

# Baker Rooming Policies

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**Last Updated: Summer 2022**

Research has shown that the assignment of rooms in a dorm has a very significant impact on the friendship and culture of a dorm.<sup>1</sup> Because of the impact of rooming, the rooming process is important to maintaining Baker culture. Because of the importance of this process, it is vital that the process operate well, reliably and equitably year after year according to the principles and processes agreed to by Baker residents and the Houseteam. We try our best to have a diverse group of residents involved in rooming and allow residents the capability to see exactly how the rooming process is implemented.

## Guiding Principles

In designing the rooming policies, the following guiding principles were followed:

- It's important for the process to be transparent and operate reliably from year to year.
- Residents, including first years, are in the best position to preference their own roommates, neighbors, and room locations.
- The rooming process should not be purely mechanical; instead the RAC may assign rooms through a discretionary, holistic process.
- Rooms shall be assigned in an order based on seniority and role in the house. Exec, RPMs, and RAC members will have priority within their class.
- Rooming will be done to minimize the amount of movement while maximizing happiness (most applicable to REX movement and mid semester moves)
- The RAC shall be selected by an objective, holistic process, not by popular vote.

## Transparency of Rooming Regulations

This document shall be posted on the Baker website.

## Room Assignment Committee (RAC) Makeup

Maximum five members. One to two from each from the sophomore, junior, and senior classes (the *permanent members*), plus the Internal President *ex officio*.

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<sup>1</sup> In 1950, a study by Festinger, Schachter, and Back at MIT, showed that friendships and information dispersal strongly correlated with the distance between apartments and the apartments a resident passes on the way in and out of the building



### **RAC Communications**

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One member of the RAC will be designated as the main point of contact (point person) for the Housing Office and Division of Student Life. One member of DSL will always be available and responsive at all times for the Baker RAC to contact (24-hour response time will be expected at all times). A master document for rooming assignments at all times (including summer rooming assignments) will be established using Google Sheets or comparable file-sharing system. Limited sharing should ensure that this document will always be up to date and accurate. All rooming changes will be made in this master document, so no information is corrupted from passing conflicting versions of the document back and forth.

When a student requests a room change at any time of year, it must be put in writing to the RAC and copied in the Head of House, the Area Director, the House Facilities Manager and DSL Housing. In response the student will be informed by RAC, with all of the above copied in, that room changes are rarely approved and only under extenuating circumstances and after both the GRA and the Area Director have met with the resident and any roommates. In addition, a room change will only proceed once the Heads of House have approved the move. Any approved room changes will generally be executed over IAP unless the Heads of House approve the move at another time. The student should be informed that room changes may incur a cost.

### **RAC Member Selection**

A new member is selected during their first year as a rising sophomore, to serve on the rooming committee for the rest of their time in Baker. If no rising sophomore applies, any Baker resident may apply. If there is a vacancy on the RAC due to a resignation, any Baker resident may apply for that spot. That member will fill out the term of the member they replaced.

The new members are selected before the Upperclassmen Selection Process. Current RAC members issue an application and solicit responses. The RAC will decide on the criteria which they use to score applicants. These criteria may include:

1. Understanding of Baker culture
2. Work ethic and responsiveness throughout the year, including the summer
3. Involvement in multiple diverse Baker communities
4. Knowledge of Database systems

In addition to these four explicit criteria, there are also criteria based on the composition of the RAC that should be followed when selecting a new member:

- RAC should, as much as possible, reflect the broad range of interests, perspectives, and diversity of the Baker community
- Gender equity on the RAC should be attempted
- No more than one member of an athletic team should be a member of the RAC (including the Exec president)



## Baker Rooming Policies

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The RAC will publish these criteria before the application period opens. The RAC shall issue an application and solicit responses. The application shall be issued via the baker-general mailing list at least 5 days before it is due.

In order for an application to be submitted, an applicant must receive 100 signatures from Baker residents on a paper petition. The objective of this exercise is to have the applicants meet the residents of the dorm. A signature only indicates acknowledgement that an applicant is running. It does not indicate support of the applicant. Baker residents should not withhold their signatures to prevent an applicant from applying.

After applications are received, the RAC will score applicants based on the criteria that have been established. The entire RAC will then select a candidate. At the next Exec meeting, the RAC will present their selection. Exec members may serve on the RAC.

## Upperclassmen Assignment Process

### Rooming Pools

The RAC conducts 3 separate rooming processes on separate days (the *rooming days*). On each day, the RAC rooms separate *applicant pools*. On the first rooming day, the RAC rooms rising seniors (current juniors); on the second rooming day, the RAC rooms rising juniors (current sophomores); and on the third rooming day, the RAC rooms rising sophomores (current first years). Current seniors who will be 9<sup>th</sup> term seniors will be assigned after first year assignments, if there are still vacancies. There shall be several calendar days between each rooming day.

