


The
A&M

HOUSING GUIDE

By



SIMPLY INTERNATIONAL



Hi, and welcome (almost) to Texas! Understanding housing can be really difficult for international students and scholars, so we've broken it down for you over the next few pages.

Simply International has specialized in helping international students and scholars with relocation logistics since 2008. Our services are free for international students at Texas A&M University.

Feel free to reach out with any questions to:

Support@SimplyInternational.com

HOUSING OPTIONS

We have two options that may make your search a bit easier:

OPTION 1

Free Pre-arrival Help

Help over email/Skype to book accommodation

Visit SimplyInternational.com for more info

OPTION 2

Apartment Tour Upon Arrival

Stay short-term in one of our apartments/dorms and we'll drive you around for free to see options available to you

If you are coming to Texas A&M for more than 10 months, you have many options available to you. This is our recommendation:

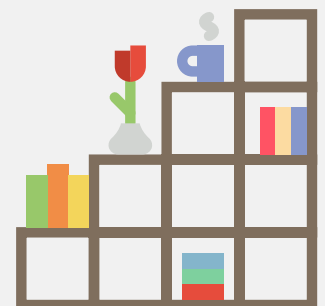
We'll set you up in a hotel-like dorm/apartment near Texas A&M for 1 - 2 weeks. During this time, we'll drive you around to explore neighborhoods and various housing options in the area. This can also give you time to find a roommate if you're looking for one.

The cost of this short-term stay:

PRIVATE ROOM
\$36 /night

LUXURY APARTMENT
\$130 /night

No cost for housing support, and we'll drive you around to review other options!



RECOMMENDED AREAS

NORTHGATE

Rich in Aggie culture and tradition, Northgate is the heart of College Station entertainment. Covering 145 acres, Northgate is not only the premier entertainment and shopping district in College Station, but also a growing student housing locality. The area offers an eclectic mix of restaurants with varying ethnic influences, shops, and bars featuring a selection of Aggieland's best local music. Notable venues include Blackwater Draw Brewing Company, specializing meeting the craft beer needs of the Brazos Valley, as well as the first Texas location of Freebirds World Burrito. Of course, no description of Northgate would be complete without mentioning the infamous and iconic Dixie Chicken, an Aggie tradition since 1974.

PRICING:

One bedroom/Studio
\$899 - \$1200/month

2-4 bedroom unit (private bedroom)
\$399 - \$629/month

EASTGATE

Eastgate is a primarily residential area of College Station located across Texas Avenue from the Texas A&M campus. It is a perfect area for both students and families looking to rent, as approximately half of the single-family vintage homes in Eastgate are rental homes. Family friendly, within Eastgate there are several elementary schools and parks, as well as Thomas Pool which is open to all College Station residents. Eastgate is also home to some popular eateries such as Fuego Tortilla Grill, famous for their Dr. Pepper Cowboy, and Layne's, a local staple serving home-style chicken fingers with a secret recipe dipping sauce. The Tap, one of College Station's most popular bars and live music venues, can also be found in the Eastgate area.

PRICING:

One bedroom/Studio
\$899 - \$1200/month

2-4 bedroom unit (private bedroom)
\$499 - \$659/month

RECOMMENDED AREAS

SOUTHSIDE

The Southside Historic (often referred to as Southgate) area of College Station is located just south of the main Texas A&M campus. One of the earliest residential areas in College Station, recent construction has seen an emergence of some of the trendiest and most affordable student housing in town. Southgate also houses ten places of worship, four parks, a city-owned greenway, the College Station Conference center, and many other noteworthy landmarks. Rich with historical ties to Texas A&M and a strong sense of community, the Southside area is one of the most desirable real estate areas in College Station. In recent years, this area has become home to the "Save Our Southside" movement, a local advocacy group dedicated to preserving and protecting the historic neighborhoods from the influx of "Game Day" houses and newly built student houses known as "Ag Shacks."

