

Off Campus Housing Information

There are a number of different rental options for new international students. Below is a list of many of the local apartment complexes and rental companies. You may also find more information by searching Google, apartments, Commerce, TX or you may also go to http://www.commerce-chamber.com/real_estate.php.

Village Creek Apartments: 2231 Live Oak Street, Commerce, TX
www.livevillagecreek.com 903-246-3120

- One bedroom and one bath apartments
- Two bedroom and one and a half bath apartments
- Three bedroom and one and a half bath apartments

Bradford Place Apartments: 3301 FM 3218, Commerce, TX
www.bradfordplacecommerce.com 903-886-8855

Churchill at Commerce: 731 Culver Street, Commerce, TX
www.churchillcommerce.com 903-886-4444

- One bedroom and one bath apartments
- Two bedroom and two bath apartments
- Three bedroom and two bath apartments

Century 21 First Group: 1219 Washington Street, Commerce, TX
www.century21firstgroup.com 903-513-3113

Chaney Properties: 903-886-8080

- Houses, Apartments, and Duplexes

Chapin Real Estate: 1404 Washington Street, Commerce, TX
www.immobel.com/chapinrealestate 903-886-6373

Charlinda Village Duplex Rentals: Corner of Monroe Street and Charity Road, Commerce TX
www.charlindavillage.com/ 903-217-2227

Commerce Inn: 1637 State Highway 60, Commerce, TX
www.commerceintexas.com/5073.html 903-886-8756

- Temporary Housing

GANT Apartments: 1814 Hunt Street, Commerce, TX 903-886-6863

- One bedroom and one bath with central air and heat- \$500
- One bedroom and one bath with window unit A/C- \$450
- Two bedroom and two bath with central air and hear- \$675

Huntex Rentals: 2610 Poplar St Suite C, Greenville, TX (Commerce properties)
huntexproperties.com/Rentals.html Select Rentals in left hand menu. 903-455-6614

Landmark Properties: 801 Culver Street, Commerce, TX
www.facebook.com/LandmarkPropertiesCommerceTexas/timeline 903-886-7038

Lion's Den: 3000 Highway 50, Commerce, TX 903-246-3175

- Temporary Housing

Maple Place Apartments: 2112 Monroe Street, Commerce, TX

www.commerceapartments.com

903-886-4050

- One Bedroom and one bath starting at \$650 plus electricity
- Two bedroom and one and a half bath studio starting at \$765 (and up) plus electricity
- Two bedroom and one bath flat \$765 plus electricity

Oak Meadow Townhomes: 150 Maple Street, Commerce, TX

www.oakmeadowstownhomes.com

903-886-8881

Oglesby Properties: Commerce, TX

www.oglesbyproperties.com/index.shtml

972-742-5099

Regency Square Apartments: 220 Taylor Street, Commerce, TX

903-886-7038

Slick Residential: P.O. Box 494, Royse City, TX (Commerce Properties)

www.slickresidential.com

972-636-3113

American Eagle Properties: 1224 Main Street, Commerce, TX

www.americaneagleprop.com/

903-886-4430

Valentine Properties: 1505 West Neal Street, Commerce, TX

www.valentineprop.com/#/valentine-properties/4535672063

903-886-8881

- Single family homes, one, two, and three bedroom apartments

Definitions of Rental Terms

Application Fee:

A charge to check your credit and rental history. Your application may be binding! That is, once you have applied, you have committed yourself to rent an apartment, if your application is approved. If you change your mind, you will have to find someone else to take the apartment and pay the rent until you do!

Financial Guarantee:

Evidence of income (usually, three times the price of the rent) to qualify applicants. A copy of the financial information used to obtain your student or exchange visitor visa is the appropriate documentation to offer. If the financial information is that of a family member, your relative's signature may be required as a guarantor of the lease. Usually, faxes between your relative and the rental office meet this requirement in a timely fashion. If your income is from a graduate assistantship or fellowship or another sponsor, the assistantship offer or sponsor's letter clearly stating your financial support should be presented. Neither the I-20 nor the IAP-66 is a financial guarantee. Apartment managers have no business asking for them or copying them!

Deposit:

Money that is held by the management to guarantee occupancy of a room or apartment, payment of rent, repair of damages, and professional cleaning after you leave. If terms of a signed contract are met, the deposit is either refunded in full or reduced to pay for unusual wear and tear or damage to the apartment. Within thirty days of your returning the apartment key, the manager must bill you for any charges and refund the remainder of your security deposit. Failing to meet this deadline, the landlord forfeits his right to the deposit and must return it in full.

Lease:

A legal contract signed by both the manager and the renter. Violation of the lease agreement can result in a heavy financial penalty. Residents should understand all of the conditions of the lease before signing. Any negotiated variation should be set out in writing, initialed, and dated by both the tenant and the manager as an amendment to the lease.

Rent:

Payment made for living accommodations. Since the rental rate and the payment due date are part of the signed contract, failing to make this payment for ANY reason may result in expensive penalties and legal actions. Legal advice is recommended for any tenant who has difficulties with a landlord.

