



UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO RESIDENTIAL COLLEGES

Flatting Life at Otago





Information included in this resource was current at the time of printing in September 2016.

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A Word from the Vice-Chancellor

Although your time living in a Residential College will soon draw to a close, the opportunities to continue this relationship as a valued member of the College community are plenty. The experience you gained in your first year puts you in a unique position to help guide those who will follow.

There are many ways in which you can continue to contribute to your College whether through academic guidance, informal mentoring or continued participation in the inter-college sporting and cultural programme.

Already you have invested a great deal during your time at Otago and now, as future graduates, you have a personal interest and responsibility in helping to maintain our University's fine reputation.

The aim of this resource is to make you aware of the many services available to you both on campus and in the community, and I encourage you to make use of these to ensure that your flatting experience is an enjoyable one.

I wish you every success going forward.

Professor Harlene Hayne

Vice-Chancellor



Timeline

Most vacant flats and rooms are readily available from mid July. Some students will wait until they return before Semester 1 before they look for a room in a flat. It's important not to get caught up in the 'panic' of trying to find a flat early and instead, put the time into researching prospective properties and flatmates. Comprehensive flat lists are available anytime on the Student Accommodation Centre website and in printed form from early August.

Flatmates

Choose your flatmates very carefully. You may find yourself liable for their rent or damages or find them difficult to live with. It may transpire that the people with whom you enjoy socialising the most, may be the most unsuitable to live with.

Take the time to talk through your priorities with prospective flatmates to gauge suitability:

- What are their priorities in terms of heating, food, location, flatmates?
- What are they looking for in a property?
- Do they have any dietary requirements that might mean individual cooking?
- How similar are your budgets for rent, food, heating, extra expenses?

Budgeting – How much does it all cost?

On top of your weekly rent costs, you will need to buy all your groceries and cleaning products, pay for your electricity, internet, mobile phone, personal insurance, transport (if needed) and entertainment. If you are a group flatting for the first time, you may also have to pay power and internet connection fees. You and your flatmates will need to agree on a budget to cover these shared expenses.

If you are joining a pre-existing flat group, it is likely that these costs will already be set and you should enquire before agreeing to join. Although weekly rental rates can vary anywhere between \$95-160 per person for a 52 week lease, a reasonable average (for a 5 person flat) based on the Accommodation Centre website is \$120 per week.

Budget

Although only an indicative guide, this budget calculator can help to provide context around the income and expenditure of a flatting student.

Weekly Income

Student Allowance	(if applicable)	<input type="text"/>
Student Loan	(if applicable)	<input type="text"/>
Part Time Work	(if applicable)	<input type="text"/>
Other	(i.e. interest / family assistance)	<input type="text"/>
Total A		<input type="text"/>

Weekly Expenses (Flat)

Rent	(biggest weekly cost)	<input type="text"/>
Insurance	(car and contents)	<input type="text"/>
Combined Groceries	(breakfast, dinners, cleaning products)	<input type="text"/>
Lunches		<input type="text"/>
Electricity	(depends on number of flatmates)	<input type="text"/>
Total B		<input type="text"/>

Weekly Expenses – Personal

Personal Items	(toiletries / medications etc.)	<input type="text"/>
Transport	(bus / taxis / fuel)	<input type="text"/>
Printing / Stationery Items	(lecture notes / assignments)	<input type="text"/>
Clothing		<input type="text"/>
Mobile Phone	(ongoing plan / extra data)	<input type="text"/>
Total C		<input type="text"/>

Weekly Expenses (Entertainment)

Internet	(ongoing plan / extra data)	<input type="text"/>
Entertainment	(snacks / drinks / eating out etc.)	<input type="text"/>
Saving for Occasional Expenses	(transport home / doctor / etc.)	<input type="text"/>
Total D		<input type="text"/>

Grand Totals

<input type="text"/>	—	<input type="text"/>	=	<input type="text"/>
Total Income (A)		Total Expenses (B+C+D)		Surplus/ Shortfall

Looking for a flat

It's incredibly important to take the time to carefully look around prospective flats. Remember, whilst you might be flat-hunting in summer, you're also going to be sleeping, eating, socialising and studying there during the coldest nights of winter. The following are some important points to consider when searching for a flat:

Noise

- How soundproof is the flat? (Consider outside noise and between bedrooms).
- How close are the neighbours?
- Is there another flat upstairs? Can you hear them thumping around?
- Is there anything noisy nearby? Maybe a liquor outlet or a noisy intersection?
- How close is the lounge to the bedrooms? Will noise leakage be a problem?

