

FINDING THE PERFECT PAD IN EDINBURGH



Are you ready to look for the perfect pad??

Flat hunting is not an easy task. You need to decide who you want to live with and which area you want to live in, to find a nice, warm, safe and affordable place and to check all the legal stuff.

It will probably take you one month and many viewings before finding the perfect place.

But don't stress out. Loads of students have done it before!

This booklet provides you a step by step guidance in your flat hunting.



1. Landlord or letting agency?

With the internet, there are more and more opportunities to rent a flat directly from a private landlord. It is cheap, quick and easy. However, letting agencies offers more guarantees and help.

Whether you decide to rent from a private landlord or a letting agency, below are a few things to consider.

1.1 Landlord

Is the landlord registered?



All private landlords have a legal duty to apply to the local council to register.

The registration system ensures that the landlord is a suitable person or “fit and proper” to let out property.

To check whether your Landlord is registered or not, go to <https://www.landlordregistrationscotland.gov.uk>

Your landlord may be exempted from registration if:

- The landlord lives in the property
- The owner has died within the last 6 months and the inheritance is being sorted out

If the Landlord is not registered DO NOT sign an agreement!

You may be evicted if the council find out the landlord is not registered
It may be because the landlord is not considered as a “fit and proper” person

Is the landlord a member of an accreditation scheme?

Before you agree to rent a property ask the landlord whether s/he is member of an accreditation scheme. You can ask for both their Accreditation Certificate and a copy of the core standards, which explain the quality standards with which your landlord must comply.

The accreditation* is not mandatory but it ensures that your landlord offers **good quality accommodation** including:

- prompt, clear and informative communication with tenants,
- equal, fair and non discriminatory behavior towards tenants,
- good management of the tenancy in regards to law,
- accessible complaint procedure,
- covered deposit,
- minimum quality accommodation standard,
- good repair and maintenance standards,
- sufficient insulation, energy efficiency and heating,
- gas, electrical, fire and water safety

*Please note that depending on the accreditation scheme, standards may differ

☛ Check if your landlord is registered:

The Landlord Accreditation Scotland:

Landlord Accreditation Scotland Ltd

25 Maritime Street

Edinburgh

EH6 6SE

0131 553 2211

info@landlordaccreditationscotland.com

Edinburgh Landlord Accreditation

Housing Property Services

The City of Edinburgh Council

Chesser House, 500 Gorgie Road

Edinburgh EH11 3YJ

0131 529 7278

ela@edinburgh.gov.uk

www.edinburgh.gov.uk/ela

Landlord Registration

East Lothian Council

Penston House

Macmerry Industrial Estate

Macmerry

EH33 1EX

01620 828775

landlordregistration@eastlothian.gov.uk



Does the property have a HMO license?

Houses in Multiple Occupation have to be registered to the local council. The license ensures that the accommodation is safe, well managed and in good quality.



Check if the flat has an HMO:

- 3 people or more live there; AND
- the people who live there belong to three or more families (If the owner lives there, they and their family are not counted); AND
- you share a kitchen, bathroom or toilet.

Look in the property for:

- Copy of the HMO License
- Gas and electricity safety certificates
- Smoke Alarms and fire extinguishers in good working
- Name and address of the person responsible for management
- A notice about what to do in emergency

=> if one or more of the above requirements are missing contact your City Council

Unsure whether the accommodation has an HMO License??

- Contact Edinburgh City Council:
HMO Licensing department
343 High Street, EDINBURGH, EH1 1PW
Tel: 0131 529 4208,
Email: licensing@edinburgh.gov.uk

To report an unlicensed HMO:

Environmental & Consumer Services (ECS),
Chesser House, 500 Gorgie Road, EDINBURGH, EH11 3YJ
Tel: 0131 469 5193, Email: hmo@edinburgh.gov

- Contact East Lothian Council, Musselburgh:
Environmental and Consumer Services
John Muir House
Haddington EH41 3AH
01620 827 365

Where can I look for a registered property?

There are many websites where you can see adverts such as Gumtree or Sparesroom. But only a few accept adverts only from registered landlords.

Here is a list of websites you can look for a registered property:

www.scotsmanproperty.com Only accept adverts from Registered Landlords.

www.citylets.co.uk Only accept adverts from Registered Landlords.

www.lettingweb.com A letting portal used by a variety of letting agents

www.studentpad.co.uk Only accept HMO properties from Registered Landlords



1.2 Letting agency

What is a letting agency?

