Accommodation

SHARING GUIDE

Moving to a new city or suburb can be daunting. Below we have put together a ‘go to’ guide on Sharing Accommodation, particularly if you are a Macquarie University student or staff member.

USEFUL WEBSITE

Macquarie Private Accommodation Website
find.accommodation.mq.edu.au/

We do not recommend the use of any other sites when searching for share accommodation. If you have found a room or property through an alternate popular website we advise to proceed with caution. Please contact the Macquarie Accommodation Services on (02) 9850 7965 or via housing@mq.edu.au for more information.

CHOOSING ACCOMMODATION

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION-WHERE DO YOU WANT TO LIVE?

Knowing where to live can be very confusing – especially if you’ve never been to Sydney before! Some students prefer to live right next to campus, whilst others prefer to live nearer to the beach or city. You therefore need to think about what type of area you’d like to live in before searching for accommodation.

1. Location – if you’d prefer to live near to campus, the closest suburbs are Marsfield, Epping, North Ryde, Eastwood, Macquarie Park, and Lane Cove. These are all within a short bus/train ride away (5-15 minutes). If you’d prefer to live within walking distance from campus, Marsfield, North Ryde, and Macquarie Park are closest. If you would prefer to live nearer to the city, close by suburbs are Chatswood, Artarmon, St Leonards, Crows Nest, Waverton, Wollstonecraft, North Sydney (north side), or Ultimo, Erskineville, St Peters, Stanmore, Newtown, Burwood, and Strathfield (west side).

2. Public transport – Sydney transport information, such as bus and train times, route maps, and fare prices can be found at www.131500.com.au/. Macquarie University is located at the train station labelled ‘Macquarie University’. Buses that frequently come via campus are bus numbers 288, 292, 290, 545, 197, 381, 506, 507, 518, and 143.

3. Safety - although Sydney suburbs are generally very safe, you should choose an area which has a good safety record, and one which is close by to emergency services if possible. For a list of crime rates within Sydney suburbs, please visit - www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/.

For a location list of Sydney medical centres and hospitals, please visit www.health.nsw.gov.au/.

Important Note: Up to date legislation information and information for dispute resolution for residential tenancies can be obtained from http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/
**HOW MUCH CAN YOU AFFORD?**

Before you start searching for private accommodation, you need to think about how much money you can afford to spend. Rental rates differ depending on location, proximity to public transport, age of property, and whether bills/utilities are included or not.

As an approximate guide, twin-share bedrooms range from $150-220/week, and single bedrooms range from $180-350/week around Macquarie University. One bedroom apartments range from $350-450/week. Note – this is an approximate guide only.

Unless you are renting out a bedroom within a shared property, it is more unlikely that you will find an entire apartment/house which is already furnished. In this case, you would need to purchase your own furniture, which can be costly. The same applies to expenses (e.g., gas/electricity bills, and water usage, etc.) - in most cases, you will need to pay for your own expenses. To work out an approximate cost for electricity, please visit - [https://www.canstarblue.com.au/electricity/average-electricity-bills/](https://www.canstarblue.com.au/electricity/average-electricity-bills/)

**WHAT LIVING SITUATION SUITS YOUR LIFESTYLE?**

When it comes to sharing the possibilities in terms of the type of people (i.e. flatmates) you could find yourself living with are endless. So you should take time to consider

1. Age preference
2. Background
3. Lifestyle (i.e. professionals or students)
4. Smoking or non-smoking; or any factors which could have an impact.
5. Study plan (i.e. undergrad/postgrad)

**HOW LONG DO YOU PLAN TO LEASE THIS ROOM?**

The length of time you wish to occupy a room can impact on your choice of property. Most share advertisements have a minimum time frame they wish to have the space occupied for. There may also be fees or charges (i.e. for re-advertising) should you wish to vacate the property sooner than you originally anticipated.

**MEETING A FLATMATE**

Once you have selected suitable properties to view it is customary in a share situation to view the property and also at the same time be introduced to the other people who reside in the house or apartment.

Try to get the appointments booked in as quickly as possible so that if you are offered a room you are able to respond to the offer as soon as possible. If you leave it too long you could run the risk of losing the offer.

