

FLATTING MAG

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT FLATTING IN DUNEDIN



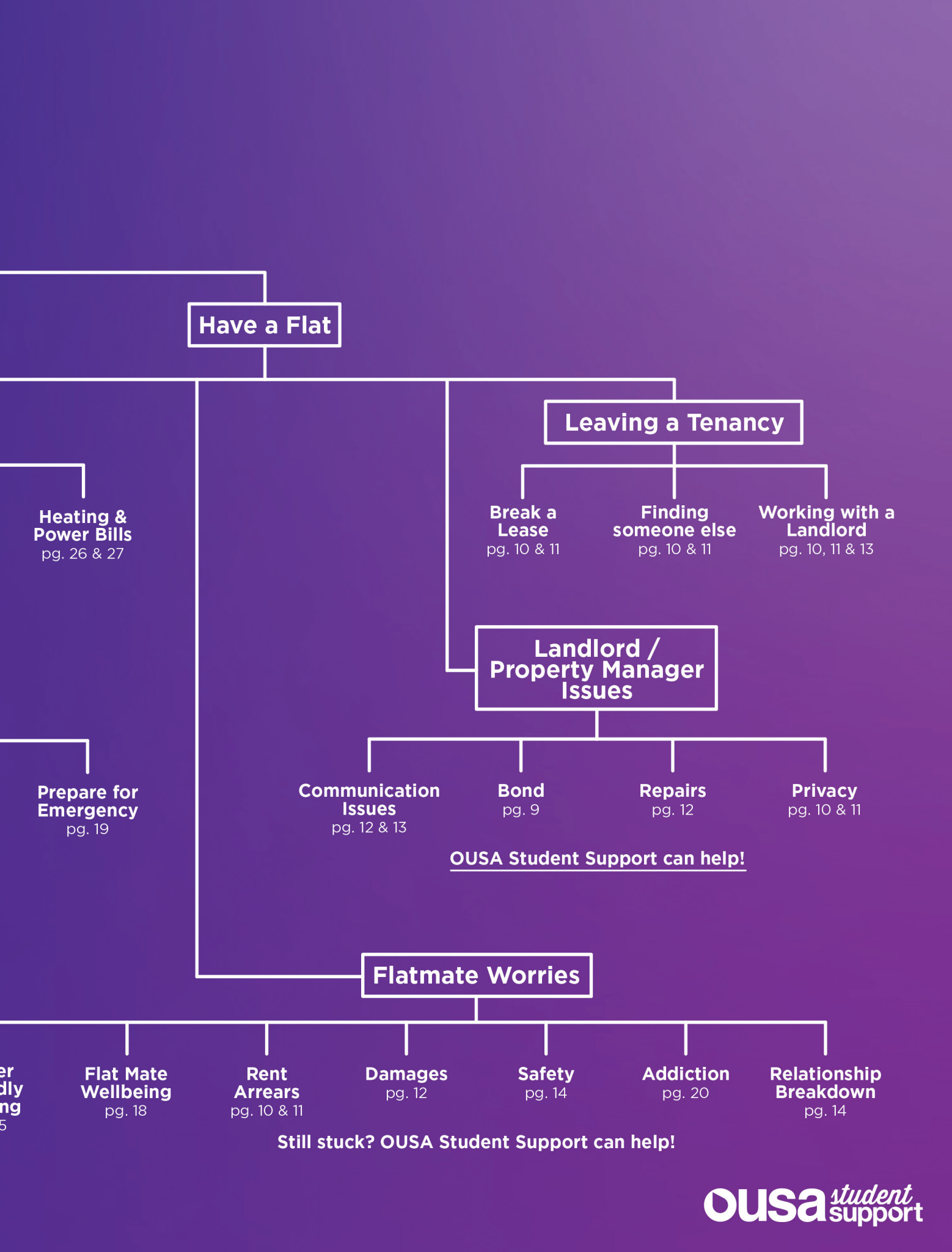
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Your university flatting days will be some of the best days of your life. Your flat will probably be the setting for some of the most profound life lessons you'll receive during your student years.

Despite your best efforts to avoid some of the pitfalls of sharing a living space with others, you may also experience some of the tougher sides of flatting. There is a lot to think about the first time you set up a property and rent a flat. We've created the Flatting Magazine as your guide through all your flatting decisions, from budgeting tips to flatmate navigation and tenancy rights. All of it is important - trust us, we've been there before.

When you encounter flatting hiccups along the way, you are not alone, even though at times it may feel like it. You can always access support and guidance from the team at OUSA Student Support. We're a diverse group of experienced and devoted individuals supporting students through just about anything life throws at them. When you need someone to lean on or have a few questions about anything that's troubling you, get in touch or stop by and see us at 262 Leith Walk.

Don't forget to keep this Flatting Mag, and check out all the other tips, tricks, and life hacks we've put together for you at ousasupporthub.org.nz. Flatting is a wild ride, and for better or worse, Student Support will be by your side.

OUSA STUDENT SUPPORT FLATTING MAGAZINE

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CHOOSING FLATMATES

YOUR FLAT IS YOUR HOME, SO THINK ABOUT WHAT “HOME” MEANS TO YOU. WHAT KIND OF ENVIRONMENT DO YOU WANT TO LIVE IN, AND WITH WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE? A WORD OF CAUTION: BEST FRIENDS DON’T ALWAYS MAKE THE BEST FLATMATES.

The majority of tenancy agreements for students in Dunedin are joint and fixed term. A joint fixed-term agreement essentially identifies all flatmates as one tenant (“joint”). It is important to understand this because the impacts of a joint agreement gone wrong are massive. For example, if one of your flatmates stops paying rent, you and your other flatmates are responsible for any outstanding rent. This is just one reason why it is important to choose a flatmate wisely. Here are some questions that will help guide you when deciding who to live with.

10 QUESTIONS TO ASK A POTENTIAL FLATMATE:

1. IS THIS A RENT THAT YOU CAN AFFORD THROUGHOUT THE LENGTH OF THE FIXED TERM?

This can be an uncomfortable question to ask, but it is important to know from the get-go. It is a good idea to talk finance early on in the relationship because you are entering a financial contract together.

2. WHAT'S YOUR POSITION ON CLEANING?

One person's 'clean' may be another person's, well, 'filthy'. Be honest with yourself about how tidy you are and choose a flatmate who is similar. It's no fun for anyone if you hate mess and your flatmate is happy to leave dishes in the sink for a few days. If you choose a perfectionist for a flatmate and you are fairly laid-back about the odd coffee cup in the sink, you may find that you're the one being nagged.

3. HOW DO YOU THINK FOOD SHOPPING SHOULD BE ORGANISED? WHAT ABOUT COOKING?

Cooking with your new flatmates can be a great way to build friendships, as well as potentially being more cost-effective than cooking for one. Dietary requirements, tastes in food, and size of appetites are all important things to consider.

4. WHAT TIME OF THE DAY DO YOU SHOWER?

If you work similar schedules and both want to be showering at 7am, this could be a problem. Try moving any unnecessary tasks out of the bathroom, like applying make-up or drying your hair, to free up more shower time.

5. WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON PAYING BILLS COLLECTIVELY?

Do you create flatting rules around shower usage? How are you going to pay your utilities? Have you opened a flatting account yet? These are important things to work out before starting your tenancy. Don't be afraid to shop around for your utilities.

6. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT HEATING BEDROOMS?

How will your flatmates like to keep the common areas and bedrooms warm in the flat? Living in an adequately warm house is an important part of keeping ourselves well, but in mid-winter Dunedin, this will come with an increase to the power bill – an expectation that all flatmates will need to manage!

7. ARE YOU PLANNING TO HAVE FRIENDS AROUND REGULARLY?

Some people are very social, while others want to head home from work to some peace and quiet. Find out if your potential flatmates plan on having friends around for drinks or parties and see if that fits in with your usual routine.

8. WHAT ABOUT GUESTS? WILL THEY BE STAYING OVER?

There's nothing wrong with having a partner stay over one or two nights a week, but if they're hogging the shower and have practically moved in then things can get a little tense. Be up-front with potential flatmates and let them know what you'd be comfortable with.

9. WHAT CAN YOU CONTRIBUTE TO THE FLAT?

Some flats are furnished, so only a few extra items are needed to get the flat all set. However, if you need to BYO furniture, there are plenty of cheaper options – think op shops and second-hand furniture stores. Get the flatmates together to figure out what you need and divvy up who is buying what. Remember – you will need to think about what happens to the furniture at the end of the tenancy.

10. DESCRIBE YOURSELF IN THREE WORDS.

Get a feel for your potential flatmate's personality and figure out if you're likely to mesh well. You have to share a house with this person, after all!

FLAT HUNTING



There are a lot of flats out there, so don't sign up to the first dark hovel you view. Try not to get sucked into feeling the pressure to sign up. Take your time, shop around, and find the flat that's right for you. Remember it is not unusual for a property manager to strongly encourage you to sign as quickly as possible. To be clear: you are a potential customer, and they are selling you something.

You might still want to sign up early, just keep in mind the other people you are signing up with. While living with your mates from first-year might seem like a great idea now, relationships can change. Changing a flatmate after they sign onto a joint fixed-term contract is difficult. You might learn that one of your flatmates can't budget and never has their share of the rent, and then what are you going to do? Have a read through the advice in this magazine about living with others harmoniously!

KEY QUALITY INDICATORS:

- Is it warm? If not, then why not?
- Are the windows double-glazed?
- Is it dry?
- Is there mould anywhere?
- What is the water pressure like?
- Is it noisy?
- Are the rooms all the same layout/size? Would you adjust the amount of rent paid based on this?
- Is there enough storage space?
- Is there nearby parking if you have a car?

Note: *If you are currently residing in a flat, some landlords may ask you to decide to sign on for the following year or start advertising early. However, the Residential Tenancy Act currently reads that tenants have until 28 days before the end of the fixed-term to confirm their intentions for the following year.*

Please keep in mind that some of the legislation in this area could change and may have by the time you are reading this information. Visit tenancy.govt.nz for up to date information.



SUBURB SUMMARY

Where to even start looking? Consider looking beyond the obvious Castle Street spots, Dunedin has a lot of suburbs that are treasures waiting to be opened. Just a note on transport: there are buses that run to all of these suburbs, so if you don't have a car, don't let this get in the way of living out of the student area.

NORTH DUNEDIN

Flats in North D are close to university and there are a lot of flats in the area. The walking distance to campus is minimal (10 - 15 minutes). As so many students live here, it's a bit of a social hub, though the downside of this is that it may be loud and littered due to student parties. Due to the proximity to the university, properties can be a bit more expensive than suburbs further out.

NORTH EAST VALLEY

N.E.V. can be a bit cheaper than other suburbs but is only a moderate walk to university (approx. 15-20 minutes). There is a great bus service and lots of amenities, including a supermarket and you may be more likely to find on-street free parking. It's a great walk through the Botanical Gardens and there are chill community vibes. It is cold, especially if you live on the flat side. If you live up the hill, you have to walk up the hill!

