

# Reasonable College Housing Accommodation Policy

*Grove City College reserves the right to amend this policy at any time.*

Grove City College (“GCC” or the “College”) recognizes the importance of providing reasonable accommodations in its housing policies and practices where necessary for individuals with disabilities to use and enjoy College housing. This policy explains the specific requirements and guidelines which govern requests for reasonable accommodation in College Housing.

## **Procedure for Requesting Reasonable Housing Accommodation (Excluding Requests for Service Animals under the Americans with Disabilities Act)**

The Disability Services Coordinator is responsible for evaluating whether to grant or deny requests for a reasonable accommodation in College Housing. In evaluating the request, the Disability Services Coordinator will consult with the Director of Residence Life and the College Counseling Center, as necessary, to determine whether the requested accommodation is necessary and reasonable. Individuals with a disability who reside or intend to reside in college housing who believe they need a reasonable accommodation must contact the Disability Services Coordinator.

**A student who intends to bring a “Service Animal,” should review the Service Animal Policy.**

Requests for a reasonable accommodation in College housing policies and practices are governed by the following requirements:

### **1. Requesting a Housing Accommodation**

- An individual with a disability must complete the “Online Registration Form” to request a reasonable accommodation. The Registration Form is located on the Disability Services page of the Grove City College website. If individuals need assistance in completing the Registration Form because of his/her disability, the Disability Services Office will assist in completing the form.
- GCC will accept and consider requests for a reasonable accommodation in College housing at any time. The individual making the request should complete the Registration Form as soon as possible before moving into College housing. However, if a request for accommodation is made fewer than **60 days** before the individual intends to move into College housing, GCC cannot guarantee that it will be able to meet the individuals’ accommodation needs during the first semester or term of occupancy.
- If the need for an accommodation arises when an individual already resides in College housing, he/she should contact the Disability Services Office and complete the Online Registration Form as soon as possible. GCC cannot guarantee that it will be able to meet the accommodation needs during the semester or term in which the request was received.
- Absent exceptional circumstances, the Disability Service Coordinator will attempt to provide a written response within seven (7) business days of receiving the registration application. A formal meeting either in person or via phone will be scheduled to discuss the accommodation request.

## 2. Information that May Be Requested for Housing-Related Accommodation Requests

Disability Services shall limit its requests for information to only the information necessary to verify whether the individual making the request has a disability and/or evaluate if the reasonable accommodation is necessary to provide the individual an equal opportunity to use and enjoy College housing.

### **Obvious Disability**

If the individual's disability and the necessity for accommodation are obvious (i.e. an individual with a physical disability using a wheelchair needs an accessible room), the individual need only to explain the type of accommodation he/she is requesting. Documentation of disability and/or necessity would not be required in these circumstances.

### **Non-Obvious Disability/Necessity**

1. If the disability is obvious but the need for accommodation is not obvious, the College may require the individual to submit appropriate documentation from a reliable third party who can verify that the requested accommodation is necessary to provide the individual with an equal opportunity to use and enjoy College housing, but may not seek information about the individual's disability.
2. If the disability and necessity for accommodation are not obvious, Disability Services will require the individual to provide appropriate documentation in most cases within 3 years, and a written statement from a reliable third party who can verify that the individual has a disability and that the requested accommodation is necessary to provide the individual an equal opportunity to use and enjoy College housing. Refer to the documentation guidelines at the end of this policy.
3. A reliable third party is some who is familiar with the individual's disability and the necessity for the requested accommodation. Third-party includes, but is not limited to, a physician, counselor or another medical professional.
4. Absent exceptional circumstances, within seven (7) business days of receiving appropriate documentation and written statement from the third-party, the Disability Services Coordinator, after consultation with the Director of Residence Life, will determine if the accommodation is necessary because of disability to provide the individual an equal opportunity to use and enjoy College housing.
5. If the third-party returns the written statement without sufficient information, for the Disability Services Coordinator to determine whether an accommodation is necessary, the Disability Services Coordinator will inform the individual supplying the written statement, within seven (7) business days of receiving the written statement.
6. The individual making the request for accommodation must cooperate with the Disability Services Office in a timely manner in providing all information needed to determine whether the requested accommodation is necessary.

## 3. Determination of Reasonableness

- The Disability Services Coordinator may deny the requested accommodation if it is unreasonable. The Disability Services Coordinator shall consult with the Director of Residence Life to determine if implementing the requested accommodation is reasonable.
- An accommodation is unreasonable if it:
  1. imposes an undue financial and/or administrative burden;
  2. fundamentally alters college housing policies;
  3. poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others or would cause substantial property damage to the property of others, including College property;
  4. and/or is otherwise unreasonable to the operation of the College.

