

# Top tips for students

## TOP TIPS FOR STUDENTS

With so many things to think about and organise, from taking care of finances and student loans to materials, books and equipment for studies, moving can seem quite daunting. To make the transition from home or halls to rental property as smooth as possible, mydeposits.co.uk has put together some simple advice:

### Cash you can't splash

Perhaps you have had a job over the summer to help you save up some cash for the coming term? Well, most landlords will require a deposit for the rental property, so be sure to keep the necessary money aside. They will normally ask for the deposit along with the first month's rent, which can be quite a large sum to part with up front. If you are sharing with others, make sure that you and your flatmates have calculated how much you will each need to contribute to the total and have budgeted adequately to have this money ready before you move in.

### Protection is a must

Did you know that by law your tenancy deposit money must be protected? There are three authorised schemes which your landlord can use. Be sure to check that your landlord is protecting your deposit and has let you have proof of protection. For example, mydeposits.co.uk provides a Deposit Protection Certificate which should be passed on to you.

### Safeguarding your deposit

Although the majority of students don't have any problems getting their deposit back at the end of their tenancy, you should be aware that any accidental spills or damage to the property will probably result in a deduction from your deposit. To minimise the chances of this happening, try to look after the property and keep it looking clean and tidy, as it was when you moved in. Also, read the terms of the contract to ensure you're not breaking any rules. There may be points about not putting nails into the walls and keeping the garden tidy. Parties aren't necessarily a no-no, but remember that any spills or stains could mean a deduction from the deposit when it's time to move out.

### "That scratch wasn't there before!"

As part of the moving in process, your landlord or letting agent will probably prepare an inventory to have an accurate record of the condition of the property and everything within it. You should receive a copy of the 'check-in' document which you will be asked to sign – be sure to ask your landlord/estate agent about this, if they do not mention it. Keep this document safe as you will need it when the time comes to 'check-out' at the end of the tenancy.

### Landlord/tenant communication

Although you are free to enjoy your home without interruption, you should be aware that your landlord may wish to conduct occasional checks on the property, perhaps every few months or so, particularly when you have just moved in. This is quite normal and is primarily for the landlord's peace of mind. They will however need to give you reasonable notice before they drop by.

You must also allow them entry to the property towards the end of the tenancy, so that they can conduct viewings with prospective tenants.

## Take care of your belongings

You'll probably be watching the purse strings quite closely as a student, so the last thing you will want is to shell out for new possessions as a result of loss or theft. From your laptop, mobile and iPod to the communal Xbox, student houses are like an Aladdin's Cave for thieves on the prowl. Avoid getting caught out, by organising contents insurance, which is your responsibility, and not your landlords.

Try not to be careless about leaving windows open and doors unlocked when you are out. Burglars are opportunistic and leaving a window or door open is like giving them an invitation to come in. Other precautions you can take include setting the radio and lights on a timer when you are out of the property for extended periods to make it seem as if someone is at home.

## What can you do about your deposit?

Being informed is the best place to start. To find out if your deposit is protected by mydeposits, simply visit the website and input a few details about the property.

A recommended read is the mydeposits Tenancy Deposit Protection Overview which gives you information about the law and the mydeposits scheme.

### A tenant's view

Gavin Thomas is a student at the University of Sheffield. His landlord protected his deposit with the mydeposits scheme. Shortly afterwards Gavin received a mydeposits *Deposit Protection Certificate and an Information for Tenants* guide from his landlord.

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By speaking to my landlord and reading the information from mydeposits, I have a good understanding of how everything works and will suggest the scheme to any future landlords.

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