

Disability Services Center (DSC)

Housing Accommodations Policy and Procedures

General Information

USM's Office of Residential Life offers a variety of housing options to students who wish to live on campus. Housing options include traditional residence hall rooms and suite style options as well as various living and learning communities. As with all communal living, all housing options at USM involve students sharing living space, bathrooms and other common areas with their peers. The Office of Residential Life strives to create a vibrant community and provide housing that fosters and supports students' academic, social and personal goals and well-being.

If you have housing needs due to a documented disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and its amendments (ADA), you may request housing accommodations by completing the attached application. All requests for housing accommodations must include written documentation of your disability from a licensed professional. To be eligible for accommodations, your disability must significantly restrict your access to and your participation in the residential community. Submission of a request does not guarantee approval of accommodations. Examples of accommodations USM may provide include modifying rooms to accommodate students with physical access needs, installing visual alarms in residential rooms for students who are deaf or hard of hearing, assigning a student a room with close proximity to the restroom for medical reasons, or assigning a single room to accommodate adaptive technology equipment. Because of numerous sites on campus that provide reduced distraction study space, accommodations are generally not provided for academic related needs. The Disability Services Center (DSC) strongly encourages students whose attendance at the university depends on the availability of on campus housing to apply far in advance of the published deadlines.

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 the 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?

DSC Housing Accommodations Request Procedure

- ✓ New residential students must complete and submit a housing contract to the Office of Residential Life by May 1st for fall semester. Returning students must complete a housing contract during the room selection process and follow the published deadline.
- ✓ Complete and submit the attached DSC Housing Accommodations Request form by deadline for fall semester. Requests made after the May 1st deadline will be honored on a space available basis. **Requests may be e-mailed to dsc-usm@maine.edu, fax to 207-780-4403 or mailed to DSC, PO Box 9300, Portland ME 04104.**
- ✓ Please note that if a request for accommodation is made immediately before the individual intends to move into University housing, USM cannot guarantee that it will be able to meet the individual's accommodation needs during the first semester or term of occupancy.
- ✓ If the need for accommodation arises when an individual already resides in University housing, they should contact the Disability Services Center and complete the Student Request form as soon as possible. USM cannot guarantee that it will be able to meet the accommodation needs during the semester or term in which the request is received.
- ✓ Your request will be reviewed by the Disability Services Center staff with possible consultation with representatives from University Health & Counseling and the Office of Residential Life.
- ✓ You will be notified of the Committee's decision in writing within 7 days of receiving your request including the documentation.

Special Note: With the exception of service dogs defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act and its amendments, USM maintains a "no pets" policy in the residence halls. However, in accordance with Federal Law (the Fair Housing Act enforced by the U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development), the university will consider requests for accommodations to the housing policy to allow students with documented mental health disabilities to have an ESA in-residence. Students requesting Emotional Support Animals must follow the Emotional Support Animal Policy and Procedures. For information, please contact the Disability Services Center at 207-780-4706 or dsc-usm@maine.edu.

Appeal Process

Students who feel that they been unfairly denied a reasonable accommodation should contact the Director of Equal Opportunity at 207-581-1226 or 711 (Maine Relay) or equal.opportunity@maine.edu.