

Housing and Dining Contract Appeals Committee

Description

The Housing Contract Appeals Committee is required by the Associate Vice Chancellor of Auxiliary, Fiscal and Innovation to provide an avenue for review of extraordinary student circumstances resulting in a student seeking a release and/or exception to policies and procedures outlined in or related to the Housing and Dining Contract.

Committee Composition

The committee is chaired by the Coordinator of Housing Contracts and Assignments. The Chair collects all information and any background pertinent to the case, presents this information to the committee and follows up with the appropriate parties. The Chair is a non-voting member of the committee. The Chair has the authority to designate a staff member to serve in their role when absent. The committee consists of the following voting members:

- One professional residence education staff member,
- One dining services staff representative,
- One RHA board representative,
- One Community Council representative,
- One graduate student representative,
- One Basic Needs representative.

All the committee members receive training on the appeals process at the beginning of the academic year.

About Housing and Dining Contract Appeals

Always read your [housing contract terms and conditions](#) or speak with your Residence Education Coordinator or Housing Services staff before cancelling your agreement.

Contract Cancellations will be accepted from students via the [Housing Portal](#).

A student may terminate their Housing Contract for one of the following reasons:

- Student is denied admission to UC Merced (or admission is rescinded).
- Student graduates, transfers to another campus, is dismissed, participates in the Educational Leave Program (ELP), participates in the Education Abroad Program (EAP) or withdraws from UC Merced.
- Student is admitted to UC Merced but fails to register for classes (or cancels registration).
- Student presents proof of marriage occurring during the term of their Housing Contract.
- Student obtains approval from the Director of Housing Services after receipt and review of a Housing Cancellation Request (see instructions below).

If a Contract Cancellation Request is approved, the room and board cost will be pro-rated based on daily rate and the day when the student completes the move-out process, which includes an approved Contract Termination, any residential housing move-out requirements and returning keys to the Valley Housing Office.

Any dining dollar over-usage will be charged to the student. There is no pro-ration for housing and dining in the first and last two weeks of each semester. The contract cancellation fee is not refundable.

Appeals Process

The first step in submitting an appeal is for the student to file an appeal through the [Housing Portal](#) online.

The student must provide a written appeal detailing why they believe an exception should be granted through the [Housing Portal](#). Additional information, such as computer screen shots, contract release application, email responses or other supporting documentation should be submitted with their case.

Always refer to our [Terms and Conditions](#) for complete information concerning cancellation.

The Chair will collect all information pertinent to the case including information from the student, supporting documentation, information from the Residence Education Office, Housing Services and any other parties deemed necessary by the Chair.

Once all information is collected, the committee members meet to review the written documentation.

Once all information is reviewed, the committee will discuss the case. The committee will make a recommendation to Housing Services based on the information available, written policies and procedures and taking into consideration previous decisions.

The Chair will follow up with the student in writing regarding the outcome.

Appeal Decision Timeline

Once a student submits the appeal, the appeal decision will be made within 14 business days. A student will be informed of the decision 5-7 business days after the appeal decision.

Adjustment to billing will be made 5-7 business days after the decision communication to student.

Meeting Times/Dates

Meetings are scheduled by the Chair and will be between Weeks two and 15 during the academic year and as needed during the summer.

Additional Information

Once a decision is rendered on an appeal, it is considered final.

If a student requests to present their appeal in person to the committee, they will be allotted no more than 10 minutes at a meeting to do so. They will present their appeal and then must leave afterward to allow the committee the opportunity to discuss the appeal.

Once a decision is made, the Chair will follow up with the student in writing regarding the outcome. A student choosing this option must also understand that the other parties involved may also be asked to appear to share information.

About the Committee

The committee serves for one year.

The appeals process begins with the Coordinator for Housing Contracts and Assignments.

Every student is asked to submit an official appeal letter along with any supporting documentation that they are comfortable sharing with the committee.

The Coordinator will then review the documents provided to ensure they include everything the committee will need. If the coordinator anticipates the committee will ask a particular question, the Coordinator will ask the student to either include that information in their appeal or via email so the Coordinator can share their answer with the committee.

The Coordinator will redact very personal information that isn't relevant (i.e. bank account numbers on bank statements).

The Coordinator will then gather all the documents and correspondence relevant to the appeal and prepare a packet for the committee to review. For example, if the appeal is related to a termination decision, the Coordinator would gather the following:

- The original termination application and supporting documents
- The original termination application decision
- The official appeal letter from the student
- Any supporting documentation the student provided along with the appeal
- Any emails pertinent to this termination request

Once the packet is prepared, the Coordinator will schedule a meeting with the appeals committee.

The Coordinator will allow committee members time to review the packet and will then open up the floor for discussion and questions.

The Coordinator, who is the chair of the committee, may only participate in the discussion to answer questions asked the by the committee about the appeal or housing contract.

The Coordinator will then email the student on behalf of the committee with the appeals decision. The Coordinator may also answer any questions about the appeal and decision on behalf of the committee.

Committee Training

Training is usually done in the Fall Semester. Prior to the training, the Coordinator will email the committee a copy of the current housing contract to review. We will then review the information provided in the document attached and review a sample appeal (typically an old one from years ago).

The Coordinator will only schedule meetings whenever there is an appeal to review, attempting to give at least one week's notice beforehand.

At the beginning of every semester, the Coordinator will email the committee to set up a "tentative" date and time every week that the committee can meet for that semester, just in case of an appeal.

No meetings will be scheduled during the first week of the semester, finals week, or during holiday and spring breaks.

Summer Appeals

During the summer, there is a separate Housing Appeals Committee. The staff members are the same, but the student members may change, depending on who is available. The summer committee only serves from May through August.

Contact for Appeal Questions and Concerns

Valley Housing Office (attention: Director of Housing Services)

100 Terrace Center, 5400 N. Lake Road

Merced, California 95340

Email: housing@ucmerced.edu

Phone: 209-228-2293