



Report on Student Accommodation at Trinity

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Introduction

Trinity College Dublin accommodation has been a subject of scrutiny and criticism, particularly in light of the [€10.9 million profit made by the college in 2018](#) and yearly rent increases, most recently in [2022 by over 5%](#) which puts students at an economic disadvantage during a cost-of-living crisis. Our College charges extortionate rents of up to €270 plus utilities of €19 a week, in the newly-built luxury Printing House Square accommodation. The Irish Universities Association (IUA), which Trinity College Dublin is a member of, [lobbied for a rent cap exemption from accommodation legislation for students and has also lobbied against students being granted proper tenancy rights](#). This has attracted criticism and highlights how third-level institutions and senior management cosy up to the government, their natural class allies, and highlights their complicity in the plight of students and staff and the state of the sector as a whole.

Accommodation 2022-2023	Rate Per Academic Year
Trinity Hall - Share of twin bedroom en-suite within an apartment	€5931 (September 16th - May 10th)
Trinity Hall - Single bedroom en-suite within an apartment	€7267 (September 16th - May 10th)


Goldsmith Hall	€8152 (September 7th - May 14th)
Pearse Street	€6455 (September 7th - May 14th)
GMB, Front Square, Botany Bay, New Square, Business School	€8876 (September 7th - May 14th)
Printing House Square	<p>€7310 (November 1st - May 14th) €7587 (November 1st - May 14th) €8002 (November 1st - May 14th) €8002 (November 1st - May 14th)</p> <p>4 different rates for 4 different rooms. It will become more expensive once it is available from September 7th, and will reach over €10000 per academic year. The reason it was only available from November 1st in 2022-2023 is because College finished building it this year.</p>

Furthermore, maintenance issues such as [water not working as happened in March 2023](#) and [mould and dirty rooms as happened in October 2019](#) have attracted criticisms of the administration of the accommodations offered by the College. A [lack of tenants' rights, overly restrictive rules and abuse of power by staff during Covid-19](#), in addition to [rude emails](#) has also been criticised. Trinity College Dublin, just like any other third-level institution, seeks to extract as much money as possible, while providing as little in return as possible to students.

This report was made to investigate the exact material conditions of students living in Trinity College Dublin accommodation with the hopes of radically advocating to improve the situation of students.

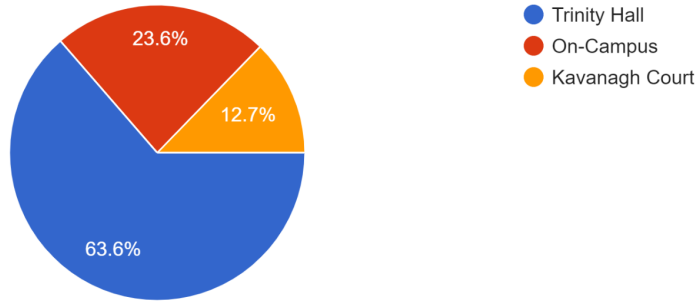
Survey Data (Quantitative)

We have received 55 responses from students living in on-campus, Trinity Hall and Kavanagh Court accommodation.

Survey	Distribution	Responses	Source
Student Accommodation	Via social media, email to SSP students and	55	

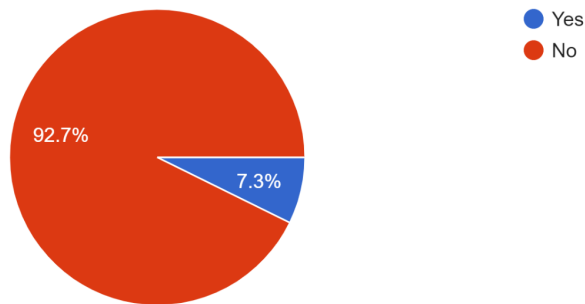
	course and accommodation groupchats.		
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To which Trinity Accommodation does your experience relate to?
55 responses



The overwhelming majority of students (92%) indicated that to them, Trinity accommodation is not affordable.