A letting agency is a professional body that acts as a facilitator between landlord and tenant. At a cost to the landlord, letting agencies advertise, arrange viewings and produce all the necessary legal documents needed to let a flat.

Benefit of an agency

Checking in; letting agencies will start you off in the flat, producing you with a detailed inventory and a walk round of the property. Allowing you to see what you effectively assume responsibility for and highlight any issues that may bother you. Much like moving in they will facilitate the check out, providing you with information on cleaning standards, and replacement requirements. On top of this again they will do a walk through with you to explain any defects or allow you to have your say in the process.

During your lease they will act as a bridge between you and the landlord. If some thing goes wrong they're legally obligated to sort the problem. Normally after consulting the landlord they will act quickly and efficiently, co-ordinating there efforts with you to cause as little distribution as possible .

Make sure you check out the agency and that its legit . Below are some websites that list official agencies throughout the UK.

<http://www.arla.co.uk/> Association of Residential Letting Agents website

<http://www.rics.org/> Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors website

<http://www.lettingexpert.com/> LettingExpert - UK Letting Agent Directory

<u>Agencies</u>	Web address	Comment	Rating
Breamore	Www.Breamore.co.uk	Great properties	★★★★
Ryden lettings	Www.Rydenlettings.co.uk	Good variety	★★
ELS	Www.Edlet.co.uk	Hassel free service	★★★
Grant Management	Www.GrantManagement.co.uk	Very student friendly	★★★
Cullen Property	Www.cullenproperty.com	Very professional	★★★★★

2. When do I start looking for a flat?

It usually takes one month to find the good flat, and you probably will have to wait another month before moving to your new place. So you are better to start looking around **3 months in advance** to ensure you have a good selection of flats to choose from.

As most of the student flats will come available in June-July, the best time to start your flat hunting is late May and June.



You might not wish to pay over the summer if you don't stay in Edinburgh. There will still be some flats available in September but you should start looking around in August.

Whenever you decide to look for a flat take your time to find a decent flat with a good landlord rather than risk regretting your decision later on.

3. What will be the cost?

Student monthly rent is about £340.00 in Edinburgh and a little bit cheaper in Musselburgh. It seems expensive but it stays under the average student monthly rent in Scotland (£360.00).



However, prices vary widely depending on the area you are living and how many students you are sharing the flat with.

Here is an idea of monthly rental cost per flat:

	Per Flat	Per Person
1 bedroom property	£400-£550	-
2 bedroom property	£550-£900	£275-£450
3 bedroom property	£750-£1200	£250-£400
4 bedroom property	£950-£1400	£237.5-£350
5 bedroom property	£1200-£1500	£240-£300

4. Where should I live?

4.1 The Area

There are many great areas to live in Edinburgh. The following list looks at the

AREA	ENVIRONMENT	TRANSPORT
Bruntsfield	Nice and friendly community feeling / 15 min walk from pubs and clubs in the centre of Edinburgh	-Bus 30 : 45 min from West End -Bus 44A: 30 min from Princes Street =>about 1h journey!
Dalkeith Road	Plenty of students' flats and close to Holyrood Park but lack of community feeling	Bus 30: 30 min from Dalkeith Road
Fountain-bridge	Pretty decent area / 5minutes walk from Tollcross and City Centre	Bus 44A: 40 min from Haymarket Bus 30: 45 min from West End =>about 1h journey!
Haymarket	Nice area to leave but not really a student area	Bus 44A: 45 min from Haymarket
Leith	Further out town and close to the sea with good transportation links	Bus 44A : 30 min from London Road
Marchmont	Biggest student area / residential	Bus 30: 30 min from South Clerk Street.
Newington	Not the nicest area and quite noisy! But many students flats and easy access to city centre	Bus 30: 30 min from South Clerk Street.
New Town	A great place to live close to city centre	Bus 44A:30 min from Princes Street Bus 30: 40 min from Princes Street
Old Town/ Grassmarket	Full of historical charm and one of the main student area in Edinburgh at the core of Edinburgh nightlife! But noisy and full of tourists in summer	Bus 30: 35 min from South Bridge Bus 44A: 30 min from Princes Street
Tollcross	Central Area close to pubs and clubs but can be noisy	Bus 30: 45 min from West End Bus 44A: 30 min from Princes Street =>about 1h journey!

