



2023-2024

Aiken
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

USCA
Commuter Handbook

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Off Campus Student Services

Off-Campus Student Services (OCSS) is part of the Division of Student Affairs and offers resources for USC Aiken students' off-campus living and/or commuting experience. If you are thinking about living off-campus, already live off-campus or are commuting to campus, OCSS is here for you. Check out the OCSS at website <https://www.usca.edu/student-affairs/commuter-students> for more resources and information. Do not hesitate to come by the office located in SAC 163 or contact the office at (803) 641-3787 if you have any questions, comments or concerns about your off-campus experience.

Freshman Housing Requirement

USC Aiken is strongly committed to retention, progression, and graduation of students. National research on retention supports the idea that students who are engaged in their campus community are more likely to remain in school and be successful. Living in on-campus housing strongly facilitates the engagement of students with other students and with campus life, and these factors contribute to their retention.

All USC Aiken Freshman entering college in the Fall semester are required to live on campus for two semesters. All USC Aiken Freshman entering college in the spring semester are required to live on campus for one semester. A freshman is defined as any student who has not attended college after graduation from high school.

All newly admitted freshman may request an exemption to the policy if one of the following situations apply:

- 1). The student will be living with their parent or guardian and will be residing within 35 miles of 471 University Parkway, Aiken, SC 29801. (Required documentation: Parent/Guardian must fill out the Parent/Guardian section of the Housing Exemption form)
- 2). The student is married. (Required documentation: a copy of the marriage license)
- 3). The student has a dependent or legal guardianship of a sibling. (Required documentation: a copy of the child's birth certificate or court order of legal guardianship)
- 4). The student is now 21 years old or will be at the beginning of the semester.

A student requesting an exemption for one of the reasons stated above must complete the **Housing Exemption form** and provide a personal statement indicating how they plan to become engaged in the community while living at home. The Housing Exemption form is due as soon as possible, but no later than August 1st.

Is Living Off-Campus for You?

Living off campus, away from residence halls, can provide exciting new benefits, challenges and responsibilities. If you like privacy, independence and the chance to pick your own roommates, perhaps living Off-Campus is the right choice for you! Independence brings more responsibilities, such as paying for rent and utilities. This guide was created to help you through the process of finding your own place and successfully living off-campus!

Here are some questions to consider before you begin:

- * Are you interested in a house, condominium, or apartment?
- * What is your price range?
- * Do you want to live with roommates?
- * Should it be in walking distance, biking distance or do you have your own transportation?
- * Is the distance from campus an issue?
- * What amenities would you like? Pool, gym, air conditioning, dishwasher?
- * Do you have or want to get a pet?
- * Does the facility need to be handicap accessible?

Student Activity Center (SAC)

The Student Activity Center (SAC) can serve as your home-away-from-home. There is a Commuter lounge for you. SAC offers Pacer Shoppe (Bookstore), Starbuck and the Cafe with an all-you-care-to-eat buffet. You'll find sitting

areas throughout the SAC. The SAC is a great place to kick back with friends while watching television, playing video games, pool, and ping ball or play basketball in the SAC gym.

Campus Recreation and Wellness

The mission of the Department of Campus Recreation and Wellness is to enhance and enrich the quality of life of the USC Aiken community by providing education, programs, and services that promote healthy lifestyle choices. This department consists of the Wellness Center, the Natatorium, Intramural Sports and Club Sports.

The USCA Wellness Center is made up of a 25,000 square foot facility located in the Business and Education Building (B&E). The Wellness Center includes a large fitness area including cardiovascular equipment (bikes, rowers, treadmills, ski machines, elliptical cross trainers and stair steppers, strength equipment, and dumbbells. There is a studio with wall-to-wall mirrors, a circuit room, and locker rooms. Group fitness classes, wellness education programs, and health-related special events are provided free to students. Services provided for a fee include personal training, fitness evaluations, and group personal training classes. In addition, Exercise and Sport Science has their exercise physiology laboratory and an instructional classroom located in the Wellness Center. The facility is supervised by CPR trained staff.

The Natatorium is connected to the Student Activities Building. The Natatorium includes a six-lane indoor pool and locker rooms. This facility is supervised by certified lifeguards during open swim hours and special programs.

Intramural sports offer men, women, and co-ed divisions in sports such as flag football, softball, basketball, volleyball, soccer, tennis, ping-pong, kickball, dodgeball, and ultimate Frisbee. Any student can participate, and all skill levels are welcome. Sign-up as a team or as a free agent at <https://www.usca.edu/campus-recreation-and-wellness/intramural-sports/register-for-intramural-sports>. Club sports are considered a student organization. If a student is interested in forming a new sport stop by the Student Life Office to find out details on how to create the organization. For a list of active club sports and to find out more information visit <https://www.usca.edu/campus-recreation-and-wellness/club-sports>.

The Campus Recreation and Wellness professional staff members and programming is housed in the Wellness Center which is in the lowest level of the Business & Education Building. To activate your membership for a variety of free health and wellness programs please stop by the Wellness Center to complete your paperwork each year.

The Healthy 4 Life program is a framework for USC Aiken to provide health and well-being programs for the students, faculty and staff. This framework includes Healthy Mind, Healthy Body, Healthy Environment and Healthy Habits. Programs to provide education and apply well-being practices are collaborative across departments including the Counseling Center, the Student Health Center, Campus Recreation & Wellness, Student Life, Housing and a variety of other entities that help people become aware, and make choices toward, a healthier lifestyle.

Career Services

The Career Service Office is available to assist all USC Aiken students and recent graduates with career-related concerns—choosing a career, choosing a college major, career planning, experiential learning, job search, and graduate school. Students are encouraged to start early and take advantage of the resources offered by the office.

Services offered to students include:

- Individual career coaching/advisement
- Career information including “What can I do with this major?” (<http://whatcanidowiththismajor.com/major/>)
- Career assessments (Pathway U and StrengthsQuest)

- Job vacancy listings for on-campus, off-campus, summer, internship, part-time, and full-time employment through Handshake, our online job board.
- Assisting with job shadowing, informational interviews, internship and cooperative education positions
- Resume and cover letter review
- Job search and interview assistance
- Preparation for graduate and professional schools
- Career events and programs

Career planning and preparation are a continual part of a student's collegiate experience and should start freshman year. Appointments can be requested through the general office address (Careerservices@usca.edu) or by phone (803-641-3440).

The Career Services office is located in the Penland Administration Building, Suite 108. Further information can be found at <https://www.usca.edu/career-services>.

Counseling Center

The Counseling Center is located in the Student and Educational Support Building, Suite 107. Counseling is confidential and services are free. Counselors are available Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. For after-hours or weekend emergencies, contact: University Police by dialing 6111 from on-campus telephones or 648-4011 or 9-1-1 from off-campus telephones; Aiken Regional Medical Center's Emergency Department at 641-5000; or Aurora Pavilion at 641-5900; or Aiken Helpline at 2-1-1 or 1 877-877-648-9900 (<https://aikenhelpline211.org/site/>). An additional resource is the National Disaster Distress Hotline 24/7/365. Calls (1-800-985-5990; press "2" for Spanish) and texts (text TalkWithUs to 66746) are answered by trained counselors from a network of independently-operated crisis centers located across the U.S.

