Residence Life Manual

Welcome to Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU). In addition to the courses and programs offered by the VCUarts Pre-College Summer Intensive Program, residence life offers participants a glimpse into another integral component of college life. It is in the residence halls that students learn the “art” of living with others.

The Summer Intensive residence hall program is based on the concept of community living. Residence life requires a disciplined community where there are defined expectations for behavior, and each individual bears a responsibility to the larger community for upholding those expectations. For many students, residence hall life is their first real chance to live independently, and this can be a great challenge. Personal independence can be a marvelous experience, if treated responsibly. All program participants are expected to be responsible and self-disciplined.

Student Housing Goals

- Make available a living environment which contributes to the students’ education
- Provide services which help the students meet or exceed their goals
- Give the students clear leadership and direction

The Counselor’s Role

- Escort students to all program activities
- Provide information
- Effectively respond to student concerns in a timely manner
- Enforce policies

Counselors are available to answer student questions. The Counseling team’s operating principle is, “There are no dumb questions!” Students are encouraged to ask for help any time they are uncertain about an issue.

Operational Guidelines

Discipline: The basic philosophy of discipline in the Summer Intensive is one of education. We focus on growth and development of individual student potential by encouraging self-discipline and by fostering a respect for the rights and privileges of others. It is the role of each resident to maintain an environment that is conducive to learning and personal growth.

You come to VCU from various high schools, but this is not a high school experience. We expect students to be mature and act with reason and common sense. However, it is important to note that students must be under supervision at all times. This is to maintain the health and safety of each student who enrolls in the program.
Feel free to call upon your counselor if you believe your rights are being infringed upon.

The following guidelines were put into place to protect the rights of all students: Summer Intensive students are subject to federal, state and local laws and ordinances. All conduct guidelines adhere to the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia, and ensure a secure and safe living and learning environment.

Failure to comply with any of the following standards will result in immediate dismissal from the program:

1. We have a zero tolerance policy regarding inappropriate behavior. Students shall not behave in a disorderly or inappropriate manner, or in any other manner to interrupt or disturb the operation of their classes, the residence hall or any program activities.
2. You may not possess or use alcohol, illegal drugs, drug paraphernalia or tobacco of any kind.
3. Students may not possess firearms, weapons or “look alike” weapons of any kind.
4. You may not leave campus at any time without written permission from your parents or guardians. Students must also gain the acknowledgment of a Counselor or senior staff member BEFORE leaving campus.
5. You may not visit the bedrooms of other students, regardless of gender, unless the door is open.
6. Students who leave the dorm after curfew will be immediately dismissed from the program.
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8. Students are reminded not to tamper with fire alarms. Any person who without just cause, calls or summons, by telephone or otherwise, any ambulance or fire-fighting apparatus, or any person who maliciously activates a manual or automatic fire alarm in any building shall be deemed guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. Such infractions will result in immediate dismissal from the program and possible prosecution.
9. Nothing may be thrown out of the dormitory windows. Throwing items out of the windows is a felony. Students will be immediately dismissed for such offenses and perhaps prosecuted.

No refunds are provided for students dismissed from the program.

Curfew: Students will be in their own floors by 11 PM every evening. Students are to be in their rooms by 11:45 PM and lights are to be out at midnight to enable students to rest so they can get the most out of their time at VCU. Students will lock their doors each night and any time they leave their rooms. This is for your safety and for the security of your property. Students need to remain in their rooms until 7 a.m. unless they need to use the restroom. Students are not permitted to congregate in the hall, in the lounge or in a friend’s room between 11:45 PM and 7 AM.

Common Courtesy: Students are expected to display courtesy in the following manner:

1. Please keep the noise level to a minimum in the residence hall and near university offices.
2. Keep your rooms clean and the common areas free of clutter. Clean up after yourselves in the shared or common spaces.

Safety Equipment: Smoke detectors, fire alarms and fire extinguishers are installed for their intended use and should not be tampered with or removed from the designated locations.
Fire Procedures: Every resident is responsible for the following:

- Knowing the location of all fire alarm pull stations on their floors and how to activate them.
- Knowing the location of alternative exits. NEVER use the elevator when a fire alarm sounds.

