

ACCOMMODATION GUIDE

It can be daunting moving to a new country, trying to learn a new language and study at the same time. At Leicester College we understand this, and we will support you in making the move as smooth and stress-free as possible.

While Leicester College doesn't provide any accommodation directly, and we are unable to source family 'homestay' accommodation, the information below should help you and we will do our best in the International Office to advise and support you to find suitable accommodation.

Self-Catering Student Halls of Residence

A student halls of residence is a large building that is split into apartments, and each of these apartments contains a number of lockable study bedrooms. Some will have en-suite facilities and some will have communal bathrooms - it varies from hall to hall. You will usually have a shared kitchen and living space with the other learners in your apartment.

These are owned and managed by private companies, and the cost is roughly £75 to £145 per week depending on location and standard, which generally includes gas, electricity and water bills. Most also include Internet usage. A refundable security deposit of approximately £200-£250 is generally also required.

Food is not included and you will have to cook for yourself. We recommend you budget £50 per week for food if you intend to prepare your own food; more if you plan to eat out at restaurants.

You are generally required to bring or buy your own bedding and cooking utensils. Please note that most student accommodation companies insist upon payment of rent in advance, although they usually allow instalments (perhaps 2-3 per year).

You should be able to arrange accommodation in a halls of residence while still in your home country. A list of student halls of residence is attached. Please note that in the UK once you have booked the accommodation the contract is for the whole academic year, September-June.

Shared Accommodation (Houses / Flats)

This is where you live in a house rented by a group of young people, usually shared between 3-4 other students. The kitchen, bathroom and living room are shared and each person has their own bedroom. Some will be available with basic furnishings and appliances but many will not. This is something you will need to check.

This type of accommodation is typically £70-£120 per week per room, but this does not include food or charges for gas, water and electricity, which are shared with other tenants in the house.

Private Accommodation (Houses / Flats)

There are plenty of options in Leicester for renting houses or flats from private landlords. This is often the best option for families or couples. Some properties will be available with basic furnishings and appliances but many will not. This is something you will need to check.

The cost could range from £400 to £700 per calendar month depending on the size of the house or flat. This would not include charges for gas, water, electricity and internet etc.

Private accommodation and shared accommodation is more difficult to arrange while you are still overseas. We strongly recommend that you view the property and in the case of shared accommodation, meet other tenants in the house, before you commit to pay any deposit or sign any contract. These contracts are legal documents and you are legally bound by the terms and conditions.

We recommend that you arrange temporary accommodation in a hostel, a hotel or in a bed and breakfast for when you first arrive to allow you time to look at private shared accommodation options before making your decision.

Further Information

Leicester College does not recommend any particular accommodation, but we can provide you with information on options to help you make a decision. You will need to consider factors such as on-site security and the number of rooms/other occupants, as well as cost and location, to find the place that is most suitable for you.

Further information on student accommodation options is available from the International Office (internationaloffice@leicestercollege.ac.uk).

Note that if you are accepted into a course at Leicester College that leads to a qualification awarded by our partner De Montfort University, then you can apply for a place in De Montfort's student accommodation. Details of De Montfort's student accommodation as available at: <https://www.dmu.ac.uk/study/undergraduate-study/accommodation/accommodation.aspx>

ACCOMMODATION ISSUES TO CONSIDER (FROM UKCISA WEBSITE)

Many students prefer to live close to their place of study, but this may not always be the best choice. You may need to balance cost, quality and convenience, especially in larger cities. Issues to think about include the following:

Where is the housing located?

It may be on campus; it may be near your place of study; or it may be some distance away. If it is not on campus, check that the locality offers you what you need and what you want: for instance shops, friends living nearby, places for meeting friends and socialising, good transport links, parking provision (if needed), a safe environment.

What are the transport links and what are the costs?

