

# LEARNING CURVE

## Living off-campus 101



ISTOCK

### Kristen Thompson

So, you're ready to move up and move out — not to dorms, but to a rental apartment off-campus, with a landlord, bills, a commute to school and roommates. It's an exciting new stage, but life off-campus comes with new responsibilities, too.

The first one? Landing a place to live.

"It's a tough market out there, and finding your first apartment will take time, so don't wait until the last minute to start looking," says Mr. CBB, who runs the personal finance blog Canadian Budget Binder, and often advises students on how to make the most out of college and university life.

If you wait too long to find a place to live, he explains, you run the risk of getting desperate, and paying for a place outside your budget —

something most students can't afford to do. Do your research early to make sure you land the perfect apartment for your budget and needs.

And while moving off-campus may feel like an upgrade from res life, it does come with some downsides, including a longer commute — and with that, the risk of skipping classes.

"If you are someone who finds commuting a hassle, then perhaps campus life is for you," says Mr. CBB.

"Definitely creating a budget is a must for all students, no matter if they are in a dorm or (rental)," he says.

Bigger cities have higher rents, so take that into account while budgeting, along with other expenses that come with off-campus living, such as commuting costs, utility bills and groceries.

"I'd also consider getting renters insurance if renting off-campus, unless the student is covered under their parent's policy," he says.

Then there is rent. Most students living on-campus pay for their accommodation at the start of every semester. But rent is typically due once a month — and you will be expected to pay on time.

For first-time renters, building a good relationship with your landlord is crucial because they will be your referral for subsequent apartments. So not only do you have to pay your rent, you need to show responsibility and respect for the space.

"A student is no different from anyone else who rents, so keeping the property tidy, paying rent on time and keeping the peace in the neighbourhood is always important," he says.

## Finding law career path starts with paralegal program

Sometimes, the path towards your dream career is not always clear.

For Lindsay McKenzie, finding her path took a couple of years before she decided to pursue her interest in law through the Maritime Business College paralegal diploma program.

"It is tough trying to figure out what career path you want to take in life," she says.

"I have always enjoyed learning about the different aspects of law."

McKenzie moved back to Nova Scotia from Calgary a couple of years ago and spent time working a part-time job and reconnecting with friends and family while she searched for a career that would spark her interest.

When she heard about Maritime Business College through a few friends, McKenzie became intrigued by what they had to offer.

"While meeting with one of the school representatives, I was very impressed with the information given to me about the school and made my final decision on enrolling," she says.



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The 14-month paralegal diploma program at MBC is designed to equip students with the knowledge and practical skills necessary to function effectively as a paralegal or legal assistant.

When McKenzie completes this program, she hopes to find a law firm that will benefit her in the long run, as well as the employees benefitting from her.

"A great working team goes a long way and I wish to find that right fit," she says.

Visit [maritimebusinesscollege.ca](http://maritimebusinesscollege.ca) for more information.