks for individuals involved in programs serving minors, and mandatory training on how to recognize and report suspected child abuse. If you have any questions regarding this Policy, please refer to the appropriate Responsible Party in Section VIII of the Policy. All units on all campuses that host or support programs involving minors are responsible for reviewing and adhering to this policy. The full policy can be found at <https://policies.mercer.edu> under the General Policies heading.

## Missing Student Policy

### Reporting

If a member of the University community (faculty, staff, student, parent, alumni) has reason to believe that a student is missing, that community member will refer the case immediately to the Mercer Police Department. For regional academic center students, the community member may contact Mercer Police directly or the Center Coordinator who, in turn, must report the missing student to Mercer Police and the Regional Academic Center Director of Operations.

Mercer Police will work collaboratively with others to contact and locate the student. All reasonable efforts will be made to locate the student and determine his or her state of health and well-being. The efforts include, but are not limited to:

- Phone call to student
- Email to student through Mercer email account (or other known e-mail addresses)
- Messages through social networking websites if possible
- Contact with all professors to determine last day of attendance in each class
- Contact with Housing staff (Resident Advisor or Residence Life Coordinator) and roommate(s) if student is residential (Housing and/or Mercer Police will make a welfare entry into the student's room)

If the student is located through these attempts, a determination will be made regarding his or her health and well-being. If necessary, a referral to the Counseling Center, Health Services and other appropriate offices may be made at



that time. The Dean of Students or Student Affairs designee or Mercer Police will also encourage the student to contact the community member who initiated the search or follow up with that person directly.

### **Policy**

If the student is not located through the above measures and has been verified to be missing for more than 24 hours, then the following actions will be taken within the next 24 hours by Mercer Police (or the Director of Operations for RAC):

1. Notification will be made (where and when applicable and appropriate) to the appropriate Dean of Students or Student Affairs Designee for the particular college /campus in which the student is enrolled, the student's academic advisor, the counseling staff, and health center staff.
2. The Police and/or Dean of Students or Student Affairs Designee will make contact with the student's emergency contact and, for non-emancipated students under 18 years of age, a custodial parent or guardian. Students should register and continually update emergency contact information on MyMercer.

Students who reside in on-campus housing are also provided an opportunity to identify a confidential emergency contact individual during check-in. This person(s) will also be contacted within 24 hours after the student is determined to be missing unless the student is under 18 years of age and not emancipated, in which case a custodial parent or guardian will be notified as mandated by law.

Once notified, the parent/guardian/emergency contact person may need to work with Mercer Police to submit additional information with outside law enforcement agencies in order to expand the investigation.

### **Motorized Vehicle Policy**

Motorized vehicles and transportation, outside of authorized golf carts, maintenance equipment, and support mobility devices for disabled individuals, are not permitted on university sidewalks. Segways and hoverboards are expressly prohibited from the campus.

### **Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy and Procedure**

Students and employees alleging violation by a University employee or contractor of the University's Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy prohibiting harassment of or discrimination against any person because of race, color, national or ethnic origin, disability, marital status, veteran status, sex (including pregnancy, child birth or a medical condition related pregnancy or child birth), sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information, age or religion (except in limited circumstances where religious preference is permitted by law) that falls outside the jurisdiction of Title IX, should follow the reporting procedures outlined in the Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy.

To access the Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy in its entirety, please visit <https://hr.mercer.edu/policies/upload/NonDiscriminationPolicy.pdf>.

### **Parking and Traffic Regulations**

Mercer Police is responsible for parking enforcement at Mercer University. All vehicles on the Macon and Atlanta campuses as well as Regional Academic Centers must be registered each year and each vehicle must display a parking decal. The decals are free. Vehicles should be registered before the first day of class. Vehicles can be registered 24 hours a day, seven (7) days a week at Mercer Police. The tag number is necessary to obtain a decal. If the vehicle or the tag number changes, notify Mercer Police the next business day.

Mercer does not issue handicap access parking decals. Permanently or temporarily disabled persons who require handicap access must see their doctor about getting a permit issued by the State of Georgia. Application forms are available at the Mercer Police station. Only a law enforcement officer can authorize a handicap access space without a decal. Vehicles must be registered with Mercer Police even if the driver possesses a handicapped permit.