This is particularly important if your housing is not on campus or if you can't reasonably walk (or cycle) to your place of study or to other places that you need or want to get to frequently. In some towns living further out, away from college, shops etc, can save money, as housing may be cheaper. If you are thinking of living further out, try and check that possible extra travel costs do not outweigh your savings on rent.

Is there any communal living space and if so is it adequate?

Having a communal living space within a flat, on a floor, in a block or in a shared house is good for relaxing and for socialising. Not having a space like this can be very limiting. If you can, check it or contact the provider.

Do I want or really need an en suite bathroom, and can I afford it?

Many new students opt for this, because the level of privacy it offers is important to them or because it supports ritual washing as part of religious observances. However, be aware of the extra cost over a standard room. Would you rather have a standard room (often larger), sharing toilet facilities, and have extra cash to spend on other things which are important to you?

What is the mix of students in the housing likely to be?

Whether you are in institution housing or privately rented housing, you are likely to be sharing with other students. They may be from your country, from other countries, and/or UK-based students. They may be undergraduates and postgraduates, male and female. To help manage your own expectations, you might want to check this pre-arrival, if the information is available. If you have particular requirements, it is important to raise this with the provider beforehand.

Does the housing offer good social opportunities?

Living in halls of residence gives you access to large numbers of other students, possibly from many different cultures. Living in shared self-catering flats, allocated by your institution is also likely to give you good social opportunities. Your institution may organise social events for students in these types of housing. If you live in a shared house or in a studio/bedsit in the private sector, you are unlikely to have social opportunities on this scale. Nonetheless, if you opt to live in a shared house, you will have some choice about who you live with. Living in a bedsit/studio can be lonely.

Many institution towns have residential areas which are a focus for student living and these can have a strong student identity and sense of community.

What are the management and security arrangements for the accommodation?

Many international students new to the UK have particular concerns about personal safety and security. Institutionally-allocated developments often have some sort of security service – staffed offices and security personnel on patrol for some of the night/day or perhaps a full 24-hour service. Developments may also have controlled access and CCTV.

What are the arrangements for food and cooking?

Unless you are going into single accommodation, you will be sharing food preparation and cooking facilities. The number of students you share these facilities with varies widely – it may be four or five; it may be twenty. It should be easy to find this out, as it is likely to be in material made available to you by your institution or by a prospective landlord. If it isn't clear, contact them. If you have specific requirements for preparing food and you are concerned about how the facilities will support you in meeting these requirements, you should contact your institution or prospective landlord.

What are the housing arrangements for vacation periods?

If you live in a shared house in the private sector, you are likely to sign a contract for a fixed and uninterrupted period, so that you can live in the housing from the start of the contract until it ends. This may also be true of institution housing. However, some institutions have special arrangements for vacation periods, particularly Christmas. Because many staff take leave from work at Christmas, the level of service to students may be reduced. To help manage this, some institutions require students staying in institution housing over the Christmas period to relocate into one or a small number of the halls. You might want to check whether this is the case for your institution. Similarly for the Easter vacation, students may be required to relocate to enable the institution to stage residential conferences. If this is likely to affect you as a resident, it should be made clear when you sign your contract. If you are concerned about it, contact the housing office.

Can I afford the accommodation?

Look out for hidden costs and things which are not included. Try to calculate how much money you will have, and how much you will need to spend on things to get you through student life, including food, rent, study materials, bills (every day and utilities), clothes, a social life and transport. Try to get an idea of what proportion of the total money that you have, you can (or want to) use for rent. You can use the International Student Calculator [^] to help plan your budget.

What is included in the price?

You need to budget for costs other than rent, unless they are included. Meals, gas and electricity bills, water rates and other utilities may or may not be included.

In institution housing gas, water and electricity costs are likely to be included, but check this. If you are deciding which type of housing is cheapest, it is helpful to have a rough idea of gas and electricity costs. Your institution may be able to provide guidance on this.

Does the price include possessions insurance?

