

TOP TIPS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

This booklet is intended as a brief introduction to life in the UK.

Its aim is to highlight some areas of life and study that may be unfamiliar.

It is important that you read the other booklets available in the Advice and Support Centre, which go into a lot more detail on these subjects as well as other topics that will be relevant to you.

We recommend that you research what you can and cannot do in the UK upon your arrival. Do not always assume that organisations (e.g. Doctors, Insurers, Local Authority etc.) will automatically know your rights as an International Student. International Office and Advice and Support Centre staff are always on hand to answer questions you may have about this.

Academic Advice for International Students

As an international student, you may be used to studying under different systems to those used in the UK.

It is vital that you familiarise yourself with the University of Wolverhampton's academic procedures. Below is a list of some of the issues you should be aware of.

Academic Misconduct

Plagiarism

This means trying to pass someone else's work off as your own.

You are expected to reference all the sources that you use in your assignments. This includes other people's words, ideas, images or data. You are expected to write

everything in your own words (unless you use quotation marks to quote directly) and provide references both within the text and via footnotes or references.

The penalties for plagiarism are severe. Ultimately, it may mean that you are not allowed to continue with your course.

Most courses use the Harvard Referencing System, further details of which can be found by typing 'Harvard Referencing' into the search engine on the University's website: www.wlv.ac.uk.

If in doubt, contact your Personal Tutor via your school office or make an appointment to see a Study Skills Adviser at your local Learning Centre.

See the informational booklet **How to Avoid Academic Misconduct**, which is available from the Advice and Support Centre in the Students' Union.

The University also runs sessions on study skills as part of the Sharpen Up Your Skills programme. Please see www.wlv.ac.uk/skills.

Collusion

This is when two or more students work together to produce similar pieces of work.

You are encouraged to discuss ideas with other students because this helps the learning and teaching process by opening up new areas for discussion.

But you must write up your assignments separately. If you submit similar work to that of another student, you could be accused of collusion.

The penalties for collusion are severe. Ultimately, it may mean that you are not allowed to continue with your course.

If you are in any doubt about the difference between group work and collusion, contact your module leader for clarification.

See the information booklet **How to Avoid Academic Misconduct**, which is available from the Advice and Support Centre in the Students' Union.

Student Representation Service

The Advice and Support offers a representation service for any student who needs it.

For example, if you have a meeting with university staff as a consequence of submitting an appeal, or if you have been accused of academic misconduct, you may like a Students' Union Vice President to come along with you to ensure you get a fair hearing.

In fact, whatever the situation, you can ask for a Students' Union Vice President to accompany you if you would like support and we will try our best to sort it out.

See the information leaflet **Student Representation Service**, which is available from the Advice and Support Centre in the Students' Union, or telephone 01902 322038.

Extenuating Circumstances

If you experience personal problems that prevent you from submitting assignments, or if the problems have affected your performance in assessments, you should consider applying for extenuating circumstances.

If successful, you will normally be given the chance to take the assessment as if for the first time at the next available opportunity (providing you haven't already passed the assessment).

You can obtain the relevant form from your Registry or from the Advice and Support Centre in the Students' Union.

See the information booklet **Extenuating Circumstances**, which is available from the Advice and Support Centre in the Students' Union.

Extensions

You can get an extension to your assessment deadline of up to seven days if you are experiencing temporary personal problems. You must normally apply for an extension seven days before the deadline.

See the information booklet **Extensions**, which is available from the Advice and Support Centre in the Students' Union.

Academic Appeals

You may disagree with a decision made by an Assessment Board. You can appeal providing that you can show

- Material irregularity; for example, an administrative error

AND/OR

- Extenuating circumstances that couldn't, for good reasons, be notified to the Board at the appropriate time

See the information booklet **Academic Appeals**, which is available from the Advice and Support Centre in the Students' Union.

Complaints

If you are not satisfied with a service, you can submit a complaint to the manager of the relevant school or department. Complaint forms are available from Registry or from the Advice and Support Centre in the Students' Union.

See the information booklet **Complaints**, which is available from the Advice and Support Centre in the Students' Union.

