Your Move Off Campus...

Putting the Pieces Together

OFF CAMPUS STUDENT SERVICES
www.offcampus.neu.edu
APARTMENT HUNTING 101

www.offcampus.neu.edu
APARTMENT SEARCH CHECKLIST - WHERE DO I START?

- How many bedrooms do you need?
- Location - What neighborhood do you want to live in?
- Utilities: heat, gas, oil, electric – included in rent or not?
- Need parking? Access to public transportation?
- Affordability – cost of rent
- Length of Lease?
- Do you have a co-signer?
- Does the landlord allow subletting in the apartment?
- Nearby amenities: grocery store? laundromat?
DON’T FORGET THESE COSTS!

- Food & household items
- Parking or Public Transportation
- Monthly rent
- Security deposit (no more than one month’s rent)
- Broker fee (50-100% of another month’s rent)
- First month rent, last month rent, security deposit, and broker’s fee – all due prior to move in!
- Telephone, Cable, Internet & Installation
- Utilities - gas, heat, water, electric (if not included)
  - ask current tenants what they usually pay for these items!
Finding a Good Realtor in a Competitive Market

✓ Off Campus Student Services
   226 Curry Student Center
   Area Realtors link on www.offcampus.neu.edu

✓ Word of mouth/personal references
   If someone you know had a good experience, give that realtor a try

✓ Annual Apartment Fair- talk to realtors
   Realtor should have a good understanding of what you need/want
REMEMBER:

The Realtor’s priority is to represent the landlord or property manager, not the tenant. However, you are paying them – so be sure to get the best deal for YOU!
APARTMENT FINDING RESOURCES

- **The Housing Registry** provides a list of current apartments available including the type of apartment, its proximity to Northeastern, the rent/fees, amenities, and contact information.  
  [www.offcampus.neu.edu/apartment](http://www.offcampus.neu.edu/apartment)

  - List Your Vacant Rental Unit
  - Search for Housing & Roommates

- MyNEU: Coop Housing Share feature
- Apartment Fair
- Internet sites (BUYER BEWARE)
AFTER YOU RENT ...

• Inspect the apartment
  – Note damages in writing; request repairs before move in
  – Take pictures and date them

• Visit your Financial Aid counselor
  – Review “cost of attendance”

• Remember -- RENTAL INSPECTIONS
  – Rental Unit Inspections are required by the City of Boston within 45 days of a new tenancy
A SAFE HOME: What to Look For...

- Smoke alarm & Carbon Monoxide detectors
- Adequate door and window locks
- Secure Lobby
- Adequate lighting
- Faucets, toilet, garbage disposal, drains - (do they work?)
- Appliances clean and in working condition?
- Current rental inspection on file?

KEEP IN MIND:

- DO NOT TAKE IN USED FURNITURE!!
- BED BUGS ARE ON THE RISE IN THE U.S.
RENTAL APPLICATION

• The rental application requires information necessary to conduct a credit & background check;
• Allows the landlord to make a decision whether to rent the property to you.

• Employment
• Income
• Credit Reference
• Social Security
• Driver's Registration
• Past Evictions
• Bank Accounts
• Personal References
• Co-Signer
BROKER or Finder's FEE

- Most realtors in Boston require you to pay this fee
- ASK—amount MAY be negotiable!
- Only a licensed real estate agent/broker can charge this fee
- Get a Rental Brokerage Fee Disclosure Form
  - Agree to pay fee for apartment shown by that specific realtor
- More information: Real Estate Board
  (617)727-2373 or www.state.ma.us/reg/consumer.htm
What to expect when working with Real Estate Professionals & Agencies:

- A Real Estate Agency should maintain an up-to-date license issued by the Mass Board of Registration of Real Estate Brokers & Salespersons.

- They should provide you with a written description of the services they are offering, including details related to fees and when they’re due.

- They should agree to comply with all state and local housing regulations, including Boston’s “No more than four” zoning code.
What to expect when working with Real Estate Professionals & Agencies:

- The Agency and all its agents should be in good standing with the Better Business Bureau.

- The Agency and all its agents agree to show clients actual available properties that are listed with them.

- The Agency should have a physical office location, where clients can go with questions.
THE LEASE

A legal binding contract between landlord and tenant (you!)

