

University Housing

2020-2021 Academic Year - Frequently Asked Questions

Housing Application Process

Q: What is Contract Renewal?

A: Contract Renewal is an annual process that allows continuing students to participate in priority placement to secure housing for the upcoming academic year. The process includes completing a housing application, forming of roommate groups, followed by Room Selection during the designated Priority Placement schedule via the Housing Portal. It is important that students check their BenU email and the Housing Portal messages throughout the Contract Renewal process for information.

Q: What is the Housing Portal?

A: The Housing Portal is the official online resident portal. The portal allows new and returning residential students to access and manage communication, housing application, housing agreement, roommate requests, room selection and assignment information. Residents are encouraged to become acquainted with the portal as it will serve as the “go-to place” as an on-campus resident.

Q: How is campus housing designated?

A: Housing communities are designated by gender and class status.

- Ondrak Hall (male) – designated for freshmen and above
- Jaeger Hall (female) – designated for freshmen and above
- Founders Woods (apartments, single gender by unit) – designated for sophomores and above

Q: How can students access the Housing Portal?

A: Students may access the Housing Portal online at www.ben.edu/housingportal. A student’s university login credentials are used to access the housing application.

Q: When does the 2020-2021 housing application open?

A: Housing application will become available via the Housing Portal on March 11, 2020 to both incoming and returning students.

Q: What is the difference between a housing application and room-selection process?

A: The **application** is a collection of important student information and preferences and the time to form roommate groups. The application process makes a student eligible to select housing, but the room selection process has its own timeline.

Room-Selection is a separate process that allows students to self-select their housing assignment during the designated Room Selection Placement scheduled dates. (See Room-Selection Timeline FAQ).

Q: Who is qualified to participate?

A: Any current student and transfer student who do not have a financial hold at the time of application is able to complete the housing application. All students must be in good financial standing with the university at the time of participation. Students with financial holds are able to log into the application, however, they will not be able to successfully complete the application and request roommates until the financial hold is removed. Students are encouraged to contact Financial Aid and the Business Office to clear their hold so that they can register for the fall semester and complete the housing application.

Q: What is the application process like?

A: The process is simple, however, it is very important to read the information presented in each step. Students advance through a number of steps with instructions included at each stage. A student can stop at any point in the process and log back in at a later point and complete the application.

Q: I currently have a hold and working to resolve to become eligible. How much time do I have to resolve and ensure I can live with my preferred roommates next year?

A: It is highly encouraged that students resolve account holds by April 17 to ensure all systems are up to date. This will provide sufficient time to form roommate groups prior to the start of Room Selection.

Q: What kinds of profile questions are asked in the application and how is that information used?

A: The profile questionnaire is used for student roommate matching and searching purposes. The profile questions include a variety of personal habits/lifestyle preference that include, level of involvement in campus life, tolerance for in-room guests or animals, including sleep and study patterns, etc. The system can identify potential roommates with a high level of compatibility of responses to the profile questions.

Q: How does a student know if the housing application has been completed successfully?

A: The student must complete all of the steps, including the "Submit Application" step to be considered complete. Student will receive an email regarding submission of application and provide details on the Room Selection Process. Students can also utilize the application status link within application, completed applications will show a status of "Housing Application Complete".

Housing and Room-Selection Process

Q: What is the Housing Agreement?

A: This is the first step in the Room-Selection Process. The Housing Agreement is a contractual agreement between the student and the University for the entire academic year, with exceptions made for students graduating at semester or participating in university sponsored study abroad programs.

The Housing Agreement articulates Terms & Conditions of housing, including regulations, expectation of contact and financial responsibility that govern the privilege of living in campus housing. **Students are advised to read the text of the agreement very carefully.** Upon completion and final acknowledgement, a copy of agreement is forwarded via email and made available within Housing Portal under the Messages tab.

Q: I've decided to commute, what now?

A: Please be advised, all submitted housing agreements are binding and hold you financially accountable to your contract terms for the academic year. Do not submit a housing agreement or participate in the room selection process if you intend to use on-campus housing as a backup plan, or if you're unsure about living on campus.

When a housing agreement is signed and housing is reserved during Room Selection dates via the Contract Renewal period for continuing students, the document is binding and cannot be broken. Please contact University Housing regarding withdrawal requests and process for extenuating circumstances.

Q: What are the 2020-2021 Room Selection dates for returning students?

A: **Upperclassmen: Wednesday, April 22** – Current residents classified as juniors or seniors in fall 2020 can participate in priority placement to self-select and assign confirmed roommate(s) to housing on the Upperclassmen Room Selection day.

Current Residents: Thursday, April 23 – All current residents classified as sophomore and above in fall 2020 can participate in priority placement to self-select and assign confirmed roommate(s) housing on the Current Residents Room Selection day.

Open to All: Tuesday, April 28 through Friday, May 8 –All students, including commuter and incoming transfer students, will have an opportunity to self-select and assign confirmed roommate(s) during the Open to All Room Selection Dates.

Q: Can eligible rising sophomores, transfer or commuter students participate in Contract Renewal prior to the Open to All Room Selection dates?

