



# **Union College Student Accommodation (The Gibson Chambers)**

## **Residents' Handbook 2026-27**

Union Theological College grants a resident a license to occupy a room in the Residence for a specified period in accordance with the Terms and Conditions set out in the Residents' Handbook. It is not a tenancy agreement.



## The Union College Residence

The Accommodation Coordinator and Sub-wardens are responsible to the Operations Manager for ensuring the smooth running of the accommodation. Faculty has overall responsibility for discipline and welfare which is delegated to the Operations Manager.

The Residence normally has three sub-wardens, one of whom is always available out of hours.

### Accommodation Office

Union Theological College  
108 Botanic Avenue  
Belfast BT7 1JT  
Tel: 028 9020 5080  
Email: accommodation@union.ac.uk

### Student Accommodation Address

Union College Residence  
Room No...  
108 Botanic Avenue  
Belfast BT7 1JT

**Sub-warden on Duty** (outside office hours): ☎ 07955 135973

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Union College Residence (the Gibson Chambers) comprises 26 ensuite rooms that are self-catering, have basic internet access and study facilities in each room. A residential pastoral volunteer normally provides support for residents and organises regular events/gatherings to develop a sense of community.

This handbook gives information and guidance on being a resident. Full details of the Terms and Conditions applicable to residents of Gibson Chambers were given at time of application. This handbook outlines the key rules, which are necessary for everyone's benefit, however the signed terms and conditions are the overarching regulations.

Please take time to read the Terms and Conditions as well as this handbook thoroughly. File it and refer to it when necessary. If you require any further information or clarification, please contact the Accommodation Coordinator or sub-warden, who will be pleased to help you.

A Residents' Meeting is held at the beginning of the residential year in which fire safety and other matters are outlined. **For legal reasons this meeting is compulsory for all residents.**

Mail for residents will be placed in the trays in the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor lift lobby. Residents will be notified about larger parcels or registered letters, which are held in the Office for collection.

A sub-warden is on duty outside office hours, and is responsible for welfare, security and safety and acts on behalf of the College Operations Manager. Sub-wardens should only be contacted by residents in the case of an emergency, particularly after the quiet time of 11pm. At all times the sub-warden on duty should only be contacted regarding matters which cannot wait until the college office is open.

## 2. ARRIVAL

- 2.1 Room keys may be collected from the Accommodation Coordinator during the week prior to the start of the accommodation period.
- 2.2 Rooms will be available at 10.00 am on the day residence period starts, that is, Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2026.
- 2.3 Students who require accommodation before the normal start date should contact the Accommodation Coordinator at the earliest opportunity. Accommodation outside the standard period may be subject to availability and additional fees.

## 3. PERIOD OF RESIDENCE

- 3.1 The normal minimum period of residence is 39 weeks, from **Saturday 5th September 2026 to Friday 4th June 2027.**
- 3.2 On accepting an offer of a room, students are undertaking to remain in residence for the residential year and to pay the full residential fee. (Special arrangements may be made for PCI ministry students.)
- 3.4 Application for vacation residence should be made on the appropriate forms available from the Accommodation Coordinator. In order to facilitate maintenance work any residents staying during vacations may be required to move room.

## 4. ROOM CHANGE

- 4.1 Room offers are subject to change and the College reserves the right to move residents to suitable alternative rooms.
- 4.2 In special circumstances, a request for a change of room will be considered and may incur a charge to cover administration costs.



## 5. PAYMENT

- 5.1 A booking deposit is paid on acceptance of an offer of a room. This deposit will not be refunded to applicants who fail to take up their place without good cause or those who require early release from contract. This booking deposit also functions as a damage deposit.
- 5.2 Fees are normally paid in two instalments. For details of all options please see your copy of Terms and Conditions.
- 5.3 Residents who retain keys for their accommodation beyond the period of residence will continue to be liable for residence fees until the keys are returned.

