

# Roommates

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## Roommate Resource Guide

- Roommate conflicts: confrontation, communication, mediation
- Guest policy (restatement)
- Key elements of the guest policy as it relates to roommates
- Procedural considerations for room changes

## **Roommate Conflicts: Confrontation, Communication, Mediation**

Our Commitment to Community identifies community living as an essential learning experience at the University of Dayton. We believe you learn valuable life skills while living and learning on campus through daily interaction with your roommates. However, that does not mean living with roommates is always easy. Sharing a living space can be challenging and stressful. It is perfectly normal to have conflicts with your roommates or community members.

The University offers a variety of resources to help you work through your concerns with roommates. By utilizing these resources, you can manage conflict in a mature and respectful manner.

When you recognize you have a concern about your living environment, consider contacting the following people or offices for advice, support or to process your thoughts, feelings and emotions regarding your concerns:

1. Your RA or Fellow
2. Go to the front desk of your living area and ask to talk with a Housing & Residence Life staff member or contact them via email, which can be found on the [housing.udayton.edu](http://housing.udayton.edu) website
3. Campus Ministry
4. Schedule an appointment to talk with a counselor in the Counseling Center 937-229-3141
5. Your academic advisor

If you ever feel that you are being threatened or that your living environment is not safe, contact Public Safety 937-229-2121 to report your concerns.

## **Addressing Your Roommate**

Communication sometimes breaks down and you may have to address your roommate with an issue. There are always two perspectives to consider in a conflict. Before addressing a roommate, consider what role you may have in the conflict.

### **How to tell if there is a concern:**

1. Your roommate may not want to talk to you, may leave the room when you enter, or may be complaining to friends about you. They may also post on social media sites as a way to vent their concerns.
2. Your roommate may become annoyed with you over little things.
3. If you start to notice these things, you should not ignore them. If a problem is addressed early, there is a better chance of it being worked out peacefully.

### **How to address the issue:**

1. Talk directly to your roommate in private.
2. Confirm that this is a good time for both of you to talk. If one of you feels rushed or blindsided they will be less able to communicate effectively.

3. Be direct. Discuss the issue with regard to behaviors rather than personality traits. This tactic is less likely to put your roommate on the defensive.
4. Be patient. Listen to your roommate and remember that there are two sides to every story.
5. Each person should be given a chance to present what they feel the problem really is.
6. Revisit your Community Living Agreement. Which of your guidelines are working and which of them need to be reconsidered? If your Community Living Agreement needs to be updated, schedule time with your RA or Fellow for assistance in reaching a successful outcome.
7. Remember that a solution will probably involve each person giving something and getting something. The solution may not be your ideal scenario, but it should be an improvement on the current state of things.

### **Communicating with your Roommates**

Most roommate conflicts are the result of miscommunication or, in some cases, a total lack of communication. If you can communicate effectively, it will be much easier to develop a comfortable living environment for you and your roommates.

Use these tips to help you communicate in a healthy way with your roommate:

1. Talk to your roommate directly when something is bothering you. Don't discuss it behind their back; this can cause a breakdown in trust between the two of you.
2. Be direct and clear about what is bothering you. If you don't tell your roommate that there is a problem, they won't be able to do anything about it.
3. Remember that communication works two ways: talking and listening. Neither one is effective without the other.
4. If you create a win-win situation, then the conflict is more likely to be resolved. Evaluate the needs of both sides before a solution is proposed and make sure the solution is acceptable to both parties.
5. Respect each other's differences. Everyone has different values, lifestyles, expectations and communication styles. Get to know each other and establish common ground. It is easier to solve a problem with a friend than a stranger.
6. If you are upset with your roommate, chances are they are upset with you as well. Being involved in dialogue means you need to be able to listen and give all parties a chance to speak. Criticism is bound to happen and your natural reaction is going to be to criticize back, but that is only going to compound the problem. Learn to accept criticism to help you communicate and live with your roommate. If you both find that, you are approaching the limit and things are not being resolved, agree to take some time away from the discussion to give you each time to process what is going on. This will also give you each time to develop feedback that is not going to be hurtful or fueled by anger.

### **Roommate Mediations**

In difficult discussions, such as roommate conflicts, it is very helpful to have an unbiased third party to help mediate the discussion. If you find that you and your roommate are having difficulty resolving your conflict, you should approach a Housing & Residence Life staff member or contact the front desk of your living area to arrange mediation. Contact your RA/Fellow as soon as possible to discuss your concerns. All students experiencing roommate conflicts are strongly encouraged to participate in mediation. Contact Housing & Residence Life at 937-229-3317 or [housing@udayton.edu](mailto:housing@udayton.edu) with questions.

