

**ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION** STAF Division of Student Affairs and Academic Support  
**POLICY NUMBER** STAF 4.00  
**POLICY TITLE** University Housing - Academic Year Eligibility and Room Modifications  
**SCOPE OF POLICY** USC Columbia  
**DATE OF REVISION** November 10, 2023  
**RESPONSIBLE OFFICER** Vice President for Student Affairs and Academic Support  
**ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE** University Housing

#### **PURPOSE**

USC Columbia (also referred herein as the “university”) offers single undergraduate housing on campus. The purpose of this policy is to outline regulations regarding (a) eligibility requirements to live in university housing; (b) room occupancy/change/consolidation; and (c) housing during periods of breaks from classes.

#### **DEFINITIONS**

**Housing Agreement/Contract:** rules and regulations that allows an admitted or enrolled student to occupy a residence hall for an agreed-upon length of time given certain conditions and payments are met by established deadlines. A legally binding contract that recognizes and governs the rights and duties of the student and the University.

**Housing cancellation form:** written request for occupancy agreement to be terminated for cause.

**Resident:** an enrolled student that is assigned to a university owned or operated residential facility.

**Student:** A person who is currently enrolled at the university, or who is accepted for admission or readmission to the university, or who has been enrolled at the university in a prior semester or summer session and is eligible to continue enrollment in the semester or summer session that immediately follows, or who is attending an educational program sponsored by the university while that person is on campus, or who engaged in prohibited conduct at a time when the individual met the above criteria. Individuals who are not currently enrolled at the university remain subject to the disciplinary process for conduct that occurred while they were enrolled.

#### **POLICY STATEMENT**

USC Columbia is committed to the educational development of its students in the classroom and in the residence halls, with the residence hall program contributing to the educational objectives of the university. As such, the university requires all first-year students to live on campus as long as space is available. The university may make exceptions to this policy, for a year or a semester. Students may receive exemption status based upon marital status, commuting status, military status, non-traditional age, or medical circumstances. Requests for exemption are made to University Housing (referred herein as "Housing"). Campus housing policies and regulations are designed to promote the health and safety of residents and insure that the residential living environment is conducive for a resident’s academic success. In furtherance of these objectives, Housing has established regulations that regulation edibility for living in campus housing, room modifications, and housing during periods of breaks from classes.

## PROCEDURES

- A. In accordance with UNIV 3.04 University Housing reserves the right to modify and/or amend stated policies and procedures during a period of crisis, including but not limited to a communicable disease outbreak or weather-related natural disaster.
- B. Eligibility
1. Eligibility for housing is limited to university students and approved visiting students (including, but not limited to, Gamecock Gateway and Palmetto Pathway) who have completed both the registration and program filing processes, have made all required payments by established deadlines, and are enrolled on a full-time basis. Some part-time students may also be eligible, providing they meet the requirements for special enrollment as defined by the University Registrar and/or the Student Disability Resource Center.
  2. Eligibility for residence on campus does not equal a guarantee of housing. Students must meet all requirements and deadlines in order to be considered for a room assignment.
  3. Priority to live in university residence halls is given to students carrying a normal course load. Any undergraduate who is enrolled for fewer than 12 credit hours may be required to vacate. Requests for remaining in campus housing must be presented to the Director of Operations or designee at 1520 Devine Street, Columbia, SC.
  4. Any person required to register under Article 7, Sex Offender Registry, is prohibited from living in campus student housing (SC Code of Laws Ann. 23-3-465 (2005)). If it is determined that any person in campus student housing is registered as a sex offender, law enforcement officials and appropriate university officials will be informed and the housing contract will be terminated immediately without refund.
  5. Lack of Eligibility for Disciplinary Reasons
    - b. The housing contract is for an entire academic year and all room charges will be assessed on the student account. The university reserves the right to cancel contracts with residents who do not abide by university rules as specified in the Code of Student Conduct, University Policy STAF 6.26 (e.g., violation of drug policies), and/or housing policies and regulations (e.g., destruction of housing property) Campus Housing Policy and Regulations [STAF 4.03](#).
    - c. Residents may not be entitled to a refund if removed for the above reasons or suspended from the university for disciplinary reasons, during times of crisis including but not limited to non-compliance Covid 19 addendum and the Terms and Conditions of the Housing Agreement. Refunds in such cases are subject to approval by the Director of Operations or that individual's designee and will be applied to the student account.
- C. Applications