## 6. CODE OF CONDUCT

- 6.1 Residents are expected to conduct themselves with courtesy and respect for other residents and staff, to have due regard for College property and the property of other residents; to observe fire and other safety/security precautions; and to respect and act within the Christian ethos and standards of the College. Nothing should take place which would bring the College into disrepute in the community.
- 6.2 On accepting an offer of a room, students declare that they have read and will abide by the terms and conditions contained in this Handbook. Residents also agree to comply with the reasonable requests of Accommodation Coordinator and Sub-warden(s).

## 7. YOUR CONDUCT

Residents must ensure that they (and where applicable their guest/visitors) act within the Law and within the Conditions of Occupancy. In particular you **do not**:

- 7.1 cause other residents or any other person any injury, disturbance, disruption, annoyance, nuisance, harassment, inconvenience or damage to their property,
- 7.2 cause any excessive or unnecessary noise in the accommodation. **After 11.00 pm in particular**, quietness should be observed in the residence and the Common Room may be the best venue for late-night discussion. The College grounds are designated quiet areas which residents are asked to observe,
- 7.3 permit others to stay overnight in your room without the permission of the Coordinator or Operations Manager.
- 7.4 hold social functions/parties on the premises without the prior consent of the Operation Manager,
- 7.5 hang banners or flags or similar materials in windows or on the outside of the residence.

## 8. YOUR STUDY BEDROOM

Residents must ensure that they (and where applicable their guest/visitors):

- 8.1 keep their room and ensuite clean and tidy. Vacuum cleaners are available in the Laundry Room for resident use.
- 8.2 place rubbish/litter in the bins provided in the courtyard.
- 8.3 do not damage walls, etc. by fixing anything to them.
- 8.4 do not damage College furniture or remove College furniture from their room or any room in the residence or College.
- 8.5 have a TV license if they have a television or other TV receiving equipment in their room.
- 8.6 have insurance cover for personal effects including loss or damage sustained to items of laundry.
- 8.7 provide their own bedding: that is, sheets, duvet and cover, pillow and pillow case.



## 9. COMMON / SHARED FACILITIES

The College is responsible for cleaning the corridors on weekdays. Residents must ensure that they (and where applicable their guest/visitors):

- 9.1 jointly with the other residents keep any shared facilities such as kitchens, laundry room and common room, adjoining corridors and stairwells clean and tidy at all times and not permit rubbish/litter to accumulate therein.
- 9.2 do not allow shared facilities (including any cooking utensils and the like) to become so unclean and unhygienic that, in the reasonable opinion of the Accommodation Coordinator, they constitute a risk to the health of themselves or others. Any cooking utensils or other kitchen equipment left in an unclean and unhygienic state which constitute a risk to health, may be removed and disposed of.
- 9.3 use only the space allocated in the fridge, freezer and cupboard in the kitchens.
- 9.4 do not permit guests to cook in the kitchen or invite guests without prior permission from the Accommodation Coordinator.
- 9.5 ensure their laundry is removed from the washing machine and tumble dryer at the end of the cycle.

## 10. DAMAGES

A reasonable view will be taken of accidents / wear and tear; but residents will be expected to pay for any property found to be missing or damaged in their room on departure.

- 10.1 Residents are expected to take reasonable care of the furniture and fittings in the accommodation.
- 10.2 All damage and losses must be reported to the Accommodation Coordinator **within 24 hours** of becoming aware of it using a Repair Slip, available in the office.
- 10.3 Damage or faults in any equipment provided by the College should be reported to the Accommodation Coordinator **within 24 hours**.
- 10.4 If residents witness any damage to the College property, whether in a study bedroom or elsewhere, they are asked to report it promptly to the Accommodation Coordinator or Sub-warden.
- 10.5 Residents must allow the College upon reasonable notice and at reasonable times (except in the case of an emergency when no notice is needed) to enter the bedroom to undertake inspections, maintenance or repairs or for any other reasonable purpose. Any extra costs required to clean/repair study bedrooms or communal areas shall be charged to the resident either through the damage deposit or separately.

