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LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

Western students are often amazed by how low living expenses in Malaysia are. In Malaysia you get high quality of life at a low cost. Rents vary according to the size of the apartment and the location. In general, you can get very nice housing with a student budget in Malaysia. As an international student you have the chance to live comfortably with just about 2000 MYR a month, inclusive of food, accommodation and other daily expenses. Swimming pools are not a rare sight.

Interested in affordable five-star hotel luxury accommodation even as a student? In Malaysia it is possible. Due to the low-price level, there are several quality hotels available on cheap rate in Kuala Lumpur. Despite the glory and luxury, some of these hotels are the best in Asia. It's recommended to get to know different prices also for hotel rooms.

You are responsible for organizing long-term accommodation on your own, but we offer information about some options, which have been recommended by previous students or the host university. There are plenty of accommodation options for both short and long-term accommodation, and there is a lot of variation in prices, size and quality. The main difficulty is often that the minimum length of a lease contract is 6 months or sometimes longer. However, it is possible to find accommodation ranging from 1 – 4 months in length. This takes a bit of effort and patience and normally there's room for negotiation. If you wish to live in the on-campus accommodation, please be directly in touch with UPM.



It's most often easiest to find accommodation after arriving at your study abroad destination by staying the first few nights at a hotel/hostel and shopping around for suitable accommodation options. You can walk around an interesting area and look for signs and/or look for offers online. Contact agents, discuss prices and go see potential apartments. Some of the long-term accommodation providers let you stay in also with daily rental pricing. We do recommend getting in touch already in advance with the accommodation agents in our Facebook group and scouring through some rental websites.

Accommodation for the first days

During the first days you will also have time to find a possible roommate among the other students. Other international students and university staff can give you good tips on areas and apartments to live in. Other students will probably have made some contacts with real estate agents already so ask around.

Good places to stay for the first nights

- The Explorers Guest House in Chinatown (Nice roof terrace!)
- Dream Home & Castle in the Sky Hostel (rooftop infinity pool)

You can find many other options e.g. at [Agoda](#).

Off-campus accommodation options

If you want to live off campus, there are great in Kuala Lumpur.

Up-to-date information and details should always be checked directly from the accommodation providers. It is worthwhile to look through all available accommodation options to see which one best suit your needs. Naturally, there are also lots of other long-term stay accommodations in KL. We are regularly updating the list based on our own field research and students' recommendations.

One option is to rent an apartment or a room via [Airbnb](#). Airbnb is a community marketplace for people to discover and book accommodations around the world. There are accommodation possibilities from shared rooms to whole villas listed.

Looking for a condominium? Here are some recommended sites for rental apartments:

<https://www.starproperty.my/>

<http://www.ibilik.my>

<https://www.iproperty.com.my/rent/>

<https://www.mudah.my/Malaysia/for-rent>

<http://www.expatriates.com/classifieds/mly/housingavailable>

<http://nstpclassifieds.nstp.com.my>

<https://www.propertyguru.com.my/>

Accommodation tips

In Asian culture it is common to do business face to face. For example, taking care of housing arrangements in advance by e-mail may be difficult. However, this isn't something worth worrying about. You can check different options online before leaving your home country to get some idea but make the final decision in the destination after staying on campus during the orientation. Terms and conditions, details of the lease and the final price are most often easily settled after arriving in KL.

Don't forget to make a written agreement about the rent and what it includes. It's also a good idea to check the apartment and write a list of the possible faults before moving in. The list can then be added to your lease as an appendix. Remember to check the safety of the area.

You'll have a chance to find suitable accommodation in your area of choice during the first few days. Don't forget that it's easiest to sign a lease during office hours, although some exceptions have been made during evenings and weekends. You can attempt to chart accommodation options beforehand by e-mail, but it may take a while to receive an answer, and the prices will most likely have room for negotiation.

Normally you will be asked to pay a deposit of 2- 3 months in advance. This is normal in KL so you should not worry about it. After that you can normally move in straight away.

