

Student's Guide to Living in Halifax

**All the answers you need to find a
great place in Halifax.**

**UNIVERSITY
APARTMENTS**

UNIVERSITY
APARTMENTS

See—More

coming spring 2022



1400 Seymour Street , Halifax, NS

Halifax's only purpose-built student housing project.

- ☒ 149 fully furnished units
- ☒ In-building laundry
- ☒ 5 minutes from campus
- ☒ 1, 3, 4 & 5 bedroom units
- ☒ Accessible units
- ☒ Two exterior courtyards
- ☒ Games room & Wellness room
- ☒ Two cafés & study spaces

JOIN THE WAITLIST NOW!

[SEE—MORE.CA](https://see-more.ca)

1

Should I live in an apartment or a house?

Choosing an apartment or a house is a big decision with tons of ups and downs to both. We've prepared some pros and cons that should help you make that decision.



Living in an apartment building

PROS

- Safety of being in a bigger building
- Some apartments have amenities like gyms, pools, or stores
- You get to be a part of a 'city' lifestyle
- More options to live alone or with only one or two roommates
- Likely some or all utilities are included

CONS

- You might have to deal with noisy neighbours when you're sharing walls
- Dealing with elevators and stairs
- Your space might be smaller in an apartment

Living in a house

PROS

- More traditional student accommodation in Halifax
- You might get a backyard or deck
- Potential for larger bedrooms and more bathrooms

CONS

- Typically meant for bigger groups of students
- You may need to pay more in utilities (if they're not included)

2

Should I have roommates or live alone?

This is a personal preference, with positives and negatives for both scenarios. Roommates can either become your best friends or your worst enemies and everything in between! Make sure to check that your lifestyles will work together when finding the best people to live with.



Living with roommates

Here's a few questions you could ask a potential roommate before you get a place together

- How neat or messy are you?
- What do you do on the weekends?
- What is your typical wakeup/bedtime schedule?
- Do you smoke/drink?
- How often do you cook?
- Have you lived on your own before?
- Do you have friends over often?

Once you've found a great roommate, make sure you set up good boundaries...

- How will we split up bills and how will we pay for them?
- How do we organize chores together?
- Will we share all kitchen and bathroom cupboard space, or should we have designated spaces?
- Will we buy groceries together, or just share a few smaller things?
- What furniture will we need to bring or buy?

3

Where should I look for apartments?

Gone are the days of looking in the classified of the local newspaper for apartments. There are endless apartment search engines online, here are a list of the most used in Halifax.



Apartment Searching

Apartments available
to rent are posted on
multiple sites, here's
where to look...



craigslist



kijiji



zumper

Don't forget
Facebook groups!

Here's a few to get
you started...

Dalhousie University

Incoming Class of 2021-22

Homes for Queers Halifax

FOR RENT IN HRM

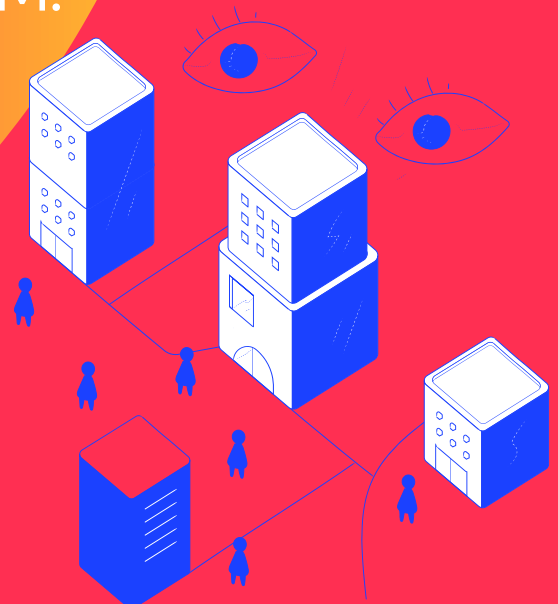
Newcomers Halifax

International students Halifax-Housing-roommates

4

What neighbourhood should I live in?

