

Council Tax Advice Direct

What Is Council Tax?

Council Tax is an annual charge on domestic dwellings (flat or house) made and collected by Local Authorities to contribute towards local public services such as fire, police, libraries, schools and rubbish collection.

Am I Exempt?

The majority of **full-time students** will be exempt and will therefore **not** have to pay council tax. Where students are living with non-students, however, the situation becomes more complex and you may be required to pay some council tax.

If you are currently living in University owned and managed accommodation, all residents should be on full-time courses. Therefore most halls of residence will be exempt from council tax.

To be deemed a full-time student you must satisfy the following conditions:-

1. Your course lasts for at least **one academic year**
2. You are required to attend the course for **at least 24 weeks** in each year and this does not mean a physical presence on campus throughout this period (see *below*).
3. The combination of independent study, tuition and work experience must average out **at least 21 hours per week** over the academic year.

How do I declare myself exempt

Birmingham City Council Procedure:-

How do I claim council tax exemption?

Birmingham City Council now has a system in place whereby students from the University of Birmingham simply call up to apply for council tax exemption/discount.

What do I have to do?

1. Make sure that you, and all your housemates, have updated your term-time addresses on your my.bham student portal. These should be as and when you change properties.
2. On the following Friday the University will pass a list of current students and their addresses to Birmingham City Council.
3. Collate the following information:-
 - a. **The full address of your property**
 - b. **The full name of each housemate**
 - c. **The student ID numbers of all the students at the property**
 - d. **Course start and end dates for each student, and whether this is full or part time study**
4. In the week following this call the Council's Contact Centre on **0121 303 1113** and inform the Council that you are students at the University of Birmingham. They should go through the above information with you to confirm that a discount can be applied to the property.

If you experience any problems with this process please note down what has happened and/or been said. If there are problems with the Council's Contact Centre

To ensure that your self-declaration is dealt with rapidly you must ensure that your term-time address is kept up-to-date on the University system. This can be done by logging in to the registration section of the [my.bham Student Portal](#).

If you need further evidence from the University regarding your student status for the purposes of council tax, please go to the Student Enquiry Counter as Student Services, Student

International Students Living Only with their Spouses & Family

Regardless of whether you are a Home or International student, if you fulfil the criteria for “full-time” study, then you will be exempt from Council Tax.

If the only non-student in the property is your spouse (i.e. husband or wife) and/or an adult dependent, then the property will be exempt from Council Tax where the non-student is:-

- o Not a British Citizen, and;
- o The terms of their leave to enter or remain in the UK prevents them from either:
 - taking paid employment,
 - OR;**
 - from claiming benefits (public funds).

This will apply to the majority of spouses and dependents from outside the EEA who come to join an international student in the UK. **However, if you are unsure as to your liability or the liability of your spouse/dependent, please contact Guild Advice for further advice.**

Thesis Awaited Status

For PhD students who have completed their research/taught phase of their course and have entered the “writing-up” or “thesis awaited” stage, there is a mixed picture across the country regarding liability.

Those students who fall within the remit of Birmingham City Council and who have entered their writing-up stage may be exempt from paying Council Tax for **the duration of their writing-up stage**. Please contact Guild Advice for further advice.

Students On Leave Of Absence / Temporary Withdrawal

Students granted leave of absence (intercalating students), but remain enrolled on the course will still be regarded as full time students during this period of intercalation by the Local Authority for the purposes of Council Tax.

You may, however, find yourself liable to pay council tax when you have finished one course and are waiting to start another – e.g. going from a MA to a PhD.

Students Living With Part-time Students or Non-Students

Where the property becomes liable for Council Tax because of the presence of a non-student adult, then students living within that property will **not** be liable.

Sources of Help

Guild Advice- Guild of Students

Email: guildadvice@guild.bham.ac.uk

Shelter

www.shelter.org.uk

Offers advice and information about any housing problems.
Room 30, 2nd Floor, Ruskin Building, 191 Corporation Street,
Birmingham City Centre Tel: 0121 236 6668

Shelterline is a 24-hour free phone service providing advice on a range of housing issues. Tel: 0808 800 4444

Birmingham Council Tax Office

www.birmingham.gov.uk/council-tax

In Writing:

Birmingham City Council Tax Office, Resources Directorate (Revenues and Payments), PO Box 5, Birmingham, B4 7AB