

Adams House

Suite Lottery Handbook for Upperclassmen

Are you ready to lottery? Please read all of the information contained in this booklet carefully. It is **only nine pages**. If after reading the handbook, you still have questions, feel free to reach out to the House Administrator with questions or to schedule a time to meet. But if your question starts with “what are our chances...,” know that I am not capable of predicting the behavior of 300 people, especially with all of the changes in Adams housing over the last few years.

For information on University housing deadlines, check the [Dean of Students Office](#) and the [Handbook for Students](#). The House-related deadlines appear below.

Best wishes in the lottery and remember that even the student with the last pick still gets a room in the best House!!

I. Dates

		Priority 2	Mixed	Priority 3
Senior House Lottery Housing Forms Due	Thursday April 9 th , 9am	some		
Senior House Lottery Night	Thursday April 9 th , 3:30pm	some		
Adams Housing Forms Due	Friday April 10 th , 9am	x	x	x
Regrouping Due	Monday April 13 th , 1pm	some		
Lottery Night I	Monday April 13 th , 7:30 pm	some		
Regrouping Due	Tuesday April 14 th , 1 pm	regroup	regroup	
Lottery Night II	Tuesday April 14 th , 7:30 pm	x	x	
Regrouping Due	Wednesday April 15 th , 1 pm			x
Lottery Night III	Wednesday April 15 th , 7:30 pm			x

Pay special attention to the deadlines. Groups that submit their Adams Housing Forms after the deadline will pick at the end of Night III.

II. Eligibility

Continuing students in the House who have not used their eight semesters of housing are automatically eligible for housing next year, as are students accepted round 1 Inter-House Transfers for the Fall Term. However, students returning from a leave of absence or from off-campus housing must first file a [Returning Student Housing Application](#) with the Dean of Students Office (DSO). If you missed the DSO deadline, which was in February, you can be added to the Space Available Waiting List, but you are not guaranteed on-campus housing and are not eligible to enter the Adams Housing Lottery unless you are taken off the Space Available Waiting List before the start of the lottery. All students are informed of this deadline as they file their leave.

III. Lottery Priorities

Everyone who enters the Lottery will be given a Priority as follows:

Class Standing*	Priority
Seniors	2
Juniors	3

* As of close of current term. This standing includes advanced standing eligible students who choose to use their senior standing early.

Special Cases:

- A. Students who have Taken Time Off: If you have taken time off, you may elect to be housed as if you were still a member of your original class. By doing this, you may live with your classmates. For example, if you have taken one or two semesters off and your original classmates are now seniors, you may enter the Lottery as Priority 2 even though you technically have junior standing. The sacrifice you make is that you will be Priority 3 in all future lotteries. You may only have senior standing (Priority 2) once. Select Priority 2 on your Adams Housing Form to take this option (see [Section V](#)).
- B. Sophomore Free Agents into Junior Rooms: If you are a current sophomore who was placed into a room with juniors, and you wish to lottery with those same juniors in the senior lottery, you may take senior standing. Think carefully about this, since you will be back to junior standing when you enter future lotteries. Select Priority 2 on your Adams Housing Form to take this option (see [Section V](#)).
- C. Students with Advanced Standing. If you have advanced standing and will be in your third year starting in the fall, you may enter the Lottery as Priority 2. However, if you decide to stay a fourth year, you will be Priority 3 for all future lotteries. You may only exercise this option if you are on the official list of students with advanced standing. Select Priority 2 on your Adams Housing Form to take this option (see [Section V](#)).
- D. Medical Exemptions: If you feel you have a legitimate medical condition which may qualify you for exemption from the lottery, contact the House Administrator immediately, as you'll

need to submit documentation to the [Disability Access Office](#).

- E. All Other Students: If you have neither taken time off, nor have advanced standing, your Priority is determined by your class. No exceptions!

