# The Landlords’ Guide to...

# Renting to Students 2014-15

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Thank you for your interest in offering private rented accommodation to students of the University of Northampton. Outlined below are some of the frequently asked questions in relation to private rentals.

Through the Accommodation Services Team, we provide an advertising service putting local Landlords in contact with students looking to rent private accommodation. We also provide support and advice in matters relating to private sector accommodation.

## The Housing List and Decent & Safe Homes (DASH) Accreditation Scheme sits under Derby City Council

The principle tool for advertising for students is the University Housing List which is published during the spring term.

### Overview of the Scheme

DASH Landlord Accreditation is a scheme which recognises and acknowledges private sector landlords with good standards n the condition and management of their properties and their relationship with their tenants.

Accreditations supports landlords and tenants in their responsibilities and as such is a significant factor in a strategy of self regulating for the private rented sector which will contribute to the raising of housing standards.

The scheme has been successfully operating since 2008 and is part of DASH Services. DASH Landlord Accreditation was previously known as EMLAS (East Midlands Landlord Accreditation Scheme) and was brought into the DASH brand in 2013.

The scheme allows all landlords to become a member and achieve accreditation. DASH Landlord Accreditation compliments other accreditation initiatives already in operation and works alongside a range of partners in the private rented sector to offer landlords the best experience.

DASH Landlord Accreditation is solely for landlords and is not open to Letting Agencies to join: the person wishing to become accreditated with the scheme must be the controlling owner of the properties he or she manages.

After making an application and signing the Code of Conduct, a landlord will be required to:

* + - * Attain a Landlord Development Qualification
      * Satisfy the Housing Act 2004 definition of being a fit and proper person
      * Complete a 10% property sample Bill of Health
      * Provide evidence of continued professional development

On competition the landlord will be awarded the scheme’s quality work of “Accreditated Landlord” and their name will be added to the public register of DASH Accredited Landlords.

The names of Accredited Landlords will be readily available for public reference.

<http://www.dashservices.org.uk/Accreditation>

### Registration Fees

All ‘fully accredited’ properties will benefit from a discounted rate of £15.00 per property, and will be advertised on the Housing List from the first cycle or point of registration if later.

All “pending” and ‘unaccredited’ properties will be advertised at a rate of £35.00 per property, and will be advertised on the second cycle or point of registration if later.

## Renting to Students

As a landlord you will have certain responsibilities and obligations irrespective of the tenant group. However, there are some issues which may be particular to renting to student groups.

### Contracts

Generally most student Landlords ask their tenants to sign a fixed term Assured Short hold Tenancy, which you can purchase from the National Landlords Association or any reputable source such as a solicitor. The period is usually fixed as being the end of the current academic year (the start of July) to the end of the next academic year.

Information on University term dates can be found at: <http://www.northampton.ac.uk/info/20001/about-us/233/term-dates>

Please be advised that the university does not recommend any particular type of contract. It is up to the landlord to determine which legal agreement best suits their particular situation.

### Council Tax Exemption

When registered on a full time course of study a higher education student is exempt from paying council tax. The University of Northampton gives each student a “Certificate of full time student status” that enables them to claim their exemption from the Local Authority.

Students are not automatically exempt and so it is important that you get copies of each student tenant’s certificate for submission to the Local Authority

During an academic year it is common to find the academic status of a resident will change either withdrawing from academic study or becoming a part-time student. Such changes affect liability to pay Council Tax. You should make sure you are aware of any such changes.

### Damage Deposits

From 6 April 2007, all deposits (up to the level of £100,000) taken by Landlords and letting agents for Assured Shorthold Tenancies in England and Wales, must be protected by a tenancy deposit protection scheme.

There are two types of tenancy deposit protection scheme available for Landlords and letting agents (insurance-based schemes and custodial schemes). All schemes provide a free dispute resolution service.

The schemes allow tenants to get all or part of their deposit back when they are entitled to it and encourage tenants and Landlords to make a clear agreement from the start on the condition of the property.

Since this is a considerable change in UK Housing law it is not anticipated that the above overviews fully explain how the new legislation will be implemented. We recommend that you view the more in-depth guides to the scheme available at [www.direct.gov.uk/en/Tenancydeposit/index.htm](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Tenancydeposit/index.htm)we have also included some further information in the Landlords pack (see enclosed).

