

# Accommodation

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## RENTING GUIDE

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Moving to a new city or suburb can be daunting. Below we have put together a 'go to' guide on renting Accommodation, particularly if you are a Macquarie University student or staff member.

### USEFUL WEBSITE

Macquarie University – Private Accommodation [find.accommodation.mq.edu.au](http://find.accommodation.mq.edu.au).

Macquarie University also offers students exclusive access to the University's Private Listings database. Here students can search for private accommodation surrounding the campus and beyond. Advertisements are updated daily. If you would like to register for this free service, please visit the above website.

### CHOOSING ACCOMMODATION

#### WHERE DO YOU WANT TO LIVE?

Knowing where to live can be very confusing – especially if you've never been to Sydney before! Some students prefer to live right next to campus, whilst others prefer to live nearer to the beach or city. You therefore need to think about what type of area you'd like to live in before searching for accommodation.

- 1. Location** – if you'd prefer to live near to campus, the closest suburbs are Marsfield, Epping, North Ryde, Eastwood, Macquarie Park, and Lane Cove. These are all within a short bus/train ride away (5-15 minutes). If you'd prefer to live within walking distance from campus, Marsfield, North Ryde, and Macquarie Park are closest. If you would prefer to live nearer to the city, close by suburbs are Chatswood, Artarmon, St Leonards, Crows Nest, Waverton, Wollstonecraft, North Sydney (north side), or Ultimo, Erskineville, St Peters, Stanmore, Newtown, Burwood, and Strathfield (west side)
- 2. Public transport** – Living close by to public transport is also a necessity if you do not have a car. Although most suburbs within Sydney are serviced by bus routes, not all suburbs have train services.  
Sydney transport information, such as bus and train times, route maps, and fare prices can be found at [www.131500.com.au/](http://www.131500.com.au/). Macquarie University is located at the train station labelled 'Macquarie University'. Buses that frequently come via campus are bus numbers; 288, 292, 290, 545, 197, 381, 506, 507, 518, and 143.
- 3. Safety** - although Sydney suburbs are generally very safe, you should choose an area which has a good safety record, and one which is close by to emergency services if possible. For a list of crime rates within Sydney suburbs, please visit - [www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/](http://www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/). For a location list of Sydney medical centres and hospitals, please visit [www.health.nsw.gov.au/](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/).

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#### FIND OUT MORE

Macquarie University NSW 2109 Australia  
T: +61 (2) 9850 7965  
[housing@mq.edu.au](mailto:housing@mq.edu.au)  
CRICOS Provider 00002J

## HOW MUCH CAN YOU AFFORD?

Before you start searching for private accommodation, you need to think about how much money you can afford to spend. Rental rates differ depending on location, proximity to public transport, age of property, and whether bills/utilities are included or not.

As an approximate guide, twin-share bedrooms range from \$150-220/week, and single bedrooms range from \$180-350/week around Macquarie University. One bedroom apartments range from \$350-450/week. Note – this is an approximate guide only.

Unless you are renting out a bedroom within a shared property, it is more unlikely that you will find an entire apartment/house which is already furnished. In this case, you would need to purchase your own furniture, which can be costly. The same applies to expenses (e.g., gas/electricity bills, and water usage, etc.) - in most cases, you will need to pay for your own expenses. To work out an approximate cost for electricity, please visit - [www.originenergy.com.au/calculator](http://www.originenergy.com.au/calculator).

## YOU'VE FOUND SOME OPTIONS, NOW WHAT?

### INSPECTIONS AND OPEN HOUSES

If you find a property that you like, and the property is listed through a real estate agency, you will need to attend an open inspection before being able to apply. This involves visiting the property at an allocated day and time (usually Wednesday or Saturday at 15-20 minute time slots). An agent will be there to answer any questions you may have about the property and application process. If you are still interested in the property, you will need to apply for it either through the real estate agent directly, or via the agent's website. Note – if the property is not listed through a real estate agent, the inspection and application process will be a lot simpler.

### TIPS FOR INSPECTIONS

1. Try to see as many properties as you can on the inspection day, as many properties will only be shown once. Also ensure that the properties you are seeing are within a short drive away from one another.
2. As some applications work on a first come, first serve basis, it is a good idea to fill out your property application form before inspecting the property. You can then easily submit it to the real estate agent on the day of inspection.
3. Get to the property at least 5 minutes early, as time slots are only 15-20 minutes in duration.
4. Don't be disheartened if a large number of people turn up to the inspection- not all of these people will apply.
5. Contact the agent if you haven't heard anything within a few days. Make sure you are friendly and introduce yourself clearly.

### APPLICATION FORMS

The main purpose of an application is to assess your suitability as a future tenant. You will be asked a number of questions relating to your previous rental history, income, employment history, and reference contacts. If you do not

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want to re-write an application form each time you see a property, you can use 1Form which will pre-fill this form for you - [www.iform.com.au/](http://www.iform.com.au/).

