

How to Find a Gaff Guide

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Accommodation
Advisory Service

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Introduction

This guide is designed to prepare you for the reality of renting in Dublin. We will cover nearly everything you should know about before and during your house hunt.

The two most important things to take away from this are:

1. Always view the site before you agree to anything or pay any deposit.
2. Keep a record of absolutely everything - ensuring you have written proof of any correspondence, complaints, payments or repairs gives you the best chance to stand up for yourself if something was to go wrong.

Inside, you'll find useful support links like the SU Accommodation Advisory Service, Threshold, the RTB, and CATU; your rights and responsibilities explained; a checklist for visiting a new property; and short explanations for the different types of student accommodation available in Dublin.

To watch a recording of an accommodation info talk hosted by TCDSU and the Trinity Halls' JCR, click here: www.facebook.com/TrinityHallJCR

Disclaimer:

This guide is not intended to be exhaustive. If you are unclear or require further help, please reach out to the Accommodation Advisory Service.

Types of Accommodation

1. Private Rented Accommodation
2. Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA)
3. On-Campus
4. Digs/ Lodgings

Private Rented Accommodation

The private rental market consists mainly of shared apartments and houses. These commonly take the form of lease agreements between tenants and landlords with rent paid on a monthly basis. Always view the property in person before you commit and be careful of the risk of using unlicensed letting agents. If you're unsure, always check the register: www.psr.ie.

Current Dublin city (North, South and City Centre) rental property prices average at 2,094 a month according to the daft.ie Rental Price report 2022. In our experience, students can expect to pay 600 to 850 per-person but this can vary. Checking Facebook groups like the TCDSU Accommodation Facebook Group, or asking around friends and family that might know people renting in Dublin can be an effective way of replacing someone and filling a room in an existing lease. Here is a list of websites you can use to view properties options in Dublin:

- www.daft.ie
- www.rent.ie
- www.myhome.ie
- www.let.ie

The Dublin rental market is very competitive, here are a few tips:

- Begin your search using daft.ie and rent.ie, you can also go into estate agents and ask for brochures of properties available.
- When using daft.ie and rent.ie filter by “added in the last 24 hours” or sort properties from new to old.
 - » Anything that has been up for more than 24 hours is likely already gone, have someone constantly looking and emailing properties to ensure best chances of success.
- Also add filters to your search to match number of beds, price per month and areas to live (D6 etc).
 - » Avoid spending time searching through properties that are of no relevance to you. Set an alert in the app that will tell you as soon as a new relevant property has been published.
 - » Check out TCDSU’s Living in Dublin Guide for an overview of each postcode area in Dublin (D6,D7 etc).
- Prepare a general opening email to contact landlords, including a brief description of all those looking to live in the house. This should include your basics, how many / what gender / what college year / what you are like (clean/quiet etc)
 - » State if you have references from previous residences/ employers available on request. Put all of these references into a doc, alongside a brief profile of each person and a photo that you can send if requested for references.

- Create a shared doc with links to all the houses you are looking at. Don't put all your eggs in one basket - keep your options open and use the doc to track if someone has emailed requesting a viewing so you know the progress with each property.
 - » Make sure you know who in the group has emailed each property - they will be the designated contact for each property, a landlord will get confused if different people from your group email them and they might not bother replying to you.

- When you get a viewing, show up smart and be polite.
 - » When speaking to the landlord, if you're happy and set on the property, let them know then if you are happy to take the property. The landlord will likely have other people coming to view it, so be decisive and let them know you want it after the viewing.
 - » NEVER pay a deposit before seeing the property. Try and make sure you can pay the deposit from a singular account.
 - » Use the accommodation checklist included so that you don't forget or miss anything (ie washing machine, signs of mould).

- Persistence is key - you will have to send lots of emails to landlords. The rental market is really competitive so don't get disheartened if you don't hear back from the majority of them, this is natural.
 - » Similarly, manage your expectations. Don't have your heart set on one property in a specific area and use that as a benchmark for other properties - look at each property with a fresh mind and decide if it's right for you.

Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA)

Purpose built student accommodation is housing specifically built for university students by private developers. It usually takes one of two forms:

1. Self contained studio or “cluster” flats with private kitchens but shared living space.
2. Modern halls of residence containing ensuite bedrooms with shared kitchen, dining and living facilities.

Below is a list of PBSA around Dublin City:

- Trinity Associated Accommodation
 - » Trinity Hall, Dartry Road Rathmines D6, 22 minute commute on the 140 bus or 30 minute commute on the Luas: tcd.ie/accommodation/trinity-hall/
 - » Kavanagh Court, Mountjoy D1, 15 minute walk to Trinity: tcd.ie/accommodation/kavanagh-court/
 - » On-Campus (see the on-campus section for more)
- Aparto Student Accommodation
 - » Beckett House, Summerhill D1, 20 minute walk to Trinity: apartostudent.com/locations/dublin/beckett-house
 - » Dorset Point, Dorset Street Upper D1, 20 minute walk to Trinity: apartostudent.com/locations/dublin/dorset-point
 - » Binary Hub, Bonham Street D8, 25 minute walk to Trinity: apartostudent.com/locations/dublin/binary-hub
- Yugo Student Accommodation
 - » New Mill, Mill St. D8, 15 minute walk to Trinity: yugo.com/en-gb/global/ireland/dublin/new-mill

- » The Tannery, Mill St. D8, 15 minute walk to Trinity: yugo.com/en-gb/global/ireland/dublin/the-tannery
 - » Dominick Place, Dominick Street Upper, 21 minute walk to Trinity: yugo.com/en-gb/global/ireland/dublin/dominick-place
 - » Broadstone Hall, Phibsborough D7, 24 minute walk to Trinity: yugo.com/en-gb/global/ireland/dublin/broadstone-hall
 - » Ardcairn House, Grangegorman Lower D7, 27 minute walk to Trinity: yugo.com/en-gb/global/ireland/dublin/ardcairn-house
 - » Highfield Park, North Circular Road D7, 36 minute walk to Trinity or 16 minutes via the 46a: yugo.com/en-gb/global/ireland/dublin/highfield-park
- International Student Accommodation
 - » International Student Accommodation (ISA, 15 different complexes between Portobello and Phibsborough)

On-Campus - 24/25 Applications Closed

Applications for continuing students are usually taken from the first Monday in February for a four-week period. All students receive an email notification in January. The dates can be found in the College Calendar. Unfortunately, applications are closed for 2022/23.

The application form is on the Accommodation Office website. Every application is read by the Accommodation Office and the Registrar of Chambers, and offers can take 3-4 months (May/June) to come out. Students then have two weeks to accept their offer. Unsuccessful applications can apply to be placed on the waiting list

Scéim na Gaeilge Coláiste na Tríonóide

Scéim is Trinity's 'Irish Language Residency Scheme'. There are 30 places in total, 18 in Halls and 12 on Campus. Anyone with a decent level of Irish can apply, you don't need to be a fluent speaker!

Residents live together and communicate through Irish at all times while at home. They must organise one 'Tógra' (activity) per term and assist the Oifigeach (Irish Language Officer) with different tasks.

There is also an accommodation subsidy of 1,000! For more info, you can email gaeloifig@tcd.ie or visit: tcd.ie/gaeloifig

Applications open in late March/early April (they are closed for the year 2022/23).

Digs

Digs accommodation takes the form of renting out a room in a homeowner's house. This is a licensee agreement between student and homeowner with rent usually paid on a weekly basis. Digs are traditionally a little cheaper than private rented accommodation. It is important to know that digs are not for everyone. Because you may be renting a room from a family, it can be a vastly different living experience than you might expect or want.

In digs, renters' rights can be abused a lot easier than other forms of accommodation. Always make sure you have a record of agreements, and a written license agreement. Never accept an oral agreement to rent. This will remove the majority of your rights.

If you want to look through the TCDSU Accommodation Advisory Service listings, you must create an account for the database here using a Trinity email.

