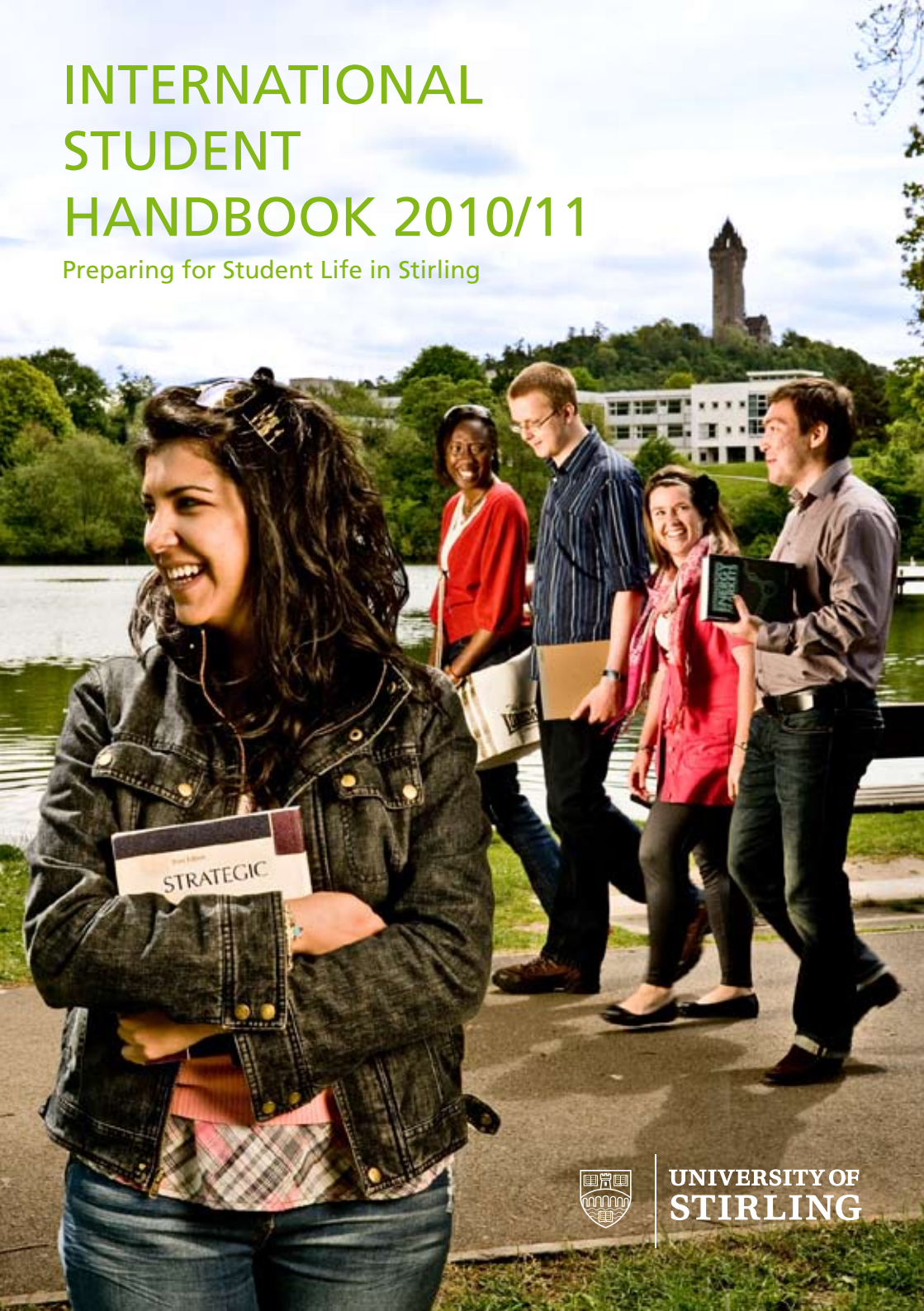



INTERNATIONAL STUDENT HANDBOOK 2010/11

Preparing for Student Life in Stirling



UNIVERSITY OF
STIRLING

WELCOME



This handbook will help you make the transition from your home country to Britain and to the University of Stirling, ensuring that your stay is as beneficial and enjoyable as possible.



