



**PACIFIC LUTHERAN UNIVERSITY**  
**Residential Life**  
**University Center 161, ext.7200, [rlif@plu.edu](mailto:rlif@plu.edu)**

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**RESIDENCE HALL CONTRACT CANCELLATION EXPLANATION**

The following document provides background and rationale for maintaining the housing contract cancellation policy. The policy is stated in its entirety in the PLU Housing and South Hall Guides and can be accessed from our office or via our website. The Housing and South Hall Guides are incorporated into the Housing and South Hall Contracts. All students receive a copy of the appropriate guide when they sign the Housing Contract or pick up a South Hall application.

In 1998 PLU changed from a housing deposit process to a contract cancellation fee process. The end result is the same in either system – students who break their contract after a certain point receive a penalty. The primary difference is that all students were affected in the former process – by having to make a deposit up front, and only those students actually breaking their contract are affected in the latter process.

PLU is rather flexible in regard to duration of housing contract. Many of our competitor schools require an academic year contract. Additionally, most of the local off-campus housing options for students require a 9 or 12 month lease. While all PLU on campus students do sign an academic year housing contract or South Hall contract, there is a schedule built into the process whereby students are able to be released from these contracts with no additional cost to themselves. We offer this as a service to our students despite the administrative difficulty presented to Residential Life by such cancellations.

All cancellations require a certain amount of administrative work on the part of Residential Life staff members as well as inconvenience to residents. When these cancellations occur early in the process, the work and inconvenience is minimal. Our housing processes are designed to encourage and accommodate cancellations made in a timely fashion. The ability to know and respond to the majority of openings at once helps staff and residents alike. Cancellations that occur after completion of the initial housing process result in additional staff work and frustration for residents. The later the cancellation is, the more likely it will result in perceived inequities in housing assignments.

On rare occasions, Residential Life has waived this cancellation penalty. The measuring stick used for determining exceptions can be summed up in the question, “where does the responsibility for late cancellation lie?”

When the late cancellation is a factor of a PLU process or decision, the cancellation penalty is typically waived. Examples of this include, but are not limited to:

- a student who receives notification of acceptance into a study abroad opportunity after the initial deadline, provided the student then contacts Res Life in a timely manner.
- a student who is hoping and planning to continue at PLU, but is not permitted to due to being dismissed from the university for poor grades.

When the late cancellation is the result of a decision made by the student, the cancellation penalty is typically not waived. Examples of this include, but are not limited to:

- a student who is hoping to live off-campus, but does not want to cancel on-campus housing until a place is secured.
- a student who is hoping to transfer to another school, but is not accepted until after the deadline has passed.
- a student who is scheduled to graduate mid-year or go study abroad for spring semester, but fails to notify Residential Life of the housing cancellation until after the deadline has passed. Students in this position occasionally want the penalty waived because “the university knew they weren’t going to be here.” Every year we have residents who are scheduled to graduate, but continue on-campus in the spring for a 2<sup>nd</sup> or graduate degree. Additionally, we have students who sign up for study abroad and change their minds.

**PROCESS FOR APPLYING FOR AN EXCEPTION**

We recognize and believe that each student is a unique individual with a unique set of circumstances. While that is taken into consideration as this policy is implemented, the overarching principles are contractual responsibility and equitable treatment for all our residents. If, after reading this document, you feel that your situation merits a waiver of the cancellation penalty place your request and rationale in writing to the Office of Residential Life.

- 1) Submit a letter or e-mail to [rlif@plu.edu](mailto:rlif@plu.edu) and mark Attention Rebecca, detailing your circumstances and need to be waived the penalty.
- 2) Rebecca Rumpza will reply to your request within three weeks of its receipt as to whether your request merits consideration.