Moving into an off-campus housing option provides the opportunity for many students to decorate their own personal space. While many off-campus apartments will come with basic white paint on the walls, there are simple things that you can do to make your space more inviting, and personalized.

Check your Rental Agreement:
Before you begin any alterations of your off-campus housing unit, make sure to thoroughly read over the rental agreement or lease! Understanding what modifications and alterations to your rental unit that are allowed will prevent non-authorized alterations of the unit. Look for sections entitled “Security Deposits”, “Restrictions and Alterations”, and “Security Deposit.” If you can not identify the sections, ask the staff member that is assisting you before signing. **If you are told anything contrary to what is listed in the rental agreement, please ensure you have changes in writing and signed by the landlord/manager. Ensure you receive a copy of approved changes and that your landlord has a copy with your rental agreement.**

Painting:
Thinking of painting your apartment to change the appearance? First confirm that painting is allowed by your rental agreement. Remember most rental agreements require that you repaint the walls the original color prior to vacating the apartment. After confirming, it’s time to pick a shade! Opt for lighter or pastel colors, as these will be the easiest colors to repaint over upon moving out. Darker colors usually require more expensive primers to cover before painting over. Only looking for a pop of color? Try an accent wall or chalkboard paint on one wall to decorate!

Decor:
Decorating your apartment is meant to be fun! Collaborate with your roommates to see what decorative items everyone has for the common area. Establish a theme or color scheme to keep everything cohesive! Check yard-sales, and resale sites for value priced decorative items that fit the style you have decided on.

Temporary items:
Are you living in a rental that doesn’t allow alterations of the unit? Search for temporary decorative items! Contact paper, command hooks, and other temporary decorative items may be a good option to use to ensure that you can still personalize your space, without sacrificing you security deposit.