

Landlord Guide

Information on letting and the University Registration Scheme

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Welcome

About us

Welcome to the University of Gloucestershire, Landlord Guide.

The University's Accommodation Department is based on the top floor of the Bodley building on the Francis Close Hall Campus, Swindon Road, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL50 4AZ. Tel: 01242 714544.

The Housing Support Team is part of the Accommodation Department.

We provide advice and support to students looking to find accommodation. The University has approximately 9,000 students (figures as of 2011/12 academic year) in Cheltenham and Gloucester.

We are here to meet the housing requirements and expectations of students, and introduce them to good quality local properties.

Why choose us?

If you decide to register your property with the University of Gloucestershire you will be in the enviable position where every single student who studies with us will have access to view your property online at StudentPad. No other local letting agency can boast a client base as extensive as this.

The University prides itself on offering good quality housing to its students. We aim to improve overall standards year on year.

Security and comfort are key factors of a student's accommodation requirements, it is essential that the student experience at University is a positive one.

This booklet will inform you of how to register your property with the University of Gloucestershire and will also provide you with information on being a successful landlord.

There are dedicated advisers who are able to offer advice and guidance on all issues relating to private let housing in Cheltenham and Gloucester.

The Housing Support Team are able to act as mediators between landlords and tenants should any problems occur and are more than happy to help with any housing issues.

Registration

In order for a property to be registered with us, the property must fulfil the following:

Compulsory criteria	Desired health and safety criteria
Landlord Gas safety certificate, carried out by a CAPITA registered engineer (this is a legal requirement).*	There are no gas appliances in bedrooms or cupboards opening off bedrooms.
Electrical Safety report carried out by a qualified Electrician issued in accordance with BS7671.	A battery/mains carbon monoxide detector has been fitted. This should be in full working order when last checked and should be checked regularly and prior to the new academic year.
There should be mains interconnected smoke detectors installed on each floor. They must be in full working order.	All electrical appliances should be PAT tested yearly.
A copy of the insurance certificate showing your public liability cover. The university expects all Landlords to hold Public Liability insurance to the value of at least £1 million.	The Accommodation Department recommends that you advise your insurance providers of the use of the property.
A copy of the Houses in Multiple Occupation licence for the property (if applicable).	All registrations should be signed up to the Landlords Code of Conduct.
Furniture and furnishings, including mattresses must comply with the current Fire Safety regulations.	Washing machine or plumbing for a machine.
It is compulsory to have a fire blanket in the kitchen.	Escape locks fitted to external doors.
Each study bedroom has at least four electrical sockets.	
Property should be in a good condition throughout with no slip or trip hazards.	

The registration fee is **£70** per academic year for each property; a separate form must be completed for every property registered. This may be subject to increase in academic year.

Please send in all the relevant paperwork electronically to accommodation@glos.ac.uk. A cheque for the fee(s) should be made payable to the University of Gloucestershire and sent to: Accommodation, Student Services, Bodley Building, Francis Close Hall, Cheltenham, GL50 4AZ.

De-Registration

The University reserves the right to de-register your property, this action will only be taken in exceptional circumstances.

- Failing to meet the Health & Safety criteria
- Falling below the compulsory standard during the academic year (including decor)
- Privately advertising any properties in halls of residence and University grounds
- Emailing students directly via their University email address without their permission
- Poor conduct, including turning up unannounced, unfair contract terms, not protecting deposits
- Letting unregistered properties through enquiries about registered properties on StudentPad

Properties to be furnished as follows:

Compulsory Items	Recommended Items
Bedrooms	Bedrooms
single bed minimum	under bed storage
mattress	mattress protector
desk & chair	desk lamp
wardrobe or hanging space	coat hooks
chest of drawers	bedside table
bookcase or shelving	light shade
curtains or blinds	internet connection
good quality flooring	
fixed wall heater/ radiator	
Kitchen	Kitchen
full size cooker	ironing board
fridge and freezer	washing machine
good quality flooring	microwave
worktops and cupboards	mop and bucket, dustpan and brush and broom
waste bin	vacuum cleaner
Living Room	Living Room
sofas or easy chairs - sufficient for the number of tenants	table and chairs or breakfast bar and stools
fixed wall heater/ radiator	television
good quality flooring	aerial point
Bathroom	Bathroom
shower or shower attachment over bath	cupboard
fixed wall heater/radiator	waste bin
curtains or blinds	toilet brush/holder
good quality flooring	extractor fan

All furnishings, flooring and decorations should be in a good clean condition with no tears or rips.

