New students on the New Zealand Universities program sometimes assume that housing is included with the UCEAP fees and is pre-arranged. Please be aware that this is not the case! Each student going on the program is free to decide whether to reside in campus housing, search for an apartment (flats), rent a room in a house, or try a homestay with a Kiwi family. This also means that each student is responsible for selecting, securing, and paying for semester housing (even those on financial aid).

Deciding about housing, reserving a place on campus, or searching for a private flat off campus is a big project. Start thinking about it right away and begin to do your research. The information below will help you get started.

The most practical accommodations are at the university halls of residence (university "colleges"). However, while many UC students live in university halls of residence or other university-managed facilities, UCEAP students have also rented private flats and shared rental houses. The latter always vary in quality and cost and usually are at a premium near the universities, but most UCEAP students have reported good experiences with private rentals.

University-specific housing information is usually included with the acceptance letter from your host university (if not, contact the host university directly and request the information). However, if you wish to live on campus we advise that you start your housing application process early and not wait for the acceptance letter.

Carefully note the duration of contracts! If you are going to New Zealand for a semester only, note whether the period of the housing contract is for a full year (this is often the case). Read closely before signing and ASK the host university accommodations office if you have any concerns or questions.

University accommodations are generally closed during holidays and other times when the university is not in session. At some host institutions, extra lodging costs are charged during orientation, school breaks, and holidays. If in doubt, ask! If you are arriving early at your host university, early move-in may be available for a per-night fee. Again – ASK what their procedure is for an early move-in.

Each NZ university in the UCEAP program has a housing office where you can obtain lots of information about on- and off-campus housing. See the accommodation website at your specific university for details:

- The University of Auckland
- The University of Canterbury
- Massey University
- The University of Otago
- Victoria University of Wellington
- The University of Waikato
General Overview

Featured below are very brief descriptions of the halls of residence accommodations at each host university. The impressions and feedback that follow these descriptions are based on personal reports from actual UCEAP participants.

The University of Auckland

Three residence halls (Grafton Hall, International House, and O’Rorke Hall) are available. These halls provide three meals a day, seven days a week; sporting facilities (cricket, rugby, netball, etc.); single or double bedrooms; and the opportunity to take part in campus life, social events, and sports tournaments. The residence halls, particularly Grafton Hall, are the best housing choice for study in Auckland.

There are also several university-managed facilities near the campus. See student comments below for more details.

Some students choose to rent or share a private flat off campus. Since you arrive prior to the Auckland semester start date, you are in a good position to locate a private rental.

Reports from UCEAP Students -

University Hall:

- 5–10 minute walk to city campus
- Newest Residence Hall
- Single bedrooms for 442 students, mostly younger students
- Music room with piano and drums
- Game room with pool table, foosball, air hockey, and Sky TV
- Residents receive membership to the University's Recreation Centre, only a few minutes away

O’Rorke Hall:

- Five minute walk to city campus
- Very social atmosphere
- Kiwi/Maori cuisine in the dining hall
- Strict rules about visitors and overnight guests

Grafton Hall:

- About a 15–20 minute walk to campus or to city shopping
- Convenient buses central to area
- Near the Auckland Domain (public park)
- Catered meals and cleaning services
- Known for friendly and helpful staff who take a personal interest in residents
- Social atmosphere; the hall sponsors many events and activities including dance parties, scavenger hunts, outings, holiday celebrations, costume parties, formal dinners, etc.
- Facilities include a lounge, game room, music room, study floor, basketball/tennis court, lawn area, dining hall, and TV room with a large projector and screen (great for movie nights)
- Residents include about 250 undergraduates of all grade levels and grad students; good mix of Kiwi and international students
- High demand for this hall; apply early
Parnell Student Village:

- About a 15–20 minute walk to campus
- Right next to Newmarket, the Auckland Domain, and the museum
- Each flat comes fully furnished and houses 4–6 people
- Rooms are singles
- No meal plan (self-catered), but you have your own kitchen
- Property has a yard complete with barbecue and volleyball net
- Residents include international and Kiwi students
- Open to both undergraduate and graduate students

Unilodge:

- Privately owned building near the university campus
- Very close to the supermarket in downtown Auckland
- Self-catering flats
- Excellent security
- Known for being clean
- Minimum noise levels
- Shared kitchen facility, which includes a cooking range
- Stovetop included in suites, but not in the studio flats

International House:

- University-managed facility
- Conveniently located close to campus
- Enforced rules such as noise restriction and locked doors after 10 p.m., alcohol bans during exams, and supervision (RAs and Admins)
- Catered, communal meals in a cafeteria (no kitchen or cooking facilities)
- Residents include a mix of first-year Kiwi students and international exchange students
- Social atmosphere; easy to meet a lot of friends at hall events and parties (theme parties, volleyball tournaments, film nights, pool games, etc.) and trips to local sites such as the zoo
- Facilities include a study room and music room with two pianos and a drum set
- Deluxe double rooms are generous size with private bathroom and entrance
- Students often complain about the food, but appreciate that they don't have to cook

Wellesley Student Apartments:

- An AUT building (Auckland Technical University)
- Most likely room with AUT and other American students (not a diverse mix of people)
- Apartments are spacious and the location is prime

14 Whitaker Place Flats:

- University housing off campus
- A 5-10 minute walk to campus
- Self-catered
- Good for mature/independent students
- Fully furnished single, private bedrooms
- Wireless/Cable Internet included
- Flats include private kitchen, bathroom, and living room
- Bedding and dishware provided
- Relatively safe
- Laundry wash/dry price per load comparable to a US laundromat
Reasonable rent
A great place to feel a part of a community (organized events—though not as many as the dorms provide)
Majority of students are international, but also a mix of Kiwis

Huia Residence Hostel:
Located at the corner of the bridge and Grafton Road, and close to the university, the Auckland Domain (park), Mt. Eden, and Hobson Bay
Right across from the link bus stop (convenient for grocery trips)
A social environment; it helps students acclimate quickly
Single, private rooms
Strict no alcohol policy
Very clean and inexpensive
Optional meal plan; you can do your own cooking and grocery shopping
Kitchens on each floor with 10 burners for cooking, a microwave, hot water heater, toaster, sink, and freezer (the rooms have refrigerators)
Bedding (sheets and pillows), towels, kitchenware (cooking utensils, pots/ pans) provided
Practice room with a piano, lounges on each floor with satellite TV, and downstairs common area with a pool table, couches, and large TV for movies or sports
Not ideal for upper-classmen as it feels like a freshman dorm (i.e., it’s highly regimented, there is less freedom)
No Internet
The demographics are roughly half international students of all class standings (many Americans and Canadians) and half Kiwi 1st-year students
Free movie rental setup with a good selection of DVDs
Many students complain about the 24-hour helicopter landing pad on top of the adjacent hospital

Private Accommodations:
Homestay: “I lived with a family in Hillsborough, which was a great experience spending most of my time with Kiwis. However, Hillsborough was rather far away (about a 30–40 minute bus ride) which made it difficult to spend evenings with other students my age. Living with a family also made it easier to be living in a foreign country without my own family and they were able to show me around parts of Auckland and NZ that I might not have seen without them.”

Private flat: “I lived in a flat for my time in Auckland. During orientation I searched for flats online and found one close to campus and town very quickly and easily, it was just a matter how much I was willing to pay. I enjoyed living in a flat mostly because it wasn’t the dorms, which weren’t appealing to me. It was nice having a place of my own without a bunch of freshmen and made it feel more like I was really living in New Zealand. I found flatting to be pretty inexpensive and definitely a positive experience overall. I ended up living with a Kiwi student who I met only through the listing of the flat. It ended up working out really well. The only real drawback to flatting I’ve seen is that it hasn’t been as easy to meet Kiwi students as it may be in the dorms. It was really nice, however, to have a place to be able to offer to other Americans to stay if they were passing through Auckland or as a place to get together with other exchange students outside the dorms. If you’re up for finding a flat during the month or so you have in New Zealand before school starts (like I said, finding a flat isn’t a problem) and don’t feel like the added stresses of electricity and internet bills would bother you, then I’d definitely recommend flatting.”

Parnell Village: “I’m living in Parnell Student Village (PSV) at the University of Auckland. It’s a nice, quiet, ritzy neighborhood. It’s about a 20 minute walk with hills to and from campus but it’s nice walking through the Domain. It is also accessible to a lot of food places nearby. Everybody has their own room and shares a kitchen and bathroom. It can get quite dirty as everything is shared and you’re supposed to clean up your own share of stuff, which might be hard to get people to do. If you branch out quick you can meet quite a few people that live around you.”
Getting to know the people that do not live too close is tough but being that there is a good amount of international students there it shouldn't be too hard to meet other friends. There aren't too many kiwis either. The supermarket is also about a 10 minute walk so it's not too close but it's doable once a week or so. I'd consider living there again, but it really would depend on what you're really looking for.”