Student Voice

Why not become a student rep and gain invaluable skills to put on your CV? For more information visit www.wolvesunion.org/studentvoice

LIVING IN THE UK

Doctors/ Dentists

Do not wait until you are ill to register with a doctor/ dentist. Lists of where to find your local doctors/dentists are available from the International Office and from the Advice and Support Centre in the Students' Union.

Remember that you will be usually expected to make an appointment *before* you go see the doctor/ dentist and in some busier practices you might have to wait a few days for an appointment.

Making Appointments

Many services will see you on an appointment basis only. When making and attending an appointment, please be aware that *unless* specified, **one** appointment is for **one** person only. This is true of doctors, dentists, banks and many other services. Some may reserve the right to refuse to see you if you try and attend with someone else who has not got an appointment.

Prescriptions Charges

Depending on your income and savings, you may be able to get a reduction in the cost of prescriptions and other healthcare, for example, dental treatment and optical care. You can fill in a National Health Service HC1 form (available from your doctor or from the Advice and Support Centre).

Accident and Emergency (A&E)

You need to attend A&E at your local hospital if your problem or illness is something you think may need urgent attention (e.g. broken bones, burns and cuts etc.) A&E is not appointment based so you have to sit and wait until someone can treat you. It can take hours and is longest on a Friday and Saturday night. If you find yourself waiting anything up to 4 hours and over, this is normal!

A triage nurse will see you quite quickly and assess how urgent your treatment should be and then you will be advised to return to the waiting room. You will have to wait for your treatment and will be seen in order of severity of illness or injury.

Emergency Services

These are Police, Ambulance and Fire Services. Call 999 **only in an emergency.**

For any non-emergency situation, these services can be contacted via your local station.

See green booklet 'Useful Numbers' for further information

Doorstep Sellers

Do not buy anything or sign anything from anyone who knocks at your front door. It may be useful to put a sign up on your front door or window stating that you will not open the door to sellers (or anyone you don't know for that matter!)

If you need to let someone into your house (for instance, someone to read your electric meter or a tradesperson to fix something), **always** ask to see identification before you let them in.

If you are a female living alone in a set of flats, just use your surname rather than first name or title on your doorbell or letter box so that it is not obvious you are female.

Queuing

You may have noticed that in England we like to stand in line for things! At bus stops, in shops, parking, telephones, cash machines, a drink in a bar...we queue for lots of things.

Queuing is not required by law but is considered good manners almost everywhere you go. Try to be courteous when waiting in line for anything. Pushing in is not something that is looked upon kindly!

Public Transport

Always remember to leave extra time when you are planning a trip by public transport. Trains and buses often do not run on time and many are late rather than early. Bus services usually end at around 11pm and restart around 5 o'clock in the morning. Sunday services are often a lot less frequent than in the week.

Calling Home

There are many companies that now offer cheap ways of calling abroad. You can usually use these services from your existing telephone.

www.buy.co.uk and www.ukstudentlife.com offer advice on the latest services and prices. Remember to shop around for the best deal.

TV Licences

If you use a television for watching or recording television programmes, you are required by law to buy a TV Licence. The money goes towards funding the BBC TV and Radio stations.

Private Sector Housing

If you live in a shared house where you have all signed separate tenancy agreements, you will all need to buy your own TV Licence if you intend to use a television in your individual rooms. If you and your housemates have a joint tenancy agreement (i.e. you have all signed one agreement), you just need to buy one licence between all of you (no matter how many televisions are in the household)

Halls Accommodation

If you have a television in your room in halls you will be required to buy a TV Licence in order to watch it legally. Regardless of the fact that you live in a 'Hall' with many other people, each room is required to have its own individual licence for watching television.

What happens if I don't get one?

If you are caught using a television without a licence, you could be liable for a fine of up to £1000

How much is a TV Licence?

A TV licence for a colour television is currently £135.50 per year. You will get a reduction if you are registered blind and it is free for those over 75 years of age. You can pay for the licence in one go or you can spread the cost throughout the year using various payment schemes.