We encourage you to use these resources and to check out our website: <https://www.usca.edu/counseling-center>

A variety of different issues can be addressed at the Counseling Center, including but not limited to:

- Time management
- Decision-making
- Communication skills
- Assertiveness training
- Building self-confidence
- Coping with depression and anxiety
- Relationship difficulties
- Drug and alcohol problems
- Conflict and anger management
- Sexual assault and/or harassment issues
- Dating or domestic violence issues

The Counseling Center shares expertise in the areas of human behavior and development through consultation and outreach services. The counselors are available to provide direct services to students, consultation for faculty and staff, or on a variety of emotional and/or academic concerns. Outreach efforts also include availability to make presentations on specific topics for classes, campus organizations, and other groups at the university upon request.

Disability Services

The Office of Disability Services seeks to assist students with disabilities in their college experience through an integration of on-campus services. A "qualified person with a disability" is defined as one who

meets the academic and technical standards required for admission or participation in the post-secondary institution's programs and activities. Appropriate documentation from a medical and/or psychological or psychiatric professional is required. Accommodations are made to allow equal opportunity and access in courses, programs, and activities, including co-curricular activities. It is the student's responsibility to contact the Office of Disability Services regarding their individual needs. Accommodations **may** include:

- Use of the Exam Proctoring Center
- Distraction Reduced Testing
- Extended Testing
- ASL Services
- Accessible Seating
- Priority Registration
- Accessible Parking
- Other services deemed appropriate

For further information, contact the Office of Disability Services by calling 803-643-6815 or stopping by the Exam Proctoring Center, Suite 104, Student and Educational Support Building.

Institutional Culture and Belonging

In line with the university's core value of collegiality, the Office of Student Life – Institutional Culture and Belonging fosters institutional equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging by providing opportunities to discuss difference, raise awareness of underserved student groups and place an emphasis on cultural diversity within the campus community. Through the implementation of services and programs that assist with campus efforts to increase retention, graduation, and career placement rates of students from underserved groups, USCA has been recognized as an outstanding university for underserved and underrepresented student populations to attend.

The following is a sample of the resources and services available through Student Life's Diversity Initiatives programming areas: A wide variety of diversity related affinity student groups, Heritage Month Celebrations and Heritage Month Planning Committees, annual campus and community-wide celebrations, diversity related trainings and workshops, support groups, and ICE events pertaining to diversity related topics. Additionally, the Office of Diversity Initiatives also administers ASUP 215: Diversity Leadership (2-credit hours). Students can add a diversity track through taking this course if they are enrolled in the Leadership Certificate Program.

Current Heritage and History Months celebrated include:

- Latinx History Month (Sept.)
- LGBTQIA+ History Month (Oct.)
- Indigenous Peoples' History Month (Nov.)
- Inter-Faith Harmony Month (Jan.)
- Black History Month (Feb.)
- Women's History Month (Mar.)
- Asian, Desi, and Pacific Islander Heritage Month (Apr./May)

The Institutional Culture and Belonging office is located in the Student Activities Center. For more information stop by or call 803-641-3442. You can also follow us on Facebook (@DiversityUSCA), or on Instagram (@DiversityUSCAiken).

International Programs

The International Programs office seeks to support international students, encourage engagement in study abroad programs, and promotes inclusion of different cultures and ethnic groups on campus through programming and events.

The office provides services to international students prior to their arrival to USCA with pre-departure information packets and student immigration advising. When international students arrive on campus, they attend orientations and workshops to help them transition and fully integrate into the USCA community, and while they reside at USC Aiken with academic, social, and cultural guidance and advising.

The office also provides information to USCA students on study abroad, work abroad, and volunteer abroad opportunities. The office works closely with faculty and staff to develop study abroad programs and opportunities for students and to assist faculty with international research and teaching projects.

Finally, the department strives to increase international awareness on campus and in the larger Aiken community through campus lectures, panel discussions, campus programming, cultural events, and through internationalizing the curriculum when appropriate.

The International Programs office is located in the Student Life Suite in the Student Activities Center.

Student Health Center

USCA has a Student Health Center (SHC) for the benefit of undergraduate students who become ill or sustain an injury while attending classes at USCA. The Student Health Center is located in Room 106 of the Student Activities Center, located just past Starbucks, beside the student media room.

Services received in the Student Health Center are free of charge, prepaid as part of tuition. The Student Health Center does provide a few specialty services for which there are nominal charges. These include, but may not be limited to, tuberculosis skin testing, immunizations, and selective health physicals.

The SHC is staff by both Registered Nurses and Nurse Practitioners who provide primary care for common health problems. Nurse practitioners are specially educated registered nurses who have received an advanced practice degree in nursing at the graduate level with a specialized focus in assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of common illnesses and injuries of the college-aged student. USC Aiken's nurse practitioners treat those diagnoses frequently seen on college campuses. They are able to write prescriptions for medications (the student then takes the prescription to a local pharmacy) or orders for other services the SHC cannot provide, such as x-rays or lab work.

A student may come in with a complaint similar to:

- "It hurts when I swallow."
- "I was late for class, was running, and fell down the steps. I think I broke my ankle."
- "My whole body aches. I have been hot with the chills."
- "I have the worst headache ever. It especially hurts when I look at the lights or hear loud noises."
- "I threw up about six or seven times last night"
- "I have this rash on my back."
- "I haven't gone to the bathroom in over a week."

Students are encouraged to visit the Student Health Center if they have an illness or injury that they feel uncomfortable treating independently. A member of the USCA Health Center nursing staff will guide the student through the healing process by assessing and diagnosing the problem, then providing the necessary treatment and follow-up care. There are times when a student's illness or injury might be more serious than the Student Health Center staff can handle. During these times the student will need to be referred to a community physician or hospital. For this reason students are encouraged to carry individual health insurance in order to assist with the referral process and financial burden. Students

interested in purchasing student health insurance should visit <https://sc.myahpcare.com/> for more information.

The Student Health Staff also provides health promotion, health education, and disease prevention information for the campus. They coordinate activities to ensure the campus is up to date on all health issues confronting the campus and surrounding community.

Student Leadership and Engagement

Student Leadership and Engagement strives to provide excellent opportunities to engage students outside of the classroom and get them involved in meaningful ways both on campus and in the community. There are many reasons why you should get involved while attending USCA. First, it is an excellent way to develop important skills that are integral to being successful in the “real world.” Second, research shows that being involved can make one’s college years more fulfilling. Students who are involved tend to be more successful in college and beyond. Third, it is a great way for students to expand their horizons and experiences. Fourth, it looks good on a resume. Studies show that students who are involved tend to get better and higher paying jobs than non-involved students. Lastly, it is a lot of fun being involved, and it can make your college career more memorable and meaningful.

Student Leadership and Engagement offers a variety of programs including:

- Community Service/Volunteerism
- Student Government Association
- Student Media
- Pacer Union Board and Programming
- Greek Life
- Leadership Programs
- 90+ other student organizations

Athletics

With the goals of winning the 4C's- Campus, Community, Classroom, and Competition, the Athletic Department at USC Aiken is a well-rounded intercollegiate program. USC Aiken is committed to fielding competitive athletic teams which are comprised of academically qualified student athletes. USC Aiken holds membership in the NCAA Division II and is a charter member of the Peach Belt Conference (PBC). The PBC — consisting of Augusta University, Clayton State University, Columbus State University, Georgia College & State University, Georgia Southwestern State University, Lander University, University of North Georgia, Flagler College and USC Aiken — has conference championships in 16 different sports. The Pacers compete on a conference and national level in 10 different sports including volleyball, men’s and women’s soccer, men’s and women’s cross country, men’s and women’s basketball, softball, golf, and baseball.

