

Saint Mary's College of California First-Year On-Campus Residency Requirement Exemption - Policy

Saint Mary's College of California strongly believes in the value of the on-campus residential experience for students. Best practices and numerous student development studies have indicated the following regarding students who live on-campus during their first year of college.

- They earn better grades and have higher GPAs than non-resident counterparts.
- They develop stronger ties to the college and have a greater feeling of community with their peers.
- They report having greater opportunities to interact with faculty and staff and feel more connected to their educational experience.
- They build more meaningful and lasting relationships with their peers.
- They are generally more satisfied with their college experience than students who live off-campus.
- They tend to graduate at a higher rate and finish college sooner than non-resident counterparts.

The College is committed to the social and academic benefits of being a residential college. All students considered to be in their "first-year" of college and attending as a full-time student (whether entering with transfer credit or not) are required to live on-campus. Students may apply for an exemption to this requirement. However, please be advised that because of the strong foundation that an on-campus experience provides for new students, few exemptions to the live-on requirement will be approved. "Distance from home to campus" as a stand-alone reason is not an exemption to be approved. Students who anticipate having difficulties with college expenses, including housing costs, should contact the Financial Aid Office at (925) 631-4370 for determining eligibility for assistance with the cost of attendance.

Appropriate Requests for Exemptions

There may be specific circumstances that would prevent a student from living in on-campus housing. Exemption from the residence requirement will only be considered for the following circumstances:

1. In a case of a student who is married or in domestic partnership and/or is a parent/guardian to dependent child(ren), as supported by documentation.
2. In a case of older students such as returning military or previously married or in a domestic partnership where, by virtue of age and experience, are incompatible with the educational objectives and values sought to be provided in the residences.
3. In a case of a student who is a primary care-giver for a parent or grandparent, as supported by documentation or court papers.
4. In a case where a student has demonstrated unmet high financial need, as determined by Saint Mary's, **AND** lives with their parents/legal guardians in their permanent residence within 15 miles of the Saint Mary's College campus in Moraga. Please be reminded that students who anticipate having difficulties with college expenses, including housing costs, should first contact the Financial Aid Office at (925) 631-4370 to determine eligibility for assistance with the cost of attendance prior to filling out this Housing Exemption form. *Note: please attach to your letter, the relationship of the person(s) of whom you will be living and their contact information. Student must also have applied for financial aid (FAFSA), and completed all steps to receive a financial aid award.*
5. In a case of a student who has a diagnosed medical condition or disability, such that living on campus will have a significant negative effect on the conditions and cannot be otherwise accommodated for on-campus and supported by documentation from a non-familial diagnosing professional. *Note: If you are filing a request based on a documented disability, a request with Student Disability Services (925) 631-4358 must be filled out prior to filling out this Housing Exemption form.*

Exemption Request Process

1. For the fall academic term, all exemption requests must be received prior to June 1. Exemptions are for one (1) semester only, ending at the conclusion of January Term.
2. For the January and/or spring academic terms, all exemption requests must be received prior to January 1. Exemptions are for one (1) semester only.
3. Students failing to submit an exemption request prior to the deadline will be assessed mandatory housing/dining fees.
4. Only the student seeking the exemption may request an exemption to the housing requirement. Submissions from non-students will not be accepted.
5. Complete the request form and all required documentation.
6. An application for exemption from the on-campus housing requirement does not guarantee nor imply that an exemption will be granted. Students should assume that their request has not been granted until they receive written notification of approval and should not make other living arrangements, enter into a rental or lease agreement with a third party realtor or lease until such notification.
7. Upon receipt of the student's request for an exemption and all supporting documentation, the request will be reviewed by the Housing Exemption Appeals Review Committee and their decision will be communicated to the student within 10 business days of the July 1/January 1 deadline. A delay in response from the committee past 10 business days does not constitute automatic approval of your request.
8. Failure to provide appropriate documentation and paperwork will result in a denial of the appeal.
9. The Housing Exemption Appeals Review Committee is comprised of representatives from the Dean of Students area (Chair), Admissions, Financial Aid, and Student Disability Services.
10. The Housing Exemption Appeals Review Committee will inform the student, via email, of the decision.
11. Questions may be directed to Jim Sciuto, Associate Vice President for Student Engagement, at dos@stmarys-ca.edu.

Saint Mary's College of California
First-Year On-Campus Residency Requirement - Exemption Request Form

Student Name: _____ SMC ID# _____ Date of Birth: ____/____/____

Home address: _____
Street City State Zip Code

Cell phone: (_____) _____

SMC email: _____ Alternate email: _____

Month and Year of High School Graduation: _____

Term(s) in which you are requesting an exemption: Fall _____(year) Spring _____(year)

From the list below, select the appropriate exemption, submit a letter detailing the exemption request and attach all required documentation.

- Married or registered domestic partnership – attach a copy of a valid certificate of marriage or domestic partnership recognized by the State of California.
- Parent/guardian to dependent child(ren) – attach a copy of child(ren)'s birth certificate and documentation demonstrating majority custody.
- Age, preventing from fully participating – attach a copy of driver's license, passport or birth certificate.
- Primary Care-giver – attach official documentation such as court papers.
- Unmet financial need, as determined by SMC, **AND** permanent address within 15 mile radius. Attach a statement of the relationship of the person(s) of whom you will be living, their contact information, and information on how you will successfully engage with the campus. Student must have a FAFSA on file with the College. Please be reminded that students who anticipate having difficulties with college expenses, including housing costs, should first contact the Financial Aid Office at (925) 631-4370 for determining eligibility for assistance with the cost of attendance *prior* to filling out this Housing Exemption form.
- Diagnosed medical condition or Disability – attach a letter from your non-familial diagnosing professional that presents sufficient and satisfactory evidence of a significant diagnosed medical condition or disability for which on-campus accommodations cannot be made. *Note: If you are filing a request based on a documented disability, your request must first be filed with Student Disability Services (925) 631-4358 prior to filling out this Housing Exemption form.*

In signing this Exemption Request Form, I am stating that I have filled out the above information accurately and truthfully, and I have provided all required documents to support my request. I understand that I am not automatically exempt from Saint Mary's College of California's residency requirement for the first-year students. I understand written notification will be received whether or not my request has been approved or denied.

Print Student Name Date

Student Signature Date

Parent/Guardian Signature Date
(if student is under 18 years of age)