

Housing Guide

Finding private sector accommodation

RESLIFE
SUPPORT



Housing Guide

Part 1 – House Hunting

- When to search
- The options and where to find them
- Who to live with
- Viewings and reserving the property

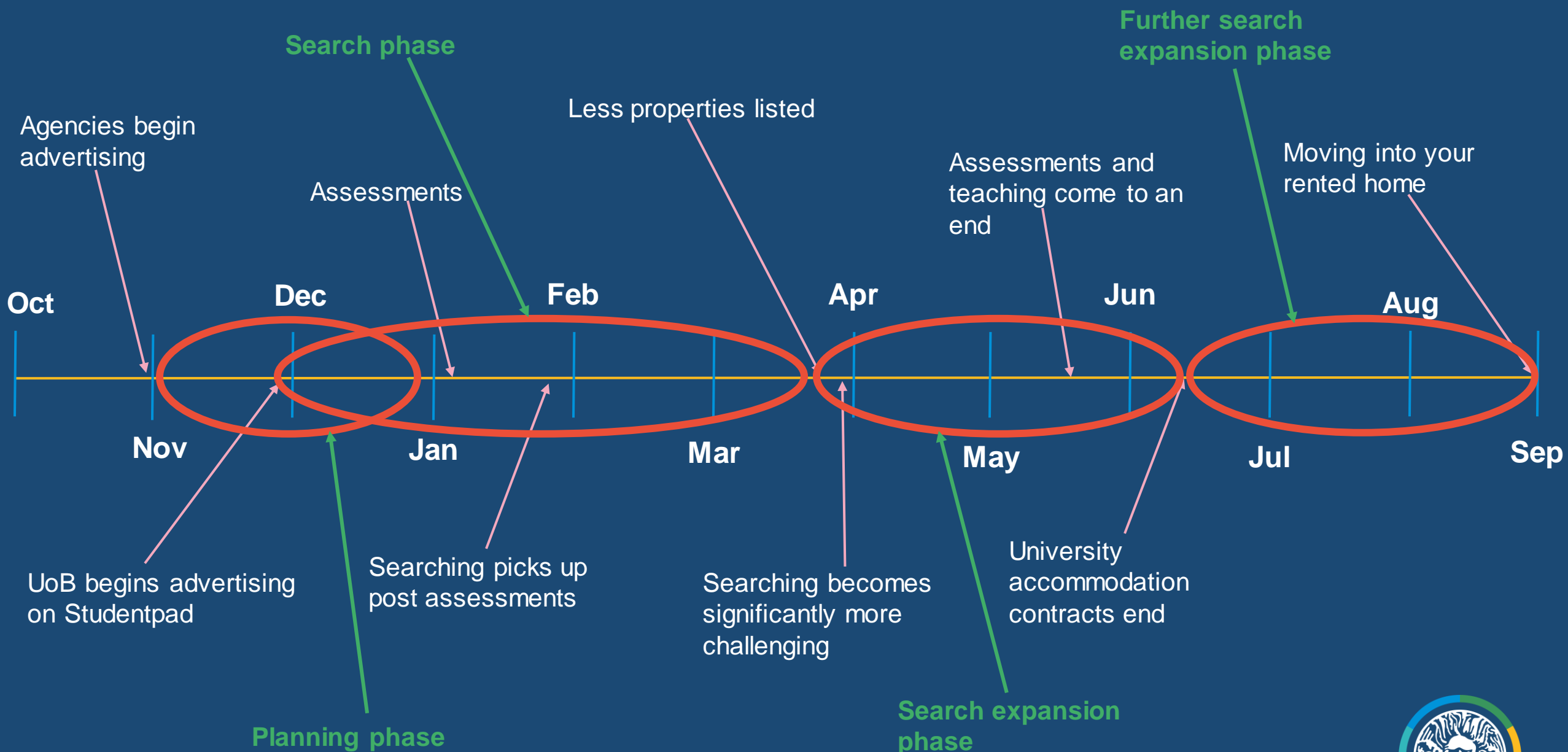
Part 2 – Finalising and Admin

- Fees
- The contract
- Guarantors
- The deposit

Part 3 – Living in Bath

- Bills and utilities
- Repairs and common issues (damp and mould)
- Community
- Support





Phases Summary



Nov to Jan: Planning Phase

- Budget
- Decide on suitable options
- Read guides
- Research using search sites
- Find housemates

Dec to Apr: Search Phase

- Start enquiring about properties
- Attend viewings
- Read through the contract
- Reserve the property

Apr to Jun: Search Expansion Phase

- Less availability
- Expand your search
- Compromise on wants (further out in Bath, be flexible with group size)

Jun to Sep: Further Search Expansion Phase

- Increased degree of difficulty
- Expand your search further
- Consider all possible options
- Potentially looking at options outside of Bath



Types of Accommodation

Shared Student House

Sharing a house with your peers. The most common option. 12-month contracts with bills and utilities excluded and some furnishings.

Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA)

Similar to University accommodation but managed by a private company. Generally considered higher-end, with longer contracts (51 week) making this a more expensive. Bills and utilities included along with most necessary furnishings.

Homestay/Lodging

Living with a landlord and renting a room in their home. More affordable and flexible option, with a more homely environment. Good potential option for those on placement for half of the year.



Location, Location, Location

Properties on or near the U1 or U2 bus route are usually more desirable, for obvious reasons

Always check your commute when looking at a property, but other factors like the neighbourhood, traffic and pedestrian noise should all be considered.

Combe Down - City Centre - Newbridge Road -
Odd Down - Oldfield Park - Southdown -
Twerton - Widcombe



[Student Community Partnership](#) - Details about the different neighbourhoods including amenities and bus routes.

See our [Widening your accommodation search](#) page if you are still looking as late as June.



Where to find these options

Studentpad – 1st December

Other search sites...

Rightmove, Zoopla, Spare Room

Local Letting Agents...



Avoid social media for house hunting!



Housemates

Sharing a student house

House size (beds)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
No. properties	13	17	37	118	92	34	10	1	1	1	1
Av. Rent (pm)	£1,004.46	£640.68	£585.52	£541.29	£550.11	£576.56	£607.86	£ XXXX	£ XXXX	£630.00	£ XXXX

More stock, more variety and cheaper

Estimated average for 2024/25:
£650-700pppm (before bills)



Housemates



Group Size

- 4 or 5

Are you on the same page?

- Budget
- Cleaning expectations
- Noise
- Guests

Shared Living Agreement

My advice...

- Avoid living with anyone who doesn't match your lifestyle
- It's best not to live with a partner (or someone you're hoping will one day be your partner!)
- Housemates don't need to be your best friends

Tools to help

- Housemate Finder Events
Wed 29/11/2023 16:00 - 17:30
Wed 13/12/2023 16:00 - 17:30
- [Studentpad Message Board](#)



What to look for...



[Our Top 5 search tips here](#)

When using search platform like Studentpad, agencies or external search sites you should always check to see...

- Is it a student property
- Location, size and rent
- Is it furnished/part-furnished?
- Are white goods included?
- How long is the contract?
- What's its Energy Performance rating? (D is the average)

You can generally expect contracts to be 12 months long or 51 week (PBSAs).

Stay safe in your search

- Use our recommended search sites
- Avoid social media for house searching
- Marks Out of Tenancy
- Signs of scams can include...
 - Prime location at a very affordable price
 - Poor spelling or grammar in the ad
 - Lack of detail, photos or videos

Private Accommodation Support is available if you come across something you are unsure of. [More safety tips here](#)



Top Tip

Look for Accreditation

Accreditation often isn't mandatory, but it will show that they landlord, agency or PBSA provider undergoes continual professional development, and you have another avenue of recourse if you encounter issues.

Consider this a bonus if they are Accredited



Viewings

Likely the only time you'll be able to see the property before you move in. Make the most of it!

Prepare

- Everyone attend
- Be on-time
- Look at the surrounding area
- Look at the outside of the property (roof, walls, garden and windows)



You may be asked on the day of the viewing whether you'd like to take the property. Be as ready for this question as you can be.



In the property...



- Is it warm? Drafty?
- Check for condensation, damp and mould
- Is there enough ventilation?
- What furniture is included and what standard is it in?
- What white goods included, and do they work?
- Are you all happy with all the bedroom sizes?
- What's the décor like?
- Ask questions if you're unsure
- Speaking with the current tenants is always helpful (if they're there)

Finally and most importantly...

Do you like the house and can you see yourself and your housemates being happy living here.

Further guides...

[Save the Student](#)

[Studentpad Housing Guide](#)



What's Next?



Don't rush! But do be decisive



Check with everyone in your group



Get any promised fixes in writing



You don't have to take the first property you see!

There may be some pressure applied at this time, but stay calm and smart.

Contracts are legally binding, so it's not something you can get out of easily if you commit too early.

Makes sure everyone is on the same page.

If there is anything you're not happy with or the landlord has told you they'll change or improve, get this in writing prior to signing the contract.



End of Part 1

Key points

- Start preparations now
- Think about who's best to live with (4/5)
- Begin your search in December
- Don't be rushed
- Be prepared for your viewing and all attend

Questions?