ŌPOHO

A bit further from university though reasonably close to the North East Valley amenities. A family friendly suburb. Ōpoho is on the hill, so it's nice and sunny but the streets can be icy in winter - it's all about balance!

CITY CENTRE

Here you have the best of both worlds: close to the university and you are already in town. However, properties are less likely to come with parking, though there are buses that run along Princes and George Streets. A moderate walk to campus (15-20 minutes).

WOODHAUGH, GLENLEITH & LEITH VALLEY

These spots can be a bit cheaper than other suburbs. They are also quiet and close to nature. Unfortunately, some properties may not get a lot of sunlight and there are no amenities, so travel to shops is necessary. The walk to university would be moderate to long, depending how far in the valley you live (20-30 minutes).

SOUTH DUNEDIN

South D is on the other side of town to uni, however it is close to lots of supermarkets and larger shops. The commute into campus is flat, so would be great for students who bike. This area would be generally cleaner, tidier and quieter than living in the student area. It is also close to the beach and South D's version of Fatty Lane.

ST CLAIR & ST KILDA

Both suburbs are close to the beach but further from university, so transport (bike, bus, car) is required to get to campus. There are great cafes and restaurants, and the beach is handy if you are a surfer!

THE NAME'S BOND. TENANCY BOND.

WHAT IS A BOND AND WHAT IS IT FOR?

- A bond is a payment made by tenants at the beginning of a tenancy that is held by an unbiased third-party (Tenancy Services) for the duration of the tenancy.
- The purpose of a bond is to provide a contingency fund in case there is outstanding rent, damages, or claims in relation to the tenancy.
- Maximum bond is 4 weeks' rent.
- In a boarding house, if the is one week or less the landlord is not required to formally lodge the bond but must provide a receipt.
- A standard bond must be lodged by the landlord/property manager within 23 working days of payment.

LODGING A BOND TENANT RESPONSIBILITIES:

- All tenants in a joint tenancy (a tenancy shared between more than one tenant) should pay the bond to the landlord. Tenants also have the option to lodge the bond themselves. The bond lodgement form is available on the Tenancy Services website.
- The whole bond for a joint lease should be lodged at the same time, not in separate parts. Use the flat bank account and make a single payment – this provides a reliable transaction record and will prevent delays in the bond being lodged.
- After your bond is lodged online or via your landlord, you should be provided with a receipt of the transaction. If you don't receive a receipt, ask OUSA Student Support for advice. It may take up to six weeks for the tenants to receive a notification from Tenancy Services confirming that their bond is lodged.
- It is your responsibility to look after the property and keep it clean and tidy, so inform the landlord immediately of any issues with the property (email is best as this provides a written record of contact!), and make sure you update your details with Tenancy Services if they change. Take photos when you move in and out so that you have a record.

LANDLORD RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Cannot charge more than 4 weeks' rent in bond.
- Need to advise the tenants how they would like them to pay the bond.
- Ensure all tenants pay their portion of the bond.
- If the landlord is arranging the bond lodgement, they need to provide the tenants with a receipt. If the tenants lodge their bond via Tenancy Services' online form, follow up with Tenancy Services to check their contact details and bond has been lodged correctly.
- Landlords need to regularly inspect the property, attend to any property maintenance in a timely manner.

- If tenants pay their bond to the landlord, it needs to be lodged with Tenancy Services within 23 working days (unless the bond falls under the boarding house tenancy exception).

BOND REFUNDS

- Before you move out, clean everything to the best of your ability. Once you have cleaned, take photos of everything! This will be really helpful in case of an unexpected claim on your bond. At the exit inspection, agree on the amount to be refunded with the landlord and then sign a completed bond refund form. If in doubt: don't sign. If you cannot get hold of the landlord or there is a dispute about the refund amount, talk to OUSA Student Support. Once the amount is agreed upon and the form is signed, the landlord or you send the refund form to Tenancy Services. If there are any issues, contact OUSA Student Support for advice. Please: don't sign a blank bond refund form!

COMMON BOND ISSUES:

- **NON-LODGE**MENT: If a bond is not lodged with Tenancy Services or incorrectly lodged by the landlord it can be very hard to sort it out at the end of the tenancy. If you are unsure whether or not your bond has been lodged, you can always call 0800 TENANCY to confirm.
- **INDIVIDUAL PAYMENTS FOR JOINT TENANCIES:** This can cause problems for yourselves, the landlord and Tenancy Services when it comes to lodging, which can really complicate things at the end of the tenancy.
- **ASKING FOR TOO MUCH MONEY:** Remember the maximum amount for the bond is 4 weeks' rent.
- **GIVING THE LANDLORD ANY OTHER FORM OF FINANCIAL SECURITY:** The landlord cannot take any form of security in relation to the property other than the bond. The only other form of financial security a landlord may ask for is a guarantor's agreement.
- **PROFESSIONAL CLEANING AND OTHER FALSE CLAIMS:** Legally, you only have to leave your flat in a reasonably clean and tidy state, which means your landlord cannot charge you for professional cleaning (unless you have done something to genuinely warrant it). Remember to take photos at the beginning and end of your tenancy and report any damages during the tenancy in a timely fashion.
- **CHANGING TENANTS:** Changing tenants can cause problems with the bond, particularly if the bond is not transferred using the Change of Tenant forms and lodged with Tenancy Services. To get help with this, contact OUSA Student Support.
- **NOT LODGING THE BOND UNDER ALL TENANTS' NAMES:** It is important that the bond is lodged under all names so that it can be divided evenly and returned to the correct people when the tenancy ends.
- All current tenancy processes are gradually transitioning away from being paper based into a digital format. For more details about the upcoming changes, please visit the Tenancy Services website: tenancy.govt.nz/about-tenancy-services/tenancy-bond-services-transformation.



LEGAL TIPS FOR FLATTERS

When you are involved in a tenancy, either as the tenants or the landlord, both parties have rights and responsibilities. Being a student doesn't remove the protection you have under the Residential Tenancies Act, and you also must ensure you are meeting your obligations too.

This section is a brief guide to some of the legal stuff involved in flatting. It's a little dry, but it's important. And don't forget that OUSA Student Support is your on-campus support centre for anything to do with flatting and tenancy.

Landlords and property managers: A landlord is the owner of the property who is responsible for the maintenance and repairs. In comparison, a property manager is someone who has been hired by the landlord to manage the property on their behalf. Property managers can be independent or can work for property management companies.

TENANCY AGREEMENTS

When you sign up for a flat you enter a legal contract with the landlord/property manager. This is called a tenancy agreement. Under this agreement both tenants and the landlord have rights and responsibilities, governed by the Residential Tenancies Act. There are several common tenancy agreements that are listed below. Pay close attention to the "joint fixed term tenancy agreement" because it's the most common tenancy found in the student area in Dunedin.

- **FIXED-TERM TENANCY:** Lasts for a fixed amount of time (typically 12 months in the Dunedin student area).

A fixed-term tenancy can't be ended during the fixed term, but if you need to move out of the property before the end date, get in touch with OUSA Student Support to explore possible options including the reassignment process. Fixed-term tenancies will automatically become periodic at the end of the initial fixed-term unless BOTH the landlord and the tenant agree otherwise, the tenant gives notice, or the landlord gives notice. Fixed-term tenancy agreements can also be "joint" (see jointly and severally liable below).

Note: *It is important to understand that if there isn't communication between you and your landlord or property manager of your intentions at the end of the fixed term contract, it will automatically roll into a periodic tenancy, and you could be at risk of paying more rent.*

- **PERIODIC TENANCY:** There is no fixed-term, and the tenancy can be ended by giving notice. The tenant can give 21 days' notice. As of January 30, 2025, the landlord can terminate a periodic tenancy with 'no cause' by providing a 90-day notice. Keep in mind there are several circumstances where the notice period could be shorter. Note: If you find yourself in this situation, please drop into the Student Support Centre to discuss with an advocate.
- **BOARDING HOUSE:** The tenant rents one room independently and shares common facilities with other tenants. If your accommodation meets the definition of a boarding house, then you can end the tenancy with 48 hours' notice even if you signed up for a fixed term. A 'studio room' may be classed as

a boarding house. If you want to check if your studio room is classed as a boarding house, then please get in touch with OUSA Student Support.

▪ **UNENFORCEABLE CLAUSES IN A TENANCY AGREEMENT:**

All clauses in a tenancy agreement must be consistent with the Residential Tenancies Act 1986. Landlords can't just put whatever clauses they want in a tenancy agreement. A common example of this is tenants being required to professionally clean carpets when they move out. The Act requires tenants to leave the property reasonably clean and tidy (not professionally) – so your property manager can't charge you for carpet cleaning unless you have left stains. Keep in mind that your rights are your rights, and even though you have signed a contract, it must be lawful. Under no circumstances can you sign away your tenancy rights, so even though you have signed, your rights are still intact. You can always get OUSA Student Support to read over your tenancy agreement before you sign it, so you understand what your tenancy agreement involves, including your rights and obligations.

- **JOINTLY AND SEVERALLY LIABLE:** A legal term that means all flatmates (tenants) are equally responsible for everything that happens in the flat on a joint fixed term contract. For example, if one of your flatmates kicks a hole in a wall you can all be made to pay for it, or if one of your flatmates disappears and stops paying their rent and your flat goes into rent arrears, you will all be taken to the Tenancy Tribunal. Creating a household agreement is one way to establish expectations in the flat. If you find yourself in a tricky situation, always talk to OUSA Student Support. We can help you deal with the landlord and a problematic flatmate.

▪ **LIVING WITH THE OWNER OR THEIR FAMILY MEMBER:**

If the owner or a close family member is living in the property then it is not covered by the Residential Tenancies Act, unless there is a clause in the tenancy agreement explicitly saying that you agree to contract into the Act. This kind of situation can go very wrong. Talk to OUSA Student Support if you are considering doing this to make sure things are set for a good year and not the end of your friendship.

OTHER NEED TO KNOW LEGAL INFO

- **RENT IN ADVANCE:** Landlords can ask for up to two weeks rent in advance. It is unlawful for the landlord/property manager to require any further rent payments until the rent paid in advance has been exhausted.
- **RENT INCREASES:** Rent can't be increased during a fixed-term tenancy, unless there is a clause in the tenancy agreement permitting it. For a periodic tenancy (or fixed-term that allows rent increases) the rent can be increased once every 12 months. Any rent increase must be in line with market rates.
- **WHEN CAN THE LANDLORD COME INTO THE FLAT?** Your landlord can enter the outside of the property and/or common areas (of a boarding house), but they are not allowed to go inside personal flats and/or rooms without giving notice.

INSPECTIONS: Between 48 hours – 14 days' notice

FOR NECESSARY REPAIRS OR MAINTENANCE: 24 hours' notice

OPEN HOMES OR FLAT VIEWINGS: There is no notice period for this. The landlord/property manager needs to discuss this with the tenants and you all need to reach a reasonable agreement.

WITHOUT NOTICE: In an emergency or with your consent.

