



Merit University

Student Handbook

2026-2027

3699 Wilshire Blvd. Suite 970, Los Angeles, CA 90010
www.meritu.edu

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Message to Students

Dear Students,

Congratulations and welcome to the Merit University student body. We have prepared this Handbook for your convenience while you pursue your studies in higher education. The information we've gathered here is intended to supplement (and not replace) the more-detailed information contained in the MU *General Catalog*. We hope that it will highlight important items you need to know about and help you explore the Los Angeles Basin.

Keep in mind that we always hold an orientation meeting early in the academic quarter. We strongly encourage you to attend this gathering so that you will have a chance to meet the MU administrators, faculty, and staff and ask any questions you might have. A buffet luncheon will be provided after the session in a very informal atmosphere, so please don't miss this date.

The Office is open from 10:00AM to 7:00PM on Monday through Friday. If you need assistance, feel free to either drop in. Again, a cordial hello. We hope you enjoy your studies with us.

Sincerely,
Office of Student Affairs

Mission

The mission of Merit University is to provide diverse groups of foreign and domestic students with an affordable higher-education experience that integrates academic and professional goals with social development and community-building opportunities centered on Christian principles.

Institutional Objectives

Merit University strives to provide an attractive learning environment, support services, staff and faculty, to enable students to:

- Demonstrate proficiency in core business knowledge and integrative decision-making, supported by an affordable and accessible graduate education.
- Develop advanced critical thinking, analytical, and problem-solving skills through high-quality instruction and faculty engagement.
- Benefit from effective student support services that enhance academic success, personal development, and engagement within the university community.
- Demonstrate career readiness and professional advancement through applied knowledge, professional skills, and effective communication in diverse business environments.
- Achieve program learning outcomes that reflect continuous growth in knowledge, skills, and professional competencies.
- Exhibit ethical judgment, global awareness, and respect for diverse perspectives within a Christ-centered, inclusive academic community.

Faith Statement

MU subscribes to the following Faith Statement:

1. We affirm that the Bible is the inspired, infallible, and authoritative Word of God, perfectly preserved in its original manuscripts and sufficient to guide faith and practice. God is the source of all truth, and all academic pursuits are enriched by a reverence for divine wisdom.
2. We believe in one eternal God, Creator of heaven and earth, who exists in three persons - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit- one in essence, power, and glory.
3. We believe that all people are created in the image of God with inherent dignity, purpose, and value—regardless of nationality, ethnicity, or belief.
4. We believe that humanity, though created good, fell into sin through disobedience and is in need of redemption. We believe that salvation is entirely by the grace of God and is a gift received through faith alone in Jesus Christ.
5. Christ's life is the model for leadership, calling us to serve others with humility, integrity, and compassion and to seek justice and mercy in all our dealings
6. Education is a form of stewardship, equipping students to develop their God-given talents and resources for the common good, moral leadership, and global service.
7. We believe in the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ as the first fruits of those who have died, the return of Jesus Christ, and the final judgment. The redeemed will enjoy eternal life in the presence of God, and the unredeemed will face eternal separation.

University and Its Settings

MU offers many specialized learning opportunities, such as small classes, guest speakers, field trips, and a well-equipped University library.

Our faculty is excellent. Faculty members are well educated and excited about making a difference in the lives of their students. All faculty and staff are ready for discussion and counseling. Do not hesitate to ask your professors to clarify points they have made. If you are having problems in a course for any reason, feel free to contact the professor, the Director of your program, or any member of administrator or staff.

We are proud of our students. Our graduates have gone on to obtain excellent jobs and hold leadership positions in the work world. With your help, we can continue our quest to create new leaders for the next generation.

Approvals

BPPE Licensed

Merit University (MU) is a private institution and is licensed to operate by the Bureau. Approval to operate means compliance with state standards. The institution or its educational programs are NOT endorsed by the Bureau and the Bureau's approval does NOT mean the institution exceeds minimum state standards.

Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education

Physical Address: 1747 N. Market Blvd. Ste225, Sacramento California, 95834

Mailing address: P. O. Box 980818, West Sacramento, CA 95798-0818

Web: www.bppe.ca.gov

Email: bppe@dca.ca.gov

Telephone: (916) 574-8900

Fax: (916) 263-1897

Administrative Policies

STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

Merit University (MU) does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity, pregnancy, physical or mental disability, medical condition, ancestry, marital status, age, sexual orientation, citizenship, or service in the uniformed services. The University also prohibits sexual harassment. This nondiscrimination policy covers admission, access, and treatment in university programs and activities. Inquiries concerning the application of Title IX of the Educational Amendment of 1972 and other non-discriminatory statutes should be directed to the Dean of Academic Affairs for assessment of such matters.

STATEMENT OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Members of the university community are expected to exercise good judgment, honesty, and high ethical standards in all business transactions and have an obligation to conduct business within the guidelines that prohibit actual or potential conflicts of interest. The faculty and staff members should deal with suppliers, clients, students, contractors, government agencies, and all others that have a relationship with the university on the sole basis of what is in the best interest of the university without consideration of personal gain.

This policy establishes the framework within which the university wishes to operate. The purpose of these guidelines is to provide a general direction so that members of the university community can seek further clarification on issues related to the subject of acceptable standards of operation. Members should contact the president of the university for more information or questions about conflicts of interest. It is possible that the opinion of the university's attorney may be sought for clarification.

An actual or potential conflict of interest may occur when a member of the university community is in a position to influence a decision that may result in personal gain for that person or for a relative as a result of the university's business dealings. For the purpose of this policy, a relative is any person who is related to the employee by blood or marriage, for example the spouse, child, step-child, parent, step-parent, parent-in-law, parent's siblings, sibling's child or step-child, niece, nephew, first cousin, and those whose relationship with the colleague is similar to that of persons who are related by blood or marriage.

No "presumption of guilt" is created by the mere existence of a relationship with outside firms. However, if members of the university community have any influence on transactions involving purchases, contracts, or leases, it is imperative that they disclose the information, as soon as possible, to the appropriate party mentioned above to the existence of any actual or potential conflicts of interest so that safeguards can be established to protect all parties.

Personal gain may result not only in cases where a colleague or relative has significant ownership in a firm with which the university is doing business, but also when a member of the university community or a relative receives any cash, a gift (including tickets) of substantial value (defined as greater than or equal to \$50), or special consideration as a result of any transaction or business dealings involving the university.

The president of the university has the ultimate authority and responsibility to determine the application of this policy and the implementation of steps to be taken to correct a situation deemed not in the best interests of the university, including, if appropriate, a recommendation for disciplinary action or discharge.

Members of the university community to whom this policy applies will be given a copy of the policy and will be required to sign a disclosure statement at the time of hire. Certain key personnel will be required to sign a disclosure form on an annual basis.

STATEMENT OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Merit University adheres strictly to a policy of complete academic freedom. Instructors at MU are encouraged to present a variety of perspectives on their subjects. Students at MU are encouraged to think and to question, challenge, and respond. Faculty and students at MU are free to examine all pertinent data, question all ideas as presented, and be guided by evidence.

FRAUD AND ABUSE

The University does not engage in fraud, abuse, or any practices designed to deceive students. All marketing materials, admissions processes, academic policies, financial information, and student services are presented accurately and consistently with regulatory requirements. Faculty and staff receive training to ensure that communications with students remain truthful, clear, and compliant with federal and state regulations. This commitment aligns with Merit University's mission to provide affordable, ethical, and student-centered education to a diverse international and domestic student body.

INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY POLICY

As a Christian-based institution of higher education, Merit University recognizes integrity as a fundamental institutional value. The University and its employees, faculty, administrators, and trustees are committed to carrying out their responsibilities in a manner that reflects sound academic and administrative practices. All University personnel shall demonstrate honest and faithful compliance with applicable laws, regulations, accreditation requirements, and institutional policies. Merit University and all members of its community share responsibility for maintaining and promoting a culture of integrity throughout the institution.

Academic Information

REGISTRATION AND ENROLLMENT

Following acceptance for admission to the university, students will register for a program of study. Registration materials are available in the Registrar's Office.

Formal enrollment in class is complete only when the student's name appears on the Class Roll Sheet. Once enrolled, students may drop or add a class only by means of an official Change of Program form. Any class dropped or added requires confirmation by the instructor and must be recorded in the Registrar's Office. A class not officially dropped will result in an F grade; a class not officially added receives no credit.

Quarter Units of Credit

Academic work at Merit University is organized by quarters, each of which is eleven (11) weeks in length. In general, one quarter unit is equal to eleven (11) contact hours of lecture, or thirty (30) contact hours of field-based activities. Courses usually carry four (4) units of credit.

Study Loads

A full-time academic load in a master's degree program is eight (8) units or more per quarter. Students may enroll for more than twelve (12) units with approval from the Dean of Academic Affairs.

Add / Drop Policy

Students may add or drop courses through the third week of the quarter. Students must request these changes by submitting an Add / Drop Form to the registrar.

Minimum Unit Requirements for Degrees

Minimum unit requirement for a Master's degree is sixty (60) units.

Attendance Policy

Regular attendance is expected of every student. A student may be dropped from class when, in the judgment of the instructor, the student cannot benefit from further instruction.

A student who has been absent due to illness or medical appointment must explain the absence directly to the instructor. The university requires that any student who is absent for a total of three (3) class sessions in any subject shall be dropped unless the student has made prior arrangements.

Attendance without Official Enrollment: Students will not be permitted to attend classes in which they are not officially enrolled.

All class sessions will be held at 3699 Wilshire Blvd. Suite 970, Los Angeles, CA 90010. Also, all class instructions will be taught in English only.

GRADING SYSTEM: DEFINITION OF GRADES AND CODES

Standard letter grades (A, B, C, D, and F) are used for graduate programs. Only these letter grades are used on transcripts and in computing grade point averages. Instructors may use plus (+) or minus (-), but such notations are not used in final GPA computations.

