University of Birmingham

Frequently Asked Questions

You're bound to have lots of questions about living at the University of Birmingham which we hope we've answered throughout this section of our website. Here are a few of the most common questions and some helpful answers.

- **Applying for University accommodation (#ApplyingforUniversityaccommodation)**
- **Paying for University accommodation (#PayingforUniversityaccommodation)**
- **Travel and parking (#Travelandparking)**
- **Meal Plan (#Mealplan)**
- **Students with disabilities and other requirements (#Studentswithdisabilities)**
- **Other University accommodation FAQs (#Otherfaqs)**
- **Private-sector accommodation (#Privatesectoraccommodation)**
- **Second and third-year students (#Secondandthirdyearstudents)**

Applying for University accommodation

Q: How can I apply for accommodation?
A: Simply go to our **Apply online page (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/undergraduate/accommodation/Apply-for-accommodation/apply.aspx)**. You'll need your University of Birmingham student ID number – it's at the top of the offer letter sent to you within your offer pack. You can apply as soon as you receive an offer pack and remember, rooms are allocated randomly through our automated allocation process, to ensure that offers of accommodation are as fair as possible. Please make sure you check your junk folder as our emails may inadvertently end up there.

You will then need to select 'Application/Offer' and choose from a list of options of which type of student you are. What student type should I select?

Postgraduate - New Student - If you are a new Postgraduate student who wishes to live in University accommodation.

Postgraduate - Returner - If you are a Postgraduate student and you wish to live in to University accommodation for your second or subsequent years of your Postgraduate studies.

Presessional Students - If you are a Presessional student, then select your specific course length in the sub category section. This selection process is the same whether you intend to undertake an Undergraduate or Postgraduate course after your Presessional course. Please note that you will need to apply for your Undergraduate or Postgraduate accommodation as a separate application (using the appropriate category above).

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A: Simply go to our **Apply online page (/postgraduate/accommodation/Apply-for-accommodation/apply.aspx)**. You'll need your University of Birmingham student ID number – it's at the top of the offer letter sent to you within your offer pack. Please don't sign up with your school email address as this account is usually shut down once you leave school. Please make sure you check your junk folder as our emails may inadvertently end up there.

Q: What are the deadlines for applying for accommodation?
A: The deadline for international postgraduates is 31 July 2015. For more information please visit the **Guarantee Schemes (/postgraduate/accommodation/guarantee.aspx)** page.

Q: How can I find out my ID number if I've lost my pack / not received my pack yet?
A: You can contact Admissions on **admissions@bham.ac.uk (mailto:admissions@bham.ac.uk)** or +44 (0) 121 415 8900 if you haven't received your pack. If you've lost your pack we can provide you with the information if you give us your full name and date of birth.

Q: What do I do if I've forgotten my password?
A: Just follow the instructions on the home page of the accommodation application.

Q: I have chosen Birmingham as my insurance choice. Should I still apply for accommodation?
A: Yes. Although a place isn't guaranteed to insurance candidates, we try to house as many as possible so we'll need your accommodation preferences to do this.

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Paying for University accommodation

Q: What's included in the fee?
A: The accommodation fee includes all utility bills, internet access, telephone calls from your flat to other flats in the University, basic room insurance and a kitchen and bedding pack for all postgraduate students. If you're allocated a Meal Plan room, you'll also receive a weekly budget loaded onto your ID card which you can spend at the Hub and lots of other catering outlets on campus. Take a look at the **What you get for your money (/postgraduate/accommodation/Living-with-us/whatyouget.aspx)** page.

Presessional students on the 10, 6 and 4 week course will also receive bedding in your room and the use of crockery and cutlery in the kitchen as part of the fee.

Q: Can I apply for accommodation for just one term?
A: You're welcome to apply but priority will be given to students applying for accommodation for the full year.

Q: Do I have to pay a deposit?
A. Once you receive your offer of accommodation you'll need to make a pre-payment of £550 to secure the room within four days of receiving your offer. This is not a deposit but a pre-payment that's then deducted from the balance owing for your accommodation fee. Once you have made this payment you won't need to pay anything else until you arrive.

Q: When are the payments due?
A: Please see the **Payments website (http://www.payments.bham.ac.uk)** for our monthly and termly payment dates.

Q: Can I pay in instalments?
A: Yes. You can either pay in three termly instalments, or arrange a direct debit to pay your fee in 8 instalments over your contract period.

Q: Is there a discount for paying in full?
A: No.

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Travel and Parking

Q: How far is the accommodation from the University?
A: All University-owned accommodation is within a 15-20 minute walk of the campus. For students wishing to use public transport, there are regular bus services (numbers 98 & 99) which run from the city centre past Liberty Gardens and the Vale Village to the Edgbaston campus. Further information on routes, timetables and fares can be found on the **National Express West Midlands (http://nxbus.co.uk/routes/west-midlands/)** website. Liberty Gardens residents also have the option of a regular train service from the nearby Five Ways station into University station. Further information on routes, timetables and fares can be found on the **National Rail (http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/)** website.

