

ACCOMMODATION GUIDE

CONTENTS



How to find private rented accommodation	04
Top tips	05
Housing providers, exchange and one semester students	06
Arrive early	06
Advice for international students	07
Guarantors	07
Family accommodation	07
Finding flatmates	07
Average costs	07
Areas to live	08
What you need to know – legislation	10
Insurance	11
Rental check list	12
Cost	12
Location and transport	12
General condition of the property	12
Furniture and fittings	13
Safety	13
Energy efficiency	13
Outside the property	13
The landlord/agency	13
Deposits	13
Remember	14

HOW TO FIND PRIVATE RENTED ACCOMMODATION

There are lots of landlords and letting agents in Edinburgh that offer rented accommodation. The accommodation office at Heriot-Watt is here to provide you with information, advice and guidance to help you find suitable accommodation.

Private rented accommodation can be found on the following websites:

www.studentpad.co.uk

www.accommodationforstudents.com

www.lettingweb.com

www.citylets.co.uk

www.espc.com

www.rightmove.co.uk

www.zoopla.co.uk

Please note that private properties have not been inspected by University staff so we cannot make any guarantees on quality or reliability of the landlord.

TOP TIPS

- Choose a price you can afford and try to stick to it. It is easy to get carried away and take a flat you cannot really afford
- Make sure you look around and don't just take the first flat you see
- Always view the property before you move in
- Allow plenty of time – it usually takes a couple of weeks to find and move into rented accommodation
- When you are looking for a flat, please remember that there will be a maximum number of people that can occupy the property. If you exceed this you are breaking the terms of your lease

HOUSING PROVIDERS, EXCHANGE AND ONE SEMESTER STUDENTS

Exchange and one semester students

If you are only in Edinburgh for one semester, here are some options for finding short term accommodation.

- On-campus accommodation through the University may be available for one semester depending on availability. Please email halls@hw.ac.uk for further information.
- Private student accommodation providers in the city may be able to offer student accommodation for one semester or the full academic year depending on availability. City Room Rentals can advise on rooms availability and costs for all of the student housing providers in the city. They can be contacted on 0131 210 0050 or by emailing booking@cityroomrentals.co.uk/www.cityroomrentals.co.uk. As this type of accommodation is like halls of residence this can be booked in advance without viewing and is a secure option for advanced bookings.
- Student lodgings may have availability for one semester. These can be found by looking on www.studentpad.co.uk.

Arrive early

If you are looking for private rented accommodation you will need to arrive in Edinburgh a few weeks before the start of term to find a suitable property. Properties must be viewed before a lease agreement can be signed so you will need to arrange short term accommodation for when you arrive. Short term accommodation in a hotel, B&B etc. can be found at www.visitscotland.com or by contacting City Room Rentals on 0131 210 0050. The Marriott Courtyard Hotel is based on campus and can be booked for short term/nightly accommodation. For bookings please contact the reservations team: reservations@courtyardedinburghwest.com or call 0131 526 3210.

ADVICE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Guarantors

A guarantor is someone who co-signs your tenancy agreement and agrees to pay your rent should you fail to. Most letting agencies will require a UK based guarantor (this is usually a parent or guardian). For international students, this can often be a problem. Students who do not have a UK guarantor will have to pay money in advance (up to the full amount due, for the duration of the tenancy) to secure accommodation in the private rental sector. The University cannot act as your guarantor. Agents/landlords will also generally request two forms of identification and references from a previous landlord.

Family accommodation

Edinburgh has a good supply of rental properties; you will be able to find suitable accommodation in the private rental market for you and your family. Please ensure that you budget for council tax should your spouse/partner be liable to pay for this. Further information on eligibility and costs etc. can be found at www.edinburgh.gov.uk.

If you are coming to Edinburgh with your family it is advisable to come on your own first so you can secure suitable accommodation before they arrive. This will allow the time needed to find the right area and property to meet your family's needs.

