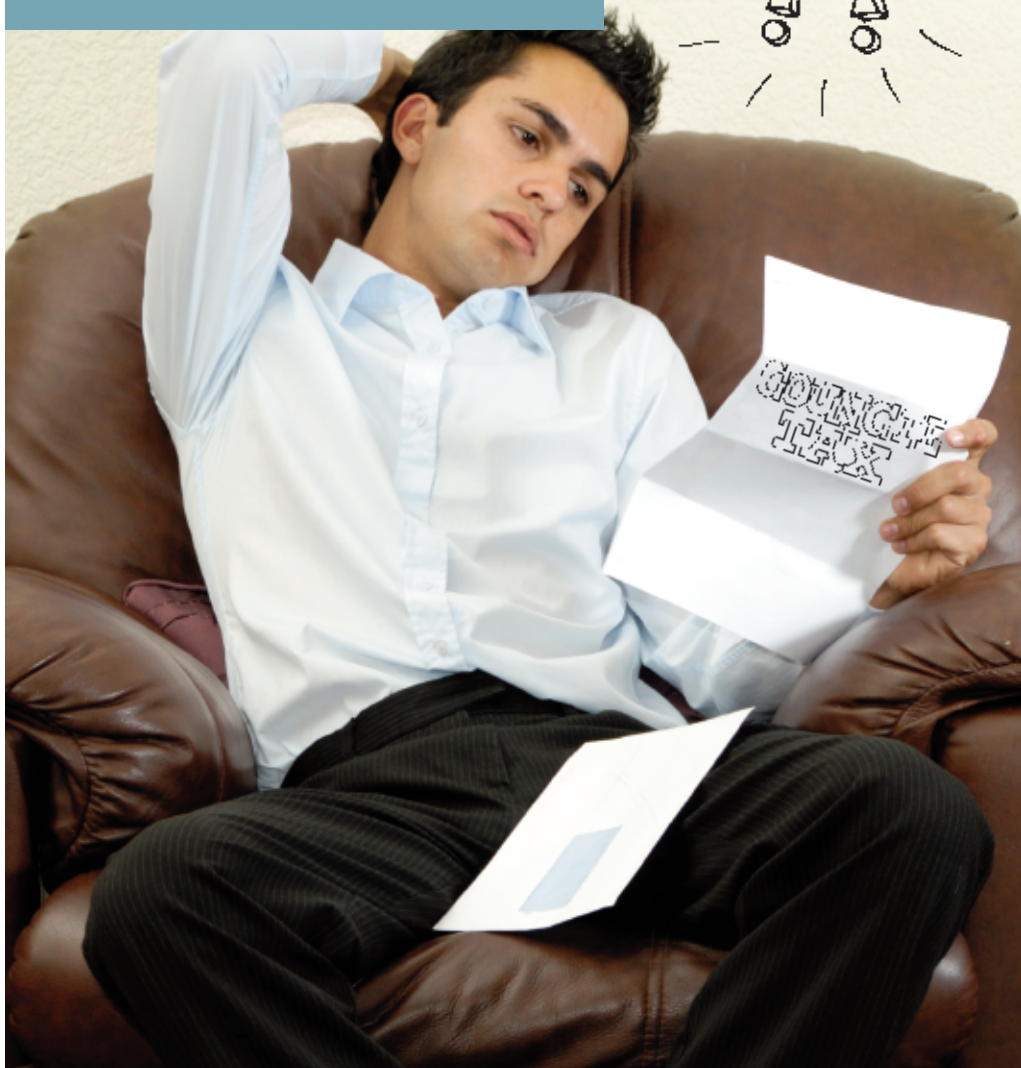


council tax



advice centre



Students and the Council Tax

Council Tax is a charge for services provided by the local authority where you live. It is a single bill for each household which is based on:

- the value of the property,
- the number of people living there,
- the personal circumstances of the residents.

It is commonly assumed that students do not have to pay Council Tax, however this is a myth. In certain circumstances some Full Time Students will have to pay Council Tax. Part-Time Students are not exempt from paying Council Tax, but may be able to apply for Council Tax benefit from their council to assist with the cost if their income is low enough.

Student Status

Before working through this leaflet you need to check whether you and the people you live with are classed as Full-Time Students for Council Tax purposes.