- **QUIET ENJOYMENT:** Your flat is your home, you are entitled to reasonable peace, comfort, and privacy. The landlord/property manager can't interfere with this, and you can't interfere with other people's quiet enjoyment either. Yes, that includes blasting your massive new speakers.
- **CHANGING TENANTS:** If you really need to move out of your flat you can 'assign' the tenancy, basically meaning someone else takes over your tenancy. The landlord/property manager needs to agree, and your flatmates need to approve of any potential replacements. There is also paperwork to do which needs to be done correctly or you might still be liable for the flat. You can be charged reasonable costs for 'assigning' but be wary of being overcharged! There are some key points to cover so it's a good idea to come and talk things through with OUSA Student Support before you do this.
- **HEALTHY HOMES STANDARDS:** From July 1st 2021 all private landlords have been required to comply with the Healthy Homes Standards. Occasionally, a property might be given an exemption from some of these standards. You can talk to OUSA Student Support for more info. Don't forget the Healthy Homes Standards are the minimum requirements. A landlord can go above the required standard and there is a lot that tenants can do themselves to make the flat warmer, dryer, and healthier.
- **DISPUTES:** If you're having issues with your landlord or flatmates there are different pathways you can use to resolve the situation. We recommend that you come in and talk to OUSA Student Support for all the options available to you as these types of situations can be complex.

If you have questions about tenancy matters, just visit the friendly team at OUSA Student Support.

**OUSA Student Support has extensive experience in flatting and tenancy related matters, gained from providing support to students who are flatting and navigating tenancy laws. All advice is given in good faith and is as accurate as possible at the time of printing, however this article does not constitute formal legal advice.*

TENANT'S RESPONSIBILITIES:

DO

- Always pay rent on time
- Pay the bills (unless they are included in the rent)
- Use the premises for residential purposes
- Keep the place clean and tidy
- Make sure your smoke alarms are working
- Notify the landlord ASAP of damages or repairs needed
- Be respectful to the property, other tenants and neighbours
- Ventilate each room regularly. This is especially important in dark, damp Dunedin homes to prevent mould and mildew

DON'T

- Intentionally or carelessly cause damage
- Sublet without the landlord's permission
- Block any fire escape points or disable smoke alarms
- Let anything illegal happen on the property
- Interfere with other tenants or neighbours' peace, comfort or privacy
- Exceed the maximum occupancy in the tenancy agreement (partners can stay over but not move in)
- Interfere with any locks
- **Sign a bond refund form where the refund amount has been left blank**

DO

- Make sure the flat is clean before tenants move in
- Provide receipts (unless tenants pay using online banking)
- Make sure the flat is secure
- Give tenants the house insurance details if requested
- Provide and maintain the property in a reasonable state of repair
- Provide working smoke alarms
- Meet all building, health, and safety standards under the laws that apply
- Provide a water supply
- Meet Healthy Homes Standards
- Compensate tenants if they have to pay for a serious or urgent repair and they couldn't contact the landlord/property manager prior.
- Make sure that other people (not on the contract) don't interfere with the tenants' reasonable peace, comfort, or privacy
- Lodge the bond within 23 working days of receiving it

LANDLORD/PROPERTY MANAGER'S RESPONSIBILITIES:

DON'T

- Interfere with supply of gas, electricity, water, telephone services, or other services, except where it's necessary to avoid danger or for maintenance
- Interfere with any existing locks
- Increase rent during a fixed term tenancy (unless it is in the contract) or without the correct notice period. The minimum period between rent increases is twelve months.
- Ask for more rent until rent in advance has been used up
- Give tenants' personal information to any external party without consent
- Breach the tenants' right to quiet enjoyment of the property
- Decide to sell without giving proper notice
- Enter the property (inside) without the correct notice period
- Charge the tenant a letting fee or key money

FLATTING DO'S AND DON'TS

HOW TO BE A GOOD TENANT

Tenant
noun
1. a person who occupies land or property rented from a landlord

Want to build a smooth relationship with your landlord, get a good reference and your bond back at the end of your tenancy? Follow these hot tips on how to be a good tenant! You have responsibilities as a tenant and it's important you live up to them. Otherwise, your landlord could request a chunk of your bond or take you to the Tenancy Tribunal.

- **BE TRUTHFUL ON YOUR FLAT/PROPERTY APPLICATION** - honesty is the best policy here!
 - **READ YOUR TENANCY AGREEMENT THOROUGHLY.** Know what you are signing up for! OUSA Student Support can look over your agreement with you for free.
 - Pay rent on time from one bank account and all in one lump sum (the only time you can withhold rent is if the Tenancy Tribunal says so).
 - **TAKE PHOTOS OF EVERYTHING WHEN YOU MOVE IN AND OUT.** The first thing you should do is get your phone out and take pictures of everything - and we mean EVERYTHING: every room, wall, ceiling and floor! Save these in a backup file just in case anything goes wrong or breaks throughout your tenancy.
 - **COMMUNICATION WITH YOUR LANDLORD IS KEY!** Report any damage and repairs to your landlord/ property manager ASAP, no matter how it was done, no matter how big or small. And always ensure you have a written record of your communication. Even if you've had a phone call, send a follow up email to confirm what you have talked about and agreed on.
 - **CLEAN AND VENTILATE REGULARLY** (at least 15 mins a day) and don't trash your flat or let friends trash it! As part of the tenancy, you must keep the premises reasonably clean and tidy.
 - **BE RESPECTFUL AND BE A GOOD NEIGHBOUR.** Not interfering with the peace, privacy and comfort of your neighbours is a requirement of your tenancy.
 - **PETS:** You must get the landlord's permission to have pets, and think carefully about who takes responsibility for the pet long-term. Alternatively, come and visit José (OUSA Student Support dog). Check out the Tenancy Services website for more info around flatting with pets.
 - **MAKE SURE YOU'RE PRESENT (IN PERSON OR DIGITALLY) AT THE FINAL EXIT INSPECTION AT THE END OF THE TENANCY.**
- For further advice and support on the above come into OUSA Student Support and check us out at www.ousasupporthub.org.nz for info on flatting and student life.

HOW TO BE A GOOD FLATTIE

- **MAKE SURE YOU PAY YOUR SHARE OF THE RENT AND BILLS ON TIME** so you don't have other flatmates chasing you or having to cover your rent. If you move out before the end of the tenancy, continue paying your rent or get your room reassigned.
- **SET UP A HOUSEHOLD AGREEMENT.** There is a template for you to fill out in this magazine or on our website ousasupporthub.org.nz.
- **CLEAN UP YOUR OWN MESS AND SHARE THE LOAD OF CLEANING THE FLAT,** don't leave all the house responsibilities to your other flatmates. Creating a chore wheel is an easy way to keep track of whose job is what each week.
- **TREAT YOUR FLAT MATES THE WAY YOU WANT TO BE TREATED.** That means respecting your mates' space, quiet time and property, being considerate when inviting guests over, and asking before you borrow things - that includes food!
- **COMMUNICATE HONESTLY** about any issues ASAP to ensure things don't spiral out of control. Flat meetings can be a good way to work through issues and refer back to your household agreement.
- **ENSURE YOU DON'T GOSSIP ABOUT OTHERS IN YOUR FLAT.** You live in close proximity, and those walls are probably thinner than you think - speak openly with those you live with.
- **DON'T GIVE THE SILENT TREATMENT, BE PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE, YELL OR BE VIOLENT TOWARDS YOUR FLATTIES.** If you have any flatmate issues that you want to talk through, come and see one of our friendly advocates at OUSA Student Support - we've heard it all!
- **CHECK IN ON FLATMATES** whose behaviour has changed dramatically or that you are worried about. Chat to OUSA Student Support about how to best support other flatmates.
- **TELL YOUR FLAT MATES IF YOU ARE PLANNING ON MOVING OUT BEFORE THE END OF YOUR TENANCY** and whether you are looking at reassigning your room or will continue paying rent. Ensure you also let your landlord know of any changes to your situation.
- Most importantly, have fun!

KEEPING THE PEACE

Whether you're sharing a space for the first time or have been living together for a while, keeping the lines of communication open is crucial for preventing conflicts and maintaining a comfortable living space that works for everyone. Here's a few tips for creating a positive flatting experience through healthy communication:

Set up consistent communication channels such as a shared messaging group so everyone can stay in the loop and be on the same page around expectations.

If something's bothering you, don't let small frustrations fester. Address them early to avoid bigger problems down the road. While it may feel easier to talk to others instead of the person involved, try to approach them directly and steer clear of gossip. Consider how you would want the situation to be approached if your actions were bothering someone else.

When addressing concerns, try using "I" statements to express how you feel, rather than assigning blame. For example, say "I feel stressed when the flat is a mess" instead of "You never clean up after yourself."

Living with flatmates means compromising. Everyone grew up in different households with their own unique values, expectations and life experiences. If different opinions come up, make an effort to hear the other person out to try understanding their point of view and come up with something that works for everyone.

Starting out the year with a household agreement is a great way to get everyone on the same page. Check out the Household Agreement in this magazine.

Accessing Support

- If communication in your flat becomes challenging or conflicts occur OUSA Student Support is here to help. We can:
- Offer guidance on how to approach conversations with your flatmates.
- Help you create a household agreement.
- Facilitate mediation to resolve disputes.
- If the situation escalates and you need to find alternative living arrangements, we can help you to explore possible options.

SAFETY CONCERNS

- If the situation becomes unsafe, don't hesitate to reach out for help:
- Campus Watch is available 24/7 in North Dunedin. Call them at 0800 479 5000 if you need someone on hand to help resolve things.
- For emergencies or if you're concerned for your immediate safety, call 111.
- If you're ever uncertain about how to handle a situation, reach out to OUSA Student Support. We are here to help you navigate these challenges.

NAVIGATING FLATMATE ISSUES

Here's a guide to tackling some of the most frequent flatting

challenges you may encounter and some tips for preventing or resolving issues that come up. It's important to note that flatmate disputes are not covered by the Residential Tenancy Act, but OUSA Student Support can be your ally before the situation turns into a full-blown flatting drama.

FLATMATE MOVES OUT AND STOPS PAYING RENT

- Check your tenancy agreement. If you are in a joint fixed term tenancy, you are most likely 'jointly and severally liable' for the rent. When one flat mate stops paying, you need to keep paying and find a way to settle it with the other flatmate. Early communication can prevent this – as much as possible, work out issues as they come up. If one person decides to leave, plan together to find a suitable replacement. If one flatmate is in rent arrears, applications can be made to Disputes Tribunal if the debt is disputed (i.e. the flatmate has not acknowledged they owe the rent). It is important to keep records of who has paid what and when.

FLATMATE HABITS CAUSING TENSION

- It's best to make sure that you know your potential flatmates before you sign. If you see 'red flags', try and iron these out early. A household agreement can set some guidelines for what works well. It's important to identify non-negotiables early on as a flat group, like no drugs or smoking, or rules around guests. If your flatmate is on the tenancy agreement, they legally have a right to live there. If you are all certain that you can't live with another person, think about what alternatives you and they may have. OUSA Student Support can help navigate this complex scenario.

