



# ACCOMMODATION GUIDE

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repairs

# TENANCY START-UP COSTS

## **Electricity**

Usually the electricity will already be connected in your new accommodation. You must contact a provider to ensure that the account is transferred into your name as soon as your tenancy commences.

A deposit may be requested, which is refunded when you move out. Be aware of fixed term contracts and fees associated with early cancellation.

## **Gas**

If you have gas appliances at your property, check to see whether there are LP Gas Cylinders connected at the side or back of your house. If you can locate LP Cylinders, you will need to arrange a new account and / or a replacement cylinder. Different fees apply for different cylinder sizes.

If you cannot locate a cylinder, but have gas appliances, your property is probably being serviced by underground gas pipelines (Natural Gas). You will need to open an account.

A security deposit may be needed for you to pay your bills by a direct debit from your bank account. Please see gas websites for further information.

## **Wi-fi**

In Australia, there are plenty of places that offer free wireless. You can often find Wi-fi hotspots in some airports, cafés, public libraries, McDonalds and UQ (although you will have to sign in to use these). If you're struggling to find a connection anywhere, there are a few Wi-fi Finder apps on smartphones.

## Home Internet

If you're living in a house, a more cost-effective solution may be entering a contract. There are a range of different plans and contracts available, so make sure you do your research to find the right one for you. Plans usually include a download limit. Going over the limit may incur additional charges.

## Mobile Broadband (wireless dongle, 3G and 4G)

There will be times when free wireless will not be available. Wireless dongles are ideal for this situation. They plug into your computer through your USB port and are available from phone companies. Another option is using the data connection on your phone through your laptop. Don't do this too often, as most phone plans have fairly low data allowance.

We recommend comparing options at [www.comparebroadband.com.au](http://www.comparebroadband.com.au)

## Other Expenses

Ensure you have enough money to pay for rent and in some cases:

- Bond (usually four weeks rent)
- Two weeks rent in advance
- Household furnishings (vacuum, mattress, sofa etc.)
- Groceries
- Social activities
- Miscellaneous (petrol, public transport, dental and health care)

Try not to pay more than 50% of your income in rent; otherwise, you may find it hard to manage other expenses.

# INSPECTIONS & APPLICATIONS

## **How much time do I need?**

We advise all new students who haven't arranged any accommodation to arrive as early as possible before classes start. Allow at least 1 month to get organised and find suitable accommodation.

It can take some time to arrange inspections and lodge applications for rental properties. Accommodation is in very high demand in the weeks before the start of each semesters.

If you have never rented in Queensland before, we encourage all students to attend one of our Accommodation Information Sessions. Check out our website for dates & times: [accommodation.uq.edu.au](http://accommodation.uq.edu.au)

## **How do I arrange an inspection?**

**You must inspect a property before you lodge an application.**

The lessor will usually meet you at the property. This is a good chance to check out the area and make sure that it is convenient—think about public transport, access to shops and services. If you will be sharing with others, attempt to meet your potential housemates to ensure you are compatible.

We recommend that you inspect a few different properties—this will give you a chance to compare suburbs and properties to ensure that you are getting value for money—rent prices vary a lot between suburbs!

## **What should I do at the inspection?**

- During the inspection look closely at the condition of the property.
- Check security, especially for ground floor properties.
- Check what appliances and furniture are included.

If you have any concerns you need to raise them during the inspection. If you lodge an application, you are agreeing to take the property in its current condition.

## **How do I lodge a rental application?**

All Real Estate agents and some private landlords will require you to lodge an application if you wish to move into a rental property.

You may need to supply:

- Copies of your ID (often more than one type)
- Proof of your Income
- Details of your rental history (if any)
- Don't leave blank spaces and fill out the form neatly.
- Don't lodge several applications at once—these forms can be legally binding and you may be at risk of incurring costs if you change your mind.

# RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES AUTHORITY

The **Residential Tenancies Authority (RTA)** is a state government statutory body that makes a positive difference to Queensland's residential rental sector.

The RTA provides tenancy information, bond management, dispute resolution, investigation, and policy and education services.

## Tenancy Agreements

Tenancy agreements are a **legally binding contract**, which set out the terms and conditions of your tenancy.

Make sure you understand all of the conditions of your lease, and if you are unsure, seek advice from Accommodation Services before signing.

Leases are generally 6 or 12 months long. Try to negotiate a shorter term if you know you can't fulfil the length of the agreement, as it can be costly if you need to break a lease.

You may be asked to sign a Rooming Agreement instead of a tenancy agreement if you are moving into a room in a shared house. These often come with additional house rules.



For all forms and legislative questions, please contact the **Residential Tenancies Authority**.

1300 366 311

[www.rta.qld.gov.au](http://www.rta.qld.gov.au)

## **Entry Condition Report**

This is used to record the condition of the property at the time you move in and may determine whether you get your bond back.

The lessor should complete the first half of the form before giving it to you.

Don't assume that the lessor's comments are correct. Check the property thoroughly and add your own comments.

You have 3 days to complete the form.

## **Bond & Advance Rent**

A bond is usually 4 weeks rent and must be lodged with the RTA for the duration of your tenancy.

Your lessor can lodge a claim for some or all of your bond if you damage the property or owe rent at the end of your tenancy.

