Housing Waiver Instruction for First Year Students (Freshman Waiver)

**Freshman live-in rule**
The state of Washington and Washington State University are committed to supporting its new students as they make the transition to college life. Therefore, all single undergraduate freshmen under 20 years of age are required to live in organized on-campus living groups for one academic year.

This policy is based on the belief that an on-campus living and learning environment offers the highest educational value to students. Further, there is a dedicated interest in the education, well-being, health, safety and convenience of all our students. National and local data show that students who live on campus earn a higher GPA their first year and are more engaged with campus life, which promotes retention.

**Exemption to freshmen live-in rule**
WSU considers freshmen live-in rule as follows.:

- The student has attended an institution of higher education as a regularly enrolled student for at least two regular semesters or three regular quarters, excluding summer sessions.
- The student is living with immediate family in a family situation (mother and/or father; legal guardian; aunt or uncle; or grandparents).
- The student has secured a statement from a physician or psychologist that documents a specific medical or psychological condition whereby recognized student housing would have detrimental effects on the student’s physical health and emotional well being. (Information regarding appropriate criteria for these conditions is available at the Access Center website at [accesscenter.wsu.edu](http://accesscenter.wsu.edu).)
- The student can demonstrate that living in recognized University housing would cause undue financial hardship.

The following instructions are to clearly outline what will be needed in order to process your waiver quickly:

**Option 1: Previous post-high school higher education attendance.** I have attended an institution of higher education as a regularly enrolled student for at least two regular semesters or three regular quarters, excluding summer sessions. This option does not apply to students with Running Start credits. Running Start students are considered freshman students with college credits.

Instructions: Include official or unofficial transcript showing post high school attendance.

**Option 2: Living with family.** I will be living with immediate family in a family situation. Spouse, mother and/or father, legal guardian, aunt and/or uncle, or grandparents ONLY qualify as “immediate family”. Sisters, brothers and cousins do not qualify as “immediate” family.

Instructions: Include documentation showing the name, address of relative, and relationship to the student. In addition, a copy of an electric bill or other utility bill showing the family members name and address is needed for verification. A parent or legal guardians signature is required as part of this option.

**Option 3: Medical waiver.** I have secured a statement from a physician or psychologist that residence in recognized student housing would have detrimental effects on my physical health or emotional wellbeing. Information regarding appropriate documentation criteria for these conditions is available at the Access Center web site under “Housing Waiver” ([http://accesscenter.wsu.edu](http://accesscenter.wsu.edu)).

An exemption will be considered when a student demonstrates that they have a documented medical or psychological condition that clearly shows living in on-campus student housing would have a detrimental effect on the student’s physical health and emotional wellbeing.
Procedure to request a Medical waiver
A student requesting an exemption from the freshmen live in rule because of a medical or psychological condition must complete and submit a written request to the Access Center for the exemption. The written request must include:

1) The freshmen waiver form; and

2) Current and complete documentation discussing the student’s medical or psychological condition. The documentation must be dated within three months of the waiver request or of moving into the residence hall and must be on official letterhead and signed by the student's medical practitioner or mental health provider. The documentation must include:
   ▪ A description or diagnosis of the medical or psychological condition or disability that would make living in the residence hall a hardship.
   ▪ The functional limitations/symptoms caused by the medical condition or disability that are or will be exacerbated by living in the residence hall.

Once documentation is received
   ▪ The documentation will be reviewed by an Access Advisor.
   ▪ If the documentation is determined to be current and complete, the student will be contacted and an appointment will be arranged with an Access Advisor to assess the student's waiver request.
   ▪ The student and Access Advisor will meet to discuss the requested waiver.
   ▪ A decision regarding a housing waiver will be made and communicated by the Access Center to the student and Housing.

As stated above, it is WSU's policy that all freshmen live in on-campus organized living groups. The Access Center and Housing will first consider whether reasonable accommodations could allow the student to remain in the residence hall before evaluating the waiver request.

A housing waiver based on a medical or psychological condition will only be approved when 1) current and complete documentation is received, and 2) the Access Advisor has determined, after meeting with the student, that a housing waiver is the most appropriate accommodation to mitigate the functional limitation of the student's condition. Submitting the freshmen waiver form and documentation does not guarantee a housing waiver.

If a student's request is denied and a student feels that the decision was not in accordance with Residence Life policy or the law, or if there is new information that might reasonably impact the decision, the student may request a review of the decision by submitting a letter to the Dean of Students. The letter should include any new documentation or other information that would be relevant. The Dean may request a meeting with the student seeking review. The Dean will inform the student in writing of the results of the review.

Option 4: Financial waiver. I can demonstrate that living in recognized student housing would cause undue financial hardship.

Instructions: Please submit a copy of your financial aid award information, budget sheet showing expenses related to living off campus and any additional information and documents that clarifies a change in financial circumstances. In order to help clarify your situation, a letter explaining your situation with supporting documents will assist the committee in making a decision and eliminate the need to ask for further supporting documents.