Off-Campus Housing

Navigating the Kingston Rental Market

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Off-Campus Living Advisor (OCLA)

What does the OCLA do?

- Offers guidance in navigating all aspects of Off-Campus Life
- Does not offer legal advice, but can assist with any issues you may be having and help with understanding the RTA
- Can suggest tips to living independently or with others, housing, your rental search, understanding the RTA and your lease agreement, conflict resolution amongst housemates, events and things to do around Kingston



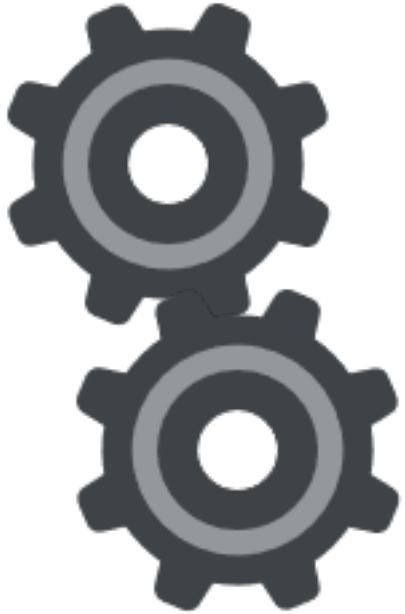
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If you are comfortable sharing; what have you heard about Kingston housing, housing searches, landlords, etc.?

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The Rental Process

1. Decide what you are looking for and who you will be living with
2. Prepare for search
3. Begin search
4. View properties
5. Submit application
6. Review and sign lease upon approval
7. Prepare for move in
8. Key pick up



Picking Your Housemates

- Your best friends might not be the best people for you to live with
- Find housemates with similar schedules, work ethic, priorities and goals
- Keep open lanes of communication, inform your housemates of your expectations, priorities, and compromises
- Establish House Rules, Goals, and Agreements between you and your housemates
- Utilize resources and documents on the OCLA page
- Understand Joint and Several Liability

Common problems between housemates

- Managing Chores (bathroom cleanliness, dishes, laundry)
- Partners or Friends staying over too often
- Garbage and Recycling
- Excessive noise or parties
- Managing utilities



All problems can be resolved with *open and calm* communication.
Making sure you have selected the right housemates also goes a long way to avoid problems

Picking Your Housemates

Solutions

- The first and most simple way to avoid conflict: select the right housemates
- Establish Rules and expectations early
- Create a chore schedule, you can also add some kind of game/point system or incentive for consistent completion of chores
- If a partner is staying over too much, talk to each other. Come to a compromise and/or schedule where the couple rotates houses

Open and Calm Communication is your most effective tool

Starting your housing search

- ***Pick the right housemates to live with***

- Establish and know your spending **budget** (Rents can range from $750 - $1200+ per room – plus utilities or inclusive)

- **Wants and Needs**; distance from campus, budget, room requirements, house specifications (inclusive, number of rooms/bathrooms), parking, etc.

- Talk to your parents or guardians (If applicable) about the possibility of needing a **co-signer or guarantor** and insurance

- **Be ready**; Questions for the landlord, know the application process, Proof of enrollment, know your rights



Housing Pricing

- **Room in a shared home** -$750-1300
- **One Bedroom** -$1400 – 2400+
- **Two Bedrooms** -$1500 – 2400+
- **Three Bedrooms** -$1700-$3200+
- **Four Bedrooms+** -$2200-$4800+



What determines rental cost?

- Location
- Utilities
- Number of rooms/bathrooms
- Finishes of the property
- Amenities included (Laundry, parking, dishwasher, etc.)
- Supply & demand – Kingston's vacancy rate

Costs to consider



- Rent
- Utilities
- Internet
- Living Expenses (Groceries, Laundry, Transit)
- Cell phone bill and Subscriptions (Netflix, Prime, Crave, Food boxes, etc.)
- Initial costs (Furniture, housewares, etc.)
- Tenant Insurance

Preparing for a showing

- Research the landlord, property, and area
- Know the landlord's application process and have documents ready
- Prepare questions to ask the landlord
- Schedule the viewing promptly
- Maintain a professional demeanor – arrive on time