The following table is provided as a general reference:

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Score</i>	<i>Grade Explanation</i>	<i>Grade Point</i>
A	100-90	Excellent	4.00
B	89-80	Good	3.00
C	79-70	Average	2.00
D	69-60	Unsatisfactory	1.00
F	59-0	Failing	0
CR		Credit	Credit
NC		No Credit	N/A
IN		Incomplete	N/A
W		Withdrawal	N/A

Credit (CR)

Credit is used to denote "pass with credit" when no letter grade is given. It is assigned to a grade of C or better for certificate program students and a grade of B or better for graduate students. CR grades are not included in the calculation of the GPA.

No Credit (NC)

No Credit is used to denote "no credit" when no letter grade is given. NC grades are not included in the calculation of the GPA.

Incomplete (IN)

An Incomplete grade is an interim grade designed for students who have serious and compelling circumstances beyond their control occurring within the last two weeks of the quarter preventing completion of the course work.

An Incomplete (IN) must be removed within the next quarter. Failure to comply will result in an F grade and will remain on the student's permanent record. An Incomplete (IN) is not used in calculating the GPA.

Withdrawal (W)

Withdrawal is a grade for students who may wish to change their schedule by dropping a course with the permission of the Dean of Academic Affairs. These grades are not calculated in the GPA but will be considered credits attempted if the student has incurred a financial obligation for the quarter.

Repeat a Course (R)

Repeat a Course is a designated code following the earned grade. Students can repeat only once any course for which they have received a grade or have withdrawn from, prior to completion. Only the higher grade is calculated in the GPA. Students will not receive cumulative earned credit for a repeated course. However, both courses will be considered credit hours attempted for the purpose of determining successful course completion percentages.

Credit by Challenge Examination (CE)

Graduate students in good standing and with the appropriate background may petition to take courses for credit by challenge examinations. Eligible students must be registered for full-time status. Graduate students must have completed two graduate courses and may challenge a maximum of two graduate courses.

Credit earned by challenge examinations may be applied toward the minimum course requirements for the master's degree. The passing mark for credit by examination at the undergraduate level is C and the graduate level is B. Credits earned will be posted on the transcript as CR, rather than the letter grade, and not calculated in the student's GPA. If a student does not pass the challenge examination, the code "NC" will be entered on the transcript. Requests for challenge examinations may be made through the Dean of Academic Affairs' Office.

Students may challenge a particular course only once and may not take a challenge examination for courses already taken or attempted at the university. The credit by challenge examination fee is \$450 per course.

Credit for Prior Experiential Learning (CX)

Graduate students in good standing and with the appropriate background may petition to earn degree credit for prior experiential learning. Eligible students must be registered for full-time status.

Petitioning students must identify the courses for which credit is sought and document in writing how the prior experiential learning is equivalent to standards in higher education and meets curricular criteria. Graduate students must have completed two graduate courses and may receive prior experiential learning credit for a maximum of two graduate courses.

Credits earned through petitions for prior experiential learning may be applied toward the minimum course requirements for the master's degrees. Credits earned will be posted on the transcript as CR, rather than the letter grade, and not calculated in the student's GPA.

Forms requesting prior experiential learning credit may be requested through the Dean of Academic Affairs' Office. The Credit for Prior Experiential Learning Fee per course is \$100.

GRADE POINT AVERAGE (GPA)

The grade point average (GPA) for the quarter is determined by multiplying the number of credit hours for each course by the number of points identified for each grade outlined above and dividing by the total number of units for the quarter.

GRADE CHANGES

Grades assigned by instructors must conform to individual policies as stated in the course syllabus. A grade submitted by an instructor is considered final and may be changed only for the following reasons: (1) error in recording a score for a student product (test, quiz, paper, etc.); (2) miscalculation of a score, including the cumulative score for a quarter; and (3) omission from consideration of valid student products that were submitted on time.

No other reasons constitute a basis for a request for a grade change.

All requests for grade changes must be submitted to the Registrar's Office by the instructor within two weeks following the date of issuance of the grade in question. Under no condition will a grade change be permitted after a degree has been awarded.

TRANSFER OF CREDITS POLICY

Merit University (MU) accepts transfer credit for coursework completed at institutions that are approved by the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education, accredited public or private institutions recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, or other institutions of higher learning, including foreign institutions.

The University evaluates each course individually to determine if it is equivalent to courses in MU's graduate programs. Only courses with grades of **A** or **B** are eligible for transfer credit. MU does not have articulation or transfer agreements with any other college or university.

At the graduate level, MU accepts a **maximum of 12 quarter units** for transfer credit. Students requesting transfer credit must submit a formal request that includes:

- A list of MU courses for which transfer credit is requested;
- Official transcripts showing courses completed at other institutions; and
- Course descriptions and syllabi or catalog outlines.

It is the student's responsibility to become familiar with the MU program requirements, as described in the current catalog, and to initiate the transfer process.

NOTICE CONCERNING TRANSFERABILITY OF CREDITS AND CREDENTIALS EARNED AT OUR INSTITUTION

The transferability of credits you earn at Merit University is at the complete discretion of the institution to which you may seek to transfer. Acceptance of the degree or certificate you earn in the educational program is also at the complete discretion of the institution to which you may seek to transfer. If the credits, degree, or certificate that you earn at this institution are not accepted at the institution to which you seek to transfer, you may be required to repeat some or all of your coursework at that institution. For this reason, you should make certain that your attendance at this institution will meet your educational goals. This may include contacting an institution to which you may seek to transfer after attending Merit University to determine if your credits, degree, or certificate will transfer.

STUDENTS TRANSFERRING TO ANOTHER UNIVERSITY

The transferability of credits earned at MU to another institution is determined solely by the receiving institution. Acceptance of degrees or certificates earned at MU is also at the discretion of the other institution. Students should verify with prospective institutions whether MU credits, degrees, or certificates will be accepted before enrollment.

TRANSCRIPTS OF MU COURSES

The Registrar's Office maintains all official transcripts, which are issued only at the written request of the student. Three working days should be allowed for processing of official transcripts. Exceptions to this rule are covered under Student Records. Requests for transcripts may be submitted either in person, by fax, or by mail. No telephone requests for transcripts are accepted. Copies of transcripts for work taken at other institutions will not be issued.

Official transcripts bear the institutional seal and the signature of the University Registrar.

STANDARDS OF SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS (SAP)

Merit University requires all students to maintain the following standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) in order to progress satisfactorily through an educational program and graduate.

Maximum Program Length

All students must complete their program within the Maximum Time Frame (MTF). If a student cannot complete the program within the Maximum Time Frame (MTF), the student will be dismissed.

Graduate Degree Programs	Units Required for Graduation	Standard Program Length	Maximum Time Frame (MTF)
Master of Business Administration	60	2.5 years / 8 quarters	4 Years
Master of Science in Management	60	2.5 years / 8 quarters	4 Years

Evaluation

The university conducts quarterly evaluations of student progress, taking into consideration the minimum GPA allowable, the minimum successful units completed (% of courses attempted), and the percent of maximum time frame allowable. Students who complete their programs in a shorter time frame are subject to the same criteria based on the percentages of the maximum time frame allowable.

The following Standards of Satisfactory Progress apply to all graduate students in the degree programs. Students must meet the minimum standards set forth below, or they shall be deemed to be out of compliance in meeting the Standards of Satisfactory Progress criteria.

Maximum Time Frame and Successful Course Completion

Master's Degree:

Required Evaluation Points*	Minimum GPA	Minimum Successful Course Completion (% of Courses Attempted)	Maximum Time Frame (MTF)
25%	2.25	55%	4 years
50%	2.50	60%	
100%	3.00	67%	

* Based upon maximum time frame.

Minimum Academic Achievement

Master's Degree: Students must achieve cumulative grade point averages (CGPAs) of the following: 2.25 at 25% of the maximum time frame; 2.5 at the midpoint of the maximum time frame; and a 3.0 at the maximum time frame. A student, whose CGPA is below 2.5 at 50% of the maximum time frame, is not eligible for probation and will be suspended for one quarter. Failure to maintain 3.0 for any quarter will result in being placed on probation.

The Effect on SAP for "W" Withdraw and "I" Incomplete Grades

All courses for which students receive a grade, whether passing or failing, a withdrawal (W), or an incomplete (I), are counted in determining hours attempted for the purposes of establishing SAP under the Maximum Timeframe criterion. All courses for which students receive a grade will be included when calculating students' GPA, except that a withdrawal (W), or an Incomplete (I), will not be included in determining students' cumulative GPA.

The Effect on SAP for Repeated Courses

Both the grade for the failed course and the repeated course will appear on the transcript but only the higher grade will be used in calculating CGPA. The original course and repeated course credits are included in the maximum timeframe calculation.

The Effect on SAP for Non-Punitive Grades and Non-Credit or Remedial Courses

Audited courses and Pass/No Pass courses count as credits attempted for purposes of calculating the student's CGPA. The corresponding grades will not count toward the student's CGPA. Non-credit or remedial course credits are not used in the calculation of CGPA.

The Effect on SAP for Extended-Enrollment Status

MU does not offer extended-enrollment status.

The Effect on SAP when Student Changes Programs

If a student is readmitted into MU, changes program of study, the credits that are applicable to the student's current program of study will be included in determining the student's satisfactory academic progress.

The Effect on SAP when Earning an Additional Credential

A student who completes a program at MU and enrolls in an additional program at the university may have the ability to transfer units from the previously completed program into the new enrolled program upon evaluation. All transferred coursework will be counted when calculating the student's CGPA and determining the maximum time frame.

The Effect on SAP when a Student Transfers to the University from another Postsecondary Institution

If a student transfers to the University from another postsecondary institution, the credits that were accepted by MU will count as credits attempted and completed for purposes of calculating the student's CGPA. The corresponding grades will not count toward the student's CGPA.

MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES

The Dean of Academic Affairs may waive the Standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress for circumstances of personal illness, unusual family responsibilities, military service, unexpected consequences arising in their homeland, or other significant occurrences beyond the control of the students. Students must document these circumstances to demonstrate that they have an adverse impact on their performance. No waivers will be provided for graduation requirements.

WARNING STATUS

Students who do not meet the SAP Minimum Standards will receive written notification stating that he or she is being placed on Warning. A student on Warning who brings their CGPA and completion rate up to SAP standards by the end of the next term is removed from Warning. A student who fails to establish SAP by the end of the next evaluation period will be withdrawn.