Renting Fees



Before the viewings

- **None**

After the viewing

- **Holding Fee** (Reservation fee, Holding deposit). One weeks worth of rent that is later put towards the one of the below fees. Will be held if you pull out, fail checks or miss reasonable deadlines.

Upon signing the contract

- **Security Deposit**. Five weeks worth of rent, refundable at the end of the tenancy (conditional)
- **Month's rent**

If you are quoted larger amounts or other fees, these likely won't be permitted due to the Tenant Fees Act.

You can always contact us for advice and support if needed.



The Contract

- Legally binding
- Shows your obligations
- Shows your landlord's obligations

Please read!

AST (*Assured Shorthold Tenancy*) is the most common type of contract



[Online Contract Helper](#)



The Contract

Joint and Several

Everyone is responsible for all the rent and damages

Head/Lead Tenant

First point of contact for the landlord/agent

Guarantor (UK based)

Family member or friend who can guarantee your rent



[Online Contract Helper](#)



Guarantors

Without one, you may be asked for all the rent upfront (or 6-months)

We usually recommend is Your Guarantor

- No co-signer
- Competitive pricing
- 3.5% for international students
- 5% for UK students
- Other providers don't offer UK students this service



Alternatives

- Housing Hand
- Rent Guarantor
- UK Guarantor



The Deposit and protection

Your landlord must use one of the three deposit protection services...

- [Deposit Protection Service](#)
- [MyDeposits](#)
- [Tenancy Deposit Scheme](#)

[Shelter Advice – Deposit Protection](#)

They are there to help ensure that deductions to your deposit are fair



mydeposits



Getting your deposit back



Understand your rights and responsibilities

- 5 weeks' worth of rent maximum
- Return the property in the same condition received (minus fair wear and tear)
- Professional clean?
- Returned within 10 days (once deductions are agreed)

Common deductions

- Cleaning
- Damage and redecoration
- Gardening
- Batteries in detectors
- Lightbulbs

Top Tips

- Take photos when you move in and when you move out
- Complete your inventory
- Don't be afraid to challenge deductions



End of Part 2

Questions?

Key points

- Know what fees are appropriate, what they're for and whether they're refundable
- Read your contract!
- Be prepared with guarantors
- Take the right steps to protect yourself and make sure you can get your deposit back



Bills and Utilities

- Share the responsibility
- Make sure everyone is named on the bill
- Regularly submit meter readings

Bills splitting company? Expect to be paying more.

2023 Average cost per person (4-bed)		
Bill or utility	per year	per month
Energy (gas/electricity)	£573.00	£47.75
Water	£131.50	£10.96
WiFi	£90.00	£7.50
TV Licence	£39.75	£3.31
Contents Insurance	£31.25	£2.60
Total	£865.50	£72.13

Figures from Unbiased and LoveMoney

- Per person (not per household)
- From 2023
- For a typical 4-bed
- The average (50% paid more)

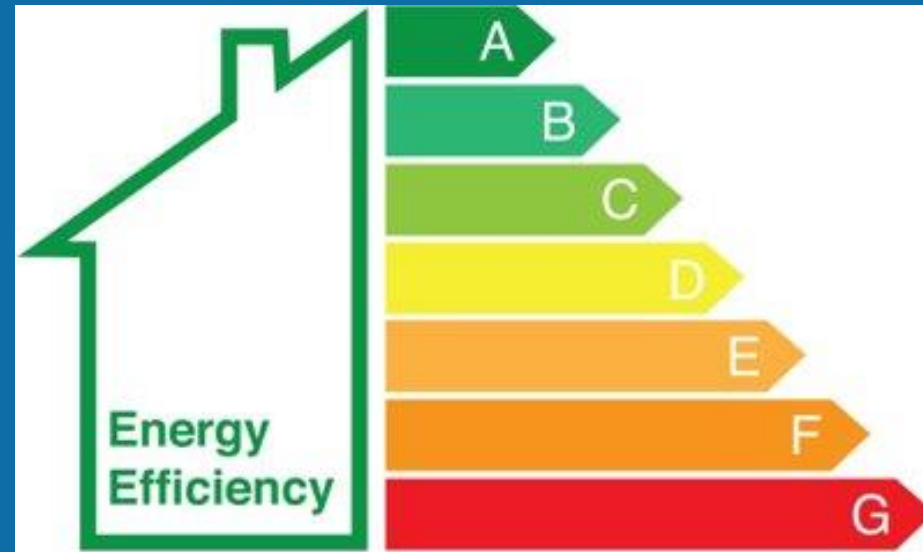


Bills and Utilities

Check the EPC when searching

- Must be A-E (not F or G)
- D is the average
- The higher the grade, the cheaper the bills generally will be

