

West Chester University
Office of Residence Life and Housing Services

Personal Care Attendants

Students with a documented need for assistance with normal life functions, within the context of a residential setting, will be permitted to have a Personal Care Attendant (PCA). The PCA can be live-in if appropriate arrangements are made (see below). It is the student's sole responsibility to make the appropriate arrangements to hire and supervise the PCA, as well as cover all financial responsibilities. The University does not provide personal care attendants or personally- or individually-prescribed devices for students with disabilities and are not financially responsible for these.

Anyone who wishes to request the use of a PCA must submit the following:

1. A written statement requesting accommodations to allow for a PCA, specifically noting whether or not the PCA will be live-in.
2. Documentation from a physician or medical professional that these arrangements are necessary may be requested by the Office of Residence Life and Housing Services.
3. Documentation that the person designated as the PCA is qualified to provide these services. This could be documentation for a specific person, or from an organization that will provide services by more than one person.
4. A copy of the written contract between the student and the person providing the service, or between the student and the organization that will be providing the services. The contract must stipulate that the services required by this student will in fact be provided by the PCA.

Some students will not require a live-in PCA, but will have a live-out (or a team of live-out) PCAs instead. The following policies are in effect for both live-in and live-out PCAs.

1. The PCA does not have to be a West Chester University student. However, while inside of the residence hall/apartment, they will be expected to abide by all the same policies and procedures as a resident student. These policies can be found in the "Ram's Eye View" and the "Guide to Residential Living". PCAs found not abiding by these policies will be required to leave campus immediately, regardless of the contractual arrangement they have with the student. PCAs will also be required to have some form of picture identification other than a driver's license that will need to be shown upon request.
2. PCAs must be of the same gender or biological sex as the student they are assisting. Since the traditional residence halls at West Chester University do not have private bathroom accommodations, PCAs will be required to assist the student with needs in a public bathroom. Due to this restriction, it is unfair to the parties involved, as well as the other residents of the floor, to have someone of the opposite gender in a public bathroom.
3. The Office of Residence Life and Housing Services reserves the right to require references or background checks on those people selected to be a PCA in accordance with Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education standards.

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4. The resident will coordinate with the appropriate Resident Director/Graduate Hall Director to order the appropriate keys and/or building access swipe cards for their attendant(s). The resident is responsible for any fees associated with the loss and subsequent replacement of the attendant's building access swipe card and key(s) including the replacement/re-coring of locks. (For live-out PCAs, the attendant's building access swipe card and keys are for use only when attending to their client.)
5. Each student who has a PCA must have a contingency plan for what will occur if their PCA is unable to attend to the student. This plan must be in writing and shared with the Resident Director/Graduate Hall Director of the building, and the Senior Director of Residence Life and Housing Services (or designee). If the contingency plan cannot be met, a student could be in non-compliance (see below). Issues to be addressed in the plan are:
 1. Who will the student contact for assistance if the aide is not available?
 2. Does the agency provide a contingency aide?
 3. If the student is without an attendant for more than one shift (live-out) or one day (live-in), does the student have a plan for leaving the residence halls temporarily until care can be re-established?
 4. Emergency contact numbers for the Residence Life staff should be provided.

If a request for a live-in PCA is granted, the following stipulations will be in effect:

1. The student must continue to be registered for classes during the period of occupancy. Any student who withdraws from classes will be required to move out of on-campus housing, as per stated University policy. Since the PCA is living on campus only because of the relationship with the student, they would be required to move out of housing as well, unless other arrangements are appropriate (e.g. they are also a registered student and would be eligible for housing on their own merits).
2. In the traditional residence halls, students with approved PCAs will be assigned to a standard double room. There will be no additional housing charge for the PCA. The student will be required to be on a University meal plan, as per stated University policy, unless a medical exemption is granted. The PCA will be responsible for providing his or her own meals. However, no unauthorized cooking equipment may be brought into the room, and kitchen facilities in the buildings are very limited. PCAs may be permitted to purchase a University meal plan due to their special residential status.
3. In the South Campus Apartment Complex, students with approved PCAs will be assigned to a double room within the apartment. There will be no additional housing charge for the PCA. Each apartment includes a kitchen. Meal plans are optional for South Campus residents and can be purchased for either the student or the aide at his or her own expense.

Non-Compliance Policy

As stated in the Student Occupancy Agreement, students must be able to care for themselves independently or arrange for services that will allow them to perform normal life functions in the context of a residential setting. If a question arises as to whether a student is abiding by this policy, the following steps will be taken:

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1. The Office of Residence Life and Housing Services staff member who witnesses behavior and/or receives information that questions a student's ability to independently and appropriately care for themselves will document the circumstances. This documentation may include, but is not limited to, behavior that places the student and/or community members at risk of injury to themselves or others. This may include documenting students who have had PCAs or been approved for a PCA who do not appear to be utilizing the services of one at the current time, as well as students who have had no previous arrangements for a PCA. This may also include circumstances when PCAs are not fulfilling their responsibilities in caring for their client.
2. If it is determined that the frequency and severity of the circumstances warrants action by the University, the documentation will be compiled by the Senior Director of Residence Life and Housing Services (or designee) and forwarded to the student. The student will have five (5) University business days to respond to the documentation, either by providing written documents refuting the claims being made by the University, or by making appropriate arrangements to correct the deficiency. Documentation may be forwarded to appropriate University offices for review. If necessary, where the health, safety and welfare of the student, others, or the welfare of the University or its personnel may be in immediate danger, the University reserves the right to do an interim removal from student housing pending a successful resolution of the matter.
3. If the student does not correct the deficiency or if they refute the claims, a Review Board will be convened by the appropriate official to assess the claims. The Board will be made up of representatives of the Office of Residence Life and Housing Services, a representative of the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities, the ADA Coordinator, and, if appropriate, a representative of the Student Health Services. The student who was documented, as well as the staff member who submitted the documentation, shall present their case to the Board. Additional people as appropriate may also be present as necessary to support the case made by either party. This Board will meet within a reasonable amount of time after the deadline referenced in #2 above.
4. The Board will have the authority to decide if the student is in compliance with the policy. If the student is in compliance, no action will be taken. If the student is not in compliance, the Board will provide to the student in writing what steps will need to be taken, and in what period of time, in order to become compliant.
5. If the student fails to meet the expectations set forth by the Board, they will be removed from housing within 48 hours of having missed a stated deadline. They may also be charged with violation(s) of University policy and the matter may be processed through the University judicial system.
6. The student will not be granted a second hearing once being notified of the loss of housing. However, they may appeal the loss of housing to the Dean of Students. The Dean of Students, or their designee, will review the case and determine if the loss of housing is warranted. New expectations and time frames may be granted, or the loss of housing decision may be upheld. No further appeal will be granted.

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7. Students issued a loss of housing as a result of this policy may be eligible for future housing by beginning the approval process from the beginning. However, they must also include a written statement addressing their past noncompliance with the policy and the steps that will be taken to insure their compliance in the future.

8. Students who are removed from housing as a result of this policy are not automatically refunded their housing fees. Students may petition for a pro-rated refund of their housing fee (Traditional Halls) by completing a Student Occupancy Agreement Release Request, and requests will be evaluated using the criteria listed in Item #2 of the Student Occupancy Agreement.

Amended 12/2019