These websites can be used to find digs accommodation:

- www.tcdsuaccommodation.org
- [TCDSU Accommodation Support Facebook Group](#)

Rights and Responsibilities

It's so important to be aware of your rights as a tenant when looking for property in Dublin. It is even more important to know how to apply your rights and hold your landlord accountable to their duties. Always seek professional legal assistance from Threshold or the RTB before you challenge a landlord as ultimately they have a lot more power than a tenant. A lot of these requirements are set down in the Residential Tenancies Act 2015. For more info on your rights, click here: www.citizensinformation.ie

Below you'll find the following topics expanded:

- Your Landlord's Duties
- The Deposit
- Your Right to Privacy and Exclusive Possession
- Record of Furnishings
- Protection of your Rights
- Repairs
- Leases for Fixed Periods

Your Landlord's Duties

To provide a rent book / receipt of payment by written statement. If the landlord refuses to supply / use a rent book contact the RTB.

A rent book must contain:

- Address of the rented dwelling
- Name and address of landlord / agent
- Name of tenant
- Term of the tenancy
- Amount of Rent, when and how it is to be paid
- Details of other payments
- Amount and purpose of deposit paid
- Conditions under which it will be returned to tenant
- Statement of information on rights & duties of landlords and tenants

The Deposit

There are now limits on the amount landlords can require anyone to pay to secure a tenancy:

- A deposit cannot exceed more than one month's rent; and
- An advance payment of rent cannot exceed one month's rent.

In other words, landlords cannot ask anyone to pay more than the equivalent of 2 months' rent in total to secure a tenancy. At the end of tenancy the landlord must promptly return the deposit. If you feel that your deposit has been unfairly withheld, make an application to the RTB. Remember, always keep a written record of every transaction between you and your landlord.

A written record will be your best defence if something goes wrong. The deposit may be retained or deductions made:

- If you have not paid the rent;
- To pay costs incurred to repair serious damage caused by you;
- If you have not given valid notice of termination of tenancy.

Your Right to Privacy and Exclusive Possession

A landlord can only enter with your prior permission and this includes repairs and inspections. If your landlord repeatedly enters your flat without permission, discuss this with them and assert your rights. A landlord may be entitled to enter to: survey the property; to ensure that it is being maintained; to read any meter that may be installed; to carry out periodic inspections of the dwelling; and in case of an emergency.

Record of Furnishings

Your landlord must record details of furnishings and appliances provided, but make sure you also keep your own record to protect your rights. To prevent disputes over damaged items:

- Record the condition of furnishings and appliances, i.e. take photographs and record the date they were taken;
- Check accuracy of inventory list.

Protection of your Rights

Your basic legal rights as a tenant cannot be overridden by the terms of the lease agreement with your landlord. Also, it is important to know if a landlord's insurance policy covers your personal belongings. Always enquire to be sure.

Threshold provide advice on renters' rights, learn more here:

www.threshold.ie/advice/

Repairs

Notify the landlord immediately in writing if repairs are needed. Try to keep all correspondence with your landlord to writing as this will provide you with a record of all interactions. Be sure to allow access for the work to be done. For problems posing serious health / safety risks contact your local council or corporation e.g. vermin, sewage.

If the landlord fails to fix a serious problem within a reasonable time you can get repairs done and your landlord must reimburse you. You must be able to prove a reasonable time has passed and that your landlord has neglected their duties. Keep records of everything.

Remember:

Generally the landlord is obliged to carry out repairs unless the tenant has caused serious damage.

Leases for Fixed Periods

Fixed Period

You cannot be asked to leave your accommodation during an agreed fixed period of a lease under most circumstances. The only exception to this is rent arrears / breach of tenancy obligations. Remember, a written agreement proves the dates of a fixed period, and may save you from being unfairly evicted.

Part 4 Tenancies

If you are currently in rented accommodation and want to stay on for another year, it is worthwhile looking into whether you have security of tenure. Part 4 Tenancies, also known as Security of Tenure, is a tenant's right to stay in rented accommodation for a set amount of time. If your tenancy was created before June 10th 2022, you have the right to stay for up to 6 years after renting for 6 months. If your tenancy was created after June 10th, you have the right to remain indefinitely (no end date). Generally, security of tenure applies automatically when you have been renting for 6 months and haven't received a valid notice of termination from your landlord in that time.

