

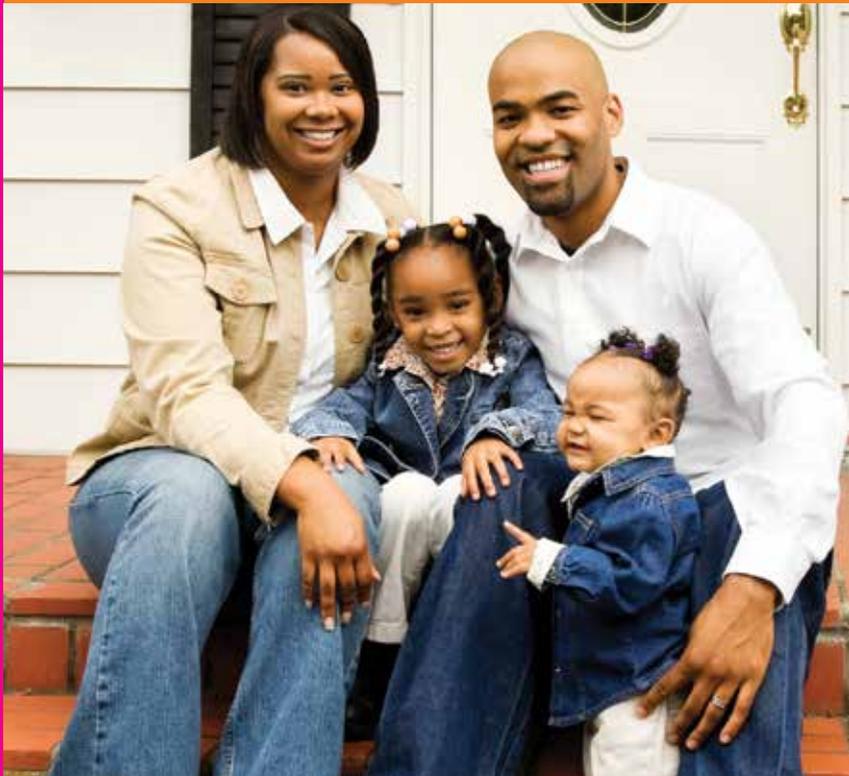


UNIVERSITY OF
GLOUCESTERSHIRE

at Cheltenham and Gloucester



International
**Students with
Families**



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Being an international student studying at the University of Gloucestershire will be a great experience and deciding whether to bring your family with you is an important decision you will need to make. Securing accommodation in a country you are not familiar with can be a daunting thought and this booklet has been designed to help guide you through the process.

In this booklet you can find information on how you can access accommodation support, the different types of accommodation available, what costs are associated with living in the UK and how to find childcare. There are also useful explanations of the terminology and words you may encounter when you begin your accommodation search.

This booklet should be read alongside the International Student Handbook which can be accessed online at www.glos.ac.uk/study/international/pages/pre-arrival.aspx

The International Student Handbook contains information on pre-arrival, visas and immigration, arriving in the UK, what to expect at the university and living in the UK.

**The University of Gloucestershire accepts no responsibility for the choices you make with regards to housing contracts, Assured Shorthold Tenancy Agreements or any other legal document. The advice is given by staff who are experienced in reviewing housing documents. However they are not legally trained or qualified, and you should seek professional legal advice should you have any concerns about your contract or do not understand any part of your agreement. The university is not commenting on the suitability of the property you choose.*

The Housing Support Team is based in the Accommodation Office at Francis Close Hall Campus and is open between 9.00am and 5.00pm, Monday to Thursday and 9.00am and 4.00pm, Friday.

Housing Support Team

T: 01242 715322

E: housingsupport@glos.ac.uk

W: www.glos.ac.uk/accommodation

www.facebook.com/UOGHousing



Although we understand that you would like to organise your accommodation before coming to the UK, we strongly advise against booking accommodation and/or signing a contract without seeing a property first. We encourage students with families to arrive before bringing their family to join them. You can stay in short term accommodation whilst you search for a place that is suitable for you and your family. It also means that you can view a variety of properties before signing a contract.

Short term accommodation can be in the form of lodgings, a bed and breakfast or a hotel.

During the International Welcome Week each September, there is free single bed accommodation for international students for 3 nights. This accommodation is temporary and is supplied in order for students to secure accommodation and to meet other international students. Outside of the International Welcome Week there is no temporary accommodation available and you will need to secure short term accommodation independently using the details below.

