Welcome to ECU’s Off-Campus Community

Off-Campus Student Services (OCSS) has spent years listening and talking to thousands of students who, like you, have chosen to live off campus.

Whether you need help finding a place and a roommate, or you just need guidance, we’re here to help you get the most out of your ECU experience and make Greenville your home away from home.

ECU does have a requirement for most first year students to live on campus. Many of our returning students and many of our transfer students choose to live off-campus.

Types of Off-Campus Housing

Start Looking Early. Start looking for housing as far in advance as you feel comfortable committing to…

There are numerous housing choices in Greenville. You should look at housing options that make you feel comfortable with and meets your needs and budget. Most off-campus residences require a signed lease. Here are some of the most common types of housing available:

Student Apartment Communities. There are many student apartment communities in the areas around ECU. They share a few similarities such as:

- Individual leases
- Furniture
- Basic utilities often included—electricity and water, for example
- Guarantor is often required

Most traditional students moving off campus for the first time choose to live in one of the student apartment communities surrounding campus.

Conventional Apartments. Conventional apartments are communities located throughout the Greenville area. Like most apartment communities, you will be responsible for the entire lease, your utilities connection and monthly bill, and all furniture. Some other types of residences include:

- Duplexes
- Single-family homes
- Condominiums
**Campus Housing**
ECU does not offer housing specifically for married or graduate students. Graduate students are welcome to live on-campus in upper class housing. If you are a student with disabilities, OCSS can help you find a place that will accommodate you. Students with disabilities should register with Student Disabilities Services immediately after acceptance to East Carolina University.

International students are urged to look for housing before arriving at ECU and may be required to present proof in advance that they have the means to pay rent. Additional resources for international students can be found with the Office of International Affairs: [http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/intlaffairs](http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/intlaffairs)

If you think living on campus might be a better option for you, contact Campus Living at 252-328-4663 or [www.ecu.edu/campusliving](http://www.ecu.edu/campusliving).

**Choosing the Right Place to Live**

Where and how you live will affect your daily life throughout the school year. Make a wise choice by considering the details, including:

- Transportation and walk or drive time
- Available and easily accessible shopping, eateries or banks
- Laundry facilities
- Noise in the area
- Safety and size of the residence

**Before You Move In.** Once you’ve found a place you’re interested in, consider the points below to decide if the place is right for you.

- Can you afford the rent?
- Is there a late charge?
- Is there a possibility of a rent increase during your lease?
- How long is the lease- 7, 9 or 12 months? How does the lease fit your academic plans?
- Does everything work properly (stove, lights, etc)?
- Is there security surveillance or a gate?
- How do you terminate the lease if circumstances change?
- How much notice do you have to give before moving out?
- Who pays for water, sewage and garbage?
- Any charges for overuse of utilities?
- Do you understand the requirements for a full refund on your security deposit?

**Amenities Check.** Ask if your place has…

- Washer/dryer
- Stove
- Refrigerator
- Cable/Internet/Phone
- Storage space
- Pool
- Fitness center
• Computer center
• Balcony or patio
• Furniture
• Working faucets, toilets, drains, etc.
• Enough study space for all residents
• Children and pet-friendly policies
• Noise restrictions
• Resident and guest parking

Signing a Lease. Here are a few points to think about before you sign a lease:
• Read the lease carefully (and request a copy after all parties have signed it)
• Don’t sign a lease with blank spaces
• Don’t sign a lease you don’t understand
• Ask to see your specific unit or residence—the quality of your unit is not represented by a model unit
• Obtain in writing all additional agreements with management
• Walk through the residence with the landlord or staff and record all damage at that time, no matter the size
• Never pay your deposit (or your rent) in cash

Get Organized: Make a List

Save time and money! Make a list of the different properties that you are interested in renting from. Write their contact information below. Ask questions based on the information given in this section.

| Name: __________________________ | Address: __________________________ |
| Phone: ___________ Fax: ___________ Email: __________________________ |
| Comments: ____________________________________________________________ |

| Name: __________________________ | Address: __________________________ |
| Phone: ___________ Fax: ___________ Email: __________________________ |
| Comments: ____________________________________________________________ |

| Name: __________________________ | Address: __________________________ |
| Phone: ___________ Fax: ___________ Email: __________________________ |
| Comments: ____________________________________________________________ |

| Name: __________________________ | Address: __________________________ |
| Phone: ___________ Fax: ___________ Email: __________________________ |
| Comments: ____________________________________________________________ |
Common Problems You May Wish to Prevent