Full-Time Students include:

- Students enrolled on a Full-Time university course, including undergraduate and postgraduate courses
- Students doing a placement as part of a Full-Time course
- Students from Full-Time courses who are doing resits on a part-time basis or without attendance. This will not apply if you are repeating your final year without attendance
- Foreign language assistants

Council Tax Exemption

Whilst some Full Time Students will have to pay Council Tax, the majority will be exempt from paying Council Tax for the duration of their course. However, this is not an automatic exemption and the council where you live will require proof that you are a full time student. There are two ways that you can provide this proof based on what time of the year you enrol onto your course and where you live;

If you enrol during the August until October period and live in Bolton, Manchester, Oldham, Salford, Trafford or Wigan;

MMU will inform your council directly that you are a student on your behalf. They will do this in mid October every year using a computerised data base. However, you will still have to register your status with your local Council Tax Unit to ensure that your exemption is applied. You can do this by email; their details will be available online on the Council websites. You must provide your address, the start and end date of your tenancy, your landlord's name and the name of all tenants and whether they are students or not.

If necessary, you can still obtain a Council Tax Exemption Certificate from your Student Information Point/Student Life Office during the year to present to the Council. If you take the certificate in person you should ask for a receipt. Make sure you keep a copy of the certificate for your own records.

If you enrol at any other time of the year OR live in an area not listed above; After enrolment, ask your Student Information Point/Student Life Office for a Council Tax Exemption certificate and give it to your local council. If you take the certificate in person you should ask for a receipt. Make sure you keep a copy of the certificate for your own records.

Students who will not be liable for Council Tax

These include:

- **Students in Halls of Residence** - halls of residence, including private halls, are exempt from Council Tax.
- **Students Sharing with Students** - the property will be exempt from Council Tax if all the residents are full-time students.
- **Students Living with their Parents** - unless the student is the owner or tenant of the property.
- **Student Lodgers Sharing with Owner Occupiers**
- **International Students Living with Non-Student Dependents** - provided that:

*There are no other non-student adults in the accommodation
and
The dependant is not permitted to work or claim benefits.*

Students who may be liable to pay Council Tax

The property loses its exemption from Council Tax if any non-student adult lives there. Prior to April 2004, many students who shared with non-students were responsible for paying Council Tax bills. Legislation introduced on 1 April 2004 means that fewer full-time students now have to pay Council Tax. However a limited number of full-time students will remain responsible for paying Council Tax.

Part-Time Students are liable to pay Council Tax. Please seek advice from the Advice Centre on your personal situation and whether you may be able to claim Council Tax Benefit from your local Council.

Check your own particular situation in the examples later on in this booklet.

Amount of Council Tax

Council Tax rates are set annually by individual councils and bills run from April to the following March. The amount of Council Tax for an individual property will depend on:

- The valuation 'banding' of the property. There are 8 valuation bands, from A (lowest) to H (highest).
- The number of adults living in the property and whether they qualify for a 'status discount' for being a student, a youth trainee etc.
- The period of occupation. Council Tax is charged on a daily basis for the period of tenancy or owner occupation. Unoccupied properties will be exempt for up to 6 months if they are unfurnished.

Payment of Council Tax

Council Tax is normally paid in 10 monthly installments per year, from April to January. Certain councils may allow you to spread your payments over 12 months. If you fall behind with payments, you can lose the right to pay by installments.

Council Tax Arrears

Do not ignore any Council Tax bill or demand for arrears. It will not go away and could cost you even more if you delay. It may be possible to challenge the bill or negotiate with the Council for payment by installments.

If you fail to respond to arrears letters, you will receive a summons for a Liability Hearing in the Magistrates Court. This will involve additional costs and could result in bailiffs' visits or deductions from your wages, or in the worst case you could go to prison. Therefore it is important you seek advice as soon as possible.

When you finish your course

Your Council Tax exemption certificate will cover you until the last day of your course (24th June 2011). After that the property where you live will attract a Council Tax bill. You may therefore find that you will be required to pay Council Tax when you are between two full-time courses, for example:

- Between finishing an HND or Dip HE and starting a degree top-up year
- Between graduating and starting a PGCE course.

You may be entitled to Council Tax Benefit during this period – contact the Advice Centre for more details.

Dropping out of your course

Contact the Advice Centre if you are thinking of withdrawing from a full-time course. You could be liable for the full Council Tax for your accommodation.

Taking time out of your course

Contact the Advice Centre if you have or are thinking of taking time out of your course. Whilst you should be exempt from paying council tax, problems may arise.

