

## 2018-2019 UC Berkeley PMB Grad Housing Guide

### Introduction

The housing market in the Bay Area can be very tight, depending on the year. If you elect to come to Berkeley, you will find that our department and campus have many resources that will allow you to find not just a place to live, but also a place you *want* to live. Most students choose to travel to Berkeley during the summer to find housing, but this is not always necessary.

### Important Resources

Berkeley Rent Stabilization Board: <http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/rent/>

Oakland Housing Counseling: <http://www2.oaklandnet.com/Government/o/hcd/s/HSC/index.htm>

Oakland Rent Adjustment Information: <http://rapwp.oaklandnet.com/>

International House: <http://ihouse.berkeley.edu/>

Ida Jackson Graduate House: [http://www.housing.berkeley.edu/livingatcal/jackson\\_house.html](http://www.housing.berkeley.edu/livingatcal/jackson_house.html)

Graduate Assembly Housing Guide: <https://ga.berkeley.edu/resources/housing-guide/>

Graduate Division: Housing Tips [https://housing.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/pdf/Top\\_10\\_tips.pdf](https://housing.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/pdf/Top_10_tips.pdf)

### Where to live

The majority of graduate students live inside Berkeley. In fact, 80% of students live within 2 miles of campus and can walk, bus, or bike to campus. A number of students, however, live in nearby cities and commute by bus (free bus pass as graduate students), car or by BART. Descriptions of common housing locations follow:

#### 1. South/West Berkeley

- Most popular with undergraduate students, can get noisy
- Mostly apartments/dorms
- Not as quiet/safe as other parts of town. Areas near the Ashby BART and Oakland border, in particular, are known to have higher crime.
- Easy walk/bike to campus

#### 2. North/West Berkeley

- “Gourmet Ghetto” area, lots of restaurants
- Most popular with graduate students
- Safe, residential part of town
- Typically nicer and more expensive than south of campus

#### 3. El Cerrito

- Two BART stations that connect to downtown Berkeley
- 20-30 minute bike to/from campus on side streets



1/8/2019

- Rent typically \$100-\$150 less per person than other areas
- A few bus routes connect to the Berkeley area
- Quiet, safe community.
- Not much commercial development.

#### 4. Albany

- No BART stations, but a number of bus routes.
- Relatively easy bicycle commute
- Rents are comparable to El Cerrito
- Somewhat more commercial development

#### 5. Kensington/Berkeley Hills/North Berkeley

- Very nice residential areas.
- Rental prices >\$100 more than other areas
- Parking can be difficult, depending on location. Street parking much more manageable than places closer to campus.
- Typically long walk (40min) to campus, biking or bus more feasible. Buses often do not run late at night, however.

#### 6. Emeryville

- More commercially developed than other places
- Longer bike or bus commute than other areas
- Can be expensive

#### 7. Rockridge

- Very nice residential area
- Can be difficult (but possible) to find affordable rentals
- Close to BART
- Easy bus and biking options to get to campus.

### **How to find a place to live**

If you plan to return to the area to look for housing, consider a couple of things. First, plan on spending a few days in the area so that you can do a thorough search of your housing options. Also, be sure to bring your financial information (credit report) and a list of references with you so landlords can run background checks, if needed. Also, be sure to bring your letter of acceptance to graduate school so they can verify your status. In addition, many current students would advise you not to come to Berkeley to look for housing until after July 4th so you can find units available on August 1st. Finally be prepared to pay a full month's rent for August, even if you're not moving in until mid-August. Also, keep in mind that many landlords will want to run credit checks when you apply for housing, and it is very common for tenants to pay a security deposit plus first and last month's rent upon signing a lease (up to \$3000). Some landlords may charge an application fee.

There are three common ways to find housing:

1. Cal Rentals: This is a UC sponsored service that maintains a listing of apartments and houses

1/8/2019

listed by landlords. Cal Rentals: <https://och.berkeley.edu/>. **Cal Rentals is free to new and continuing students.** This website also describes on-campus housing opportunities for students as well.

2. Craigslist: Craigslist is a free online bulletin board that is widely used to list housing for rent. You can search by neighborhood, and even though there's usually a little more legwork involved, most students are able to find good housing deals using this service. It is the most common method used by grad students to find housing in Berkeley. <http://www.craigslist.org>
3. Staying in touch with the department and graduate students: Very often, current graduate students change apartments over the summer. Sometimes it is possible for new students to move in, either by joining the current lease, or by starting a new one. Landlords like graduate students and are often willing to continue a lease to other grad students. As we find out about grad students leaving a unit available, we can forward this information to incoming students.

## **General Housing Options**

### **Typical Rent Rages:**

Work Exchanges	Free or reduced rent in exchange for 10 to 20 hours of work per week.
Room in shared apartment or house	\$985 – \$1,315 (2017 Berkeley average: \$1,241)
Studio apartment	\$1,426 – \$2,088 (2017 Berkeley average: \$2,088)
One-bedroom apartment	\$1,896 - \$2,567 (2017 Berkeley average: \$2,332)
Two-bedroom apartment or house	\$2,714 - \$3,721 outside Berkeley \$3,531 - \$3,538 and up in Berkeley (2017 Berkeley average: \$3,538)
Three bedroom or larger house (Three-bedroom apartments are rare)	\$3,514 - \$5,243 and up (2017 Berkeley average 3-bedroom house: \$4,373)

**NOTE:** Generally, graduate students will coordinate with one another to rent a house together. Usually, up to 3 to 4 graduate students will pay around \$800 - \$900. Keep this in mind when looking for housing options.

## **Graduate Students and Cooperatives**

University Students Cooperative Assoc. (USCA)

Cal offers alternative housing through the USCA in the form of co-op houses and apartments, which reduces the cost of living by dividing labor (cooking, cleaning, gardening, etc.) among members. A weekly five-hour commitment is expected in the houses, while the apartments require 6-12 hours per semester.

### **Co-op Housing:**

- Graduate students can live in any of the co-op houses or apartments.
- The houses have what are called “**open kitchens**,” meaning that members may cook whatever and whenever they like; the kitchens/pantries are fully stocked with a variety of produce, frozen goods, non-perishables, and perishable goods.

1/8/2019

- Houses and apartment complexes come with various amenities, such as house computers, televisions, periodicals, decks, hot tubs, etc.
- All bedrooms in apartments are single occupancy, while houses may vary.
- Residence in **Hillegass Parker (HIP) House** and **The Convent** is restricted to graduate and re-entry students only.

**COST:**

- Current cost is \$3,609 semester for **room and board houses**, which is approximately \$721.80/month **including food and utilities**.
- Extended/larger rooms are available at HIP House at an additional cost.
- Prices for the apartments vary depending on the number of occupants and location.

Detailed information about cooperative housing and specific houses, including eligibility, is available on the BSC website (<http://www.bsc.coop/>). To find out more about family living and university-owned graduate housing, please visit <http://housing.berkeley.edu>.