

Roommate Relations

Whether you've known the person your entire life or just met him/her last week, a roommate relationship will be like no other you've ever had. It can truly be "the best of times and the worst of times."

The resources listed below are to serve as guides and helpful resources for both types of times. These just highlight a few of the resources that are available. The DTS Housing Office is always available to talk with students to advise them on how to handle situations.

Common Roommate Questions and Conflicts: What to Do?

This page addresses concerns that arise in roommate situations such as when one roommate might leave before the designated end of the lease or when one roommate no longer finds it possible to live with another. Other issues addressed involve the roommates' combined responsibility of bills and the significance of signing a lease.

Roommate Contract

The DTS Housing Office recommends that a Roommate Contract be completed anytime a new lease is signed or a lease is renewed. This document is designed to provide its users the opportunity to establish some guidelines related to the details of their living arrangements. Users are encouraged to spend quality time discussing each section, being as forthright and honest with their opinions as possible. Although designed to be a legally binding agreement, its main purpose here is to provide a chance for roommates to proactively discuss issues that potentially could become areas of conflict.

Remember...You are your Roommate's Roommate!

Your roommate may not be a mirror image of yourself but remember that roommates do not have to be best friends. It is not necessary to share every aspect of live together. In fact, learning to tolerate each other's differences, without infringing on one another's freedoms can be a valuable part of your education.

Good intentions do not always lead to good relationships! But, how do you sit down with someone you have known for years or with someone you have just met and attempt to discuss the expectations for the variety of situations that arise when you live together? This handout was designed to ease the getting acquainted process, as roommates. Although some of the questions may seem trivial at first, explore the answers with each other honestly and avoid the temptation to gloss over the differences.

You are encouraged to sit down with your prospective roommate and talk over a number of topics. Hopefully you can find out enough about each other to set a pattern of communicating and working together on common concerns. These "talking points" are designed to be used with the Roommate Contract.

1. Introducing Myself: The Basics

Even though you may have talked about the basics, it is best to start at the very beginning, so take the initiative and jump in. Tell about yourself here before launching into all the other questions:

1. My full name...
2. Where my hometown is...
3. What my high school/college was like...
4. How many brothers and sisters I have - their names and ages...
5. What kind of neighborhood I grew up in (city, suburb, farm, etc.)...
6. How old I am and when my birthday is...
7. What I am majoring in...
8. Why I came to DTS...

2. Preferences and Habits

Now that you know the basics about each other, move into some of the more serious areas. One person should answer every question in this section and then give the other a chance to ask for clarification. Next, the other person should answer every question in this section.

1. When I like to sleep and how many hours I need
2. What I have in the way of friends here
3. How important it is for things to be neat and clean
4. How I feel about my possessions - like what is okay for you to borrow or use and what things I prefer not to have others touch
5. The grades I hope to earn this year and how important that is to me
6. What my study habits probably will be like this term
7. Some habits of mine that it might be important for you to know about
8. What I like to spend money on when I have some
9. What my health is like most of the time and what I like to do for exercise
10. How I feel about living away from home
11. How I feel about having guests over to our home
12. What kinds of extracurricular activities I want to get involved in

3. About My Emotional Style

If you realize that you've been skipping questions or joking around, think about why. Make an effort to remain sincere and honest, and continue on.

The purpose of these questions is to help you learn some of your similarities and differences; do not be afraid to note some differences among yourselves - this is what makes us individuals.

1. Something that is likely to annoy me...
2. Something that will cheer me up when I'm down...
3. Something that can get me tense and uptight...
4. Times when I would prefer to be left alone...
5. How I feel about conflict (it might be helpful to think of past situations you have been in and how you have resolved them)...

4. About My Personal Values

When you are sharing reactions in this section, make an effort to be specific. Mention specific behaviors. Be open and honest.

Later, while you're living together, if your values begin to change, remember this handout. Try talking out the issues again using your communication skills of listening, being specific, being open, honest, and considerate.

1. Which aspects of my social life are important to me...
2. What other people seem to think are some important traits of mine (like parents or friends)...
3. What it is like for me to go out and make friends...
4. Things I feel roommates should do together - include activities such as: cleaning, grocery shopping, eating, campus activities...
5. How I feel about parties and socializing...
6. What I want to do with my freedom away from home...

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, you should talk over the following topics to discover your points of agreement.

1. Something I like about you is...
2. It appears to me that an important similarity between us is...
3. I think an important difference between us is...
4. I think we might have to compromise on...

6. House Rules

Now that you have discussed your personal values with your roommate, begin to establish "house rules" and write them down here. Doing this final process will help you solve problems later.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.