

## *HOUSING*

### *Guide for International Students*

International students and scholars have two options when finding a place to live. You may live on campus in a residence hall/dormitory/shared apartment, or live off campus in an apartment or a house.

#### *On-campus housing*

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On-campus housing is limited and fills up quickly and therefore you have to apply several months in advance (well before you arrive). Students who plan to live on campus must complete a housing application form and also contact the Office of Housing and Residence Life to make special arrangements to move in if you plan to arrive before the regular move in date. You can chat live with a Housing and Residence Life Staff member any time online [housing.gmu.edu](http://housing.gmu.edu) or contact Brian Davis, [bdavis4@gmu.edu](mailto:bdavis4@gmu.edu), phone (703) 993-2720, fax (703) 993-2744, for more information on housing. The Office of Housing and Residential Life is located in the Housing Module and more information can be obtained from [housing.gmu.edu](http://housing.gmu.edu). GMU has three campuses and on campus housing is only available on the main campus in Fairfax, where most of the departments and student services are located.

#### *Off-Campus Housing*

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Your 1-stop shop for GMU off-campus housing for rent, roommates, sublets and furniture is <http://och.gmu.edu>. This site provides an easy search and comparison, pictures and floor plans, maps and directions, roommate listings, message board for furniture to buy/sell, sublets to search/post. Off Campus Partners, the organization that powers/manages the site, has added a search feature called International Student Friendly. In addition the student Message board includes a Board topic area called International Students. You can contact off-campus housing service calling (877)-895-1234.

A list of available rooms to rent, apartments, and shared student housing, is also available at the web site of the Federation for Off-Campus Students (FOCS), <http://liveoffcampus.com/georgemason/>. This site has current listings of apartments/rooms available, sub-leases, etc. Other on-line sources are The Washington Post ([www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com)), [www.apartments.com](http://www.apartments.com), [www.rent.com](http://www.rent.com), [www.move.com](http://www.move.com), <http://washingtondc.craigslist.org/nva>, [www.roommates.com](http://www.roommates.com) Apartment Rentals, Sublets, Houses & Rooms for Rent can also be found on <http://sublet.com>

There are also some apartment locator services that charge a fee to find you a room to rent or a host family. "Roommates Preferred", phone (202) 234-5789, Homestay D.C., <http://www.homestaydc.com>, are services that GMU students and scholars have used. Check the yellow pages under "apartments" for a listing of similar services.

Once you are here, check Mason's school paper, *The Broadside*, and other local papers. There are also free apartment rental guides and some local real estate agents (Long and Foster, Century 21, etc.) may also be helpful. On-campus bulletin boards (in SUB I, SUB II and the Johnson Center particularly) are a good source too.

**RENT:** Renting an apartment can cost approximately \$700 for a single-bedroom apartment, to \$1,200 for a two-bedroom apartment. This amount may or may not include the cost of utilities (water, electricity, gas, etc.). Hence, it is important to inquire at the outset what is included in the rent. If all/some utilities are not included, inquire from the landlord/management about the average utility cost per month. It is usually cheaper to rent a room in a house or to share an apartment.

**LEASE:** Most apartments/rooms are commonly rented on a lease agreement. A lease period is usually twelve months, and sometimes three or six months. Shorter lease periods usually have a higher per-month rent. Once you have signed a lease agreement for a certain period of time, you have made a binding agreement to rent that place for the given period. Hence, inquire from your landlord/management the conditions under which you can leave earlier, if the need arises. Some landlords permit sub-leasing to a third party (you have to find a suitable tenant for the remaining period of your lease).

Inspect your apartment thoroughly within the first two-three days (most lease agreements typically specify the time period within which you need to do this) of occupancy and make a thorough inventory of any damages, defects (even minor damages for example: stains on carpets, broken kitchen cabinets, water leaks, etc. should be included). This should be given in writing to the landlord/ management and keep a copy for your files.

If this is not done thoroughly it is possible for the landlord/management to deduct money from your security deposit for these defects when you are leaving.

Ask the landlord/management about trash pick up/drop off, mail delivery, the availability, location and access to laundry facilities (some apartments have common laundry facilities and some units have them inside each apartment). Most apartments also have certain regulations and codes of conduct and certain activities such as loud music, improper conduct, etc. are prohibited. Make inquiries about regulations concerning decoration of the interior (painting, putting up fixtures, nails, etc.), whether pets are allowed, etc., to ascertain what is permitted.

**SECURITY DEPOSIT:** A refundable security deposit is required by most landlords and can be equivalent of one month's rent or sometimes higher. The security deposit will be returned to you when you move out if you leave the apartment in good condition.

**LOCATION:** The location of the apartment is an important consideration, particularly if you do not plan to buy a car. If you live on the CUE bus route, you can ride the bus to Fairfax campus for 25 cents if you present your GMU ID card. Check with the landlord if the location is close to the CUE bus, or other public transportation such as the Metro Bus, the Fairfax Connector or the Metro Train (<http://www.wmata.com>). Keep in mind that the Metro Bus does not run frequently as the Cue Bus (more information about the Metro Bus schedules and routes can be found at [http://www.wmata.com/metrobus/riding\\_metrobus.cfm](http://www.wmata.com/metrobus/riding_metrobus.cfm)

Some apartments in the Fairfax community that are on the CUE bus line are:

Avalon at Providence Park: (703) 691-1097  
Circle Towers: (703) 273-9054  
Margate Manor: (703) 323-0319  
Pinewood Plaza: (703) 323-0465  
Gainsborough Court, Copperfield Square: (703) 591-4643  
Cavalier Court: (703) 273-4907  
Fairfax Circle Villa: (703) 591-8574  
Van Metre, Fairfax Square: (703) 591-5498.

More information about these and other housing in the community is available at OIPS.