IV. Forming a Rooming Group and Blocking

A rooming group (RG) is a group of students who plan to live in the same suite. The following things should be considered when forming a RG:

- A. **Compatibility:** Perhaps it goes without saying; you should plan to room with people with whom you are compatible. Adams House, as popular as it is, is normally always filled to capacity. Please know that the opportunities for resolving rooming conflicts by changing rooms once the fall term has begun are extremely limited. You should work out all roommate disputes before forming a RG.
- B. **Room Type/Group Size:** Floor plans and lists of available rooms will be available in advance of the housing lottery. We try to keep the floor plan information accurate, but once you have some idea of what you want, it is best to visit rooms. Just set up a time with the current residents. You might also inquire about quality-of-life issues like noise, sunlight, pests, etc. The list of available rooms will be updated periodically, so keep checking to see if any changes have been made. Group size is a consideration because you may only choose rooms designated for the exact size of your RG. For example, if everyone opted to form triples, only a fraction would be housed in the first round of the lottery and everyone else would have to regroup and try for other types of rooms.
- C. **Inter-House Transfers:** If you were successful at transferring to Adams House during the February transfer process, you are eligible for the lottery with your class according to all the policies here.
- D. **Mixed gender RGs:** mixed gender groups can form RGs in the same way as single-gender groups. Gender mix has no impact on the lottery.
- E. **Blocking:** Blocking allows RGs to choose rooms at the same time, usually for the purpose of living close to one another. Groups blocking together will be drawn as a single unit in the lottery (see [Section VI](#)), and each RG involved in a block chooses a room (or passes) when the unit is drawn. Blocking in the Adams lottery has nothing to do with your freshman blocking group, you do not need to block with the same people with whom you came into the House. The following three rules apply:
1. All members of a block must be of the same priority (mixed groups can block together, but a priority 2 group cannot block with a priority 3 group).
 2. The number of RGs in a single block may not exceed three. The number of people in a single block may not exceed nine.
 3. Rooms must be chosen based on the size and composition of the individual RGs within a block, not by the total size of the block. Please note that forming a block allows the selection of rooms at the same time but does not guarantee nor necessitate that the rooms chosen be close to one another.

F. Regrouping: A list of the rooming groups will be sent before each lottery night. You can evaluate your chances of getting a room you want based on the number of other groups of the same size. Groups will have one opportunity to regroup. These changes must be submitted to the House Administrator using the Regrouping Form by the dates provided on [page 1](#). Changes to RGs or blocks cannot be made after these times.

V. Entering the Lottery

Eligible participants will receive an email to complete the Adams Housing Form, which is an electronic form similar to a Google Form. If you do not receive an email with the Adams Housing Form and distribution is announced, contact the House Administrator. Students away for the current semester should assign a proxy in the House to handle their lottery participation by contacting the House Administrator.

Rooming groups and blocking groups can be created using the Adams Housing Form. Follow all directions on that form carefully.

If you know you will not be living in the House next year, please contact the House Administrator directly.

VI. The Lottery Process

Blocking/rooming group names will be displayed on the projection screen in the Dining Hall and sorted alphabetically, and numbers will be drawn for each group. After all blocking/rooming groups have their lottery numbers; we will begin calling groups to pick rooms. Each group will have 90 seconds to announce their selection.

The Senior House lottery is held on Thursday, April 9th at 3:30pm in the Lower Common Room.

Senior House Lottery: Only groups with priority 2 may enter the Senior House lottery. Senior House lottery groups must be 9 people. Nine person groups will select Senior House and the optional connected 5-person suite in Claverly 106. Groups entering the Senior House lottery should be aware that the connected 5 person suite (Claverly 106) has a door that can be closed and locked between the two suites. The door separating the suites is not soundproof.

All following lottery sessions will take place in the Adams Dining Hall and begin promptly (see [Section 1](#)). Night I will be for groups with Priority 2 only. Night II will be Priority 2 regroups, followed by mixed groups (and if applicable, mixed groups regroups). Night III will complete the process with Priority 3.

VII. After the Lottery

A. Taking a leave of absence/moving off-campus: If you choose a room but then decide to take a leave of absence or move off-campus, you must complete a [Housing Cancellation Form](#). If

you do not complete this form before the deadline, you will be billed for room and board and/or late cancellation fees. You must also contact your roommates so they can talk to the House Administrator about the Free Agent that will fill your space.

