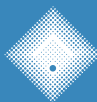


# HOUSING GUIDE 2019



[vu.edu.au/housing](http://vu.edu.au/housing)

CRICOS No: 00124K (Melb), 02475D (Syd), RTO 3113



**VICTORIA  
UNIVERSITY**

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# ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS

Choosing the right type of housing can present a challenging task.

Before you start looking you must determine what you can afford. What will be your source of income and how much of that income can you afford for housing? Do a budget to identify your expenses.

The electronic budget planner on the Moneysmart website is ideal – [www.moneysmart.gov.au](http://www.moneysmart.gov.au)

Next, consider your needs – for example, do you rely on public transport or will you need car parking? Do you need to be close to campus or an area for employment?

Write down a list of your needs and your budgeted amount for housing so you can take these into account when considering the options.

And lastly – improve your living skills by ensuring you know how to do your laundry, cook and care for yourself.

Accommodation options include:

- university accommodation
- commercial student apartments
- shared housing
- private rental
- homestay
- rooming houses and hostels

Take time to explore your options and take temporary accommodation – hotels, motels, hostels and backpackers to give yourself time to inspect accommodation before signing any lease or agreement or paying any money.

Spacious and light filled living room in the 6 bed UniLodge apartment.



## VU ACCOMMODATION

If you have never lived out of home or wish to live in a University environment with planned social, recreational and academic activities, then choosing to live in Victoria University's accommodation may be a great option.

### BENEFITS OF LIVING IN UNIVERSITY ACCOMMODATION

The benefits of living in university accommodation are many!

- located across the road from VU's Footscray Park campus provides you access to all the services, facilities and activities of the campus — library, gymnasium, indoor pool, cafes, bar and events where you can mix with other VU students from all over the world
- resident programs, support services and activities
- seven day Reception and 24/7 on-site resident support (RAs) for the best experience at University accommodation
- easy access to public transport to VU's other campuses — our City Flinders Campus is just two train stops away
- Footscray University town — easy access to shopping, vibrant cafes and markets
- lower rent — compared to lesser quality and higher priced accommodation in the CBD

For further details of university accommodation contact:

### UNILODGE @ VU

This new multi storey complex located directly opposite VU's Footscray Park campus offers Studio, 2 and 6 bedroom luxury apartment living for 500 students! Fully furnished apartments, study rooms, in-house theatre and much more await you! Utilities and wifi are included in the rent. Twin share apartments are now available from \$193 per week.

### ACCOMMODATION GUARANTEE

Unilodge @ VU has partnered with Victoria University to offer guaranteed accommodation to new and continuing full-time domestic and international students for your initial lease.

Booking: [unilodge.com.au/lodge/vu](http://unilodge.com.au/lodge/vu)

Email: [vu@unilodge.com.au](mailto:vu@unilodge.com.au)

Phone: +613 9998 8490

## OFF CAMPUS ACCOMMODATION

In and around Melbourne, you can choose to rent a commercially operated Student apartment, a vacant property in the community, rent a room in a share house or live in a family home environment through Homestay.

You can find out more about different accommodation options by referring to the Share Housing, Renting, Homestay/Boarding, Hostels/Rooming Houses and Commercial Student Apartments Blocks sections in the Student Housing Guide.

## STUDENT HOUSING DATABASE

If you are considering Off Campus accommodation, Victoria University has a Student Housing Database which students can access.

The database can be viewed at

[vu.edu.au/housing](http://vu.edu.au/housing)

More information about moving out of home and budgeting can be found on the Moneysmart and tenancy information on the Consumer Affairs Victoria or Tenants Victoria websites.

VU has a House Hunting Friends Facebook Group where you can link in with other students looking for accommodation. To find out more visit [vu.edu.au/facebook/groups](http://vu.edu.au/facebook/groups)

## SHARE HOUSING

Choosing shared housing gives you the opportunity to live independently in a shared environment. You share the cost of the rent with others and share common areas such as the kitchen, bathroom and living room with other people living in the household.

Remember that as it is a shared arrangement people may tend to move in and out of the house. This can be great for interacting and meeting new people, but it may also create a challenging study environment.

### JOINING A SHARED HOUSEHOLD

Living in a household and sharing the cost of rent and bills (and sometimes food) with other people makes sharing a cheaper housing option than renting on your own. In some instances, housemates take turns in sharing the cooking and put in money for communal living expenses (such as cleaning products).

It is less expensive if you choose to move into an established share house that has furniture, kitchen utensils and whitegoods (e.g. fridge, washing machine). When looking at moving into a shared household, always check what is included and what you need to bring to the house.

Some things to consider before you move in are:

- shared rental and living costs
- number of people in the household
- current tenancy arrangements
- distance to campus and public transport
- if landlord permission is required
- shared house expectations and rules
- condition of the property
- safety inside and outside of the property
- landlord permission is obtained (if property is a rental)
- secure locks and smoke alarms

The Housing Checklist (page 19) provides detailed questions to ask when considering and moving into a shared housing arrangement. When sharing it is important to recognise that the Residential Tenancy Act 1997 does not differentiate between the rights and responsibilities of co-tenants in relation to each other. If something goes wrong, a landlord can pursue any one or all of the co-tenants for damages. Specifically, this means that you can be held responsible for the wrongdoings of your housemates. For this reason, it is important to ensure that you meet potential housemates and discuss living arrangements prior to moving into a shared household.

