

# **Finding private *accommodation***



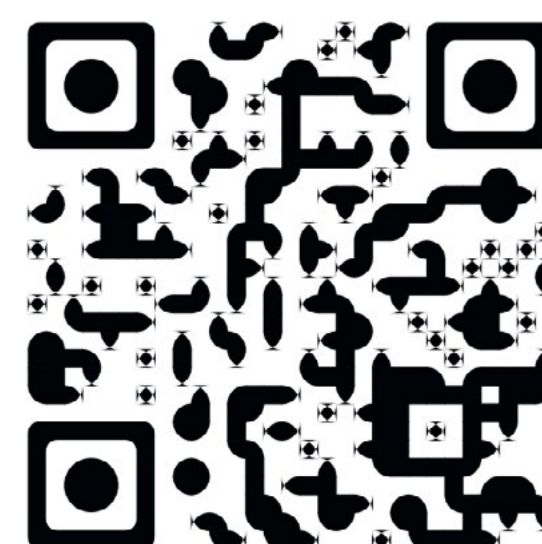
# Private Accommodation

One of the most exciting things about university can be moving away and living with other students. Glasgow is a small city with five universities, every year there are a high number of students looking for a place to live. This guide covers a range of information on finding accommodation, living in Glasgow, and navigating the private rental market.

This guide is aimed at students studying in Glasgow. If you are studying at the [GSA Highlands and Islands campus](#) the GSA has accommodation available for students in the nearby town of Forres. Students based at this campus should visit the GSA website and contact [innovation@gsa.ac.uk](mailto:innovation@gsa.ac.uk).

The GSA Student Welfare Service can provide general advice and guidance on searching for private accommodation: You can contact them at [welfare@gsa.ac.uk](mailto:welfare@gsa.ac.uk).

Like many cities in the UK, Glasgow's private rental market has become much more challenging recently, with increased prices and a shortage of accommodation overall. This has created increased competition and can make for a stressful experience in trying to find accommodation. This guide is designed to support students with their search to find accommodation suitable for them in Glasgow.



Please note all information provided in this document is for guidance only. The GSA has no direct control over accommodation that is rented directly from a landlord or agent and we are unable to endorse, inspect or provide private accommodation. We recommend, when necessary, students seek additional advice from community organisations such as Citizen's Advice, Shelter Scotland and the Scottish Government.

# Orientation

Type of accommodation available to students

Deciding where to live

The search

The process

Top tips for flat hunting

Staying safe from scams

Alongside this guide there are other guides which you might find helpful. These are our '**Renting in Scotland Guide**', '**Problems with Accommodation Guide**' and '**Budgeting for the Cost of Living**'. These can be found on the Student Welfare section of the Student Intranet and on the pre-enrollment gateway.

# **Types of accommodation *available to students***

There are 3 main options for most students living in Glasgow:

- GSA Student Halls
- Commercial Student Halls
- Private Renting

## **GSA** *Student Halls*

The GSA has dedicated Student Halls with priority being offered to new students. These are purposely designed for students to rent, and normally include a private bedroom with other shared spaces. We have two Student Halls of Residence in the Garnethill area of Glasgow, within walking distance to the main GSA campus.

Due to current pressures on the Private Rental Market, we strongly advise new students to consider applying to the GSA Student Halls, especially if newly arriving in Glasgow. Please visit [GSA Student Accommodation](#) or email [accommodation@gsa.ac.uk](mailto:accommodation@gsa.ac.uk).

If you are currently a student in Halls of Residence, it is not normally possible for current residents to re-apply for GSA Halls for the following academic year, unless you have extenuating circumstances. We therefore recommend that students currently in Halls of Residence start planning their accommodation options well in advance of their Halls tenancy ending in June.

**Type of accommodation available to students**

## **Commercial** *Student Halls*

Commercial Student Halls are accommodations designed for students and run by private, commercial companies. There are a number that operate in Glasgow, most are conveniently located in places like the City Centre or West End. With this option you are likely to have a private bedroom and other shared facilities. There may be options to rent a self-contained studio within a student complex. To rent in Commercial Halls, students pay a monthly fee and sign a contract that sets out the terms. You should read whatever contract you sign carefully as this will outline your rights regarding important things like your deposit, rent, length of stay and termination of tenancy.