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WELCOME

This handbook will help you make the transition from your home country to the UK and the University of Stirling.

It provides advice and information on a range of issues. Please take the time to read it as it will help you prepare for your time as a Stirling student. Your studies are of course vitally important and they will progress more successfully if you have prepared for all aspects of your time in the UK. For this reason much of the information in this handbook is not directly related to your studies but will help you to adjust to everyday life in the UK.

If you are concerned about any of the issues raised in this handbook please contact the staff at the International Office. You can email us at international@stir.ac.uk

We hope to meet as many of you as possible during your stay. Your studies in Scotland

are an excellent opportunity not only to achieve academic success but also to enhance your life experience and interests. We hope you will take some opportunities to explore the cultural and social aspects of student life in Stirling – these will add great personal value to your time with us.

We look forward to welcoming you to our community here at the University of Stirling.

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We have taken every care to ensure that the information in this handbook is correct at the time of printing. However, information is subject to change and the University cannot accept responsibility for any alterations, omissions or inaccuracies which may occur.

Induction Information and Events

Throughout the first week of semester there will be a number of events to help you get to know the University, including information sessions on immigration issues, talks to help you adjust and also opportunities to meet other students and staff of the University.

Dates and times of sessions will be sent to you during the admissions process. We encourage you to attend as many of these events as possible.

You can also find more information about induction events at the University's induction web pages: www.induction.stir.ac.uk



EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AREA (EEA) AND SWISS STUDENTS

If you are a citizen of an EEA member state or Switzerland you will not need a visa to come to the UK for study. Most of this section will not apply to you but you should read the information on employment on page 11. You can find more information for EEA students at <http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/eea.php>

If you are a national of another country but live in the EEA you may need a visa and the next section will still apply to you.

EEA Member States

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Republic of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom

BEFORE YOU LEAVE YOUR HOME COUNTRY

All international students coming to Stirling for more than 6 months will need a visa. You apply for a visa in the Visa Application Centre for your region or country. You can check where this is on the web site www.ukvisas.gov.uk.

If you're coming for a shorter programme, see the information on page 8. You should begin preparing for your visa application as soon as you have arranged your studies and your funding.

STUDENT VISAS

KEY POINTS

- › Make sure your passport is up to date
- › Request your CAS in good time
- › Check it thoroughly and make sure you put the information on your visa form accurately
- › Check that you have the original certificates and transcripts detailed in your CAS
- › Check the requirements for financial documents very carefully
- › Apply in good time
- › Tell us if you have problems



Students should apply for a Tier 4 General Student Visa. The process is explained below.

APPLYING FOR A TIER 4 (GENERAL) STUDENT VISA

Where to apply: at the Visa Application Centre for your country/region.

When to apply: after you have confirmed your unconditional offer and have gathered the documents you need, but no more than three months before your programme starts

Visas for the UK are issued by British Embassies and High Commissions abroad. UK Border Agency (UKBA) is the government department that deals with visas and immigration.

To qualify for a Tier 4 General Student Visa you will need to meet two basic requirements:

1. You must hold a valid Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS)

The University can issue a CAS when you accept an unconditional offer of a place on a full time programme of study. We cannot issue a CAS for a conditional offer. If you use a University of Stirling CAS, your visa will only be valid for study at Stirling. So, you must decide where you will study before applying for your visa.

The CAS is a “virtual document”. We enter your personal details and your study details into a UKBA information system and a reference number is assigned. When you apply for your visa you give the reference number and the officers dealing with your application can see the information we have entered on the system.

When we issue the CAS we will send you a copy of the information we have provided. You **MUST** check that this is accurate and tell us of any changes or errors as soon as possible.

The information you give with your visa application must match the information in your CAS.

The CAS will give details of the qualification(s) you presented to us to get your unconditional offer. You will have to show the original certificates or transcripts with your visa application. It is very important to make sure you have the original documents detailed on your CAS.

