

Contents

Page

The services we offer

Private Accommodation Register	2
Bristol Student Accreditation Scheme	2
Property Grading System	3
Code of Management Practice	4

How to register your accommodation

Registration fee	6
Timetable of events	7
Updating your details	7

Contractual Arrangements

Assured Shorthold tenancies	8
Tenancy relations – your obligations as a landlord	8
Inventory	8
Deposits	9
Housing Act 2004	9

Facilities to be provided

Bedrooms	10
Kitchen	10
Lounge	11
Bathroom	11
Resident Landlord – additional considerations	11

Safety Issues

Gas Safety	12
Electrical Safety	12
Fire Safety	13
Furniture Safety	13
Security	13
Energy Performance Certificates	13

Rent

Factors to consider	14
Bills	14

General Information

Equal opportunities	15
Insurance	15
Mortgages	15
Benefits	15
Tax	15
South Gloucestershire Council – Sort It Project	15
Complaints about student tenants	16
University Complaints Procedure	16

Useful Telephone Numbers

The services we offer

The University of the West of England, Bristol (UWE), currently has in excess of 25,000 registered students. The majority of these students live in the Private Sector.

Accommodation Services is the only department within the University dealing with ALL accommodation matters.

Accommodation Services is situated on the main Frenchay Campus at UWE. We serve all campuses of the University:

- Frenchay Campus – Frenchay
- Bower Ashton Campus – Ashton
- St Matthias Campus – Fishponds
- Glenside Campus – Stapleton

Accommodation Services is the first port of call for all students looking for rented accommodation and we provide students with details of properties as follows:

Private Accommodation Register

We compile details of accommodation available from the information supplied to us by private landlords. This includes essential details of the accommodation such as rent, number of rooms etc. The lists are divided into suitable areas for each campus and between resident and non-resident landlords. We display the details of available accommodation on the University web pages via the internet. Students then contact the landlord to view the property and arrange a tenancy.

Bristol Student Accreditation Scheme

The University, in partnership with Bristol City Council, has introduced an accreditation scheme into the Private Rented Sector.

The Scheme addresses the following areas:

- Gas safety certificate
- Electric safety certificate
- Furniture safety undertaking
- Fire protection measures
- Security measures
- Energy efficiency
- Facilities and room sizes
- Code of Good Management Practice.

For information about the Bristol Accreditation Scheme please see the following website:
www.bristol.gov.uk/accreditation

Once an application for Accreditation has been received the property is given preferential advertising through the University's web site.

Property Grading System

We often find that when students come to us looking for accommodation they simply don't know where to start. All they see is an endless list of properties and they ask "which are the good ones"?

For the University, our students' safety is our primary concern. We have therefore developed the Property Grading System as a way of raising awareness of safety issues and showing what each property has achieved.

In order to advertise with us Landlords need to have achieved a minimum of Level 3 on our grading system. The grade will be stated on the property advert. Please see the table below for requirements. The grading system is cumulative.

Grade 1 - Gas Safety Certificate

The property will have a current gas safety certificate which has been issued by a CORGI registered contractor. The certificate will list all gas appliances within the property and is valid for one year from the date of issue.

Grade 2 - Furnishings declaration, Smoke detectors fitted, Signed Code of Management

Furnishings declaration – The landlord will have signed a declaration which states that they certify that the furniture included in the letting of the property complies with the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) regulations 1988 (as amended in 1989 and 1993) and that the beds comply with BS7177 (Low hazard).

Smoke detectors – The Landlord has confirmed that a minimum of 2 battery smoke detectors have been fitted into the property in the recommended locations.

Code of Management Practice – The Landlord confirms they will act in accordance to these guidelines.

Grade 3 - Electric wiring certificate

The landlord has provided a report, dated within the last 5 years, on the electrical power and lighting circuits and on any fixed electrical appliances. The report has been completed by an engineer who is able to self certify under Part P Building Regulations, for example NICEIC, ECA, or have the relevant City and Guilds qualifications.

Grade 4 – Accredited Property

The Landlord has self certified that the property complies with standards set by the Bristol City Council for this grade.

Grade 5 – Accredited Plus Property

The Landlord has self certified that the property complies with standards set by the Bristol City Council for this grade

Code of Management Practice

Conduct

The landlord agrees to conduct business with regard to the property and the tenancy in a courteous, reasonable and equitable manner and to answer promptly queries and issues raised by the tenant.

