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# Placement in Student Housing and Allocation to Commuter Student Communities



January 2024

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## Placement in Student Housing and Allocation to Commuter Student Communities

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<b>Policy curator<sup>2</sup>:</b>	Director: Applications, Student Accommodation and Client Services
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<b>Validity:</b>	The English version of this Policy is the operative version, and the Afrikaans version is the translation

<sup>1</sup> Policy Owner: Head(s) of Responsibility Centre(s) in which the Policy functions.

<sup>2</sup> Policy Curator: Administrative head of the division responsible for the implementation and maintenance of the Policy.

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## **ESSENCE OF THE POLICY**

The essence of the Policy for placement in student housing and allocation to commuter student communities (hereafter "the Policy") is to guide placement in Stellenbosch University's (SU) student housing and allocation to a commuter student community (CSC) community so as to broaden access and enhance student success and social cohesion. This Policy supports Vision 2040 and the SU Strategic Framework. It subscribes to the University's values, namely excellence, compassion, accountability, respect and equity, and gives effect to SU's commitment to access, inclusivity, equity, redress and student success.

This Policy must be read in conjunction with SU's Admissions Policy, as approved by Council, through which SU commits itself to providing a transformative student experience by creating an inclusive and thriving community, where diversity is regarded as an asset. By facilitating access, this Policy seeks to enable such a diverse and thriving student community that provides opportunities for a transformative student experience that builds social cohesion and enhances success.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The Policy:

- 1.1 is guided by SU's values;
- 1.2 supports the strategic themes of a transformative student experience and a thriving university by establishing diverse and inclusive student communities where students can experience meaningful learning that contributes to their success and prepares them to thrive in a diverse South Africa;
- 1.3 is aligned with SU's Admissions Policy, as approved by Council, in so far as it promotes equitable access and student success;
- 1.4 is aligned with SU's cross-cutting theme and imperative of transformation;
- 1.5 facilitates access to a diverse student community for qualifying students from all backgrounds, including students who face barriers to participation in university education, such as socioeconomic disadvantage and disability; and
- 1.6 is aligned with the requirements in the National Policy on Minimum Norms and Standards for Student Housing at Public Universities (September 2015) regarding the development and implementation of a comprehensive residence admission and allocation policy.

## **2. PURPOSE OF THE POLICY**

- 2.1 The Policy seeks to facilitate access and thereby enable a diverse and thriving student community that provides opportunities for a transformative student experience that builds social cohesion and enhances success.
- 2.2 The Policy aims to establish an equitable, transparent and reasonable process for residence placement and the allocation of students to commuter student communities.

## **3. SCOPE OF THE POLICY**

The Policy applies to both Stellenbosch and Tygerberg campus in respect of:

- 3.1 new placements and re-placements in junior residences and senior residences;
- 3.2 placement in other University housing, for example Listen, Live and Learn (LLL) houses and leadership houses; and
- 3.3 the allocation of students to commuter student communities.

## **4. DEFINITIONS**

Refer to Addendum A for a glossary of terms and abbreviations.

## **5. POLICY OBJECTIVES**

- 5.1 To contribute to social cohesion by creating diverse and inclusive student

communities that enhance out-of-classroom growth and development, as well as student success.

- 5.2 To allocate places in residence to students who face barriers to participation in university education and whose chances of success will hereby improve.

## 6. POLICY PRINCIPLES

- 6.1 SU subscribes to the principle of excellence strengthened by diversity and the building of social cohesion.
- 6.2 SU acknowledges academic performance as a criterion for placement in the University's student housing.
- 6.3 SU supports the principle of residence placement for students who face barriers to participation in university education and who would benefit most from being accommodated in University housing. In this regard, SU acknowledges the transitional challenges first-years face, as well as the barriers to access for students with disabilities and students from a socio-economically disadvantaged background.
- 6.4 SU considers gender identity, as indicated on the student's application, in placement decisions.
- 6.5 SU also strives to organise the student community into commuter student communities and clusters to enable a transformative student experience.