Don’t be afraid to ask questions - remember you have to be comfortable in the property so the more you ask the better.
Potential questions to ask:

- Is the flat noisy? Is the place near the flight path or busy road?
- Is there parking available? If so at what cost? Does street parking require a council permit?
- Is there good security (i.e. security building, locks on windows)?
- What happens when there are repairs to be done? Does the lease holder or the owners organise repairs, or is there an agent involved? Please note all general repairs should be at the owner’s expense unless the repair is due to tenant negligence.
- How is the rent paid? Weekly/Fortnightly/Monthly? How will a receipt be given?
- What are the services provided with the accommodation (i.e. Foxtel, Internet, Wi-Fi, fixed phone line, etc.)? What is the average cost of this service/s?
- Is there a cleaning schedule? Or do you have a cleaner, if so at what cost?
- Will the lease holder or owner inspect the room prior to the new occupant moving in? Is so how will this be documented?
- What are the other occupant’s interests? Employment? Hours kept?
- Is the house quite social or do you generally keep to yourself?
- Bond?

MOVING IN

Share accommodation in most circumstances is an informal arrangement between occupants of a property and the lease holders/landlord. Therefore in most circumstances there will not be an agreement with your name on it. This is why it is imperative to be comfortable with and be able to trust the people you are living with, as well as having a good understanding of the circumstances of the living situation (i.e. is the lease on the property current, will the lease be renewed after the expiry, is there any possibility of the Landlord wanting the property back once the lease has expired). Being an informal arrangement it is important to take the necessary steps to cover yourself.

These could include:

Change of shared tenancy form

Ask for your name to be added to the bond. Whilst this gives you no claim on the lease you will have part ownership of the bond. This is as simple as having the occupants as well as yourselves complete the Change of Shared Tenancy Arrangement form which can be obtained from the Rental Bond Board or Fair Trading NSW website. (Please note this is not mandatory and some lease holders may choose to keep the bond in the same name as the lease).

Share, Boarder or Lodger Agreements

Some share accommodation providers ask that occupants sign a piece of paper which could be referred to as a tenancy agreement, a boarder agreement or a lodger agreement. Please be aware that unless it is a Residential Tenancy Agreement (please see Fair Trading NSW for example) this agreement is not enforceable by law or the Consumer Trader & Tenancy Tribunal. We have seen many cases of these agreements being entered into with the occupant moving in believing they are protected by this agreement. It is only when a dispute arises that the occupant becomes aware that the agreement they have signed only serves to benefit the provider. If you are offered one of these agreements to sign we recommend getting in touch with Macquarie University Accommodation Services via housing@mq.edu.au or on +61-2-9850-7965.
Bond

Ensure you are given a receipt for the deposit of the bond in the lease holder’s account.

Rent Payments

Try to arrange rent payments to be paid direct to the agent (if one involved) or alternatively pay direct into the lease holders account through internet banking so that you have a record of your payments. **Avoid at all costs paying by cash.** If cash is absolutely necessary then ensure a receipt is provided for each and every payment.

Condition Report

An ingoing condition report is not required to be completed prior to you moving into the room; however we recommend you document the condition of the room (i.e. floors - carpet good condition, no marks). Taking the time to do this can prevent any issues occurring when you decide to move out of the room. If there are any issues and there is nothing documented that the issue was there prior to you moving in, this could result in loss of a portion or even the entire bond. Making sure to sign and date any log you create for the condition and it is also a good idea to get the lease holder to sign as well to avoid any discrepancy.

Bills

Make sure to view all utility bills (if bills are not included in the rent amount or is not a set amount) to ensure you are paying the correct amount.

Be aware

Make sure to be aware of your surroundings and your flatmates. Clean up after yourself, turn appliances or lights off after use, etc. General cleanliness and awareness is the key to ensure smooth running of a household and avoid any unnecessary confrontation.

FURTHER ASSISTANCE

For further assistance with sharing private accommodation please contact Macquarie University Accommodation Services via housing@mq.edu.au or on +61-2-9850-7965.