Holding fees

The landlord agrees not to require rent or the deposit before the signing of the tenancy agreement and to limit any holding fee that is required before the signing of the tenancy agreement to £50 (this holding fee to be returned immediately if the tenant decides within the first 24 hours not to proceed).

Inventories

The landlord agrees to ensure that an inventory is signed by both parties at the beginning of the tenancy (or as soon as practicable afterwards) and to give the tenant the opportunity both to carry out a joint inventory inspection at the outset and to discuss the inventory at the end of the tenancy.

Deposits

The landlord agrees to withhold any deposit only for the purpose for which they were levied, to return deposits as soon as possible after the end of a tenancy (in any event within 4 weeks) and to provide written details and receipts for any deductions which may be made.

Repairs and maintenance

The landlord agrees to carry out repairs within a time period appropriate to the severity of the problem, keeping as far as is practicable to the guide timescales given on the next page*. The landlord also agrees to uphold as far as practicable all undertakings given on work to be completed prior to the tenant moving in and to consult the tenant when planning other major maintenance work (for example to avoid exam periods for student tenants).

Landlord's access to the property and other statutory requirements

The landlord agrees to comply with all statutory obligations required of them by housing and landlord & tenant legislation including the legal requirement to gain access to the property (for inspection, repairs or other reasons) only by arrangement with the tenant and having given 24 hours notice of the visit (except in emergencies).

Neighbours

The landlord agrees to take reasonable steps to minimise any nuisance that may be caused to neighbours by the way the property is managed: in particular by offering occupiers of the immediately neighbouring properties a contact telephone number or address to report any problems; and also by ensuring that "To Let" boards are removed once the property has been let and are not left up as long-term advertising features.

Participation in the Accreditation Scheme

The landlord agrees to display the current accreditation certificate at the property and accepts that the Accreditation Scheme partner organisations will need to share relevant information between them in the event of any complaint being made to one of them about the property or the management of the tenancy.

* Guide to repair timescales once a fault has been reported:

24 hours - urgent, affecting health or safety (eg major electrical fault, blocked WC).

5 working days - urgent, affecting material comfort (eg hot water, heating or fridge failure, serious roof leak).

28 days - other non-urgent (eg furniture repair, retiling).

How to register your accommodation

If you would like to advertise your accommodation please complete and sign the enclosed Private Accommodation Register Form.

Please ensure:

- The form and information supplied is fully completed – failure to do so will result in the form being returned to you.
- A cheque is enclosed for the correct registration fee, made payable to 'UWE, Bristol'.
- The property is at least at Grade 3 Standard, (we can not advertise if you do not meet this requirement).

Properties will be removed from the advertising list one week before the Gas or Electrical certificate expires; we cannot re-advertise the property until the new Certificate information has been supplied.

We are unable to advertise a property if there is a booking fee of more than £30.

The advertising will be more effective if you supply photographs for us to display. We can display a maximum of 5 photographs per property. Please e-mail photographs to accommodation@uwe.ac.uk, maximum size is 180 x 180 pixels.

Registration Fee

Number of properties	Registration fee (inc VAT)
----------------------	----------------------------

1	£50.00
2-5	£70.00
6-10	£100.00
11-20	£130.00

Resident Landlord	£30.00
-------------------	--------

The registration fee is non refundable and expires on the 20th December annually.

Once the annual fee has been paid you are able to advertise any vacancies that occur within your property at any point during the year as long as the Certificates are currently valid.

The University of the West of England, Bristol, is unable to offer any guarantee that vacancies advertised will be let.

Timetable of Events

The University academic year runs from September through to June. However, current students start looking for accommodation from January. Our landlord register therefore operates from January until December. To help you get the full benefit from the Private Accommodation Register please refer to the following timetable of events.

November	Mail-out to all current landlords the new Private Accommodation Registration Pack.
December	Private Accommodation Register forms returned to Accommodation Services – these are entered on a first come first served basis.
January	Private Accommodation Student Fair. The new Private Accommodation Register is publicised to students. Current students start looking for accommodation for the next academic year.
June/July	New first year students are looking for accommodation – these students are likely to be allocated University accommodation. Private accommodation for families may be required.
August	Exam results published – students come through clearing system, the majority of these students will also be allocated University accommodation. Accommodation Services open every Saturday through August.
September	Accommodation Services open every Saturday until mid September. Late applicants looking for accommodation.
October	Nursing students looking for accommodation to start January.

