Commuter Connections
Graduate Student
Guide to Off-Campus Housing

The Department of Graduate Student Affairs can help to assist you in your search for off-campus accommodations! You are encouraged to meet with Steven Weglinski in the Graduate Student Center at Kutz Hall during our hours of operation Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm, or contact him via email or phone. We will strive to be a valuable resource to help you find information and identify your specific housing needs.
Where should I live?

It is important to think about location when living off-campus. You should choose a neighborhood that can best accommodate your needs and lifestyle. Many students live within walking distance to the university. Others may live off of the Fitchburg Commuter Rail and closer to the city. (Brandeis is located on the Fitchburg/Acton Commuter Rail train line at the Brandeis/Roberts stop). Where you live will depend on your individual needs and your specific budget. The three main streets that are near campus include South Street, Main Street and Moody Street and the majority of Brandeis University students live within this area. To help guide your search within Waltham, we created a map of the area with the outlined FREE Brandeis Shuttle’ map!

Visit [http://www.mbta.com](http://www.mbta.com) for all train and bus transportation schedules and maps. The 70 & 553/554 bus lines run closest to campus.

If you have a car, you will have greater flexibility to live in other areas, like North Waltham and Watertown because you will not need to rent in towns with access to public transportation, which are circled in the map above. Be sure to inquire about parking and actual commute times when considering any apartment. Most apartments will have on-street parking.

With a commuter parking pass purchased from Brandeis University, you can park in designated lots on campus (approx. $120 for the year). You can purchase a parking pass from the Office of Public Safety when you arrive at campus.

*Use Google Maps to view estimated times for travel by car, public transport, or walking!*
Where Brandeis Grad students live

- 75% Waltham
- 10% Brighton
- 5% Cambridge
- 10% Other (<5% each)

Who Brandeis Grad students live with

- 5% Alone
- 35% Spouse/partner
- 60% Roommate (excluding spouse/partner)

20% of Brandeis Grad students live with pets
8% of Brandeis Grad students have children

What type of properties Brandeis Grad students live in

- 60% Small Property (1-9 units)
- 20% Large Property (50+ units)
- 20% Mid-Size Property (10-49 units)

What size residences Brandeis Grad students live in

- 5% Studio
- 25% One bedroom
- 20% Two bedrooms
- 50% Three or more bedrooms

*rates based upon total shared monthly rent of all occupants

*Average rent by apartment size

- $1,200 Studio
- $1,400 1 BR
- $2,000 2 BR
- $2,700 3+ BR

Distribution of property ratings

- 30% 0 - 6.9
- 15% 7 - 7.9
- 20% 8 - 8.9
- 35% 9+

*REVIEWS AND ADVICE FROM 200+ CURRENT GRAD STUDENTS

DISCLAIMER: The reviews and ratings presented throughout the guide and the VeryApt website do not reflect the opinions, position, or endorsement of VeryApt. The responses and reviews presented are solely those of the survey respondents, current Brandeis Grad Students. VeryApt assumes no responsibility for readers’ or users’ interpretation of the data. The results do not in any way constitute a warranty or representation by VeryApt as to the quality, safety, or other features of a property. We encourage you to check all available sources of information about properties prior to renting.
NEIGHBORHOODS EXPLAINED

An overview of the most popular neighborhoods for Brandeis Grad students

1. **Waltham**
   - 75% of Brandeis Grad students

   Waltham is the most popular choice for Brandeis Grad students and it’s really because of the close proximity to campus. Most students prefer a short walk or a nice bike ride to campus, as well as access to the Brandeis Shuttle, which is FREE to all students.

2. **Brighton**
   - 10% of Brandeis Grad students

   Brighton offers affordable options for students looking for a quiet, green neighborhood who are also okay with being a bit farther away from the downtown scene. While nightlife is limited, there are a ton of parks in the neighborhood that students love. Direct public transportation to Brandeis is limited.

3. **Cambridge**
   - 5% of Brandeis Grad students

   Located further from campus, Cambridge is home to Harvard and a lot of grad students/young professionals. While it’s not necessarily a Brandeis hub, it’s great if you want to mix it up with other universities. Students typically utilize the commuter rail train (~$200/month), which drops students off at lower campus.