Lodgings

Lodgings is a flexible option and can be used as a form of short term accommodation because you are not required to sign a contract. Students agree to stay for a period of their choice and move out once their permanent accommodation has been organised. If you do not agree a period of stay you will be required to give notice to leave the accommodation, this is usually 4 weeks. In lodgings you rent an individual study bedroom and share the communal facilities (kitchen, lounge and bathroom) with the resident landlord/lady and possibly their family. These houses tend to be quieter as you would not usually be sharing with other students. You can expect to pay approximately £65-£85 per week for self-catering and £90-£110 per week for half board (breakfast and evening meal); both price ranges will be inclusive of utility bills but you may have to pay extra to use the telephone and internet. You will have your own study bedroom, furnished with a bed, desk, chair, wardrobe, chest of drawers and shelving.

You can search for available lodgings accommodation by registering an account with the university's Approved Housing Database called StudentPad. You will need to visit www.glosstudentpad.co.uk.

Bed and Breakfasts and Hotels

A bed and breakfast (or B&B) is a small accommodation establishment that offers overnight and short term accommodation and breakfast, but usually does not offer other meals. Typically, B&Bs are private homes with fewer than 10 bedrooms available for commercial use.

A list of bed and breakfasts and hotels can be provided by emailing accommodation@glos.ac.uk. These options can become quite expensive if the stay extends beyond 1 - 2 weeks.

Some useful websites to help you search for short stay accommodation are:

www.visitcheltenham.com

www.cheltenhamaccommodation.co.uk

www.google.co.uk

(search for hotels and B&Bs in Cheltenham)



The University of Gloucestershire does not have designated accommodation suitable for students with families. Most students with families prefer to live in private rented housing in the local community close to other families with children, schools, shops and local amenities.

Where you live will have a major influence on your enjoyment of university life so it is important that you find a place that suits you. To begin you will need to create a list of criteria that are important to you. You may wish to consider:

- cost
- location
- size
- local schools
- transport links

Familiarise yourself with the types of accommodation available in certain areas and at what cost.



There are many benefits to renting accommodation privately.

These include:

- a wide choice of locations and large numbers of properties available
- you may be able to move in quickly
- properties may be furnished
- private rented accommodation is available in most areas of the town and in areas that will be close to schools

Private flats and houses are generally rented for a fixed period of at least 6 to 12 months on a contract known as an Assured Shorthold Tenancy Agreement. This is a legally binding contract and if you want to leave before the end of the contractual period, you will remain responsible for paying the rent, unless someone else takes over the contract. It may be possible to renew an Assured Shorthold Tenancy Agreement for a further 6 to 12 months if required.

You can find private rented accommodation in many ways including through a letting agent, a website or through the local newspaper. A list of local letting agents and other sources for searching for accommodation can be provided by emailing accommodation@glos.ac.uk.



In the UK letting agents will charge a tenant fees associated with the organisation of the contract. These fees will be in addition to your deposit and unlike your deposit will not be refunded to you.

Commonly used words for the fees you may need to pay are:

- Holding fee – the fee paid to stop the letting agent from advertising the property
- Referencing fee – the fee paid for the letting agent to check any financial references you have provided
- Administration fee – a fee paid for the organisation of the contract
- Standard Agency fee – a combination of the fees listed above but paid in one lump sum



The cost associated with organising a contract will vary between each letting agent and it is important you understand any fees you will need to pay before you can move into your accommodation.

Deposits usually equal approximately one month's rent. Many landlords will ask for this once you accept a property as it will sometimes act as a holding fee. If you decide not to move into the property your deposit may not be returned to you.

Once the contract has started, the deposit is held as an insurance against the cost of cleaning and damages. It is refundable at the end of the tenancy but could be withheld if any of the conditions of your contract have not been met. Always ask for a receipt as proof that you have paid your deposit and keep it safe.

Legally all private landlords and letting agents taking deposits for tenancies, legally referred to as Assured Shorthold Tenancies (contracts) in England and Wales, are required to register them and pay them into a government-authorised tenancy deposit protection scheme.



Details of the tenancy deposit scheme your landlord uses will be included in your contract or can be provided to you by your landlord.

It is a legal requirement that a Landlord places your deposit in a scheme, landlords that do not are breaking the law.

Tenancy deposit protection schemes ensure that deposits paid to landlords are kept safe and that a tenant gets their deposit back at the end of the contract, providing there hasn't been a breach of the terms and conditions of the contract, such as unpaid rent or charges or damage to the property.

We strongly advise that you have your contract checked by the International Accommodation Support Adviser or a member of the Housing Support Team before you sign it. We will be able to advise you on your terms and conditions of the contract and will be able to highlight any potential difficulties.

A contract is legally binding and once it has been signed you will not be released until the end date stated in the contract.

» GUARANTOR

Many landlords in the UK will ask their tenants to provide a UK guarantor. A guarantor is a person that agrees to be liable for your financial responsibilities under the terms of the contract. This means they will have to pay your rent if you do not. In the UK this is usually a parent.