Finding flatmates

Accommodation from letting agents and private landlords is generally offered as a whole and not on a room only basis. You can find flatmates in the following ways:

- Post an advert on www.studentpad.co.uk
- Find a flatmate on Heriot-Watt's Facebook page by joining – 'Find a Flatmate Heriot-Watt Edinburgh' group

Average costs

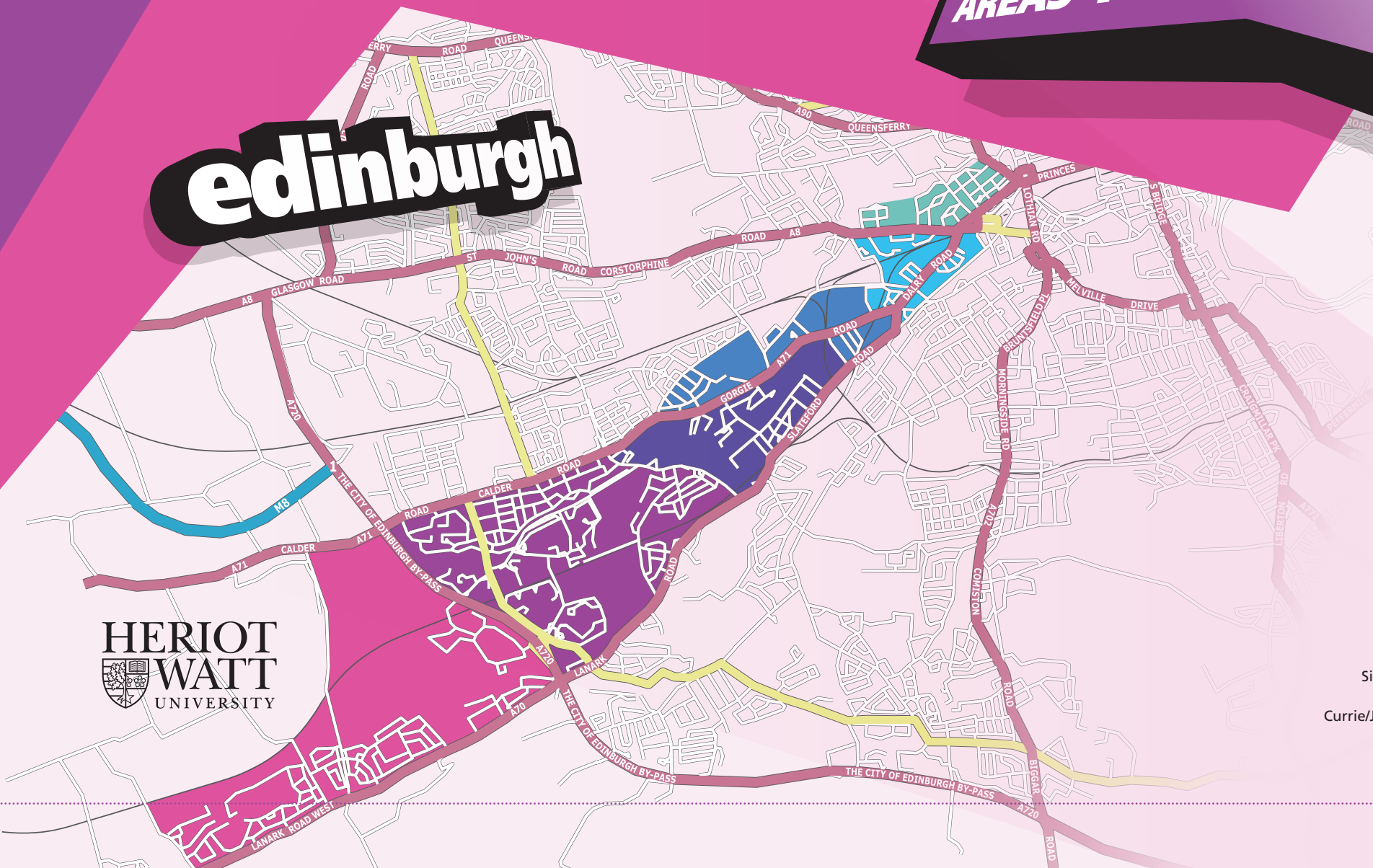
Depending on the area the property is situated in, prices can vary between £400.00-£450.00 per room per month in a shared student flat. Students have to pay gas, electric, internet and TV licence charges in addition to the rent, so it is important to factor these extra costs into your budget. As full time registered students you will be exempt from paying council tax, exemption forms can be collected from the Student Service Centre in the Hugh Nisbet Building. Exemptions for The City of Edinburgh can also be applied for on-line – www.edinburgh.gov.uk/forms/form/12/en/apply_for_student_council_tax_discount_or_exemption.