4. **Watertown**
   - 3% of Brandeis Grad students

   Watertown offers convenient shopping at the Arsenal Mall, Watertown Mall, Target, and Home Depot. There are many parks, offering recreational activities and green space. Watertown is about 20 minutes from Brandeis and Boston via car or public transportation via bus.

Other Neighborhoods

less than 5% each

5. **Newton**
6. **Downtown**
7. **South Boston**
8. **Somerville**
9. **Allston**
Waltham
Most Convenient Neighborhood for Brandeis Grad Students

ABOUT WALTHAM

Waltham is the most popular choice for Brandeis Grad students and it’s really because of the close proximity to campus. Most students prefer a short walk or a nice bike ride to campus, as well as access to the Brandeis Shuttle, which is FREE to all students.

Quiet  Lots of Grad Students  Easy Commute  Not Much Nightlife

Campus Shuttle Service

MEDIAN RENTS IN WALTHAM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Studio</th>
<th>1 Bedroom</th>
<th>2 Bedroom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>$1,200</td>
<td>$1,900</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WHAT RESIDENTS THINK ABOUT WALTHAM

🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟 Review by Grad Student  🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟
LONGVIEW PLACE
Living in the Waltham area, I find it to be extremely nice and I very much enjoy my short walk each day. Overall, I find the area to be very beautiful and relaxing, particularly when compared to living closer to the city. The area has more of a suburban feel to it. There is a hospital across the street and an elementary school down the road from my apartment.

🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟 Review by Grad Student  🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟
86 LOWELL ST
Diverse, park across the street, lots of kids playing, near other college students and locals.
Brighton offers affordable options for students looking for a quiet, green neighborhood who are also okay with being a bit farther away from the downtown scene. While nightlife is limited, there are a ton of parks in the neighborhood that students love. Direct public transportation to Brandeis is limited.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quieter</th>
<th>Longer Commute</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affordable</td>
<td>Clean</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### MEDIAN RENTS IN BRIGHTON

| Studio | $900 | 1 Bedroom | $1,100 | 2 Bedroom | $1,780 |

### WHAT RESIDENTS THINK ABOUT BRIGHTON

**Review by Boston Resident**

Love it here! Only negative is that brighton is a little secluded in terms of public transit. It is manageable though.

**Review by Grad Student**

Cool spot! The neighborhood is awesome and pretty inexpensive compared to other areas in Boston - would definitely recommend!
Cambridge
Hub for Grad Students/Young Professionals

ABOUT CAMBRIDGE

Located further from campus, Cambridge is home to Harvard and a lot of grad students/young professionals. While it’s not necessarily a Brandeis hub, it’s great if you want to mix it up with other universities. Students typically utilize the commuter rail train (~$200/month), which drops students off at lower campus.

Lots of Grad Students/Young Professionals
Can be Pricy
Pretty Scenery

MEDIAN RENTS IN CAMBRIDGE

|$1,200 | $1,500 | $2,200 |
| Studio | 1 Bedroom | 2 Bedroom |

WHAT RESIDENTS THINK ABOUT CAMBRIDGE

⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐
Review by Boston Resident LOFTS @ KENDALL SQ.

Lots of fun bars and restaurants nearby, super close to the red line. Head to Voltage for coffee, Friendly Toast for brunch, CBC or Meadhall for afterwork beers, and Fuji for sushi.

⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐
Review by Boston Resident THIRD SQUARE

No nearby grocery stories, some noise in the mornings, close to Kendall Square/MIT and Red Line.
# Apartment Ratings

## KEY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Price Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>••••</td>
<td>Excellent for a category</td>
<td>$1500+ per renter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>•••</td>
<td>Great</td>
<td>$1000- $1499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>••</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>$700- $999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>•</td>
<td>Below average</td>
<td>&lt; $700</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Prices subject to change and may vary significantly by room type.

