

**For immediate release: Tuesday, 12<sup>th</sup> April, 2005**

## **ACCOMMODATION FOR STUDENTS LAUNCHES**

### **WORLDWIDE**

**- No 1 UK website expands to 14 countries simultaneously, including USA, Australia, Japan, China, India, France and Germany -**

(London, 12/4/05) Accommodation for Students (AFS) ([www.accommodationforstudents.com](http://www.accommodationforstudents.com)), the UK's No 1 student accommodation website, is embarking on a major programme of international expansion with the aim of becoming the world's No 1 student accommodation website within 12 months. The company will sign a deal later this month with investors in the USA. Talks are ongoing also with potential investors in France and Australia.

AFS is pursuing a franchise model for its international expansion and is actively seeking investors in each country to buy into and manage the business. Franchise opportunities now exist for Australia, Canada, South Africa, France, Spain, Germany, Italy, India, China, Japan and Russia. These sites all went operational on the 6<sup>th</sup> April, 2005, and AFS is producing local language versions for countries where appropriate.

Director and co-founder, William Berry, said:

“We are about to sign a deal with our partners in New Mexico. They came over to see our operation recently and are very keen to launch AFS in the States. We go over there later this month to conclude the deal, whereby they will invest a six-figure sum which will give them part-ownership of the American operation and provide a significant amount to launch and market the site in the States.

The Accommodation for Students business and technological model has always been intended to be easily transferable, country-wise. Our research has shown us that, as in the UK, most of these markets do not have a successful, dedicated student website, and it is that student angle that has made it so successful in the UK.

We intend to use the American partnership as a model for our expansion and are therefore actively seeking partners as investors/franchisees for our other new markets. Since our growth rate has been over 100% per annum we have attracted considerable interest.”

Accommodation for Students recently launched the latest version of its successful website, featuring a secure and sophisticated integrated online payment system for the charging of landlords and students for its services, plus new search and admin facilities for both students and landlords.

Accommodation for Students has been phenomenally successful since its launch 3 years ago and, is effectively, the only site on the market with full UK student and property coverage. It currently has 216,000 registered student users and deals with over 6,000 landlords and letting agents, and 15,000 properties. It also covers most of the main Larger Private Housing Schemes (LPHS) run by the likes of Unite and Jarvis, 135 in all throughout the UK.

Accommodation for Students is number one in all the search engines. It attracts over ¼ million unique users and ¾ million page views per month, and receives 3.5 million hits a week on the website.

#### **Website Links:**

Main UK website: [www.accommodationforstudents.com](http://www.accommodationforstudents.com)

USA: <http://USA.accommodationforstudents.com>

Australia: <http://Australia.accommodationforstudents.com>

Canada: <http://Canada.accommodationforstudents.com>

South Africa: <http://SouthAfrica.accommodationforstudents.com>

France: <http://France.accommodationforstudents.com>

Spain: <http://Spain.accommodationforstudents.com>

Germany: <http://Germany.accommodationforstudents.com>

Italy: <http://Italy.accommodationforstudents.com>

India: <http://India.accommodationforstudents.com>

China: <http://China.accommodationforstudents.com>

Japan: <http://Japan.accommodationforstudents.com>

Russia: <http://Russia.accommodationforstudents.com>

**- ENDS -**

**About Accommodation for Students**

Accommodation for Students Ltd. was founded by William Berry and Simon Thompson, graduates from Manchester Metropolitan University, in June 2000.

### **Partners**

Accommodation for Students is a content partner for MSN (MSN displays AFS content on its website) <http://afs.money.msn.co.uk> and Virgin Student.

Accommodation for Students is sponsored by STA Travel, Virgin Mobile, Saxon Insurance and Barclays Bank.

### **Accolades**

- Nominated for Best Use of Web in 2004 New Media Age Awards.
- Highly Commended in the Best Industry Innovation category at the inaugural 2002 Property Business Awards

### **The site's features include:**

#### **For students**

- A powerful search engine accessing a nationwide database of student accommodation properties
- An easy-to-use, comprehensive set of accommodation criteria, including geographical location, number of rooms (including required size of room), rent, availability dates, interior facilities (from satellite/cable television to dishwasher), exterior facilities (from garden to off-street parking) and service facilities (e.g. CORGI registered gas central heating)
- Notice board facility with student profile and avatar features. Also detailed messaging services.
- Clipboard facility to save accommodation details
- Landlord email facility which sends an e-mail to the landlord with one click when a student finds a property they like. The e-mail specifies the house and student details and effects an introduction between the student and landlord.
- Chatroom to allow potential housemates to talk to each other and review house options.

#### **For Landlords**

- Sophisticated, user-friendly '**landlord admin suite**' which allows landlords to directly upload and edit their property details and pictures on the Accommodation for Students website. The unique measurement facility allows landlords to judge the effectiveness of the website in attracting student interest to their properties and ultimately their letting.
- Fully integrated online payment system with full transaction history and invoice reporting functionality.
- Multiple image and logo upload facility
- Easy contact system: Accommodation for Students '**e-mail landlord service**'. This service enables students to send a generic e-mail of interest to a landlord with one click. This also ensures the privacy of landlord email addresses.

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