A: Yes, as long as at least one member of the roommate group meets the participation eligibility criteria. The person with the earliest date should be designated as the Group Leader (see “What is the roommate grouping process for Room Selection” FAQ).

Q: What are the Room Selection dates for incoming new freshman?

A: **New Students: Monday, June 1 through August 3** - All new students entering in fall 2020 will have an opportunity to self-select an available Jaeger or Ondrak housing assignment during and assign confirmed roommate the New Student Room Selection dates.

Q: How are housing assignments made?

A: Returning students self-select their spaces through the Housing Portal beginning at the start of the Room Selection Process if they have successfully completed a housing application and have formed groups of two or four to be placed into a room or apartment.

New incoming freshmen are eligible to self-select and reserve a housing assignment within the residence halls beginning June 1 via the New Students Room Selection Process.

Q: What is the roommate grouping process for Room-Selection?

A: University Housing consists of one, two or four-person units, therefore roommate groups must match the housing size. All students must mutually request and confirm each other within the roommate group. The group must assign one member as the designated Group Leader. Only the Group Leader will be able to assign roommates in-group into spaces in the system. Once assignments are made by the Group Leaders, each student in the group must complete the remaining pages in the housing portal within the next 24 hours. Roommate groups should be formed with the desired housing in mind. Communication is important and planning in advance will work in everyone’s favor as changes in placement cannot be changed. For example, groups should determine the bed assignment and who’s sharing the bathroom – bed assignments A&B share one bathroom, C&D share the other bathroom.

Per the Housing Agreement, any student assigned to space by a group leader is considered to have selected that space and will be obligated to the same terms and conditions as if they selected the space themselves.

Groups should have enough members to fill the preferred room or apartment during the Room Selection process. It is also important to be realistic about the housing inventory. For example, we have limited two-person apartments available, but many students desire these accommodations. It is important to be thoughtful as to where you will be in the process and subsequent availability of desired spaces.

Q: What if I don’t have a confirmed roommate at the time of Room Selection?

A: Applicants who do not have a confirmed, mutually accepted roommate will only see available housing options that can only accommodate one person. For example, designated singles within Jaeger or Ondrak, or one bedroom-one person apartments within Founders.

Q: What if I want to change rooms?

A: Students are not encouraged to select a space they do not want to live in. Housing assignments are final and room changes are not offered during the room selection process. Students will have an opportunity to request a room change during the fall room change process.

Q: What happens if one or more of my roommates cancels their housing? Will I be notified? Who will take their place and can I have a different friend move into the vacancy?

A: Cancellations may occur post room selection in the event attendance plans change. University Housing will not notify roommates. Each student is responsible for maintaining communication with roommates throughout the spring and summer months leading to fall move in. Once a vacancy is noted in Founders Woods, returning students will have 7-days to appoint a new roommate through August 1. Returning students who selected an incoming transfer will not be able to utilize the 7-day period if vacancy arises.

Vacancies through campus housing are accumulated to accommodate Founders Preference List and new housing applicants. University Housing will work on transfer requests ALL SUMMER to do everything we can to ensure that students have the roommates they want. However, all vacant beds in all rooms will be used to assign new students after August 1st. Specific roommate requests and room changes cannot be guaranteed after that date.

Q: Will there be a Founders Woods waitlist?

A: Founders Woods will have a “preference list” for students not placed into apartments. Housing placement is required to be added to preference list. Requests should be directed to housing@ben.edu.

Q: What accommodations does BenU provide students with disabilities?

A: Students may qualify for accommodations based upon documented need. Students must seek such accommodations through the ACE Center. We ask that the student work with their provider to obtain documentation as outlined by the ACE office. Pre-selection offers will be provided when students’ housing accommodation requests are approved by the Accommodations Review Team based on supporting medical documentation that identifies an access-related need that cannot be obtained through the traditional Room Selection process.

Students already approved for housing accommodations must notify their Case Manager in the ACE Center if they intend to utilize their housing accommodations for the upcoming academic year by March 3, 2020. Housing accommodations are based on disability-related needs and determined on a case-by-case basis. Preference-based requests not directly related to an individual’s disability will not be considered when reviewing accommodation requests. Pre-selection offers are intended to accommodate an individual’s access-related needs, not circumvent the housing selection process for either new or returning students.

If you wish to request disability-related housing accommodations, you must have completed the housing accommodation request process through the Academic & Career Enrichment (ACE) as outlined in the Student Accommodations Handbook: Student Accommodations Handbook, by March 3, 2020 for returning students, May 15, 2020 for new freshman students. Please note, housing accommodation requests typically take at least three weeks to process, so returning students should start the ACE process well in advance of the room selection process. Questions are encouraged to be raised and directed to the ACE and University Housing office in advance of the room selection process.

Meal Plans

Q: Where can students use their meal plan?

A: Meal swipes may only be used Benny’s, unless otherwise provisions are identified by Dining Services. Munch Money may be used in the Coal Ben and Starbucks.

Q: Are all students required to have a meal plan?

A: Yes, all residents must select one of the meal plans designated for the halls or the apartments. Meal plan options are presented to students in the housing process, immediately following the room selection step. If a meal plan is not selected, University Housing will assign the default meal plan based on housing placement.

