

# From Dorm Room to Your Home Away From Home



**A Packing & Decorating  
Guide for MCLA Resident Students**

Courtesy of Residence Life & Housing at MCLA



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. Residence Life & Housing 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 80" and the height of all residence area beds is adjustable. (Note: There are 30 inches of storage space under the bed when it is raised to its highest level.) When buying sheets, please remember 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 stores; purchase sheets from our campus vendor (OCM); or use two flat sheets.

Due to strict fabric fire-rating codes, students cannot bring upholstered furniture of any kind into the residence areas (this includes futons). With furnished rooms and common areas, we think you'll 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 pieces of furniture, cinder blocks or other items. 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 a small throw rug is 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'. Double rooms in Hoosac Hall are approximately 10' x 15'. Single rooms measure approximately 10' x 14'. Townhouse bedrooms vary in size. Feel free to call or write for the dimensions of your specific bedroom ([reslife@mcla.edu](mailto:reslife@mcla.edu), 413-662-5249).

## 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. Double rooms have two windows.

**Hoosac Hall:** Double rooms have a window opening that is 72"W x 60"L. Single room windows are 53"W x 58"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 small wall hangings are all good ways to brighten up the walls and make a statement about yourself, your interests, hobbies and culture. While planning ways to decorate your walls, it's important to remember the following:

1. Never use nails, putty, double-stick tape or scotch tape to hang things up on the walls. We also do not recommend the use of Command Strip-type products as they can cause paint tears. In the Towers, the first floor of Hoosac Hall and the Townhouses, staples and push pins work best. In Hoosac Hall (floors 2 - 7), masking tape is the way to go. The use of duct tape on walls, floors and doors is prohibited in all residence areas.
2. Wall hangings can be a terrible fire hazard. With that in mind, wall hangings larger than 3' x 5' are prohibited and should never be hung from ceilings, walls or over beds. You should also limit the number of posters and other decorations you place on the wall. A good guideline is to not cover more than 50% of your walls with flammable items.
3. Do not attach cup dispensers, hooks, paper towel dispensers and room deodorizers 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 or sprinkler activation.
5. Never draw or paint on any interior or exterior brick walls. Chalk and paint 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 in Berkshire Towers and Hoosac Hall are painted. Townhouse bedroom doors are finished wood. 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 in a manner 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 local stores 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.

## **Cooking and Other Appliances**

Many electrical cooking appliances are safety hazards and are strictly prohibited by fire safety code. U.L.-approved coffee pots (including Keurigs), hot pots and popcorn poppers 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 are not allowed in Berkshire Towers and Hoosac Hall. In the Townhouses, all U.L.- approved cooking appliances, including microwaves, may be used in the kitchen areas. Please refer to "Guidelines for Community Living" for more details regarding the use of other types of electrical appliances in the residence areas.

## **Staying Connected...Electrically Speaking**

Each room on campus is equipped with multiple wall outlets. Depending how you arrange your room and how many electrical items you bring, you may find you do not have enough wall outlets or the wall outlets might not be in an ideal place. That's when a power strip can save the day! For fire safety reasons, the College does not allow multiple plug extension cords and outlet adaptors. You are allowed to use U.L.-approved power strips with a built-in circuit breaker and reset button. The length of the power strip cord cannot exceed 10-feet and the circuit breaker rating must not exceed 15 amps. Power strips must be plugged directly into the wall and cannot be plugged into each other.

## **Telephones**

Each room on campus is equipped with local phone service. This service can only be accessed with a special phone that the Help Desk in Murdock Hall can provide upon request. Each student has a personal voicemail box. Whether or not you connect an actual phone in your room, you will receive voicemail in your College e-mail inbox.

You will find your personal phone extension (PPE), room assignment and campus mailbox number on Self-Service THD when assignments are posted in August. 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**

All three residence areas have WiFi. Each bedroom is also equipped with a hard-wired computer port for each student. The exact hardware and software requirements to access this service are available in the Computer Help Desk section of the MCLA website.

## **Streaming Television and DVR Service**

All resident students have access to a streaming television service called SpectrumU which includes a wide variety of network and cable channels; music channels; HBO and an online DVR service. You can access this service on your laptop, tablet and smartphone. Instructions on how to access this service are available in the Tech Help section of the the MCLA website.

# PACKING LIST

## Necessities \*

- warm clothing & snow gear
- umbrella & rain gear
- alarm clock, flashlight & batteries
- bed linens & towels
- metal wastepaper basket & fan
- toiletries
- shower caddy & shower shoes
- laundry bag & supplies
- hangers & LED desk or floor lamp
- laptop or tablet
- school supplies
- reusable plate, bowl & eating utensils
- reusable water bottle & mug
- UL-approved power strips (max. 10 ft. & 15 amps)

## Niceties

- small throw rug & curtains
- small computer printer
- room decorations
- small TV
- UL-approved coffee maker
- music (and headphones!)
- plants
- milk crates & closet organizers
- iron
- bicycle & helmet
- your favorite stuffed animal
- reusable shopping bags
- board games
- musical instrument (no amplifiers or drums)
- first aid kit
- sewing kit
- sports equipment
- snacks & beverages
- folding camp chair
- photos of friends & family

## Things to Leave at Home

- pets (other than fish in a small tank)
- dart boards with metal darts
- gas grills
- wireless routers & extension cords
- refrigerators (we've got you covered in this area!)
- microwaves in BT & HH
- candles, incense & lanterns
- weapons & fireworks of any kind
- upholstered chairs & couches
- flags, banners & tapestries larger than 3'x5'

\* Townhouse residents should keep in mind that they must provide their own kitchen and bathroom (including a shower curtain and plunger for each bathroom) supplies; cleaning supplies; and snow shovel. 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.