**ALL DECALS MUST BE PLACED ON THE LOWER FRONT WINDSHIELD ON THE DRIVER'S SIDE.**

Possession of a decal does not guarantee a parking space. The responsibility for locating a proper space rests with the driver, not the University. The lack of a parking space (i.e., being late for class or work, parking illegally for a short

time, leaving flashers on) are not valid excuses for parking illegally. The absence of a sign prohibiting parking does not mean drivers can park illegally.

More information on the parking system, tickets, and appeals is available from the departmental website at <http://police.mercer.edu/parking/>. Special parking brochures are available at Mercer Police.

## Religious Observance Policy

Mercer University is respectful of the religious practices of members of the student body. Students who will be absent from class for religious observances must confer with their instructor(s) regarding the date of the absence at the beginning of each semester or session, or at least two (2) weeks prior to the dates of the absence. The disposition of missed assignments will be arranged between instructor and student. If a mutually satisfactory solution is not reached, the right to establish a reasonable alternative is reserved by the instructor. Students who feel that their academic performance will be compromised by the alternative assignment/examination timetable may ask that the instructor's dean review the instructor's decision.

## Rights of Students

*Community of Respect* ensures certain rights of its members. The University values the following student's rights:

- A. Free inquiry, expression, and assembly as long as conducted in a manner that does not infringe upon the rights of others.
- B. Freedom from unreasonable invasion of the privacy of the individual's person, residence, papers, personal effects, and University records.
- C. Right to due process and equal protection under the University's judicial system.
- D. Freedom to pursue educational goals; the right to free exchange of ideas, thoughts, and viewpoints.
- E. Freedom of association for students who meet the University's standards for participation in co-curricular and extracurricular activities.

## Rights Pertaining to Educational Records

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords students at Mercer University certain rights with respect to their educational records. These rights include:

1. The right to inspect and review a student's educational records within 45 days of the day the Office of the Registrar receives a written request for access. The student should submit to the Registrar a written request that identifies the record(s) the student wishes to inspect. The Registrar will make arrangements for access and notify the student of the time and place where the records may be inspected. If the Registrar does not maintain the records, the student shall be advised of the correct official at the University to whom the request should be addressed.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's educational records if the student believes them to be inaccurate. The student may ask the University to amend a record that he/she believes is inaccurate. The student should write the Registrar, clearly identify the part of the record he/she wants changed, and specify why it is inaccurate. If the University decides not to amend the record as requested by the student, the Registrar (or another appropriate official, if the record is maintained by another office) will notify the student of the decision and advise the student of his or her right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the student when the student is notified of the right to a hearing.
3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's educational record, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A "school official" is a person employed by the University in an administrative, supervisory, academic, research, or support staff position (including law enforcement personnel and health staff); a person or company with whom the University has contracted (such as an attorney, auditor, or collection agent); a person serving on the Board of Trustees; or a student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a "legitimate educational interest" if the official needs to review an educational record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Another exception which permits disclosure without student consent is disclosure to officials of another school, school system, or institution of post-secondary education where a student seeks or intends to enroll. Upon the request of an institution in which

a student seeks or intends to enroll, the University will forward the student's education records to the requesting institution. Upon request, the student may obtain a copy of the record that was disclosed and have an opportunity for a hearing as provided above. As of January 3, 2012, the U.S. Department of Education's FERPA regulations expand the circumstances under which your education records and personally identifiable information (PII) contained in such records — including your Social Security Number, grades, or other private information — may be accessed without your consent. First, the U.S. Comptroller General, the U.S. Attorney General, the U.S. Secretary of Education, or state and local education authorities ("Federal and State Authorities") may allow access to your records and PII without your consent to any third party designated by a Federal or State Authority to evaluate a federal- or state-supported education program. The evaluation may relate to any program that is "principally engaged in the provision of education," such as early childhood education and job training, as well as any program that is administered by an education agency or institution. Second, Federal and State Authorities may allow access to your education records and PII without your consent to researchers performing certain types of studies, in certain cases even when we object to or do not request such research. Federal and State Authorities must obtain certain use-restriction and data security promises from the entities that they authorize to receive your PII, but the Authorities need not maintain direct control over such entities. In addition, in connection with Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems, State Authorities may collect, compile, permanently retain, and share without your consent PII from your education records, and they may track your participation in education and other programs by linking such PII to other personal information about you that they obtain from other Federal or State data sources, including workforce development, unemployment insurance, child welfare, juvenile justice, military service, and migrant student records systems.