- **One year contract** – standard is Sept 1-Aug 31

- **Addendum** – special terms or agreements added to lease
  - THE ADDENDUM LISTS ALL SPECIFIC RULES OF THE APARTMENT
  - LOOK THE ADDENDUM OVER CAREFULLY; ACCEPT OR CHANGE ITEMS YOU NEED TO **BEFORE** YOU SIGN THE LEASE!!!
STANDARD LEASE

STANDARD FORM APARTMENT LEASE (FIXED TERM)

Date:____________________

Name:____________________ Address:____________________
City/State/Zip:____________________ Phone Number:____________________

Lessor, hereby leases to 
(Name) ____________________________ ____________________________
(Address/City/State/Zip): __________________________________________ (Phone Number) ____________________________

Lessee, who hereby hires the following premises, viz (Apartment/Suite) 
____________________ (containing of) ____________________________ 
(Street or Address): ____________________________ MA (Zip) ____________________________

for the term of ______________________, beginning 
and terminating on ______________________. The rent to be paid by the Lessee for the leased premises shall be as follows:

RENT:

A: The term rent shall be $_______, payable, except as herein otherwise provided, in installments of $_______ on the ______ day of every month, in advance, so long as this lease is in force and effect;

B: However, if in any tax year commencing with the fiscal year __________ the real estate taxes on the land and buildings, of which the leased premises are a part, are in excess of the amount of the real estate taxes thereon for the fiscal year __________ (herein called the “Base Year” and being the most recent year in which the Lessor has actually received a real estate tax bill for the leased premises), Lessee will pay to Lessor as additional rent hereunder, when and as designated by notice in writing by Lessor, per cent of such excess that may occur in each year of the term of this lease or any extension or renewal thereof and proportionately for any part of a fiscal year. The Lessor represents to the Lessee that the term set forth in the immediately preceding paragraph (A) does not reflect any real estate tax increase subsequent to the said Base Year. Notwithstanding anything contained herein to the contrary, the Lessee shall be entitled to pay only that proportion of such increased tax as the unit leased bears to the whole of the real estate so taxed, and if the Lessor obtains an abatement of the real estate tax levied on the whole of the real estate of which the unit leased by Lessee is a part, a proportionate share of such abatement, less reasonable attorney’s fees, if any, shall be refunded to said Lessee.

LESSOR AND LESSEE FURTHER COVENANT AND AGREE:

1) MAINTENANCE - For maintenance, if other than lessor, contact: 
Name:____________________ Phone Number:____________________
Address:____________________ City/State/Zip:____________________

2) ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS -
BEFORE SIGNING THE LEASE, You Should Know...

- Name, address, phone # of person responsible for care, maintenance, and repair of apartment
- Amount of rent and date due
- Amount of security deposit and disclosure of rights under the Security Deposit Law
- Written statement noting any damages, and plans for repair
- Take photos of items/areas that need repair
SECURITY DEPOSIT

What is a security deposit?

- Cover landlord’s expenses should damage occur or tenant leaves owing rent
- Deposit can’t exceed value of 1 month’s rent
- Due by time you move in
- Expect a receipt with bank account # where the security deposit is being held
- If no damages when you move out, you are owed 100% of the security deposit \(PLUS\) INTEREST
SUBLETTING

• Leasing all or part of leased apartment to another person (s)
• Must get permission from landlord first
• Original tenant is responsible for actions of subtenant
• If you sublet, proceed carefully & get a written sublease
• Landlord can charge an extra fee
# LANDLORD and TENANT RIGHTS

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<tr>
<th>Landlord Rights</th>
<th>Tenant Rights</th>
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<td>- Right to prompt payment.</td>
<td>- Right to apartment that meets code: water, heat, kitchen, pest control.</td>
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<td>- Right to have tenants abide by any and all terms of tenant agreement, written and oral.</td>
<td>- Right to privacy; no unlawful entry by landlord.</td>
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<td>- Violations may lead to eviction.</td>
<td>- Right to all terms specified in lease; can’t be terminated or rent increased for exercising one’s rights.</td>
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TOP 10 RENTAL TIPS

#10 START EARLY- Start your apartment search now so that you have time to see a wide variety of apartments; rent the best deal for you, not the quickest.

#9 USE THE APARTMENT HUNTING CHECKLIST- Visit www.offcampus.neu.edu and the “Get Started” link for helpful checklists; check out the other resources as well.

#8 UNDERSTAND YOUR RIGHTS – Go to www.cityofboston.gov/rentalhousing to learn your rights and responsibilities as a tenant and avoid future problems!
#7 FIND A REALTOR/LANDLORD/PROPERTY MANAGER YOU TRUST- If you get a bad feeling or they have a reputation of poor performance, questionable practices or problems in the past, move on!!

