



## Guidelines on Housing Requests Based on Disability-Related Needs Revised January 2010

### General Information

American University is committed to ensuring accessibility to university programs and activities for all qualified students with disabilities. The following information is provided to assist American University students who wish to obtain disability-based housing accommodations.

If you would like to request housing accommodations because of a disability, you must complete the **Request for Disability-Based Housing Accommodations** form (see attached) and return it to Disability Support Services (DSS). *All requests must be initiated through Disability Support Services and not through Housing and Dining Programs.* DSS will consult with other university offices as necessary in the handling of your request. If your request is related to a learning disability or ADHD, the request will be forwarded for consultation to the Academic Support Center. Because of numerous sites on campus that provide reduced-distraction study space, single rooms are not generally provided for students who have learning or attention disorders.

### Documentation

You are responsible for submitting the required request form, including having your medical provider complete the necessary documentation. Just as in the case of documentation for accommodations in the classroom, documentation for a housing request consists of an evaluation by an appropriate professional that relates the current impact of the condition to the request. A diagnosis of a disorder, condition, or syndrome in and of itself does not qualify an individual for disability-based accommodations.

### Housing Lottery

Beginning in the fall 2010 semester, Housing and Dining Programs will implement an on-campus housing lottery for rising juniors and seniors.

**First-year Students:** There is no lottery process for first-year students. First-year students requesting housing accommodations based on disability should return the Request for Disability-Based Housing Accommodations form along with appropriate documentation. Examples of accommodations that American University may provide include: modifying rooms, bathrooms, and common areas to accommodate students with mobility impairments; installing visual alarms in residential rooms; and assigning students with psychiatric disabilities to appropriate living situations.

**Rising Sophomore Students:** There is no lottery process for rising sophomores. If you want to re-apply for previous housing accommodations or you are requesting a new housing accommodation, you should return the Request for Disability-Based Housing Accommodations form along with appropriate documentation to Disability Support Services. Documentation must be updated each year a request is made. Please note that you must submit both the room re-application and the housing accommodation request by the deadline posted annually by Housing and Dining Programs.

**Returning Students:** Students with disabilities who have completed four semesters in campus housing (including spring 2010) will be invited to participate in a lottery. **Students who have received disability-based housing accommodations in previous semesters are not automatically exempt from the lottery process. In most cases, students will need to participate in the lottery process.** If you become eligible for housing through the lottery process and wish to request a disability-based housing accommodation, you will need to submit a request form and appropriate documentation to be reviewed by the director of Disability Support Services.

**Only students with significant disabilities for whom living off campus is not feasible will be considered for exemption from this lottery process.** A request for a lottery exemption can be made using the Request for Disability-Based Housing Accommodations form with current documentation prior to the start of the lottery process. Documentation should include a detailed rationale for an on-campus housing assignment. Determination will be made by Disability Support Services and communicated to Housing and Dining Programs.

**Transfer Students:** There is no lottery process for a transfer student with fewer than 46 credits. If you are a transfer student with fewer than 46 credits, and wish to request a housing accommodation based on disability, you will need to complete the Request for Disability-Based Housing Accommodations form and provide appropriate documentation to be reviewed by Disability Support Services. If you have 46 credits or more, on-campus housing is not guaranteed and is not likely. If you wish to be considered for housing should transfer students with more than 46 credits become eligible to live on campus, you will need to complete the Request for Disability-Based Housing Accommodations form and provide appropriate documentation.

## **Housing Deadlines**

Due to heavy demand for on-campus housing, you must adhere to housing application deadlines. We strongly encourage students with disabilities whose attendance at the university may depend on the availability of on-campus housing to apply far in advance of the deadline. The earliest possible communication with DSS and Housing and Dining Programs is particularly helpful in cases where it may be necessary to make special room assignments or room modifications.

**If you are currently an enrolled AU student who is requesting a disability-based housing accommodation for the following year, you must submit the request form with documentation to Disability Support Services by the room application deadline posted annually by Housing and Dining Programs.**

## **Please note the following specific deadlines to request disability-based housing accommodations:**

Entering first-year student and transfer students with fewer than 46 credits: as soon as possible after tuition and housing deposits are made

Rising sophomores, junior and seniors: room application deadline posted by Housing and Dining Programs

## **Evaluation of Disability-Based Housing Requests**

Housing requests completed in compliance with the guidelines below are considered carefully and on a case-by-case basis. Below are three areas considered when evaluating housing requests.