In addition to the 10 NCAA Division II teams and the Spirit Squad (combined cheer/dance team), nearly 200 students represent the athletic department each year. Facilities are also a plus. The Roberto Hernandez Baseball Stadium is state of the art. Volleyball and both basketball teams compete in the 3,500 seat Convocation Center, which is among the finest in the Southeast. The Pacers also have lighted soccer and softball fields and the school is in the process of building new stadiums for the soccer and softball teams near the Convocation Center and Roberto Hernandez Stadium.

During the 2022-23 academic year, volleyball, women’s basketball, men’s basketball and golf all competed in the NCAA Tournament. The men’s basketball team won the PBC regular-season championship and advanced to the Sweet 16.

USC Aiken hosts over 100 sporting events throughout all the sports, beginning in late August and running through early May. Video streams for all home sporting events as well as rosters, schedules, feature stories, history of USC Aiken Athletics and all news pertaining to USC Aiken Athletics can also be found

at PacerSports.com. Additionally, fans can like USC Aiken Athletics on Facebook or follow Pacer Athletics on Twitter and Instagram.

Bookstore

Located in the Student Activities Center (SAC) near the SAC Café, the Pacer Shoppe is a competitive source for all course materials including textbooks, lab supplies, course packets, school supplies, and study aids. The primary mission of the bookstore is to provide educational materials to students while fostering, enhancing, and supporting the academic and administrative goals of USCA.

Money saving tips for purchasing course materials:

- Purchase used books whenever possible; used textbooks are less expensive than new textbooks and help conserve our environment.
- Purchase or rent your books as early as possible; more used textbooks are available and the bookstore is not as busy.
- Purchase or rent only the required materials before class. If a textbook is listed as optional, wait until after classes begin because you may not need this book.
- Sell your unwanted textbooks at the end of each semester. The Pacer Shoppe will buy books that have been re-adopted for the next semester, are in the current edition, and are not overstocked at the bookstore. The Pacer Shoppe will offer the current wholesale value for all other books as determined by a national textbook buying guide.

Making your textbook shopping a little easier:

- Bring your class schedule or course syllabus with you to the bookstore to make certain you are getting books for the correct course number and section number.
- Avoid the crowd by shopping the bookstore during its less busy hours. The hours of 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. are the busiest during the first week of classes at the Pacer Shoppe.

Return policy:

The Pacer Shoppe offers refunds and exchanges

- An original sales receipt is required for all refunds and exchanges.
- Merchandise must be returned in the same condition as when purchased.
- The final day for textbook refunds will be posted in the bookstore and listed in campus publications each semester.
- No refunds are offered at any time for study outlines, unwrapped course packets, or magazines. Software and multi-media products are refundable in the original, unopened packaging only.
- Special orders are non-returnable.

Buyback policy:

Textbooks can be sold back during the last week of each semester if your book meets the following criteria:

- The textbook has been requested by the instructor for the upcoming semester.
- The book is in sellable condition.
- The book is needed by the Bookstore

Bookstore Hours:

Fall and spring semesters

Monday through Thursday, 7:45 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Friday, 7:45 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Summer sessions

Summer hours will be coordinated with the university's hours of operation. There will be extended hours of operation at the beginning of each session.

For more information, contact the bookstore at 803-641-3457 or visit the website at

<https://www.bkstr.com/uscaikenstore/home>

Business Services

The Business Services Office manages the assessment and collection of tuition and other fees and maintains the accuracy of student accounts. The office also manages payment plans, student refunds, and processes third-party sponsor bills. Additional services include assistance with understanding your bill, payment deadlines, 1098T tuition statements, CarolinaCard and cash payments. The office is in Room 114 in the Penland Building. For more information, please contact us at 803.641-3543 or via email at busserv@usca.edu. Additional information can also be obtained at <https://www.usca.edu/business-services>

Center for Student Achievement

The Center for Student Achievement, located on the first floor of the Gregg-Graniteville Library, encourages the academic success of USCA students by assisting them in developing educational plans, connecting them to campus resources, and promoting engaged learning and personal responsibility. Below are descriptions of some of the services in the department. More detailed information about these services, a full list of the free programs in the department, and other academic resources can be accessed at <http://www.usca.edu/csa>.

Academic Advisement

The Office of Academic Advising helps connect USCA students to their assigned advisor. Students are required to be advised before each registration period. New First-year students will be assigned a professional advisor in the Office of Academic Advising according to their major.

All students are welcome to consult a professional advisor for the following services:

- Finding and using academic resources
- Exploring degree programs
- Requesting a change of major or advisor
- Using and understanding SSC and DegreeWorks
- Schedule planning and registration
- Getting connected with other campus organizations and resources

Tutoring

Tutoring is available in a number of content areas and courses and is available on a drop-in basis (no appointment required) in the Learning Commons area in the Gregg-Graniteville Library. CSA tutors are high achieving students with positive faculty references and tutoring is free for currently enrolled students. To access a list of tutors available for the current semester and their schedules, visit the CSA website. We also offer online tutoring options for both on-campus and off-campus students. Online tutoring is also available, with several subject areas 24/7.

Additionally, if students need assistance in a course that is not included on the list, they can complete a "tutor request" form on the website

Academic Consultations

The Center for Student Achievement offers academic consultations designed to assist students at any level. Students work one-on-one with professional staff members to improve time management, study skills, organizational skills, and other academic skills. Students can schedule an appointment using the "Academic Consultations" link on the website.

Technology Services Division

The mission of the Technology Services Division (TSD) is to provide students, faculty, and staff with the computing, networking, and voice communication tools necessary to support the university's mission. The University of South Carolina Aiken and TSD are committed to providing a reliable, state-of-the-art campus computing environment.

USCA's primary student computing resource lab is located in the Business and Education Building, suite 238. This area contains an open Windows and Mac computer lab as well as two dedicated computer lab classrooms. During the fall and spring semesters, TSD Help Desk personnel staff this area on Mondays through Thursdays from 8:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. and on Fridays from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. During the summer, assistance is available on Mondays through Thursday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Friday. Students have access to these facilities and most computing resources 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

All academic computing is supported in the Windows and Mac environments.

Wired and Wireless network services through USC Aiken's state-of-the-art network provides gigabit wired connectivity and WiFi connectivity on campus. TSD manages several servers providing the campus community with network printing, file sharing, and network applications. More information about TSD and the services it provides can be found at <http://www.usca.edu/csd>.

Dining Services

The university contracts with one of the country's premier food service operators to provide food services on campus and offers many dining options at USCA including:

- The **SAC Café** is located in the Student Activities Center. It is a full service "all you care to eat" café featuring a fresh salad bar, made-to-order station, pizza, deli sandwiches, grilled entrees, and a comfort food station. (It operates for breakfast, lunch, and dinner with extended hours Monday through Thursday.)
- **The Station** is located in the Humanities and Social Sciences Building and offers gourmet coffee, fresh build-to-order subs, and much more. It is open for breakfast and lunch.
- **Starbucks Coffee** is located in the Student Activities Center and serves freshly brewed coffee, specialty drinks, and a variety of sandwiches, muffins, and pastries.
- **The Pacer Market** is located at Pacer Downs and serves snacks, supplies, and household essentials.

All Housing students are required to have a meal plan. Freshman and sophomore students may choose from Meal Plans A, B or C. Sophomore students may choose from Meal Plans A, B, C, or D. Junior and Senior students may choose from Meal Plans A, B, C, or D. USC Aiken housing residents will sign up for a meal plan when they complete their housing application. All other students should sign up during the registration process. To activate their meal plan, all students must present a valid USC Aiken ID.

