

# Frequently Asked Questions

## ABOUT LIVING OFF CAMPUS

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### **How do I get a password to search your rental listings?**

*You must have a UCSC email account to get a password for access. Once you do, go to our main page, click on "Search for Rentals" and follow the easy instructions to access the Housing Registry.*

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### **What is the difference between a UNIT and a ROOM?**

*A **unit** is a self-contained space, be it a house, apartment, studio, or even a self-contained room connected to a house. In order for it to be classified as a unit it must have a private bath, private entrance, and a private kitchen area. A **room** is in shared housing. The room is (usually) private, but the kitchen, living room, bathrooms, and other common areas are shared. We also have listings we call "efficiencies," which are typically living spaces with most characteristics of a studio, but with limited cooking facilities.*

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### **What are the most important things to do in searching for a place and renting it?**

*For searching - Take CRO's Online Renters' Workshop and prepare a rental application packet. For renting - Get all agreements in writing and keep receipts for financial transactions. Complete a Condition of Property Checklist when you move in and KEEP A COPY! Take photos of every room and the yard. Communicate with your landlord by email or letter so you can document and date your exchanges.*

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### **When should I look for fall housing?**

*Start looking three to four weeks in advance of your move-in date, or earlier if you have special requirements. Most landlords don't know if their rental will be available until their tenant gives a 30-day notice. However, the Community Rentals Office solicits "Advance Fall Listings" in April, where landlords list their rentals during spring quarter for students to contract for fall housing. Based on prior years, we may receive over 150 listings. If you don't locate your housing before the school year ends, start looking again in August. Have your rental application packet ready when you start.*

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### **How much can I expect to pay?**

*Our Rental Cost Statistics, located under "Rental Resources" on our main web page, lists price ranges of everything from rooms in shared housing to 6-bedroom houses.*

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### **If I am renting with other people, should we prepare an application packet for each person?**

*Yes. Put all individual packets together with one cover letter. Be sure to include your photos. An example of a rental application packet is available on our web site.*

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### **What should we say in the cover letter?**

*Try to tie the household together with common interests, how you all met, that you get along well, perhaps that you have lived together on campus. Reiterate highlights from your resume, e.g. you are responsible, conscientious individuals who are science majors and need a quiet household for serious studying--only if you are, of course!*



**Community Rentals**

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**Most applications refer to credit history. What if I don't have any credit?**

*No credit is better than bad credit. Get a credit report on yourself. You might be surprised at the information you find there.*

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**I'm concerned about my personal information. Is it safe to put account numbers and social security numbers on the applications?**

*Landlords need to have social security numbers to run a credit check but actual bank or credit card account numbers are unnecessary. You can make a copy of the latest financial statement and black out the account number for the application packet. Landlords are required to take reasonable steps to safeguard your private information. While they must keep copies of your application if they run a credit check on you, if they do not, you can request they shred or return your application.*

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**Is there a way to locate other UCSC students looking for housing?**

*With a UCSC email account, you can view profiles of UCSC students available as housemates and post your own profile on the housemate page of our rental listings program, The Housing Registry.*

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**In a month-to-month agreement, can the landlord raise the rent?**

*Yes, with a 30-day written notice. We still recommend a month-to-month agreement for students because of its flexibility. Leases can be very expensive to break.*

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**If a landlord sells a house, can they make me leave?**

*If you are on a month-to-month agreement they can with a 30-day written notice. If you are on a lease, they cannot. The new owner becomes your new landlord with the same terms and conditions of the original lease.*

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**I did not complete a Condition of Rental Property Checklist when I moved in; now I am getting ready to move out. What should I do?**

*Familiarize yourself with the Security Deposit law. Clean the unit thoroughly and, if possible, fix anything you damaged before the pre-move out inspection. This inspection gives you the opportunity to correct any areas that the landlord believes are not up to expectations before you vacate. It is usually less expensive for you to take care of it than for them to hire professionals and charge you. Expect that your idea of clean and their idea will most likely be different. Take photos. It is too late to document the condition when you moved in but you can document the condition when you vacate.*

*Remember for the next rental to complete the Condition of Rental Property Checklist. This is the most important thing you can do to protect your deposit. Be sure to keep copies of all documents pertaining to your rental.*

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**What if I run into problems with my housing situation?**

*Review our Advising FAQ and web page. Many problems are common and even though each situation is unique, the process to work it out is fairly standard. Our advising web page has many expert resources for you to access.*



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