



CONTRACT APPEALS PROCESS (RELEASE WITHOUT PENALTY)

Scope: Residential Life
Issued : June 1, 2012
Revised: February 10, 2015

I. Purpose

II. Policy

Owner: Conferences and Contracts Manager

Functional Areas Involved in Administering Process:

- Communications and Administrative Services
- Financial and Human Resource Services

Goals:

The goals of the Contract Appeals Process for the Louisiana State University Department of Residential Life are:

- To provide a process that provides the student a means for application for a release without penalty from the Academic Year Contract for Residence Halls and Apartments
- Insure equitable enforcement of the Academic Year Contract's rent penalty with input from staff within Residential Life and the university
- The process for Residence Halls also applies for East and West Campus Apartments

Process:

The following appeal process must be followed to be released from an academic year **residence hall** contract. To apply for release from a **food service** contract, the student should contact the Tiger Card Office.

1. Student is informed of any rent penalty either before cancelling his/her assignment (informed at the time of cancellation by Assignments staff) or after the Rent Penalty has been applied to the student's billing statement.
2. Due to the volume and straightforward nature of some cancellation/penalty situations, Assignments Staff will directly handle the following reasons for assignment cancellation prior to the student checking out of his/her assignment:
 - a. Students leaving for a co-op experience (COOP)
 - b. Off-Campus Academic Program/Exchange students (EXCH)

- c. Graduation (GRAD)
 - d. Relocation to Ed Gay/Nicholson Apartments (HAPT) *only if student is the renting student*
 - e. Students leaving for military reasons (MILI)
 - f. Withdrawal/Resignation from LSU (RESG)
 - g. Students transferring to another institution (UNIV)
 - h. Marriage
 - i. Pregnancy
3. For reasons listed in 2.a. through 2.i., Assignments staff will work directly with the student to communicate documentation required to support their cancellation reason and work with the student to receive said documentation. Once supporting documentation is received, Assignments Staff will make a note on the student's record to prevent the penalty from being applied at check-out or to process a reversal of a penalty.
 4. For any reason outside of those listed in section 2 above, a student must initiate an appeal for release from the rent penalty if the student believes two scenarios exist: 1) a change in circumstance creating a special need after moving into the assigned space and 2) LSU has no other form of housing that will meet this need. Common examples of appeals include medical and financial reasons.
 5. Student must initiate the appeal process; due to FERPA regulations a parent/guardian cannot submit an appeal on behalf of the student.
 6. The student should meet with Communications and Administrative Services Administrative Coordinator in 100 Grace King Hall Room. In the absence of the Communications and Administrative Services Administrative Coordinator, functions will be completed by the Administrative Assistant to the Executive Director. The Administrative Coordinator will conduct the *Pre-Exit Interview*. During the interview, the Administrative Coordinator will ask standard questions and record answers on the *Pre-Exit Interview* form.
 - a. The *Pre-Exit Interview* process will explore issues such as reasons for leaving campus, appropriate housing accommodations, Residential Life staff involvement and other issues involved with leaving on-campus housing.
 - b. The Administrative Coordinator will determine if another form of housing exists that would remedy the change in circumstances as provided by the student via the *Pre-Exit Interview*.
 - c. If another form of housing exists, the Administrative Coordinator will make recommendations during the *Pre-Exit Interview* process for accommodations and provide the student with a copy of recommendations.
 - d. The student will be asked to sign the completed *Pre-Exit Interview* form. A student's signature does not necessarily signify agreement with the Administrative Coordinator recommendations. However, it does affirm that the student has been apprised of recommendations. Likewise, the Administrative Coordinator's failure to identify another form of housing in no way guarantees the student/applicant an automatic release without financial penalty.
 - e. Upon completion of the *Pre-Exit Interview*, the Administrative Coordinator will distribute to the student the *Guidelines for Louisiana State University Application for Release Without Penalty from the Residence Halls Academic Year Contract*.

