**Living With a Roomate**

After you have chosen a roommate, contact your roommate before arriving on campus. Included in your assignment letter from University Housing & Dining Services is the name and address of your future roommate. Use the contact information provided to introduce yourself to him/her. Once you arrive on campus, spend time getting to know your roommate. Share your mutual interests and discuss your differences. Talk about some things that you might not think are a big deal, but which could cause conflict and tense situations.

**Communication is the key!**

Establish ground rules early and keep lines of communication open throughout the year. Take time to discuss issues and get everything out in the open. When conflicts arise, reflecting on these topics can help resolve disputes before they become unsolvable. If faced with a particularly difficult situation, talk with your Resident Assistant. If your RA is not able to assist you, he/she will refer you to someone who can. Listed below are suggested topics to discuss with your roommate(s).

**Roommate Agreement Form**

Ask your hall staff about using the Roompact roommate agreement form to discuss expectations and document your agreements in advance.

**Suggested Roommate Topics for Discussion**

Study habits (times/areas)

Noise levels (music/TV)

Security (locking doors/windows)

Gatherings

Telephone use/payment/taking messages

Overnight guests

Alcohol (consumption/values/practices)

Hygiene/Cleaning (how often, by whom)

Borrowing Items

Sleeping habits

Mail pick-up

Pet peeves

Food (sharing/cooking)

Room temperature

**Additional Discussion Items**

The way I react to most people when I first meet them is...

What I would like to tell you about my family and community I grew up in is...

What I miss most being away from home is...

My hobbies and interests are...

The way I would like to decorate our room/apartment is...

Some things I like to spend money on are...

My greatest pet peeve is...

When I'd rather be left alone, I will...

I usually let people know I'm angry by...

When I'm feeling sad or upset, I usually...

Something that always cheers me up is...

**Questions to ask your Roommate**

Are you a morning person or night owl?

When do you have to get up in the morning?

Do you like to listen to the radio and snooze a lot in the morning, or

do you like to wake up to the buzzer and hit the shower right away?

How messy or neat do you keep your room?

How do you feel about your roommate borrowing your belongings?

Would you like them to ask first?

Do you like to sleep with the windows open or closed? The room

warm or cool?

How do you feel about visitors or overnight guests?

Do you like to study in the library or in the room? With the radio on

or in silence?

How will you work your message system so that you each get your

messages on time?

How do you feel about using alcohol?

**Realize That Your Roommate Doesn't Have to Be Your Best Friend**

Understand that living with a roommate doesn't automatically make that person your best friend. In fact, you may not even consider your roommate a friend at all. On the other hand, you might turn out to be great friends. The most important thing to understand is that the person you live with should be a good roommate, nothing more nothing less.

**Be Respectful**

There's no law that says you have agree with your roommate's beliefs, values, or likes and dislikes. But a tolerant attitude allows you to respectfully disagree with one another without making a judgment call about that person. Remember, it is entirely possible that they disagree with one of your values too. Ideally you can learn and grow by understanding the point of view of another person.

**Disagreements Are Normal**

Realize that disagreements are an ordinary part of life that help clear the air. Don’t ignore disagreements. Talk about them! Take care of conflicts right away. The longer things build up, the worse they get. Work at achieving a compromise as a way to avoid or end conflict. Ask your hall staff member for help if you need a mediator.

**Decide When and When Not to Confront Your Roommate**

Avoiding confrontation usually means avoiding a problem that will need to be resolved sooner or later. Think of confrontation as the first step to resolution, and as such, the first step to reestablishing a harmonious living environment. But sometimes confrontation fails, especially when the timing is wrong. Avoid confrontation when your roommate is running out the door, yelling at you or about to go to bed. Judge what time is best to approach your roommate or ask to schedule a time that is convenient for both of you to sit down and talk.

**Understand Your Roommate's Point-of View**

Put yourself in the other person's shoes. If you still can't seem to see things from your roommate's perspective, you're free to disagree. But at least you made an honest effort to understand where your roommate is coming from, which, in itself, may provide the insight you need to understand why your roommate holds certain beliefs even though you disagree with them.

**If You Are Wrong, Admit It**

No one likes a person who can't admit when they make a mistake. So admit when you're wrong, and by doing so you'll encourage your roommate to do the same. Apologize. Nothing can restore a relationship more than a sincere apology. If you owe your roommate an apology, give it.

**Have Fun!**

Living in a residence hall should be a fun and rewarding experience. Spend quality time with your roommate and have fun together. Remember, however, that there are a lot of other people in your residence hall to spend time with. Get to know your neighbors and other building residents and make the most of the residence hall living experience.