When you have security of tenure, your landlord can only terminate your tenancy for a limited number of reasons, see RTB's page on "If your landlord wants you to leave":

www.citizensinformation.ie

Checklist for Viewing a House/ Apartment

It is so important that you have a clear understanding and record of the condition of the property before you agree to anything. Also consider the area and location, is it convenient? You should always view a property in person before you put down a deposit. The risk of using unlicensed letting agents far outweighs the benefits. If you're unsure, always check the register here: www.psr.ie

Accommodation

- Check for signs of dampness (e.g. mould in the bathroom, in the back of cupboards)
- Is there proper ventilation? (especially in the bathroom and kitchen)
- Do the windows open?
- Will it be easy to heat? Are there draughts or high ceilings?
- What sort of heating is there? What will it cost? Who's responsible for the bills?
- Is there enough furniture? Are there enough cupboards and shelves?
- Are the cooker, fridge (and any other electrical appliances) working?
- What way is water heated? Is it working?
- Are there enough electric sockets?
- How will electricity / gas / phone be paid for?
- Is there cable television? Who pays the bill?
- What are the arrangements for cleaning common areas?

- Are there fire extinguishers and safe exits in the event of a fire?
- Do you have access to a garden?
- Is there a safe place to put your bike?
- Is there internet access? Is it compatible with your computer?

AREA

- Is it close to college / easy to get to?
- Is it on a good bus route or near the DART / Luas?
- Are there shops / parks nearby?

AGREEMENTS

We cannot stress just how important it is to have paper proof of everything. Never agree to a verbal lease, keep all bills, note the condition of the property, who has access and when. Keeping a record protects your rights.

- Is there a written lease?
- How much is rent? How often is it to be paid?
Does it include electricity / phone rental?
- How much is the deposit?
- Is the landlord registered with the RTB?
- Does anyone else have keys to the flat? When can the landlord enter?
- What repairs will you be responsible for?
- Is there a contact address and phone number for the landlord in your rent book?

Supports

TCDSU Support Services

TCDSU Accommodation Advisory Service

A [free service](#) that connects student renters with landlords. We also maintain the Accommodation Facebook page, which is another great way to connect with other Trinity Students when looking for accommodation around the city. You can get in contact with Alex by email at accommodation@tcdsu.org

Living in Dublin Guide

[This guide](#) was compiled in 2018 by the TCDSU Accommodation Advisory Service. It has plenty of information for student renters in Dublin including; descriptions of areas to live, expenses other than rent, and what to look for when viewing a property. We are working on updating the guide for next year.

TCDSU Welfare and Equality Officer

[Hamza Bana](#) can provide welfare loans, financial guidance, and accommodation advice. She will help you navigate the College's support services so that you can access the help you need. Contact her at welfare@tcdsu.org.

External Support Services

Threshold

A [registered charity](#) whose aim is to secure a right to housing. Contact them Mon to Fri 9am to 9pm at 1800 454 454, via webchat, online submissions, email advice@threshold.ie, or face to face consultations.

- Provide independent advisory and advocacy services
- Provide long-term solutions for people who are homeless
- Provide representation before Residential Tenancies Board and Workplace Relations Commission

Residential Tenancies Board (RTB)

The RTB Research and Data Hub provides information on the number of tenancies registered at a national and regional level, information on the number applications for the RTBs dispute resolution service and up to date rental price developments through the Rent Index. The RTB has compiled a list of their 6 top tips for renting during college: www.rtb.ie/renting-in-college

Community Action Tenants Union (CATU)

CATU Ireland is a union which represents renters, council tenants, mortgage holders and people in emergency & precarious living situations. CATU are here to support their members during community or tenancy issues by organising protests and coordinating direct action. If you want to become a member of CATU and be represented by them, you can join here for as little as 5 euro a month: catuireland.org/join

