

## Student Accessibility Services Housing Accommodation Policy and Procedure

### Introduction and Background

Clark 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 that govern requests for reasonable accommodation in University housing. Clark University reserves the right to amend this policy at any time as circumstances require.

### Procedure for Requesting Reasonable Accommodation

Student Accessibility Services (SAS) is responsible for evaluating whether to grant or deny requests for reasonable accommodation in University housing. In evaluating the request, SAS will consult with Residential Life and Housing (RLH) and/or Health Services as necessary to determine whether the requested accommodation is necessary and reasonable. Individuals with a disability who reside or intend to reside in University housing who believe they need a reasonable accommodation must contact SAS.

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

#### Requesting a Housing Accommodation

- 1) An individual with a disability should submit disability documentation to SAS complete with what housing accommodations are being requested. For documentation guidelines, see <http://www2.clarku.edu/offices/aac/ada/doc.cfm>.

Students should self-identify when filling out housing forms with RLH and make the same requests there that they are requesting through SAS.

Please note: Clark University will accept and consider requests for reasonable accommodation in University housing at any time. The individual making the request for accommodation should submit documentation as soon as practicably possible and ideally do so before moving into University housing.

Adapted from: Western Connecticut State University AccessAbility Services and University of Nebraska

- a) **For new incoming students:** If the request for accommodation is made fewer than 60 days before the individual intends to move into University housing, Clark cannot guarantee that it will be able to meet the individual's accommodation needs during the first semester or term of occupancy. As soon as the CU Web and ClarkYOU portals open for new students to use around May, they should be starting this request process via both SAS and RLH.
  - b) **For students whom are currently in campus housing:** If the need for the accommodation arises when an individual already resides in University housing, they should request housing accommodations at least 30 days before the lottery process to pick rooms begins with RLH. Clark cannot guarantee that it will be able to meet the accommodation needs during the semester or term in which the request is received. This is particularly true if students make their requests after housing selection for the fall has closed.
- 2) After receiving documentation and allowing some time for SAS to review it, SAS and the individual will schedule an intake meeting during which the request will be reviewed.
  - 3) At the end of an intake meeting, in most cases, SAS will make an accommodation decision. If more information is needed in order to come to an accommodation decision, the next steps will be discussed with the student. After the intake, if SAS determines that other professional input is needed to come to a decision then RLH and/or Health Services will meet with SAS to review the request.

After all information is received and the intake meeting is held, SAS will attempt to provide a response to a reasonable accommodation request within fourteen (14) business days.

### **Information that May Be Requested for Housing Accommodation Requests**

SAS shall limit its requests for information to only the information necessary to verify whether the individual making the request has a disability and/or to evaluate if the reasonable accommodation is necessary to provide the individual an equal opportunity to fully participate in University housing.

- **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 she is requesting. No verification of disability is required under these circumstances.

Adapted from: Western Connecticut State University AccessAbility Services and University of Nebraska

- Non-Obvious Disability
  - If the disability is obvious but the need for the accommodation is not obvious, the University may require the individual to submit disability documentation that the requested accommodation is necessary to provide the individual an equal opportunity to fully participate in housing
  - If the disability and necessity for the accommodation are not obvious, SAS will require the individual to submit documentation from a provider to verify that the individual has a disability and that the requested accommodation is necessary to provide the individual an equal opportunity to use and enjoy University housing.
  - For documentation guidelines, refer to: <http://www2.clarku.edu/offices/aac/ada/doc.cfm>

## Determination of Reasonableness

SAS may deny the requested accommodation if it is unreasonable. SAS can consult with RLH to determine if implementing the requested accommodation is reasonable.

An accommodation is unreasonable if it:

- Imposes an undue financial and/or administrative burden
- Fundamentally alters university housing policies
- 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
- Is otherwise unreasonable to the operation of the University.

## Denial of Accommodation/Appeal

If SAS determines a requested accommodation is necessary but unreasonable, SAS will contact the individual within seven (7) business days of its determination and engage in an interactive process with the individual to determine if there are alternative accommodations that might effectively meet the individual's disability-related needs.

If the individual is unwilling to accept any alternative accommodation offered by SAS or there are no alternative accommodations available, SAS will provide a verbal explanation and written notification to the individual of the denial, the reasons for the denial, the right to appeal the decision, and the procedures for that appeals process. The notification shall be in writing and made within seven (7) business days of the notification from the individual of his/her unwillingness to accept any of the alternative accommodations offered or the determination that there are no alternative accommodations available.

If the individual would like to file a grievance and appeal the decision, they can follow the procedure on this page: <http://www2.clarku.edu/offices/aac/ada/studentgrievance>.

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## **Confidentiality and Recordkeeping**

In processing requests for reasonable accommodations, the University will take all steps required by federal, state, and/or local law to protect the confidentiality of any information or documentation disclosed in connection with the requests. Such measures may include limiting access to such information to individuals specifically designated to determine and implement requests for reasonable accommodations. These individuals will disclose the information only to the extent necessary to determine whether to grant the request, determine if the request is unreasonable, and implement any request granted. They will keep all written requests and accompanying documentation in a secure area to which only those designated individuals have access, except as otherwise required by law.

## **Non-retaliation Provision**

Clark University will not retaliate against any individual because that individual has requested or received a reasonable accommodation in University housing.

Any questions regarding this policy should be directed to Adam Kosakowski, Director, at 508-798-4368 (voice), or via e-mail at [akosakowski@clarku.edu](mailto:akosakowski@clarku.edu).

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