If you discover a fire:

- Sound the alarm immediately to alert all residents.
- Shut all doors and windows in the vicinity of the fire.
- If the fire can be contained immediately, use a fire extinguisher.
- Exit by the nearest stairway. Do not use the elevator. Do not run. Remain calm.
- All students must evacuate the building when an alarm sounds.
- If you hear a fire alarm; evacuate the residence hall as quickly as possible. It is recommended that students:
  - Dress properly. Wear shoes and take a wet towel to cover their faces in smoke-filled spots.
  - Take their VCU ID cards and room keys when exiting the building.
  - Keep low to the floor if they encounter smoke.
  - Feel doors before opening them. If a door is hot, do not open it. If it is not hot, brace yourself against it and open slightly. If heat or heavy smoke is present, close the door quickly. Do not panic. Find another exit.
  - After exiting the building, meet their counselors at designated points outside of the building so each counselor can be certain all assigned students have gotten out of the building safely. This assembly point will be at least 50 feet from the residence hall in Monroe Park.
  - Remain outside of the building until the re-entry signal is given.

If all exits are blocked, remain calm and go back to your room. Close the door and take the following action:

- Seal the cracks around the door, using sheets, pieces of clothing or whatever is handy.
- To let smoke out and bring fresh air in, open windows a few inches. Then hang an object out the window to alert the Fire Department to your location.
- If possible, call VCU Police (804-828-1234) to report being trapped. Be certain to give your room number and residence hall location.

Animals: Absolutely no animals, either caged, un-caged or in a bowl, are permitted in the residence halls. Animals present a health hazard as well as a potential nuisance.

Appliances: The use of electrical appliances such as a hot plate, soup warmer, toaster oven, electric grills such as the George Foreman grill or electric frying pans is not allowed, as they constitute a fire hazard. Use of iPods and televisions are permitted as long as they do not interfere with the rights of others. Floor fans, microwave ovens and small refrigerators are permitted.
Disruptive Behavior: Behavior that disrupts others in the residence hall community is prohibited. Such behavior may include, but is not limited to, creating disturbances (either emotional or physical in nature), threats of physical harm to self or others and threats of property damage. Counselors will fill out incident reports on students who violate this policy. Incident reports will be turned in to the Head of Residence Life. More than one such offense will lead to students being sanctioned, their parents being called or they will be dismissed from the program.

Drastic Alterations of Appearance: Students are not allowed to drastically alter their appearance while attending the Summer Intensive. This includes no drastic haircuts, especially those given by other students, no hair coloring, piercing, etc. Students are expected to leave campus looking basically the same way they looked when they arrived.

Failure to Comply: Refusal to respond to a request or directive from university personnel (including but not limited to professors, teaching assistants, members of the counseling team, security guards, the Head of Residence Life or the Program Director) acting in the performance of their duty is a violation of the Summer Intensive policy.

Smoking: Smoking is prohibited for all participants, no matter what their age, and will not be tolerated.

Vandalism/Residence Hall Damage: Vandalism and destruction of university or residence hall property, or the destruction of personal property of others is prohibited. Students found in violation of this policy will have to make restitution to the appropriate parties. Each student is held responsible for damage to his/her room and public areas.

It is each student’s responsibility to act to prevent property damage, where possible, and to ascertain responsibility for the damage when it occurs. Please turn in the names of individuals responsible for the damage to your counselor so that the student(s) can be billed accordingly.

Residents of entire floors or sections of halls may be held responsible collectively for damage to the public areas or furnishings therein. The cost of the damages will be charged to the student(s).

Visitors: Visitors are discouraged so that students can concentrate on program-specific activities. All visitors must be pre-approved by the students’ parent or guardian and by the Head of Residence Life or Senior Counselor on duty.

General Information

Identification Checks: IDs must be presented when entering the residence hall. Conference Services ID cards must be carried at all times and readily visible to allow university personnel to easily identify participants. IDs must be presented when requested by any university official. Loaning others VCU ID cards is strictly prohibited.
**Dress Code:** A typical summer day consists of average low temperatures in the mid to upper 60s and average high temperature in the upper 80s to 90+ degrees. Richmond tends to be quite humid. Plan to wear light, casual clothing.

Clothing should be neat, comfortable and modest. No bare midriffs or backs are permitted. No undergarments may be visible at any time. Shirts and shoes must be worn at all times. Students who do not follow these guidelines will be asked to change clothes before going to class.

The academic spaces and residence halls are air conditioned so warmer attire, such as a sweater or jacket, is recommended.

