

UNIVERSITY OF SURREY LETTINGS

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UNIVERSITY OF
SURREY



A Student's Guide to Renting

A guide to private sector accommodation



GETTING STARTED

Welcome to the University of Surrey's guide to student renting.

One of the most anticipated parts of university life is entering the private rental sector. It's a rite of passage for many students, and although living with friends and increasing your independence is highly exciting – it can also be challenging.

This guide will lead you through each stage of the renting process from when you first consider renting, all the way through to signing your contract. We will provide you with all the information you need to make moving into the private sector an easier and more informed transition.

Getting Started

When looking for accommodation in the private sector there are three main things you will need to consider. These are who your housemates are going to be, where you want to live and what your budget is.

Who?

The first step in organising a house share is to carefully consider who you want to live with. Your university experience so far may have gifted you with steadfast friendships, but your closest friends don't always make the best housemates.

It's always worth sitting down with potential housemates and discussing your wants, needs and expectations for sharing a house together. It's important to talk through potential issues or differences before committing to a year of living together.

Where?

Once you've got your group together you can begin to think about where you want to live and what you want from the location.

It is also important to consider the travel options available in different areas. Living in the centre of town can be more expensive than living slightly further afield, so as long as your house has good transport links you shouldn't be put off considering locations further away.

How Much?

Arguably one of the most important things to think about is your budget and it is crucial to decide upon the maximum monthly rental amount you can afford. Your rent and bills will take up a large chunk of your funds and you'll also need to consider additional costs such as travel, food, books, socialising and contents insurance.

If you are planning on renting in a group, make sure that everyone in your group has decided their budget and that it is similar to your spending. The Student Services Centre offers advice and budgeting plans to help students plan ahead.

YOUR JOURNEY

From house viewings to move-in day - this is your step-by-step guide to the private sector rental process!

1 Prepare your paperwork

References and documentation at the ready!
Go to [page 6](#) for a handy list of what paperwork you may need.

2 Gather your housemates

Have your group confirmed before you start looking and try to always view properties with everyone present.

3 Start looking

Register your interest with letting agencies who will notify you when new properties become available and also search online.

4 Book viewings

The student letting market is highly competitive, especially for three and four bedroom properties, so be proactive and organise house viewings as soon as you're ready.

DID YOU KNOW?

THE MOST POPULAR WEBSITES INCLUDE STUDENTPAD, SPAREROOM, RIGHTMOVE, ZOOPLA AND ONTHEMARKET.

TOP TIP

GATHER YOUR REFERENCES BEFORE YOU START YOUR PROPERTY SEARCH. THIS WILL MAKE SECURING ACCOMMODATION A MUCH EASIER PROCESS.

6 Understand the fees

Insist on a breakdown of your fees and ensure that you understand them before making an offer.

5 View the property

Take your time during a viewing and pay attention to the condition of the property, the neighbourhood and who your neighbours will be.

Turn to [page 7](#) for a checklist of what you should look out for.

TOP TIP

BEFORE YOU CALL, MAKE NOTE OF YOUR AVAILABILITY AND CONSIDER HOW YOU'LL GET TO EACH VIEWING.

TOP TIP

IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO MOVE INTO THE PROPERTY FOR REASONS BEYOND YOUR CONTROL IT MAY BE UNFAIR FOR THE AGENCY NOT TO RETURN YOUR HOLDING DEPOSIT. YOU SHOULD SEEK ADVICE IF THIS HAPPENS TO YOU.

7 Hold the property

Most agencies will require a deposit to take the property off the market whilst you're finalising everything.

DID YOU KNOW?
THE UNIVERSITY OFFERS A CONTRACT CHECKING SERVICE.

8 Read the contract

Read it, learn it, love it! Whilst the contract can be time consuming to review, it is important to understand what you are agreeing to.

DID YOU KNOW?
THE AGENCY CANNOT CHARGE YOU FEES BEFORE YOU HAVE AGREE TO TAKE THE TENANCY.

9 Find a guarantor

Your guarantor is financially responsible for the rent should you default on payments. They must be based in the UK and in most cases be a home owner.

11 Move in!

You've secured your next home and celebrations are in order. Time to start thinking about packing!

DID YOU KNOW?

THE DEPOSIT AMOUNT IS NOT REFUNDED ACCORDING TO WHO CAUSED THE DAMAGE OR HASN'T PAID THEIR RENT. BE AWARE YOU MAY HAVE DEDUCTIONS FROM YOUR SHARE OF THE DEPOSIT IF ANOTHER TENANT CAUSES DAMAGE.

10 Pay your deposit

Tenancy deposits give your landlord protection in the event of damage or unpaid rent and normally equate to four to six weeks of your rent. It must be held in an approved deposit protection scheme until the end of your tenancy and you must be provided with a deposit registration certificate within 30 days of moving in.

TOP TIP

IF YOU DO NOT HAVE A UK BASED GUARANTOR YOU COULD USE A GUARANTOR COMPANY SUCH AS HOUSING HAND OR THE UNIVERSITY ALSO OFFER AN INTERNATIONAL GUARANTOR SCHEME.

DOCUMENTATION CHECKLIST

When it comes to looking for your next home it always helps to be well prepared.

It's likely that throughout the process, as laid out on the previous page, you'll need to complete referencing checks and supply various pieces of documentation. It is essential that you have collected all relevant documentation **before** you start your property search.

Preparing your documents ahead of time will hopefully mean that the referencing process takes no more than one to two weeks, and it's important to remember that guarantors will be required to provide the same documents as you.

It is crucial to have all documentation prepared ahead of time, as without referencing the rental process cannot proceed.

