



**OFFICE OF RESIDENCE LIFE
AND HOUSING**

Off-Campus Housing Guide

Introduction

This document is a resource guide developed by the Office of Residence Life and Housing to assist students in finding rental properties in Brunswick's local community. The goal of this guide is to help students become educated in the rental process off campus, including understanding the responsibilities of the tenant and the landlord. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our office at 912-279-5815.

Preliminary Steps to Consider Before Renting

When planning to rent a house or apartment off-campus your search will be easier if you start looking early. It is important for you to become familiar with the types of rentals available and the current rental rates to locate the apartment or house that best fits your needs. It is important to develop a budget for the rental, which will include rent, utilities, food, gas, etc. This budget will help you to accurately assess what you can afford on a monthly basis. Below is a sample budget:

	Cost
Security Deposit	
Rent	
Utilities	
Internet, Cable, Phone	
Food	
Gas	
Furniture	
Misc	

Before renting, it is a good idea to check the reputation of your prospective property managers as well as the neighborhood in which you are planning to live. Present tenants are a good source for this information. In addition, the Office of Residence Life and Housing provides a list of apartment complexes in Appendix A.

Do not forget that many property managers require prepaid rent and a security deposit when you sign a lease. A lease is a binding contract and many times a deposit, or part of it, is not refundable. Be sure that you have found the right rental before you sign a lease or give a deposit.

You may want to consider purchasing renter's insurance to cover theft or damage to your personal belongings. Before buying, check your parent's homeowner or rental insurance policy to see if you are covered while you are living away from home. If you are not covered, shop around for the policy that best suits your needs. Annual premiums and coverage vary with each policy.

Organizing Your Search

Setting Your Priorities

Begin by asking yourself some questions:

- What features are most important? List features in order of importance and the areas you are willing to be more flexible on.
- Can you afford the apartment? Remember, there are move in costs associated with the rental such as deposits and application fees.
- Will you need a roommate to help with the monthly rent?
- What is the atmosphere like?
- Do you feel safe?
- Does the complex appear clean and kept up?
- Distance to campus and work?

After setting your priorities, you are ready to organize your apartment/house search. It is helpful to establish a rating system. The rating system should include categories such as location, price, condition, layout, amenities, and other items that you determined important. Rate each category using a scale 0-5 scale, with 0 being non-existent and 5 being excellent.

It Is Important to Ask Questions

Before you sign a lease, submit a deposit or agree to rent, check the property over very carefully. Take a list of questions with you when you do a site visit. If you have further questions about anything, ask the property manager about it. Be sure to look at the unit during the day and again at night if possible. Viewing the property at different times will allow you to see if you would be comfortable there when it is dark. See Appendix B for questions to ask property managers.

Choosing Roommates

Selecting a roommate requires a commitment. Take time to discuss and compare each other's personalities, living habits, expectations, likes, dislikes, habits, and allergies before you agree to live together.

To protect themselves, roommates should sign a written contracts together which spells out the provisions should one decide to move. The person who leaves should either find a substitute roommate or continue to pay his or her share of the rent. Please see Appendix C for the rental agreement between roommates. If just one person signs a lease, that person is solely responsible for the entire rent and all other obligations of the lease. However, if all members of the apartment/house sign the lease, roommates should be aware of joint liability. Most leases are handled in such a way that all parties are responsible for the performance of their roommates.

Deposits and Written Leases

Deposits

Prior to signing a rental agreement or lease, if a property manager requires a deposit to hold an apartment or house, it is important to get a receipt which should include:

1. a move-in date
2. the specific apartment number or house address
3. the purpose of the deposit (redecorating, cleaning, pet deposit, or security for purpose of damages)
4. how much of the deposit, if any, is refundable

If any other money is prepaid, save all receipts and indicate the purpose for each receipt.

Leases

A written lease is a binding contract. Do not sign a lease unless you fully understand it. If you do not agree with the way it reads, discuss it with your property manager and, if appropriate, have the wording changed before you sign it.

Before you sign anything, read the lease and house rules carefully. Inspect the premises, checking the furniture (if furnished), wiring, ventilation, sound proofing, heating, cooling, and possible fire hazards. Take into account the exterior as well – look for broken windows, absence of screens, and the general construction of the unit.

Take inventory upon moving in to protect yourself from unreasonable charges when you move out. If you want something fixed or changed, have the property manager do it before you move in, or have him or her sign a written promise that it will be fixed. Do not take possession of a unit that is in any way different than what had been agreed upon.