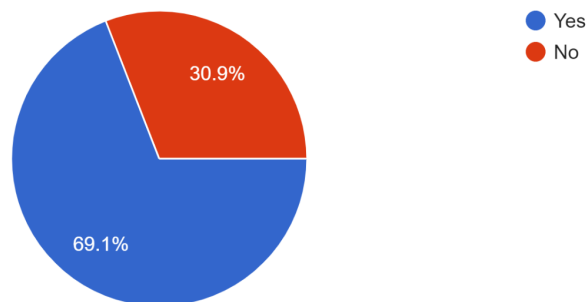
To you, is Trinity Accommodation affordable?
55 responses



A majority of students (69%) indicated that they had financial difficulties arising from the expenses associated with Trinity accommodation.

Have you had financial difficulties due to the cost of rent of Trinity Accommodation?

55 responses



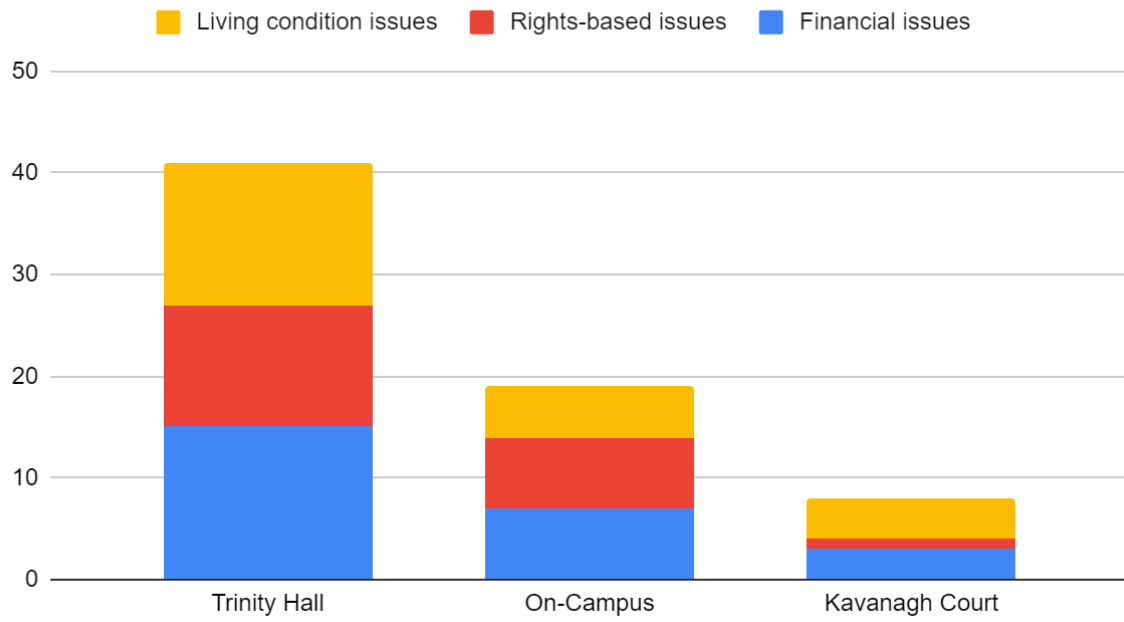
Survey Data (Qualitative)

The survey contained a form asking about students' experiences with Trinity accommodation. This is very important to analyse to understand what issues students living in Trinity accommodation face. The responses are varied, with a lot of them being focused on finances, rights and living conditions.

