

ROOMMATE / SUITEMATE AGREEMENT GUIDE

We want you to enjoy this year as you begin, or continue, your journey at Ohio State. A good place to start is by developing a relationship with your roommate(s) or suitemates. In order to develop a healthy roommate relationship, it is vital that you begin communicating right away. This guide is designed to help you do just that. Shortly after the quarter begins, you will be asked to schedule a meeting with your RA to complete the Roommate/Suitemate Agreement. Your RA will be present to help you and your roommate(s) engage in discussion about these topics, and complete the Roommate Agreement process. In fact, staff members are available to talk with you and your roommate(s) about your experience in the residence halls throughout the year. Our number one priority is to help you make your experience here a positive one!

KEYS TO REMEMBER

- Go into a new roommate/suitemate situation with an open mind
- Be honest about what you need to be comfortable
- Talk to your roommate(s) right away if something bothers you
- Avoid Gossip

Step 1: Starting Out

Before you complete the Roommate/Suitemate Agreement, spend several hours getting acquainted with your new roommate(s). Talk privately together, keep conversations in confidence, ask only questions that you, too, are willing to answer, and be honest. Also, take some time to fill out the Roommate Survey so that you are better able to express your personal needs during the agreement process.

Step 2: Define Your Living Arrangement

Use the categories outlined in the following pages to start a discussion about your expectations for day-to-day living. As you talk, put in writing key issues that relate to each topic and several possible solutions. Once you've covered every topic, go back to the beginning and settle on a solution in each category that works best for all the roommates. Make sure the solution you select is in keeping with the policies and procedures of the residence halls.

A: Use of the Community Area

- How orderly should the common area be kept?
- Will we keep personal items in common areas?
- How will we balance study time with TV/radio use throughout the year?
- Should windows be open or closed at night?

B: Cleaning Issues

- Will we keep food in the room?
- How often will food areas be cleaned?
- Where will trash cans be kept and how often will they be emptied?
- Who cleans our room/suite? How often?
- Who will clean the refrigerator? How often?
- What constitutes clean?
- Will we split the cost of cleaning supplies?

C. Use of Personal Property

- Who may use your stereo, TV, or CDs? What about your computer? How often must others ask permission? Do you want to be present when they are in use?
- Do you loan your clothes to others? Who cleans them once they are borrowed?
- Which groceries will we share? How will we know who should replenish them?
- What happens if something breaks?

D. Social Behavior

- Do we plan on doing social things together?
- If we are both 21, do we permit drinking in the room?
- Will we have a time limit on phone calls? Is there a priority for any phone calls?
- How will we make sure that we get our telephone messages?

E. Visitation and Guests

- When is room visitation acceptable?
- When is suite visitation acceptable?
- What are our guidelines for guest behavior?
- How much responsibility must a host take for his or her guest?
- May members of the opposite sex use the bathroom?
- Are overnight guests permitted? When? How often?
- Are guests permitted to stay in the room alone?

F. Study Times/Quiet Hours

- Should we set specific study times?
- How should we establish extra study times?
- Can we study with the radio or TV on?
- How quiet must it be during study times?
- How do we define quiet hours?
- When will we have quiet hours?
- What time is bedtime?
- How early does the day begin?

G. Resolving Conflicts

- How will we handle interpersonal conflict?
- How will we handle conflicts with students in another room?
- How will we know that it is time to ask the RA for help?

H. Other Issues To Discuss

- Hygiene - How often will you shower? How often do you expect your roommate to shower? How often should laundry be done? Is anyone allergic to perfume or cologne? Where should muddy or smelly shoes be kept?
- Safety - What precautions will we take in our room or suite in the interest of safety? When will we keep the door locked? What specific safeguards make me feel personally more comfortable?
- Anything else - Pet Peeves or any other items that you value (or don't value) in your living community.

Step Three: Complete Your Agreement

Once your living arrangement is defined, your RA will finalize your agreement. He or she will help you write your negotiated solutions in clear, specific language. Once the agreement is complete, roommates are asked to sign and date the agreement. One copy will remain in the room and one copy will be put on file with the Hall Director.

Step Four: Use the Agreement

Once the agreement is signed, refer to it whenever there seems to be a roommate conflict. Does the agreement address the situation at hand? Is the agreement clear enough to resolve the situation? Does the agreement need to be renegotiated? If the agreement needs to be renegotiated, which is possible at anytime during the academic year, follow steps one through three to complete the process. If, after attempting to work through a conflict, you are unsuccessful, contact your RA for consultation or mediation.



The myth that roommates need to be best friends is false! Acquaintances can be excellent roommates, as long as respect and the willingness to communicate are present. If you and your roommate aren't close - don't despair. It probably just means that you've found other people with common interests in other areas and you are