1. New first-year and transfer students should complete the online housing application by May 1. Information on how to apply is distributed by the Admissions Office with other matriculation materials.
2. Continuing students currently living on campus (or who lived on campus before leaving for an approved spring study abroad) should apply online for housing and pay \$100 non-refundable housing application fee beginning November 1 of each year.
3. Students going through the readmission process, returning from a fall study abroad, currently living off campus should submit a housing application online by November 1<sup>st</sup> for the next academic term and early December for the spring only semester.
4. Application requests specifying only a particular residence or type of housing cannot be guaranteed, nor can roommate/suitemate preferences, based upon race, ethnicity, religion, religious practices, sexual orientation, dietary preferences, socioeconomic status, physical characteristics, national origin, or other protected class.
5. Applications for Students Seeking Accommodations based on Disability Status
  - a. Students with documented disabilities who may need some form of disability-related specific housing consideration (accessible housing, access to a private bath or kitchen, single room assignment, strobe alarm, etc.) must complete and submit a request to the Student Disability Resource Center.
  - b. Housing will make disability-related housing assignments only after a recommendation from the Student Disability Resource Center. Students who may have received accommodations in the past must re-apply each year to be reconsidered. Previous accommodations are not automatically extended without submitting an updated request for the upcoming academic year.

#### D. Housing Period

1. The housing period begins at the time the student takes occupancy of the assigned space which must be no later than 5 p.m. on the first day of classes for each semester. The housing period ends 24 hours after the time a student ceases to be eligible for residence or within 24 hours after the student's last final examination, but no later than the official posted closing dates noted on the Housing web page and contained within the Housing contract.
2. Temporary housing, including early arrivals and extended stays, is approved on a limited basis and will result in an additional charge to a student's account to extend the contracted housing period. Students must be in residence for both the fall and spring semesters in order to be approved for temporary housing.
3. University Housing reserves the right to determine buildings that are open for break periods based on the need.

## E. Room Occupancy

1. After entering students are officially admitted to the university, have signed residence hall contracts, and paid the required application fees, they are assigned a room as space permits. Assignment is determined by the date of Housing application, within the priority groups (learning communities, residential programs, etc.). Whenever possible, written requests for a specific learning community and roommate(s) will be honored, but the university reserves the right to make whatever room assignments are considered in the best interest of the institution and student body. Students may not move into any room other than the one assigned.
2. If a resident fails to occupy the assigned space on or before the first day of classes, the assignment may be canceled if proper notice of late arrival is not given to the Housing Assignments Office. A resident who signs contract, but fails to occupy the assigned space, will be required to pay full rental fees. A new first year student who resides off campus, but had not received an exemption may be billed for housing costs. Residents who withdraw from the university at the end of or during the fall semester or spring semester must officially check out with Residence Life and the Housing Assignments Office. Residents may request and pay extra for a single room if space is available. This includes rooms designed for double occupancy.
3. At all times, only the assigned student shall occupy the assigned space. Under no circumstances may a student change assignments or keys with another student, sublet their room or provide regular housing to any other person(s).
4. If for any reason a student ceases to be eligible for housing, they must vacate their room within 48 hours.
5. Housing reserves the right to assign any vacant space, (including partially occupied multiple rooms and/or single rooms within suites), at any time, and is not obligated to inform roommates or suitemates of changes. Any student with a vacancy in their room should keep the space open and ready for assignment at any point.

