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There are lots of landlords and letting agents in Edinburgh that offer rented accommodation. The accommodation office at Heriot-Watt is here to provide you with information, advice and guidance to help you find suitable accommodation.

Private rented accommodation can be found on the following websites:

- www.studentpad.co.uk
- www.accommodationforstudents.com
- www.lettingweb.com
- www.citylets.co.uk
- www.espc.com
- www.rightmove.co.uk
- www.zoopla.co.uk

Please note that private properties have not been inspected by University staff so we cannot make any guarantees on quality or reliability of the landlord.

**TOP TIPS**

- Choose a price you can afford and try to stick to it. It is easy to get carried away and take a flat you cannot really afford.
- Make sure you look around and don’t just take the first flat you see.
- Always view the property before you move in.
- Allow plenty of time – it usually takes a couple of weeks to find and move into rented accommodation.
- When you are looking for a flat, please remember that there will be a maximum number of people that can occupy the property. If you exceed this you are breaking the terms of your lease.
Exchange and one semester students
If you are only in Edinburgh for one semester, here are some options for finding short term accommodation.

- On-campus accommodation through the University may be available for one semester depending on availability. Please email halls@hw.ac.uk for further information.

- Private student accommodation providers in the city may be able to offer student accommodation for one semester or the full academic year depending on availability. City Room Rentals can advise on rooms availability and costs for all of the student housing providers in the city. They can be contacted on 0131 210 0050 or by emailing booking@cityroomrentals.co.uk/www.cityroomrentals.co.uk. As this type of accommodation is like halls of residence this can be booked in advance without viewing and is a secure option for advanced bookings.

- Student lodgings may have availability for one semester. These can be found by looking on www.studentpad.co.uk.

Arrive early
If you are looking for private rented accommodation you will need to arrive in Edinburgh a few weeks before the start of term to find a suitable property. Properties must be viewed before a lease agreement can be signed so you will need to arrange short term accommodation for when you arrive. Short term accommodation in a hotel, B&B etc. can be found at www.visitscotland.com or by contacting City Room Rentals on 0131 210 0050. The Marriott Courtyard Hotel is based on campus and can be booked for short term/nightly accommodation. For bookings please contact the reservations team: reservations@courtyardedinburghwest.com or call 0131 526 3210.

Guarantors
A guarantor is someone who co-signs your tenancy agreement and agrees to pay your rent should you fail to. Most letting agencies will require a UK based guarantor (this is usually a parent or guardian). For international students, this can often be a problem. Students who do not have a UK guarantor will have to pay money in advance (up to the full amount due, for the duration of the tenancy) to secure accommodation in the private rental sector. The University cannot act as your guarantor. Agents/landlords will also generally request two forms of identification and references from a previous landlord.

Family accommodation
Edinburgh has a good supply of rental properties; you will be able to find suitable accommodation in the private rental market for you and your family. Please ensure that you budget for council tax should your spouse/partner be liable to pay for this. Further information on eligibility and costs etc. can be found at www.edinburgh.gov.uk.

If you are coming to Edinburgh with your family it is advisable to come on your own first so you can secure suitable accommodation before they arrive. This will allow the time needed to find the right area and property to meet your family’s needs.

Finding flatmates
Accommodation from letting agents and private landlords is generally offered as a whole and not on a room only basis. You can find flatmates in the following ways:

- Post an advert on www.studentpad.co.uk
- Find a flatmate on Heriot-Watt’s Facebook page by joining – ‘Find a Flatmate Heriot-Watt Edinburgh’ group

