

IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING THE EXEMPTION APPEAL PROCESS

Please read.

You are being given information about the exemption appeal process because you have submitted and been denied an exemption request and because the appeal process has changed from previous years.

In the past, many students would “automatically” appeal an exemption denial. Students cite various reasons for wanting an exemption to the University’s housing requirement. The most frequently cited--but rarely granted--reasons are outlined on the back of this letter. Please consider thoughtfully your reasons for appealing. Before “automatically” submitting an appeal, consider the following:

- Exemption appeals are rarely granted.
- University Housing Services’ first obligation is to make appropriate accommodations for students with serious health problems and/or disabilities. Therefore, our goal is always to try to find a solution within the residence halls to whatever problem is prompting your request for an exemption.
- The appeal process is not to be taken lightly since many people are coming together to review each and every appeal. Therefore, we ask that you carefully consider whether or not your situation is so extreme that it cannot be resolved in the residence halls or that the consequences of remaining in the residence halls would be severely negative for you.
- If you decide to appeal, you will have only one opportunity to do so. All appeals **MUST** be submitted in writing. Students may choose to be present when the Board Reviews their appeal or not. Students will be contacted if they indicate on their appeal form that they wish to be present. (Students will have the opportunity to address the board.) This is not a legal or judicial process, therefore, please do not invite “witnesses” to come on your behalf. The only thing that is needed to review an appeal is your written statement (which should not exceed one or two pages, at the most), any supporting documentation you want the board to consider, and, if you choose, yourself.
- Members of the Appeals Board include representatives from the student body as well as experts from various professions to ensure a thorough and knowledgeable review of each appeal. **Therefore, the decision of the Appeals Review Board is final. No additional appeals will be considered.**

If you still wish to appeal, you need to complete the Exemption Appeal form available at University Housing Services (Office of Residential Life building) and submit any supporting documentation that you want the Review Board to consider. The Review Board meets monthly. Submit all documentation to University Housing Services by the 15th to have your appeal heard by the board that month. Decisions on appeals will be made within 45 days of receipt.

The above deadlines are *firm*. If all your documents are not submitted by the deadline, your appeal will not be reviewed until the next review session, or it will be reviewed without supporting documentation. **The appeal deadlines will not be adjusted to meet personal deadlines.** You are strongly advised NOT to sign a lease until your appeal has been reviewed and unless you are granted an exemption in writing from University Housing Services.

If exceptions are rarely granted, then why have an appeal process?

Many students don’t realize the number of ways the University can meet their needs and the type of accommodations that can be made to enable them to fulfill their housing requirements. However, there are those rare circumstances where a student with a significant problem or extreme circumstance has special needs that cannot be met in the residence halls. Determining whether or not those circumstances provide the basis for an exception to a university requirement can be difficult. That is where the expertise of the Appeals Board members is helpful. Our goal in having both students and professional University staff on the board is to ensure that every appeal is given personal attention—not just by one reviewer, but by a board of experienced reviewers.

Frequently cited but rarely granted reasons for requesting an exemption

Already signed a lease -- Students who sign leases without having received a “granted” letter in writing from University Housing Services will still be responsible for fulfilling the on-campus housing requirement. Students are blocked to register until they submit a housing contract for the following academic year. You are advised *not* to sign a lease unless you have received a letter from our office indicating that you are exempt from the housing requirement.

Allergies and/or asthma -- Many students come to campus with allergies, asthma, or some other type of chronic health problem. Some students develop allergies after they arrive. Although many students have allergies, it is rarely the basis for an exemption as it does not prevent them from living and academically achieving in the residence halls. In severe cases of allergies and asthma, the University can usually offer some type of accommodations that can help, such as year-round air conditioning, an air purifier, a single room, etc. in addition to whatever medications or strategies are prescribed by their physician. While we do not attempt to ensure that all allergic symptoms are eliminated, we will do what we can to provide accommodations that help alleviate the symptoms in severe cases. Students who need accommodation due to allergies, asthma, or any type of chronic health problem should contact Student Access and Accommodations Services.

Bad experience with a roommate or floor mates -- The staff of University Housing Services wants students to have a rich and rewarding residence hall experience. Sometimes, however, roommates are not compatible—even roommates who originally chose to live together. In these cases, we recommend that both roommates work with the hall staff to try to work out their problems or make a room change. An online room change process occurs every fall semester for any resident who would like to make a room change for the spring semester. This means that the longest you would “have” to live in an undesirable situation is one semester and that can often be avoided by working with the professional residence hall staff to resolve the issue or make an immediate room change.

Finances -- You should consider on-campus housing in the cost of attendance at ISU if you have been out of high school for less than two years. If you have concerns about maintaining that cost, please contact our Financial Aid Office to see what aid option may be available. If you are required to live on-campus, signing a lease without a granted exemption may cause a financial dilemma, but it is not grounds for an exemption.

Food/dining -- The residence halls offer a wide variety of dining options and types of food, including low-fat and vegetarian options. Event Management, Dining, and Hospitality (EMDH) has a registered dietician who works with students who have dietary concerns. CDS can almost always assist students who are on special diets prescribed by their physician.

Lack of privacy -- Most students are used to having more privacy at home than they have in the residence halls and this can require a major adjustment. If it is extremely disturbing to the student or if the student needs more privacy for medical reasons, University Housing Services can generally work with him or her to make sure they get a single room or that they are assigned to a residence hall, such as Watterson, where fewer people share restroom facilities.

Want to move into an approved fraternity or sorority house for spring semester -- Sophomore students are allowed to move into a fraternity or sorority house, but only for an entire academic year—August to May. Exemptions are NOT granted for students to move into a fraternity or sorority house for spring semester only. Exemption appeals based on moving into a fraternity or sorority house for spring semester will not be reviewed by the Appeals Board.

Want to live with a non-parent relative (sibling, cousin, aunt, grandparent, etc.) or commute from outside the approved commuting distance: Students may live full-time and commute from home under two conditions: 1) they will reside full-time with a parent or legal guardian (someone who has applied for and been granted legal guardianship by the court/s) and 2) that parent or guardian lives within a 40 mile radius of campus. If either of those two conditions are not met, an exemption will not be granted.

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