Commonly used abbreviations in rental housing advertisements

A/C or AIR	Air-conditioning
ABP	All bills paid. Your utilities (water, electricity, gas, sewage, garbage collection) has been included in your rent. You only have to arrange for telephone service.
ASAP	As soon as possible
BR or BDRM	Bedroom
C-FAN	Ceiling fan
EFF	An efficiency apartment: one room for living, eating, and sleeping. The bathroom is separate
FP	Fireplace
4-Plex	A rental unit comprised of two ground floor or "garden" apartments and two second floor apartments
IMMED	Ready for immediate occupancy
INCL	Included in the rent
MO	Month
2/2 or 3/2	The first number indicates the number of bedrooms in the apartment. The second number indicates the number of bathrooms. Bathroom facilities include bathtub and/or shower, toilet (WC), and wash basin.
W/D	Washing machine and clothes dryer are provided.
W/D CONN	Washer and clothes dryer connections are available for your own machines.

Questions to ask when looking for off-campus housing

1. What is the rental price for the apartment? _____
2. How many bedrooms____/bathrooms____ does the apartment have?
3. How many tenants may (legally) share the apartment? _____
4. Where is the apartment? How close to campus? _____
5. What utilities are included in the rent?
 - ____heat

- ____a/c
 - ____electricity
 - ____cable hookup
 - ____waste/garbage collection
6. Is a roommate matching service offered? _____
 7. Is the lease an individual lease or a joint and several lease? _____
 8. What furniture and/or appliances are in the apartment? _____
 9. What amenities are included in the rent?
- ____swimming pool ____laundry room ____social room ____exercise room
 ____game room ____parking ____bicycle storage ____pest control service
 ____other _____
10. Where is the nearest laundry? _____
 11. Is there a direct bus service to the nearest grocery store? _____
 12. Who is responsible for maintenance and repairs of the apartment (landlord or tenant)? _____
 13. Is a short term lease available (semester, six month, nine month, summer only)? _____
 14. What is the price difference between a short term and a long term lease? _____
 15. Are sublets allowed? How are sublets handled? _____
 16. Is an application fee required? ____ What is the required security deposit? ____
 Is the application fee credited to the security deposit? _____
 17. For Families: Is there a play area for children? ____ How near is a public park? ____
 18. For families: Where one lives determines where your children will attend school.
 - What is the neighborhood school my child(ren) will attend? _____
 - How near is it? _____
 19. Is there a written move out policy? May I have a look at it? A copy? _____
 20. What is the pet policy? _____
 21. Additional notes on the apartment

Rental Procedures

1. Apartment managers usually require current evidence of income three times the price of the rent to qualify applicants. Have an extra copy of the financial guarantee (bank or sponsorship statement or your assistantship offer) used to obtain your visa as evidence of your ability to afford a year's rent. Your visa authorization document, I-20 or DS-2019, is not a financial guarantee. You do not have to show your immigration documents to your landlord for any reason.
2. Some apartment complexes will also require a social security number from the person who the apartment will be rented under. International students are not eligible for a social security number until they have secured employment and new international students are only eligible for on-campus employment.
3. As a guideline to your rental price range, calculate between one third and one fourth of the living expenses required by the International Student Services Office (ISSS) for your first year.
4. Spend time finding (an) apartment mate(s) to help you share the cost of an apartment.
 - Consult the academic department you will be entering, the international student organizations representing your region of the world, and rental advertisements posted in the International Office and elsewhere on-campus.
 - Compare smoking habits, study habits, dietary customs, etc. with the strangers with whom you propose living.
 - Discuss and agree to arrangements for handling bills, ordering telephone service, maintaining the apartment, entertaining guests, buying groceries, cooking, watching TV, and listening to the radio.
5. Look for an apartment that suits your budget and your needs
 - Ask many questions (such as those recommended in the next section)
 - Read the contract carefully
 - Check that the number of apartment mates with whom you plan to live is within the legal occupancy limit for the apartment. (All apartments have a legal occupancy limit.)
6. Make an application for the apartment of your choice. Apply for only one apartment. Ask if your application involves an application fee.
 - Is your application binding? This means that you are making a commitment to sign a lease if your application is approved.
 - You will be asked for a financial guarantee to prove that you can pay for the rent. Use the financial information from your personal, family, or sponsor's support statement or your assistantship offer.
7. When your application is approved you will be asked to pay a security deposit and the first month's rental fee.

- The security deposit will be held by the landlord during your rental of the apartment. When you terminate your lease, the landlord must send you an itemized bill for any unpaid charges due on the apartment and the remainder of your security deposit.
 - Your careful maintenance of the apartment and your timely payment of rent protect your chances of a refund from your security deposit.
- 8. Sign the lease contract with all your apartment mates.
- 9. Inspect the apartment and make a damage checklist within the first few days in the apartment.
 - Detail any damage and/or lack of cleanliness in the apartment.
 - Photographs of the apartment are a reasonable addition.
 - Deliver the damage check list, dated and signed by everyone living in the apartment, to the landlord or apartment manager as soon as possible to provide evidence of the condition in which you receive the apartment and for which your security deposit should not be charged when you terminate your lease.
- 10. Apply for electric and telephone service.
- 11. Give your new address to the University Registrar's Office, to assure that you will receive official University mailings, and the ISSS to ensure compliance with USCIS rules.
- 12. Ask the landlord or apartment manager to help you with any appliances unfamiliar to you.
- 13. Request maintenance and repairs in writing to your landlord or apartment manager. Keep a copy of your requests.
- 14. Pay your rent before the late penalty period each month. (Payment by registered mail, return receipt requested provides evidence of your timely payment.)
- 15. Renew or terminate your lease in writing before the renewal/termination date.