### TIP

The Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria (DSCV) provides a free mediation service to help resolve disputes.  
[www.disputes.vic.gov.au](http://www.disputes.vic.gov.au)  
Phone: 1300 372 888

### DISAGREEMENTS IN A SHARED HOUSE

Sometimes disagreements and disputes arise between housemates. Common areas of conflict include friends visiting or staying over, cleaning, food and different cultural needs or lifestyle habits.

If you find yourself in this situation remember good communication is essential. Try to talk through the problem directly with the other housemate(s) and focus on the issue. Remaining open to the other person's perspective and looking for areas of commonality will also help to resolve the disagreement.

As with other housing options, it is always a good idea to establish and agree upon the living arrangements prior to moving into a house. It is also a good idea to have regular meetings with your housemates to discuss chores, bills and social activities.

### TIP

Never pay a Bond in cash. Get a bank cheque or money order (from a Post Office) made out to the Residential Tenancies Bond Authority (RTBA) and complete the Bond Lodgement form together with the landlord or agent.

### TIP

Before moving into any rented premises, ensure the lease holder has written permission of the landlord. If the person states they are the owner ask for proof such as Land Rates notice bearing their name.

## RENTING

Renting a property in the private housing market gives you the opportunity to live independently and to be self-reliant. For some students this choice provides an excellent option for privacy, autonomy and lifestyle independence.

This option however can be expensive as you are responsible for organising the tenancy, paying for the connection to utilities, paying the full rent and managing ongoing bills.

Please consider your budget carefully. It is recommended that you allow at least 35% of your income for rent.

You are also solely responsible for all the daily chores associated with living in a house. For example there is no sharing of dishes, cooking, grocery shopping or cleaning duties. Again, if you enjoy being self-sufficient and are organised these responsibilities may not be daunting.

### FINDING A PRIVATE RENTAL

There are a few different ways of finding a rental property in the private market:

- VU Student Housing Services Database
- search the real estate websites
- visit real estate agencies

You must inspect each property you are interested in before applying. The web listing may contain Open for Inspection times or contact the Agent or landlord to arrange this.

When you decide to apply for a rental property, you will need to complete an application form. This contains a range of personal details including the contact details of referees. You will also be asked to provide details of employment and/other sources of income and rental history. You will also be asked to provide a copy of your driver's licence or passport.

### TIP

Ensure that you fully understand any tenancy documents before you sign them. Seek advice from Consumer Affairs Victoria if you are unsure of your rights and responsibilities.

### TIP

Always complete a Condition Report before you move into a Rental Property. This important document is your written record of the condition of the premises (and may be used as evidence in any dispute about cleaning, damage or missing items).

When inspecting a rental property it is a good idea to refer to a map and become familiar with where facilities (e.g. shops, public transport, chemist, doctor etc.) are located in relation to the property.

It can be difficult to remember all the things you need when inspecting the property and for this reason, take along the Housing Checklist (page 19). This is also handy for comparing properties.

### ALLOW ENOUGH TIME TO FIND A RENTAL PROPERTY

Given that there is strong competition for affordable rental properties in Melbourne, it is advisable to allow yourself at least 4 weeks to find suitable housing, especially at the start of semester when many students are looking to secure affordable housing. This allows time to have a look at a range of properties on the market and helps you to find a property that suits your needs.

### FOOTSCRAY UNIVERSITY TOWN

Footscray – a marvellous multicultural hub close to the CBD!

Home to VU's Footscray Park and Footscray Nicholson St Campuses, Footscray can offer lower housing and accommodation costs than the CBD. You can enjoy a vibrant lifestyle with bustling markets, public gardens and loads of cafes and restaurants offering Vietnamese and African cuisines.

Footscray Railway station is a main hub providing easy access to all VU's campuses. The city campuses are just two stops away.

Regional Rail links to Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo also transit through Footscray.

### TIP

SCAMS: if the information you read about a property looks too good to be real, it probably is not real. Beware! Find out more about SCAMS here: [www.moneysmart.gov.au/scams](http://www.moneysmart.gov.au/scams)

## HOMESTAY

Homestay provides a cultural exchange between you and a local family or individual (called a Host). You live as a guest in the host's home. Unlike many other accommodation options you do not need to pay a bond, provide furniture, sign a lease or search for a property.

Living in a supported environment, you are provided with a clean furnished room (this includes items like a bed, desk, wardrobe, chair and a study lamp) access to bathroom and laundry facilities and meal services. Utilities (electricity, gas and water etc.) are also included. The minimum stay is 4 weeks.

Hosts offer ongoing support and orientation to the local area and facilities such as banks, post office, shops, public transport etc.

Homestay charges vary. As a general guide, costs A\$350 per week. The rate will depend on whether the host is offering a single or share bedroom, meal plan option and your age (less than or over 18 yrs). Homestay agencies who arrange the placement charge a placement fee. This is usually equal to one weeks rent.