There is also demand for short term accommodation for students and lecturers. If you are prepared to offer your accommodation on a short term basis please indicate this on your form. If you want to advertise to lecturers/researchers this will only be entered onto the system provided you have confirmed that there will be no students in the property.

Updating your details

It is important that you keep us informed with the current situation regarding vacancies in your property so we can keep the advertising as up to date as possible. Please e-mail us at accommodation@uwe.ac.uk or call the office on 0117 32 83601.

Contractual arrangements

It is advisable to use a written tenancy agreement, drawn up by a solicitor, or a standard agreement purchased from a legal stationer.

Please note: even if you have no written agreement you cannot make the students leave the property without following the correct legal procedure.

Assured Shorthold Tenancy

This is the most commonly used standard agreement. For further information on this a booklet entitled: 'Assured and assured shorthold tenancies, a guide for landlords' can be obtained free of charge from Communities and Local Government Publications, PO Box 236, Wetherby LS23 7NB. Tel: 0870 1226 236, Fax: 0870 1226 237, Textphone: 0870 1207 405, e-mail: communities@twoten.com. Please quote product code 97 HC 228B.

Joint tenancies – all tenants sign one contract with everyone's name on it, this is useful for established groups. However some students will be reluctant to sign a joint tenancy if they do not know the other students.

Single tenancies – each tenant has their own agreement.

Licence to Occupy – This is used for Resident Landlord accommodation where exclusive possession of the property is not granted.

Your obligations as a Landlord

- To display all Valid Certificates as legally required.
- To adhere to the Code of Good Management
- You are entitled to carry out repairs or inspections to the property as long as you provide reasonable notice to the tenants.
- It is against the law to enter your students' house without their permission once a tenancy is in place.
- If you illegally evict your tenants you will be committing a criminal offence and your tenants could claim damages against you. Please obtain legal advice before starting proceedings.

Inventory

It is strongly recommended that an inventory is completed when each student moves into your property. The student should sign the inventory to confirm the condition of the property when they move in. Both you and the students should keep a copy of the signed inventory.

Deposits

A returnable deposit is held against damages or unpaid rent and should be refunded within 4 weeks of the tenancy ending.

- It is usual to ask for the equivalent to one months rent (the legal maximum is two months)
- Always provide a receipt
- Photographs taken at beginning and end of tenancy are useful as proof of damage
- If you need to retain all or part of a deposit, a written list will need to be provided detailing damages and costs, you should be able to provide receipts for work done.
- It is recommended that you meet the students on the day they move out to agree deductions.
- You cannot keep deposit for fair wear and tear.

Landlords issuing an Assured Shorthold tenancy are required by Law under the Housing Act 2004 to join one of the three Tenancy Deposit Protection Schemes.

The Landlord can choose the type of scheme, either:

Custodial – Scheme administrators hold the deposit and the scheme is free of charge
Insurance – The Landlord holds the deposit but has to pay an insurance premium.

All schemes will be supported by an Alternate Dispute Resolution service to avoid disputes going to court.

If deposits are taken and not protected by one of the three schemes, the tenant can go to court and request that you provide the information regarding the scheme you are using to hold the deposit or, return it to them. Meanwhile you will have to pay the tenant a fine of 3 times the amount of the deposit.

For further information regarding the deposit protection scheme providers please see the useful telephone numbers section at the back of the booklet or go to www.direct.gov.uk/tenancydeposit

Housing Act 2004

You will be able to gain an overview of what the Act entails and keep up to date with any new developments by visiting the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister website – www.Odpm.gov.uk

Facilities to be provided

If your property is classed as a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) then the standard of facilities will be set by the local authority. For further information on HMO Licensing and whether your property requires a licence please visit www.landlordinfo.co.uk

Guidelines on the minimum facilities to be provided in a shared student house let to a single household

In all rooms, i.e. bedroom, kitchen, lounge and bathroom there should be a fixed form of heating and adequate ventilation.

Bedrooms

Single study bedrooms must be a minimum of 6.5 m² where a living room is provided and must be a realistic shape. Most students are not prepared to share a bedroom and it is easier to let accommodation if each room is offered as a single room.