Structure

- Does it look like a strong gust of wind might knock the place over?
- Do all the windows and doors close and seal properly?
- Are there any holes in the walls, ceiling, floors or doors?

Warmth

- How will you keep warm and how much will it cost you?
- Check the location of any heat pumps in proximity to living areas and bedrooms. Rooms with tall ceilings can be difficult and costly to heat.
- Fireplaces can be useful if you can get cheap firewood, but do require more frequent work to clean and set.
- Are there any large trees or structures blocking sunlight? How much natural light can you see?
- Weird lingering smells may indicate dampness.
- Look up at the walls and the ceiling – any peeling paint might also signal moisture.

Space

- How big of a room do you need to fit all of your belongings?
- Do the rooms have enough power points for all of your gadgets?
- If there's a closet sized room, who gets it? Will everyone pay the same price?
- Is the lounge the correct size and shape for everyone to sit and watch television comfortably?
- Is there plenty of fridge, freezer and cupboard space for everyone's food (this particularly applies if some members are cooking independently).
- Do you need off-street parking? Campus parking is very limited.

Keeping Clean

- Is the washing machine an antique?
- How will you wash your clothes? (A dryer can be very expensive to run).
- Look out for mould or slime in the corners of bathroom walls.
- Is the only toilet in the bathroom? Will this disrupt morning routines when everyone is getting ready at the same time?

Energy / Moisture

- Individual heaters can add many dollars to the energy bill. Instead, it is often much cheaper to heat the main living area with a heat pump or fire for all to enjoy.
- If your flat does decide to use electric heating, ensure the heater has been tested and certified and keep any clothing or furniture at least 1.5 metres clear.
- Discuss with your flatmates, the possibility of storing away a few extra dollars for power in the warmer months, to make things easier and more comfortable in winter.
- It's a good idea to impose a charge per load of \$1-\$2 per dryer load, both to cover the cost and to encourage alternative ways of drying clothing.
- It has been estimated that a poor choice of flat can potentially add an extra year to your degree due to sickness, respiratory problems and the inability to study in cold conditions.

Tenancy Agreements

Joint Tenancy is when you have signed one contract with other tenants. You will all be responsible for any rent owed or damage.

Individual Tenancy is when you are only liable for your own rent, damage and cleaning but the landlord may fill the rest of the property with tenants of their choosing. (ie. Studio Room)

Periodic Lease is not for a specific term. It continues until either the landlord or the tenant gives the correct notice to end it. The tenants should give three weeks notice to end the tenancy whereas the landlord is required to give three months written notice. The landlord may choose to raise the rent after six months.

Fixed Term Lease finishes on a specific date. There is no provision for either the landlord or the tenant to give notice to cancel early. This type of lease is the most common for students and gives security of tenure for the period of the lease. A fixed term lease also provides a commitment that the rent will not be increased unless an option to increase is included in the lease upon signing.

A fixed term lease may include the option to renew for an additional period. Once signed, the terms and conditions of this lease can not be arbitrarily changed.

Tenancy Tips

- When signing your Tenancy Agreement, ensure all flatmates are available to sign it, otherwise they may not share liability for any outstanding damage or costs.
- If you sign a Fixed Term Lease (with a start and end date) you cannot give notice to leave and the lease can only end by agreement between all tenants and the landlord or by an order of the Tenancy Tribunal.
- Your landlord can ask for 4 weeks' bond, 2 weeks' advance rent and if they are a Real Estate agent they may require a letting fee of 1 weeks' rent plus GST.
If the property has been advertised on the Student Accommodation Centre website, the real estate company will not charge a letting fee.
- Prior to signing, make sure you have enough flatmates to fill every room and that the landlord provides a property inspection report and a complete list of existing chattels.