Victoria University's preferred homestay provider is Australian Homestay Network (AHN).

To find out more please refer to [www.homestaynetwork.org/VU-students](http://www.homestaynetwork.org/VU-students) or phone: +613 9435 6621 or 1300 MY STAY.

AHN students are covered by insurances and have a 24/7 emergency phone line.

## WHEN PROBLEMS ARISE IN HOMESTAY

In the event that a problem does occur, try to talk through the problem directly with the other person. Choose a time that you are both available and think ahead about what you want to say. It might also be helpful to write down the points you want to raise. Remember to stay focused on the issue and talk about the problem, not the person. Remaining open to new ideas and looking for areas where there is common interest can often help with reaching a resolution.

If you are reluctant to speak directly with the other person, then it is important that you contact the Homestay agent.

The Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria (DSCV) also provides a mediation service. [www.disputes.vic.gov.au](http://www.disputes.vic.gov.au)  
Phone: 1300 372 888

For further information refer to the Understanding Your Rights and Responsibilities section.

## TIP

Deal with the issue early. The longer a problem is left, the more difficult it becomes to resolve.



Students sitting outside UniLodge @ VU near  
Footscray Park Campus.



## HOSTELS/ROOMING HOUSES

Any house or building that has four or more people who individually rent a room and share facilities may be classified as a hostel or rooming house and should be a registered business.

Hostels are popular amongst students who like living with other people in a communal environment. You can rent your own locked bedroom (single room) or share a bedroom with other students.

Bedrooms may be furnished with a bed, wardrobe, table and chair and lamp. You share the kitchen(s), dining room(s), laundry(s). Utilities are normally included in the rent unless separately metered.

Most hostels usually have a café where you can buy meals and the larger hostels often have gyms, bars, travel agents, and business facilities.

Some things to consider:

- if you asked to share your room, you have to agree first and your rent must be reduced
- the maximum bond you can be asked to pay is up to 14 days rent
- seek advice if you are asked to sign a tenancy agreement
- if you want to leave the rooming house, you need to give at least 2 business days notice for which you will need to pay rent

### TIP

A landlord cannot put additional people in a room without the consent of the current occupier.

### TIP

Costs can vary between the above mentioned options, so it is worth calling a few different accommodation providers and asking about their short and long term rates. There are also temporary accommodation listings (e.g. hotels, motels and backpackers) that can be accessed by visiting the Student Housing Services website [vu.edu.au/housing](http://vu.edu.au/housing)

## STUDENT APARTMENTS

Student apartments are run by commercial operators. Apartments include bathrooms and kitchen facilities. If you enjoy independent living, this option may be worth considering.

The rooms are fully furnished with most complexes having a management team and usually security. There are different apartment configurations, including one bedroom, two bedroom and twin share.

Renting your own apartment may be expensive so many students tend to share an apartment. Shared rental means that each student has a locked bedroom and shares the kitchen, etc.

Commercially operated student apartments not affiliated with an educational institution are covered by the Residential Tenancies Act.

### TIP

Rooming Houses and Hostels must be registered to ensure health, fire and safety requirements are met.

### TIP

Leases for student apartments are normally 6 or 12 months. If you need to break a lease early, break lease costs will apply and may be quite substantial.

# LIVING COSTS

The following table lists the average living costs per student for a room in an established household in the private market as compared to a room in a 6 bedroom apartment in UniLodge @ VU. This is a guide only and costs are subject to increase and may vary depending on location, lifestyle needs and choices. Costs are calculated for one full year. Setting up your own house or flat would be more expensive than either of these options.

	PRIVATE SHARE HOUSE		UNILODGE @ VU	
<b>ESTABLISHMENT COSTS</b>				
Bond/damages/security deposit#		\$392–\$784		\$1,500
Rent or fees in advance		\$392–\$784		\$2,253
Rent and reservation fee		0		\$170
Community Spirit Program		0		\$200
Homestarter kit (bedding etc)		\$159–\$255		\$249–\$274
Furniture, if required		\$500–\$1000		0
Departure cleaning fee		\$300		\$130
<b>TOTAL ESTABLISHMENT COSTS</b>		<b>\$1743–\$3123</b>		<b>\$4372–\$4397</b>
<b>WEEKLY COSTS</b>	<b>PER WEEK</b>	<b>PER YEAR*</b>	<b>PER WEEK</b>	<b>PER YEAR*</b>
Rent/accommodation fees	\$196	\$10192	\$268##	\$13936
Food/beverages	\$115	\$5980	\$115	\$5980
Public transport (Myki Card)	\$43	\$2236	**\$0	(\$2236)
Personal care	\$25	\$1300	\$25	\$1300
Entertainment, sport, hobbies	\$30	\$1560	\$30	\$1560
Mobile/internet	\$45	\$2340	*\$30	\$1560
Utilities (gas, electricity, water)	\$35	\$1820	0	0
<b>ESTIMATED MINIMAL LIVING COSTS</b>	<b>\$489</b>	<b>\$25,428</b>	<b>\$468</b>	<b>\$24336</b>

