



Housing Accommodation Request, Policy and Procedure

The Student Accessibility Center is responsible for evaluating requests for reasonable accommodation in university housing. The Student Accessibility Center works in collaboration with the Student Health Center, Counseling Services and Residence Life to meet the needs of students requesting a Housing Accommodation. It is the responsibility of the student to initiate all requests, complete the online form, and ensure that a licensed healthcare professional submits the documentation in a timely manner. Ashland University recognizes the importance of providing reasonable accommodations in its housing policies and practices where necessary for individuals with disabilities to fully participate in the university housing program. This Policy explains the specific requirements and guidelines which govern requests for reasonable accommodation in university housing. Ashland University reserves the right to amend this policy at any time as circumstances require.

PLEASE NOTE: This policy and procedure does not supersede other housing policies or procedures or guarantee a student housing. All criteria for housing must be met as outlined in the Student Handbook and the annual room lottery and selection process.

Requests for reasonable accommodation in university housing policies and practices are governed by the following requirements:

FORMS TO BE SUBMITTED

FORM 1: An individual with a disability must complete the **Housing Accommodation Request Form** (student completes this online in Etrieve) to request a reasonable accommodation. If the individual requires assistance in completing the Request Form because of his/her disability, the Student Accessibility Center will provide assistance in completing the form.

FORM 2: The university may require the individual to designate a reliable third party who can verify that the requested accommodation is necessary for individuals with disabilities to fully participate in the university housing program. If the third party returns the Verification Form without sufficient information for the Student Accessibility Center to determine whether an accommodation is necessary, the Director of the center will inform the individual in writing of the verification's insufficiency and may request additional information, including speaking directly with the individual supplying the third-party verification.

DOCUMENTATION GUIDELINES

While third-party documentation may be sufficient to establish the presence of a disability, documentation alone does not inform whether accommodations are reasonable and does not guarantee specific accommodations. SAC is not required to implement a provider's recommendations, as these recommendations often do not consider the broader higher education landscape regarding disability accommodations. Medical information will be considered, but is not the definitive information that informs our final decisions. We consider a multitude of factors. A medical provider's recommended accommodation does not automatically bind SAC/AU to approve the accommodation as being reasonable. When recommendations within documentation would primarily enhance success or are considered outside the scope of what is necessary for equal

access, the student will be referred to other resources and or given options that may be able to address the specific need. All documentation is reviewed on a case-by-case basis, and accommodations are determined through an interactive process.

Documentation that includes any of the following points, though not exhaustive in scope, may be helpful in our analysis:

- Explanation of how disability uniquely affects the student's opportunity to access or participate in campus housing relative to other students who will also encounter similar experiences (such as living with a roommate)
- Understanding of how the student, due to disability, would be adversely affected, relative to other students, if the requested accommodation is not approved, and the student must participate within the standard housing experience
- Objective data and professional analysis that provide context for the necessity for on-campus housing or specific housing modifications to ensure equal access and opportunity to the housing and campus experience

Obvious Disability

If the individual's disability and the necessity for the accommodation are obvious (e.g. an individual with a physical disability using a wheelchair needs an accessible room), the individual need only explain what type of accommodation he/she is requesting. No verification of disability and/or necessity is required under these circumstances.

Non-Obvious Disability/Necessity

- If the disability is obvious but the need for the accommodation is not obvious, the University may require the individual to complete the Housing Accommodation Verification Form for University Housing and designate a health care provider or other professional who can verify that the requested accommodation is necessary to provide the individual an equal opportunity to participate in the University housing program.
- If the disability and necessity for the accommodation are not obvious, the Student Accessibility Center will require the individual to complete the Verification Form and designate a health care provider or other professional (e.g., a physician, optometrist, psychiatrist, psychologist, physician's assistant, nurse practitioner, or nurse), who can verify that the individual has a disability and that the requested accommodation is necessary to provide the individual an equal opportunity to participate in the University housing program.

