Off-Campus Housing Information

Chatham University can only guarantee housing On Campus for single students who complete the necessary steps before the Priority Deadline. For all other students, Off Campus housing can be found in the areas surrounding the Chatham Campus. The following information is meant to assist you in your search for Off Campus housing by providing resources to find housing and guidelines for what to expect in your search. Our office is available to answer what questions we can about the Pittsburgh Area and guide you to the correct resources for any other problems you may have.

I. Rental Agencies and Contacts for Finding Your Apartment

When you begin your apartment search, it is important to know what needs that you have that will need to be met by this new home. As a Chatham Student, being close to the campus or within an easy commuting distance should be at the top of your list. Neighborhoods with easy access to Chatham, such as Squirrel Hill, Shadyside, Oakland, and Point Breeze are all good places to start your search. These neighborhoods each provide many amenities like shopping, entertainment and night life, and access to public transportation. Below are some property management companies that advertise rental properties:

Long Term Housing:

- Mozart: www.mozartrents.com
- Lobos: www.lobosmanagement.com
- Walnut Capital: www.walnutcapital.com
- Forbes: www.forbesmanagement.net
- Equity: www.equityrealestate.net
- Franklin West: www.franklinwest.com
- Meyers: www.meyersmanagement.com
- Union: www.unionreal.com/apartments
- Craigslist: www.craigslist.com

Temporary Housing:

- Shadyside Inn: www.shadysideinn.com
- Friendship Suites: www.friendshipsuites.com
- Chatham University Howe-Childs Gatehouse: www.chatham.edu
II. Rental Checklist

When you speak with the property’s landlord or visit the apartment, there are many things you will want to find out about the property. Here are some suggested questions for you to keep in mind during the visit:

- What is the cost of the apartment?
- What Utilities are you responsible for? What Utilities is the Landlord responsible for?
  
  *What do we mean by “Utilities”?* Utilities refer to the electric, gas, water, sewage, and trash service costs. Often, the Landlord will pay some of these and you as the Tenant will be responsible for the rest. It is important to find out which ones you will be responsible for, as they are not included in the rent. If they are not included, you have to pay them separately to the companies that provide the services, for example Duquesne Light, an electric company or Equitable Gas, a gas company. For a more complete list of Utility providers, see below. Keep in mind that there will likely be start-up costs for opening accounts with your Utility providers.
- What kind of heat does the apartment have, gas or electric? Who controls the thermostat? Is the apartment air conditioned?
- Does the property allow children or pets? Are there any rules about guests?
- Is there parking? Is there a fee?
- Is there laundry available in the building or nearby?

We highly recommend that you go to see any apartment you consider renting. This visit will give you the opportunity to see whether the apartment suits your needs and is in good condition. Here are some important things to keep in mind during your visit:

- Are the walls, carpets, appliances and facilities clean and in good condition? Do they work correctly? This might include bathroom facilities and kitchen appliances, laundry machines, windows, etc.
- Are there blinds or curtains on the windows?
- Are there enough electrical outlets and phone jacks?
- Is there lighting in the apartment or do you have to provide your own?
- Are there any signs of infestation?
- Are there any signs of water damage, leaks, mold or other problems? Have the carpets been replaced/cleaned recently and has the apartment been painted?
- Are there enough closets? Will you need extra storage space?
- Is the apartment furnished or unfurnished? Will any furniture you have fit?

Regardless of the type of apartment you are looking at, there are rules and regulations about the safety features provided by the Landlord. It is important to make sure the apartment you rent has these things because it is your right as a tenant to be safe and secure in your new home. When you visit an apartment or talk to the Landlord, be sure to ask about the following:

- Are there smoke detectors in the apartment? Are there fire extinguishers available in the apartment or in the hallways?
- Is there a fire escape or emergency exit? Are the at least two entrances/exits to the apartment?
- Do the locks on your door and the door to the building work? Is there a doorbell or intercom system for you to let your guests in?
- Are the hallways/stairways/alleyways leading to the apartment well lit? Do the stairways have hand rails?
- Are the electrical outlets in the kitchen and bathroom GFI type?
- Do the windows close and lock? If the apartment is on the ground floor, do the windows have security bars?
III. Cost

Pittsburgh neighborhoods offer a great variety in cost and style of housing. The neighborhoods closest to Chatham will usually have rent ranging from 600 USD to 2,000 USD, depending on the number of bedrooms, proximity to the University, newness of the property, and inclusion of utilities. Many apartments are available with 2 or 3 bedrooms, which would allow you to share the costs of your rent and utilities with roommates.

There are usually other costs that arise during the apartment search. Many Landlords will want to run a credit check on you and any potential roommates to make sure you have a good financial history. This usually costs 30 USD, which will almost always need to be paid to the landlord when you submit the rental application.

If you take the apartment, you will also need to place a Security Deposit on the property. This deposit is usually the same amount as the rent and is held by the Landlord for the duration of your lease and returned to you when you move out, unless there are damages to the apartment. If there are damages, the Security Deposit is used to pay for the repairs.

Your new Landlord may also ask you to pay the first month’s rent, so make sure you have sufficient funds to pay these additional expenses before you sign the lease. Here is an example of the startup costs of an apartment that costs 650 USD per month:

$30 credit check fee  
+ $650 Security Deposit  
+ $650 First Month’s Rent

$1,330 Total needed to rent the apartment

Utilities:

In addition to making the Security Deposit and First Month’s payment on your apartment, you will also need to contact your Utility companies to start accounts with them. As mentioned before, some apartments require you to pay for certain Utilities separately. Be sure to ask your landlord which Utilities you are responsible for. When you open accounts with Utility companies, there will often be a fee or deposit for this service.

Please contact us with questions about off campus housing:

Office of International Affairs  
Mellon Building 1st Floor  
Woodland Road, Pittsburgh PA 15232  
InternationalAffairs@chatham.edu