

Office/Contact: Office of Student Affairs

Source: SDBOR Policy 3:6

Link: <https://www.sdbor.edu/policy/documents/3-6.pdf>

Associated Forms: [Residential Life Forms](#)

SOUTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY
Policy and Procedure Manual

SUBJECT: Student Housing

NUMBER: 3:3

1. Purpose

This policy and its procedures set forth the requirements and exceptions for student housing and the guidelines for residence hall security at the University.

2. Policy

- a. During the first two (2) years from the time they were or would have graduated from high school, all unmarried students who enroll in six (6) credit hours or more at the University are required to enter into a housing agreement and designated meal plan for the specific living environment with the University unless special permission to reside or dine elsewhere is received from the University.
- b. When occupancy allows, Family Student Housing apartments are available to any married student or any student who has legal dependents and any full-time single graduate student. All undergraduate students must be enrolled for no less than twelve (12) credit hours and graduate students must carry no less than nine (9) credit hours of graduate work (seven (7) credit hours if on a doctoral program), or be proceeding on a regular planned program with the Graduate School. During summer sessions, residents do not have to be enrolled in classes, but must be pre-registered for fall classes. Students who do not enroll in at least one (1) summer session and/or who are not engaged in an otherwise academic activity (e.g. internship), may be provided housing if space permits. Students who might wish to request an exception to these stipulations should seek special permission from the Department of University Housing and Residential Life.
- c. To be released from the University on-campus living requirement, students must submit a *Request for Release* to the Department of University Housing and Residential Life. The following exemptions will be reviewed for consideration by the University's Director of Housing and Residential Life, or designee:
 - i. Marriage Exemption: Students requesting a release because they are married must submit a copy of a valid marriage license to the Department of University Housing and Residential Life before a release can be approved or rent charges canceled. The release date will not be earlier than the date of marriage. Releases are granted only if there are no vacancies in Family Student Housing.

- ii. **Legal Dependent Exemption:** Students requesting a release because they reside with a legal dependent must submit a copy of the dependent's birth certificate to the Department of University Housing and Residential Life before a release can be granted. Releases are only granted if there are no vacancies in Family Student Housing.
- iii. **Commuter Exemption:** Students requesting a release of this nature must live within 60 driving miles of campus at the legal residence of a family member who is not a full-time student and no further removed in relationship than an aunt or uncle.
- iv. **Financial Hardship Exemption:** Students requesting a financial hardship release based on verifiable, extenuating circumstances must complete a *Supplemental Financial Need Verification Form* which can be obtained from the Department of University Housing and Residential Life. Releases are not granted upon an assertion that living off campus may be less expensive. A release will be considered only when:
 - 1. The student has a significant, verified need for financial aid as indicated by the University's Financial Aid Office and that need is not fully funded by University financial aid, or
 - 2. A student can demonstrate a substantial change in their financial situation, thereby creating extenuating circumstances, defined as "situations over which the applicant has had no control," such as loss of parental support due to death, divorce, loss of employment, catastrophic health issues, bankruptcy, etc. which create a financial hardship and which occurred after the housing contract was signed.
 - 3. If the first test is not present before a student signs a housing contract, or if both tests are not present after having signed a housing contract, the student may not cite this as a reason for release.
- v. **Medical Condition Exemption:** Students requesting a release based on this criterion must provide information from the attending physician or certified mental health care provider stating the specific verifiable condition for which it is medically necessary for the student to be released and why the specific off-campus housing would provide better living conditions in regard to this medical condition. Students must complete a *Supplemental Medical Need Verification Form* which can be obtained from the Department of University Housing and Residential Life.
 - 1. Students requesting a release based on behavioral health or emotional needs must provide a specific psychological recommendation from a licensed behavioral health provider. Applicants not seeing personnel at the University Counseling Center must also provide the Department of University Housing and Residential Life with a written statement evaluating the student's specific needs or problems written by a certified behavioral health care provider.

- vi. Academic Requirements Exemption: Students requesting release because of academic requirements, such as student teaching, nursing, pharmacy, etc., must ask their academic department to provide verification of the academic requirement to the Assignment Coordinator. Students who leave the residence hall for academic requirements will be released and reimbursed only for the number of days needed to complete their academic requirements.
 - vii. Below Six (6) Credits Exemption: Students requesting a release based on carrying less than six (6) credit hours for the semester must already be registered for five (5) or less credit hours in order to cite this reason. By citing this item, the student agrees to stay below six (6) credits for the duration of the release period. The Department of University Housing and Residential Life will periodically verify the credit level of students released for this reason. Students registered for internet courses only or a combination of internet and less than six (6) credits on campus may be released from the residency requirement.
 - viii. Greek Organization Member Exemption: The Greek Council grants Greek releases each year for members of Greek chapters, who are at least sophomores, to live in approved chapter housing at the University. Students applying for a Greek release must be approved by the President of the Greek Council and the Program Advisor for Greek Affairs. Applicable deadlines are May 1 for the fall semester and December 15 for the spring semester.
 - ix. Students who are enrolled in classes only at the University Center in Sioux Falls may be released from the residency requirement.
 - x. Students who have enrolled for twelve (12) or more credits for four (4) semesters may be exempted from the residency requirement at the University's discretion. The University may also grant exemptions for students when residence hall occupancy exceeds manageable capacity.
- d. Each student, together with the student's spouse, dependents or household members, who applies, or is required to apply, to reside in a University operated housing facility must disclose on the application form whether the student or spouse or any dependent or household member is required to register as a sex offender pursuant to law, or whether any such person has a criminal history that includes conviction, guilty plea, no contest plea, or suspended imposition of sentence that has not been discharged involving a felony offense, together with details identifying the jurisdiction, date of the offense, circumstances of the offense, the sentence or parole conditions and other facts or circumstances that the student believes to be relevant.
- i. Students, spouses, dependents or household members are not required to respond to the felony question if their only felony offenses resulted in adjudication as a delinquent child or as a child in need of supervision.
 - ii. Where the application process reports a felony offense involving use or sale of illegal drugs or involvement in a crime of violence which did or could have resulted in injury to a person, the individual may not reside in any University operated housing facility.

