

Where Are You Going To Live?

Finding A Home

There are a lot of housing options around Duke. If you plan to get a car, do not worry too much if you find accommodation a bit far from campus. Durham is small but spread out, and many students live in the surrounding towns, such as Chapel Hill or Cary.

Before deciding where you will live, look up the distance between your accommodation choice and the law school on Google Maps. You can check how long it will take you by bike, car and walking. Note that some areas look walkable on the map but are not in practice. For example, Duke Forest and Lakewood have few footpaths to campus. The Erwin Road area is usually an easy walk to campus.

Apartment Complexes

Most LLMs choose to rent one or two-bedroom apartments in apartment complexes. Many of these complexes include swimming pools and gyms.

Around The Law School

[Lofts at Lakeview](#) is relatively close to the Law School but quite expensive (you should ask for a quote before renting as prices constantly fluctuate for any apartment complex). Two other options in this area are [The Flats Exchange on Erwin](#) and [Trinity Commons](#). All these apartment complexes are situated in the same area. Hence, you will definitely have classmates living close by. Also, they are all within a 15 to 20-minute walk from the Law School. However, they are far from downtown's cafes and bars (7-8-minute drive), and the closest grocery store is Harris Teeter, with a 25-minute walk (but DoorDash is always an option). Nevertheless, they have several eating spots very close by, including Enzo's Pizza (*see [Places To Eat And Drink](#)*).

Within walking distance of the Law School, the [Belmont](#) apartment complex usually gets many LLMs. This is a mid to high-priced option. If you do not feel like walking, there is a Duke Bus stop just across the street that takes you close to the Law School. People living at the [Heights LaSalle](#) also utilize this transportation option, as it is right outside their complex. The Heights LaSalle might be a little more expensive compared to the Belmont, but you can see the difference in quality. Belmont and Heights LaSalle are within a 15-minute walk from Harris Teeter, the nearest grocery store.

In the same neighborhood, closer to the supermarket but further from the law school, is the [Duke Manor](#) apartment complex. This apartment complex is cheaper than the others in the area and has the advantage of having good furniture rental deals. However, it is a bit unsafe.

Downtown

[605 West End](#) and [West Village](#) are closer to downtown Durham than the Law School but still on bus lines. In previous years, some LLMs also lived at [Solis Brightleaf](#) in this area. In recent years some LLMs have opted for [Cortland Bull City](#), [Whetstone](#) and [Van Alen](#) apartments, which offer diverse options in

downtown Durham. Van Alen and Cortland Bull City offer the best amenities in Durham. However, note that these apartments have a limited number of grocery stores within walking distance.

Ninth Street

[810 Ninth Street](#), [Station Nine](#) and [Berkshire Apartments](#) are good options if you want to be right on Ninth Street, where you will find large supermarkets (Harris Teeter and Whole Foods), several restaurants, cafes, an independent bookstore and other stores. [Blue Light Living](#) is a new apartment complex that is close to Ninth Street. It offers furnished apartments and short-term lease options. This apartment complex has a bus that can take you to Duke Campus. However, note that the bus did not always function efficiently. It also has a Duke bus stop nearby which goes straight to the Duke Chapel, at a 10-minute walk to the Duke Law School.

Other Areas

Some students decided to stay in [Chapel Tower Apartments](#) or [Campus Walk Apartments](#), which are not apartment complexes but open stairwell buildings/houses. These options are somewhat closer to the law school and cheaper, but you are not provided with the same amenities and security apartment complexes provide.

Another area is Trinity Park/East Campus. This is a leafy area, within walking distance to the Brodie Gym and Ninth Street. If you have a car, it is a ten-minute drive to the Law School. A bus from the East Campus Quad can also take you straight to West Campus and the Law School in 5 minutes. In addition, the area is bikeable by Durham standards. Trinity Park/East Campus accommodations, such as [Trinity Properties](#), can be cheaper as it is mostly houses rather than new apartment complexes.

Another apartment complex is the [501 Estates](#), at a 10-15 minutes distance by car from the University. It is recently renovated with full amenities, including study rooms, a barbeque, and a pool.

[MAA Patterson](#) is an apartment complex in a safe area, with good surroundings in terms of grocery stores, restaurants and cafes. It is a 9 minute drive to the Law School.

Good deals are also available at [Croasdaile](#) apartments (5-minute drive to school) – not as luxurious as the complexes above, but very friendly with helpful staff and a quiet area. Other places include University Apartments, Pinnacle Ridge, Alden Place, Poplar West, Holly Hill, Springfield, North Pointe Commons and American Tobacco.

Please note that many of these complexes may require that you have a CAR as they are not as close to the Law School and public transportation may be difficult, so be sure to check this before you arrive.

In 2022-2023, the LLM students were spread across all these and other locations and it is fair to say the vast majority of people were happy with their choice. The apartment complexes with the most LLMs were the Belmont and Blue Light Living.

