

## Resident's Rights

- The right to read, study, and sleep free from undue interference.
- The right to expect reasonable cooperation in the use of shared space and items (bathrooms, living areas, appliances, telephones, etc.)
- The right to personal privacy, including the use of one's belongings.
- The right to live in a clean and orderly room.
- The right to have free access to the room and facilities without pressure from roommate(s).
- The right to expect that all grievances will be discussed in an atmosphere of openness and mutual respect, and the right to involve a University Housing staff member in the in the discussion if desired.
- The right to be treated with consideration and thoughtfulness.
- The right to be free from intimidation and physical and/or emotional harm.
- The right to host guests within the parameters agreed upon by roommates, provided they respect the rights of roommates and community members.
- The right to expect that a roommate will not violate a University Housing or USCA policy in the room and subject others to judicial



## Staff Involvement

Occasionally, an agreement cannot be reached between roommates. If you should need assistance in solving a problem involving your roommate or suitemate, you may call upon your Resident Assistant (RA), or the Assistant/Associate Director of University Housing. They will assist you in finding a solution on your own or, if necessary, they will intervene when a situation cannot be resolved between roommates.

The University of South Carolina Aiken University Housing staff feels certain that you will enjoy meeting a variety of new and exciting people from different backgrounds. Everyone joining together, meeting, and mixing creates and enhances your community. Good luck and enjoy your University Housing experience!



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This Brochure has been adapted from Converse College

# Roommate Relations



## A GUIDE TO ROOMMATE RELATIONS 2008 - 2009

## WELCOME TO UNIVERSITY HOUSING LIVING

The University of South Carolina Aiken University Housing staff hope that you will have a very exciting year. You are beginning a new adventure in communication, friendship, living in a on campus community offers your opportunities to learn about yourself and others. USCA values the experience that students will have by living in University Housing. On-campus living is a meaningful and valuable experience where in and out of the classroom learning merge. Whether you live at Pacer Downs or Pacer Commons both have staff to aid you in your student development. In addition the staff create and plan programs just for you!

Sharing a room or suite with someone is similar to other relationships— to be successful, it requires openness, flexibility, and respect.

Your room is a place to sleep , study , learn, and live. However, the room can be much more than that. It may be a gathering place for community members, a haven for intellectual thought, or a place to relax. To a large extent, the quality of life in your room will depend on the relationship developed between you and your roommates and suitemates.

## YOUR ROOMMATE RELATIONSHIP

Like you, your roommate and suitemates are unique individuals. Therefore, the same elements that make you unique apply to your roommate or suitemates. We all have our own opinions and attitudes about things. Some of your attitudes and values may be challenged. Think about your own values and how they affect your behavior. Your roommate or suitemates may have diverse valued which impact differently on their behavior.

You may differ from your roommate in the following areas:

**Family**— You may be from a large, noisy family. Your roommates or suitemates may be used to living in a quieter environment and may be from a small family.

**Geographic Origin**— You are either from a rural, urban, suburban, or international community and are probably quite accustomed to that way of living.

**Religious Views**— You may practice your faith within the Protestant, Judaic, Catholic, Islamic, or other tradition. Your faith may be an important part of our life, but religion may not play a significant role in the life of your roommate or suitemates.

**Cultural/Ethnic Differences**— You be from a community with a lot of ethnic diversity. Your roommate or suitemates hometowns may be more homogeneous.

Each person is drawn to USCA from a broad spectrum of our society. This diversity enriches our campus community. You must strive to understand the individual differences of those around you, especially your roommates and suitemates. As you engage in daily activities and interaction, you must possess a genuine desire to learn form others and be open to new ideas and experiences.

Most students look forward to living on campus and having a roommate. It can be a very positive experience coupled with learning and lots of fun.

The University Housing staff encourages your to concentrate on the 3 C's for success—**Cooperation, Compromise, and open Communication**. These concepts are basic to healthy human relationships of all kinds. Each roommate and suitemate is asked to complete a Roommate Contract during their first few weeks at USCA. This is done with the help of a Resident Assistant (RA) and promotes discussion about your living environment.

Experience has shown that the following are common issues that may result in conflict in a roommate situation:

- Study Habits
- Visitation and guests
- Room Cleaning
- Use of stereo, TV, phone etc.
- Food in apartment or suite
- Time for friends
- Use of personal property
- Space for clothes, luggage, items etc.
- Miscommunication
- Divergent expectations of roommate or suitemates



After you move into University Housing, you and your roommate and suitemates will complete a roommate contract with your RA. Should a conflict arise, you will re-negotiate this contact. If compromise still cannot be reached, a room change may be approved, space permitting. Room Change forms will become available two weeks after classes begin. This however does not mean that you will automatically be approved for a room change.

## SOME BASIC STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH ROOMMATES

**Talking**— Problems between people usually involve a lack of communication. Work toward expressing yourself freely. Talking can help prevent differences from blowing out of proportion.

**Listening**— Learn to listen carefully. Most of us have learned to listen selectively so we can influence or win arguments. Strive for understanding by listening for words and identifying feelings without evaluating or reacting immediately.

**Flexibility**— The way you feel about a given situation today may differ a great deal from the way you feel tomorrow. Expect contradictions and be flexible with yourself and others.

**Understanding**— Don't assume or expect your roommate or suitemates to view things as you do. Understand and work to respect differences in attitudes and people.

**Cooperation**— This joint experience requires honesty and diligent attempts to make the relationship work. When you collaborate, your chances of mutual satisfaction are greatly increased.

**Compromise**— Living with another person challenges you to find ways in which all involved can be winners, but it does not mean that you have to be less than satisfied.

**Communication**— Express yourself clearly, especially your needs, in a direct, assertive manner avoiding sarcasm or exaggeration. Learn to deal with conflict so minor issues or irritations don't escalate into major arguments. Confront concerns as soon as possible, preferably when they occur. Learn to identify and confront while remaining pleasant. The key is to be assertive without being aggressive.