

Rental Accommodation Scams



International
Students Legal
Service

Scammers often target international students looking to rent at the beginning of semester - this factsheet is about how to avoid being scammed and what to do if you are.

Scammers May Target You

Scammers often target international students looking for private accommodation at the beginning of semester.

They may demand upfront payments before inspections, use fake identities for landlords or agents or provide counterfeit tenancy agreements, leading many students to lose thousands of dollars.

Warning Signs

These are some signs that you might be being scammed:

- You're asked to pay before seeing the property, keys, or ID
- The landlord/agent can't be verified or only uses messaging apps
- No written tenancy agreement is provided
- They won't do in-person or live video inspections
- They ask for payment by wire transfer, crypto, gift cards, or overseas accounts
- The listing looks suspicious or doesn't match the address

- You feel rushed ("pay now or miss out") or the rent seems unusually cheap

How to Protect Yourself

Here are some ways to protect yourself from being scammed:

1. Check the property and agent

- Inspect in person, or ask for a live video walkthrough
- Check the agent's licence with NSW Fair Trading

2. Only pay the bond to the RBO

- In NSW, bonds are lodged through Rental Bonds Online (RBO)
- You can create your own RBO account
- You should get an official confirmation email
- Do not transfer bond money to an individual's personal account

3. Use safe payment methods

- Avoid crypto and international transfers
- Use payments you can trace or dispute, and get a receipt

4. Double-check the listing

- Search the address and photos online
- Watch for copied or mismatched listings

5. Protect your ID

- Only share what's necessary
- Be careful sending passport or licence details

6. Check your paperwork

- Read the agreement before paying
- You should receive a written tenancy agreement and standard documents
- Different agreements give different legal rights - check what you're signing.

If You Think It's a Scam

If you think it's a scam, act quickly:

- Contact your bank to try to stop or recover the payment
- Report the listing on the website or app where you found it



- Report to Scamwatch, ReportCyber and/or NSW Police
- Read the agreement before paying Get help from IDCARE if you shared ID

Safe to Rent Checklist

Make sure you've checked these things before going ahead with any rental accommodation:

- I've seen the property (or live video)
- The agent is verified
- The agreement is in writing
- Bond will be lodged through RBO
- Payment is traceable and I'll get a receipt
- I've kept copies of everything

Service NSW has a [Housing Checklist](#) on their website for international students.

Contacts

Redfern Legal Centre www.rlc.org.au/contact
9698 7277

Tenants' Union of NSW
www.tenants.org.au
(02) 8117 3700

Fair Trading

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/housing-and-construction/renting-a-place-to-live>
13 32 20

If you need an interpreter, call 131 450.

This fact sheet is for information only and is not legal advice.