WELCOME

With around two-thirds of our students living in the local area, life at the University extends much further than our campuses.

This guide has been designed to assist new students looking for somewhere to live in the local area, as well as current students looking to move out of halls into the community.

With tips on where to look for housing, finding housemates, and useful checklists for house viewings, we hope that this guide will help to make your house search as smooth as possible.
FINDING A PLACE

Types of private accommodation

- **Private, shared housing** – This is the most common type of privately rented accommodation. You will rent a room in a house/flat with other students.

- **Private, shared housing with your landlord** – You rent a room in a house/flat and live with your landlord.

- **Private, individual housing** – You rent a house/flat on your own.

- **Purpose built student accommodation** – halls of residence.

WHERE TO LOOK

There are many student houses and purpose built accommodation in areas near to the University’s Whiteknights and London Road campuses, such as Basingstoke Road, Cemetery Junction, Christchurch Road and Wokingham Road areas.

If you live close to the University and the centre of town you may save money on travel, however houses further away may charge lower rents.

### Estate Agents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Estate Agents</th>
<th>Website</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Phone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Atlantis Estates</td>
<td>atlantisestates.co.uk</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mail@atlantisestates.co.uk">mail@atlantisestates.co.uk</a></td>
<td>0800 612 1515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chancellors Student Lettings</td>
<td>chancellors.co.uk</td>
<td><a href="mailto:student.lettings@chancellors.co.uk">student.lettings@chancellors.co.uk</a></td>
<td>0118 950 4111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cintra Estates</td>
<td>cintraestates.com</td>
<td><a href="mailto:info@cintraestates.com">info@cintraestates.com</a></td>
<td>0118 931 1211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haart</td>
<td>haart.co.uk</td>
<td><a href="mailto:earley.lettings@haart.co.uk">earley.lettings@haart.co.uk</a></td>
<td>0118 966 8448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin &amp; Co</td>
<td>martinco.com</td>
<td><a href="mailto:reading@martinco.com">reading@martinco.com</a></td>
<td>0118 931 2179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martyn Russell</td>
<td>martynrussell.co.uk</td>
<td><a href="mailto:info@martynrussell.co.uk">info@martynrussell.co.uk</a></td>
<td>0118 926 6655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Lettings</td>
<td>readinglettings.com</td>
<td><a href="mailto:info@readinglettings.com">info@readinglettings.com</a></td>
<td>0118 966 6666</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sewell Lettings</td>
<td>sewell-lettings.co.uk</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rent@sewell-lettings.co.uk">rent@sewell-lettings.co.uk</a></td>
<td>0118 324 8880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space Lettings &amp; Management</td>
<td>studentspace.uk.net</td>
<td><a href="mailto:lets@space.uk.net">lets@space.uk.net</a></td>
<td>0118 966 6660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Holmes (Adams Estates)</td>
<td>studentholmes.net</td>
<td><a href="mailto:info@studentholmes.net">info@studentholmes.net</a></td>
<td>0118 935 1616</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studentville (Westgate Students)</td>
<td>westgatestudents.co.uk</td>
<td><a href="mailto:info@westgatestudents.co.uk">info@westgatestudents.co.uk</a></td>
<td>0118 966 8001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Flatman Partnership</td>
<td>flatmans.com</td>
<td><a href="mailto:lettings@flatmans.com">lettings@flatmans.com</a></td>
<td>0118 966 0055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walmsley Lettings Ltd</td>
<td>walmsley.co.uk</td>
<td><a href="mailto:lettings@walmsley.co.uk">lettings@walmsley.co.uk</a></td>
<td>0118 947 0511</td>
</tr>
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### Non-University owned Halls

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-University owned Halls</th>
<th>Website</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CRM (Central Studios and Queens Court)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.crm-students.com">www.crm-students.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crown House (Unite)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.unite-students.com">www.unite-students.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fawley Bridge (Atelier Asset Management)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.fawleybridgestudents.com">www.fawleybridgestudents.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kendrick Hall (Unite)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.unite-students.com">www.unite-students.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saxon Court (Collegiate AC)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.collegiate-ac.com">www.collegiate-ac.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Bagri Foundation</td>
<td><a href="http://www.191kr.com">www.191kr.com</a></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

You can also seek student accommodation using private search functions such as **Student Rightmove** and **Studentpad**.
ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

