



Your Accommodation Fees, Your Responsibilities



Student Accommodation Fees: Payment and Debt Arrangements

Helping you with every step

2020/2021

Introduction

This document should be read in conjunction with your University Accommodation Licence Agreement (Contract) and supports information available on the University Accommodation webpages.

Payments are due for the whole period of the contract as specified in your licence. Most contracts are for at least 40 weeks. Students with a contract for Canterbury Christ Church accommodation who occupy their room late or leave early, remain liable to pay the full accommodation fees in accordance with your contract.

This document explains:

- How to pay your accommodation fees;
- What to do if you are having trouble paying them;
- Information relating to debts, sanctions and complaints.

The information provided in this document sets out your responsibilities in relation to your accommodation fees and supports the information in your Accommodation Licence Agreement.

If you are having trouble paying your accommodation fees, you should let us know, and seek help as soon as possible. The University wishes to support all its students and will be sympathetic and help where possible. However, in order to maintain quality of accommodation and to ensure fairness of treatment for all students, the University must act to recover debts.

Who to Contact

If you have any questions, please contact the Finance Department at the University:

Accounts Receivable Section
Finance Department
Canterbury Christ Church University
Rochester House
St Georges Place
Canterbury
CT1 1UT

Email: accounts.receivable@canterbury.ac.uk

How to pay your Accommodation fees - Full Year Licences

All students living in University accommodation have to pay in full or enter into an arrangement to pay in instalments **before** they move into their accommodation.

The University provides an online payment system which is an easy, flexible way of paying your accommodation fees by debit or credit card. Payments are made online and all information is held in safe and secure environment.

You must set up an arrangement to pay as part of the online acceptance of your accommodation offer.

There are two payment options from which you can chose:

- Paying your full accommodation fees before moving into your accommodation.
- Paying your accommodation fees in 3 instalments by debit or credit card.

If you are paying by instalments, you will need to provide a guarantor at the same time you accept the accommodation offer.

Prepayment

When you accept the accommodation offer, if you select to pay in instalments, you will need to pay an initial £115 pre-payment online. Your first instalment payment will be reduced to reflect the amount already paid.

Paying your Accommodation Fees in Full

If you pay your full accommodation fees for the whole year before the start of your accommodation licence we will give you £250 back during the year in the form of a credit for University catering and Food Court Services. This will be credited to your card in 3 amounts: £100 in October, £100 in January & £50 in April.

Paying your Accommodation Fees by Instalments

You may choose to pay your accommodation fees in three instalments. Payments will be due on the following dates for 2020/21:

- 1st payment 29th September 2020 (35%)
2nd payment 7th January 2021 (35%)
3rd payment 15th April 2021 (30%)

Payment method

The University accepts Visa and Mastercard debit and credit card payments.

How to pay your Accommodation fees - Short Term Licences / Homestay

If you are on a short course or have a short-term accommodation licence (under 14 weeks), you will have to pay all your fees upfront before you move in, (or in two instalments if your licence is between 14 and 30 weeks). Dates and details will be provided in your individual offer.

You must set up an arrangement to pay as part of the online acceptance of your accommodation offer.

Pre-Payment

Students who are eligible to pay in instalments will need to make a pre-payment of £115 towards their accommodation fees when accepting their University Accommodation Licence Agreement.

Paying your Accommodation Fees by Instalments

If you are eligible to pay in instalments, the instalment options available to you will be displayed when you accept your accommodation licence online.

Payment method

The University accepts Visa and Mastercard debit and credit card payments.

Additional Charges – All Licence Agreements

There may also be additional charges added to your account which you have to pay for if you are in breach of your licence agreement or Homestay agreement, such as covering smoke detectors or lost keys. Additional charges can also be added for works needed at the end of the licence for student damage or neglect, including cleaning. These must also be paid under the terms of the licence agreement and terms set out in this document.

What happens if you have trouble paying your fees

Regardless of what type of Accommodation Agreement you have accepted, if you are having trouble paying your accommodation fees, or any additional charges, you should contact the Finance Department as soon as possible in the first instance so that the Finance team are aware, and your particular circumstances can be discussed with you.

You may also want to speak to the Student Support, Health & Wellbeing team regarding possible financial support options that might be available (<http://www.canterbury.ac.uk/students/support-services/support-advice-and-wellbeing/financial-support.aspx>), and the Accommodation Office team regarding moving to possible alternative accommodation that may be cheaper.

What happens if any payments are late?



Further contact if your Accommodation Fees remain outstanding

If you are not required to have a Guarantor for your Licence Agreement, we will continue to contact you regarding your accommodation fees, via email and / or phone. If your accommodation fees continue to remain outstanding, a Notice to Quit the University accommodation may be sent to you. This would give you 28 days notice to leave the University accommodation unless payment is made in full.