FLATMATE BREAKING THE RULES

- If a flatmate ignores an agreed-upon rule, like no smoking or drugs, it's important to address it quickly. Calling a flat meeting is often a good place to start to re-negotiate what is acceptable to everyone. Timing is everything here, so pick a time after the incident when your flatmates are in a good space and have time to chat. If the issue seems unresolvable, seek out some facilitation or mediation support from OUSA Student Support.

STRUGGLING TO FOCUS IN A NOISY FLAT

- If you're trying to study but the flat is constantly loud or messy, setting clear expectations from the start is crucial. A household agreement can outline study time, noise limits, and cleanliness. If the situation isn't working for you, discuss it with your flatmates or consider finding a new living arrangement that suits your needs.

FLATMATE'S FINANCIAL ISSUES

- If a flatmate struggles with paying rent or bills on time, it's important to address it before things escalate. Don't depend on the property manager to bring rent arrears to the flat's attention. If one flatmate is struggling to manage their finances, encourage them to seek advice from OUSA Student Support around budgeting if needed. Having an honest, facilitated conversation can help find a solution that works for everyone.

QUEER FRIENDLY FLATTING TIPS

1. GENDER NEUTRAL/GENDER INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE: Be sure to use gender neutral/gender inclusive language if you're not sure of someone's pronouns, gender identity, or their partner's. It's never harmful to ask for someone's pronouns, just be open about it.

2. CONFIDENTIALITY: Respect others' privacy and confidentiality and keep the trust they've put in you.

3. BE CONSISTENT: Remember to try and use correct names and pronouns in conversations even if the person you're talking about isn't in the room. Practice makes perfect and helps to build good habits with your personal connections.

4. RESPECT BOUNDARIES: Some of our community members may experience dysphoria (unease or dissatisfaction) and/or may not want to talk about things. Plus, physical boundaries are important in all types of relationships.

5. BE CURIOUS: Don't ask invasive questions. Don't go asking about what body parts someone is working with, or if they're still shaving daily. It's none of your business! Be curious about how your friends are doing. Ask if they feel comfortable talking about their journey. Ask about events you could go to with them to learn. You can ask what something means to someone but not treat them like Queer Wikipedia. When in doubt, Google!

6. HUMOUR: Be mindful of the jokes you and those around you make. Be open to receiving feedback if someone does take offense. Be mindful of what you share on social media.

7. BELONGING: Queer, questioning, or ally, try and make it a safe space for everyone! This means taking a chill pill on jokes that push it, not having prejudice, and not treating someone like their queerness is their only personality trait.

8. BEING SUPPORTIVE: Let your friends know you're a safe person and they can be comfortable with their identity around you.

WHERE DO I FIND A QUEER-FRIENDLY FLAT AND/OR QUEER FLATMATES?

There are a few ways to do this, but here are some suggested by Queer Support:

- Check out online sites like TradeMe as some may include this in their listings.

There are some really helpful flatting groups out there, here are some examples:

- **RAINBOW HOUSING NZ (FACEBOOK)** - queer houses across Aotearoa.

- **UNIQ** - students often post about looking for flats and/or flat mates.

FACING DISCRIMINATION IN FLAT HUNTING

It is unlawful to be discriminated against when looking for a flat. You cannot be turned down as a potential tenant based on being a member of the rainbow community, much like you can't be turned down based on culture, religious beliefs, age, ability etc.

This is true for looking for flats and deciding whether to continue or end a tenancy. It is also unlawful for anyone, including landlords and/or property managers, to tell anyone to discriminate.

Unless discrimination is done explicitly, it can be hard to prove. Regardless, it doesn't feel good and it is not okay. If you suspect you've been discriminated against, come speak to OUSA Student Support for advice.

QUEER SUPPORT: COME OUT AND PLAY

Queer Support offers support at the University and Polytechnic for everyone, rainbow people and allies alike. Here are a few things they offer:

- **ONE ON ONE SUPPORT:** Confidential chats about anything you need. This support also includes advocacy, information and access to resources.
- **VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES:** Queer Peer Support and event assistants.
- **QUEER SPACE:** A safe place on campus that also houses the Queer Library.
- **EVENTS CELEBRATING DIVERSITY.**
- **WORKSHOPS & TRAININGS:** Educating staff and students on rainbow issues and the best ways to be supportive.
- **QUEER FRIENDLY STAFF NETWORK (QFSN):** Keen to know who the queer-friendly people in your department are? We have a list located on the OUSA Student Support Hub.
- OUSA Queer Support also offers a few donated binders. These are available to loan from the OUSA Student Support office. Come and see us for more info!

HOUSEHOLD AGREEMENT

This is an agreement entered into by all flatmates to promote effective communication and ensure shared responsibility within the flat. If any problems occur, a flat meeting shall be arranged, and this document referred to for clarification.

Please note: This is not a legally binding document but is an important guide to specify expectations of the flat.

Flat Details

Date Agreement Created:

Flat Address:

Names of all Flatmates:

Tenancy Period:







Agreement







Flat Account	<p>We have a flat account (this is separate to any personal accounts of all flatmates). The flatmates responsible for setting up the flat account are (at least two):</p> <p>These flatmates responsible will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">o Ensure all flatmates have access to the accounto Only use the money in the account for the agreed upon useso Set up and stop automatic payments for billso Close the account at the end of the tenancyo If excess in account at the end of the tenancy, the amount will be split among all flatmates and repaid by ___/___/___
Rent	<p>Each flatmate shall pay rent of \$___ each week on ___(day).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">o To the flat accounto Directly to the landlord/property manager <p>If the rent amount differs between flatmates, specify amounts below:</p>
Bills	<p>Choose one option:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">o One flatmate is responsible for organizing all bills and bills will be split evenly between all flatmates.o Each bill has a specific person responsible for organising payment. The person responsible for the bill divides the total among all flatmates, collects the money and pays the bill. The flatmates responsible for each specified bill are:o We will pay \$___ each into the flat account each week/fortnight/month to cover bills. Bills will be paid by ___(flatmate responsible) by the bill deadline.o We agree to the following arrangement for bills:
Meals	<p>Choose one option:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">o We will share food expenses as a flat and have a roster for cooking for: Breakfast Lunch Dinner (circle those that apply) This roster will / will not include weekends (circle one)o We will each buy our own food and do cooking for: Breakfast Lunch Dinner

Cleaning	<p>Cleaning needs to be completed weekly by ___(specify day)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">o We have a roster <p>OR:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">o We have fixed responsibilities: <p><i>Kitchen:</i> Benchtop, oven and stove top, microwave, fridge, floor <i>Bathroom:</i> Sink, toilet, bath, shower, floor <i>Common areas:</i> Tidy and common areas/shared spaces <i>Rubbish & Recycling:</i> Putting out bins for collection <i>Laundry:</i> Communal items (tea towels, dishcloths etc) <i>Other:</i></p>
Safety	<p>Choose one option:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">o The flat will always be locked. All flatmates are required to keep their key on them in order to access the property.o The flat will be locked at night from ___ PM onwards.
Repairs/ Maintenance	<p>If repairs and maintenance are required, the allocated flatmate who will contact the landlord and arrange access to the property if required for the landlord/tradesmen is:</p> <p>Flatmate 1: OR: Flatmate 2: OR: The person responsible for/who notices the damage</p>
Flat Meetings	<p>Choose one option:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">o Meetings shall be held every week/month and additional flat meetings can be agreed upon as required.o Meetings will be held on an as-required basis.o We agree to the following arrangement for flat meetings:
Visitors	<p>Choose one option:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">o Visitors can stay overnight with ___ days/hours' notice.o Visitors cannot stay overnight <p>Choose one option:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">o Visitors can stay for meals with ___ days/hours' notice.o Visitors cannot stay for meals

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="radio"/> We will each buy our own food and do cooking for: Breakfast Lunch Dinner (circle those that apply)<input type="radio"/> We agree to the following arrangement for meals:
Shopping	<p>Choose one option:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="radio"/> We will purchase communal items only such as: (consider pantry staples and cleaning products)<input type="radio"/> We will purchase communal items and food items for all shared meals. We will put \$ ____ per week into the flat account to cover these items. <p>Choose one option:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="radio"/> We will do the shopping as a group.<input type="radio"/> We will take turns doing the shopping. <p>Choose one option:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="radio"/> We will split the cost between all flatmates for a taxi/Uber to get the shopping home.<input type="radio"/> We will give \$ ____ petrol money each if a flatmate uses their vehicle to take shopping home.<input type="radio"/> We will order our shopping online and pick it up OR get it delivered.<input type="radio"/> We will walk to the shopping home. <p>OR: We agree to the following arrangement for shopping:</p>
Heating	<p>Choose one option: Communal Areas (i.e., living room and kitchen)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="radio"/> We agree to heat communal areas at night only.<input type="radio"/> We agree to heat communal areas between these times: <p>Choose one option: Bedrooms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="radio"/> We agree to heating in bedrooms and flatmates that wish to do so are to pay an additional \$ ____ per week for power.<input type="radio"/> We agree to heating in the bedroom (no limits/extra cost)<input type="radio"/> We agree to no heating in bedrooms. <p>OR: We agree to the following arrangement for heating:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="radio"/> Visitors can stay for meals with ____ days/hours' notice.<input type="radio"/> Visitors cannot stay for meals <p>OR:</p> <p>Conditions for visitors staying overnight:</p> <p><i>Informing other flatmates:</i></p> <p><i>Maximum number of nights per week:</i></p> <p><i>Contribution towards bills/food:</i></p> <p><i>Use of showers:</i></p>	
Parties	<p>Choose one option:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="radio"/> Flatmates can hold parties with ____ days/hours' notice.<input type="radio"/> Flatmates can only hold parties if all other flatmates agree and are given ____ days/hours' notice.<input type="radio"/> Flat parties will be registered with Good One at least two weekdays in advance and all appropriate safety measures will be made.<input type="radio"/> No parties are to be held at the flat. <p>OR: We agree to the following arrangement for parties: (consider curfew for noise on weeknights and during the weekend)</p>	
Moving Out Early	<p>We acknowledge, as per the Residential Tenancies Act 1986, that if any flatmate wishes to move out before the end of the lease term, they are responsible for finding a replacement tenant that the other flatmates approve of (within reason). The departing flatmate will be responsible to cover their share of rent until a replacement is found, is approved by the property manager and has moved into the flat.</p> <p>The departing flatmate is responsible for notifying the landlord/property manager (in writing) and ensuring a change of tenant form is signed and sent to the landlord/property manager.</p> <p>The assignment fee will be covered by the departing flatmate/s (if relevant).</p> <p>Please add any additional agreements here:</p>	
Additional Agreements		
Reviewing Agreement	<p>Choose one option:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="radio"/> We agree to review this agreement each semester and all changes must be agreed upon by all flatmates.<input type="radio"/> We agree to review this document when a new flatmate joins the tenancy, and all changes must be agreed upon by all flatmates<input type="radio"/> We agree to only review this document should a flatmate become unhappy with an arrangement and all changes have to be agreed upon by all flatmates.<input type="radio"/> We agree to never review this agreement and no alterations can be made.	