Professionals Who Can Provide Clinical Documentation

- The provider must have comprehensive training and experience in the relevant specialty and hold appropriate licensure and/or certification
- The provider must be familiar with the history and functional limitations of the student's condition and provide detailed information about the substantial nature and level of the impairment and its impact on major life activities
- The documentation provided generally cannot be from a family member or someone with a personal relationship with the student or the student's family

Recency of Documentation

- Documentation must reflect the status of the student's current functional limitations
- Typically, diagnoses with no anticipated fluctuation of functional limitations require a

recent report written in the past two years

- Typically, diagnoses that may change or are considered episodic, require a recent report written in the past six months

DEADLINES

Ashland University will accept and consider requests for reasonable accommodation in university housing at any time. The individual making the request for accommodation should complete and provide the request form to the Student Accessibility Center as soon as practically possible before moving into university housing. However, if the request for accommodation is made after the deadlines listed below, Ashland University cannot guarantee that it will be able to meet the individual's accommodation needs during the first semester or term of occupancy. Due to the limited number of residential facilities on campus, we cannot guarantee housing accommodations for requests to be in specific locations or buildings. If the need for the accommodation arises when an individual already resides in university housing, he/she should contact the Student Accessibility Center and complete the request form as soon as possible. Ashland University cannot guarantee that it will be able to meet the accommodation needs during the semester or term in which the request is received.

To ensure the best opportunity for priority consideration, it is imperative that students submit the application and all requested documentation by the deadlines indicated below:

- New students and transfer students: Submit your Housing Accommodations Request Form at least 30 days before the start of the Fall or Spring semester, depending on when you plan to begin.
- Returning students: If you are interested in a housing accommodation or currently have an accommodation and want to maintain that accommodation next year, you must go through the application process. Submit your Housing Accommodations Request Form by January 31 to apply for housing accommodations for the following academic year. Accommodations need to be renewed every year; they do not roll over from year to year.

PROCEDURES

1. The student will submit the completed Housing Accommodation Request (Form 1) online and request supporting documentation from their licensed healthcare provider (Housing Accommodation Verification).
2. The Student Accessibility Center will notify the student of the receipt of the forms and let the student know if any additional information or documentation is needed.
3. The Director of the Student Accessibility Center will engage in the interactive process with the student to review all documentation related to the request. An interview and review will be conducted to establish that this is a student with a disability and explore whether the requested accommodation is logical and appropriate to provide equitable access, remove unnecessary academic/institutional barriers, and/or ensure nondiscrimination.
4. Upon receipt of all the necessary documentation, the Housing Accommodation Review Team (Residence Life Director, Director of Counseling/Heath Center, and the Student Accessibility Center) will determine whether appropriate reasonable accommodations can be made based on availability of housing and on the

submitted information. Any request received AFTER a posted deadline will be reviewed in the order it was received.

5. The student will be notified in writing whether or not the accommodation can reasonably be made. This notification will be sent to the student's university email address. Absent exceptional circumstances, the University will attempt to provide a written response to a reasonable accommodation request within fourteen (14) business days of receiving the requested information and engaging in the interactive process with the student. If the housing committee determines that a request accommodation is not warranted or is unreasonable, students may then engage in an interactive process with the Director of the Student Accessibility Center to determine if there are alternative accommodations that might effectively meet the individual's disability-related needs.

DETERMINATION OF REASONABLENESS

The Student Accessibility Center may deny the requested accommodation if it is unreasonable or not necessary to participate in and enjoy housing. A request may also be denied if the requested accommodation is determined to not be necessary for equal access and alternate accommodations can meet the student's needs. The Student Accessibility Center shall consult with Residence Life to determine if implementing the requested accommodation is reasonable. An accommodation is unreasonable if it: (1) imposes an undue financial and/or administrative burden; (2) fundamentally alters university housing policies; (3) poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others or would cause substantial property damage to the property of others, including University property; and/or (4) is otherwise unreasonable to the operation of the University. If the Student Accessibility Center determines a requested accommodation is necessary and is not unreasonable, the individual will be contacted, in writing, within seven (7) business days of its determination.

