

From Dorm Room to Your Home Away From Home



A Packing & Decorating
Guide for MCLA Resident Students

Courtesy of Residential Programs & Services (RPS)



Believe it or not, studies conducted with college students have shown that students who spend time settling in, decorating their rooms and helping to personalize the common areas around them are more likely to stay in school and do better while there. Residential Programs & Services (RPS) encourages students to do what they can to feel at home while at school. The following is a handy guide containing what you will find in your room when you arrive here, suggestions for personalizing your room and a few things to avoid along the way....

Furnishings

Each resident on campus is provided with a bed frame & mattress, dresser, closet, desk, desk chair & bookcase (or bookshelf). All mattresses are 36" x 77". When buying sheets, please remember that the mattress size is longer than a standard twin-size fitted bottom sheet. To get around this problem, you can buy extra long sheets from a variety of chain stores; use our campus vendor for sheets, OCM; or use two flat sheets.

Due to strict fabric fire-rating codes, students may not bring upholstered furniture of any kind into the residence areas (this includes futons). With furnished rooms and common areas, we think you will find you have all the furniture you need. You may rearrange the furniture in your room any way you like as long as it is not damaged. We only ask three things: 1) Do not raise your bed off the ground by placing it on top of other furniture, cinder blocks or other items. If you live in Berkshire Towers, check out the information on Rackraisers for a unique way to loft your bed for additional storage space! 2) Make sure you leave some space between the radiator and your furniture. If you don't, your room will not heat properly when the weather gets cold. 3) Do not move your assigned furniture out of your room.

While bringing additional upholstered furniture is not allowed, milk crates, under-the-bed storage containers & closet organizers are always handy. You can use them for both packing and creative in-room storage areas!

Flooring

All bedrooms have vinyl tile floors. An area rug or small throw rugs are a nice addition to the tile floors. The majority of double rooms in Berkshire Towers are approximately 11' x 15'. Single rooms measure approximately 7' x 11'. Rooms with room numbers that end in "25" or "33" measure approximately 7' x 24'. All rooms in Hoosac Hall are approximately 10' x 15'. Townhouse bedrooms vary in size. Feel free to call for the dimensions of your specific bedroom.

Windows

All bedroom windows have screens, shades and curtain rods. Approximate window sizes are listed below.

Berkshire Towers: Each window is 35"W X 72"L. Single rooms have one window. All other rooms have two windows.

Hoosac Hall: Each bedroom has a window opening that is 72"W x 60"L.

Townhouses:

Odd-numbered Apts., T05 - T35

A: 66"L X 36"W

B: 66"L X 36"W and 66"L X 20"W

C & D: 34"L X 72"W

Odd-numbered Apts., T37 - 87

A & B: same as above

C & D: 54"L X 72"W

Even-numbered Apts., T06 - T36

A & B: 66"L X 36"W, 66"L X 36"

and 66"L X 20"W

Even-numbered Apts., T38 - 88, T90 & T91

A: same as above

B: 66"L X 36"W

C: 66"L X 36"W and 66"L X 20"W

Walls

All bedroom walls have been painted in light, neutral shades to complement a wide variety of room furnishings and decorations.

Decorating the Walls

Finding ways to break up the monotony of staring at four blank walls is a good way to start decorating your room. Posters, photographs and wall hangings are all good ways to brighten up the walls and make a statement about yourself, your interests, hobbies, culture, etc. While planning on ways to decorate your walls, it's important to remember the following:

1. Never use nails, double stick tape or scotch tape to hang things up on the walls. In the Towers and the Townhouses, staples and thumbtacks work best. In Hoosac Hall, masking tape is the way to go. The use of duct tape is prohibited in all residence areas.
2. Wall hangings can be a terrible fire hazard. With that in mind, fishnets, parachutes, Indian bedspreads and other billowy hangings should never be hung from ceilings, walls or over beds. You should limit the number of posters and other decorations you place on the wall. A good guideline is not to cover more than 50% of your walls with flammable items.
3. Do not attach cup dispensers, hooks, paper towel dispensers, room deodorizers and the like to the walls. They pull the paint off when they are removed.
4. Never attach anything to the fire detection equipment in your room - smoke detector, heat detector or sprinkler head! It interferes with the functioning of the equipment and could cause a false fire alarm.
5. Never draw or paint on any interior or exterior brick walls. It does not come off the way you think it might and you will be billed for the time it takes a professional cleaner to acid-wash the area.

Bedroom Doors

Bedroom doors are painted in Berkshire Towers and have a 16" x 42" mirror on the room side of the door. The bedroom doors in Hoosac Hall are also painted. Townhouse bedroom doors are finished wood. Hanging a message board on your door is a good idea. (Using a product like 3M Command Adhesive Strips to hang your board prevents damaging the door when you remove it at the end of the year.) In addition to a message board, decorating your room door is a unique way of letting other people know a little something about the residents who live inside. We only ask that you do not paint or write directly on the door or put up any decorations that will damage the surface of the door.