## Properties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property Type</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Price Range</th>
<th>Most Popular</th>
<th>Best for Pets</th>
<th>Best for Families</th>
<th>Management</th>
<th>Amenities</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Safety</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adams Street Apartments</td>
<td>Apt 4</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlesbank Estates</td>
<td>Apt 8</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlesbank Garden Apartments</td>
<td>Apt 9</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longview Place</td>
<td>Apt 9.5</td>
<td>$$$$</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vox on Two</td>
<td>Apt 10</td>
<td>$$$$</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>159 Summer Street</td>
<td>Apt 10</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Morris St</td>
<td>House 9</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>212 Charles St</td>
<td>House 8</td>
<td>$$$</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>219 Summer St</td>
<td>House 8</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>223 Endicott St</td>
<td>House 5</td>
<td>$$$$</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>232 Kelton St</td>
<td>House 5</td>
<td>$$$</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>240 Crescent St</td>
<td>House 5</td>
<td>$$</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 MORTON ST</td>
<td>House 8</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 Academy Hill Rd</td>
<td>House 7</td>
<td>$$$</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32 Nathan Rd</td>
<td>House 5</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>346 Faneuil St</td>
<td>House 6</td>
<td>$$</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52 Chester Ave</td>
<td>House 6</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 Maple St</td>
<td>House 7</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86 Lowell St</td>
<td>House 7</td>
<td>$$$</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99 Francis St</td>
<td>House 8</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## About Our Categories

### Property Type
- **Apartment (Apt)**: Properties with one building manager. Often have consistent pricing/features.
- **Condo**: Properties with multiple owners. Lease terms and features can vary significantly by unit.

### Key Building Factor Ratings

- **Overall Rating**: Overall feedback on building quality.
- **Popularity**: Estimated # of students in the building.
- **Living Situation Ratings**
  - **Families**: How students with partners and/or children rated the building.
  - **Pet Owners**: How students with pets rated the building.
- **Building Quality Ratings**
  - **Management**: Maintenance and service quality.
  - **Amenities**: In-room and building features beyond the basics.
  - **Value**: Building quality given cost of rent.
  - **Social**: Building community and social scene.
  - **Safety**: Building neighborhood safety.
MOST POPULAR APARTMENT BUILDINGS

Buildings with the most Brandeis Grad students

READ MORE REVIEWS AT VERYAPT.COM

What students typically look for:

✔ Lots of Brandeis Grad students
✔ Excellent location
✔ Reasonably-priced apartments with solid amenities

RATINGS AGGREGATED FROM CURRENT STUDENTS

TOP 5

1st
CHARLESBANK GARDEN APARTMENTS
Waltham, 56 Charles River Rd

$1,300

Review by Brandeis Grad Student
“The closest off-campus apartment. Comfortable floor plan, excellent facility services (free) and heat and water is included in the rent. The down side is that, since this place is so popular, the waiting list is really long and it is nearly impossible to find a vacant spot if you don’t have any current tenant to pull you in as a roommate.”

2nd
LONGVIEW PLACE
Waltham, 70 Hope Ave

$2,200

Review by Brandeis Grad Student
“Although Longview is on the upper end for a graduate student’s budget, the comfort and enjoyment my partner and I get from this home is incomparable. I have lived in Boston many years and this is the nicest place I have lived; we picked it with the intent of staying here long-term. The apartments have lots of space, allow pets, have full carpeting, have full and updated kitchens that are perfect if you love to cook, large/spacious bathrooms, walk-in closet, large windows providing lots of light, and only a 15 minute walk to Brandeis campus.”

3rd
CHARLESBANK ESTATES
Waltham, 70 Charles River Rd

$3,000

Review by Former Brandeis Grad Student
“While coming from another part of the US I thought the rent was very expensive, we have looked into moving and have found very little that can offer us what we have now for a cheaper price. The grounds are very well maintained in the summer and with snow removal. Parking is always abundant.”
Shared Living Homes
Smaller properties and how to find them

ABOUT SHARED LIVING HOMES

Shared Living Homes are apartments in older buildings, typically a few stories tall. They usually do not have a doorman, an elevator, or many amenities, but can be cheaper and more spacious than the apartment and condo units in high-rises.

WHY YOU SHOULD CONSIDER A SHARED LIVING HOME

- CHEAPER
- LARGER FLOOR PLANS
- 3+ BEDROOMS AVAILABLE
- MORE PRIVACY

WHY YOU MAY WANT TO AVOID A SHARED LIVING HOME

- NO DOORMAN
- LESS CONVENIENT LOCATIONS
- OLDER CONSTRUCTION
- LIMITED AMENITIES
- MORE MAINTENANCE ISSUES

Finding a shared Living Home

Shared living homes can be challenging to find because they tend to be individually owned and do not have full time leasing managers. Shared living home listings are typically available ~60 days in advance. You can find a shared Living Home by searching online listings, contacting a landlord directly, or by working with VeryApt’s Concierge Team who can help identify some options.