## 11. HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 11.1 It is Government Policy that students who are living away from home should register with a doctor in the University area, under the National Health Service. Queen's students should consult the Queen's Student Health Service.
- 11.2 In the event of an accident involving injuries, or in a medical emergency, an ambulance should be called immediately. The Accommodation Coordinator should be notified, or outside of office hours the Operations Manager should be contacted via the Sub-warden.
- 11.3 All accidents must be reported to the Accommodation Coordinator or Sub-warden and recorded in the Accident Book held in the office. Any accidents which arise out of office hours should be brought to the attention of the Sub-warden who will take charge in the event of an emergency.



- 11.4 Residents should read the Health & Safety Instructions displayed in their rooms concerning procedures to be followed in the event of a fire and familiarise themselves with the location of fire exits, fire extinguishers and the alarm system.
- 11.5 All shower heads will be cleaned by professionals quarterly. Notice will be given.

Residents must **not**:

- 11.6 bring into or keep in the accommodation pets or any living animal (except for assistance animals). Should you require an assistance animal, please see the College *Accommodation Assisted Animals Policy*
- 11.7 bring their own furniture, etc. into their room as all furnishings must comply with relevant safety legislation.
- 11.8 cause any obstruction of any shared facilities such as kitchens and communal areas, corridors and entrances.
- 11.9 put anything harmful or which is likely to cause blockage in any pipes or drains.
- 11.10 throw or drop anything whatsoever from windows or balconies of the College.

## 12. SECURITY

Residents will be issued with an access card and a set of room keys for door access to the accommodation.

Residents must:

- 12.1 **report the loss of any key or card** provided by the College **immediately** to the Accommodation Coordinator or the Sub-warden. Please note that residents shall be responsible for the costs of replacements).
- 12.2 not give their keys to anyone else.
- 12.3 keep their room door and windows locked at all times when they are not in the room.
- 12.4 when entering and leaving the residence ensure that external doors are shut and locked behind them.
- 12.5 not admit anyone into the residence unless satisfied that they are a resident, a guest of a resident or are there with the College's authority. Residents should question the identity of any unescorted stranger in the College building. Contact the Accommodation Coordinator/Sub-warden if there are urgent security-related issues.
- 12.6 if a security door fails to open in an emergency, break the nearest green break-glass to release the door and report this immediately to the Accommodation Coordinator or Sub-warden.

## 13. FIRE AND ELECTRICAL SAFETY

- 13.1 The College will normally carry out a fire alarm test each Friday morning between 8.30 am and 9.30 am.
- 13.2 At all other times, on activation of the fire alarm residents must evacuate the building immediately.
- 13.3 Residents **must use the In/Out Board** when they enter and leave the accommodation. In the event of an emergency the board must accurately reflect if a resident is in the building.
- 13.4 Do not abuse the fire alarm or associated safety systems and equipment, including covering smoke detectors. Any misuse or abuse of the equipment may compromise the lives of other residents – and may also be a criminal offence.
- 13.5 Residents should comply with all compulsory fire training arranged for the residence at the start of the academic year.



- 13.6 Residents should only use fire exits in an emergency and keep fire routes clear of obstructions at all times.
- 13.7 In an emergency situation do not use the lift.
- 13.8 Sensitive smoke detectors are fitted in each bedroom and care should be taken when using hair sprays, deodorants, etc. The ensuite extractor fan should be in the **ON** position **at all times** and the ensuite door should be kept closed when operating the shower.
- 13.9 Careless actions which result in false fire alarms being raised may be regarded as a serious disciplinary matter.
- 13.10 Residents are not permitted to deep fat fry, whether in a deep fat fryer or saucepan.
- 13.11 Residents are not permitted to have the following electrical appliances in their room:
  - \* electrical cooking appliances of any kind (including kettles and toasters),
  - \* personal heating appliances of any kind or halogen lamps,
  - \* electrical reel extensions or have any trailing leads across the floor.
- 13.12 Any electrical item which residents use in their room (including computers and laptops) will be checked by the College for electrical safety. This is a legal requirement. A small charge may be made for this.
- 13.13 Residents are not permitted to plug electrical appliances into sockets in the corridors.
- 13.14 Do not use candles, naked flames, incense sticks, decorative string lights, fireworks or do anything which may constitute a fire hazard - to do so would constitute a serious fire hazard and danger to others and will be regarded as a serious disciplinary matter.