Plants

There is probably nothing that helps to brighten up a room more than some greenery. Check the stores in town for plant sales during the first couple of weeks and you'll probably find some good bargains. Please do not use plant hooks in the ceiling to hang your plants. A plant pole or stand will look just as nice without damaging the ceiling. Be creative! Put a plant on top of some milk crates, your stereo speakers or your dresser. You are only limited by your imagination!

Cooking and Other Appliances

Although these items can help to make you feel at home, many electrical appliances are safety hazards and are strictly prohibited by fire safety code. U.L.-approved coffee pots and hot pots with an automatic shut-off may be used in Berkshire Towers and Hoosac Hall. Each room in Berkshire Towers and Hoosac Hall comes with a complimentary MicroFridge. The MicroFridge is a unique multipliance which consists of a refrigerator/freezer and a microwave - when the microwave is in use, the refrigerator shuts off. This reduces the overall amount of electricity drawn by the unit. Stand-alone microwaves may not be used in Berkshire Towers and Hoosac Hall. All U.L.- approved cooking appliances, including microwaves, may be used in the kitchen areas of the Townhouses. Please refer to *The Resident Student Handbook* for more details regarding the use of other types of electrical appliances in the residence areas.

Telephones

Your room's telephone (with local telephone service) will be up and running when you arrive on campus in September. All you need to do is plug in your own touch-tone phone to access the service which includes unlimited local phone service, voice mail service, call-waiting and last number dialed. Leave your answering machine at home as it will interfere with your ability to receive voice mail messages from others on campus. We also recommend you bring a standard phone rather than a cordless one. If you do decide to bring a cordless phone, please keep in mind that not all cordless phones are compatible with our phone system....analog phones seem to work the best.

We will send you your telephone number in August with your room assignment. In the meantime, you might want to think about how you want to handle your long distance service. You can use a calling card or bring a cell phone.

Computers

With your own computer, you will be able to tap into both campus and external computer networks right from the comfort of your own room. This in-room connection to the "information highway" provides access to e-mail, internet, computer bulletin boards and library services. All incoming freshmen are required to have a laptop computer. For information about the laptop requirement, please check out the College website.

Once you arrive on campus, you can take advantage of a do-it-yourself hook-up process. Campus computing consultants will also be available to assist you in completing your connection. For information on Apple Macintosh specifications & campus standard software, you can visit the MCLA Help Desk website. If you have any questions regarding computer compatibility or other network access issues, please see the College website or call the Computer Help Desk at 413-662-5276.

Cable Television

The same jack in your room that brings you your phone service also provides you with cable TV service. The cable package, designed especially for MCLA students, provides access to over 70 stations including ABC, NBC, CBS, FOX, PBS, MTV, CNN, TBS, ESPN, Lifetime, USA, A&E, Nickelodeon, Discovery, the Learning Channel, the local public access channel and three MCLA-TV channels. The MCLA-TV channels will provide you with listings of daily events on campus, announcements and programs created by MCLA students.



PACKING LIST

Necessities *

- warm clothing
- rain & snow gear
- alarm clock
- bed linens & towels
- metal wastepaper basket
- toiletries (& a bucket to carry them in)
- flashlight & batteries
- laundry bag & supplies
- hangers & desk lamp
- laptop computer
- school supplies
- eating utensils
- touch-tone telephone
- television (if you want in-room cable TV)

Niceties

- small throw rug
- curtains
- room decorations
- hometown paper subscription
- hot pot or coffee pot
- music (stereo, radio, headphones)
- plants
- milk crates & closet organizers
- iron
- bicycle & helmet
- your favorite stuffed animal
- stationery, stamps & addresses
- board games & sports equipment
- musical instrument (no amplifiers or drums)
- reference books (dictionary, thesaurus)
- sewing kit
- first aid kit
- snacks & beverages
- camera & film or memory card
- photos of friends & family

Things to Leave at Home

- pets (other than fish)
- dart boards with metal darts
- gas grills
- waterbeds
- microwaves in BT & HH
- refrigerators (we've got you covered in this area!)
- candles, incense & lanterns
- weapons & fireworks of any kind
- upholstered chairs & couches
- colored lens floor lamps
- halogen torchiere floor lamps (that don't meet current U.L. safety standards)

* Townhouse residents should keep in mind that they must provide their own kitchen, bathroom and cleaning supplies. All U.L.-approved appliances, including microwave ovens, may be used in the kitchen areas of the Townhouses. Since storage space is limited and to avoid duplication, it's a good idea to discuss who will bring which items with your apartment mates prior to packing.