

## SAINT LEO UNIVERSITY POLICY AND PROCESS FOR MEAL PLAN EXEMPTIONS

All residential students at Saint Leo University are required to have a 5, 10, or 19-meal plan per week. Dining Services offers a range of options (including vegan, vegetarian, and items that are made without gluten) and will work with individuals on their dining needs. Special meals can be prepared for students upon request. Prior to petitioning for an exemption, students must speak with the Director of Dining Services to come up with a plan that may suit dietary needs.

- If a student has a qualifying disability that would limit or prohibit them from consuming foods at dining facilities on campus, they may request accommodations that are designed to provide equal access to the student dining options. If, after considering potential accommodations, the Office of Accessibility Services determines it is not possible to provide equal access to dining options, the student may be considered for a reduction or exemption to their Saint Leo University meal plan. Students must complete a [Housing/Dining Accommodations Application](#) and provide documentation aligned with the [Office of Accessibility Services Documentation Guidelines](#).
- If you are requesting an exemption for religious reasons, you will need to provide a summary of your religious-based dietary needs and provide a letter supporting your needs from your religious leader. If you plan on cooking all your meals in a kitchen on campus, please provide information in your letter about how you plan to have this kitchen provide you with the environment that you need to practice your faith (e.g., Kosher/Halal kitchen, etc.)
- If you are requesting an exemption due to severe financial hardship, you will need to meet with Student Financial Services to review your need and your options for loans, student jobs, etc. After your meeting, you must provide documentation that includes who you met with, and your financial aid offer details. In your personal statement, please include how you will obtain, pay, and prepare the food that you will be purchasing and how being exempt will reduce your financial hardship. The documentation must also state whether your financial situation is temporary or permanent. Please note that to qualify for financial hardship, the circumstances must be severe and pervasive.

Students with disabilities who are in need of ADA accommodations must submit their request via the [Accessibility Services Housing/Dining Accommodations Application](#). Students requesting a meal plan reduction or exemption for any reason other than disability-related needs must submit their request and their supporting documentation via the *Meal Plan Exemption Request Form*. All requests for meal plan reductions or exemptions must be submitted by the **end of the fourth week of class each semester unless extenuating circumstances arise after the deadline.**

Students may be exempt from their Saint Leo University meal plan only after it has been determined by the Meal Plan Exemption Committee that Dining Services cannot meet their dietary needs. The Meal Plan Exemption Committee will inform the student who applied if they determine that a reduction or exemption is warranted. The Meal Plan Exemption Committee includes a staff member from Dining Services, the Office of Accessibility Services, Student Financial Services, and the Student Health Center. Decisions made by this committee are final and no appeals will be accepted once a decision is made to the student.

Requests that are received after the fourth week of the semester will be considered for the following semester. Charges will not be pro-rated until the date the student has been approved for a meal plan reduction or exemption, regardless of whether the student has been using their meal plan on campus.

The process may take several weeks in its entirety. Any charges accrued before the student is approved for a reduction or waiver will remain and are the responsibility of the student.

Vegetarianism and veganism are not typically considered valid reasons to request a meal plan exemption. Students with a vegetarian or vegan diet are highly encouraged to meet with the Director of Dining Services to discuss all the offerings available in Saint Leo University's Dining locations.

If a student has any questions about the Meal Plan Exemption Policy or to request the form, please contact Justin Bush at [justin.bush@saintleo.edu](mailto:justin.bush@saintleo.edu). If you have any questions about requesting disability-related dining accommodations, please contact the Office of Accessibility Services at [adaoffice@saintleo.edu](mailto:adaoffice@saintleo.edu).

## **Meal Plan Exemption Application**

### **Part 1: Contact Information**

- First and Last Name
- Student ID
- Building and Room #
- Email
- Phone Number
- Current Student Classification
  - Freshman
  - Sophomore
  - Junior
  - Senior
  - Graduate Student
- Type of exemption
  - Requesting a reduction in my meal plan
  - Requesting a full exemption to my meal plan

### **Part II: Documentation & reason(s) for applying**

Check the reason you are applying for a meal plan reduction/exemption and supply the appropriate documentation.

Reason for exemption

- Disability-Related Requests
  - Students must complete an application via the [AIM portal](#) and provide qualifying documentation aligned with the [Office of Accessibility Services Documentation Guidelines](#) along with the personal statement outlined below.
- Religious
  - Letter supporting your needs from your religious leader.
- Financial Hardship
  - Letter supporting your request from your Student Financial Advisor.

### **Part III: Personal Statement**

Provide a typed written statement which details why a reduction/exemption of the meal plan is required. Please provide information on what solutions you have already explored prior to writing this

petition (e.g., spoke with the Director of Dining Services, met with a team member in the Office of Accessibility Services, met with your Student Financial Advisor, consulted with a medical provider, switched to a different meal plan, etc.) It must be clear in your statement how you will provide and prepare your own meals if not on a meal plan. This statement must be prepared and provided by the student.

#### **Part IV: Acknowledgement**

- I understand that I must apply for an exemption **by the end of the fourth week of class for each semester.**
  - Requests that are received after that time will only be considered for the following semester. Charges will not be pro-rated until the student has been approved for a meal plan reduction or exemption, regardless of whether the student has been using their meal plan on campus. The process may take several weeks in its entirety. Any charges accrued before the student is approved for a reduction or waiver will remain and are the responsibility of the student.
- I understand that my meal plan is still considered active, and I will be charged the daily rate whether my meal plan is used or not used during this time.
- I understand that refunds will be prorated from the time the application is approved for an exemption.
- I understand that I will be notified by the committee if any documentation is missing.
- I understand that If I submit the application after bills are due, it is recommended that I pay for my current meal plan.
  - If you are approved for a reduction/exemption, a refund will be processed provided there is no outstanding balance on your student account.
- I understand that I am responsible for all charges owed on my student account.

My signature below gives permission to chair of the committee to share documentation with other members of the committee and to other departments on campus such as Student Financial Services and Office of Accessibility Services to assist in your case, if necessary.

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_