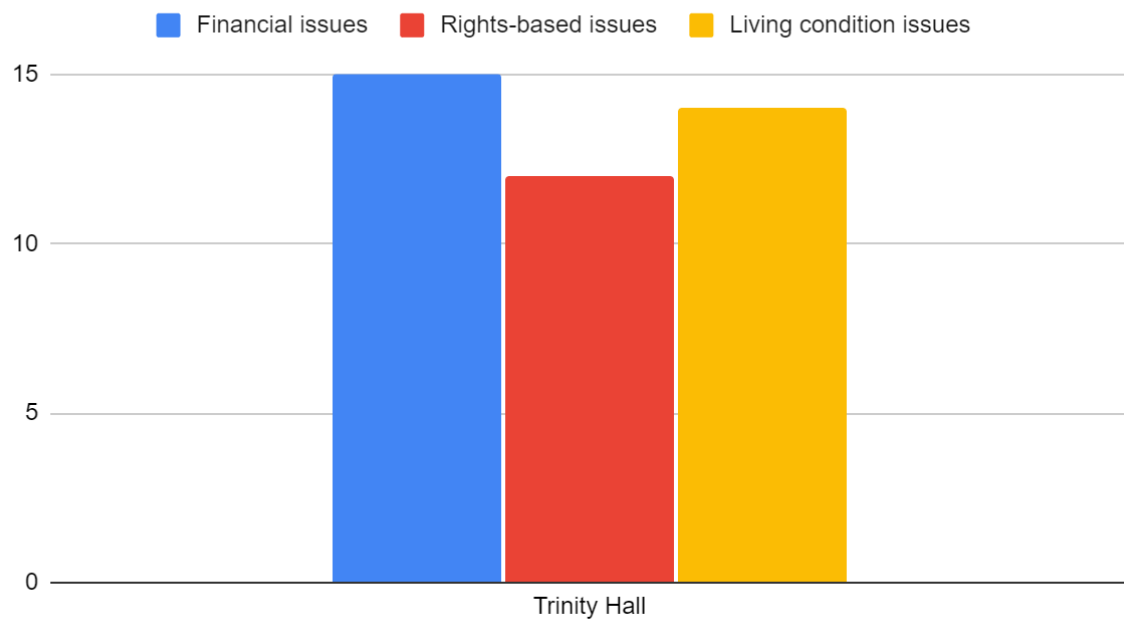
In order to analyse the data, we have split it into three categories so that we can give quantitative information as well. The below is what was specifically mentioned in the text. Note the earlier data regarding affordability as well, and keep in mind that this is solely if the issue was explicitly mentioned in the text. In the texts 7 times (12%) neither of them were mentioned, these are often short inputs and the only usable data from them is the earlier questions quantitative data, not qualitative.

- Financial issues, such as the accommodation being too expensive, struggling to pay or make ends meet. This was mentioned 25 times, or 45% of the time.
- Rights-based issues, such as unannounced visits, early move out dates, strict policies and evictions. This was mentioned 20 times, or 36% of the time.
- Living condition issues, such as slow maintenance or uncaring attitudes, bad facilities and lack of amenities. This was mentioned 23 times, or 41% of the time.

