

STUDENT STREET • guide



Your essential student guide to living off campus
from your Students' Union

essexstudent.com/community





Living off campus again next year?

let's

help you find the perfect place.

StudentLets is the new house-finding service from your Students' Union - simply register with us online or in person and we'll help you find a place that's right for you.

Find out more at essesxstudent.com/studentlets

studentlets

UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX
students' union

welcome



Hi, I'm Ashley, Essex Students' Union's VP Welfare and Community.

As your elected representative I work with the local community to deliver the best possible experience for students off campus, while also making sure students have a positive impact on the lives of our more settled neighbours.

For most students coming to university, it means living in private accommodation for the first time, a liberating and exciting experience, though equally as daunting and problematic. This simple guide aims to make the transition off campus and into the local community as easy and stress free as possible.

We've crammed this guide full of all the things you told us you needed. Top tips on renting, info on local amenities and how to keep yourself and your belongings safe, alongside all you need to know about how to get involved in volunteering and community schemes.

Most importantly, enjoy your time living off campus! Colchester is a great place to live and nothing compares to the freedom you gain living in your own place.

Don't forget I'm here to help you, feel free to contact me any time at vpwelfare@essex.ac.uk

Thanks

Ashley

the big move

top tips on moving from halls to house

For most students, being at university is the first time you'll be in private rented accommodation. So, first thing first, make sure you get the big move right!



Certain things are written into law and can be legally enforced whether they are stated in your contract or not

Take photos of every room

It's essential that you record the original condition of the house when you move in.

Make sure you have an inventory

If you've been given one make sure it's correct, if not notify the landlord of any discrepancies asap. If you're not given one make a note of anything broken or missing and inform the landlord.

Test fire and smoke alarms

Not just once but regularly, and don't take the batteries out!



Take meter readings

Call your gas and electricity supplier as soon as you move in to give them meter readings. Eon supply most of the Colchester area. Share the responsibility by naming all of the tenants on the bill.

Make sure the property has a gas safety certificate

It's the law, so insist on it!

Make sure you have a TV License

Sign up online at www.tvlicensing.co.uk. If you pay collective rent you only need one, if you pay individually you all need one.

If you've paid a deposit it should be protected

If you don't know what scheme it's in find out, the landlord has to let you know within 14 days. By law all deposits should be protected. For more information on these schemes check out essexstudent.com/studentstreet



Council Tax

If you're a full time student head to the Registry and get a Council Tax certificate because you don't have to pay!

Check the property's security

Check the locks on doors and windows, the vast majority of student targeted burglaries are walk in burglaries. For more info on keeping your stuff safe check out the crime pages.

Insurance

Get Covered! It can cost so little and save you so much in the long term. Endsleigh Insurance were set up by the National Union of Students and cater for all student needs. Check them out at endsleigh.co.uk

Meet your neighbours

It'll go a long way to keeping your house safe when you're away and it's just nice. Don't forget to let them know if you plan to have a party or any kind of large gathering that might cause a disturbance.

Utopia!

Set out a rota, lay down ground rules and make sure everyone in the house is happy with everything. For the best year it's best to get off to a good start.



your rights

be aware of how the law protects you

If you think your rights have been breached do not withhold rent, this may cause further legal problems. Contact the [SU Advice Centre](#) for guidance.

To have 'quiet enjoyment' of the property, so no random inspections or entering without your permission.

To not be evicted except after the correct legal procedures have been pursued.

To take legal action against the landlord if they break the terms of contract or prevent 'quiet enjoyment' of the property.

A safe and inhabitable property is the right of every tenant. Check that the property has been accredited, or at least possesses a gas safety certificate.

All repairs and damage that are the responsibility of the landlord must be carried out promptly.

The name and address of your landlord must be accessible to you even if you rent via a letting agency.

Information about your tenancy must be accessible, things like tenancy start date, when rent is payable and when it could possibly change.

Certain things are written into law and can be legally enforced whether they are stated in your contract or not

your responsibilities

win your landlords love by sticking to these simple rules

If you think you're being asked to do anything unlawful or outside of your responsibility do not withhold rent, this may cause further legal problems. Contact the [SU Advice Centre](#) for guidance.