COST	SAFETY	AMENITIES	STUDENTS AREA
Affordable	Safe area	Good amenities: shops, cinema, sport centre, city centre, Meadows park, Haymarket station, Fountain park	NO
Cheap	Quite safe area	Quite far from any amenities. Must take the bus to get to any shop or pub!	YES
Affordable	Safe area	Good amenities: shops, cinema, sport centre, city centre, pubs, nightclubs, Meadows park, Haymarket station, Fountain park	YES
Affordable	Not the safest place in Edinburgh	Good Amenities: shops, cinema, sport centre, bar, train station	NO
Cheap	Not the safest place in Edinburgh	Good Amenities: shops, cinema, sport centre, bar	YES
Expensive	Safe area	Good amenities: shops, cinema, sport centre, city centre, meadows park	YES
Cheap	Quite safe area	Quite good amenities: Shops, bar, Meadows park	YES
Expensive	Safe area	Good Amenities: shops, cinema, city centre, pubs,	NO
A bit expensive but affordable	Quite safe area to live in	Good Amenities: shops, cinema, city centre, Meadows park, pubs, nightclub	YES
Cheap	Safe area	Good amenities: shops, cinema, theatres, sport centre, city centre, Meadows park, pubs, nightclub	NO

4.2-Property Type

Property Type	Cost	Furniture	Safety	Energy Efficiency	General Condition (repairs and sanitarian)
Victorian	cheap	Depends on the landlord but usually not brand new furniture	Depends on the landlord, it is advised to ensure gas and electricity certifications are up to date	low	Depends on the landlord but not the best condition
Georgian	expensive			average	Good condition
Old Town	expensive			low	Depends on the landlord but not the best condition
Modern	affordable	New	Safe	high	Good condition

5. Moving in check list

When moving in, there are plenty of things to think about. Here is a check list to keep track on what needs to be done.

5.1 Safety First!

- You know where the trip switches, water and gas mains valves are, you may need to turn them off in an emergency
- Windows and doors lock securely
- Smoke and carbon monoxide alarm works
- There is a fire extinguisher and a fire blanket in the kitchen
- The HMO and gas/electricity safety certificates are up to date



5.2 Flat content

- Make an inventory: list the things that come with the property, specify their condition and get it signed by the landlord
- Check damages from previous tenants and report them to the landlord
- Take pictures of the flat to complete your inventory
- Get contents insurance for your personal belongings
- Keep a note of the meter readings when you move in and eventually make the landlord countersign.

5.3 Suppliers

Register with the **electricity, gas, phone and internet companies** as soon as you move in and give the names of one (phone-gas) or all occupants.

If you don't know who they are call 0870 160 0229 for gas supplier and 0870 270 9101 for electricity supplier

5.4 Council Tax Exemption

Full time students are exempt from Council Tax.

However, if you are moving from one course to another or from one institution to another, you will be due to pay the Council Tax over the summer even if it is a progression.

Part time students are liable for Council Tax but can get Council Tax Benefit. The benefit is means tested. The amount you can receive depends on your income.

Exempt from Council Tax?

Write to your City Council and give the address of the property, names of all students occupants, along with their matriculation number and the institution you are studying, when you moved in.

Send your letter to:
Revenues and Benefits
The City of Edinburgh Council
Chesser House
500 Gorgie Road
Edinburgh EH11 3YJ

OR

Download the form and send it to:
East Lothian Council,
Revenues Division
PO Box 13251,
HaddingtonEH41 3YG

5.5 General



- Ask for your landlord's full name, address and phone number. The agency cannot refuse to give it to you
- Give people your new details: friends, family, university, bank, employer and any other suppliers you have contract with
- Register with a new doctor and dentist
- If you have a TV make sure you get a TV license

You are now ready to move in!

For further information or advice contact:

**Edinburgh City Council
0131 200 2000**

**Shelter
0808 800 4444**

**The Welfare Point
The Students' Union
Queen Margaret University
Edinburgh EH10 4JE
0131 474 0000
cguilloteau@qmu.ac.uk**



Not sure about your renting rights??

Look at our Housing Rights Booklet