

Housemate Compatibility/Selecting Housemates

You may consider living with one or more people. Selecting a housemate is as important as the house you live in. The following list of questions may help you assess your compatibility. It can also help launch a conversation between potential housemates that can make the difference between an enjoyable off-campus living situation and a not-so-enjoyable experience. Most housemate situations result in friendships that last a lifetime. Off-Campus Living strongly encourages you to use this compatibility survey to help optimize satisfaction with your living arrangements.

- What is your major?
- How many hours/day do study at home/campus?
- Do you study with music/TV playing?
- Do you need absolute silence when studying?
- Do you smoke? Do you mind if others smoke?
- What do you consider strong smells? perfumes/cleaners/candles/foods
- Do you drink alcohol? How much/often?
- Do you like to entertain? Frequency?
- Do you mind if housemates have overnight guests?
- How do you describe your personal hygiene and house cleaning “personality”? Messy? Neat? Germ-phobic?
- How would you describe yourself in a bad mood? Quiet? Irritable? Reclusive? Hyper? What do you do when you are in a bad mood? How often do you get into a bad mood? What can predispose you?
- Do you feel comfortable confronting people about things they may do that bring you “grief”?
- Do you or parent manage your personal expenses?
- Do you have a car? Do you mind coordinating and sharing transportation for errands?
- Other _____

Remember, most local leases hold tenants living together “jointly and severally bound” to the lease. This means that you are responsible for your housemate throughout the term of the lease (rent, damages, etc)

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Problems/Conflicts...and how to resolve them

The majority of students who choose to live off-campus achieve balance that is within their time/financial budgets and they are generally comfortable with. On occasion circumstances change. When this happens it is important to consider your options for resolving the problem and to keep in mind the lease you signed is a binding contract that cannot be broken without consequences (usually monetary).

Here are some hypothetical questions you should ask yourself, potential housemates and landlord before signing a lease:

- Who will be living in the apartment/house? How acquainted are you with each other? Will you have an opportunity to interview each housemate before signing the lease?
- Is there a legal limit to the number of people who can live in the apartment/house?
- What happens when a housemate unexpectedly takes a leave of absence, transfers out of state or decides to study abroad?
- Are you ready to confront housemates about their behavior? Do you know what resources are available to help you?
- What are the Ithaca City noise ordinances parking policies, recycling, etc? Are they enforced?
- Do you understand your responsibilities to the landlord, the property and each other?
- How clean does the landlord expect you to keep our apartment place? What are the consequences for not living according to those expectations?
- What is the amount of the deposit that the landlord holding? Is it important to you and your housemates to recover the deposit? What do you need to do to recover your entire deposit?

Your lease will often supply the information needed to sort out the potential solutions available to you for resolution of conflict/problems.

The Off-Campus Living staff is dedicated to helping you secure the best living arrangements possible. We provide support in the form of educational materials as well as providing one on one consultations. We assist you in finding additional support in a crisis situation and give you direct access to appropriate resources on Campus and in the City of Ithaca. There is a team of people available in such circumstances.