



PACIFIC LUTHERAN UNIVERSITY

Residential Life

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PACIFIC LUTHERAN UNIVERSITY'S RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT EXPLANATION

This letter is in response to your inquiries regarding Pacific Lutheran University's Residency Requirement. This letter provides you with additional background regarding this University requirement and a clear understanding of the limited circumstances under which an exception may be granted.

BACKGROUND

Until Fall 1998 Pacific Lutheran University's Residency Requirement was known as a three year requirement. For Fall 1999 it was altered – lowered to a two year requirement. It now reads that students are required to live on campus until they have attained 20 years of age (by September 1st for fall semester, by February 1st for spring semester) or Junior Status (60 semester hours) or live at home with parent, spouse or child within 30 driving miles of PLU's address.

Previous to Fall 1999, the policy included a waiver process. Students were able to petition for an exception. A waiver was granted if a student could establish, with appropriate documentation, that they would experience "a unique or exceptional hardship" if they were to continue living on campus. With this relaxation of the policy (from 3 years to 2 years) the waiver process was eliminated.

These policy changes came about after extensive discussions, led by the Vice-President and Dean for Student Life and ultimately involving the President of the University. It was determined that a two year commitment to living on campus served to reaffirm the University's role as a residential institution, an integral part of PLU's identity, and did not constitute an unreasonable hardship for students or their families.

A successful residential life program needs to include all types of students, for students often learn best from one another. This is one reason why we work so hard to attract and retain not just sophomores, but juniors and seniors as well. It is the aim of this policy to benefit the community as well as the individual student.

EXCEPTIONS

The policy includes the following universal exceptions: when living at home with parent, spouse or child. Students meeting one of these requirements must request a *Confirmation of Living at Home* form from the Office of Residential Life. Living with a non-parent/guardian family member such as a sibling, aunt/uncle, or grandparent is not justification for an exception. This has been reviewed and denied on multiple occasions.

Additionally, two situations that have often formed the basis of a request for an exception, but have not been considered grounds for a waiver are food and financial. In the case of the former, Dining Services will work with a student on individual needs, and when appropriate, grant a waiver of the meal plan requirement. As for the latter, since a minimum of two year's residence on campus is considered an integral part of a PLU education, financial issues must be worked out with Financial Aid if a student is to successfully continue at PLU.

A small number of exceptions have been granted in the years since the policy was revised. In each of these cases, a student presented a situation that went beyond preference to necessity and could, in no way, be accommodated anywhere on campus.

PROCESS FOR APPLYING FOR AN EXCEPTION

Students seeking to be released from this University requirement must demonstrate to the satisfaction of Residential Life that some aspect of their personal situation precludes them from successfully living on campus and attending PLU despite accommodations made on their behalf. Residential Life has been able to work with students on alternative housing assignments including single rooms if appropriate.

- 1) Submit a letter or e-mail to Rebecca Rumpza (rumpzari@plu.edu) detailing your circumstances and need for being released from this PLU requirement.
- 2) Rebecca Rumpza will reply to your request within three weeks of its receipt as to whether your request merits consideration.