If the bond is being split between housemates, individual contributions can be recorded on the lodgement form.

Two weeks advance rent is also usually paid at the start of your tenancy.

Make sure you get receipts for all money paid.

# DISPUTES WHILE RENTING

Sometimes problems will occur while you are renting.

The most common disputes tend to arise when people are not aware of their obligations under the tenancy legislation; there is poor communication between parties; or the correct procedures have not been followed.

## **Notice to Remedy Breach (Form 11)**

If you, or your lessor, breach the terms of the tenancy you may be issued with a Form 11.

Whoever receives the notice then has a specified time frame to address the issue (generally 7 days).

## **Don't Ignore Problems!**

If you are experiencing an issue in your tenancy, get advice early.

The best approach is to first raise the issue with your lessor or agent, and see if the matter can be resolved informally. Make sure you get any agreements in writing, and keep a record of all contact.

It is important that you respond to any notices or correspondence you may receive, and attend all scheduled appointments.

You can dispute a breach notice if you disagree.

Contact Accommodation Services or the Residential Tenancies Authority (RTA) as soon as possible to get advice. Don't leave it until the notice has expired!

## **RTA Dispute Resolution Service**

The Residential Tenancies Authority offers free, confidential advice to help tenants and lessors resolve problems quickly and without the need for formal legal action.

Most meetings are handled over the phone. It provides the opportunity for all involved parties to give their opinion and provide information with the support of an independent advisor.

Any agreement that is reached becomes binding. Simply submit a completed Form 16 to the RTA, who will then contact all involved parties to start the process.



For questions regarding dispute resolution, please contact the **Residential Tenancies Authority.**

1300 366 311

[www.rta.qld.gov.au](http://www.rta.qld.gov.au)

# REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE

Both you and your landlord/lessor have responsibilities when it comes to the care and maintenance of your rental property.

You need to make sure that the property is kept clean, neat and tidy. Your landlord must ensure that the rental property is maintained, including any communal spaces or shared facilities.

## **Getting things fixed**

Your lessor must maintain the property in the same condition as when you moved in. This includes any furniture or appliances that were included in the inventory.

You must report any repairs to your landlord/lessor as soon as you notice them. Most estate agents have repair request forms, so make sure you submit the form correctly, and keep a copy of any documentation.

Your landlord/lessor needs to notify you prior to the tradesperson accessing the property.

## Emergency Repairs

Emergency repairs are defined by Queensland tenancy legislation, and the rules apply to residential tenancies only (not including rooming accommodation).

Your tenancy agreement should include a section on emergency repairs. It will list the items that can be considered an emergency, and should also include contact details (including out of hours contact numbers). Always notify your lessor/agent as soon as possible.

If you cannot contact your agent/lessor, or the repairs are not done within a reasonable period of time, you can arrange to have the work completed, and then seek reimbursement for the cost. You must obtain quotes, and the cost cannot exceed more than 2 weeks rent.

Check out the RTA website if you are not sure what constitutes an emergency repair ([www.rta.qld.gov.au](http://www.rta.qld.gov.au)).



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[www.rta.qld.gov.au](http://www.rta.qld.gov.au)

# AVOID DISPUTES DUE TO REPAIRS

## **Report repairs correctly**

At the start of your tenancy you should be told who to contact in the event that a repair needs to be reported. Most estate agents use repair request forms, others will take repairs over the phone. Make sure that you keep a record of all contact and copies of any forms.

## **Be realistic**

Don't set unrealistic expectations when it comes to repair timeframes. Yes, a dripping tap may be annoying, but it isn't considered an emergency repair unless your house is about to flood! Also be realistic about what you are requesting—you generally won't get a new bathroom if there is one chipped tile!

## **Get permission**

It is essential that you get permission, in writing, from your landlord before you make any changes to the property. This includes adding or removing any fixtures. Don't fix any repairs yourself without consulting your landlord first.

## **Pay attention during the inspection**

If you have concerns about the condition of the property or notice any damaged items, ask about them before you move in. When you lodge an application you are usually agreeing to accept the property in the condition in which you viewed it.

## **Complete the Entry Condition Report**

You need to be as detailed as possible when you complete the entry condition report, as it will be used to determine if your bond will be returned. Note any damage, including scratches, chipped paint, picture hooks etc. Check all appliances and note any issues on the form. This is to be returned within 3 days.

## **Know your responsibilities**

You (and your housemates) are responsible for keeping the property clean and tidy. If you cause damage you will be responsible for rectifying it. This can also include issues like mould—if you leave wet washing inside or don't air the bathroom—your lessor may argue that you have caused the damage and costs may be deducted from your bond.



## CONTACT ACCOMMODATION SERVICES

For more info about your options or if you require any support or advice, please contact our office.

### **Location**

Student Services  
Building 21D  
St Lucia QLD 4072

**Phone:** +61 (7) 3365 1704

**Email:** [info@accommodation.uq.edu.au](mailto:info@accommodation.uq.edu.au)

### **Office hours**

Monday – Friday  
8:30am to 4:30pm

### **Online assistance**

International students can make a Skype appointment to discuss their needs.

Please book an appointment via email first, and take note of our office hours.

**Skype ID:** accommodation.uq