HOUSE VIEWING CHECKLIST

We have put together a list of things for you to check when viewing a property. You may want to use this list when you visit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenancy details</th>
<th>Inside the property</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the start date and length of the tenancy agreement?</td>
<td>Do all taps, flushes and showers work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is it a joint or shared tenancy agreement?</td>
<td>Are there enough electrical plug sockets?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the landlord living at the property?</td>
<td>Is there adequate heating?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does any maintenance or repair work need to be completed before you move in?</td>
<td>Are there any improvements or repairs scheduled? If so, make sure these are confirmed in writing by the landlord</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Costs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the deposit amount?</td>
<td>Do you need to organise suppliers for utilities? This can include gas, electricity, water, broadband/landline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there any letting agency fees?</td>
<td>What furniture and appliances are included?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the rent?</td>
<td>Are there instructions for how to use the appliances?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the rent paid weekly or monthly?</td>
<td></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Safety and Security</th>
<th>Outside the property</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are doors and ground floor windows securely locked?</td>
<td>What is the condition of the garden?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there street lighting?</td>
<td>Who is responsible for the maintenance of the garden?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there working smoke alarms and fire safety equipment in place?</td>
<td>Is there a washing line?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there a carbon monoxide detector?</td>
<td>Where are the rubbish bins located?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there a valid gas safety certificate?</td>
<td>When is the rubbish collection day?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there any signs of pests, mould or damp?</td>
<td>What are the recycling requirements?</td>
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</tbody>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transport</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>What parking is available?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are parking permits required?</td>
<td>Where is the nearest bus stop and train station?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where is the nearest bus stop and train station?</td>
<td>Is there safe storage for a bicycle?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FINDING HOUSEMATES

Looking for housemates? Search Reading University Students’ Union (RUSU) Find a Housemate group on Facebook.

The group is a great way to find other students looking for housemates and is also used by students to advertise room vacancies.

Make sure you meet up or Skype each other and see how you get along before you make any decisions to move in.

“I’ve found living in private accommodation to be even more fun than halls: there’s nothing quite like living with your mates and having a living room to socialise in. If like me you’re lucky enough to have a garden, a BBQ will become a weekly ritual in summer term rain or shine...”

Jack Abrey, BSc Geography
TENANCY AGREEMENTS, DEPOSITS, RENT AND BILLS

Tenancy Agreement
Most students sign a Joint Assured Shorthold Tenancy Agreement, which means that you commit to rent the property for a fixed period – usually 12 months – with a number of others (usually students). Both the landlord and the tenant will have certain responsibilities which should be set out in the agreement.

Keep a copy of your tenancy agreement safe along with receipts for any money paid to the landlord. You should also ensure that you have either the estate agent’s or the landlord’s contact details to report issues of disrepair or in case of an emergency.

Deposits
If you have signed a Joint Assured Shorthold Tenancy Agreement (most students do) your landlord is required by law to ensure that your deposit is protected in a government deposit protection scheme. Your landlord has to provide information about their chosen scheme within 30 days of receiving your deposit (not from when you move into the property).

Make sure you get a receipt for any cash paid to either the estate agent or the landlord and that you know what you are paying the money for (i.e. administration fees, deposit, holding fees).

Try to keep the house clean and tidy to ensure the return of your deposit. You may be required to clean the house to a professional standard prior to moving out – if so this should be detailed in your tenancy agreement.

Rent
You should pay rent by a monthly standing order, or at the beginning of each term, and if there’s a problem try to speak to the landlord.

We strongly recommend that you do not pay your rent in cash. However if you landlord has requested cash or you are having difficulty transferring money electronically, contact the RUSU Advice Service.

The RUSU Advice Service is available to help you with any further questions: rusu.co.uk/advice/housing_advice

Right to rent
All private landlords and letting agents have to make ‘Right to Rent’ checks. This means that landlords and letting agents must ensure that only people who are allowed to rent in the UK are renting. For more information and what documentation you may need to provide, click here.

Bills
Your Tenancy Agreement should state which utility bills are your responsibility. Usually tenants are responsible for gas, electricity, water, TV licence, broadband/telephone line. If you are unsure of who currently supplies utilities to the property, ask your landlord or letting agent for the details. Before you move in, check with your landlord or letting agent whether you are allowed to change utility supplier.

Things to consider are:
- Make sure to take meter readings before you move in and out of the property so that you are only charged for what you use
- Bills are usually sent monthly or quarterly and may be received by post or email. Choose the best payment method for you and your housemates
- Remember, the name on the bill indicates the person(s) legally responsible for paying the bill and the supplier will pursue that person if the bills are unpaid. Make sure you consider this when deciding who is paying the bills
- It might be helpful to set up a household bank account with each housemate contributing to it regularly. This will help to keep track of payments and avoid falling into rent arrears
- Be aware of utility usage throughout the year and when bills are due to be paid. Don’t forget, over the winter months you are likely to have the heating on more often
- Make sure you have a TV licence. For more information and how to pay for a licence see here
- Most full-time students are exempt from paying Council Tax, but it is your responsibility to let the local council know. Find out how to do this here.

Guarantors
Letting agencies and landlords may ask for a guarantor – a person who will agree to pay your rent or any damages if you cannot. International students may be asked to provide a guarantor who is based in the UK. Click here for more information about guarantor agreements.
**MOVING IN**

If you are renting a furnished property, you should expect the landlord or letting agent to provide a desk, chair, bed, item for storage in the bedroom; dining table and chairs, cooker and fridge, and seating in the communal areas.