Whatever type of housing you choose, you are recommended to take out possessions insurance to protect your belongings from theft, fire, loss or accidental damage while you are staying in the UK. Some institutions include possessions insurance as part of the deal, but check this covers all your possessions. Sometimes it is necessary to register laptops and tablets under a policy and anything to do with bicycles normally involves registering the bike.

If there is no insurance included in the rent, check whether the institution offers an insurance deal separately or recommends one. If you are in the private sector, you will probably need to make your own insurance arrangements. Websites such as www.moneysavingexpert.com offer a good overview of insurance policies for students. Furthermore, companies such as Endsleigh Insurance can provide policies to cover clothes, books, IT devices, TVs, hi-fi equipment and valuables (http://endsleigh-alpha.azurewebsites.net/personal/student-insurance/?gclid=CLjxvf6v4cECFXDHtAod_QQACg).

Is there an internet connection, and if so, is there an extra cost?

These days students expect this to be provided in institution housing and in private halls. It almost always is – but check. If you have access to social networking sites, it may be possible to find out from existing or previous residents if the service is a good one. Some providers, for an additional fee, allow you to increase your allowance for data download and/or speed but wait to see what you need, because normally the standard service is adequate.

Are bed linen, towels and kitchen utensils provided?

You should be able to check this in advance in available material or by contacting the provider. In housing provided by your institution, they will either be provided, or you may be able to buy a "starter pack" of items when you arrive.

If you are going into housing in the private sector, you will need to make your own arrangements for these items.

What is Council Tax and do I have to pay it?

Council Tax is a system of local taxation, which is collected by local authorities. It is a tax on the properties in which people live. The local authority uses the money collected to provide local services, including for schools, rubbish collection, social services. Full-time students who live only with other full-time students or in halls of residence do not have to pay Council Tax.

If I have a car, are there parking facilities and if so, is an extra cost attached?

Driving a car in the UK is costly and most students get by with a combination of walking and using public transport (buses, trains) and taxis. If you do intend having the use of a car, be aware that parking facilities are generally limited and expensive. In addition if you intend to run a car you will need to ensure that your licence is valid for use in the UK; that you have appropriate insurance; and that the car is taxed and has a valid MOT. See Driving in the UK: a guide for international students. <http://ukcisa.org.uk/International-Students/Study-work--more/Other-useful-information/Driving/>

Am I required to pay a deposit? If so, how much is it and what is it for?

A deposit is a sum of money you pay to your institution/landlord at the start of the contract. The institution/landlord will return the money soon after you move out, but they are entitled to keep some of the money if they incur expenses for which you are responsible, for instance:

- damage to the property, like broken windows
- damage to fixtures and fittings such as furniture or carpets
- the cost of cleaning the property if you have left it in a condition which means the landlord cannot re-let it without cleaning it
- re-decoration costs, for example, if you have painted a room without the landlord's permission
- the cost of replacing keys which you fail to return to the landlord
- any rent which you haven't paid
- the cost of removing from the property any rubbish you leave behind.

Depending on what it says in your contract, your institution/landlord can make additional charges, for instance:

- an extra charge for dealing with late rental payments you might have made
- the cost of replacing any missing items, for example, curtains, furniture

The institution/landlord cannot charge you for fair 'wear and tear' throughout the tenancy. 'Wear and tear' means the normal deterioration of fixtures, fittings and items provided through normal use of them.

It is standard practice for institutions and landlords to charge a deposit. It is also fair: institutions and landlords need some financial protection in case they incur costs as a result of the actions of students living in their housing.

Never pay a deposit without getting proof of payment for any money you have handed over, especially if you pay in cash. The deposit is normally equal to one month's rent but can be more, especially in London.

By law, private landlords and suppliers must protect your deposit money by signing up to a Tenancy Deposit Scheme. Education institutions and those in shared rooms are exempt from this requirement. The Tenancy Deposit Schemes are designed to make sure money is not unfairly deducted or kept from you at the end of your tenancy. They provide a dispute resolution service, so that if you believe your landlord has acted unfairly in keeping some or all of your deposit when you move out, you can use the service to argue that you should get your money back.

