

Roommate Conflict Policy

When we live with other people in community, we can quickly see that our desires, comforts, preferences, and values can crash against our neighbor's expectations and experiences. It is in the experience with conflict where we can act out our love for God through loving our neighbor or we can veer off the road of discipleship, choosing only to serve ourselves.

We believe that God created each person, including one's roommate, in His image and therefore each person deserves respect and dignity. If/when roommates or apartment mates experience conflict or unmet expectations in their relationships, we believe this is a prime opportunity to teach, educate, and help students grow in their ability to navigate conflict by exploring reconciliation options as well as to seek understanding. Learning how to address conflict is a necessary skill at Wheaton and beyond. Our desire is to follow the Lord's instruction in Matthew 18:15-20 and encourage students to go to one another first, instead of gossiping or assuming the worst. The Residence Life staff is here to help students participate in these challenging conversations with the hope of seeing students grow and relationships restored.

The following four steps can assist roommates who are experiencing conflict and desire resolution. If a student is in physical danger, they should talk with their senior staff member immediately (Residence Director/Graduate Residence Advisor). The Dean of Residence Life retains the authority to modify the roommate conflict process regarding the number of conversations required before it is determined a housing change is necessary. Residence Life staff will collaborate with various staff across campus to gather a robust understanding of all the students involved and their personal situation.

1. A conflict surfaces and needs to be addressed

- a. Roommates are encouraged to talk to each other and allow time for each person to talk and listen to one another with the desire to find a mutually agreeable resolution.
- b. Residence life staff can provide resources to assist in the first conversation.
- c. After the conversation, students should put into practice their new agreements.

2. Conflict persists (1-2 weeks after first conversation)

- a. A student should speak with their Resident Assistant or Graduate Resident Advisor in campus apartments/houses about the continuing concerns. The staff member will meet with each student individually and help facilitate a conversation between the roommates to help them come to an agreeable solution.
- b. After the conversation, students put into practice their new agreements.

3. Conflict continues to persist (1 -2 weeks following conversation with the staff member)

- a. Student contacts their RA/GRA about their continued concerns, and the RA/GRA invites a senior staff member (GRA/RD) to assist.

- b. A senior staff member (GRA/RD) facilitates a conversation between the roommates to help them find common ground.
 - c. After the conversation students put into practice their new agreements.
- 4. Relationship still not working (1-2 weeks following GRA/RD facilitated conversation)**
- a. If roommates continue to experience hardship and are unable to reconcile, then a decision will be made by the senior staff member (in consultation with the Dean of Residence Life) to determine which student will be required to move. The decision about who will move out of the room will be based on all the information gathered during the previous conversations.