

# **MCLA On-Campus Residency Requirement Modification** **Petition Information and Guidelines for New and Returning Students**

Residence Life & Housing (RLH)

Townhouse #89

413-662-5249 (Phone) 413-662-5004 (Fax) [reslife@mcla.edu](mailto:reslife@mcla.edu) (email)

## **I. General Information about the MCLA On-Campus Residency Requirement**

MCLA has a three-year on-campus residency requirement for all entering freshmen. Transfer students are assigned a one, two or three-year residency requirement based on the number of credits accepted by the College at the time of admission. Students who live with their parents or legal guardians within the College-designated commuting range, veterans, married students, students who reside with dependent children, and students over the age of 24 are exempt from the on-campus residency requirement policy.

## **2. Petition for Extenuating Circumstances**

Petitions for individual modifications to the MCLA on-campus residency requirement can be made in accordance with the Petition grounds and guidelines outlined in this document.

Petitions must provide evidence of the existence of extenuating circumstances that personally impact the resident and cause the resident to have an inability to fulfill the MCLA on-campus residency requirement.

Extenuating circumstances are defined as circumstances which:

- are not under the control of the student;
- are not reasonably foreseeable at the time of enrollment;
- personally impact the student; and,
- result in a demonstrated inability to fulfill the MCLA on-campus residency requirement.

Petitions on other grounds are not accepted.

Examples which may qualify as extenuating circumstances include but are not limited to: certain illness or medical conditions, unforeseen financial emergencies, and military deployment.

Supportive documentation that thoroughly demonstrates both the extenuating circumstances and the resulting inability to fulfill the MCLA on-campus residency requirement is required.

**It is important to remember that requesting a modification to the MCLA on-campus residency requirement does not guarantee that a modification will be granted. Alternate housing arrangements (including signing a lease to live in an off-campus apartment) should not be made until you receive an official response regarding the outcome of your Petition.** The College is not responsible for any financial obligations you may incur as a result of failing to heed this advice.

It is expected that students participating in this process will participate in the Returning Student Housing Assignment Process (HAP) or New Student Housing Assignment Process by the advertised deadline dates. Petitions of students who fail to follow this requirement will not be considered.

## **3. Petition Deadline Dates**

The deadline date for requesting a modification to the MCLA on-campus residency requirement is Friday, May 12, 2023. Petitions from returning students requesting a modification to the MCLA on-campus residency requirement will not be accepted after that date. Petitions from new students will not be accepted after that date unless an exception has been granted by the Office of Admission.

## **4. The Housing Petition Board**

The Housing Petition Board (HPB) reviews Petitions for modification to the MCLA on-campus residency requirement. The HPB meets on a weekly basis and provides a decision to the petitioning student no later than 10 business days after the Petition is submitted. All HPB communication is made to the petitioning student's MCLA email account. All decisions made by the HPB are final. (Please see Item #10 for Appeal Process

information. HPB decisions may only be appealed if the procedure outlined in this document was not followed and/or a substantial change in circumstance occurs after the submission of the Petition.)

The HPB is comprised of representatives from Residence Life & Housing (RLH), Financial Aid, Disability Resources, Student Accounts and in the case of newly enrolled students, the Office of Admission. The HPB is chaired by the Director of Housing Operations or their designee. A minimum of three members review each petition at the Petition hearing. The HPB may, at their discretion, consult with other Campus professionals who have knowledge or expertise related to the Petition (e.g. Dining Services, Health Services, Counseling Services). The Board is instructed to treat all information submitted and presented with extreme sensitivity.

## **5. Petition Guidelines**

To receive a modification to the MCLA on-campus residency requirement, the student must demonstrate both the extenuating circumstances and the inability to fulfill this policy. Extenuating circumstances must be beyond the control of and directly impacting the student.

Only the resident student may petition for a modification to the MCLA on-campus residency requirement. Petitions will not be accepted from individuals on behalf of resident students.

**All information the student wishes to be considered must be submitted in writing with their completed Petition.**

*Petitions must be based on one of the following grounds:*

- financial,
- student medical condition or psychiatric disability, or
- other situations which meet the description of extenuating circumstances described in section #2.

Interpersonal conflict, disputes with roommates or other interpersonal relationship issues, the desire to live with friends off-campus, the ability to live in lower cost housing, or a desire to not be enrolled in a mandatory meal plan are not grounds on which a Petition will be accepted.

The student's written Petition, combined with submitted supportive documentation, must cite and demonstrate both the extenuating circumstances and the resulting inability to fulfill the MCLA on-campus residency requirement. The student's written Petition must be substantiated by supportive evidence in the form of detailed written statements and applicable documents from appropriate sources. Additional guidance on supportive documentation is provided below.

Petitions must include a completed Petition form, a detailed statement of explanation, and all supportive documentation. Incomplete Petitions will be returned to the student. Petitions that are not submitted by a student or do not meet guidelines will also be returned. Only complete Petitions submitted by the deadline will be forwarded to the Housing Petition Board for review.