4. The right of a currently enrolled student to request that his/her "directory information" not be released by Mercer University. The University at its discretion and without the written consent of the student may release "directory information" which includes the following items: student name, address, e-mail address, telephone number, date and place of birth, academic program, dates of attendance, degrees and honors received, most recent previous institution attended, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, and photographs or video images. A student request for non-disclosure of the above items may be completed on his or her MyMercer portal at the 'Student Privacy' tile then select 'Online Directory Privacy'.
5. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by Mercer University to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA are: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-4605.

## Service Animals and Emotional Support Animals

Mercer University is committed to maintaining a fair and respectful environment for living, working, and studying for all, including individuals with disabilities. To that end and in compliance with federal and state laws, the University has developed guidelines regarding Service Animals and Emotional Support Animals while on Mercer property.

The policy can be viewed in its entirety at <https://policies.mercer.edu/> under the General Policies heading.

## Sexual Misconduct (Title IX) Policy and Procedures

### INTRODUCTION

Mercer University is committed to providing a workplace and educational environment, as well as other benefits, programs, and activities that are free from sexual harassment. To ensure compliance with federal and state civil rights laws and regulations, and to affirm its commitment to promoting the goals of fairness and equity in all aspects of the educational and employment programs or activities, Mercer University has developed internal policy and procedures that provide a prompt, fair, and impartial process. This policy applies to all University students and employees, visitors, and individuals doing business with the University.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This Policy is not intended to infringe or restrict rights guaranteed by the United States Constitution including free speech under the First Amendment.

**All members of the University community are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that does not negatively affect an individual's school or work experience or the overall school environment, whether on University premises or at any off-campus location.**

### **TITLE IX COORDINATOR**

The University's Title IX Coordinator oversees implementation of Mercer University's Sexual Misconduct policy. The Title IX Coordinator has the primary responsibility for coordinating Mercer University's efforts related to the intake, investigation, resolution, and implementation of supportive measures to stop, remediate, and prevent sexual harassment misconduct, and retaliation prohibited under this policy.

**Sharon L. Stellato**  
**Title IX Coordinator**  
[Stellato\\_sl@mercer.edu](mailto:Stellato_sl@mercer.edu)  
[TitleIX@mercer.edu](mailto:TitleIX@mercer.edu)

### **Macon Campus**

315 Newton Chapel  
478-301-2788

### **Atlanta Campus**

217B Sheffield Hall  
678-547-6598

The Title IX Coordinator (and all employees associated with Title IX) act with independence and authority free from bias and conflicts of interest. The Title IX Coordinator oversees all resolutions under this policy and these procedures. Employees associated with Title IX are vetted and trained to ensure they are not biased for or against any party in a specific case, or for or against Complainants and/or Respondents, generally.

The Title IX Coordinator reports directly to the Vice President for Audit and Compliance. To raise a concern involving bias or conflict of interest by the Title IX Coordinator, or to report misconduct or discrimination by the Title IX Coordinator, contact the Vice President for Audit and Compliance, James Calhoun at [Calhoun\\_J@mercer.edu](mailto:Calhoun_J@mercer.edu). Concerns of bias or a potential conflict of interest by any other employee associated with Title IX should be reported with the Title IX Coordinator.

Individuals also have the right to file an external grievance with:

Office for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202-1100  
Customer Service Hotline #: (800) 421-3481  
Email: [OCR@ed.gov](mailto:OCR@ed.gov)  
Web: <http://www.ed.gov/ocr>

To access the Sexual Misconduct (Title IX) Policy and Procedure in its entirety, please visit the Title IX website at <https://titleix.mercer.edu/policy.cfm>.

## **Tobacco and Smoke-Free Environment Policy**

Mercer University is committed to the health and well-being of the members of its student body, faculty, and staff. The University not only has a vested interest in the vitality of its students and those who administer and operate the University's programs of education, research, and service, but also wishes to promote the advancement of health in general and the maintenance of a healthful environment. The University and its medical, nursing, and pharmacy and health science schools, moreover, have substantial commitments to health-related research and teaching.

The Surgeon General of the United States has determined that cigarette smoking is the largest preventable cause of illness and premature death in the United States; it is associated annually with the unnecessary deaths of thousands of

Americans. Research findings now indicate that users of smokeless tobacco and non-smokers who are regularly exposed to tobacco smoke are also at increased risk.

