



SAVANNAH

OFF-CAMPUS HOUSING *Resource Guide*

A collection of resources for
students considering
moving off campus



All information is being provided by SCAD for informational purposes only. All students are encouraged to exercise their own good judgment when evaluating prospective rental properties and landlords.



Who can live off campus?

National statistics show that living on campus the first year is an important complement to the educational experience and results in higher retention and overall student satisfaction. For this reason SCAD requires all first-year students to live on campus unless they've received an approved exemption.

Getting started

Before you begin your search

Consider proximity to academic buildings

- Will you be walking to class or driving?
- Will you be using public transportation to get around the city?
 - [Chatham Area Transit](#)



Amenities

- Prioritize needs vs. wants (on-site pool, fitness center, etc)
- Furnished vs. unfurnished apartments
- Parking
 - Is onsite parking available? Is there an additional fee?
- Laundry
 - Does the unit include a washer and dryer?
 - Are laundry machines available onsite? What is the cost?

Avoiding scams

- Be cautious of listings that push you to act immediately.
- Be wary of a deal that is “too good” (ie., rent is far lower than average for the area).
- Be suspicious if there is no property address in the listing, or duplicate listings using the same photos.
- Be cautious if the listing requires a security deposit higher than 1-2 months’ rent, or doesn’t require a background check.
- Tour the property whenever possible (or have a friend tour for you if you’re out of town).
- [Learn more](#) about avoiding renter fraud.

Safety

- Use local police department interactive crime maps to check out potential neighborhoods and assess the types and frequency of crimes in the area.
 - **[Savannah Police Department](#)**

More things to know for a first-time renter

- <https://myhome.freddiemac.com/blog/rental-housing/6-tips-first-time-renters>



Planning to live off campus

- **Begin your search** by using reputable rental search sites or working with respected realtors and property managers.
- **Roommates**
 - Some property managers will write a separate lease for each individual tenant in an apartment or house, but many will have all residents sign a lease together.
 - Some apartment complexes lease each bedroom separately, and might lease rooms in your apartment to other tenants you may not know.
- **Rental applications**
 - Application will likely include your full legal name, social security number, and prior addresses, but may also ask for additional information.
 - Many applications will require a fee for a background check.
 - This background check might include a check of your credit score, criminal records, and housing court records, among other things.
 - Learn more about [tenant rights pertaining to background checks](#).
 - The [Fair Housing Act](#) makes it illegal for tenant background check companies and landlords to discriminate against applicants because of race or color, religion, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), national origin, familial status, or disability.



- **Terms of your lease**

- 12-month lease versus shorter terms (12 months is standard)
- Is the lease for all occupants of the house/apartment or does each individual sign their own lease?
- How is rent paid every month?
- What appliances and utilities are included?
- How much is the security deposit? (to be returned at the end of your lease if there are no damages or other breach of your rental agreement)
- Is there an option to sublet during the summer or if you study abroad?
- Is there provision for alternative housing if there's a significant maintenance issue that cannot be resolved quickly?
- What are the rules and restrictions? These could pertain to smoking, pets, guests, and more.
- What are the conditions that allow for an early lease termination? Is there a penalty?

- **Utilities**

- Electricity - [Georgia Power](#)
- Water - [City of Savannah Utility Services](#)
- Gas - there are many providers, these vary by location (ex. SCANA Energy, Georgia Natural Gas, Gas South, etc.)
- Internet - many providers, vary by location and rates vary. You can use [InMyArea.com](#) to search and compare.

- **Furniture**

- Furnished vs. unfurnished apartments
- Costs of purchasing new or used furniture

- **Parking**

- Is onsite parking available?
- Is there an additional fee for parking?

- **Pets**

- Is the property pet friendly?
- Are there restrictions on size, number, breed?
- Are there additional pet deposits or fees?

- **Renters insurance**

- Renters insurance can be obtained through a licensed insurance agent or company.
- Renters insurance typically covers fire or water damage to your personal property but may also include additional benefits such as hotel stays if your apartment is damaged, and liability coverage for damage to others' belongings.
- Some landlords will require renters insurance, but it's a good idea even if they don't.
- If your family has homeowners insurance already you may be able to add a renters policy for a reduced rate.

- **Being a good neighbor**

- Be respectful of your neighbors by keeping noise levels down, especially at night; keep your property neat and free of junk and debris; and be considerate of neighbors' privacy.
- If a problem develops with a neighbor, address it respectfully with the neighbor. If the problem persists, you may want to consult your landlord or property manager for guidance.
- If parking spaces are assigned, be considerate and park in your space only. If hosting guests make sure they know where they should park. Don't park in grass or on other landscaping, sidewalks, or other areas not designated for parking.



University resources

- **BeeSafe at SCAD**

Because the student experience often takes place away from SCAD buildings and facilities, the SCAD Department of University Safety goes to great lengths to educate students on personal safety. No level of security will prevent every crime everywhere, but students can be empowered by practicing commonsense steps to create a safe and fun downtown experience. [Learn more.](#)

- **SCAD University Safety HomeCheck**

The SCAD Department of University Safety offers free [residential security checks](#) for students, faculty, and staff who live off campus in Savannah. Crime prevention specialists will conduct a security check of your residence.

- **LiveSafe app**

The [LiveSafe app](#) lets the SCAD community easily communicate with safety officials using your phone.

The LiveSafe app allows you to:

- Send text, picture, video or audio, and even live chat with SCAD security, and remain anonymous when you want.
- Use the “SafeWalk” feature to allow designated friends or family to track you when you’re walking.
- Use the GPS-tagged panic button, which will share your preloaded information and GPS-tagged location with SCAD University Safety staff, saving you time in critical situations.
- Receive safety alerts and information.

- **Passio/SCAD transportation map**

The SCAD BeeLine provides bus service to all SCAD academic buildings and residence halls. While routes and schedules may vary from year to year, current schedules are always available in MySCAD, and [routes may be viewed online.](#)



Local resources

- Use local rental property search resources (see examples below).
- Safety of property
 - Visit potential properties during the daytime and after dark
 - Use local police department interactive crime maps
[Savannah Police Department](#)
 - CAT bus system
[Chatham Area Transit](#)
- [GeorgiaLegalAid.org - Rental Housing Basics](#)
- [Georgia Landlord Tenant Handbook](#)

Suggested rental property search resources

**The following is not a complete list, and inclusion here does not imply endorsement by or affiliation with the Savannah College of Art and Design.*

Realtor.com

Zillow

Apartments.com

Trulia

