



# Accommodation Search Checklist (Fall 2023)

## Learn about housing in Canada

Research the Residential Tenancies Act of Ontario to know your rights and responsibilities as a renter in Ontario. Review the resources listed on our housing website under the off-campus rentals section:

<https://www.conestogac.on.ca/international/student-support/housing>

Check the Conestoga Student Success Portal for housing webinars to learn more about renting in Ontario.

Find off-campus housing and roommates by searching rental listing websites and networking with family, friends, and other Conestoga students. To learn more, visit:

<https://www.conestogac.on.ca/international/student-support/housing>

## Determine your rental criteria

Before you begin your housing search, ask yourself the following questions:

### **What is your budget?**

Expect to spend an average of \$800 per month for a single room in a shared accommodation. Typically, at the beginning of your rental period, you will be required to pay your landlord the cost of both the first and last month's rent. Utilities such as monthly heat, hydro, gas, and water may not be included in your rent. Consider these costs as well as the cost of other amenities such as food, phone, internet, transportation and, most importantly, rental insurance.

### **Will you live alone or with roommates?**

Consider looking for shared accommodation to help make rental costs more affordable. Having a roommate is also an opportunity to socialize and make new friends.

### **What location is most suitable?**

Choose a location close to your campus and other amenities and services. Consider whether the rental is conveniently located near your preferred bus route so that you can travel to campus and other locations with ease.

## Find roommates

Connect with **Viva Engage! Viva Engage** is a Microsoft 365 social networking tool available to everyone with Conestoga credentials. This is a great way for you to connect with your peers to search for housing, offer housing, find out about carpooling (ride sharing) opportunities and to stay engaged with the international community at Conestoga College.



To access **Viva Engage**, you will need to sign in using your Condor ID. Need help with your Condor ID? You'll find it here: <https://it.conestogac.on.ca/support/student>

Each campus group is monitored by our International Transition Coordinators and Student Outreach Ambassadors. When posting and interacting with other students online, be sure to follow Conestoga's **Student Expectations for Online Engagement**:

<https://www-assets.conestogac.on.ca/documents/www/about/policies/student-affairs/student-expectations-for-online-engagement.pdf>

You can also find roommates by networking with family and friends or by using the roommate feature on <https://www.places4students.com/>

### **Find local transit**

Make sure that your rental is located near your local transit system and that it provides convenient service to your Conestoga College campus and frequently used amenities such as grocery stores. You can find up-to-date information about the transit systems operating in each of our campus cities on the Conestoga website:

<https://www.conestogac.on.ca/parking-services/public-transit>

### **Contact landlords**

Now that you have found a selection of rental options that meet your criteria, you can begin contacting landlords.

Make a good first impression! Express your interest in the accommodation and present yourself as an ideal tenant.

Ask the landlord to arrange an appointment with you to view the accommodation. See below for an example of **what to say when contacting a landlord** (either by email or phone).

It is strongly recommended that you always visit the rental accommodation in person, or have it viewed by a person you trust.

If a landlord says they cannot show you the accommodation in person, this may be a sign of a scam or fraud.

Be safe and aware! Take precautions when visiting an accommodation. Bring a friend with you, if possible.



## What to say when contacting a landlord (either by email or phone):

*Hello, my name is (your name) and I am very interested in your (room for rent) that I found advertised on (website name). I am a responsible, mature student and will be studying at Conestoga College, (your campus) this (program start date). Is this unit/room/apartment still available and if so, could you please provide more information about the unit? When can I arrange to view the accommodation?*

*I can be reached at (youremail@conestogac.on.ca or by phone XXX-XXX-XXXX). Thank you for your consideration and I hope to hear from you soon.*

Your Name

youremail@conestogac.on.ca

Phone: XXX-XXX-XXXX

### **Read landlord response carefully**

The landlord will outline an application process for interested tenants. They may ask you some questions, however, it is illegal to ask about your religion, sexual orientation, or relationship status. If you have questions or are not sure how to respond, please forward the message to the International Transition team for feedback:

internationaltransition@conestogac.on.ca

### **View the accommodation and make your final decision**

When viewing an accommodation, make sure to ask the following questions:

What utilities or appliances are included? What is the length of the lease? How many people live in the rental or will be living in the rental? Are there on-site laundry facilities? Are there functioning smoke and carbon monoxide detectors? Does the landlord live on-site?

Please note: If you share a kitchen or a bathroom with the landlord, you are considered a boarder and your occupancy does not fall under the Residential Tenancies Act. Be sure to confirm your legal rights and responsibilities accordingly.



**Submit your application**

If the accommodation is right for you, complete the landlord's application process. Remember, you do not need to provide your SIN to potential landlords for a credit check.

**Once accepted, sign a lease (if applicable)**

If your application is successful, the landlord will require you to sign a lease. Read the lease carefully before signing it, as it is a legally binding agreement. Be sure to get a copy of the agreement after you and your landlord have both signed the lease.

**Pay rent**

With the signing of the lease, you will usually be required to pay the landlord 2 payments:

- **First Month's Rent:** This payment is for the first month that you live in the unit.
- **Last Month's Rent:** This payment is for the last month that you live in the unit.

Request a receipt for any payment you make to your landlord.

We recommend that you pay the rent either using a cheque or e-transfer so that you have proof of payment. Avoid paying rent in cash.

The lease will stipulate when your rent is due each month. You must pay your rent by this date. Rent prices are NOT negotiable and you must pay on time.

**Arrange a time to pick up your keys and move into your new rental accommodation**

Congratulations on securing your new rental accommodation!

**Still have questions?**

Visit our International Housing website:

<https://www.conestogac.on.ca/international/student-support/housing>

Email our International Transition Coordinator team:

[internationaltransition@conestogac.on.ca](mailto:internationaltransition@conestogac.on.ca)

Book an appointment with us on the Student Success Portal:

<https://successportal.conestogac.on.ca/s/international-transition-support>