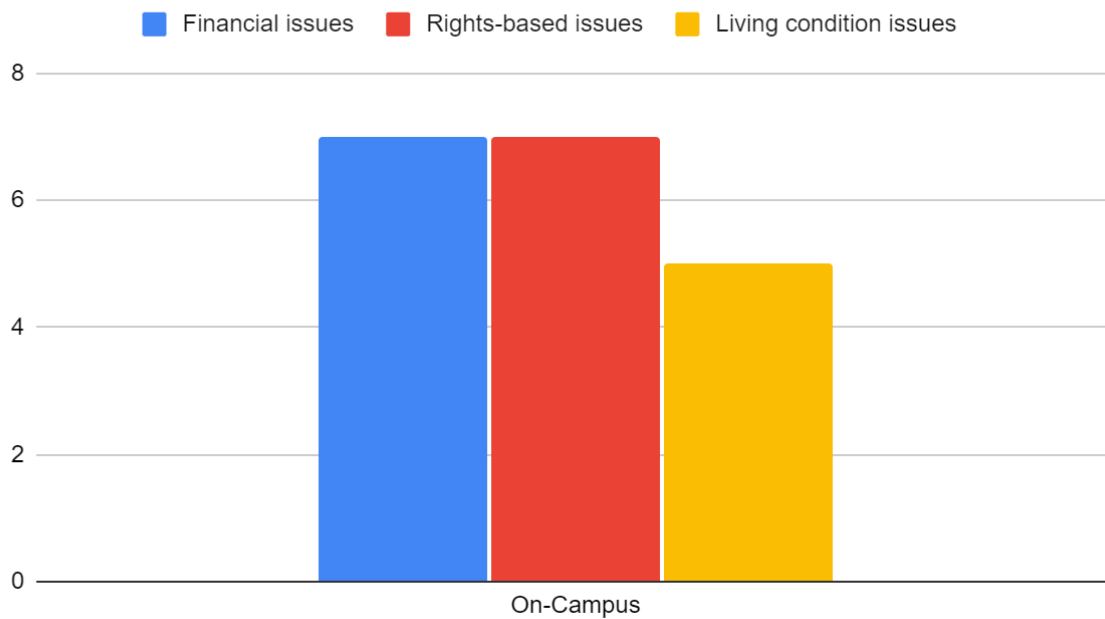
Trinity Accommodation Issues



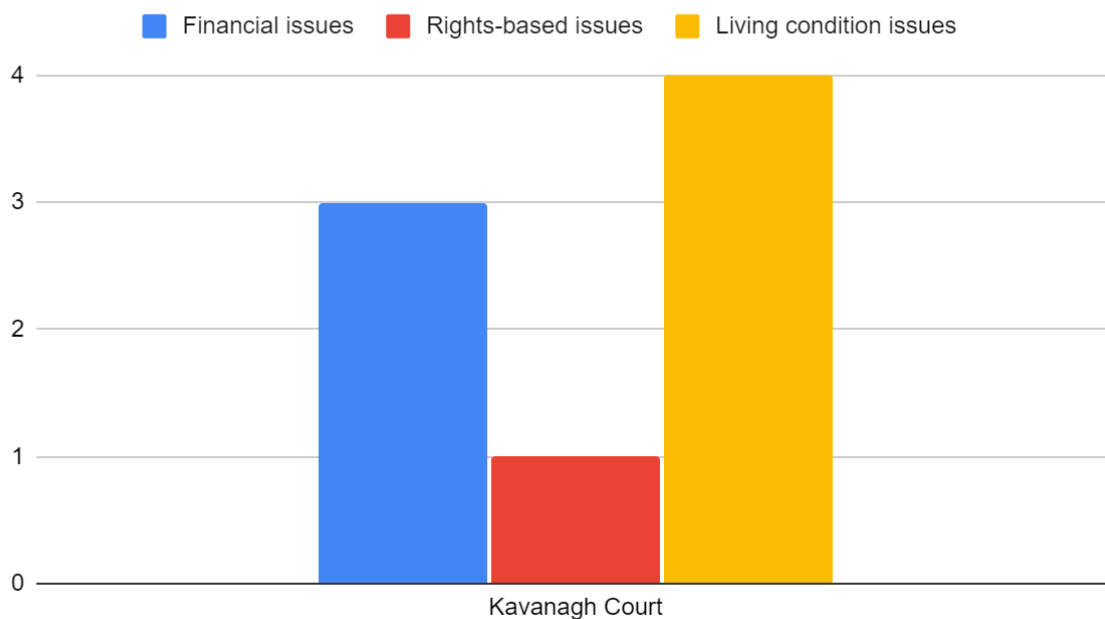
Trinity Accommodation Issues in Trinity Halls



Trinity Accommodation Issues On-Campus



Trinity Accommodation Issues Kavanagh Court



The issues seem evenly distributed across the three accommodation sites, with no major variations in which category comes out on top, with the exception of Kavanagh Court, which is privately-operated but has an agreement with Trinity College Dublin. In this case, the complaints about rights-based issues are lower. This makes sense as it is possible that privately-owned accommodations are laxer on rules, as demonstrated for example by the differing response of Trinity College Dublin-run accommodation to Covid-19, which was strict and [“like a prison”](#), to other accommodations which are privately-run.

Please see below certain excerpts from the data highlight individual students' stories.

"It is extremely expensive and often is difficult to pay. We share one fridge between seven people which is inadequate. There seems to be no control over heat in the apartment and the apartment is often excruciatingly warm and difficult to sleep in. Security have come into my apartment numerous times without warning also."

