

ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION STAF Student Affairs		POLICY NUMBER STAF 4.05
POLICY TITLE Housing Contract Appeals Committee		
SCOPE OF POLICY USC Columbia		DATE OF REVISION November 10, 2023
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER Vice President for Student Affairs and Academic Support		ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE University Housing

PURPOSE

This policy outlines the steps and procedures a student may take to cancel their contract with University housing.

DEFINITIONS

Housing Agreement/Contract: rules and regulations that allows an admitted or enrolled student to occupy a residence hall for an agreed-upon length of time given certain conditions and payments are met by established deadlines. A legally binding contract that recognizes and governs the rights and duties of the student and the University.

Academic Year: the period of the year during which students attend institution, usually from August to May.

Appeal Application: a guide to assist contract holders who feel they have been treated unfairly in some way, and they want a committee or senior housing officer to reconsider financial penalties.

Release: decision to not enforce standard financial penalties, the student is not liable for full terms of lease agreement.

Student: A person who is currently enrolled at the university, or who is accepted for admission or readmission to the university, or who has been enrolled at the university in a prior semester or summer session and is eligible to continue enrollment in the semester or summer session that immediately follows, or who is attending an educational program sponsored by the university while that person is on campus, or who engaged in prohibited conduct at a time when the individual met the above criteria. Individuals who are not currently enrolled at the university remain subject to the disciplinary process for conduct that occurred while they were enrolled.

Withdrawal: student drops all courses and leaves institution.

POLICY STATEMENT

The appeals process is designed to assist residents who have not been able to resolve a contract cancellation through standard withdrawal procedures or to assist residents who may have extenuating circumstances. Generally considered a legally binding document between the resident

and university housing, this policy outlines those limited and exceptional circumstances that could warrant the release of a resident from the existing contract.

PROCEDURES

- A. In accordance with UNIV 3.04 University Housing reserves the right to modify and/or amend stated policies and procedures during a period of crisis, including but not limited to a communicable disease outbreak or weather-related natural disaster.
- B. Release: The housing agreement/contract is issued for the full academic year. The agreement is strictly adhered to with exceptions made only under special circumstances. A request for a release from the agreement does not constitute an automatic release/refund, nor should acceptance of a form be construed as a commitment to release. Essentially, consideration for adjustments or cancellation of the agreement/contract will fall into four categories: withdrawal from school, medical, marriage or in cases of necessity as determined and approved by University Housing Administration or the Contract Appeals Committee. Residents requesting a release without penalty must establish through documentation a change in circumstance creating a special need
 - 1. Process for Requesting a Release from University Housing
 - a. Applications for release from the residence hall academic year contract may be obtained from University Housing's via main office located in Patterson Hall at 1520 Devine Street or by emailing (housing@sc.edu)
 - b. Appeals must be submitted by the resident. To submit an appeal, residents my email a letter outlining the reasons for appeals (including documentation of extenuating circumstances) to housing@sc.edu or submit materials to University Housing: Attention: Contract Appeals Committee, 1520 Devine Street, Columbia, SC 29208.
 - c. Appeals submitted will first be vetted by the housing senior director of administration for consideration of requests that clearly meet established criteria. Decisions for release from the Housing Contract based on extenuating financial or medical circumstances that fall outside of the terms of the contract will be determined by the Appeals Committee. The Chair of the Appeals Committee (designee) may request additional information or documentation
 - d. The Appeals Committee meets the first week of every month and decisions are delivered in writing to the resident via email and certified U.S. mail; with the goal of notifying the student of the decision within 30 days. .
 - e. All applications for release without penalty must be received by November 1 (fall semester) or February 15 (spring semester). Applications for release without penalty will not be accepted after these dates.
- C. Necessary Documentation: The following is a list of documentation that must be provided in support of the resident's application for release without penalty:

1. Marriage (for single undergraduate students only): Submit a copy of the marriage license. The release, if granted, will be approved near the date of the marriage (up to one week prior) when the marriage does not occur between semesters.
2. Residents who graduate mid-year will need to submit a request for cancellation. These residents will not be billed any cancellation charges provided they properly check out from and vacate their residence hall by the end of the fall housing period.
3. Medical: A complete explanation of medical condition by the treating physician as related to the residence hall living environment must be provided by the applicant.
 - a. Complete history of the illness.
 - b. Date illness was diagnosed.
 - c. Type of treatment prescribed.
 - d. Last contact with doctor regarding the illness.
 - e. Expected duration of the illness.
 - f. In what ways does living in the residence hall contribute to the illness? In addition, a medical form will be forwarded to the applicant's physician and must be completed and returned by the physician in order for a review to take place. The University reserves the right to request an authorization for the release of medical records under certain circumstances.
4. Financial: Financial reasons for release will only be considered if it can be verified that a significant change in the financial status of a student's family or background has occurred since the date the student moved into the hall. Examples might include a death of a parent, permanent lay-off of a parent, family bankruptcy, etc. A release will not be granted for a student to move into off-campus housing, fraternity/sorority houses, public private partnership, to secure less expensive housing, to commute from home or live in a recently purchased family property. Documentation to be provided must include: photocopies of federal or state income tax returns, proof of outstanding debt, proof of loss of financial aid including scholarships, loan contracts, verification of income, photocopies of current savings and checking account statements, etc. Parents' financial statements are required as well if student is a dependent.
5. Off-Campus Academic Program (internships, student teaching assignments, cooperative education assignments, etc.): A letter outlining the duration of the program and the reason why remaining in university housing prohibits or interferes with their participation in the academic program from applicant's department chair must be provided.

6. Withdrawal from the University: Applicant must submit a room cancellation form. Release will take place following verification of non-enrollment from the University Registrar.
7. Other: For reasons other than those listed, applicant must be very specific and extensive in his/her explanation. If original supporting documents are attached to the application, they become a part of the University's permanent records and may not be returned.

RELATED UNIVERSITY, STATE AND FEDERAL POLICIES

[FINA 4.06 Refund of Academic Fees](#)

[Academic Advising - Hardship Withdrawals](#)

[UNIV 3.03 Quarantine and Isolation of Students, Faculty and Staff](#)

[UNIV 3.04 Communicable Disease Outbreak Mitigation Measures](#)

HISTORY OF REVISIONS

DATE OF REVISION	REASON FOR REVISION
June 1, 1993	Revised to include Family and Graduate Housing.
July 8, 2020	Policy was updated to be more clear and student-friendly and to reflect current practices. Revised to new policy format. Revised to include communicable diseases outbreak and isolation and quarantine measures.
November 10, 2023	Definitions updated.