Landlords & Flat Maintenance

The following are some important points to consider in order to build and maintain a positive relationship with your landlord:

- Find out if they live locally and how best to contact them.
- If the flat requires repairs, arrange with your flatmates who will liaise with the landlord and tradespeople for access to the flat.
- Remember, landlords must provide smoke alarms for your flat, which are there to save your life. As inconvenient as they may be when you burn your toast, do not remove them and remember to check them regularly.
- Get into the habit of locking your flat doors and check your personal contents insurance to see if your individual rooms require locks. Keep in mind that if your flat is not locked with windows closed, you may not be covered.
- Communication is key – if you are having problems with the property, talk to your landlord. They have years of experience and the majority have seen most problems before and may be able to offer you a solution.
- Landlords must give tenants at least 48 hours' notice before an inspection and this notice must be given within a maximum of 14 days prior to their visit. Inspections must take place between 8am and 7pm. Only one inspection may occur within any 4 week period.
- A list of further requirements can be found on the Tenancy Services website, provided by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment.

Domestic Matters

To keep on top of all of the domestic happenings within the flat and to ensure that all tasks are handed out evenly, it's usually a good idea to create a weekly "chore roster" at the very beginning of the year. This may cover everything from cooking, to cleaning a certain area of the house/bathroom, vacuuming or wiping down surfaces and removing rubbish.

Keeping up with this housework, however dull, will prevent you from having to scramble when the landlord announces that they're coming for a flat inspection!

Citizenship – Your Responsibility

It's important to remember that both on and off campus, you are a member of the University community and as such, are responsible for how students are seen in the wider community. Ultimately it is in your best interests to help protect and build the reputation of the University, as this will be reflected in your graduate status throughout your career.

Get to know your neighbours and look out for each other. Residential Colleges are always looking to develop their alumni relationships and to engage previous students - so look out for opportunities to mentor, tutor, join sports teams or volunteer. Not only will this benefit other students on and around campus, but provide valuable experience for your CV.

Most importantly, take the time to become familiar with what's expected of you through the University Code of Student Conduct.

A copy of this is available: otago.ac.nz/proctor/codeofconduct



Resource & Assistance Directory

During the year things might get tough and you may find that you need some support from others. Typical issues that arise include needing advice about University policies, your health, questions about gender or sexuality, landlord issues, finance problems, to name a few.

The following pages contain some University and local support agencies that we know can help you to find solutions or answers to your queries.



OUSA Student Support Centre

The OUSA Student Support Centre webpage is a comprehensive source of information for all things flatting. Some of the many resources available include:

- Budgeting calculator
- Information on bonds, tenancy agreements and insurance
- Tips to keep your flat warm and dry
- Dunedin suburb review
- Domestic chore roster template



The OUSA Student Support Centre exists to make your student experience as trouble-free as possible, providing free support and advocacy. We can help with any tenancy issues, even dealing with difficult landlords or flatmates. Drop in and see our friendly staff. If they can't help, they'll find someone who can.

OUSA Student Support Centre | 5 Ethel Benjamin Place | Dunedin
(03) 479 5449 | help@ousa.org.nz | ousa.org.nz/support/flatting

University Student Accommodation Centre

The Student Accommodation Office is a listing agent for local landlords, property managers and real estate companies. The following is a non-exhaustive list of some of the services they can provide:

- Comprehensive flat lists, these are available online anytime and in printed form from early August.
- Details about vacancies in flats.
- Extended hours in February when they're open 7 days a week.
- Flatting events in February to help students find flatmates or flats.
- Tenancy advice and additional information about help services available.

Student Accommodation Centre | 109 St David Street | Dunedin
(03) 479 5100 | accommodation@otago.ac.nz | otago.ac.nz/about/accommodation

Conflict Resolution and Mediation Services

As individual schedules get busier and the weather gets colder, flat tensions can start to build and are worth addressing sooner rather than later. This service is a low-level and informal way of resolving problems and addressing concerns, available to all members of the University community.

In addition, the service's website provides a number of useful suggestions to help mitigate any instances of conflict you may be experiencing within your flat.

University Mediator | 143 Union Street East | Dunedin
(03) 479 5679 | mediation@otago.ac.nz | otago.ac.nz/mediation

Student Health Services

Student Health is an invaluable and comprehensive range of primary health care services available to the University's student population. Areas include medical, nursing, counselling, psychiatry, health education and speciality clinics.

Some of the issues Student Health can help you with include:

- Illness Management
- Injury Management
- Minor Surgery
- Sexual Health / Contraception
- Psychological Health
- Travel Medicine
- Sports Medicine
- IUD Placement

Student Health | Cnr Walsh & Albany Streets | Dunedin
Freephone: 0800 479 821 | otago.ac.nz/studenthealth



Proctor's Office / Campus Watch

The Proctor and Deputy Proctor have direct management control of the Campus Watch teams which provide a 24/7 presence on the Campus and surrounding streets, making ours one of the safest University Campuses in the country.