Resident Meal Plan Options

Meal Plans are an excellent way to ensure proper nutrition and budgeting. Additionally, they offer the best dining value. There is a meal plan to suit the needs of every student and everyone should consider purchasing a meal plan.

- Plan A: Unlimited meals plan - \$1,630.00 per semester. It provides unlimited full, hot meals in the cafeteria each week. This plan also offers a bonus \$100 in declining balance money, which may be used in any campus dining location.

- Plan B: 11 meal plan - \$1630.00 per semester. This plan provides 11 full, hot meals in the cafeteria each week. This plan offers a bonus \$300.00 in declining balance money, which may be used in any campus dining location.
- Plan C: 6 meal plan - \$1630.00 per semester. This plan provides 6 full, hot meals in the cafeteria each week plus \$600 in declining balance dollars.
- Plan D: Declining balance plan - \$875.00 per semester

All non-declining balance meal plans (A, B, or C) offer a breakfast meal equivalency which may be used in the H&SS Station between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. as well a lunch meal equivalency which may be used in the SAC Café, H&SS Station, or Pacer Market between the hours of 11:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

Commuter Meal Plan Options – Although anyone can purchase a residential meal plan, two meal plans have been designed specifically with the commuter student in mind.

- Block 30 - \$350 per semester. This meal plan provides 30 meals per semester and includes \$80 of declining balance dollars.
- Block 50 - \$543 per semester. This meal plan provides 50 meals per semester and includes \$125 of declining balance dollars.

* **All meal plans are priced on a semester basis.** Meals and declining balance dollars do not roll over from semester to semester.

** **USCA has partnered with a third party vendor who accepts declining balance dollars as a form of payment.** Our current vendor is Domino's Pizza.

Other Campus Dining Options:

Pacer cards are ideal for those students who are not required to purchase a meal plan, commuter students, faculty, staff, or as a supplement to an existing meal plan. Pacer Cards only cost \$40.00 but grant \$44.00 of purchase power. Pacer Cards may be purchased in the Business Services department located in the Penland Administration Building. When one card runs out, just stop by and purchase another. Meal Plan Options can be found at <https://www.usca.edu/housing/living-on-campus/campus-dining/meal-plans>.

Rates and meal plans may be subject to change.

Financial Aid

USCA participates in an array of financial aid programs which consists of scholarships, grants, loans, and student employment opportunities. Most programs require students to complete the Free Application for Student Aid (FAFSA) every year. The FAFSA can be found at www.studentaid.org. The Financial Aid office is located in Room 102 in the Penland Administration Building. For additional information, please visit the Financial Aid office or contact a financial aid representative at 803-641-3476, StuAid@usca.edu, or fax 803-643-6840.

ID Cards

All currently enrolled USCA students are required to have a USCA ID card and have it in their possession while on campus. The ID card is an important item that allows access to university facilities and services and is designed to be checked by computer for validity. Certain services will be denied without the issued ID card. The ID card is a permanent card and is valid as long as a student is officially registered. The card is the property of USCA and is intended solely for its use. It is not transferrable and must be returned upon request. Upon request of law enforcement, faculty, and staff students must produce and provide their USCA ID.

Students are responsible for reporting lost or stolen cards promptly; otherwise, they may be liable for debts incurred through the use of the cards. Replacement cards cost \$25.00 and the charge will be billed through the Business Services office.

ID cards are valid only when a student is enrolled in classes. Should a student withdraw or be suspended during the semester, the card will no longer be recognized by the computer system. If a student leaves USCA and later returns, the student will not need to have a new ID card made. By registering and paying fees, the computer will recognize the card as valid once again. Questions concerning the ID card system can be answered in the University Police Office.

The ID card also can be used anywhere on campus that Carolina Cash is accepted such as campus dining, Starbucks, vending machine, Laundry services, the Pacer Market, the Pacer Shoppe, and PacerPrint. You may add Carolina Cash to your ID card through Self Service Carolina (SSC) account or by visiting business services.

New Students: The ID card process is now completed through a new online process. Following the below listed steps will greatly reduce your time waiting in line. Complete these steps at least 72 hours prior to picking up your ID:

- Take a photo of yourself meeting the mandatory requirements*
- Go to <http://my.carolinacard.sc.edu> and log in using your VIP ID
- Complete the cardholder agreement
- Submit your photo by clicking "Photo Upload"
- You will receive a confirmation that the submitted photo was acceptable
- Retrieve your student ID from the University Police Department

*These photographs should be of the same quality and have the same characteristics required for driver's license, military identification, or passports. They should be taken with a solid background, you must be facing the camera, it must be a photo from head to shoulders, and it must be in color. Photographs will not be accepted if you are wearing a hat, sunglasses, halter top, sleeveless shirt, or bathing suit. The display of offensive language or inappropriate behavior will disqualify the photograph.

Library

The faculty, support staff, and collections of the Gregg-Graniteville Library comprise an integral part of USCA's instructional program. The following services and resources are available to all registered students:

Library services

- Materials and technology for lending
- Research help available, including walk-up assistance, Ask a Librarian chat (24 hours a day Monday–Friday & 8am-midnight Saturday/Sunday), email, and individual research appointments with a librarian available both online and in-person.
- Information literacy instruction and workshops
- Librarian-curated research guides
- InterLibrary Loan system and PASCAL Delivers
- Website with access to Library resources and services

Library Technology

- Online book catalog for all of South Carolina's college and university libraries
- Over 240 databases, including access to online journal articles and streaming videos.

- Over 50 computers available for student use
- Laptops for student checkout
- Access to color and b/w printing
- Photocopying and scanning equipment
- Online library account for library material renewals
- Access library resources using your USCA email address and email password.

Centrally located library facility with a useful and diverse collection of materials and technology

- Two-story 40,000 square foot building
- Print book and bound periodical collection of more than 130,000 volumes
- E-book collection of over 1,000,000 titles
- Print and e-journal access to over 178,000 periodicals and newspapers
- Official depository for United States government publications, South Carolina State documents, and the Department of Energy Public Reading Room collection. Over 11,000 documents in combined collections
- Houses both the Gregg-Graniteville Archives and Museum, and the USCA Institutional Archives
- Individual and group study rooms reservable through the library website
- Large Learning Commons area with comfortable and moveable furniture including whiteboards to facilitate group study.

Loan Period

- Six weeks for current USC system students, with no limit on the number of books checked out.
- One week for DVDs, VHS, and CDs
- One week for laptops
- Reserve and InterLibrary Loan materials' loan periods and renewal options vary

Overdue Charges

- Overdue charges are 20¢ per day for non-reserve books with a four-day grace period. There is no grace period for overdue interlibrary loan items and media items
- Overdue charges are \$1.00 per day for reserve items (not marked "Library Use Only"). There is no grace period.
- Overdue charges are 10¢ per minute after the library closes for reserve materials marked "Library Use Only" that leave the building
- Overdue charges are \$1.00 per day for overdue PASCAL books. There is no grace period.
- Overdue charges are \$1.00 per hour for study room keys. There is no grace period.
- Overdue charges are \$10.00 per day for overdue laptops.

Hours of Operation:

Monday through Thursday: 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 a.m.

Friday: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Saturday: Variable – Check Library Website for hours.

Sunday: 2:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m.