On each rooming day, the rooming committee divides the applicant pool into 3 *sub-pools*: those with a role in the house (Baker exec, RPMS, RAC members), current Baker students, and students transferring into Baker. On each rooming day, the RAC first rooms all current Baker students, and then rooms all incoming transfer students.

### Order of Rooming Pool

For each sub-pool, the RAC randomly sorts the list of students in that sub-pool (the *random ranking*). The random ranking is an ordered list from 1 to N, where N is the number of students in that sub-pool. If a student has a valid medical or other requirement, filed through the MIT Housing Office, those students are given special consideration.

### Before the process

Before the rooming process, the House Manager will inform the RAC of all rooms which are unavailable for the upcoming semester and which are protected for reasons designated by the House Manager. The RAC shall post the list of rooms which are designated as unavailable by the House Manager, but may not necessarily post the reasons such rooms are unavailable.



## Baker Rooming Policies

### Room Preference Sheet

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Several days before the start of the rooming process, the RAC issues a *room preference sheet*. All students interested in living in Baker fill out a preference sheet and submit it to the RAC by

the deadline indicated by the RAC. The room preference sheet will contain a summary of the information presented herein, with a pointer to the full policy.

The sheet asks students for their preferences in a number of categories, including floor, wing, neighbors, room type/size. The room preference sheet has a section where residents can indicate

the relative preference for each category. Students may also list a rank order of specific rooms. The 2011 Room Preference Sheet is attached to this document. The sheet also has a phone number field. During the rooming meeting, residents should remain accessible by phone.

### **The Rooming Meeting**

On each rooming day, the RAC enters into a closed meeting (the *rooming meeting*) to conduct the rooming process. The RAC reads each form in the order of the final ranking of each sub-pool.

The RAC then evaluates each application holistically, taking into account the preferences listed on the sheet, the balance and makeup of the dorm, preferences expressed by the Heads of House, GRTs, House Manager, and Exec. These are as follows:

1. First year students should not be roomed in singles. Any proposed exceptions must be brought to the Heads of House for discussion and consideration and no first years may be placed in singles without Head of House Approval.
2. First year residents should be roomed in approximately equal numbers across all floors.
3. Every attempt should be made for quieter rooms by the Head of House and AD apartments.

If the RAC has additional questions, they will call the resident. If someone lists a preference for a roommate, they will be placed together, no matter the roommate's place in the ranking. The roommate may be in a different pool or sub-pool. The RAC will attempt to room friends near each other. At the end of each rooming day, the RAC posts the assignment of rooms and the list of rooms still available. Once these assignments are posted, members of the classes underneath the one that was just roomed can change their preferences accordingly to reflect the available rooms.



### **The Rooming Meeting - Remote Conduct**

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The point person will direct the meeting. Ideally, he/she assigns jobs to all of the members of the committee. This can be done through an informal document with names next to the job. In the past, jobs have included: room type referencer, roommate request referencer, random sequence generator, artist marking names on the Baker layout pdf, recorder of names on a spreadsheet, and a recorder of who has been roomed thus far.

### **Preferences regarding Current Room/Floor**

Current residents of a particular room have no automatic right towards their current room for either themselves (ie. *squatting*) or others (ie. *willing*), nor to their current floor. Though due to the seniority ordering, a resident is almost always able to keep his or her current room next year.

### **Transfer Assignment Process**

Transfers are students who are moving into Baker House at a time other than the REX Assignment period, or the period before the Upperclassmen Assignment period.

MIT Housing notifies the RAC and the House Manager that a student is moving into Baker. The RAC will issue the student a room preference sheet. Upon request, the RAC provides the new resident with a list of available rooms. The House Manager and RAC will work to pick the best available room which matches the new resident's preferences and works logistically. Work should be done to smooth the logistical burden of the process, while maintaining flexibility for students.

### **Summer First years Temp Room Assignment Process**

MIT Housing sends the RAC a list of students that have been assigned Baker in the Summer Housing Lottery. MIT Housing also sends information about the student's preferences, as collected during the summer housing lottery, to the RAC (the *summer preferences*).

The rooming committee shall assign first years randomly to temporary rooms, while avoiding clear conflicts of compatibility from the student's summer preference sheet. Students have an opportunity to remain with their roommates or find new ones during the post-REX First years Assignment Process.

