

HOUSING SEARCH

Moving off campus for the first time can be an intimidating process. Here is a step-by-step guide to lead you through your housing search:

Step 1: Decide what you can afford to pay each month. Complete a prospective monthly budget to determine what you can spend on housing expenses.

Do not forget to consider various sources of *income*, such as:

- your wages/salary
- loans, grants & scholarships
- savings, dividends & interest
- parental/spouse/partner contributions
- child support or alimony
- other sources of income

Determine your *non-housing related expenses* such as:

- tuition & fees
- books & supplies
- cell phone
- groceries/commuter meal plan costs
- gasoline/transit costs
- automobile repair & maintenance expenses
- auto payments
- auto insurance
- medical expenses/insurance
- life insurance
- recreation & entertainment
- club dues
- other expenses

Subtract your total *non-housing related expenses* from your total *income*. The difference is the amount you will have left to spend on *housing-related expenses* such as:

- rent/mortgage payment
- deposits/application fee
- homeowner's insurance
- homeowner's dues
- utilities: electricity, telephone, natural gas, water, sewer & trash
- tv cable/Internet
- furniture

Step 2: Decide if you want to live within or outside of the one-mile radius of campus.

Students who live within one mile of the center of campus are NOT permitted to park on campus between 7 a.m. and 4 p.m. After 4 p.m., students may park on campus with the purchase of a nighttime parking permit. However, many students **choose** to live within this area because they save on yearly parking permit fees, are near other students and are close enough to walk, bike or skateboard to campus. There is also a free shuttle bus system with convenient stops for students within the one-mile radius. (See following page for 1-mile radius map.)

Step 3: Decide if you want to live with others or alone.

Sharing a house or apartment with a roommate is a great way to keep expenses down. However, it is important to find someone who is responsible and with whom you will be compatible. The Seahawk Perch Web site, www.uncw.edu/offcampushousing, features a section on finding roommates, including a roommate personality profile, information on drafting roommate agreements and suggestions for getting along with others. You may also view a list of available roommates on the Web site's Off-Campus Housing Ad Service.

Step 4: Decide what type of housing you are looking for.

Do you want to live somewhere near other students? Would you feel more comfortable living off campus if there was a student advocate in your community, such as a UNCW **Community Resource Specialist**? (See page 3.) Do you need a place that's furnished? Are you going to have a pet? How long do you want to be committed to a lease? How much space do you need? Do you want certain amenities such as a pool, garage or exercise facility? The answers to all of these questions will help you determine if you would be more suited to renting an apartment, condominium, townhouse, house or a room in a private home.

Step 5: Do some comparison research.

Once you've decided on the type of property you are interested in, you can consult the right information sources. The Seahawk Perch resource center can provide you with apartment brochures and real estate guides. In addition, the Seahawk Perch Web site contains a detailed section regarding off-campus housing, including a list of available rentals in the area and links to Wilmington apartment community and real estate agency Web sites. **You may also wish to call the Wilmington Police Public Information Officer at 910.343.3602 for crime statistics of specific areas.**

Step 6: Narrow your search, and begin visiting properties.

Generate a list of your top picks, and call them to schedule an appointment to visit the property. (Remember, many offices are closed or have limited hours on weekends.) If you are going to have a roommate, make sure you invite them along.

Once you're there, ask about flooding, incidences of crime, parking regulations and the upkeep of the premises. Make sure to ask if there is a deposit and if it's refundable. Examine the outside of the complex. Is it in good repair? Ask if the terms of the lease are negotiable (3, 6, 9, or 12 months; sub-letting allowed?). Understand the rules of the house/community regarding noise, visitors, smoking, parking, pets, etc. Understand what repairs/damages you are responsible for and which are the responsibility of the manager/owner. If you're looking at apartments, make sure you ask to see the exact apartment you will be getting and not just the model.

Based on the information you've gathered and your overall impression of the places you've visited, you should now be able to select a property.

Step 7: Before you sign that lease, READ IT!

Also, realize that because of your income, you may need a co-signer/guarantor (such as a parent) to secure a lease. A lease is a legally binding agreement. Should you break your lease, you are still responsible for paying the rent even if you are no longer there. The property manager/owner is not able to make allowances for roommate conflicts. Even if a roommate leaves, the person who signed the lease is still responsible for the entire rent payment.

It is your right to have the property manager or landlord review your lease with you. Ask them to do so. For more information about legal matters, see pages 6-7 of this guide. **If you still have questions, you can schedule a free appointment with a local attorney through UNCW's Student Government Association by calling 910.962.3553 (students only).**

Step 8: Your search is over, now what?

Time to get set up in your new home! See page 10 for information on setting up your utilities, phone service, cable and newspaper service, as well as how to get renter's insurance and how to make your new home as secure as possible.

One Mile Radius Map

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|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. University Union | 18. Greenway Village |
| 2. Belk Hall | 19. Mill Creek |
| 3. Galloway Hall | 20. Lullwater Condos |
| 4. Graham/Hewlett Hall | 21. Village Square |
| 5. Apartments | 22. Lullwater Village |
| 6. Suites | 23. Colonial Park |
| 7. Honors/International | 24. New Centre Commons |
| 8. McMillan Oaks | 25. Brookstone Village |
| 9. College Green | 26. Clear Run |
| 10. The Quad | 27. Cypress Pointe |
| 11. Seahawk Square | 28. The Lofts |
| 12. Courtyard | 29. Campus Walk |
| 13. Wimbledon Chase | 30. Campus Edge |
| 14. The Glen | 31. Lowe's Foods |
| 15. University Arms | 32. Harris Teeter |
| 16. Pinewood | 33. Bear Shelter |
| 17. Winterwood | |

*on-campus locations in bold

For a larger version of this map, visit www.uncw.edu/parking

