

# THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN APARTMENT HUNTING IN BOSTON

## Visit

We strongly recommend that you come to Boston to search for an apartment in-person. It is not a good idea to rent an apartment without seeing it first. Most apartments become available 30 to 45 days before the date you are looking to move in, so plan your visit accordingly. Contact at least 2 or 3 rental agents or landlords a few days before you arrive to set up appointments to see apartments. Be persistent and try not to get discouraged! You *will* find something you like if you keep trying!

## Cost

How much are you willing to pay in rent per month? (See below for price ranges) Living in Boston can be expensive. You will pay for location as well as convenience. **Note:** *These ranges are only approximations, and a number of these areas might fall under two or more of the specific ranges.*

### **HIGHER PRICED apartments**

STUDIOS	\$1200-1600+ per month
1 BR	\$1600-2200+ per month
2 BR	\$2200-2400+ per month
3 BR	\$2600-3000+ per month

*Beacon Hill, Back Bay, Bay Village, South End, Cambridge*

### **MODERATELY PRICED apartments**

STUDIOS	\$1000-1400+ per month
1 BR	\$1600-2000+ per month
2 BR	\$2200-2400+ per month
3 BR	\$2600-3200+ per month

*Brookline, Medford, Fenway / Kenmore, North End, Charlestown, Somerville, Allston / Brighton*

### **LOWER PRICED apartments**

STUDIOS	\$800-1000+ per month
1 BR	\$1200-1600+ per month
2 BR	\$2000-2200+ per month
3 BR	\$2400-3000+ per month

*South Boston, Malden, Jamaica Plain, Quincy, East Boston*

## Commute

Do you want to walk to school, use public transportation, or drive to school?

- **Walking** – Beacon Hill, Back Bay, the South End, and parts of South Boston are considered walking distance to campus.
- **Driving** – See “[Having a Car in Boston](#)”
- **Public Transportation** – The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA), better known as “the T,” operates the public transportation system in Boston and the surrounding communities. Options include buses, subway, and commuter rail trains. Commutes via public transportation vary depending on place of origin. Discounted monthly T passes are available at the Bursar’s Office. For more T info, check their website at <http://www.mbta.com>.
  - Bus routes 9, 11, 43, and the Silver Line all stop in front of Tufts Medical Center.
  - The 4 subway lines in Boston (Orange, Red, Green, and Blue) all have stops within walking distance of school, though Blue line commuters find it easiest to change to the Orange line instead of walking to campus.
  - The commuter rail serves communities outside of the immediate Boston area. These trains run on specific daily schedules arrive at various subway stations within the city. Check the MBTA website for more information.

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## Fees/Cost to Sign a Lease

Many apartments are listed with realtors who charge a standard fee equal to one month's rent if you rent an apartment they showed you. It is possible to find apartments without a fee. These are usually listed directly with the realtor or management company.

Be sure to ask the realtor or landlord if anything is included with the rent. If the current tenants are available, ask them how much they typically spend on utilities each month to help you estimate your budget.

You can expect to pay a small application fee to apply for an apartment you like. It will usually take one month's rent as a deposit to have the realtor de-list the apartment. This should generally be refundable if you choose not to sign, but make sure to ask first before giving them a check. At least two additional months' rent will be due at lease signing; all together, you will pay first month's rent, last month's rent, and security deposit, (three months' rent at signing). The security deposit is returned to you at lease end, less assessment of apartment damage. Some realtors also charge a key deposit, which is a small fee returned to you at lease end when the keys are turned in.

## Roommates

The decision to have a roommate should be based on how willing you are to share your space with another person and how much you are willing to spend on the apartment. Living alone, without sharing costs, can be an expensive proposition. With increasing numbers of roommates, costs go down. On the other hand, more roommates can lead to conflicting schedules, lifestyles, and personalities. We urge you to carefully consider roommate prospects before signing a lease.

## Apartment Hunting

If you decide to find a vacant apartment either for yourself or for you and a roommate, there are a few ways to go about this:

- Check out [JumpOffCampus](#):  
Tufts University School of Medicine has partnered with **JumpOffCampus**, a new online housing resource available to all medical students. The site offers a variety of features to assist you with searching available apartment listings, search and post sublets, and offers a Marketplace for you to advertise furniture, electronics, etc. that you are trying to sell.
- Students most commonly use on-line resources such as **www.boston.com**, **www.craigslist.org**, etc. These are good place to start, as you can get a general sense as to cost, location, and amenities available in different areas. On the other hand, many of these apartments are listed through realtors and will charge a fee, usually equal to one month's rent, to sign a lease. Also, contacting a rental agent on a specific listing may induce them to try and sell you other listings that may not be right for you. Your best judgment will serve you well while using online resources.
- Trustworthy, no-fee realtors are available in Boston. However, it is a good idea to contact more than one as each realtor has different listings. With a realtor, you tell them what you are looking for (i.e., how much you are willing to spend, number of bedrooms, amenities, etc.) They will often have a good idea if their listings can match your needs, but it is not uncommon that they will take your contact information to get back to you if they find something later on. Your best chance to see multiple units on one visit will happen while using a realtor. They will also drive you to each unit, which cuts down on your stress level and travel time.

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## Do's and Dont's

- **DON'T** put down a deposit on an apartment unless you are really sure you want it. If you are interested in an apartment but still want to see others, you should only fill out an application.
- **DON'T** let the realtor pressure you into making any commitment you are not ready to make. **YOU** control this process, not the realtor. But on the other hand...
- **DON'T** wait too long for the perfect apartment – there is no *perfect* apartment! A really good one you saw but waited too long for could end up rented by someone else!
- **DO** bring references with you. The rental application will ask for past landlords, employers, credit information, and sometimes personal references. Feel free to use the Tufts University School of Medicine Office of Admissions as a reference to verify your acceptance to the MD program - please note that the Admissions Office will only be able to verify your acceptance because until you matriculate you cannot be considered an enrolled student. You can also use a copy of your acceptance letter for this purpose.
- **DO** bring a few checks with you – if you find a place you really like and wish to rent you can fill out the application and leave a deposit. Once a deposit has been made, the realtor will take the apartment off the market while a background check is done and the landlord reviews your application.
- **DO** read the lease before signing it. While Massachusetts requires all rental agencies to use a standardized form (called the “RHA lease”) for apartments, you should still familiarize yourself with the contents of the lease to know your rights. If you should do an unofficial rental contract, say with someone who is renting their condo to you; make sure that you are protected legally in the contract if something should go wrong.
- **DO** ask if the above can be done through the mail if you must leave Boston before finalizing your apartment. While the preliminary agreement process can be done by phone/fax, originals are required for formal lease signing. Most agencies are willing to accommodate mail business.
- **DO** ask your parents to co-sign the lease if required. Many landlords are reluctant to rent to students because they do not have a source of income. They will, however, rent to students if someone else cosigns, and the landlord has the right to demand this before entering into a lease. The cosigner will pick up the payments if you are unable to make them.
- **DO** ask for an explanation if you are not accepted for an apartment you applied for, as it will help you in your future search. If this happens, you should get your deposit back.