

Housing/Living on Campus Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

For most students, living on campus will be the first time that a student lives on their own, away from their support systems. Here are some tips, tricks, and answers to help you prepare yourself to take this next step!

HOUSING?! What are my options?

- **Residential Halls (commonly known as dorms!)** Residential halls are usually the most popular option for freshman/first-year students. Dorms come in different shapes and sizes! Dorms may be single-, double-, or sometimes even triple-occupancy. Additionally, the bathrooms are shared with an entire floor or hall of students. In order to find the dorm that fits you, make sure to read all of the information provided to you about the various dorms available to you. Dorms do not often have kitchens! They come standard with a refrigerator and a microwave. **Check before you make any purchases. Be completely honest** on your housing preferences survey so that you can find the housing option that best suits your needs.
- **Suite-style dorms** are usually three or four bedrooms (with double-occupancy) which share a bathroom and/or a common space. This provides you with a community within a community and a common place to share with your suitemates. These may or may not have small kitchenettes, though that may simply mean a shared sink in addition to the fridge/microwave combo.
- **University-owned or -sponsored apartments** are apartments that you can select through the university's housing application. Apartments are usually occupied by upperclassmen students who are given priority to these more-private spaces. Usually 2-4 people can share an apartment, depending on the size of the unit. Though you will share a bathroom with your roommates, these are not public communal spaces. You will also have access to your own kitchen.
- **Off-campus apartments, condos, or homes** are privately owned. The size, quality, and amenities offered will vary widely for apartments that are not owned by the university. Be very thorough before signing a lease to an off-campus apartment. You'll probably rent and bills **monthly** (the money will not be automatically deducted from your student account) and will likely have to buy your own furniture.
- **Living at home** is also an option, though studies show that students who live on campus are more embedded in campus culture and more likely to succeed in their academics. Some schools may also have restrictions dictating how far you can live away from the campus, so be sure to check with your specific college or university.

How much will it cost me?

- That depends on a lot of factors. It is important that, if you haven't already, you indicate on your FAFSA that your plans are to live on campus. Indicating the "living on campus" option on your FAFSA application will increase your cost of attendance and thus potentially increase the amount of aid that you'll receive!

What is a security deposit?

- This type of deposit is to secure that any damage that may occur to the apartment or space you are occupying is covered financially. Typically the security deposits are refundable and are due at the rental agreement or lease signing (AKA before you move in). You normally will only have to submit a security deposit if the apartment or home is not operated by the university.

Will my dorm or apartment be furnished?

- This will depend on the type of dorm or apartment you choose. You should always ask before you submit a deposit and sign a lease.

Do I have to have a roommate?

- Not necessarily, but living alone will more often than not cost you more money. Shared spaces are generally more affordable. In addition, having a roommate during your freshman year or throughout college can help you build your interpersonal skills and develop life-long friendships!

Can I pick my roommate?

- Yes and no. In your freshman year, you can choose someone specific you know to be your roommate if you and your preferred roommate both request to live together. However, if you do not have a particular person in mind, each school will have its own process for pairing roommates.

Are there special programs that I should know about?

- Every school will have different programs available to their students. Some residential halls may have themed floors or residential halls. Check with your university's housing page to see what programs may be available to you!

What about food? Will I eat on campus or will I have to cook or buy my own food?

- Most of the housing that freshmen/first-year students choose will not have a kitchen, so students living in these residential halls are often required to have a meal plan. However, if you live off campus or in an apartment style dorm you may have the option to choose whether you want to purchase a meal plan or not.

What types of support are available to me if I live on campus?

- Most on-campus (sponsored by the university) housing options will come with Residential Advisors (RA's) who will live in your building, plan building-wide events, and act as a guide for you throughout your year. Off-campus housing options rarely have RA's and mostly do not provide extracurricular programming, though if the apartment complex is swankier or marketing specifically towards students, they may offer some other amenities, like pools, gyms, study rooms, etc.

Can my financial aid be applied to my housing?

- Yes! Please make sure to indicate on your FAFSA that you will be living on campus. This will let the university know that you may need more aid to cover your housing costs. However, keep in mind that you may have to contribute money if you exceed the estimated cost of living that the university budgeted or if your financial aid does not fully cover all of your costs. In this case, it is possible to contact the financial aid department at your school and discuss your financial situation.

How are assignments made?

- Housing assignments are made according to a combination of factors including: availability, date of application, roommate requests, and building/room preferences. Your university housing office will make every attempt to honor requests, but it is not always possible to satisfy all of these requests. Demand is high and we often can not honor all requests

What should I bring to campus?

- Use a dorm room checklist (easily found on the internet) and a guide from your university's housing website to help you decide **what you need, what you want, and what will fit!** Make sure to look up what your housing option will provide so you avoid making unnecessary purchases. Also use thrift shops, craigslist, and other discount shopping options to help reduce the costs of your purchases! Your living space your freshman year will most likely be a shared space and possibly smaller than you are used to. Be mindful of your roommates while you are shopping even if you haven't met yet! Being considerate may help build the foundation for a strong roommate bond!

What should I not bring?

- Regular household extension cords, halogen lamps, hot plates, toaster ovens, space heaters, candles, incense, fryers, electric skillet, electric grills or any potentially hazardous items. These are items that are more often than not **restricted**. Please check your specific university housing guidelines to ensure that you do not bring any prohibited paraphernalia with you.

May I have a pet?

- Most university housing options do NOT allow pets, though some private houses and apartments may permit household pets. For health reasons, animals such as mammals, birds, insects, reptiles, arachnids, crustaceans, and amphibians are usually prohibited. If you bring your pet and the university or your RA finds out, a fine will be assessed to the owner of the pet for cleaning cost. Immediate removal of the pet will be required and possible disciplinary action may occur.

Where should I live?

- Now that you have all of this information, it's time for you to go explore your housing options at your college or university! Most students live in residential halls their first year, but pick the housing option that is best for you! Living on campus is a wonderful experience! Have fun!