GSA is unable to endorse or keep a comprehensive list of Commercial Student Halls but they are easily searchable online.

While we would always recommend viewing in person if you can, Commercial Student Halls can be a practical option for students not able to visit Glasgow and view available accommodation. Commercial Halls offer remote viewings, can be fully researched online and are a simple way to ensure your tenancy is arranged prior to arrival. Students should always be vigilant when booking accommodation.

**Type of accommodation  
available to students**

## Private renting

The majority of students at the GSA privately rent their accommodation. This is where you pay a monthly fee to live in a property owned by a landlord. When we talk about Private Renting we are referring to:

- Renting a whole flat or house, alone or in a couple.
- Renting a whole flat or house together with a friend or a group.
- Renting a room within a property or existing house-share.
- Renting a self-contained studio or bedsit within a larger building.

In Scotland, tenants have a series of rights to ensure housing is safe and fair. Student Support have a guide for students on 'Private Renting in Scotland' which we recommend you read. This can be found on the Student Intranet and Pre-Enrollment Gateway.

There are also external resources that we encourage students to look at when planning your search:

- [Shelter Scotland – Your rights if you rent your home](#)
- [Scottish Government – Private Residential tenancy: Information for tenants](#)

It is a good idea to talk about renting with parents or guardians, family, friends, or wider support networks, especially if you have never rented before.

To get a private tenancy you will need to pass some checks. Checks usually include checking identity, references, guarantors and paying a deposit. Currently, due to increased pressure within the market, it is likely that you may need to apply for a tenancy and be selected. You can find information on this process in this guide.



# Deciding where *to live*


Deciding where to live can feel a little daunting, particularly if you are not familiar with the city or are looking for a flat for the first time. You need to consider lots of things when thinking of a place to live including your commute to campus (and workplace if you work part-time), your lifestyle and places you want to live near and your budget. Being open-minded and flexible about living in different parts of the city can be helpful, particularly at the moment, whilst the property market has limited availability.


## **Transport** *around Glasgow*

The GSA's main campus is situated in the Garnethill in the city centre Glasgow. The GSA's Campus Map can be found [here](#). Glasgow is a small city and Garnethill has great public transport links to areas across the city and beyond.

- 15 minute walk to Glasgow Central & Queen Street Stations, for links to across Glasgow & beyond.
- Less than 10 minute walk to Charing Cross train station, with links to the west and east of the city.
- 5 minute walk to Cowcaddens subway station, to access the city's circular Subway system.
- Several bus services stop and pick-up nearby GSA, with links across Glasgow and beyond.
- 10 minute walk to Buchanan Street Bus station, Glasgow's main bus station.
- Glasgow International Airport can be reached by a regular, express bus in less than 30 minutes.
- The M8 Motorway runs very nearby to Garnethill.

Glasgow is a small city, and it is relatively easy to get around different parts of the city on foot, or by bike. Depending on where you live, you may be able to make regular journeys this way, particularly if you are a confident cyclist.

	<p><u><a href="#">First Bus Glasgow</a></u></p>
<p>Buses stopping near the Garnethill campus: 19A, 6A, 3, 60/60A, 38B, 4/4A, 57, 61, 6 &amp; 77. Student discounts are available. Please note other bus companies operate in the city with different tickets and routes.</p>	

	<p><u><a href="#">SPT Subway Glasgow</a></u></p>
<p>The Glasgow Subway travels in a circular route that connects parts of the West End, City Centre and Southside.</p>	

	<p><u><a href="#">ScotRail</a></u></p>
<p>Glasgow has a network of trains connecting many areas of the city with frequent train services, as well as wider Scotland.</p>	

## **Discounted travel**

If you are under 22 and resident in Scotland for at least 6 months of the year, you can apply for free bus travel in Scotland (excluding some services such as premium or Citylink services) under the Young Persons Free Bus Travel Scheme. Submit your application at [Freebus.scot](https://www.freebus.scot).