### **How Mediations Work:**

1. Contact your RA/Fellow, by email or in person, to explain the situation and request mediation.
2. Your RA/Fellow will contact all roommates to find a time that works best for everyone. It is very important that you allow enough time for each person to express themselves and come up with a solution.
3. Even if you are the person who contacts the RA/Fellow, remember that they have a responsibility for the well-being of all of their residents. Your RA/Fellow will give each person a chance to be heard, and they will encourage a solution that is beneficial to all parties.
4. Your RA/Fellow will bring your Community Living Agreement as a reference. If you have updated this document since move in, it will be helpful to provide your RA/Fellow with an updated copy before the mediation.
5. Some roommate conflicts require a number of mediations before they find a solution. In other cases, you may find that the situation is not working even after you have all made an honest attempt at mediation. In those cases, and only in those cases, a room change may be the best answer.

Roommate Conflicts. (2012). Retrieved June 13, 2012, from <http://www.slc.edu/studentlife/residence-life/roommate-conflicts-confrontation,-communication,-mediation.html>

### **Guests**

A guest is defined as an external visitor of a student and/or a student who is being hosted in the residence of a fellow student. Students must accompany their visitors in the campus area at all times and are responsible for the conduct of their guests. Students who advertise and/or issue mass invitations (online or actual) will be held responsible for the outcome of such an invitation. Guests (student or non-student) are not permitted to stay overnight if they are of the opposite sex from the students residing in the room/suite/apartment/house. Students are not permitted to have overnight guests (student or non-student) stay more than two consecutive nights or five nights in one month without written consent from roommates/living mates as well as the Housing & Residence Life coordinator. Guests may not sleep in the unoccupied bed without prior written consent of the student who primarily uses that bed. Overnight guests are not permitted during orientation week, final exam week dates when the housing facilities are closed, or on any days/dates that the University communicates as a guest restricted timespan. Students living in University housing may be subject to additional guest registration requirements during specified times of the year. Personal guests of students are not subject to the background check required of the Minors on Campus University-wide policy nor are such guests considered "guests of the University" in any way.

*Note: In cases where a guest's conduct puts students/faculty/staff at risk of harm, the consequences of hosting that guest can result in severe disciplinary action.*

### **Key elements of the guest policy to consider when negotiating roommate issues:**

- Guests (student or non-student) are not permitted to stay overnight if they are of the opposite sex from the students residing in the room/suite/apartment/house.
- Students are not permitted to have overnight guests (student or non-student) stay more than two consecutive nights or five nights in one month without written consent from roommates/living mates as well as the Housing & Residence Life Area Coordinator/Community Coordinator and/or Resident Director.
- Guests may not sleep in an unoccupied bed without prior written consent of the student who primarily uses that bed.

- Overnight guests are not permitted during orientation week, final examination weeks, dates restricted by Housing and Residence life (such as Halloween and/or St. Patrick's Day), or dates when the housing facilities are closed.
- Students who advertise and/or issue mass invitations (online or actual) will be held responsible for the outcome of such an invitation.

### **Changing Rooms**

Students are permitted to change rooms during the academic year; however, there are procedures and action steps required to move. The University cannot and will not require a student to move upon receiving a complaint of misconduct by the roommate. However, a student with a complaint against their roommate that is of a critical nature (as determined by Housing & Residence Life staff and/or the dean of students) will be offered temporary housing until the matter can be resolved. Once the University has investigated and/or has taken disciplinary action that causes the roommate to be moved, the initial complaining party can return to the space. In cases where illegal activity is taking place in a room, the concerned student should contact Public Safety immediately.

#### **Students who wish to change rooms will participate in the following process:**

1. Schedule an appointment with the Housing & Residence Life area coordinator/community coordinator and/or residence director in their living area. The name and contact information for this person can be obtained at the front desk of the residence hall or by calling the main office at 937-229-3317.
2. When meeting with the staff member, the student should be prepared to indicate their reasons for a move and what actions they have taken to resolve any conflicts with their roommate, if applicable.
3. The staff member will determine if any further mediation or staff intervention is needed prior to approving a room change.
4. In cases where the change is approved, the student will be referred to the Housing Assignments staff for assistance in selecting an appropriate space.

#### **Important Notes about Changing Rooms:**

- In cases where a student has identified a location they would like to be moved in order to live with a friend who does not have a roommate, meeting with the area coordinator/community coordinator and/or resident director is still required. It is a violation of the housing contract to move without authorization.
- Room changes are not permitted in the first two weeks or last six weeks of a term.
- The University has the authority to require a student to move in an emergency capacity, as the result of a violation of the housing contract and/or student conduct case.