Hours of operation variations for holidays, intersessions, summer term, and exam periods are posted in the library and on the website.

Presentation of current barcoded University ID card is required for check-out of materials, laptops, and study rooms.

Lost and Found

Lost and found items may be turned in or claimed at the University Police Department located at 805 Leadership Drive which is located in front of the Pacer Downs housing complex.

Math Lab

The missions of the Math Lab is to provide support for students enrolled in mathematics courses at USCA and ultimately enable students to be successful in classes that use mathematics. This is accomplished by providing students with free peer tutoring in any freshman level and selected sophomore level mathematics classes. The Math Lab is located on the first floor of the Gregg Graniteville Library.

Registrar/Records Office

The office of the Registrar is responsible for a variety of ongoing services for the current student population at USCA.

The office gathers and records the grades for all undergraduate students and implements the university's suspension and probation policy by tracking and keeping all related records of students on suspension and probation. Other services pertaining to a student's permanent record include name and address updates and proper recording and filing of all academic decisions and exceptions on students.

Students wishing to graduate from USCA must complete a graduation application available in Self-Service Carolina no later than the published date for that semester.

This office provides an academic calendar used by the entire university and also produces the USCA Bulletin and the master schedule of classes. Room scheduling for campus functions is handled in this office as well.

The Registrar's office also provides Self Service Carolina (SSC), which is a web system for students to use in registration and financial transactions. Students can access SSC from anywhere they have internet access. SSC is also the only means by which students receive grades. The address <http://my.usca.edu/> provides instructions on how to set up and use this type of account.

Students and alumni can also request official transcripts of their courses and grades by going to www.usca.edu and in the "A to Z" index, click on the "T" for transcripts.

Writing Center

The Writing Center, located in H&SS 112 and 119, provides support for student writing through collaborative discussion, workshops, and advice. Writing consultants come from a range of disciplines, provide feedback during all phases of the writing process, and coach students to become better editors and proofreaders of their own drafts.

The Writing Center offer a full computer lab, printing, space for individual and group consultations, and a range of resources. Writing Center consultations are available in person and online by appointment with some availability for in-person walk-in consultations.

Workshop, event, and contact information can be found at <http://www.usca.edu/writing-center>. For more information, email writingroom@usca.edu.

University Police

The University Police office is located at 805-B Leadership Drive in front of Pacer Downs. The USC Aiken campus is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by state-commissioned police officers. These officers are responsible for protecting members of the campus community, enforcing the law, and maintaining the

physical security of the campus. The officers also attempt to deter crime through the application of crime prevention techniques and high visibility. For information go to <https://www.usca.edu/campus-safety>.

The office provides many services to the campus community including:

- Criminal investigations
- Parking lot assistance
- Escorts
- Lost and Found
- Emergency phones
- Enforcement of university rules
- Enforcement of all state and local laws
- General information and assistance
- After hours building entry assistance
- Police reports
- First Responder medical assistance
- Issuance/replacement of ID cards
- Issuance of vehicle decals

University Police may be reached by dialing 6111 on-campus, 803-648-4011 off-campus, or by using one of the emergency call boxes located around campus.

Emergency Notification

University of South Carolina Aiken students are automatically enrolled in campus emergency siren, text, phone and email alerts on their first day at the university. Your emergency contact information is available and can be updated at <https://myaccount.sc.edu>.

We encourage all students to add their parents, guardians or other emergency contacts as a secondary contact to ensure they receive alerts about campus emergencies or safety practices. You can do that by visiting <https://myaccount.sc.edu>.

When students are no longer enrolled at the university, their emergency contact information as well as that of their contacts is automatically purged from the system.

Emergency Telephones

Emergency telephones are provided at multiple locations on the campus. These devices provide direct access to University Police at all times. Additionally, University Police may be reached by dialing 6111 from any on-campus phone or 803-648-4011 from any other phone.

Escorts

To ensure safe passage to and from vehicles, university housing, classes, and buildings on campus, University Police officers will serve as escorts upon request. Students desiring this assistance should request it by calling University Police at 648-4011 or 6111 from an on-campus telephone or from one of the emergency phones located throughout the campus.

Cameras

Security cameras are located across campus. As areas are identified, additional cameras are added. The cameras can be monitored in the police department as well as patrol cars.

Off-Campus Housing

If off-campus housing is being considered, students and parents should be aware that Aiken County is served by three separate law enforcement departments, with jurisdiction determined by the location within the City of Aiken, the City of North Augusta, or the balance of the County, which is served by the office of the Sheriff of Aiken County.

Please contact rental agents for the County or City emergency numbers that might be helpful such as fire, police, and hospital. In addition, USC Aiken strongly suggests that all students considering off-campus housing contact the appropriate law enforcement department for specific crime and safety information about the residential areas under consideration.

Local Law Enforcement Contact Points

Aiken County Sheriff's Office

803-642-1761 or 911 for emergencies – www.aikencountysheriff.org

City of Aiken Public Safety

803-642-7620 or 911 for emergencies - www.adps.aiken.net

City of North Augusta Public Safety

803-279-2121 – www.northaugusta.net

Parking and Traffic Safety Policies and Procedures

Current parking decals are required by all students, faculty and staff and they must be obtained through the University Police. These decals should be displayed on the driver's side lower corner of the front windshield. Parking on campus without a permit will result in a ticket and subsequent fine. Fines must be paid in the Business Services office located in the Penland Building.

There are four parking lots on campus which students can use. Parking lots A and B are located in the front of campus and parking lots C and D are located on either side of the Etherredge Center. Other parking areas such as behind the softball field and adjacent to the Senior Net Learning Center are considered main lots and all parking rules apply. Students may park in any of the spaces marked with white lines. The yellow marked spaces are reserved for faculty and staff until 2:00 p.m.

Parking in any spaces other than those designed for students will result in a ticket and subsequent fine. Students who live in USC Aiken student housing will be issued a special parking permit which will allow them to park in the campus housing parking lots. Students with this special decal can also park in Lots A through D, except from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Students who do not live in campus housing and do not have a special parking decal are not permitted to park in the housing parking lots and are subject to fines, booting of their vehicle, and towing if they do so.

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Parking and Traffic Regulations

- A. Rules and regulations for parking and traffic control at the USCA campus are indicated by printed guides, campus maps, signs, and street curb markings.
 - 1) Yellow curb indicates no parking and/or limited parking (i.e. 15 minute parking). In addition, parking is prohibited at fire plugs, fire lands, sidewalks, walkways, grass, lawns, intersections, driveways, or alleyways unless indicated by signs. At no time should service drives and trash pickup areas be blocked.
 - 2) Faculty/staff parking spaces are indicated by yellow lines; student parking spaces are indicated by white lines.
 - 3) The campus speed limit is 14 miles per hour unless otherwise posted. However, everyone is expected to operate vehicles in a safe manner commensurate with road and weather conditions.
 - 4) In the event a vehicle becomes inoperable on campus, University Police should be notified immediately. Steps should be taken to move the vehicle from the street or other hazardous position to a parking space. If the vehicle is not moved within a reasonable amount of time, the vehicle will be towed at the owner's expense. Jumper cables are supplied by University Police 24 hours a day.
 - 5) All parking vehicles should be locked and valuables should not be left in unoccupied vehicles at any time. Report thefts or damage to University Police (ext. 6111) for investigation or other action.
- B. Booting, towing, and/or impounding vehicles - According to State law, the appropriate campus official responsible for law enforcement and public safety or designee shall have the power to have a vehicle impounded, towed, and stored at the owner's expense and risk under the following conditions:
 - 1) If the motor vehicle is parked in a fire lane.
 - 2) If the motor vehicle is parked in a handicapped space without benefit of a handicapped permit or is parked in such a way as to block a curb cut for the handicapped.
 - 3) If the motor vehicle is parked on a yellow curb or in such a way as to block a driveway, to block a service entrance, or to create a hazard to safety.
 - 4) If the motor vehicle is parked in a permit-only area without the benefit of a permit; no parking after 12 a.m. midnight without a permit, towing enforced in all lots.
 - 5) If three or more traffic violations in one academic year have been issued against said vehicle.
- C. Violations, penalties, and bonds

The driver and/or owner or person in whose name a vehicle is registered shall be responsible for all violations incurred by the vehicle. Penalties and/or bonds are payable in person or by mail at the Business Services office during regular working hours Monday through Friday. Do not send cash.