AREAS TO LIVE

edinburgh



- Haymarket
- Dalry
- Gorgie
- Chesser
- Sighthill/Calder
- Currie/Juniper Green



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW - LEGISLATION

Heriot-Watt's Edinburgh campus is approximately a 30-40 minute bus journey from the City Centre. Popular areas for Heriot-Watt students tend to be on the West side of the city:

Area	Overview	Approx distance to campus by bus
Haymarket	5 minute walk from city centre Many local amenities Excellent bus, rail and tram links Direct bus route to campus	30 mins
Dalry	Situated between Haymarket and Gorgie 10 minute walk to city centre Several amenities and leisure facilities close by	25 mins
Gorgie	15 mins by bus to the city centre Many local shops and amenities Home of the local football club Heart of Midlothian	20 mins
Chesser	Situated between Longstone and Slateford Largely residential area Large 24 hour supermarket	15 mins
Sighthill/Calder	Largely industrial area Has limited pubs and shops City centre 30 mins by bus	10 mins
Currie/Juniper Green	Self contained communities with good local schools Based on the outskirts of Edinburgh with good bus links to the city centre Walking/cycling distance to the Edinburgh campus	10-15 mins

The above areas are well serviced by Lothian buses (numbers 25, 34 & 45) which run regular services from the campus to the city centre and there are plenty of local supermarkets close at hand. Further information on the buses can be found on www.lothianbuses.com.

Landlord Registration /Agent Registration	All landlords/agents must by law be registered to rent out their property. Please ensure that you request their registration number.
Gas Check	Landlords whose properties have gas are required by law to have all gas appliances checked on a yearly basis and provide CO ₂ detectors. Please request a copy of a valid landlord's gas safety certificate.
Property Licensing (HMO)	If the property is to be rented to 3 or more unrelated students the landlord must have a House in Multiple Occupancy (HMO) Licence. These properties must adhere to additional safety requirements outlined by the council such as fire extinguishers, mains wired smoke alarms, fire doors etc. Please contact City of Edinburgh Council for further information on 0131 469 5151 or by email hmo@edinburgh.gov.uk . This licence is not required for family accommodation.
Fire Safety	Ensure mains wired smoke alarms are fitted and that furnishings comply with the 1989 Fire and Furniture Regulations. Landlords have a responsibility to carry out electrical safety checks on all properties and be able to provide copies of the certificates if requested.
Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)	To comply with EU legislation all rental properties marketed in Scotland must have a valid Energy Performance Certificate (EPC). The certificate gives a rating, allowing tenants to be aware of the energy efficiency of a property before signing a tenancy agreement.
Private Residential Tenancy	If you are wishing to rent a flat through a private company/letting agency they will ask you to sign a Private Residential Tenancy. This will be open ended and will last until a tenant wishes to leave a property or a landlord uses grounds for eviction. If you are sharing with flatmates you are all jointly responsible for the rent, bills and the upkeep of the property.
Tenancy Deposit Scheme	Under The Tenancy Deposit Schemes (Scotland) Regulations 2011, the Scottish Government has licensed 3 companies to operate a Tenancy Deposit Scheme in Scotland. From 2 July 2012, landlords or agents in receipt of a tenancy deposit must transfer it to a licensed operator. This is to ensure the money is securely held and that any dispute about its eventual return can be resolved quickly by an independent party. Further information can be found on www.scotland.gov.uk .
Your Rights & Responsibilities	For a comprehensive overview of the renting process and legislation please look at the following websites: www.citizensadvice.org.uk/housing/renting-a-home/student-housing/ www.rentingscotland.org/ .