If you are a full-time student, you can also apply for a 16-25 Railcard for a small fee. This offers discounted rail travel across the UK for students. Full-time mature students are also able to apply for this railcard. If you are taking regular journeys by rail or travelling around the Scotland and the UK (for example to visit family or as part of your commute) this can be a cost-effective option. To apply visit [www.16-25railcard.co.uk](https://www.16-25railcard.co.uk).

**Deciding where  
to live**

## **Where should I look?**

Finding a place to live can be tricky, particularly at the moment, but it is sensible to have an idea of where you might like to live before you start looking. GSA's main campus is located in Garnethill (G3). To assist in searching for accommodation, we have provided a list of postcodes within the Glasgow area, detailing the name and general location of each. This may be helpful to help you map out options and areas that you could consider living in.

<b>City Centre</b>	
G1 Merchant City, Argyle Street G2 Charing Cross G3 Finnieston, Garnethill, Woodlands	G4 Cowcaddens, St. Georges Cross G5 Kingston

<b>West End</b>	
G11 Partick, Thornwood G12 Hyndland, Hillhead G13 Jordanhill, Knightswood G14 Scotstoun, Whiteinch	G20 North Kelvinside G60 Old Kilpatrick G81 Clydebank G84 Helensburgh

**Deciding where  
to live**

**East End**

G31 Dennistoun  
G32 Tollcross  
G33 Steps

G38 Dennistoun  
G40 Bridgeton  
G69 Baillieston

**North**

G21 Springburn  
G22 Hamiltonhill  
G23 Summerston  
G61 Bearsden  
G62 Milngavie

G63 Drymen  
G64 Bishopbriggs  
G65 Kilsyth  
G66 Kirkintilloch

**South**

G41 Pollokshields,  
Shawlands  
G42 Govanhill,  
Mount Florida  
G43 Pollokshaws  
G44 Cathcart  
G46 Giffnock  
G51 Kinning Park, Ibrox  
G52 Cardonald

G53 Crookston  
G57 Ibrox  
G71 Uddingston  
G72 Cambuslang,  
Blantyre  
G73 Rutherglen  
G76 Clarkston  
G77 Newton Mearns  
G78 Neilston

**Deciding where  
to live**

The GSA has some resources which may be helpful if you are unfamiliar with the city including a Guide to Glasgow and the GSA's Live Map.

GSA's Live Map features many creative projects and spaces in the city with a connection to the GSA, as well as a guide featuring places selected by GSA Students' Association. These maps can help give you an insight into the city, especially parts that you may not be so familiar with.

We strongly recommend students consider as many areas as possible during their accommodation search. Due to current pressures on the private rental market, parts of the city traditionally popular with our students are likely to attract high numbers of potential tenants, so competition and rental prices may be higher. It is vital for you to keep searching regularly, in as many areas as possible. Try to be open minded when considering which different areas of the city, and keep an eye on transport to and from the location.

**Deciding where  
to live**

# The search



## When to look?

Newly available accommodation is listed all the time. Some properties or rooms may be available to book in advance for the next academic year and others may want tenants to move in sooner. You should try and have accommodation secured before the start of the academic year as the property market is very limited in August and September. It can be a very stressful to be searching later in the summer, and to not have secure accommodation arranged when your course begins or resumes. Due to current pressures on the private rental market, available accommodation is likely to attract high numbers of potential tenants, particularly around the summer months, so competition may be high. It is therefore important for students to begin their planning and searching early in advance of the Summer and keep searching regularly, in as many areas as possible.

## Conducting a search

The main way people now search for accommodation is online. Some of these search sites have apps you can download to your phone to search more frequently. New adverts are listed throughout the day, so searching regularly and responding quickly is the best way to get a viewing.