7. The student must complete the *Application for Release Without Penalty from the Residence Halls Academic Year Contract* and return it to the Communications and Administrative Services Administrative Coordinator in 100 Grace King Hall.
 - a. The Administrative Coordinator will review the application and identify any missing documents.
 - b. In the event that the application is not complete, the Administrative Coordinator will work with the student to provide the necessary documentation.
8. When an application is completed, the Communications and Administrative Services Administrative Coordinator will attach the *Pre-Exit Interview* form and submit all documentation to the Conferences and Contracts Manager.
9. A Contract Release Committee will review all applications and appropriate documentation no later than two weeks following submission of the completed appeals documentation. The committee is comprised of the following members:
 - Conferences and Contracts Manager, Department of Residential Life - Chair
 - Director, Office of Disability Support Services (or designee)
 - Designated Assistant Director (Residential Life & Education), Department of Residential Life
 - Designee from Housing, Department of Residential Life
 - Designee from the Office of Financial Aid & ScholarshipsCommittee meets in-person weekly mid-November through February unless prohibited by holiday schedules. Committee meets as needed during other months of the year.
10. The committee will render a decision of financial responsibility.
11. Conferences and Contracts Manager for the Department of Residential Life will write and sign the letter to the student, outlining the decision of the committee. This letter will be sent to the student's LSU email address.
 - a. Committee finds student has no financial responsibility and is released from the rent penalty
 - i. Conferences and Contracts Manager notifies the Accountant Manager of Financial and Human Resource Services, Department of Residential Life, that the student is released from financial responsibility/rent penalty.
 - ii. The Accountant Manager or designee will issue a credit to the student's account in the amount of the financial responsibility/rent penalty, **process is complete**.
 - b. Committee finds student has financial responsibility and is **not** released from the rent penalty.
 - i. Student agrees with Committee decision; financial responsibility stands and student waives right for appeal, **process is complete**.
 - ii. Student does not agree with Committee decision; student appeals decision to Director, Communications and Administrative Services or designee.
 1. Appeal must be in the form of a written document addressed to the Director of Communications and Administrative Services, Department of Residential Life, within five (5) business days of receipt of the Committee decision.
 - a. Document should clearly state the specific actions or recommendations that are being appealed.

- b. Document should clearly present specific reasons and grounds for appeal.
 - c. Document must be signed by the person making the appeal.
12. The Director for Communications and Administrative Services for the Department of Residential Life or designee will review all files and schedule a meeting with the student appealing the decision. A meeting with the student will generally take place within one week of receiving the appeal in writing.
13. The Director of Communications and Administration or designee renders a decision and will write a letter outlining the decision. This letter will be sent to the student's LSU email address.
- a. Director or designee finds student has no financial responsibility and is released from the rent penalty
 - i. Director notifies the Accountant Manager of Financial and Human Resource Services, Department of Residential Life, that the student is released from financial responsibility/rent penalty.
 - ii. The Accountant Manager or designee will issue a credit to the student's account in the amount of the financial responsibility/rent penalty, **process is complete.**
 - b. Director or designee finds student has financial responsibility and is **not** released from the rent penalty.
 - i. Student agrees with Director's decision; financial responsibility stands and student waives right for appeal, **process is complete.**
 - ii. Student does not agree with Director's decision; student appeals decision to Executive Director, Department of Residential Life.
 - 1. Appeal must be in the form of a written document addressed to the Executive Director, Department of Residential Life within five (5) business days of receipt of the Director's decision.
 - a. Document should clearly state the specific actions or recommendations that are being appealed.
 - b. Document should clearly present specific reasons and grounds for appeal.
 - c. Document must be signed by the person making the appeal.
 - iii. Appeal will be considered if one of the following events has occurred:
 - 1. Evidence of bias on the Director or designee.
 - 2. Failure to follow Contract Appeals Process procedures.
 - 3. New information has become available since the appeal meeting.
 - 4. An appeal which does not clearly raise one or more of the three issues raised above shall be dismissed without further consideration. The appeal shall be limited in its review to the issue or issues raised in the written appeal.
14. The Executive Director of Residential Life or designee will obtain files for the student appealing decisions of financial responsibility.
- a. Executive Director or designee will review the request for appeal and if appropriate meet with the student within two weeks of receiving the appeal in writing.
 - b. The Executive Director or designee will render a decision and will write a letter outlining the decision. This letter will be sent to the student's LSU email address.

- i. Executive Director upholds Committee/Directors or designee's decision, **process complete.**
- ii. Executive Director modifies Committee/Directors or designees decision.
 - 1. Executive Director notifies the Accountant Manager of Financial and Human Resource Services, Department of Residential Life, that the student is released from financial responsibility/rent penalty.
 - 2. The Accountant Manager or designee will issue a credit to the student's account in the amount of the financial responsibility/rent penalty, **process is complete.**

The decision by the Executive Director or designee concludes the appellate process for the specific Contract Appeal.