#### **4. Approval of Accommodation**

If the Disability Services Coordinator determines a requested accommodation is necessary and not unreasonable, the individual will be contacted within seven (7) business days of the determination, to arrange a meeting to discuss the implementation of the accommodation

#### **5. Denial of Accommodation/Appeal**

- If the Disability Services Coordinator determines a requested accommodation is necessary but unreasonable, the Disability Services Coordinator will contact the individual, in writing, within seven (7) business days of the determination and engage in an interactive process with the individual to determine if there are alternative accommodations that might effectively meet the individual's disability-related needs.
- If the individual is unwilling to accept any alternative accommodation offered by the Disability Services Coordinator or there are no alternative accommodations available, the Disability Services Coordinator will provide a verbal explanation and written statement to the individual of the denial, the reasons for the denial, the right to appeal the decision and the procedures for that appeals process. The statement shall be provided to the individual within seven (7) business days.
- All appeals for housing-related accommodations are reviewed by the Vice President of Student Life and Learning. If the appeal is denied, the Vice President of Student Life and Learning shall provide the individual written notification of the denial and the reason(s) for the denial.
- An individual may also use the grievance procedure provided under the general College antidiscrimination policies.

#### **6. Non-Retaliation Statement**

GCC will not retaliate against any individual because that individual has requested or received a reasonable accommodation in College housing.

Any student who feels they have been discriminated against, on grounds of their disability may file a grievance through the College's grievance procedure.

## Guidelines for Documentation for Disability Related Housing Needs

These guidelines have been prepared to clarify the type of documentation needed when a student requests housing accommodation(s) based on a physical or medical disability: Documentation should be current (within three years), on letterhead, and must include the license number and original signature of the medical professional. The diagnostician should be an impartial individual.

The office of the Disability Services Coordinator is ultimately responsible for determining accommodations based on impact of the disability as supported by the documentation. Priority housing requests are considered on a case-by-case basis according to need with documentation of the disability and strong medical support. Following a thorough review, recommendations will be made as appropriate by the Disability Services Coordinator to the Director of Residence Life. *Initiating this process does not guarantee the requested accommodations will be approved.*

## Documentation Supporting Housing Accommodation Requests

Documentation provided to the Disability Services Coordinator must be comprehensive and include:

- Evaluation by a licensed physician, neurologist, psychiatrist, or other medical specialist qualified to diagnose physical disabilities and/or chronic health conditions.
- A specific diagnosis. The clinician is encouraged to cite the specific objective measures used to help substantiate diagnoses. The evaluator should use definitive language in the diagnosis of a physical disability, avoiding speculative terms such as “suggest” or “has problems with”.
- Relevant information regarding medications, current treatment, patient’s response, and prognosis related to the disability.
- Current impact of the disability as it relates to the housing request. In the opinion of the medical professional doing the evaluation, is this accommodation necessary for the student to have “equal access” to college?
- Recommendations for effective accommodations.

## Single Room Requests

Single room requests will be considered when accompanied by appropriate medical documentation.

In general, the following diagnoses **may** lend themselves to single room housing accommodations:

- Disorders involving muscular degeneration
- Immunodeficiency disorders (or need for chronic medication which significantly impacts immune function)
- Sleep disorder (generally a full sleep assessment including sleep disorder lab study will be required)
- The diagnosis must support the importance of the special housing request not just convenience.

## Air Conditioning

Current Grove City College students must provide and submit medical documentation from a pulmonologist or allergist supporting the student’s need for an air conditioner by the end of February. New students requesting an air conditioner must provide and submit documentation by the end of June, prior to the fall semester.

There are only certain residence halls on campus that can accommodate an air conditioner. Therefore, when an accommodation is granted for an air conditioner, the student will be assigned to a room where one can be installed. Unless housed in a first year hall or in Colonial Hall, students will remain in their same room throughout the duration of their enrollment. The student is responsible for the cost of the air conditioner, but there is no charge for installation.

The air conditioning unit may remain on campus over breaks if the student is enrolled for the subsequent semester. However, air conditioning units left on campus at the end of an academic semester, in which the student is not registered for the subsequent semester, are considered abandoned and will become the property of Grove City College.

Students and parents will be asked to sign the Request for Medically Approved Air Conditioner form acknowledging the air conditioner policy and agreeing to abide by it in full.

The diagnosis must support the importance of the special housing request not just convenience.

All documentation is confidential and should be submitted to:

**Zachery Brown**

*Disability Services Coordinator*

Grove City College

Academic Resource Center, Crawford Hall

100 Campus Drive

Grove City, PA 16127

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