



SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY  
MADRID  
Off University Housing Guide

At SLU-Madrid, we care about you. Your living arrangements have an impact on your success as a student. If you are not living with a SLU-Madrid host family, please review this document. We have written it to help you make good choices and avoid problems at your residence, with your landlord or rental agent, or with the Spanish law.

As a SLU-Madrid student, you are subject to our [Student Responsibilities and Community Standards](#) on and off campus, including in student residences and other off-campus housing arrangements. SLU-Madrid reserves the right to investigate and sanction conduct violations, including, but not limited to, those 1) that place the safety or health of others or yourself at risk or 2) that are against Spanish law.

### Living at Student Residences

Student residences and *Colegio Mayores* in Madrid have their own residence norms which you must follow. We urge you to review these norms. Ask the residence to email their policies to you if they are not published on their websites. In addition, review your housing contract prior to signing or making a payment. If you need assistance with understanding legal terms or with the Spanish, SLU-Madrid housing staff is available to help.

*Colegios mayores* often have their own traditions and community culture: nonetheless, all student residents have the same rights and responsibilities, which includes respecting others and being respected. Hazing of any kind – including *novatadas*, the Spanish term for hazing – is against the law in Spain. If you feel pressured by fellow residents or have concerns about, notify your residence’s staff or SLU-Madrid housing staff. Indeed, if you have concerns about safety or the quality of the food at your residence, we urge you to report these concerns to your residence staff. If you don’t feel that they have been addressed, please notify SLU-Madrid housing staff.

Your residence will provide you with the “proof-of-housing” documentation you need to apply for your Spanish entry visa and, once you are in Spain, for your student resident card.

### Renting an Apartment

Many students choose to rent their own apartments in the city of Madrid – on their own or with others. SLU-Madrid does not recommend this option for first-year degree-seeking students. We feel living among a community of students, either in host-family or a recommended student residence, positions new students for academic success more effectively. Nonetheless, non-traditional and continuing students often prefer the freedom and affordability of apartment life. In addition, Madrid’s outstanding public transportation system makes almost anywhere in the city an attractive option.

If you are considering renting your own apartment, we urge you to research the property, the neighborhood, and the agency with which you are signing the contract as thoroughly as possible. On our housing webpage, under “[Other Housing Options](#),” SLU-Madrid provides a short list of rental agents recommended by students. These agents will provide you with the “proof-of-housing documentation you need for your visa and resident card applications.”

To rent an apartment legally, you and your landlord must sign a lease or rental agreement. Most landlords will be reluctant to rent that less than a year; most will require a deposit (normally equivalent to one month’s rent) and a down payment of the first (and sometimes last) month’s rent. Officially, if your lease is less than five years, your contract can be renewed annually for a minimum of five years (or seven years, if your landlord is a legal entity),

when the initial contract expires. The landlord has the right to adjust the rent at the end of each year; you have the right, if you give 30 days' notice prior to the date of termination, to renew the lease or not.

Your rights as a tenant in Spain include:

- To live in a habitable environment. This means heating, toilets, hot and cold water, door locks that function. Appliances (fridge, stove etc.) that are supplied must be in working condition. You have a right to terminate the contract if your landlord does not carry out the required repairs and maintenance to the property.
- To live in your apartment undisturbed by the landlord. This means that your landlord cannot enter the apartment without seeking prior permission from you. If the landlord causes an unnecessary disturbance, you have the right to terminate the contract.
- To not be forced to leave. An owner cannot sell a property when a tenant is living in it. Your landlord cannot make you leave the property until the contract duration is completed.
- To make small improvements. You are allowed to make changes such as painting, putting up shelves, etc., but your contract may require you to inform your landlord prior to making these changes.

Your responsibilities include:

- Maintain the property in habitable condition. If you cause any damage to the property, you will be liable to bear the expenses.
- Pay the rent on time.
- Give at least 30 days' notice before leaving the property.
- Not make excessive noises and carrying out illegal activities.
- Not sublet the property without the landlord's consent.

Tips for Renting:

- Be aware of fake website links.
- Be sure that the rental offer is legitimate.
- Do not make a payment or sign a lease prior to visiting the property.
- Use Google Maps to check out the commute time to and from campus.
- Read the lease carefully.
- Take photos, videos and notes of existing damages as proof.
- Pay your rent on time.
- Document all the communication between you and the landlord.
- Contact your landlord if the property needs repair.

### **Living in a "Holiday Rental"/Short-term Rental**

Some students – especially those staying for one semester – choose to book their own short-term rental prior to arrival. The convenience is clear: these apartments are often completely furnished; many include cleaning services and other amenities. Looking for an apartment and committing to pay for it in advance, based only on information available from a website or via social media, has its risks. If you are considering this option, we urge you to research the property, the neighborhood, and the agency with which you are signing the contract as thoroughly as possible.

The Spanish law [Decreto 79/2014](#) describes the requirements of holiday rentals in Madrid: the webpage advertisement must accurately represent the number of rooms and furnishings; phone and wifi service must be included; the price must be displayed in a visible place at the entrance; and the price must include utilities, linen, and cleaning.

If you are studying with SLU-Madrid as a first-year, transfer, or and one-year study abroad student, you will need to apply for the Spanish residence card within 30 days after your arrival in Spain. The application process requires you to provide proof of where you reside in Madrid. Since holiday rentals are meant to be booked for short-term, the owner may not provide documents your need and could prevent you from obtaining your resident card.

#### **Tips for Booking:**

- Do thorough research of location, prices, website etc. before booking.
- Be sure that the booking offer is legit.
- Read the booking policies carefully.
- Be aware of fake website links.

#### **Renting a Room from a Private Individual**

SLU-Madrid students often rent rooms in privately-owned apartments – with other students, from families, etc. If you choose this option, the owner of the apartment and you sign an agreement or rental contract, outlining the terms of the rental (length of stay and cost) and method of payments. Avoid subletting: that is, renting a room from someone who is renting an apartment, unless you have clear evidence that the renter has the right to sublet. If you have questions about your rental agreement, SLU-Madrid’s housing staff is available to respond to them.

Do not be tempted to rent a room on a cash-only basis without any official agreement or contract. While the offer may look attractive, your landlord may not be reporting the rental income. In addition, you lose your rights as a tenant and will not be protected by Spanish law.

If you sign a housing agreement to rent a room, you will have the same rights and responsibilities as tenants who rent entire apartments.

#### **Tips on Renting a Room**

- Rent only from an authorized individual (the landlord; or, individuals who can demonstrate that they have the right to rent the room).
- Read the contract carefully before signing.
- Do not make a payment or sign a lease prior to visiting the property.
- Take photos, videos and notes of existing damages as proof.
- Pay your rent on time.
- Document all the communication between you and the renter.

SLU-Madrid will support you if you face housing challenges, but if you enter into informal or illegal housing agreements, you also surrender your right. In this case, you may need to look for external legal assistance.

For more about your rights renting an apartment: see [Ley de Arrendamientos Urbanos](#).

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