## F. Room Changes

1. Any student with roommate concerns will first participate in a roommate discussion/mediation process during which time the roommate contract will be evaluated and adjusted as needed. Vacant spaces within rooms will be assigned to students needing room changes, using a student's housing application to help match new roommates.
2. Room changes may be made as often as requested during scheduled room change periods provided space is available. Students may request a room change in the fall (mid-September), in December (for the spring semester), or in the spring (late January). Upperclass students accepted by a learning community may not request a room change over the summer after the returning student room selection process.

3. Room changes at any other point in the academic year are rarely granted and require that a student has demonstrated an attempt to mediate any roommate/suitemate conflicts. Any room changes that are not approved by the Housing Assignments Office and Residence Life are a violation of policy and the responsible student(s) will be required to return to their previous room and will be subject to conduct sanctions and an improper room change charge of \$100.
4. Only in unusual circumstances will requests received outside of the scheduled period be approved by the Director of Operations or the Director of Residence Life.
5. We reserve the right to modify room changes during times of crisis, including but not limited to communicable disease outbreak or weather related/natural disaster.

#### G. Consolidation Policy

1. Housing may initiate and implement a consolidation program in order to: (a) better meet the demand for students requesting to room together; (b) better meet the demand for private rooms; and (c) support the private room policy regarding payment. The consolidation process is applied to unoccupied spaces on a floor or within the building. As such, students are not required to move to another floor or building to accomplish consolidation, but may choose to do so if it would meet their needs. Students in half-vacant rooms will be encouraged to voluntarily consolidate with another resident prior to the implementation of consolidation. Specifically:
  - a. Students will be notified of the need to have a roommate at the beginning of each semester.
  - b. Students without roommates can:
    - i. Pay the private room rate if it is available in their hall at that time and for the remainder of the academic year.
    - ii. Voluntarily consolidate with another student in a half-vacant room.
2. By the established date, students still in a half-vacant, non-private room will be included in the consolidation drawing. All affected students will be invited to the drawing.
3. Each floor with half-vacant rooms will hold its own random drawing to determine which students will be required to move to one of the other half-vacant rooms on their floor.
4. Students will be notified, in writing, of the outcome of the drawing the following day. Students drawn to move will have until the following Monday at 8:00 a.m. to complete the room change.
5. Failure to comply with consolidation outcomes may result in additional room fees and/or disciplinary actions.

H. Illegal occupancy

1. If a new student or individual not assigned to campus housing occupies a room without the consent of Housing, the student will be charged \$75 plus pro-rated rent.
2. The student may also be required to vacate and is subject to disciplinary action. Unregistered non-student occupants are subject to arrest.

I. Break Housing

1. During break housing, which includes winter and spring breaks, most residence halls are closed. Designated halls will remain open and some break housing may be available.
2. Due to scheduling pressure, renovations may be going on in the halls kept open for break housing. Prior to each break period, specific information regarding the availability of break housing and special regulations will be distributed.

**RELATED UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

[STAF 4.03 Campus Housing Policies and Regulations](#)

[STAF 4.11 Resident Student Conduct](#)

[STAF 6.26 Student Code of Conduct](#)

[UNIV 3.03 Quarantine and Isolation of Students, Faculty and Staff](#)

[UNIV 3.04 Communicable Disease Outbreak Mitigation Measures](#)

**HISTORY OF REVISIONS**

<b>DATE OF REVISION</b>	<b>REASON FOR REVISION</b>
June 1, 1992	New policy approval
June 2, 2017	Policy organization, content, and accuracy was reviewed and the policy procedures were revised to reflect current practices.
July 8, 2020	Policy was updated to be more clear and student-friendly and to reflect current practices. Revised to new policy format. Revised to include communicable diseases outbreak and isolation and quarantine measures.
November 10, 2023	Policy revised to reflect current practices and updated to definitions.