You should also:

- Bring additional items or buy these as soon as you get to Reading. These include: bedding, towels, lamps, and kitchen utensils (pots, pans, cutlery and crockery), ironing board, iron, dustpan and brush. If sharing a property, you may want to check what others are bringing so you don’t bring too many of the same things
- Think about whether you need additional storage in your room such as boxes to go under the bed
- Don’t forget to bring things to make your room feel like home like photographs and posters
- Make sure you get all the keys to the property including doors, windows, garages and sheds. Check whether you need permission to copy any keys. Find out the cost of replacing lost keys and any call-out charges should you not be able to get into the property
- Introduce yourself to the neighbours and let them know how long you will be living in the property.

**Inventory**

An inventory is a written record of the rooms, furniture and other items provided by the landlord or letting agent. It is sometimes called a check in report. You should take a detailed inventory when you move into a property, and review it when you move out.

A landlord or letting agent should complete an inventory with you, but if this does not happen you should complete and sign your own inventory. If you do your own inventory, you should send a copy to the landlord and/or letting agent so that you have evidence should there be any deposit disputes.

**Repairs and maintenance**

You need to inform your landlord about any repairs that need doing, it’s best to do this in writing or, if done verbally, to follow up with an email outlining what you’ve agreed. Certain repairs may be the responsibility of the landlord and you should not carry out repairs yourself as you may be charged to fix mistakes.

**Living with others**

Living with housemates is a great way to expand your network and get to know different people – you might even become friends for life.

It is normal for people to disagree on things when living in shared housing, so don’t worry if you don’t get on all of the time. You are all individuals with different experiences, views and personalities. Even if you do have a disagreement, it’s important to respect each other, talk through any issues calmly and not to take different opinions personally.

Here are some tips to help build a good relationship with your housemates:

- Share the chores – draw up a cleaning rota when you first move in so that everyone knows what they are responsible for
- Be mindful of your own mess and try to keep the house clean and tidy
- Set up a house fund to buy communal items such as toilet paper, washing up liquid and soap together
- Let housemates know in advance if you’re inviting your partner/friends/family to visit or to stay over
- Be polite and always ask before you borrow food or other items from housemates
- Be mindful of noise – playing loud music all day or late at night isn’t very considerate for your housemates or your neighbours
- Respect their privacy – everyone needs some alone time every now and again, and that’s ok.
LIVING IN READING

There are lots of areas around the University that students choose to live in. Here are some of the most popular ones:

- Basingstoke Road
- Cemetery Junction
- Christchurch Road
- Wokingham Road
- Reading town centre

In most of these areas you will find a range of local amenities including convenience stores, pharmacies, take away restaurants, hairdressers and pubs. In Reading town centre you will also find larger shops, restaurants, cafés and bars.

Supermarkets

Smaller supermarkets can be found in and around the popular student areas. There is a small Co-op convenience store on Whiteknights campus, where you will find many day-to-day items. Larger supermarkets are based on the outskirts of Reading and are easily accessible by bus or car. The Asda Superstore based in the Lower Earley area can be reached by the Claret number 21 bus which you can take from the Whiteknights or London Road campuses.

Banks and cash machines

In Reading town centre you will find branches of all major banks and many cash points. On the Whiteknights campus there is also a Santander bank and multiple cash points.

Buses

The Claret number 21/21a travels from Reading train station and town centre past the London Road campus and onto Whiteknights campus 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Other frequent bus routes which run near campus and popular students areas are:

- Number 7 for Basingstoke Road
- Numbers 17 and 4 for Cemetery Junction and Wokingham Road
- Number 21/21a for Christchurch Road and Reading town centre.

Further information about Reading buses, including routes and times, is available here.

Insurance

If you are living in private accommodation we strongly advise that you take out contents insurance to cover against theft and damage to the property such as fire or floods. Make sure that this covers all your belongings including your computer/laptop, mobile phone, other electrical equipment, jewellery and clothing.

It is your responsibility to arrange your own insurance cover. Find out more here.

Keeping safe in the property

Don’t leave cooking unattended or put items on hot surfaces. Take particular care with equipment such as frying pans and toasters.

Most landlords or letting agents do not allow the use of candles or joss sticks as they may cause a fire.

Know who to contact in an emergency. Keep the numbers secure in your mobile phone.

Personal security

Always remember to lock your doors and windows when you leave the property.

Keep laptops, valuables and cash out of sight. You can also mark valuable electrical equipment with a UV marker pen to help the police to identify items if they are stolen.

When travelling to and from your accommodation be mindful of your personal safety. If you will be out late at night, plan your journey to make sure you can return with a friend or take a registered taxi. Click here for more tips on how to stay safe in the local area and on campus.

Bicycles

Keep your bike safe, particularly overnight, by using a good quality lock to keep it secure.

Record the make, model and colour of your bike along with the serial number and any identifying marks in case it is stolen.

Ensure that your insurance covers your bike.
PRIVATE ACCOMMODATION GUIDE

For more help knowing and understanding your rights and responsibilities as tenants please contact:

RUSU Advice Service
advice@rusu.co.uk
Tel +44 (0)118 378 4100
rusu.co.uk/advice