



Finding housing that meets your needs and requirements in any city can be intimidating. Students planning to live in off-campus housing are encouraged to begin researching prior to arrival in the United States. However, it is often difficult to make a decision and confirm your housing from abroad, therefore, we recommend viewing housing options in person and signing a lease after you have arrived. The Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS) has prepared this guide to help you in the search for off-campus housing in the U.S.

## GETTING STARTED

Beginning the process to search for off-campus housing may seem difficult. Below are steps that you should consider following throughout your search:

- **Decide on Your Budget**
  - Determine how much you can afford to pay for monthly rent. Do not forget to factor in general expenses – water, heat, electric, food, garbage, cable/data, transportation to get to and from campus, etc.
- **Choose Roommates**
  - Deciding who and how many people you will live with will affect your budget. Having roommates can make your rent cheaper. Remember when choosing roommates that you want to find roommates who are responsible, since you will be signing a lease together.
- **The Search**
  - When searching for apartments compare your options and keep in mind what is important to you (i.e., distance, utilities, amenities, parking, etc.). It is always a good idea to visit the apartment before signing a lease.
- **Selecting a Rental Unit**
  - Once you have decided on a space, make arrangements with the realtor or landlord to sign a lease. Please see the lease section for further information about your rights and responsibilities.
- **Moving In**
  - Remember to discuss your move-in date with your landlord. If you selected an unfurnished apartment, you will need to purchase furniture for your new apartment.

Keep in mind that Quinnipiac University assumes no responsibility for the condition of the home/apartment rentals or the safety and well-being of the student while residing off campus. We strongly urge you to review and inspect the potential property prior to any commitment or exchange of funds.



## CONSIDERATIONS FOR RENTING

As you embark on your search for off-campus housing, here are some helpful questions to ask yourself before signing a lease:

- How much can you afford to pay monthly for rent and utilities (i.e., gas, electricity, water, Internet)?
- How long do you plan to rent? Most apartments will require long-term leases (1 year). Some will offer short-term (month-to-month) rentals but the rent may be higher.
- How far will you commute to campus and what form of transportation are you willing to use?
- How convenient is your housing for daily life – grocery shopping, public transportation, entertainment, etc.?
- Most off-campus housing is not furnished. Can you afford to buy furniture and household goods?
- Where will you launder your clothes? Some apartments provide a washer and dryer but many do not.
- Are you willing to maintain the property? For example, if you rent a house, you may be expected to shovel the snow or mow the lawn.
- Do you plan to have roommates? How many people are you planning to live with?
- How many bedrooms and bathrooms will you need?
- Is there a place to park?
- Is there a security deposit or application fee?
- Are pets allowed?
- How is maintenance handled? Is someone on call 24/7?

Don't be afraid to ask the landlord any questions. We have prepared a [Renter's Checklist](#) that is another helpful resource to use when visiting apartments or speaking with landlord. Take your time and find the home that is right for you!



## U.S. HOUSING LEASES

As a renter, you will most likely be signing a written lease. A lease outlines the responsibilities of the landlord (owner of the property) and tenant (renter of the property). The lease will have detailed information regarding the property, length of rental, amount of rent due, utility payments, and the tenants' rights and responsibilities.

A lease specifies the rules the owner and renter both agree to live by. Once signed, it is a binding and legal document. It will describe what you as the tenant can and cannot do and what your landlord can and cannot do. Keep in mind: If one person in your apartment does not contribute their share of the rent, you, as the roommate, are then responsible. All tenants on the lease are equally responsible. Your lease should include the amount of rent and when it is due, the beginning and end dates of the lease, if pets are allowed, who is responsible for paying the utilities, how much the security deposit is, who is responsible for outside upkeep including snow removal, and who is responsible for repairs and maintenance.

The lease is a document to protect both you and the landlord from misunderstandings. In the state of Connecticut, each signing party has responsibilities in the lease. Always remember to read your lease carefully and NEVER sign a lease with blank spaces!