Even if you have never rented before, or have no solid employment history, you can still apply for private accommodation. Everyone has to start somewhere! Some tips on how to increase your chances of being noticed include:

1. Ensure that you have enough money in your bank account for at least 3 months' rent.
2. Ask a parent or guardian to be your guarantor. Think of a guarantor like rental insurance. If you are unable to meet the criteria outlined in your lease, then the guarantor is legally bound to act on your behalf, and cover any rental costs/damages outstanding. Although having a guarantor is favourable to agents for students without previous rental or employment history, it is important to understand that guarantor agreements must be entered into responsibly.
3. Get a written reference from your previous household, even if just your family home. If you lived in shared accommodation, but were not included on the lease, try to obtain a written reference from the landlord.
4. If you can afford it, you might also want to consider paying for rent 3-6 months in advance. If you'd like to do this, make sure you include this on your application form.

## SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

To apply for accommodation through a real estate agent, you will be required to provide at least 100 points of identification.

Examples of this include:

70 points = Birth certificate, citizenship certificate, current passport\*

40 points = Australian driver license, Australian boat license, employment ID card, student ID card\*

35 points = Document from your current/previous employer (within last 2 years)\*

25 points = Marriage certificate (maiden name), credit card, foreign driver license, Medicare card, EFTPOS card, utility/bank statement, lease/rent agreement, record of a primary /secondary /tertiary education institution attended within the past 10 years, record of professional or trade association of which you are a member.\*

If you are an international student, you should also provide a copy of your student visa.

\* This is an example only; amount of points may vary with different agencies.

## NEED TO KNOW FACTS BEFORE CONFIRMING A RENTAL

### TENANCY TERMS AND GENERAL INFORMATION

A lease is a written legal document between a tenant (you) and the property owner (landlord/agent) which explains the terms and conditions of your living arrangement. Example of a standard lease form is available from NSW Fair Trading via [www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/pdfs/Tenants\\_and\\_home\\_owners/Residential\\_tenancy\\_agreement.pdf](http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/pdfs/Tenants_and_home_owners/Residential_tenancy_agreement.pdf)

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## LEASE DURATION AND TYPES

A typical lease is for 6 or 12 months. There are 2 types - a 'Fixed Term Agreement' and a 'Periodic (continuing) Agreement'.

If an agreement is for a specific period of time (e.g., 6 months), then it is a **fixed agreement**. This type of agreement may be used at either the start of a new tenancy, or when renewing an existing agreement once the initial fixed term period has finished. If a fixed agreement has finished, and a new agreement has not been signed, the tenant will automatically move to a **periodic agreement**.

For more information on leases and how to complete one, please visit

[www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/Tenants\\_and\\_home\\_owners/Being\\_a\\_landlord/Starting\\_a\\_tenancy/Completing\\_atenancy\\_agreement.html](http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/Tenants_and_home_owners/Being_a_landlord/Starting_a_tenancy/Completing_atenancy_agreement.html)

## RENT

In most cases, you will be required to pay up to 2 weeks rent in advance before moving into a property. Note – you cannot be charged more than 2 weeks rent in advance, and no additional rent will be due until at least 2 weeks have passed.

Rental fees can be organised as weekly, fortnightly, or monthly payments. Ensure you speak to your landlord/agent about this before signing a lease.

For more information about rental fees, including rent increases, falling behind on your rent, and tenant/landlord responsibilities, please see read the Frequently Asked Questions on our Macquarie Private Accommodation website - [find.accommodation.mq.edu.au/Faq](http://find.accommodation.mq.edu.au/Faq)

## BOND

A bond is a sum of money that the landlord/agent can request you to pay as a form of security in case you break the terms and conditions outlined in your lease agreement (e.g., hanging pictures on the wall when you were told not to).

The bond can be no more than 4 weeks rent. So, if your rent is \$200 per week then the bond can be no more than \$800. This applies to both furnished and unfurnished properties.

The bond can be paid in cash, bank cheque, or bank transfer (depending on the agreement with the provider).

## WHERE IS THE BOND KEPT AND HOW TO CLAIM?

Once your landlord/agent has received your bond money, they will need to lodge it with NSW Fair Trading – they cannot keep this money aside on your behalf. A 'Rental Bond Lodgement Form' must be completed by the landlord, and signed by you before paying the bond. Forms are available from any Fair Trading Centre or by calling 13 32 20 (the landlord should obtain this form for you). Lodgement of the form and money must be done within 10 working days from receiving the bond.

After the bond has been processed by Fair Trading, you will receive confirmation of bond lodgement, as well as a unique bond number. Please keep this confirmation letter safe.

For more information about bonds, search 'Taking a bond' on the Fair Trading NSW website: [www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au](http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au)

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## NOTICE OF TERMINATION /BREAKING LEASE EARLY (LANDLORD)

The landlord/agent must provide you with at least the following notice periods to terminate your contract:

- **14 days** – if you are 14 days or more behind on your rent, or have committed a breach of the lease agreement
- **30 days** – if the fixed term of the agreement is due to end
- **30 days** – if the premises has been sold after the fixed term has ended and vacant possession is required by the buyer under the terms of the sale contract
- **90 days** – if the fixed term period has expired and no new agreement has been signed.

