10 steps to help you in the private rental market

If you can't access student accommodation, you might need to find housing in the private rental market, which we know can be difficult and time consuming. We have put together the below step-by-step guide to help you through this process. We also recommend you speak to friends, family, and other students to gain their insights as this advice is by no means exhaustive.

1. Research

Get to know the types of rentals, the locations, travel time and cost of rent.

Resources:

- Student.com- Renting Successfully in Perth video
- ECU Accommodation Resources page
- Study Perth – Accommodation

2. Work out your budget

Ensure you will be able to pay rent each week and utilise any available financial support resources.

Resources:

- ECU Financial Support Resources page
- Study Perth Cost of Living Calculator
- MoneySmart Online Budget Planner

3. Register on rental websites

Register and create an account on all the main private and shared rental websites:

- Realestate.com.au
- Domain.com.au
- Rent.com.au
- Tenant App
- Tenant Options
- ECU Accommodation Listings
- Flatmates.com.au

CAUTION – Be aware of scams and unethical behaviour on these websites and never pay any money before inspecting the property and reviewing a residential agreement.

4. Create your renter resume

Build a renter resume (which can be added to some of your accounts in step 3):

- 100 points of identification.
- Rental history (can be overseas).
- Employment history.
- Income statements and/or bank statements.
- References for previous housing, employers and personal.
- Prepare a cover letter or "about me" section (see step 5).

- Ensure you include all required information – leaving out information or documents may mean your application is automatically dismissed.
- Everyone over 18 in your household will need to prepare and submit an application.

Resources:

- Circle Green – Making an application for a rental property
- REIWA – How to apply for a rental

5. Create a cover letter

Like a job application cover letter, this is your chance to tell the owner why you would be the best tenant for the property and a little bit about who you are.

You want the property manager to know:

1. You will confidently pay the rent consistently and on time.
2. You will take good care of the property.
3. You will be easy to communicate with.

Resources:

- How to write a cover letter for a rental application

6. Start a property shortlist

Start browsing listings and select all the properties that fit your criteria – the more the better – and create a property inspection planner.

When you see something that is suitable, register your interest or contact the property manager. If you don't register your interest, you will not receive any notifications about property inspection changes or cancellations.

7. Inspect and apply

- Attend home opens, try speaking with the property manager to build rapport, present well and be on time.
- Ensure you understand what's included/not included (e.g., there may be a storeroom that is not to be accessed by tenants).
- Aim to apply for as many properties as possible. You can apply for more than one property at once but be careful not to accept more than one offer.

- Because you have already prepared your application on all the websites, this process will be more efficient. It may still take a long time and many applications before you are approved for a rental. Don't give up. The more prepared you are, the easier it will be.

Resources:

- Circle Green – <u>Inspecting a property checklist</u>

8. Be available to agents and seek feedback

Return calls to property managers promptly and ask for feedback for declined applications. It will take a while, but don't give up!

9. Review agreement and pay upfront costs

- When you are approved for a rental property, read the agreement carefully before signing and ask the property manager if something is not clear. If you're still having trouble understanding the agreement, you can seek support from <u>Consumer Protection</u>.
- If you are signing an agreement as a "tenant" you are covered under the Residential Tenancy Act (1987). If you are signing an agreement as a "boarder or lodger" you are not covered under this Act, but still have rights under Australian Consumer Law.
- Make the required payment to the property manager or owner promptly.
- If you are a tenant, the property manager or owner should pay your bond to the Bonds Administrator, where it is kept for the duration of the lease, until you vacate. Ensure you receive notification that it has been lodged there.
- You should not be asked to pay more than four weeks' rent for the bond or two weeks' rent upfront.
- Ensure all tenants over 18 sign the lease agreement and ensure you receive a signed copy from the agent.

10. Prepare for your move and start your tenancy

- Ensure you complete and return any property condition reports provided by the property manager within seven days. Be sure to report any pre-existing cleaning or maintenance issues in this report, otherwise you may be held liable for them.
- Arrange connection of applicable utilities, such as electricity and gas. The property manager will manage the water connection and send you the water usage invoices.
- Set-up ongoing rent as per the agreement and ensure each payment is on time. Check with your bank how long each transfer/payment will take.
- Comply with routine inspections (they can be conducted every three months) and any other obligations under your lease agreement.
- Promptly report any maintenance or repair issues to the property manager agent during your tenancy.

Resources:

- Circle Green – Starting a tenancy and During a Tenancy

For further advice during your tenancy, you can access the below services:

- Circle Green – Tenancy Information and Legal Services
- Consumer Protection – Tenancy advice and manages residential bonds and disputes.
- Northern Suburbs Community Legal Centre – Located at ECU Joondalup Campus

For further assistance with housing, you can make an appointment with the ECU Housing Advice Officer via your student portal (for ECU students only) or you can email studentsuccess@ecu.edu.au.

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