ROOMMATES 101
A Roommate Guide for Traditional Style Housing
The purpose of this guide is to help lead discussion between yourself, your roommate, and your Community Leader, about community living in order to start your year off right.

Each section in this guide has been identified as an area from which roommate conflicts often stem. Addressing these items early on and having an honest conversation about your expectations will help you deal with concerns that may come up throughout the year.

Before meeting with your roommate and Community Leader to discuss your Roommate Agreement, take some time to reflect on your personal values, habits, and pet peeves in this guide. It is important that you are aware of these items so that you can better communicate with your roommate during your discussion.

A Roommate Agreement is a collection of guidelines, that both roommates agree to uphold to the best of their ability, that allows clear communication between people living together in a shared space.

Early in the term, your Community Leader will approach you and your roommate to complete a Roommate Agreement with the “questions to consider” from each section in mind.

Get to Know Your Roommate

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What do you like to do for fun? What are your hobbies?
- How do your class and work schedules compare to your roommate’s?
- Do you have any pet peeves that you feel your roommate should be aware of?
Like any relationship, it is important to approach your roommate with an understanding of mutual respect and to be willing to openly communicate with each other. Please keep these items in mind while developing your Roommate Agreement and throughout the year.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Consider how you would like to be communicated with. For example, would you like to communicate over text message, phone calls, or social media?
- What times are necessary to communicate with your roommate? For example, inviting guests over, borrowing something, or leaving for an extended period of time.
- How do you show someone respect? What are some ways that others can show respect to you?
- What are your preferred pronouns?
- If you are upset, what can your roommate do to help?

If you notice any behaviours of your roommate that seem out of the ordinary, check in and ask how they are doing. You can also consult your Community Leader about ways to approach sensitive conversations.
Safety and security is one of our priorities for students living in residence. It is important that you help to keep your community safe. Theft can occur in residence. It is important for you to protect yourself, your roommate, and your room by locking your own doors and windows.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What will be your policy on locking doors and windows?
  - Will you always lock the door whenever you leave the room?
- What about locking the door when you go to bed?
- If you live on the first floor, when will you be closing and locking the window(s)?

Please note that you cannot lend your keys to any unauthorized individuals. Please see the unauthorized key possession policy outlined in the Community Standards, located in your Community Living Handbook and Residence Contract.
The use of shared items and spaces is often the most contentious issue among roommates. It is important to set clear boundaries and expectations from the start in order to minimize confusion and tension later on in the year. Be sure to respect the personal belongings of your roommate. It is always best to ask before borrowing or using something that does not belong to you.

Please note it is your responsibility to complete the Room Condition Report for your room within seven days of move in, available on the UVic Residence Housing Portal.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What items are you comfortable sharing?
  - Are you comfortable sharing items like cleaning supplies or other disposable items (paper towel etc.)?
  - What about food, utensils, or dishes?
  - Which items are off limits?
- Where is it okay/not okay to put things like dirty clothes, textbooks, etc.?
- What areas of the room do you consider your personal space (bed, desk, closet, etc.) and what areas do you consider shared space?
Let’s be honest, few people particularly like doing chores. However, when living with a roommate, it is necessary for both of you to do your part to ensure a clean space in which you both can live and study. We strongly recommend that roommates decide on cleanliness standards for their unit and create a cleaning schedule together.

**CLEANING SCHEDULE EXAMPLE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Date 1</th>
<th>Date 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Take out garbage and recycling</td>
<td>Roommate A</td>
<td>Roommate B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacuum floors</td>
<td>Roommate A</td>
<td>Roommate B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wipe surfaces and dust shelves</td>
<td>Roommate B</td>
<td>Roommate A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wash dishes</td>
<td>Roommate B</td>
<td>Roommate A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please note that in December and April, Cleanliness Inspections will take place and staff will follow-up if any concerns arise. Upon move out, any cleaning charges incurred for the room will be shared amongst roommates.

**QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER**

- How will chores be done?
  - How often will these tasks be completed?
  - Will each roommate be assigned a specific chore to perform throughout the year?
  - How often will you rotate tasks?

- Will you share the cost and use of cleaning supplies? A vacuum is provided to your community. Contact your CL for more details. We suggest purchasing the following items: disinfectant wipes, duster, garbage bags, dish soap, and sponge.

