



PACIFIC LUTHERAN UNIVERSITY

Residential Life

University Center 161 (253) 535-7200 rlif@plu.edu

RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT

Pacific Lutheran University requires that all full-time (enrolled in 12 or more semester hours) students live in University housing unless:

- a) The student lives at home with parent(s), spouse, or child within 25 driving miles of PLU's address
- b) The student is 20 years of age or older on or before:
 - September 1, – Student exempt for the academic year.
 - February 1, – Student exempt for spring semester.
- c) The student has achieved Junior status (completed 60 semester hours) prior to:
 - September 1, – Student exempt for the academic year.
 - February 1, – Student exempt for spring semester.

At Pacific Lutheran University, we describe ourselves as a residential university with a strong commitment to the residential experience. We have this University Policy in place because we care deeply about student success. Both national research studies and PLU data clearly indicate that students who live on campus are more likely to succeed at higher levels than students who do not live on campus in three important areas: Grade Point Average, Retention and Graduation. Additionally, residential students feel a greater sense of Connection, Belonging and Satisfaction with their educational experience.

A successful residential life program includes a variety of experiences and a diversity of students, for students often learn best from one another. This is one reason why we work so hard to attract and retain first-year students, sophomores, juniors and seniors. Residents can learn from one another and grow together in community. This policy is in place to benefit the individual and our community of learners.

A decision to attend PLU involves a commitment to adhere to all University Policies, including the Residency Requirement.

Standard Exceptions

The policy includes the following standard exceptions: when living at home with parent, spouse or child, within 25 driving miles of campus. Documentation verifying these circumstances is required.

Students meeting one of these requirements must request and complete a *Confirmation of Living at Home* form from the Office of Residential Life. Even though PLU stresses the importance of the residential experience, these standard exceptions are in place to assist with needs we may not otherwise be able to address. PLU does not currently offer housing suitable for students with children and only very limited options for married students. Finally, we recognize that some students' personal circumstances may require them to live at home with parent(s) and we prefer they have the option of a PLU education over a local community college alternative. The distance limit is in place to address the concern that it is not in a student's best interest to spend excessive amounts of time commuting to and from campus.

The following list is provided as context to assist students whose individual circumstances do not match the standard exceptions and may be considering seeking a waiver of the policy. Individual circumstances are weighed along with university mission and values, which includes the need to administer policies equitably for all students.

Commonly Denied Requests

- Commuting from home with parent beyond the 25 mile driving distance. This distance was carefully chosen as the outside parameter for a successful commute.
- Living with a non-parent family member such as a sibling, aunt/uncle, or grandparent. This does not constitute a standard exception, even if the address is within the 25 mile driving distance.
- Twentieth birthday is close to September 1st for the academic year or February 1st for Spring semester. This standard is clear, easy to remember and consistently enforced.
- Student has accumulated almost 60 semester hours necessary for junior status. This standard is clear, easy to remember and consistently enforced.
- Student has already signed a lease on an off-campus apartment or house. Student actions contrary to this policy are the responsibility of the student.
- Difficulty with food options offered through University meal plans. Campus Restaurants will work with a student on individual needs, and when appropriate, grant a waiver of the meal plan requirement.
- Ability to find off campus living options that cost less than on campus. Any financial issues experienced by a student should be addressed with Financial Aid if a student is to successfully continue at PLU.

Exceptions to this policy are rare. A successful petition for an exception must go beyond personal preference and demonstrate that a student has needs that cannot be met through any of our varied living options.

Process for Applying for a Waiver

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) Student must submit a letter or e-mail to Rebecca Rumpza (rumpzari@plu.edu) detailing personal circumstances and the need for being released from this PLU requirement.
 - a. Only written requests for a waiver of this policy will be considered.
 - b. While it is understood that parents assist their students in many ways, including financial, it is the student who enters into a contract with the university and agrees to abide by university policies; therefore, this request must come from the student.
- 2) Rebecca Rumpza will reply to the request within three weeks of its receipt as to whether the request merits consideration.

****A student enrolled at the university and living off-campus in violation of this policy without the approval of Residential Life for his or her specific living arrangement, will be held responsible for the room and meal charges for that period and will be required to move on campus for the remainder of their time under the requirement.**