

Choosing Your Accommodation – A Guide for MSc and PhD Students

Choosing the right accommodation during your time in Liverpool can make all the difference to your overall student experience. LSTM does not possess its own halls of residence, however, with over 50,000 students in Liverpool there are plenty of options to choose from.

It is important to understand that there are advantages and disadvantages to every accommodation option. This guide aims to assist you in making an informed decision about your choice of accommodation.

Liverpool Student Homes (LSH)

LSH is a joint initiative between the Universities of Liverpool and their respective Student Unions, including LSTM. If you are seeking student accommodation in the private sector you are strongly advised to use this service. All properties advertised on the website are registered to the LSH Code of Practice which gives you confidence that they meet rigorous criteria. The LSH website provides details of accommodation offered by private landlords/letting agents including; lodgings, rooms for rent in shared student houses, student flats/apartments, bed-sits and larger housing schemes.

LSH offers bespoke support to LSTM students looking for accommodation. You can also use their discussion boards to find other LSTM students to share accommodation with.

<http://www.liverpoolstudenthomes.org>

+44 (0)151 794 3296
LSH@liverpool.ac.uk

Private Halls of Residence

The most popular accommodation with long term students is halls of residence. Many private companies now offer an alternative to the traditional university owned halls of residence.

The cost of private halls varies greatly. You can expect to pay £80 - £170 per week for city centre halls which are open to undergraduate and postgraduate students. The price you pay is usually inclusive of fuel bills (gas, electricity, water etc). You are usually expected to pay a deposit and will be asked to sign a contract for the academic year. There may be an additional fixed charge for internet access but generally this tends to be included in the overall rent.

Most private halls are arranged into clusters of flats. Within each flat, students will have their own private study bedroom but will share the main living quarters (usually the kitchen, lounge area and bathroom(s)) with other students. How many students you share with depends on the size of the flat. On average you can expect to share with between 4 - 6 people but in some cases it can be as many as 10. Some properties offer en-suite rooms, which means you have your own private bathroom connected to your bedroom. En-suite rooms are more expensive.

Tenancy agreements (contracts) are usually a **minimum of 43 weeks** and you will be expected to pay for the room for this period, even if you will be spending time out of the UK.

As general advice, we advise Masters Students planning to carry out an overseas research project to book their accommodation until early May (e.g. 17th May 2021). Some private halls will allow you to do this but this must be built into the terms of your contract.

The majority of private halls can be booked online. In most cases you will complete an online application form which will ask for information such as the name of your university, your next of kin details, etc. You will also be asked to pay a deposit (Sometimes called a reservation/ booking fee). Once you submit your application form and pay your deposit you are committing yourself to that accommodation. If you change your mind you could risk losing your deposit. In some cases, if you cancel your room at the last minute and a new tenant cannot be found, you will be liable for the total rent for the full tenancy period!

Always read the cancellation policy before committing yourself to any accommodation. Although it is not possible for every student, where practical, you should arrange a trip to Liverpool to view any accommodation you may be interested in before committing yourself. Some accommodation providers will allow students to pay in instalments, if they have a UK guarantor. Students without a UK guarantor will be expected to pay the full cost of their accommodation upfront i.e. before you move in.

If you require single sex accommodation then you should state this when contacting accommodation providers

It is also a good idea to stress that you want to be housed with third year undergraduate or postgraduate students. Lettings Managers do tend to group mature students as a matter of course but do this as an extra measure. You don't want to end up sharing with a group of rowdy first year undergraduates.

MOST IMPORTANTLY – PRIVATE HALLS START TAKING BOOKINGS FOR SEPTEMBER ENTRY UP TO 6 MONTHS BEFORE THE START OF THE ACADEMIC SEMESTER. YOU SHOULD BOOK EARLY TO AVOID DISAPPOINTMENT.

Are Private Halls of Residence for me?

Advantages: Private halls of residence are well suited to single students looking to live the true student experience. They are the perfect way to meet new people and to help you settle into a new city. Almost all private halls in Liverpool are within comfortable walking distance (5-20 minutes) from LSTM. Some are literally a stone's throw away. Halls of residence are reasonably priced for city centre living and the fixed cost pricing structure means no squabbling over bills; it also allows students to budget easily.

Disadvantages: Sharing facilities with others can have its problems but if you set boundaries from the start you then you're less likely to run into problems. Student halls can also be noisy at times. Tenancy agreements are usually for the academic year (43 weeks) and students can only be released from their contract in exceptional circumstances.

Other Accommodation Options

Private sector accommodation

By private sector accommodation we mean:

- Renting a whole house or flat; or
- Renting a room in a shared student house; or
- Lodging with an individual or a family.

Private accommodation close to LSTM is difficult to find and there is no parking at the School. However, the transport networks in and around Liverpool are excellent and students very often commute on the train or bus. You will need to budget at least £50 per month for travel if you live out of the city centre. If you are looking for private accommodation then please remember that it is a time-consuming task. With this in mind you should come to Liverpool well before the start of your course in order to find something suitable. If you intend to bring your family then you should initially come alone and then send for them once you have found appropriate accommodation.

Renting a whole house or flat or in a shared house

Students who don't want to share facilities or students who wish to bring their family with them will probably be looking for a whole house or flat to rent. The price you pay will depend on the size of the property and the area it is located in. You can expect to pay between £300-500 per month for a small bedsit or flat. You can rent a small house from between £500 - £800 per month. Flats and houses can come fully furnished, part furnished or unfurnished. Fully furnished properties are more expensive. Bills (Gas, electricity, Council Tax, water rates, TV license, telephone, internet, buildings and contents insurance) are not usually included in the rent therefore you will need to budget accordingly. If you are renting a small bedsit or flat then you need to budget £200 upwards for bills. For a small house you should budget for £300 upwards for bills.

When you find a property that you are happy with you will be asked to sign a contract for a fixed period of time, usually no less than 6 months. It is important to note that you will not be able to end your tenancy agreement before the end of the fixed period unless your tenancy agreement (contract) contains a break clause. If you try and end your tenancy early and you have no right to do so, you can be liable for the rent up until the end of the fixed period. For this reason it is important that you are one hundred percent happy with the property before signing the tenancy agreement. You will normally be required to pay a deposit to the landlord as security in case you damage the property or its furnishings.

On average landlords will ask for a sum equivalent to one month's rent. The deposit will normally be refunded after you move out of the property, provided it is left in good condition. If you have an assured shorthold tenancy agreement (this is the type of contract you will most likely have) then your landlord must place your deposit with a government authorised scheme. The scheme aims to safeguard a tenant's money by resolving the dispute through a neutral third party. Your landlord must provide you with details of the scheme within 14 days of you paying your deposit.

Lodging with an individual or a family

There are many individuals and families in Liverpool who rent out bedrooms to students in their own homes. This is also known as lodging or sometimes home stay. In most cases you will have your own bedroom but share the main living quarters (Kitchen, lounge and a bathroom/ toilet(s)) with the landlord (and his/her family if applicable). In most cases (but not always) the rent is inclusive of bills.

Further assistance

If you have any questions regarding accommodation please do not hesitate to contact the Student Experience Officer who will be happy to assist you:

Email: SAW@lstm.ac.uk
Phone: +44 (0)151 705 3756

If you have found a suitable property but would like someone to check it for you or have a look at your contract, please contact Liverpool Student Homes.

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