## **6. Is Your Petition Based on Financial Reasons?**

Your Petition must demonstrate financial inability in accordance and consistent with Financial Aid guidelines and procedures. The Student Financial Services office coordinates most reviews of financial inability in advance of the Board meeting. Generally, this means the student:

- Must have filed a FAFSA for the upcoming academic year;
- Must have accepted all financial aid awarded, including loans;
- Must submit all documentation to support the Petition by the advertised deadline.

Examples of reasons which typically do not qualify as extenuating circumstances for financial reasons include: wanting to move off campus, engagement, siblings attending/planning to attend college, preference to live at home, opportunity to save money, and a preference to not accept student loans.

## **7. Is Your Petition Based on Medical Conditions or Psychiatric Disabilities?**

Petitions on the grounds of a **medical condition** must be accompanied by detailed supportive documentation from an appropriate, qualified medical professional (e.g. physician, nurse practitioner) who has direct knowledge of the student and the student's condition.

Petitions on the grounds of **psychiatric disability** must be accompanied by detailed supportive documentation from an appropriate, qualified mental health professional (e.g. psychiatrist, psychologist, licensed social worker) who has direct knowledge of the student and the student's condition.

Supportive documentation must additionally include the following elements:

- A statement that clearly describes the relationship between the condition and the student's ability to reside in on-campus housing; and,
- Evaluation of the medical or psychological consequences to the student if the student is not provided with a modification to the MCLA on-campus residency requirement.

**The petitioning student must be registered with Disability Resources.** If the student is not currently registered with Disability Resources, the student should schedule a meeting with the Disability Resources Coordinator prior to submitting a Petition. Last, the petitioning student must consent to having the documentation shared with Housing Petition Board members reviewing the Petition.

## **8. Is Your Petition Based on Other Circumstances?**

The student must submit a narrative and supportive documentation demonstrating the need for release consistent with all Petition guidelines and information provided above. The submitted narrative and supportive documentation should clearly demonstrate both the extenuating circumstances and resulting inability to fulfill the MCLA on-campus residency requirement policy and the supportive documentation should explain and demonstrate the grounds for the Petition.

## **9. Petition Submission Procedures**

The Housing Petition Board reviews petitions from students requesting a modification to the MCLA on-campus residency requirement. Individuals filing a petition need to follow the procedures found in this packet and complete the "MCLA On-Campus Residency Requirement Modification Petition" form below. This form and the required documentation should be returned directly to the Residence Life & Housing office via e-mail ([reslife@mcla.edu](mailto:reslife@mcla.edu)) or fax (413-662-5004).

The HPB will review your written Petition and supportive documentation. If the Board requires further clarification on the written Petition, you will be contacted directly. The Board's decision will be communicated via the student's MCLA e-mail account. At the Board's discretion, a Petition may also be continued pending submission of additional requested information or documentation.

If you have any questions regarding Petition procedures or guidelines, please e-mail Dianne Manning, Director of Housing Operations at [dianne.manning@mcla.edu](mailto:dianne.manning@mcla.edu).

## **10. Appeal Process**

Decisions reached by the HPB may only be appealed if the process outlined in this document was not followed and/or a substantial change in circumstances occurred after the initial Petition was submitted. Disagreement with the decision reached by the HPB is not a valid reason to request an appeal. Appeal requests should be directed to the Director of Residential Operations. The request should be in writing and must address in what way the procedure outlined in this document was not followed and/or what substantial change in circumstances occurred after the initial Petition was submitted.

# MCLA ON-CAMPUS RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT MODIFICATION PETITION

Residence Life & Housing (RLH)  
Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA)

## PART I: Your Personal Information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ "A" Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Residence Area Room Assignment: \_\_\_\_\_ MCLA P.O. Box Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Class Status: FR SO JR SR Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Permanent Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What was/will be your first semester at MCLA? Fall 20\_\_ or Spring 20\_\_

Were you/will you be an Entering First Year or a Transfer student? \_\_\_\_\_ Entering First Year \_\_\_\_\_ Transfer

Expected Graduation Date? \_\_\_\_\_

If you were/or will be a Transfer student, how many credits did/will you transfer in? \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate your reason(s) for requesting a residency requirement modification:

\_\_\_\_\_ Financial Inability \_\_\_\_\_ Medical Inability \_\_\_\_\_ Psychiatric Inability

\_\_\_\_\_ Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

## Part II: Your Personal Statement

I have attached a separate document explaining, in sufficient detail, both (a) the extenuating circumstances personally impacting me that form the basis of this Petition; and, (b) my resulting inability to fulfill my MCLA on-campus residency requirement.

## Part III: Your Supporting Documentation

I have attached the required documentation (as described in sections 6, 7 & 8) for each reason for requesting a residency requirement modification that I checked above.

## Part IV: Your Signature

I have reviewed and understand this packet and I give consent for records relative to my Petition to be disclosed to members of the Housing Petition Board and campus professionals reviewing my Petition.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

Received By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ RR: \_\_\_\_\_

RR: \_\_\_\_\_ Disposition: \_\_\_\_\_