"2 thirds of my wages go toward paying accommodation fee and I'm not treated like an adult in any capacity by the accommodation services"

"my family are really struggling to afford it and I've nowhere else to stay."

"Unable to continue making rent payments; studying full time, from a disadvantaged background with either a 2.5 hour commute and 2 bedroom apartment deemed unfit to live in as the only other options, and working both days of the weekend to meet living costs. mental and physical health were being neglected in order to maintain living arrangements and pay fees in avoidance of the cramped home situation. now commuting an hour from the apartment that is shared with 6 people."

*"Priced out of accommodation, forced to travel three hours day as a student with a physical disability."
"We have to move out by 14th May, which is before my course ends at the end of May. Now I have to find accommodation while taking classes."*

"The accommodation is too expensive and there are often faults in the building. We frequently have no hot water and have had issues with kitchen appliances such as our oven not working. There is construction that is going on beside the building that starts early in the morning and has obstructed the entrance to the main door. The overnight guest policy is very strict. There was a period of almost a month over Christmas where overnight guests were not allowed, despite exams finishing up before Christmas."

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"The cost is way too high for what we get. I've had a number of maintenance issues over my two year tenancy that have never been resolved. Last year for example we experienced flooding in our flat, and the smoke detector had to be removed as a result due to the water interfering with the electric. The smoke detector has not been replaced since. The light over the kitchen door does not turn on, and the hood fan/range over the stove doesn't work. Our fridge has also had a number of problems, including not cooling down enough (resulting in a ridiculous amount of food waste), and we have generally just stopped calling maintenance because things don't get fixed. Half our flats blinds were broken, the TV has not been connected to Internet (and therefore we cannot watch Netflix or anything) since October (even though our fees are technically paying for this service), and upon arrival to the dorm rooms we are expected to bring everything for kitchen supplies. We can't even just leave kitchen items in the shared kitchen when we move out for others to use. It's such a huge waste - I don't see why shared things like kitchen supplies can't just be on the premises and supplied by Kavanagh Court. We are expected to pay €270/week and bring in all our own cookware, dishes, plates, cutlery, etc. It is extortionate and so exceedingly wasteful, I've seen all the garbage they've amassed clearing the dorms out for the incoming years. It's so wasteful. [...] People just enter our flats, half the time no notice is given. I watched the building manager just walk into my flatmates room while she was sleeping. Last year I was sleeping in my room and the cleaners preparing the flats for the summer

entered my room three times on the same day while I was trying to sleep and then shower. It's absolutely alarming. [...] I work a part time job and I do side hustle work to try and be able to afford it all, and it's been at the expense of my grades. I nearly achieved distinction last year, but the amount of coursework, work, and extracurricular things I have to do just to survive and keep on top of bills have been too much, so my grades have faltered."

Recommendations

We highlight the following points from the data as a whole in a form of summary.

- Rents are too high and this places an unfair financial burden on students.
- Extra costs on top of the rents such as the laundry machines provided by Circuit Laundry are extortionate.
- Accommodation should be subsidised, and provided at a non-profit rate to students. The way it is being provided currently follows the state's for-profit and neoliberal approach.
- Maintenance issues are slow to be solved and the Accommodation Office is under-resourced to deal with the issues that arise.
- Restrictions on overnight guests are too strict and extend beyond the Christmas exam period, for no reason.
- Staff are under pressure and therefore rude to tenants in the accommodation, and this has a negative impact on the student experience and mental health.
- The finishing dates for accommodation oftentimes fall in the middle of assessment and exam season and this causes stress for students.

We do not recommend milquetoast lobbying or establishing further dialogue with senior management and the government. This approach has already been tried by the students' union. Instead we appeal to all students to organise themselves in grassroots renters' groups and proclaim demands for accommodation. Making change will require press attention, protests, petitions, occupations and rent strikes, such as was done in the North of Ireland and the United Kingdom.

Appeal to all students: support protests, put pressure on the hierarchy and organise!