Schedule of Penalties: Fine

Parking improperly - \$20.00

Parking permit is improperly displayed - \$10.00

Parking in a no parking area - \$50.00

Parking in a service or loading zone - \$25.00
Block sidewalks and driveways - \$25.00
Parking in a reserved space - \$25.00
Parking in a no parking safety zone, fire land, or blocking a fire hydrant - \$50.00
Parking on grass - \$25.00
Parked on a yellow curb - \$50.00
Failure to register a vehicle - \$20.00
Parking in student housing lot by a non-resident - \$25.00
Housing residents improperly parking in main lots from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Monday through Friday - \$25.00
Parking in a space designated for people with disabilities or blocking a space or curb cut - \$75.00
Speeding on campus - \$50.00
Booting of a vehicle - \$50.00
First offense driving in an unsafe manner/obstructing campus operations - \$25.00
Second offense driving in an unsafe manner/obstructing campus operations - \$50.00
Failure to obey police officers' instructions - \$50.00

D. Appeals

Any person desiring to appeal any parking or traffic violation which he/she feels may have been given through error or without just cause must do so within 72 hours after the time of issuance (Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays excepted); otherwise, the right to appeal is forfeited. Appeal forms are available at the University Police office and on the University Police Department's webpage: <http://www.usca.edu/university-police/>. Appeals are reviewed on a regular basis and a final determination is made. Notification is made by university email address.

Student Code of Conduct

The Student Code of Conduct applies to ALL students enrolled at the university, regardless of institutional or program affiliation. This applies to all students whether the event occurs on or off-campus. If you are enrolled and engage in student misconduct off-campus, you may be held accountable through the university's Judicial System.

COST OF LIVING OFF CAMUS

Personal Budgets

Rent in Aiken and the surrounding area can vary. The average rent is likely to be somewhere between \$300-\$800 per month, plus utilities. Some landlords include basic utilities in the monthly rent, such as Water & Sewer, Cable-TV or Internet.

Paying rent is not your only expense when living off-campus. Create a simple budget and use it as a guideline to determine how much you can afford to pay in rent. Your rent should be no more than 20-30% of your monthly income.

Depending on the season and type of Heating/AC in the apartment, Electricity or Natural Gas can range from \$75-\$300 each month. Consider finding a roommate to split the costs and share living space. Click here for a sample Budget ([hyperlink to PDF](#))

Finding a place to live off campus

If you're looking for a rental home or apartment:

- Go through the local newspapers and look in the Classifieds section under "For Rent".
- Visit the local rental agencies to get a copy of their rental listings. Borrow their Rental Keys to see the property in-person.

- Walk through the rental property. Take your checklist with you and make note of any items of concern.
- Take a look around the neighborhood. Is it quiet? On a Busy Street? Does the property look well kept?
- Check the Crime Stats for that neighborhood. The local law enforcement will usually give you a copy of their incident reports or talk with you about the type of criminal activities that often occur in that area.

Some of the larger apartment complexes in the Aiken community are listed below. These off-campus properties are not affiliated with the USC Aiken.

The housing application

The property manager may require you to complete an application and submit a deposit to reserve the rental. The application fee covers the property manager's cost of running a credit check, criminal background check, and general processing costs. The deposit to reserve the rental may be different from the Security Deposit.

The property manager may require that you have a Co-Signer if you don't meet income requirements. The Co-Signer is often a parent or guardian and they may be required to show proof of their income. A property manager may require: credit references, a security deposit, up to 2-months rent and/or references from previous property managers.

Fair Housing Law

Fair Housing Laws protect you against discrimination based on race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, sex/gender, marital status, number of children in the family, age, mental disability, physical disability, learning disability, legal source of income or participation in Section 8 or a Rental Assistance Program. Housing Discrimination is when a person/family is treated differently when trying to buy, rent, lease or sell a home or apartment. Discrimination can take many forms.

Finding a roommate

If you decide to live with a roommate(s), finding the right one(s) is just as important as finding the right place to live. Your roommate(s) will impact your social life, financial decisions and off-campus safety. They can be a lot of fun, or a lot of stress.

Even if your best friend wants to be your roommate, you have to be realistic in your expectations of how well the two of you would get along in sharing a living space. Living with someone off-campus can be more complicated than if you shared a room in one of the residence halls on-campus. Unlike on-campus housing, you cannot just switch rooms during room-change if you have signed a lease.

Consider these lifestyle questions when choosing a roommate:

- What are your study habits (quiet vs music, etc)
- Do you split the grocery bills or share groceries?
- How is space to be divided?
- Who will chores be divided?
- Cleaning of common areas?
- Yardwork?
- Who will setup the Utility accounts?
- Is smoking allowed? If the rental allows pets, will you or your roommate HAVE a pet? Is anyone allergic to animals?
- If you want to throw a party, when & how often should they occur?
- How do your roommates feel about locking doors & windows?

Enter into a lease with someone only after the two of you have a clear understanding of each other's expectations. Once way to get some of the basic issues clarified is to create a rental agreement with your roommate.

Roommate rental agreement

The purpose of a Roommate Rental Agreement is to set up basic guidelines at the beginning of a lease to determine the responsibilities of all persons living in that apartment. It's best to have all roommates sign and date the agreement, giving everyone a copy. A *sample* roommate agreement can be found under Additional Resources at the end of this guide.

The Roommate Rental Agreement should include the following:

- The agreed dollar amount that each tenant is responsible to pay for rent. Rent may be split equally, or can vary according to bedroom size.
- Who pays the utility bills and how the costs will be split among the rooms.

- Who is responsible for paying the Security Deposit and will the deposit be split among roommates?
- If the property is damaged, who will take care of the damage and/or pay for its repair?
- Expectations regarding guests, academics and study time.

Signing a lease

Don't rush into signing a lease before reading the fine print! Make sure that all terms are well-defined and written in clear, concise language. You have the right to edit the lease before signing. The bottom line, read the lease carefully BEFORE you sign it!

A lease is a legal document that outlines you and the property manager's responsibilities; it does not just reserve you a place to live. It can be very short or long with lots of details. See the Lease Checklist at the end of this guide for a list of things typically mentioned in a lease. A lease can be negotiable, so ask the property manager if they will negotiate any clause of the lease that you do not like. They may say no, but it is worth asking. If they will not change the clause, you may want to live somewhere else.

Here are a few common issues that should be specified in the lease:

- Amount of Rent
- Date the rent is due each month
- Amount charged if the rent is paid late
- Length of the Rental Period (6-months, 12-months, etc)
- Amount of Security Deposit & Return Date/Agreement
- Who is responsible for repairs
- Which repairs will be done by the landlord
- Whether sub-leasing is allowed, and under what terms
- Definition of when a landlord may enter your property
- Are Pets Allowed? If so, is there a Pet Deposit?

