

A GUIDE TO STUDENT ACCOMMODATION

The college keeps a list of local accommodation suppliers and details are provided on request. All accommodation on this list has been selected on the basis of compliance with gas and electricity regulations and the general suitability of the living conditions.

However it is your responsibility to select a property, satisfy yourself as to its suitability and agree to rent/sign the contract. We strongly recommend that you view the property before entering into an agreement.

TYPES OF ACCOMMODATION AVAILABLE

Homestay (lodging in a private home)

Available 5 or 7 days a week

Suitable for students aged 16-18 years old or those living away from home for the first time

Host(s) will provide you with breakfast and evening meal from Monday to Friday and full board at the weekend, if you select the 7 days-a-week option

You will have a private bedroom with a place to study and access to normal washing and living facilities

Rented by the week

Costs range from £75 to £120, usually payable weekly in advance

Contract/rental period usually for full academic year (Sept to June), term time only

Deposit* usually required

Notice period usually four weeks

Self catering (renting a room in an unoccupied property)

Available in flats, bedsits and shared houses

Suitable for students 18 years old and over, who want more independence and to cook for themselves

Rental period is usually for the full academic year (Sept to June)

Costs range from £60 to £90, which may include some bills

Deposit* usually required and rent payable monthly in advance

Rent is normally payable during vacations

Notice period varies - check with landlord

**Deposits are held against damage and returned at the expiry of the tenancy. The amount of the deposit may vary but is usually four weeks rent.*

Before viewing accommodation

Step 1: Read the accommodation list very carefully and select several potentially suitable properties. It is often useful to check their location on a map (e.g. www.streetmap.co.uk).

Step 2: Contact the landlord to check availability and ask any further questions you may have before deciding if you want to view.

Step 3: Arrange directly with the landlord a date and time to view the property.

We strongly recommend that you view one or more properties before agreeing to rent. Although this may be inconvenient if you live far from college, taking the trouble to do this will greatly increase your chances of being happy where you live!

Viewing and selecting accommodation

After making an appointment to view a room:

Keep to the agreed time

If you are delayed, call the landlord to explain

Ask to see each room that you will be able to use

Take your time looking at each room and try not to allow the landlord to rush you. After all, you may be living there for several months or longer so you need to be clear about what is on offer

Wherever possible, view more than one property before deciding

Finance and Contracts

How much is the rent? Does it vary between different rooms in the house and is this clearly documented?

How much is the deposit? When is it payable and how is it returned?

Are any bills included in the rent? How much are they likely to be?

When and how is rent payable?

What kind of occupancy agreement/contract is being used (e.g. Licence agreement, Assured Shorthold Tenancy, etc)

How long is the agreement for and does it cover holiday periods?

Is an inventory of condition and furniture to be provided?

Are any works due to be undertaken prior to the commencement of the agreement?

Once you have selected a property

Step 1: Make sure you understand the terms of the rental agreement or contract you will have to sign. If unsure about anything, please seek further clarification.

Step 2: Sign contract and agree start/moving-in date.

Step 3: Ensure that you arrange adequate insurance cover for your possessions before you move into the property (the landlord will insure the building)

Step 4: Make arrangements with a local doctor's surgery. (*Details are available from Student Services*).

Living in the Property

Make sure that you have sufficient funds to pay the rent on time - this is your legal responsibility!

Keep records (receipts) of any payments made to the landlord (if you pay in cash, you MUST insist on a receipt as this will be your only proof of having paid)

When you move in, ensure that you agree a detailed inventory of house contents and any existing damage with the landlord (this should be a written list signed by both parties)

Respect the owners fixtures and fittings, e.g. burn marks on carpets/furniture could cost you your entire deposit

If you break/damage anything (deliberately or accidentally) inform the owner immediately

Always report any maintenance/repair requirements immediately to the landlord

Clean the house properly on a regular basis

Ensure that the house is in a clean condition at the end of the tenancy

Arrange an end of tenancy visit by the landlord

Return the keys on the day you move out

Resolving Problems

If you have any problems with the accommodation, you should always talk to the landlord in the first instance. Most issues can be resolved in this way. If speaking to the landlord does not resolve the issue or if, for any reason, it is not possible to deal with the landlord, you should contact Student Services staff, who will be happy to help, advise and mediate, if necessary.

VIEWING CHECKLIST

The following is a detailed, but not necessarily exhaustive list of things to check/ consider when viewing a property and deciding whether to rent or not.

Outside the property

- Is there a garden? Who maintains it?
- Are the windows, doors and other external woodwork in sound condition?
- Is there adequate facility for disposal of refuse?

Security and safety

- Are all external doors solid?
- Do all ground floor windows have locks?
- Do all rooms have suitable curtains or blinds?
- Is there an electrically operated fire alarm system?
- If not, are there battery smoke detectors?
- Are there any fire extinguishers/fire blanket in the property?
- In the event of a fire, are means of escape clear?
- If you are living with a family, you may want to see CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) certificates.

Furniture

- Do all rooms have a bed, desk, wardrobe and suitable floor covering?
- Does all the furniture comply with furniture regulations on fire safety?
- Are there enough kitchen cupboards for everyone?
- Is all the furniture in good condition? Is any due for replacement?
- Do all the fixtures and fittings meet legal requirements?

Bathroom/heating

- Is the bathroom in good condition?
- Is there hot water on demand (or is it tank-fed)?

Electricity and Gas

- Do all of the rooms have adequate electrical sockets?
- Does the cooker work?
- Do extractor fans in the kitchen and bathroom work?

Laundry

- Is there a washing machine (and tumble dryer)? Is there an extra charge?

Television

- Is there a TV in the house? If so, does the landlord pay the licence fee?

Telephone

- Is there a telephone? Can you make external calls? How is this charged for?
- Is there an internet/broadband connection? How is this charged for?

Keys

- Lodging in a private home - will the host provide you with your own key?

House Rules

- Check what these are (e.g. smoking, curfew [lodging in private homes])