Agreement signed by:		
Signature:	Name:	Date:
		
		
		
		
		
		

Signature:	Name:	Date:
		
		
		
		
		
		

FLAT WELLBEING

Flatting can pose a lot of challenges – living independently for the first time, managing budgets, prioritising health and wellbeing, forming new friendships, and facing new academic challenges. Here are some tips to look out for your wellbeing:

- **CREATE A ROUTINE:** Building a solid routine can help you stay on top of things. Dedicate time for study, exercise, meals, and relaxing. Avoid staying cooped up in your room all day. Mix things up by studying in the library, going for a walk, or socialising with your flatmates. There's a direct link between what we do and how we feel. Striking a balance is important – work hard but allow yourself moments to relax and enjoy other activities.
- **FOCUS ON HEALTHY HABITS:** It's easy to forget about the basics when life gets busy. Making sure you are getting enough sleep, eating balanced meals, drinking enough water, and staying active can make a real difference to how you feel and prevent your wellbeing from taking a hit when things get tough.
- **CONNECT WITH OTHERS:** Spending time with others is important to feel connected. Spending time doing flat activities to get to know your flatmates is great, but building a network outside your flat can also be valuable. Join Clubs and Societies to meet people with similar interests – OUSA Clubs and Socs offer plenty of options! Volunteering can also provide a great space to meet like-minded people; check out Are You Ok? and UniCrew. If forming connections feels daunting, OUSA's Peer Support program is a great way to meet others and build confidence in developing friendships.
- **GIVE YOURSELF TIME TO UNWIND:** Balancing academic and social demands can feel exhausting. It's okay to say "no" to a night out and recharge instead. Whether it's Netflix, listening to music, painting, or taking a quiet walk, find activities you enjoy that may help you relax and recharge.
- **KNOW WHEN TO SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP:** If things are feeling too much and you're overwhelmed with coursework, stressed about balancing responsibilities, or struggling with your mental health, seeking professional support can make a big difference. Here are some free/low cost options:
 - Student Health for GP, counselling, psychology or psychiatrist support. Call 0800 479 821 to book an appointment.
 - Kōwhiri Centre for counselling support at Otago Polytechnic. You can book an appointment via the website www.op.ac.nz/services/kowhiri-centre
 - Puāwaitanga offers free phone and web-based counselling to University Students. You can book an appointment via the website www.puawaitanga.nz/
 - Youthline Otago offers free face-to-face counselling. Reach out to ylof2f@youthline.co.nz.

HELPLINES:

- Need to Talk – text or call 1737
- Youthline – text 234 or call 0800 367 633
- Depression Helpline – text 4202 or call 0800 111 757
- Anxiety NZ – 0800 269 4389
- Lifeline – text 4334 or call 0800 543 354

CONCERNED FOR A FLATMATE'S WELLBEING?

It's great to be mindful of your flatmate's wellbeing, especially during stressful periods like exams. Here are some signs to watch out for that your flatmate might be struggling to watch out for:

- Withdrawal, isolation, or avoiding others
- Mood changes, excessive worrying, tearfulness
- Significant shifts in eating or sleeping habits

- Erratic, irrational, manic behaviour
- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Self-harm or suicidal ideation

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP:

• CHECK IN

A simple "How are you?" or an invitation to hang out can make all the difference. It can often take time for someone to feel comfortable opening up. Keep checking in if you are concerned but don't pressure them to share anything they aren't ready to.

• ACKNOWLEDGE AND VALIDATE THEIR FEELINGS

Often, the best way to support someone isn't by offering solutions right away. Sometimes they just need to feel heard. Rather than jumping straight into problem-solving mode, take a moment to acknowledge their feelings. Let them know it's okay to feel what they're feeling and that you're there to listen.

• AVOID MAKING ASSUMPTIONS

Everyone handles stress and emotions differently, so it's important not to assume you know what's going on. Take the time to ask open-ended questions and truly listen to what they have to say. Show you care by asking open-ended questions like, "How can I help?" or "What do you need right now?"

• SUPPORT THEM TO REACH OUT FOR HELP

If you're concerned about your flatmate's mental health, don't hesitate to encourage them to seek help. You could encourage them to chat with Student Health, OUSA Student Support, or support them to reach out to others they trust. You could offer to go with them for extra support, but ultimately it's their choice to seek help when they are ready. This process can be difficult for us to manage and sometimes we may feel frustrated, but it's key to remember that ultimately we can't control others' behaviour.

CHECK IN AROUND SAFETY

If you are concerned about your flatmate's safety or if you have concerns about self-harm or suicide, here are some options to reach out for more help:

- EPS (Emergency Psychiatric Services), call them on 0800 467 846 or access through ED at the Dunedin Hospital.
- Campus Watch on 0800 479 5000 are available 24/7 and can do a welfare check or take your flatmate to EPS.
- If there are immediate safety concerns, don't hesitate to call police on 111.

REMEMBER TO CARE FOR YOURSELF AND KNOW YOUR LIMITS

You can't effectively support your flatmates if you're not looking after yourself first. Prioritise your own self-care, whether that's through rest, exercise, or simply taking a step back when you need it. Connect with your own support network and remember you are supporting as a friend not a professional. It is important to remind yourself that you are not responsible for someone else's wellbeing. If you feel overwhelmed, it's okay to get support for yourself. When your own mental and physical health is in check, you're in a much better place to be there for those around you.

OUSA Student Support is here to help, whether you are concerned about your own or your flatmate's wellbeing. Don't hesitate to reach out!

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

When an emergency happens, it's best to have supplies to look after yourself and those in your care for at least three days. Check out what supplies you should have on hand on getready.govt.nz/prepared/household/supplies

FIRE:

It may seem like common sense, but if you have a FIRE IN YOUR FLAT, remember:

- You have 3 minutes to GET OUT safely.
- Expect to feel disorientated in the toxic smoke GET DOWN, GET LOW, GET OUT!
- Shout to others: "FIRE, FIRE, FIRE!"
- Follow your ESCAPE PLAN – talk about it and practise as part of your Household Agreement.

Ask yourselves THREE questions when setting up a fire evacuation plan upon moving in:

- What are the safe ways OUT?
- How will we all make sure EVERYONE gets out?
- Where will you all meet SAFELY?

In the event of a fire, call 111 and ask for 'FIRE'. Give your name, address, suburb and city. Stay on the line! Meet with flatties and guests at your safe meeting place. Account for anyone missing. DON'T go back inside!

PREVENTION IS BEST:

- Check smoke alarms regularly (use a broom handle to press the button), replace batteries and don't remove or move the fire alarms without your landlord's consent.
- Use electric heaters rather than LPG gas and remember the 'metre from the heater' rule.
- Clean out your lint catcher in the dryer. This should be done after every use.
- Don't light fires – including in your recycling or rubbish bins.
- 1 in 4 fires start in the kitchen. Don't drink and fry or leave the room when cooking!
- 1 in 6 fires start in the bedroom. Never leave candles unattended, and use the correct light bulb size and rating (watts) in lamps. Close your bedroom door at night – a closed door can majorly reduce smoke inhalation in the event of a fire.
- Replace electric blankets or get them checked regularly. Roll them for storage (don't fold) and don't

put heavy objects on top of the bed when they're on. Turn it OFF before you sleep! Make sure cords are not twisted!

- Keep a torch or phone handy at night.
- Appliances: turn off when not in use, keep away from water, use 'safety tested' second-hand appliances, don't use if faulty, and allow space and airflow around them.
- ONE heater or appliance per plug. Don't overload multi-boards or plug one multi-board into another multi-board. Uncurl extension leads when in use.
- Hot water bottle safety – never use boiling water. Make sure the top is firmly closed. Use it to warm the bed, then remove before getting into bed. Use a cover or a towel before using to help prevent burns. Check and replace your hot water bottle regularly.

EARTHQUAKES:

- Dunedin is located on Otago's most active fault, so make sure you've outlined a plan to keep yourself safe.
- It's a good idea to talk about an emergency plan as part of your household agreement – identify safe places inside and outside your flat.
- During a quake – DROP, COVER, HOLD.
- Stay INSIDE until shaking STOPS, under stable furniture or by internal walls.
- Go outside only when safe to do so, into an OPEN SPACE away from power lines and trees.
- Listen to and follow Civil Defence emergency advice.

FLOODS:

- Collect sandbags to keep water out.
- Move valuable or dangerous items as high above the floor as possible, including electrical equipment and chemicals.
- Turn off water, electricity and gas if advised to.
- Follow Civil Defence emergency advice and be prepared to evacuate if you feel unsafe.

A GUIDE TO RESPONSIBLE PARTYING

Dunedin is infamous for its party scene. From O-Week to St Patty's, Hyde to Flo, and Re:Ori to red cards, there's almost always a reason to celebrate. Partying responsibly isn't hard, but it's easy to get overwhelmed by the Dunedin scene.

Parties are an integral part of student life, but it's important to understand the risks. If a party looks like it's getting out of hand, maybe it's time to head home. Check yourself and your mates when you're out and about. Sometimes a situation may look manageable, but be aware that it can change in a second.

If you're the one hosting and it's getting out of hand, you have options. Parties are great, but the aim should be to have fun with your mates. We're not telling people to stop drinking or partying, but we want to give you some tips on how you can be responsible while having fun.

HOW TO HOST RESPONSIBLY

When you decide to throw a party, don't make it a public Facebook event or Instagram story. Make sure your where is big enough for the people you invite and have a plan in place if 200 people randomly show up because it's a Saturday night and that just happens sometimes.

THERE ARE ALSO SOME PRE-EMPTIVE OPTIONS IF YOU ARE PLANNING ON HAVING A BIG ONE:

- Register with GoodOne. These guys will help you out with almost anything you need. Definitely get in touch with them if you're hosting something big, especially during O, Flo, and Re:Ori. They provide a whole bunch of information about how to host well and put on the best event you can.
- Give Campus Watch a call 24/7 on 0800 479 5000. They're sometimes viewed as the 'fun police', but actually they're great folks who are just looking out for you and your mates. They offer great advice and can even check up on the party while it's happening. If you think a party is getting out of hand, give them a call sooner rather than later as a heads up - or better yet, talk to them before the party even starts.

- Make sure to check with your neighbours before you host as noise can be an issue once you start heading more to the peripheries of North Dunedin.
- Tell people to bring cans - smashed glass bottles suck for everyone.
- Have food and water available.
- Set an end time and try sticking to it.
- Check all flatmates are keen for hosting the party.
- Make sure all your valuables are locked away.

SPOTTING THE SIGNS: ALCOHOL & DRUG ADDICTION

As you spend more time as a student in Dunedin, you'll notice more and more drinking and drugs. Dodgy drugs have been on the rise over the last couple of years. Free, anonymous drug testing is sometimes available through OUSA ahead of and during big events.

CHECK YOURSELF: what kind of relationship do you have with alcohol and drugs? If you're starting to find that you're drinking more and more often, and just keep drinking to the point of blackout, consider whether you actually enjoy getting to that state. It's a good idea to check on both yourselves and your mates often, especially if you've noticed changes in habits or motivation. What might look like a flatmate just having a cone every now and then may be them smoking every night because they can't sleep without it.