Q: Do I need to bring my car with me to University?
A: Most Birmingham students find they don't need a car. There are great transport links from Selly Oak to Birmingham and the surrounding areas, and if you're living in University accommodation, it's all just a short walk away from the campus. Buses regularly run in and out of the city centre and we even have our own train station which takes you to the city's main station at Birmingham New Street.

Parking is sometimes a challenge in the local area during term time, particularly in Selly Oak where it can be difficult to get a space. So please do think carefully about whether you really need to bring your car this term, and don't forget the added environmental benefits of using public transport

If you do need to bring a car, please make sure you're considerate of your neighbours and don't park your car outside local schools, which is extremely dangerous. Cars parked haphazardly in an attempt to squeeze in closer to properties can also be dangerous, particularly when cars are parked on pavements causing people to step out into the road.

Q: Can I park at University accommodation?
We have a very limited number of parking spaces at our accommodation sites so we prefer you not to bring your own vehicle.

- **Jarratt Hall**
  No parking is allowed except for blue badge holders who require a mobility parking space by prior arrangement with reception.
- **The Vale Village and Pritchatts Park Village**
  A limited number of mobility parking spaces are available, operating on the same basis as Jarratt Hall.

Q: Will I need a parking permit?
A: A limited number of parking spaces and permits are available at Pritchatts Park and The Vale from reception and are distributed based on need. There is a total charge of £290 (for 42 weeks) for these at the Vale & Pritchatts Park. A permit is £105 for the autumn and spring terms, and £80 for the summer term.

Visitor parking permits are available; please contact reception on arrival for more details.

Q; What happens if I park without a permit?
A: We currently work with UKPC, a parking enforcement agency, to control unauthorised parking at our accommodation. Any cars parked without displaying an appropriate permit, or with a permit but parked in a restricted area, will be subject to a penalty charge, currently £60, with escalating charges for late payment.

Take a look at our Parking and local transport page for answers to all questions about parking at University accommodation.

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Meal Plan

Q: Can I buy food on campus if I have a Meal Plan?
A: Yes. The main food outlets are in University Centre but you can also use Meal Plan at Starbucks in Muirhead Tower and at the smaller outlets in each department - these are only open from Monday to Friday. The Hub runs a brunch service on Saturday and Sunday mornings.

Q: Can I cancel my Meal Plan?
A: No, the Meal Plan is contracted onto your room so it can't be taken off. If you no longer want the Meal Plan you'll need to apply to transfer to self-catered accommodation in October.

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Students with disabilities and additional requirements

Q: If I have a disability will this be taken into consideration when I apply for accommodation?
A: Yes, we always take into consideration any disability or medical issue you may have. We often require a referral from the Disability Support team to confirm this so please **visit their intranet page (https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/studentservices/disability/index.aspx)** or telephone +44(0)121 414 5130. Alternatively, you can provide a doctor's note which details your condition and what this means for your accommodation needs. We have a number of adapted rooms for people with wheelchairs, hearing impairments and visual impairments. You can also visit our pages on the Disabled Go site for more information on the adapted rooms in our accommodation.

Q: I've heard that you hold a Taster Stays for students with disabilities and additional requirements. Can you tell me more about this?
A: So that you can experience our accommodation first hand before you start your course, we offer Taster Stays where you spend a few hours or stay overnight during the summer in our Vale Village. More information is available on our **Students with disabilities page (/postgraduate/accommodation/Living-with-us/Studentswithdisabilitites.aspx)** .

Q: Is it possible to view all of the University's accommodation?
A: The annual Accommodation Open Day is on Saturday 19 March 2015 and is a great chance for you to experience our accommodation at first hand. For more information take a look at the **Accommodation Open Day (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/undergraduate/accommodation/Apply-for-accommodation/living-taster-days.aspx)** page. If you apply for accommodation before the Accommodation Open Day, you'll be able to change your choices on your application form after the event by logging back into your application. A small amount of our accommodation is available to view on University Open Days and most Applicant Visit Days.

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Other University accommodation FAQs

Q: Where can I find more information about my accommodation?
A: You'll find more, including a 360 tour, on our **student villages pages (/postgraduate/accommodation/halls/index.aspx)** .

Q: Are the rooms cleaned or can I request a cleaner?
A: It's up to you to keep your room and flat clean and tidy, but you can arrange to have your flat cleaned as a one off or weekly for a small extra charge. Take look at our **Cleaning services (https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/has/Cleaning-services.aspx)** pages for more information.