PRICING:

One bedroom/Studio
\$700 - \$1400/month

Two bedroom (private)
\$450 - 900/month

WESTGATE

The Westgate area of College Station is located just behind the Westgate Shopping Center, within walking distance to Northgate. The shopping center conveniently houses restaurants, a beauty salon, barbershop, tanning salons, and a nail salon. The area, which is home to a diverse demographic including graduate students and families, has been going through a revitalization and is quickly becoming one of the city's trendiest communities.

PRICING:

One bedroom/Studio
\$850 - \$2000/month

Two bedroom (private room)
\$750 - 1300/month

MOST IMPORTANT SUGGESTIONS

1.

Only sign a lease for the time you are in Texas. If you are only staying for 5 months, it's better not to sign a year-long lease. It is unlikely you will be able to get out of the contract, and subleasing often costs 85% of one month's rent. Plus, finding a sublesser is difficult.



2.

If possible, visit before you sign a long-term lease - pictures may not be a good representation of the apartment. We have options where you can stay for up to 2 weeks while you search. Please note that it is often difficult to find short-term leases, so if you are here for less than 7 months, you may want to select your housing before you arrive in College Station.



3.

Don't forget furniture! Furniture can be costly to purchase, transport, and resell - we recommend renting furnished apartments.



4.

College Station does not have a great public transportation system, so we suggest looking for housing in the areas mentioned previously as they have easily-accessible bus routes to campus.



5.

As an international student or scholar, it's likely that you will need to pay multiple months' rent up front in addition to a large deposit. The amount varies by apartment complex.



6.

Before choosing to take over a sublease from someone, make sure the apartment complex knows about your stay! Most options have guidelines to prevent residents from taking advantage of visitors, but the only way to truly be sure is to confirm the apartment complex knows about you taking over the lease.

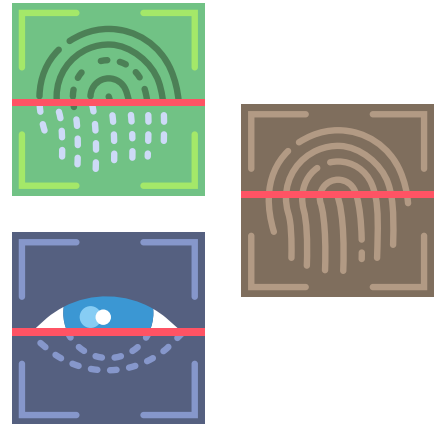


LEASING AS AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT OR SCHOLAR

LEASING WITHOUT A SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER

Applicants without a social security number from the United States will likely be required to pay an additional deposit to lease an apartment. This is required because the apartment complex has no way to run your credit history.

You can avoid a large deposit by finding a US citizen with a social security number to cosign the lease with you. By doing this, they take full responsibility of your payments and fees.



GETTING YOUR DEPOSITS BACK INTERNATIONALLY

It is very common for apartments to charge for damage, and in some situations it seems unfair. Typical damage charges are between \$85 - \$300, but we've also seen charges reach over \$2000! In order to avoid this, take pictures of your apartment when you move in and when you move out.

If you feel as though your apartment complex is unfairly charging for damage, please notify us and we can try to help.

It's also very difficult to receive your deposit back when you are in your home country, as many businesses will not mail a refund check outside of the US. You might consider keeping your American bank account open even after you leave the country so that the apartment can mail the check to your American bank.



GENERAL LEASE INFORMATION

SHORT-TERM LEASES

Typical lease terms near the university area start in August and end in July. It is difficult to find a lease that will not end in July; even if you arrive after school begins in August, it is still likely that the management company will want your lease to end in July so that they can lease the apartment for the next year (from August - July).

CAN LEASES BE BROKEN?

Most housing contracts near the University are only breakable for a few, very strict reasons. Even if you leave the country, you or your guarantor will likely still have to pay for the remainder of the lease.

SUBLEASING YOUR PLACE TO SOMEONE ELSE

A "sublease" is when you have someone take over your lease for you. It is very important that if you "sublease" your apartment, you let the apartment complex know that you are having someone take of the lease from you. Around Campus, this typically costs 85% of one month's rent. If you don't let the complex know that you have subleased the room, you can be evicted and can also be charged for any damages caused to the apartment. Organizing a sublease without informing the apartment complex is quite risky.