Examples of Council Tax Liability

Example 1

Full-time student

Living with: household entirely comprising full-time students

Amount of Council Tax bill:

Nil – property exempt

Example 2

Full-time student

Living in: Hall of Residence (MMU or private hall)

Amount of Council Tax bill: Nil – property exempt

Example 3

Student (full-time or part-time)

Living in: bedsit

Liability for Council Tax bill:

The bill will be the landlord's responsibility

Note: The building must be classed as an HMO (House in Multiple Occupation)

Example 4

Full-time student

Sharing with: non-students (or part-time students) as joint tenants

Amount of Council Tax bill:

*If there is one non-student: 75% Council Tax bill

*If there are two or more non-students: 100% Council Tax bill

Liability for the bill:

Bills incurred before 1 April 2004:

All joint tenants will be jointly and severally liable for the bill. Contact the Advice Centre for more detailed advice.

Bills incurred from 1 April 2004:

The Council cannot hold the full-time student/s responsible for paying the bill. The non-student/s will ultimately be liable for the whole bill. If they are on a low income they may be entitled to Council Tax Benefit for up to the whole amount of the bill.

Example 5

Full-time student

Living as a couple (including same sex couples) with non-student

No other adults in property

Amount of Council Tax bill: 75%

Liability for the bill:

Bills incurred before 1 April 2004: Both partners will be jointly and severally liable for the bill.

Contact the Advice Centre for more detailed advice.

Bills incurred from 1 April 2004: The Council cannot hold the full-time student responsible for paying the bill. The non-student partner will ultimately be liable for the whole bill. If the non-student is on a low income s/he may be entitled to Council Tax Benefit for up to the whole amount of the bill.

Example 6

Full-time international student

Living with spouse; no other adults in accommodation

*If the spouse is forbidden by the Home Office to work or claim benefits in the UK:
The Council Tax bill will be NIL (property exempt)

*If the spouse is permitted to work or claim benefits in the UK:
Council Tax bill =75%
Liability to pay the bill: the spouse will be liable to pay

Example 7

Full-time student, single, owner occupier

Shares home with non-student adult, children or lodgers

Amount of Council Tax bill:

*if there is one non-student: 75% Council Tax bill

*if there are two or more non-students: 100% Council Tax bill

Liability for the bill:

The owner occupier will be responsible for the bill, even though s/he is a full-time student. Contact the Advice Centre to check if you are entitled to Council Tax Benefit.

Example 8

Full-time student, single, tenant

Shares home with non-student adult, children or lodgers

Amount of Council Tax bill:

*if there is one non-student: 75% Council Tax bill

*if there are two or more non-students:100% Council Tax bill

Liability for the bill:

The tenant will be responsible for the bill, even though s/he is a full-time student. Contact the Advice Centre to check if you are entitled to Council Tax Benefit

Example 9

Full-time Student

Living in someone else's home

You may share the home of someone who is the tenant or owner-occupier of the property, for example a parent or friend. In this case, you will not be liable to pay Council Tax. Payment of the Council Tax will be the responsibility of the resident tenant or owner-occupier.

Example 10

Part-time Student

Part-time students aren't exempt from paying Council Tax.

If you are a tenant or owner-occupier and live in the accommodation, you will be liable to pay up to the full amount of the Council Tax. Contact the Advice Centre for more detailed advice and to check whether you may be entitled to Council Tax Benefit.

Getting Help

The Council Tax is a complicated subject and this leaflet may not have covered everything you need to know.

Contact the Advice Centre for more information or help:

Manchester

3rd Floor, Students' Union, 99 Oxford Road, Manchester, M1 7EL

Tel: 0161 247 6533,

Fax 0161 247 6314

E-mail: s.u.advice@mmu.ac.uk

www.mmunion.co.uk/advice

MMU Cheshire, Didsbury, Gaskell and Hollings

The Advice Centre runs advice sessions at Crewe, Gaskell, Hollings, and Didsbury. Phone 0161 247 6533 to book an appointment

Telephone advice is available 10am - 12noon each week day, including Tuesdays.

Opening Times

Monday	9.30am - 4pm
Tuesday	Closed
Wednesday	9.30am - 4pm
Thursday	9.30am - 4pm
Friday	9.30am - 4pm



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E-mail: s.u.advice@mmu.ac.uk Web: www.mmunion.co.uk/advicecentre

Large print versions of this leaflet are available

Disclaimer: MMUnions' Advice Centre has made every effort to ensure that the information in this leaflet is accurate. MMUnion cannot be held responsible for the consequences of any action taken as a result of reading this leaflet. Before taking any action you are advised to visit the Advice Centre, Students' Union, 99 Oxford Rd, Manchester.