DENIAL OF ACCOMMODATION/APPEAL

The SAC provides accommodations that support access and opportunity without changing core housing standards. Students with disabilities are expected to meet the same requirements as their peers. Every request goes through a structured review, and students can [appeal decisions](#) if needed.

ANNUAL SUBMISSION AND REVIEW OF HOUSING ACCOMMODATIONS

The Housing Accommodation Request must be submitted on an annual basis, or if there is a change in the accommodation requirement, unless otherwise determined by the Student Accessibility Center.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The Student Accessibility Center understands the nature of medical confidentiality and privacy laws, if a request for a housing accommodation is to be given full and appropriate consideration, then the above documentation is vital and the ability to contact the verifying professional may be essential. It is the responsibility of the student to notify their professional healthcare provider's office of the need for the above information and to provide that office with any required privacy release documentation. The Student Accessibility Center guarantees that a student's confidentiality will be upheld, and information shared as needed with the Housing Accommodation Review Team members. Documentation provided by the student as part of the Housing Accommodations Review

process will be maintained in a confidential manner by the Student Accessibility Center. If a student chooses not to provide an item listed above or to provide no documentation, then the Student Accessibility Center may not be able to proceed with a review of the Housing Accommodation Request.

SINGLE ROOM ACCOMMODATIONS

If you are considering requesting a single room as a disability accommodation, please read the below information:

AU is committed to providing housing for as many students as possible, and to ensuring full access for every student who resides in the residence halls. Being eligible for a single room as a disability accommodation means that **a single room is required in order to provide you with equal access to the residence halls**. If you are considering requesting a single room as a disability accommodation, please take a moment to consider your request carefully and ask yourself whether this definition applies to you.

The SAC is happy to assess requests from any student who chooses to make one, and understands that there are access barriers that may qualify a student for a single room accommodation. However, every term, the SAC receives a number of requests from disabled and nondisabled students who would prefer a single room, would feel more comfortable in a single room, would have their symptoms lessened or treated by a single room, or feel that they would perform better academically if they lived in a single room. While it is valid and understandable to feel this way, these reasons are not the same as requiring a single room for equal access, and these types of requests may not be approved.

Because we know that sharing a room can be difficult, AU has several support systems available to students who struggle with sharing living space, including Housing staff support with roommate communication and boundaries, study areas to provide alternative spaces to work, and a team of mental health counselors available to all students for short-term services. Our support team is happy to help talk you through any concerns you have with sharing a room, direct you to appropriate resources to assist with your concerns, and/or craft a plan of action to address your concerns.

If you do choose to submit a disability accommodation request for a single room, please note that submitting documentation does not guarantee provision of a single room - it simply gives the SAC the information we need in order to fully assess your request. As with any accommodation request, we will engage in an interactive process with you to discuss your individual situation and needs and determine what accommodations are appropriate.

A single room is defined as a room with 1 set of furniture, typically a smaller-size room for one person. Students with approved accommodations for single rooms will be assigned to a true single room, as there is space availability. If there is no availability of a true single room, students will be placed on a waitlist until a space that meets the accommodation opens up.

Students who are interested in a double room with just one occupant, should request a buyout through the Office of Residence Life, not as a part of the housing accommodation

process. Buyouts have an additional cost associated and are granted as space is available.

Assigning a single room as a disability accommodation occurs when private living/sleeping space is necessary to remove barriers for the student to access and utilize college housing. A single room is a disability accommodation when a student's clinical history and professional documentation clearly provide a rationale explaining how the student's substantial limitations create a need for separate living/sleeping space as the only reasonable means for the student to access and utilize housing.

In general, the following diagnoses *may* be cause for single room housing accommodation:

- Disorders Involving Muscular Degeneration
- Immunodeficiency Disorders (or need for chronic medication which significantly impacts immune function)
- Sleep Disorders (a full sleep assessment *including* a sleep disorder lab study will be required)

In general, the following *are not typical* reasons to provide single room housing accommodations and will require specific and thorough third-party documentation:

- ADD/ADHD
- Arthritis
- Mental Health Disorders
- Irritable Bowel Disease
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Allergies or Asthma
- Eating Disorders
- Migraine Headaches
- Diabetes

RELEASE FROM THE ON-CAMPUS LIVING REQUIREMENT:

Exemptions to the housing policy and live-on requirement are only recommended in rare cases where all other reasonable accommodations are considered first. The Student Accessibility Center focuses on accommodations in the on-campus living environment.

