

TV Licensing, students and the law

When do I need a TV Licence?

You need a TV Licence to watch or record TV programmes, irrespective of what channel you're watching, what device you are using (TV, computer, laptop, mobile phone or any other), and how you receive them (terrestrial, satellite, cable, via the Internet or any other way). If you don't have a licence you risk prosecution and a fine of up to £1,000.

In some cases you and your flatmates will each require your own separate licence for the TVs in your rooms, and in others one licence may be sufficient between all your flatmates, regardless of the number of devices in the property. The tenancy agreement on your property is often a good indication of this. For example:

- You need your own separate TV Licence if you live in halls of residence and use a TV in your own room, or if you share a house with other students and use a TV in your room, and your room is a separately occupied place (a separate tenancy agreement would normally indicate that this is the case).
- If you have a separate tenancy agreement but a television is only being used in a communal area, then only one licence is required
- If you are sharing a house with other students and you use a TV in your own room, but the house can be treated as one place shared by all, then only one TV Licence is required (a joint tenancy agreement would usually be evidence that the house is a single licensable place for this purpose).

Aren't I covered by my parents' TV Licence?

Your parents' TV Licence will only cover you in your student accommodation in the following limited circumstances:

- You only use TV receiving equipment which is powered by its own internal batteries
- You haven't installed the TV receiving equipment, for example you haven't connected the TV receiving equipment to an aerial or plugged it into the mains supply
- Your permanent place of residence is your parents' house
- Your parents have a valid TV Licence for their house.

What if I am moving out of my student accommodation?

If you are moving out of halls or other student accommodation, remember that your TV Licence does not move with you and you will need to notify TV Licensing of your new address. You can update your details by visiting www.tvlicensing.co.uk/students2008 and following the instructions. It only takes a minute or two. You'll be asked for your TV Licence number and new address.

If you are moving later in the summer, you can update your details up to 90 days in advance. And, if you don't yet know your new address, you can sign up for the email reminder service, and TV Licensing will contact you at the appropriate time to make sure you remain correctly licensed.

At the same time you can choose to receive your TV Licence by email instead of receiving a paper licence in the post.

I don't need my TV Licence over the summer, can I get a refund?

If you are not staying at university over the summer and do not need your TV Licence again before it expires, you are entitled to a refund of any unused quarters (three full

calendar months). So long as you purchased your TV Licence in October and don't need it for July, August and September, you could be eligible for a refund.

Most students would need to buy a TV Licence at the beginning of term in October in order to allow enough time at the end of the year to qualify for a refund. Assuming that a TV Licence is purchased in the month it is needed, it will expire 12 months from the first of that month.

To check if you are eligible for a refund, call 0844 800 6734.

How will anyone know if I don't have a TV Licence?

TV Licensing's database lists addresses that don't have a TV Licence, including university accommodation and enquiry officers do visit unlicensed properties.

If you use television-receiving equipment without a valid TV Licence, you risk prosecution and a fine of up to £1,000, plus court costs, and you will need to buy a TV Licence if you still need one. A colour licence costs £139.50.

Students requiring further information should contact TV Licensing on 0844 800 6734. To find out about the many ways you can pay for your TV Licence, including Direct Debit, visit www.tvlicensing.co.uk/students2008