## 7. POLICY PROVISIONS

- 7.1 **General provisions for placement and re-placement in student housing**
  - 7.1.1 Placement and re-placement in student housing are subject to application for accommodation and is valid for one academic year only. Students must reapply every year.
  - 7.1.2 As places in student housing are limited, placement cannot be guaranteed.
  - 7.1.3 This Policy provides sets of criteria for the following:
    - a) Placement of first-year students in junior residences on Stellenbosch campus
    - b) Re-placement of current students in junior residences on Stellenbosch campus
    - c) Placement and re-placement in senior housing (including senior residences and LLL houses) on Stellenbosch campus
    - d) Placement and re-placement in residences on Tygerberg campus
    - e) Placement and re-placement of student leaders in student housing
    - f) Placement from the waiting list in student housing
    - g) Allocation to commuter student communities

7.1.4 The following students are not eligible for placement:

- a) Students who are employed full-time and earn a fixed income
- b) Students who are registered at the University for subjects or modules that do not lead to an SU qualification, for example those registered as occasional students
- c) Students who are admitted to the following programmes: BAgric (Elsenburg), any programme at the Business School (Bellville Park Campus) or any distance learning programme.

7.1.5 As a general rule, no transfers between residences are accommodated.

7.1.6 Exceptions to the placement criteria may be considered on a case-by-case basis to ensure full occupancy or based on extenuating circumstances and will be managed in terms of the Management Guidelines.

7.1.7 The particulars of the placement process and procedures are contained in the Management Guidelines, which appear on the websites for prospective students ([www.maties.com](http://www.maties.com)) and current students ([my.sun.ac.za](http://my.sun.ac.za)) respectively. These guidelines are reviewed annually by the curator of this Policy in consultation with the primary stakeholders, including the Centre for Student Life and Learning and the Student Accommodation Office, and are approved by the owner of the Policy. The Management Guidelines also provide for extraordinary circumstances that might necessitate deviation from stipulations in this Policy.

## 7.2 Placement of newcomer first-year students in junior residences on Stellenbosch campus

7.2.1 The following criteria are used to make a residence placement offer:

- a) **Admission status:** Students must have received conditional admission or a final admission offer to SU programmes.
- b) **Age:** Students 21 years and younger of age (in the year of residence) are considered for placement in a junior residence.
- c) **Academic performance:** Academic ranking is used throughout the process.
- d) **Race:** To redress past inequalities and build social cohesion, race (coloured, black African, Indian or Asian) is considered.
- e) **Socio-economic status (SES):** In this category, priority is given to:
  - i. applicants with a high SES score as determined on application<sup>1</sup>, as well as
  - ii. applicants who receive a bursary based on financial need, such as the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Refer to the [Admission Policy](#) for more detailed information on the calculation of the SES score.

<sup>2</sup> At the stage of application and residence placement, an applicant's bursary status is not yet known.

Other considerations that may be taken into account in this category include:

- iii. selection to an extended curriculum programme based on deficits in the school system; and
  - iv. distance from campus, where such distance creates a barrier to access.<sup>3</sup>
- f) **Nationality:** International applicants are considered to ensure diversity.
- g) **Disability:** Students with disabilities, where appropriate, will be considered for placement in student housing in consultation with the Disability Unit.
- h) **Special placements:** Special placements form part of the total number of placements per year. Special placements do not constitute an additional group for whom additional provision is made. The following special placements apply and may be amended by University management as deemed necessary:
- i. *Bloemhof Bursary Trust ("the Trust") placement, as agreed with the University:* In terms of the agreement between the Trust and SU, 45 residence placements are currently reserved for first-year students nominated by the Trust.
  - ii. *Sport placements:* An agreed number of places are reserved for top athletes. Nominations for placements, including placements in the high-performance sport residence, are made by Maties Sport by an agreed date. Placements are made in accordance with Maties Sport's Recruitment and Retention Plan as well as their Transformation Plan.
  - iii. *Military students:* Officers selected by the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) who are enrolled for full-time programmes on Stellenbosch campus may be placed in suitable University accommodation.
  - iv. *Discretionary placements:* Provision is made for discretionary placements based on strategic considerations or exceptional circumstances. These provisions are included in the Management Guidelines.

7.2.2 The residence placement process involves the following:

**Step 1: Setting the targets**

- a) To ensure that the purpose and objectives of the Policy (as articulated in paragraphs 2 and 5 respectively) are achieved, and in line with the stated

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Therefore, bursary status can only be considered once the information becomes available.

<sup>3</sup> Distance in itself does not constitute a barrier to access if the means to travel and secure accommodation are available. In this regard, distance is viewed in the context of the applicant's socio-economic status. It is also important to note that SU is situated in an area with limited accessible public transport. Therefore, applicants who reside within a radius of 30 km of the University (criteria used by NSFAS) may also experience distance as a barrier.