EVALUATION OF HOUSING ACCOMMODATION REQUESTS

To accurately and fairly evaluate housing accommodation requests related to medical, psychological, or other disability-related conditions, Ashland University requires sufficient documentation explaining how the requested housing assignment relates to the current impact of the condition. For medical conditions, this documentation typically includes an evaluation from an appropriate licensed professional who is treating the student.

Accommodation decisions in higher education are based on what a student needs to ensure equal access and opportunity relative to other students. These decisions do not guarantee a specific outcome or requested accommodation. The goal is to remove environmental barriers that, when combined with a disability, limit a student's access or opportunities compared to their peers. There must be a clear, logical connection between the disability and the way the housing environment creates an unequal impact or lost opportunity. It is the student's responsibility to provide information that demonstrates this connection to the Student Accessibility Center (SAC).

Ashland University provides housing accommodations when they are appropriate, supported by documentation, and reasonably available. Students who believe they cannot access the on-campus living environment due to a disability are expected to submit a need-based accommodation request

through SAC and provide thorough documentation with enough time for review. SAC carefully evaluates each request and works closely with Residence Life to identify appropriate on-campus housing options. SAC's role is to address accessibility within the on-campus living environment.

The disability accommodation process in higher education is designed to prevent discrimination and ensure students with disabilities have equal access and opportunity in the academic and campus experience. While accommodations may provide adjustments to access, academic and institutional standards and expectations are not lowered or modified.

SAC engages in a personalized, interactive process with students to determine reasonable housing accommodations that support equal access. Having a disability does not automatically mean a student will receive their preferred housing assignment or requested accommodation. Each request is reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

A student's disability experience is important; however, accommodations are only provided when aspects of the university environment create unequal access or limit opportunity compared to other students. Accommodations are intended to remove those environmental barriers rather than treat the disability itself. If no specific environmental factor at the university disproportionately affects the student because of their disability, an accommodation may not be warranted. Simply requesting a particular outcome is not sufficient—there must be a clear, logical connection between the disability and the barrier created by the environment.

We rely on the following information to make informed decisions:

- Student narrative/history
- Third-party documentation from a qualified medical/health/counseling provider (with extent of documentation needed varied by the situation)
- Consultation with other members of the campus community, such as professors or AU housing staff (as necessary)

Accommodations are about providing accessibility to on-campus housing and are generally not:

- To increase comfort or alleviate discomfort, such as avoiding typical roommate challenges and conflicts or lack of experience sharing a room with someone else.
- To ensure a quiet, solitary place for studying. There are many quiet options for studying, including the Ashland University Library and other buildings on campus.
- As a substitute for developing skills needed to live on campus (advanced preparation prior to living on campus, through trial-and-error, counseling, life coaching, AU resources, such as Counseling, or other strategies).
- As part of a treatment or medical plan. While living in a specific type of environment might be ideal based on a student's diagnosis, housing accommodations are not intended to be part of a treatment plan or a medical resource.
- Concerns about living independently for the first time on-campus.
- Due to financial concerns (whether related to disability or not).
- To ensure a private space for virtual appointments, self-care, or wellness activities.
- For safety and/or perceived greater access to campus resources, services, or activities.

*All recommendations will be considered; however, final decisions will be determined by Ashland

University.

Sometimes a housing accommodation may be reasonable for disability reasons but not possible in a specific housing situation. SAC works with Housing and Residence Life to explore other options when this happens. A requested accommodation may be unreasonable or not immediately doable if:

- All suitable rooms are already assigned for the semester
- It creates undue financial or administrative challenges for AU
- It would fundamentally change housing policies that apply to all students
- It poses a safety risk to others, the student, or property