MIT HOUSING Virtual Chat with Nilam Kotadia, Manager of Housing Assignments
Friday, August 9, 2013
12:30 p.m.–1:30 p.m. (EST)

(Q) I want to get a refrigerator for my son’s room, but do not have room in my vehicle to transport it to MIT. Is there a service I can rent from? The MIT parents page had a link to renting a microfridge, but I thought microwaves weren’t allowed.

(A) I would recommend that you just purchase a fridge when you arrive to Cambridge. There are many stores in the area such as Target, Bed Bath and Beyond and others that sell refrigerators. Sometimes you can also find upperclassmen who want to sell theirs.

(Q) My daughter got email about her staying in McGregor. How do we know if it is a single or double room for her? Will she need to move after her upcoming FLP and orientation? How far away is McGregor from the closest Trader Joe store? She wants to cook some meals for herself. How long is the walk from McGregor to academic buildings? Trying to decide if she needs a bike or not.

(A) MacGregor House has only 3 double rooms, the rest are single rooms. During Orientation MacGregor has an internal housing process where all first year students have to get reassigned to their rooms. Please email residence@mit.edu so I can answer your daughter’s question specifically. MacGregor is located on our shuttle bus route, so students can use the shuttle to travel. MIT is also a very bike friendly campus, so if she would like a bike, that is an option as well. MacGregor House also has a Campus Convenience store located in the building so if she cannot get to Trader Joes, there is an alternate option.

(Q) How close is the nearest Trader Joes?

(A) There is a Trader Joe’s close to campus at 748 Memorial Drive (between 1-2 miles depending on where you live on campus). There is a shuttle that runs from campus to Trader Joe’s on Sundays during the academic year. Here’s a link to the shuttle: http://web.mit.edu/facilities/transportation/shuttles/grocery.html

(Q) Lofting beds: Are the beds the same between the dorms, or does each dorm (or within a dorm) have different beds? Want to know if I can design the loft prior to arriving on campus.

(A) Each building has different bed designs and some buildings do not allow lofts. We highly recommend that you find out building specific policy before making the investment. The mattress sizes are Twin XL, but the furniture design may be slightly different.

(Q) I’m trying to understand the roommate and room process. It seems like the students are assigned to one dorm but don’t know their roommate? How many stay with the same roommate and same room? What is the length of time they have to find a roommate and possibly switch rooms?
(A) Housing assigns students to their buildings and the student Room Assignment Chairs assign the rooms and roommates. We release room information with the housing assignment release, but we tell students to contact their Room Assignment Chairs for roommate information. The part about how many stay with their roommates depends upon the building. Some buildings, once they find a roommate, they stay together, in others, they like their current roommate, but want to live with someone else more. They can find a roommate during REX, as long as they are in the same building. Students can work with the Room Assignment Chairs and House Government in getting assigned together.

(Q) We were assigned to McCormick Hall which can't be changed. So can we order online compact refrigerator now and ask them to deliver at McComick Hall.

(A) You can ask them to deliver to McCormick. We suggest you wait until your student is on campus so she can accept the delivery. We really do not have storage space for packages, so we cannot accept anything prior to your student’s arrival.

(Q) OK. Good morning/afternoon. My question relates to REX and the housing lottery which follows. My son's understanding is that in Baker Hall, if a student wishes to stay in his room and not enter the lottery to move, in other words, "squat," that will be allowed. First, can you confirm that and second, if his roommate is not interested in squatting, but he is, may he squat alone and welcome another roommate?

(A) I am familiar with each Houses internal process. Please email residence@mit.edu with this question, and I will look up the process and get back to you with answer.

(Q) When can students get into their assigned dorm room? (not students for pre-orientation)

(A) When students arrive to move into their temporary rooms, they are going to move into the rooms they were assigned to from the lottery release. They will move to their final rooms on Move Day, which is the Thursday of Orientation.

(Q) For students who are cooking, do they normally buy all utensils themselves, or do they share major items, e.g. rice cooker, frying pans, slow cooker, pressure cooker, blender, etc.

(A) It all depends on the students. Once your child meets others in their buildings, they can make their own arrangements with each other.

(Q) My daughter is attending a FPOP so we will be on campus 8/20. That is when we thought we could get her settled in her room. I understand now that this was a temporary assignment, and I appreciate the process to assure the students are in preferred locations. My question is how does this impact the timing of bringing all of her things and setting up the room? We have all of the items for her, but it does not seem efficient to set her up and then someone has to take it apart, move it and then re-set it up. Your insight is appreciated.
(A) We suggest that you bring the majority of her belongings after the Thursday of Orientation. By that time, your child will know where they are living, and it will be easier to get settled into their rooms. We suggest that students pack a suitcase or two or necessities until Move Day occurs.

