



International Student Services

ucalgary.ca/student-services/iss/settling-calgary/housing/o-campus-housing



**UNIVERSITY OF
CALGARY**



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Finding Accommodations

Finding a suitable place to live in Calgary can be challenging, as the city has a competitive rental market and a variety of neighbourhoods to choose from. However, with careful planning and research, it's possible to find an off-campus housing option that meets your needs. This guide will go through everything you need to know when looking for off-campus accommodation, things to consider when moving in, and the process of moving out.

Note that all external resources provided in this guide are referenced for informational purposes only and are not endorsed by International Student Services or UCalgary.

TYPES OF ACCOMMODATIONS IN CALGARY

There are various types of rental accommodations available in Calgary, including:

- **Apartments:** Most apartments have full kitchen facilities and may even come with a dishwasher. Often apartment buildings may have communal facilities like a common space, pool or gym. Laundry facilities are usually available although they may be shared.
- **Condos:** Condos are apartments in smaller two- or three-story buildings. They generally have the same in-apartment facilities as high rise apartments, but they may lack the communal facilities.
- **Suites:** Suites are separate sections of a larger home. There's usually a kitchen, but there may not always be laundry facilities. Often these are in the basement of a home, so there may not be as much natural light. If you're considering renting a suite, you must ensure that the suite is legal. Legal suites are listed on the [City of Calgary Secondary Suite Registry](#), so check the registry before you sign a lease.
- **Shared accommodations:** Shared accommodations involve sharing an apartment or house with roommates. Sharing rental costs can reduce your living expenses, but you may not have as much privacy in this arrangement.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A PLACE TO LIVE

There are several factors to consider when searching for off-campus accommodation, including:

- **Location:** Consider the distance of the accommodation from UCalgary, as well as accessibility to public transportation, grocery stores, and other amenities.
- **Safety:** Look for accommodation in safe neighbourhoods and consider features like secure entrances and well-lit areas.
- **Budget:** Determine how much you can afford to spend on rent, and consider additional costs like groceries, utilities, internet, and transportation.
- **Lease terms:** Look for accommodation with lease terms that match the duration of your studies, and carefully review the lease agreement to understand the terms and conditions.
- **Furnishing:** Determine if the accommodation is furnished or unfurnished and what is included.
- **Amenities:** Consider the amenities included, such as laundry facilities, utilities, internet, and parking.

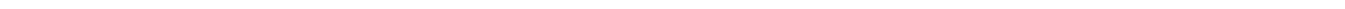


CALGARY NEIGHBOURHOODS

Calgary is divided into four quadrants (Northeast, Northwest, Southeast, and Southwest), and neighbourhoods in Calgary are designated by which quadrant of the city they're in. UCalgary is in the **NW quadrant** of the city – meaning that it may be more convenient to look for housing options in the north quadrants.

When looking for housing, it's important to consider distance to main campus, amenities, and transit accessibility. While a 20-minute walk to main campus is great in the summer, it's a little less enjoyable in the middle of winter. It's also important to consider the proximity of grocery stores to your home. In Calgary, there are several grocery store chains that can be found throughout the city, including Safeway, Superstore, Sobeys, Save-On-Foods, Co-op, and Walmart. Here are some of the closest neighbourhoods where many students tend to live. Please note that housing may be in high demand. As a result, rental properties in these neighbourhoods may be limited.

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Due to the highly competitive rental market in Calgary, students may wish to begin searching for accommodation before moving to Calgary. There are some rental websites that offer virtual home showings, which may be beneficial when conducting a search remotely. However, make sure to proceed with caution when making a decision and be aware of any special conditions.



Note that it's okay to provide references who are outside of Canada. Landlords who are familiar with international students understand that you may not be able to provide in-Canada references. Landlords may also ask for your Social Insurance Number (SIN). Be very careful when it comes to sharing your SIN. You are not legally required to give it to a landlord to rent an apartment.

Landlords typically ask for proof of income to ensure that their tenant will pay the rent on time. Similarly, some landlords may also ask for a **credit report**, which is a summary of your credit history. A credit report is created when you borrow money or apply for credit for the first time. Click [here](#) to read more about how you can request your credit report for free. If you have no credit history, a landlord may ask you for a guarantor, who is usually a parent or guardian with good credit history. The guarantor agrees to pay for you if you are unable to pay your rent.

Remember: It's very important to ensure that you communicate politely and promptly when dealing with potential landlords. Also remember to redact account numbers, SIN, etc. when showing income or savings account documents to a potential landlord.

RENTAL AGREEMENT

A rental agreement, or lease, is a legal contract between the landlord and tenant that specifies terms for the rent, parties involved, duration of renting, and conditions for terminating the lease. Rental agreements are governed by the **Residential Tenancies Act (RTA)** which outline the rights and responsibilities that apply to landlords and tenants. If you will be sharing a living space with your landlord, see our **Shared Accommodations** section. There are two common types of rental agreements in Alberta:

- **Fixed term agreement:** the tenancy term begins and ends on specific dates that both the tenant and landlord agree on.
- **Periodic agreement:** the tenancy term has a start date but no end date. Most periodic tenancies are month-to-month, but they can also be week-to-week or year-to-year.

A rental agreement should specify information including, but not limited to, the following:

- The names of the landlord and tenant(s)
- The address of the rental property
- The agreed-upon monthly rent and when rent is due each month
- What is included in the rent (i.e., any utilities or internet)
- Security deposit
- Which repairs are the tenant's responsibility

It's important that you fully understand the rental agreement and what it entails before signing it. Upon agreeing to the terms



SECURITY DEPOSIT AND PROPERTY INSPECTION

Landlords usually ask tenants to pay a one-time security deposit or a damage deposit fee. The amount of a security deposit can't be more than one month's rent at the time tenancy begins. For example, if your monthly rent is \$1,000.00 CAD, then the one-time security deposit cannot exceed that amount. In addition to this, the security deposit can't be increased as rent increases, or for any other reason during the tenancy. As a tenant, you can request a receipt for any fees paid, showing the amount, date and parties in the transaction.

Moreover, consider doing an inspection of the rental property before you move in. This ensures that you won't be held responsible for the damage that already exists. You must do the inspection with your landlord and document any visible damage (i.e. by taking pictures). Using an [inspection worksheet](#) may be helpful when conducting the inspection. Be sure to ask the landlord who you would contact in case there are maintenance requests or emergency maintenance issues.

UTILITIES AND INTERNET

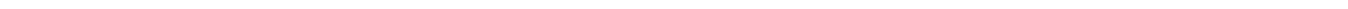
Utilities are services that you'll need in your rental property such as electricity, heat, water, and gas. It's important to read the rental agreement carefully and note which utilities are included in the agreement, if any.

In the event that your rent doesn't include utilities and/or internet, you will need to set up separate accounts with utility and telecommunication companies. There are [cost-comparison tools](#) available to help you search for the best suited utilities company. As for internet, there are several service providers that you can set up an account with, however, the most common in Alberta are [Shaw](#) and [TELUS](#).

RENTER'S INSURANCE

Although it's not mandatory, tenants may wish to purchase tenant's or [renter's insurance](#) to protect their home and its contents from theft, loss, or damage to the inside and outside of the property. There are several companies that provide renter's insurance including some banks, and as a tenant, it's your responsibility to search for the insurance policy that is most suitable for you. Note that the cost of renter's insurance is not fixed and will depend on several factors such as your credit score, the location of the property, and the amount of content coverage you require.







WELLNESS SUPPORT

If you require health and wellness support, contact the on-campus [Student Wellness Services](#) office by phone or visit their website for more information

