

## The Guide to Housing:

# Where to live while attending Penn State Behrend

By: Alec Italiano, sports editor

Housing can be one of the most frustrating aspects of the college life, especially for freshman or transfer students who do not know the basics of the housing process. Hopefully this article can be a guide for those students that need a little guidance on what to do, who to talk to, and maybe even a few shortcuts and secrets to make your living arrangements here at Behrend both more enjoyable and affordable.

### THE PROCESS

The first thing you need to do if you plan to live on campus is to request a housing contract, which can be done on [eliving.psu.edu](http://eliving.psu.edu). Once you are on the eliving website, all information to request a contract is all on the opening screen. The last day you can request a contract for the fall semester is Jan. 20, 2011 by noon, but make sure you request one well before that date because on-campus housing is extremely competitive.

At any point after you receive a contract you can easily drop it and opt for off-campus housing, so it does not hurt to request for one even if you are not sure of

your housing situation for the next year. After the contract request period ends on Jan. 20, you can then apply for a building you wish to live at up until Jan. 31. There is then a modification time throughout February where the housing department sorts through all the contracts and places students in their respective buildings.

When you apply for buildings there will have to be a first choice, a second choice, and a third choice.

**TIP** - when you apply for buildings, make sure you vary your options or else you will get reverted back to a freshman hall. For example if you apply for Tigress as your first

pick, Tiffany as your second, and Porcupine for your third, and all of them are full (Which they do fill up pretty fast) you will be reverted back to a freshman hall. So make sure you put Ohio hall or the on-campus apartments as one of your choices so that does not happen to you.

**NOTE** - Alcohol is legal to obtain and consume if you are of age in every dorm on campus **EXCEPT** the freshmen-only halls (Lawrence, Niagara, Perry, and Senate). Also, floor plans of all the on-campus halls are available online at [hfs.psu.edu/behrend/housing](http://hfs.psu.edu/behrend/housing).

### THE BUILDINGS

#### Tiffany, Tigress, and Porcupine

These suites are usually the most popular buildings for incoming sophomores and fill up quickly. They are nice buildings; rooms and closets are considerably bigger than the freshmen halls. The bathrooms are shared between only four people and are cleaned for you on a weekly basis, which is extremely convenient. The catch is that the halls are divided into eight separate hallways that each house eight students in four rooms and two bathrooms, so you need to basically apply with eight people for these to have a decent shot at getting in. Tip: Tigress is the building in the suites that has laundry facilities, so apply for that one first, and word on the street is that Tiffany is the next nicest building. Also, make sure all eight roommates request one another.

#### Ohio

Ohio is the biggest hall on campus with a max capacity of 263 students, and is responsible for housing many of the non-freshmen students that live on campus. Five stories high with two wings (one big, one small), and with the option for either single or roommate living, Ohio is the crown mansion of housing for Penn State Behrend. There are many pros and cons to living in Ohio. Pros include more privacy than the freshmen halls as two halls have a community bathroom with a private commode and shower facility, and has two sinks and tremendous counter space that is over fifteen feet long. Cons are that it is simply too big sometimes, and you do not get that hall bonding occurrence that so many freshman experienced. Groups tend to stick together there rather than grow and add new members. Also it is so far away from the heart of campus, you will get tired of walking to the edge of campus a couple times per day. But other than that, it has excellent laundry facilities, multiple private rooms to do homework and read, or even hold meetings. Also, the parking facilities are pretty close too; never need to deal with banana lot mania.

#### On-Campus Apartments

This is more of an option for juniors and seniors as you need to at least have 48 credits, or that the majority of the residents are 21 or older. There are a few exceptions to this rule, though, as a lot of sophomores do sometimes end up living there if there are a large amount of open buildings after a graduation, make sure to check with housing on these exceptions though if you are interested in living here as a sophomore. The pros to this living option are obvious: they have a kitchen, full bathroom, decently sized living room, and tremendously larger room sizes compared to the freshmen halls, almost double. They are very conveniently situated between three separate parking lots and classrooms. Drawbacks include two major things. First, you still have a roommate (which will become an issue the later you go in college if this does not concern you at the present) Secondly, it is still technically on-campus; this means you still have to follow all the parking rules, drinking rules, etc. There are two laundry facilities: One on the far end of the complex, and one under the 800s.