2. You must have funding to pay for your studies

The exact amount of funding you need will depend on the cost and length of your programme:

Length of programme	Money needed
Nine months or less	Academic fees plus £600 for each calendar month* of the course
More than nine months	Academic fees for first year plus £5,400

*Part months are counted as a whole month. So, for example, if your programme starts on 15 September 2010 and ends on 20 December 2010 this will be counted as four months.

UKBA have strict requirements about the documents you can present to show that you have enough money. Please check the information from the Visa Application Centre and check these websites when preparing your application:

www.ukvisas.gov.uk
www.ukcisa.org.uk

Tuberculosis Screening and medical tests

Students from certain countries may need to have a Tuberculosis (TB) test before their visa will be issued. The test must be undertaken by an accredited clinic and show that the student is free from infectious TB. The Visa Application Centre will give you more information about testing in your area. The test involves a straightforward chest x-ray.

Biometric Data

As part of the visa application process, you will have to give your fingerprints and have a photograph taken at the visa application centre.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Academic Technology Approval Scheme

If you are a Research student with the School of Biological and Environment Sciences or the School of Computing Science and Mathematics, you will need to apply for an ATAS (Academic Technology Approval Scheme) certificate before you make your immigration application. You can apply online. The University Postgraduate Admissions Office will include the documentation and information you need along with your Unconditional Acceptance letter and CAS. If you are a research student with any other academic department or subject area, or an undergraduate or Masters student, you do not normally need an ATAS certificate. For information, visit:

www.fco.gov.uk/atas
www.ukcisa.org.uk
www.ukvisas.gov.uk/en

HOW LONG WILL YOUR VISA LAST?

Your visa will be issued for the length of your programme of study plus some extra time at the end, depending on the length of programme:

Length and type of programme	Length of Visa
Main programme, 12 months or more	Full length of programme plus 4 months at the end Visa can be issued up to one month before start of programme
Main programme or pre-sessional English language programme 6-12 months	Full length of programme plus 2 months at the end Visa can be issued up to one month before start of programme
Pre-sessional English language programme for less than 6 months	Full length of programme plus 1 months at the end Visa can be issued up to one month before start of programme
Other programmes for less than six months	Full length of programme plus 7 days at the end.



STUDENTS COMING TO STIRLING FOR LESS THAN SIX MONTHS

If you are coming to the UK for less than 6 months, you can either apply for a Tier 4 (General) Student visa, in which case you should follow the advice above, or you can come to the UK as a Student Visitor. Applying for a Tier 4 (General) Student visa has two main advantages: you will have permission to work part time in the UK, and you will have the opportunity to extend your stay if you decide you want to study in the UK for longer than six months.

If you decide to come to the UK as a Student Visitor instead, you should check whether you need to apply for a visa before travelling at the web site www.ukvisas.gov.uk/en. As a Student Visitor you will not be able to work in the UK and your stay will be limited to 6 months. For more information about Student Visitor status visit the web site www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/info_sheets/arriving_in_uk.php

ARRIVING IN THE UK – IMMIGRATION CONTROL

Please carry all documentation relevant to your studies in the UK (for example, your offer letter and accommodation information, financial information) in your hand luggage.

When you arrive at the UK airport or port of entry, you must first clear Immigration Control. Follow the signs or ask a member of staff to assist you. When you reach Immigration Control you may be required to produce the documentation you presented to get your visa or entry clearance. The Immigration Officer may also ask you questions to make sure that your study plans have not changed. Remember – your visa is issued to allow you to study at a specific University or college. If you have changed your mind and want to study somewhere else you should apply for a new visa before you travel. You will not be able to change your visa at the airport.

The vast majority of students who arrive in the UK with a valid visa have no problems at immigration control. The Immigration Officer may send you to a medical inspector for a

routine health check. If you have already had a TB screening test or medical check-up please carry the documents in your hand luggage.

If any problems should occur at immigration – for example, you are detained for further questioning and you are unsure of what to do – ask to see a representative of the UK Immigration Advisory Service.