What’s in writing is what counts and is legally binding. Applications (credit checks) that most realtors will ask you to fill out “to see if you can be accepted as a tenant” are sometimes (often) legally binding. Don't fill the application out unless you are sure you want to rent from the realtor. Tell the realtor you will take the blank application and return it when you are sure. Even if someone tells you their application is not legally binding, if you feel compelled to fill it out, ask them first to write at the top of the page that “This is NOT a legally binding application” and to initial the statement. Don’t just take someone’s word because they seemed really nice. Leave no room for miscommunication...and financial commitments for which you are not prepared. East Carolina University cannot get you out of a contract that you sign with a landlord or apartment community.

Point of Information

**Student Legal Services** – Do you need professional advice about landlord-tenant issues; lease questions; city and county codes; violence prevention and more? **Student Legal Services** (SLS) was established by the Student Government Association at East Carolina University as a service to provide for students. SLS is registered with the North Carolina State Bar as a pre-paid legal services plan. It is funded through student fees and services are available for fee paying students. **Attorney client privilege and confidentiality are assured.** Please contact them with your questions or concerns.

**Office:** 125 Mendenhall Student Center  **Phone:** 252-737-1067  **Fax:** 252-737-1068  **Website:** www.ecu.edu/cs-studentaffairs/sls/

Breaking Your Lease

Know the details of your lease agreement as there are often fees, paperwork and a process to break your lease. Breaking your lease isn’t your only option, and OCSS wants you to understand what to do, you can:

**Sublease.** A sublease is an agreement between you, your landlord and another person who rents your residence from you. This can be a difficult and time-sensitive option, and you will still be responsible for the rent and any damages to the residence. If you need assistance, contact your property manager. If you want to sublease your residence, you can post a listing on our website or Information Board in Mendenhall Student Center.

**Re-Lease.** It doesn’t happen often but sometimes a landlord will “re-lease” you from your lease obligations. You’ll still need to find someone to rent your apartment. OCSS can assist you find someone by post a listing on our Web site or Information Board in Mendenhall Student Center. There are often fees involved with sub or “releasing.”

**Your Rights.** Residents have rights no matter where they live. Students who live off campus however, are often unaware that they have just as many rights as those who live on campus.

**Fair Housing Act.** If your landlord refuses to rent to you based upon your race, class, gender, religion, age, physical limitations, nationality or sexual orientation, you have the right to speak out. If you are an enrolled ECU student and you experience discrimination of any kind, free legal services are available through **Student Legal Services** at 125 Mendenhall Student Center.
Your Residence. Your landlord must keep your residence up to health, building and housing codes. As a resident, you have the right to a structurally sound residence, including intact windows, floors and roof. Also, remember that your landlord should exterminate your residence of all bugs, rodents, etc.; install a working smoke detector, remove garbage from premises continuously during your residence, and provide access to electricity, heat and running water.

Complaints About Your Landlord. You have the right to complain if you have concerns or are treated unfairly. Some examples of unfair treatment or abuse include:

- Business fraud or unethical actions
- Scams of any kind
- Violation of landlord/tenant laws
- Identity theft

Your Responsibilities. As a resident, you have responsibilities. You may live away from home, but that doesn’t release you from caring for your residence or adhering to housing laws. You have a responsibility to:

- Keep your place clean and free of garbage
- Comply with housing and health codes
- Contact the landlord when repairs are needed
- Avoid damaging the residence
- Respect your neighbors
- Control the noise level and your guests

Point of Information

**Code Enforcement** – Is your landlord not fulfilling their legal responsibility of providing sound housing? Are your neighbors decreasing your quality of life with excessive garbage in the yard and loud noise? **Code Enforcement** (formerly Neighborhood Services), a division of the City of Greenville Police Department, manages the enforcement of City ordinances as well as weeded lots, public nuisances, junked and/or abandoned vehicles, parking on unimproved surfaces, minimum housing standards, and three unrelated persons per residence. For more information, please contact their division.