Most Dal students end up in the south end due to its proximity to campus. However, Halifax is pretty small, meaning it is an easy city to walk, bike or take transit across. Let's take a look at the neighbourhoods within HRM.



South End

The South End is home to 95% of students living off campus, understandably given how close it is to the universities. Many residential houses have been converted into multi-unit student housing to accommodate the large student population in the city.



The Area

Near Point Pleasant Park, walking distance to downtown restaurants and bars, close to grocery stores and pharmacies.

Getting to Campus

Plenty of bus lines go directly to Dalhousie's campuses, or take a nice bike ride or walk. Owning a car in the south end may be more of a bother than a luxury as many student apartments don't offer parking, or if they do it's at a hefty monthly fee. If you want to avoid a pile of street-parking tickets it may be best to stick to alternative methods of transportation...



5–7 mins



0–20 mins



12 mins



5 mins

North End

Trendy, chic, hip – are all accurate descriptions of Halifax's North End. A diverse and welcoming neighbourhood that is home to long term residence, students, recent grads, artists, and low-income communities.

The Area

Commercial centres, historic buildings, military base, library, community centres, small businesses.



Getting to Campus

Although living in the north end would put you in walking distance from NSCAD, getting to Dal is a bit of a longer commute than the south. Luckily, the neighbourhood is situated parallel to the main streets of Gottingen, Robie, and Windsor, making it relatively easy to hop on a bus headed towards campus. Cycling is just as easy, if not easier, than a commute by car.



15 mins



20–60 mins



22 mins



13 mins

West End

Known to be a quieter side of town. Unaffected by many businesses, storefronts or bars – though the Halifax Shopping Centre and Hydrostone neighbourhood are both within a 20-minute walk. Rental prices are more reasonable than the north and south end.



The Area

Quinpool area is the heart of the west end, Close to grocery stores, shopping, cafes. The area consists of young professionals, students, and retirees.

Getting to Campus

Relatively easy to reach Dal and King's, given the proximity to Oxford Street.



15 mins



40 mins



20 mins



10 mins

Downtown

The most expensive location to rent in HRM. Renters often live above some kind of business, which comes with all the noises and smells of that establishment. Downtown is a prime location for the social butterfly with immediate access to bars, events, and of course – that late night donair.



The Area

Up from the waterfront, Central business district; business entertainment, and tourist hub. Multi-functional residential and commercial building arrangements.



10 mins



25 mins

Getting to Campus

Downtown is home to Dalhousie's Sexton Campus, but for all other Dal students the commute to the main campus is almost identical to that of the south end.



10 mins



8 mins

Dartmouth

Dartmouth, Halifax's former sister city is right across the pond and accessible by bridge or ferry, or you can take the longer scenic route around the Bedford Basin if you have time to spare (and not a dollar for the bridge). If you're looking to keep your wallet a bit heavier and don't mind a longer commute, Dartmouth is a great spot.



The Area

Across from the McDonald Bridge and Dartmouth Ferry Terminal. Home to young professionals, proud Dartmouthians and students sick of Halifax.

Getting to Campus

Unless you're a talented swimmer you will have to get acquainted with the ferry schedule. Taking the ferry is a 12 min transit and costs \$2.75 per trip, or you can opt for a monthly pass for \$82.50/month. If taking the bridge, be sure to have some loose change or get a MacPass, you'll need a dollar each way across (or bike, which is free!).



10 mins



25 mins



10 mins



8 mins

5

What should I look for during an apartment viewing?

So you've spotted an apartment ad you like. Woohoo! Don't get too excited just yet; let's talk about what questions you should be asking when viewing your potential apartment, and what you should consider before signing a lease...



Apartment Viewings

Q: What utilities are included in rent?

Q: If utilities are not included, how much do they average out to per month?

Q: Are appliances included?

Q: Is there parking? Bike storage or storage lockers?

Q: Where is the fuse box?

Q: Does the apartment come furnished or unfurnished?

