

# VIU Off Campus Housing

## Rental Guide & Agreement (Non-RTA)

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### 1. Introduction

Finding decent rental accommodation while at university can be a real challenge. This is especially true for first-time renters or out-of-province and international students. VIU is very fortunate to have many private home-owners offer rooms in their own houses to accommodate our students. This is often a wonderful opportunity for cultural exchange and new friendships. We understand that living together can also bring its own challenges from time to time. This guide and agreement is offered to support you and help avoid common issues.

### 2. Legal Basics

#### Roommate or Tenant?

Does the renter and landlord live in the same house *and* share a kitchen and / or bathroom?

Does the renter let a room from another tenant and their name is not on the rental agreement?

If the answer to either is 'yes', the renter is legally a roommate or 'occupant'. The term 'roommate' will be used in this document. Roommates are not covered by BC Residential tenancy law (the [RTA](#)).

#### Disclaimer

VIU Off-Campus Housing are not lawyers and this agreement is for guidance only. For students needing suggestions for legal advice and representation, contact [VIU Off-Campus Housing](#), email [housing@viu.ca](mailto:housing@viu.ca) or [make an appointment](#).



### 3. Essential Contacts

**The Landlord OR Head Tenant:** Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency repair contact (if different) \_\_\_\_\_

**Roommate:** Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Emergency** (police, ambulance, fire service): 911

**BC Health Information and Advice:** 811

[BC Multilingual Resources](#) (confidential personal and emotional support): 211

[Other Useful Numbers](#) (emotional support, poison control etc.)

**Your Useful Numbers:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



#### 4. Rental Agreement

What are the start and end dates of the rental? \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

What is the monthly rent? \_\_\_\_\_

What day/date is rent due? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the total security deposit? (e.g. *RTA maximum is 50% of one month's rent*) \_\_\_\_\_

What other fees are payable? (e.g. [RTA allowable fees](#)) \_\_\_\_\_

If utilities are **NOT** included in the rent, what percentage does the roommate pay? \_\_\_\_\_%

When are utility payments due? \_\_\_\_\_

How are any payments to be made? (e.g. *e-transfer, cash*) \_\_\_\_\_

**N.B. It is highly recommended that receipts are given for deposit, rent and utility payment(s).**

What happens if rent or bills are not paid on time? \_\_\_\_\_

If this agreement is with the **head tenant**:

What type of agreement do you have with the landlord? Month to month      Fixed term

If fixed-term, when is the end date? \_\_\_\_\_

Does the tenancy continue after the end date? (Y/N)

Who can give notice to end the lease early? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the procedure for doing this? (See [Giving Notice guidance](#)). \_\_\_\_\_



If the roommate wants to leave OR the landlord or head tenant wants a roommate to leave ...

How much notice should be given? \_\_\_\_\_

How should notice be given? \_\_\_\_\_

When will the security deposit(s) be returned? (*e.g. RTA maximum is within 15 days after move out day*)

\_\_\_\_\_

Move in day: What is the condition of the accommodation (personal and shared areas)? You can take photos of existing damage and consider using an [RTB Condition Inspection Report](#).

Move in Condition Inspection Report completed date:

\_\_\_\_\_

When and how will a move-out condition inspection be conducted? (*e.g. on move out day*) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Move out Condition Inspection Report. Record any agreed deductions and sign when completed:

Date completed: \_\_\_\_\_

Agreed deductions:

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Landlord/Head Tenant) / \_\_\_\_\_ (Roommate)



## 5. Good Housekeeping

Where is the ... ?

water cut-off \_\_\_\_\_ fire extinguisher \_\_\_\_\_

smoke alarm \_\_\_\_\_ first-aid kit \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What do you do if the power cuts out? (see also [BC Hydro guidance](#)) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What do you do if you discover pests, mold, leaks or damage? (see also [TRAC damage guidance](#)).

\_\_\_\_\_

Which areas in the property are shared? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Attach a separate list of any shared household costs, e.g. cleaning supplies.

Who buys these items? \_\_\_\_\_

How is the money collected? \_\_\_\_\_

Attach a separate list of any agreed and shared household chores, e.g. bathroom cleaning (see this [example list](#)). Who cleans which area? When do they clean?

