

THINGS TO CONSIDER

A lease is a **BINDING CONTRACT**, so be sure you understand your rights and responsibilities before you sign.



What's the social climate of the building/area?

Gauge whether the building is primarily students. Students keep different hours than non-students, which may cause tension with neighbors down the road.

Do my roommates share my lifestyle?

Talk with your roommates about sharing responsibilities, what food/appliances you'll share or keep separate, a guest policy, and even what room temperature you all prefer.

Can I live with the conditions of my lease?

Read your lease and make sure you know exactly what you and your property manager are each responsible for. Set aside funds for renter's insurance, and make a plan to ensure proper home/yard care.



How do utility payments work?

Identify the utilities included in your rent and ask your property manager their preferred method of paying for the other utilities. You might need to set up a BGE account or otherwise pay management directly. Make a plan for splitting the additional costs each month with your roommates.

Are there laundromats, grocery stores, and other services nearby?

Location location location! Keep in mind the convenience of having nearby grocery stores, banks, laundry mats, and coffee shops.

How will I get where I need to go?

Check and see where the closest stops of the JHMI Shuttle, the Blue Jay Shuttle, and the Charm City Circulator are.

If you plan on having a car, ask whether your building has parking (fees may apply). Consider filing for a temporary resident parking permit.

What are my additional responsibilities?

In addition to the University's Student Code of Conduct, students are expected to abide by local codes and laws. Make sure to check with your property manager to ensure you are disposing of your trash correctly and adhering to community expectations.

Is the property safe?

You can request a home safety inspection from JHU Security to evaluate the safety of a property you are considering. Do this before you sign a lease. If you are considering a commercial property, ask the property manager about the building's security features.

RENTER'S CHECKLIST

Suggested Questions for a Smarter Transition to Off-Campus Living

WHEN CONSIDERING THE LEASE:

- What length lease is available?
- When am I required to give my notice to vacate by?
- Is there an automatic renewal clause?
- Is subletting allowed? With what restrictions?
- Will you be able to see the specific unit before signing the lease?
- What utilities are included in rent?
- Is a credit-check required? Do I need a cosigner?
- Is there a penalty for late rent payment?
- Are there restrictions against pets? Extra fees?
- Are there rules about painting or hanging pictures?
- Are there special hours or rules related to move-in?
- Do I have storage or parking? Extra fees?

WHEN EXAMINING THE UNIT:

- Is the entryway adequately lit?
- Do the doors have deadbolts and peepholes?
- Can the windows be opened, closed, and LOCKED easily? Do lower floor windows have security grating?
- Where are the fire exits? Are fire doors alarmed?
- Is there a fire escape or secondary exit from the unit?
- Do all the switches and outlets work?
- Can you hear your neighbors around you?
- Are there signs of insects, mice, or rats (traps, droppings)?
- Are the floors clean? Are there water stains indicating previous leaks?
- Are the walls cracked or peeling? Are there any dents or holes, other than small nail holes?
- Is the stove in good working order and clean?
- Are the plumbing fixtures clean and in good condition?
- How does the hot water supply seem?
- Does the building have central air?

WHEN TALKING WITH THE LANDLORD:

- How are maintenance issues handled?
- Is there an emergency phone number designated for urgent maintenance issues?
- Is there separate meters for individual units? If not, how are tenants charged for these utilities?
- Who controls the temperature in the building?
- Where is the trash/recycling pick-up?
- How are deliveries handled?
- What amenities do tenants have access to?

Off-Campus Housing Office

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