#6 TALK TO CURRENT TENANTS- No one knows more about an apartment than current occupants. Ask about any problems, cost of utilities, the landlord, the neighbors. Do your homework!

#5 MAKE SURE ALL TENANTS ARE ON THE LEASE – If you’re not on the lease, you don’t have tenant rights!

#4 NO MORE THAN FOUR- Boston Zoning Code prohibits more than 4 full-time undergrads living in one unit, regardless of size.
#3 GET EVERYTHING IN WRITING - Make sure any lease amendments are made BEFORE you sign; get receipts for ANY money you pay to your landlord and realtor.

#2 ASK ABOUT THE NEIGHBORS - Consider possible conflicts between your lifestyle and the neighborhood; BE CONSIDERATE of the families, professionals, or elders who could be your new neighbors.

#1 IS THE APARTMENT YOU ARE CHOOSING SAFE? - City of Boston requires all rental units to be inspected and meet State Sanitary Code; check status at www.cityofboston.gov/ISD/housing/rental.asp
**BOSTON COMMUNITIES**

Popular Student Neighborhoods
- Allston / Brighton
- Fenway
- Kenmore/Fens
- Jamaica Plain
- Mission Hill
- Roxbury
- South End

Neighboring Communities
- Brookline
- Cambridge
- Hyde Park
- Somerville
Mission Hill

- Mission Hill offers proximity and affordable rents.

View of Boston from Mission Hill
Mission Hill

Green Line - “E”
15-20 minute walk

Brigham Circle is a hub of activity in this diverse neighborhood. The shopping center has a grocery store, drug store, two banks, JP Licks, and a restaurant.
Mission Hill

- Puddingstone Park offers spectacular city skyline views and trails for walking or jogging.
Back Bay

- So named because it was actually the “back of the bay” of Boston before it was filled in during the 19th century.
- Newbury and Boylston Streets offer diverse and trendy shopping set against picturesque Victorian brownstone architecture.
Kenmore/Fens

• Home to the World Champion Boston Red Sox, the landmark 60 ft. by 60 ft. Citgo sign and the “Fens” recreation area.
Kenmore/Fens

- Typical housing in the Kenmore-Fens neighborhood
Kenmore/Fens

- The Landmark Center on Park Drive houses retail stores like Best Buy, Staples, Bed Bath and Beyond, restaurants and a movie theatre.

Green Line - All except “E”
15 minute walk
Fenway

- Neighborhood in closest proximity to NU
- Mix of privately owned condos and student apartments
Fenway

- Convenience often means higher rents
- Great area for college cuisine and night life
- Borders the Freshman Quad

Green Line-“E”

5 minute walk
Allston/Brighton

- Allston and Brighton are neighborhoods located North and West of campus.
- They are connected to the rest of Boston by a strip of land between Commonwealth Ave. and the Charles River.
Allston/Brighton

• “Comm Ave” is the main drag through Allston/Brighton.

• The B - Green Line runs down the center of the avenue from Boston University all the way to Boston College.
Jamaica Plain (aka JP)

- Jamaica Plain is situated between Roxbury and Brookline.
- Students live here for the variety of housing and sense of neighborhood.

Green Line – E
Orange Line
30 minute walk or
15 minute commute
South End

Home to Victorian style brick buildings and a diverse population

Orange Line
10-15 minute walk

A great place to live if you love to experience the arts, theater, and a wide variety of ethnic cuisine.
**GEMS from NU Students**

- Start your apartment search early; you should look at 10-20 apartments before you sign!

- Find a “good” broker- DO NOT stay with someone you are uncomfortable with
**GEMS from NU Students**

- Have everything in writing-
  - Pay attention to details

- Location, location, location!!!

- Choose roommates wisely
**GEMS from NU Students**

- Be clear and direct about price with your realtor—don’t be bullied

Last, but certainly not least:

- **ALWAYS TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS!**
Apartment Hunting 101

Workshops

March 16
@ 7:00 PM - West Village C Classroom

March 25
@ 12:00 Noon - 333 Curry Student Center

MAKE AN INFORMED CHOICE IN YOUR APARTMENT SEARCH!!

Your Move Off Campus...
Putting the Pieces Together
QUESTIONS?
Off Campus Student Services
226 Curry Student Center
offcampus@neu.edu
617-373-8480

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