

Before You Sign: Rental Agreement Checklist

1. Bond Details

The bond is a security deposit (usually 4 weeks' rent) that your landlord holds in case of damages or unpaid rent. It must be officially lodged with the relevant state authority (e.g., Residential Tenancies Bond Authority in VIC or Bond Administrator in WA). Always request a receipt and check if the bond is registered-this protects you from losing money unfairly.

2. Duration of Lease

Your lease should clearly state the start and end dates. Fixed-term leases usually last 6 or 12 months, while periodic leases roll over month-to-month. Ensure that the lease period aligns with your course dates or personal timeline. Avoid signing unclear or open-ended agreements.

3. Maintenance Responsibilities

The rental agreement should specify whether the tenant or landlord is responsible for general upkeep and urgent repairs. For example, landlords are typically responsible for plumbing and electricity faults, while tenants handle basic cleanliness. Get this in writing to avoid disputes later, especially for shared spaces.

4. Exit Clauses

Exit clauses outline how and when you can legally break the lease. Understand how much notice you need to give (usually 21-30 days) and whether there are penalties. Some leases charge a 'break fee' if you leave early. Check for subletting rules or re-renting options in emergencies.

5. Room Sharing Rules

In shared accommodations, check if all roommates are listed on the lease. If not, you may have fewer legal protections. Ask how many people are allowed to stay in the room-overcrowding is illegal and unsafe. Discuss expectations around guests, quiet hours, and cleaning duties.