University of Canterbury

You may live on campus or seek independent accommodation. On-campus housing consists of university halls of residence or university flats located adjacent to the campus. Hall accommodations are in single or double rooms and a full meal service is provided. Flats consist of 3-6 single bedrooms with shared kitchen, living room, and bathroom facilities. Flats are self-catering, but there are also cafeterias nearby in the student union. While every effort will be made to accommodate your preferences, you cannot be guaranteed your first choice of housing.

Reports from UCEAP Students - Ilam Apartments:

- Apartment-style housing offered by University of Canterbury
- Located across the street from the university
- Ten-minute walk to classes, the gym, grocery store, and Bush Inn shopping complex
- There are bus stops, restaurants, and shops all nearby
- Buses pick up on both sides and are super convenient as you can check their arrival time online
- Moderately priced compared to UC, but expensive compared to other student housing in NZ
- Rental agreement is lease-only (beware of harsh penalties for breaking the lease)
- Very clean and well taken care of
- Decent sized rooms, each with a large, opening window and a heater
- Internet is pay-by-data, which isn't uncommon and pretty fast
- The refrigerator is 3/4 size
- Dominated by American exchange students
- Maintenance comes fast if you have a problem
- Most of the housing only has a microwave oven, not a full oven
- Very social and easy to make friends who like to travel (RAs organize events if you want to take part)
- If you want to live with Kiwis, look on trademe.co.nz and try to find a flat

Massey University

Palmerston North Campus:

Most UCEAP students will be located on the Palmerston North campus. You can live in a catered, single-room hall of residence or a self-catered flat on campus. The catered halls offer one or two meals a day, seven days a week. The self-catered flats consist of five to six single furnished bedrooms with shared kitchen, living room, and bathroom facilities.

If you want to mingle with local students, the catered accommodation is a better option. Keep in mind that the local students are first-year students (approximately 18 years old). Power is included.
Reports from UCEAP Students –
“Palmerston North was a nice central place to live because it made jumping to other places over the weekend very easy. Having lived in on-campus housing, I can say that living with younger students can either make you feel young again or like the grandma of the bunch. So choose housing carefully according to whether you’d like to relive all the chaos of past dorm experiences or if those really hard classes you’ll be taking require more Zen-like environments.”

Wellington Campus:
Students live in self-catered apartments a few minutes from the campus. The apartments consist of five single furnished bedrooms with shared kitchen, living room, and bathroom facilities.
Power and phone service are additional charges. You are encouraged to stay in the university apartment since inexpensive accommodation in Wellington is difficult to find.

Reports from UCEAP Students –
“I spent the fall semester living at ‘The Cube Complex,’ Massey/Wellington’s 9th floor ‘modern’ apartment building. I lived on the top floor in a five-person flat. We had a glorious view of Wellington Harbour from our lounge window, but for the first three weeks of my time there the elevator was out of service, and hiking nine flights got to be a little old after not too long. The Cube seemed to be populated predominantly by incoming Kiwi freshman, and rowdy parties were common. I found myself spending most of my time with other (older) international students, who had gotten more partying out of their systems, but also made some great Kiwi friends in the building. I appreciated having my own room (all the rooms in the Cube are singles, though apartments vary in number of rooms). In the winter, the rooms got very cold, as there is no heating in the Cube (perhaps this is normal?). In retrospect, I’m glad I lived in the Cube because of the great friends that I made, and the feeling of inclusion in the university environment. However, if I were to do it again, I might choose either a smaller, cozier residential complex, or an apartment.”

Auckland Campus:
Students live in self-catered university apartments a few minutes from campus. Flats consist of four to six single furnished bedrooms with shared kitchen, living room, and bathroom facilities.
Power and phone service are additional charges. There are free shuttle buses from the accommodation to the campus. You are encouraged to stay in the university apartment since inexpensive accommodation in Auckland is difficult to find.

University of Otago
You can choose to live in a catered or non-catered hall of residence located a short distance from the main campus and city area, or in a shared student flat. You are also welcome to arrange temporary accommodation in advance and look for more permanent accommodation after arrival in Dunedin.