(Q) My daughter got triple in McCormick hall-west tower. Are there 3 individuals beds or one bunk-bed and one individual bed

(A) We try to get all of the beds to be on the floor when we do room set up. After that it is up to the students to decide how to arrange the room.

(Q) Can you confirm: ResX dorm results are on Thursday, Aug 29, and Room assignments within the dorm are on Friday, Aug 30.

(A) Students will be going through the In House Lottery process on Wednesday evening, August 28. At the end of that night, they will know their final room assignment. On Thursday morning, they will be moving to their final room assignment.

(Q) My son will be living in Next House. All the pictures I’ve seen of the beds in Next House are up on risers to allow for storage underneath. Is that standard for Next House? Can I assume he’ll have that space?

(A) I am not sure what the setup is in Next House specifically. Please email residence@mit.edu with that question and I will get you an answer today.

(Q) Are the computer connections in the rooms wireless?

(A) They are wired and wireless.

(Q) Does MacGregor dorms have air conditioning? Do residents there normally buy window mount air conditioning?

(A) MacGregor does not have air conditioning. We tell students to bring fans, they are easy to move and more mobile. After your student lives here for a while, they will know exactly what their needs are and can make the necessary arrangements.

(Q) "We suggest that you bring the majority of her belongings after the Thursday of Orientation" - can you suggest to the Orientation people that, in the future, they move Parent Orientation to that time too. Frustrating that PO is at the beginning, and then parents are supposed to leave. So how do you stick around to give them their stuff?

(A) You can leave the stuff with them, if you do go that route. We suggest that you do not unpack anything that is not needed right away to make it easiest to move.

(Q) My son is not arriving early for FPOP. We will be arriving in Cambridge on Saturday, Aug 24. Can he move into his assigned room on that date?

(A) Yes he can. He can go straight to his dorm to check into his room.
(Q) Is electric kettle allowed in dorm room? Do students need to purchase microwave for the common kitchen or was that provided by MIT?

(A) MIT provides the microwave in the common kitchen. The electric kettle can be used by students in the common kitchens. They cannot be used in their rooms because it is a fire code violation.

(Q) Sorry to have joined late as I may be repeating a question--if a student is assigned to his/her preferred dorm for their temporary assignment and they continue to prefer that dorm, will they be able to stay in that dorm or is it still subject to the lottery?

(A) They will stay in that building, they may not be staying in that room. It all depends on the building and their In House Lottery process.

(Q) My daughter has been assigned a single in McCormick. She is arriving on the 20th for FPOP...she says she just gets to go to her assigned room and does not change after that. Please confirm.

(A) That is correct. McCormick does not have an In House Lottery process. Students get assigned to their final rooms from the First Year Lottery.

(Q) Sorry to have joined late as I may be repeating a question--if a student is assigned to his/her preferred dorm for their temporary assignment and they continue to prefer that dorm, will they be able to stay in that dorm or is it still subject to the lottery?

(A) Please see my previous response to this question.

(Q) Any provisions to allow International Students to return Thursday or Friday, rather than Saturday when the dorm’s open for everyone? Seems like it would be nice to give them that option to help with adjusting to the time change before classes start.

(A) I am sorry; we cannot allow students to return earlier than that Saturday or Sunday. International Orientation events are held on Monday and Tuesday. So we are already allowing them to come to MIT early.

(Q) How late can my son move into his dorm room on Saturday Aug 24. Our flight does not arrive in Boston until the evening.

(A) We will have people at the desk until midnight. There are also on call people afterwards that can help your son check in.

(Q) Is it necessary to bring individual printers?

(A) No it is not. We have Athena printing stations in some buildings and in academic spaces.

(Q) Being assigned to a single room in a quad: the lay-out does not show where the bathrooms are, and is it possible that the other 3 rooms in that section will be co-ed?

(A) Which building is your son assigned to? A quad means different things in different buildings.
(Q) Do the dorms close after finals in December? If so, what date? Any problem with leaving stuff in the room if the kid is not taking a January class?

(A) After finals in the fall semester and before Reg Day in the spring semester, the dorms are open for students to stay. We allow that so that students can continue to do their research or internships, or other activities. Students can leave and arrive at their own will.