Please be clear whether you provide internet access (student responsibility) or fully installed and operational internet/broadband.

Garden

It is recommended that the landlord/owner should maintain the garden. A suitable outdoor bin should be provided to dispose of household waste and avoid the attraction of vermin.

StudentPad

What is StudentPad?

StudentPad is an online system of properties available to University of Gloucestershire students, www.glosstudentpad.co.uk. Students looking for University registered shared houses can search for and locate properties on the website.

Private landlords can register and advertise their property via the University. The site has proved very popular with the students, with over 76,000 searches made by students in 2009/10.

When all the relevant paperwork has been received, (please see the section on registration for more details) and the property has been inspected by a member of the Housing Support Team, it will be advertised on the StudentPad website for students to view.

Once the property has been loaded onto the system the details of how to logon, view and amend your advert(s) will be emailed or posted out to the landlord. Landlords can amend certain aspects of their advert but not all.

There is a full online instruction booklet available to landlords when you logon to view your property(s) to help navigate your way around the site. When landlords make amendments to their adverts an email will be sent through to the Housing Support Team who will vet the changes and then make them live. If you would prefer changes to be administered by the Housing Support Team we are more than happy to help, simply email the amendments through to accommodation@glos.ac.uk.

There are many facilities on StudentPad for landlords' to use to assist with the smooth running of letting their properties, from loading photos of the properties to enhance the adverts, to an online journal for landlords to keep a track of deposits, tenancies, and maintenance issues.

Landlords cannot register online or add additional properties. This process needs to be done through the Housing Support Team by requesting an electronic registration pack. Contact us on 01242 714544 or email accommodation@glos.ac.uk.

It is vital that landlords keep the team up-to-date when their property(s) become full so we are not advertising an out of date list and landlords are not receiving unwanted calls. The largest complaint that we receive from students is about the housing list being out of date. We ask that landlords do inform us when a property has been taken.

Students will often look at the adverts that have photos of the property first as they can see what it looks like before calling the landlord. Therefore, we would encourage all landlords to add photos to their adverts to give themselves the best chance of letting the property as early on as possible. We would advise that six good quality photographs are better than several smaller ones. If you would like to add photos please send them via email to accommodation@glos.ac.uk

www.glosstudentpad.co.uk

The Tenancy agreement

When you are letting rooms in a property you will automatically be creating an agreement between yourself (the landlord) and the tenant.

An assured shorthold tenancy (AST) is the usual form of letting if:

- The tenancy began on or after 15 January 1989;
- The house or flat is let as separate accommodation

By giving someone a tenancy agreement you are giving them the right to use the property. As a tenant they have the right to quiet enjoyment and should be given **at least 24 hours written notice before visiting, unless there is an emergency.**

Once a tenant has signed a tenancy agreement they are tied into the agreement for the term stated. It is usual with a student that the tenancy runs for an academic year. A landlord can only seek possession during a fixed term tenancy if one or more of the conditions of tenancy are breached and would have to be granted by order of the courts.

Tenancy agreements should be clear and concise and written in plain English with no jargon. We would advise that you purchase a tenancy from a stationer or you can download them from the web. You may want to look at www.landlords.org.uk which gives valuable advice.

Rent

Rent should include water rates. Tenants usually pay for the other utilities, gas, electricity and telephone. If you do want to set up an inclusive rent you may want to cap the amount. This should be clearly stated in the tenancy agreement.

Tenant responsibilities

The University tries to ensure that every student is informed of their responsibilities as a tenant.

- paying the rent on time
- informing the landlord if any repairs are needed
- using the property in a responsible manner and avoiding damage
- not causing a nuisance to neighbours or other occupants
- securing the property when it is empty
- undertaking minor maintenance, e.g. unblocking sinks, replacing light bulbs, general cleaning
- students should ensure that their rubbish is kept in a suitable bin and put out for collection on the correct day

The University makes every effort to ensure students understand their responsibilities when living in the local community, the following advice is given when they move into their home:

- Students should introduce themselves to their neighbours when they move in, to encourage strong community spirit
- Students are asked to keep the noise down between 11.00pm – 8.00am to avoid any unnecessary problems occurring
- Students must think about their behaviour whether in or out of the University as their actions will have consequences for both.

Landlord responsibilities

- Landlords should adhere to their tenancy agreements.
- Landlords should ensure that their properties are maintained throughout the tenancy.
- Priority should be given to failures in heating and hot water systems.
- Landlords, tradesmen or other official personnel should not enter the tenants home without due notice.
- Landlords should provide all equipment enabling tenants to conduct their tenancies in an appropriate manner.