You may be eligible for a discount if you buy your licence before the end of October and return home for the Summer holidays.

How do I get a TV Licence?

www.tvlicensing.co.uk/buyorrenew or call **0870 242 1417**

For further information, please see the blue pamphlet 'TV Licences – The Facts for Students' or the website www.direct.gov.uk

Postal Services

There are a number of ways you can post items in the UK and there are different costs according to size, type of delivery and whether you send something through Royal Mail or a private courier firm.

If you are posting expensive or important items, you may choose to use a service that offers compensation if the goods are lost or damaged (e.g. Special Delivery, private courier services). If you are not concerned about compensation but need to confirm that the item has been received then you might choose a service where the recipient has to sign for the item upon delivery (e.g. Recorded Delivery). If you use a standard method of postage, you can do it at the Post Office and obtain a Certificate of Posting, which though not entitling you to compensation or guaranteeing delivery, does prove when the item was sent, should you need to do this.

If you are posting your passport and documents to the IND to renew your visa, we recommend you send it by Special Delivery. If you decide not to, then at least send it at the Post Office and get a certificate of postage to prove that you have posted it.

For ordinary post, most people just use standard Royal Mail first or second class post according to how quickly they need the item to be delivered.

Prices on all types of postage vary according to the size and weight of the item.

Go to www.royalmail.com for further information about the services provided by Royal Mail.

For private courier services search the internet or the Yellow Pages.

Council Tax

What is Council Tax?

Council Tax is a tax that is paid by households to the local council.

The amount you pay is based on the estimated value of the property and the number of people living in it. **Every** domestic dwelling is liable to pay Council Tax.

Do I have to pay Council Tax?

If you are a full-time student and **ALL** the other people in your house are also full-time students, your household will not have to pay Council Tax. It is your responsibility to inform your local Council Tax office of your full-time student status. You can do this by asking your campus Registry for a letter showing your student status. You can request this letter from e:vision.

N.B. Council Tax liability starts as soon as your course ends.

Halls Accommodation and Council Tax

Only full-time students are allowed to live in halls, therefore halls accommodation is exempt from Council Tax liability. If you live in halls, you **will not** need to get a letter from Registry, as living in halls automatically makes you exempt.

For further information please see the blue booklet 'Council Tax'

Utilities

What are Utilities?

Utilities are basically what you use within your home for heating, lighting, washing, cooking etc. These will include such amenities as electricity, gas, water, telephone and internet connection.

What to do when you move into a new property

One of the first things you must do is to take readings from all utilities meters in the house. These will usually be the electricity, gas and perhaps a water meter (which not every house has). The meters are usually found in a cupboard under the stairs, or in a box on the outside of the house. Your landlord should be able to show you where all the meters are.

Take down the numbers given on the meters and telephone each utility company, giving them the reading and the date you moved into the house. You should also give them the names of **every** person living in the property. This will make sure that all people in the house are jointly responsible for the bills.

Why should I contact the utility companies?

If you do not let the utilities companies know when you moved into the property and what the meter reading was when you moved in, you could end up paying for the utilities used by the previous tenants. Every time someone moves in or out of the house, you should call the companies again to let them know and to change the names on the bill.

See green booklet 'Useful Numbers for contact details of local utility companies

Halls

If you live in University halls accommodation, your utilities are included in the price of your room.

Internet Services

Most companies will offer you a minimum contract period of 12 months. This means that even if you cancel the contract earlier, you will usually be expected to pay the monthly charge until the end of the minimum contract period. After the minimum contract period you will only be asked to pay until the end of the notice period (often 30 days).

Some companies may not charge you for the whole of the contract if you withdraw from it early but instead just charge you an additional amount as an 'early termination fee'.

If you move house during the minimum contract period, you will generally be expected to take the contract with you. Anything you sign is LEGALLY BINDING so be careful to read everything and do your research before you sign.

When comparing the different services you need to think about what you require out of a service. For example, although one company may offer the cheapest broadband deal per month, another may require shorter notice to cancel a contract. If you know that you will have to cancel the contract early, it might be wise to choose one that charges you a one of fee for early cancellation rather than for the whole of the contract.

