

Kun Shan University Off-Campus Accommodation Information

Getting an off campus apartment is an option for many students. However, living outside of the university system has its advantages and disadvantages, freedoms and responsibilities. It's important to get all the facts before you sign that first lease.

Where to Find Listings:

There are several ways of finding permanent accommodations:

- The most basic way is to ask students who live off-campus.
- Read the apartment notices (usually printed on red paper on street side community bulletin boards)
- The other way is go to KSU website and select the “House For Rent System” (<http://www.ksu.edu.tw/cht/unit/D/A/SA/CLS/AP/rentedHouse/>) for housing rental information.

Housing Costs:

Off-campus private housing is generally more expensive than living in the student dormitory, and options are limited in the areas close to campus. The off-campus housing alternatives may be available in the neighborhoods around KSU or elsewhere in Yongkang City. These range from single rooms within a shared apartment to two-person or family-sized apartments. Depending on the facilities provided, tenants can expect to pay between NTD5,000 and 15,000 per month, with a security deposit of one to two months' rent usually required.

Living Off Campus: Pros and Cons

The first thing to do before deciding to live off campus is to consider how you live and study. Apartment or house living will involve some trade-offs. For example, the money you save by sharing an apartment might be balanced out by the extra money you spend commuting to campus. Here are some things to consider:

[Pros]

- Living off campus can be cheaper than university housing.
- You'll probably have more independence, freedom, privacy, and space.
- Private apartments are usually quieter and have fewer distractions, and therefore, are better for studying.
- You can make your own meals.
- No more shared bathrooms (or at least not shared by as many).

[Cons]

- Living off campus can actually be more expensive.
- You're on your own for Internet and cable TV connections.
- You'll have chores: renters usually spend more time grocery shopping, preparing meals, cleaning, and commuting than dorm dwellers.
- You may be more isolated from campus and other students.
- You'll probably have more responsibilities and liabilities.

Think about what's important to you and put together your own pros and cons list. You might also want to do a side-by-side comparison of all of the expenses involved with living on vs. off campus.

Tips before You Rent:

- Ask for his/her personal ID and housing ownership documents to prove landlord status and read a lease carefully before you sign.
- Ask about anything you do not understand. Look for hidden charges or penalties. If you sign the lease, you may be stuck paying those charges.
- If something is important to you, get it in writing. Don't count on an oral promise.
- Find out who pays for hot water, heat, electricity.
- If you will be paying an electric bill, ask the electric company for billing on your unit for the past 12 months. The company must tell you. The same rule applies to natural gas pipeline utilities.
- Be sure that all utilities and appliances are working right. Make sure the landlord agrees to fix appliances, furnace and other building systems, as needed.
- Try to talk with another tenant about the building and the landlord
- Check to see that all the windows and doors can be locked and are not broken.
- Be careful about putting money down to "hold an apartment." If you decide later not to rent it, the landlord may refuse to return your money.
- Before paying the security deposits, be sure to ask for rent receipts (including: address of the property, landlord's full name, amount of security deposits, landlord's ID number and rent date).

Types of Rental Agreements:

1. Lease – lists the names of the landlord and tenant, the address of the property, the length of the lease, and the day the rent is due. Most leases contain much more than this. Read these "extra conditions" carefully and understand them before you sign.
2. Security Deposits – A security deposit is money you give to your landlord when you move in. Your landlord can use it to cover any unpaid rent or damages. According to No 99 of land law, Your landlord cannot make your pay a security deposit that is more than tow times your monthly rent.

Before You Move In:

- Make a list and take pictures of major problems in the apartment/house. Include the condition of walls, floors, windows, and other areas. Try to get the landlord to sign your list. This will help protect you when it comes time to move out.
- Get something to keep your records in. Keep in your file:
 - Your lease or rental agreement
 - Security deposit receipt
 - Dated list of things wrong with the apartment
 - Landlord's address and phone number
 - All other papers about your tenancy
 - Rent receipts (or cancelled checks)