

REQUESTING SPECIAL HOUSING ACCOMMODATIONS GUIDANCE¹

Union College complies with the [Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990](#), [Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#), and the [Fair Housing Act](#). Special housing accommodations are intended for students with a qualifying disability that **substantially** limits their ability to function daily in a residence hall environment. Such an accommodation is not based solely on a diagnosis, but rather on a comprehensive analysis of a student's disability and how that disability directly interferes with one or more major life activity/activities as would be encountered in the residential setting.

Union College housing offers an independent and social environment with various options of shared living spaces. Learning to share space and connecting with others is an integral part of living in a residential community. Special housing accommodations differ from housing preferences. Student preferences for certain types of housing (e.g., ground floor, air conditioning, etc.) cannot be granted, whereas reasonable accommodations may be provided to a student with a documented disability depending on the impact of that disability. Requests for special housing accommodations based on preferences, as opposed to documented need, will be declined.

Be advised that a diagnosis of a medical or psychological condition does not automatically qualify a student for a special housing accommodation and that in some cases, alternative reasonable accommodations (other than those requested) may be offered. The desire to have a quiet, undisturbed place to study is insufficient to warrant a housing accommodation. Wicker Wellness Center (Counseling and Health), Accommodative Services, Academic Support Services, and the Office of Residential Education & Housing have resources to assist students with communication and problem-solving skills, study habits, and communal-living tools.

IMPORTANT SUBMISSION DEADLINES

Deadlines for special housing accommodation requests have been established so that review and placement can happen prior to the completion of the general housing assignment process conducted by the Office of Residential Education & Housing. Students must adhere to the appropriate deadlines. Special housing accommodation requests require advance planning and documentation of the disability. To be considered for a special housing accommodation, **students must submit all required information by the following dates:**

- **January 10** for Fall 2025 Term (returning students)
- **June 16** for Fall 2025 Term (incoming students)

¹ This guidance explains the specific requirements that govern requests for reasonable accommodation in college housing. Union College reserves the right to amend this guidance at any time, as circumstances require.

REQUESTING A SPECIAL HOUSING ACCOMMODATION

Review the information below –

1. Importantly, if a student submits a special housing accommodation request after the relevant above deadline has passed, the **student will still need to participate in the general housing lottery selection process**. The housing application deadline is strictly enforced.
2. If the need for a special housing accommodation arises after general housing assignments are issued by the Office of Residential Education & Housing or when a student already resides in College housing, the student should follow the process described below as soon as possible; however, such requests should only be submitted if based on a newly diagnosed disability. If a special housing accommodation request is submitted after the above relevant deadline, and the accommodation is approved, the student may be placed on a waiting list depending upon availability, as the supply of single rooms is limited.
3. New/incoming students **must** participate in the Housing Deposit and Housing Application processes while they are going through this Special Housing Accommodation Request process, to be eligible for housing.
4. Be advised that the Special Housing Committee WILL NOT consider a release from the residency requirement. A request to live off-campus as an accommodation will not be considered.
5. Assignment to a specific residence or roommate is not an accommodation.

PROCESS AND REQUIRED INFORMATION

Students who wish to request a special housing accommodation due to a qualifying disability must submit to the Director of Accommodative Services a completed and current [Special Housing Accommodation Request Form](#).

- To properly evaluate how the College can meet the student's need for reasonable and appropriate housing accommodations, the College requires information from both the student submitting the request and their current, treating licensed provider.
- Section 1 must be completed in full by the student. Section 2 of the Special Housing Accommodation Request Form must be completed by a licensed provider who is currently treating the student. All questions must be answered in full and the form must include the provider's stamp.

- Any accompanying documentation and/or letter submitted in addition to the required form and questionnaire must be on the provider's letterhead.
- A primary care provider is acceptable in some circumstances, however, a treating specialist is highly preferred. The licensed provider may not be a relative or close friend of the student or the student's family.
- To be considered **current**, the Special Housing Accommodation Request Form should be filled out **within three months of its submission**.
- The College does not accept a student's medical chart, notes written on prescription pads, evaluations not directly reporting on one's housing accommodation needs, and/or publications provided as a self-evaluative measure (e.g., journal articles, textbook chapters).
- Requests for an air conditioner as an accommodation must be supported by a medical diagnosis as determined by the treating specialist, and include prescribed medications with dosage and frequency.
- It is the student's sole responsibility to obtain and submit the Special Housing Accommodation Request Form by the stated relevant deadline.
- Special housing accommodation requests that are incomplete, illegible, unresponsive and/or are not current will not be reviewed and will be returned to the student.
- The College reserves the right to request additional information, if needed, to evaluate any housing accommodation request, including meeting with the student and/or asking for further written documentation or asking to speak with the licensed provider.

SPECIAL HOUSING ACCOMMODATION - DECISIONS

The Special Housing Committee (comprised of Health, Counseling, and Accommodative Services staff) evaluates special housing accommodation requests based on submitted information, including information provided directly by the student as well as the treating professional.

After the Special Housing Committee has met, students will be notified via email by Accommodative Services if they have been approved, denied or if more information is needed for the requested special housing accommodation(s). Special housing accommodations may be approved for a specified period of time or for an entire academic year. Approved requests that require a change in room assignment may not be immediately available and will be

implemented based upon availability. In the event of limited room availability, the student will be put on the waiting list for the approved accommodation, as the supply of singles is limited.

- Returning students will be notified of decision by: **January 16, 2025.**
- Incoming students will be notified of decision by: **June 30, 2025.**

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION

A student whose request for a special housing accommodation is denied may request reconsideration **only if** new/additional supporting documentation is provided. **Requests for reconsideration must be submitted the following dates:**

- **January 23** for Fall 2025 Term (returning students)
- **July 7** for Fall 2025 Term (incoming students)

Requests for reconsideration will be reviewed by the Housing Accommodation Reconsideration Committee and decisions will be issued prior to the completion of the Office of Residential Education & Housing's general housing assignment process. All decisions of the Housing Accommodation Reconsideration Committee are final.

RETURNING STUDENTS WHO ARE CURRENTLY APPROVED FOR SPECIAL HOUSING ACCOMMODATIONS

If you are currently approved for a special housing accommodation and are returning to Union for the next academic year, complete the [Special Housing Accommodation - Returning Student Information Form / Renewal Form](#) **regardless of whether or not you are requesting to renew** your currently-approved special housing accommodation(s). The form is intended to simplify the request renewal process for returning students who wish to have the **same** special housing accommodation(s) for the following academic year; it will also inform the Special Housing Committee if returning students are not requesting their currently-approved special housing accommodation(s) for the following academic year.

Be advised that although a special housing accommodation can be renewed for the following academic year, there is no guarantee as to availability of the same residence hall and/or room assignment. The Special Housing Committee does not issue room assignments, as that is under the purview of the Office of Residential Education and Housing.

NOTE: If you need to request an additional and/or different special housing accommodation beyond your current special housing accommodation, you should NOT use the Returning Student Information Form / Renewal Form. If you plan to request additional and/or different special housing accommodations (or if you plan to bring a different

assistance animal to campus), you must submit the appropriate forms located on the Accommodative Services webpage.

- The Special Housing Committee reserves the right to require students to submit updated documentation, including any pertinent request forms in order to renew their special housing accommodation(s).