



GRADUATE STUDENT OFF-CAMPUS LIVING **FAQs**

What are my living options in the Columbia area?

A variety of options are available both near campus and in the areas surrounding Columbia. If you're looking for apartments nearby, our [Partners in Off-Campus Living](#) webpage is a great resource. Furthermore, the [Daily Gamecock Housing Listing Service](#), an online resource hosted by The Daily Gamecock student newspaper, has listings of available properties. There are many property management companies in town such as [Columbia Property Management](#), [Turner Properties](#), [Midlands Property Management](#), [Bob Capes Property Management](#), [Landmark Resources](#), [APM Realty Group](#), and [Cantey and Company](#). Individual landlords also advertise rental property on [Craigslist](#), and in [The State](#) and [Free Times](#). Ultimately, when making a decision about where to live, there is no substitute for viewing it in person.

How do I find a roommate?

We provide a graduate student [message board](#) for students looking for a roommate. You will find posts from students who have a room and need a roommate as well as students who need a roommate and a place to live. The message boards are used daily with hundreds of posts each semester. Most apartment complexes that offer individual leasing will provide assistance with the roommate matching process.

Where is the safest area to live?

Columbia is an urban environment, and campus is located in the middle of downtown. USC's Division of Law Enforcement and Safety partners with RAIDS (Regional Analysis and Information Data Sharing) Online, an online crime-mapping tool, to show crime activity in the surrounding area so you can make informed decisions about your safety. View the local [RAIDS online crime map](#) to find out more. You also can download the [RAVE Guardian Safety app](#), which can alert USCPD or 911, allows you to leave anonymous tips and more, at the push of a button. Students must be vigilant about their personal safety, no matter where they live. For more information on safety, please visit the Off-Campus Student Services [Safety page](#) or the [USCPD website](#).

Which neighborhoods are popular with students?

These are some of the most popular neighborhoods in close proximity to campus: Wales Garden, Olympia Mills, Granby Mills, Rosewood, Hollywood-Rose Hill, Shandon, University Hill, The Avenues – Cayce, Old Shandon, Earlewood, Cottontown, Elmwood Park, and Waverly. When living in a neighborhood, please follow the [good neighbor tips](#) on the Off-Campus Student Services webpage.

Where can I find information on parking services and parking passes?

Hourly parking meters are located on city streets around campus. We recommend that you download the Passport Parking app to pay for city parking meters. The university offers parking lots and garages; garages and lots vary in price depending on location and accessibility. More information can be found on the [Parking Services website](#).

What is there to do in Columbia?

Columbia is a thriving city that offers lots to do for fun. The [Columbia Visitor Bureau](#) offers lots of information about [things to do](#) in “Famously Hot Columbia” for day-to-day activities and [annual city events](#) like Famously Hot New Year, the Greek Festival and the Indie Grits Festival.

I'm new to South Carolina. What rights do renters have?

[Student Legal Services](#) is available for students as they transition to Columbia and prepare to move. The staff can review leases and provide legal advice. Watch their [“Know Your Rights” webinar](#) for information on rights of tenants in South Carolina that may differ from your home state. The Off-Campus Student Services website also offers [general leasing tips](#).

If the place I'm living doesn't come furnished, are there options available to rent furnishings?

Yes! If you search the internet for furniture rental companies in the Columbia area, different companies will come up, and you can choose which one works best for your individual needs.

Where do you buy food?

Like any large city, a variety of options are available for you to purchase food. Also, you can shop at farmers markets and other options available beyond brick-and-mortar stores. A search of the internet will provide you many options. We recommend looking at each address you are considering based on proximity to grocery stores and restaurants. [Walkscore](#) is a great resource to see proximity of important services.

What utilities are included in my rent?

Utilities included vary among the various apartment complexes and rental properties. Ask your landlord what you are responsible for paying beyond your rent. Some common utility providers are: [SCE&G - Electricity & Gas](#), [City of Columbia Water](#), [AT&T Cable](#), and [Time-Warner Cable](#).

Do I need a car to live in Columbia?

Whether or not you need a vehicle depends on where you decide to live. [Walkscore](#) can help you see what is in walking distance of the location you're planning on living. The Comet is a bus system with routes throughout the city. Bus schedules and pricing can be found on The [Comet's website](#). Furthermore, many of the off-campus apartment complexes offer shuttles to and from campus. Taxis and personal shuttles (Uber, etc.) are also offered in the area.

Have additional questions not addressed above?

Please visit the [Off-Campus Student Services website](#), contact us by email at saocss@mailbox.sc.edu or drop by in person to our office located in [Russell House West Wing Suite 033](#).