Campus Watch is a diverse group of people readily available to offer assistance and advice when or wherever it is required. They act as a 'walking information booth', helping to steer students in the right direction on any number of flatting related issues including budgeting, rubbish procedures, health problems, tensions with neighbours. The role of Campus Watch is mainly pastoral - meaning they are there to help and support our students.

What you need to know when throwing a party

Get in touch with Campus Watch to find out what your responsibilities are in this regard. Taking proactive steps can help you to avoid unwanted visits from the Noise Control or the Police – a useful list of things to check is provided on the Proctor's Office website.

Some key things to remember:

- The Otago Regional Council has a regulation banning all fires in Dunedin City (including braziers). The fine is \$300 payable by residents of the flat.
- Keep track of who's attending your party - you're responsible for their behaviour while they're at your place and will be left dealing with any potential damage they cause!
- It is your responsibility to ensure that any glass is kept onsite and properly recycled.
- Look after any of your friends or guests who over-indulge in alcohol.
- Local thieves like to party too! The more people you invite, the easier it becomes for unwanted guests to slip in unnoticed.
- As a hosting flat, it is also your responsibility to ensure the safe behaviour of your guests, which includes making sure no one has roof access. Don't put yourself, your flatmates and guests in danger by allowing high-risk activities at your place.

Vacant Flat Registration

If you are leaving your flat unattended over the December/January period or during semester breaks, Campus Watch is available to check in and to help ensure that the flat's contents remain safe and secure. Print off and fill in the registration form from the Proctor's Office website, and deliver to Campus Watch a week before your departure.

Looking for safe and accessible fire-arm storage?

For a nominal fee, Campus Watch can provide Police approved "A" Category firearm storage. Students are required to produce their firearms licence when dropping off or uplifting their firearms.

Proctor's Office/Campus Watch | St David Complex
University Campus | Dunedin
24 hour Control Room: 0800 479 5000
proctor@otago.ac.nz | otago.ac.nz/proctor | campus.watch@otago.ac.nz



Media Advice

Every now and again you may be approached by representatives from the media who will ask you to contribute to stories that they are working on. If you are willing to take part in their story, then it is your prerogative to do so.

However, if you're unsure of what to do, and think you might need practical advice then please call the media office.

Meanwhile, here are some basic pointers:

- Ask the reporter for their full name and the name of the news organisation they are working for.
- Ask them what their story is about.
- Remember that you do not have to answer questions if you do not wish to.
- Answering by email is one way to help ensure that stories are more accurate than an off-the-cuff conversation.
- If a reporter comes to your front door, which is your private property, and you do not wish to speak to them you can politely ask them to leave.
- If they do not leave and you feel intimidated please call Campus Watch on 0800 479 5000 (or x5000 from a University phone).

University Media Office

(03) 479 5452 or (03) 479 8263 | media.office@otago.ac.nz



University Performance Coach

Personal Performance Coaching is practical and action based, enabling you to examine your current challenges and find the means to manage and overcome whatever it is that is holding you back from achieving your academic goals.

Whether these issues are around time management, procrastination, identifying resources or building confidence – this free service is a great place to start. Sessions tend to last around 50 minutes and focus on strategies to help you progress your studies.

Brian Johnston | Personal Performance Coach
(03) 479 8461 | brian.johnston@otago.ac.nz
otago.ac.nz/study/phd/performancecoaching

Rape Crisis

Rape Crisis Dunedin is a non-profit, community agency run by a number of dedicated women – paid workers and volunteers – who support female survivors of sexual violence progress towards healing. Rape Crisis is not a crisis-only service.

Many of our clients are survivors of historical rape; this organisation provides counselling to women who have suffered from sexual violence, whether it has occurred recently or in the past. The women at Rape Crisis Dunedin are of varying ethnicities and come from a variety of backgrounds.

All Rape Crisis workers have been trained specifically to work in the area of sexual violence and are constantly updating and developing their skills and knowledge through training workshops. All workers regularly attend supervision to ensure that they are providing the best possible service for clients, while obtaining the support they need.