It would be beneficial for landlords to check that all tenants are full-time students at the University of Gloucestershire. Council tax exemptions are only applicable for properties that are solely occupied by students in full-time education.

Landlords must ensure they adhere to council/ government guidelines on:

- Tenancy Deposit Scheme
- House in Multiple Occupation
- Energy Performance Certificates

Supporting information on these regulations can be found on pages 8-10.

Tenancy deposit Scheme (TDS)

From 6 April 2007, all deposits taken by landlords using an Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST) in England and Wales must be covered by a tenancy deposit protection scheme.

What are tenancy deposit schemes?

There are two types of tenancy deposit protection schemes available for landlords and letting agents (insurance based schemes and custodial schemes). Any landlord can use the custodial scheme but there are some restrictions on who can use the insurance based schemes. All schemes provide a free dispute resolution service.

Custodial Scheme

The Deposit Protection Service (DPS) provides the only custodial TDP Scheme. Under this scheme the DPS holds the deposit money in the bank account. When the tenancy ends, it releases the deposit to the person who is entitled to it.

Insurance Based Schemes

The landlord or the landlord's agent holds the tenant's deposit and pays a fee to insure it. If the landlord doesn't pay the tenant the amount they are owed at the end of tenancy, the insurer will pay the tenant and try to get the money back from the landlord. The only two insurance based providers at present are MyDeposits and the Tenancy Deposit Scheme (TDS).

There is no charge for landlords or letting agents to use the custodial DPS. The insurance based schemes charge a fee for membership and you will also have to pay insurances premiums.

The schemes allow tenants to get all or part of their deposit back when they are entitled to it and encourage tenants and landlords to make a clear agreement from the start on the condition of the property.

Insurance based schemes	Custodial schemes
tenant pays deposit to landlord or agent	tenant pays deposit to landlord or agent
landlord retains deposit and pays a premium to Insurer	the landlord/agent then pays the deposit into the scheme
within 14 days of receiving a deposit the landlord or agent must give the tenant the details about how their deposit is protected including:-	within 14 days of receiving a deposit the landlord or agent must give the tenant the details about how their deposit is protected including:-
contact details of scheme provider	contact details of scheme provider
landlord/agent contact details	landlord/agent contact details
how to apply for the release of the deposit	how to apply for the release of the deposit
information explaining the purpose of the deposit	information explaining the purpose of the deposit
what to do if there is a dispute about the deposit	what to do if there is a dispute about the deposit
at the end of the tenancy the landlord/agent should agree with the tenant how much deposit will be returned	at the end of the tenancy the landlord/agent should agree with the tenant how much deposit will be returned. Scheme provider will return the deposit divided in the way that is agreed by both parties
if there is a dispute, the landlord must hand over the disputed amount to the scheme, until the dispute is resolved	if there is a dispute, the scheme will hold the deposit until the dispute resolution service or courts decide what is fair
if the landlord fails to comply, the insurance arrangements will ensure the return of the deposit to the tenant if entitled	

Further information can be found at www.direct.gov.uk

Ensure that you inform tenants of the scheme you are using at the start of your tenancy.

House in Multiple Occupation (HMO)

Please ensure that you check with the council as to whether your property requires an HMO licence.

HMO generally refers to one of the following:

- A house split into bedsits
- A house or flat share where each tenant has their own tenancy agreement
- Students living in shared accommodation

Does my HMO need a license?

On April 6th 2006 mandatory HMO licensing came into force across England with the intention of raising the standard of accommodation in HMOs. Landlords must register their HMO with the council if the property has 3 (habitable) storeys or more AND is occupied by 5 or more people in one household.

The council will then assess whether (in their view) there is enough space for the occupants and if the property is well managed before granting a license. Councils also have power to introduce licensing for smaller HMOs or all rental properties in certain areas they want to improve, so always check with your local council to see what regulations apply.

What is the license?

The license will specify the maximum number of people who may live in the HMO. It will also include the following conditions, which apply to every license:

- A valid current gas safety certificate, which is renewed annually, must be provided
- Proof that all electrical appliances and furniture are kept in a safe condition
- Proof that all smoke alarms are correctly positioned and installed
- Each occupier must have a written statement of the terms on which they occupy the property, for example, a tenancy agreement

Councils may also apply the following conditions:

- Restrictions or prohibitions on the use of parts of the HMO by occupants.
- A requirement that the condition of the property, its content, such as furniture and all facilities, bathroom and toilets for example, are in good working order.

Please note that licensing only applies to HMOs where rents or other considerations are payable.

