

2026-2027 Special Interest Housing Agreement

Residence Life Office
One University Avenue, Suite 4502
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055
(717)796-5239; housing@messiah.edu

I hereby activate this agreement for a residence hall space for myself at Messiah University for the **ENTIRE ACADEMIC YEAR** 2026-2027, from the applicable date of check-in until the applicable date of check-out as stated below. I understand this agreement will be terminated in the event of my withdrawal, suspension or dismissal from the university, permanent removal from the residence hall by the University, completion of my degree requirements, or participation in an off-campus study program. I agree to be an involved member of the living learning community, pay applicable fines, attend regular floor meetings, and participate in hall activities. I agree that this agreement **does not** create a landlord/tenant relationship between me and Messiah University, and **does not** convey any leasehold or other real property interest. I understand that the terms “resident,” “occupant,” or “student,” as used in this agreement, apply to me. I understand the terms of this agreement and agree to abide by them.

- 1. CONDUCT OF RESIDENTS:** The resident of the space assigned agrees to abide by the Community Covenant and Code of Conduct of Messiah University and is subject to University policies relating to residential living facilities as published in the current Student Handbook and incorporated in this contract by reference. A resident is assumed to be aware of these policies.
- 2. CHECK-IN PROCEDURE:**
Returning students with traditional housing contracts can complete the check-in procedure:
Beginning at 9 a.m. on Sunday, August 23, 2026 for Fall
Beginning at 9 a.m. on Sunday, January 10, 2027 for Spring
Early Arrivals:
All early arrivals must be approved by the Residence Life office. Fall early arrivals can occur starting August 9 for sponsored and individual students. An additional per day room fee will be charged individually to those who move in after August 9 and before the designated opening day of August 21 for new/transfer students and August 23 for returning students. There will be no early arrival for non-sponsored students for Spring semester.
Required All Special Interest House Meeting – all residential students are required to attend a building meeting that will be held on Monday, August 24. Details and locations will be communicated upon move in. A \$25 fee will be charged to any students who do not attend without an approved absence.
- 3. REQUIRED HOUSE MEETINGS** – anytime there are all hall meetings, the house members are all expected to attend an all special interest house meetings. Times and locations will be communicated by the RA through individual contact, emails and/or signs in the buildings. A \$25 fee will be charged to any students who do not attend without an approved absence. The meetings will be held on the following dates:
Monday, August 24, 2026
Tuesday, December 8, 2026
Monday, January 11, 2027
Tuesday, April 27, 2027
- 4. HOUSE INVENTORY:** The resident of the space assigned shall be responsible for any unassigned loss, damage, repair, or replacement of the furnishings, doors, windows, walls and the conditions of the space during the term of occupancy. Upon arrival and departure, the resident will be given the opportunity to inspect the space and conduct an inventory of the furnishings and condition of the space with a representative of the Residence Life Office. Any student who chooses not to fill out a condition inventory form may be held financially responsible for all damage in the room. For check out a representative of the Residence Life Office is to inspect and lock the space after the inventory is completed.
- 5. HOUSE KEY:** Receiving a house key is part of the check-in procedure. Any student who does not pick up a room key within the first 10 days of class will receive a \$75 fine for improper check-in. Upon departure from residence, the house key must be returned to the Resident Assistant or Residence Life Office. Failure to do so will subject the resident to a **key replacement charge of \$75.00. A house key may not be duplicated.** If the room key is lost or stolen during the term of occupancy, a key replacement charge of \$75.00 will be made to the student's University account.
- 6. HOUSE INSPECTION:** To ensure all furnishings remain in the assigned space throughout the year, a member of the University staff will inspect this space during winter break, spring break, and at departure. The resident(s)

will be billed the current replacement value of those items missing, damaged or broken following each inspection period. Resident Directors or University staff members will conduct an inspection each semester to ensure rooms meet fire and safety requirements and the resident(s) will be responsible to make necessary changes within one day of receipt of violation notification. If during any of the inspections mentioned above, violations of the student code of conduct are found, appropriate judicial procedures may be initiated. The University reserves the right to enter and inspect residential space at any time for maintenance needs and for reasons of health or safety.