Are there any specific requirements for use of any shared areas? For example, does anyone have significant food allergies? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Attach a separate list of any equipment or food in common areas that is OK to share.

How do you identify personal items in the fridge and cupboards? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



Are there specific quiet times in the house? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What are the likely times guests will be invited? Are there any requests about having guests?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Are parties OK? If so, when, how often and at what time should they finish? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Are there preferences about smoking, vaping, cannabis use and alcohol?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Are pets allowed? If yes, are there any house rules? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What happens if the accommodation is vacant during the holidays? For example, can a friend stay, water plants etc.? Name \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Does the landlord have their details and know who they are? (Y/N) \_\_\_\_\_

## Signatures

Each roommate should discuss and sign a new agreement.

**Landlord / Head Tenant:** Name \_\_\_\_\_ Sign \_\_\_\_\_

**Roommate:** Name \_\_\_\_\_ Sign \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_



## 6. A Guide to Dispute Resolution

### Pick your battles and take the long view

Someone else's unwashed mug is unpleasant, but compared to regular all-night parties, is it worth the argument? And for most of us, minor annoyances fade away soon after moving on. Take a deep breath and picture yourself in a few months from now. Coffee-stained mug? No problem.

### Be the change

Okay, it's not fun when you're the one unloading the dishwasher every time, but maybe start with quietly setting the standards. Your good habits *might* just rub off on others.

### Change your outlook

Before voicing your irritations, consider reviewing your own preferences. Do others like the temperature lower than you're used to? You could put on a sweater and be cozy. If you do need to reflect your concerns, be careful and try to use available and *private* support networks. It's harder to fix a problem when someone learns later that you've been complaining about them. VIU students can always have confidential chat with a member of the [VIU counselling team](#) instead.

### Resolving Conflicts

If you really do need to tackle the issue, try these guidelines to help you avoid a big fallout.

#### Start communicating early

Someone's used up all your milk and there's none for your morning coffee. It's no big deal so you let it go. But six weeks later, it's still happening and now it's a more awkward conversation.

#### Talk in-person

Face-to-face chats beat notes on the fridge or text messages, which can be misunderstood and don't encourage empathy.

#### Pick a good time

You want a calm, unpressured chat. First thing in the morning or rushing to get to the bus while still half-asleep won't be the best time to raise an issue. If possible, find light-hearted ways to open difficult discussions.

#### State your needs and wants

Start with an honest explanation about the problem – with reasons. Try to use “I” not “you” to build empathy. “I need to know there's milk for my breakfast. I have busy mornings and don't do well without. I'd love to share but I'm on a tight budget this year.”



### **Be specific about the problem**

Avoid personalized generalizations and extreme language. Instead of “You drive me absolutely crazy with your constant milk-stealing!” try, “Yesterday I didn’t have any milk in the morning and it was a problem for me.”

### **Empathy flows both ways**

Asking about another’s needs and wants may be helpful. Are they overworked or managing a tight budget? Although you can’t solve these problems, hearing them could encourage a healthier outcome.

### **Remember to listen**

It’s easy to jump in before the other person has finished speaking but be patient. And a response that’s framed “Yes, and ...” creates a more positive stepping-stone. We always remember the negative in “Yes, *but* ...” don’t we?

### **Step back**

After a tricky chat, allow for bruised feelings and raised emotions on both sides. Give yourselves some cooling-off time. Maybe suggest a chat the next day over a cup of tea. When you do, encourage a collaborative solution: “So, what do you think we should do about X?” Remember, everyone thinks they’re right and, sometimes, you’ll need to compromise. There are likely shared positives to focus on, and future goals that work for everyone.

### **If all else fails ...**

Ultimately, if you just can’t work it out and you do need to find somewhere new to live, take time to get to review your rights and responsibilities. It might take a few weeks to end your agreement and practical discussions can help you avoid emotional scenes. [VIU Off-Campus Housing](https://viu.ca/off-campus-housing) can support you and help you explore options – visit our website to learn more, get in touch and [book a meeting](mailto:housing@viu.ca).