Rape Crisis Dunedin | 1st Floor | Corso Building
111 Moray Place | Dunedin
(03) 479 1592 | rcrisis@xtra.co.nz | rapecrisisdunedin.org.nz



Healthline

Healthline is a free service, staffed by experienced registered nurses and available to help 24 hours, 7 days a week.

Healthline nurses are specialists in assessing and advising over the phone and can help if you're:

- Feeling unwell - but are not sure whether you need to see a doctor.
- Needing some urgent advice about a friend who might be sick.
- Have a general enquiry regarding health and wellbeing.

If you need to speak to someone in your own language, Healthline can usually arrange this using an interpreting service.

Available 24/7 | 0800 611 116

Lifeline Aotearoa

The transition into flatting can sometimes be stressful and whether you're having trouble overcoming problems with a flatmate, coping with a heavy workload or financial pressure, or would just like to talk to someone, Lifeline is available.



Lifeline Aotearoa offers free, confidential support 24/7 from volunteers who have undergone world class counselling training and supervision, providing a caring and professional service to a wide range of people in need.

24/7 Helpline: 0800 543 354

Queer Support

OUSA Queer Support understands that it can be daunting to be confronted with labels such as gay, lesbian, bi, trans and 'queer' and offers a comprehensive support network for students finding out about and coming to terms with gender and sexual identity.

Dedicated to making the University of Otago one of the most inclusive tertiary institutions in New Zealand, Queer Support's resources include peer support, advocacy, discussion groups, a comprehensive library and confidential one on one appointments with the Queer Support Coordinator.

OUSA Queer Support | 5 Ethel Benjamin Place | Dunedin
 (03) 479 5445 | q.support@ousa.org.nz | ousa.org.nz/support/queer-support

Transition to Flatting Self-Assessment Questionnaire

The transition from the comfort of a Residential College to flatting is exciting but can also be a source of apprehension. As such it is important that you feel informed and supported in order to make this transition as rewarding as possible.

After having attended your College flatting information session and having read this guide, take a moment to fill in the table below. This should help you to identify areas in which you will need to seek out more information and the resources you will use to do so.

Remember that Residential College Staff can help to point you in the right direction where necessary.

Area	Topic	I am confident	I am OK	I would like further information	Follow-up
Choosing a flat	Location				
	How much?				
Legal issues	Choosing flatmates				
	Tenancy agreements				
	Rights & responsibilities				
	Solving disputes				
Finance	Bonds				
	Insurance				
	Budgeting				
Living together	Sharing costs				
	Flatting agreements				
	Solving conflict				
Healthy living	Sharing chores				
	Eating on a budget				
	Keeping warm				
Good citizens	Hygienic practices				
	Rubbish				
	Noise control				
Support services	Bullying & harassment				
	Financial				
	Campus Watch				
	Mental Health				
	Academic				



Last word...

As you depart your residential college experience, remember that you are still an alumnus of your college and should continue to represent its values around good citizenship, academic excellence and fair play.

You will always be part of the history of your college and we know from talking to former residents just how special these experiences have been, and that the friends made, seem to last a lifetime.

You also continue to have the privilege of representing your college in the Inter-College Sporting and Inter-College Cultural competitions and should keep in touch with your college on how you can do that, either in the core residents' team or by forming your own alumni teams to participate in the many sporting and cultural events held every year.

Dunedin is a true University city full of young vibrant people like you, adding to and evolving that wonderful culture.

Make the best of your time, be good neighbours, look out for each other and be caring flatmates.

All the very best in the next stage of your Otago experience! Flattling!

James Lindsay

Director | Accommodation Services

Quick Reference Contacts

OUSA Student Support Centre	03 479 5449
University Accommodation Centre	03 479 5100
Campus Watch / Proctor's Office	0800 479 5000
University Media Office	03 479 5452
University Mediator	03 479 5679
Student Health	0800 479 821
University Performance Coach	03 479 8461
Healthline	0800 611 116
Rape Crisis	03 474 1592
Lifeline Aotearoa	0800 543 354
OUSA Queer Support	03 479 5445
Community Law Centre	03 474 1922
University Information Centre	0800 80 80 98
Tenancy Services New Zealand	tenancy.govt.nz

For further information contact:
Student Accommodation Centre
University of Otago
PO Box 56
Dunedin 9054
Tel 64 3 479 6510
Email accommodation@otago.ac.nz
otago.ac.nz/accommodation