#### 14. NO SMOKING, ALCOHOL AND DRUGS POLICIES

The College operates strict no smoking, no alcohol and no drugs policies. Residents are not permitted to smoke, have alcohol or consume alcohol or be involved in drug abuse in any part of the residence or College premises including covered areas at entrances, or to allow any guest or visitor to do so.

#### 15. GUESTS

- 15.1 Residents are held personally responsible at all times for the conduct of any visitors they bring to the accommodation, or anyone they allow to enter the College. Visitors must be accompanied by a resident at all times.
- 15.2 Residents may entertain a reasonable number of guests and visitors in their bedrooms or in the common areas, but are not permitted to have guests staying overnight in their bedrooms without the prior permission of the Accommodation Coordinator. Reasonable requests for an occasional overnight guest will normally be granted. In all other circumstances, visitors should not be on College premises after 11 pm or before 9.00 am.
- 15.3 A Sub-warden shall at any time have the power to exclude a particular visitor or to require a particular visitor to leave the premises.

#### 16. SUB-LETTING PROHIBITED

Residents must not at any time sublet, share or part with possession of their accommodation. Residents' rights in their accommodation are not transferable to anyone else.

#### 17. OUT-OF-BOUNDS AREAS

The following areas are out of bounds to residents (and where applicable their guest/visitors): roofs, staff areas and offices, stores, the switch room and maintenance plant rooms. Access to lecture rooms and the Chapel is permitted only when specific permission has been obtained.



## 18. PARKING

A limited number of parking spaces may be available for residents for an additional charge. Please apply in writing to the Accommodation Coordinator.

Bicycle 'hoops' are available in the College courtyard. The College accepts no responsibility whatsoever for the loss of/or damage to any motor vehicles of whatever description or to bicycles parked on property belonging to the College. Bicycles should only be left in the courtyard – never inside the building.

## 19. LIABILITY

19.1 In exceptional circumstances, the College may agree to allow a resident to leave the accommodation within the 39-week period – such requests must be made in writing to the Accommodation Coordinator. For further details please see the *Gibson Chambers Accommodation Conditions of Occupancy*.

In cases of early termination of the agreement, the deposit will be forfeited.

19.2 In the event of a student withdrawing (or being required to withdraw) from their course of study during the residential year they **must** inform the Accommodation Coordinator in writing. In such circumstances they may be required to leave the residence – though each case will be considered on its merits. Student residents will remain liable for their residential fees until the college releases the resident from their contract. In such cases the deposit will be forfeited. For further details and terms please see the *Gibson Chambers Accommodation Conditions of Occupancy*.

19.3 Residents must advise the on duty Sub-warden if they intend to be away from their room for one or more nights during the residential year. For an extended period of absence, residents should notify the Accommodation Coordinator. **There will be no remission of fees for any period a student is not in residence and students whose courses involve work placements should be aware of this.**

## 20. WHEN YOU LEAVE

20.1 At the end of the residential year, residents must leave all items belonging to the College and remove all their personal belongings from their room and kitchen areas before departure. Please inform the Accommodation Coordinator of early departure.

20.2 In addition, residents must leave the accommodation in a good state and condition and return all keys and access cards to the Accommodation Coordinator. Any cleaning and/or repairs and/or replacements required will be charged at a reasonable cost against the damage deposit.

20.3 Any residents' personal belongings left on the premises after departure may be immediately disposed of and any reasonable expenses and administration costs incurred by the College may be passed on to them.

## 21. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE AND DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

A copy of the College Complaints and Disciplinary Procedures can be found appended to the *Gibson Chambers Accommodation Conditions of Occupancy*.



## Resident Declaration

*This form should be signed and returned to the Accommodation Coordinator*

I confirm that I have read and understood both *Gibson Chambers Accommodation Conditions of Occupancy* and the *Residents Handbook* and understand that it forms part of my terms and conditions of residence with Union Theological College:

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_ Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name : \_\_\_\_\_

***Note: Residents do not have access to Union College Student Network unless they are a registered student of the College***