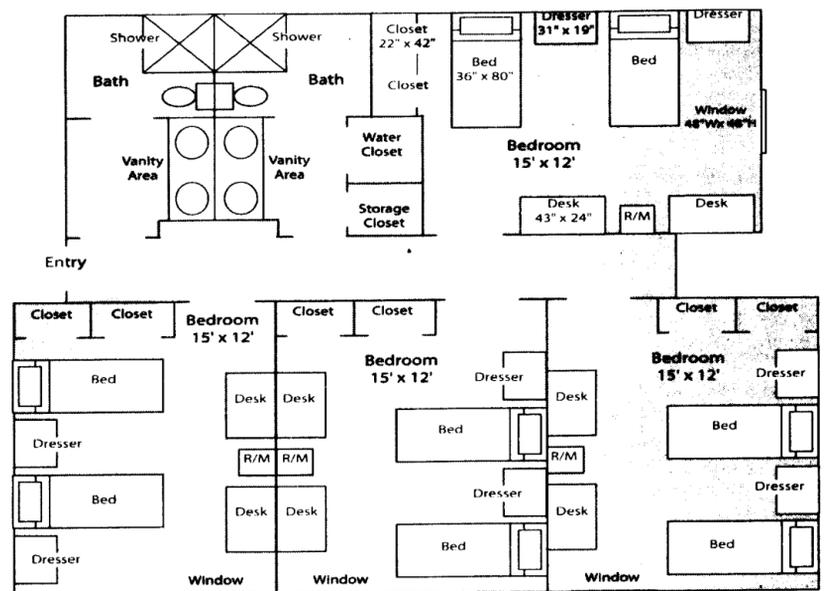
#### University Gate Apartments

The most prominent off-campus option is University Gate Apartments, aka U-Gates. They are situated right across the road from the main entrance to campus; the main office is attached to the Hungry Howie's pizza establishment right off of Station road. All range of students lives here, from freshmen to super seniors. With 12 separate buildings, three stories each, four rooms per floor and housing over 570 students, U-gates is the Las Vegas strip of Behrend that will stay awake deep into the early mornings on weekends. Parties are everywhere here on a Friday and Saturday night as students "party hop" from one apartment to the other. They are usually relatively calm on the weekdays as the people who live there are in fact students and need to be productive for a portion of the week.

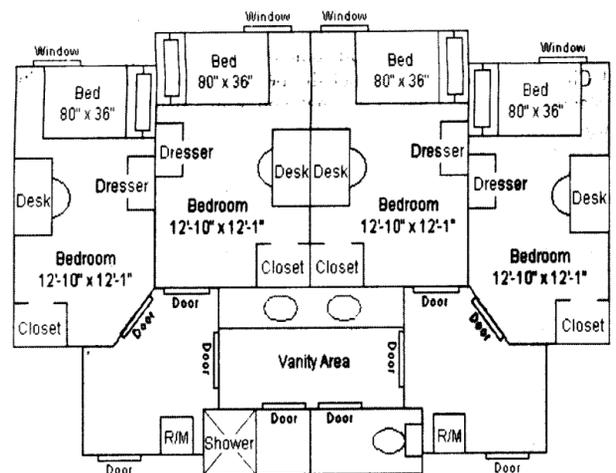
Appealing aspects of U-Gates are that they are the most comfortable living option for the cheapest price. They are cheaper to live at than on-campus (which is a nice little thing to tell the parents), especially if you do not get a meal plan, which is not uncommon at all. Features include full kitchen with a very handy island, two full bathrooms, four individual rooms, and a spacious living room with room for a full set of furniture and entertainment system. Another big pro and money saver is that parking down there is FREE. Possibly its best aspect is also its worst downfall as it is situated at the bottom of a very long hill that separates the apartment complex from campus. The walk to the Burke building (REDC) is notoriously known for being a terrible experience, especially in the winter months. If you want to drive a vehicle to class, you would be required to purchase a commuter parking pass (green pass).

Other than that, it is a noisy place at times and has a tendency to get rowdy at times. Tip: To apply for U-Gates, the first thing you need to do is call them for information on it (their number is 814-833-8900). Be persistent with them down there to ensure you get exactly what you want and have confirmation on it. Also, when picking a room, opt for a floor on the third and second floors before a first floor room; it is a lot more private and quiet than the ground floor.

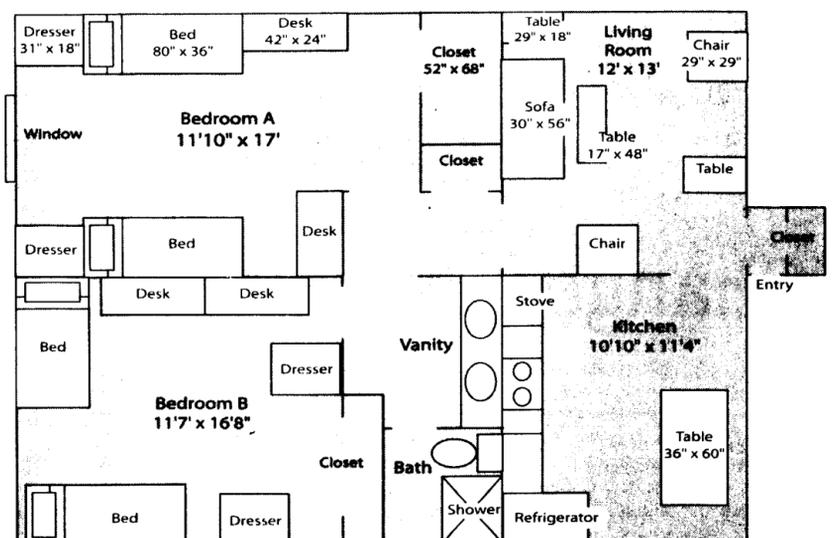
#### TIGRESS HALL



#### OHIO HALL SINGLES SUITE



#### APARTMENTS



#### Tips and Comments

Do not be afraid to go down to housing and question them about where you are living next year and what are all of your options. If assigned to a hall that you really do not want to be in, there is probably some solution to the dilemma, you just need to be reasonable with the housing staff. They are all extremely helpful and skilled at their job; trust me, I have visited them enough times. Also a helpful tip would be plan with your roommates, and make sure everyone is involved and on the same page, because all of this needs to be taken into consideration before a final decision is made.

#### Other Off-Campus Options

There are a few other off campus options with some apartment complexes in and around the Erie area. Popular off-campus sites are down Station Road and then down Saltsman Road. But there are no real walk able housing options except for a small row of houses behind Knowledge Park that are owned by a private real estate company.

I hope this was a good guideline for all students and parents debating their housing needs for future years. Again, refer any and all questions to the Housing department which is situated at the bottom of Senate, right across from the top entrance of Reed.