Possible documents that you could be asked to provide:



PASSPORT



VISA
(IF REQUIRED)



PROOF OF CURRENT ADDRESS
(DATED WITHIN THE LAST THREE MONTHS)



UNIVERSITY ENROLMENT LETTER



EMPLOYMENT REFERENCE



CREDIT CHECK



CURRENT OR PREVIOUS LANDLORD REFERENCE



To Let



PROPERTY CHECKLIST

When viewing a property for the first time there are certain things you should be looking out for. Our best advice is to take your time, ask questions, talk to the existing tenants and take our handy property checklist with you!

- » **Damp** – signs of this common problem are flaking paint or wallpaper, patches of black mould and a musky smell
- » **Rats, mice and other pests** – tell-tale signs are rodent droppings, traps and unexplained noises
- » **Security and safety** – is there a burglar alarm system, safety locks on the doors and is the road well-lit at night? Check for working fire alarms, extinguishers and fire blankets
- » **Electrical appliances** – do they cater sufficiently for your needs as a group and are they in working order?
- » **Furnishings and fittings** – have a clear idea of what is included in the tenancy agreement and be aware that landlords of student houses should provide a suitable desk and chair for each tenant
- » **The water supply** – check the water pressure by turning on the taps
- » **Insulation** – a well-insulated house will save you money on energy bills! Check for secure doors, a good heating system and double glazed windows
- » **Ventilation in kitchen/bathroom** – this is essential, so look out for extractor fans
- » **Location** – how close is the house to the campus, shops, transport links and other key amenities?
- » **Neighbours** – talk to the current tenants if possible about their experiences with their neighbours. Are they professionals, a family or other students?

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR LANDLORD OR LETTINGS AGENCY

What to ask

When preparing to sign a contract make sure that you have asked all the right questions. We've recommended questions to ask your landlord or lettings agency before making any big decisions:







LETTINGS AGENCIES

Working together

On the opposite page is your guide to the lettings agencies currently working in partnership with the University of Surrey to help students find suitable accommodation across Guildford, Woking and the surrounding area.

Please note that they will only register your interest once you have collected your references and are in a position to proceed with the process. If you have any questions or want to discuss living in the private sector with one of our expert advisors please contact us:

E: usl@surrey.ac.uk | T:01483 681 111

or visit us in person at the Accommodation Office in the Philip Marchant building on Stag Hill campus.

Agency	Romans (Guildford)	Belvoir (Guildford)	County Property Management (Woking)	Seymour's (Woking)
Fees	£300 per tenant (this includes the guarantor fee)	£120 to £200 per tenant plus a £96 guarantor application fee	£204 for the first tenant and £156 for each tenant thereafter Check-in and check-out fees Insurance (approx. £8.50 per month)	£210 tenancy agreement £84 referencing fee per tenant Inventory Fee
Guarantor details	Pays six months in advance UK-based guarantor is required for all tenants Guarantors are severally liable	Pays six months in advance UK-based guarantor is required for all tenants Guarantors are jointly and severally liable	Pays six months in advance UK-based guarantor is required for all tenants International government confirmation of payment is required for Saudi tenants	Pays six months in advance UK-based guarantor is required for all tenants
Upfront payments	One month's rent (if not paying six monthly) Six weeks' rent as a security deposit	One month's rent (if not paying six monthly) A month and a half's rent as a security deposit	One month's rent (if not paying six monthly) Six weeks' rent as a security deposit	One month's rent (if not paying six monthly) A month and a half's rent as a security deposit
References	Passport (and visa) Confirmation of studies Proof of address Bank statements (if not paying six monthly)	Passport (and visa) Confirmation of studies Proof of address Credit check Confirmation of income	Passport (and visa) Confirmation of studies Bank statements (if not paying six monthly) Copy of appropriate insurance	Passport (and visa) Confirmation of studies Proof of address Referencing form
Contact	01483 483268 guildfordlettings@romans.co.uk	01483 537200 guildford@belvoir.co.uk	01483 883939 lettings@countyp.com	01483 741308 taylor@seymours-woking.co.uk
Notes	A holding deposit of £500 is payable to hold the property. However if the let does not proceed due to students withdrawing or failing the referencing process this deposit is non-refundable.	A holding deposit of £500 is payable to hold the property. However if the let does not proceed due to students withdrawing or failing the referencing process this deposit is non-refundable.	A holding deposit of £500 is payable to hold the property. However if the let does not proceed due to students withdrawing or failing the referencing process this deposit is non-refundable.	A holding deposit of £500 is payable to hold the property. However if the let does not proceed due to students withdrawing or failing the referencing process this deposit is non-refundable.

TEAM OVERVIEW

Betty Jensen
Property Management
Administrator

Betty is responsible for the day-to-day smooth running of properties managed under the University Head Lease Scheme. This includes arranging maintenance, inspections and safety certifications.

Charlotte Minall
Property Management
Co-ordinator

Charlotte ensures the effective management of the Universities Head Lease Scheme property portfolio.

Liani Mannifield
Lettings Agency
Manager

Liani leads the development, implementation and subsequent operational management of the University's private sector housing Lettings Agency. Her department is responsible for providing a high quality commercial service to landlords combined with a comprehensive advice and support service for students.



Elliot Knight
Lettings
Co-ordinator

Elliot plays a key role in recruiting new landlords to utilise the lettings agency and also manages our partnerships with lettings agencies.

Emily Frame
Housing Advice
Co-ordinator

Emily provides advice, guidance and support to students renting or looking to rent in the private sector alongside awareness raising campaigns.



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Disclaimer

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this brochure at the time of going to print (August 2016).

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