Do not rush into anything

Once a lease is signed, you are locked into that property. Do your due diligence *before* signing

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What to look for during a showing

- Fully inspect the properties condition – inside and out (Missing cabinet knobs or doors, holes in the wall, overall dirty, water stains in the ceiling, broken windows, missing screens on windows)

- Do you see any signs or evidence of pests? (Rat/mouse traps under the sink or in basement, bugs)

- If you are able to, talk to the current tenants to ask them about problems with the house, or ask them about the landlord. You can also request to contact the tenants through the landlord





Avoiding Housing Fraud/Scams

- Research the property- look up the property online, look for rental listings, posts online about the property
- Ask to speak to current/previous tenants
- Research the landlord- is it a company? Is it a private individual? Search their name online and see if anything comes up
- Always view the property- virtually or in person
- Suspicious activity? Contact the OCLA



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When to start your search

- October/November are not the end all be all
- Many properties will come available January, February and March
- Tenants are only required to give a minimum of sixty days notice
- Most leases are 1 year leases, from May to May, but you may also find Sept to Sept, or Sept to April

Do not feel pressured or rushed

Difference between rushing and being efficient

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Where to start your search

There are many different websites, listing services and property management companies. Regularly use all of them to ensure you are seeing all available properties.

Contact the Off-Campus Living Advisor for a list of resources

Download the Resource Document

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In Ontario, landlords can ask for a security (damage) deposits

True or False

Submitting Applications

Landlords and Property Managers will generally ask for:

- Application through website/PDF/paper
- Verification of Enrollment (Proof of enrollment, Student ID, Confirmation letter, etc)
- Guarantor form signed
- References
- Deposit- You are **NOT** required to submit a deposit when applying. Wait until approval and reading the lease before money is exchanged. **Never send money without seeing the unit** or getting the full go ahead from ALL housemates.

Not all Property Managers and/or Landlords have the same requirements.
Submit your application together. Know your rights!

Lease Agreements

The Landlord has approved your application and asks for your deposit:

- Ask to see the lease agreement before sending any money
- In Ontario, the Landlord ***MUST*** use the Ontario Standard Lease agreement.
- Landlords have the right to attach an additional terms and conditions clause on the Standard lease; read through it and make sure there is nothing strange and/or illegal
- In Ontario, Landlords ***CANNOT*** legally ask for First and Last month's rent. They can only ask for one month's rent, often applied to the last month

Did you know that the Off-Campus Living Advisor can assist in navigating your lease agreement and/or your application process?

You sign a one year lease agreement that expires on April 30th.

If you don't sign a new lease, you need to move out on that date.