Contact with your Guarantor

If you are required to have a Guarantor for your Licence Agreement, and your accommodation fees continue to remain unpaid after the 3 reminder letters have been sent, or you default on a payment, or there is no arrangement to pay put in place, the Finance Department will send a letter directly to your Guarantor to ask them to pay the fees on your behalf.

The University may issue a Notice to Quit the University accommodation if you or your Guarantor fail to make the required payment and your accommodation fees remain outstanding. This would give you 28 days notice to leave the University accommodation unless payment is made.

Sanctions for non-payment of Accommodation Fees

The University reviews all outstanding accommodation fee debts on a regular basis.

If you do not respond to reminder letters or other contact by the University, or there is no agreed arrangement in place for payment, it is possible that you would have to leave your accommodation.

A Notice to Quit your accommodation could be sent to you as set out above. Notice to Quit letters can be sent to you at your term time address or last known home address. The Notice to Quit gives you 28 days to make full payment or set up an appropriate payment arrangement.

Legal action could also be taken to recover accommodation fee debts and you would have to pay any associated costs (debt-recovery fees).

You should note that if we take court action for non-payment of accommodation fees, and you have to leave your accommodation, we can still charge you for all the charges due to the end of the licence.

Legal action could result in a money judgement order which is a County Court Judgment against you which could seriously affect your credit rating and your future ability to get a mortgage, credit card, bank account or enter into an accommodation contract.

If you have outstanding accommodation debts at the end of the academic year, and there are no agreed arrangements for payment in place, you will be required to discuss with the University's Finance department options for payment of the debt before returning to University in the next academic year, or before you graduate from the University.

Accommodation offers for returning students with an existing rent debt will only be made on the basis that the debt is cleared before signing the Agreement or moving into the room. We cannot offer students accommodation in future years, or for summer periods, if any payments remain outstanding.

Withdrawing From Your Accommodation (Full Year and Short Term Licences)

If you wish to be released early from your University accommodation you will need to contact the Accommodation Office team. You have signed a legal licence agreement which is a contract for a set period. Early release will be dependent on the terms and conditions of your Licence Agreement.

Withdrawing From Your Accommodation (Homestay)

If you wish to be released early from your Homestay accommodation you will need to let the Accommodation Office team know. Early release will be dependent on the terms and conditions of your Homestay Agreement.

Complaints and Appeals Process

This section sets out the appeals process relating to the University's procedures in relation to student debt. It is based on the principles set out in the University Framework for Student Procedures.

At the completion of each stage in the procedures where there is written communication, you will be advised in writing of the means by which you may take the matter further.

If you make a complaint or appeal during the credit control process, we will investigate in line with the procedures. However, we will continue with any action including serving a Notice to Quit or applying to court within any part of the process.

Outline of the Appeals Process

Informal Stage

Wherever possible, the University will seek to resolve any difficulties informally, at the level at which the matter arose. In relation to the student debt procedures, you should start by discussing anything relating to the procedures with the Finance Department.

If the issue cannot be resolved informally, you may ask for a **formal investigation** to be made by the Director of Finance or his nominee.

Formal Investigation Stage - you will need to send a letter/ email and:

1. Explain the problem you are having with the student debt procedures
2. Suggest how you think the problem could be solved (however, the outcome may be different from your suggestion).
3. Include the appropriate evidence, where possible.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the formal investigation, you may request within twenty working days of receiving the written response from the Director of Finance or his nominee, a **review** of the findings of the investigation to be undertaken by the Vice Chancellor or his nominee.

Review Stage - you will need to send a request in the form of a letter/ email and attach a copy of any correspondence received

Where the decision does not entail termination or interruption of a programme of study, you will receive an acknowledgement from the Vice Chancellor's nominee with an indication of the date when a decision will be made. The Vice Chancellor's nominee will make a judgement on the subject matter of the request, which may be either to confirm, reduce, set aside, amend or otherwise vary the decision of the Director of Finance.

Where the decision entails termination or interruption of a programme of study, the Vice Chancellor's nominee will conduct the review as soon as practicable after the receipt of the request.

- You may be interviewed and you may be accompanied by a friend who may be a fellow student of the University, a member of the Students' Union or a member of staff, and may speak on your behalf.
- The Vice Chancellor's nominee has the discretion to interview any member of the University staff involved at an earlier stage in the proceedings.
- Following the review, the Vice Chancellor's nominee may confirm, reduce, set aside, amend or otherwise vary the decision of the Director of Finance.

Once the Vice Chancellor's nominee has determined the appeal, the student may make a request to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) for independent adjudication. It is not possible to refer the matter to the OIA until the completion of the process by the Vice Chancellor's nominee. The arrangements for making a request to the OIA will be provided in a separate letter from the Clerk to the Governing Body once the University's procedures have been completed.