If a student requests a specific roommate, they will be matched with that roommate. First year students should not be placed in singles unless required for a medical issue or disability, and should be distributed across all floors as evenly as possible with the understanding that 1W will continue to room more first years than other floors. First year students, as well as upper level students, should not be isolated among a homogeneous group on a floor – that is, floors should be as heterogeneous as possible while still respecting the desire of subgroups (teams and groups of friends) to room close to one another.



### **Post-REX First year Room Assignment Process**

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During REX, the RAC advises first years to look for compatible roommates. After REX, all incoming Baker first years (including those assigned to Baker in the Summer Housing Lottery and those assigned to Baker in the REX Lottery) gather in the back of Baker House at a designated time. Exec and the RAC will make it clear that first years should take their time to find the right roommates. First years are encouraged to pick roommates with similar sleep schedules, work habits, and who share their expectations about socializing. First years fill out the same Room Preference Sheet, as described above. If first years want to live together, they staple their sheets together to form a *group*. The RAC then enters into a Rooming Meeting, as described before. The RAC first assigns first years with valid medical or other requirements,

filed through the MIT Housing Office. The RAC then assigns 4-person groups to quads. The RAC then assigns other students according to a holistic process. Unlike the Upperclassmen process, the applications are not reviewed in a specified order. Groups are not broken up, but other first years may be added to a group. For example, a two-person group may be assigned a triple with a third person. The RAC then posts the room assignments that night.

### **First year Squatting Rules**

One goal of the rooming-assignment process is to help students find a good roommate(s) match. This can be more logistically complicated with quad and triple rooms. In keeping with the Housing Redesign Principles, in situations where some students living in a quad/triple wish to relocate, while others do not, the RAC and House team will work with students to find the most beneficial housing situation and rooming arrangement for everyone involved. Of course, preference noted on their REX forms will be taken into consideration as part of that move.

### **First year rooming in singles**

In the event that a first-year student is moved into a single as cleared by the Heads of House (or placed in a single at the beginning of the year due to a medical reason or other extenuating circumstance), they should be placed in the "cozy" singles -- ideally on the west side if they are available, otherwise the far east side near the first year 46 quad: see above for restrictions on housing first years in singles.

### **IAP Switching**

Students will typically reach out during the Fall semester regarding switching during IAP. These students are to be kept in a queue on a Google spreadsheet, in the order received, and at the end of the semester they will be referred to the Heads of House so their respective GRAs can speak with them. See below for more details on the switching process: see above for process required of moves within Baker House.

### **Switching**



## Baker Rooming Policies

If students work out a mutual switch, the RAC will honor the switch. But, before making any changes to current student's room assignments, the RAC will check with the Heads of House, Area Director, and House Manager about the move. After their approval, the RAC should email housing and the HOH, AD, and HM to confirm the move. RAC should encourage students to make the switches between semesters, unless there exists an outstanding reason for needing the switch immediately.

### Gender

Baker House is a co-ed dorm. Students shall not be segregated by gender by either floor, or section of the floor. Instead, effort should be made to intersperse males and female rooms.

### Exec Meetings

From time to time, the RAC shall come to Exec Meetings to keep Exec informed about the rooming process. In particular, the RAC should come to the meeting before the opening of the Upperclassmen Selection Process.

### Member Etiquette

Any RAC member should not address resident concerns alone but in consultation with other members of RAC and as stipulated above with the AD and Heads of House. No RAC member may make a decision that does not align with the principles and process described above. Members can sign with their own names along with "Baker RAC" on the same line or the next line. It is up to member discretion about whether or not they include their name.

### Mass Emails

All resident recipients **must be Blind Carbon Copied** (BCC'd) to protect anonymity. RAC should be cc'ed so recipients can "Reply All" to email all of RAC. Finally, the recipient (TO: ) should be left blank or sent to yourself.