- How often do you expect to do laundry? Is it okay to have dirty clothes in open spaces? Residents provide their own detergent and other laundry cleaning solutions. Laundry cards can be purchased and reloaded at the Craigdarroch Office Building (Residence Services Front Desk) and also can be reloaded in Cadboro Commons.

- How will you communicate with one another if you are unhappy with the level of cleanliness in your unit?
Although you have the privilege of having guests visit your room, you first have the responsibility to ensure that your roommate is comfortable with the people who are entering the space you share. When you have a guest in residence, you: must accompany them for the duration of their stay, are responsible for their actions, and must ensure that they are familiar with and respect the Community Standards.

Please note that items outlined in your Roommate Agreement regarding guests and functions must also be in line with the Community Standards.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- How social/quiet do you and you roommate want the room to be?
- How do you feel about functions and social gatherings (parties) being held in your room?
  - Who is responsible for cleaning up after guests and/or functions?
  - How far in advance should you ask for your roommate’s consent before having a guest or function in your room?
  
  *It is your responsibility to inform your roommate of the context of the function (number of people, purpose, length of stay, etc.)*

- How do you feel about having overnight guests in your room? Where is it okay for overnight guests to sleep?

- When and how long is it okay for guests to be in your room?

  *Residents are permitted to have an overnight guest for no more than three consecutive nights for a total of nine nights per semester. Permission for an extended stay should be requested through your Residence Life Coordinator.*
Seemingly unimportant details such as the level of lighting and sound in a room may seem minor, but they have the potential to lead to frustration amongst roommates.

It is important to understand that every person has the right to a living environment that is conducive to academic success and personal comfort. The right for your roommate to be able to sleep or study supersedes your right to listen to music or watch TV, etc.

Please note that Quiet Hours in residence are in effect between Sunday-Thursday 9 pm-8 am and Friday-Saturday 12 am (midnight)-10 am.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What are your tolerances for noise? How loud is too loud?
- When does your room need to be quiet? What does this mean for the use of stereos, televisions, and laptops? Does it differ on weekdays or weekends?
- What will be your room’s policy on turning on/off lights? Does the time of day matter?
- How will you communicate with one another if you have a concern about noise or lights in your room?
Your ability to sleep and study without distraction or interruption is important for your academic success. Because of this, it is necessary that you discuss specific expectations regarding sleep and study habits so that everyone can have a successful year.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Will you be studying in your room? If so, consider the following:
  - What time of day do you prefer to study?
  - For how long?
  - How might this impact your expectations of the level of noise in your room?
- When do you usually go to bed and when do you usually get up? Does it differ on weekdays or weekends?

- Can you easily sleep with distractions (such as background noise or dim lighting)?
- How might your alarm clock (and the snooze button) affect your roommate? *Remember to turn off your alarm when you go away for the night or the weekend!*
- What are your expectations of your roommate and/or guests coming home late at night/early in the morning?
Often residents don’t want to speak to their roommate or have a mediated discussion because they want to avoid further conflict. However, we often see successful relationships once roommates express their needs and/or concerns to each other. The most harmful approach to addressing roommate conflict is to let tensions build, instead of addressing them proactively.

Remember that your Community Leader is available to coach you through how to approach a roommate conflict or lead a mediation session if necessary. Be sure to contact them if you have a question or need any assistance.

**QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER**

- How will you approach your roommate should a disagreement, concern, or conflict arise?
- What will happen if either of you do not uphold the Roommate Agreement?

**TYPICAL CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROCESS**

1. **Roommate conflict occurs**
2. **Consult your Roommate Agreement on how to address the issue**
3. **Approach your roommate: discuss the conflict and possible solutions**
4. **Contact your CL for a mediated discussion with you and your roommate**
5. **Resolved?**
   - Yes
   - No
6. **Mediated discussion with CL**
7. **Resolved?**
   - Yes
   - No
8. **Ask your CL to put you in contact with your Residence Life Coordinator**

In the event that the Residence Life Coordinator is unable to resolve your roommate conflict, room transfers are available. Please see the Community Living section in the Community Living Handbook for more details.