### **Severity of the Condition**

- Is the impact of the condition life threatening if the request is not met?
- Is there a negative health impact that may be permanent if the request is not met?
- Is the request an integral component of a treatment plan for the condition in question?
- What is the likely impact on academic performance if the request is not met?

### **Timing of the Request**

- Was the request made with an initial housing request?
- Was the request made before the application deadline for housing requests for the semester in question?
- Was the request made as soon as possible after identifying the need?

### **Feasibility and Availability**

- Is space currently available that meets the student's needs?
- Can space be adapted to provide the requested configuration without creating a safety hazard (related to electrical load, emergency egress, etc.)?
- Are there other effective methods or housing configurations that would achieve similar benefits as the requested configuration?

## **Charges**

The university is committed to providing appropriate accommodations when they are well-documented and clearly disability-related by providing priority for single rooms at the single rate. All students, regardless of disability status, are expected to pay for the occupancy level they are assigned. The accommodation is the assignment to the single-occupancy room, not charging a differential rate.

## **Notification**

Students will be notified of housing assignments by Housing and Dining Programs. If there are questions about disability-related accommodations, please contact Disability Support Services at 202-885-3315.

The above guidelines are intended to inform students about the university's decision-making process but it is not exhaustive since we cannot anticipate every situation. The educational process necessitates change. This publication must be considered informational and not binding on the university. The university reserves the right to amend these guidelines with or without notice. Consult Disability Support Services for additional information.



## Disability Support Services

### Request for Disability-Based Housing Accommodations

To request a housing accommodation on the basis of disability, the form below must be completed and returned to Disability Support Services (DSS) as early as possible. To determine eligibility, American University requires current and comprehensive documentation of the student's condition from a licensed clinical professional or health care provider familiar with the history and functional limitations of the student's condition(s). You are responsible for seeing that your medical provider provides the information requested on this form and forwards it directly to DSS. We also recommend that you provide your medical provider with a copy of the **Guidelines on Housing Requests Based on Disability-Related Needs**. It is important that all housing application deadlines be met in order for a timely decision to be made.

#### For Completion by Student:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ AU ID#: \_\_\_\_\_

Housing Semester/Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Current academic level at time of this request (freshman, sophomore, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Describe your medical condition or disability requiring accommodation (supporting documentation from a medical provider as described below will be needed):

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Type of housing accommodation requested and rationale:

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Describe alternatives if the preferred accommodation is not possible:

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By signing below, I certify that the above statements are correct and I authorize American University to release or exchange information with my medical provider and other university officials as necessary to assist in this accommodation process. I also certify that I have read and understand the guidelines on housing requests based on disability related needs.

Student's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



**For Completion by Medical Provider:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Credentials: \_\_\_\_\_

Patient Name: \_\_\_\_\_

To determine eligibility for housing considerations, American University requires current and comprehensive documentation of the student's condition from a licensed clinical professional or health care provider familiar with the history and functional limitations of the student's condition(s). The provider giving the below information must not be a relative of the student or a friend of the student or student's family. Thank you for your time and support in providing assistance to this student. Please return this form and your responses on professional letterhead as soon as possible via fax, email, or mail.

1. Current diagnosis, history that is the basis of the request, and prognosis;
2. Discussion of the current, substantial disability-based limitations, and how they relate to the residential hall environment;
3. Discussion of any current treatment, medication, and/or other mitigating measures used by the student or recommended by the provider;
4. Description of any substantial medication side effects, if applicable;
5. A complete description of the desired housing configuration and discussion of why this specific accommodation is the necessary accommodation for the student's disability;
6. An indication of the level of need for the recommended configuration (and the consequences of not receiving it);
7. Possible alternatives if the recommended configuration is not possible;
8. Discussion of how the student will manage limitations/symptoms in other campus environments (e.g. classrooms, dining hall, library, etc.);

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