APPEALS AND PROBATION

A student, who wishes to appeal a determination that he/she is not making satisfactory academic progress due to mitigating circumstances, may submit a written appeal to the Dean of Academic Affairs for review. The written appeal should include a detailed explanation and documentation of the current academic status of the student, mitigating circumstances that led to the student's current academic status, how the student's situation has changed, and the student's plan for achieving the required minimum standards of satisfactory academic progress.

The Dean of Academic Affairs is responsible for determining the appropriateness of the mitigating circumstances regarding severity, timeliness and the student's ability to avoid the circumstances. The result of the appeal (granted or denied) will be provided to the student and documented in the student's academic file. If the appeal is granted, the Dean of Academic Affairs will outline the requirements of academic plan that the student must follow. The terms of the academic plan must ensure the student will be able to complete the program within the maximum timeframe. If the student agrees to the academic plan, the student is placed on probation and allowed to continue at the university.

At the end of the probation period, the student's progress will be evaluated based on the academic plan. If the student is meeting the SAP standards, or he/she has met the requirements of the academic plan, the student will be eligible to remain at the university. If the student fails to meet the expectations of the academic plan at the end of the probationary period, the student will be expelled.

DISMISSAL

Students who have been dismissed due to the failure to maintain the academic minimum outlined above may reapply for admission after one quarter. A meeting will be scheduled between the Dean of Academic Affairs and the student for reapplying to determine whether the student has the academic ability and desire to successfully continue in the program. When a student receives a written dismissal notice from the school after instruction has begun, the student will receive a pro-rata refund for the unused portion of the tuition and other refundable charges if the student has completed 60% or less of the program.

READMISSION

Students who have been dismissed or expelled from the university must wait one quarter before applying for readmission and must submit a Petition for Readmission to the Dean of Academic Affairs. The Petition must include the records of any academic work successfully completed at other institutions and present compelling reasons for reinstatement, which include the ability to maintain the SAP standards. The Dean of Academic Affairs will notify the students in writing concerning their readmission. Students who are readmitted for enrollment will be placed on an Academic Plan and be required to meet the SAP standards. A student on Warning or Probation, who improves their CGPA and completion rate up to SAP standards by the end of the next term, will be eliminated from Warning/Probation status.

REINSTATEMENT

Students who leave the university without filing a Request for Leave of Absence will not be automatically reinstated. Students must file a Petition for Readmission to a degree program, which have the recommendations of the Dean of Academic Affairs. The petition must be submitted to the Admissions Office. Upon reinstatement, students will be subjected to all of the current requirements for the degree effective from the time of reinstatement.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Students, in good standing and making satisfactory progress towards a degree, who must interrupt studies for compelling reasons (e.g. which may include but not be limited to personal illness, unusual family responsibilities, military service, and unexpected consequences arising in their homeland.) must file a Request for Leave of Absence, usually not to exceed four (4) quarters. Students must file this request with the Registrar's Office and have approval from the Dean of Academic Affairs.

During the leave of absence, students are not entitled to assistance from the faculty or allowed to use university facilities. If granted, the leave is recorded on the student's transcripts. The period of leave is not counted in the time allowed for the completion of degree requirements.

Students who do not return to enrolled status at the end of the approved leave of absence are no longer considered to be pursuing a degree. Students who fail to apply for a Request for Leave of Absence or for whom a leave has been denied or has expired should refer to Readmission.

WITHDRAWAL FROM COURSES

Students should review and select classes carefully with their advisers and avail themselves of college counseling services before making a decision to withdraw from classes. Students may drop classes without academic penalty through the fifth week of classes. Due to unforeseen circumstances, students may withdraw from classes from the sixth week through the ninth week of classes and receive a grade of Withdrawal (W) with permission from the Dean of Academic Affairs. After the tenth week of class, permission will not be granted for a student to withdraw, a letter grade of F or Incomplete (IN) will be assigned to the student.

CLEARANCE FOR GRADUATION

Graduation candidates for the Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree and the Master of Science in Management (MSM) degree shall have:

1. Completed and submitted the application for graduation to Registrar's Office. The application form for graduation can be obtained from Registrar's Office.
2. Settled all financial obligations with the university. Any outstanding balance and tuition fees must be paid prior to graduation.
3. Successfully completed all degree requirements as below.

The Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree is conferred after satisfactory completion of sixty (60) quarter units. The Cumulative Grade Point Average for the degree must be a minimum of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. Students, who have completed their bachelor's degree without the foundation courses (12 units) in accounting (4 units), economics (4 units), and business management (4 units), must complete the three courses in addition to the 60 units of degree requirements.

The Master of Science in Management (MSM) degree is conferred after satisfactory completion of sixty (60) quarter units. The Cumulative Grade Point Average for the degree must be a minimum of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. Students, who have completed their bachelor's degree without the foundation courses (12 units) in accounting (4 units), economics (4 units), and business management (4 units), must complete the three courses in addition to the 60 units of degree requirements.

LEARNING METHOD OPTIONS

The courses in the Master's Degree Programs at Merit University are taught either in a traditional on-campus format or via a hybrid format which features both on-campus and online aspects.

Students may select either of the available learning formats for the partial program or may request alternate formats for certain courses as the student progresses through the program (depending on availability).

Traditional On-Campus Format

The weekly on-campus format requires attendance in the physical classroom once per week per course.

The class session will comprise a discussion and lecture by the instructor on the topic for that week and question-and-answer opportunities for students to relate problems encountered in their understanding of assigned readings. The instructor will distribute many current handouts for students, which illustrate the most recent analyses of contemporary problems. Following the completion of the discussion of key concepts, the class will be devoted to a case analysis. The purpose of the chosen cases is to illustrate how various concepts shape decisions on real-world problems. The instruction methods will help students apply their knowledge to real-world-based situations through in-class activities and case studies.

Equipment to be used: Faculty will use computer presentations in the classroom to aid student learning. Students will be expected to make use of the Internet and the library. Required textbook and/or other materials used will be listed on the course syllabus. Students can check out laptops by providing their photo identification cards.

Hybrid / Distance Education Format

Students enrolled in the hybrid version of Master's Degree Programs will participate in their courses both online and on-campus. Students will have access to their online courses via the student portal where students participate in online discussions and submit course assignments. Students participating in this format are required to take part in weekly online discussion boards and submit all assignments on the portal. Online academic work is organized by quarters, each of which is eleven (11) weeks in length. Seven days will elapse between the institution's receipt of student lessons, projects, or dissertations and the institution's mailing of its response or evaluation.

The online portion of the hybrid format and related tutorials are accessible via the university's student portal: <https://merituniv.populiweb.com/>. The portal is accessible to students using a username and a password, which is distributed during New Student Orientation.

DISTANCE EDUCATION POLICY

Distance education at Merit University is defined as a formal educational process in which the majority of instructional interaction occurs when the student and instructor are not in the same place. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous. This policy shall apply to all credit-bearing courses and programs offered through distance education by Merit University. The technologies may include the internet for using classroom management platforms and video conferences using Zoom.

1. Faculty has a collective responsibility to ensure the academic quality and integrity of the University's courses, programs, and degrees. This responsibility extends to those courses and programs offered through distance education.
2. Faculty and students have a right to know the modes of delivery and technological requirements of each course, program, and degree offered by the university. Students shall have access to this information before enrolling in a course or program.
3. Distance education programs and courses shall be consistent with the educational mission of the University.
4. Courses, which are offered as distance education shall provide the opportunity for substantial, personal, and timely interactions between faculty and students.
5. Students in the distance education program shall have adequate access to library and student services.
6. The university shall provide appropriate support services to faculty who teach distance education courses.
7. Distance education program at the university is an optional mode of instruction. Nothing in this policy shall imply that distance education is a preferred or required mode of instruction in the school curriculum.

The Dean of Academic Affairs and Management Information Systems (MIS) Advisor have the responsibility for and exercises oversight over the program, ensuring both the rigor of the courses and the quality of instruction. This includes:

- The selection and evaluation of formally approved adjunct faculty.
- Ensuring that the technology used suits the nature and objectives of the distance education program.
- Ensuring the currency of materials, courses, and program.
- Ensuring the integrity of student work and the credibility of the degrees and credits the university awards. It is the responsibility of the dean of academic to ensure that reasonable safeguards are in place to prevent academic dishonesty.
- Ownership of materials, faculty compensation, and copyright issues shall be agreed upon by the instructor and the university prior to the initial offering of a course.
- No individual, program, or department shall agree in a contract with any private or public entity to deliver distance education courses or programs on behalf of the university without prior approval from the university.

The university shall maintain clear standards for satisfactory academic progress. The university shall ensure the completion of student evaluation of learning outcomes by faculty, which are appropriate for use with the distance education methods used, and evaluated by faculty.

Distance Education Library and Learning Resources

MU provides online library resources through the Library and Information Resources Network (LIRN). The program administrators shall ensure that:

- 1) Students have access to the LIRN library resources 24/7.
- 2) Students have sufficient library resources to meet the instructional needs for students and instructors.
- 3) Students are provided with an adequate means for developing the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to use effectively any technology required for distance education courses.

Distance Education Student Services

The program administrators shall ensure that:

- 1) Students are provided with accurate and timely information about the university, its distance education courses and programs, costs, and related policies and requirements.
- 2) Students are provided with necessary technical support to resolve hardware and software problems encountered while enrolled in distance education courses.
- 3) Students are provided with adequate access to the range of student services including enrollment/registration, academic advising, tutoring, career counseling and placement, and personal counseling.
- 4) Students are provided with an adequate means for resolving student complaints and grievances.
- 5) Students are provided with meaningful interaction with faculty who are qualified to teach using distance education methods.

Distance Education Technology Support

Merit University makes sure about technology support as follows:

- 1) The university assesses each student, prior to admission, in order to determine whether each student has the skills and competencies to succeed in a distance education environment.
- 2) The university shall provide adequate support services for the instructor and students participating in distance education courses, including necessary equipment, personnel and training.
- 3) The Management Information Systems (MIS) Advisor handles administrative systems, equipment maintenance and general user support.
- 4) The Academic Dean also handles faculty support including instructional applications.
- 5) Personal technology support is provided via zoom, telephone, or email (zoom and/or Populi in addition).

