

Knowledge is key

# Renting in college: a guide for students

Use this guide to know your rights and responsibilities to make renting in college as easy as possible.



## 1. What is the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB)?

The [RTB](#) is an independent public body that regulates Ireland's rental sector and works to ensure a fair rental system for everyone by:

- Informing tenants and landlords of their rights and responsibilities.
- Ensuring landlords register tenancies and follow rental law.
- Helping resolve tenancy dispute.
- Providing trusted data to shape rental policy.

## 2. Before you start: know the types of tenancies

**Student specific accommodation (SSA):** housing used solely to provide accommodation to students during the academic term. This includes [SSA](#) provided by universities and private companies.

SSA tenancies and licences are under the RTB's remit. For student accommodation on campus with shared facilities, each individual licence must be registered.

**Private residential tenancy:** this is an [agreement or lease](#) between a landlord (who can be an individual, company, or trustee) and a tenant. The tenant pays rent in exchange for the right to live in the property.

### 'Digs' or Rent a Room style accommodation:

this is where you rent a room in your landlord's house. This is called a licence agreement and is outside the RTB's remit. They do not have to be registered and are not covered by the RTB's dispute resolution service.

**Short-term lets:** are also outside the RTB's remit

But be aware that just because something is called a license agreement, that doesn't mean it is one.

## 3. Looking for accommodation

- **View the property first**, never pay or sign anything before visiting the property.
- **Check that the property** meets [minimum standards](#) - has hot and cold water, heating and safe appliances.
- **Watch for scams** and never pay money without seeing the property.

## 4. When you've found a place

- **Use our [Starting a Tenancy Checklist](#)** to [set your tenancy up for success](#) and avoid any problems later on.
- **Sign a written tenancy agreement:** use our [sample tenancy agreement](#) (for private tenancies only).

- **Pay a deposit** and get a receipt, avoid cash where possible.
- **Check the landlord has registered the tenancy:** you can do a search on [the RTB public register](#) or the [RTB's SSA register](#).
- **Do an inventory report** with dated photos of contents and their condition.

## 5. Special rules for SSA

- You can't be asked to pay more than 1 month's rent in advance to secure the tenancy (unless paying tuition fees to the same provider and your landlord agrees). This is in addition to the deposit amount.
- Your tenancy or licence arrangement should not be more than 41 weeks, unless you ask for longer.
- You can end SSA tenancies between 1 May and 1 October with 28 days' notice for any reason. Outside of these dates, the existing rules about ending a fixed term tenancy apply.

## 6. Living in your rented accommodation

You have legal [rights and responsibilities](#).

### Your rights include:

- A safe home with basic utilities and working appliances.
- Peaceful and exclusive occupation which means your landlord must get your permission to enter, except in emergencies.
- Information on how your rent was set.
- Proper notice if the tenancy is ending.

### Your responsibilities include:

- Pay rent on time.
- Keep the property in good condition and report repairs needed.
- Allow reasonable access with notice.
- Don't sublet or assign without permission. Subletting is not allowed in SSA tenancies.
- Don't engage in or allow anti-social behaviour.

## Other tips to avoid problems:

- If you're paying rent by cash, follow up with a confirmation message.
- Check the house rules on smoking, keeping a bike or dealing with bins.
- Check who is responsible for paying utility bills.
- Always keep copies of any correspondence with your landlord.

## 7. Ending the tenancy

Landlords and tenants must give written notice to end a tenancy.

Visit [rtb.ie](#) to learn about the [correct notice periods](#) and how to [give notice correctly](#).

### Protecting your deposit

Landlords can only make deductions from [your deposit](#) for unpaid rent, damage beyond normal wear and tear, unpaid utility bills or insufficient notice.

You should receive your full deposit or the balance soon after moving out.

## 8. If things go wrong

### Dispute resolution

Try talking to your landlord first. If unresolved, contact the RTB for [dispute resolution](#).

### Reporting a landlord for breaking the rules

You can [report a landlord](#) to the RTB for:

- Not registering the tenancy.
- Breaking rental law.



## Need more help?

Whether you're new to renting or renewing your lease, the RTB is here to support students rent safely and confidently.

Visit [rtb.ie](#) for full information on all the topics covered here and for checklists, sample letters and video explainers.