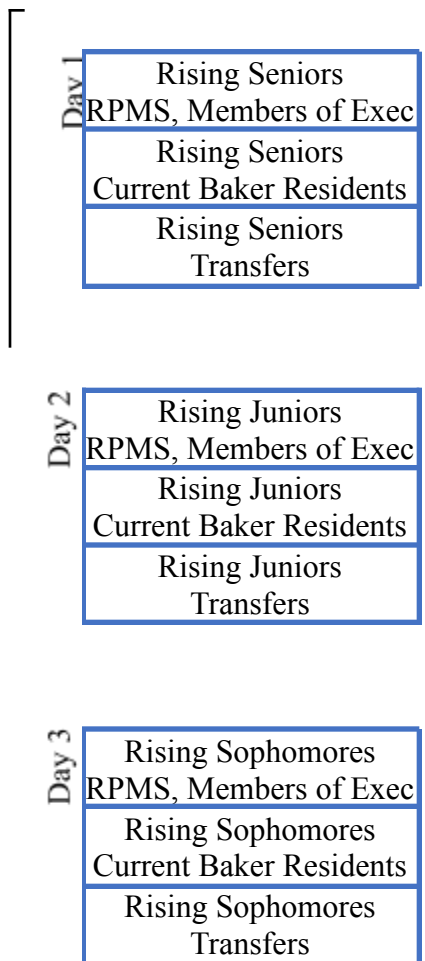


Figure 1 Room Sub-Pools

Figure 2 2011 RAC Application





Baker RAC App <https://spreadsheets.google.com/viewform?hl=en&formkey=dE91aWNL...>

### Baker RAC App

**\* Required**

**Name \***

  
**Year \***  
**Athena \***  
**Are you free tomorrow at 7pm for about an hour? \***

Yes

No

**Can you program/good with databases (access)? \***  
We may want to create a more automated system for rooming.

Yes

Maybe...

No

**Funny joke? \***

**Explain how connected you are in Baker/the different people you know. \***  
RACs should know different circles in Baker so they can make good decisions about rooming when it is up to their judgment.

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## Baker Rooming Policies

Baker RAC App

<https://spreadsheets.google.com/viewform?hl=en&formkey=dE91aWNL...>

**Characterize the social scene/makeup/people of each floor of baker. \***  
Just a quick sentence for each will do.

Submit

Powered by [Google Docs](#)

[Report Abuse](#) - [Terms of Service](#) - [Additional Terms](#)

2 of 2

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Figure 3 2011 Upperclassmen Room Preference Sheet



## Rooming Preference Sheet

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### Instructions

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The rooming chairs will be placing the most weight on the rankings that you make below, so please think carefully about what is most important to you for your room and who you would (or would not) like to live by! If you would like to have specific people as roommates, ALL involved must fill out the form. No squatting (staying in your current room without entering the lottery) is allowed. All students must complete this entire form and submit it by their class deadline. On the night your preference is due, we suggest keeping your phone available in case we need to contact you for any reason.

You may request a room switch after the lottery by contacting the rooming chairs in the 24 hr period after the results are posted. Please be advised: rooming assignments are FINAL and all changes are made at the discretion of the RAC. In general no changes will be made unless the rooming committee made a clear error in reading your preferences. Incomplete pref sheets or missed deadlines are NOT valid reasons for a reassignment and such requests will generally be denied.

Helpful links in making your choices:

- [Available Room Information](#) – including square footage and type
- [Floor Plans](#)

Deadlines:

- ALL Special Requests and Rising Seniors (2012) – Friday 4/29 at 11:00pm
- Rising Juniors (2013) – Wednesday 5/4 at 5:00pm
- Rising Sophomores (2014) – Sunday 5/8 at 12:00pm Noon

If you have questions or comments, contact the [Baker RAC](#).

### Your information

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Name	Phone where you can be reached	Current Room	Class
Michael E Plasmeier		512	2013

### Rankings

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When ranking, 1 is your first choice. Do not give any choices the same rank.

Rank the following in order of importance to your room choice (do not rank any the same)

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# Baker Rooming Policies

Rooming Preference Sheet   Baker House		<a href="https://baker.mit.edu/rooming/">https://baker.mit.edu/rooming/</a>	
- Floor	- Wing	- Size/Room Type	- Neighbor
Floor	Wing	Room Type	Size Tolerance
- 1st Floor	- East	- Coffin	I don't care about a difference in room size of - square feet or less, if my other priorities benefit.
- 2nd Floor		- Pie	
- 3rd Floor	- Central	- Couch	
- 4th Floor		- Front Double	
- 5th Floor	- West	- Back Double	I don't care about if my other priorities benefit.
- 6th Floor			
<b>People/Neighbors</b>			
<b>People you want to live with (ROOMMATE)</b>			
<input type="text"/>			
<b>People you want to live near: (rank in order!)</b>			
<input type="text"/>			
<b>People you cannot live near</b>			
<input type="text"/>			
<b>Other</b>			
If you have any other notes or considerations for the RAC and write them below. Note: you may list rooms in the order that you would prefer to be assigned below, but please remember that the rooming chairs will be using the above rankings as the primary factor in room assignments. If you would not like a specific room (or shape of room) for a certain reason please state that below.			
<input type="text"/>			
<input type="button" value="Submit"/> You can make changes to these preferences until the submission deadline			