**Office:** Greenville Police Department - Code Enforcement; 500 S. Greene St.
**Phone:** 252-329-4364 or 252-329-4455  **Website:** [www.greenvillenc.gov](http://www.greenvillenc.gov)
Everything I Should Have Known About Renting But Was Afraid To Ask

As you look for housing, please ask the following questions of prospective landlords or property managers. Learn as much as you can about a place before you submit a rental application or a lease.

How much is the monthly rent?
Will my rent payments have to be guaranteed? If so, why and by whom (parents)?
How many of us may rent and live at this rental address?
May I rent from you for a twelve-month, nine-month, or lesser time period?
Where and when must rent be paid?
If rent is paid after that date, is there a late fee? How much is it?
If one month’s rent payment is late, does the lease contain an acceleration clause? (That causes all remaining rent to become due and payable?)
May each roommate pay his/her portion of the rent with separate checks?

Do I pay for: Heat, air conditioning, and hot water (electric, gas, or oil)
  • Utilities and basic services—water/sewer, electricity, gas or oil, and garbage collection
  • Parking (What about guest parking)
  • Repairs of any kind. If so, why?
  • Pets (Are pets allowed at all? Is there pet fees?)
  • Cable TV

Lease Applications
Must prospective tenants submit an application for a lease?
Is a fee required with my application? If so, what happens to that money?
Does the act of submitting an application commit me/ and or my parents to sign a lease?
What are my obligations if my application is accepted?
Can you provide me with a copy of the lease at this time?

Security Deposits
How much is the security deposit?
When must it be paid? When is it returned, or may it be used as my last month’s rent?
Do I receive interest on my deposit?
What must I do to have my security deposit returned in full?
Which bank will hold by security deposit?

Lease Obligations
Who are the landlord and/or the landlord’s property manager? What are their contact info?
Will the lease be written or oral?
What rules and regulations must I follow upon signing the lease?
How much notice is needed to renew or terminate the lease?
Escalator Clauses/Utility Overages
Does the lease contain escalator clauses that could cause my rent to increase during the lease period? For example, are energy-cost increases passed on to the tenant? If utilities are included are there overage fees if tenants exceed some limit?

If you expect something to be included in your apartment (utilities or repairs) or except the landlord to allow you to sublet (get someone else to take over your lease before its time is up), MAKE SURE WHAT YOU WANT OR HAVE VERBALLY DISCUSSED WITH THE LANDLORD IS WRITTEN INTO THE LEASE BEFORE YOU SIGN IT. Lots of people say things and then don’t follow through. If necessary, see if you can write into the lease any specific additions before committing yourself…it’s your money!

Joint and Several vs Individual Leases
Joint and Several leases means roommates all sign the same lease (paperwork) and if one person bails out the others are responsible for the missing rent. Individual leases mean each roommate signs their own individual lease (paperwork) and if one person bails out the others are not responsible for the missing rent. In such a case, the realtor may however have the option to find the next roommate for the apartment if the remaining roommates can’t find someone to fill the vacant spot.

Security Deposits
During the first couple days after you move into your place, fill out a Damage Checklist and try to get someone from the reality company to sign it in agreement. Even small stains, dents or poorly working appliances should be noted. Take pictures when possible…dated pictures are best. Keep a copy of everything you document and give a copy to your landlord. Within 30 days after you move out of your apartment you should get either your deposit back or an itemized list telling you why you were deducted money from your deposit. If you are charged for something that was wrong before you moved in, you damaged checklist can be of help.

Know Your Budget
It is important to know what you can afford when living off campus before you start looking at your housing options.

Financial Aid is based on an overall “cost of attendance” that does not change if you live on or off campus (in most cases.) If your financial aid package covered housing/dining costs when you lived on campus and does not change-you will get a refund from the university after your bill is paid. You are responsible to pay your housing and food costs from that refund and cover any remaining costs. Check with ECU Financial Aid to discuss how moving off campus might impact you. http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/financial/

When looking at what you can afford in terms of living off-campus – remember to include monthly costs like rent, utilities or utility overage fees, laundry, pet fees, transportation costs, and parking fees. Then you will need to budget for items that you will need to move in…pots, pans, cleaning supplies, and in some cases-furniture.
You will also need to create a budget for food that includes cooking at your apartment, meals on-campus and eating out. Think about when, where, how and what you like to eat.