The information contained in this guide is intended to get you acquainted with the background to HMOs. As local councils have the authority to impose licensing as they see fit we strongly suggest you speak to your council for further clarification. Please refer to the following website

www.cheltenham.gov.uk/downloads/propertylicence-landlord-guide.pdf

Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs)

It is mandatory for landlords to have a valid energy performance certificate (EPC) available for all new tenants, highlighting the property's energy efficiency and its environmental impact, along with providing estimated running costs and recommendations for improving the home's performance.

A certificate will be required for any property that is let on a shared basis regardless of whether it is a joint or sole tenancy agreement. Certificates will be valid for ten years.

EPCs must be produced by an accredited Energy Assessor. If you use an Independent Energy Assessor, make sure they are a current member of an accreditation scheme (www.epcregistration.com)

Further information is available at <http://epc.direct.gov.uk>

If you are letting out a room in your own home, i.e. lodgings, you may be exempt from this regulation.

Tenant and Landlord duty to the Community

If a noise complaint is received by the University, the landlord will be contacted and asked to speak with the tenants. Contractually the landlord is obliged to address such complaints.

The University takes noise complaints and other disturbances very seriously and will visit and write to the students if such a complaint occurs, this does not release a landlord from their obligation to the community.

If there are repeat complaints, the students will be called in for a disciplinary meeting with a senior member of the University.

The University works closely with the local council, community groups and the police to try and ensure the students settle into the community well. We would ask landlords to work with us to achieve this aim.

The Housing Support Team is here to offer advice and support to any landlord that may be facing noise disturbance issues or other problems with students and will help to deal with these issues quickly.

It often helps to know where the students live so we can talk to them personally. With this in mind we have uploaded a contact sheet to our website and would ask that when you let your property that you complete this form and return it to us for our records.

Equal opportunities

We are committed to being a community where equality of opportunity is a reality for all students and staff. That means creating a positive environment in which students and staff are respected.

We aim to ensure that no-one in our University community will receive unfair or unlawful treatment due to race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, religion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, disability or age.

Owners must therefore ensure that there is no discrimination in the provision and letting of accommodation and that all tenants are treated respectfully and fairly. Under the Race Relations Act and the Sex Discrimination Act it is unlawful to discriminate on the basis of race or sex.

Failure to comply with the University's commitment to equal opportunities may result in owners/landlords being removed from the accommodation register.

General information

Recycling

Students should be encouraged to recycle items at their local recycling centres throughout the year and especially when they are moving out in the summer, instead of putting large amounts of refuse out on the streets for collection.

Repairs

The landlord will be responsible for the repairs to the structure and all fixtures and fittings of the dwelling, including heating and hot water installations.

Security

In the present climate of opportunist thieves, local police recommend that owners of student properties should take adequate precautions to secure against break-ins. For advice, refer to www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crime/

Retainers

A retaining fee over the summer period can be requested if the tenants currently living in the property wish to reserve it for the forthcoming year. A retaining fee should not be expected from tenants who have not yet moved into the property.

Notices

We would advise that the following information is displayed at all times in the property:

- Name, address and telephone number of the landlord/agent of the property
- Emergency repairs procedure/telephone numbers
- Procedures in case of fire
- Location of water stop-cock, mains gas tap and electrical trip switch
- Copies of the gas, electrical certificates and HMO license if applicable
- Information of refuse and recycling collection days

Inventory

It is advisable to create an inventory that lists the contents of the property and their condition. We would advise students to complete an inventory themselves if a landlord has failed to do so. The details of which should be agreed by all parties.

TV Licence

- If your tenants have a television they will require a TV licence; please refer to the website for current regulations.
- Each tenant who signs a sole tenancy and watches a television in their bedroom will need a licence. Further information can be found at www.tvlicensing.co.uk

Frequently asked Questions

What do I get for my money?

The registration fee covers the administration of putting your property on StudentPad and advertising throughout the year.

When can I register a property with the University, is it only once a year?

You can register anytime during the year as long as you have met the current criteria and have provided all relevant documentation. Please note it can be very busy the two weeks prior to the housing list being released.

What condition should my property be in before it can be registered?

We expect properties to be in a good state of repair, both the building and contents supplied to tenants. Paintwork should be clean and not peeling, carpets should not be ripped and all furnishings should be clean and whole. Housing Support Advisers have the right to refuse to register a property. Landlords can appeal against this decision directly to the Housing Manager.

Are you open during the University holidays?

We are open throughout the year only closing for University and Bank Holidays. The office is open from 8.30am – 5.00pm, Monday – Thursday and 4.30pm on Fridays.