Other types of housing

Some LLMs used Facebook groups to find groups of Duke students living together in houses that needed to replace an outgoing roommate. These students were happy with their decision. They generally only needed to furnish their bedroom (but were often able to purchase furniture from the outgoing roommate). The rent is usually cheaper than to rent a one-bedroom apartment. If you would like to consider this option, you should explore Facebook groups, such as the [Duke Law Buy/Sell group](#). One suburb that is popular with students is Old West Durham.

You can check out [DukeList](#), which is updated weekly and has a small number of housing listings. There are also ads for people looking for roommates. Some LLMs found a house to rent thanks to DukeList. Note that you must have your NetID and password to access DukeList.

Finally, the Student Affairs Office has a website called [near Duke](#) that can be used for finding accommodation in Durham. It offers information and a handy map on the apartment communities near the University.

Remember that apartment complexes within walking distance to the Law School fill up quickly. The Belmont and Heights LaSalle operate on a waiting list system, as do many other complexes so **sign up soon!** If you find an apartment complex near campus that is not mentioned above, please check with the International Studies office before you sign a lease. LLMs this year reported finding their accommodation quite easily from January through August, with May being the most common month that they confirmed their accommodation.

Apartment Reviews: www.apartmentratings.com

Apartment Guide: www.apartmentguide.com

Apartment List: <https://www.apartmentlist.com/nc/durham>

Rent.Com: <http://www.rent.com>

The Student Exchange House at Duke (good option for one-semester exchange students): www.thestudentexchangehouse.com

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Furniture

Buying furniture

Most of the apartments are not furnished. You have to bring your own furniture and pay your own utility bills.

As you settle into your new home, keep in mind that anything you purchase here will likely need to be sold when you leave. Consider this when deciding what furniture you are willing to buy. If you decide to purchase furniture, be prepared to spend at least \$1,300 to furnish a one-bedroom apartment unless you buy from a thrift store like [TROSA](#) or [Durham Rescue Mission](#).

While some people have ordered their furniture from [IKEA](#), it is important to note that there is no local IKEA store, so you may need to order online at least one month in advance and the delivery fees might be

high. Alternatively, some LLM students have rented a truck and made a trip to the IKEA store in Charlotte.

North Carolina is the "furniture state". Hence, local stores also have a good selection of cheap, student-grade furniture that could be useful during your time at Duke. You can also find furniture at [Target](#), [Bed Bath and Beyond](#) and [Walmart](#). Check if they have student discounts! [Amazon](#) is great for ordering bedding, towels and other household items in advance. Make sure you have a drop-off location arranged before your arrival if you decide to go with this option.

Before you start at Duke, you will be provided with a Duke email address. You can get 6 months of free Amazon Prime membership and a \$5 credit via: <https://a.co/27w3S5P>. This can be used for free 1-day shipping.

You can find cheap cookware and dinnerware in [Dollar Tree](#), [TJ Maxx](#) or [Marshalls](#). You can also get your furniture from [DukeList](#), [Craigslist](#), [E-Bay](#), and Facebook groups ([Duke Law Buy/Sell](#), [Fuqualist: Buy/Sale/Lease](#)). Finally, check previous LLMs furniture deals!

Renting furniture

If you prefer to rent furniture, the following companies are good options: [Aarons Furniture](#), [AFR](#) and [Cort](#). They usually charge a monthly fee but any replacements (if needed) are taken care of by the company.

Some of these companies offer student packages. In the end, the quality of the package will depend on your budget

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Additional Housing Advice

Smokers

Make sure the complex you choose allows you to smoke on the balconies. For example, Trinity Commons is an environmentally green complex and does not allow smoking **anywhere**. The Belmont, on the other hand, allows you to smoke on your balcony.

Parking

There is usually plenty of parking available and most places include visitor parking too. However, some of them do not offer covered parking (Trinity, Lofts, Berkshire and Bell West End offer plenty of covered parking). With the amount of rain and frost Durham gets, this is not really a problem.

Lease dates

Something you should ask before deciding where to live is whether the complex offers lease agreements for less than a year. If you want to end the lease before the expiration date, you may have to pay a fee or lose your security deposit. Some complexes, however, like Heights, Belmont, Berkshire, West Village and Trinity Properties offer 10-month or shorter leases. Also, remember to include additional lease time if you are planning to stay in Durham after the LLM to study for a bar exam.

Renter's insurance

Renter's insurance will cover all of the possessions inside your accommodation if they are stolen or damaged. We **strongly encourage** you to purchase renter's insurance, which can often be combined with auto insurance to provide less expensive coverage. Some complexes will require you to have it and they may provide you with names of insurance companies from which you can choose. Information on renter's insurance is available on the [International House website](#). Some LLMs took an "expat insurance" in their home countries, which included the coverage they would have obtained from U.S. renter's insurance.