There are some landlords that do not require a guarantor but if you find that you cannot provide a UK guarantor or afford to pay a portion of your rent in advance you can begin to search for a different property.

As an international student you may not be able to provide a UK guarantor, in this case a landlord may ask you to pay a portion of your rent in advance. This is sometimes between 3-6 months' rent.

In addition to your monthly rent you will also need to budget for your living costs such as bills, food and travel. The table below is an

estimated summary of the approximate costs a typical family should expect to pay on rent and bills:

TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION	DESCRIPTION	APPROX COST PER MONTH
One Bedroom Flat	Usually suitable for a couple and possibly one very young child.	GBP500 - GBP550
Two Bedroom Flat	Suitable for a small family.	GBP550 - GBP750
Two Bedroom House	Suitable for a small family normally with a small garden.	GBP650 - GBP800
Three Bedroom House	Suitable for average family. Normally comprises of two good sized bedrooms, one small bedroom, a garden and garage.	GBP700 - GBP950
Four Bedroom House	Suitable for a larger family. Normally a larger property with more bedrooms, reception rooms, a garden and garage.	GBP995 - GBP1,300

TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION	DESCRIPTION	APPROX COST PER MONTH
Council Tax	This is a charge that is paid to the local council and charges vary between areas. Full time students do not need to pay council tax. You will need to provide evidence of this to your landlord.	GBP115
Gas	Many properties have gas for central heating and hot water.	GBP40*
Electricity	Properties that have gas for the central heating and hot water will pay less. Some properties only have electricity which operates the heating and hot water. This charge will be higher but there will be no gas charge.	GBP40* GBP60*
Water	Some properties have a fixed rate charge and some have a meter to pay for the amount you use.	GBP40*
Television licence	It is a legal requirement in the UK to hold a valid licence to watch the TV and watch or record television programmes as they are being broadcast (this can include through the internet).	GBP145.50 paid annually
Internet	Costs vary significantly between provider and the package you choose.	GBP15 - GBP35*

These costs are intended as a guide only. Those marked with an asterisk () are dependent on levels of use.*

In the UK there are two types of insurance that need to be in place in order to protect the property and everything in the property. These are Building Insurance and Contents Insurance. Your landlord will provide the Building Insurance. This is an insurance that protects the physical building but not your personal belongings. It is your responsibility to purchase Contents Insurance to protect your personal belongings; this will include protection of your clothes, your laptop, a bike or anything that you personally own.

'Renters contents insurance' can be searched for and purchased online by simply using a search engine and researching the results.



After you have found where you are going to live and have signed your contract it is time to move in. Whilst it is exciting to move into a new property it is also important to remain focussed and organised to ensure all moving in tasks are completed as soon as possible.

Inventory

An inventory is a complete list of rooms, walls, carpets and items included in the property when you move in and a note on the condition of each such as good, bad, damaged etc. The inventory should be completed on the day you move in and signed and dated by you and the landlord or letting agent, you should keep a copy for your records and return the original to the landlord. An inventory is an important document to complete as it will be used at the end of the contract by the landlord to calculate the amount of deposit to be returned to you. If you notice any damage in the property, it is important to take photos as evidence.

Bills

On the day you move in it is important to read all of your meters (water, gas and electricity) and supply the reading to the utility company to set up the utility account in your name. This will also need to be done at the end of your tenancy. This means you will only pay for what you have used.

Rent

Your contract should state when and how you need to pay your rent. This is usually monthly via direct debit. Organise this payment with your bank as soon as you move in to ensure your rent is paid in time.



It is important that you understand how and when you can end your tenancy. Information on how to do this will be contained within your contract and each landlord will require different actions to take place. The contract checking service supplied by the accommodation team will be able to highlight any important information you will need to know in order to end your contract.

There will be certain things you should do to avoid losing your deposit and to ensure you are not charged for amenities that you are no longer using.

Give notice

To give notice means you are communicating with the landlord that you wish to instigate finishing the contract. If you are in a fixed term contract with a specific start and end date, you may not be required to give notice. If you do, you will not be able to give notice before the end date stated in your contract. Many landlords require notice in writing one month before you wish to leave the property. How to give notice will be described in your contract.

Cleaning

Before you move out and return your keys to the landlord or letting agent, make sure you have cleaned the property thoroughly. Check with your landlord or letting agent as to what is expected of you before you leave. This information is sometimes included in your contract.

Meter Readings

Take meter readings on the day you leave. Inform the utility companies of the readings and give them a forwarding address to which they can send a closing bill.

Post

If you are not returning to the property, please ensure you inform all relevant companies of your new address and set up a mail redirection service with the Post Office at www.postoffice.co.uk

Deposits

You will need to find your Tenancy Deposit Scheme paperwork that you received at the beginning of your contract and discuss how and when your deposit will be returned. For more information on Tenancy Deposit Schemes please read the 'Your Deposit and the Tenancy Deposit Scheme' on page 10.