There are three schemes that are registered with the government for these purposes:

- Deposit Protection Service: www.depositprotection.com
- My Deposits: www.mydeposits.co.uk
- The Dispute Service: www.thedisputeservice.co.uk

Your landlord has to tell you which of the three existing schemes they have signed up to. If you have not received this information, you can check directly with the schemes to see if your deposit is protected.

To help ensure you get your full deposit back when you move out:

- when you move into a property, check for damage, uncleanliness and missing items
- report any problems to the landlord in writing, keeping copies of all correspondence and, if appropriate, taking and keeping labelled and dated photos
- keep a detailed list of contents
- ensure the property is thoroughly cleaned before you move out
- ensure you remove all your possessions
- respect the property and treat it well
- make sure you understand what the contract makes you responsible for
- ensure you do not have any rent owing at the end of your contract
- dispose of rubbish to minimise the risk of pest infestations, which are costly to get rid of
- report any damage to the landlord as soon as it happens – repair/replacement may be cheaper than leaving it to the landlord to put right after you have left

If you feel your deposit has been wrongfully withheld, you should seek advice from your students' union, the Citizen's Advice Bureau, Shelter, or another housing advice agency or local law centre. You can also download Unipol's deposit recovery pack for further information.

http://www.unipol.leeds.ac.uk/Leeds/IFS/Deposits/Tenancy_deposit_non_compliance/

What are the payment terms?

Check whether there are any limitations on the method of payment. Be aware of what the institution's or landlord's requirements are in relation to upfront payments, payment periods and instalments. Make sure you understand what the consequences are if you fail to pay your rent on time. Some institutions require a substantial rental payment upfront and the payment of the rest of the year's rent in instalments, due at fixed points in the letting year.

These arrangements vary and you'll need to be clear what they are. In the private sector it is usual for students to have to pay an instalment at the start of the contract (which can be up to half the annual rent) together with a deposit.

What is a guarantor and will I need one?

Many landlords now require students (and particularly international students) to provide a guarantor as a condition of the housing contract. The guarantor – a third-party individual or organisation – guarantees to pay the landlord any rent which the student fails to pay and the cost of any damage for which the student is responsible and fails to pay. Landlords generally insist that a guarantor is UK-based.

Institutions rarely ask for a guarantor. Landlords for privately-rented shared houses will often not insist on you naming a guarantor, especially as for many international students, it is very difficult to identify someone who is UK-based to undertake this legal commitment. It is landlords of large-scale purpose-built housing developments in the private sector who are likely to require you to provide a guarantor. If you cannot provide one, they will probably require you to pay most, if not all of, the rent for the full contract before you move in. This is a considerable financial challenge for many students.

In a small number of cases, particularly in London, your institution may be able to stand as guarantor for you. If you find yourself in difficulties over this, check with your institution whether they are prepared to act in this capacity.

If you do need a guarantor and you are able to find one, it is important that your guarantor's financial liability is limited to just your personal rent/damages. Unipol has prepared a model guarantee for this purpose. See <http://www.unipol.leeds.ac.uk/Leeds/IFS/Contracts/Guarantee.asp>

Be aware that you will be signing a legally-binding contract when you finally commit to your accommodation, so be aware of the implications.

If I sign a joint contract will my liability be different?

If you have signed the same contract as your friends and you all agree to take the property at the same time, you will be jointly and severally liable with each of your housemates for any rent arrears and/or damage to the property. So, if one tenant moves out, the landlord/agent can pursue the remaining tenants (as well as the tenant who has left) for any rent due.

Does the length of the contract fit my period of study?

The standard academic year runs from September/October to May/June for undergraduates and September/October to September for postgraduates. The letting year for housing typically runs from August or September to the end of June. It is sometimes possible to negotiate an extension to include residence for the summer months – July, August and the first 10 days or so of September. Make sure that your housing requirements fit your study requirements. You may be on a course which operates to a non-standard calendar (for example a Semester 2 start); you may have a requirement for a postgraduate writing-up period at the end of your studies; or you may want to attend a graduation ceremony beyond the end of your course and your housing contract. Think about these issues and check with your institution or landlord if you have concerns.