7. **MINIMUM & MAXIMUM AGE:** Minor students who are at least 17 years of age may be approved to live on campus. Students 24 years of age or older are not allowed to live on campus. Requests for an exception can be made to the Director of Housing.
8. **CHECK-OUT PROCEDURE:** Resident students completing degree requirements or leaving the campus at the conclusion of first semester must vacate their space by noon on the day following the conclusion of their last final examination in the fall semester or upon completion of their academic requirements for the semester. Likewise, students **not completing degree requirements in the spring** must vacate their space **24 hours after their last final OR by noon on Wednesday, May 6, 2027**. Residents participating in commencement may remain in their space **until Commencement Day**.
9. **COMMUNITY COVENANT & CODE OF CONDUCT:** Students are expected to re-read the Community Covenant and Code of Conduct and abide by the guidelines and principles outlined therein.
10. **CONDITION OF HOUSE UPON DEPARTURE and DAMAGES:** All trash will be bagged and removed by the assigned resident. Failure to remove trash or leave the house in clean and acceptable condition will result in an assessment equally divided between each assigned resident. Moreover, if the common areas of the house are left in disrepair, a charge for returning the common area to its original condition will be equally divided among all residents. All personal belongings must be removed from the space assigned upon departure. The University assumes no responsibility for belongings left in the space assigned. Additional charges may be assessed if residential space is occupied following the required check-out.
11. **CONDITION OF HOUSE (GENERAL):** All Special Interest Houses have a certain level of wear and tear, depending on the age of the house. Students are expected to know that the condition of the house will not be radically altered or improved over the course of their stay. All houses will have safety needs addressed, but cosmetic issues may not be repaired, depending on the cost and long-term need of the house.
12. **WEEKLY GROUP MEETINGS** – Will be held at the house to build community and to fulfill the goals and mission of the house.
13. **ADVISOR** – One house member, designated as the house leader, is expected to meet with the advisor once a month.
14. **SEMESTER REPORTS** – The residents of the house will submit a community video at the end of the semester that demonstrates learning about the house theme, and community living in their specific house. The video will be used for special interest house recruitment. At the end of the spring semester, the residents will submit a 150 to 250 word reflection on their year in a special interest house. Expectations of what is to be included in this summary will come from the Assistant Residence Director.
15. **INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY:** The occupant of the space assumes responsibility for any act, behavior or conduct that originates from the space assigned or selected.
16. **COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY FOR DAMAGE:** The University reserves the right to assess students for damages to public areas and furnishings within the common spaces of the house. If individuals responsible for damage cannot be identified, the residents of the house will be deemed collectively responsible for the cost of repair or replacement. In situations where the damages are extreme, repetitive, or the unit is severely disruptive, the students may be subject to the University disciplinary process resulting in sanctions, including housing relocation.
17. **SPECIAL HOUSE ENTRY AND SEARCH:** The University reserves the right to enter and search any residential space in an emergency or if there is reasonable cause to believe a violation of University policy, local, State, or Federal Law is occurring. Any such entry and/or search is subject to the Student Search Policy published in the Student Handbook.
18. **BREAK CLOSING:** During Winter and Spring break closings students are required to move-out by the designated date and time to avoid penalties. Date and time will be announced within a reasonable timeframe prior to breaks.

Winter Break: The campus residences, including the houses are closed from noon Friday, December 18, 2026 to Sunday, January 10, 2027 at 8:00 a.m.

Spring Break: Students in the Special Interest Houses (Schrag/Rafiki, Woodland, Foreman and Melhorn) are permitted to stay in their residences if they [apply for spring break housing](#).