Pre-schools are establishments that offer pre-school education to children between 3 and 5 years old prior to compulsory education. A pre-school is normally attached to a Primary School and operates sessions within school hours.

Day Nurseries are similar to Pre-schools but operate independently. The opening hours are longer, sometimes between 7.00am to 7.00pm and children as young as 3 months are accepted. Day Nurseries are charged at different prices and offer different hours for you to select from.

The education your child receives is the same in both pre-school and day nursery which includes elements of play and social skills. To gain a place at a pre-school or nursery you will need to contact your preferred establishment and ask if there are places still available. You will be required to make an appointment to visit the establishment and this will give you an opportunity to see how the establishment is managed, to look at the facilities and to ask questions.



The English school system is split into two parts; primary and secondary. The primary stage is for children between 5 and 11 years old. This may also be referred to as Key Stage 1 (ages 4 to 7) and Key Stage 2 (ages 7 to 11). Reception is the first year and year six is the final primary year. The secondary stage is for children between 11 and 16 years old. This may also be referred to as Key Stage 3 (ages 11 to 14) and Key Stage 4 (ages 14 to 16). Year seven is the first secondary year and year eleven is the final secondary year. Education is compulsory until the age of 16.

After the age of 16 students may continue their education for two more years at either a college or in a secondary school that has provision for year 12 and 13. This is also known as lower and upper sixth forms.

The school year is from September to July and is divided into three terms. Each term lasts approximately twelve weeks and a half term holiday is given in the middle of each term. This holiday is usually for one week. There is also a summer holiday at the end of the school year that is six weeks long.

How to find a school?

You will need to research what schools you would like your child to attend. For example, you may wish your child to attend a school that is within walking distance from your home, alternatively you may wish your child to attend a school that follows a certain religious belief.

Using the link below you will be able to search to see what schools there are in Cheltenham. You will also be able to find information on how to apply for a place at a school. This may influence the area you wish to live in or you may find your accommodation first and then search for a school once you know your address. You will be able to organise appointments to visit the schools that you have shortlisted to discuss your child's place and the schools policies.

www.gov.uk/find-school-in-england

How do I know if it is a good school?

Ofsted is the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills. They report directly to Parliament and are independent and impartial. They inspect and regulate services which care for children and young people, and those providing education and skills for learners of all ages. You can use the website below to read reports about the schools you have short-listed.

www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report

For more information on schools please contact the International Support Advisers on isa@glos.ac.uk

USEFUL CONTACTS

Main University Number

Telephone: **+44 (0)844 801 0001**

From this number you can be put through to any university number/department within the university.

International Office (Helpzone)

Telephone: **+44 (0)1242 714509**

Emergency telephone: **07500 571783**
(for problems at immigration control)

Fax: **+44 (0)1242 714200**

Email: isa@glos.ac.uk

www.glos.ac.uk/int

Immigration and Compliance Team

Telephone: **+44 (0)1242 714879**

Fax: **+44 (0)1242 714200**

Email: visas@glos.ac.uk

www.glos.ac.uk/int

Tuition Fee Administrator

Telephone: **+44 (0)1242 714222**

Fax: **+44 (0)1242 714469**

Email: intfeesadmin@glos.ac.uk

Medical Centre (Park Campus)

Telephone: **+44 (0)1242 714400**

(Out of hours: **+44 (0)1242 580644**)

www.underwoodsurgery.co.uk

USEFUL WEBSITES

International Student Pre-Arrival guide

<http://www.glos.ac.uk/study/international/pages/pre-arrival.aspx>

Accommodation Webpage

www.glos.ac.uk/accommodation

University Approved Housing Database

www.glosstudentpad.co.uk

Temporary Accommodation Websites

www.visitcheltenham.com

www.cheltenhamaccommodation.co.uk

Travel in Cheltenham

www.cheltenham.gov.uk/info/200078/public_transport

www.stagecoachbus.com/CheltRM.aspx

Train Travel in the UK

www.thetrainline.com

Post, packages and parcels in the UK

www.postoffice.co.uk

Finding a school in the UK

www.gov.uk/find-school-in-england

www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report

We hope this booklet will be a useful resource that you can use to find and secure good accommodation for you and your family.

The key to being successful at securing your accommodation is to plan ahead and be organised. If you follow the steps described in this handbook you should find your search smooth and with few problems.

If however, you find that you are encountering problems or you wish to discuss your accommodation further, please feel free to contact the International Accommodation Support Adviser or the Housing Support Team using the contact details on pages 5 and 18.



E: internationalstudents@glos.ac.uk
W: www.glos.ac.uk/accommodation