Check on your mates, check on yourself, **TEST YOUR DRUGS** with KnowYourStuff.nz, and never be afraid to check in with OUSA Student Support if yourself or someone you know has any questions or concerns.

WHAT IS A HEALTHY HOME?

Here we give you a brief synopsis of not only the Healthy Homes Standards that your landlord is required to meet but also what YOU can do to keep your living space as healthy as possible.

YOUR LANDLORD IS REQUIRED TO PROVIDE A HEALTHY HOMES STATEMENT WITH YOUR NEW TENANCY AGREEMENT STATING THAT THEY COMPLY WITH THE STANDARDS. THESE ARE:

- Fixed heating source in main living area, appropriate size for area.
- Sufficient insulation. Should be equal or greater than ceiling R3.3 and underfloor R1.3. Wall insulation is preferred but not compulsory.
- Ventilation – opening windows, doors or skylights in each habitable space. Kitchen and bathroom must have an extractor fan vented to the outside.
- Draughts – no unreasonable gaps in walls, doors, windows. Fireplace closed off if not in use.
- Adequate storm water drainage outside and moisture barrier under the floor.

If you're not sure whether your flat complies or not, OUSA Student Support can talk this through with you.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO KEEP YOUR LIVING SPACE AS HEALTHY AS POSSIBLE?

- Keeping your flat warm and dry gives you a better chance at getting through the Dunners winter without coming down with every illness that's going around.
- Moisture control is a biggie! As a flat, you need to collectively keep your moisture levels down. The biggest culprits are boiling pots without lids, taking long hot showers, and drying clothes inside – tricky to avoid in Dunedin! So:
- Dry your clothes outside or in a dryer that is vented to the outside.
- Put lids on pots when cooking.
- Keep the bathroom well-ventilated when showering – open windows, extractor fan on.
- Crack the windows open at least twice a day for 10-15 minutes to ventilate the flat.

- Dry your windows and sills every morning. Use a window squeegee and towel to soak it up. Dry the towel outside afterwards.
- Use a dehumidifier if there are any signs of moisture/mould.

SIGNS OF MOISTURE/MOULD:

- Beads of water on windows.
- Pools of water on windowsills.
- Bed feels damp.
- Damp patches or running water on walls, ceilings, corners or recesses of rooms.
- Black spots/mould on walls (internal and external). Check behind the bed and furniture where there is little air flow.
- Mould on curtains and clothes.
- Carpet mould is often a sign of penetrating dampness – check with the landlord about the moisture barrier.
- Use 70% white vinegar and 30% water mix for killing mould. Spray on, wipe away and spray again to prevent regrowth.

HEATING IS IMPORTANT:

Heat your space for longer than the free 'power hours'. Know how to use your heating source efficiently to get maximum benefit from power use. Thermal curtains reduce heat loss by 60%. Apply to get them for a small fee from Dunedin Curtain Bank. <https://dunedincurtainbank.org.nz/>

Lastly, a healthy living space is one that not only looks after your physical health, but your mental and spiritual health as well. Try to create spaces in your flat that are aesthetically pleasing to you (plants, artworks, photographs), spaces you want to live in, to hang out together or to be alone. You can talk about this together and might use a household agreement to set some guidelines for how spaces will be collectively used.

WHAT F·R·I·E·N·D ARE YOU?

(And which Friends can you live with?)

1. MONICA GELLER - FLAT MUM

IDEAL FOR: Those who have an appreciation for an organised, well-maintained home.

ABOUT MONICA: Monica is the ultimate control freak and has a strong tendency for order. However, despite her desire to have things just so, she enjoys taking care of the people around her. She might re-organise your things without asking, and if you're not following her house rules, she's not afraid to remind you (multiple times). Despite her tendency to over-manage everything, she does it out of love and care, wanting the space to be as perfect as possible. Expect frequent cleaning marathons and perfectly folded towels, but also a fair share of her infamous 'Monica Geller temper' if her standards are challenged. If you like feeling taken care of, living with a Monica could be nice.

WARNING: She can be a bit of a nag at times. Those who appreciate having autonomy over their home life and gravitate towards a more laissez-faire way of being: beware.

2. PHOEBE BUFFAY - FREE SPIRIT

IDEAL FOR: Those who love a quirky, nurturing presence and are looking for a yoga partner.

ABOUT PHOEBE: Phoebe is definitely the flatmate that marches to the beat of her own drum. She is most likely to be missing in action, especially at times of flatting conflict. However, she can always be counted on to lend an ear to you when you need it most. Her comforting, open-minded nature makes her a perfect listener, and she'll offer a lot of emotional support, even if her methods are unconventional and she is most likely to consult with her crystal collection for answers. Her random acts of kindness, along with her bohemian spirit, will fill your flat with warmth and a sense of freedom.

WARNING: If you're looking for practical, straightforward solutions to your problems, Phoebe's eccentric guidance might confuse you. You'll get advice about karma, Smelly Cat, and perhaps even some odd rituals. It's worth noting that Phoebe is often MIA.

3. RACHEL GREEN - SOCIAL BUTTERFLY

IDEAL FOR: Someone who enjoys a lively living environment, a good flat party and stylish home.

ABOUT RACHEL: Rachel is fun, caring, and always up for a good time. She loves keeping up with the latest fashion trends and may frequently ask for opinions on her outfits. Expect lots of shopping bags around the flat and possibly the occasional wardrobe dilemma. A brunch enthusiast, Rachel will likely insist on Saturday morning mimosas and will keep the flat looking chic, even if it sometimes feels like a "work-in-progress". She's also likely to encourage spontaneous get-togethers and is all about making the flat feel like a social hub.

WARNING: If you like your space to be quiet and drama-free, Rachel's social life might be a bit overwhelming. There will be regular gatherings, last-minute brunches, and the occasional spontaneous party. Rachel is not great with managing money and at times can choose her personal shopping needs over her financial obligations to the flat. Careful signing onto a joint fixed term rental agreement with a Rachel type, you could be in rental arrears before you know it. And if you want to avoid your personal life being documented on social media, it would be best to avoid living with a Rachel.



4. CHANDLER BING – SARCASTIC AND EMOTIONALLY UNAVAILABLE

IDEAL FOR: Someone who appreciates sarcasm and witty banter.

ABOUT CHANDLER: If you enjoy dark humour, sarcasm, and dry wit, Chandler will keep you laughing (even if it's just at his own awkwardness). While he may have a slightly unusual area of study that nobody really understands, don't expect him to stop making jokes about it. Chandler is a bit neurotic but incredibly supportive when you need him, even if his emotional comfort often comes wrapped in self-deprecating humour. He'll occasionally cook dinner or order takeout (definitely pizza), and while his attempts to clean may be unenthusiastic, he does care about keeping things in good condition – mostly for his own peace of mind.

WARNING: Emotional avoidance. If you're looking for deep emotional conversations and connections, you might be disappointed. Chandler uses humour to deflect anything that might feel uncomfortable, including personal issues.

5. JOEY TRIBBIANI – CAREFREE SLOB

IDEAL FOR: Those who don't mind a bit of mess and love a good laugh.

ABOUT JOEY: A flatmate full of charm and a carefree attitude. While Joey is not exactly the neatest person, he's definitely the one who keeps the mood light. He's always down for a good time and might invite friends over at odd hours. Expect him to occasionally forget about responsibilities, especially if he's caught pursuing his passions. But his loyalty, charm, and occasional deep moments make up for it. Joey might "borrow" your food (without asking), but he'll make up for it by cooking you a questionable but heartwarming meal. Joey is not always concerned about taking care of what he considers to be 'menial daily chores' around the flat and will simply turn a stained cushion over rather than washing it.

WARNING: Don't count on Joey to pull his own weight around the flat or to take any initiative when it comes to the flat itself. Don't be surprised if Joey brings home unexpected guests regularly. So, if you are looking for a flatting experience that is more predictable, perhaps living with a Joey type is not your best bet. Although he is lovable, Joey is not very dependable.

6. ROSS GELLER – SERIOUS STUDENT

IDEAL FOR: Those who enjoy intellectual conversations and can tolerate minor awkwardness.

ABOUT ROSS: Ross is your classic bookish flatmate, the one who will happily engage you in deep conversations about science or his latest failed relationship. He can be a bit moody and anxious, but once you get to know him, he's incredibly sweet and caring. He's also likely to engage in (sometimes embarrassing) outbursts of passion about his various hobbies or past mistakes. His enthusiasm for his work can lead to many discussions about dinosaurs, but his sensitivity means he's always willing to listen when you need support – even if he's a little overly dramatic sometimes. Be prepared for some quiet nights interrupted by the occasional "we were on a break!" relationship rant.

WARNING: Emotional baggage. Ross brings a lot of emotional drama with him. His break-ups, jealousy issues, and relationship troubles could spill over into the flat, turning the flat into a bit of an emotional rollercoaster. Ross is happy to attend a party outside the flat, but don't expect him to be willing to host a get-together in the shared flat. He can have a tendency to be annoying about keeping the noise to a minimum. Ross is not always a good time, and he is likely to bore you with his lengthy explanations.



TRUE STORIES OF GOOD & BAD FLATTING SITUATIONS

We asked students to tell us about the best and worst of their flatting experiences in Dunedin. Here are the highlights.

BAD

- 1.** Our landlord would show up to the flat during the day without letting us know. He would want to measure or repair things around the flat for maintenance reasons. We eventually realised that he couldn't just show up like he was and that he needed to give us 48 hours' notice.
- 2.** Our tenancy started on the 1st of January and the landlord knew we would be away over the summer before the semester began. When one of the flatmates moved into our flat at the start of February, they discovered that the landlord had been doing repairs and construction on our flat during the summer months without our consent. This was a huge muck around for us as the flat was uninhabitable due to the bathroom and kitchen being renovated, all while we were paying our full rent amount! Be aware that landlords need to give you notice if work is being done on the property, and that you have the right to request a rent reduction if the property will be uninhabitable!
- 3.** At the end of Semester 2 when we had moved out of our flat and headed home for the summer, our property manager emailed us to say that the carpets needed to be professionally cleaned, and the walls had marks on them that needed to be painted over. She tried to charge us for this cleaning/work out of our bond, as we had all left Dunedin and could not return to do it ourselves. We contacted Student Support who talked us through our rights and our options to respond to the property manager. Communicating between all five flatmates who were in different parts of the country was tough, but we eventually agreed on a response to the property manager letting her know that the property needed to be left in a reasonably clean and tidy condition, and that general wear and tear was okay (sections 40 and 49A of the RTA for yall out there). The property manager dropped the charges once we pushed back and we got our full bond refunded. We were lucky - I have friends who have had to push back 3-4 times for the property manager to finally drop the charges.
- 4.** My mates and I signed up for a flat together and I was so excited to live with them. We moved in at the beginning of the year and all was good for a while, till out of the blue, they started giving me the cold shoulder. Next thing, they had all turned against me and I felt like I couldn't comfortably live in the flat any longer. I felt so stuck having signed on to a lease with people I didn't want to be around anymore, let alone live with. I ended up going into OUSA Student Support for some help with what to do in this situation and they talked me through the process of reassigning my spot on the lease and moving into another place.