- B. Free Agents (aka “floaters”): If you are a Free Agent, or a member of your RG decides to take time off, you should contact the House Administrator as soon as possible about potential roommates. All available spaces will be filled before the fall term begins. These decisions will be made with as much attention as possible to the desires of everyone involved.
- C. Transferring out of Adams House: If you decide after the lottery that you would prefer to transfer out of the House, this may be accomplished over the summer. Application for Round 2 Interhouse Transfers and the deadline are listed on the [Dean of Students Office website](#).
- D. Swapping Rooms: If something changes about your rooming situation (e.g. suitemate going abroad, injury making selected room inaccessible), all housing changes must be made through the House Administrator. You may not trade rooms or roommates, nor may you give your room away. Once you have selected a room, that selection is final, which is why it is imperative that you do your research and visit rooms before the lottery. In the unusual event that a change is necessary, all changes will be executed with respect to personal considerations and issues of priority. In the end, the House Administrator has the authority to place students as they see fit. The lottery is an optional process.

Adams House

Suite Lottery Frequently Asked Questions

- 1) There are only three of us. Can we choose a quad and get a Free Agent?
 - A. No. You must choose a room designated as a triple.

- 2) Our roommate is taking fall term off. Can we be guaranteed to room together in the spring?
 - A. No. If you can find someone you know is taking spring term off, you can enter the lottery with them. When they leave and your roommate returns, you may request that your prodigal roommate join your room. The schmooze is a great way to discover someone who is planning to take spring term off.

- 3) I may be taking fall term off, but I'm not sure yet. Should I enter the lottery?
 - A. That is a personal decision, and you should discuss with your RG whether they would mind getting a Free Agent if you decide to leave, or whether it would be better if you entered the lottery as a Free Agent (or as a single). If you do decide to take a leave of absence, remember to cancel your housing before the deadline to avoid fees.

- 4) Is it possible to change my rooming configuration when my group's lottery number is called? Example: We go into the lottery as a quad, and when our number is up there are no good quads but some good doubles. Can we pick two doubles?
 - A. No. If you want to choose rooms in a different configuration than you entered the lottery, you'll need to PASS when your number comes up, and then regroup for the following session. There are two good reasons for this:
 - If you're in a double and there are 4 other doubles entering the lottery, you should be able to come to the lottery with 5 possible rooms knowing you'll get one of them. Allowing other groups to regroup ahead of you would throw your rooming situation into uncertainty.
 - It's important to work out the best rooming configuration for you in the days before the lottery; the minute you'll have to choose a room is not a good time to make a snap decision to break up your group.

After the initial list of RG sizes is posted, you will have ONE chance to regroup before your lottery session. This way, if it looks like quads (for example) are extremely popular this year, you can consider changing your configuration in advance.

- 5) Do all of the RGs in a block have to pass if one RG wants to pass?
 - A. Nope! One (or two) RGs in a block can pass and the other one (or two) can still choose a room. The groups that pass still have to wait for the end of the night to regroup.

- 6) What happens if we have two groups of the same size in a block, and only one room we want? How do we decide which one has to pass? Rock, paper, scissors in the dining hall?
 - A. Please don't! The best way is to decide (or flip a coin) ahead of time which group will get preference.

- 7) We are a group (mostly) of Seniors, but one of our roommates used Senior standing last year (or, is a rising Junior). We really want to live together, and we want Senior housing. Can we enter the Senior Lottery?
 A. No. You will have to enter the lottery as a mixed Junior/Senior group.
- 8) I have advanced standing (or took time off) and decided to take my senior standing to go into the mixed junior-senior lottery, but the senior groups took all the good rooms in the first lottery session. Can I regroup and switch back to Junior Standing (Priority 3)?
 A. No. Once you've gone into the lottery with Senior Standing, you're stuck with it. We don't usually recommend using up your senior standing to enter the mixed junior-senior lottery, as it means you'll never get the chance at true senior housing.
- 9) Can we form a mixed gender RG?
 A. Absolutely!
- 10) If my roommate enters the lottery then decides to take fall term off, will I be able to keep the whole room to myself?
 A. No. Vacancies are filled by Free Agents from the sophomore, junior, and senior classes.
- 11) We're a 5-person rooming group of three seniors and two juniors. If there are no quints left when we pick, in the mixed round will the juniors be able to pick a double?
 A. No. the seniors will be able to pick a triple, but the juniors will have to wait and enter the lottery in Session III.
- 12) If I go through the lottery as a senior, then decide to take time off after the lottery, do I sacrifice my senior standing?
 A. Not in most cases. The main exception is if you lottery with juniors and your senior standing allows them to lottery in session II instead of session III. If you never lived in the senior room that you selected or moved out of the senior room after only one semester, you are eligible to use priority 2 again. If you have lived in a room chosen with priority 2 for two semesters, you cannot use priority 2 again.
- 13) We have a friend who was assigned to Adams but took a year off after freshman year. Now I'm a rising junior but my friend is technically a rising sophomore. Can we still enter the junior lottery?
 A. Yes! Since you both entered Harvard in the same class, you can lottery together this year.
- 14) What happens the year after that? Can we lottery as seniors?
 A. You bet! Since you both entered Harvard in the same class, you can lottery together this year, too.