There must be adequate natural light. The furniture supplied must comply with the current fire and furnishings regulations (see section on safety) and should include the following:

- bed
- desk or table (of sufficient size to allow work and PC)
- upright chair
- wardrobe
- chest of drawers
- bookcase or shelves.

Kitchen

There should be provided:

- fire blanket
- adequate food storage space for each student
- adequate work surfaces for the preparation of food
- vacuum cleaner
- mop and bucket
- two twin power sockets in addition to any for major appliances

There should also be one set of the following facilities for every 5 students:

- a sink with hot and cold water supply
- cooker
- fridge/freezer

Lounge

This should be of adequate size and adequate natural light. Furniture supplied should conform to current fire and furnishings regulations.

- easy chairs or settees (at least one per student)
- coffee table
- dining table and chairs if not provided in kitchen
- TV aerial socket

Bathroom

There should be one set of facilities for every 5 students which should include:

- A shower or bath with hot and cold water
- A wash hand basin with hot and cold water
- A WC (separate WCs should have their own wash hand basin with a hot and cold water supply)

Resident Landlord – Additional Considerations

General facilities to be provided remain the same as for self-contained properties. There are two ways in which you can let a room in your own home to a student:

Self-Catered: accommodation where the student will require full access to the kitchen to prepare their own meals, and will need adequate storage facilities for their food.

Catered: accommodation where some or all meals are provided. The student will require access to a kitchen to prepare drinks and light snacks and an evening meal if only breakfast is supplied.

Resident Landlord – House Rules

It is important to discuss and establish the exact terms and conditions of the living arrangements with the student to ensure that both parties are aware of each others expectations and therefore avoid later misunderstandings.

Suggested areas to discuss:

Access to the living room

Use of the telephone

Visitors

Provision of communal items

Use of the TV,

Locking up procedure

Cleaning responsibilities

Safety issues

You have a legal responsibility to ensure that the accommodation you provide is safe and in a good state of repair. Specific safety issues include:

Gas Safety

- Responsibility to provide a copy of current gas certificate, for further details please visit Health & Safety Executive <http://www.hse.gov.uk>

Information on Gas Appliances, Landlord Guide to Gas Safety and Carbon Monoxide awareness can all be found on the above website.

Electrical Safety

Landlords need to ensure that electrical installations are properly maintained. The following guidance is intended as good practice and will help to ensure that you comply with the legal requirements:

- Arrange for the electrical installation to be inspected every five years by a suitably qualified electrician.
- The electrician should provide a formal electrical certificate. The certificate will provide details of the inspection and list any defects that were identified.
- Any defects that affect the safety of the electrical installation should be promptly resolved.
- Routine electrical safety checks should also be carried out between every change in tenancy.

For further information, please contact your local Environmental Health Team.

Fire Safety

There are different requirements depending on the type of property you let.

- Provide battery operated smoke detectors
- Fire blanket in the kitchen
- Annual servicing of fire alarms

Properties let as an HMO require fire precaution measures to be specified by the local authority.

Furniture Safety

Responsibility to ensure that all furniture supplied to your tenants complies with the requirements of the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988. For further information contact trading standards at www.bristol.gov.uk/tradingstandards.

Security

To minimise the risk of break-ins and to improve the personal safety of the students the following should be considered:

- Provide locks to all ground floor windows and give the students a key
- Provide net curtains for ground floor windows
- Provide a deadlock to the front door which can be operated by a latch from the inside
- Provide bolts on the back door
- Provide external security lights in unlit areas.

NEW: Energy Performance Certificates

From October 2008 some rental properties in England and Wales will be required to have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) prepared by an accredited Energy Assessor.

- An EPC is required for a property which is self-contained (e.g. there is a joint agreement).
- An EPC will offer opportunities for landlords to differentiate their property from their competitors and gain a distinct marketing advantage.

Your tenants will benefit from lower running costs and a warm, comfortable living environment, making them more likely to stay longer in your property. Also supports your reputation as a landlord who takes the quality of their properties seriously and delivers a professional service for tenants.

For further information on EPC's please see: www.bristol.gov.uk/ccm/content/Housing/Private-Housing/energy-performance-certificates.en

A network of Energy Saving Trust advice centres operates across the UK. They provide impartial information on home energy efficiency and can advise you on any grants and offers that may be available to help you with the costs of installing measures. www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/ To contact your local centre, call 0800 512 012.

Rent

Factors to consider

- How much you charge will depend on a variety of factors e.g. facilities provided and the area in which it is situated.

