WHAT IS A ROOMMATE AGREEMENT?

Roommate agreements outline standards of behaviours that each roommate agrees to live by in order to fulfill a successful roommate relationship.

HOW TO USE IT?

This guide provides a brief introduction to topics that are important to cover when creating a roommate agreement. Included are questions to consider and later discuss with your roommate(s).

Following a floor meeting in September, you will arrange a time with your roommate(s) to review and write your roommate agreement. After completing the agreement, you will submit it to your residence staff member. In the future, if any changes need to be made to the agreement, first discuss the changes with your roommate(s) and then speak with your staff member who will have the copy.

Your residence staff member is available to help facilitate your roommate agreement discussions as well as any amendments or changes to your living situation.
When having a conversation with your roommate it is paramount to have face-to-face communication so that both of your thoughts and feelings can be accurately expressed. Try to avoid using indirect forms of communication, such as sticky notes and texts, which often only make situations worse.

It is important to be approachable so that if your roommate has a suggestion on how to improve your living situation, they can do so with comfort and ease. Think about the following questions to determine how you would best communicate with your roommate(s) in the event of a dispute. Remember to talk about your answers with your roommate!

Consider when and how you’d like to be approached and how your roommate might expect you to react (ie: you get quiet, defensive, need time, etc.)
You have the responsibility to allow your roommate to sleep without undue disturbances from noise, guests, or other disruptions. Sleep is precious at university. You need your energy. By getting your sleep, you allow yourself to maximize your potential for success. Although sleep requirements differ from person to person, some common concerns include: amount of light when trying to sleep, time of day, and noise. It is also important to be conscious that each of you may have different schedules. Remember to be realistic and communicate with your roommate.

“How dark do you need it to be to sleep (can the computer screen be on, etc.)?”

“What time do you go to bed and wake up?”

“What is your sleep schedule like during the week versus weekends?”

“What are your pre-sleep habits or behaviours?”
Individuals study in different ways; different levels of noise, locations, times of day. It is the responsibility of each roommate to ensure they are maintaining an environment in their room that is conducive to learning by not causing any undue interferences or distractions. Check with your roommate(s) to ensure that you get the most out of your time in residence.

“What type of environment do you need to study? (i.e., need music, need silence, need to be alone, have to study in a group, etc.)”

“Should you post copies of your timetable for each other?”

“What time of day do you like to study? (i.e., in between classes, only at night, etc.)”
In some of the residence rooms, you are able to adjust your climate to a more desired setting (cool/warm temperature) as well as open windows. Temperature settings not only affect comfort levels, but also are useful in terms of sustainability efforts. Speak with your roommate(s) to ensure that the temperature is at a level that is suitable for each one of you.

“What is your ideal room temperature?”

“When can the window be open?”

“If someone wants to change the temperature, what steps should they take?”
Residents are required to maintain at least a minimum standard of cleanliness for health and safety. Responsibility for the neatness and cleanliness of the residence is shared by all residents. Your residence room/suite is a shared space and individual standards and expectations surrounding cleanliness can vary. For example: some may want dishes to be cleaned immediately, or recycling to be removed daily. Work with your roommate(s) to ensure your responsibilities are completed and your room stays clean.

“How can we ensure our room maintains our standard of cleanliness (i.e., cleaning schedule)?”

“How often do dishes need to be cleaned?”

“What does messy look like?”

“How do you describe your cleanliness?”

“Think about the garbage, recycling and compost removal, whose responsibility is this?”
Property & Belongings

Each resident comes into a new shared living space, each bringing their own personal belongings. Different people have different viewpoints on how they like their belongings to be used or not used. Speaking with your roommate(s) to determine boundaries regarding borrowing personal property will avoid any unexpected surprises or doubt.

“What are we allowed to borrow from each other within our room?”

“Is permission necessary at all times when borrowing these items?”

“What is completely off limits?”
You all have family and friends back home that you would like to stay in touch with. Whether it’s a phone call back home or an interaction over Skype, be mindful of when you’re having those conversations, how loud you are, and who else is in the room. You might also just need some space and time to be alone; think about how your social needs differ from that of your roommate(s).

“What is acceptable time for late night Skyping, etc.?”

“If you need alone time, how will we communicate that with each other?”
Guests

Do you plan on having any visitors come by your new place in residence? Great! Let each other know that someone is going to be spending time at your place. You require the consent of your roommate(s).

Please view page 20 in your Residence Contract for useful information regarding guests in residence.

“Do we allow overnight guests?”

“What is the maximum number of people we should have in our room at one time?”

“How much advance notice do we need?”

“How will we let each other know when guests are coming?”

“Do we let guests use each other’s belongings? If so, what would we be comfortable with them using?”
Western is a safe campus and we would like to keep it that way. If you are in your room, keeping your door open can create an inviting and friendly environment on your floor. Please ensure that when no one is present, you lock your doors in order to keep everyone’s belongings secure. Discuss the following with your roommate:

We agree to:
• Close and lock the door when someone is not in the room
• Close and lock the windows when leaving the room for long durations
• Bring our key when leaving the room for any reason (even if going to the bathroom) so that our roommate can lock the door
• Ensure that guests respect each other’s property

Thank you for working to create a positive residence community by taking care of yourself, each other, and your residence.