# A bond is refundable subject to no deductions for outstanding rent or damages

## 6 bedroom apartment

\* 50 gb internet/month included in rent

\*\* Living at UniLodge @ VU you may have minimal public cost if you are attending Footscray Park Campus or Footscray Nicholson St Campus. To see more about the costs of living in Victoria go to [www.liveinvictoria.vic.gov.au](http://www.liveinvictoria.vic.gov.au)

See the UniLodge website for the full product range and pricing

## TIP

Senior Student Advisors at Victoria University can provide you with information and advice on money management, tips to save money, debt management and inform you of your rights in relation to money and debt matters. You can make an appointment with a senior advisor, phone: +613 9919 6100. Doing a budget will help you manage your money. For a useful budget planner visit [www.moneysmart.gov.au](http://www.moneysmart.gov.au)

## TIP

A useful website to find out about rental trends and housing costs is [www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/publications/rental-report](http://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/publications/rental-report)

# RENTAL COSTS

It is important to consider the combined cost of rent, living expenses and transport when choosing rental accommodation in Melbourne.

RENTAL PRICES FOR SUBURBS NEAR VU CAMPUSES*			
LOCALITY	1 BEDROOM UNIT	2 BEDROOM UNIT	3 BEDROOM UNIT
CBD Melbourne	\$450	\$600	\$880
Footscray	\$290	\$400	\$540
St Albans	\$270	\$320	\$340
Werribee	\$250	\$300	\$340
Sunshine	\$230	\$340	\$400

Source: [www.realestate.com.au/neighbourhoods](http://www.realestate.com.au/neighbourhoods)

\* Median prices per week (as at 23 November 2018)

## INTERESTED IN FINDING OUT MORE ABOUT A LOCATION?

To find out more about each suburb (such as people, lifestyle and types of housing) visit [www.reiv.com.au/Property-Research/Rental-Data/Median-rents-by-suburb](http://www.reiv.com.au/Property-Research/Rental-Data/Median-rents-by-suburb) (as at Sept 2018)

### TIP

Generally, rental accommodation becomes more expensive the closer it is located to the Melbourne CBD.

# STEPS TO STARTING A TENANCY

1. Inspect Property
2. Lodge application
3. Application accepted
4. Real estate agent/landlord gives you a Residential Tenancy Agreement to read, understand and sign – keep a signed copy
5. Pay the bond in bank cheque or Money Order (from post offices) made to Residential Tenancies Bond Authority and one month's rent in advance

Note: if you are starting a tenancy in a rooming house and the rent is to be paid weekly, the rooming house owner cannot ask for more than 14 days rent in advance and the bond can not be more than 14 days rent. Refer to Rooming House section on page 5 of the Housing Guide

6. You are provided with a Bond Lodgement Form to complete and sign. You keep one copy
7. Real estate agent/landlord forwards the bond to the Residential Tenancies Bond Authority (RTBA) within 10 business days of receiving the bond money
8. The RTBA sends you a receipt within 7 days of receiving the bond
9. A Condition Report on the premises is given to you by the landlord/real estate agent  
This very important document details the condition of the premises at the start of the tenancy. You have 3 business days from when you receive the keys to add your comments to this report and hand a copy back to the landlord or agent

Note: It is also recommended that you take photographs of the condition of the property and any existing damage prior to moving in

10. Return a copy of the Condition Report with your written comments within 3 working days to the landlord or real estate agent.  
Keep a signed copy
11. Arrange connection of gas, electricity and water (In Rooming Houses these would be connected and cost included in the rent unless the room is separately metered)
12. Settle in

## TIP

Keep all your tenancy documents (lease, condition report and any photos) rent receipts and correspondence with the real estate agent or landlord in one folder. Check that you receive receipts for the rent, bond and any bills. Also, remember the importance of checking the property location and the safety inside and outside of the property.

## CONDITION REPORT

The Condition Report states the condition of the property when you moved in.

It is vital that you carefully go through the property room by room and either tick the column next to each item if you agree, or make a comment if you do not. Write in any additional item/s of damage you find that is not shown on the Condition Report. Take photos to support your comments and findings.

Return a copy of the Condition Report to the real estate agent or landlord within 3 working days of moving into the property.

The Condition Report provides the evidence to support a claim by either you or the landlord or real estate agent in the event of a dispute between you and the landlord at the end of your tenancy.

The Condition Report documents:

- state of cleanliness of the property
- state of the fixtures and fittings
- declares if there is any existing damage

## TIP

Use descriptive words on the Condition Report to describe state of cleanliness.  
e.g. moderately or heavily soiled instead of emotional words such as 'this place is filthy!'  
Describe damage accurately e.g. 6 slats of the lounge vertical blind are torn.