Average costs
Depending on the area the property is situated in, prices can vary between £400.00-£450.00 per room per month in a shared student flat. Students have to pay gas, electric, internet and TV licence charges in addition to the rent, so it is important to factor these extra costs into your budget. As full time registered students you will be exempt from paying council tax, exemption forms can be collected from the Student Service Centre in the Hugh Nisbet Building. Exemptions for The City of Edinburgh can also be applied for on-line – www.edinburgh.gov.uk/forms/forms/12/en/apply_for_student_council_tax_discount_or_exemption.
Heriot-Watt’s Edinburgh campus is approximately a 30-40 minute bus journey from the City Centre. Popular areas for Heriot-Watt students tend to be on the West side of the city:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Overview</th>
<th>Approx distance to campus by bus</th>
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| Haymarket           | 5 minute walk from city centre  
Many local amenities  
Excellent bus, rail and tram links  
Direct bus route to campus | 30 mins                          |
| Dalry               | Situated between Haymarket and Gorgie  
10 minute walk to city centre  
Several amenities and leisure facilities close by | 25 mins                          |
| Gorgie              | 15 mins by bus to the city centre  
Many local shops and amenities  
Home of the local football club Heart of Midlothian | 20 mins                          |
| Chesser             | Situated between Longstone and Slateford  
Largely residential area  
Large 24 hour supermarket | 15 mins                          |
| Sighthill/Calder    | Largely industrial area  
Has limited pubs and shops  
City centre 30 mins by bus | 10 mins                          |
| Currie/Juniper Green| Self contained communities with good local schools  
Based on the outskirts of Edinburgh with good bus links to the city centre  
Walking/cycling distance to the Edinburgh campus | 10-15 mins                        |

The above areas are well serviced by Lothian buses (numbers 25, 34 & 45) which run regular services from the campus to the city centre and there are plenty of local supermarkets close at hand. Further information on the buses can be found on www.lothianbuses.com.
Cost
- How much is the rent?
- How much is the deposit?
- Remember to factor in the cost of bills and internet access

Location and transport
- How far away from the campus is the property?
- Are there useful shops nearby?
- How far away is the nearest supermarket?
- What about other amenities, such as a leisure centre, cinema or library?
- Is the property on a bus route?
- When is the last bus home?
- Is there parking?
- Would you feel safe travelling home at night?

General condition of the property
- Is the property big enough for you and your flatmates?
- Are there any signs of damp such as mould on the walls or carpet?
- What form of heating does the property have?
- What type of windows does the property have?
- What is the average monthly heating bill?

Furniture and fittings
- How much furniture is provided?
- What condition is the furniture in?
- Is there enough storage space?
- Is there a washing machine?
- Is there a freezer provided?
- Is there a desk for studying?

Safety
- Can the landlord/agent show you a valid gas safety certificate?
- Does the property have mains wired smoke alarms?
- Is there a fire blanket in the kitchen?
- Does the furniture comply with safety regulations?
- How secure are the locks on the doors and windows?
- If the property is a flat does it have an entry phone system?

Energy efficiency
- Does the property have an Energy Performance Certificate?

Outside the property
- Are there any communal areas, such as an entrance hall or stair well?
- If so who is responsible for cleaning them?
- Is there a back garden?
- If so who is responsible for maintaining it?
- How is rubbish collected?

The landlord/agency
- Is the landlord/agent registered with the council?
- Do you feel intimidated by the landlord/agent?
- Would you feel able to approach them if anything went wrong?

Deposits
- Is the landlord/agent aware of the Tenancy Deposit Scheme?
- What scheme will my money be lodged with?
Ensure that the landlord/agency is registered. If they are not you should not rent a property from them.

Prior to signing any tenancy agreement, read it carefully and check everything before signing. There is no ‘cooling off’ period.

Request a receipt for your deposit and ensure that you know which Tenancy Deposit Scheme your money will be lodged into.

Ensure that you have an accurate record called an ‘inventory’ of the condition of the property when you moved in, along with meter readings of the gas and electric. Make sure this is signed and dated and returned to the landlord within 7 days.

Highlight any problems that you have in writing to the landlord so that you have a record of this.

It is advisable to take dated pictures of the property when you move in so you have a record of its condition and cleanliness.

If you are renting with 3 or more people please ensure that the landlord has a House in Multiple Occupancy (HMO) Licence, this is a legal requirement.

Scams – do not send money to anyone for accommodation prior to viewing the property, verifying that the person is the actual landlord or representative (such as a letting agent) and seeing a tenancy agreement. You should be very suspicious of anyone asking you to send money via a payment service such as Western Union, Moneygram or Bidpay.

If you are worried please come to The Accommodation Office.