(Q) When school year ends, I heard that students need to move out of their dorm. Does MIT provide temporary storage room for their belongs?

(A) MIT does not provide temporary storage for their belongings we suggest that students make their arrangements with some of the local storage areas. You can see some of the storage options on this page: http://bit.ly/19gWj0g

(Q) My daughter was assigned a single room in a quad in MacGregor

(A) In MacGregor some of the quads are co-ed whereas others are single gendered. The gender breakdown depends on the area. Your daughter can choose which type of quad she wants to be assigned to.

(Q) Another question about the lottery that I’m not following. Can they request a change in dorm or can they only move within their assigned dorm?

(A) If your child is not assigned to Maseeh Hall or McCormick Hall, they can enter the First Year Residence Exchange to try to move into another building. They will get the results of FYRE before the In House Lottery process on Wednesday evening or Orientation.

(Q) Are Aug. 25 and 26 Orientation days the same or do we need to attend both?

(A) There are some similar sessions on both days, but each day does offer some unique events. You can see the full schedule here: http://mit.edu/firstyear/2017/orientation/parent/schedule.html

(Q) Any thoughts about the room temperature in the winter? If they are from the South, do you recommend down comforters?

(A) Temperatures in the buildings tend to be warm in the winter, but each student has a different preference. If your child sleeps with a comforter now, I highly suggest bringing it with you.

(Q) In MacGregor, is there bike storage inside? How full is it?

(A) I am not sure if MacGregor has indoor bike storage. I suggest you ask your child to speak to the Room Assignment Chair for building specific questions. The RACs are upper-class students who can answer those building specific questions.

(Q) Is electric blanket allowed in dorms?

(A) Yes they are. They should have an automatic shut off on them, for safety reasons.
(Q) Bed bugs, how common are they at MIT dorms, e.g. MacGregor?

(A) Bed Bugs are brought into the buildings by the students. They are not that common as long as students are keeping their rooms clean. However if a situation does happen, we have protocols in place to get the room cleaned up again.

(Q) We did the virtual tour for McCormick single and double room. Tour for triple room is not available. Is bureau provided per student or do they share? Are the phones for incoming purpose only?

(A) The triple rooms have not been created into virtual tours yet. We are working on getting those put together this year. The bureaus are provided per student. I am not sure which phones you are referring to.

(Q) The MacGregor dorms have carpet. Should we buy vacuum cleaner for students or are there common ones to borrow?

(A) I would suggest waiting to purchase one. Sometimes students will pool money together and purchase one together, sometimes the desk will have them available, and they can ask the house keeping staff if they can borrow theirs.

(Q) Similar question about dust/dust mites. Do you find that students who are allergic suffer in these older dorms?

(A) As long as students are cleaning up after themselves, I have not heard of students having difficulties with allergies. If a situation does arise and we need to move the student, we will work with the student to make that happen.

(Q) Re: the virtual tours for Baker Hall...I see one type of bed style in the double video and another in the triple video. Would that be consistent throughout the dorm or more random?

(A) The virtual tours are there to give you an idea of what the rooms look like. However, in many of our buildings, the rooms may be slightly off on size or structural things.

(Q) Sorry, re the virtual videos of Baker...more specifically, the beds in the double room have drawers under them for storage, and those in the triple have open space underneath, e.g. for under bed storage.

(A) Please email residence@mit.edu. I will speak to the House Manager of Baker and get you specific information.

(Q) Is bed riser (those from bed, bath and beyond) with electric outlet allowed in student dorms?

(A) They are allowed, as long as they have a surge protector in them.

(Q) For dorms without carpet in the rooms (Next House), how important is it to purchase a rug? Are the floors okay without the rugs, or do you recommend buying one?
(A) It all depends on the student’s preference. If a student is used to having a carpet or rug at home, I would suggest bringing it.

(Q) Can we use risers on all Macgregor beds? We were told that there is about 30 inches of clear space beneath the bed normally.

(A) You can use risers. Again it is up to your student’s preference.

(Q) Is there parking available close to MacGregor so we can park our rental car and drop off my daughter’s stuff in her dorm?

(A) You cannot park at MacGregor, you will be able to unload your vehicle, but will have to move your car afterwards.

(Q) When semester ends, who will help the student to move out large stuff...like refrigerator? Moving company or students have to manage on their own

(A) Students are responsible for moving their belongings out. If you would like to hire movers, you are more than welcome to.