# DURING A TENANCY

## TENANT'S RESPONSIBILITIES

- pay rent on time. If the rent is 14 days or more behind, the landlord or real estate agent issues you a notice to vacate
- take care to avoid damaging the property
- report any damage caused by you or your visitors
- notify the landlord or real estate agent of required repairs in writing
- connect utilities and telephone
- keep the property clean; maintain the garden and lawns (if any) as stated in the tenancy agreement

## LANDLORD/REAL ESTATE AGENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- lodge bond money with the Residential Tenancies Bond Authority (RTBA)
- provide you with information – Consumer Affairs Victoria booklets 'Renting a Home: A Guide for Tenants or 'Rooming Houses: A Guide for Residents and Operators' Landlords/ real estate agents can be fined up to \$500 for not providing this information
- must repair and maintain the property
- give you privacy and must give you a notice to visit or enter your property



If you would like to discuss responsibilities during a tenancy or further information contact:

**Tenants Victoria**

[www.tuv.org.au](http://www.tuv.org.au)

Phone: +613 9416 2577

**Consumer Affairs Victoria**

[www.consumer.vic.gov.au](http://www.consumer.vic.gov.au)

Phone: 1300 558 181

# MOVING

Some important things to take care of before you move out of a house include making sure that you have paid your share of the bills, cleaned your share of the house, disconnected the gas, etc. if relevant, and provided your forwarding address or have you mail redirected by Australia Post.

## LEAVING A PROPERTY AT THE END OF AN EXPIRED LEASE

If you are living in shared housing (and not on the lease), tell your housemate/s that you want to leave and give them an exit date. Your housemate/s can then decide whether they want to advertise for a new housemate.

If you are on the lease, you need to tell your housemates and give 28 days written notice to the landlord or real estate agent of your intention to vacate. Your housemates can then decide whether to advertise for a new housemate or also give 28 days written notice to vacate to the landlord or agent.

If you are living in your own rental property, you need to give at least 28 days notice in writing to the landlord or real-estate agent.

## THE FINAL INSPECTION

The real-estate agent or landlord has 10 working days from when you vacate the property to:

- undertake the final condition inspection to ensure the property is clean and undamaged
- process your bond claim for refund
- notify you of any issues of dispute such as cleaning or damage
- and if there is an issue, lodge an application with the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) for the matter to be heard

Leave the property in the same or better condition as when you signed the lease. Prior to the final inspection, repair any damage to the property that may have occurred. Remember to take all your belongings.

Share households usually have copies of all bills sent prior to the inspection date. You will need to pay your share of the utility bills (water, gas, electricity and phone) on your vacating date. All keys and borrowed goods also need to be returned to the landlord on the vacating date. Extra rent may be charged if the keys are returned late.

### TIP

Ignoring your responsibilities may have an impact on the ability of future students to arrange accommodation with landlords. You may also have renting problems if you try to rent in the future.

## BREAKING A LEASE EARLY

If your lease (contract or agreement) has not yet expired and you want to break it early, then you may be liable to pay the rent until the property is re-let. This may include the re-let fee and any additional advertising fees.

The landlord needs to take all reasonable action to re-let a vacant property and cannot discriminate against potential tenants. Phone the landlord regularly to see if they have re-let the property.

The re-letting provision does not apply to hostels, rooming houses (unless signed into a contract) or shared housing situations. See Student Housing Services asap if you need advice.

Landlords may also legally apply to the Victorian Civil Administration Tribunal (VCAT) for you to pay compensation if you break your lease early.

### For free confidential advice, contact Consumer Affairs Victoria

Phone: 1300 55 81 81 (local call charge)

You can advertise for free on VU's Student Housing database or with another tertiary institution to see if another student will take over your lease when you leave. If you have immediate reasons for breaking the lease, such as the rented property being unfit for human use or major repairs have not been undertaken as requested, seek advice from:

### Consumer Affairs Victoria

Phone: 1300 55 81 81 (local call charge)

### Tenants Victoria

Phone: +613 9416 2577

## CLEANING

Final cleaning includes:

- carpets are cleaned and lawns mowed
- all surfaces (benches, floors and oven top) are dirt and stain free
- the oven/griller and bathroom/laundry have been cleaned
- newspapers are recycled and all rubbish placed out for collection
- all belongings (furniture, clothes, books, PC and pot plants) have been removed  
This includes trying to find the owner (or friends of) belongings left behind that are not yours

In shared households, bedroom cleaning is 100% the responsibility of the person who sleeps/slept in it. Cleaning of communal areas (kitchen, lounge, bathroom, laundry and garden) is shared equally between all housemates. Be aware that failure to clean adequately may result in the landlord claiming commercial cleaning costs (this can amount to hundreds of dollars).

## STORAGE

If you have a household of furniture including bed/s, wardrobe, bookshelf, chest of drawers, washing machine, fridge, microwave, sofa, table and chairs, bike, clothes, books, PC, desk, TV and stereo, you may want to use a removalist and hire storage to keep your furniture.

Compare prices of storage companies and removalists listed on the internet or in the local newspaper and yellow pages. Check with removalists how big their truck is, if insurance is included and if the quoted removalist price is for 1 or 2 people.

## TIP

It can be expensive to break a lease. Before entering into a fixed term tenancy agreement, think about your likelihood of staying at the property for the full period of the lease.