Commonly used online accommodation sites include:

- [Zoopla](#)
- [SpareRoom](#)
- [Rightmove](#)
- [On The Market](#)
- [S1 Homes](#)
- [Student Accommodation UK](#)
- [Houses and flats to rent on Gumtree](#)
- [ESPC](#)

## **Other ways properties may be advertised**

- Social media e.g., WhatsApp groups, Facebook Marketplace, Facebook groups, forums
- Word of mouth
- Notice boards, online & in-person

Please be especially vigilant if using Facebook groups or websites like Gumtree to search for accommodation. Both are not well moderated and may, from time to time, contain fraudulent or scam adverts. You can find out more information about Property Scams below, and it is important that students understand the risks of Property Scams and take precautions against them when searching for a place to live.

## **Finding flatmates** *and beginning your search*

Think about where you want to live or be close to and who (if anyone) you want to live with. Look at public transport links and make a budget.

If you want to live with others, make sure you all start planning at the same time, discuss budgets and consider where you may want to live. If you want help with finding a flatmate, student support can provide advice [welfare@gsa.ac.uk](mailto:welfare@gsa.ac.uk).

If you decide to move into a current flat share, you may have to go through an interview style process where the existing flatmates select their preferred candidate. This is quite common, but can be daunting. If you do do something like this, it's important to remember that you are deciding whether you want to live with people too, so ask questions and make sure it's a good fit for you. If you are not selected, try not to take this personally. There is lots of competition and it is not a reflection on you. If moving into an existing tenancy, you should always check whether you can join the tenancy. Please see our 'Renting in Scotland Guide' for more information on tenancies and subletting. You can find this on the student welfare section of the student intranet and the pre-enrolment gateway.

If you are all searching for a flat together, it is important for you to discuss and agree what you are looking for with your potential flat-share group. Chatting to your own family and friends can also be helpful for you to identify your key criteria and to help you find a place to live that is suitable for your needs.

# The process

## **Communicating with Landlords and Agents**

If you see a flat that you like, you should call or message the landlord or letting agent immediately to arrange a viewing. Viewings can fill up very quickly particularly in popular places and during the summer months. If you see an advert for a suitable flat, do not hesitate to call (or message) straight away. Calling to express interest is recommended where possible. If writing to an agent or landlord it's important to be polite, honest and concise. Landlords and Letting Agents want to have reliable tenants, so communicating well with them to begin with is important.

Student Support can offer more advice on communicating effectively with landlords and agents. If this is something you are worried about please email [welfare@gsa.ac.uk](mailto:welfare@gsa.ac.uk).

## **Things to do when you view a property**

Ideally, all tenants should view a property in-person ahead of signing a contract and agreeing to rent a property. Currently, with increased demand to the market, landlords and letting agents are often running 'open viewings'. This is where they will show multiple groups round at once, or provide short slots over an hour or so. Due to the high demand for properties, you are more likely to find a property if you agree to go at the set time, as it is very likely someone will take the property following an opening viewing.

With many other students and non-students searching, be mindful that groups may be ready to proceed straight away, so you could have competition. This can add extra pressure, so it is important to try and remember your needs and what makes a property suitable to meet them. If you can, try and take someone to support you. This could be a parent, guardian, friend, or sibling. This may help alleviate pressure and make it easier to make the decision that is right for you.

Top tips to remember when viewing property:

- Confirm monthly rent cost and what this covers exactly. Sometimes, rent may be inclusive of some or all bills, so this is good to confirm.
- Confirm the deposit cost and documents required if you decide to let the property. Ask when you need to pay the deposit and confirm it will be placed in a Safe Deposit Scheme. See more tenancy and deposit information below.
- Ask if there is an **HMO (House in Multiple Occupancy) License** if you are sharing with two or more unrelated people. You should ask to see a copy of their HMO License. Please refer to our 'Renting in Scotland' guide for more information about HMO Licenses.
- Find out if it is furnished or unfurnished and what is included in the tenancy.
- Take someone with you when you view a property. It is safer and it will be helpful to have a second point of view.
- Test whether things work such as hot water, heating, cooker, and fridge.
- Check there are **Smoke Alarms**, where they are and what type.
- Confirm which space is private to you and your household and what is shared, such as a garden.