Q: Are there smoke detectors, do they work?

Q: Who do I notify if repairs are needed?

Q: Is there in-unit coin operated laundry in the building, or none at all?

Q: Where are the essentials in this area?

Q: What is the pet policy?

Q: Is the apartment accessible? Is there an elevator or stairs?

Apartment Viewings

Other things to consider...

Security

Take note of the apartments security features – are there security cameras? security alarm?

Do your windows lock? Is there a common area? Does it have a lock? How many locks does your door have?

Other

Are there any signs of mould or pests?

Is the apartment properly insulated?

How are the other tenants? Will your lifestyles clash?

Are the power outlets, faucets, and shower in good condition?

6

How do I know if the landlord is any good?

An apartment is only as good as the landlord who owns it, and if you don't have a terrible landlord story, you definitely know someone who does.

Here's how you know you've (probably) avoided a landlord from h3ll...



Finding a great landlord

O1 THEY ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS

- Sounds simple right? If your landlord responds to your questions promptly and honestly, without avoiding them, you're on the right track.
- How long have they owned the property? How have rental prices changed over the years?

O2 THEY PASS YOUR RESEARCH TESTS

- Search your landlord's name, company, or building and find some review sites to check out the evaluations of the property management company or landlord from previous tenants
- It may require some digging, but Google reviews and Reddit are a good place to start.



Finding a great landlord

O3 THEY WANT TO KNOW ABOUT YOU

- A telltale sign that a landlord cares about their property usually includes a detailed application. If a landlord has invested money into their property they want good tenants who will take care of their investment.
- They should want your co-signer's name/contact info, a reference letter, employment history/student status, etc.
- Keep in mind, a landlord doesn't need your SIN information! Be weary if they ask...

O4 THEY ARE OPEN FOR CONVERSATION

- Have a conversation with your landlord regarding how they would handle tricky situations and clarify the qualities you are looking for in a landlord.



This process may feel awkward and uncomfortable... but remember, you are interviewing them just as much as they are interviewing you!

7

How much should rent cost per month?

The average costs of rent varies depending on the size of apartments you're looking to rent. Here are the current ranges in Halifax you can expect to pay near campus and on the peninsula



Average Rental Rates

Obviously, The average costs of rent vary depending on the size, location and condition of the apartment you're looking to rent.

Here are the current average ranges in Halifax you can expect to pay near campus and on the peninsula...



Bachelor

\$ 850 - 1,200



1 bedroom

\$ 1,000 - 1,400



2 bedroom

\$ 1,300 - 1,900



3 bedroom

\$1,800 - 2,500



4 bedroom

\$2,400 - 3,000



5 bedroom

\$ 3,000 -4,000

8

What is normal to be required on a lease?

Moving into your first apartment is
exciting stuff!

But, what the heck is on a lease
and why is it so important to
actually read the fine print?



Lease Requirements

DAMAGE DEPOSITS

In Nova Scotia, it's typical that a landlord will ask you for ½ of the first month's rent as a damage deposit. Usually they collect this when you sign your lease, and they will return this back to you at the end of your lease term following a move-out inspection.

CO-SIGNER OR GUARANTOR

As a student, you will likely be asked for a co-signer or a guarantor. This is someone (usually a parent) who has already built credit and can be responsible for the rent payments in the case that you cannot pay. This is very common when renting to students, so make sure you talk to a parent or guardian about this when you are apartment shopping.

Lease Requirements

LEASE TERMS

Lease terms are either:

- Monthly (renewed month to month)
- Yearly (renewed year to year)
- Fixed-term

In monthly and yearly leases, the lease automatically renews if you don't give proper notice that you are leaving. In a fixed term lease (which is common for student rentals) your lease ends on a specific date and then you are under no obligation to renew. You'll need to speak to your landlord 3-6 months before the end of the term in order to renew.

TENANTS INSURANCE

Your landlord might require that you get tenants insurance. This insurance covers damages from disasters like fires or floods, and liability such as if someone fell in your apartment and wanted to sue you. It is always prudent to get insurance to protect yourself and/or your roommates.

