



The Student Accommodation Code

The Student Accommodation Code has been designed to protect your rights to safe, good quality university accommodation, wherever you are studying, and to make sure you get the best out of your time living in university or college residences. It outlines everything you should expect from your university-managed accommodation, as well as your responsibilities as tenants.

Not all university residences are covered by The Code – to find out which buildings are covered, please visit www.TheSAC.org.uk

The Code protects your rights to:

- A healthy, safe environment.
- Timely repairs and maintenance.
- A clean, pleasant living environment.
- A formal, contractual relationship with your landlord.
- Access to health and wellbeing services.
- A living environment free from anti-social behaviour.

A healthy, safe environment

The Code makes sure that your accommodation is signed up to all necessary health and safety standards.

Fire and utility rules

Staff at your residence should be fully prepared for emergencies such as fires and electrical faults by clearly displaying health and safety information, testing fire alarms and making sure fire exits are clear. Heating, power, lighting and water should all come as standard in your accommodation and drinkable water should be clearly marked.

Fittings, furnishings and facilities

Your room should be fitted with a bed, a mattress, a place to study, a chair, curtains/blind, clothes storage and a rubbish bin. All kitchen, bedroom and bathroom facilities should be in good working order and there should be enough showers and kitchen facilities for the number of students using them. Your university or college is also obliged to provide you with a place to collect mail.

Security

You want to feel safe in your new home which is why all main entrances, individual rooms and accessible windows must be securable. Someone's bound to lose their keys at some point, so details of procedures for lost keys/access cards should be included in your welcome pack.

Your role in staying safe

As well as ensuring that your accommodation is signed up to all necessary health and safety standards, The Code also outlines a few things that you should do to help stay safe and secure. This includes making make sure that you don't leave downstairs windows open for intruders and that you know where your nearest fire exit is.

Timely repairs and maintenance

Your university or college is responsible for ensuring your accommodation, including outside areas, are in a good state of repair and should make sure you know how to report a problem.

Repair and maintenance work should be carried out as quickly and effectively as possible. Urgent work should be carried out within 24 hours, and you should be given seven days notice for planned work. No one wants the added distraction of workmen during revision time, so wherever possible, your university or college should arrange for repair and maintenance work to take place outside key exam times.

In the event that you or any of your guests damage your accommodation, you should report the problem and be told the total costs and charges for the repair work as soon as possible.

A clean, pleasant living environment

Your accommodation should offer good heating, lighting, hot water and ventilation – all that goes without saying. In addition, you should also be made aware of:

- When regular rubbish collections take place.
- How you can recycle domestic waste (provided your local authority offers this).
- How you can be energy efficient in your building.
- Where you can find car, bicycle and motorcycle parking.

A formal contractual relationship with your landlord

As a tenant, you should have a formal contract with your university or college, as your landlord. This should outline your landlord's responsibilities to you, as well as your responsibilities as a tenant.

Your right to information

As a tenant you should be able to access information about your accommodation including:

- Practical things such as cleaning schedules, laundry services, parking facilities and other services your accommodation offers; how to report a problem and what to do if you lose your keys.
- Financial information such as payment schedules, costs that you could incur, discounts that are available and damage deposits.
- Technical information such as whether the university or college's insurance covers your belongings, the terms of your contract and access rights to your study or bedroom.

At the beginning and end of your tenancy

When you arrive at your new accommodation you should receive an induction briefing or meeting and contact details for people who can help if you have any problems. On leaving, your university or college should return any deposits held within 28 days of the end of the tenancy.

Access to health and wellbeing services

It can be tough living away from home, so it's good to know that your residence will provide information about the welfare support, financial advice and counselling services available. You should also have access to emergency out of hours support and be encouraged to register with local health services and a GP.

A living environment free from anti-social behaviour

No one likes anti-social behaviour, and your residence should have procedures in place to help make sure everyone is treated with respect.

How to address any issues you have with your accommodation

In all instances issues should be raised with individual housing offices at the university or college. Contact details for accommodation offices can be found on The Student Accommodation Code website www.TheSAC.org.uk

In the event that an issue cannot be resolved locally with the accommodation staff, you should use the individual university or college formal complaints procedure.



Finally, if you have tried both of these routes and are still not happy with the end result, you can get in touch with the OIA which is the independent body set up for student complaints.

For more information, go to: <http://www.oiahe.org.uk>