Preparing for a shared Living Home search

Some Brandeis grad students opt for larger properties in order to live closer to other students and simplify the housing search. That said, a lot of students choose to live in shared living homes - be prepared to visit more properties to find that perfect home, carefully examine the pros/cons, and move quickly if you find a unit you love.

TIPS AND ADVICE

Reliable Landlords

Check online reviews and talk to previous tenants to find out about your landlord. Look for one that responds quickly to maintenance requests and has a history of returning deposits.

Noise and Neighbors

Sounds often travel well through shared Living Homes and you can easily be disturbed by barking dogs, music, or construction. Check out the surrounding area to get a sense for what it may be like.

Lease Terms

Leases with independent landlords are negotiable. Check your lease for restrictions on sub-letters and visitor policies. You may be able to avoid a rent increase by locking in a longer lease.
Rent with Confidence

**Time Savers**

All the information you need in a single place. Photos, prices, floor plans, maps, and amenities - VeryApt has you covered.

**Intelligent Search**

Personalized apartment recommendations based on the amenities you want, your proximity to school or work, and your desired price range.

**Concierge Service**

On demand rental experts that can provide apartment recommendations, set up apartment tours, and help you with your rental application - all at no extra cost.

**Trusted Reviews**

Hundreds of verified apartment reviews from current and past tenants that help you make an informed decision about where you want to live.

---

**WHY WE STARTED VERYAPT**

VeryApt was born from the simple realization that the small things about an apartment are often the most important: a friendly doorman, lots of sunlight in the living room, a running trail nearby, or that amazing hole-in-the-wall Thai restaurant across the street. We understand that the frustrations of apartment hunting are universal, but share a belief that it doesn’t have to be. We know what makes an apartment truly feel like home is unique for each person and that’s why our focus is on bringing you personalized recommendations based on timely, relevant, and real user reviews. We’ll be there every step of the way to help you find your perfect apartment.

Ashrit Kamireddi
Co-Founder & CEO of VeryApt
ashrit@veryapt.com
Some questions to ask yourself in general and about specific shared Living Home rentals?

1. Where is the house located?
2. Are stores located conveniently to my home?
3. How safe is the neighborhood?
4. Is there adequate parking?
5. Who do I call in case of an emergency?
6. Will I live alone or with others?
7. What is the cost of the rent per person?
8. How many bedrooms are there?
9. Is heat included in the price of rent?
10. What type of heat (oil, gas, electric) does it use?
11. What appliances/amenities are included with the house?
12. Are laundry facilities close?
13. What will be my cost for transportation between school and home?

BUDGETING & PREPARING FOR LIVING COSTS

**Boston is the 3rd most expensive housing market in the United States.** However, Waltham is one of the more affordable suburbs in the greater Boston area. There are several large apartment complexes in Waltham; apartments are also located in multifamily homes and smaller apartment buildings. A typical apartment in the area is a two story or three story multi-family home that has two or three apartments stacked on top of each other, as well as a 5-6 bedroom home with shared common space and bathroom(s). When examining what your budget should be you should think about heat and other utility bills as well, which generally add about $100+/month. It is especially important to take heat into consideration as it is cold in Waltham and heating costs can be very expensive in the winter. However, some rentals may have heat/utilities included in the rent.

Before you begin making calls to realtors or landlords, it is advisable to figure out how much you want and can afford to spend on housing. Create a budget for yourself that includes rent, utilities, books, transportation, food, entertainment, and other costs.

Common upfront costs that you may have to pay include the first month’s rent, a security deposit of one month’s rent, & last month’s rent (equal to one month). Most housing is found through a real estate agent. It is common in Boston to pay a total of 1 month’s rent to the real estate agent to secure your apartment.

**Example of Upfront Costs**
If your portion of the rent is $750.00
1st month’s rent: $750.00
Last month’s rent: $750.00
Security Deposit: $750.00
Broker Fee: $750.00
Your total needed to secure the apartment would be $750.00 x 4 = $3000.00

*Not all rentals will require all 4 costs as diagramed above. Speak to your agent about details*
Suggested Agents & Resources

We work closely with several real estate agents in the Waltham area that have a proven track record providing top customer service to our Brandeis Graduate Students. Please refer to the agents below for additional assistance in your search for housing. They each are knowledgeable about the specific needs of Brandeis graduate students.

Martha Zawadski
781-856-2246
marthazrents@yahoo.com

Alan Gould
561-504-5015
alan@centrerealtygroup.com

Bibiana Gomez
954-479-7757
bibiana@gradbnb.com

Julie Carrozo
617-713-4404 - Office
781-526-0207 - Cell
julie@betterplacerealty.com

Steven McCue
617-610-2170
steven.mccue@commonmoves.com

Tom Giblin
617-921-8677
tsgiblin@gmail.com

Disclaimer: The Office of Graduate Student Affairs provides information to students as a courtesy service to help with finding suitable housing for students attending Brandeis University. The information is for the use of Brandeis students and is only updated periodically. Brandeis University accepts no responsibility for the reliability of the information provided or those listing with the Department. Contact with persons listed herein will be conducted independently of the University. Brandeis University will not be involved in any negotiations between you (the leaseholder) and any landlord, property owner, student, prospective student or realtor.
Temporary On-Campus Summer Housing Arrangements

Only available until August 10th, 2018

We are offering the opportunity to stay on campus for up to 3 days during the summer months to assist you in your search for housing. This is the perfect arrangement for any student that is has set up appointments to see apartments in the area and would like to save money on a place to stay for a few nights to secure housing for the upcoming semester. Housing on campus will be available from June 1st – August 10th for $20/night. Please contact Steven Weglinski at weglinski@brandeis.edu or 781-736-3546 for more information.

Alternative House Arrangements

While between homes, use Orbitz.com or Hotwire.com to find cheaper rooms at hotels. We also include additional cost effective resources to consider.

Marriott Hotel Newton
2345 Commonwealth Ave
Newton, MA 02466
617---969---1000

Holiday Inn Express
385 Winter Street
Waltham, MA 02451
781---890---2800

The Westin Hotel -- Waltham
70 Third Ave
Waltham, MA 02451
781---290---5600

Embassy Suites
550 Winter Street
Waltham, MA 02451
781---890---6767

Global Immersions Inc: (Watertown, MA) 888---924---2712
www.globalimmersions.com
Provides home-based housing placement services for all lengths of stay.
This should be planned at least 1 month in advance

Boston Homestay Inc.: (Needham, MA) 781---449---9733
www.bostonhomestay.com
A temporary homestay placement service for international students and professionals.
This should be planned at least 1 month in advance

Airbnb.com
Save money by renting from a local host.
If you rent through AirBNB and have any issues, please read this guide!

Boston Hostels
hostels.com/boston/usa
Inexpensive accommodations for shared temporary living

PRO TIP:
Be sure to utilize our Housing Facebook Page and Housing List Serve to
communicate your housing needs, questions, and opportunities!
**Need help finding a roommate?**

Often times, it is too expensive to live by yourself. Having a roommate can cut costs dramatically and also help keep you connected to campus events and activities. Be sure to post about yourself and your housing interest on our Housing Facebook page or List Serve. If you work through an agent, be sure to let them know a little about yourself, so they can help you match with other roommates you will likely get along with!

**How do I choose and live a roommate?**

Living with a roommate can be one of the most rewarding experiences of graduate school. The key to living with someone is to remember that everyone has the right to live in a safe, clean and healthy situation that allows them to pursue academic and personal endeavors. With that in mind, we have included some suggestions in hopes that your experience leads to a successful, healthy roommate relationship.

1. Take the time to find roommate you feel you will be compatible with.
2. Talk 2-3 times over the phone/e-mail/Facebook before meeting in person (if possible)
3. Be honest and open about your needs, concerns and expectations.
4. Get to know the person before you pass judgment.
5. Share basic information with one another including hobbies, family, program and interest.

**Upon Arrival**

6. Complete a Roommate Agreement Contract
7. Discuss how you should set the apartment up and then do it together.
8. Discuss what is shareable (food, computer, appliances, printer, etc).
9. When a problem arises talk about it with that person first.
10. Establish guidelines about the following (can be found in Roomate Agreement)
    - cleanliness, cooking and housework
    - guest, study time, work schedules, privacy, celebrations/parties
    - financial stability: bills, rent, food, phone and payment processes (who collects/pays what and when)

Sometimes living with someone from a different region of your country or an entirely different country can be an extremely rewarding, yet challenging experience. Different communities have different concepts of personal space, ownership, communal space and property, food, noise, money, etc. It is very important that you are as direct and patient as possible in order to avoid misunderstandings and conflicts.

**PRO TIP:**

*Complete a Roommate Agreement within the 1st week of living together with your new roommates, and even consider revising the agreement*
Subletting

You should be aware that the majority of leases are for 12 months. If you are signing a 12 month lease you should be aware of the sublet section of your lease. Many leases will be very clear in what the sublet policy is for that apartment. Subletting works in two ways. 1) You may be able to lease all or part of the leased premises to another person and retain some right to the original lease. 2) The second option is you may relinquish your portion of the lease completely to the person you sublet to. In this situation the person you sublet to would pay the landlord directly. You must check with the landlord; in most cases the lease will have a provision for subletting with their permission.

The original tenant is responsible for the actions of the sub-tenant. To avoid any confusion, enter into any arrangement carefully and obtain a written sub-lease. However, some landlords do not permit subletting, and doing so can cause you to lose your apartment.

Local Realtors/Brokers

A realtor can help you locate accommodations that a landlord has listed with them. You may be required to sign a contract that holds you responsible for payment of the agent’s fee. This fee should be paid only after you have actually signed a lease for an apartment referred to you by that agent. Some agents do require the fee, deposit and initial rent deposit upon application for a specific apartment. If this is required, do not relinquish money unless you are certain you want the apartment if the application is approved. Many landlords require initial payments of first and last month’s rent and a security deposit. If a realtor helps you find an apartment, expect to be charged a fee equal to one month’s rent (i.e. if one month’s rent is $750, expect to put down $3000 for the apartment – first, last, security, realtor/broker)

Living with Your Family/Spouse
(MUST READ FOR PARTNERS/FAMILIES)

Many Graduate Students join us with limited resources and finding affordable housing can be quite challenging, especially when you add spouses and family members.

The main challenge with finding housing for children is the overtly common existence of older housing with walls covered in lead based paint. Massachusetts occupancy laws prevents children from living in homes with lead based paint, as well as a general requirement of one room per person. Therefore, to move in with a spouse and children, it will require a lead free home AND a minimum of 2 bedrooms (rent usually $1,600+)

If you are moving in with a spouse, you can be ok with a 1 bedroom apartment. However, if you would like to live in a larger home with roommates, each adult is required to have their own room, thus you can expect to pay for 2 rooms.

PRO TIP:

Over 90% of leases are year-long commitments. It is very difficult to find anything that is month to month. Remember that you are signing and responsible for the terms of the contract and can not legally break the contract without mutual agreement between you and the landlord!
Legality and Your Rights – VERY IMPORTANT TO REVIEW!

A lease is a legally binding contract between a tenant and a landlord. Any terms or conditions not prohibited by law may be included in the agreement. If either party fails to abide by the terms of the lease, the offended party may be entitled to certain concessions, including the possibility of termination of the agreement. You should obtain everything in writing, including specific provisions agreed upon with the landlord in your lease.

Please carefully review all the terms of a lease or tenancy at will agreement. Discuss any provisions or special circumstances before signing the lease. Any item that may need further clarification should be discussed before signing. Every party involved should have and keep a copy of the signed lease agreement.

Review the Attorney General’s “Guide to Landlord/Tenant Rights,” available for students to use while reviewing their lease.

Some important definitions:

-- **Common Areas:** All exterior and interior areas contiguous to a rental unit and units but not within the aforementioned nor under tenant control by mutual consent.

-- ** Dwelling:** A structure or part thereof consisting of one or more units and used as a household for living purposes.

-- **Household:** A family and/or one or more unrelated persons who share the same dwelling unit.

-- **Landlord:** The owner or lessee of a given dwelling unit or any person authorized to manage or otherwise perform the owner’s or lessor’s obligations on her/his behalf.

-- **Owner:** One or more persons holding legal title to a dwelling or exclusive rights to use or administer the same. Term also applies to a mortgagee, such as a bank, which has taken the legal possession of a dwelling.

-- **Rental Agreement:** An oral or written lease agreement establishing certain terms, conditions, rules and regulations concerning the use and occupancy of a dwelling unit.

-- **Security Deposit:** A deposit of money required by a landlord from a tenant that must be returned within thirty days after a tenant vacates a unit unless the unit is damaged or rent is owed. In either of these cases an appropriate deduction is made and the remainder, 5% interest and an itemized listing of deductions, must be sent to the tenant.

-- **Tenant:** You, any person or head of household occupying a dwelling for living purposes who assumes responsibility by making a rental agreement with the landlord; plus those other occupants of the unit making up the tenant’s house hold at the time such agreement is made or at any time thereafter with the landlord.

**Be sure to keep a copy of the lease signed by all parties.** You should save all receipts, records and correspondences with your roommates and landlord until you have moved out of the apartment and your security deposit has been returned. We do not recommend signing a lease that does not have all of the information filled in – especially the payment schedule, price, contract length and any other things you have agreed upon ahead of time.
Resources For After You’ve Moved In

The Office of Graduate Student Affairs (GSA) is continually looking for ways in which to make living off-campus easier for our students so that they can focus on their learning experience. Some of the programs we offer are:

**Mediation:**
Not everyone is a great communicator. When necessary, our office will work with students to open the lines of communication and to collaborate on creating a Roommate Agreement that is manageable and realistic. Get started on a Roommate Agreement! Before a disagreement escalates into an intolerable situation the first step is to check in with Steve or Jessica at the Graduate Student Center in Kutz Hall. Although GSA cannot offer extensive legal advice, we can guide you through options and effective communication strategies to try and resolve the problem.

**Off-Campus Housing Clinic:**
The Watch CDC Housing Clinic is a community resource that provides assistance through the support of trained housing advocates. Housing Clinics are held Mondays and Thursdays from 7:00pm – 8:30pm at 24 Crescent Street, Suite201, Waltham, MA. For more information, go to: www.watchcdc.org/clinic.

**Here Are Some Useful Numbers to Get You Started**

**National Grid** (gas)
Customer Service: 800---233---5325
Emergency Gas Safety: 800---233---5325
www.nationalgridus.com

**NSTAR** (electric)
Customer Service: 800---592---2000
www.nstaronline.com

**Verizon** (telephone / internet)
Customer Service: 800---870---9999
www.verizon.com

**Comcast** (cable/internet)
Customer Service: 800---266---2278
www.comcast.com

**MBTA** (Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority)
For information on subway, bus, commuter rail schedule, maps and fares.
Customer Service: 617---222---3200
www.mbta.com

*Charlie Cards are free cards that can be picked up at kiosks in the subway or at local MBTA offices. You can add money to them in the metro. When you add money to them and then use them for busses and subway rides to receive discounted fares.*
Moving In / Out
You always want to plan ahead for moving. It can be time consuming and often more expensive than anticipated. Listed are a few reminders before moving in and moving out. If you have used furniture for sale or you would like to purchase used furniture, please go to my.brandeis.edu (classified section).

Before moving in:
--- Do not move into an apartment if the condition is unacceptable.
--- Arrange utilities before you move in. Try to set up phone lines and/or Cable appointments in advance.
--- You need to display your name on the mailbox to receive you mail – DISPLAY LAST NAME.
--- It is better to ask the landlord or neighbors about the trash disposal schedule before you throw away your garbage and recycling.

Before moving out:
--- You typically must give a 60---day notice to your landlord if you are planning to move out, even if your lease expires.
--- Before you move out, be sure to clean your apartment thoroughly. You can be charged for additional cleaning if the condition of the apartment does not meet requirements. TAKE PICTURES!
--- Make an appointment with your landlord and jointly inspect the apartment. The security deposit may not be refunded in full if there is any damage in the apartment. Be sure to return the keys to the landlord. (Including mailbox key if there is one)
--- Change your address with school and local post office.

Being a good neighbor
The neighborhoods in the Waltham area are made up of a tight knit group of residents, business owners and students that all work hard to create a sense of community. As a student at Brandeis you are expected to act responsibly as a community member. Many areas have active neighborhood associations as well as neighborhood watch groups in relation with the Waltham Police Department. Brandeis encourages students to become active positive members of both the community at large and that in which they live.

Steps to being a good neighbor
Be neighborly; it is not required that you introduce yourself to your neighbors, but being friendly helps in building relationships. Simple gestures in the community will provide for a more comfortable setting and a pleasant experience. This can include observing reasonable hours for noisy activities. Remember that noise travels, especially if you live above or below someone!