AFTER YOU ARRIVE IN THE UK

Registration with the Police

Some students will be given a visa or passport stamp requiring them to register with the police. If you are required to register with the police you must do so within seven days of entry to the UK. The seven-day requirement also applies if you are planning a short stay in another part of the UK before arriving in Stirling. For example, if you are spending time in London, you must register with the local police in London, and when you arrive in Stirling you must inform the police of your new address.

There is a charge of £34 for police registration. You will pay this charge only once and you must bring your passport, one passport photograph, evidence that you are a student and evidence of your address in the UK. You will then receive a Certificate of Police Registration. This document will be valid for the duration of your permission to stay in the country. It is important that you read the information on the back of this certificate.

If you extend your visa you must, by law, inform the police when an extension has been granted. You must keep the police informed of any change of address while you are in the UK.

The Police visit campus in September each year to make it easier for new students to register. Details will be available on www.induction.stir.ac.uk/first-week/timetable.php

Extending your stay in the UK

If you are already studying in the UK and need to extend your visa to start a new programme or complete an existing one, advice is available from the International Student Adviser.

In September, the International Student Adviser will deliver sessions on how to extend your stay as a student. He also operates the 'Student Batch Scheme'. If you want to use this scheme the International Student Adviser will assist you to send your Tier 4 (G) application to the Home Office. Information regarding session times and using the scheme will be posted on the International Students' Notice Board, in the Andrew Miller Building, on the University website at: www.stir.ac.uk/international and on webCT under 'International Student Information'.

If you are a PhD Research student with the School of Biological and Environment Science or Computing Science and Mathematics, you will need to apply for an ATAS (Academic Technology Approval Scheme) certificate before you make your immigration application to extend your visa. – see the information about ATAS on page 7.

Travel outside the UK

If you intend to travel to a country other than your home country, you should contact the nearest Embassy or Consulate of that country, to determine if you require a visa or any special

documentation. You may have difficulty in obtaining a visa to visit another country if you are travelling near the end of your permission to stay in the UK. Many embassies/consulates expect students to have a minimum of between three and six months' permission to stay in the UK, after their proposed trip. If you are coming to the UK for a short course and want to visit another country from the UK, you should obtain a visa for that country, if required, before leaving your home country for the UK. For further details contact Ian MacLellan, International & Study Abroad Office, email: international@stir.ac.uk

You should take out appropriate travel insurance before you leave the UK. There are many providers available which will suit your needs.

Re-entering the UK

You should ensure that you return to the UK while your visa is still valid. You must carry, in your hand luggage, relevant documentation proving your status as a student (ask Student Administration, 2Z Cottrell, for a Certificate of Enrolment) and satisfy entry requirements on returning to the UK.

If your last permission to stay was granted as an extension of stay in the UK for less than six months, please seek advice from the International Student Adviser before travelling.



EMPLOYMENT

EEA and Swiss students

Most EEA and Swiss National students are allowed to work in the UK without any restrictions on hours of work. If you are a national of the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia or Slovenia and you want to work, you are required to register as a worker under the Accession State 'Worker Registration Scheme'. If you are a National of Bulgaria or Romania and you want to work, you will need an accession worker card. For more information visit: <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/workingintheuk/eea/> and also the "EEA and Swiss Students" section of www.ukcisa.org.uk

All other students

Degree students who enter the UK with a Tier 4 (General) Student visa will normally be allowed to take part time work (up to 20 hours per week) during semester and full time work in the UK during vacations. Students studying programmes below degree level may be restricted to 10 hours' work per week. Your visa will state how many hours you can work. This permission does not include working as a sports person or entertainer, self-employment or pursuing a career by taking a permanent job but most student part time jobs are allowed.

Students who enter as Student Visitors will not be permitted to work.





PACKING: WHAT TO BRING

HAND LUGGAGE

You will be able to bring one small bag on your flight. Things to put in this bag:

- › Overnight toiletries (in case your main luggage is delayed)
- › Documents from the University (programme of studies information, accommodation forms and information)
- › Something to read on the flight/at the airport
- › Essential medication (plus confirmation from your doctor that you need this medicine)

Remember that there are restrictions on what you may carry in your hand luggage:

Heathrow Airport security information at www.heathrow-airport-guide.co.uk/security.html gives a useful guide.

