Meal Plan Modification Policy
This policy applies to student residents who fall under the requirement of University policy governing campus housing and meal plans, and who would like to apply for a housing and/or meal plan modification or exemption.

Housing
Campus housing is an independent, highly social environment comprised of shared living space, common access bathrooms, and a wide variation in noise level. For medical reasons, students request a variety of nonstandard housing accommodations (i.e., special living accommodations) ranging from dietary restrictions to medical singles. To substantiate the need for assistance, we require clear documentation of limitations in function or performance specifically as it relates to the housing assigned. Substantiated need is constituted by a severe and chronic disabling condition that has been well documented by the appropriate, qualified professional. The disabling condition must significantly restrict your access to the residential educational environment and/or residential activities unless reasonable assistance is provided. When determining the need for a medical single, the question at issue is “Will the student be denied equal opportunity to housing if the accommodation is not granted?” The question is not “Will the accommodation be beneficial to the student or will the student do better?”

Dining
University policy states that meal plans are required for all residence hall students except those residing in Doris Twitchell Allen Village and Patch upper class housing. Residents may change their meal plan once during the first six weeks of the academic year. Meal plan changes are made online at http://www.umaine.edu/dining/. Any additional requests made outside of the allowed change must follow the procedures stated in this policy. Meal plan exemptions are only considered in the most extreme cases. Personal financial hardships are not subject to consideration for a meal plan modification or exemption. Students having financial hardship should contact Student Financial Aid at (207) 581-1324.

Application Process
Students who have a chronic ailment, disabling condition, or other circumstances that require special facilities and/or modifications must fill out the “Meal Plan Modification Application” including:

→ **Part I: Questionnaire** that must be completed and signed at the bottom of the page.

→ **Part II: A written essay** detailing why you require a modification or exemption.

→ **Part III: Proper documentation** supporting your reason for application.

Detailed instructions and definitions of “proper documentation” can be found on the application. All applications will be reviewed and you will be notified of any missing documentation. Some applications may necessitate further review by a University
Clinical Advisory Board consisting of a Physician, Clinical Psychologist, Disability Specialist, and/or Registered Dietitian. After a determination has been made, the appropriate department will contact you. Dining refunds, if approved, will be prorated from the date the application is received, less any meals or funds used during the review period.

Applications for known conditions are appreciated in advance of each semester; however, applications may be submitted at any time. Depending on the nature of your request, please allow up to three weeks for the review process to be completed. Submission of incomplete documentation may result in a delay of the review process.

NOTE: Submitting an application does not guarantee a modification. Modifications are recommended based on careful review of the documentation provided. This may include evaluation of the medical condition and review by University of Maine Professional Staff and Clinical Advisory Board if appropriate. Modifications will only apply to the applicant and will not include roommate preferences.

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**How are students assigned to housing?**

Current residents participate in an on-line room selection process in the spring. Dates and times are posted, and the day a student selects a room depends on the type of housing being requested.

New students wishing to be assigned to on-campus housing must complete an on-line application that has the student’s name, address and other relevant personal information. The application allows the student to request living/learning lifestyle choices, preferences for residence halls, type of room and choice of roommate. These choices are not guaranteed but are taken into consideration when the assignment is made. Availability of the type of space is a key factor in granting a request.

**How can I get a single room?**

Rooms are assigned as outlined above and the majority of single rooms are selected by current residents during room selection in the spring. New students are not generally assigned to single rooms as most have already been assigned when new students apply for housing. Any student may send an email request to Housing Services to be put on a singles waiting list that starts on May 1st of each academic year, and runs throughout the rest of the year.

**What if I have a medical or other documented need to have a private room?**

Students who believe they have a need for a private room must complete a Housing Assignment Modification application and provide documentation of the condition with supporting materials that outline why the assignment modification may be necessary.
**Why am I required to be on a meal plan?**

As an auxiliary of the University, Black Bear Dining is required to meet its own expenses with the revenue generated by the program. To keep all dining facilities open to serve the community and to maintain fiscal accountability, it is necessary to require participation in the meal plans by students who live in traditional residence halls. Offering meal plans that combine dining facility meals and meal equivalents with declining balance funds provides stability for Black Bear Dining while maximizing flexibility for the customer. Seventy-five percent of all universities across the country also have a mandatory meal plan for students residing on campus.

**What if I believe the meal plan does not meet my needs?**

Black Bear Dining proves many options and much flexibility. In fact, there may be more options available than you realize. Please contact our office at 207-581-4580 for assistance with your diet. If you still wish to pursue a meal plan exemption, you must verify to us that your dietary needs cannot be met in the dining facilities by providing required documentation, which will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

**I’m a vegan and there aren’t enough choices for me on campus. What should I do?**

Black Bear Dining offers a comprehensive array of vegetarian and vegan choices with daily entrées, soups, sandwiches, daily pasta bar, soy and rice milks. In addition, our chefs are happy to take your suggestions. Each dining facility has a wide selection of organic foods and produce. Contact our office or manager on duty at your dining facility for more information.