

Student Housing Guide for Poland

MS in Poland Resource Guide



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For International Students

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Finding suitable accommodation is one of the most important decisions you'll make as an international student. This guide will help you understand your housing options, typical costs, and important considerations when securing a place to live in Poland.

Housing Options Overview University Dormitories (Akademiki)

University dormitories offer the most affordable housing option for students in Poland, with built-in community and proximity to campus.

Advantages:

- Significantly lower cost than private rentals
- Located close to or on campus
- Utilities and internet typically included
- Easy way to meet other students
- Administrative support from university

Disadvantages:

- Limited availability (priority often given to lower-income students)
- Shared rooms (2-3 students per room is common)
- Shared bathrooms and kitchens
- Less privacy and potential noise issues
- Basic furnishings and facilities

Application Process:

1. Apply as early as possible through your university's accommodation office
2. Priority is often given to first-year students and those with financial need

3. Required documents typically include your acceptance letter and student ID

4. You may need to pay a security deposit to secure your spot

TIP: Apply for university dormitories as soon as you receive your acceptance letter, as spaces fill quickly. International students often receive priority, but it's still competitive.

Private Student Residences

These are privately-managed dormitory-style accommodations designed specifically for students, offering more amenities than university dormitories but at higher prices.

Advantages:

- Better facilities than university dormitories
- Often include gyms, study rooms, and social spaces
- Private rooms with shared common areas
- Typically located near universities
- All-inclusive payments (rent, utilities, internet)

Disadvantages:

- Significantly more expensive than university dormitories
- Can be as expensive as private rentals
- Limited availability in some cities
- May require 10-12 month contracts

Private Rentals Shared Apartments (Mieszkanie dzielone)

Renting a room in a shared apartment is a popular option offering a good balance between cost and independence.

Advantages:

- More privacy than dormitories
- Opportunity to live with Polish students or other internationals
- Often fully furnished
- More freedom regarding guests and lifestyle
- Kitchen and living areas typically shared among fewer people

Disadvantages:

- Higher cost than dormitories
- Potential compatibility issues with roommates
- Need to manage utility payments
- May require a longer commitment (6-12 month contracts)
- Security deposit (usually 1-2 months' rent)

Finding Shared Apartments:

- Facebook groups for student accommodation in your city
- Websites: OLX.pl, Gumtree.pl, Pepe Housing, otodom.pl
- University notice boards
- Student groups and forums

Studio/One-Bedroom Apartments (Kawalerka)

For those seeking more independence and privacy, renting your own apartment is an option, though more expensive.

Advantages:

- Complete privacy and independence
- Freedom to set your own rules
- Option to host friends and family
- Quieter study environment
- More space for personal belongings

Disadvantages:

- Highest cost option
- Responsibility for all utilities and maintenance issues
- Potential loneliness/isolation for new students
- Usually requires longer-term commitment (1 year minimum)
- Higher security deposit (often 2 months' rent)

WARNING: Be wary of rental scams targeting international students. Never transfer money before signing a contract and viewing the property in person or via verified video call. If a deal seems too good to be true, it probably is.

Costs and Budgeting Typical Monthly Rental Costs (2024 estimates)

| Housing Type | Warsaw | Kraków | Wrocław | Poznań | Gdańsk |

|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|

| University dormitory | 400-700 PLN | 350-650 PLN | 350-600 PLN | 350-650 PLN | 400-600 PLN |

| Private dorm room | 1200-1800 PLN | 1000-1600 PLN | 900-1500 PLN | 900-1400 PLN | 1000-1500 PLN |

| Shared room in apartment | 800-1200 PLN | 700-1100 PLN | 700-1000 PLN | 650-950 PLN | 700-1000 PLN |

| Private room in shared apartment | 1200-2000 PLN | 1100-1800 PLN | 1000-1600 PLN | 900-1500 PLN | 1000-1700 PLN |

| Studio apartment | 2000-3000 PLN | 1800-2600 PLN | 1700-2400 PLN | 1600-2300 PLN | 1700-2500 PLN |

| One-bedroom apartment | 2500-3800 PLN | 2200-3200 PLN | 2000-3000 PLN | 1900-2800 PLN | 2100-3100 PLN |

Additional Costs to Consider:

- **Utilities:** Approximately 300-600 PLN/month (electricity, water, heating, waste)
- **Internet:** 50-80 PLN/month (often included in dormitories and some shared apartments)
- **Security deposit:** Usually 1-2 months' rent (returned at the end of contract if no damages)
- **Agency fee:** Sometimes up to one month's rent (if using a rental agency)

NOTE: Heating costs can increase significantly during winter months (December-March), sometimes doubling utility costs during this period. Central heating (ogrzewanie centralne) is generally more cost-effective than electric heating.

