

RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT

Residency Policy

As a Residential College, Westminster requires all admitted degree-seeking students with freshman, sophomore, or junior academic standing at the beginning of each academic year to live in one of the college residence halls, fraternity houses, college-owned houses, college apartments, or townhouses. Any student who wishes to be granted an exception to this policy must complete a Housing Exception Request Form and submit it to the Office of Residential & Greek Life. Forms can be found on the Residential Life website, or picked up in the Office. Research on Westminster students shows that it is especially important that new freshmen reside on campus. For this reason, exceptions to the residency requirement will be very rare for new students.

Otherwise, exceptions to this policy may be requested by students who:

1. Are living at home with their parents and commuting from within Callaway County;
2. Are 22 years or older or have senior status (88 credit hours) prior to the first day of classes;
3. Are married or the primary care giver of a child(ren);
4. Have a special circumstance that may require them to live off-campus and can provide appropriate documentation of those circumstances.

A student is permitted to submit one Housing Exception Request form during each academic year, and there is one opportunity to appeal this request. The Housing Review Board makes decisions on these requests. Students whose requests are denied by the Housing Review Board are allowed one appeal each academic year. Appeals are submitted in writing to the Vice President/Dean of Student Life. This is the final appeal of the request process. Typically these requests are made and considered for the start of a new academic year, and the exemption runs for the duration of that year. In rare instances, mid-year exceptions may be considered.

Depending on the need and availability of campus housing, exceptions may be granted more or less liberally than previous years. Very rarely are decisions made based upon the exceptions granted the year before, but rather, are considered with the forthcoming year in mind.

Students who fail to comply with the residency policy or disregard the result of their request and therefore reside off-campus without approval will be responsible for full room charges and may also be subject to additional disciplinary action.

Residency Exception for Transfer Students

If a student is coming to Westminster as a transfer student, they may qualify for an automatic exception to our campus residency requirement if they have earned an Associate's degree at another institution. If the student is transferring under other circumstances, the normal exception guidelines will apply to their request.

Residency Exception for Fraternity Men

The College recognizes occupancy in all of our fraternity houses as compliance with our Residency Policy as long as the facilities meets the College Minimum Standards for Housing. However, because fraternity men enter into different housing agreements with their respective House Corporations, they must gain approval from both the College (through the above outlined process) in addition to their House Corporation.

If a student makes an exception request to the College prior to receiving fraternity approval, they may be pre-approved to live-off campus by the Office of Residential & Greek Life (RGL). When they are notified in writing from RGL, their House Corporation will be copied on their decision letter, thus informing them of the student's intent to live outside of the fraternity house for the upcoming year. If the student does not go through the proper fraternity process and receive exemption from their internal board, the College pre-approval expires and the student is still bound by their fraternity agreement.

The College supports the fraternity's efforts to fill their facility and maintain housing agreements with their members. Therefore, the College refrains from making residency exception decisions that may impact a fraternity's potential occupancy.

Housing Review Board

The Office of Residential & Greek Life utilizes a Housing Review Board to hear requests for exemptions or special consideration to any campus housing policies. The Board makes every attempt to meet in person; however, sometimes they may correspond via e-mail in the interest of timely consideration. The Board is composed of professional staff members in the following areas:

- Residential & Greek Life (Director and Assistant Director)
- Financial Aid
- Wellness Center
- Business Office
- Academic Affairs (Associate Dean of the Faculty)
- Student Life

If a student wishes to be considered for an exemption to current campus policy, they must submit their request, in writing and by the published deadline, to the Office of Residential & Greek Life. The Board will then consider the request and the student's written statement prior to making a decision. The student will be notified of the Board's decision, in writing, no more than one week (seven days) after their request is heard by the Board. This correspondence will also outline the student's appeal process if they wish to appeal the decision of the Board. All appeals will be directed to the Vice President and Dean of Student Life, or his/her designee.

The majority of the policy exemptions that are considered by the Housing Review Board include residency requests and special meal plan requests. The Office of Residential & Greek Life may elect to refer other policy issues to the Board, depending on the specific nature of the request. In rare cases, the Board may also be used to hear roommate conflicts or mediation.