
Rental Agreement Tips for Students

Student Guide to Rental Agreements

What to Look For

Lease Terms

- **Duration:** Standard is 12 months, but consider if you need shorter terms
- **Early termination:** Understand penalties and notice requirements
- **Renewal process:** Automatic renewal or notice periods required

Costs

- **Monthly rent:** Total amount and due date
- **Security deposit:** Amount and conditions for full return
- **Utilities:** Which are included vs. tenant responsibility
- **Application/administration fees:** One-time costs
- **Late payment penalties:** Amount and grace period

Maintenance & Repairs

- **Landlord responsibilities:** Timeframe for addressing issues
- **Emergency contacts:** Who to call when urgent problems arise
- **Tenant responsibilities:** Regular upkeep expected

Rules & Restrictions

- **Guest policies:** Overnight stays, maximum duration
- **Noise restrictions:** Quiet hours and consequences
- **Pet policies:** Allowed animals, deposits, fees
- **Decoration/alteration policies:** What changes you can make

Documentation

- **Property condition:** Take dated photos before moving in
- **Inventory checklist:** Document pre-existing damage

Negotiation Strategies

Before Negotiating

- **Research market rates:** Know average prices in your area
- **Understand vacancy rates:** High vacancy gives you leverage
- **Identify priorities:** Know what matters most to you

Effective Approaches

- **Offer longer lease** for lower monthly rent
- **Highlight your strengths** as a tenant (income, references)
- **Bundle requests** rather than negotiating item by item
- **Ask about move-in specials** or discounts for students
- **Request specific improvements** before signing

topgrades abroad

What's Often Negotiable

- **Monthly rent:** 5-10% reduction possible in competitive markets
- **Security deposit:** Amount or payment schedule
- **Lease length:** Shorter terms or month-to-month options
- **Move-in date:** Prorated rent for partial months
- **Appliance/amenity upgrades:** Minor improvements at landlord's expense

What's Rarely Negotiable

- Local ordinances and safety requirements
- Insurance requirements
- Core payment responsibilities

Red Flags to Watch For

- Missing/vague terms about deposit return
- Excessive restrictions on guests
- Language prohibiting you from pursuing legal remedies
- Maintenance responsibilities shifted entirely to tenant
- Verbal promises not included in written agreement

Final Steps

- Get all agreements in writing
- Keep copies of all documents
- Consider having a third party review before signing