Policy principles (paragraph 6), the Rectorate considers the demographic profile of the eligible residence applicant pool each year and sets targets for the percentage of newcomer first-year students in the following categories:

- i. Applicants who achieve above a specified academic level
  - ii. Applicants who are coloured, black African, Indian or Asian
  - iii. Applicants with an SES score above a certain level and/or who receive a bursary based on financial need, such as NSFAS
  - iv. International applicants
- b) As the targets are only approved towards the end of the application cycle once the demographic profile of the qualifying pool can be determined, the initial process of reserving a place in residence is based on the previous year's targets and qualifying applicant pool. As soon as the new targets have been established, the final reservations are made to ensure that the targets are reached. Targets are also applicable when placements are made from the waiting list.
- c) The targets are reported to the relevant governance structures and published in the Management Guidelines once determined.

### **Step 2: Reserving a place in residence**

- a) Places in residence can only be reserved for applicants who have applied for placement in a residence and have received an academic offer.
- b) An acceptance amount is required if the applicant wishes to accept the reservation and secure the place in residence. The following criteria are considered simultaneously according to the set targets
  - i. Academic performance
  - ii. SES and/or bursary received based on financial need
  - iii. Race (coloured, black African, Indian, Asian or white)
  - iv. Nationality (South African citizen or international student)
- c) As places are limited, academic performance is used to rank applicants in the various categories.
- d) Places are also reserved for applicants who are eligible for placement based on a disability (par 7.2.1 (g)) or who qualify for a special placement (par 7.2.1 (h)).

### **Step 3: Placement in specific residences**

- a) As soon as the first round of academic offers have been concluded and applicants have accepted their residence reservation offers, placement in specific residences commences.
- b) In line with the purpose of the Policy, placements are made to provide

- opportunities for strengthening social cohesion through diversity.
- c) The diversity profile in residences will be distributed based on:
    - i. academic performance;
    - ii. SES and/or bursary received based on financial need;
    - iii. race (coloured, black African, Indian, Asian or white); and
    - iv. nationality (South African citizen or international student).
  - d) Throughout the final placement process, the approved targets are used to guide placement decisions, including placements from the waiting list.

### **7.3 Placement and re-placement of current students in junior residences on Stellenbosch campus**

- 7.3.1 Academic performance, as determined in the Management Guidelines, is the primary provision for the re-placement of current students in junior residences.
- 7.3.2 As a rule, students on Stellenbosch campus may reside in junior residences for up to the normal duration of the undergraduate programme for which they initially registered.

### **7.4 Placement and re-placement in senior housing (including senior residences and LLL houses) on Stellenbosch campus**

- 7.4.1 Placement in senior housing on Stellenbosch campus strives to create opportunities for social cohesion and is based on:
  - a) academic performance, as determined in the Management Guidelines;
  - b) race; and
  - c) bursary received based on financial need.
- 7.4.2 To be considered for senior housing, applicants need to be in their final year of study or turn (at least) 22 in the year of taking up the placement offer. Students who will be older than 26 in the year of residence are not considered for placement in senior housing.
- 7.4.3 Students may reside in senior housing for a maximum of three years. This period is cumulative, irrespective of the type of SU senior housing (including LLL houses).
- 7.4.4 Placement of international students in senior housing is managed by SU International in consultation with the Residence Placement Office.
- 7.4.5 Placement in LLL houses occurs as follows:
  - a) The LLL programme is a targeted residential and immersive experiential learning opportunity for senior students to actively engage in order to develop a deeper understanding of social cohesion.
  - b) Students are invited to apply annually and are selected based on high

academic performance, diversity considerations and other selection criteria as published in the Management Guidelines. If selected, students are allocated to available LLL housing.

- c) Given the special nature of the LLL programme, students may take part for a maximum of two consecutive years.

## 7.5 **Placement and re-placement in residences on Tygerberg campus**

7.5.1 Residences on Tygerberg campus are either junior (for first to third-years) or senior residences (fourth to final-year students), and students move from junior to senior residences in the course of their undergraduate studies.

7.5.2 Placement of newcomer first-years

- a) The placement criteria for newcomer first-years as set out in paragraph 7.2.1 of this Policy equally apply to students enrolled for a programme on Tygerberg campus.
- b) Prospective students selected for the programmes MBChB, BSc in Physiotherapy, B of Nursing or BSc in Dietetics can only be considered for placement in residences on Tygerberg campus, and not on Stellenbosch campus.
- c) Students following the programmes Speech-Language and Hearing Therapy (in their first and second year) and Occupational Therapy (in their first year) will not be accommodated on Tygerberg campus and may be considered for placement in junior residences on Stellenbosch campus.