In response to these considerations, the University has adopted as its goal that of achieving an environment as close to tobacco-free as possible. The following guidelines are designed to achieve a relatively tobacco-free environment on the Mercer campuses:

- Smoking is prohibited in all indoor locations. All buildings on all campuses are tobacco and smoke-free. This includes vapor/electronic smoking devices.
- Smoking is prohibited within 25 feet of all building entrances, air intakes, and windows.
- Residence hall public spaces (lobbies, hallways, lounges, recreation areas, restrooms) and rooms are tobacco-free.
- Use of smokeless tobacco products is prohibited in all university facilities, except in individual residence hall rooms and apartments.

It is the responsibility of each member of the Mercer community to observe this Tobacco-Free Policy and these guidelines. This policy relies on the thoughtfulness, consideration, and cooperation of smokers and non-smokers for its success. Individuals who are smoking inside a building must be directed to the outdoors. Visitors must observe this Tobacco-Free Policy. Department heads, building stewards, and sponsors/hosts of University events are responsible for visitors' compliance with the University's Tobacco-Free Policy. The University expects a good faith, common sense, and courteous approach by students and employees in resolving conflicts within the requirements of this policy.

Violation of policies should be reported to Student Affairs for students and Human Resources for employees.

## **Voter Registration Requirements of the Higher Education Amendments**

Mercer provides each enrolled student the opportunity to apply to register to vote or to update his or her voter registration records at least once a year. Voter registration information is available at the following locations:

- Macon Campus: Tarver Library, the Office of the Vice President and Dean of Students, and the Access and Accommodation Office.
- Atlanta Campus: Swilley Library
- Regional Academic Centers: Program Coordinators' offices For further information on this amendment, contact Student Affairs at (478) 301-2685 (Macon campus), (678) 547-6821 (Atlanta campus), or (678) 547-6370 (Regional Academic Centers). Students with a disability may obtain information and assistance in filling out the cards from Access and Accommodation at (478) 301-2778 (Macon campus) or (678) 547-6823 (Atlanta campus). Students may also obtain voter registration applications at <http://www.statelocalgov.net/50states-secretary-state.cfm>. Notice regarding this information will be sent to each student during the fall and spring semesters of each academic year.

## Withdrawals, Administrative or Medical

The mental and physical welfare of a student can have a significant impact on his or her academic and developmental success in college. Mercer University provides qualified medical and mental health services for students through Mercer Campus Health and counseling services on the Macon and Atlanta main campuses. Under normal circumstances students may withdraw from classes through the eleventh week of fall or spring semester; course withdrawals are not permissible after this deadline. However, medical or psychological situations may arise that jeopardize a student’s ability to continue enrollment at the University. In such instances the student may request to be administratively withdrawn from the University. This request should be directed to the appropriate Student Affairs Designee on the campus or program at which the student is enrolled. The Student Affairs Designee will make a judgment about the need for an administrative medical withdrawal and once properly evaluated and approved, will implement the appropriate procedures for the withdrawal. Each course in which the student was enrolled will be assigned the grade of “W”. Appropriate medical documentation may be required to evaluate a request for withdrawal. Once a student has been administratively withdrawn from the University, he or she must present clear evidence of the remediation of the difficulties before he or she may be granted readmission to the University in any program. This evidence may include documentation from an appropriate physical or mental health professional about the treatment the student has received.

Absent exceptional circumstances documented by the Student Affairs Designee, all requests for withdrawals beginning the last week of classes through the end of the semester must be processed by the Appeals Committees chaired by the Director of the Office of the Bursar. For more information about administrative or medical withdrawals, contact the Office of Student Affairs at (478) 301-2685.

## The Mercer University Alma Mater

<b>Macon Campus and Macon Center</b>	<b>Atlanta Campus, Douglas Center, and Henry County Center</b>
On the city’s western border Reared against the sky Proudly stands our Alma Mater As the years roll by (Chorus) Forward ever be they watchword Conquer and prevail. Hail to thee, O Alma Mater! Mercer, Hail, all Hail! Cherished by thy sons and daughters Mem’ries sweet shall throng Round our hearts, O Alma Mater As we sing our song.	On the city’s eastern border Reared against the sky Proudly stands our Alma Mater As the years roll by (Chorus) Forward ever be they watchword Conquer and prevail. Hail to thee, O Alma Mater! Mercer, Hail, all Hail! Cherished by thy sons and daughters Mem’ries sweet shall throng Round our hearts, O Alma Mater As we sing our song.