Clothes and the weather

You can check the weather forecast for Stirling at the **Met Office** - www.metoffice.com/weather/uk/ta/stirling_forecast_weather.html.

The weather in Scotland is variable. Summer temperatures are usually 18-25 degrees celcius (daytime) while in winter the temperature can be as low as minus 5 degrees and high temperatures can be around 10 degrees.

Weather changes quickly – we can have both rain and sunshine within an hour

For a more detailed discussion of Scottish weather, the BBC web site features the following pages about understanding the weather system in Scotland:
www.bbc.co.uk/weather/features/understanding/scotland_01.shtml

We suggest you bring at least one raincoat and warm coat or jacket with you. In winter you will need waterproof boots, gloves, scarf and hat. It is best to keep warm by wearing many layers of clothing rather than one

thick layer. Winter coats and clothing can be bought in Stirling if they are not readily available at home.

We suggest you plan to buy some of your clothes in the UK after you have some experience of the climate.

Household Items

Check with your accommodation provider what items are included in your accommodation – you may need to buy some kitchen equipment and bedding after your arrival in the UK so check what you will need for the first few nights.

It's best to buy heavier items in the UK to avoid exceeding your baggage allowance.

Restricted goods

There are restrictions on bringing some goods to the UK (for example, alcohol, drugs and some food products). For more information see the UK Border Agency web page on customs: www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/travellingtotheuk/customs/

- › Make your accommodation arrangements in good time
- › Book flights and onward travel from home if possible – it is usually cheaper than booking at short notice from the UK
- › Book an Airport Collection or plan your travel from the airport to Stirling
- › Book extra accommodation for anyone travelling with you
- › Book extra accommodation if arriving early
- › Arrange money/traveller's cheques for the first few days

PLANNING YOUR TRAVEL

You will be able to arrange most of your travel through a travel agent in your home country or via the internet (see the links at the end of this section). It is usually cheaper and more reliable to arrange as much of your journey in advance as you can.

Most students travelling to Stirling arrange to arrive at Glasgow or Edinburgh Airport, either by transfer flight from London or from outside the UK. You can usually book a transfer flight along with your main flight. You can also travel from London to Stirling by train or coach.

GETTING TO STIRLING FROM GLASGOW AND EDINBURGH AIRPORTS

Driving to the University takes approximately 45 minutes from Edinburgh Airport, and around 70 minutes from Glasgow Airport. There are regular bus and train services, or you could get a taxi, although this will be expensive.

Note: Glasgow Prestwick Airport is not the same as Glasgow Airport. Glasgow Prestwick is another 40km (25miles) further away from Stirling than Glasgow Airport. There are regular trains from Prestwick Airport to central Glasgow.

Stirling and the Campus

Note that the University Campus is only two miles from the train and bus stations in Stirling. It is possible to get a bus to campus but if you have luggage it will be easier to get a taxi (approximate cost £6).

Luggage

Label all luggage clearly with your full name and the full name and address of the University of Stirling. When you arrive at a UK airport and have cleared Immigration Control, you must collect your luggage and pass through customs.



AIRPORT COLLECTION

Stirling Direct are a shared travel service operating 24hrs a day – 365 days of the year. They offer collection services from Edinburgh, Glasgow and Prestwick Airports and aim to offer the lowest priced, hassle free travel. This service is available to Students, Parents, Friends, Visitors and University Staff.

If you wish to book an airport collection with Stirling Direct please do so through their website www.stirlingdirect.org.

You can also contact them via e-mail at info@stirlingdirect.org or phone them on +44 (0) 791 251 3558.

If you lose your luggage, inform the airport authorities at once. They will ask you to fill in some forms, which will begin a search.

ARRANGING YOUR ACCOMMODATION

Please make sure that you have finalised your accommodation before travelling to Stirling. If you arrive in Stirling with no accommodation arranged it may be difficult to find a suitable place to stay.

