



Where should I live is one of the questions you may be considering right now as you prepare for your studies at A&M-Commerce? The two basic housing options students have at A&M-Commerce are on-campus or off-campus but within these two choices are many things to consider.

Living on-campus at A&M-Commerce

Students will often choose to live on-campus because of the easy accessibility to on-campus services, classes, library, professors, other students, and recreational activities. Living on-campus can be a very fulfilling experience for any student as they truly get to experience “American college life.” In many cases we recommend that international students who are studying at A&M-Commerce strongly consider living on-campus their first year so they may become more familiar with the area and American culture. Please visit Residence Life at <http://web.tamu-commerce.edu/studentLife/housing>. International student will need to take the following into consideration when choosing on-campus housing:

- Some residence halls on-campus do not have kitchens in each room but will have a kitchen on each floor of the hall for students who choose to cook their own meals. There is an option to purchase a meal plan for on-campus food service and there has been a concerted effort with food service to provide more options for international students and students with special dietary needs. Students who are awarded a housing scholarship will be required to purchase an on-campus meal plan.
- Some residence hall rooms and bathrooms provide some privacy but they are generally communal in nature and they may not be as private as you are used to in your home country. Less expensive housing will most likely include no kitchen and communal bathrooms. For more information on room layouts for each residence hall please visit <http://web.tamu-commerce.edu/studentLife/housing/aboutUs/residenceHallListing.aspx>.
- You may choose a preference of where you would like to live on-campus but there is no guarantee that you will be assigned to one of those preferences. The later you apply for on-campus housing the less likely you will be assigned to your preferred residence hall.
- You may give preference for someone as a roommate but there is no guarantee that you will be assigned to a room with the person you have listed as a preference.
- Students who live on-campus are required to sign a one-year lease agreement (fall/spring) and it is very difficult to be released once you have signed the contract and moved in on-campus.
- On-campus residence who live on-campus during the semester breaks are all consolidated into one or two residence halls and will need to move some of their possessions (not all possessions) out of the hall they resided in during the regular semester.

Living off-campus in Commerce or close to campus

Students will often choose to live off-campus in the area around campus as they may be able to find cheaper housing or choose their roommates more easily. When deciding to live off-campus students need to take some of the following questions and considerations into account.

- Will you have reliable transportation? You may be able to find a house or apartment close to campus but this is not always a guarantee. There is no public transportation in Commerce.

- Some apartments/homes that you rent may include some utility expenses such as water, gas, and electricity but others may not. You may be required to sign up for an account with a utility company (water, electric, gas) and if you do not have a social security number (which most new international students will not be eligible for one until they have found eligible employment) then you may be required to pay a large deposit (specific amount of cash...example \$100, \$500, or more) to the utility company before you can set-up their service.
- Once you find a place to live the rental company/owner will also require you to pay a deposit (usually one and/or two months of rent) before you can move in. This money may be refunded at the end of your lease agreement minus any charges for cleaning or damages.
- As with on-campus housing, you will be required to sign a contract for a specific amount of time with any rental company and there may be financial penalties if you chose to end the contract early.
- While Commerce is generally a very safe community, personal security may be a consideration depending upon where you live in the area. For more information on off-campus housing please visit http://www.commerce-chamber.com/real_estate.php.
- Some apartment complexes/rental companies do not treat their residence as they should or run their business with integrity. *Generally*, the more expensive apartments/rental properties will provide better service to their residence...example- addressing concerns or maintenance needs.

Living off-campus in the Dallas/Fort Worth (DFW) metropolitan area

Students who chose to live in a town or city other than Commerce need to keep in mind the following issues.

- What is your major? Where and when will your classes be offered? Students in certain majors may find many classes available at our DFW sites but there is never a guarantee all of your classes will be in the DFW area. At any given semester you may be required to travel to the main campus in Commerce for class(s). Also, the university has very limited services and university department/offices for students in the DFW area and it may be necessary for you to travel to the main campus for certain services or to meet with certain university department/offices.
- Do you have or will you be able to secure transportation in a timely manner? There is no consistent/inexpensive public transportation between Commerce and other towns and cities. New international students may have to wait up to a month after the start of the spring semester before they can secure a drivers license due to I-20 report time lines with immigration.
- The closer you get to Dallas/Fort Worth the more housing will costs and the cost of living may be more expensive as well.
- Current traffic between Rockwall, Denton, McKinney, and other Dallas/Fort Worth areas is very heavy and inconsistent due to current road repair and development on many of the majors highways and interstates. Most constructions projects will last for the next few years and a 45 minute trip to Commerce can become a 2 hour or longer trip at anytime due to rush hour traffic and construction.