

I would like to give you some advice when you are about to rent a second-hand accommodation; this means a private person who rents out his or her room/apartment.

Quite recently we have had a few incidents where people got 'scammed'. This means that they signed a contract (or paid a deposit in advance) to a person who is not in the position to rent out the proposed accommodation. This usually happens on Internet sites where people can place advertisements at no cost. This is usually a great way to find accommodation as most of the advertisers have the right intentions. I would like to suggest you consider the following 9 advice though.

(You should **not be afraid** to find an accommodation this way, most of the advertisements there are legitimate and it is still one of the best possibilities for international Master students to secure housing! It is good however, to take the following advice)

1. Normally **we advice against paying a deposit fee or rent in advance**. If a deposit fee is asked, agree to pay it when you move in, when you sign the contract or have the keys in your hand . With the current housing situation however, it puts landlords in a 'better position'. So in the end you might be forced to pay something in advance, if you don't do it someone else might.

If you are being asked to pay in advance, ask for a Swedish bank and account number. Better yet, if you've been able to speak to the association president (see point 3) and are sure it's real, you can offer to leave payment with the president in escrow rather than wiring money to who knows where. This will guarantee that you aren't being scammed, and if the person renting to you is legit they should not complain.

2. **If there is a deposit fee it should not exceed one month's rent**. If you agree on a rent that is 3000 SEK, the deposit fee should not be higher than 3000 SEK.
3. Ask whether they own the apartment or are renting from someone, and for the name and number of the president of the housing association or rental company. Also ask whether they have permission to be subletting (even if they own it, they must have permission from the association). **All apartments in Sweden, whether owned or rented, must be part of an association**. If they tell you it's not, they're probably lying. Once you get the number to the president, you can give them a call and make sure it's all-legitimate.
4. **Ask whether you can arrange for someone to look at the place for you** (even if you don't actually have anyone to look at it). That's usually a good way to check if it's real, they will be willing to do it. If it's not, they will come up with an excuse.
5. The rent you are charged cannot exceed the rent your landlord pays. If the apartment is furnished, a mark-up of around 10 % of the rent is often seen as reasonable. Furthermore, the rent is highly based on the location of the accommodation. A rent of 2000 SEK for an apartment in the city centre is too perfect to be true!
6. **Make sure that you get as much information about the person that is renting out his/her room as possible. Name, personal identity number, copy passport, email, phone number etc.**

7. **Check that the ad seems correct.** Use Google Maps for example. Sometimes the scam is easy to identify simply because the address provided does not exist or it refers to an office complex or industrial building.

Often it is written “2min from university”. Uppsala does not have one campus, but university departments are spread all over the city so the distance will largely depend on where your department is situated.

8. **Never agree to let the keys send to you by post!** Always agree to meet the person at the accommodation. In case he/she cannot be there at that time (make sure that you ask why he/she can not be there) and arrange to meet someone else, and make sure you have contacted this person about the situation. Also make sure to have different means of contacting this person (e-mail, mobile phone, address).
9. The hardest thing for you as an international student is to know if everything in the contract is legal. It is best to pursue to sign a standard contract, you can find one in English here:  
<http://www.uppsalastudentkar.nu/en/housing/housingcontracts>

Regardless of what the contract looks like it should contain:

- Both the contact details of yourself, and the person that is renting out the accommodation.
- The duration of the contract as well as rules about termination.
- The exact address of the room/apartment. Often apartments have one central front door, which then leads to the different rooms/apartment. The central door has one number, which is valid for every room, and every room has a unique room number. It can look something like this Uppsalagatan 20 B.
- The exact size of the accommodation in square meters.
- How much the monthly rent is, when it should be paid, if there is a deposit fee and how and when it will be returned to you.
- If the bathroom/kitchen is shared or if you have your own.
- If the electricity, heating, water and/or Internet connection is included in the rent, and if not how this should be paid.
- A list of furniture (if it is a furnished accommodation) that is present in the accommodation at the moving in date, as well as a list of possible damages/defects.

In any case if you feel insecure about your contract or landlord, feel free to contact the Student Union any time with your questions!

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