If you are staying in University Accommodation you will receive information about making your application – please read this carefully.

Please go to the web page at www.external.stir.ac.uk/students/campus_info/accommodation/index.php for more information.

If you plan to live in private accommodation, the Residential Services Office can provide a list of available accommodation. It is your responsibility to make arrangements to view this and to pay for this accommodation directly with the landlord.

Relatives and Friends

If a friend or relative is travelling with you to help you settle in, please remember to arrange accommodation for them. It may be difficult to find accommodation at short notice, especially in the days before the start of semester as many parents, friends and relatives come to Stirling with new students. Residential Services can provide information about short term accommodation including Bed and Breakfast near campus– contact accommodation@stir.ac.uk. Bed and Breakfast accommodation usually means a room in a small guest house or hotel with breakfast provided. This can be cheaper than a major hotel.



MONEY FOR THE FIRST FEW DAYS

We advise all students to open a bank account in the UK, but this will take a few days to arrange. You should make sure you have access to money to cover your needs for the first few days in the UK:

- If you plan to use a non-UK credit card or bank card to make payments or withdraw cash, check with the card provider that there will be no problems with this.
- If you plan to bring cash, consider bringing traveller's cheques instead. Cash is easily lost or stolen

Remember that there may be unexpected or emergency expenses (for example paying for accommodation in London if you miss a transfer flight) so you should budget to spend more than normal in the first few days.

TRAVELLING SAFELY

Travel in the UK is generally safe but the following advice may help you:

1. Always use seatbelts where provided in cars, taxis and coaches.
2. Try not to carry large amounts of cash. If you do have a lot of cash do not draw attention to this fact and keep it out of sight.
3. Carry valuable items in your hand luggage.
4. Do not accept offers of accommodation from agents who may approach you. Go instead to a tourist information office if you need temporary accommodation (for example for an overnight stay in London). They will help you find somewhere to stay.
5. Make sure small valuable items (cash, purses, wallets, phones, jewellery) are secure, especially in busy places and on the London Underground.
6. If you are lost, ask a police officer or a member of staff from the transport services for help.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Many students take out travel insurance before coming to the UK. A good travel insurance policy may provide compensation in the event of missed flights, lost luggage and other things that might go wrong on your trip. Your travel agent should be able to provide information.

USEFUL LINKS

Travel in the UK

www.external.stir.ac.uk/undergrad/campus_get/get_here.php – information on getting to the University from UK locations

www.traveline.org.uk – travel information for the UK including a journey planner

www.nationalrail.co.uk – for train travel, including a searchable timetable

www.nationalexpress.com – for coach travel

www.citylink.com – for coach travel

Accommodation

www.studentaccommodation.stir.ac.uk – the University's accommodation service

www.visitscotland.com – tourist information site, useful for booking temporary accommodation

www.visitlondon.com/accommodation/ – for accommodation options in London

Safety

www.britishcouncil.org/accreditation-safety-first.pdf – a guide to personal security and safety for International Students



MONEY AND BANKING

PLANNING YOUR FINANCES

- after your academic fees, your main expense will be accommodation
- it's important to know what costs are included in your accommodation bill
- planning a budget will help you manage your money
- some students work part time to supplement their funding, but you shouldn't expect to earn a lot of money from a part time job

BUDGETING AND COST OF LIVING

You will need to show your financial support to get a visa for the UK. You will also need to consider what you will need to spend your money on. These on-line resources will help you:

University information about the cost of living in Stirling: www.external.stir.ac.uk/international/finance/costofliving.php

The Student Calculator: www.studentcalculator.org.uk/international/ (a multilingual on-line tool to help you plan your budget)

KEY LIVING EXPENSES

Accommodation and heating

When budgeting it is important to know what you will have to pay for. The on line resources above will help you. A key issue is what costs are included in your accommodation payments. In most privately rented accommodation, you will have to pay for gas, electricity and telephone separately so

you will need to allow for this when planning. You should always check what is included in your rent payments. Heating in Scotland is usually provided by gas central heating or, less commonly, electric heating.

