



Accessibility Services Center

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Reasonable Accommodation Analysis Process- Residential Living

What is the purpose of the residential living accommodation process in higher education?

Unlike in the K-12 environment where the focus of success is central to the K-12 accommodation process, the baseline in college is equal access and opportunity relative to other students. The purpose of the disability accommodation process is to ensure a student is not discriminated against solely based on disability and has the same level of access to Stetson as their nondisabled peers. **The goal is equal access and equal opportunity.**

How are reasonable residential living accommodation decisions made?

The Accessibility Services Center (ASC) facilitates an interactive process to understand a student's residential experiences with the goal of removing adjustable barriers to the daily living experiences created by the college environment. Any accommodation requested should demonstrate the necessity to ensure nondiscrimination and equal access. Every request for accommodation is individualized and explored through fact gathering, interviews, and a review of relevant information. This can include multiple meetings and involve a series of exchanges either in person, via email, or phone

The following information can be used to make informed decisions:

- Student narrative/history
- Third-party documentation from a qualified medical/health/counseling provider (extent of the documentation needed can vary depending on the situation or accommodation requested)
- Consultation with other members of the campus community (as necessary)
- Previous educational accommodation history documentation (IEP, 504, School Psychological Evaluation, Accommodation Letter from previous college/university)

What is the role of third-party documentation in determining reasonable accommodations?

Documentation alone does not determine whether the accommodations requested are reasonable. **Third-party documentation establishes the presence of a disability.**

The information provided will be considered but it is not the definitive information that determines our final decisions. The decision comes from a multitude of factors. Also, a medical provider's accommodation recommendation(s) does not automatically bind Accessibility Services or Stetson University to approve the accommodation as being reasonable. Any recommendation that is outside the scope of what is necessary for equal access, the student will be referred to other resources or given options that may be able to address the specific need.

Students are required to provide to Accessibility Services third party-documentation for two reasons:

1. To establish that a student has a disability.
2. To provide information to help us understand how and why a requested academic or residential accommodation may be reasonable, logical, or necessary to ensure nondiscrimination and equitable access relative to the disability

Documentation that includes ALL the following points, though not exhaustive in scope, is going to be required in our analysis:

For Residential Living Accommodations:

- Be in the form of a letter or report from a physician, psychologist, psychiatrist or other medical provider who is qualified to make the diagnosis and is currently treating you for the disability for which you are requesting a residential living accommodation.
- The documentation must state how long you have been under the provider's care.
- The documentation must be on official letterhead.
- The documentation must include the treating provider's signature and license number.
- **All documentation requires the following:** definition of the disability/diagnosis/condition, the functional limitation(s) it causes, and the severity of the limitations in comparison to someone without the impairment.
- Explain how the condition relates to your request for a residential living accommodation. **There must be a direct link established between the condition and your requested accommodation.**
- Clearly state a specific residential living accommodation recommendation(s) because of the condition.
- Include possible alternatives if the requested accommodation is not available.

What factors are considered when determining if an accommodation is reasonable?

The ASC prioritizes equity and strives to facilitate accommodations that offer the most equitable experience without fundamentally altering an essential outcome or aspect of a campus experience. Stetson University student expectations are not to be reduced.

The interactive process includes consultation with staff and others to ensure reasonable access is facilitated. Please note, reasonable access may not necessarily require residential living accommodations but could be met through other measures such as inclusive design.

The ASC team utilizes a structured review process for each residential living accommodation request. Once the student completes the application and meets with the Accessibility Services Staff member, the staff member will take their application and notes from the accessibility meeting, review the information, discuss with the accessibility team members, and research alternatives if necessary. The student will be informed in writing within 3-5 business days of their meeting with Accessibility as to the committee's determination.

An appeal process is available for students who do not agree with the initial determination.

Reasonable accommodations are facilitated when the accommodation is required to address ALL the following:

- Establishes meaningful access or an equal opportunity to 1) fully engage and participate in the same activities, campus services, benefits and experiences offered to a person without a disability; 2) utilizes the same information shared with everyone; and 3) have the same opportunity to achieve.
- Logically address the impacts of one's disability relative to the barriers/challenges established by and rooted in the residential living environment.
- Is logically designed to and will effectively remove the identified residential living barrier to equitable access.
- **For Residential Living Accommodation Requests-** Resolves matters that the student could not otherwise address through preparation, practice, counseling/coaching/professional guidance, adjustment to expectations, and routines, or implementation of other strategies that any student who live on campus must consider and incorporate to continue to be successful at Stetson.

When are residential living accommodations NOT reasonable?

A residential living accommodation due to a disability is generally not provided for any of the following reasons:

- Solely to ensure the student is successful at Stetson (accommodations in higher education are to provide access, not success)
- To ensure a quiet solitary place for studying. The Stetson library and various other buildings across campus have spaces available for students to study. The library even has private study rooms that can be reserved.
- To increase comfort or alleviate discomfort in the residential living arrangement (such as by having a roommate free experience to avoid addressing typical roommate conflicts).
- To serve as an alternative to the student developing the skills, abilities, and practices necessary to effectively live on campus (through trial-and-error, counseling, success coaching or other strategies).
- To ensure a private space for virtual appointments
- When a request is meant for the residential living space to serve as part of a student's treatment plan for their diagnosis or for Stetson to serve as a student's primary treatment or medical plan/resource.
- To increase comfort by making it easier to manage an academic schedule.
- Concerns about living independently for the first time away from on-campus residential living.

What type of residential living accommodations exist at Stetson?

- **Living Space Accommodations:** Accommodation considerations for students who have a confirmed Stetson Residential Living Agreement and will be (or are) assigned a space on campus. These accommodations could include private bedroom and/or bathroom, physical accessibility features, strobe light fire alarm, first floor access or access to an elevator, etc.
- **Emotional Support Animal (ESA):** An ESA is an animal that provides emotional support that alleviates one or more identified symptoms or effects of a person's disability.