

2-2 Renting an Apartment

After contacting the real estate agency, your realtor will make appointments with you to see the apartments that are available. Japanese society places importance on being on time, so try to make a good first impression by being on time for your appointment. After you have decided which apartment you want to rent, you have to fill out several forms and make an application for the apartment.

Please be aware that you have to wait for 3 to 4 days after making the application until you can sign the rental contract.

The rental contract for an apartment explains privileges and obligations as a tenant. If you do not abide by the obligations in your contract, it may be declared void. Make sure that you discuss the content of your contract and have anything you do not understand fully explained.

Special note should be taken regarding:

1) Contract period

Most contracts are for two years, but there might be exceptions. Ask if there are any things to do if you want to extend your contract or if you want to leave before the end of your tenancy agreement.

2) Rent

Confirm when and how the rental payments are due and what happens when the rent is overdue.

3) Residents

Only people specified in the contract may live permanently in the apartment. If you want to share your apartment, you have to confirm it beforehand with your realtor.

4) Restrictions

Using noisy household appliances after a certain time at night may be prohibited.

5) Guarantor

When students seek private housing in Japan, they will usually be required to have a “guarantor” (*rentai hoshonin*), who must be living in Japan. It becomes the guarantor's responsibility to pay the rent on behalf of the tenant if the tenant becomes unable to do so. If you do not have a mobile phone on your own at the time you sign the housing contract, you have to give your guarantor's phone number instead.

Please find a guarantor yourself. If you cannot find anyone, Keio University can become your guarantor. To apply for this service, you must meet the following conditions:

- ① You are unable to find a guarantor
- ② You must hold a status or residence of “Student”
- ③ You must join the insurance program specified by Keio University
- ④ You must submit both the rental agreement from the real estate agent and the contract form specified by Keio University
- ⑤ Your property owner and real estate agent must approve articles ③ and ④ above
- ⑥ Tenants may include you, your family members, and/or other international students of Keio University who hold the status of residence of “Student”
- ⑦ You must have been deemed by the Student Life Section of SFC to have the ability to pay your rent.

<http://www.gakuji.keio.ac.jp/en/sfc/sl/housing.html>

You can also use the service of guarantor companies. Your real estate agent may introduce you to these companies or you can look for them by yourself. One company offering a guarantor service in English is Global Trust Service: <https://www.gtn.co.jp/en/>