You can review a [sample lease](#) in advance to become familiar with the language. Refer to the Glossary of Housing Terms in this guide for definitions of words common to a lease or rental agreement. Keep in mind, however, that each lease is a bit different. Ask the landlord to allow you time to review the lease before signing.

## WHAT IS INCLUDED IN RENT

When researching housing, ask which (if any) of these are included in the rental price.

- **Utilities:** Water, gas and/or electricity, internet, cable television. In many cases, no utilities (except sometimes water) are provided by the management, so you should factor these additional costs in your planning. Utilities are typically billed monthly.
- **Amenities:**
  - **Major appliances.** Most units include a stove, oven and a refrigerator, but it is important to confirm this.
  - **Laundry.** If a washing machine and dryer are not provided, you will need to use a local laundromat.
  - **Furnished/unfurnished.** Most off-campus housing is rented without furniture (bed, tables, sofas, etc.) but sometimes furnished housing is available.
  - **Parking.** This sometimes carries an additional fee. In some locations, street parking is available. If more than one person will have a car, ask about the number of parking spaces available.



## GLOSSARY OF HOUSING TERMS & ABBREVIATIONS

- **Co-signer (or Guarantor):** Someone who assumes responsibility for a lease with a tenant who otherwise would not meet the landlord's financial qualifications. If you don't have rental history or have bad credit, you may be required to have a co-signer or guarantor. This is different than having roommates who also sign the lease on their own behalf.
- **Credit Check:** Landlords may review a potential tenant's credit history through one of several credit rating agencies before approving a rental application. This provides the landlord with an understanding of your financial history. You need to give written consent which permits the landlord to check your credit and some applications may require this.
- **Full Bath:** A bathroom which includes a toilet, sink, and a bathtub or shower. A "Half Bathroom," on the other hand, has a toilet and sink, but no shower or bath.
- **Furnished Apartment:** An apartment that comes with basic furniture such as a bed, sofa, kitchen table, and chairs, etc.
- **Landlord:** The person or company who owns and/or manages property that is leased or rented to others.
- **Lease:** An agreement between the landlord and tenant that lists all the rules and stipulations of the rental. Most leases are for a one-year duration.
- **Repairs:** A lease should specify whether the tenant or landlord is responsible for repairs on the rental apartment. Without a provision for repairs in the lease, it may be very difficult to persuade a landlord to make needed repairs.
- **Rent:** Amount of money paid every month to landlord or building owner for housing.

## GLOSSARY OF HOUSING TERMS & ABBREVIATIONS (CONTINUED)

- **Security Deposit:** A deposit, usually in the amount of one month's rent (Connecticut law allows up to 2 months rent for security), that a tenant will pay to the landlord at the time of signing a lease as security to cover the expenses of a possible damage to the apartment during the course of their tenancy. At the end of the lease term, the landlord will take the cost of any damages caused by the tenant out of the security deposit before returning it. The landlord must return tenant's security deposit, either in full or in part (after deducting cost of damages), within 30 days of the end of the lease.
- **Studio:** An apartment which is composed of a single room and a bathroom. The main room functions as the kitchen, living room, and bedroom. Usually appropriate only for one person.
- **Sublease:** An agreement whereby a tenant grants possession and use of all or part of the leased property to another party, who is known as the (sub)'lessee', 'subtenant' or 'undertenant'. Subletting may be prohibited by the original lease or require written permission from the landlord. In a sublease, the original tenant, who is now regarded as the 'sublessor' or 'over-tenant', remains directly responsible for making the rent payments to the landlord.
- **Tenant:** The person who is leasing the apartment.
- **Utilities:** Services such as heat, water, electricity, and gas. Sometimes these services are included in rent and sometimes they are not. Make sure your landlord indicates in the lease what utilities are included in rent. If they are not included, you will have to arrange and pay for the utility service directly with the utility companies.

