




Policy Name:	Residential Life Housing Accommodations Policy		
Associated Form(s):	Accommodation Intake Form through the Student Health Portal	Policy Number:	2023-16
Reviewed:	Non-Academic Policy Committee	Approved:	August 17, 2023
Approval Authority:	President 	Adopted:	August 28, 2023
Responsible Executive:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Vice President for Student Affairs Vice President for Finance 	Revised:	Residential Life Staff Apartment Accommodations Policy and Agreement, June 28, 2016
Responsible Office:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Office of ACCESSibility Office of Human Resources 	Contact:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Director of Accessibility Services Associate Director of Human Resources

I. Introduction

In accordance with relevant federal and state disability laws Mercy University (the “University”) is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to ensure equal access for students who have qualifying disabilities, who have registered with the Office of ACCESSibility, and who choose to participate in the University’s Residential Life program. Students, as considered within this policy also include students identified as “resident assistants.”

Residential Life housing accommodations vary based on the nature of a student’s disability. Each request for a Residential Life housing accommodation is considered on a case-by-case basis. Students who choose to participate in our Residential Life program and wish to request related accommodations will need to follow the steps outlined in this Policy.

II. Preference Versus Need

The Office of Residential Life is committed to providing clean, healthy and safe living environments for students that promote a positive community building experience, self-authorship and opportunities for learning outside of the classroom. Residential Life programs and services support the pedagogies of the University to develop students holistically, thus preparing them for success in a diverse world. Students who choose to participate in the University’s Residential Life program are committed to living in a communal environment which involves learning to share space and negotiate with fellow residents to ensure a respectful and inclusive experience. While the University will make every attempt to provide the housing accommodation that student requests, it cannot guarantee that it will provide the housing accommodation requested, nor does the University guarantee that the housing accommodation will be granted immediately. The University will make every effort to grant reasonable housing accommodation(s) in a timely fashion. Request for Residential Life housing accommodations based on a preference or desire for comfort rather than a need will not be granted.

III. Procedures For Students Requesting Residential Life Housing Accommodations

For full consideration of any housing accommodation request, students should complete the Application for Accommodations with The Office of ACCESSibility for each semester they participate in the Residential Life program no later than July 15 (for the Fall term) and by December 15, (for the Spring semester). A request for Residential Life Accommodations may be submitted at any time during the academic year; however, the University encourages students to begin this process as soon as a Residential Life Housing accommodation is identified. Meeting the required deadlines will increase the ability of the University to review and make a determination related to the requested accommodation. Approval of Residential Life housing accommodations occurs on a first-come, first-serve basis with rare exceptions as a result of documented extenuating circumstances. Accommodations are valid for the academic year in which the student is enrolled.

Students who wish to maintain their Residential Life housing accommodations must submit a request annually.

Review Protocol:

Each Residential Life housing accommodation request received is reviewed by the Residential Life Accommodations Committee (the “Committee”). The Committee is comprised of staff members from The Office of ACCESSibility, Residential Life, Health Office, and Student Counseling Center. The process for requesting housing accommodations under the Policy is as follows:

1. Student completes Housing Application with Residential Life;
2. Student registers with The Office of ACCESSibility in accordance with the *Student Accommodations Policy*;
3. Student submits a formal housing accommodation request via the Application for Accommodations on the Student Health Portal;
4. Student submits supporting documentation from a qualified professional under whom the student has a documented history of care or treatment which substantiates the need for the requested accommodation. The University considers a qualified professional a treatment provider with whom the student has an established relationship and who has expertise in the area of the relevant diagnosis that is the basis for the accommodation request. The student is required to use the University’s accommodation specific forms when seeking input and documentation from the qualified provider. The qualified provider must complete the form in a manner that specifically addresses the request being made. Incomplete forms may delay or substantially impact the student’s request; therefore, students are encouraged to ensure the form is complete before submitting it to the University. For example: A student requesting a single room may provide documentation from their current physician or mental health provider that substantiates the presence of a condition or disability requiring the need for a single room as a reasonable alternative that supports a current treatment plan.

Students requesting the following specific Residential Life housing accommodations should contact The Office of ACCESSibility to obtain the appropriate form, guidance, and related policy. Resident Life housing accommodation requests that require specific forms are:

1. Emotional Support Animal Requests
2. Meal Plan requests
3. Single Room requests

Students are welcome to submit additional documentation to support their request, but it is not required if the form provides the information necessary. Additional documentation submitted should be consistent with the ACCESSibility Documentation Guidelines as outlined in the *Student Reasonable Accommodations Policy*.

Students must schedule and participate in an intake with The Office of ACCESSibility to ensure that an interactive process can occur that fully explores the student's requested housing accommodation.

Within two (2) weeks of completing the steps outlined above, the Committee will review the student's request and will make a determination. Determinations will be communicated via the University's official email. The Office of ACCESSibility will work with Residential Life staff to ensure appropriate annotations are entered into the student's record. In the event the requested accommodation is not approved, the Committee will, when practicable, identify and/or provide an alternative reasonable accommodation.

NOTE ON SINGLE ROOM REQUESTS:

The provision of single rooms as a housing accommodation is not common. Occupying a single room does not guarantee privacy, a quiet environment, an allergen-free environment, nor will it prevent a student from having to interact and negotiate living arrangements with fellow residents. On a case-by-case basis, single room assignments generally provide access by removing common barriers. Meaning, single rooms are equipped with features that promote independence and safety for a student with a qualifying disability.

IV. Appeals

Students may appeal a determination of a request for an accommodation under this Policy by filing a complaint with the Director of Title IX/Equity Compliance. The Title IX /Equity Compliance Director, or a designee, will initially seek to mediate with the student and the Committee to address the concerns or appeal basis described in the complaint. If a mutually acceptable outcome is reached, the agreed upon housing accommodation will be implemented as soon as practicable.

If a mutually acceptable housing accommodation cannot be determined, the Title IX/Equity Compliance Director, or a designee, will initiate an investigation under the *Policy on Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination, and Notice of Non-Discrimination*. The outcome of the investigation will lead to the Title IX/Equity Compliance Director making a recommendation to the Vice President of Student Affairs. The Vice President of Student Affairs, or their designee, will make the final determination specific to an appeal. This determination will be the final determination of the University.