- 15) What about the year after that? I'll be long gone, but what will happen to my erstwhile roommate? Will they now have to take sophomore standing, yet one more insult to add to the hurt and abandonment?
- A. It's not that bad! I was just getting to that. Your roommate can only take senior standing once, but since junior standing doesn't have quite the same cachet, your roommate will have junior standing for their last year and will be able to enter the junior lottery.
- 16) So then, hey, if I'm a rising sophomore who HASN'T taken time off, but am advanced standing, can I take junior standing now?
- A. Nice try, Mr. Smarty-Pants Advanced Standing. You'll be housed with all the other rising sophomores.
- 17) But what happens if I'm a rising junior or senior who really wants to room with a rising sophomore who HASN'T taken time off, such as Mr. Smarty-Pants Advanced Standing, above? Can I still enter the lottery?
- A. If you are a rising junior, you can float and then you and your potential roommate can contact the House Administrator with preferences among the rooms that are left. Although you will probably be housed over the summer with the rest of the Free Agents and sophomores, you will get housing preference over all of the sophomore-only groups. Same if you are a rising senior and really want to live with a rising sophomore.
- 18) I'm a junior Free Agent, do I even need to show up at the lottery at all?
- A. Yes! Junior free agents may enter the lottery as a group of 1 and select hallway singles if there are any available. However, if all singles are exhausted, the process will revert to matching using a housing questionnaire over the summer.
- 19) I'm currently a rising junior but I took a gap year before enrolling at Harvard. Can I use my senior standing in this lottery?
- A. No. Only students who have taken time off since beginning their enrollment at Harvard can choose to use their senior standing early. Students who deferred enrollment or took gap year(s) before enrolling at Harvard must lottery with their academic class.
- 20) What happened to priority 1?
- A. The Adams House lottery used to include a priority 1 option for seniors with one semester remaining who had only lived in senior housing for 1 or 0 semesters to pick single rooms. Because Adams House now has many singles, seniors with one semester remaining are encouraged to use priority 2 (if eligible) to select a single. No students are eligible to take priority 1 because it no longer exists.
- 21) Hey House Administrator, when does storage start and how does it work?
- A. We do not provide summer storage in Adams House.
- 22) This document is peppered with warnings and stern pronouncements, and it all seems very frightening. What can I do to make my lottery experience less stressful?

- A. Do your homework -- visit rooms, talk with the House Administrator and tutors who have been through this process as students, and come to the lottery with a list of all the rooms for your group size, in the order you wish to pick them. If you're in a quad group, and there are 24 other quad groups in the lottery, then if you come with an ordered list of your top 25 available quads, then all you need to do is tick them off one by one until your lottery number is called. You may also want to decide in advance at what point you would rather pass and regroup later. If you have other considerations (i.e., you want to be close to or far from certain people), then you just need to put together a longer prioritized list.

Glossary

N+1 Suite: has one more room than people. A 3-person suite with three bedrooms and a study is N+1.

N Suite: has the same number of rooms and people. A 2-person suite with one bedroom and a study is N.

N-1 Suite: has one fewer room than people. A 4-person suite with two bedrooms and a common room is N-1.

-End-