7.5.3 The following arrangements apply regarding re-placement in residence:

- a) Academic performance is used to rank students for the available places in both junior and senior residences.
- b) For students who spent their first and/or year in a junior residence on Stellenbosch campus and then have to move to Tygerberg campus, the allocation of a residence place on Tygerberg campus will depend on availability.

## 7.6 **Placement and re-placement of student leaders in student housing**

7.6.1 Elected student leaders, as determined in par 7.6.2 and 7.6.3, should

- a) meet the academic criteria, as stipulated in the Management Guidelines,
- b) as well as the general provisions in par 7.1

to be considered for placement or re-placement in student housing.

7.6.2 Students who are elected to residence leadership structures, namely the head student (primarius/primaria), house committee members, the cluster convenor and mentors, may reside in junior or senior residences for longer than the number of years allowed.

7.6.3 Students who are elected as Student Representative Council (SRC) and Tygerberg Student Representative Council (TSRC) members, may reside in student housing, and where necessary, for longer than the number of years allowed.

#### **7.7 Placement from the waiting list**

7.7.1 Applicants who could not be placed in residence may register on the waiting list.

7.7.2 If cancellations are received, placements are made from the waiting list.

7.7.3 Placement criteria as stipulated in this Policy equally apply to placement from the waiting list.

7.7.4 Processes for placement from the waiting list are published in the Management Guidelines.

#### **7.8 Allocation to commuter student communities**

7.8.1 To enable integration in the student community, students who do not reside in SU student housing and make use of private accommodation are allocated to a commuter student community and a cluster.

7.8.2 To enable diversity and enhance social cohesion, allocation to commuter student communities and clusters is based on the same criteria as those applied to first-year placement in student housing.

7.8.3 If a CSC student secures a place in residence during the junior years, the student will be re-allocated to the applicable new cluster.

7.8.4 Students who move from residence to commuter student communities are included in the commuter student community of their former residence's cluster.

7.8.5 Some student accommodation is earmarked for leaders in the commuter student communities, and placements are made accordingly in leadership houses.

### **8. POLICY CONTROL**

8.1 The Policy is determined by the SU Council.

8.2 With a view to implementing and managing this Policy, the University establishes the following roles and responsibilities, among others:

8.2.1 The statutory head is the Rector and Vice-Chancellor. The statutory head is responsible for executing the Policy and delegates the overall responsibility to the appropriate environments that report to a member of the Rectorate, namely the Registrar.

8.2.2 The owner of the Policy is the Registrar. The owner is accountable for the development of the Policy in the owner's sphere of responsibility, ensuring that the Policy and the related Management Guidelines are in place. The owner is also responsible for the appointment of a curator (and related structures and roles)

and for ensuring the effective functioning of the curator (and related structures and roles).

8.2.3 The curator of the Policy is the Director: Applications, Student Accommodation and Client Services (ASACS). This is the institutional functionary to whom the owner of the Policy allocates the responsibility of attending to the formulation, approval, revision, communication, release, interpretation and implementation monitoring of the Policy and Management Guidelines. The curator also convenes a task team of relevant stakeholders for the annual review of the Management Guidelines.

## **9. MONITORING AND REPORTING**

The owner of the Policy is accountable, and the curator is responsible for creating the necessary controls to monitor and report on the Policy, and for reporting to the Rectorate on an annual basis.

## **10. ACTION IN THE EVENT OF NON-COMPLIANCE**

10.1 Any complaints stemming from alleged non-compliance with the Policy are dealt with in terms of SU's existing complaints management processes and systems.

10.2 Any cases requiring conflict resolution are referred to the Director: ASACS for guidance and decision-making.

## **11. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS**

11.1 The Policy must be read in conjunction with the Admissions Policy of Stellenbosch University.

11.2 The management provisions and implementation measures are contained in the Management Guidelines, which appear along with the Policy on the websites for prospective students ([www.maties.com](http://www.maties.com)) and current students ([my.sun.ac.za](http://my.sun.ac.za)) respectively and are reviewed annually.