Always make sure you shop around and look for the best deal. You can visit shops on the high street as well as use internet comparison websites to find the deal that suits you.

House Hunting – Your Rights as a Private Tenant

- You have the right to 'Quiet Enjoyment' of your property – that means that no one has the right to disturb you, especially your landlord!
- Your landlord is required by law to give you at least 24 hours notice before entering your property
- If you have signed an Assured Shorthold Tenancy Agreement your landlord **must by law** give you 2 months notice before asking you to leave a property. Simply throwing you out of a property is against the law!
- Only a court can order you to leave a property. A landlord cannot tell **anyone** to remove you without getting a courts permission first.
- It is the law that every landlord should hold a Gas Safety Certificate for their property. Ask to see it. If there isn't one, or there is and it has expired, your landlord is breaking the law (and potentially endangering your health)!
- As from 6th April 2007 any deposit you pay to a landlord must be put (by him or her) into a government approved Tenancy Deposit Scheme. This means that the landlord does not hold your deposit, but must let you know within 21 days of signing the contract, where your money is to be held. This new scheme *should* stop landlords withholding deposit unfairly.

Contracts/ Tenancy Agreements

Halls

A contract with Residential Services is LEGALLY BINDING and is usually for a whole academic year. You are required to pay your rent in 3 instalments and there is a discount if you pay your rent in full at the start of the tenancy.

Once you have signed a contract, in Halls or in the private sector, you are unlikely be allowed to leave it before the end. Make sure you read everything thoroughly before signing and get clarification from the Advice and Support Centre if you are unsure of anything.

See blue booklets 'House Hunting Guide' and 'Private Tenancies' for more information.

Driving in the UK

Driving Licences

It is important to check whether you can use you own driving licence in the UK. If you are unsure, check with the DVLA (Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency) to make sure before driving in this country 0870 240 0009 or www.direct.gov.uk/motoring.

Insurance/Road Tax/MOT

All motor vehicles in the UK must be registered, taxed and insured. Vehicles over 3 years old also require a valid MOT (Ministry Of Transport) test certificate. These are usually renewed every 12 months.

See red booklet 'International Students' for further information about driving in the UK.

Registering with the Police

If you are a national of the Commonwealth or intend to stay in the UK for less than 6 months, then you will not usually need to register with the police when you arrive.

A stamp in your passport will usually tell you whether you need to register or not.

See red booklets 'Police Registration' and 'International Students' for more information.

Visa Renewal/ Extensions of Stay

If your stay expires before your course ends, you will have to renew your visa and extend your leave to remain. You must make your application before your current visa expires.

The Advice and Support Centre runs a Postal Batch Scheme, whereby the International Adviser can go through your application with you and send it off for you in a batch with other students' applications. You must do this **at least** 8 weeks before the date your visa expires.

See the red booklet 'International Students' and 'Student Postal Batch Scheme' for more information.

Useful Contacts

Advice and Support Centre
Students' Union
Wulfruna Street
Wolverhampton (City Campus)
Tel: (01902) 322038
Fax: (01902) 322040
www.wolvesunion.org (Advice & Support)
Email: advice@wolvesunion.org

International Office
University of Wolverhampton
Room 106
MB Building
Wolverhampton (City Campus)
Tel: (01902) 322267
Email: international@wlv.ac.uk

International Students Post-arrival Handbook from the International office.

Advice and Support Centre In-House Booklets –

International Students (Red)

Police Registration (Red)

Extending your student visa (Red)

Working in the UK after your Studies (Red)

House Hunting Guide (Blue)

Council Tax (Blue)

Private Tenancies (Blue)

Harassment and Illegal Eviction (Blue)

Gas Safety (Blue)

How to Avoid Academic Misconduct

Academic Misconduct

Extenuating Circumstances

Extensions

Appeals

Complaints (Lilac)

Benefiting From Your Assessment (Lilac)

Student Representation Leaflet

Travel Abroad (Green)

Student Safety Guide (Green)

Staying Healthy (Green)

Useful names and addresses (Green)

Banking for International Students (white leaflet)