

## Working Group Report #3 Synthesis/Analysis Standard IV

Standard IV-1a ...

**Potential evidence:**

- 2019-2020 Student Handbook
- 2019 Orientation Schedule
- 2019-2020 Family Guide
- Student Consumer Information

**Summary of evidence:**

Mercyhurst University provides accurate and comprehensive information regarding expenses, financial aid, scholarships, grants, loans, repayment, and refunds. Mercyhurst uses a variety of mechanisms to communicate all aspects of financial literacy with regard to University uny uri2.7 ( u)12.3 (n)iane6

Furthermore, the student consumer information page provides a comprehensive overview

into before the academic year begins. These students meet twice weekly with an Academic Support counselor to review current class progress, assess deficiencies, and plan for future academic goals. As a supplement to this program, Academic Support offers a three-week residential summer program for interested incoming freshmen. This program introduces the students to our academic expectations and our campus culture. Students take an introductory REACH course taught by a tenured faculty member and receive study skills support by the Academic Support team.

Academic progress is monitored after each semester for all students. Any undergraduate student who does not achieve at least a 2.0 cumulative grade point average (G.P.A) is placed on academic probation. We recognize the fall semester of the freshman year can have extra challenges, so we have established an academic warning status for freshman who earn between a 1.75 and a 2.0 g.p.a. in the fall semester. These students often return to good academic standing within one semester.

Once a student is placed on probation for failure to achieve or maintain a 2.0 g.p.a., they are expected to meet with their Academic Support counselor to do a probation plan of action before the semester begins. This meeting establishes strategies for success in the upcoming semester. The student is also required to meet with their counselor at least three times throughout the semester, register and remain enrolled in at least 12 credits, demonstrate tangible progress toward graduation, and refrain from withdrawing from any courses without review by a faculty advisor or an Academic Support counselor.

Any student who was placed on probation but failed to earn the 2.0 g.p.a. will proceed to final probation. This status puts students on notice that they may be suspended for failure to maintain academic progress. At the end of two full semesters on probation, a student who fails to achieve or maintain a 2.0 g.p.a will be suspended. Appeals for academic suspension are reviewed by the Office of the Provost.

After each semester has ended and grades are certified, students are notified of their probationary status via a letter sent to their home address and by email to their campus account.

**Summary of compliance:**

As is evidenced above, Mercyhurst University maintains, from admission to graduation, checks and balances to ensure the success of our students.

**Standard IV-1c ...**

**Potential evidence:**

**Summary of evidence:**

From the day a new student arrives on campus, to the day they graduate, the departments of student life, student financial services, athletics, and academic support, have developed and maintained, and continue to create and institute, programs, events and resources to enhance the overall student experience resulting in increased retention. Mercyhurst's boasts a five-year average retention rate of 80.2% which is more than 8% above the national average. This data comes from the last five years available on IPEDs. The level in which we engage our students is credited in part for our retention rate.

During the orientation process, which was only for all incoming freshmen but is now offered to all transfer and adult students, we offer sessions on financial aid, information technology, the help desk, Title IX, the health center, the counseling center, residence life, athletics, campus ministry opportunities and campus involvement opportunities to name a few. We also send our students and their families a Family Guide which covers academics, academic support, campus life resources and activities as well as financial aid, IT resources and support with technology recommendations.

All new traditional aged students are enrolled in iMU, a two-part college transition course designed to acclimate students to our campus resources, establish an early mentoring connection with a facilitator and Laker Leader, and to share our rich history of the Sisters of Mercy. The course is offered in the first eight weeks of both the fall and spring semesters. This course provides students with information they need to be successful in their first year of college. This course is taught by a wide variety of administrators and faculty.

After a thorough review of the HUB (internal portal) sites for Academic Support and Student Financial Services, we found a wide range of resources available to the Mercyhurst University community. The Student Financial Services (SFS) HUB page covers information such as billing, payments, scholarships, applying for Financial aid, and contact information for SFS counselors. 7

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## Transcript Request Form

### **Summary of evidence:**

Students are guided throughout their academic experience at Mercyhurst via advising from Faculty and Academic Success Counselors. Students are encouraged to work with advisors to ensure that requirements for degree completion are met. In order to support the success of the student, Mercyhurst employs technology through the Student Information System, Ellucian. One of the products, the Self-Service tool is available to students and advisors. This tool gives access to the unofficial transcript, enables students to Plan and Register for their coursework, and confirm that Progress is made toward meeting degree requirements.