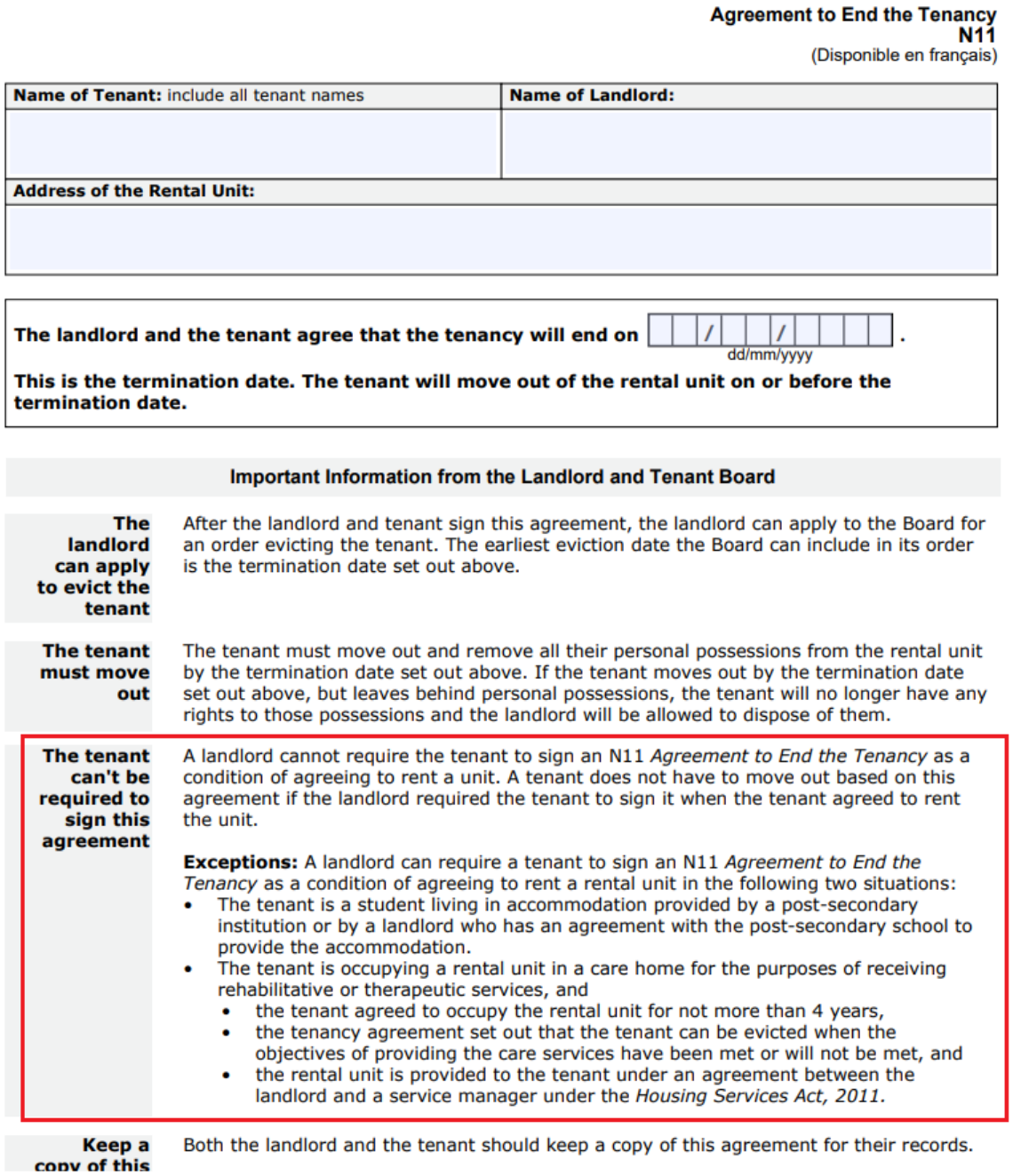
True or False

Lease Agreements

- Landlords cannot ask for first and last, only one month's rent
- Landlords cannot ask for a cleaning or security/damage deposit
- Landlords cannot have you sign N11 (Agreement to terminate at end of term)
- Landlords cannot ask for a key deposit that is more expensive than the cost to replace the keys. The key deposit must be refundable
- Landlords cannot drop in unannounced or perform unreasonable, and overly frequent inspections of the house. They can inspect the property within reason with 24 hour notice
- Once you have given notice to vacate at end of term, the landlord does NOT need to give you 24 hour notice for showings

Read and understand your lease agreement. It is a legally binding contract!

- All lease agreements roll into month to month after fixed term
- Tenants are required to give sixty days notice prior to end of term if they intend to vacate
- If in month to month, sixty days notice is still required
- Landlords cannot force you to renew your lease, or sign again
- Recognize the Ontario N9 and N11 forms



Agreement to End the Tenancy
N11
(Disponible en français)

Name of Tenant: include all tenant names	**Name of Landlord:**
Address of the Rental Unit:	

The landlord and the tenant agree that the tenancy will end on / / . dd/mm/yyyy

This is the termination date. The tenant will move out of the rental unit on or before the termination date.

Important Information from the Landlord and Tenant Board

The landlord can apply to evict the tenant

After the landlord and tenant sign this agreement, the landlord can apply to the Board for an order evicting the tenant. The earliest eviction date the Board can include in its order is the termination date set out above.

The tenant must move out

The tenant must move out and remove all their personal possessions from the rental unit by the termination date set out above. If the tenant moves out by the termination date set out above, but leaves behind personal possessions, the tenant will no longer have any rights to those possessions and the landlord will be allowed to dispose of them.