Q: Can I request to live with my friend?
A: There is an extra notes section on the application where you can make requests like these but we can't guaranteed that we'll be able to meet all requests. Remember, both you and your friend will need to make the request for it to be considered.

Q: Do you have accommodation suitable for families / couples?
A: For couples we offer studios and apartments in University accommodation. For families we recommend that you look in the private sector. **Birmingham Student Pad (http://www.birminghamstudentpad.co.uk/Accommodation)** is a good place to start or you can contact the LIVING team on +44 (0)121 414 8000 or email **living@contacts.bham.ac.uk (mailto:living@contacts.bham.ac.uk)** . Please note, children are not allowed in University accommodation.

Q: Why did I not get my first choice accommodation?
A: We can never guarantee any of your preferences. We always try to get as close to your preferences or facility choices as possible.

Q: My accommodation has been cancelled, what can I do?
A: If you don't accept your offer of accommodation within four days it will be cancelled. If you still want University accommodation you'll need to apply online again, however please be aware your new application may now be outside the guarantee schemes.

Q: Am I able to transfer to different accommodation?
A: If you're not happy with your flat when you arrive there's a chance to transfer during the first term if you're living in University-owned accommodation, usually in October. If we're able to transfer you there's an administrative fee of £50. If you've been allocated accommodation with a partner provider you won't be able to transfer.

Q: Can I cancel my accommodation and get a refund?
A: Once you've accepted your offer of accommodation and made your pre-payment you'll only be released from your contract if a replacement can be found. If a replacement can't be found you're liable to make the full payment.

Q: When can I move in?
A: All contracts for academic year 2015/16 start on 21 September 2015. You will be able to move in during allocated time-slots (only) on 18, 19 & 20 September 2015. You will be emailed these time-slots in late August. If you cannot arrive during the allocated time, for example due to flight arrival times if you are coming from overseas, you will need to contact your Village reception to make alternative arrangements.

Q: Does my room have a TV aerial point?

A: Whilst some of our rooms do have a TV aerial point not all of the rooms have an aerial point as television is now accessed by IPTV through the students laptop

Q: Where should I go if I have a query about my accommodation once I arrive?
A:There's an Accommodation Services office in University Centre called LIVING where staff can answer all of your queries Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm (Tuesdays from 10am). Alternatively you can email us at **living@contacts.bham.ac.uk (mailto:living@contacts.bham.ac.uk)** and we'll aim to respond within two working days.

Q: How do I report any damage or issues with my flat?
A: You should report any damage as soon as you move into your accommodation. If any damage occurs during the year you can request repairs at your site reception. You'll find the phone number on the noticeboard in your room.

Q: Can I extend my contract?
A: If you need an extension you'll need to inform LIVING accommodation services towards the end of your contract period. This will be subject to availability.

Q: Can I find out the names of my flatmates before I move in?
A: No, because of data protection we can't disclose this information. But you can take a look on websites like Facebook as there are often groups on this. The **Student Mentor Scheme (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/undergraduate/accommodation/Living-with-us/Studentmentorscheme.aspx)** also operates a 'Flatmate Finder' app via Facebook, where you can find other students living in your flat or nearby who have registered with the app.

Q: What do I need to bring with me for my flat?
A: Please take a look at the inventory for your flat on our **Offer pack information page (/postgraduate/accommodation/Living-with-us/OfferpackInformation.aspx)** .

Q: I'm in partner accommodation; can I transfer to University accommodation?
A: Once you enter into a contract with one of our partner providers of accommodation you'll be bound by the terms and conditions of that contract. You will need to find a replacement for your room to be released from the contract as you would in University accommodation. Once you've found a replacement it will then depend upon the vacancies we have in our accommodation whether we can offer you a room.

Q: What does the Travel Daily list mean?
A: This is set up for students who live within commuting distance of the University and have chosen to wait until a space in their preferred accommodation becomes available. We usually allocate all of these students within the first term.

Q: Are there any opportunities for students to work in University accommodation?
A:The University of Birmingham offers on-campus casual work opportunities for students. Worklink the University's Student recruitment service is looking for a number of first year students for new positions at the Vale Student village.

Please visit the **Worklink website (https://www.worklink.bham.ac.uk/WorkLink/index.asp)** to view and apply on-line for any positions you feel you are suitable for. You will need to upload your CV and have your Student ID number.

Q: How do I make sure you have my correct address details if I have moved?
A: Log in to the **Student Portal (https://www.my.bham.ac.uk/cp/home/displaylogin)**.
- Go to the 'my programme' tab at the top of the screen.
- Click on 'Online Registration'.
- Select option 2 'Update Addresses'.
- Update your details and click 'Submit'.