GOOD

- 1.** We had a flatmate who needed to move out early and his comms were amazing. He checked with the rest of us when we were free to meet potential replacements and assured us that he understood he was liable to continue paying rent until all the paperwork was sorted. The whole process was super chill and well organised, and we were able to agree on a replacement who we all love!
- 2.** At the beginning of the year, our flat made a pact to not be cold in our flat. We decided to use the heat pump in the lounge when anyone was home, on 22 deg. We made sure we had good curtains in the bedrooms (Curtain Bank helped us out with this) and used a convection heater. We decided that from the beginning of the year, we would put extra into the flat account each week to cover the current power bill but also save for the higher bills during the colder months. The power bills were manageable and living in the flat was actually enjoyable - we weren't staying at Central late to stay warm!
- 3.** Looking for a flat for our second year, we were feeling a lot of pressure to sign up for a flat as soon as we could and we weren't getting accepted for any. We began to feel a bit desperate to get a flat sorted early. As it turns out, there are flats that are advertised all year and we signed up to a great place in October.
- 4.** When I was in first-year, a group of mates were looking to sign up for a flat but when we were given the contract, we barely understood what a lot of it meant. We found out that Student Support were providing checks for tenancy agreements, so we took it in and chatted about whether our contract was all good or not. We found out what everything in the contract meant and also some other things to look out for in our tenancy, tips about moving in, and what our responsibilities are as tenants too. It was only about a 30-minute conversation, but it was so worthwhile to have all that information before we moved in.

SUSTAINABLE FLATTING

Sustainable flatting isn't just a state of mind, it's about habits. Kōrero with your flatties early on about how you can collectively live sustainably during your time at uni. Try and turn off the flow of waste into and out of your flat. Make do with what you've got and tread lightly on Papatuanuku. These tips using the 6 R's could be helpful for setting up a more sustainable student flat.

REFUSE

- Refuse to consume wherever you can. Simply say "no thanks" to things you don't need! Do you really need to collect every single promotional trading card from the supey? Refuse to accept them and let the supermarket take care of the waste!
- Refuse packaging. When shopping, take and fill your own bags or boxes. You can often save some cash this way, too.

REDUCE

- Reduce power consumption. www.powerswitch.org.nz is great for picking up good deals and comparing power providers. Make an appointment with the DCC Eco Design Advisor to see how you can make your whare more energy efficient.
- Reduce fossil fuel consumption. Travel by foot, bike, rideshare or bus – to receive a discount on the bus system you will need to take your Bee Card and and tertiary ID to the ORC office located at Level 2, Philip Laing House, 144 Rattray Street. Bee Cards can be purchased on campus at the University Book Shop. Dunedin actually has a great bus system.
- Reduce waste. Choose bulk goods without packaging as much as you can, it's cheaper that way, too. Bulk kai stores all have dry and wet foods in bulk and non-food personal care items too. Eat as much of a kai item as you can – e.g. chop up the broccoli stalks with the stir-fry, toast the bread crusts, keep the peel on. Save leftovers for lunch!
- Eat less meat to reduce your carbon emissions. Have a meatless dinner one night a week, try oat or soy or almond miraka in your latte or partake in \$4 lunch upstairs at Clubs & Socs. Pulled jackfruit makes for a mean meat substitute at half the price.
- Reduce the need to buy expensive packaged cleaners. Try making your own using inexpensive ingredients such as vinegar, salt, baking soda, and lemon juice.

REUSE

- Reuse what already exists rather than buying new. Buy second-hand whenever you can. Dunedin has great op-shops for furniture, costumes and clothes. Try second-hand stores and Facebook Marketplace for some great deals. At the end of the year, drop off unused items at OUSA Drop for Good. If you're buying for a costume party, there's no need to buy new.
- Check out Te Oraka, the Uni's very own thrift shop. Open during semester Monday to Friday 11am – 1pm at 109 St David Street.
- Bring your keep cup, take-away lunch containers and cutlery to uni. A lot of eateries on and around campus allow you to bring your own containers to use when getting takeaways.
- Organise clothes swaps or other items amongst friends or close-by flats. Put free items outside your gate or donate to op-shops around town and reuse and sell textbooks. OUSA Clubs & Socs also has a free corner for people to drop off and pick up items. Keep it all cycling around.

- Rent your favourite labels rather than buying. Check out Dunedin-based Instagram dress rental pages or set up your own.

REPAIR

- Often if something breaks we have a habit of throwing it away. There are some cool places in Dunders where you can get help to repair your goods back to working condition or get them repaired such as clothes, bikes, appliances and electronics. Te Oraka also has bike grabs on Tuesdays from 11am – 1pm where you can pick up a preloved bike for a Koha and repair it so it's good to go!

RECYCLE

- Know what can be recycled in Dunedin and download the DCC Kerbside App. Yellow bins take rigid plastics #'s 1, 2 & 5 (no lids), tin and aluminium cans and paper/cardboard. Blue bins take rinsed, unbroken glass – but again, no lids! The Proctor's Office has spare blue bins for your flat if you need them. Campus Watch has two caged trailers, brooms, and shovels all available for students to use for free.
- Utilise your green-lidded bin for an easy way to compost your food scraps without having to do any work.
- Each house in Dunedin now has a red-lidded general rubbish bin, yellow-lidded mixed recycling bin, green-lidded food scraps/garden waste bin, and blue glass bin.
- Check out <https://www.dunedin.govt.nz/services/rubbish-and-recycling> to find your collection day and more info about what can go in each bin.

RETHINK

- Be mindful about what you buy. Ask yourself if you really need something or is it just something that will bring you short-term enjoyment. If you think you do really want something, sit on it for a few days; try to avoid making those in-the-moment purchases. By consuming more products, we're both creating and discarding more.
- Consider if the products you are buying are designed in a way that considers people and the environment. Was it made ethically? Is it made from recycled materials? Can the components of it be recycled?
- Did you know that Otago University has a Sustainability Neighbourhood? Uniflats Sustainability Neighbourhood & Sustainability Village is owned, managed and maintained by the University of Otago's Uniflats. These spaces share multiple gardens, hot-houses, beehives, and tackle food waste through either worm farms or compost. They also host monthly hui where a guest speaker is invited to share their knowledge about different sustainability topics, from waste to nutrition to well-being. Contact flats@otago.ac.nz if you're interested in being a part of this community.

POWER DOWN YOUR BILLS

We have some power saving tips for cutting your power bill when renting. You don't have to make drastic changes to your power habits, nor do you have to endure the freezing cold. It may be a matter of thinking a bit smarter when it comes to your usage that will help make a difference.

UTILITIES BUDGETING

- First thing's first: Work **WITH** your flatmates to establish your expectations so that everyone is on the same page regarding bills.
- Paying a set amount of your power bill weekly can break down that monthly cost to a smaller amount and make it way more manageable. Simple breakdowns like this can really help with your budgeting. This can also help when it comes to those higher power bills in winter as hopefully you have some credit saved up from those cheaper months. If there's any money left over at the end of the year, split it evenly between the flatmates.

USE THE FACILITIES AVAILABLE TO YOU!

- Another great idea is to use the University's library internet, and then hot spot your phone when you're at home! Two bills in one! There are unlimited data phone plans, which could save your flat an entire Wi-Fi bill. The only thing to consider with this option is that you may sometimes get stuck with a poor connection.
- Using the University's library is also a great place to go to cut down on heating costs. Going here to study during winter could save you big bucks!
- There are free showers at OUSA Clubs and Socs (BYO towel, shampoo, etc., available for your use on the second floor in the bathroom areas).

TURN OFF YOUR APPLIANCES WHEN YOU'RE NOT USING THEM

Whether it's the warmer or colder months, one of the simplest ways to reduce energy costs in your home is to turn your appliances off at the wall when you're not using them. Even when appliances are turned off, they still keep drawing power when plugged into the wall. This won't make you rich, but it will definitely save you money!

WASH YOUR CLOTHES IN COLD WATER

Yes, cold water does still clean clothes! There's a long-standing belief that you have to wash your clothes in warm water in order to kill the bacteria in the fabric, but this is not the case. This is a great way to save power as a cold wash can draw 10x less power than a hot one.

RUN APPLIANCES AT SPECIFIC TIMES

As we touched on before, some companies offer lower rates or 'off-peak hours'. If you are going to commit to this option, be mindful that the 'peak' hours will be more expensive than just having one general rate. Putting timers on appliances such as your washing machine, dryer and dishwasher can also save you heaps. You just need to be mindful and plan how/when you are going to use these appliances each day - for example, when you're going to have your shower or cook dinner. Don't forget to check if/when your off-peak times are.

CHOOSE YOUR POWER COMPANY CAREFULLY!

It is helpful to use a power company that uses an app and is able to break down the individual price of each appliance. It is also helpful to check which appliance is using the most power at what times and to see if you can modify this in any way. For example, if your oven is costing you a crazy amount to cook dinner, perhaps you could pre-cook your dinner at off peak times or invest in an air fryer which is way more efficient and cheaper to run than an oven. We also suggest paying a set amount to your power company each week/fortnight/month; this way, when your power bill (most likely) increases in winter you should have some credit to cover the additional bill.

IT'S GETTING HOT IN HERE

As many Kiwis don't adequately heat their homes, we are unknowingly providing the conditions for mould to thrive. The recommended indoor temperature of your house should be 18°C for living spaces and 16°C for bedrooms. The higher the temperature, the less likely condensation and mould will develop.

If you only take one thing away from this breakdown, it should be that heat pumps cost way less than you think. One hour of heat pump costs LESS than an extra 10-minute shower. Don't be stingy with heating your flat, and make sure you keep healthy! A warm flat means a dry flat, and that's better (and healthier) for everyone!

These are the most common types of heating in Dunedin flats:

HEAT PUMP

This is the most popular and efficient option. These devices absorb the heat from outside and transfer it inside. They move heat around as opposed to generating it which is why it is one of the most efficient heat sources. Heat pumps are great for living areas as they heat up a large space quickly whilst requiring less energy to do so than other heaters.

ELECTRIC HEATERS

Although electric heaters can be bought for a low initial cost, they're very costly to run! It is very important to keep yourself warm in the colder months of Dunedin, and these bad boys are a great heat top up for your room. Just be mindful to turn them off whenever you don't need them on.

WOODFIRE

Although a fireplace may seem like the cheapest option when heating a flat, firewood can be expensive! You also need to consider the effort that goes into having a fireplace: chopping up the wood, having a dry place to store it, potentially hiring a trailer to pick it up, the set up each time you want to use it... and it does take a wee bit longer for a room to heat up compared to a heat pump. If you do have a fireplace, make sure you have carefully planned out how much firewood you will need as you don't want to get stuck in those colder months and not be able to find any dry wood. If you do have a fireplace, make sure to purchase your wood in summer when it's dry, has a few months to dry out even more, and is cheaper!

TIPS!