## COMMON ABBREVIATIONS

- **A/C:** Air Conditioning
- **Apt.:** Apartment
- **BR:** Bedroom; you will usually see this preceded by the number of bedrooms (i.e., 3BR is an apartment with 3 bedrooms).
- **BA:** Bathroom; you will usually see this preceded by the number of bathrooms, where a "half" bathroom (0.5) is just a sink and toilet with no shower or bathtub. For example, 2.5BA is an apartment with 2 full bathrooms (toilet, sink, and shower or bathtub) and 1 half-bathroom (sink and toilet).





## HOUSING COSTS

- **Rent:** Rents in the neighborhoods surrounding the University vary from one unit to another, however, expect to pay between at least \$1,100 to \$2,000 per month for a one-bedroom apartment, and between \$700-1,100 per month for a room in a shared apartment. Be sure the lease clearly indicates what it included in the rent.
- **Security Deposit:** In addition to the first month's rent, a security deposit (typically in the amount of one or two month's rent) is often required. Your security deposit will be returned after you vacate the apartment, granted you have left it clean and in good condition.
- **Deposit:** A deposit is sometimes requested to hold an apartment until financial verification, credit checks, and/or employment verification can be completed.
- **Realtors:** If you rent through a realtor, they may charge an application fee (generally less than \$50) or have you pay for the credit check.
- **Utilities:** If the apartment rent does not include utilities (electricity, water, gas), before signing the lease you will want to inquire about the average monthly cost of the utilities and the cost of heating the apartment in the winter. This will help you understand the full cost of the rental. Some utility companies (gas, electric, internet, etc.) require that you pay a deposit when initially starting them if you do not have a credit history or social security number in the U.S. After 1 year you may be able to get back this deposit back (typically in the form of a bill reduction). Deposits are typically \$200 or more for each utility that you set up, so make sure that you have enough money to get started (or arrange to split the costs of deposits with your roommates).
- **Unfurnished Apartment:** An unfurnished apartment will usually contain no furniture. You can ask the landlord if there is any furniture available, but if not you will have the additional expense of furnishing your apartment.

## WHERE TO LOOK FOR HOUSING

Looking for longer-term housing takes research and time. It is wise to visit and inspect the property thoroughly before you sign a lease. Be very cautious of signing a lease on a property you have not seen in person. It is often difficult to make a decision from abroad, therefore, you may want to look into short-term housing options at a hotel, short-term rental like an [Airbnb](#), or a friend's house when you first arrive in the U.S.

Take advantage of the housing resources provided by Quinnipiac to begin your housing search. You can also connect with current and new international students in the WhatsApp chat to find potential roommates.

In addition to the resources provided by Quinnipiac, the following websites and databases are sites that list available apartments. Many of these databases also give you the option to post a listing or profile if you are seeking an apartment or roommate. They allow you to filter on a variety of search terms, such as budget and location. If you are looking for short-term/summer housing, you may consider searching for a “sublet” option.

### Housing Databases:

- [www.zillow.com](http://www.zillow.com)
- [www.rent.com](http://www.rent.com)
- [www.apartments.com](http://www.apartments.com)
- [www.apartmentguide.com](http://www.apartmentguide.com)
- [www.hamdenctapartments.com](http://www.hamdenctapartments.com)
- [www.craigslist.com](http://www.craigslist.com)

## BEWARE OF RENTAL SCAMS

When using online websites to find an apartment, be alert to the possibility that the ad may be a scam. While it does not happen often, it helps to pay attention to the advice below to avoid a rental scam.

- If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Scammers will often list a rental for a very low price to lure in victims. Find out how comparable listings are priced, and if the rental comes in suspiciously low, walk away.
- Do not wire money as a deposit or payment of first and last month's rent. Wiring money is the same as giving cash; you cannot get a refund, even if you find out the offer was a fraud.
- Do not pay a security deposit, fee, or first month's rent before you have seen the property and signed a lease.
- Get a copy of the lease, signed by both you and the property owner/manager. The lease should have the terms of your rental, including fees, rent, and maintenance.
- Do not give out personal information like bank account or credit card numbers.



## PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Access to public transportation may be a factor in your housing selection. The public bus system in Connecticut is called CT Transit. You can learn more about the services, fares, and plan your trip on the [CT transit website](#). The [Trip Planner](#) is a helpful tool that will provide public transportation directions from your origin location to your destination. Bus routes 229 and 228 run along Whitney Ave. and are the closest to Mount Carmel and York Hill campuses. The 215 is closest to the North Haven campus.

Review the maps below for more information about stops along these bus lines.

- [Bus 228 Whitney Avenue Map](#)
- [Bus 229 Waterbury Map](#)
- [Bus 215 North Haven, Wallingford, Meriden](#)

The [Go CT card](#) is the easiest form of payment when riding the bus. OISS has Go CTs cards available in the office that you can use to set up an account and load money.

## ADDRESS UPDATES

Once you have secured your off-campus housing, you are required to update your U.S. address in two places within 10 days of the change. You must ensure that your address information is correct in these two places so you must continue to update your profile if you move in the future.

- **[Self-Service on MyQ](#):** Please log into Quinnipiac University Self-Service to update your local address. This will ensure that the university can reach you in an emergency and ensure that any mail reaches you in a timely way. Once you are logged in, select “User Options” (small face icon on the left-side menu), choose “User Profile,” and then “+ Add New Address.” When you enter your new address, be sure to select “New Local Address Request” as the address type. Visit Self-Service using this link: [Quinnipiac University Self-Service](#)
- **[ISS Portal](#):** Log in to the International Students & Scholars Portal with your QU username and password. Click on the “Control Center” on the top toolbar. Submit an “Address Update” request on the left menu to provide OISS with your new address so that your SEVIS immigration record can be updated. The F-1/J-1 visa regulations require students to report their address within 10 days of the change.



## OFF-CAMPUS SAFETY TIPS

Take time to read the following tips to prevent crime(s)! Intruders can strike any neighborhood at any time. They often seek houses that are poorly maintained, hidden by fencing or landscaping, and are out of sight of neighbors. The following will help minimize your chances of becoming a victim:

- **Trust your instincts.**
  - If you think there is something wrong, there is probably something wrong. Always contact 911 in case of an emergency.
- **Keep your doors locked at all times regardless of whether you are awake or sleeping.**
  - Do not prop open doors or leave doors wide open.
  - Also, check the windows to make sure they are properly closed before leaving the house.
  - If you return home and notice something questionable (e.g. ,slit screen, broken window), do not go inside. Call 911 immediately.
- **Turn on your outdoor lights at night.**
  - Contact your landlord if lights need to be replaced or repaired.
- **Do not allow strangers into your house. Always find out who is at the door before opening it.**
  - Don't be afraid to ask for identification of any utility employee or law enforcement officer. Beware of solicitors!
- **Avoid risky behavior.**
  - Remember that alcohol impairs your judgment. Think before you drink and consider the risks before you act. The decisions you make now can have a significant impact on your safety in the future.
- **Be aware of your rights in social and sexual situations.**
  - The University enforces an affirmative consent policy. Unwanted physical contact is a crime and should be reported immediately to Quinnipiac Public Safety or a member of the Dean of Students Office.
- **Protect your property.**
  - Get renter's insurance! Check with a parent/guardian about adding a rider on their homeowner's policy or contact an insurance company for renter's insurance quotes.
  - Record serial numbers of all valuable items.
  - Keep wallets, purses, and jewelry out of sight and locked away.
  - Do not keep large sums of cash in your house or on your person.
  - Keep track of credit cards and important documentation and report any losses immediately. Be alert to what is happening around you.