

Effective: May 13, 2025

Last Updated: May 13, 2025

Last Review: May 13, 2025

Responsible University Office: Office of Ignatian Belonging

Responsible Executive: Vice President of Ignatian Belonging

Scope: Students

Meal Plan Accommodation Request Policy

A. NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

Xavier University is committed to promoting, maintaining and providing an inclusive and equitable environment reflective of our Jesuit Catholic identity. Xavier University does not discriminate in admission, educational opportunity, employment, programming or events based upon race, color, religion, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, military status, parental status, or any other characteristic protected by applicable law. At Xavier, we are committed to radical care of the whole person; discrimination and harassment violates this principle and will not be tolerated.

Nothing in this statement shall require Xavier University to act in a manner contrary to the beliefs and teachings of our Catholic faith and Jesuit traditions or to diminish its rights as a religious organization.

B. Policy Statement & Purpose

Xavier University is committed to providing equal access to its programs and services for all qualified students, including university dining facilities. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the University provides reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. This policy outlines the process for requesting a waiver from, or modification to, the mandatory university meal plan requirement based on a documented disability-related dietary need that cannot be reasonably accommodated by University Dining Services.

C. Scope

This policy applies to all students who are required by university housing contracts or policies to participate in a university meal plan and who are seeking an accommodation due to a documented disability.

D. Eligibility Criteria for Meal Plan Accommodation

A student may be eligible for a meal plan waiver or modification if all the following are met:

1. The student has a documented disability (e.g., severe food allergies, celiac disease, metabolic disorders, gastrointestinal conditions) with specific dietary requirements.
2. The student has registered with the Office of Accessibility Services.
3. The required documentation clearly supports the need for an accommodation and specifies the dietary restrictions.
4. University Dining Services and Auxiliary Services, after consultation with the student and the Office of Accessibility Services, determines that the student's specific, documented dietary needs cannot be reasonably and safely met through available dining options, specialized meal preparation, or modifications within the existing meal plan structure.

Note: Personal dietary preferences (e.g., veganism, vegetarianism, unless part of a documented disability), financial constraints, or convenience are not considered grounds for a disability-related meal plan accommodation under this specific policy, although the University may have separate processes or resources to address these concerns. Dining Services can accommodate common dietary needs like vegetarianism, veganism, and common allergens.

E. Application Procedure

Students seeking a meal plan accommodation must complete the following steps, preferably well in advance of the semester start date:

- **Step 1: Register with Accessibility & Disability Resources (ADR):** If not already registered, the student must register with ADR and provide documentation of their disability according to ADR guidelines.
- **Step 2: Submit Meal Plan Accommodation Request Form:** The student must complete and submit the specific "Meal Plan Accommodation Request Form" (available from the ADR or university website) to ADR.
- **Step 3: Provide Supporting Medical Documentation:** Along with the request form, the student must provide current, comprehensive documentation from a qualified healthcare provider (e.g., physician, allergist, gastroenterologist). This documentation *must*:
 - Confirm the diagnosis of the specific disability/medical condition.
 - Detail the necessary dietary restrictions and why they are required.
 - Explain why the restrictions prevent the student from safely participating in the standard university meal plan, even with typical accommodations offered by Dining Services.
 - Include contact information for the healthcare provider.

- **Step 4: Engage in the Interactive Process:** The student must be available to meet with ADR staff (and potentially a Dining Services representative/chef) to discuss their needs, the limitations of the dining program, and potential accommodation options.

F. **Review and Decision Process**

- ADR will review the request form and supporting documentation to determine eligibility under ADA/Section 504.
- ADR and the student will consult with University Dining Services (including registered dietitians, chefs, managers) to assess whether Dining Services can reasonably meet the student's documented dietary needs. This may involve exploring ingredient information, special preparation protocols, dedicated allergen-free stations, or custom meal options.
- ADR will make a determination based on the documentation and consultations. Possible outcomes include:
 - **Accommodation within Dining Services:** A specific plan is developed with Dining Services to meet the student's needs (e.g., regular meetings with the dietitian, specially prepared meals). The standard meal plan requirement remains.
 - **Partial Waiver/Modification:** The student may be approved for a reduced meal plan (e.g., a smaller block plan, a plan with fewer meals per week) if some, but not all, needs can be met on campus. This often applies to students living in accommodated housing with kitchen facilities.
 - **Full Waiver:** If it is determined that Dining Services cannot safely and reasonably accommodate the student's needs, a full waiver of the meal plan requirement may be granted.
 - **Denial:** The request may be denied if the documentation is insufficient, the condition does not rise to the level of a disability under the ADA, or if Dining Services can reasonably accommodate the needs. The reasons for denial will be communicated in writing.
- The student will be notified of the decision in writing by the ADR.

G. **Appeals Process**

Students who wish to appeal a decision regarding their meal plan accommodation request may do so by submitting a written appeal to the Deputy ADA/Section 504 Coordinator within 10 business days of receiving the decision notification. The appeal should state the grounds for the appeal and include any additional relevant information.

H. **Confidentiality**

All medical documentation and information related to a student's disability and accommodation request will be kept confidential in accordance with university policies and shared only with relevant university personnel on a need-to-know basis as required to evaluate and implement the accommodation.

I. Contact Information

For questions or to begin the request process, please contact: Accessibility & Disability Resources at 513-745-3280 or jonesc20@xavier.edu.