

Understanding the Process for Requesting Reasonable Housing Accommodations

Rev: 01.10.2024

I, _____ (Print Student Name) have read and understand the information below.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Albright College provides reasonable housing accommodations for students with disabilities as defined by the ADA and the Fair Housing Act. The student must provide documentation from a licensed, qualified professional (e.g., medical provider, neuropsychologist, psychologist) that substantiates that the student has a physical or mental impairment that significantly limits a major life activity and that the requested accommodation is necessary to afford the student equal access. In addition, documentation must be submitted that specifically addresses housing needs as they relate to the student's functional limitations. The Student Accessibility and Advocacy (SAA) office may require completion of the housing verification form to supplement any submitted documentation. **Housing requests will not be evaluated until all the required documentation is submitted. Generally, a provider who is related to the student should not be the one providing supporting documentation.**

The request for housing accommodations and accompanying documentation may be reviewed by a healthcare professional at Albright College and the Director of SAA, who will determine the validity and reasonability of housing requests. **A provider's recommendation does not automatically guarantee that the recommendation is necessary for access and therefore does not guarantee that the recommendation will automatically be approved.** SAA may also consult with Residential Life to evaluate the student's current living arrangements and to coordinate any necessary accommodations or modifications to the living environment. **In submitting a request for housing accommodations, the student agrees to release documentation to these offices as necessary for the evaluation of and coordination of requested accommodations. The student will be notified of the final determination.**

The student must have completed a Housing Contract before submitting a Request for Reasonable Housing Accommodations. Requests will not be processed if the student does not have a contract.

A request for housing accommodations may be submitted and considered at any time; however, if the request for accommodations is made after the deadlines below, Albright College cannot guarantee that it will be able to meet the individual's accommodation needs during the first semester or term of occupancy. If the need for accommodations arises when an individual already resides in residential housing, they should contact SAA as soon as practicably possible. Albright cannot guarantee that it will be able to meet the accommodation needs during the semester or term in which the request is received. If you wish for your housing preferences (residence hall, roommate, etc.) to be considered, the request must be received by the deadlines as well.

- Fall Semester
 - Returning Students: April 15th
 - New Students: June 15th
- Spring Semester
 - New and Returning Students: November 15th.

If the provider/student returns a verification form or other documentation without sufficient information for SAA to determine whether an accommodation is necessary, the Director of SAA will inform the student of the verification insufficiency and may request additional information or request to speak directly with the provider supplying the verification form/documentation. The individual requesting accommodation must cooperate with SAA promptly in providing all the information needed to determine whether the requested accommodation is necessary.

Housing Accommodations, if approved, will supersede any preferences indicated in the housing contract. If the request is submitted before the dates above, the college will attempt to honor your requests unless doing so would result in a living arrangement that is in opposition to your approved accommodations. If you submit your request after the dates noted above, or if your accommodations cannot be met with your selected preferences, you will be assigned to a space that will meet the accommodations required due to your functional limitations.

Any room assignment due to a disability will only apply to the student requiring the accommodation. Accommodations do not apply to any roommate requests, and SAA does not displace students currently living in college housing due to another student's accommodation request.

Requested accommodations cannot supersede safety regulations set by the city, state, or other governing bodies.

Albright cannot guarantee that it will be able to meet the accommodation needs during the semester or term in which the request is received. However, reasonable housing accommodations, when approved, may take effect immediately based on housing availability. Requests cannot be submitted for future semesters without addressing the current assignment, and a request to hold a reassignment may not be honored.

Students needing housing accommodations must renew their requests each year. Deadlines for requests are listed above as the deadlines for housing requests for returning students. Housing accommodations are assigned based on need as determined by the **current** impact of your disability on your housing assignment. Because conditions and circumstances change, approval for one year does not guarantee approval for the next year. Many students (generally those with invisible diagnoses) will be asked to update the documentation they have submitted in support of an accommodation request to ensure that we have **current** information about a student's needs. Generally, updates are requested annually unless a student's diagnosis suggests that more frequent updates may be necessary to understand the student's current needs.

Room Assignment Changes:

Housing accommodations may limit where a student can reside based on residence hall environments and current room availability. Once housing accommodations are approved, the following will occur:

- Residential Life will collaborate with SAA to determine which available residence hall can meet the student's needs or if any adjustments need to be made to the student's physical room.
- If the student elects to live in a residence hall that has been pre-determined to be single rooms for the Albright student body, the student will be required to pay the housing expenses for that room. The only exception would be if the student medically requires a single room and there are no other single rooms available on campus where the student's medical needs can be accommodated.
- Should the student wish to move to another room where the medical need cannot be met, the college may require the student to submit, in writing, documentation from a medical professional stating that the approved accommodations are no longer medically necessary or that the professional feels the new requested living space will not jeopardize the student's medical needs or safety. If such documentation is not available, the student must verify, in writing, that they understand that the accommodation cannot be met by the selected room and that if the accommodation would be

required for future semesters, the Request for Reasonable Housing Accommodations would need to be resubmitted and re-evaluated. In the latter instance, SAA, Residential Life and/or Gable Health professionals will review the request and make a final determination to accept or deny the new housing request. Moving to a new room may not be able to be completed during the current semester.

- If a student is moved to a new room to address a temporary medical need, the student will return to their original college housing once they have been medically cleared by their provider. By nature, a temporary medical condition generally does not qualify as a disability under ADA law unless it has been present for a minimum of 6 months; however, any assistance provided as a courtesy by Albright is processed through the SAA office.
- Albright College reserves the right to change or update this process at any time as circumstances require.

Appeals and Grievance Process

Institutions of higher education bear the responsibility of making well-informed decisions regarding reasonable accommodations for students. Sometimes these decisions may differ from recommendations made by external professionals or from previously established Individualized Education Plans or 504 Plans. Students are required to participate in the interactive process with the Student Accessibility and Advocacy (SAA) office. Generally, accommodations cannot be provided to students who do not engage in the interactive process.

Students who find themselves in disagreement with accommodation decisions made by the SAA office are encouraged to follow the outlined process below:

1. Initiate an informal discussion with the Director of SAA to address concerns and to seek understanding and resolution regarding the decision.
2. If a satisfactory resolution is not reached through informal discussion, the student should formally request an appeal. Formal letters of appeal must be written and submitted by the student. While emails will not be accepted, documents may be delivered via email attachments.
 - Academic accommodation appeals should be directed to the Assistant Provost for Academic Affairs
 - Campus life accommodation appeals should be addressed to the Assistant Provost of Campus Life, Health, and Wellness
 - Appeals of decisions made by the General Education Committee (GEC), such as denial of a course substitution, should be directed to the Provost rather than the Assistant Provost for Academic Affairs.
3. If a satisfactory resolution remains elusive after a decision from the Assistant Provost for Academic Affairs or the Assistant Provost of Campus Life, Health, and Wellness, the student may escalate the appeal to the Provost.

4. Should a satisfactory resolution still prove unattainable, the student should request an appointment with the College's Affirmative Action Officer, who serves as the Director of Human Resources, for final determination.

By initiating an appeal, the student acknowledges and consents to the sharing of any documentation submitted to the Student Accessibility and Advocacy office with the reviewing authority. Further information may be requested from the student, their provider, or other campus offices as necessary during the interactive process to assess the reasonableness and appropriateness of the request based on the student's disability. The student's active participation in the process is required.

Please direct any questions to:

Office of Student Accessibility and Advocacy

Telephone: 610-921-7503

Fax: 610-929-6793

SAA@albright.edu