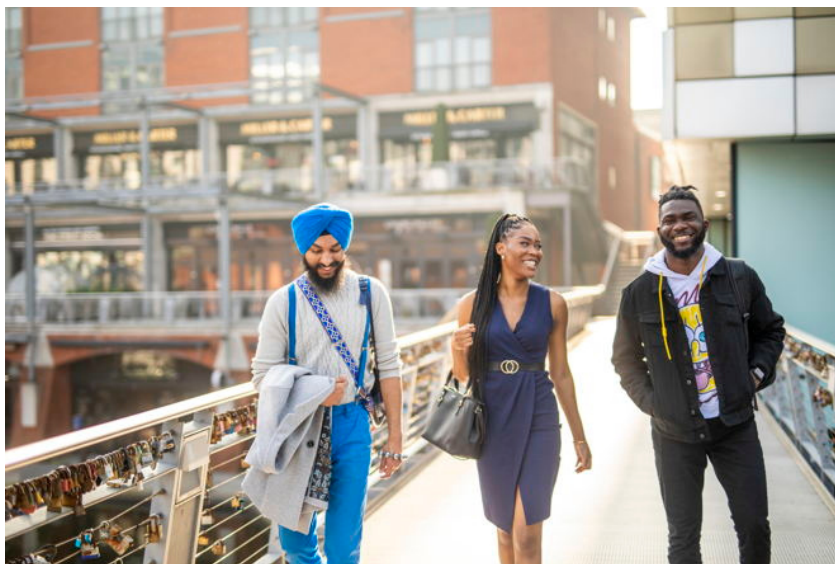


10 things to consider when choosing student accommodation in the UK

Before moving into your student accommodation, there are many things for you to consider. This list, compiled with Student.com, will help you know what to look out for and prepare you to find your ideal student home in the UK.



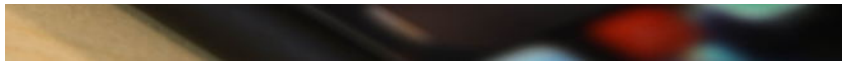
'If you book early, you'll have a better chance of finding an apartment to share with friends or other people you know you want to live with'

1. Book as early as possible

As soon as you receive your offer, start researching student accommodation in the UK. It is your responsibility to secure suitable accommodation for yourself. If you don't apply for university-owned accommodation, your university will assume that you have found or will find private accommodation.

When you start your search early, you will have more options in terms of university accommodation and the private rental market. This is especially important in cities or locations with less supply than demand. In most cases, it will still be possible to find private accommodation just before the start of the academic year. But be aware that you will have fewer choices available, so book early if possible. You will find better deals and, if you're looking with other people, you will be more likely to find something that suits all of your needs.





'Facebook can be a good place to get an idea of where might be a good area for you to live - or where might be best avoided'

2. Turn to social media for some inspiration

One of the best places to find out about university accommodation in your town or city is Facebook. Facebook groups are full of information about rooms and apartments on short- or long-term rent, people looking to 'buddy-up' with others to rent private shared accommodation or sublets, for example. You can also get an idea of where might be a good area for you to live - or where might be best avoided. You can also get feedback from students who have lived in certain parts of town or accommodation types based on their own experiences.

Your university will likely have a Facebook group just for accommodation for the upcoming academic year, which is a good start. University halls and large purpose-built student accommodation (PBSAs) also tend to have their own Facebook groups where you can read about them in more detail and get help if you have any questions. Some universities also offer student accommodation services to help guide and support you through the process.



'PBSAs are known for having great facilities - for example, in-house gyms, game rooms and dedicated study spaces'

3. The different types of accommodation

In general, there are three types of student accommodation:

1. On-campus accommodation

If you go for on-campus accommodation, it will be easy to meet lots of new people and you'll be close to your university. Despite having less flexibility in choosing your exact room, this option is often popular with first-year students. On-campus accommodation is typically booked for one academic year.

2. Private residences

Private residences offer more flexibility with dates and also make it easier to choose your location and type of room. They are not limited to students, so it's possible you'll end up sharing the building with a mixture of students and professionals.

3. Purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA)

PBSAs are large apartment complexes built specifically for students. They are known for having great facilities - for example, in-house gyms, games rooms and dedicated study spaces, as well as more 'typical' common rooms. You'll also have lots of flexibility in choosing the type of room you want and the dates you want to rent it for.



'In a private room, you have a bedroom to yourself. Other facilities, for example, kitchens or laundry rooms, are shared'

4. The different types of rooms

Like with types of accommodations, when it comes to rooms, there are also generally three different options.

1. Shared room

In a shared room, you share a bedroom with a roommate, and all other facilities are also shared. This is a more sociable option and usually the most affordable, but will also offer less privacy. In the UK, this is less common than, for example, in the USA.

2. Private room

In a private room, you have a bedroom to yourself and sometimes - depending on the property - also a private en-suite bathroom. Other facilities, for example, kitchens or laundry rooms, are shared. This can be seen as a sort of 'medium choice' for both price and privacy, and most UK students choose to rent private rooms.