The tenant can't be required to sign this agreement

A landlord cannot require the tenant to sign an N11 *Agreement to End the Tenancy* as a condition of agreeing to rent a unit. A tenant does not have to move out based on this agreement if the landlord required the tenant to sign it when the tenant agreed to rent the unit.

Exceptions: A landlord can require a tenant to sign an N11 *Agreement to End the Tenancy* as a condition of agreeing to rent a rental unit in the following two situations:

- The tenant is a student living in accommodation provided by a post-secondary institution or by a landlord who has an agreement with the post-secondary school to provide the accommodation.
- The tenant is occupying a rental unit in a care home for the purposes of receiving rehabilitative or therapeutic services, and
  - the tenant agreed to occupy the rental unit for not more than 4 years,
  - the tenancy agreement set out that the tenant can be evicted when the objectives of providing the care services have been met or will not be met, and
  - the rental unit is provided to the tenant under an agreement between the landlord and a service manager under the *Housing Services Act, 2011.*

Keep a copy of this

Both the landlord and the tenant should keep a copy of this agreement for their records.

Exemptions from the RTA

- Renting with a direct family member of the landlord/owner
- Living with, or sharing a kitchen with a direct member of the family
- Renting and living with the Landlord (Room and Board)

You will not have protections under the Residential Tenancies Act

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Move In

- Take pictures of the entire unit before moving in, and fill out a Walk Through Inspection Form (Inside and Out) 
- Have your utilities set up (If Applicable) 
- Get Tenant Insurance/ Liability Insurance – you may be covered through your parent. This will protect your belongings inside the house 

Common Notice from Landlords

- N1 – Notice of Rent Increase
- N4 – Notice of Late Rent Payment
- N5 – Notice to End your Tenancy For Interfering with Others, Damage or Overcrowding
- N7 - Notice to End your Tenancy For Causing Serious Problems in the Rental Unit
- N8 – Notice to End Tenancy at End of Term
- N9 – Notice from Tenant to Landlord of Intent to Vacate
- N11 – Agreement to End Tenancy

These notices do not mean you are being evicted, but can lead to it

Please answer Yes or No

You are a tenant, rent is paid on time and in full monthly, but you have broken one of the many Terms and Conditions your landlord has added to your lease.

The landlord has found out and is threatening to evict you as soon as next week by changing the locks.

Can the landlord do this?

Eviction

Under the RTA, evicting tenants is a lengthy process that requires certain steps and protocols be followed

- Cannot evict you overnight
- Cannot evict you because of pets (rare exemption)
- Cannot evict based on illegal, unenforceable conditions in your lease agreement (pets, guests, additional occupants)
- Cannot change the locks without giving you a key
- Cannot shut off utilities as a means of rent collection

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Property Standards

The City of Kingston has a property standards by-law

- Condition of the windows, roof, doorways, and the overall house
- Pest control
- Home temperature requirements - 21.1C (70F)
- Structural and fire safety



On-Campus Meal Plans

- On-Campus Meals plans are available to students living off-campus
- No need to carry cash- the plan is registered on your student I.D. Card
- Saves you time. No need to prep meals and snacks or leave campus to eat at home
- Access to 3 All-You-Care-to-Eat dinning halls on campus
    - Leonard Dinning Hall (Main Campus)
    - Banrigh Dinning Hall (Main Campus)
    - Jean Royce Dinning Hall (West Campus)

www.queensu.ca/food/meal-plans/campus-meal-plans

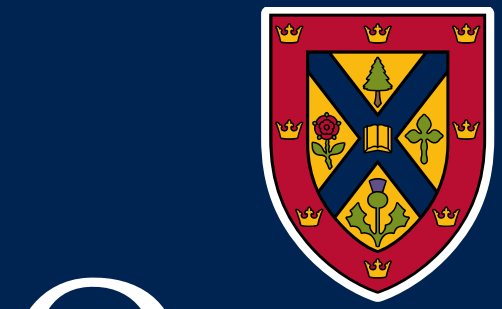
How to contact the OCLA

Off-Campus Living Advisor

ocla@queensu.ca

- Facebook - @Queen's Off-Campus Living
- Instagram - @queensocla
- Website – queensu.ca/ocla

Book an appointment with the OCLA



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