Q: How can a student seek exemption from a meal plan?

A: Students who believe they may have a basis for a meal plan exemption must meet the following criteria: 1) the exemption must be for a documented medical reason; 2) the student must first meet with Dining Services to see if dietary restrictions can be accommodated through the meal plan, and; 3) the student must seek the accommodation through the identified process administered by the ACE Center.

Q: Can a student change a meal plan?

A: Student can change their meal plan, but they must do so by a designated date. For the fall semester, changes must be made by August 1. For the spring semester, changes must be made by December 1.

Q: Do meals carry over?

A: No. Meals are re-set each week and do not accumulate. Any meals left at the end of a term are lost and have no cash value. Munch Money, however, does carry over between the fall and spring semesters. Munch Money does not carry over from one academic year to the next, however.

Q: Can meals be converted to Munch Money?

A: No, there is no process in place for converted meals into Munch Money. However, Dining Services may allow limited “meal exchanges.” Details about the meal exchange process are available through Dining Services. Policies related to meal exchange are subject to change.

Q: What happens if there is a conflict between athletic schedules and meal service hours?

A: In the event of travel and training conflicts, Dining Services and Athletics will determine the best way to provide access to accommodate the needs of student athletes impacted by the conflict.

Facilities and Living Arrangements

Q: How do students know what they can bring?

A: A list of recommended items will be made available through the University Housing web page as well as within the Housing Portal. Some items are specifically prohibited, such as halogen lights, open coil appliances and pets.

Q: Can students request a single room?

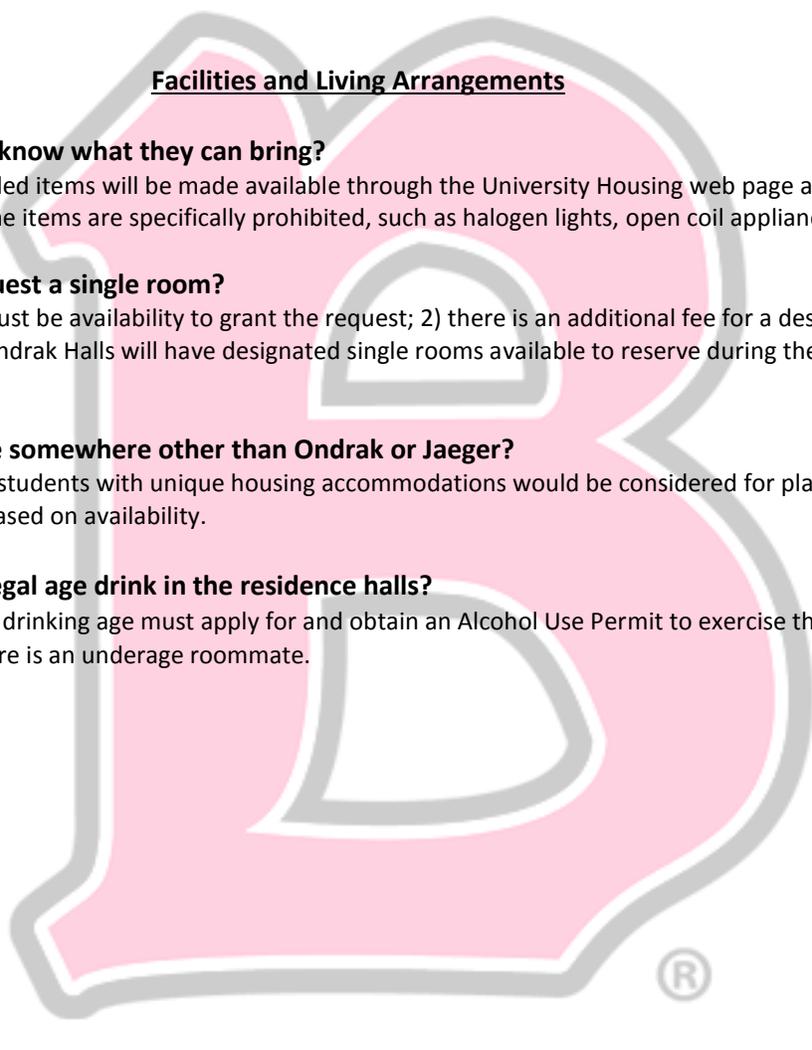
A: Yes, but: 1) there must be availability to grant the request; 2) there is an additional fee for a designated private room. Jaeger and Ondrak Halls will have designated single rooms available to reserve during the room selection process.

Q: Can freshmen live somewhere other than Ondrak or Jaeger?

A: Generally no. Only students with unique housing accommodations would be considered for placement in Founders Woods, based on availability.

Q: Can students of legal age drink in the residence halls?

A: All students of legal drinking age must apply for and obtain an Alcohol Use Permit to exercise this privilege. Permits will be denied if there is an underage roommate.



**HAVE MORE QUESTIONS?
UNIVERSITY HOUSING IS LOCATED
IN KRASA, SUITE 175
WWW.BEN.EDU/HOUSING
HOUSING@BEN.EDU**