The February semester of any academic year is Otago’s busiest semester. There is pressure on the available student accommodations close to campus at this time of year and you may find it difficult to secure suitable and affordable accommodation close to campus. It may be easier for term II students (fall) to find places. Most accommodations are located close to campus and it is unnecessary to drive or use public transport to and from the university (students usually bike or walk). The halls of residence are centrally heated, but if you stay in a flat or apartment you will find it necessary to purchase a space heater and warm bedding (there is no central heating in Dunedin), and to bring warm clothing.
Reports from UCEAP Students

University Flats:

- Mostly international students and a few Kiwi students
- Private rooms
- Fully furnished
- Flats are usually pretty nice, close to campus, and often in complexes with other University Flats
- You have the option of choosing how many people you want in your flat (six is the maximum)
- Spacious, clean, modern, and relatively affordable
- Residents pay for water, electricity, food etc.
- No insulation or central heating
- A lot of independence
- Easy application process; you find out housing assignment before arrival in Dunedin
- A really good place to meet people (social experience)

Toroa International House:

- Short walk from campus and close to downtown, nightlife, supermarkets, etc.
- As a residence hall, there are rules and regulations to abide by (e.g., no parties three weeks before exams, playing music too loud, rules for cleaning the bathroom, kitchen, etc.)
- It is warm, comfortable, well-organized, and spacious
- Staff are incredibly helpful and the resources available are unparalleled
- Great common room with movie selection, large-screen TV, BBQ, pool & foosball tables
- Numerous planned events and activities create a sense of community
- 120 residents with an international feel
- Flats are well equipped with a full kitchen
- Linens provided
- Heaters make it very comfortable during the cold winter months
- The rent is expensive, but a lot is included; Toroa charges a single rate for all the heating, water, electricity, and lockout rescues, while regular flats make you pay as you go
- Gates surround the entire perimeter of the grounds
- Good academic support network
- Most of the time Toroa is a quiet community (if you’re one to party often, Toroa might not be the right choice)

Private Accommodations:

“I chose not to arrange accommodation before I got to NZ, because I had a friend’s house to crash at while I searched for housing. The Otago accommodation office had a list of people looking for flatmates. It was a tad stressful, having only a week before school started, but I found a place within a five-minute walk to Uni (on Union St. West). It’s a large house with ‘studio’ rooms. There are eight rooms in the main house, and five rooms in the back house. I live in the back, and go inside the main house to use the kitchen, laundry, etc. Since it’s a studio I have a fridge, microwave, and kettle in my room, but other than that, it’s just a normal room.”

“Cons: It’s rather expensive for NZ, but still cheaper than what I was paying in California. Pros: Central heating included. I was warm all winter long! And I think that made a huge difference in my experience. Also, cleaners come twice a week and clean communal areas.”

“There are definitely pros and cons between living in a regular flat and living in an international hall. Since I’m here for a year, it’s nice to have a quiet place to come back to, and there aren’t parties all the time to distract me. That is also a con, because it was a lot harder for me to meet other international students and find friends that were just as motivated as me to go on trips on
weekends. However, I have made a lot of Kiwi friends. Living in a house with studio rooms also means there isn’t any ‘flat drama,’ which tends to happen when people end up with flatmates they don’t get along with.”

“I decided to find a room outside of the university-owned flats in an attempt to keep myself from only socializing with other Americans. While I succeeded in that, I think it had more to do with my joining the tramping club than who I was living with. The pros of my situation include cheaper rent than those living in the university-owned housing, a more central location, and getting to know one of my flatmates. However, there were many cons. These include a very small room (for which I was paying slightly less than my flatmates who had rooms 2 or 3 times the size of mine), incredibly cold temperatures in the house in the winter, faulty plumbing, and putting up with my flatmates’ dirty dishes. I believe that most of this can be chalked up to the fact that I did not know any of the people in the house prior to moving in and was not able to see the house itself, save for a few pictures I was sent. I think you take more of a risk when you live outside of the university-owned flats. I suppose the take home message is that finding a private room in a flat is like any other risk: there can be big rewards or big losses.”

The University of Waikato

You may live on campus in a single room in a university hall, in a flat, or in a rented room in Hamilton. There are four halls of residence: Student Village, College Hall, Orchard Park, and Bryant Hall.

All halls except Orchard Park, which is self-catering, offer a communal dining room, lounges, separate TV rooms, laundry facilities, central heating, and linens and blankets.

