



## UNIVERSITY POLICIES

**Title:** Emergency Conditions Policy  
**Effective Date:** March 24, 2025  
**Issuing Authority:** Provost and Senior Vice President of Administration and Finance  
**Policy Contact:** Faculty and Students: Vice Provost, [provost@mercer.edu](mailto:provost@mercer.edu), 478-301-2110  
Staff: Associate Vice President for Payroll and Benefits, [payroll@mercer.edu](mailto:payroll@mercer.edu), [benefits@mercer.edu](mailto:benefits@mercer.edu), 478-301-2825

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide direction to the University community during times of modified campus operations for emergency conditions including inclement weather.

### Scope

This policy applies to all students, faculty, and staff of Mercer University.

### Exclusions

None

### Definitions

As used in this policy, the following term(s) have the meaning specified below:

**Emergency Conditions:** Potentially urgent, unexpected, and dangerous situations that may pose immediate and significant impacts on the normal operations of the University and the health, safety, and welfare of the University community.

**Essential Services:** services related directly to the health, safety, and welfare of the University community, the continuity of key operations, and the maintenance and protection of University property and resources. Essential services include the following:

- Campus housing
- Dining options (may reduce business hours as needed)
- Mercer Police Department
- Physical Plant
- Research laboratories (at faculty discretion)
- Operations otherwise designated by the President or designee

**Modified Operations:** temporary changes to teaching, learning, research, and/or business operations in response to emergency conditions that require University action.

## **Policy Statement**

The University will remain open and operate normally to the greatest extent possible during emergency conditions including inclement weather. The decision to modify operations for a specified period due to emergency conditions will be made by the President or designee.

Notifications of closures, delayed openings, and early dismissals will be made public as early as possible. When possible, every attempt will be made to notify the public no later than 6 a.m. on the effective date.

## **Faculty Guidelines**

If modified operations seem likely to affect University operations, instructors may be notified as soon as possible via email by the Office of the Provost to prepare for a virtual learning option. If modified operations are declared, instructors will be directed to pivot to a virtual learning environment as explained in the Virtual Learning Policy.

Faculty should consider the unique needs of students with disabilities, communicate early, and collaborate with students to reduce unintentional barriers created by modified operations.

## **Student Guidelines**

When modified operations are declared, students should await communications from their instructors regarding the delivery of classes.

Students with disabilities who experience barriers related to modified operations should communicate these concerns with their instructors and the Office of Access and Accommodations, if needed.

Students should follow guidance and/or directions provide by the Office of Student Affairs regarding student activities, events, programs, and services.

The University reserves the right to restrict student clinical, internship, or field experiences during emergency conditions to maintain student safety. All students in clinical, internship, or field experiences should follow guidance from program leadership.

## **Staff Guidelines**

If modified operations are declared, University employees for the impacted campus location are expected to make every reasonable effort to continue work in accordance with the University's modified schedule. Employees are required to actively communicate with their supervisors regarding their timeliness and attendance during emergency conditions to assure proper staffing. Supervisory staff are expected to use their discretion reasonably.

## **Employee Absences**

Absences due to emergency conditions, including severe weather, may be addressed in the following manner, as applicable:

1. Employees may be authorized by supervisors to perform work at home or an alternate location to the extent such is available, practical, and feasible with appropriate accountability.
2. If there is no campus closure, employees may be authorized by supervisors to make up the time absent through an alternate work schedule within the same work week.
3. If there is no campus closure, non-exempt, hourly employees may utilize accrued compensatory time (or flex time), if available.
4. If there is no campus closure, eligible employees may take accrued PTO or if no paid leave is available, be placed on leave without pay.

If the University reduces operations to essential services only, employees who perform essential functions should report to work.

### **Additional Resources**

1. Mercer University Alerts: <https://alert.mercer.edu/>
2. Mercer University Credit Hour Policy: <https://policies.mercer.edu/credit-hour/>
3. Mercer University Virtual Learning Policy: <https://policies.mercer.edu/virtual-learning/>
4. Personal Leave Policy (Vacation and Sick Leave):  
<https://policies.wip.mercer.edu/personal-leave-vacation-and-sick-leave/>