Signing a lease on monthly basis is worth looking into. Remember however that signing a longer lease may entitle you to a discount. If you sign a lease for the full length of your stay, but wish to change accommodation for some reason, it will be difficult to get your security deposit back. When signing your lease, remember to find out what the policy is for incomplete months (for example, if you want to move out before the end of a month). The location may have daily or weekly rates, or you may be able to make arrangements with your landlord. However, sometimes paying for a full month can be cheaper than paying for two weeks on a daily basis. Rents are in a lot of the times paid in cash. Even at the same location the apartments may be differently equipped. Not all locations offer daily amenities. Some products can be enquired about at the reception, although in most cases you must buy them at your own expense. Luckily however, the prices for such products are quite affordable. If you need to buy any duvets, pillows etc., it might be a good idea to visit Tesco or IKEA.

Some places charge separately for electricity, water and the Internet. The most expensive factor in the electricity bill is air conditioning, and it should be used

cost-effectively. With an economic use of AC, students have been able to cut down their electricity bill by dozens of Euros per month. For both economic and ecological reasons, you should turn off AC when the apartment is empty, and preferably also for the night if it's not too hot. Also, you shouldn't set the temperature too low as it's possible to catch a cold because of AC. 22 to 24 Celsius degrees is typically a suitable temperature for the night.

If internet is not included, you can get it from several companies. However, most companies offer contracts for one year, but e.g. U Mobile offers contracts for less than a year. There's a big IT market next Times Square shopping center. Don't worry if things don't go exactly as planned when making arrangements for your accommodation. This is mostly due to cultural differences and the way things are done in Asia. A good sense of humor, a little patience and attempting to understand a different culture will help sort things out. Sometimes it might take up to a week or two to find long-term accommodation, but that's not uncommon at other exchange locations in other parts of the world either.

As in Kuala Lumpur, breaking a lease is difficult all around the world. Students should consider the apartment they sign up for very carefully as well as the breaking of one's lease (in extreme situations), which can be a frustrating and expensive process.

Summary for finding accommodation at the destination:

1. Travel to Kuala Lumpur before the start of the semester.
2. Get a feel for the accommodation option(s).
3. If needed, ask around for a roommate among the other students (you can do this already beforehand on What's App groups).
4. Re-read AE's tips and plan for long-term accommodation.

Summary for finding accommodation at the destination:

Living in Kuala Lumpur provides a dynamic mix of modern conveniences, rich traditions, and cultural diversity. The cost of living varies, with rent ranging between RM 1,500 and RM 4,500, depending on location and amenities. Food can be inexpensive, particularly when dining at local food stalls. Public transportation is well-developed, with LRT, MRT, and buses making commuting easy. Grab, a popular ride-hailing service, is also widely used, but it's important to plan for traffic, especially during rush hours.

Kuala Lumpur is a culturally diverse city where Malays, Chinese, Indians, and expats live harmoniously. This diversity brings a variety of religious customs, so it's important to be mindful of local practices, such as dressing modestly and respecting cultural norms. While English is widely spoken, especially in urban areas, learning a few basic Malay

phrases can be beneficial. The tropical climate is warm and humid, with regular rainfall, making lightweight clothing and an umbrella essential.

The city offers excellent and affordable healthcare, with modern facilities and English-speaking medical professionals readily available. Kuala Lumpur is generally a safe place to live, although it's wise to be cautious in busy areas to avoid petty theft. Emergency services are easily accessible, with dedicated numbers for the police and ambulance services. In terms of social interactions, Malaysians generally respect personal space, and while handshakes are common, less physical contact may be preferred in interactions between men and women.

Kuala Lumpur boasts a lively shopping scene, from high-end malls to traditional street markets. Major attractions include the iconic Petronas Twin Towers, Batu Caves, and cultural areas like Chinatown and Little India. For nature lovers, nearby highlands and urban parks provide a welcome escape from the city's bustle. The expat community is also vibrant, with plenty of opportunities to join social events and connect with others.

When adapting to life in Kuala Lumpur, it's important to respect local customs, especially during Ramadan when business hours may change. Being prepared for traffic and understanding local dining practices, especially around street food, will help in making a smooth transition into this vibrant city.



YOUR WAY ABROAD

The world has an interesting way of giving great experiences
to the ones who are passionate about their dreams.

Miia Muukkonen, Asia Exchange student