## TIP

You may be able to acquire storage boxes free from supermarkets. Ask friends if they have a spare room or garage that you can rent short-term to store your stuff.

## BOND RETURNS

Complete a Bond Claim form in pen – avoid leaving any blank sections on the form and never sign a blank Bond Claim form. Ensure your bank account details and other form sections are completed correctly and that you sign it the same way you did when it was first lodged. Bond refund is usually returned in 2–3 business days. The RTBA provides no counter cheques and the Bond Claim form must be signed by the landlord before lodging.

## BOND TRANSFERS

If you paid a bond/security deposit in shared housing that was lodged with the RTBA, then you need to complete a Tenant Transfer form. The new tenant (or remaining tenants) pay you the bond money you are owed. Any new tenant is then included on the lease and their share of the bond is recorded in their name. You should check with the real estate agent/landlord that your name has been removed from the lease.

## CANCELLING THE GAS, ELECTRICITY, WATER, PHONE AND INTERNET

If the utilities account/s are in your name, you need to give at least 48 hours notice to your retailer prior to vacating to ensure the final readings are done to avoid being charged for utilities after you vacate. In most instances you can do these arrangements on-line.

## MAIL REDIRECTION

Complete a Mail Redirection form on-line with Australia Post to have your mail sent from your current address to another local or overseas address. The cost of this service is around \$23 per month and you can organise it in advance. Redirecting of letters overseas does incur extra costs – see Australia Post website for more information.

## TIP

The Residential Tenancy Bond Authority (RTBA) will not accept a Bond Claim form if it has been altered in any way. If a tenant, landlord or real estate agent needs to make any changes to the form, they must complete a new Bond Claim form.



# UNDERSTANDING YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

When you start renting a property, you enter into a lease. There are two types of leases: fixed term and periodic. Fixed term leases are for a set period of time, usually 6 or 12 months. A periodic lease generally runs from month to month.

It is important to understand that a lease is a legally binding contract between you and the landlord. If you break a lease (e.g. leave before the end of the agreed time period), it can be very costly. For this reason, only sign a fixed term lease if you are sure that you want to stay at the property for the entire period of the lease.

Remember that you are entitled to negotiate the terms of the lease with the landlord – the law does not require that a lease is for 6 or 12 months. It is just common practice. For example, you can ask the landlord to change the lease period to fit the academic year.

If you are renting a property with other people, you and the other tenants all need to sign the lease.

If you are moving into an already established share house, you should request written permission from the landlord to have your name added to the tenancy agreement. Having your name on the lease gives you the same rights as your housemates.

You are, however, also equally responsible for what happens in the house. For example, you are equally responsible for any damage to the property and non payment of rent.

If someone is moving out as you move in, make sure that you both sign a Bond Transfer form prior to paying the bond money to the tenant who is leaving. Ask the landlord or agent to come and inspect the property and complete a new Condition Report so you are not held responsible for any damage that might have occurred before you moved into the house.

There are some circumstances where you may be in a sub-letting arrangement. This is where a tenant assumes the role of landlord and sub-lets property. Your rights and responsibilities are the same as a tenant under the Residential Tenancies Act.

More information on this type of housing arrangement is available from:

**Tenants Victoria**

Phone: +613 9416 2577

**Consumer Affairs Victoria**

Phone: 1300 51 81 81

As a tenant, it is important that you read *Renting a Home: A Guide for Tenants* or *Rooming Houses: A Guide for Residents*, produced by Consumer Affairs Victoria.

These booklets provide information about yours and your landlord's/rooming house owner's rights and responsibilities. It is required by law that you are given one of these guides by the landlord or real estate agent. Student Housing Services also has copies of these booklets.

If you want to discuss a tenancy issue, you can contact:

**Consumer Affairs Victoria**

[www.consumer.vic.gov.au](http://www.consumer.vic.gov.au)

Phone: 1300 558 181

**Tenants Victoria**

[www.tuv.org.au](http://www.tuv.org.au) – useful housing factsheets

Phone: +613 9416 2577

## TIP

It is wise to do as much research as possible on your rights and responsibilities prior to entering into any tenancy arrangement. Tenancy Law can be complicated and the onus of responsibility is with you in understanding your rights and obligations.

# HOUSING WEBSITES

There are some excellent housing resources available online to help guide you through the rental and shared house environment.

Check out the following websites:

## **CONSUMER AFFAIRS VICTORIA**

Provides rental information and forms  
[www.consumer.vic.gov.au](http://www.consumer.vic.gov.au)

## **TENANTS VICTORIA**

Provides many useful fact sheets and an excellent section on Student Housing  
[www.tuv.org.au](http://www.tuv.org.au)

## **MONEYSMART**

Provides useful short videos to help you prepare for moving out of home  
[www.moneysmart.gov.au/life-events-and-you/under-25s/moving-out-of-home](http://www.moneysmart.gov.au/life-events-and-you/under-25s/moving-out-of-home)

## **COMMUNITY HOUSING**

Provides details of all Community Housing organisations  
<https://chiavic.com.au>