Your written lease should include the following information:

1. Specific apartment number or house address.
2. Amount of rent per month and due date.
3. Beginning and ending date of the lease.
4. Amount and type of deposits and conditions for return. A security deposit is money given to the landlord in addition to the rent. As specified in the lease, it can be used for last month's rent, pets or damages.
5. Names of the owner, manager, or person authorized to receive notices from you
6. Items in need of repair – make sure you get this in writing before you sign the lease
7. Rules of behavior: Which, if any, pets are fine? Are overnight guests allowed? Are parties allowed? What conduct is not permitted? After you sign the lease, you must abide by the rules as defined by the property manager or you can be evicted.
8. Subleasing rules: Do you have the right to sublease if you move out before the lease term expires? If your

lease does not have a clause specifying sublease specifications, ask your property manager.

9. Does your rent include utilities? Who is responsible for the payment of electricity, gas, water, sewer, trash?
10. Who do you contact for maintenance issues?

Getting Your Security/Cleaning Deposit Back

1. Keep a receipt of all deposits paid.
2. Know how much of your deposit is applied to either the first or last month's rent and how much will be held for the entire term of the rental agreement
3. The tenant is expected to return the premises in the same condition it was in at the beginning of the lease or rental agreement – reasonable use and wear are expected. On the day you move in, record the condition of all items, preferably with your property manager present. Follow an inventory checklist that may be supplied by the property manager. Keep a copy of the checklist signed by both you and the landlord. Take pictures of anything major that is damaged and, if possible, have a witness present. In order to avoid potential problems over the condition of the premises, it is a good idea to agree with the property manager on what is expected in the way of cleaning.
4. As you move out, give proper written notice, and be sure to give the property manager a valid forwarding address. It is important that you ask for the return of your deposit in writing at the time that you move out. Do not assume that because your lease is ending that you do not need to provide a written notice. Always provide at least a thirty day written notice. Under Georgia law, a landlord must return the tenant's security deposit within one month after the tenant has surrendered the rental property to the landlord.

Giving Notice that you Plan to Leave

In order to protect your deposit and insure that you are not responsible for another month's rent; give the landlord warning that you will be leaving. If you do not have a lease, you must give your property manager written notice at least 30 days before the day on which your rent is due. However, do not assume that just because your lease is ending that you do not need to give a written notice. Many properties still require a 30 day written notice, even though your lease is ending.

If you have a lease, your potential liability is the full amount of rent due under the lease. You may be responsible for the rent until the end of the lease even if you move out before. However, if you do abandon the premises before your lease is up, the property manager must make a reasonable effort to rent it at a fair value, and if he does rent it before the expiration of your rental agreement, the agreement ends as of the date the new tenancy begins.

Important Telephone numbers

Georgia Power	1-888-660-5890 – www.georgiapower.com
Comcast	912-342-4876 – www.comcast.com
AT&T	1-888-691-9092 – www.att.com
Brunswick-Glynn Water and Sewer	912-261-7100 – www.bgjwsc.org
Trash	912-267-5598 – www.brunswickga.org/pw/Sanitation.htm

Appendix A

Brunswick

Fox Run – The Landings

100 Walden Shore Drive
Brunswick, GA 31525
912-264-5441

www.foxrunthelandings.com/rentals

Gated community located 7 miles from the College; offers 1, 2, and 3 bedroom apartments, unfurnished; full kitchen; washer/dryer hookups, laundry center; fitness room, sparkling pool; clubhouse; on-site security officer; property manager on-site; tennis and basketball courts; 25 acre lake with beach.

Palm Club Apartments

111 S. Palm Drive
Brunswick, GA 31525
912-466-9090

www.venterraliving.com/palmclub

Approximately 6 miles from the College; gated community; 1, 2, and 3 bedroom apartments, unfurnished; full kitchen; fitness center; pool; tennis court; volleyball court; picnic and grilling area; clubhouse with gourmet kitchen, Jacuzzi spa, computer with Internet access, lending library, free DVDs; washer/dryer hookups; patios/balconies; laundry facilities; courtesy officers enforce quiet time (10 pm – 7 am).

Legacy Apartment Homes

101 Legacy Way
Brunswick, GA 31525
912-242-0481

www.legacybrunswick.com

Approximately 3 miles from the College; gated community; offers 1, 2, and 3 bedroom apartments, unfurnished; full kitchen; washer/dryer hookups; large closets; fitness center, clubhouse; pool; theatre room; and billiards room. Accept full time students with parents' co-signature.

Fountain Lake Apartments

1000 Fountain Lake Drive
Brunswick, GA 31525
912-267-1420

www.fountainlakeapts.com

Approximately 2 miles from the College; offers 2 and 3 bedroom apartments, unfurnished; full kitchen; washer/dryer hookups; private patio; pool with sundeck.

Cypress Mill Plantation Apartments

3200 Cypress Mill Road
Brunswick, GA 31525
912-264-4500

Approximately 3 miles from the College; offers 2 and 3 bedroom apartments, unfurnished; full kitchen; washer/dryer hookups; pool; activity building.

