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. They work 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. Dundee City Council are responsible for renting through Dundee Landlord Accreditation http://uod.ac.uk/intl-052 so please check this website before enquiring.

What does houses of multiple occupation mean?
A simple definition of an HMO is a house or flat which is occupied by 3 or more unrelated persons. The term can apply to hostels, including student residences, bedsits and shared flats. http://uod.ac.uk/intl-051 All HMO landlords must have an HMO license.

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: http://www.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?
UoD-Int-Adv 24-Jan-18
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 landlord is also required by law to provide you with a copy of your tenancy agreement within 28 days of you signing contract.

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. However, as of 1 December 2017, all new tenancies in Scotland will be Private Residential Tenancies. The contract is open-ended that means you can end the tenancy whenever you like as long as you give at least 28 days’ notice. If the landlord ask you to leave, they must give you at least 28 days’ notice based on at least one of the 18 grounds of eviction. For more information on Private Residential Tenancies, please see video guide from Shelter Scotland and the Scottish government at https://tinyurl.com/tenancyprt.

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 their family join them only when they have found suitable accommodation. Alternatively, a student arriving with family would be advised to obtain 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 relating to private accommodation and answer any questions on housing matters for students 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

For further details visit the student hive, Level 4 DUSA | The Union website: dusa.co.uk/advice/housing/