Oberlin College Housing/Dining Accommodations
2016 Policies and Procedures

Oberlin College recognizes the importance of providing reasonable accommodations in its housing/dining policies and practices where necessary for individuals with disabilities to use College housing. The College engages in an interactive process with each student and reviews requests for accommodations on an individualized, case-by-case basis. Depending on the nature and functional limitations of a student’s documented disability, the student may be eligible to receive a housing accommodation. This policy explains the specific requirements and guidelines which govern requests for reasonable accommodation in College housing. The College reserves the right to amend this policy at any time as circumstances require.

Oberlin College is a residential college. As a residential college, academic activity is designed to occur in a community setting of faculty, staff, and students. Oberlin College’s mission articulates that one of the goals is to “develop the residential experience to ensure that it serves as an intellectual and artistic incubator for educational excellence.” (The Oberlin College Strategic Plan 2016-2021). Housing and residential life programs are guided by best practices in accordance with such organizations as the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS), as well as the Association of College & University Housing Officers-International.

Accordingly,

• College policy for housing/dining requires all students to participate in the housing program for the typical period to complete graduation requirements (eight semesters), with eligibility for off-campus housing after six semesters. There is limited off-campus eligibility after six semesters in residence.
• All students are required to participate in the dining program throughout their college experience.

Deadlines for Requesting Housing Accommodations

• For fall housing for continuing students: March 15th
• For fall housing for 1st year and transfer students: June 15th
• For fall housing for students returning from leave: July 15th
• For spring housing: December 15th
In order for the College to provide housing accommodations, the College recommends that a student request an accommodation in a timely fashion since the types and numbers of housing units are finite. The following deadlines reflect the housing assignment process and are identified with the aim of facilitating access to housing accommodations.

Oberlin College will accept and consider requests for reasonable accommodation in College housing during any month. However, the College may not be able to provide the accommodation if the request is not submitted in a timely fashion due to the lack of housing availability. Accommodations will not be granted retroactively.

Disability housing accommodations are intended for individuals with a clearly documented physical, medical, psychological or learning disability that substantially limits their ability to function daily in a residence hall environment. There is a difference between Disability housing accommodations and a housing preference. Requests to live in specific halls or with specific people are not reasonable requests for accommodation.

**Procedure for Requesting Reasonable Accommodation for Housing/Dining**
(excluding requests for Service Animals under the ADA Amendments Acts and ESAs under the Fair Housing Act)

1. An individual with a disability must **complete the “Disability Accommodation Request Form for for College Housing/Dining”** to request a reasonable accommodation. Copies of the Request Form are available from ODS (Office of Disability Services) or on-line at https://new.oberlin.edu/office/disability-services/housingdining-accommodations/
The student making the request for the accommodation should complete and provide the Request Form to ODS as soon as practicably possible.

2. **Documentation of accommodation need**
   To evaluate requests based on medical, psychological or disability related conditions accurately and equitably, the **documentation** should consist of an evaluation by an appropriate professional that includes the name, title, and credentials of the professional. All letters must be typed on letterhead, signed, and date. Documentation should not be from a relative.

   The documentation should include following:
   • the diagnosis for which the accommodations are requested
   • the methodology used
   • current functional limitations and explanation of how the disability substantially limits a major life activity
   • severity of the condition
   • the needed accommodation
3. **Meeting with ODS:**

The student will meet with the Director of ODS (or their designated representative) to discuss the requested reasonable accommodation.

4. **The Housing Accommodation Committee evaluates whether to approve requests** for a reasonable accommodation in College housing/dining. That Committee, chaired by a member of the ODS, includes representatives from Residential Education, the Counseling Center and Student Health, and ODS. The deadline for requests each month is the 15th, and the Committee meets within seven business days of that deadline. Below is a summary of the factors considered when evaluating housing requests.

**Disability**
- Does a disability exist?

**Relationship**
- What is the relationship between the disability and requested accommodation?

**Severity**
- 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?
- What is the likely impact on social development if the request is not met?
- What is the likely impact on the student’s level of comfort if the request is not met?

**Timing of Request**
- Was the request made before the deadline for housing requests for the semester in question?
- Was the request made as soon as possible after identifying the need? (Based on date of diagnosis, receipt of housing assignment, change in status, and so forth)

**Feasibility of the Request**
- Is the space available that meets the student’s needs?
- Can space be adapted to provide the requested configuration without creating a safety hazard (electrical load, emergency egress, etc.)?
- Are there other effective methods or housing configurations that would achieve similar benefits as the requested configuration?
- How does meeting this request impact housing commitments to other students?
5. Absent exceptional circumstances, within seven business days of the Housing Accommodation Committee meeting, the Chair of the Housing/Dining Accommodation Committee will let the student know of the decision of the Committee in writing. 
   • Approval of Accommodation: If the Housing Accommodation Committee decides that a requested accommodation is necessary and is not unreasonable, the Committee chair will contact the individual of its determination. When appropriate, the Housing Accommodation Committee may recommend an alternate accommodation. The student will have the opportunity to discuss the recommended accommodation and accept or decline.
   
   • Denial of Accommodation: The Housing Accommodation Committee may deny the requested accommodation if it is unreasonable and will contact the individual, in writing, of its determination.

6. **Appeals** are reviewed by the Accommodation Appeals Committee. The Office of Disability Services Appeals Procedure can be found under “Policies” on the ODS website.

7. **Confidentiality and Recordkeeping**: In processing a request for reasonable accommodations, the College 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.

8. **Non-retaliation provision**: Oberlin College will not retaliate against any individual because that individual has requested or received a reasonable accommodation in College housing.
June 2016