

BOSTON COLLEGE



Office of Residential Life/Off-Campus Housing

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Congratulations and Welcome to BC

Prior to arrival, the first step for an international student is to book a temporary accommodation. Next, you should visit the Off-Campus Housing Office to receive some guidance with your search.

As you begin preparing for your education at Boston College, the Office of Residential Life, Off-Campus Housing is pleased to inform you that we are here to try to make your search for housing as easy and stress-free as possible. Included in this newsletter is important information that will guide you through the process of securing off-campus housing.



Temporary Accommodations

Upon arrival, students can find temporary accommodations near campus while completing their apartment/housing search at the following link: <http://www.bc.edu/offices/reslife/offcampus/areainfo/lodging.html>

The link provides many bed & breakfasts, hotels, and hostels. Be sure to note the distance from campus, proximity to public transportation, and price (hostels being the least expensive).

Off-Campus Housing Office



Gasson Hall in the Fall

The Off-Campus Housing office is located in 21 Campanella Way, Suite 220. Our services include:

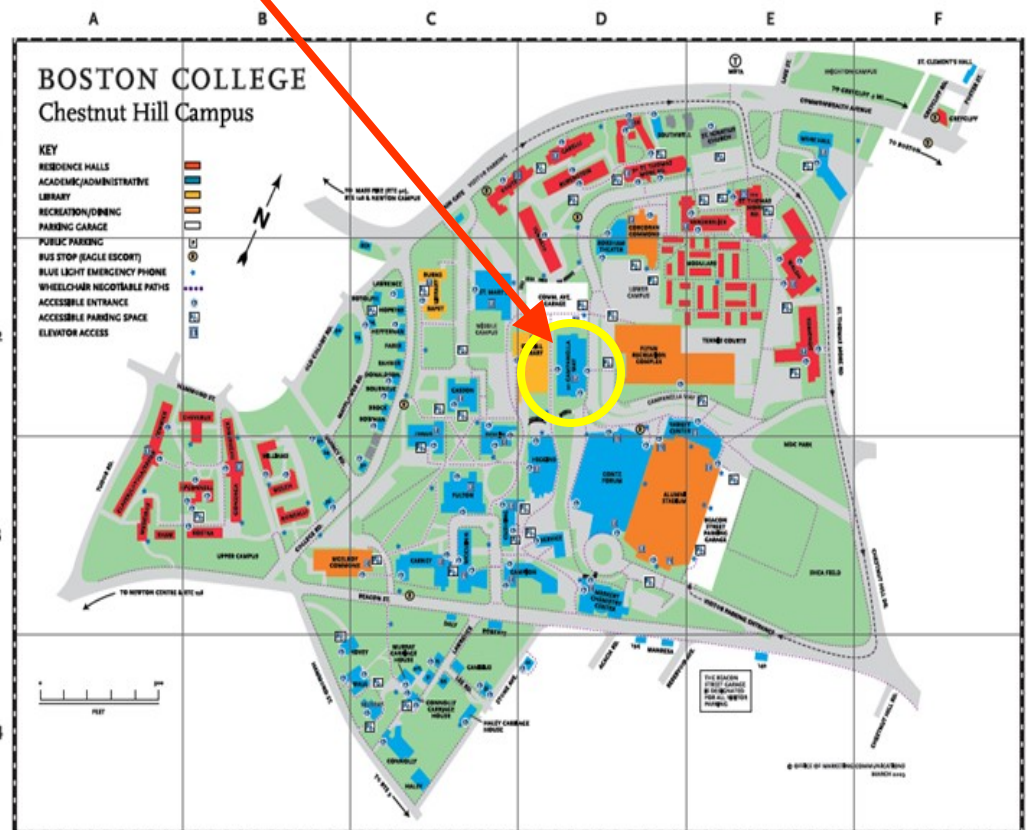
- Online listings of available rental units, which are updated daily and include apartments, and rooms in private homes (see below for details).
- Roommate Finder service.
- Assistance with general off-campus living issues.
- On average, it takes from 5 to 7 days to secure a place to live near Boston Col-

lege. Our staff looks forward to assisting you with your search. Contact us at (617) 552-3075 or email us at:

offcampus@bc.edu with any questions or concerns about off-campus living.

- A map of campus can be found at: www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/top/about/pdf/chestnut_hill_3_09.pdf

21 Campanella Way,
Suite 220



St. Ignatius Church

Neighborhoods Near Campus



The Boston Skyline from BC

Most of off-campus listings are in close proximity to the Boston College main campus. To search for street locations, go to <http://maps.google.com/>. Begin your search by entering the Brighton, Massachusetts Zip Code: 02135. Areas you may want to consider are Cleveland Circle (the intersection of Chestnut Hill Avenue and Beacon Street, in addition to the surrounding area), and apartments between the 2000 and 1600 Commonwealth Avenue area in Brighton. There are a few apartments in houses for students located in the Chestnut Hill/Newton neighborhoods close to the Boston College main gate (140 Commonwealth Avenue, Chestnut Hill, MA 02467). These neighborhoods are more residential than the Cleveland Circle/Brighton area.