A Commuter Meal plan can be an excellent tool for managing some of your food costs. Allowing for you to eat some meals on-campus each week at a cost budgeted for at the beginning of the semester. For more information visit: www.ecu.edu/dining.

Once you have your budget then you can start looking at places that fit that budget- asking questions about what costs are included and not included in the monthly rent. Remember apartments may charge for things that you didn’t pay for while living on campus – like making a room change, yet also might include items in the rent like tanning or laundry in the unit. Even how you pay your rent can impact your budget – in some cases when you pay rent with a credit card there can be fees or additional costs.

**Point of Information**

**Go Online!** – Do you need to find a place to stay? Do you need to find a roommate? How about a sublet or even some housing that’s for sale? It doesn’t matter if you are an undergraduate, graduate student or even staff or faculty. The Off-Campus Student Services Website has it all! Log onto the site and then create an account. From there all of the property listings, roommate finds, message boards and much more will be available to you. You can even add and manage property listings. Why not take advantage of all the benefits the website offers and make finding your new property as easy as a click

**Website:** www.ecu.edu/offcampushousing

**NOTES:**

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Finding Your Way Around

Once you have done all of your homework on the interested properties, it will then be time to see them in person. Greenville can be a confusing place for those new to it, however, we have provided the map below that shows the main streets of The City of Greenville as well as the major roads that flow into and out of the area. Please use it to get more familiar with your new surroundings.

Map Legend

- Greenville City Limits
- ECU Buildings
- Major Roads
MY Ideal Roommate

Finding the right roommate is essential to having a positive experience in college. Start thinking about how you live and what you prefer early—that way, you’ll find the best fit for you. Fill out the survey below and prepare to tell future roommates about yourself.

How do you live?

1. I study in the apartment / library about ___ times a week.
2. I do / do not need quiet time and my best time to study is ________________.
3. I do / do not cook in the apartment, and eat breakfast / lunch / dinner at home.
4. I do / do not drink alcoholic beverages and do / do not use drugs.
   I do / do not mind if my roommate does either of these. As for parties, I feel ________________.
5. Overnight guests are / aren’t allowed.
6. Each person should be responsible for their own groceries / bills / cleaning.
7. On a scale from 1 - 5 for cleanliness, I’m about a ____.  
   (1 being not clean at all and 5 being extremely clean)
8. A set schedule is / is not desired for chores.
9. If I am upset, I expect my roommate to _____________________________.  
   If my roommate is upset, I prefer to _____________________________.
10. I rarely / sometimes / often need time alone. I am a private / social person.
11. I don’t mind / avoid sharing my things.
12. I don’t like / don’t mind lending money.
13. I want to live with pets.  Yes / No

Other important things about me and/or the roommate I want:

________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
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________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
# Apartment Checklist

Use this checklist to compare up to three apartments.

## Lease
- How much is rent?
- How long is the lease (7, 9 or 12 months)?
- Is subleasing allowed?
- How much is the security deposit?
- Option for early lease termination?
- How much advance notice is required for lease termination?
- Can rent be increased at anytime during lease?
- Do I understand the requirements for a full refund of security deposit?
- Am I clear who pays for water/sewage/garbage/etc.?
- Is there a utility cap or average charges?
- Do I understand whom to call for emergencies?
- Is there a list of rules and regulations for residents?
- Is there an occupancy limit?
- Are pets allowed? Is there an extra pet fee?

## Amenities
- Stove
- Microwave
- Refrigerator
- Cable/Internet/phone
- Working faucets/toilets/drain
- Adequate storage space
- Pool
- Fitness center/workout room
- Laundry facilities (In apartment? On property?)
- Balcony or patio
- Furniture
- Adequate study space (Computer lab on property?)
- Resident parking/Guest parking
- Guest parking
- On ECU Transit System?

## Security
- Fire sprinkler system
- Smoke detectors (Required by state law)
- Security system
- Fire extinguishers
- Adequate outdoor safety lighting
- Outdoor surveillance system
- Property gate
- Guard station/on-site security