SUBLEASING AN APARTMENT FROM INDIVIDUALS

Subleasing an apartment from someone else can also be very risky. If you do not apply through the management company, then the lease is not official. If management then learns you are living there without a lease contract, they will make you leave and you will not get back any of the money that you paid. Sadly, many international students have been scammed by people offering "unofficial subleases."

PAYMENTS

The following are typical payments that you will make associated with renting an apartment:

- Application fee: Once you pay this, the apartment is typically reserved for you. In some cases, apartments will waive the application fee - just ask!
- Rent: Rent is typically due at the first of the month. Late fees typically start accruing on the 3rd of the month and range anywhere from \$50 - \$75 initially, and then \$5 - \$10 per day until the rent is paid in full.
- Deposits: deposits are generally due before you move in to the apartment
- Utilities: the next page contains more information on utilities
- Furniture: if it is not included in the apartment, furniture is generally around \$100/bedroom to rent

ADDITIONAL MONTHLY FEES WITH YOUR APARTMENT

FURNITURE

Some complexes furnish some of the units they lease but do not include kitchen utensils, bedding, towels, etc. We often recommend you purchase these items on Amazon so they are delivered to your door.

UTILITIES

Apartments generally require residents to pay separately for utilities, which are listed below. Utility bills come out about 2 months after use, so a bill for July's usage might not come out until September. Please keep this in mind if you have roommates but are putting utilities in your name as you may have difficulty getting reimbursed by your roommates for utilities!

-Water: Water bills are sent out by the apartment complex and you will pay them along with your rent each month.

-Electricity: Electricity is a little harder to set up if you do not have a social security number. To do so, you will need to go in person to the Utility Customer Service Center at 310 Krenek Tap Road, College Station TX 77840. **Your complex will likely charge you an electric "delay fee" of \$50 if you do not have the electricity turned on to your name by your move-in date.** If you are unable to set up your electricity before your move-in date, contact your apartment *prior to your lease start date* and ask them to waive the electric delay fee.

-Cable/internet: Most apartments are pre-wired for cable/internet from a specific company, and some include cable/internet in rent. If it is not included, call your apartment to find the company for which they are pre-wired.

- Gas: Gas is typically billed by your apartment complex, but please confirm with your apartment complex - if it isn't already set up, it can take up to 2 weeks to get an appointment to turn on the gas. During this time, you might have to take cold showers!

- Valet trash: Some luxury apartments charge a "valet trash" fee of around \$25/month. It is required, so make sure you know about this charge prior to signing the lease.

MAINTENANCE

Most apartment complexes provide maintenance to their residents. If something breaks, you can normally call the leasing center and schedule to have maintenance come by your apartment which should take between 2-3 days.

For emergencies like water leaks, apartment complexes generally have a 24 hour phone line that you can call to dispatch a technician out.

ADDITIONAL THINGS TO KNOW!

TYPICAL DATES OF CONTRACTS

Most apartments around the university will require move-in and move-out dates to run along the school year, from August - July.

There are times that apartment complexes allow shorter terms (December or May), but they normally charge you more per month for these dates.

NO NEGOTIATING LEASES

Most prices at College Station apartment complexes are set and there is no room for negotiation.

Most of the people that lease the apartments do not have any say in what apartment prices will be, nor do they have the ability to negotiate with applicants. Prices for apartments are set by management in the corporate office.

GETTING AROUND COLLEGE STATION

If you are planning on taking a bus, make sure you review a route to/from campus. Be sure to bring your school ID on the bus for a discounted price.

MODEL APARTMENTS

Most apartment complexes will have model rooms to show you. These are almost always their best rooms with the best furniture. The actual apartment you move into may not be as nice as the model.



Please email Support@SimplyInternational.com for questions or free assistance in finding housing!

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Help over email/Skype to book accommodation

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OPTION 2

Apartment Tour Upon Arrival

Stay short-term in one of our apartments/dorms and we'll drive you around to see options available to you