Do I have to use a tenancy deposit scheme?

Yes, from the 6th April 2007 all landlords that give assured shorthold tenancy agreements now have to register deposits with one of the schemes, this is a legal requirement. If the deposits are not protected in a deposit scheme, landlords can face large fines or prosecution.

What if I offer an inclusive rent?

You should make tenants aware of how many units used for gas and/or electricity you have budgeted for within your inclusive rent. This should be included in your tenancy agreement. Because of the price increases in utility bills over the last few years we would advise you to put a cap on the amount that can be used.

What is an Erasmus student?

Erasmus students are international exchange students who may only study at the University for one semester. If renting to Erasmus students you may need to provide a shorter tenancy agreement.

Should I have the student's home details?

It is important that you have the tenant's home address in case a problem arises either during or after the tenancy period.

Are there any precautions I should take in my property?

We suggest that loft hatches and cellars are locked to avoid tenants using them for storage. Banisters should be fitted correctly and there should be no trip hazards, e.g. trailing wires and carpets that are not fixed properly.

Should I provide any information in the property?

We suggest that you have a copy of your current certificates displayed along with a list of emergency contact details. It is also useful to state where the stopcock and trip switch are located and their refuse collection day.

What is an Inventory?

The inventory should include everything that is in the property as well as the condition of the house including any marks on carpets, walls etc. It should be signed and dated by both the landlord and all the tenants. This is important to avoid disputes at the end of the tenancy.

What should happen at the end of the tenancy?

A visit should be made to the property by both the landlord and tenants before the end of the tenancy to ensure the property is in good order and to avoid any unnecessary disputes over the deposit. Meter readings should be taken and any tenant post redirected.

How long should a tenancy agreement be?

A tenancy agreement should be the length of the academic year, currently 38/40 weeks.

Can we contact the parents/guardian if a student is not paying their rent?

No, first and foremost they are your tenants, they are 18 and over and their privacy should be respected.

I would like a letting agent to manage my property, can I do this?

Yes, however we would want confirmation that there would be no 'hidden' costs passed onto the tenant and the owner was the landlord not the letting agent. The University has the right to refuse any letting agents.

What is a guarantor?

A guarantor will guarantee payment of rent that has not been paid by the tenant. More and more landlords are choosing to use them.

Useful Contacts

Accommodation Office

Francis Close Hall
Swindon Road
Cheltenham, GL50 4AZ
Tel: 01242 714544
Email: accommodation@glos.ac.uk
Web: www.glos.ac.uk/accommodation

General Welfare

Tel: 01242 714542
Email: studentservices@glos.ac.uk

Cheltenham Borough Council

Municipal Offices
Promenade
Cheltenham, GL50 9SA
Tel: 01242 262626
Fax: 01242 227131
Minicom: 01242 264264
Email: enquiries@cheltenham.gov.uk
Web: www.cheltenham.gov.uk

Council Tax

Tel: 01242 264161
Email: counciltax@cheltenham.gov.uk

Environmental Health

Tel: 01242 264135
Email: Envhealth@cheltenham.gov.uk

Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB Cheltenham)

6 St James Square
Cheltenham GL50 3PR
Tel: 01242 522491
Fax: 01242 531380
Web: www.cheltenhamcab.org.uk
Email: advice@cheltenhamcab.org.uk

Gloucester City Council

Herbert Warehouse
The Docks
Gloucester
GL1 2EQ
Tel: 01452 396396
Email: heretohelp@gloucester.gov.uk

Citizens Advice Bureau (Gloucester)

75-81, Eastgate St, Gloucester
GL1 1PN
Tel: 01452 527202/01452 528017
Web: www.gloucestercab.org.uk
Email: bureau@gloucestercab.cabnet.org.uk

Council Tax

Gloucester City Council Revenues Services
Tel: 01452 396495
Email: revenues@gloucester.gov.uk

Environmental Health

Tel: 01452 396396
Email: heretohelp@gloucester.gov.uk
Fax: 01452 396340

Victim Support

Tel: 0845 3030900
Web: www.victimsupport.org

Crime & Victims

Web:
www.direct.gov.uk/en/crimejusticeandthelaw/

National Landlords Association

22-26 Albert Embankment
London SE1 7TJ
Tel: 020 7840 8900
Web: www.landlords.org.uk
Email info@landlords.org.uk

Police

Tel: 999
Non-emergency
Tel: 101
Web: www.gloucestershire.police.uk

Crime Stoppers

Tel: 0800 555 111
Web: www.crimestoppers.co.uk