Check online [here](#)



Repairs and Maintenance

Landlord

- Electrics
- Plumbing
- Heating/hot water
- Ventilation
- Structure (walls, roof, external windows and doors etc)

Tenants

- Cleaning
- Gardening
- Heating and ventilating your home
- Minor maintenance (changing light bulbs)
- Damage caused by you or guests

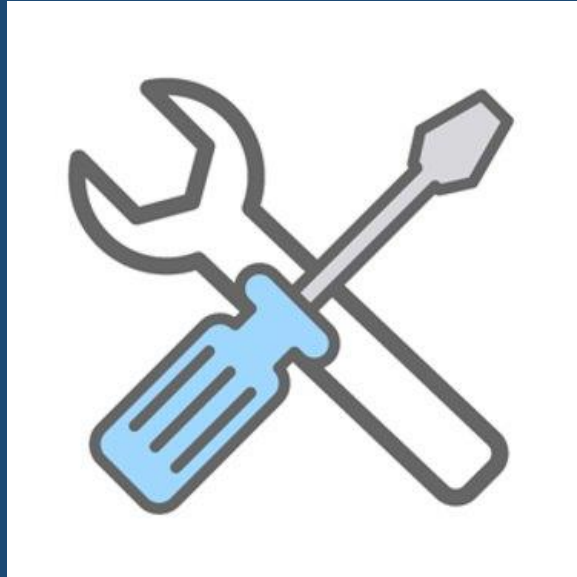


[Report a problem with your rented home](#)

- Read your contract!
- Report repairs (in writing - email)
- Allow a reasonable amount of time
- Chase if late
- Report to the council if they fail to act



Reasonable Time Periods



[Report a problem with your rented home](#)

From the BathNES website...

Landlords need to complete repairs 'within a reasonable period of time'. The period that we consider to be 'reasonable' depends on the seriousness of the problem, and how much it affects your safety, health or comfort in your home.

- **Emergency repairs which affect your health or safety:** 24 hours
(for example, a major electrical fault, or a blocked WC)
- **Urgent repairs which affect your comfort:** 5 working days
(for example, hot water, heating or fridge failure or a serious roof leak)
- **Other non-urgent repairs:** 20 working days
(for example, a shower breaking down, when you are still able to take baths)



Where the difficulties lie...

The local authority will help and force a landlord to take action on significant health and safety issues/hazards in their rental property.

"Comfort" or "inconveniences" are unfortunately more difficult to enforce.

Protect yourself

- How the property was sold to you?
- What was it like on the viewing?



Damp and Mould



Unfortunately a common issue in this area

Landlord or Tenant?

It depends...

You must heat and ventilate your property appropriately

The landlord must ensure the property has the appropriate ventilation and heating capabilities

- Look for signs of damp on viewings
- Check there's enough ventilation
- Check the EPC

If you encounter issues

- Manage them as best you can, wiping away moisture, heating the house etc
- Report these issues to your landlord
- Contact the Council



Community – Be a good neighbour

Neighbours could be families with young children, elderly, other students. Living in the community is very different from being on campus.

- Get to know your neighbours
- Be aware of how far noise travels and try to limit late night noise
- Avoid bringing a car (BA1 or BA2) and be aware of the Residents Parking Zones.
- Look after your environment

Student Community Partnership

BANES rubbish and recycling



OUR SHARED CITY
Student Community Partnership



Be well and Stay Safe



University of Bath
Residence Life Support
Reslifesupport@bath.ac.uk
+44 (0)1225 36503

SU Advice and Support
thesu@bath.ac.uk
01225 38 3800

Student Support and Wellbeing
studentsupport@bath.ac.uk
+44 (0)1225 383838

- Lock doors and close windows when you leave the house
- Clean regularly and keep your property well heated
- Check your smoke detectors
- Do not leave cooking unattended
- Get contents insurance
- Report repair issues
- Download the [River Safety Map](#) for safer routes [#GotYaBack](#)
- [University Security](#) (even off campus) - 01225 383999
- [Nightline](#) instant messenger (termtime 8am to 8pm)



End of Part 3

Key points

- Budget for bills (check the EPC)
- Know your repair rights and responsibilities
- Report issues in writing (email)
- Heat and ventilate the house
- Be a good conscientious neighbour
- Look after each other
- Contact us for support as needed

Questions?

How did we do?



Thank you for coming!

Happy house hunting, and stay safe

Residence Life Support
Reslifesupport@bath.ac.uk
+44 (0)1225 36503

SU Advice and Support
thesu@bath.ac.uk
01225 38 3800

Student Community Partnership
community-liaison@bath.ac.uk
07814 285710

How did we do?

