UNIVERSITY STUDENT BUDGETING AND ACCOMMODATION INFORMATION

For many students making decisions about university accommodation can be quite daunting and bewildering. In addition to this, they may be living away from home for the very first time and confused or unsure about how to budget without blowing their student loan or starving.

Therefore we have put this guide together for students to refer to before attending and during their studies at university.

Parents and carers may also find this guide helpful when supporting their child in finding university accommodation and helping them learn to budget.

The Careers Team fully appreciate the uncertainly students and their families may face in preparing for university and we are more than happy to support with any questions and queries you may have.

We hope you find this guide useful.

MEET THE TEAM

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ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT CHOOSING UNIVERSITY ACCOMMODATION

Halls of residence

Halls of residence are owned by the university and they're mostly reserved for first year students. They are usually closer to campus, cheaper than other types of accommodation and have wardens to help and support you as a student.

You'll need to apply for a place in halls of residence through the uni accommodation office, and you can usually do this online. You'll apply for a few different halls and rate them in your preference order, but bear in mind they are popular, so you may not get your first choice. Check the uni website for details on how and when to apply.

Things to think about when choosing your halls

To understand what options are available, the best place to start is the uni website. But here are our key things to look out for:

Cost: Prices vary depending on the location and what's included. See what options will suit your budget. You usually get electricity and water bills, but you'll still need to pay for things like a TV licence and insurance.

The right fit: Check the uni accommodation website to see what each option looks like and what they offer. Some might be catered, for example, or have shared bathrooms.

Location: Depending on which uni you're going to, you'll need to think about the location of your accommodation. For example, is there a halls option on your campus and if not, how will you travel to uni and how much will it cost?
Read the small print: Make sure you know what you can and can't take with you. For example, some halls have restrictions on taking cars, and some accommodation has different contract lengths.

Remember: You aren't guaranteed a place in your first choice, so have a back up option.

HINTS AND TIPS - Having your own bathroom will cost. You won't have your own bathroom in your subsequent years so opt for a shared bathroom in your first year to save you money!

Private halls of residence

Private halls are like normal halls of residence but aren't owned by the uni. They're usually part of a UK-wide chain of purpose-built student accommodation. You could be living with students who don't go to the same uni as you but they also sometimes have other options like studio flats available, although they are often much more expensive.

Shared housing

If you do not want to go into halls of residence, or you haven't managed to secure a place, you could choose to rent a house or flat, either by yourself or with other students.

This is common for second and third year students, but you can ask your accommodation office or students' union to see if there are other first years looking for private rented accommodation too.

HINTS and TIPS -This is a risky option for first year students. You must really know what you are doing , check the contract <u>very</u> carefully and manage your bills yourself.

Source: Ucas.com

PREPARING FOR THE SECOND YEAR OF UNIVERSITY ACCOMMODATION

Finding accommodation for your second year, sooner rather than later!

Once you have started your first year and made friends, it is important to start to make plans about your second year accommodation. Find the friends you would be happy to share accommodation with the following year and if possible secure somewhere before the end of the first semester. This will mean you will have the most choice and value for money.

EATING ON A STUDENT BUDGET

It can be quite daunting when starting university, living away from home for the first time and trying to budget for the essentials. We have put this guide together to provide some useful hints and tips to help you manage your finances and eat healthily.

1. Plan your meals
Once you have a settled into a routine, and know your weekly timetable and how many meals you'll be making, spend some time planning what you're going to cook. This will ensure that you don't buy ingredients you don't need, and that you're not left with food waste.

2. Buy seasonal, shop locally or use budget supermarkets
Fruit and veg not in season will have been imported and travelled further to the store so will be more costly. Try to shop locally where possible or use a budget supermarket.

3. Use loyalty cards
Supermarket loyalty cards can offer genuine savings, so make sure you get one for each shop in your area. That way you can go wherever has the best deals for your shopping list that week, rather than staying loyal to one because you're signed up to their scheme.

4. Buy in bulk and choose own brands
Buy store cupboard essentials together with your flat mates and buy in bulk. Be savvy when you're choosing individual products – often there's an own-brand version (made in the same factory) which costs less than the well-known brand. Shop on the lowest shelf as these are often where to find the cheapest items.

5. Keep an eye out for discounts and reduced items
Watch out for student discount offers and codes. Time your shop for an hour or so before the store closes (or around 7pm at a 24-hour shop) when items close to their sell-by date will be reduced. Keep an eye out for yellow stickers and ask staff where reduced items are. Freeze them when as soon as get home if you're not going to use them straight away.

6. Cook in batches
As with buying in bulk, cooking in batches can save you valuable time and money. Find a few favourite recipes for dishes that store well and pack your freezer with food you can refrigerate, freeze and reheat safely.

STUDENT BUDGETING TIPS

When you receive your student loan payment and any other funding at the beginning of the term, it can seem like quite a lot of money. However this money will need to pay for things such as rent, bills, contents insurance, food, travel and car costs as well as books, study materials and social groups.
Below is a brief guide of how to plan and budget.

How to Budget

1. Add up your income:
- your student loan
- any grants, bursaries, sponsorships or scholarships you're eligible for
- money from your parents or guardians
- income from a job
- any savings you're not saving for after your course

2. Then take off your essential outgoings:
- tuition fees (usually paid directly to the university by Student Finance England)
- rent for your accommodation
- any household bills - internet, TV licence, water, gas, electric etc.
- contents insurance
- any travel or car costs
- credit card or debt repayments
- your phone bill
- food

3. Then whatever’s left you can spend on other things:
- books or equipment for your course
- household supplies and toiletries
- music, films and social activities
- clothes and shoes etc.

Extra funding sources available, part time work and student discounts

- Check your university to see if you are eligible for any scholarships, grants or bursaries.
- Find a part time job. Do not commit to too many hours a week, 15 hours is more than enough for a full time university student. Be careful if the job requires you to work unsociable hours as these can take a toll on your studies. You can always increase your hours during your holidays if needed.
- Make sure you use the student apps for discounts such NUS card and UNIDAYS.
- Check with your university for other opportunities to bring in some extra funds such as becoming a student ambassador or gaining on campus work.
- You can get a 16-25 railcard to save a third on rail fares. The only exception is before 10am, where a £12 minimum charge applies.

Things to be wary of

- Make sure you have a TV licence.

There may be burglaries in your area.
- There's often a risk of this in student areas, so it's best to get insurance - whether just for specific contents like your phone, for your whole room, or for outside your room as well.
- If you're in halls, your parents' content insurance might cover you, but sometimes only counts during term-time - if so you'd probably want to bring any valuable things home during the holidays. (Check the policy and check with your course provider.)
- If you're renting a house with other students, you could split home insurance between you.

USEFUL WEBSITES

Home

Student Space

Student Discounts

Access thousands of student discounts at home and abroad with ISIC, the only internationally accepted student identity card endorsed by UNESCO.

NUS UK

Free Student Discounts | Exclusive discount codes and Deals | UNiDAYS

Get student discounts on your fave brands, including ASOS, UberEats, LookFantastic, Next, Nik...

myunidays.com