Reports from UCEAP Students -

“The housing situation in New Zealand is really relaxed. Don’t stress about finding a place before you get there. It is quite easy to find a flat or a dorm. It depends on what your preferences are. I chose to live in a flat because there was no big town center. I lived in Raglan for the first semester and then moved to Hamilton for the second. The most helpful suggestion I can give you about flatting is to bring heaps of warm clothes and prepare for a cold winter. The insulation in New Zealand flats isn’t good and they have no central heating. It’s not uncommon to be able to see your breath in your own house. Just crank up the space heater and get used to it. Besides you don’t want to spend that much time in your flat anyway; go travel and see the country.”

“I lived in a private residence with other UCEAP’ers. It was really cheap and really nice to be able to cook our own food. I would recommend trying to live with some Kiwis in addition to just Americans.”

Victoria University of Wellington

It is recommended that you live in a residence hall. Independent housing in Wellington is expensive and difficult to find.

You are eligible to apply for accommodation to all the halls of residence offered at Victoria University. There are several catered and self-catered halls from which to choose.
Reports from UCEAP Students -
University Hall—Study Abroad apartments:

- Big rooms in a nice house
- Great location; proximity to Victoria is 5-10 minute walk and close to Zealandia nature area that offers a less urban backdrop
- Easy to connect with other study abroad students as well as Kiwi flatmates that are fun to hang out with
- A lot of Americans

Waiteata Apartments:

- The location is perfect; close to the Kelburn campus and an eight-minute walk downhill to the heart of town
- Easily accessible to buses/cable car
- Close to the Sunday market (corner of Vivian and Willis) with fresh and cheap produce every Sunday, and other great food places: Aro Fish n’ Chips, French Bakery
- Cozy 4–5 person flats
- Nice size rooms and shared bathroom
- Self-catered (cook your own food)
- No-charge laundry facilities
- Free university Internet through Ethernet (con: university internet doesn’t allow access to IM or Skype)
- Perfect for older, independent students who want to socialize/have fun, but still have space to get work done
- Great place to meet people from all different countries and cultures
- If you are looking for the crazy dorm experience, this is not the place for you
- Coming from anywhere, you have to climb up the steep hill or stairs and you’re usually carrying things; it’s a mission but great exercise

Stafford House:

- 15–minute uphill walk to campus and the Botanic Gardens, 20–minute walk to the main downtown area (coffee shops, bars, clubs); and the New Zealand Parliament is only half a block away
- About three hundred residents
- Very small 3-bedroom flats
- Fully furnished with a washer/dryer, bedroom furniture, and kitchen with basic cooking and cleaning supplies (no oven)
- Always clean and warm, even in the winter
- About one third of residents are American or international students (the rest are Kiwis)
- Well maintained building and excellent management and staff (RAs care about keeping Stafford a healthy and safe place)
- This is not a place to party
- Strict rules about visitors and noise
- If space and rules don’t concern you, Stafford is the place to be in terms of location, health, and community

Ustay:

- Conveniently located near campus and downtown
- Double studio rooms include a kitchenette and bathroom
- Many first-year Kiwis were excited to make new friends
Private Accommodations:

“Instead of going with one of the many student accommodations/hostels, I chose to get to Wellington and try to find my own accommodation. I looked on trademe.co.nz, which is the equivalent of Craigslist. I looked on trademe during January before I headed over to NZ, and there were countless listings of people who needed flatmates. However, once I arrived in Wellington right before university started in late February, the demand for housing had drastically risen and the flat hunting became very competitive, especially since I wasn’t going to be staying for an entire year. So I ended up living in a backpackers for about three weeks while I scoured trademe every day and went and looked at countless flats all over the city.

“Fortunately I did find housing, though, with two awesome Kiwi girls from Wellington. The flat was perfect, located centrally on upper Cuba Street so I was only twenty minutes from campus and basically right in the heart of town. I really enjoyed having my own flat as opposed to living in university-run housing because I am very independent and like doing my own thing. I heard from several friends that stayed in Stafford House or one of the other Uni-owned buildings that there were strict rules about visitors and afterhours, and most of them got tired of that, especially since they were adults of 21 years old. The only thing I would recommend if you chose to find your own flat is to attend the welcome week activities and try to meet as many people as you can in the first few weeks because you do miss out on meeting people by opting out of student housing. Other than that I thought it was great, plus by walking the city so much trying to find flats, you really learn your way around your new temporary home rather quickly.”