- iii. Where the circumstances of the offense otherwise reasonably suggest that placement within a University operated housing facility may place the individual into settings that are similar to those in which the original offense occurred, the University may deny the individual the privilege of residing in any of its housing facilities.
 - iv. No person who is required by law to register as a sex offender may reside in any University operating housing facility.
 - v. Any person, other than a registered sex offender, who has been denied residence in a University operated housing facility may request a review of the determination and will be provided an opportunity to submit such writings as the person deems necessary and helpful to explain why the University should permit the person to reside in one of its housing facilities.
- e. Students' individual residence hall rooms and individual apartments constitute private places to which the general public does not have an unrestricted access right. The following measures are in place to establish and enhance residence hall security at the University:
- i. Notification of areas restricted to residents and areas that are open to the public will be posted as appropriate.
 - ii. Education programming to inform residents of security measures and provide them with information to report security concerns will be provided during student orientation, and any concerns will be addressed on an ongoing basis.
 - iii. Exclusive locks to individual rooms will be maintained, and the security of these rooms will be enhanced through the rights of privacy policies along with the current solicitation, lock core replacement, and room key check out policies specified in the Residence Hall Handbook.
 - iv. Community Assistants will be generally available in each building a minimum of four (4) nights per week. The number of Community Assistants in each building will depend on the number of students present in the building.
 - v. Designated Community Assistants will be on duty between 8:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m. and will make rounds through each building at least two (2) times. Additional rounds will be conducted on an as-needed basis determined by the Residence Hall Director of each residence hall.
 - vi. The central entrance doors of each residence hall will be monitored during primary traffic hours each day by either an Office Assistant or Community Assistant within the residence hall.
 - vii. Alarms will be used for fire protection only.
- f. Students will follow the guidelines regarding residential hall conduct and visitation as outlined in the Residence Hall Handbook. Alleged violations of these guidelines will be processed as set forth in University Policy 3:1, Student Conduct Code.

- g. The University does not carry insurance covering loss or damage to students' personal effects and does not assume responsibility for such loss or damage. It is recommended students investigate the purchase of renter's insurance.
- h. The University will assist students who are unable to leave the campus during official University vacations, including summer vacation, to locate housing alternatives.

3. Procedures

- a. Students who do not qualify for an approved exemption must obtain a housing contract for on-campus living through the online Housing Application process. The effective dates of the contract range from the first day of fall semester classes through closing for summer following final exams week in May.
- b. Students who wish to be released from on-campus living requirements and who meet at least one (1) of the approved exemptions should obtain a *Request for Release Form* from the Department of University Housing and Residential Life. Students will have 30 days to submit all necessary information for a review of the request. Students whose request is either incomplete as instructed or granted an extension will be discarded.
 - i. Students whose request is denied can appeal the outcome for the following reasons within five (5) business days of the decision:
 - 1. Relevant information has been obtained that was not available at the time of the original request;
 - 2. The student can demonstrate that the process for obtaining a release was not properly followed; or
 - 3. The student's circumstances have substantially changed thereby altering the basis of the initial request.
 - ii. The Department of University Housing and Residential Life will typically respond to an appeal within ten (10) business days. Failure to respond to an appeal within the ten (10) day window does not constitute approval of the appeal.
 - iii. Students whose request for an exemption to the residency requirement has been approved will have five (5) business days to communicate acceptance to the Department of University Housing and Residential Life. Students who do not accept a release within the five (5) day window will continue to hold an assignment and be charged the residence hall rate accordingly.
- c. Applicants, excluding sex offenders, who have been denied residence in a University operated facility will have five (5) business days to submit a written request for reconsideration. This request should be directed to the Director of Housing and Residential Life and should include all information necessary to explain why the University should rescind its denial of residence in a University housing facility.

4. Responsible Administrator

The Vice President for Student Affairs, or designee, is responsible for the annual and ad hoc review of this policy and its procedures. The University President is responsible for approval of any modifications to this policy and its procedures.

SOURCE: Approved by President on 08/25/2014.