3. Studio apartment

In a studio apartment, everything beyond the front door is just for you. It is totally private, and you don't need to share anything, so this is the best choice for anyone seeking both privacy and personal space. Unsurprisingly, the cost of renting a studio apartment is higher than other available options.



'Your budget will be an important factor in determining what kind of accommodation you choose'

5. What is your budget?

Before you start looking for somewhere to live, your budget is one of the first things you'll need to figure out. How much can you afford, or are willing to pay per month, on rent? Your budget will be an important factor in determining what kind of accommodation you choose. Sharing with others is usually the most cost-effective. However, if you can afford to pay more and privacy is a top priority, a studio apartment might be your best option.

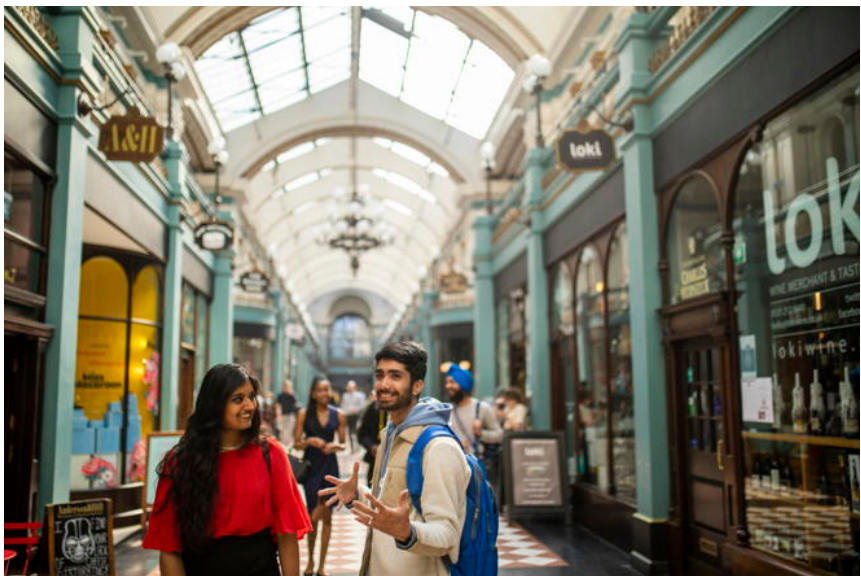
It's also worth keeping in mind that it's likely, especially in the private rented sector, that will require a deposit of one month's rent, for example, before you move in. So you will need to factor this into your budget.



'Would it be possible for you to walk or cycle to university from your accommodation?'

6. Location

Location is one of the most important things to consider when looking for student accommodation. Your new home will be your base, but it's worth considering where you want that to be and how you will be able to move around from there. For example, would you be close to your campus? How easy would it be for you to explore your new area when you have free time? How important is it that you can access the town centre or other places of interest quickly, easily and cheaply from your home? How close to public transport is it - for example, bus stops, metro or train stations, or would it be possible for you to walk or cycle to university?



'How important is it to you that you can access the town centre or other places of interest quickly, easily and cheaply from your home?'

7. What is the accommodation really like?

Have you seen the room or the space in person? If not, and if you won't be able to do so, it's particularly important that you review all images or videos of the room and the building in detail. This way, you'll get a better idea of what it will be like, which will help you narrow down your choices.

Many accommodation providers now offer virtual accommodation tours, which can help you get an idea of the space, and how it all fits together beyond just photographs. If you cannot visit in person, and there is a virtual tour available, make sure to check it out.





'Make sure you know what will be inside your accommodation when you arrive. For example, does your accommodation have a bed?'

8. Is the place furnished?

Make sure you know what will be inside your accommodation when you arrive. For example, does your accommodation have a bed? Is there a desk and a chair? Or even a shower curtain? Before arriving, it's good to know what is provided and what is not so you can arrange everything else you need without the time pressure. Turning up late at night in your new accommodation after a long day of travelling to find no bed is best avoided.



'Before you sign a contract, make sure you know what your rights and obligations are'

9. Make sure you understand the contract

Before signing a contract, make sure you know your rights and obligations. Do you have to pay a deposit before you can move in, and if so, how much? Do you need a guarantor who will agree to pay the rent for you if you cannot? What is the cancellation policy if your plans change? For example, what happens if you don't get accepted to your university, you don't get a visa, or there are new travel restrictions put in place? Even if these things seem unlikely, it's always better to be prepared and know what to do if anything unexpected arises.



'Make sure that you find out who your contact person is and understand what kind of support they offer'

10. Find out who you can contact for support at your accommodation

Before or just after arriving at your property, ensure you find out who your contact person is. Save their phone number and email address on your phone and understand what kind of support they can offer you. For example, who do you go to if there is a water leak? If your cooker stops working or your boiler breaks, what is the process for sorting this out? Or even if you just need answers to any other practical questions about your accommodation, it's always good to know who's on hand to help you.