

Some tips when searching for a house

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START LOOKING EARLY

The Office of Student Affairs maintains several listings of private rooms available for rent in the vicinity of the university. These listings are also available online at <http://www.nus.edu.sg/rental>. You may also look in the Straits Times Classifieds or online postings on Asiaone Classified at <http://www.sph.com.sg>.



DECIDE ON YOUR NEEDS

Decide whether you prefer privacy or sharing space and living expenses with a room mate. Calculate your budget with the following in mind - rental cost (depending on location), size of apartment and whether the apartment / room is furnished.



VIEW THE PROPERTY

When viewing a property for rental, it is advisable to do the following checks :

- The plumbing – Is the flush in the toilet working? Any faucet drips and / or leaking pipes? (It is important especially if you have to pay the utility charges).
- Are the lightings working?
- Is the furniture in good condition?



COMMISSION

Property owners or housing agents who advertise their rental offers through the OSA Off-Campus Accommodation System are not permitted to charge NUS students any commission. You should report to us if there is any breach by the property owners / housing agents. However, commission is payable for rentals secured through other sources. Please refer to the Institute of Estate Agents website at <http://www.iea.org.com> for IEA's recommended commission guidelines on lease of Housing and Development Board (HDB) rooms / flats, and private flats / apartments. The issue of commission should be sorted out before entering into a Lease Agreement. If it is agreeable to both the property owner and you, it becomes binding once it is stated in the Lease Agreement.



RENTAL TERMS

Check out the rental terms with the property owner. Examples :-

- What is the monthly rental like? When is it to be paid?
- What type of deposit does the property owner require and is this refundable?
- Are utilities (ie water, gas, electricity, trash) included in the monthly rental payable?
- Who is responsible for maintenance and repairs?



THE LEASE / TENANCY AGREEMENT

A Lease / Tenancy Agreement is a legal agreement establishing a landlord / tenant relationship. It is a binding document which you cannot break.

Important

- Before signing, read the entire lease agreement carefully and make sure you understand and agree to all the terms stated in the lease.
- All verbal agreements made with the property owner must be documented and signed on all copies of the agreement.
- Ask for receipts for any payment made.

Checklist for Lease Agreement

- Rental
 - Does it include electricity, water, gas and other utility charges?
 - Is the rent payable in advance or at the end of the month?
- Rental Deposit

- Is the rental deposit refundable and under what conditions is it refundable?
- Duration of Lease
 - Is the date of commencement and expiration of lease stated clearly?
- Termination of Lease
 - Is there a provision for early termination by either party upon giving the requisite notice (which is normally one month)?
- Usage of room and facilities (should be clearly spelt out in the lease agreement)
 - Are you allowed to bring guests to your room?
 - Are you permitted to run your PC / printer / fax in the room?
 - Are there cooking and laundry facilities available to you?
- Repairs

The property owner should be responsible for any repairs to furniture and fittings required, unless the damage is caused through your negligence, after allowing for fair wear and tear. Repainting, repair of leaks and other major repair works required is usually the responsibility of the property owner.



COMMON COURTESIES WHEN SHARING ACCOMMODATION

Living in Singapore, you may find religions and customs different from those of your home country. Respect them and observe common courtesies:

Household practices

- It is a common custom to remove your footwear as you enter a house and leave them by the door
- Keep personal rooms, common areas, bathrooms and kitchen clean and tidy
- Use shared appliances responsibly and keep them in good working condition

Religious practices

It is possible that you may share your accommodation with people of different faiths and beliefs. It is important to be respectful and not impose your beliefs on others.

- Storing food: The consumption or handling of some food is prohibited in some religions. Do respect your housemate's religious dietary restrictions. For example, Muslims do not eat pork or cook with alcohol. Hindus and Buddhists do not eat beef and some may be vegetarians.
- Religious rituals: Please keep your religious practices private. Conduct prayers in your own room and do not disturb others in the common areas with the burning of incense and other religious rituals.
- Household etiquette:
 - Seek permission from your landlord if you are bringing guests home to stay
 - Do not smoke in your room
 - If you are returning home late, keep noise levels to a minimum to not disturb others who may be resting

We hope this tips have provided you with the basic guidelines in your search for an accommodation. All the best!

**Residential Services
Office of Student Affairs**