RENTAL CHECK LIST

Things to consider when you're looking for a place to rent

Cost

- ☐ How much is the rent?
- ☐ How much is the deposit?
- ☐ Remember to factor in the cost of bills and internet access

Location and transport

- ☐ How far away from the campus is the property?
- ☐ Are there useful shops nearby?
- ☐ How far away is the nearest supermarket?
- ☐ What about other amenities, such as a leisure centre, cinema or library?
- ☐ Is the property on a bus route?
- ☐ When is the last bus home?
- ☐ Is there parking?
- ☐ Would you feel safe travelling home at night?

General condition of the property

- ☐ Is the property big enough for you and your flatmates?
- ☐ Are there any signs of damp such as mould on the walls or carpet?
- ☐ What form of heating does the property have?
- ☐ What type of windows does the property have?
- ☐ What is the average monthly heating bill?

Furniture and fittings

- ☐ How much furniture is provided?
- ☐ What condition is the furniture in?
- ☐ Is there enough storage space?
- ☐ Is there a washing machine?
- ☐ Is there a freezer provided?
- ☐ Is there a desk for studying?

Safety

- ☐ Can the landlord/agent show you a valid gas safety certificate?
- ☐ Does the property have mains wired smoke alarms?
- ☐ Is there a fire blanket in the kitchen?
- ☐ Does the furniture comply with safety regulations?
- ☐ How secure are the locks on the doors and windows?
- ☐ If the property is a flat does it have an entry phone system?

Energy efficiency

- ☐ Does the property have an Energy Performance Certificate?

Outside the property

- ☐ Are there any communal areas, such as an entrance hall or stair well?
- ☐ If so who is responsible for cleaning them?
- ☐ Is there a back garden?
- ☐ If so who is responsible for maintaining it?
- ☐ How is rubbish collected?

The landlord/agency

- ☐ Is the landlord/agent registered with the council?
- ☐ Do you feel intimidated by the landlord/agent?
- ☐ Would you feel able to approach them if anything went wrong?

Deposits

- ☐ Is the landlord/agent aware of the Tenancy Deposit Scheme?
- ☐ What scheme will my money be lodged with?

REMEMBER

- ☐ Ensure that the landlord/agency is registered. If they are not you should not rent a property from them.
- ☐ Prior to signing any tenancy agreement, read it carefully and check everything before signing. There is no 'cooling off' period.
- ☐ Request a receipt for your deposit and ensure that you know which Tenancy Deposit Scheme your money will be lodged into.
- ☐ Ensure that you have an accurate record called an 'inventory' of the condition of the property when you moved in, along with meter readings of the gas and electric. Make sure this is signed and dated and returned to the landlord within 7 days.
- ☐ Highlight any problems that you have in writing to the landlord so that you have a record of this.
- ☐ It is advisable to take dated pictures of the property when you move in so you have a record of its condition and cleanliness.
- ☐ If you are renting with 3 or more people please ensure that the landlord has a House in Multiple Occupancy (HMO) Licence, this is a legal requirement.
- ☐ Scams – do not send money to anyone for accommodation prior to viewing the property, verifying that the person is the actual landlord or representative (such as a letting agent) and seeing a tenancy agreement. You should be very suspicious of anyone asking you to send money via a payment service such as Western Union, Moneygram or Bidpay.

If you are worried please come to The Accommodation Office.



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www.hw.ac.uk