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- Check what type of energy meter is installed (e.g., Pre payment or standard) and where they are located.
- Check Gas & Electricity have been safety tested. Certificates confirming this should be available from the landlord or agency you are renting from.
- Check the landlord is registered. They should have a landlord registration number. This may be present on the advert for the accommodation. You can check it on the [Scottish Landlord Register](#).
- Are you happy with the area? Take a walk around beforehand, check your travel arrangements and that they are suitable for your needs.
- Check for any concerning damp or mold and discuss this with the landlord. Find out if there is maintenance work required, and that the property can be kept warm and comfortable for you to live in.

This is not an exhaustive list. On top of the above, it is a good idea to think ahead about the things that are important to you and make a list ahead of the viewing.

Do not hand over any money or sign any documents until you are satisfied with all aspects of the accommodation. Never pay a deposit in advance of viewing a flat or to secure a viewing. You should not need to pay until later in the process. You should not be charged any upfront fees such as “holding fees”, “credit check fee” or “admin fee”. This is no longer allowed in Scotland. Please contact [welfare@gsa.ac.uk](mailto:welfare@gsa.ac.uk) if you are unsure about a fee you have been asked for.

Our ‘Renting in Scotland Guide’ has lots of helpful information about renting and safety standards in Scotland as well as rules for tenants and landlords around deposits and tenancies. We recommend familiarising yourself with this information when planning your accommodation search.



## Applying for a Tenancy

If you like a flat, you may have to apply for a tenancy. You are likely to be up against numerous other applicants, and, in a busy housing market, it is more likely that the landlord may decide to select their preferred tenant. Being prepared ahead of time can make you an attractive option for a landlord in this situation.

- Have your documents ready to apply quickly if you like the accommodation, you can ask ahead of time what documents they are likely to need from you if you do decide you want to live there.
- Some applicants may be offering increased rent or multiple months upfront – do not do this if you cannot afford it. You cannot pay more than 6 months upfront in Scotland. 6 months rent upfront is a common requirement for international students with no UK guarantor.
- Applications may look stronger from those in part-time work or who can evidence earnings. If you have a part time job, mentioning this can be helpful when stating your interest in a property.
- It is likely you will be asked for a Guarantor as a student. A Guarantor is someone who agrees that they can guarantee to pay rent arrears if you are unable to. Have this conversation ahead of time with your parent, guardian, or another responsible adult you can trust. Most landlords require guarantors to be based in the U.K. Please see our 'Renting in Scotland Guide' for more information about Guarantors and options for International Students.
- Save up for a deposit in advance, so you can pay promptly when you successfully find a suitable flat.

## References

As part of the checks to become approved for a tenancy, the landlord/letting agent will ask for references. Usually, they would request a reference from:

- Current or most recent landlord/letting agent (you can ask for a reference from your Student Halls if this is where you have most recently lived). If you are moving out of the GSA Student Halls, you can contact [accommodation@gsa.ac.uk](mailto:accommodation@gsa.ac.uk) if you require a reference.
- Current or most recent employer.

Students who have not previously rented a property, or do not have/have not had a job, may be able to provide another type of reference, such as from education or a character reference. If you cannot provide the requested references, it is a good idea to let the landlord/letting agent know to negotiate which alternatives could be given.

## Moving into your new flat

Once you have agreed a move in date with your landlord, you can start to plan your move.

- You should pay the deposit, get a receipt and ensure this will be kept within a Safe Deposit Scheme.
- Sign the tenancy and pay the first months' rent.
- After moving in you should read any information given to you by the landlord, complete an inventory, register for utility bills, complete council-tax exemption and update relevant addresses e.g., for your bank account.
- Check for anything that is broken and have the landlord agree in writing that this will be dealt with. Take photos of any damage to the property or anything that is not in a good condition (eg. stains on a carpet) prior to you moving in, and ensure that this is sent to the landlord.
- Take gas and electric meter readings and contact the current supplier of the property to update their records and so you can start being billed.