## **ACCOMMODATION WEBSITES**

[www.domain.com.au](http://www.domain.com.au)  
[www.realestate.com.au](http://www.realestate.com.au)  
[www.flatmates.com.au](http://www.flatmates.com.au)  
[www.flatmatefinders.com.au](http://www.flatmatefinders.com.au)

## **HOMESTAY**

[www.homestaynetwork.org](http://www.homestaynetwork.org)

## **REAL ESTATE INSTITUTE OF VICTORIA**

[www.reiv.com.au](http://www.reiv.com.au)

## **SUSTAINABLE RENTING**

Tips on how to reduce your environmental impact  
[www.environmentvictoria.org.au/rentersguide](http://www.environmentvictoria.org.au/rentersguide)  
Save on energy and your power bill  
[www.switchon.vic.gov.au](http://www.switchon.vic.gov.au)

## **GOVERNMENT BOND ASSISTANCE**

[www.housing.vic.gov.au/apply-bond-loan](http://www.housing.vic.gov.au/apply-bond-loan)

## **VICTORIAN STATEWIDE HOMELESSNESS LINE**

Freecall: 1800 825 955

## **PUBLIC HOUSING**

[www.housing.vic.gov.au](http://www.housing.vic.gov.au)

## **DISPUTE SETTLEMENT CENTRE OF VICTORIA**

[www.disputes.vic.gov.au](http://www.disputes.vic.gov.au)

## **VICTORIA CIVIL AND ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNAL (VCAT)**

[www.vcat.vic.gov.au](http://www.vcat.vic.gov.au)

## **RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES BOND AUTHORITY**

[www.rentalbonds.vic.gov.au](http://www.rentalbonds.vic.gov.au)

## **STUDY MELBOURNE STUDENT CENTRE**

For international students at risk of homelessness  
[www.studymelbourne.vic.gov.au](http://www.studymelbourne.vic.gov.au)

# HOUSING CHECKLIST

## ADDRESS

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Property 1

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Property 2

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## BEFORE YOU START LOOKING

### WHAT CAN YOU AFFORD?

What area(s) do you want to live in?	
What area(s) can you afford?	
Can you afford to live alone and pay all the bills or do you want to live with others?	
How much is the bond and rent in advance?	
Have you checked whether you are eligible for financial assistance through Centrelink?	
How much is the gas, electricity, water and phone?	
What furniture, utensils and linen do you need?	

### IF YOU ARE CHOOSING SHARE HOUSING, DO YOU WANT TO LIVE WITH?

Males or females?	
Older or younger people?	
Students, unemployed or working people?	
People who smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol or take drugs?	
Messy or tidy people?	
People who keep different hours to you?	

# COMPARING PROPERTIES

(TICK WHAT IS PROVIDED ✓)

## HOUSING QUESTIONS GENERAL

	PROPERTY 1	PROPERTY 2
Will you be sharing with anyone?		
What is the landlord's name, phone number and address?		
How close is public transport?		
Is the property safe inside and outside?		
Are there any support services nearby?		
Is there a working smoke alarm?		
Do all the windows and doors open/lock?		
Is the area quiet or noisy?		
Is there a garden? If so, who maintains it?		
How long will it take you to get to campus?		
Are pets allowed at the property?		
Does the household have any specific religious or cultural needs?		
Is the property accessible for people with a disability?		

### TIP

Smoke detectors are compulsory in all properties. Your life could depend on it so ensure you test it regularly and change the battery.

## RENT

	PROPERTY 1	PROPERTY 2
How much is the rent?		
Is this rent for a single or shared bedroom?		
Does the rent include bills?		

## IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

	PROPERTY 1	PROPERTY 2
How much is the bond?		
How will the bond be kept?		
Has a Condition Report been completed, signed and provided to the landlord and tenant?		
How long is the lease?		
How much written notice do you need to give to end the lease?		
How much will it cost to break your lease early?		
How many people are on the lease?		
Can I put my name on the lease/tenancy agreement?		

## HOUSEHOLD RESPONSIBILITIES AND RULES

	PROPERTY 1	PROPERTY 2
Who buys and pays for the food?		
Who does the cooking? What type of food is eaten?		
Are any meals shared or provided?		
Who does the grocery shopping?		
Who pays for the general household items (e.g. cleaning products)?		
Do tenants shop as a group?		
Who does the cleaning?		
Are friends/family able to stay regularly and do they contribute to the bills?		
Can friends and family visit?		
What sustainable practices are used at the property? (e.g. recycling, water and power usage)		

# GAS, ELECTRICITY AND WATER BILLS

## TIP

The tenant needs to connect the utilities if moving into a vacant property.

(TICK WHAT IS PROVIDED ✓)

	PROPERTY 1	PROPERTY 2
Are there any water or heating restrictions?		
Who pays the bills?		
How are the bills divided?		

## FOXTEL AND INTERNET

	PROPERTY 1	PROPERTY 2
Is Foxtel television provided? Does this cost extra?		
Is internet access provided? Does this cost extra?		