### Facilities

Students will normally expect a property to be let as fully furnished. Therefore we suggest landlords consider the following as a rough guide to the kind of furniture they should provide.

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| --- | --- |
| Bed/Study Room | Bed, Chest of Drawers, wardrobe or clothes rail, Desk with chair |
| Sitting/Communal Room | Dining Table, Sofa/Easy Chair(s) |
| Kitchen | Cupboard space, fridge and freezer shelf per tenant, Hob, Oven, Washing Machine, Microwave, toasters, kettle. |

You should ensure that all furniture provided complies with the Furniture and Furnishing regulations, 1988; these regulations deal with fire redundancy standards of upholstered furniture and filling material. You should check that all chairs, sofas and mattresses have a permanent label attached stating that the product complies with the 1988 regulations.

In many cases students are expected to provide their own bedding and cooking utensils.

# It is suggested that as the Landlord you do provide the household with a vacuum cleaner that is in good working order unless you are providing a cleaning service. Also if students have responsibility for the external areas then appropriate equipment should be provided e.g. a mower.

### Housing Health and Safety Rating System - HHSRS

As a landlord you will need to ensure that your property is safe for your tenants. The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) introduceda new risk assessment system. The principle is towards identifying and addressing those hazards which are most likely to be present in houses.

In total there are 29 hazards which are identified within the HHSRS including dampness, poor hygiene and pollutants.

Further information is available at: ]

<http://www.dashservices.org.uk/Accreditation>

<http://www.northampton.gov.uk/info/200144/private_sector_landlords/1286/housing_health_and_safety_rating_system>

### Summer Retainers

Summer retainers are not mandatory and some Landlords may choose to let for the full year (52 weeks) which would entitle the student to full access. Other Landlords charge a retainer fee to ‘hold’ the property over the Summer Vacation. Payment of the retainer should enable student tenants to store their belongings at the property and allow reasonable access depending on the amount charged.

Student tenants may often want to occupy the property earlier, especially if they are working in Northampton over the summer break. This arrangement is at your discretion and the main thing to consider is that students have no exemption from Council Tax over the vacation period when they are not counted as being enrolled on courses.

Even if the property is empty over the summer months you should NOT re-let it once you are receiving a retainer or full rent.

### Wear and Tear

We recommend that a detailed inventory including photographs is drawn up and agreed by both yourself and your tenants. This should detail all furniture provided, its condition, together with the general condition of the property.

We recommend that our students also consider taking photographs of any particular damages that require maintenance either before or upon moving into the property. This serves as a good visual record of what works (if any) are outstanding.

### Withdrawals and Terminations

Due to the nature of University life, students may lose their student status for a number of reasons. We always tell students to contact the Landlord in these situations. We understand that there are many issues which can threaten the tenancy and we are always available to offer support to students. However, in such circumstances we will explain to the student their obligations and will not undermine the agreement between Landlord and tenant.

Although a Landlord is under no legal obligation to agree to release a student, in such circumstances where staying in the property is not viable we encourage the student to seek the Landlords permission to be released from their contract or to find a replacement tenant. Any replacement must satisfy the Landlord’s requirements.

### New Properties

For all properties that have not previously registered with us please follow the following website and register your property -<http://www.northamptonstudentpad.co.uk/landlords>

## Further information and useful links:

* University of Northampton – information and services for landlords to register property

<http://www.northamptonstudentpad.co.uk/Landlords.asp>

* Accommodation Services helpdesk: 01604 892482

### DASH Accreditation Scheme:

* Decent and Safe Homes East Midlands – Guidance and information on renting in the private sector and information on the DASH Landlords Accreditation Scheme.
* <http://www.dashservices.org.uk/Accreditation>
* <http://dashtraining.org.uk/>

### NBC:

* Northampton Borough Council - Guidance and information on renting in the private sector and statutory compliance.

<http://www.northampton.gov.uk/housing>

### NLA:

* Northampton Landlords Association –

<http://www.landlords.org.uk/in-my-area/east-midlands/nla-northampton>