There may be some variation to the processes outlined above depending on your circumstances and the property you rent, but if you become unsure about any stage of the process or experience something you are not expecting you should pause and seek advice. Be particularly aware if you are asked for money at an early stage of taking out your tenancy and do not agree to do something which seems unusual or unrealistic. If you are asked to do something that you are not sure about or become suspicious of any part of the process, seek advice from [welfare@gsa.ac.uk](mailto:welfare@gsa.ac.uk) at any point.

If you need additional help while going through this process, visit [Shelter Scotland](#) or [Citizens Advice Scotland](#) for general advice. Additionally, you are welcome to email [welfare@gsa.ac.uk](mailto:welfare@gsa.ac.uk).

# Top tips for *flathunting*

Student Support can offer more advice through their drop-in sessions, as well as from general enquiries sent to [welfare@gsa.ac.uk](mailto:welfare@gsa.ac.uk). Below are a few of our top tips that you can employ when searching for a property to rent.

- If you see a flat listing that you like, call where possible rather than emailing or responding online. This can make the process quicker and you are likely to know whether it is still available for viewings sooner.
- You could check street view and get a feel for the location in advance of the viewing. Getting as much information online as you can before you're at the viewing might help you make a decision later on.
- Don't attend viewings by yourself. Take a flatmate, friend or family member with you. It is safer, and they can help you with decision making.
- If you like a flat, you will probably have to apply for a tenancy. You are likely to be up against numerous other applicants, and the landlord may decide to select their preferred tenant. Being prepared ahead can make you an attractive option for a Landlord in this situation.

**Top tips for  
flat hunting**

## Property scams

Unfortunately, across the UK there has been an increased number of scams that occur around renting property, with students a frequent target. Property scams involve a fraudster taking advantage of those looking for property and trying to trick or scam people out of money or important documents like their passport.

Students need to be vigilant to potential scams when searching for accommodation. Known scams have included taking money in advance for properties which do not exist; asking students to pay via Air BnB; sending a 'unique' links for payments; or posing as the landlord when this is not in fact the case to fraudulently obtain money or personal information.

It can be extremely hard for banks to retrieve money and information once sent, not to mention the disruption and stress this causes, so be aware of the risks and take precautions when searching:

- Private advertising sites such as Gumtree or Facebook marketplace are more vulnerable to property scams due to having less restrictions on what is posted on them. Be more vigilant using these sites and treat with suspicion anything which seems too good to be true.
- Even if adverts appear on reputable websites or look like they come from trusted sources of information you should be wary, particularly if they ask you do something unusual or provide information that you would not expect to.
- Do not send any money up front. You should not need to pay anything until you have agreed to the tenancy. Do not pay additional fees such as holding fees, admin fees or credit check fees.

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**Top tips for  
fraud hunting**

- Beware of any messages or emails asking you to follow a link, pay via another service or which ask too many personal questions or for too much personal information.
- Beware if you are asked to wire any money via a money transfer service or make a cash payment.
- Always check a landlord is registered: [www.landlordregistrationscotland.gov.uk](http://www.landlordregistrationscotland.gov.uk). Ask the landlord for ID – reputable landlords should be willing to share this. It can be helpful to also have multiple contact methods to help verify them, e.g., phone, text, email, address.
- Get all of your tenancy paperwork in advance of paying a deposit. Ask for a copy of the tenancy agreement, safety certificates and deposit amount,
- Be wary of letting a landlord/letting agent take a copy of your ID, passport or visa documents, there is no legal reason for them to hold this information and it is not a legal requirement for agreeing a tenancy under Scottish law.
- Do not agree to rent a property where the landlord says it is being “managed” via Airbnb. If you see a property that mentions Airbnb on a site that is not the Airbnb website, be extremely cautious.

More information and guidance can be found via the Student Intranet and from Police Scotland. If you become concerned about anything you are asked to do whilst trying to find somewhere to live, email [welfare@gsa.ac.uk](mailto:welfare@gsa.ac.uk) for advice and guidance.

**Top tips for  
flat hunting**

# THE GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART

**The Glasgow School of Art**  
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