9

How do I set up my bills?

This may be your first time living on your own, which means you'll probably need to set up your bills all on your own (a little scary!)

Don't worry though! Let's chat about everything you'll need to know about setting up bills.



Get your bills set up

If your utilities are not included in your rent payable to your landlord you will have to set up a few different accounts in order to pay your bills.



Nova Scotia Power handles all of your utilities except for wifi (obviously). It is recommended that you set up an account 7-10 days before you need your power connected. See [NS Power](#) webpage for students to learn more. From here you can set up an account and have your payments pre-authorized on a credit card so you don't miss any payments.



For phone, internet & TV, several different service providers offer options in the HRM. [BellAliant](#), [Eastlink](#) and [City Wide](#) offer all three services individually or in bundles. Just like your utilities, you can get these service payments pre-authorized, they also offer student plans to get a lower rate!



10

Can I get a shorter term lease?

Subletting is a great option if you're only coming to Halifax for a semester or two, if you're studying on an exchange or if you're here on a co-op work term. It's very common for students to sign a lease for a year and want to sublet their apartment at least one of the semesters.



Subletting

Q: So what is subletting?

A: A way to rent a portion of someone else's lease from them

Q: How does subletting work?

A: You (a sublessee) will sign a lease agreement with a sublessor who has a lease for the unit. They remain responsible for the apartment and they will become your landlord for the term of your agreement.

Q: What terms are usually available for sublet?

A: Summer (May 1– Aug 31) is usually the most common, but you can also find lots of subletting opportunities from Sept 1–Dec 31, and Jan 1 – Apr 30.

Subletting

Q: Who do I pay rent to?

A: You would pay rent to the Sublessor (the student renting their apartment) , and they continue to pay the landlord.

Q: What should I keep in mind when looking for a place to sublet?

A: Make sure that the Sublessor has permission from their landlord to sublet. You should also make sure the other roommates know they plan to sublet and you may want to meet them before committing to live there. Always check whether or not furniture and utilities will be included in the agreement.

11

What should I budget for my expenses in Halifax?

It's easy to get a little carried away with spending when you go off to university.

Budgeting can sound intimidating, but its not actually hard and it'll help you thrive.



Sample Monthly Budget

MONTHLY EXPENSES			ONE – TIME EXPENSES		
MONTHLY EXPENSES		APPROX. COST	ONE – TIME EXPENSES		APPROX. COST
Rent		850 – 4,000 \$	Tenant Insurance		10- 80 \$
Utilities		100 – 200 \$	Initial Moving Expense		600 – 2,000 \$
Groceries		250 – 300 \$	Security Deposit		1/2 month's rent \$
Phone		50 – 100 \$	Total One-Time Expenses	1,035 – 4, 080	\$
Internet		75 – 125 \$			
Public Transportation		2.75/trip \$			
Clothing		20 – 200 \$			
Car		140 – 400 \$			
Leisure Spending		20 – 300 \$			
Total Monthly Expenses	1,505 – 5,625	\$			

THESE FIGURES ARE A ROUGH GUIDE OF AVERAGES, YOUR BUDGET WILL DEPEND ON YOUR CHOICES

Note: Rent is variable based on roommates, location, size, and condition.

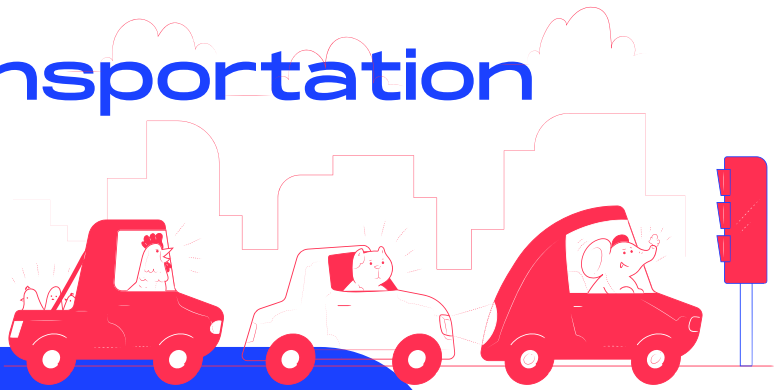
12

How can I get to Halifax from the airport?