Online (Distance Education) Student Training

The Online (Distance Education) student training is accessible via the university's student portal: <https://merituniv.populiweb.com/>. The portal is accessible to students using a username and a password, which is distributed during New Student Orientation. The Online (Distance Education) student training is listed as MU102 Online (Distance Education) Student Training in Populi.

Distance Education Student Identity Verification

Merit University ensures that the student who registers for a distance education course is the same student who participates, completes assignments, and receives credit. All students access courses through **Populi** using a unique username and password, which must be kept confidential. Additional verification may include **proctored exams** or other approved technologies. Students must provide accurate personal information and are notified at registration of any fees associated with identity verification.

To further ensure academic integrity, Populi utilizes built-in anti-cheating features, particularly for online tests. These features help verify student identity and prevent academic misconduct by:

- **Webcam Monitoring:** The system takes pictures of the student via their webcam at frequent, random intervals throughout the exam for the instructor to review.

- **Browser Controls:** It requires a full screen browser and can detect and log if the student attempts to navigate away from the test page.
- **Activity Logging:** The system tracks and logs events such as copy-and-paste activity within the test.

These incidents and activities are logged in the test's integrity log and flagged for review by the instructor. Students must acknowledge their understanding of these controls before they begin the test.

Student Privacy

1. Secure Access to Records

- All student records, including grades, transcripts, and enrollment information, are maintained in password-protected, encrypted systems.
- Students receive individual login credentials and are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of their account information.
- Faculty, staff, and contracted service providers are trained on FERPA compliance and digital security requirements.

2. Electronic Communication

- Students are advised not to share personal login credentials or sensitive information through unsecured channels.

3. Consent for Third-Party Access

- Requests to release student records to employers, graduate schools, or other third parties require written or electronic authorization submitted through secure University forms.

4. Filing Complaints

- Students who believe their privacy rights under FERPA have been violated may submit complaints in writing or electronically to the Registrar.
- Students may also file complaints with the U.S. Department of Education, Family Policy Compliance Office or the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education (BPPE) as described in the Right to File a Complaint Policy.

Financial Information

TUITION AND OTHER FEES

Tuition

Students are required to pay tuition at registration. Cash, money orders, credit cards, and checks are accepted in the amount due. *Fees are subject to annual revision.*

Program Course Level	Cost
Graduate Level Courses (500 – 599)	\$ 200 per Unit
Foundation/Undergraduate Level Courses (100 – 499)	\$ 200 per Unit

Entire Educational Program	Estimated Schedule of Total Tuition Charge	Tuition Charges for a Period of Attendance
Master of Business Administration Degree	\$12,000	\$1,600
Master of Science in Management Degree	\$12,000	\$1,600

Other Fees

Description	Fee
Application Fee for All Students (Non-Refundable)	\$100
Registration Fee (Per Quarter)	\$20
Late Registration Fee	\$50
Late Payment (Installment) Fee	\$50
Change-of-Course Fee (Add / Drop)	\$10
Change-of-Program Fee	\$100
Credit by Special Examination Fee	\$450
Credit for Prior Experiential Learning Assessment Fee	\$100
Deferral Admission Fee	\$100
Reinstatement (Change of Status) Fee	\$200
International Express Mailing Fee	\$200
Graduation Fee	\$250
English Placement Test Fee (Per Test)	\$40
Official Documents or transcript Fees (per Copy)	\$10
Parking Validation Fee	\$5
Student Tuition Recovery Fund Fee (CA Residents): Effective February 8, 2021, the Student Tuition Recovery Fund (STRF) assessment rate will be (\$2.50) per \$1,000.	\$2.50 per \$1,000

FINANCIAL POLICIES

Payment Policies

Failure to make payments of tuition and other fees, or other amounts when they are due, is considered sufficient cause to place a student on non-academic discipline. This status causes the University to do one or more of the following:

1. Bar the student from attending classes, taking examinations, or registering for the following quarter.
2. Withhold a diploma, scholastic certificate, transcript of record, or grades for the quarter.
3. Suspend the student.

Deferment of Tuition

Application for deferment of payment will be considered on the basis of financial need and assurance of ability to make the payments as required. No tuition is to be deferred for students enrolled for less than four (4) units.

Tuition Payment Plan

The university accepts three separate payments each quarter. The tuition payment plan is available in the Finance Office. The Finance Office charges for late payments will apply to the students who are not paying in full. If students fall behind in their payments, students are not allowed to take part in class activities, including test taking.

Cancellation, Withdrawal, and Refund Policies

Student's notice of cancellation must be in writing, and that withdrawal may be effectuated by the student's written notice or by the student's conduct, including, but not limited to, a student's lack of attendance. Merit University shall refund 100 percent of the amount paid for institutional charges, less a reasonable deposit or application fee not to exceed two hundred fifty dollars (\$250), if notice of cancellation is made through attendance at the first class session, or the seventh class day after enrollment, whichever is later. Refunds will be made within thirty (30) days of official withdrawal or thirty (30) days of determination of withdrawal if the student does not officially withdraw.

Student Tuition Recovery Fund (STRF) Policy

"The State of California established the Student Tuition Recovery Fund (STRF) to relieve or mitigate economic loss suffered by a student in an educational program at a qualifying institution, who is or was a California resident while enrolled, or was enrolled in a residency program, if the student enrolled in the institution, prepaid tuition, and suffered an economic loss. Unless relieved of the obligation to do so, you must pay the state-imposed assessment for the STRF, or it must be paid on your behalf, if you are a student in an educational program, who is a California resident, or are enrolled in a residency program, and prepay all or part of your tuition. You are not eligible for protection from the STRF and you are not required to pay the STRF assessment, if you are not a California resident, or are not enrolled in a residency program."

"It is important that you keep copies of your enrollment agreement, financial aid documents, receipts, or any other information that documents the amount paid to the school. Questions regarding the STRF may be directed to the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education, 1747 N. Market Blvd. Ste 225, Sacramento, CA 95834, (916) 574-8900 or (888) 370-7589.

To be eligible for STRF, you must be a California resident or are enrolled in a residency program, prepaid tuition, paid or deemed to have paid the STRF assessment, and suffered an economic loss as a result of any of the following:

1. The institution, a location of the institution, or an educational program offered by the institution was closed or discontinued, and you did not choose to participate in a teach-out plan approved by the Bureau or did not complete a chosen teach-out plan approved by the Bureau.

2. You were enrolled at an institution or a location of the institution within the 120-day period before the closure of the institution or location of the institution, or were enrolled in an educational program within the 120-day period before the program was discontinued.
3. You were enrolled at an institution or a location of the institution more than 120 days before the closure of the institution or location of the institution in an educational program offered by the institution as to which the Bureau determined there was a significant decline in the quality or value of the program more than 120 days before closure.
4. The institution has been ordered to pay a refund by the Bureau but has failed to do so.
5. The institution has failed to pay or reimburse loan proceeds under a federal student loan program as required by law or has failed to pay or reimburse proceeds received by the institution in excess of tuition and other costs.
6. You have been awarded restitution, a refund, or other monetary award by an arbitrator or court, based on a violation of this chapter by an institution or representative of an institution, but have been unable to collect the award from the institution.
7. You sought legal counsel that resulted in the cancellation of one or more of your student loans and have an invoice for services rendered and evidence of the cancellation of the student loan or loans.

To qualify for STRF reimbursement, the application must be received within four (4) years from the date of the action or event that made the student eligible for recovery from STRF. A student whose loan is revived by a loan holder or debt collector after a period of non-collection may, at any time, file a written application for recovery from STRF for the debt that would have otherwise been eligible for recovery. If it has been more than four (4) years since the action or event that made the student eligible, the student must have filed a written application for recovery within the original four (4) year period, unless the period has been extended by another act of law. However, no claim can be paid to any student without a social security number or a taxpayer identification number."

Reference: CEC §94909(a)(14), 5, CCR §76215(a), and §76215(b)

Student's Right to Cancel Policy

The student may cancel their enrollment agreement and get a refund paid through to the attendance at the first class session or the seventh day after enrollment, whichever comes later.

- 1) To receive a refund of any portion of the tuition fees, you must provide the school with a written statement that you intend to withdraw from the program in which you have enrolled.
- 2) Withdrawal may be effectuated by the student's written notice, by a student's misconduct, including, but not limited to, a student's lack of attendance.
- 3) If you have completed 60% or less of your program, the school shall provide a pro-rata refund of the amount paid for institutional charges, less the non-refundable application fee, non-refundable processing fee, and other reasonable fees not to exceed two hundred fifty dollars (\$250).
- 4) If you complete more than 60% of your program, the school shall NOT refund any portion of the amount paid for institutional charges.
- 5) If you are eligible for a refund under the conditions stated above, you will receive the refund within 45 days of the school receiving the written notice of cancellation or the school's notice of dismissal.

To cancel this agreement mail, fax, or deliver a written notice of Withdrawal / Cancellation to this mailing address: *Registrar's Office at Merit University, 3699 Wilshire Blvd. Suite 970, Los Angeles, CA 90010.*

Loan Responsibilities

Any agency or organization which grants loans will indicate the terms and amount of that loan. If a student obtains a loan to pay for an educational program, the student will be responsible to repay the

full amount of the loan plus the interest, less the amount of any refund, and that, if the student receives federal student financial aid funds, the student is entitled to a refund of the moneys not paid from federal financial aid funds.

FINANCIAL AID

Merit University does not participate in federal and state financial aid programs. MU is responsible for disclosing the above information to all prospective students in accordance with *California Education Code (CEC) 94897(p)* and *94909(a)(10)*.

If the student has received federal student financial aid funds, the student is entitled to a refund of moneys not paid from federal student financial aid program funds.

If the student defaults on a federal or state loan, the following may occur:

1. The federal or state government or a loan guarantee agency may take action against the student, including applying any income tax refund to which the person is entitled to reduce the balance owed on the loan.
2. The student may not be eligible for any other federal student financial aid at another institution or other government financial assistance at another institution until the loan is repaid.

SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Students may apply for the Presidential Scholarship for the Fall, Winter, Spring, and Summer Quarters for tuition credit. The Presidential scholarship are funded through the university's General Fund.

