

Student Accommodation (Privately Rented Accommodation)

Some Basic Guidelines

We appreciate that where you live is a very important part of your life at the Arts & Business College of London and we recognise that meeting your needs as far as possible will help you to make the most of this new and exciting period in your life.

the Arts & Business College of London does not have any Student Hostel or Student Accommodation Facilities. During your time at the Arts & Business College of London you will therefore have to either live in the private rented accommodation or with friends/relatives. Our staff will be able help and advice you as necessary in finding the most suitable accommodation for you.

We are unable to rent flats or houses on students' behalf. Renting a flat or a house requires you to sign a contract or a tenancy agreement which we cannot do on your behalf. If your preference is to stay in a privately rented house or a flat, we may arrange for a short term accommodation (2-4 weeks) until you find a suitable flat or a house.

Temporary arrangements

If you have any friends or relations in the area arrange to stay with them on a temporary basis while you look for somewhere to live. It is important that you do not arrive here without having arranged for somewhere to stay when you first arrive, at least for your first few nights.

Private rented accommodation

An alternative to a place in hostels is accommodation in the private sector, for example staying in lodgings with a family, or sharing a house or flat with other students.

The following web sites provide assistance with finding private rented accommodation:

There are different types of private accommodation; the most popular are as follows:

<http://www.radissonblu-edwardian.com/london-hotel-gb-wc1b-3qd/gbmarlbo>

Bedsit / Hostels

A single or double room in which you live and sleep; the room is both a bedroom and a sitting room (living room).

The cooking, bathroom and laundry areas are usually shared. Services such as cleaning and changing of sheets are often provided. If the room is in a building belonging to an Institution, it is usually called a 'hall of residence'.

Studio Flat

A small flat where the living room and bedroom are combined (a flat is known as an "apartment" in American English).

Usually the room has its own entrance and you are free to come and go when you want. There is usually a small bathroom, but this may only contain a basin, toilet and shower. A 'maisonette' is similar, but is usually not all on one floor.

Flat Share / Shared House

A "flat share" is when you share a flat with one or more other people. You may have your own room, or alternatively you may share a twin-bedded or double-bedded room with another person.

A "student house" usually refers to a private house which is occupied by a group of students (sometimes called "student digs").

B&B (" bed and breakfast "), Guest House

A room, usually part of someone's home, which the owners are renting out to make some money. Breakfast is provided, but no evening meal. The bathroom is probably shared with other guests.

Money and Legal Matters

Contract:

When you rent a studio flat or a flat or a house you will normally be expected to sign a contract or tenancy agreement. Contracts/tenancy agreements are usually signed for a period of 6 months (minimum) to 1 year. You may be required to pay a security deposit which will be retained by the landlord until you have moved out provided there are no damages to a property and that you have given a sufficient notice to vacate your property.

Please check the following before signing a contract or a tenancy agreement:

Do you have to pay a deposit, and when do you have to pay rent?

Which bills are not included in the rent? (Water / gas / electricity / council tax / telephone line rental).

If you want to move out of the accommodation, how much notice do you need to give the landlord?

Do you feel you can trust the owner?

If you are with a host family, what is their main reason for wanting to accept a student into their home? If the main reason is to make money, in some cases the family may not speak to you often, may provide very cheap meals, or may argue about small matters such as the amount of toilet paper or water that is being used. Problems are more likely to occur in popular student locations at time when there are many students in the town (for example, September/October) - there may be a lot of demand, and too little supply of quality host families.

Tenancy Agreement

It is risky to rent somewhere without a legal agreement between you and the landlord (or accommodation agency).

The most common type of agreement is known as an assured shorthold tenancy (AST). As long as you pay the rent and do not break the conditions in the tenancy agreement, you have the right to stay for 6 months. After 6 months, if your landlord wants you to leave, he/she should give you details (in a written letter) at least 2 months before the date on which you are expected to leave.

If you have a licence agreement (you are living in the same place as the landlord), the notice period may be shorter than for a tenancy agreement, for example 1 month.

You should read the agreement carefully before you sign it. If you do not understand something, ask for someone to explain it to you.

Term/Period: contracts/tenancy agreements are usually signed for a term (period) of 6 months (minimum) to 1 year.

Check the following before signing a contract:

- How long does the agreement last?
- Is there a minimum period that you can rent the accommodation?
- Will you have the opportunity to rent the accommodation for a longer period?
- How much warning do you need to give the landlord if you wish to leave?

Rent and Bills

Check the following before signing a contract/tenancy agreement:

- How much is the rent? When must the rent be paid?
- How often are rent reviews (when the amount of the rent can be increased)?

- Does the rent include council tax? Does the rent include water charges? If not, how much are these?
- How are charges for gas, electricity, telephone line rental or calls or the charges for the television licence for a shared TV divided between the people living in the accommodation?
- Deposit and Inventory: you may be required to pay a security deposit which will be retained by the landlord until you have moved out provided there are no damages to a property and that you have given a sufficient notice to vacate your property. You may be required to sign an inventory (a list of all the items in the room/flat).

Check the following before signing a contract or a tenancy agreement:

- How much is the deposit?
- When you leave, how quickly will your deposit money be returned to you?
- Under which circumstances will the landlord keep your deposit?

Check the inventory carefully before you sign the tenancy agreement.

Make a list of anything that is damaged (for example, note any scratches, cracks or stains) and give a copy of this to your landlord.

You may want to take photographs as soon as you move into the room, to prove that any damage was not caused by you.

If anything is missing or damaged when you leave, your landlord may try to keep part of your deposit to pay for these.

Further Assistance

Please book an appointment with our Student Welfare Officer for further information or assistance.