

# Alcohol-Free Accommodation

“For many students, drinking and parties are a big part of the university experience. But with more than one in five saying they don’t drink, the demand for alcohol-free accommodation is on the rise” (BBC News, 2018).

## NUS Student Opinion Survey Findings 2018

- Preference for alcohol-free halls increases as personal alcohol consumption decreases (e.g. 4% of respondents who drink alcohol 2-3 days a week said they’d be likely to choose these halls compared with 7% who drink once a week, 46% who never drink but have previously drunk alcohol, and 70% of those who have never drunk alcohol).
- Younger students are more likely to say they are unlikely to choose alcohol-free halls (68% of 18-22 year olds are unlikely to do so, compared with 60% of 23-29 year olds)
- International students from outside the EU are more likely than UK students to opt for these halls (17% of UK respondents said they’d be likely to choose alcohol free compared with 55% of international beyond the EU (nb small sample size for non-EU students)).
- No statistically significant difference in preference according to gender

## Reasons for Opting into Alcohol-Free Accommodation

*“...even though I don’t drink much, if I was offered alcohol free accommodation, I would definitely take it.”*

- **Improve academic performance**
  - *“Because I believe that alcohol really affects you while studying and I have known people to drop out since they had the freedom to drink whenever they want to because there wasn’t an adult supervising them.”*
  - *“The likelihood of distractions caused by other students enjoying the intake of alcohol would be reduced and study time would be a more satisfying experience.”*
  - *“I feel it would be a less distracting environment”*
  - *“I want to concentrate on my work, this would not be possible if I was surrounded by people drinking alcohol.”*
- **Mature student and not interested in going out**
  - *“As a mature student I would prefer quieter accommodation.”*
- **Safer**
  - *“Extra security”*

- *"Avoid all collateral damages that can happen"*
- *"Sexual assaults would decrease and people with anxiety would feel safer"*
- *"Drinking with friends can get out of control sometimes and this can impact on others."*
- *"Reduced possibility of victimisation, harassment, violence"*
- *"Likely to be quieter and safer."*
- *"Stops antisocial behaviour"*
- **Religious reasons**
  - *"For religious reasons I do not wish to drink or watch others drink alcohol"*
- **Non-drinker**
  - *"I dislike the emphasis that is placed on drinking alcohol as a way of socialising, and am often questioned as to why I don't drink - alcohol-free accommodation would make this less likely."*
  - *"I do not drink alcohol and do not like to associate with people or environments that drink a lot as it makes me feel uncomfortable"*
  - *"I don't drink so it would be nice to hang out with others who also don't."*
- **Don't like the effects of alcohol**
  - *"Not keen on the party crowd that infest normal accommodation sites and get loud and drunk at 5 in the morning"*
  - *"No drunk people around causing mess, noise and trouble. No alcohol = little to no parties as well so quiet"*
  - *"Won't have to deal with drunks or people who pressure me to drink"*
  - *"The noise levels would be lower late at night without people leaving late to go out."*
  - *"To avoid constant nightly disruption caused by drunk students, such as fire alarms being set off and shouting"*
  - *"I think that it would help to avoid late-night noise and other anti-social behaviour within the accommodation."*
- **To be with like-minded people**
  - *"It is likely to be quieter and calmer. I would also not feel excluded when they go drinking and I don't."*
  - *"Likely surrounded by like-minded people and hopefully more peaceful"*
  - *"I'd like to find more friends who don't drink alcohol"*
  - *"I don't drink alcohol, so I would prefer to have flatmates that are the same."*
  - *"I would be sharing accommodation with like-minded individuals which would help me stick to a routine of sleep and study. A good nights' sleep makes me more motivated in the day and I am likely to attend all lectures. Other students who choose alcohol-free accommodation are also mature individuals who may be more interested in activities other than drinking."*
- **Improved wellbeing**
  - *"Peer pressure can instigate behavioural change in terms of frequency of alcohol consumption. Hence being in an alcohol-free environment will be better for my wellbeing."*
- **Previous bad experiences**
  - *"I had a bad experience with the other people in my flat while living in accommodation. They would stay up for hours partying."*

- *"I lived in the party block in my first term at uni and constantly had disturbed nights due to my flatmates and students from the block next door drinking heavily and waking me up with their unpleasant behaviour."*

## Universities Offering Alcohol-Free Accommodation:

**University College Cork (Ireland) (UCC):** UCC were the first university in the British Isles to offer alcohol-free/substance aware and quiet housing options on campus accommodation. This accommodation option is available at all locations and is strictly subject to availability. Each apartment has single occupancy study bedrooms, kitchen/living room, and most rooms are ensuite with the exception of one block.

**University of St Andrews:** St Andrews University in Scotland was one of the first universities to ban alcohol from some of its halls of residence in 2015 and it has now emerged more campuses across the UK have since followed suit.