KEEP YOUR HOME DRY

The more moisture that is in your home, the harder it is to heat it up! Therefore, one of the best ways to heat up a cold Dunedin flat is to keep it as dry as possible. A few

simple ways to do this are: ventilating your spaces, opening up the windows for 10 mins a day can make a huge impact on the moisture level in your house; having quick showers; using your extractor fan when cooking and showering; drying your clothes outside (not inside!); and getting as much fresh air and sun into your flat as possible. If you see any condensation on your windows, wipe this off as soon as you notice it.

New Zealand homes can collect up to 8 litres of moisture per day, so it is essential that you try and implement these little daily changes into your Dunedin flat to keep it warmer!

BE CAREFUL USING YOUR DRYER!

Be careful with drying your clothes – clothes dryers are one of the most expensive house appliances you can use. Although we can have some gloomy days in winter, try not to rely solely on your dryer as it can become very expensive! Clothes dryers typically use about \$1 of electricity per load.

Try to air-dry your clothes outside when possible and avoid the dryer unless it's absolutely necessary. If you do need to use the dryer, try airing out the clothes as much as possible before popping them in the dryer. This will reduce the amount of moisture your dryer will be working towards getting rid of. Also remember to clean out the dryer filter after every load!

BE MINDFUL OF YOUR HEATING OPTIONS

Although heaters are gradually becoming way more energy efficient, they still account for around 30% of the average New Zealand power bill. Implementing tiny changes can make a huge difference to your heating bill. For instance, ensuring that your home is as dry as possible, wearing warm clothing, and turning your heater down a bit can all add up to help reduce your power bill.

USE YOUR HEAT PUMP CAREFULLY

Only turn on your heat pump when you need it and make sure you remember to turn it off when no one is home. Avoid using 'auto' mode as this uses more electricity than "heating mode" as it is switching between heating and cooling modes to maintain a temperature. Ensure that the filters have been regularly cleaned to ensure it runs efficiently. It is recommended to set the temperature of your heat pump to between 20°C and 22°C. Setting the temperature higher makes it work harder and will be less efficient.

A 6kW heat pump running for 8 hours a day will add around \$70 a month to your power bill.

LIVING ON A STUDENT BUDGET

Don't go broke or end up in debt. Work out what you can afford using this Flatting Mag weekly budget as a guide. It's important to understand how much money you have coming in each week, how much you're spending on essentials, and extras on top of that. Food, rent, and power should always take priority.

HOW TO SET UP YOUR BUDGET:

- **ESTABLISH YOUR INCOME** First up, you need to work out how much money you have to work with.
- **ESTIMATE YOUR OUTGOINGS** Next up you need to figure out where all your money is going.
- **CALCULATE YOUR WEEKLY BUDGET** Once you've got all your expenses laid out before you, it's time to break it down into a weekly budget.
- **SET YOURSELF SOME GOALS** Whether you are budgeting for your day-to-day or budgeting to save up for something, it's all about setting goals to either reduce your spending or increase your income.

On the OUSA Student Support Hub (ousasupporthub.org.nz) there is a list of alternative financial support options for students in times of need. Please see this for more information or book an appointment to discuss your financial situation.

BANKING WHILE STUDYING

HERE ARE SOME TIPS TO NAVIGATE THE FINANCIAL WORLD DURING YOUR TIME AT UNI:

- **GET A STUDENT BANK ACCOUNT ASAP** - you could get perks such as free fees. Make sure to do your research as not all student bank accounts are the same. Please note that some banks charge for a credit card, and others for ATM use so be mindful of the details.
- **TRY TO AVOID SETTING UP AN OVERDRAFT.** If you absolutely need one, make sure that it has 0% interest! Remember: Interest-free student overdrafts are only free while you're a student. If you still have these debts once you finish uni they will then incur interest. Be proactive and have a plan to be able to pay them before you finish university.
- **BEWARE OF 'BUY NOW, PAY LATER' SCHEMES.** You are eventually going to need to pay this money back, so only do this if absolutely needed. The bottom line is: budget for your purchases, save the money first, then buy as you like.
- It can be helpful to set up separate bank accounts for each of your essentials (rent/bills/groceries) so that you can visually see what is leftover and not be short of paying for the necessities.
- If you are working part time or multiple jobs, make sure you are using the correct tax code when completing your tax code declaration with IRD. Lots of students just tick the generic 'M' for their employment, however you may be 'MSL' if you have a student loan and are earning between 24k - 70k, or 'SB SL' if you have more than one job and a student loan. Check that you are using the right tax code on the IRD website: ird.govt.nz If your tax code is incorrect, you risk having to pay money back to IRD at the end of the financial year!

BILLS		
BILL	BUDGET	ACTUAL
Rent		
Power		
Wifi		
Gas		
Insurance		
Phone		
TOTAL		

SAVINGS		
SAVINGS	BUDGET	ACTUAL
TOTAL		

OTHER EXPENSES		
EXPENSE	BUDGET	ACTUAL
Groceries		
Takeaways/Eating Out		
Coffee		
Petrol		
Car Expenses		
Travel/Transport		
Credit Card/Overdraft/Afterpay		
Tuition		
Books & Supplies		
Health-related Expenses		
Childcare		
Pet Expenses		
Appliance Rentals		
Discretionary/Recreation		
TOTAL		

SUBSCRIPTIONS & MEMBERSHIPS		
EXPENSE	BUDGET	ACTUAL
Gym		
Spotify/Apple Music		
Youtube Premium		
Netflix		
Prime		
Disney+		
Neon		
TOTAL		

	BUDGET	ACTUAL
REMAINING FUNDS:		

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



MAKING THE MOVE

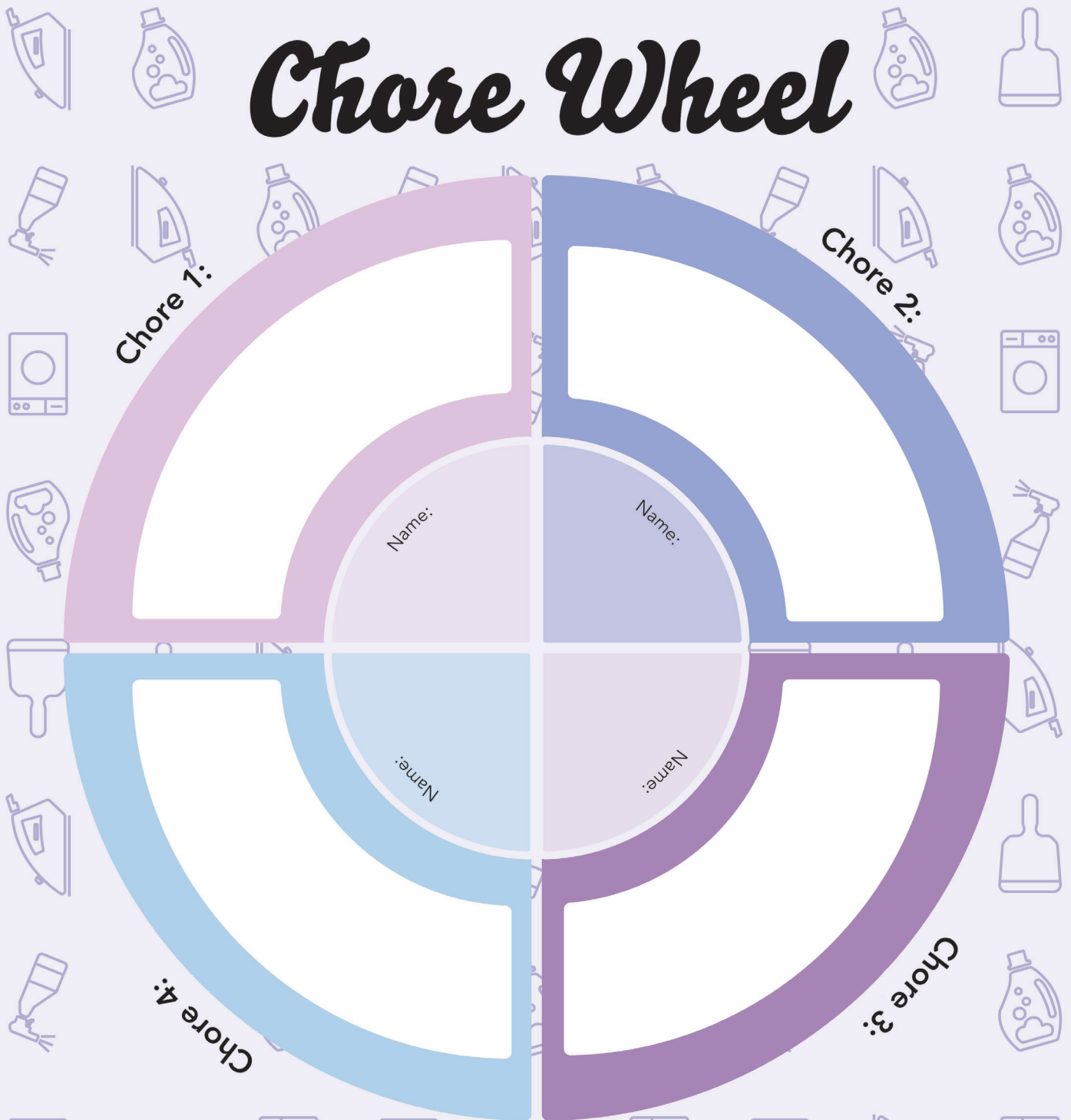
MOVING IN

- 1.** Get your tenancy agreement checked by OUSA Student Support before you sign.
- 2.** Lodge your bond with Tenancy Services and pay rent in advance (if required) before you move in.
- 3.** Create a Household Agreement.
- 4.** Create a flat account and set up your bills - we recommend that at least two people are on the account.
- 5.** Collect your keys, complete an initial property inspection and take photos of everything, to document the condition of the flat.
- 6.** Report any issues in writing (email) to the landlord and talk to OUSA Student Support if there are any problems.
- 7.** Move your belongings in, add your personal touches and enjoy your new where.

MOVING OUT

- 1.** Remove all your belongings and rubbish from the property.
- 2.** Clean the property (to a reasonably clean and tidy state).
- 3.** Take photos of everything to document the condition of the property.
- 4.** Complete an exit inspection with the landlord (if possible) and make sure rent is paid until the end date on your tenancy agreement.
- 5.** Return your keys.
- 6.** Stop all utility contracts such as power and internet (or move them to your new address).
- 7.** Sign a completed bond refund form.

Chore Wheel



Common chores and jobs:

1. Cut the small circle out
 2. Separately pin the page and small circle in place with drawing pins/tacks - this will allow the small circle to rotate.
 3. Decide if the chores need to be done daily or weekly.
 4. Break down what is included for each chore (if necessary).
 5. Rotate the chore wheel at the end of the week/month.
 6. Enjoy a clean flat!
- (Create your own version of the Chore Wheel to include all flatmates and chores as necessary)

Community Law Otago

Free

Legal Advice



Phone 03 474 1922

or email reception@dclc.org.nz
to make an appointment

first floor, 169 Princes Street, DUNEDIN



community law

free legal help
throughout aotearoa