To view more information about neighborhoods near Boston College, go to <http://www.bc.edu/offices/reslife/offcampus/areainfo.html>.

Transportation To Campus

The areas and streets listed above are close to the Boston College Shuttle Bus route <http://www.bc.edu/offices/transportation/> and the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (MBTA), also known as the “T” (green line trains B, C, and D) <http://www.mbta.com/>; the B-line goes directly to and from Boston College main campus, while the C and D-lines pass through the surrounding area (particularly Cleveland Circle).



The B-Line: BC “T” Stop



The BC Shuttle Bus

Finding a Place to Live



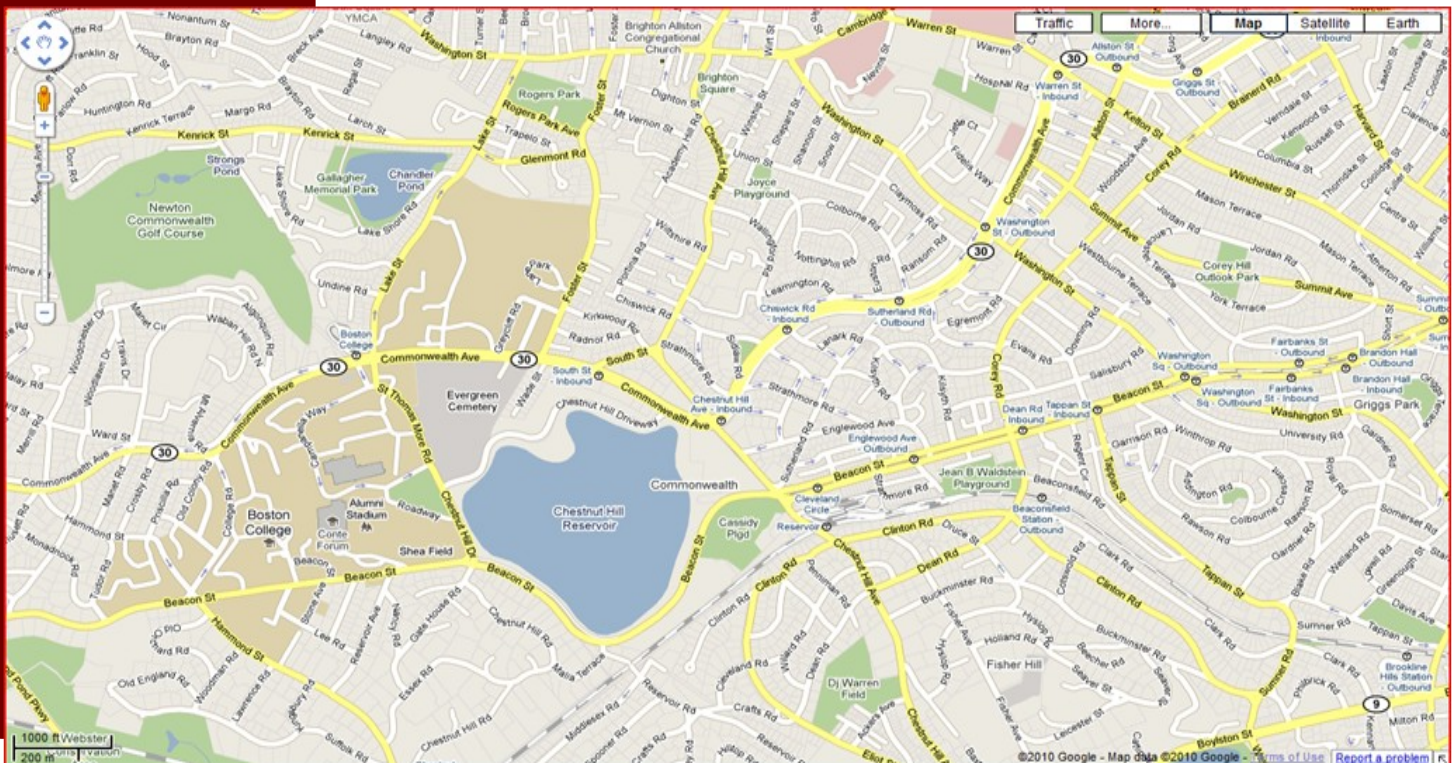
“The Office of Off-Campus Housing made my house search super easy and they saved me tons of money!”
-Evan Gabor 2012

The Boston College Off-Campus Housing Office has two separate lists to search for an accommodation off-campus; the **Apartment/Room List** and **Roommate Finder**.