Sub-leasing

Sub-leasing is when the Tenant (you) sign a Lease with the Property Manager and then the Tenant (you) rents-out a room/apartment/house to another person. If you sublease, you remain on the original lease and are responsible for all lease provisions and actions of the new Tenant until the end of the original lease agreement. Remember, the sublease is SEPARATE from the Lease. It is always best to get permission from your property manager before trying to sublease your place. A landlord might prohibit subleasing.

Security deposit

A security deposit is usually in the amount of one or two months' rent. It usually must be paid at the time that the Property Manager/Landlord and Tenant (you) sign the lease. Upon the termination of the lease, the landlord must return the security deposit to the tenant if no violations of the lease occurred. He/she may keep the entire security deposit or return a portion of the amount due to any damages, which can be proven, as agreed upon in the Lease.

Before moving into your rental, inspect it and write down anything that is need of repair, damaged or hazardous. If the property manager does not provide a checklist form, you can use the "Move-In/Out Checklist" at the end of this resource guide. If you find something wrong with the rental & it is not listed on the checklist, make a note of it under the additional comments section. Ideally, the property manager should be with you while you are inspecting the property. After the inspection, ask the property manager to sign the checklist to make sure that you both agree on the condition of the rental before you move-in. If the property manager is not available during your initial inspection, send them a copy of your findings. It is best to video or photograph your inspections. Take pictures of EVERYTHING. Make sure the photos/video have a date/time stamp. Repeat the process when you move-out to help prove your case to the property manager if he/she refuses to refund your Security Deposit. When moving-out, make sure to leave your new address so the Property Manager can mail the refund.

Cost of utilities

Before you move in, call the Utility Companies to make sure that you have service at that address. Many Utility Companies require a Deposit and some charge a Connection Fee to turn on the service. Deposits are usually returned at the end of service (when you move out) or after a set amount of time. Remember to disconnect these utilities when you move out!

Discuss Utility Bills with your roommate(s) up front. Talk about the usage of electricity/gas heat/water and other services and determine how the bills will be divided. If a roommate decides NOT to pay their portion of the bill, be sure to pay the entire amount on time, especially if it's in your name. You can settle your personal differences with the roommate later. You don't want the Utility Company to add late fees and other penalties. Not only can they shut-off your utilities (electricity, heat, water, etc), but it can impact your credit in a negative way. A Roommate Agreement is a helpful way to determine responsibility and hold roommates accountable.

Renter's insurance

Do you have about \$10 a month to ensure that all your belongings will be replaced in the event of a fire, tornado, theft or vandalism? You can usually find cheap Renters Insurance online by comparing multiple home insurance companies. Many people who already have a car insurance policy, healthcare coverage or life policy may simply add their renters insurance to their existing coverage policy. Many insurance companies will offer a discount when you bundle plans. In addition to insuring your valuables and personal property, you will also be protecting yourself against lawsuits with liability protection. If a person is injured in your home that is not due to a problem with the actual structure of the home, they can sue you. If you have a renter's insurance policy however, you can protect yourself from any litigation that might result from someone injuring him/herself while visiting your home. Your property manager may have insurance to cover the physical structure of the rental, but it usually does not cover your possessions inside that structure. Therefore, your property manager will likely have NO legal responsibility to cover or protect your stuff. For a list of Insurance Agents in the Aiken community, go online to www.greenwoodschamber.org/members.

If you have a pet

Some property managers will allow pets if you provide a "Pet Deposit". Make sure you understand if the deposit is refundable and if so, that should be included as part of your signed Lease. Other property managers do not allow pets inside the rental or on the property. The only situation where the Property Manager cannot prohibit or require a Pet Deposit is in the case of an assistance animal for a person with a disability, such as seeing-eye dogs. If your lease prohibits pets, your property manager has the right to evict you if you bring a pet onto the property. If your property manager agrees to allow pets, get the terms in writing.

Pet Responsibilities:

- Pets are a lot of responsibility! Your pets rely on you for fresh food and water.
- Clean up after your pet and make sure your pet is properly immunized.
- Keep your pet under control. Don't let your pet disturb the neighbors by barking or running loose.
- Find out if you need insurance or a license for your dog. Certain breeds of dogs are deemed dangerous and the pet owner may be required to maintain liability insurance, even if the pet has never been a problem.
- If you are aware that your dog has bitten or attacked someone in the past, you may be liable civilly and/or criminally if your dog attacks someone.
- If you can't control your pet, you may be liable for fines, court costs and any injuries inflicted by your pet.
- If you find that you can no longer take care of your pet, do not abandon your pet! Contact the local animal shelter to help them find a new home. The Aiken County Animal Shelter can be reached online at <https://www.aikencountysc.gov/DspOfc?qOfcID=CEDAS> or by calling 803-641-1537 and the SCPA shelter can be reached online at <https://www.letlovelive.org/> or by calling 803-648-6863.

Smart rental tips

- Consider renters insurance. It's an in-expensive way to protect your personal belongings if they are damaged, or protect yourself from being held liable if someone gets injured in your apartment
- For a better chance of getting a return of your Security Deposit, take photos and document the condition of the property before you move in! When you move-out, these photos/documents can verify the condition of the property before you moved in.
- Don't agree to any verbal changes to the written lease. All changes should be agreed upon and signed by you and the landlord. Keep a copy for your records.
- Follow all procedures to pay the rent, and if possible, do not pay in cash. If cash is your only option, then get a receipt from the property manager.
- Check smoke detectors and know where the fire extinguishers are located.
- Contact your landlord at the first sign of any problems such as repairs needed. Follow-up in writing and document everything. Keep a copy for yourself.

- If the landlord does NOT complete a repair in a reasonable amount of time, and it affects your health or safety, then he/she is not fulfilling the contract.
- Keep your apartment safe and sanitary. Get rid of garbage in a clean and safe manner.
- Use appliances properly and prevent others from damaging your place.
- When you move out, make sure that it is clean and in the same condition it was in when you first moved in. Leave a forwarding address for your landlord to send your security deposit.

Be a good neighbor

As a member of the Aiken community, you now have a set of responsibilities and expectations that come with being part of your surrounding neighborhood. Sometimes conflicts come up between neighbors, and usually arise as a result of poor communication. The most common conflicts are:

- Noise and nuisance complaints (parties, vehicles, etc)
- Parking problems and occupancy concerns
- Animal disturbances (excessive barking, etc)
- Safety issues such as speeding cars
- Property maintenance/up-keep (or lack of)

You can avoid some of the problems with these simple steps:

- Introduce yourself to your neighbors & exchange phone numbers.
- Get to know your neighbors by asking about their interests, professions and family.
- Keep your property clean and don't leave trash scattered around your yard
- Take care of your lawn, cut the grass if that is part of your rental agreement.
- Be considerate of neighbors at night by keeping noise to a low volume
- Handle any problems politely and maturely

Responsible party hosting

If you decide to throw a party, check your Lease and the City Ordinances to determine any restrictions that might prevent you from hosting the party (guest limits, keg restrictions, parking, noise restrictions, etc). Keep in mind, the university's Student Code of Conduct applies to your behavior off-campus.

