Private Accommodation - Frequently Asked Questions

Should I look for accommodation before leaving my home country?
This is not recommended. There are many websites advertising property for rent, and although the adverts may look ideal, they may not be legitimate. Therefore, take time to research and don’t rush into paying money without verifying that the property is legitimate and the company/owner/landlord is genuine.

How will I know if the advertisement is genuine?
Dundee City Council (local authority) http://uod.ac.uk/intl-050 have a responsibility to ensure that all landlords are registered to rent out properties. Therefore, do not hesitate to get in touch with Dundee City Council, as it may save you time and money.

In Dundee more than 8000 households rent their homes from a private landlord or agent. Private renting is probably your best option if you are looking for somewhere to stay quickly or looking for somewhere that is furnished or if you’re looking for short-term accommodation.

These are usually a self-contained flat or house, a shared flat or house with other tenants, a House in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) http://uod.ac.uk/intl-051 or a room in your landlord’s house or flat

There are many private landlords in Dundee, ranging from letting agencies to individual owners. The rent tends to be more than similar properties owned by the council or housing associations and the standard of accommodation and management can vary. In 2006 a national Private Landlord Registration http://uod.ac.uk/intl-053 scheme was set up and all private landlords in the city must be registered with Dundee City Council. All registered landlords will be able to produce a registration number.

Dundee City Council are responsible renting through Dundee Landlord Accreditation http://uod.ac.uk/intl-052 working with local landlords and letting agents to promote and recognise those who take a responsible approach to letting their properties and support the good practice already going on in the city.

Rental advertising jargon - what does it all mean?
When you look at classified advertisements for rental properties you could find yourself confused by all the abbreviations. But don’t worry use our handy jargon guide:

- **GCH** = gas central heating
- **WM** = white meter for electricity
- **WC** = water closet (toilet)
- **N/S** = no smoking
- **DG** = double glazing
- **CT** = council tax
- **PCM** = per calendar month
- **PW** = per week
- **lge** = large
- **sm** = small
- **rm** = room

Preparing to find accommodation on arrival in Dundee
Give yourself a few days to recover from your journey before you sign for a rental property. During your first week you will meet people who will be happy to share information with you and help point you in the right direction.

Where can I find temporary accommodation for a few days?
There are plenty of hotels and small bed and breakfasts close to the University campus at: visitscotland.com/accommodation/ to check the available accommodation on a daily basis.

How close to the University do you want to live?
The closer you live to the University, the more it may cost, depending on the postcode: DD1 will generally cost more than properties at DD2, DD3, and DD4. However, you may find that some properties may appear to be less expensive, but they may not always be owned by registered landlords. The UK Government requires all landlords to be registered.

The flat I have looked at is not clean. Do I have to clean it when I move in?
No, you should not have to clean when you move in. Your landlord has a responsibility to rent you a clean, wind and water tight property.

The landlord promises to replace some of the carpets and furniture if I sign the lease now, but how do I know he will?
You can ask the landlord to put any replacements/changes in writing before you sign the lease or move in to the property.

The landlord says I don’t need a lease or a receipt for the deposit and rent, is this true?
No, this is not true. You are entitled to a proper written receipt, and you are strongly advised not to make payment without receiving a receipt on headed paper. This is your evidence of purchase.

The lighting outside the property is very poor, and there is a lot of rubbish lying around, is this acceptable?
No, this is not acceptable. There should be adequate lighting. If there is a security entry door, it should be working and rubbish should not be lying around.

How much money should I pay as a deposit?
Normally you are asked to pay one month rent and one month deposit. However, that is usually if you can provide a UK referee. If you are not in a position to do so, then try to negotiate a discount if you are asked to pay for several months in advance.

Where can I get a reference?
If you have stayed in University residences, you can request a reference from the Residences office. If you stayed in private accommodation, please contact your previous landlord.

What is a Tenancy Agreement/Contract?
Once you have found a suitable place to rent, you will need to agree terms with your landlord, sign a tenancy agreement and pay a deposit and rent in advance. You may also be asked to provide references. If you are renting through an agency, they may charge you a fee. However, it is illegal for a landlord or letting agency to charge you money for a key.

What if I have signed a Tenancy Agreement, and then I find somewhere cheaper?
When you sign a tenancy agreement, you have entered into a legally binding contract. You either have to find a replacement tenant, or you will have to pay for two rented properties.

Some landlords believe they can take advantage of students, mainly because they do not know their housing rights. It is essential that you take you time to get the best value for money and the best property you can afford.

Students with Dependents
The University of Dundee does not operate accommodation for students with a partner and or children. Dundee has a large number and variety of private sector accommodation. Families living in private sector housing need to make their own arrangement, although this is far easier when the student is in Dundee. Therefore, it is recommended that a student with family arrive in Dundee alone (unless family accommodation has been confirmed) and send for their family only when they have found suitable accommodation. Alternatively, a student with family may expect to require hotel/B&B accommodation initially to provide the opportunity to secure suitable housing for their family.

If it is of assistance, the University would normally be able to offer temporary (minimum charge - one week) SINGLE accommodation during the academic summer vacation (early June to late August) to allow students the opportunity to arrange suitable family accommodation. Please note: single accommodation is NOT suitable
for a family or a couple even on a temporary basis. Contact the Residences Office for single accommodation information. residences@dundee.ac.uk

**Where can I get further help?**

DUSA | The Union provide advice on issues in relation to private accommodation including:

- Tell you about DUSA’s Housing Accreditation Scheme and DUSA Housing
- Explain your rights and responsibilities as a tenant
- Lease checks
- Give advice on your landlord’s rights and responsibilities
- Help with inventory and deposits
- Give advice on repair issues

Answer questions on any other housing mater…

For further details visit the DUSA | The Union website: [https://www.dusa.co.uk/advice/housing/](https://www.dusa.co.uk/advice/housing/)