Pay your rent on time and in full.

If, for some reason, you are struggling to pay, talk to your landlord. Ignoring a problem will just make it worse.

Maintain the property

to the standard it was in when you moved in. This includes keeping it clean and not breaking anything. Any structural or depreciation damage must be repaired by the landlord, but you must inform them of any problems.

Use the property in a reasonable way,

so don't try and recreate Sub Zero or turn your flat into a bakery, don't make too much noise and don't be messy!

Be a good neighbour

by keeping the noise to minimum and if you want to hold a party let them know. Put your rubbish out on the right day, and if you see your neighbour struggling with their shopping give them a hand.

Pay the bills

associated with you and your property. Water, gas, electricity etc

Don't leave

for an extended period of time. Doesn't mean you can't go on holiday but let your landlord know if you're going away for a long period out of term time for example.

Smoking

is one of the main reasons why students don't get their deposits back. If you rent a no smoking property do not smoke! You are also responsible for visitors.

With independence comes a little responsibility. Be a good tenant and the perfect neighbour!

Clean & Green!

Rubbish and recycling in Colchester...

If you live in a flat or a large block of student accommodation you may not be able to recycle from home. To find your nearest recycling bank visit recyclenow.com



Paper, Card and Plastic

In Colchester, recyclable paper, card and plastic waste is collected in clear sacks provided to every household by the council. Your recycling bag should be tied shut and placed on the boundary of your property by 7am on the morning of your collection day.

If you've run out of clear recycling sacks, or you move in and there aren't any, you can order more by calling 01206 282700 or emailing recycling@colchester.gov.uk



Metal Cans, Bottles and Foil

Metal food and drink cans, glass bottles and foil are recycled in green boxes supplied by the council to every household. Your recycling box should be shut and placed on the boundary of your property by 7am on the morning of your collection day.

If you move into a house and don't have one, you can order by calling 01206 282700 or emailing recycling@colchester.gov.uk

Rubbish - Black bags

Colchester doesn't have wheelie bins, they use black rubbish bags.

Your refuse bag should be tied shut and placed on the boundary of your property by 7am on the morning of your collection day.

There are a number of things you can do to minimise the waste you produce:

- Buy loose vegetables
- Take a bag with you when shopping
- Repair things if they can be mended
- Donate materials for art/textile projects to schools
- Donate reusable goods to charity

To find out your collection day visit essexstudent.com/recycling

Bulk and Electrical Waste

Electrical
Retailers of portable batteries have obligations to take back waste portable batteries from the public. At the Campus Shop you can drop off your old batteries, mobile phones and print cartridges for recycling.

Bulky and hazardous waste

Things like sofas, electrical, beds and fridges can be taken away by the council for a small charge. If it's potentially harmful to the environment, or too big for the bin men, then you'll need to arrange a special collection. For more information on special collections visit essexstudent.com/recycling

Get recycling! Recycle your cans, card and plastic, it's so simple and it makes a real difference

Crime & Safety

Keep safe and sound, remember these simple tips...

Remember!

Who has popped in, while you have popped out?
Have you locked your door?

Remember!
Always call 999
in the case of an
emergency



Student Crime

Around 20% of students become a victim of crime, don't become one of them. If you are renting your property, good home security is very important to prevent burglary. Burglary has dropped over the past ten years, but it is still a risk if your property is not properly secured.

Responsibility for home security is shared between you and your landlord.

The landlord has the responsibility to provide security to the overall site, incorporating the building, to reduce the risk of entry by an intruder, and to include a security lock to the main entrance to a shared property.

It's your responsibility as an occupier to maintain, monitor and use any security features in the property.

Security Tips

- Dead lock your door
- Lock your windows
- If you have one, set your alarm every time you leave the property
- Use timer switches when you are on holiday or out for the evening
- Don't leave your possessions in plain sight
- Don't let anyone you don't recognize follow you into your block
- Make sure you can safely escape from your home in the event of fire.