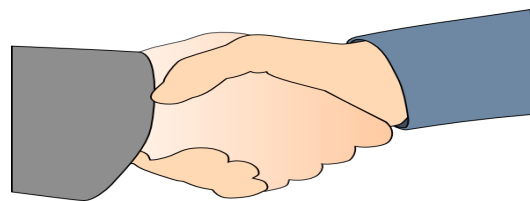
If possible, wait to leave a deposit, or sign a rental lease until you are in the Boston area so that you can see the living space and meet prospective roommates and property owners.

The **Apartment/Room List** is used to search for:

- Studio (one room) apartments
- 1-5 bedroom apartments/houses
- Furnished rooms in private homes living with a family
- Free Room and Board in exchange for services
- This pdf list is available on the off-campus housing website at www.bc.edu/offcampus. This section of the website is password protected. Since you will not have your BC username and password until the Exchange Student Orientation, please use our online request form for access to the listing.
- Keep in mind that the city of Boston zoning codes **limit** the number of Undergraduate students in one dwelling to **4**.
- Listings are updated every day! Information on the **Roommate Finder** can be found on the next page.



Roommate Finder



Another great tool offered by the Boston College Office of Off-Campus Housing is the **Roommate Finder**. You can use this service for:

- Roommates in established apartments
- List your name and information as a prospective roommate
- If you have found an apartment, but are looking for additional roommates

In most cases, you will have your own private bedroom and share the rest of the

apartment with other BC students.

- A Boston College username and password is not required to access this list, thus it is open to the public
- Apartments are generally unfurnished

To explore the “Roommate Finder” on our website go to <http://www.bc.edu/offcampus>

- The drop down menu option “seeking roommate(s)” allows you to contact

students who already have an established apartment and need more roommate(s) or...

- Drop down menu option “prospective roommate(s)” submits your information on a list so it can be possible for students to contact you, to live with.
- You can also browse the list of other incoming students to network or to apartment search for housing together.

“When I was in a bind, roommate finder came through and set me up with a great roommate in an awesome location”
-Matt McCluskey
2010

To Search for Specific Street Locations

First go to <http://maps.google.com>. Then begin your search by entering in the Brighton, Massachusetts Zip Code: 02135. Follow the Zip Code by a particular street name and house number to show the exact location of the dwelling. Note: You can also access a live image of the street and house via the GoogleMap “Street View” option!

Finding a Place for Fall Semester Only

Because most students want go abroad in the Spring, finding a place to live for fall semester only can be a challenge. Students hope to rent their room or apartment to fulfill their legal agreement for one full year from *September 1 to August 31*, or at least for the academic year *September 1 to May 31*. Because most international students start their search one to two weeks prior to the beginning of classes, many students become flexible with price and the time frame for renting. Just prior to the start of the semester everyone becomes negotiable. Some owners will even try to furnish or partially furnish their apartments to get them rented out before September 1. Another option is to check the Apartment/Room List for a ‘room in a private home with a family.’

Questions to Ask When Looking for an Apartment



Is there a “commission fee” to be paid to the rental agent for finding an apartment (often referred to as a “finder’s fee”)?

Only rental agents can charge “finder’s fees.” If you lease directly with the property owner/landlord, a finder’s fee **cannot** be charged. A typical fee is usually equal to one month’s rent, but can be less. If renting for one semester, the fee should be one half of one month’s rent. If you are renting from students and they already paid the fee, they might or might not ask you for your share of the fee. Always ask up front if there is a fee involved!

What is the security deposit, last month’s rent, or other fees (for example, a key deposit)?

In addition to a possible one month “finder’s fee,” which is equal to one month’s rent, you might be asked to pay your first and last month’s rent in advance, which is also equal to one month’s rent. You also can be asked to pay a key deposit of approximately \$25.00. Except for the “finder’s fee,” other deposits are to be returned, or applied to last month’s rent.

When do I get my security deposit returned?

Your landlord is legally required to return your security deposit within 30 days after your lease expires. Many international students try to get their security deposit back a few days before they leave; this is rare; unless your landlord agrees to do so. Your key deposit will be returned when your lease term ends and you turn in your key(s). You must arrange to have your apartment inspected with your landlord a few days before you leave so you can agree on the condition to assure you will receive your full deposit return. To avoid any discrepancies, you should take pictures and list any damages or repairs, and give a copy to the landlord or agent upon move-in. Any damages at the end of your tenancy should be deducted from your security deposit with a written itemized statement of the repairs from your landlord. Be sure to leave an address where you want your deposit mailed to you. The landlord cannot charge for “normal wear and tear” to the apartment. For more information go to the city of Boston’s website www.cityofboston.gov or call the Mayor’s 24-Hour Hotline (617) 635-4500.

