We want you to enjoy this year as you begin, or continue, your journey at the university. A good place to start is by developing a positive relationship with your roommate(s). To develop a healthy roommate relationship, it is vital that you begin communicating right away. This guide will help you do that.

Shortly after the semester begins, your Resident Assistant (RA) will host a floor meeting to explain and distribute your roommate success guide. We will ask that you meet with your roommate(s) and fill out the success guide by a specific date and return it to your RA. Although this document is in writing, please remember that staff members are available throughout the year to revisit previous decisions should they not be working out for you and your roommate(s). Our number one priority is to assist you in making your experience at UNL a positive one.

STEP 1: UNDERSTAND YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES
These are reasonable expectations that students have for one another while sharing a space in the residence halls. Students living on campus have the following rights and responsibilities:

- Responsibility to give respect where respect is earned
- Right to have one’s belongings respected
- Right to privacy
- Right to sleep & study in room free of excessive noise and distractions
- Right to feel secure against physical & emotional harm
- Right to a clean space
- Responsibility to be aware of residence hall and student conduct policies and procedures

STEP 2: GETTING STARTED
Before you complete the Roommate Success Guide, spend some time to become acquainted with your new roommate(s). Talk together (preferably privately), keep your conversations in confidence, and only ask questions that you are willing to answer. Please be honest and respectful. Also, take some time before the meeting to reflect on your personal, social and cultural routines so you are better able to express your needs during the success guide process.

STEP 3: DEFINE YOUR LIVING ARRANGEMENT
Use the categories outlined in the following document to begin discussion about your expectations for day-to-day living. As you talk, record the key issues that relate to each topic and several possible solutions. Make sure the solution you select keeps with the policies and procedures published in the University Code of Student Conduct and University Housing Policies.

University Code of Student Conduct:
studentconduct.unl.edu/student-code-conduct

University Housing Policies:
https://housing.unl.edu/reslife/pdf/rightsresponsibilities.pdf

A. Use of Room & Quiet Hours
Within reason, each roommate’s ability to sleep and study in their room is a top priority
1. How will we balance study time with TV/music/computer use throughout the year?
2. Is anyone allergic to fragrances or foods that should be avoided in the space?
3. How will we manage the temperature in the room?
4. How do we define quiet hours and when will they occur?
5. What time will each roommate usually go to bed?
6. What time do you expect to wake up?
7. How will we address the need for each roommate to have time alone in the room?

B. Use of Common Areas
1. How clean/organized should we keep the common area?
2. Where is it acceptable to keep personal items in common areas?
3. For apartment & suite units: How will you schedule bathroom usage? It may be helpful to share class/work/daily schedules to coordinate.
4. How will closet space be shared? Personal closets, storage closets, cabinets, etc.
5. How will shared toiletries be purchased (i.e.: toilet paper, tissues, cleaning supplies, etc.)?

C. Safety and Security
1. What precautions will we take in the interest of safety?
2. When will we keep the door and window locked?
3. How will we check to be sure that oven/stoves, appliances, curling irons, straighteners, etc. are turned off?

D. Cleanliness
In apartment & suite units: University Housing custodial staff will enter each unit on a bi-weekly basis to clean bathrooms and to ensure proper pest control measures. An absence of regular cleaning causes damage to the unit and is inconsiderate to other roommates. Excessive dirtiness may warrant additional cleaning services by custodial staff at a cost that will be dispensed to all roommates. It is recommended the residents clean the kitchens, living rooms, and bathrooms on a weekly basis. As a general rule, all residents need to wipe down the stove top after each use, as well as, put away all food as to not attract insects.
1. What is our definition of clean?
2. Will we split the cost of cleaning supplies?
3. How often will food preparation areas be cleaned?
4. Who will clean the refrigerator? How often?
5. Where will we store food? What are expectations around food preparation?
6. Where will trash/recycling cans be kept?
7. Who will empty the trash? How often?
8. Who will clean our common areas? How often?
9. How often will you shower? How often do you expect your roommate(s) to shower?
10. How often should laundry be done? Where should muddy or dirty clothing/shoes be kept?

E. Use of Personal Property
1. Who may use your TV, laptop, appliances, game console, and other electronics? How often must others ask permission? Do you want to be present when others are using your property?
2. Will we share clothing and other personal items/toiletries? How often must others ask permission?
3. Will we share dishes or cookware? How often must others ask permission?
4. Which groceries will we share? How will we know who should replenish them?
5. What happens if something breaks?

F. Social/Spiritual/Cultural Behavior
1. Do we plan on doing social things together?
2. How will we check the mail? Where will mail for other persons be kept?
3. What are expectations around private phone conversations? Is it okay to have them with your roommate(s) present? Is there any time of day or night when phone calls/texting should not happen in the room?
4. What are the expectations around social media? Regarding posting/sharing photos about one another?
5. Are there any social, spiritual, or cultural behaviors (e.g., music preferences, cooking habits, tobacco use, alcohol) that you would like to discuss?

G. Guests/Visitors
Having guests/visitors is a privilege and not a right. You may only have guests/visitors if their presence does not interfere with your roommates’ ability to study or sleep. At no time will more than 10 individuals (16 for apartment/suites) be permitted in a unit.
1. When is visitation acceptable?
2. How will we communicate when we have guests/visitors?
3. What are guidelines for guest behavior?
4. How will we hold our guests accountable for their behavior?
5. May guests use the bathroom or shower?
6. Are overnight guests permitted? When? How often?
7. Can a guest use any of the beds in the unit when one of the roommates is not home or out of town?
8. What is our expectation about sexual activity in the room?

H. Resolving Conflicts
1. How will we communicate? What are the best methods of communicating concerns?
2. How will we handle interpersonal conflict? How will we handle conflicts with other students in another room (i.e., next door, down the hall, upstairs, etc.)?
3. When or how often should we revisit our Roommate Success Guide?
4. How will we know when it is time to ask the Residence Life staff for help?

STEP 4: COMPLETE YOUR SUCCESS GUIDE
After having this conversation, please follow the instructions listed below.
1. ALL residents will complete SECTION 1
2. Residents in Suites/Apartments (University Suites, Eastside Suites, Knoll, Village, Courtyards, and Massengale) will complete SECTION 1 and SECTION 2 of the guide.
3. Once completed each roommate should sign indicating acceptance of the guide.
4. Return your completed guide to your Resident Assistant.
5. A completed copy will be filed with the Residence Director. A copy will be provided to residents when requested.

STEP 5: USE YOUR SUCCESS GUIDE
Once the Roommate Success Guide is completed, refer to it whenever there seems to be a roommate dispute. Does the success guide address the situation at hand? Is the success guide clear enough to resolve the situation? Does the success guide require renegotiation?

If the guide requires renegotiation, which is possible at any time during the academic year, follow steps 1-3 to negotiate the previous arrangement. If you need assistance in working through a conflict, contact your RA for consultation or additional mediation with Residence Life staff.

FINAL THOUGHTS
The expectation that roommates need to be best friends is FALSE. Acquaintances can be excellent roommates, as long as RESPECT and willingness to COMMUNICATE are present. If you and your roommate are not close do not despair! It probably means that you have found other people with common interests in other areas, and you are probably focusing your energy on friendships with them.

A few things to keep in mind:
- All members of the unit should be involved in the creation of this document.
- Go into a new roommate/suitename situation with an open mind.
- Be honest about what you need to be comfortable.
- If something is bothering you, talk with your roommate right away.
- Avoid gossip.
- If you encounter a situation that you have not been able to resolve, contact your RA.
- Treat your roommate the way you would like to be treated.