For those students planning to transfer to other institutions, Academic Success Counselors meet with them to conduct an exit interview. In that process, after the initial conversation with the counselor, the student meets with a Student Financial Services representative for exit counseling where information regarding student loans is reviewed. Students are made aware of repayment requirements including deferment of loans if they transfer to another school and how it will affect the loan grace period. Additionally, the student is directed by the Academic Success Counselor to the website [www.mercyhurst.edu/transcripts](http://www.mercyhurst.edu/transcripts) where they can request an official transcript be sent to the new institution.

Several programs within the University either recommend or require students to participate in an Internship within their discipline. These opportunities provide students with connections within the real-world workplace, often resulting in job placement after graduation. The Office of Career Development is instrumental in overseeing internships. Other services that

## Credit for Life Experience from the Catalog Transfer Student Admissions

### **Summary of evidence:**

Policies for evaluation and acceptance of credits either through transfer, experiential learning, prior non-academic learning and competency-based assessments are outlined in each of the University catalogs found digitally on the University website: <https://www.course-catalog.com/mercyhurst/C/2020-2021>.

The University keeps in its Student Information System, a bank of institutional data that reflects coursework equivalency that has been approved by department chairs. This information is reviewed on a rotating basis by the Records Manager in the Office of the Registrar to ensure the information is current. The information is made available to Transfer Admissions Counselors who are tasked with reviewing official transcripts from the transfer institution and outlining transfer equivalencies on a Transfer Evaluation Form for the student. This form is kept in the student file for referral should a review of courses accepted become necessary. For the transfer student interested in attending Mercyhurst, the admissions web page <https://www.mercyhurst.edu/admissions-aid/transfer> offers resources to assist the potential student determine if and how coursework from prior institutions will be applied to Mercyhurst's degree programs.

Students are awarded credit for competency-based assessment such as the International Baccalaureate program, Advanced Placement Exams and the College Level Examination Program. Through the Office of Admissions, students are advised to submit transcripts/official placement scores as part of their admissions package. Information for the awarding of credit from placement exams can be found at <https://www.mercyhurst.edu/admissions-aid/school-counselors>. Upon receipt of these scores, the Office of the Registrar awards credit for successfully completed exams. Students are required to earn a score of 4 or better for Advanced Placement Exams and a score of 4 or more for High Level IB exams and 5 or more for Standard Level IB exams.

Students interested in attempting the College Level Examination Program to fulfill REACH curriculum requirements may schedule an exam through any testing agency. Students who complete the exam with a minimum recommended score may elect to pay the placement exam fee for credit to be posted to their transcript. Mercyhurst is authorized to administer the examination, however, due to Covid-19 restrictions, exam dates have been suspended.

A path for awarding credit for non-traditional learning is available to students who have had life/work experiences. Normally it is the non-traditional student who pursues this option. Documentation, which can include a portfolio of work experience, is reviewed by the department to determine what learning objectives have been met through the experience. Students register for the life-experience course and can earn up to 3 credits for the experience course.

### **Summary of compliance:**



access to student files. Student conduct decisions are shared with students through their university e-mail which only they can access using their university username and password.

The terms of condition of occupancy are shared in the Student Handbook. This can be found at <https://www.mercyhurst.edu/handbook>.

**Summary of compliance:**

Our working group believes that Mercyhurst adheres to local, state and unacersity





The National Survey of Student Engagement or NSSE, for short is completed every 3 years, capturing data from Freshmen or 1<sup>st</sup> year students and from our senior or 4<sup>th</sup> year students. The 2019 NSSE survey results are available through the assessment office. The survey is not distributed annually, therefore, these results are most pertinent to the ongoing effort of assessment which supports this criterion. The NSSE survey results are a tool in supporting the periodic assessment of the effectiveness of programs supporting the student experience. Engagement Indicators (EIs) provide a useful summary of the detailed information contained in our students' NSSE responses. By combining responses to related NSSE questions,

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includes a discussion of resources. The Assessment Handbo

accordance with the regulations per the Office of Academic Affairs and the Provost. Mercyhurst values our syllabus repository and dedicates a staff member to the task of organizing and posting syllabi in a timely manner.