## BEDROOM FURNITURE

PROPERTY 1	✓	PROPERTY 2	✓
Bed		Bed	
Wardrobe		Wardrobe	
Desk		Desk	
Drawers		Drawers	
Heater		Heater	
Fan		Fan	
Computer		Computer	
Lamp		Lamp	
Other		Other	



# WHAT IS AVAILABLE FOR SHARED USE

(TICK WHAT IS PROVIDED ✓)

PROPERTY 1 ✓	PROPERTY 2 ✓
DVD player, games console	DVD player, games console
Computer, printer, internet	Computer, printer, internet
Kettle, toaster, rice cooker	Kettle, toaster, rice cooker
Cutlery, plates, cups	Cutlery, plates, cups
Linen – pillow, sheets, doona, blankets, towels	Linen – pillow, sheets, doona / blankets / towels
Car parking	Car parking
Other (e.g. soap butter, milk, sugar, coffee toilet paper, cleaning products)	Other (e.g. soap butter, milk, sugar, coffee toilet paper, cleaning products)

## RECEIPTS (SAMPLES ONLY)

### Bond Receipt (Example)

Date Paid:

(Name of person money paid to) received \$ (amount) for bond from (your name and new address):

Both Signatures:

### Rent Receipt (Example)

Date Paid:

(Name of person money paid to) received \$ (amount) from (your name) for (how many) weeks rent) for address:

Both Signatures:

# EXTERNAL SUPPORT SERVICES

If you are experiencing difficulties outside Victoria University office hours, there are many free support services available to help you either by web or phone.

## COUNSELLING SERVICES

SERVICE	DESCRIPTION	CONTACT
LifeLine	Lifeline provides a confidential telephone counselling services service.	Phone: 13 11 14 <a href="http://www.lifeline.org.au">www.lifeline.org.au</a>
Suicide Line	Suicide prevention and counselling and support.	Phone: 1300 651 251
Beyond Blue Info Line	Provides access to information, advice and referrals around depression, anxiety and related conditions.	Phone: 1300 22 46 36 <a href="http://www.beyondblue.org.au">www.beyondblue.org.au</a>
LGBTQIA Switchboard Victoria	Counselling and information.	Phone: 1800 184 527 3pm – midnight (everyday)

## INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ASSISTANCE

Study Melbourne Student Centre details	Provides legal information, material aid and study support to international students.	Phone: 1800 056 449 9am - 5pm Monday - Friday <a href="http://www.studymelbourne.vic.gov.au">www.studymelbourne.vic.gov.au</a>
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## CRISIS ACCOMMODATION

Crisis Accommodation Info Line	Provides a variety of support to people who are homeless or risk of homelessness.	Phone: 1800 627 727 (free call) 10am – Midnight daily
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## OTHER USEFUL NUMBERS

Emergency	Fire, Police, and Ambulance services.	Phone: 000
Poison Information Line	Provides a timely, safe information service in poisonings and suspected poisonings.	Phone: 13 11 26

# STUDENT SERVICES

To access the range of support services at VU visit VUHQ in person, phone: +613 03 9919 6100 or ask a question via [askvu.vu.edu.au](mailto:askvu.vu.edu.au)

## STUDENT SUPPORT

### CENTRELINK

- ✓ advocacy
- ✓ payment advice and entitlements
- ✓ application assistance

### FINANCES

- ✓ money management
- ✓ debtor rights
- ✓ using credit
- ✓ contract advice
- ✓ consumer rights
- ✓ short term interest free student loans of up to \$500 (upon approval)
- ✓ eligibility for HECS Help
- ✓ fee extensions and fee waivers

### HOUSING

- ✓ database of student housing options
- ✓ housing mentoring program
- ✓ House Hunting Friends Facebook Group
- ✓ utility aid and payment advice
- ✓ Tenancy Advice

### INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

- ✓ transition issues
- ✓ family
- ✓ health, health cover
- ✓ visa
- ✓ attendance and progress

## STUDENT LIFE AND WELLBEING

- ✓ clubs and societies
- ✓ leadership programs
- ✓ social events
- ✓ orientation
- ✓ counselling
- ✓ accessibility services
- ✓ advocacy service
- ✓ chaplaincy

## STUDENT INTEGRITY UNIT

- ✓ safer communities
- ✓ student complaints

## THE HUB

Victoria University offers a range of complementary activities to engage you in learning and skill development beyond your course.

At the Hub you can access careers and employment advice, library services as well as writing and maths guidance.

You can drop into the Hub on campus, book a workshop or access resources online.

## CONTACT US

[askvu.vu.edu.au](http://askvu.vu.edu.au)

[vu.edu.au/housing](http://vu.edu.au/housing)

Phone: +613 9919 6100

### DISCLAIMER

Please note this publication has been produced to provide housing information and should be treated as a guide only. Victoria University accepts no responsibility for the accuracy of information and reserves the right to make changes to the document at any time in its absolute discretion. The onus of responsibility is with each student to assess whether any housing option outlined in this publication is suitable to his/her own needs. Any arrangements, financial or otherwise, are strictly between the student and the share house/landlord/agency/agent.

While every reasonable effort has been made to ensure this information is correct, details are subject to change. Publication date January 2019.