

Housing options in Houston

Rice Graduate Housing

Information about on-campus housing for graduate students can be found at gradapts.rice.edu. Most international graduate student receiving funding from their academic departments live in Rice Graduate Housing for their first year, and then move off-campus in their second or third years.

The housing application for the 2012-13 academic year is available online from March 12, 2012. Room assignments will begin on May 1, 2012 and will continue until all available spots are filled. If you are confident that you intend to come to Rice, fill out an application soon – once apartment assignments are made, you will have two weeks within which you can decline the offer and have your deposit refunded if you so desire. Last year (fall 2011), the graduate apartments filled up fast - so apply early!

Advantages

1. This is a great option for your first year – you can meet many other graduate students, from different countries and departments, and also get to live close to most other incoming Indian graduate students.
2. The graduate housing complexes are partially furnished – each resident receives a bed (with mattress), a dresser, a nightstand, a desk and desk-chair, and occasionally a bookcase.
3. If you have decided to live in a 2-bedroom apartment (which is cheaper than living in a 1-bedroom apartment), the Graduate Housing Management is responsible for finding you a roommate. Usually Indian graduate students end up being roommates.
4. There is a shuttle bus from each graduate housing complexes to campus every 15 minutes Monday-Friday from 7:30 am to 8 pm. There is a night escort service from 10 pm to 6 am on Sunday-Thursday which goes to the graduate housing complexes upon request.
5. There is a shuttle to the closest grocery store and supermarket on Saturday mornings (every 45 minutes from 10 am to 3 pm.)
6. Since the apartment complexes are part of Rice, high-speed Rice internet is provided to all residents with no additional charge. Basic cable TV and water are also included. Residents of Rice Graduate Housing are, however, required to pay their own electricity bills.

7. Residents of Rice Graduate Apartments (RGA) are able to easily access the Graduate Loan Closet. However, residents of Rice Village Apartments (RVA) or Morningside Square Apartments (MSA), have to find a way of transporting furniture to their apartment complexes if they choose to take advantage of the Loan Closet.
8. The Rice apartment complexes are gated and monitored by the Rice University Police Department.
9. Since the housing complex is designed for Rice graduate students, the management has experience working with academic department. Lease terms are for the academic year and can be extended over the summer. If you are going to be away from the entire summer, but wish to leave your furniture in your apartment, you can opt for 'Summer Storage', which allows to you to do so while paying only half rent. If a student graduates, studies abroad, gets married, etc. the management will allow you to terminate your lease with a reduced penalty.

Disadvantages

1. Living on-campus is somewhat more expensive than living off-campus – but quite affordable with most department stipends.
2. If you are assigned an apartment in your first year, you are allowed to renew for your second year. However, once past the second year, residents of RGA and RVA who wish to continue living in graduate housing are entered into a lottery. (Residents of MSA can always choose to extend their lease as long as they are enrolled at Rice)
3. While the shopping shuttle runs to the grocery stores every Saturday, there are very few grocery stores actually close to either graduate housing complex.

Apartment complexes close to Rice

There are some apartment complexes within walking distance of Rice, and even more within biking distance. If you decide to live off-campus, it will make your lives significantly easier if you own a car, or at the very least a bicycle.

Advantages

1. The baseline rent is somewhat cheaper if one lives off-campus. As a reference, the rent for a 450 sq ft 1-bedroom apartment at RVA is \$855/month, while the rent for a 660 sq ft 1-bedroom apartment off-campus within biking distance to Rice is roughly \$700/month. The

rent for a 637 sq ft 2-bedroom 1-bathroom apartment in RVA is \$630 per bed per month, while the rent for an 875 sq ft 2-bedroom 1-bathroom apartment off-campus is roughly \$460 per bed per month. The farther one lives from Rice, the cheaper the rents get.

2. You can renew your lease every year – there is no lottery to worry about.
3. There are apartment complexes quite close to bus stops, grocery stores, etc.

Disadvantages

1. Rents do not usually include water, cable, power, internet, etc.
2. If you choose to live in a 2-bedroom apartment, you are responsible for finding your own roommate.
3. Apartments are rarely, if ever, furnished. You will have to provide your own bed, desk, etc.
4. It is quite difficult to get by without a car/bicycle, to get to Rice and to grocery stores.
5. Usually one has to prove that one's monthly income is three times the monthly rent, or pay a much larger security deposit.
6. Some apartment complexes are not gated, others might be located in unsafe areas.

Ideas for finding off-campus apartments

1. Look at Rice's list of off campus housing options at offcampus.rice.edu
2. Email the ISAR mailing list at isar-l@mailman.rice.edu asking if anyone is looking for a roommate.
3. Post a message at the ISAR Facebook group at tinyurl.com/isarfacebookgroup
4. Post a message at the GSA Facebook group at www.facebook.com/groups/101585130539
5. Email the Rice international student office's mailing list at ois-market@rice.edu
6. Contact apartment complexes close to Rice. A google map with some such places marked can be found at tinyurl.com/rice-conv-apt-cxs