Food and Other Essentials

Whether you decide to cook for yourself or use the University catering facilities, you should allow at least £35 per week for food costs. You could add a further £12 per week to cover the costs of other essentials such as soap, toothpaste, household cleaning products, washing powder etc. This will provide a basic standard of living- you may wish to spend more.

Travel

If you live off-campus you will have to budget for the cost of travel to and from the University. The costs will depend on how far you live from the campus. A rough guide would be to allow £6 per week for travel expenses if you live quite near the campus.



Books

The University Library is an excellent resource but you will also need to buy some books to assist with your studies. In any one year you may be expected to spend £200 + on books and stationery. Some students save money by buying textbooks second hand – you can check in the campus bookshop and also with on-line booksellers (when checking on-line prices remember to include the shipping costs for the book).

Leisure

While you are here you may wish to take advantage of the variety of opportunities open to you. You may be interested in theatre, cinema or sport, or travel within the UK or Europe. It is essential that whilst making the most of your studies you should also make the most of your leisure time. Plan ahead and put aside a budget to enable you to do the things that interest you.

Academic Fees

International students can obtain information on current fees from the International & Study Abroad Office at: www.stir.ac.uk/international/finance/tuition_fees.php

Visiting non-graduating students may obtain information on current fee levels from the Study Abroad Office.

Students from the European Union undertaking an undergraduate degree should contact the Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS), Gyleview House, 3 Redheughs Rigg, Edinburgh EH12 9HH, for current information regarding eligibility for assistance with tuition fees: www.student-support-saas.gov.uk



BANKING

- you should open a UK bank account as soon as you are able
- most students use the campus bank for convenience but you can shop around for the best deal
- money transfers are usually quicker than paying non-sterling cheques into your account

You are advised to open a bank account on arrival at the University. There are branches of most major Scottish banks in Bridge of Allan and Stirling, and a branch of the Halifax Bank of Scotland on campus.

Please note that international students are not usually entitled to credit facilities (including student accounts and credit cards) from a bank account in the UK unless you have been a resident in the UK for a period of three years. It is therefore advised that you should apply for a credit card in your home country if you wish to have this option.

To open a bank account you will usually need to show two forms of identity:

1. A passport or EU national ID card.
2. Proof of your address in the UK. This may be your accommodation agreement with the University or a landlord, or a Certificate of Enrolment showing your name and address, from the University. You can obtain this certificate from the Matriculation and Records Office, 2Z, Cottrell Building, on campus.

Some banks have special offers or promotions to students opening an account so you may want to check the facilities offered to you before joining a bank. You should also consider convenience and location of the bank you choose. The bank on campus has wide experience of handling students' accounts.

The major high street banks in Scotland are:

Halifax/Bank of Scotland
(www.bankofscotlandhalifax.co.uk)

Lloyds/TSB
(www.lloydstsb.com)

Royal Bank of Scotland
(www.rbs.co.uk)

Barclays Bank
(www.bank.barclays.co.uk)

Clydesdale Bank
(www.cbonline.co.uk) (this bank has few branches outside Scotland)

Abbey (Santander)
(www.santander.co.uk)

There are also branches of HSBC
(www.hsbc.co.uk) and Natwest (www.natwest.com) in Glasgow and Edinburgh.



The campus bank

The staff in the campus branch are used to dealing with the complexities of overseas banking as well as student finance in general.

The hours of business are posted outside the bank, but during semester are generally 9.15am – 12.30pm (open 10.15am on Wednesdays) and 1.30pm – 4.45pm, Monday – Friday. Almost all banks have automated dispensers and these are linked with most banking networks so that cash can often be withdrawn from accounts held abroad.

Transferring funds

If money is to be sent to you from home after you have opened an account, please arrange to have this done by bank transfer. Please note that personal cheques from your bank that are not in sterling can take months to clear and the banks here will often refuse to deal with them. When arranging for funds to be transferred, please check with the receiving bank in the UK and the sending bank in your home country the information they will need.