Before the student pays any money, or moves in:

- The rent needs to be set and agreed with the student, this should remain the same for the fixed agreement term.
- The payment schedule needs to be confirmed e.g. weekly or per calendar month (charging 4 weekly can be confusing and lead to unintended arrears).
- Confirm which bills are included (if any) and how payment is to be made.

The student should be provided with a receipt for any money paid. If rent is paid on a weekly basis, you are required by law to give the student a rent book.

If you are a resident landlord then agreement in advance should be made regarding what meals (if any) will be provided and any other services to be included i.e. provision of bed linen, laundry services, cleaning.

Bills

- Landlords are normally responsible for payment of water and sewerage bills.
- Liability for payment of Council Tax will depend on how the property is let. For further information you will need to contact your local Council Tax office. If required, students can obtain a Council Tax Exemption Certificate from their faculty once they have registered on their course.
- Rent inclusive of bills can be attractive to prospective tenants as they only have one regular payment to budget for. Landlords may find there are then less issues with debts caused by unpaid bills.

If bills are excluded it is up to the Landlord whether they put the bills in the student's name in which case the Electricity and Gas supplier will need to be notified, or whether the Landlord still receives the bills and passes the cost on to the student.

General information

Equal Opportunities

Accommodation Services aims to provide services to all students and landlords regardless of ethnic origin, gender or disability.

Under the Race Relations Act 1976, Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and Disability Discrimination Act 1995 it would be unlawful for a landlord or Accommodation Services to discriminate against students on the basis of ethnic origin, gender or disability, in advertising the accommodation or by the terms under which the accommodation is let.

If you are a resident landlord you are however able to choose who you want in your home (e.g. you may prefer a female if you are a female living on your own) but Accommodation Services can not specify your preferences when advertising your accommodation.

Insurance

Your insurance company should be aware that the property is occupied by students and should cover both the buildings, furniture and any property provided for your tenants. You are not expected to be held liable for the insurance of the student's personal belongings. You should strongly advise your students to take out insurance to cover their personal belongings.

Mortgages

If you have a mortgage on the property you must check with your lender before letting the property.

Benefits

Any income you are receiving from letting rooms in your home, or a whole house or flat, may affect your entitlement to benefits such as Income Support and Housing Benefit. Please check with your benefits office for further details.

Tax

Any profit you make from letting accommodation may be liable for tax depending on your own tax position. The University is legally obliged to provide the Inland Revenue with the names and addresses of landlords if requested. Expenses incurred 'wholly and exclusively' for the purpose of the let may be deducted from the income before tax and there are specific rules for tax on income from letting (including letting rooms in your own home). Please check with your local tax office for further details.

South Gloucestershire Council – Sort It Project

The council has introduced a new policy for refuse collection. The Sort It Collection service introduces a new collection of cardboard and garden waste from a green wheelie bin. One week the green bin and the green kerbside recycling box are emptied and the following week the black/grey wheelie bin will be emptied. Please make sure your tenants are aware of this service.

Complaints about student tenants

The University often receives complaints from neighbours regarding the behaviour of students within private accommodation. We will contact Landlords where complaints have been made about the behaviour of the students at their property. We have no control over students in these properties and would expect you as Landlord to deal with these cases in an appropriate manner.

University Complaints Procedure

The University reserves the right to refuse to advertise any property.

Complaint initiation

Complaints can be initiated by a tenant whether previous/existing or prospective of a property.

They must be put in writing. This must clearly state the problem and any action taken. Students are also given details of the UWE Student Union and the procedure for the Small Claims Court where appropriate.

Response from Accommodation office

The accommodation office will inform the Landlord that a complaint has been made and give details of the nature of the complaint.

The landlord will be given 21 days to respond – in the meantime the University may temporarily suspend any current advertising depending on the seriousness of the complaint.

The tenant will be given a copy of any response from the landlord.

If the problem is resolved – the landlord will be re-instated on the register, no further action will be taken. However, details of complaints are held on file for 5 years.

If the problem is not resolved – the University reserves the right to suspend the Landlord from the register for a period of 12 months.

Once the 12 months has elapsed we would review if any further complaints were received within the 12 month period and make a decision to re-instate the Landlord.

If the Landlord has been Accredited by Bristol City Council, the University would copy all correspondence to the appropriate department within the Council.