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Private-sector accommodation

Q: Where can I find information about accommodation in the private sector?
A: You can find a list of landlords who advertise with the University on our Student Pad website at **www.birminghamstudentpad.co.uk (http://www.birminghamstudentpad.co.uk)**. We recommend that you don't sign any contract or make any payment for accommodation in the private sector before you arrive. Alternatively if you have a query please contact us at **living@contacts.bham.ac.uk (mailto:living@contacts.bham.ac.uk)**.

In summer 2014 Living partnered with Guild Lettings, the Guild of Students' lettings service, to ensure that we can meet all our student needs and support them with looking for accommodation in the private sector in the local area of Selly Oak. For more information on Guild Lettings please see **www.guildlettingsbirmingham.co.uk (http://www.guildlettingsbirmingham.co.uk/)**

Q: What areas are close to the University?
A: Please take a look at the **Birmingham Student Pad (http://www.birminghamstudentpad.co.uk/)** site for more information on the areas surrounding the University. Most students live in Selly Oak, Harborne or Edgbaston.

Q: What areas are close to the University?
A: Please take a look at the **Birmingham Student Pad (http://www.birminghamstudentpad.co.uk)** site for more information on the areas surrounding the University.

Q: I have a room available in the private sector, can I advertise it?
A: Yes, you can advertise it on the **Birmingham Student Pad (http://www.birminghamstudentpad.co.uk)** message board. But we will need to see the gas safety certificate which your landlord should be able to provide.

Q: I still haven't got my deposit back, what can I do?
A: All deposits should be covered by deposit protection schemes. You'll need to contact the relevant scheme and they can tell more. Your landlord or letting agent will be able to tell you which scheme your deposit was protected with. If you need any more advice please call into the LIVING shop in University Centre.

Q: My deposit hasn't been returned in full. Can I dispute this?
A: Yes, the deposit protection schemes all have dispute services where all issues can be resolved.

Q: Where do I find the council tax exemption form?
A: You'll find this at our **Academic Services council tax page (https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/studentservices/enquiries/council-tax.aspx)**. Make sure you've registered your term-time address on the my.bham portal. Or you can call into the LIVING shop in University Centre and we can give you the form to complete.

Q: I need short-term accommodation, can you help?
A: It depends if we have any vacancies at the time you need, but we'll do everything we can to source accommodation for you. We can also provide information on local guest houses and hotels. Take a look at our Short-term lettings page for more advice.

Q: Can you check my contract for me before I sign it?
A: Yes, we recommend that you bring your contract in to be checked even if it's from a reputable company. We'll be able to point out any important information about charges, what's expected of you as a tenant and what rights you have regarding your landlord. We do recommend that you always view the property before you sign a contract.

Q: If I have an issue with my landlord what do I do?
A: When sorting out any issues yourself, make sure you put any requests/complaints in writing to your landlord. If you continue to have problems please come to the LIVING shop in University Centre and we can help you further.

Q: I'm a landlord – how do I advertise my property to students?

A: First, you need to have been accredited by the Midland Landlord Accreditation Scheme (MLAS). Second, your property needs to have up-to-date gas and electric safety certificates and an energy performance certificate. Once these have been done you can advertise on www.birminghamstudentpad.co.uk. Details of charges and more information about the MLAS course can also be found at the **Midlands Landlord Accreditation Scheme site (http://mlas.org.uk/)** .

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Second and third year students

Q: Can I apply to stay in halls for my second and third year?
A: Yes, you can apply online in December. All current students are eligible to apply online as a returner for the next academic year. The closing date for applications is 31 January 2015, so please apply as soon as possible as numbers are restricted.

Q: Will I be living with other returning students?
A: Where possible we do try to place returners together.

Q: When can I move in?
A: All contracts for academic year 2015/16 start on 21st September 2015. You will be able to move in during allocated time-slots on 19th & 20th September 2015. You will be emailed these time-slots in early September. If you cannot arrive during the allocated time you will need to contact your Village reception to make alternative arrangements.

Q: What happens once I have returned my contract and pre-payment for University accommodation?
A: Once you have received your email confirming this, your room is reserved for you and your pre-payment credited towards your residence fees.

Q: What happens once I've returned my contract and deposit for University owned and managed properties?
A: Your room is reserved for you and your deposit will be refunded at the end of the contract unless it's needed to cover any cleaning/repairs costs over the tenancy period.

Q: What happens if I change my mind?
A: If you change your mind before you've signed and paid, just inform Accommodation Services and your application will be cancelled. If you change your mind after you've signed and paid you will remain liable for your contract. You should only accept the accommodation on the understanding that you will remain for the full contract period. For further information please contact Accommodation Services on +44 (0)121 414 8000, or by visiting the LIVING shop in University Centre on campus.

Q: How long have I got to apply?
A: The closing date for returner applications is 31 January 2015. After this date please call in and see us at LIVING and we can discuss your options with you.

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Apply for Accommodation **(/postgraduate/accommodation/Apply-for-accommodation/apply.aspx)**

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