

OCC Housing Search Checklist



Make sure to get answers to all of these questions before you sign the lease for a property. For more information, contact the OCC (occ@binghamton.edu)

Financial / Lease

- What is the amount of the rent? How is it paid? Is this amount per month, per semester, etc.? Per person? On what date is the rent due? Late fees? Does the rent include any utilities? How long is the lease?
- Is an application fee, or security deposit required? If so, how much and under what circumstance is it held?
- Do you pay extra (and how much)? Any hidden fees? One-time charges? For example storage space, air conditioning, parking space, cable TV, use of laundry facilities, installation of special appliances, late payment of rent, etc.?
- Read and understand the lease, The Legal Clinic can review your lease for free
- When possible, insist on a “separate” (individual) rather than a “group” lease. Keep one signed copy of the lease for your own records.

Safety features

- Features**
Are the exterior doors of the living unit equipped with deadbolt locks? Security chains? Through-the-door viewers? How about Cameras?
- Building Area**
Is it clean and well-lit? Are there adequate provisions for building security? Cameras, deadbolt locks, etc.?

Miscellaneous

- How do you dispose of trash? What day is trash picked up? Do we use Binghamton blue bags?
- How do you receive mail and packages?
- How far are the bus stops, banks, and grocery stores?

Building maintenance and features

Features

Are the premises furnished? If so, what do those furnishings include? Are the furnishings clean and in good repair? Dishwasher, microwave, AC, cable, internet, handicap accessible? Is laundry in unit, on-premise, or not available? Additional amenities' fitness center, study rooms, etc.?

Maintenance Services

Is there a building manager living on the premises? What are the hours during which routine maintenance services are performed? Are tenants adequately forewarned of routine maintenance services to be performed within their living units? How is emergency maintenance service handled? How do you put in a maintenance request? How long does it take? What happens if you get locked out? Lost keys?

Bathrooms

Are plumbing fixtures in good working order and reasonably clean? Is the hot water supply adequate for the size of the unit?

Kitchen

Is the sink in good working order? Are the stove and refrigerator in good working order and reasonably clean?

Wiring

Are there enough electrical outlets? Do all the switches and outlets function properly? Are switches and electrical outlets properly covered?

Heat

Does the heating system appear to be in good working condition? Is adequate heat provided? Ask the age of the furnace.

Cable/Internet

Are they already set up? All bedrooms?

Entrances and exits

There should be at least two exits. Are stairwells adequately lit and structurally sound? Are fire exits provided? Are exit doors equipped with panic hardware?

Fire Safety

Are fire alarms or heat/smoke detectors provided and in working order? Are fire extinguishers provided and in working order? Ask the landlord to show his inspection permit. CO2 detector on premises?

Windows

Are any broken? Can they be opened and closed easily? Are screens provided? Are window frames properly weather-proofed?

Floors and ceilings

Are they well maintained? Is the plaster cracked? Is there any paint peeling?

Hallways

Are they clean and well-lit? Are they in good condition and free of obstacles?

Infestation

Are there signs of insect infestation? What precautions are taken?

Lighting

Do the room fixtures provide adequate lighting? Are the fixtures in good working order? Is there adequate natural light from the windows? Who is responsible for lightbulbs?

Storage Space

Is there adequate space for storage in room closets, and in kitchen and bathroom cabinets? Are there facilities in the building available to tenants for the purpose of long-term storage?