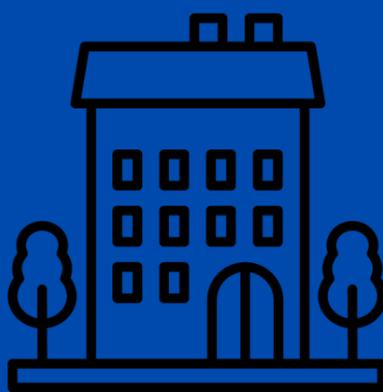
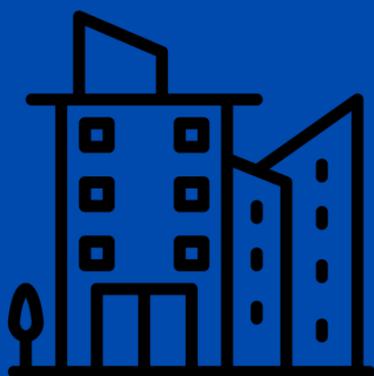




Student Housing Scam Awareness Guide

How to Spot Red Flags & Protect
Yourself Before You Pay

Created by EU StudyAssist
Supporting students beyond funding





Why This Guide Matters

Student accommodation scams are increasing worldwide, especially in popular study-abroad destinations. International students are often targeted due to limited local knowledge, time pressure, and the urgency to secure housing before arrival.

Scammers exploit this vulnerability by offering “too good to be true” deals that can trap students in minutes.

This guide will help you:

- ✓ Identify common housing scams
- ✓ Spot fake listings early
- ✓ Recognise pressure tactics
- ✓ Know what legitimate landlords ALWAYS provide
- ✓ Protect your money and peace of mind



Common Student Housing Scam Signs

Be cautious if you notice any of the following red flags:

- Rent is significantly lower than similar properties in the area
- Requests for upfront payment before viewing or signing a lease
- Pressure to “secure the room immediately”
- Vague or inconsistent property details
- No clear address or refusal to share documents
- Requests for payment via wire transfer, cash, crypto, or gift cards
- Poor grammar, rushed communication, or emotional manipulation

If something feels off, pause. Scammers rely on speed, not transparency.



Fake Listings: What They Look Like



Fake listings are one of the most common student accommodation scams.

They may involve:

- Properties that do not exist
- Duplicate listings copied from real ads
- Hijacked ads pretending to be legitimate
- Impersonation of real landlords or agents

Warning signs include:

- Photos that look overly polished or generic
- Images found on multiple websites (reverse image search helps)
- No clear address or only a general area listed
- No proof the person owns or manages the property
- Listing disappears once you ask detailed questions
- Refusal to offer live or recent video tours

Tip: Use reverse image search and Google Maps to verify listings.



Advance Payment & Pressure Tactics



Scammers rely on panic and urgency and often demand payment before:

- Viewing the property
- Signing a lease
- Confirming ownership

Common phrases include:

- “Many students are interested — pay now to secure it”
- “You must send the deposit today”
- “This offer expires in a few hours”
- “I’ll hold it only if you transfer the money now”

Legitimate landlords do NOT demand money without documentation.



Identity & Phishing Scams

Some scammers pose as:

- Real estate agents
- Landlords
- Property managers



They may:

- Share fake credentials
- Send links requesting personal or banking details
- Ask you to complete “online forms” that steal your data

Never share:

- Bank details
- Passport copies
- Login information
- One-time passwords



What Legitimate Landlords ALWAYS Provide

A genuine landlord or agency will always offer:

- ✓ A written lease agreement
- ✓ Full legal name and contact details
- ✓ Proof of property ownership or authority
- ✓ Clear rent, deposit, and utility breakdown
- ✓ Secure and traceable payment methods
- ✓ Reasonable time to review documents

If any of these are missing – do not proceed.



Smart Steps to Protect Yourself



Before paying anything:

- Verify the property address on Google Maps
- Request a video call or live tour
- Research average rent prices in the area
- Ask for a written lease agreement
- Never send money without a signed contract
- Avoid cash payments and untraceable transfers i.e crypto
- Keep all communication in writing
- Use trusted housing platforms or university-recommended services
- Trust your instincts – hesitation is a warning sign



What to Do If You Suspect a Scam

- Stop all communication immediately
- Do not send money or share personal information
- Avoid clicking on any links
- Report the listing to the platform
- Notify your university housing office
- Contact your bank immediately if a payment was made

Key Practices for Safe Student Housing Abroad

Use Trusted & Accredited Sources

Always prioritise:

- University-recommended housing platforms
- Accredited student accommodation providers
- Official university residence pages
- Established housing websites with verified listings

Avoid relying solely on social media groups or private messages.

Take Your Time – Don't Rush

Pressure is a common tactic used by scammers.

- Take time to compare options
- Read all documents carefully
- Do not let urgency force a decision

A legitimate opportunity will still be available after questions are asked.



Key Practices for Safe Student Housing Abroad

Ask Questions Until You're Satisfied

If anything is unclear, ask.

- Who manages the property?
- What is included in the rent?
- How long is the lease?
- What are the deposit and refund conditions?



Clear answers indicate legitimacy.

Keep Everything in Writing

Always ensure:

- Lease agreements are written and signed
- Costs, rules, and conditions are documented
- Payment confirmations are saved
- Communication is kept via email or official platforms

Written records protect you in case of disputes.

Key Practices for Safe Student Housing Abroad



Confirm Amenities & Utilities

Never assume amenities are included.

Ask about:

- Internet access
- Water and electricity
- Heating or cooling
- Furniture and appliances
- Laundry facilities

Ensure amenities are clearly stated in the lease.

Understand the Full Cost

Confirm all costs upfront:

- Rent
- Deposit
- Utilities
- Maintenance or service fees

Unexpected charges often signal poor transparency.



SUCCESS

With this guide, you're one step closer to a smooth transition and a strong academic start in your new country.

You now have the knowledge to navigate student housing safely and confidently. As you prepare to embark on this exciting new journey, remember: informed choices lead to better experiences. Take your time, ask questions, and trust yourself.

Wishing you a safe move, a comfortable home, and a successful academic journey ahead.

