

Residential Life - University Housing Policy

University Housing Policy

Valparaiso University is residential by design. Living on campus represents an integral component of the mission of the institution by providing living and learning experiences that lead to a student's growth and development and an enhancement of one's total education at Valpo. Valparaiso University has a three-year residency requirement. All incoming undergraduate students must reside in campus housing for six (6). All incoming new transfer students with a previous, full-time on-campus residency at a previous University should contact Residential Life to determine how this policy applies to your situation. An exemption to the University's residency requirement is given in the following circumstances:

- A student who has completed six (6) semesters of residency in campus housing.
- A student who lives exclusively in the permanent or primary residence of a parent or legal guardian within 25 miles of the Valparaiso University campus.
- A student who is or will be 22 years of age by September 1 of the applicable academic year.
- A student that is married.
- A student that is a parent of a minor child with whom they will live.
- A student that is a veteran of active duty with the United States Armed Forces.
- A student that is an active member of a Valparaiso University fraternity and living in recognized Fraternity housing.
- Students can complete their class registration once they comply with the university housing policy.

The housing policy is a binding agreement that obligates the student to live in University-operated housing for a full academic year. Students are not excused from the Agreement because they reach the age of exemption or attain senior status midyear. Students are also not automatically excused from the Agreement if they drop below 12 credit hours, wish to move into approved fraternity houses or other off-campus living units' midyear, or wish to commute. Students who breach the University's housing policy without prior written approval will be responsible for the entire amount of the costs associated with their housing assignment.

Valparaiso University maintains its residence halls for occupancy primarily by full-time undergraduate students. Part-time, graduate, and law students are welcome to apply to live on campus, but the first priority for housing is given to full-time undergraduates. The University reserves the right to deny housing to individuals who are not full-time undergraduate students.

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Commuter Student Policy

A commuter student is a full-time undergraduate student who lives exclusively in the permanent or primary residence of a parent or legal guardian within 20 miles of the Valparaiso University campus. A student who otherwise would be required to live on-campus may not reside at another off-campus address after registering as a commuter student. Questions related to the Commuter Student Policy should be directed to the Office of Residential Life.

Length of the Housing Agreement

The Housing Agreement is binding on the student for the Fall and Spring semesters of the designated academic year or the remaining portion, exclusive of vacation periods. Students who breach the residency requirement of this Agreement without prior written approval will be responsible for the entire amount of the Agreement. A breach of this Agreement includes but is not limited to failure to reside within University Housing per the terms of the Agreement and/or the University Residency Requirement. This obligation is binding whether or not the student affirmatively chooses a particular room assignment after execution. Students will be assessed all fees for the agreement term if the Student enrolls but does not occupy the assigned space and has yet to have the approval of this Agreement canceled in writing pursuant to the Termination of Agreement sections. (See Housing Agreement for more details).

Students may cancel this Agreement after the start of a semester only for the following reasons: graduation authorized off-campus academic programs, withdrawal, marriage, or circumstances that are determined by the University, in the University's sole discretion, to be an "Authorized Reason." This Agreement cannot be terminated solely for the purpose of living off-campus or commuting from home. Documentary evidence is required to demonstrate cause for cancellation. Contact Residential Life for information regarding this appeals process.

Students may cancel this Agreement at the end of the Fall semester if the cancellation is for an Authorized Reason. Depending on the reason for cancellation, the student may be subject to a cancellation fee of up to \$400. Students shall remain liable for room charges until written notice is received and cancellation approval is given by the Director of Residential Life or their designee. At any other time after the start of the academic year, students may terminate the Agreement for an Authorized Reason; any refund will be based upon the University's Student Accounts Office refund schedule.

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Cancellation Fee & Deposit Refund Schedule

Students that cancel their housing are subject to the following cancellation fee and deposit refund schedule:

- **February 28:** If a student provides written notice of cancellation to Residential Life on or before this date, the Agreement shall terminate with no penalty and receive a 100% refund of their housing deposit (if applicable).
- **March 1 – April 30:** If a student provides written notice of cancellation to Residential Life between these dates, a \$200 late cancellation fee shall be charged against the student's account if the student continues to be enrolled. The student will receive a 50% refund of their housing deposit (if applicable).
- **May 1 – The Day Prior to the Official Opening Date of the Residence Halls:** If a student provides written notice of cancellation to Residential Life between these dates, a \$400 late cancellation fee shall be charged against the student's account if the student continues to be enrolled. The student will receive a no refund of their housing deposit (if applicable).
- **Official Opening Date of the Residence Halls –** On and after this date: Students shall pay full room charges if enrolled. This Agreement may only be canceled through appeals if a student is enrolled.
- Students Requesting Housing for Spring Semester Only
- If students cancel housing AFTER the Official Opening Date of the Residence Halls for the Spring Semester, the student shall pay the full room charges for the spring semester if the student remains enrolled at the University.

Students may cancel this Agreement after the start of a semester only for the following reasons: graduation authorized off-campus academic programs, withdrawal, marriage, or circumstances that are determined by the University, in the University's sole discretion, to be an "Authorized Reason." The Housing Agreement cannot be terminated solely for the purpose of living off-campus because they match one of the exemption criteria mid-year or to commute from home. Documentary evidence is required to demonstrate cause for cancellation. Depending on the reason for cancellation, the student may be subject to a cancellation fee of up to \$400. The student shall remain liable for room charges until written notice is received, and the Associate Dean or their designee gives cancellation approval.

Requesting a Housing Exemption

Valpo is, by design, a residential University. Living on campus provides educational and living and learning experiences that lead to a student's growth and development and an enhancement of one's total education at Valpo. Because residency is such an important

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component of the Valpo experience, only in very special circumstances will a student be exempt from the University housing requirement. Requests for policy exceptions will be considered only if they fit into one of three categories:

Special needs related to a specific medical condition that cannot be accommodated in University residence halls.

Special needs related to a specific psychological or psychiatric condition that cannot be accommodated in University residence halls.

An extreme, unanticipated, and unpredictable change in family financial status since the student's initial enrollment at the University and/or signing of the Housing Agreement.

In each case, a student must complete a Housing Policy Exemption Application at the Residential Life office. In medical and psychological/psychiatric cases, the student must provide documentation from a physician, psychologist, or psychiatrist, including diagnosis, specific needs related to the condition, and recommended treatment, including an explanation of why alternative housing is necessary. The student must also submit a written statement authorizing the attending physician, psychologist, or psychiatrist to discuss the student's case with University medical and/or psychological staff. The student must submit appropriate documentation in financial hardship, including tax returns, financial aid statements, and payroll receipts. The student may also be required to meet with a Financial Aid officer to review the family's financial status and explore the possible availability of additional aid in response to changes in said status. In all cases, the student must show how living off-campus will result in significant savings that not doing so would require him or her to withdraw from the University.

All requests for exemption are reviewed by the Director and/or the Housing Exemption Committee. The student requesting an exemption is responsible for assembling and presenting any and all information to assist the committee in the decision-making process. Students are informed in writing of the decision. All decisions are final. In the event of an approved Housing Agreement cancellation, the student may be subject to a cancellation fee (up to \$400) and loss of housing deposit (if applicable).

Regulations

By signing the Housing Agreement, the student agrees to comply with all residence hall policies, rules, and regulations listed in the Valparaiso University Bulletin and General Catalog, the Valparaiso University Student Handbook, and all other policies, etc., the University may issue.

Online versions of the catalog and guide may be viewed at the Registrar's Office website: valpo.edu/registrar