ACCOMMODATION: HALLS OF RESIDENCE LISTING

*** Note: This list is for information and reference only – Leicester College does not recommend any particular student accommodation and does not inspect the properties individually.**

Name	Company	Telephone	Website	Address
City Block Student Accommodation	City Block	+44 (0)116 251 7270	www.cityblock.co.uk/student-accommodation-leicester	24 Careys Close, Leicester LE1 5NS
Code Student Accommodation	Code Student Accommodation	+44 (0)116 233 5678	https://codestudents.co.uk/	Various locations around Leicester
Filbert Village	Unite Group	+44 (0)117 302 7497	www.unite-students.com/leicester-salesenquiry@unite-students.com	1 Lineker Road, Leicester LE2 7FZ
The Grange	Unite Group	+44 (0)300 303 8645	www.unite-students.com/leicester-salesenquiry@unite-students.com	Please refer to website
Hub-Student	Hub-Student	+44(0)116 291 1291	www.hub-student.co.uk	99 Hinckley Road , Leicester LE3 0TD
The Hundred	Knightstone Properties	+44 (0)116 259 9841 / +44 (0)7769 323 600	http://leicesterliving.co.uk/Students/our-apartments/the-hundred/	100 Vaughan Way, Leicester LE1 2SH
Liberty Park	Liberty Living	+44 (0)116 255 4370	www.libertyliving.co.uk/student-accommodation/leicester	101 Raw Dykes Road, Leicester LE2 7FP
Mansion Court	The Mansion Group	+44 (0)116 298 4851	www.mansionstudent.co.uk	35 Grasmere Street, Leicester LE2 7PT
Merlin Heights Student Accommodation	Fresh Student Living	+44 (0)116 366 0831	http://freshstudentliving.co.uk/location/leicester/merlin-heights/leicester@freshstudentliving.co.uk	75 Bath Lane Leicester LE3 5AU

Name	Company	Telephone	Website	Address
Millstone House Tudor Studios York House Pennine House	Mezzino	+44 (0)116 262 0668	www.mezzino.co.uk	26-30 Millstone Lane Leicester LE1 5JN 31 Millstone Lane Leicester LE1 5JN York Street, Leicester LE1 5TT
Newarke Point	Unite Group	+44 (0)300 303 8645	www.unite-students.com/leicester salesenquiry@unite-students.com	8 Newarke Close Leicester LE2 7GZ
Oxford Court	12 Property FE Ltd	+44 (0)116 254 2220	www.oxfordcourtleicester.co.uk	46 Oxford Street Leicester, LE1 5TT
Sangha House & Alexander House	Sangha Developments		www.sanghastudentaccommodation.com live@sanghastudentaccommodation.com	37 Newarke Street, Leicester LE1 5SP & 112 Regent Road, Leicester LE1 7LT
Walnut Street Residences	Sovereign	+44 (0)116 255 7482	www.sovereign.org.uk/looking-for-a-home/key-worker/property-leicester/	Walnut Street, Leicester LE2 7LD
St Martins House	Unite Group	+44 (0)300 303 8649	www.unite-students.com/leicester salesenquiry@unite-students.com	38 King Street Leicester LE1 6RP
Various	Westmanor Properties Ltd 11-19 Grange Lane Leicester	+44 (0)116 254 0541	www.westmanorpropertyservices.co.uk	Various - please refer to website (Gosling Court, Queens Court, Regents Court, Oxford House, Athena Apartments, Enfield House, The River Building, The Zenith)
Zone Luxury	Lettings 4 Students	+44 (0)116 254 1541	www.thestudentzone.co.uk/	131 Western Road, Upperton Road, Leicester LE3 0GF

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