Eligibility: The student must: a) be currently enrolled; b) have a GPA of 3.0 or higher; c) show no outstanding balances.

Restrictions: Students may apply for only three scholarships per year.

Application Procedure: Students must apply during the first week of the quarter of Fall, Winter, Spring, and Summer quarters. Applications are available in the Dean of Academic Affairs' office. Completed applications should be submitted to the Dean of Academic Affairs. Nominees are presented to the President for final approval. Awards will be made at the end of the quarter with adjustments made to the student's account.

Criteria for Scholarship Awards: The Scholarship Committee will consider the student's a) GPA; b) contributions made to the university; and c) contributions made to the community.

Amounts of Scholarships: The university may award \$500 to a graduate student per quarter.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

STUDENT RIGHTS

Students are the primary focus in campus life. Their welfare and the conditions under which they study, work, and relax must be safeguarded to preserve their rights under the United States Constitution, federal laws, and California statutes. Campus policies and procedures seek to guarantee these civil liberties. Student understanding and cooperation are essential to the successful implementation of this legal structure.

Right to Appeal

The university has initiated and implemented procedures for appeals by students with the intent of assuring fairness and objectivity. The procedures are not designed to incorporate all of the due process safeguards that the courts of law require. The purpose is to provide a system that will represent “fairness and the absence of arbitrariness.” The university makes every effort to see that appeal procedures are clear to students and that their avenue of appeal is not.

Right to File a Complaint Policy

Any student alleging failure of the university to comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education. Students are encouraged to use the internal university grievance procedures to resolve complaints prior to contacting outside agencies. A student or any member of the public may file a complaint about this institution with the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education by calling (888) 370-7589 or by completing a complaint form, which can be obtained on the bureau’s Internet Web site (www.bppe.ca.gov).

Student Grievances and Due Process

When students pursue academic studies at the university, they should be free of unfair and improper action by any member of the academic community. A grievance may be initiated when a student believes there has been an unjust action or denial of rights as stipulated in university policies. Such action may be instituted by the student against another student, a faculty member, an administrator, or other university staff.

Students may initiate a grievance for any of the following reasons:

- Prejudicial or capricious action in the evaluation of the student’s academic performance.
- Intimidation, assault, or harassment (including sexual harassment).
- Arbitrary action or imposition of sanctions by a university representative without proper regard to procedural due process.

Merit University encourages students, faculty, and staff members to informally resolve differences. If an issue cannot be resolved informally, a formal grievance may be filed. Complaints under this policy may be brought for alleged discrimination based on, but not limited to race, color, national

origin, religion, sex, gender identity, pregnancy, physical or mental disability, medical condition, ancestry, marital status, age, sexual orientation, citizenship, or service in the uniformed services. It is also appropriate to use this policy to file complaints about grades, academic procedures, student behavior, and other campus concerns except for sexual harassment.

Procedural due process is the method established to resolve faculty, staff, and student conduct issues in a clear, fair, and orderly manner. These procedures apply to actions that interfere with or exert a harmful affect upon the functions of the university. Due process is intended to achieve an equitable solution that will resolve the issue with due regard for the rights of the accused, the protection of the student body, and the interest of the university. Any action taken by a student under a due process procedure shall preclude any further action.

Student Grievances Procedure

The procedure for the resolution of student complaints is a three-step process. The university anticipates that most disputes either will be resolved through step No. 1, via informal discussions or step No. 2, by the intervention of an ombudsman. Only a few cases should proceed to step No. 3, the judgment of an informal hearing panel.

- First, a student who feels that the faculty, staff, administration, or any other students have treated him/her unfairly is advised to seek informal counsel with the offending party or the Dean of Academic Affairs in the interest of a speedy resolution of the problem.
- Second, if this step does not lead to the satisfaction of the student, he/she should petition for a grievance review, a formal procedure at the university. The petitioner should write a letter to the Dean of Academic Affairs requesting the assignment of an ombudsman. The letter must outline the specifics of the complaint, all pertinent information, and the steps taken to remedy the situation through an informal process.

The Dean of Academic Affairs will act promptly in assigning an ombudsman and informing the President of the grievance. The Dean of Academic Affairs will outline some possible steps to the ombudsman in solving the problem. These may include interviewing the grievant, contacting the offending party, and/or convening all parties to the grievance. The ombudsman will notify the Dean of Academic Affairs in writing of the outcome of the intervention with recommendations. These will be sent to the President who will confer with the Dean of Academic Affairs to guarantee that the cause of the grievance is removed.

- Third, if the grievant is unable to receive a satisfactory resolution of the complaint he/she should notify the President in writing, who will convene an impartial hearing panel for judgment. For further redress, the student may contact the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education by calling (888) 370-7589 or by completing a complaint form, which can be obtained on the Bureau's website (www.bppe.ca.gov). The complaint form may also be mailed to: 1747 N. Market Blvd., Suite 225, Sacramento, California, 95834. Further information may be obtained by contacting the Bureau at: (916) 574-8900 or by fax at: (916) 263-1897.

Student Evaluation of Instruction

To sustain a high quality of instruction at the university, students are expected to evaluate each class and instructor in which they are enrolled. Evaluation forms are distributed toward the end of each quarter. The evaluation forms, filled anonymously, are collected and returned to the Administration Office by a designated student. Student evaluations are tabulated by the university, and the results are analyzed by the Dean of Academic Affairs and distributed to the individual instructors.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Conduct

The following regulations apply to any person who is enrolled as a Merit University (MU) student. These rules are not to be interpreted as all-inclusive of situations in which discipline will be invoked. These rules are illustrative, and the university reserves the right to take disciplinary action in appropriate circumstances not set out in this catalog. *The university reserves the right to exclude at any time students whose conduct is deemed undesirable or prejudicial to the university community's best interest.*

The disciplinary procedure described herein affords procedural fairness to the accused student and flexibility to the administration to sanctions based on the individual circumstances of each case. Students accused of improper conduct shall be given adequate notice of the charges and an opportunity to respond to the charges made against them. Where a student is disciplined for improper conduct, the student may submit a grievance with regard to the decision in accordance with the university's Grievance Policy, which can be obtained from the Dean's Office. While disciplinary action against a student is pending, the student poses a significant threat to the university community. The disciplinary action taken may be reflected in the student's permanent record, as part of the disciplinary punishment. Behavior resulting in disciplinary action may involve, but is not limited to, one or a combination of those listed below:

- Dishonesty in any form, including plagiarism, illegal copying of software, and knowingly furnishing false information to the university.
- Forgery, alteration, or misuse of university documents, records, or identification.
- Failure to comply with written or verbal directives of duly authorized university officials who are acting in the performance of assigned duties.
- Interference with the academic or administrative processes of the university or any of its approved activities.
- Theft or damage to property.
- Sexual harassment or assault of any individual.
- Violation of civil or criminal codes of local, state, or federal governments.
- Unauthorized use of or entry into university facilities.
- Violation of any state policies or regulations governing student relationship to the university.

The disciplinary procedure described herein affords procedural fairness to the accused student and flexibility to the administration of sanctions based on the individual circumstances of each case. Students accused of improper conduct shall be given adequate notice of the charges and an opportunity to present their case to an impartial appeals committee. Written notice of the specific charge(s) made against a student shall be given at least ten days before the student is to appear before the committee. While disciplinary action against a student is pending, the student's status does not change unless it is found that the student poses a significant threat to the university community. Hearings are private. The accused student is afforded the opportunity to rebut all charges. The

university establishes the charges by a preponderance of the evidence. The student has the right to appeal the disciplinary action to the Dean of Academic Affairs, but only on the grounds that fair procedure was not followed by the committee or that the evidence in the record does not justify the decision or the sanction. A record will be kept of the disciplinary action taken, and the basis for this decision. The disciplinary action taken may be reflected in the student's permanent record, as part of the disciplinary punishment. Disciplinary action invoked by the committee may involve, but is not limited to, one or a combination of the alternatives listed below:

Dismissal: Separation of the student from the university on a permanent basis.

Suspension: Separation of the student from the university for a specified length of time.

Probation: Status of the student indicating that the relationship with the university is tenuous and that the student's record will be reviewed periodically to determine suitability to remain enrolled. Specific limitations and restrictions on the student's privileges may accompany probation.

Students dismissed from the university for disciplinary reasons must exclude themselves from university classes, activities, facilities, and buildings. Any exception must be approved by the President. Students found culpable of any of the foregoing violations will be subject to disciplinary action. A student who is dismissed may reapply for admission after two quarter's leave. When a student receives a written dismissal notice from school after instruction has begun, the student will receive a pro-rata refund for the unused portion of the tuition and other refundable charges if the student has completed 60% or less of the program.

Students who have not fulfilled their financial obligation to the university are in violation of the university contract. Said students may be denied the right to graduate, take examinations, receive degrees, and obtain or request transcripts of their grades.

Student Obligations

For students to remain in good standing at the university, they must:

1. Maintain academic standards, attend classes, and meet all financial obligations.
2. Be courteous and respectful in dealing with faculty, administrators, and fellow students.
3. Adhere to the federal, state, and municipal laws of the U.S., as well as to the rules and policies of the university.

Cheating and Plagiarism Policies

Cheating: The act of obtaining or attempting to obtain credit for work by use of dishonest, deceptive, or fraudulent means.

Plagiarism: The act of taking ideas, words, or specific substances of another and offering them as one's own.

One or more of the following actions are available to any faculty member who suspects a student of cheating or plagiarizing. The choice of action taken is guided by the extent to which the faculty member considers the cheating or plagiarism reflective of the student's lack of scholarship or lack of academic performance in the course.

- Review-no action.
- Oral reprimand with emphasis on counseling aimed at preventing further occurrences.
- Requirement that the work be repeated.

- Assignment of an F grade for the specific work in question.
- Assignment of an F grade for the course.
- Referral to the Dean of Academic Affairs and/or the appropriate committee.

Students accused of cheating or plagiarism are entitled to and may petition for due process. Regulations in their entirety are published in the *Faculty Handbook*.

Academic Discipline

Re-admission of dismissed students can be granted only after they file a petition with the Dean of Academic Affairs and have been on leave for two quarters. Students re-admitted after dismissals are placed on academic probation for the immediate quarter following re-admission.