Notice of termination/ Breaking lease early (tenant) although it is possible to break your agreement early, you may be eligible for extra costs if you do. For example, if you break your contract during a fixed term, you may need to pay rent until a new tenant takes over or the fixed term period ends (whichever one occurs first). Note - the landlord must take all reasonable steps to find a replacement tenant as soon as possible.

You can provide **14 days' notice** for early termination without financial penalty if: **1)** You have accepted an offer of social housing (e.g. from Housing NSW); **2)** You need to move into an aged care facility or nursing home (not a retirement village); **3)** You have obtained a final apprehended violence order against somebody you were living with; **4)** The landlord has put the premises on the market for sale, and you were not told before signing the lease that a contract for sale had been drawn up. You can provide **21 days' notice** for early termination without financial penalty if you have a fixed term agreement of more than 2 years and you have been given a rent increase notice.

## SIGNING THE LEASE AGREEMENT

Once your application has been approved, you will need to do the following:

1. Book in a time with your landlord/agent in which to sign your lease.
2. Ensure that you understand all the costs associated with your rent. You might want to ask your landlord/agent for a copy of this in writing.
3. If there are any damages/problems with the property, ensure that you let the landlord/agent know as soon as possible and in writing. This is usually done via a 'condition report', which the landlord/agent will provide you after signing your lease.
4. Make sure you give yourself sufficient time to read through your lease. If you are unsure regarding any of the terms, do not hesitate to ask your landlord/agent to explain.
5. Double check everything written in your lease. Make sure that your name and personal information are spelt correctly.
6. Make sure your agent gives you a printed copy of your condition report after signing the lease. This document usually needs to be handed back to the agent within 7 days.

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7. You should be given as many keys as there are names on the lease, as well as keys for your mailbox. You should also be provided with a photocopy of these keys.
8. Make sure you understand the process for repair/maintenance requests. Some agents might ask you to submit an online application, whilst others may ask you to contact them by phone.
9. Find out who your real estate agent will be throughout the lease period. In most cases this will be the person who showed you the property at inspection.
10. Ensure you receive a signed copy of your lease.

## CONDITION REPORT

A Condition Report is a document that details the general condition of the property. Before you move in, the landlord/agent will visually inspect the property and make clear any damages to furniture, carpet, or other belongings.

After inspecting the entire property, the landlord will provide you with 2 copies of the Condition report (one that you keep, and another which you will give back to the landlord/agent).

You will then need to read through each comment and agree, or make adjustments, if you don't agree. The Condition report is very important because it will be used as evidence if there are any disputes with the bond.

It is therefore very important to read the Condition report carefully, and write down any marks, stains, or damages that you can see. Example of what a Standard form Condition report is available via [www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/pdfs/Tenants\\_and\\_home\\_owners/Condition\\_report.pdf](http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/pdfs/Tenants_and_home_owners/Condition_report.pdf) from [NSW Fair Trading](http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au).

## OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER

### REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

It is the landlord/agents responsibility to ensure that the property is clean and tidy before you move in. It is also your responsibility to keep the property clean and tidy at all times. Any damages will be deducted from your bond.

#### Tips for property repairs

1. Report any damages/repairs to the landlord/agent as soon as they arise. Otherwise, it may be seen as intentional.
2. Requests for repairs/maintenance should be requested in writing (via email or post). If you have an urgent repair, such as a burst pipe, no electricity, or gas leak, make sure you contact your agent directly, however. Your agent will usually provide an emergency contact number.
3. Keep a record of all maintenance/repairs you've requested. This will be used as evidence if any future problems arise.
4. Take photos of any significant maintenance issues. E.g., cracks in the wall, leaking taps, etc.

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## UTILITIES AND SERVICES

In most cases, you will be required to pay for utilities and bills. There are many providers across Sydney that can provide you with quotes for electricity, telephone, internet, and TV services. Some of these include:

### GAS & ELECTRICITY PROVIDERS

AGL  
131 245  
[www.agl.com.au](http://www.agl.com.au)

Energy Australia  
133466  
[www.energyaustralia.com.au](http://www.energyaustralia.com.au)

### TELEPHONE & INTERNET PROVIDERS

Telstra  
1800 782 650  
[www.telstra.com.au](http://www.telstra.com.au)

TPG  
131 423  
[www.tpg.com.au](http://www.tpg.com.au)

Optus  
1800 500 002  
[www.optus.com.au](http://www.optus.com.au)

AAPT  
13 88 77  
[www.aapt.com.au](http://www.aapt.com.au)

### PAY TV/CABLE TV PROVIDERS

Foxtel  
1300 788 796  
[www.foxtel.com.au](http://www.foxtel.com.au)

### WATER

If you rent an apartment or a bedroom within a shared property, you are not required to pay for water usage. You would only need to pay for water usage if you rent a house, in which case you would receive a water bill each quarter.

### FURTHER ASSISTANCE

For further assistance please contact the Macquarie University Accommodation office:  
[housing@mq.edu.au](mailto:housing@mq.edu.au) or on (02) 9850 7965

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