Muskingum University Requirements

All Residence life at Muskingum is an important part of a student’s total education. Living, socializing, studying and dining in close relationship with one another requires the development of respect for others, interdependence and social-relational skills. All unmarried, non-commuting students enrolled at Muskingum University must live and take their meals in university housing unless otherwise authorized by the Dean of Students. In order to seek authorization for off-campus housing from the Dean, you must have either Junior or Senior status.

Apartments

An apartment is a complete living unit, with no facilities other than laundry machines that must be shared with other residents in the apartment building. An “efficiency apartment” has two rooms: a bathroom and another large room that is suitable for kitchen, bedroom, and living room. It is suitable for one or perhaps two people. There are also one, two and three bedroom apartments.

“Unfurnished apartments” have only a refrigerator, stove and possibly window coverings. The renter must acquire all other furniture that is needed. A “furnished apartment” includes all furniture, but not linens (towels, sheets, etc.) or cooking and eating utensils. Because unfurnished apartments cost less than furnished apartments, people who will be here for at least one or two years find it to their financial advantage to rent an unfurnished apartment and buy used furnishings for it. A furnished apartment costs more, but eliminates the need to buy furniture.

A renter or “tenant” usually has to pay for his/her own utilities (i.e. electricity, gas, water and telephone), although the monthly rent may include some of these. The landlord or manager can explain what you must do to begin utility services, that is, to get electricity and gas to your apartment.
A lease is a written agreement between a tenant and the landlord describing the rights and responsibilities of each. It is a binding legal document which, among other things, makes the tenant responsible for minimal care of the rented property and for the monthly rent of a stated amount for a stated period of time. It specifies the landlord’s responsibilities for maintenance and repair of the housing unit. A lease may or may not contain provisions concerning its early termination. Students should be very careful in signing leases which require multiple months.

When you sign a lease, you will usually have to pay a “damage deposit” or a “security deposit” which may amount to as much as two months rent. The landlord is supposed to return the deposit to you within 30 days after you leave the apartment if you have paid your rent, left the apartment clean and undamaged, and have not been evicted. If the landlord does not return all of your deposit, he or she should give you, within 30 days, a written statement explaining why the deposit was withheld.

What should one look for in a lease? First of all, duration. Make sure you can keep the room or apartment as long as you wish, but that the lease is not binding for a time period longer than you anticipate needing the housing. See whether it is renewable by the month or the year. See whether you, the renter, can “break” the lease with a month or two month notice to the landlord. In the absence of such a provision, you may be required to pay rent until the end of the period covered by the lease even if you move out and live elsewhere. (Many unpleasant disputes arise between landlords who want to keep their property rented and student renters who, after signing a lease, decide for some reason that they wish to live elsewhere.) Or, if the lease allows it, you may be able to “sublet” your room or apartment. That means, essentially, that you find another tenant to rent your apartment in your absence.

Secondly, ask what utilities you are responsible for. Ask the landlord or a current tenant what average utility costs are, because utility costs must be added to rent in determining your monthly housing costs.

Landlords are required to provide adequate winter heating and regular insect control. If you make any special agreements with the landlord concerning repairs or alterations, make sure those agreements are written into the lease, signed, and dated. (Americans consider it essential to have important agreements written down and signed.)