Refer to Satisfactory Academic Progress Policies, for other conditions which apply students.

Non-Academic Discipline

Students not conforming to university standards are subject to probation, suspension, or dismissal from the university. Faculty members may initiate proceedings through the Dean of Academic Affairs, who will refer the matter to the administrators for a final decision.

Students who feel they have been treated unfairly may petition a grievance review through the Dean of Academic Affairs.

Faculty members encountering unruly and unmannerly conduct in class will report such instances to the appropriate director or Dean of Academic Affairs for appropriate action. Examples of unacceptable conduct requiring non-academic disciplinary action are as follows:

- Lighting a fire on campus
- Possessing or displaying a weapon
- Unauthorized possession of university property
- Offering bribes for special favors from faculty
- Use of obscene language
- Insolence or insubordination toward faculty, administrative personnel, or any university employee
- Cheating, plagiarizing, or otherwise duplicating the work of another student
- Excessive absence from class
- Intoxication or being under the influence of a controlled substance
- Hazing, humiliating, or intimidating other individuals

Students found culpable of any of the foregoing violations will be subject to disciplinary action. A student who is dismissed may reapply for admission after two quarters' leave.

Students who have not fulfilled their financial obligation to the university are in violation of the university contract. Said students may be denied the right to graduate, take examinations, receive degrees, and obtain or request for transmission transcripts of their grades.

Student Services

Student Services is committed to working closely with students by providing personalized attention and professional services. It seeks to develop a campus climate that brings together students, staff, faculty, and the community. It facilitates and supports various activities to assist students in making a successful transition to the university Community and to prepare them for life after graduation.

NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION

Orientation is held at the beginning of each quarter for new students and is designed to familiarize them with campus facilities, policies and procedures, financial aid, faculty, administrators, and staff.

STUDENT RECORDS POLICY

Federal law allows current and former students access to their education records. To protect the privacy of students, the law sets certain conditions on the disclosure of personal information kept by the university. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974— also known as the Buckley Amendment or FERPA— and the California Education Code 67-100ff states that students have the right to access their educational records. Educational institutions shall not release educational records without consent of the student, subject to exceptions provided by law.

In compliance with FERPA, MU designates the following categories of personally identifiable information as *directory information*: name, address, telephone number, e-mail address, date and place of birth, dates of attendance, enrollment status, program of study, honors, awards, and degrees received. MU may release or publish directory information without prior consent of the student, unless specifically instructed by the student to withhold information. To restrict the release or publication of any student information, a student must provide the appropriate written instructions to the Registrar's Office.

Pursuant to the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the California Information Act and Educational Code, students at MU have the right to:

- (1) Inspect and review their education records that pertain to themselves as students, unless waived or qualified under Federal and State law or College policies;
- (2) Seek to amend the content of their education records that may be considered inaccurate or misleading;
- (3) Withhold from disclosure of personally identifiable information contained in their education records, except as provided in Federal and State laws or College policies; and
- (4) File a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education (Family Policy Compliance Office) regarding alleged violation of their FERPA rights.

Students and alumni who desire the university to release their records and information to perspective employers, graduate schools, etc., can expedite their applications by providing MU with written permission to release their records, specifying which records and to whom the release should be made.

A student will be given the opportunity to inspect and review his/her education records within 15 days from the day that the school receives the request for access. The student should submit to the Registrar, or other appropriate school official, written requests (or emails) that identify the record(s)

s/he wishes to inspect. The school official will make arrangements for access and will notify the student of the time and place where the records may be inspected. If the records are not maintained by the school official for whom the request was submitted, that official should advise the student of the appropriate official to whom the request should be addressed.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with a legitimate educational interest. A school official is a person employed by the college as an administrative, supervisory, academic, research, or support staff person (including the law enforcement unit, personnel, and health staff); a person or company contracted (such as an attorney, auditor, funding agency, or collection agent); a person serving 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 legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Parental access to a student's records will be allowed without prior consent if the student is under eighteen years of age or is a dependent as defined in Section 252 of the Federal Internal Revenue Code. If any MU student wants to ensure or block access for their parents to his/her grades, any disciplinary action that has been taken or other information, then it is best to file written permission with the Registrar to clarify their wants and needs.

ACADEMIC ADVISING

The university assists students in reaching their goals by providing orientation for a successful academic experience, helping to clarify career and academic goals, and assisting with course selection and program planning.

CAREER AND PLACEMENT SERVICES

The Career and Placement Services makes available the services of a coordinator who provides individual counseling as well as materials, references, and job listings designed to assist students in making short and long-range vocational decisions. Workshops, employer interviews, and online job searches through the Internet help focus student choices. Appointments for counseling can be made through the main office.

HOUSING SERVICES

All programs at Merit University are "non-residential." MU does not hold dormitory facilities but is located in Los Angeles and is easily accessible by public transportation. Many different arrangements are available, for example: the rent of a studio or one bedroom apartment ranges from \$1,000 to \$2,000 monthly. The area offers a vast array of inexpensive restaurants, including many fast-food chains, and minimum monthly food costs are within an affordable range for city living. *The institution has no responsibility to find or assist a student in finding housing.*

MU assists student housing, near campus, and the cost for rent varies by size. Students can travel on the Metro Red Line subway to Hollywood, the L.A. Union Station, or transfer to Long Beach (the Blue Line), Pasadena (the Gold Line), or beyond (Amtrak travels to many cities across the United States).

HEALTHCARE SERVICES

Merit University provides information and brochures on insurance policies that have been designed for students' health care needs. These policies are offered by private and independent companies.

HOSPITALS

The following are some of the hospitals available in the area:

California Hospital

1401 S. Grand Ave., Los Angeles, CA
(213) 748-2411

Harbor General Hospital

100 Carson St., Torrance, CA
(310) 222-2345
(Anyone is eligible for treatment; emergency fees are based on ability to pay.)

Hospital of the Good Samaritan

1225 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, CA
(213) 977-2121
(Walk-in service is available from 7am to 7pm.)

St. Vincent Medical Center

2131 W. 3rd Street
Los Angeles, CA
(213) 484-7111

USC/County General Hospital

1200 N. State St., Los Angeles, CA
(323) 442-8500
(Accepts anyone.)

STUDENT GOVERNMENT

All students are urged to participate in Merit University's student government. This organization is recognized by the faculty and administration as important to the student's education and cultural experience. Through their participation, students can provide information that assists both the faculty and administration in strengthening the academic program and improving the collegiate life at MU.

COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY

Merit University holds a commencement ceremony every June for students who have completed their degrees and have fulfilled all university requirements. Prospective graduates must obtain an Application for Graduation from the Registrar's Office and submit it to the Registrar before they can be considered for graduation. Commencement activities are a highlight for students, faculty, and staff.

FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

All facilities, classrooms, computer lab, library, and student lounge, of Merit University are located at 3699 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 970, Los Angeles CA 90010 and all programs are offered at this location.

Classrooms

Each classroom is equipped with desks, chairs, whiteboards, computer projectors, screens for the projectors, and laptops with Internet access. All class sessions are held at 3699 Wilshire Blvd. Suite 970 with assigned classroom numbers on the schedule and enrollment agreement form.

Equipment

Educational equipment necessary for the graduate programs are laptops installed with Microsoft Office, and necessary programs. Faculty and students may check out laptops by providing a photo identification card. Wireless Internet access is available for notebook computer users.

Student Lounge

The student lounge is equipped with a microwave, a refrigerator, beverages with a comfortable sofa, and tea tables for students to relax, read, and have their snacks or meals before and after classes.

LIBRARY AND LEARNING RESOURCES

The Merit University Library provides access to relevant, current resources to meet the research needs, support the high-quality curriculum, and enrich the educational experience of students and faculty. The purpose of the University Library is to provide the best possible service to the students, faculty, and staff in a friendly and timely manner and support them in their research requirements via the library's collection. A variety of services include reference service, database training, research assistance, and orientation and information sessions.

Library Hours:

Monday through Friday from 10:30 am to 5:00 pm.

Collections and Resources:

The library collection includes books and periodicals available for reference or circulation exclusive to Merit University students and online resources of over 60 million journal articles, books, encyclopedias, newspapers, magazines, and audio-video clips to support all academic programs through the Library and Information Resources Network (LIRN). LIRN is a non-profit library service and content provider, creating a consortium of educational institutions that have joined to share access to informational resources. The LIRN virtual library provides students and faculty with resources to support their academic needs and studies and can be accessed anywhere with an internet connection. LIRN provides information content from sources such as ProQuest, eLibrary, and Gale/InfoTrac, just to name a few (and more). Students can also search and check out MU's library holdings by logging into their Student Portal student information system, Populi account, and by browsing the library online catalog.

Online Library:

MU provides online library resources through our subscription with the Library and Information Resources Network (LIRN). Students can access our online library resources 24/7.

Through LIRN, The MU Online Library provides students with millions of peer-reviewed and full-text journal, magazine, and newspaper articles, e-books, podcasts, audio, and video resources to support their academic studies from various academic databases, eLibrary, Open Access Resources and more. The online library and other resources are more than sufficient to meet the instructional needs for students and instructors.

Library Orientation:

Students can find the LIRN login details in the course syllabus and Student Portal (Populi). Library Orientation & Information Literacy Instruction video is available to help you navigate our online library resources. You can watch the video at the link: <https://youtu.be/EB1zl-ZTH6o>

Library Policies:

- The Library is dedicated to use as a study area. Students should conduct their business quietly and are expected to mute audible devices before entering the facility.
- The computers and network are reserved for legitimate research and study purposes.
- Materials from the reference collection are available for use in the library and may not be checked out.
- Students may check out books from the circulating collection for two weeks and renew for an additional two weeks. The cost of replacement of any lost or damaged materials will be charged to the student who has checked out the materials and will include the actual replacement cost plus appropriate fees.

