

## Top 12 Tips for International Students Living Off-Campus

1. Decide which neighborhood will be best for you to reside. Can you walk to campus or will you need a car or public transportation?
2. Please be aware that if you decide to live off campus, Hofstra is not responsible for any agreements or documents that you enter into with your landlord. Off campus housing is privately owned.
3. Make sure to receive a written agreement. Make a copy of your agreement/lease. Understand what you are signing. If you have any questions about your lease, bring a copy to the office of Office of Off-Campus Living and Commuter Students Services located at 221 Mack Student Center. We will help you read over your lease and understand the terms. Remember, once you and the landlord sign the document it is official! Place your copy in a safe location where it is easily available.
4. Always pay your rent by check or money order, **do not pay** by cash. You might get asked to pay one month's security and the first and last month's rent. **Never** pay everything for a year or a semester at once.
5. Ask if utilities are included in your rental fees. If they are not included, ask for a list of local companies that have been used in the rental property before. The following are examples of what may be considered utilities: gas, electric, cable & internet, water, sewage. Be aware of the city's trash and noise rules. If the landlord's name is on the utilities bill, you must pay the landlord. Make sure that the rental agreement mentions that you must be provided with a copy of the bills each month before your payment will be remitted to the landlord.
6. Take pictures of each room in the house or apartment before moving in so you have a record of the condition upon moving into the apartment. Also, look for an alarm system, which can be optional but is suggested. Carbon Monoxide and fire detectors are mandated by the state, they must be included.
7. Individual leases are illegal for the same house. There should be one lease with multiple signatures. Tenants can make additional written agreements if needed.
8. If you are sharing a house, make sure there is a written agreement about expenses, cleaning and trash removal.
9. Make sure your rental agreement states when your security deposit has to be returned to you. A majority of international students need to go back to their countries right after the term ends. Landlords by law have the right to hold your deposit two months after you move out. Therefore, it is important to state in the lease when the deposit needs to be returned.
10. Get to know the neighborhood and your neighbors! A lot of your neighbors might not have heard of your country or your customs. This is a great way of meeting new people who might be able to help you with some local restaurants, shopping and, information about where you live.
11. In Case of emergencies and to learn more about safety tips visit the Hofstra's Public Safety Page: [Public Safety](#). For information about the Hofstra Night Shuttle click here: [Hofstra Shuttle](#)
12. Remember, you can always visit the [Off Campus Housing Website](#) to help you find a place to rent. Please remember, the University is not responsible for these postings.