**Emergency Doors:** The emergency doors at the end of each hallway in the dorm do not open unless the fire alarm is sounding. The front door is the only way to enter and exit the building. The VCU Police monitor dorm access and exit according to card key swipes. The Head of Residence Life and the Program Director receive a print out of this dorm access and exit log. Students found entering or exiting the building after curfew will be dismissed from the program immediately.

**Graffiti:** Graffiti and tagging are serious forms of property damage. In Richmond, this is a criminal offense that is taken very seriously by the City of Richmond Police, the judicial system, the VCU Police and university officials. Several former VCU Art Foundation students have recently completed prison terms for this offense. **A first offense has a MINIMUM sentence of 90 days. The most recent sentence for a student found guilty of property damage was 15 months in jail. Any infraction of this law will result in program dismissal and possible prosecution.**

**Internet Access:** All rooms in the dorms have Internet access.

**Laundry:** Students are responsible for doing their own laundry. Please ask your Counselor for assistance if you do not know how to utilize the washer and dryer.

**Medical Incidents and Emergencies:** Any illness must be reported to your Counselor. Your Counselor will arrange to get you to a physician if necessary.

In the event of an emergency, contact your Counselor or the Counselor on duty. If you suspect the injury or incident is life threatening dial 911 immediately. A local rescue squad will transport emergency cases to a nearby emergency room. **Never move an injured individual.**

**Posting Signs:** All signs need to be posted utilizing masking tape to prevent damage to the wall covering. No staples or tacks are to be used. If a student chooses to decorate his or her room, ALL DECORATIONS must be removed before check out. Students WILL BE CHARGED a fee for removing anything left on the walls, doors or ceilings upon departure.
Quiet Hours: Quiet hours are designed to allow students to sleep, prepare for class and socialize, but not disturb those around them. Quiet hours are from 10 PM until 8 AM Sunday through Thursday and from 11 PM until 8 AM on Saturday and Sunday. Please show respect for others by abiding by these quiet hours.

Sexual Misconduct and Harassment: Sexual misconduct is prohibited. Student sexual misconduct is defined as unwelcome acts of a sexual nature committed by a student against another student or a member of the Counseling team without consent including sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or other verbal or physical conduct, including written communications of an intimidating, hostile or offensive nature, or action taken in retaliation for the reporting of such behavior.

Immediately report acts of student sexual misconduct to your Counselor, the Head of Residence Life or the Program Director.

Soda/Snack Machines: Soda and snack machines are available on the first floor. Directions for receiving vending machine refunds are posted on each machine.

Theft: Theft and/or possession of stolen property are violations of state law and prohibited by residence hall policy. Students are encouraged to report missing property to their Counselors and to the VCU Police. Students are reminded to keep doors locked at all times.

Trash: All residents are required to put their trash in the trash room that is located on each floor. VCU is a green campus so please recycle in the bins provided.

Valuables: VCU does not assume responsibility for any lost or damaged items, therefore recommends that no valuable items such as jewelry be brought to campus. Students are encouraged to use check or charge cards to cover personal expenses while attending to program.

To keep your property safe please follow these guidelines:

• Never leave your belongings unattended or unsecured while in class, the library, the Commons, while attending evening activities or going on field trips.
• Carry your purse close to your body. Carry only the cash and credit cards you need each day.
• Remember, safety is everyone’s responsibility. Awareness is prevention.

Mobile Phone Policy: The Summer Intensive fosters community among its members. This means fostering an environment with limited distractions. Students are encouraged to concentrate on relationships within the VCU community during the Intensive.
To prevent distractions and interruptions, phones must be turned off during all class sessions and all outside of class activities. There is to be NO TEXTING during any class sessions or structured evening activities. If a student is caught texting, his or her phone will be confiscated for the remainder of the class period or activity. Confiscation of a students’ phone will result in a write up.

Art tools such as palate knives, etc. are to be utilized only in classrooms and only while working on art projects. They are never to be utilized to threaten other students.

A breach in any of the rules listed in this handbook may result in expulsion of a student without refund.

Campus Security: It is very important that students remain in groups as they go to and from classes and program activities. Students should NEVER walk alone on campus. Ask your Counselor to accompany you to insure safety.

If you see someone who is not part of the Summer Intensive in the residence hall report him/her immediately to security.