Before the party:

- Only invite people you know
- Decide what time the party will END with your roommates.
- Designate "Sober Monitors" to enforce house rules, talk with police if they show up, and find a sober driver to get your intoxicated guests safely home.
- Let your neighbors know about the party a few days before.

During the Party:

- In SC, you must be 21-years old to drink beer, wine or liquor. Make sure those guests who are drinking alcohol are of LEGAL DRINKING AGE!
- If a guest is drinking too much alcohol (or too fast) – by all means, slow them down!
- Call 911 immediately if there is an emergency
- Keep the noise level down & watch out for other problems that could result in a Police visit.
- If police do arrive, allow them to do their job without interference and follow all police instructions.

Ending the Party:

- Turn on the Lights / Turn off the Music
- Put away the Alcohol and begin serving only soda, water or coffee
- Make sure your intoxicated guests have a sober driver take them home.

After the Party:

- Make sure your yard is free from party trash (cups, bottles) and check on the neighbor's yard too.
- Ask your neighbors if they had any problems from the party. If so, discuss how to resolve it.

If serving alcohol,

- As a party host, you are responsible for your guests' health.
- You can be held legally responsible for your guests' behavior *after* they leave your party
- Don't collect money at the door to help cover cost of alcohol (It is Illegal)

Alcohol Poisoning

A person who is unconscious or can't be roused is at risk of dying. Do not leave the person alone! Watch for these signs of Alcohol Poisoning and Dial 911 for help!

- Confusion, Stupor
- Vomiting
- Seizures
- Slow or Irregular Breathing
- Blue-Tinged Skin
- Pale Skin
- Low Body Temperature
- Unconscious / Passes Out

Rental issues with a property manager

The following information is for educational purposes only. It is not legal advice from the university.

In general, the Tenants are the ones responsible for informing the Property Manager about any repairs or maintenance needed. The Property Manager makes repairs and makes sure that your rental meets state and local Fire, Housing and Health codes! If you've informed the Property Manager about the repairs needed and he/she does not respond, you cannot withhold the rent, but you do have some options.

1. Send a written letter by Mail (certified to make sure it was received) asking the Property Manager to make repairs. Keep a copy for your files.
2. Contact the local housing code office to file a complaint. If you don't file an official complaint to the code enforcement office or agency, you won't be able to take the case to court.
3. Finally, File the case with the Court.

Eviction

In some cases, property managers may force tenants to leave before their lease ends. This is called an "Eviction". If a property manager gives you an Eviction Notice, remember that Tenants have many rights, and if a property manager does not handle the eviction process in a legal manner, you may want to seek the advice of an attorney.

When you have a written lease, property managers can evict you for the following reasons:

- Failure to vacate the premises after the lease ends
- Failure to pay rent after it is due (indicated in the lease)
- Breaking a serious law (like buying/selling drugs)
- Breaking clauses in the lease, or being a legal nuisance

Eviction Process

- Property Manager issues a "Notice to Quit" telling the Tenant (you) to vacate the premises by a certain date.
- If you choose not to move-out by that date, the Property Manager then files a "Summons and Complaint". This will include an official court paper with the words "return date", indicating when the "Appearance Document" must be filed with a court (not when the Tenant appears before the court)
- Do not ignore the "Summons & Complaint" or you will LOSE the eviction case by default.
- Go to Clerk of Court's Office to request an "Appearance Document".
- Complete the Appearance Document & return to the Clerk of Court. (They can help you fill it out) If you complete & return all of this paperwork properly, you will have an opportunity to defend your actions in court. If you have a written lease that is still in effect, you retain basic Tenant rights. This means that your property manager cannot lock you out of the house/apartment or take other actions against you unless they file separate complaints.

Rental search

This checklist can be used when you are visiting potential rentals.

Terms & Conditions

	Rental #1	Rental #2	Rental #3
Amount of Rent			
Rent Due Date			
Amount of Security Deposit			
Maximum No. Occupants			
Late Fees			
Penalty for Breaking Lease			
Subleasing Allowed?			
Trash/Recycling Service			
Utilities Included			
Pets Allowed? Fees?			
LIVING SPACE:			
Size of Living Room			
Type of Flooring (wood, carpet, vinyl, etc)			
Number Electric Outlets			
Furnished or Un-Furnished			
BEDROOM:			
Number Bedrooms / Size			
Number Electric Outlets			
Enough Closet Space			
Blinds / Curtains			
Furnished or Un-Furnished			
Type of Flooring (wood, carpet, vinyl, etc)			
UTILITIES:			
Air Conditioning (Window Unit or Central)			
Heat Source (Gas, Electric, Oil)			
Cable-TV Connection			
Washer-Dryer Hook-up			
Landline Phone Connection			
Internet Connection			
Parking available / Fees?			
KITCHEN:			
Refrigerator (Condition)			
Dishwasher (Condition)			
Stove (Gas or Electric/condition)			
Microwave (Condition)			
Condition of Sink/Faucet			
Is the Kitchen Clean?			
BATHROOM:			
Number of Bathrooms			
Condition of the Toilet			
Are the electrical outlets grounded in the bathroom?			
Is the Bathroom Clean			
NEIGHBORHOOD:			
Type of Neighborhood (Student, Family, Mixed, Business, Senior)			
Distance to USC Aiken			
Distance to Grocery Stores, Banks, Pharmacy, etc			
Is a Laundry Service nearby?			
Do you feel SAFE in the neighborhood?			
Transportation Options			

SAFETY:			
Passed a Housing Inspection?			
Emergency Exits			
Fire Extinguishers			
Smoke Detectors (especially in bedrooms)			
Windows Open/Close easily?			
Screens on the Windows?			
Door Locks work properly			
Lighting Outside the Rental			

Checklist for a Lease Agreement

Read the lease very carefully. Do not sign a lease or any agreement until every statement is fully clear to you. You have the right to omit parts of the lease that you don't agree with (If the Landlord agrees to it the changes). All changes to the lease should be made in writing. Both you and the Landlord should initial and date the changes on the lease. Keep copies of all signed documents.

RENT: Amount: _____ Due Date: _____ Late Charges: _____
Where to send Rent Payments: _____

SECURITY DEPOSIT:
Amount of Security Deposit: _____ Date of Return: _____
Conditions for Security Deposit Return: _____

MOVE-IN COSTS:
Total Due to Landlord at Time of Signing Lease (Security Deposit, 1st Month): _____

UTILITIES:
Which Utilities paid by Landlord: _____
Utilities paid by Tenant (You): _____
Who pays for Trash/Recycling Service: _____ Cost: _____
Who is responsible for Lawn Care: _____ Cost: _____

PARKING:
Parking Available: _____ Number Spaces: _____ Cost: _____
Guest Parking: _____ Number Spaces: _____ Cost: _____

PETS:
Are Pets allowed: Yes ___ No ___ Amount of Pet Deposit: _____
Animals allowed (dog, cat, etc): _____ Number Pets allowed: _____

DAMAGES AND REPAIRS:
Who is responsible for damages: _____ How is damage determined _____
Who is responsible for repairs: _____
Landlord/Maintenance Contact Info: _____

OCCUPANCY:
Move-In Date: _____ Move-Out Date: _____
Can the Rent be raised? _____ Max No. Occupants Allowed: _____
Is Smoking allowed? _____ Smoking Restrictions: _____
Number of Guests allowed: _____ Guest Restrictions: _____
Property Storage: _____ Are Waterbeds Allowed: _____
Restrictions on Painting, Hanging Pictures by Tenant: _____
Improvements planned by Landlord? _____
If so, what is expected completion date: _____