19. **GUESTS/OVERNIGHT STAYS:** Guests are welcome in University residences if they are approved under and abide by the Messiah University visitors policy. Approved guests may stay overnight on campus for up to three nights with the approval of their residents of the room. A guest is not permitted to stay on campus longer than three nights, even if the guest stays in more than one room. Students may stay overnight in the rooms or apartments of others students of the same gender for up to three days. Neither guests nor students are permitted in bedrooms of the opposite gender except during scheduled visitation hours. The resident is responsible for the conduct of their guest(s) and agrees to pay for any damage caused by a guest.
20. **BED RISERS:** Bed risers are allowed to create additional under bed storage for residences. In order for bed risers to be used the following criteria must be followed. Bed risers must be made of high density polyethylene that holds 1,200 lbs, the bed cannot be raised more than six inches. Bed risers may only be used on metal beds and may not be used when bunking beds. Bed risers made out of other forms of plastic, cinder block or PVC pipe are prohibited.
21. **STADIUM SEATING** – Lofts, bed-risers and any form of stadium seating for couches or other furniture is prohibited.
22. **FURNITURE STACKING** – The stacking of any furniture that is not constructed to stack is prohibited.
23. **LOFT CONSTRUCTION:** The construction of “loft” beds by residents is prohibited.
24. **PERSONAL INSURANCE:** The University accepts no liability for the theft, loss, or damage by fire, water or appliance failure or otherwise of money, valuables, computers, or any personal property of the student either in the student's residential space or in University storage areas. Students are urged to purchase their own insurance to cover such losses. The Residence Life office works with a company who offers insurance specifically for university students. Information can be found at the Residence Life office or by contacting <http://gradguard.com/school-search> Since family homeowner's insurance policies sometimes provide coverage for the personal property of a family member away at school, students are also encouraged to check with their family's insurance agent regarding policy coverage.
25. **RECYCLING AND TRASH REMOVAL:** Trash and recycling pick-up is on Monday mornings (put at the end of driveway on Sunday evenings) for Melhorn and Foreman. Rafiki & Woodland Houses use campus trash and recycling services. Rafiki & Woodland Houses need to take their trash to a central drop-off location for their area. In accordance with Pennsylvania Act 101, the occupants of the space assigned are encouraged to separate recyclable glass, aluminum cans and all plastics.
26. **INTERNET:** The University is providing internet to all of the special interest houses. The cost has been adjusted to include these amenities.
27. **PARKING:** For those who live in the special interest houses, parking is the same charge as those on campus. Students must still apply for a special interest house parking sticker so the Department of Safety can determine which cars are permitted to park at the house. During inclement weather, vehicles cannot be parked in the house driveway.
28. **VACANT SPACE(s):** If a space should become vacant in your room or apartment, the university reserves the right to assign the space without prior notice. You are expected to make adequate space available for roommate(s). Additionally, if you fail to do so, you may be subject to judicial action or additional fees.
29. **REASSIGNMENT PROCESS:** The University reserves the right to temporarily or permanently reassign students to another residence hall space at any time during the term of occupancy.
30. **SANCTIONS FOR ALCOHOL & TOBACCO USE** - If alcohol or tobacco is found in the Special Interest House or if residents of the house are found responsible for use of alcohol or tobacco those students will be reassigned to a residence hall room.
31. **ROOM CHANGES:** A student may not move from his/her assigned space to another without the prior authorization of the Residence Life Office. A request to make such a change must be initiated through the appropriate Residence Director and approved by the Director of Housing. Students who move without

authorization may be subject to a fine of up to \$200.00 and/or cancellation of their space assignment.

32. **REFUNDS:** Room charges are refundable to students who officially withdraw from the University under the same formula and conditions as those applicable to tuition subject to policies published in the Messiah University Catalog.
33. **STORAGE:** No personal items or furniture may be stored in the house. The house must be completely empty at the end of the school year. On-campus storage is available for house/programmatic items. **The University assumes no responsibility for any loss or damage of items stored.**
34. **MEDICAL FORMS:** All medical forms must be completed and returned to Engle Center (health services) in order for a student to receive a room key for a residential room and building.
35. **CREDIT REQUIREMENT:** Students must enroll and maintain a minimum of 12 credits per semester in order to qualify for residential housing. Exceptions are made by the Director of Housing on an individual basis for any student who is enrolled in less than 12 credits.
36. **CANCELLATION POLICY: Continuing/Current Students:** Any continuing student who chooses to cancel her/his housing contract prior to August 1st may do so without penalty. Any cancellation received between August 1st and move in day will be subject to a \$100 cancellation fee. After move-in students will be assessed a \$250 cancellation fee in addition to the daily housing rate. Both will be charged to the student's account. All cancellations must be in writing and received by the Residence Life Office. Any student who qualifies as a commuter (lives locally with family, part time student, married, 23 years old or older) and decides to live off-campus for the second semester will not be charged the \$250 cancellation fee if the housing change is made with the Residence Life Office before the fall 2026 term.
37. **NON-DISCRIMINATION:** Messiah University does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, color, disability, or national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other University-administered programs. It complies fully with the prohibitions against discrimination on the basis of sex contained in Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972. By entering into this contract, student residents agree to honor and support the University's commitment. Discrimination or harassment of others in violation of this commitment will be cause for dismissal from the residence halls.