Other Resources available:

- California Open Online Library for Education (cool4ed.org)
- County of Los Angeles Public Library (lacountylibrary.org)
- Los Angeles Law Library (www.lalawlibrary.org)
- Los Angeles Public Library (www.lapl.org)

COMPREHENSIVE SUMMARY OF ALL LIBRARY AND LEARNING RESOURCES

Merit University Library's mission is to provide the best possible service to the students, faculty and staff in a friendly and timely manner. In order to fulfill this mission, the library maintains sufficient information and learning resources to support the academic curriculum of the university. Accordingly, the library's collection supports the students, faculty and staff in their research requirements. Moreover, the library has a small reserve collection that supplements the courses taught at the university. In addition, a general reference collection provides quick answers and resources for students, faculty, and staff and visitors.

The library staff supports the reference, circulation and internet requirements of its patrons. MU students, faculty, and staff can have access to current business articles and other resources through the Library and Information Resources Network (LIRN) that provides access to thousands of articles that supplement and support MU's academic curricula.

Library and learning resources available for students regardless of location are listed below.

ProQuest Core ABI/INFORM Collection: This collection is the most comprehensive ABI/INFORM database, comprised of ABI/INFORM Global, ABI/INFORM Trade and Industry, ABI/INFORM Dateline and ABI/INFORM Archive, featuring over 3,000 full-text journals, 25,000 Dissertations, 14,000 SSRN working papers, key newspapers such as the Wall Street Journal and the Financial Times, as well as country-and industry-focused reports and data. Its international coverage gives researchers a complete picture of companies and business trends around the world.

ProQuest Core Accounting, Tax & Banking Collection: Comprehensive coverage of accounting and tax topics appearing in key industry publications and newspapers. The quintessential accountant's database.

ProQuest Core Asian & European Business Collection: This database focuses on business and financial news from the eastern hemisphere. It covers Asian business and financial information from key international publications.

ProQuest Core Australia & New Zealand Database: This database provides information pertinent to the study of business and finance topics across Asia and Europe., including academic journals, newspapers, newswires, and magazines.

ProQuest Core Business Market Research Collection: This database contains company, industry, economic and geopolitical market research from three sources, including Hoover's Company Profiles, OxResearch from Oxford Analytica, and Snapshots.

ProQuest Core Canadian Business & Current Affairs Database: This database, with 600 full text titles, is the most comprehensive Canadian reference collection available today. Accessible to readers and researchers at every level, CBCA Complete features a highly-respected, diversified mix of publications, dissertations, books, newspapers, and magazines.

ProQuest Core Computer Science Database: This collection provides unmatched discipline-specific coverage spanning thousands of publications, many in full text.

Gale Directory Library: This library offers 60+ years of authoritative directories on companies, publishers, associations and more, with a wide-range of data sorting, filtering, and exporting options so users can tailor results and put them to practical use.

Gale eBooks: This is a database of encyclopedias, almanacs, and specialized reference sources for multidisciplinary research.

ProQuest Central: The ultimate cross-disciplinary research tool, ProQuest Central brings together 30 of the most highly used databases to create the largest single academic research resource available today.

ProQuest Core Research Library Business: This source covers publications on the latest business and financial information for researchers of all levels.

Skillsoft Books: Skillsoft Books offers on-demand, instant access to the complete text of thousands of best in-class online books, book summaries, audiobooks, research reports and best practices. Topical collections represent trusted sources in business, technology, engineering, finance and more.

Directory of Open Access Journals: Free, full text, quality controlled scientific and scholarly journals, covering all subjects and many languages.

ERIC: Provides a comprehensive, easy-to-use, searchable Internet-based bibliographic and full-text database of education research and information. Includes bibliographic records (citations, abstracts, and other pertinent data) for more than 1.4 million items indexed since 1966, including: journal articles, books, research syntheses, conference papers, technical reports, policy papers, and other education related materials. Currently, more than 650 journals are indexed in ERIC either comprehensively (full content) or selectively (articles that are education-related). Sponsored by the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) of the U.S. Department of Education.

The LIRN consists of additional extended ProQuest Core databases such as Education, Engineering Database, Aviation, Building & Construction, Dental, General & Interdisciplinary, Health & Medical, History & Social Science, Language & Literature, Law & Criminal Justice, Library Science, News & Current Events, Psychology, Religion & Philosophy, Science & Technology, Success Skills, Veterinary Science, and Visual & Performing Arts.

TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING

You may need some form of transportation to get to and from MU. If you are planning to use L.A. City buses or the subway, remember that MU is located at 3699 Wilshire Blvd. The area around the office building is known as “Koreatown.” If you are commuting from a non-local address, use the Metro Red-Line to the Wilshire/Vermont Station within walking distance to the campus.

The MU Registrar can provide you with a letter that qualifies you for a student discount on a Metro Pass. Metro Bus schedules and information are available at One Gate Plaza, Los Angeles, CA 90012, or by calling (213) 922-6235. Metro subway schedules and information can be obtained at (213) 626-4455.

Parking – Parking is available for students at the building facility during classes. No vehicles may be left in the parking lot overnight. The university is not responsible for theft or damaging vehicles.

F-1 INTERNATIONAL STUDENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

International students in F-1 status must follow the rules set forth by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) in order to maintain lawful status (www.uscis.gov).

In order to maintain F-1 status, graduate students must take at least 8 units per quarter to be considered as full-time student status. Only one class per quarter can be taken through MU Online (distance learning) as applied towards full-time student status. Students also must maintain a 3.0 or above cumulative GPA in graduate study. Failure to comply with these guidelines may cause a student to violate their F-1 status.

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

Optional Practical Training (OPT) is a temporary work authorization in the student's field of study for the purposes of gaining practical training. Students may be authorized up to 12 months of practical training each at the completion of a master's degree. Students have the option of requesting OPT at the completion of the program (post-completion OPT) or prior to the completion of the degree program (pre-completion OPT).

For student applying for post-completion OPT, it is recommended that students process their application before the completion of a course of study, but no earlier than 90 days before the completion of program requirements.

Students who chose to utilize OPT prior to graduation lose time approved from their 12 months of post completion OPT (www.ice.gov/sevis/practical-training).

Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is a part-time, paid or unpaid internship opportunity for "eligible" F-1 International Students in which they are permitted by the USCIS to gain practical training in a field directly related to their degree.

CPT Eligibility Requirements:

Have completed 3 full time academic quarters of study at MU.

Be in good academic standing

Be in good financial standing

Students will be ineligible for CPT for the next quarter if they fail their CPT Internship course. Students may re-apply the following quarter after that and receive approval as long as you are eligible.

CULTURAL EDUCATIONAL AND RELIGIOUS OPPORTUNITIES

Student Clubs and Organizations

Students are encouraged to form or join official student organizations. Such clubs have the right to meet in unused classroom or other campus space (after receiving approval from the dean to meet in a particular location and at a particular time) and to promote their clubs by posting flyers (after receiving approval from the office).

Opportunities for ministry and social outreach/services

Opportunities for ministry can be found at www.gracemi.com/gmimission. Opportunities for ministry at Grace Ministries International can be discussed with Pastor Young S. Ahn.

Grace Ministries International

Address: 1645 W. Valencia Dr., Fullerton, CA 92833 and Tel: 714-446-6200

EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Students who wish to work must meet all the following conditions:

- You must have been enrolled in a full course of study during the past 9 months
- You must be in good academic standing: Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher
- You must have the approval of an advisor.

If you have questions regarding campus employment students, please contact MU Student Service. You will need to obtain a Social Security card for employment on-campus or off-campus.

To apply for a Social Security card, take your passport, and official letter of employment to a Social Security Administration Office (Website: www.ssa.gov).

INCOME TAX (IRS)

All students are required to file both a statement with the U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and a 1040NR. Specifically, there are two major income tax forms that need to be submitted: (1) the Federal Income Tax Form and (2) the State Income Tax Form. Forms and instructions are available at most banks, libraries, and U.S. Post Offices.

If you are employed, your employer must issue a W-2 Form, which you must submit with your tax forms. The W-2 details the amount of wages paid to you during the calendar year and the amount of taxes that were withheld. If you do not receive W-2 Form by the end of the January following a year in which you were employed, notify your employer.

Additional information on federal tax obligations for non-resident aliens can be found in IRS publications 518 and 519. These instructions can be obtained from the IRS by calling (800) 829-1040 or visit www.irs.gov.

For more information on state income taxes, contact:

California Franchise Tax Board

300 South Spring Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012

Call: (800) 338-0505 or visit www.ftb.ca.gov.

Campus Safety and Emergency Plan

SEXUAL ASSAULTS ON CAMPUS GROUNDS POLICY

MU is committed to creating and maintaining an academic learning environment that is safe and hospitable in which individuals are free from sexual assault or sexual harassment from any party. Sexual assault is defined by California Education Code Section 94385 to include without limitation, rape, forced sodomy, forced oral copulation, rape by a foreign object, sexual battery, or threat of sexual assault. Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual flirtations, advances or propositions, requests for sexual favors, verbal abuse of a sexual nature, subtle pressure or request for sexual activities, unnecessary touching of an individual, graphic verbal commentaries about an individual's body, sexually degrading words used to describe an individual, a display in the school of sexually suggestive objects or pictures, sexually explicit or offensive jokes, physical assault, and other verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

No student, applicant, faculty member or other employee of the university shall: (a) sexually assault any student or applicant; or (b) threaten or insinuate, either explicitly or implicitly that a student's or applicant's refusal to submit to sexual advances will adversely affect that student or applicant's application, enrollment, grades, studies, or educational experience at MU. Similarly, no faculty member or other employee of the university shall promise, imply or grant any preferential treatment in connection with any student or applicant with the intent of rewarding for or engaging in sexual conduct.

Any student, applicant, faculty member or other employee of the university who feels that he or she is a victim of sexual assault or harassment (including, but not limited to, any of the conduct listed above) by any student, applicant, faculty member, or other MU employee, or visitor or invitee of the school, in connection with the educational experience offered by the university, should bring the matter to the immediate attention of the Dean of Academic Affairs. A student, applicant, faculty member or other employee of the university who is uncomfortable for any reason in bringing such a matter to the attention of the Dean, or who is not satisfied after bringing the matter to the attention of the Dean, should report the matter to the President of the university. Any questions about this policy or potential sexual assault or harassment should also be brought to the attention of the same persons.