Get insured! Make sure your possessions are covered. Endsleigh are a company formed from the NUS and tailor their services specifically to students. Find out more at endsleigh.co.uk

Personal Safety

Be streetwise – advice to keep you safe

- Do not hitchhike or accept lifts from strangers or unlicensed Taxis
- Plan your route there and back. Avoid short cuts through unlit or deserted areas
- Try to walk in groups
- Let someone know where you are going and your time of return
- Have keys ready – so that you can get into your house or car quickly
- Be aware of surroundings – wearing headphones etc may prevent you from hearing traffic or somebody approaching behind you
- If you think you are being followed, go to the nearest public place and **call 999**
- If you are confronted, use your alarm (available from **SU Advice Centre**) and shout to attract attention

Be aware

16 – 24 year olds are a very vulnerable group. They are susceptible to crime, by their life-style.

Useful numbers

Important Telephone Contact Nos.

- Emergency Services – **999**
- Essex Police (Non – Emergency) **0300 333 4444**
- Crime Stoppers – **0800 555 111**



Be a super neighbour!

Top tips to make you the perfect member of the community



Remember!

If you do experience problems with neighbours, it's always best to try and talk to them first to resolve any differences amicably. Failing this, contact the **SU Advice Centre** on **01206 874034**.

Get to know your neighbours

Just introduce yourself. It will make it much easier to sort out any problems that may arise. They'll also be more likely to look out for you and your property.

Shhh!

Be considerate when coming back at night. After a good night out and a little alcohol we can all be a little noisy, but please remember to keep noise to a minimum.

Be a tidy tenant

Put your rubbish out on the right day, you can find the collection dates at essexstudent.com/recycling. Don't leave large items on the street, get them collected by calling the council, all the info is on the Rubbish/recycling page.

Pump down the bass

Low frequency noise can carry further than other sounds. Try to position speakers off the floor and away from partition walls.

All you need to know about getting around and where best to go!

Paper thin walls

If you are living in a terraced or semi-detached house, remember that the walls may be quite thin so every day loud noises might be heard by your neighbours.

Party responsibly

If you are planning on having a house party, let your neighbours know. Try to come up with a mutually acceptable time to turn the music down/off.

Park considerately

Don't leave your car blocking a neighbour's drive way, or somewhere that hinders traffic.

Get involved!

Give something back to the local area. Get involved with a vTeam volunteering project or become a Community Champion.

We offer confidential and impartial advice on a range of subjects, including the following issues:

1 Academic

Course changes, illness, progress, representation, disciplinary, academic offences, appeals

2 Immigration

Visa renewals through the Home Office Batch Scheme

3 Welfare

Free welfare phone calls, free condoms, pregnancy tests £2, security alarms £1

4 Housing

Contracts, repairs, disputes, leaving early, insurance, deposits

5 Legal

Consumer rights, solicitors, small claims court, representation: where appropriate

6 Money

Loans: hardship loans, student loans, tuition fees
Access to learning funds: forms and information
Benefits: who's entitled to what and how much
Nhs charges: forms and information

Contact us anytime...

The Students' Union Advice Centre, Square 3
Open Monday-Friday 10am-4pm
Telephone **01206 874034**
Email suadvice@essex.ac.uk
Visit essexstudent.com/advice

SU
advice
centre

we'll be
there for
you...

UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX
Students' union

Be the change you want to see

Make a difference to student lives by becoming an **SU Community Champion!**

Find out more and apply here today!

STUDENT STREET

essexstudent.com/community



your community

Be the change you want to see

What is a Community Champion?

Community Champions are students that volunteer within the local community to support students off-campus and deliver real change for the benefit of everyone.

The Champions are trained extensively to;

- Support you with safety and security, housing and the environment.
- Support and represent students living off campus.
- Consult with residents and make positive changes.

- Expand volunteering projects to more effectively target community need.

Feel free to contact your Community Champions with your thoughts, problems or questions. You can find their contact details at essexstudent.com/community

Volunteer for the community

At the core of the Community Champions scheme are the dedicated and hardworking volunteers, and we're looking for more! You can gain so much from being a Community Champion, including confidence, friends, the opportunity to manage your own projects, knowledge of volunteering and the community, and an awesome addition to your CV! Become a Community Champion today! Visit essexstudent.com/community for more information.