The Halifax Stanfield International Airport is about a 30 minute drive to downtown Halifax. Here are some options to getting you into the city!



Airport Transportation



Uber

The fare runs anywhere between \$60 – \$85

Driver Dave

\$20 – \$35 per person. Discount available if booked in groups.

Taxi

Yellow Cab and Casino taxi both come into the city. You can expect to pay \$60-70.

Metro Transit

The #320 bus leaves the airport every 30-60 minutes and costs \$4.25.

Maritime Bus

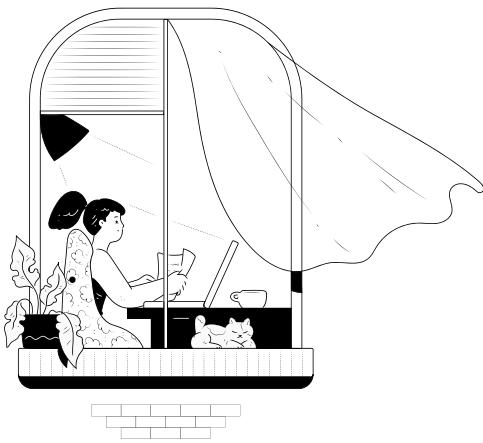
Shuttle runs May 1 – October 21 and costs \$22 one way.

**UNIVERSITY
APARTMENTS**

Beautiful Spaces Designed for Student Life

CHECK OUT OUR LISTINGS!

UNIVERSITYAPARTMENTS.CA



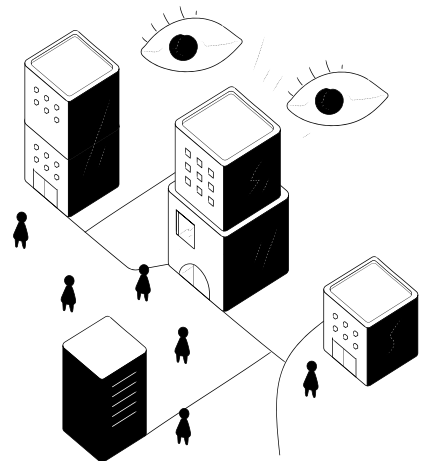
BEAUTIFUL APARTMENTS

Big, bright, beautiful furnished apartments
designed for student living.

SECURE

The fam will always know you're safe.

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!



PERFECT LOCATION

Practically on campus – roll out of bed
to class!

AMENITIES

in-building laundry and more!

MAINTENANCE

Our buildings are new and well
serviced.

Resources

"Average Rent in Halifax, NS and Cost Information." Zumper, www.zumper.com/rent-research/halifax-ns.

Dalhousie Legal Aid Services , 2019, pp. 1–64, Tenant Rights Guide, cdn.dal.ca/content/dam/dalhousie/pdf/law/DLAS/TenantRightsGuides/Tenant%20Rights%20Guide%202019.pdf.

Finley, Jillian Knox. "30 Questions to Ask a Roommate Before You Move in Together." MyDomaine, www.mydomaine.com/questions-to-ask-a-potential-roommate.

"Money Matters." Dalhousie University, www.dal.ca/admissions/money_matters.html.

Rentals.ca, rentals.ca/national-rent-report#rentalsca-data.

Ross, Lauren. "20 Good Questions to Ask Potential Roommates." CoStar Renterverse, 23 Jan. 2019, www.apartments.com/blog/20-good-questions-to-ask-potential-roommates.

Team, The Common. "7 Simple Ways To Improve Roommate Relationships Overnight." The Coliving Blog by Common | Resources for Shared Living, 27 Aug. 2020, www.common.com/blog/2019/11/7-ways-improve-roommate-relationships/.