The University of St Andrews offers undergraduate and postgraduate students an option of living in alcohol-free accommodation. The offer will be subject to availability and dependent on whether they can fill a five person apartment/flat. If students wish to apply for this type of accommodation they can do so by answering yes to the question about preference for an alcohol-free environment on the accommodation application form. There is no difference in cost compared to standard halls.

If they accept the offer of alcohol-free accommodation they will have entered into an agreement not to drink alcohol in their apartment. If they do so they will be moved to another residence/apartment of the university's discretion. For 2018/19, 407 students applied for alcohol-free accommodation and the university were able to offer it to 122 students. They have 2 full blocks of flats which are alcohol-free and one block that is partly alcohol-free. It is mainly self-policed however the wardens are aware of which flats are alcohol-free.

**University of Bristol:** Students at Bristol get the option to select preferences when they are selecting their accommodation. While they say they cannot guarantee preference, in 2017 90% of applicants had their preferences met. One of the options available to students is an alcohol-free flat. Tenants or guests are not permitted to drink alcohol within the flat. No student will be placed in an alcohol-free flat unless they apply to do so.

By accepting an accommodation offer for an alcohol-free flat, the student enters into an agreement not to drink alcohol in the flat. If they do, they will receive one written warning, the second time they will be moved to another residence of the accommodation office's choice.

**Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU):** CCCU are offering a small number of rooms in Vernon Place for students who want alcohol-free accommodation. There is now a selection for 'alcohol-free' university accommodation in the preferences drop down menu on the accommodation application portal where students can apply. The preference will be based on demand. Flats are priced as per the standard halls cost starting at £118 per week (£4,720 over 40 week term).

**University in the West of England (UWE):** UWE offered alcohol-free flats or houses to residents in campus-allocated accommodation. Students could select this preference on their application form. If the student chooses to accept alcohol-free accommodation, they have agreed not to drink alcohol in their house or flat. If they subsequently drink alcohol within the house or flat the university will take action under its own disciplinary procedures. The student will be held responsible for their guests and/or visitors complying with these conditions while they are in the student's property.

Alcohol-free halls were introduced at UWE for the 2017/18 academic year. For the 2018/19 academic year, the accommodation office at UWE said they were oversubscribed, and had more students apply for alcohol free accommodation than they had allowance for. The alcohol-free flats are priced at the same cost of standard halls.

**Queens University Belfast:** Queens University has dedicated blocks suited for students with a specific lifestyle choice which includes alcohol-free. They also have dedicated accommodation to students who prefer single-sex or quiet living.

**University of Manchester:** Students can opt to live in a 'Lifestyle Moderated Area' whilst at university in Manchester which includes quiet areas and alcohol-free accommodation. If students are interested in this type of accommodation they are asked to contact their accommodation office to request this. The cost is the same as other accommodation in the same hall.

The University of Manchester have 28 rooms which are designated to 'party-free zones' for like-minded students. However, the accommodation office did report that they are able to offer as many 'moderated lifestyle' rooms as are requested. Despite this, in 2017/18 only four students requested such accommodation which is the lowest demand in recent years.

**Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU):** Student Living at MMU offers students to live in alcohol-free accommodation. However, students are warned that there is no guarantee that they will be selected to live in alcohol-free accommodation, it is simply a preference if the university can accommodate. They state that each person living in the flat will have volunteered to live in an alcohol-free home for the period of residence.

At the beginning of the 2016/17 academic year, 189 students applied for alcohol-free accommodation with 21 students being successful. At the beginning of the 2017/18 academic year, 787 students stated a preference for alcohol-free accommodation, with 73 students being successful. The MMU partnership reported a significant noise reduction in these halls compared to standard halls.

**University of Chester:** This year (2018-19) the University of Chester is offering students an option of living in alcohol-free accommodation. The offer will be subject to availability and dependent on how popular this type of accommodation is. It may be a house or a group of flats depending on the number of applications received. If students wish to apply for this type of accommodation they can do so by answering yes to the question about their preference for an alcohol-free environment on the accommodation application form. If they accept the offer of alcohol-free accommodation they will have entered into an agreement not to drink alcohol in their apartment. If they do so you will be moved to another residence/apartment at the university's discretion.

Having spoken to the accommodation office at University of Chester Accommodation Office, there were approximately 12 alcohol-free/quiet flats available for students. However, there was only enough interest in the 2018/19 academic year to fill half of these. Students were more likely to opt for quiet halls than alcohol-free. These flats were priced the same as standard halls.

**Other UK universities that are offering alcohol free accommodation are:** the [University of Aberdeen](#), [University of Exeter](#), [University of Leeds](#), [University of Bath](#), [Aberystwyth University](#), [Abertay University](#), [University of Stirling](#) and [Plymouth University](#). Quiet Flats are also often on offer to students who want to adopt a moderated lifestyle while at university in respect to alcohol, parties and noise. An example of quiet flats on offer to students is at [Roehampton University](#) (London).