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Step 1 Where do I live?
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Step 2 Who do I live with?
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Step 3 Where do I live?
Location is really important. It's important to consider:
- Distance to Uni and town
- Transport links
- Jobs in town, cafes, supermarkets and gym closures
- Does the area feel safe?
- Do you have a car do you need a parking space?
- Is it a joint or individual contract?

Step 4 How do I find a property?
There are lots of websites where you can search for accommodation:
- unilist.org.uk
- rightmove.co.uk
- student.spareroom.co.uk
- unipol.org.uk/nottingham/accommodation
- accommodationforstudents.com
- wordofmouth.com
- noticingboard.com
- gumtree.com
- localpapers.com
- localads.com
- estateagents.com
- facebook.com
- twitter.com
- linkedin.com
- suitableproperties.com

Step 5 The Legal bit
It doesn't have to be scary! Some things to look out for though are:
- What type of contract are you going to be signing? Joint or individual?
- What type of agreement is your landlord going to be signing? Look for an individual contract, only you would be signed on the agreement and you would be responsible for your share of the rent.
- Who will be managing the property - the landlord or a letting agent? Who will you be paying your rent to? Who will you report disrepair to? If it's managed by a letting agent, they will be responsible for the total repair costs for the property but not with a landlord. Still with an "individual" contract, only you would be signed on the agreement and you would be responsible for your share of the repair costs.
- Make sure you get your contract checked with SU Advice before signing!
- Remember, you must use a TDP scheme even if your deposit is paid by someone else, such as your parents/guardians. They must be do this within 30 days of getting it. Your landlord must put your deposit in a government-backed tenancy deposit scheme (TDP). They must provide you with at least 24 hours' notice. There are lots of websites for properties but times this by six and what are you getting for this money?
- Clear what you are paying for. A £75 agency/administration fee may sound cheap, but it's not when you're comparing it to the rent all year round for lots of reasons.
- Clear how much you will be paying in rent. Ask the current tenants or the landlord if they know of any hidden costs. If bills are included in the rent, ask the landlord if there is a cap on usage.
- Make sure you view a selection of properties, not just the one you like. Speak to the current tenants to avoid and then in January you can be fully prepared to search for your new, dream accommodation.

Step 6 Viewing properties
Just because it's student accommodation doesn't mean you should accept sub-standard housing.
- Make sure you visit the property during the day and not night time.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions. Property viewing on verbal agreements only aren't legally binding, so make sure you get your contract checked with SU Advice before signing!
- If there's anything you don't understand, don't be afraid to ask for clarification before signing!
- Make sure any verbal agreements are written down and signed by both landlord and tenant.
- Don't do any deals on verbal agreements.
- Be safe, don't visit properties alone.
- Pre-letting schemes are subject to the Landlord and Tenant Act 1989.
- Make sure you get your contract checked with SU Advice before signing!
- Make sure you're happy with the property before you sign for it.
You’re starting to think about accommodation options for your next academic year and perhaps have decided that private-rented accommodation is for you. If this is the case then this is your SU guide of key information and things to consider as you start looking.

Take some time to explore your options, areas of the city, find out more information and tips from SU advice at su.nottingham.ac.uk/advice or by visiting Advice on C floor, Portland Building.

Tips
- It is nearly always cheaper to pay bills directly yourselves.
- Be confident (not pushy) and ask, they can only say no.
- Remember, agents/Landlords are just as keen to let their properties as you are to find somewhere.
- You should negotiate a gap between tenancies to allow for cleaning/refurbishments.
- Know the market - find out average rents and administration fees.
- Be able to justify your reason for asking for a discount/reduction.
- When viewing as a group, you may want to nominate a lead negotiator.
- Make a good impression - landlords want responsible tenants.

International students
- Ideally, you should have viewed the property in person before you commit and pay any money.
- If you need a UK based guarantor and this is not possible, you may be asked to pay an increased amount of rent in advance. Try negotiating to minimise the upfront cost.
- If you are bringing your family later in the year, don’t make a long term commitment to a property that isn’t suitable.
- It’s not rude to ask questions and walk away if you need further advice and support before committing to a decision.

Additional considerations
If you need to, you can negotiate on the following:
- The amount of rent payable
- The summer retainer (if this is being asked for)
- The length of the contract
- Any administration costs
- Bills included
- Refurbishments/improvements
- Furniture/appliances

Licensing and accreditation
Most properties in Nottingham fall under a licensing scheme, which you can check online.
- All letting agents need to be members of a “property redress scheme”. These are government authorised schemes which give you a way to escalate complaints if you’re unhappy with how they have been dealt with by your letting agent.
- You should also look for a property that is Nottingham Standard accredited.

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Your guide to househunting

Make sure you view the property before paying any money.

Viewing Notes
- It’s reasonable to be given 24 hours to take the contract away to read and review it.

Checklist
Here’s a checklist of what to look out for, with these views to compare viewings.

Ask the landlord
- See a copy of the RPM licence (if the property has more than 5 people)
- In the presence of the ‘Nottingham Standard’ accreditation
- Ask to see a gas safety certificate

Ask the current tenants
- Are repairs completed on a timely basis?
- Does the landlord return security deposit within 21 days?
- Why are they leaving?
- Are there any issues with the house?

After your visit
- Have you visited the area during the day and night?
- Contact the current tenants if you missed them earlier
- Do you require a guarantor?
- Is there a ‘holding deposit’?
- Do you want to live there?

The points of view are
given 24 hours to take the contract away to read and review it.

TO LET

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Your guide to househunting