If you're interested in becoming a Community Champion visit... essexstudent.com/community

Volunteering

Have a positive impact on your local community

To find out more about the volunteering opportunities available, or to sign up today, visit essexstudent.com/vteam



The vTeam has changed!

vTeam has been created with the aim to support students to volunteers, by facilitating meetings with external organisations, sorting out CRB checks and providing funding for reasonable expenses.

vTeam are happy to work with groups or individuals to build customised projects based on needs.

Volunteer in your local area!

We'd like to support students who want to develop regular projects or one off events (e.g. presentations about Chinese New Year in schools) in their local areas in order to improve the quality of life of its residents! So don't hesitate to approach us with your idea!

Increase your employability!

Volunteering is a great boost for your CV! We're rewarding our volunteers with an official certificate endorsed by the VC and SU president. Using our passport scheme, all voluntary hours are recorded over and academic year.

Check out some of the exciting volunteering opportunities happening in your local community.

- **Einstein** - Working with schools to provide science demo's, using household objects
- **Golden Age** - Spending time with elderly people e.g playing Nintendo Wii games
- **Time Travellers** - Supporting young children by providing extra help with history studies by comparing historical events with tv/movies
- **Allotment** - Growing fruit and veg with 4 year olds and generally digging things up!

PICK ME UPS

PRESCRIPTION PICKUP SERVICE AND OVER THE COUNTER MEDICINE

NOW AVAILABLE ON CAMPUS!

LOCATED IN THE MINI MALL ON SQUARE 3

UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX
Students' union

Useful contacts

Money

SU Advice Centre

01206 874034
suadvice@essex.ac.uk

Free advice on your consumer rights, reclaiming tax and TV licensing. Information on hardship loans and funding options.

Student Support

01206 872366
sso@essex.ac.uk

Free advice on student finance, hardship funding, money management and debt resolution. Information on welfare benefits, fee status and council tax exemption.

Citizens Advice Bureau

0870 121 2033
citizensadvice.org.uk

Free advice on money, legal and other issues.

Accommodation & renting

SU Advice Centre

01206 874034
suadvice@essex.ac.uk

Free advice relating to private sector renting.

Can also advise on University accommodation.

Shelter

0808 800 4444
shelter.org.uk

National charity that works on homelessness and bad housing.

Student Lets

01206 878978
Kathryn.r@essex.ac.uk

The SU's student focused letting agency. Free of charge to students.

Immigration

SU Advice Centre

01206 874034
suadvice@essex.ac.uk

Free advice on Tier4 and Post Study Work visas.

Student Support

01206 872366
sso@essex.ac.uk

Free advice on student Immigration matters not covered by the SU Advice Centre. On-line enquiry form at www.essex.ac.uk/immigration

Local Issues

Colchester Borough Council

01206 282222
colchester.gov.uk

Health

NHS Direct

0845 4647
nhsdirect@nhs.uk

The national health line, providing expert health advice and information.

Campus Health Centre

01206 794484
rowhedgesurgery.co.uk

Medical service provider on campus.

Open Road

Substance abuse support
0844 499 1323

A registered charity that provides support for anyone affected by drugs and alcohol

Medical Emergency ONLY

999 and ask for an ambulance

Legal

Essex Law Clinic

01206 874034
suadvice@essex.ac.uk

Free initial legal advice to members of the public, students and University staff.

Citizens Advice Bureau

0870 121 2033
citizensadvice.org.uk

Free advice on money, legal and other issues.

If you've got a problem but you don't know who best to talk to feel free to contact:

Travel

Traveline

0871 200 22 33
travelinesoutheast.org.uk

Up-to-date information on local public transportation.

National Rail Enquiries

08457 48 49 50
nationalrail.co.uk

Information on schedules, delays and fares across the national rail services.



Ashley
at vpwelfare@essex.ac.uk



or **The Advice Centre** at
suadvice@essex.ac.uk

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University of Essex Students' Union
produced this guide in partnership with:

