



Common Housing Terminology and Abbreviations

Apartment Amenity

This refers to items of convenience or enjoyment that are provided by the apartment, usually at no cost. Examples are: swimming pool, club house, fitness center, etc.

Apartment's Right-of-Entry

The apartment staff is legally able to enter your apartment at reasonable times to inspect and perform repairs. The apartment will typically notify you ahead of time if they will be entering your apartment, but in many cases, they don't have to.

Deposit

This is an amount of money that is required to be paid when signing the lease on your new apartment. The deposit is to protect the apartment owner from the possibility of future damages or default on the lease. The deposit should not exceed 1.5x the monthly rent. You need to provide a valid U.S. address so your deposit can be returned to you via a family member or friend, as long as you leave your apartment in the same or better condition as when you moved in.

Drinking Age

The legal drinking age in Arizona is 21. Unfortunately, it doesn't matter what the drinking age is in your country! Be prepared to show a valid picture ID proving you are 21 or older when ordering (or possessing) alcoholic beverages at local drinking establishments. The same is true when drinking at a party in someone's apartment.

Electricity

U.S. electrical current is 110 volt/60 hertz. Most foreign appliances use a 220 volt/50 hertz current. Appliances requiring a 220 volt/ 50 hertz current will not work properly in the U.S. without an appropriate adapter. If your apartment does not pay for electricity, you will need to notify Tucson Electric Power to start service. Some apartments require service in your name before you can get your keys. Make sure you ask the apartment what their policy is when you sign the lease.

Furnished Apartment

These are apartments that contain some items of furniture rather than requiring you to supply all furniture. Things that are not included in a furnished apartment are: dishes, cups, silverware, pots, pans, linens, towels, pillows, blankets, vacuum, iron, ironing board. You will need to supply these items.

Guarantor (also called a co-signer)

A person that agrees (in writing) to pay your lease and associated expenses if you default (are unable to pay) on your lease. A guarantor may be required when applying for a lease if you are unable to demonstrate a history of good credit or an income capable of paying the rent.

Lease

Read “**International Student Lease Information**” handout for more information and vocabulary

A lease is a **legally binding contract** between you and the apartment. This contract will spell out the legal requirements and limitations for both you the renter, and the apartment owner.

A lease is a binding document and very hard to cancel once you have signed it. You cannot just leave your apartment and lease when you no longer need housing. You need to notify the apartment as soon as possible and let them know when you will be leaving so there is no misunderstanding. It is your responsibility to find someone to take over your lease and they will need to sign a new lease before you are no longer responsible. If you fail to comply with this requirement, the apartment may take legal action against you, and leaving without notification may result in huge monetary penalties. If you no longer need the space you signed a lease for before you move in, **please be respectful and notify the property as soon as possible.**

Make sure you read the lease thoroughly and understand what it says. If you are unable to understand the language in the lease, we recommend hiring a lawyer trained in this area or setting a meeting with [ASUA Legal Services](#), which is a free on-campus service to UA students.

School Status

You are required to be a UA student, and the apartment complex will confirm your status.

Social Security Number (SSN)

This is a nine-digit number issued by the U.S. Social Security Administration. SSNs are only available to international students with employment. For more information visit the [ISS website](#).

Utilities

Some apartments will include certain utilities in the rent, e.g. gas and water, while others require you to set-up service with the utility company yourself, e.g. Tucson Electric Power (TEP) for your electricity. Check with the apartment when you sign the lease to determine if you have to start service ahead of time, in order to get your keys.

Abbreviations

- A/C – Air Conditioning (often used to include heat as well)
- Apt. – Apartment
- BR – Bedroom. You will usually see this preceded by the number of bedrooms, e.g. 3BR which is an apartment with 3 bedrooms.
- BA – Bathroom. You will usually see this preceded by the number of bedrooms, e.g. 2BA which is an apartment with 2 bathrooms.
- W/D – Clothes washer and dryer (sometimes in the apartment, not in a separate laundry room)
- S/B – Apartment Shuttle or Public Bus. Options for getting to campus from your apartment.
- F/U – Furnished/Unfurnished. Some apartments provide all furniture; others require you to provide your own.
- W/G/E – Water, Gas, Electric. Some of these utilities may be paid as part of your rent. Some you may have to pay yourself (ask the apartment to be clear).

- TEP – Tucson Electric Power (company that provides electric service)
- SW Gas – Southwest Gas (company that provides gas service – if the apartment doesn't include this in your rent).