Emergency Reporting Telephone System (ERTS): The VCU Police Department has established a system of approximately 200 emergency call boxes throughout the campus. These phones connect directly to the VCU Police Department Emergency Communications Division and are for use by the VCU community when police assistance is needed. The phones may also be used for general information.

Look for the yellow call boxes located outside of the buildings or while indoors look for red wall phones. Dialing is unnecessary. When you lift the receiver or push the button, you can give a message directly to a trained communications officer. Even if you cannot leave a message, your location is pinpointed on a call directory and a police officer is sent to your location.

Security personnel wear uniforms and are constantly in radio communication with police dispatchers. Officers patrol the campus on foot, on bikes, on scooters and in automobiles.

Security Resources:

- On Campus: 804-828-1234
- Non-Emergency Reporting: 804-828-1196
- Lost & Found Office: 804-828-7071
- General Information: 804-828-0100
Maintenance Requests: If students experience maintenance problems they should tell their counselor who will submit a maintenance request form. If the problem is of an emergency nature, i.e., running or leaking water, power outages, an air conditioning problem or a hazardous situation, tell one of the security guards and they will radio the on-call maintenance person. Please contact the residence hall security desk immediately if any of these situations occur.

Residence Hall Keys: Please be extremely careful with your room keys. There is a $65 charge for lost keys.

Lockout Procedure: Resident Assistants (RA) will be living in the dorm during the summer. If a student gets locked out of his/her room, their Counselor will contact the RA on duty to unlock the door.

ID Cards: Students will have their Conference Services ID card with them at all times. This will allow entry into the residence hall and to the dining hall. If the card is lost or stolen a replacement fee of $25 will be charged.

Checkout Day: Students will turn in their room keys and ID cards in the lobby of the dorm before leaving campus to avoid being charged for these items. Students must check out with their Counselor BEFORE leaving. Counselors will be inspecting rooms before students are allowed to leave.

Conduct in Instructional Settings: Students, as well as faculty, have a responsibility for creating and maintaining an environment that supports instruction. In order for faculty members and teaching assistants to provide, and for students to receive effective instruction in classrooms, studios, and other learning environments, the University expects students to conduct themselves in an orderly and cooperative manner.

Students are expected to:

- Be attentive
- Refrain from conversation while the professor is speaking
- Never engage in excessive displays of affection
- Refrain from ANY cell phone use during classes and program activities

Students who do not follow these guidelines will be referred to the Head of Residence Life or the Program Director for sanctions.

Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs): There are ATMs at the Student Commons which is located at 907 Floyd Avenue, and outside the VCU Barnes and Noble at 1111 W. Broad Street. There is a Wells Fargo cash only machine at the Siegel Center which is located at 1200 W. Broad Street. There are also ATMs at Kroger which is located at 901 N. Lombardy. Your Counselor will be happy to escort you to one of these machines.
**University Student Commons:** Your counselor can escort you and your group to the Commons for snacks/food, movies, playing video games, pool, etc. The Commons is located at 907 Floyd Avenue.

**Religious Services:** VCU has a number of churches and synagogues nestled right in the heart of the campus. Students will have the opportunity to attend services at local churches.

- **St. James Episcopal Church, 1205 W. Franklin Street**  
  Service: 9 – 11 AM  
  804-355-1779

- **Cathedral of the Scared Heart, 823 Park Avenue**  
  Service: 9 – 11 AM  
  804-359-5651

- **Beth Ahabah Synagogue, 1111 W. Franklin Street**  
  Service: Friday evenings at 6:30 PM during the summer  
  804-358-6757

- **Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 1100 W. Grace Street**  
  Service: 8:30 – 9:45 AM  
  804-353-4413

Students must be escorted to and from any services they chose to attend.

**Missing Student Policy:** Students are to be escorted everywhere they go while at VCU. The following procedure has been put into place to insure your safety while on campus.

1. As soon as a counselor finds out that a student is missing he/she will immediately notify the Head of Residence Life during the evenings and the Program Director during the day.
2. The Head of Residence Life or Program Director will then notify the VCU Police. The police will put a message out via radio for their officers to be on the lookout for the student.
3. If the student is not back within one hour the Head of Residence Life/Program Director will telephone his/her parents or guardians. This notification will take place no matter what time of the day or night it is.
4. The student is to call the Head of Residence Life/Program Director as soon as he/she returns to campus and a time will be arranged for disciplinary action to take place.