MU encourages students, applicants, faculty members or its employees to promptly and accurately report all sexual assaults occurring at any of the school's facilities to the Dean and the appropriate police agencies. Upon the request of a sexual assault complainant, the university personnel will: (a) transport the complainant to the hospital or contact emergency personnel on behalf of the complainant; (b) refer the complainant to a counseling center or an agency that can make such referral; and (c) notify the police on behalf of the complainant if this has not been reported previously.

The office of the Dean will promptly investigate all allegations of sexual assault and harassment in as confidential a manner as it deems reasonably possible and take appropriate corrective action if warranted. MU will inform the complainant of the results of the school's investigation. Sexual assault complainants may, in their sole discretion, pursue their own remedies against the alleged perpetrator, whether civilly and/or criminally. The university will assist any student with academic difficulties arising as a direct result of a sexual assault on the student by any MU student, applicant, faculty member or employee occurring on campus.

A student of any member of the public may file a complaint about this institution with the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education (BPPE) by calling Toll Free: (888) 370-7589 or by completing a complaint form, which can be obtained on the bureau's website (www.bppe.ca.gov).

DRUG, ALCOHOL, AND TOBACCO POLICIES

MU strongly supports the goals of the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act (DFSCA). It is MU's policy that no person shall manufacture, distribute, possess, or use illegal drugs, a controlled substance, on its premises or as a part of any of their activities. A controlled substance includes, but is not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, cocaine derivatives, heroin, amphetamines, barbiturates, LSD, PCP, and substances typically known as "Designer Drugs" such as ecstasy or ketamine. Possession of paraphernalia associated with the illegal use, possession, or manufacture of a controlled substance is also prohibited. The President has designated the Dean of Academic Affairs to act in all matters pertaining to the enforcement of this policy with regard to students and faculty and the President to act in all matters pertaining to this policy in regard to staff. Whenever possible or reasonable university personnel will counsel offenders and make available sources of rehabilitative services. At the discretion of the administration, the university may impose the following sanctions:

1. A warning to the student, staff member, or faculty member.
2. Administrative suspension of the student or suspension of employment of the staff or faculty member.
3. Administrative dismissal of the student or termination of employment of the staff or faculty member.

University policies concerning the possession and consumption of alcoholic beverages do not contravene federal, state, or municipal law. Gatherings on university premises or as part of university activities, at which alcoholic beverages are to be served, must receive prior approval from the Dean.

It is the policy of MU that smoking is prohibited in all university facilities. At the discretion of the administration, outside areas may be set aside within the university facilities to accommodate students, staff members, and faculty who smoke. Violations of the smoking policy may result in suspension or termination of academic status or employment.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES POLICY

The University is committed to complying with all the mandates set forth in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and Americans with Disabilities Act. Disabled students may make any request for reasonable accommodations to the Dean of Academic Affairs' Office and are required to provide medical certification of their disability. In certain circumstances, early registration may be available for students with disabilities. Students who wish to file a formal grievance should secure a copy of the Student Grievance Procedures from the Dean of Academic Affairs' office.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Purpose

This guideline aims to clarify the processes and responsibilities related to the students with disabilities policy. The University assesses the need for disability related accommodations on a case-by-case basis and individuals seeking disability related accommodations may need to actively participate in the process.

Definitions

An *individual with a disability* is defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. An individual with a disability must also be qualified to perform the essential functions of the job with or without reasonable accommodation, in order to be protected by the ADA. This means that:

- for a student, an individual with a disability satisfies the requisite skills, experiences, education, and requirements of an educational program;
- for an employee or job applicant, an individual with a disability can perform the essential functions of the job.

Reasonable accommodation is available to qualified individuals with disabilities and may include modifications or adjustments to tasks, to environments in which tasks are customarily performed, or to allow for equitable access to a physical environment, a program or service, a job application process, an employment privilege or benefit, or an activity hosted by Merit University. These accommodations aim to provide equal opportunities to participate and perform essential functions and are assessed on an individual basis. Reasonable accommodation may include:

- acquiring or modifying equipment or devices,
- job restructuring,
- part-time or modified work schedules,
- reassignment to a vacant position,
- adjusting or modifying examinations, training materials or policies,
- providing readers and interpreters, and making the workplace readily accessible to and usable by people with disabilities.

It is a violation of the ADA to fail to provide reasonable accommodation to the known physical or mental limitations of a qualified individual with a disability, unless to do so would alter the nature of a program or service or result in an undue administrative or financial burden. Permanent removal of an essential job function or fundamental alterations of a course or program requirement are not considered reasonable accommodations.

Responsibilities

- Individual with a disability:
 1. Provides appropriate applications and/or documentation from qualified treating providers of the disability and the disability related need for accommodation.
 2. When requested, participates in the process with appropriate University personnel.
 3. Communicates concerns or issues with the implementation of approved accommodations, or changes in disability status or accommodations with appropriate University personnel.
- Human Resources:
 1. Recognizes an accommodation request and gathers necessary information to process the request.
 2. Explores accommodation options with the employee and their supervisor. For each accommodation under consideration, consider if it is reasonable, effective, or imposes an undue hardship.
 3. Communicates decisions to the employee and their supervisor and helps develop an implementation plan for approved accommodations.
 4. Follows up and monitors approved accommodations and reengages in the process as needed.
 5. Documents the process and securely stores employee documentation, accommodation decisions, and related documents for workplace accommodation requests.
- Student Services:
 1. Follows ADA review processes and practices for students requesting accommodations.
 2. Receives and evaluates student accommodation requests.

3. Communicates decisions related to accommodation requests with students and when appropriate campus partners who actively participate in implementation of some accommodations.
4. Securely stores student documentation, accommodation decisions, and related documents for student accommodation requests.

Compliance

Students making requests for accommodation(s) must direct their requests to Office of Student Services.

Employee requests for workplace related accommodations must direct their requests to the Office of Human Resources.

Grievance Procedure

If a student disagrees with a decision or process related to accommodations or services, they have the right to submit a grievance by following the Student Grievances and Due Process in the General Catalog. Any individual who feels that they have experienced discrimination based on their disability, may file a formal complaint through the Office of Student Services.

Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation

The University prohibits retaliation against any individual for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by University policy or law, or because the individual makes a good faith report or formal complaint, testifies, assists, participates, or refuses to participate in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing under the University Policy on Prohibition of Harassment in Employment or College Activities (Employee Handbook) and Student Grievances and Due Process (General Catalog). Merit University will not take any adverse action, retaliate, or discriminate against an eligible employee or student for requesting or utilizing a Service or Assistance Animal as permitted under this Policy. If an eligible employee or student believes an adverse action has been or is being taken against them for the use or need for a Service or Assistance Animal, the employee or student should contact the Office of Human Resources or the Office of Student Services.

Violations of Policy

Any violation of rules or incidence of other violations may result, if appropriate, in a referral to the Office of Human Resources for disciplinary action.

HEALTH AND INFECTION DISEASE PREVENTION (INCLUDING COVID-19)

Merit University follows public health guidance to safeguard the community from infectious diseases.

- Students, staff, and faculty are encouraged to follow CDC recommendations for preventing the spread of respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19. See: <https://www.cdc.gov/covid/prevention/index.html>
- Preventive measures include:
 - Regular handwashing with soap and water or use of hand sanitizer.
 - Staying home if experiencing illness, fever, or symptoms of respiratory infection.
- The University will communicate health alerts, testing, isolation, or quarantine requirements promptly through official channels (email, website, and in-class announcements).
- Ventilation systems are regularly maintained to improve air quality.

Additional Preparedness and Training

- The University will provide regular training and awareness sessions on health, safety, and emergency preparedness.

- Students and staff are encouraged to participate in emergency drills and to familiarize themselves with emergency equipment locations.
- International students will receive orientation on local emergency response systems, including how to interact with U.S. first responders.

SECURITY AND SAFETY

The safety of all members of the University Community is of the utmost importance. The building in which the university is located is generally safe and secure with 24 hours security on premises. Security cameras are installed on entry points and major traffic areas of the facility. All unusual situations should be reported to the closest staff member or security personnel so that appropriate steps can be taken. Flammable liquids, fireworks, weapons, open as well as charcoal fires, candles, incense burners, and touchier style halogen lamps are prohibited.

EMERGENCY PLAN

In the event of a medical emergency, the situation should be reported immediately to the University office, and 911 must be called. Only trained personnel should provide any type of medical care. A first aid kit is kept in the business office for minor needs.

In an emergency, you should:

- Upon discovering an emergency, or potential emergency, immediately get to a safe place if possible and CALL 911.
- Give the Office as much information as possible regarding the emergency.

Every effort is made to ensure a safe and hazard-free work and study place. During emergencies, tune to a local radio or television station for safety instructions and other official information.

Emergency Exit Routes

In an emergency, disabled persons are to be given priority in the use of elevators. Emergency Exit routes are posted around the campus building in various places.

Fire Extinguishers

Fire extinguishers are located throughout the building. They are regularly inspected and maintained. Do not operate or handle a fire extinguisher except in an emergency

Fire Drills

Fire drills are available with the building management. In the event of a fire drill or fire, walk to the nearest exit and wait at the outskirts of the front parking lot. Be careful to stay out of the way of fire engines or other emergency vehicles.

Earthquakes

Southern California is prone to earthquakes. If you are inside a building when an earthquake occurs, remember to duck down, take cover, and hold this position until the earthquake is over.

Reporting Suspicious Activities

If you notice any suspicious activity, or suspicious stranger, please inform the office. In the event of violent or criminal acts, immediately dial 911 and report.

Campus Closings

Campus closings will be reported via email, the website, and internet. If there is any doubt regarding a school closing, do not come to school until you have checked and verified that the university is open and operating.

Instructions on Filing a Complaint with BPPE

If you feel your rights have not been upheld, you may contact the BPPE:

Students may contact the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education by calling (888) 370-7589 or by completing a complaint form, which can be obtained on the Bureau's website (www.bppe.ca.gov). The complaint form may also be mailed to: 1747 N. Market Blvd. Ste 225 Sacramento, CA 95834. Further information may be obtained by contacting the Bureau at: (916) 574-8900.

CONTACT INFORMATION

MERIT UNIVERSITY

Address: 3699 Wilshire Blvd. Suite 970, Los Angeles, CA 90010

Telephone: (213) 325-2760

Website: www.meritu.edu