Saint Simons Island

Please visit <http://www.hodnettcooper.com/resrentals.htm> and contact:

Brett Flanagan
Division Manager
Residential Rentals
Hodnett Cooper Real Estate
(888) HODNETT
(912) 638-4750 x125
brett@hodnettcooper.com

Appendix B

Questions to ask Property Managers

1. Who pays utilities?
2. What do utilities usually cost, in summer and winter? Is it gas or electric heat?
3. Who controls the heat?
4. Who pays for cable and Internet?
5. Is parking space available?
6. Do I have to pay for a permit?
7. Is there guest parking?
8. What are the rules on guests and visitors? What are the restrictions, if any?
9. Are pets allowed? What are the restrictions? Is there an extra deposit and/or rental fee?
10. Is there storage space?
11. How safe is the area? Is security provided?
12. Are all the locks working?
13. Do the windows open, close tightly and lock?
14. Is there weather-stripping? Can you feel drafts around the windows and doors?
15. Are there enough electrical outlets? Can more outlets be added if requested?
16. How is the water pressure?
17. Are fire extinguishers and/or smoke detectors provided?
18. Is there 24 hour emergency service if needed?
19. Is redecorating the apartment allowed? How much?
20. If repairs are needed, is the property manager willing to make them before you move in?
21. Are there laundry facilities in or near the building?
22. When is the rent due? Is there a charge for late payments?
23. What deposit and fees are required? How much of that is refundable?
24. What length leases are available?
25. Is subletting permitted? Is there a fee for subletting?
26. Can the rent be increased if the number of tenants increases?
27. Do your roommates have to be approved by the landlord?
28. If you're interested in renting an apartment or house, can you leave your name and a deposit now to reserve the place? Does this guarantee you the apartment or house for when you want to move in?
29. When is the apartment available to move into?

Appendix C
Rental Agreement Between
Roommates

This contract explains the duties and responsibilities roommates agree to owe each other. It does not affect the responsibilities that the roommates owe the property manager either by a separate agreement or by law.

It is mutually agreed on the _____(day) of _____(month), _____(year), that the roommates to the contract, __, _____, _____, agree to abide by the terms of the lease with _____(property manager), dated _____, and share rent and other responsibilities for the premises commonly known as _____
_____(complex and address of complex).

Security deposit

Each roommate agrees to pay _____percent of the total security deposit of \$_____. If different portions of the deposit are paid by each roommate, there specific amounts are noted below:

1. _____ shall pay \$_____of the total deposit.
2. _____ shall pay \$_____of the total deposit.
3. _____ shall pay \$_____of the total deposit.

Rent

Each roommate agrees to pay _____percent of the total rent per month of \$_____/month. This rent will be paid for the term of the lease which runs from _____to _____. If different portions of the rent are paid by each roommate, there specific amounts are noted below:

1. _____ shall pay \$_____of the total rent.
2. _____ shall pay \$_____of the total rent.
3. _____ shall pay \$_____of the total rent.

Once rent is received from all the roommates, _____ shall pay the full rent by the due date each month.

Utilities

The owner shall furnish only the following utility services:

All other charges shall be divided equally between roommates, with each roommate being responsible for

_____percent of total utilities. Utility expenses to be paid by roommates include: (check all that apply)

gas electricity telephone water trash
cable/Internet

The following roommates are responsible for paying each utility by the due date:

_____ Gas	_____ Electricity
_____ Telephone Service	_____ Water
_____ Trash	_____ Cable/Internet

Repairs

Roommates are liable for damages which result from his/her intentional or negligent conduct or that of his/her guests, done to the premises or personal possessions of another roommate. Any repairs or improvements to the premises which will be paid for by all the tenants shall be approved by all of the tenants when the cost exceeds \$____. If pets are permitted under the lease, each pet owner shall be solely responsible for all damaged caused by his/her pet. This includes, but is not limited to, damage to furniture, carpeting, doors, lawn and garden.

Special Conditions

Each roommate agrees to the special conditions as set forth below:

Food: _____
Cleaning: _____
Sharing of personal items: _____
Smoking/drinking: _____
Overnight guests and visitors: _____
Privacy: _____
Noise/study time: _____
Security: _____
Telephone messages: _____
Additional remarks: _____

Termination of Agreement

If for any reason a roommate will be moving out before the end of the lease, he/she must give the other roommates a thirty day written notice on or before the periodic rental date, or come to a mutual agreement with all roommates. Such notice shall not relieve the moving roommate from any financial liability contained in this agreement unless a substitute roommate is found and accepted by all parties. It is understood that the leaving roommate may still be obligated to the property manager under the property manager's rental agreement.

The moving roommate shall be entitled to his/her share of the security deposit when the property manager refunds it or when a substitute roommate moves in and replaces the moving roommate's security deposit portion.

All Roommates Sign/Date Below:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____