Are utilities (electricity, gas, heat, hot water) included in the rent?

Be sure to ask your landlord or prospective roommate(s), what the average cost will be for any utilities that might be extra such as; (electricity, gas, heat, hot water, cable, and internet). Find out what is included, and be sure this is written in your lease.



Questions Continued:

Where can I park a car?

If you have a car, there is very limited on-street public parking. To rent a private parking spot the cost is usually \$100-\$150 per month. To get a free resident parking sticker, your vehicle would have to be registered at your off-campus address (this applies to the Brighton area). To obtain the permit, go to the Office of the Parking Clerk www.cityofboston.gov and click on “e-services”. In Chestnut Hill and Brookline there is no overnight on-street parking during the academic year, so you would have to rent a private spot, or be sure that parking is included in your rent (which may or may not be an extra cost).

Dates of the lease? When can I move in?

Most leases in Boston are for one year, beginning on September 1 and ending August 31. Leases can begin any month of the year, but it is difficult to find a 9 month or a one semester lease. Make sure your lease has a sublet clause, in case you need to sublet your apartment.

***To sublet is to rent your apartment to someone during your own lease term. There is a second lease on the apartment, but it does not negate or release you from your responsibility.**

Steps to Take After You Have Found an Apartment

1. Review your lease and make sure you understand all of the terms in the lease.
2. Have the apartment inspected. If you will be living in Boston (Brighton is part of the City of Boston), you can contact the City of Boston’s Inspectional Services Department (ISD) to have the apartment inspected or assist you in addressing any issues related to the condition of the apartment. ISD can be contacted at (617) 635-5300 or go to www.cityofboston.gov/isd for more information.
3. Take pictures of the condition of the apartment before you move in and when you move out. Complete the “Apartment Condition Statement.” The “Apartment Condition Statement” is a detailed checklist of damages in the apartment that exist prior to moving in. When it is completed and signed by both tenant and landlord, make sure both parties retain copies and one is attached to the lease. The landlord/agent must provide you with this statement upon receipt of the deposit or within 10 days after the tenancy begins, whichever is later, to help you keep track of the condition of the apartment. You can find this form on the off-campus housing website or on the City of Boston’s website at www.cityofboston.gov/isd.
4. Apply for Apartment Insurance to protect yourself! Information about various types of insurance may be found at the National Student Services, Inc., website www.nssi.com. A great resource for you might be the Good Neighbor’s Handbook—A Guide for Boston Landlords & Tenants, go to: <http://www.cityofboston.gov/rentalhousing/pdfs/handbook.pdf>.

Furnishing Your Apartment

Most apartments come unfurnished, so if you need to furnish an apartment, you may want to go to the following area stores:

Used Furniture, Household items and Clothing (thrift store, cheap):

Urban Renewals: 122 Brighton Ave., Allston: (617) 783-8387 (no delivery, direct train access from BC.)



Furniture to Buy:

Basics Carpet & Furniture: 1119 Commonwealth Ave., Boston (free delivery to the Boston area):

www.basicsboston.com

Target: 550 Arsenal Street, Watertown; (617) 924-6574, www.target.com

Furniture to Rent or buy:

Churchill Furniture Rental: www.furniturerent.com

CORT Putnam Furniture Rental: www.cortputnam.com

AFR Furniture Rental: www.rentfurniture.com



Hardware Stores (also sell student type furniture/house wears—reasonable prices!):

Cleveland Circle Hardware: 1920 Beacon St., Boston: (617) 734-6440

Economy True Value Hardware: 219 Massachusetts Ave., Boston: (617) 536-4280

Economy True Value Hardware: 1012 Beacon St., Brookline: (617) 277-8811

www.economyhardware.com



Unfinished Furniture to Buy:

Bostonwood: 1117 Commonwealth Ave., Boston: (617) 783-0274

Getting A Cell Phone

To review the services most BC Students use click on the following service providers:

AT&T Store 1329 Beacon Street, Brookline; (617) 566-6800

AT&T Store 124 Beacon Street, Boston: (617) 267-6948

www.att.com

T-Mobile 1047 Commonwealth Ave, Boston: (617) 779-0250

T-Mobile 1310 Beacon Street, Brookline: (617) 277-3036

www.tmobile.com

Verizon Wireless Coolidge Corner, 283 Harvard Street, Brookline: (617) 278-3920

Verizon Wireless 13 Boylston Street (Route 9), Chestnut Hill: (617) 738-2600

www.verizonwireless.com