## **12. RELATED DOCUMENTS**

12.1 Disability Access Policy

12.2 Maties Sport Recruitment and Retention Plan

12.3 Maties Sport Transformation Plan

12.4 National Policy on Minimum Norms and Standards for Student Housing at Public Universities (September 2015)

12.5 Policy for the Prevention of Nepotism

12.6 Policy on Conflict of Interest

12.7 Transformation Plan

12.8 Stellenbosch University Guidelines for Off-Campus Private Student Housing Accreditation

## ADDENDUM A

### DEFINITIONS

The following terms used in this Policy are assigned the meanings indicated below:

**Academic performance** – In the context of the placement of newcomer first-year students, academic performance at school, and for senior students, academic achievement at university.

**Academic year** – The period starting on the day that classes commence and ending on the final day of end-of-year assessment, excluding the mid-year break.

**Applicant** – In the context of this Policy, any prospective or registered student applying for placement in student housing in the following year.

**Cluster** – A number of residences that are grouped together primarily on a geographical basis and are allocated a commuter student community (in the event of an integrated men's and women's community) or two commuter student communities (in the event of separate men's and women's communities) to form a student community.

**Cluster convenor** – A student leader who assists the ResEd coordinator with all activities in a cluster.

**Commuter student community (CSC)** – Students in private housing who are grouped together for organisational and community-formation purposes and assigned to a Commuter Student Community. Commuter student communities are assigned to clusters along with residences and have their own student leadership structures.

**CSC students** – Students who do not reside in official University student housing but stays private, except students who resides in leadership houses.

**Disability** – A long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment that, in the presence of various barriers, may hinder a person's full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

**Diversity** – In the context of this Policy, nationality, race and socioeconomic status, among others.

**Extended curriculum programme** – A formal degree programme in which students may complete their degree over a longer specified period.

**First-generation student** – A student whose parents did not study at a university.

**Gender identity** – The personal sense of one's own gender, which may or may not correlate with a person's assigned sex.

**Head student (primarius/primaria)** – The head student in a residence or a commuter student community.

**House committee** – The student leadership body in a residence or a commuter student community.

**Junior residences** – Residences for primarily junior students, where newcomer first-year

students up to the age of 21 in the year of residence are placed.

**Leadership houses:** Student house allocated to a commuter student community for placement of leaders of the community.

**Listen, Live and Learn (LLL) house** – An official University house accommodating students who are selected to the LLL programme.

**Out-of-classroom** – The student's experience of the University outside the formal lecture context or formal academic offering.

**ResEd coordinator** – A staff member who coordinates a cluster. This person is often the head of a residence in the specific cluster.

**Residence** – Official University building that provides living accommodation to a large number of students.

**Residence head** – A person appointed to act as head of a residence. This person usually resides in or adjacent to the residence concerned.

**Residence leadership structures** – In the context of this Policy, the head student (primarius/primaria), house committee members, the cluster convenor and mentors.

**Senior residences** – Residences for students aged 22 to 26 (in the year of residence).

**Social cohesion** – The extent of connectedness and social solidarity among groups in society. In the South African higher education context, it denotes the sense of belonging to a student community as well as the relationships among members of this community.

**Socio-economic status (SES) score:** A score based on socio-economic information captured at application. Educational, economic and generation information is taken in account. Refer to the [Admission Policy](#) for more detailed information on the calculation of the SES score.

**Student house** – A house owned by the University, or rented by, the University that is made available for student accommodation.

**Student housing** – All formal University housing structures, including residences, leader and LLL houses.

**Student Representative Council (SRC)** – The Students' Representative Council (SRC) is the highest representative structure for students at Stellenbosch University (SU) as recognised by the SU Statute and governed by the [Student Constitution](#). The SRC fulfils its representative and organizational mandate through various portfolios allocated to a team of elected SRC members and appointed SRC managers. The **TSRC** refers to the same leadership structure on the Tygerberg campus.

**Student success** – In the context of this Policy, the achievement of academic success as well as growth in terms of developing graduate attributes, namely having an enquiring mind, being an engaged citizen, and becoming a dynamic professional and a well-rounded individual.

**Transformative student experience** – Receiving opportunities for growth as an undergraduate and postgraduate student, including guidance, support and services to enable one's success. At SU, we value our students and are committed to delivering such a transformative

experience to each one of them. With this intention, we want to ensure that SU is accessible to qualifying students from all backgrounds, including to students who face barriers to participation in university education. We regard it as a journey – from our first contact with prospective students until they graduate and embrace the role of alumni.

**University management** – In the context of this Policy, the Rectorate.