Neighborhoods and Locations

When choosing where to live, consider these factors:

University Proximity

- Living near your university saves on transportation costs and commuting time
- Student-concentrated areas often have more affordable food options and student discounts

Transportation Access

- Check public transportation connections to your university
- Look for proximity to tram/bus stops or metro stations in larger cities
- Consider transportation costs in your monthly budget
- Remember that you'll receive student discounts on public transportation

Safety Considerations

- Research neighborhood safety statistics
- Ask local students about areas to avoid
- Well-lit streets and active areas are generally safer
- Consider building security features (secure entrance, concierge, CCTV)

Amenities

- Proximity to grocery stores, pharmacies, and medical facilities
- Laundry facilities (in building or nearby laundromats)
- Parks and recreation areas
- Cafes and affordable restaurants
- Study spaces (libraries, cafes with Wi-Fi)

Application Process and Documentation Required Documents for Renting

Be prepared to provide the following documents:

- **Passport or national ID**
- **Student visa/residence permit**
- **Student ID card** (legitymacja studencka)
- **Proof of income or financial resources** (scholarship confirmation, bank statements, or parental guarantee)
- **Polish phone number**
- **Temporary PESEL number** (if already obtained)

Rental Contract Essentials

Ensure your rental agreement includes:

- **Clear rental amount and what it includes/excludes**
- **Deposit amount and conditions for return**

- **Duration of rental and notice period**
- **Rules regarding visitors, pets, and noise**
- **Responsibility for repairs and maintenance**
- **Inventory of furnished items (with photos)**
- **Utility payment arrangements**
- **Termination conditions**

IMPORTANT: Request an English translation of your rental agreement if it's in Polish. While the Polish version will be legally binding, understanding all terms before signing is crucial. Have a Polish-speaking friend or university staff member review the contract with you.

Tenant Rights and Responsibilities Your Rights as a Tenant

In Poland, tenants have substantial legal protections:

- Right to a habitable living space (working utilities, heating, no safety hazards)
- Right to privacy (landlord must give notice before visits)
- Protection from arbitrary eviction
- Right to request necessary repairs
- Right to have the full security deposit returned if no damages
- Right to proper notice period before contract termination

Your Responsibilities

- Pay rent and bills on time
- Maintain the property in good condition
- Report any maintenance issues promptly
- Respect noise limitations (typically 10 PM - 6 AM quiet hours)
- Follow building regulations
- Provide proper notice when moving out
- Return the property in the same condition (normal wear and tear excepted)

Common Housing Scams and How to Avoid Them

Be aware of these common scams targeting international students:

- **Phantom apartments:** Listings for non-existent apartments or ones the person doesn't own
- **Bait and switch:** Showing one apartment but offering a different, inferior property
- **Excessive fees:** Requesting unusually high deposits or application fees
- **Pressure tactics:** Rushing you to pay immediately "before someone else takes it"
- **No contract:** Refusing to provide a written rental agreement
- **Suspicious payment methods:** Requesting wire transfers to foreign accounts or cryptocurrency

How to Protect Yourself

- **View the property in person** before transferring any money
- If unable to visit, arrange a video call walkthrough with verification
- **Request a meeting with the actual property owner** with proper identification
- **Sign a proper contract** before making any payments
- **Get receipts** for all payments
- **Use secure payment methods** that leave a paper trail
- **Ask for student recommendations** from university accommodation offices

WARNING: If you believe you've encountered a housing scam, report it immediately to your university's international office and local police.

Setting Up Your New Home Essential Services Setup

Once you've secured housing, you'll need to set up:

- **Internet** (if not included)
- **Electricity/gas account** (transfer to your name)
- **Water service** (usually handled by building administration)
- **Garbage collection** (typically arranged through building administration)
- **Residence registration** (zameldowanie) - legally required within 14 days of moving in

Resources for Affordable Furnishings

- IKEA (major cities)
- OLX.pl and Facebook Marketplace for second-hand items
- Pepco, Action, and Flying Tiger for affordable household goods

- End-of-semester sales from departing students
- University bulletin boards and Facebook groups

Housing Support Resources

- **University Accommodation Office:** Your first point of contact for housing guidance
- **International Student Office:** Support with contracts and housing issues
- **Erasmus Student Network (ESN):** Housing assistance and roommate matching
- **Student unions:** Advice on tenant rights and dispute resolution
- **City information points:** Maps and neighborhood information
- **Legal clinics:** Many universities offer free legal advice for housing issues

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