If you are expecting money from abroad when you are in the UK, remember to ask your remitter (the person sending your money) to quote your account number, bank sorting code and SWIFT code when remitting the funds to ensure correct routing. You can also transfer money to a new account through an international payment direct from another account.

If you wish to bring a bank draft, it should be in UK currency (Sterling).

British Currency

Britain's currency is based on pounds sterling (£) which are divided into 100 pence. Coins are issued up to the value of £2 – 1 pence, 2 pence, 5 pence, 10 pence, 20 pence, 50 pence, £1 and £2. There are £5, £10, £20 and £50 notes. UK currency is issued by the Bank of England, but some Scottish banks issue their own bank notes.



STUDENT LIFE

- UK University courses require a lot of independent study – get organised for effective study!
- Prepare for your studies by reading before the start of your programme
- Most courses feature Web CT modules where you can get materials and extras on-line
- Know the rules and requirements for your programme of study – this helps you plan your study and avoid problems
- Some courses also involve group work – working with others can expand your experience

STUDYING AT STIRLING

Studying in the UK may be very different to studying in your home country. Even students from countries whose education system is similar to the UK will find that there are differences.

Classes

Teaching in British universities may be less formal than you are used to at home. At Stirling, teaching centres around lectures and tutorials.

In **lectures** you are expected to listen and take notes while your tutor presents the lesson. There is usually little or no opportunity to ask questions or discuss topics.

Tutorials and **seminars** however are an opportunity for students to discuss their subject and develop ideas, guided by a tutor.

The size of classes will depend on the programme of study. The largest undergraduate lectures are those for first and second semester modules. These can range from 50 to 350 students, depending on the subject. Seminar or tutorial groups will be smaller and will average around 10 to 15 students in most programmes.

Independent Study

You are expected to study mainly on your own. You are encouraged to develop your own ideas rather than merely repeat the text books. Your tutors will ensure you have the basic information you require, guidance on reading etc, and your tutors or programme directors are there to assist with any difficulties you may have.

Independent study means that you will need to organise your study time well. You will need to prioritise and plan our work so that you meet deadlines and prepare well for examinations. You should check your programme requirements and regulations so that you can target your work. Assessed coursework and exams will usually take priority.

Assessment

Most courses are assessed by a combination of written coursework and examination. You should be aware that your examinations may take place right up to the last day of semester. You should not, therefore, confirm any travel plans to go home until the final examination timetable is published.

If you think you will have a problem meeting the deadline for a piece of assessed work, for example because you are ill, you should contact your tutor immediately. Don't wait until the deadline has passed.

SOME IMPORTANT ISSUES FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

In the UK it is customary to approach academic staff if you need advice or wish to discuss something: you should not wait for them to approach you.

Illness

If you are ill or have any problems which may affect your studies it is important that you tell members of staff in your academic department before assessments are completed and before exams.

Assessment rules

You will receive more detailed information from your academic department about the rules that apply to examinations and assessed work. You should read this information carefully. You should be particularly careful to follow guidelines on referencing (quoting other people’s writing in your work). If you are not sure, you should ask your tutor for guidance when you are preparing your work. You must NOT use another student’s work as your own or quote from books and articles without referencing them properly – this is known as plagiarism and is taken very seriously and could jeopardise your studies.

GETTING READY FOR STUDY AT STIRLING

Here are some things you can do to prepare for your studies:

1. Get to know your programme of study

Read any information that you have received about your programme of study, and, if possible, buy or borrow some of the books on the recommended reading list.

You can read programme information here: Undergraduate programmes: www.external.stir.ac.uk/undergrad/course_info/index.php

Postgraduate Programmes: www.external.stir.ac.uk/postgrad/study-research/index.php

You may also be able to access some programme material on-line before you arrive in Stirling. Your programme director will send you information if this is the case.

2. Learn more about studying in the UK.

The Prepare for Success web site will help you: www.prepareforsuccess.org.uk

You will find a basic summary of Study Skills advice on this page from the **UK Council for International Student Affairs:** www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/info_sheets/study_methods.php

3. Read more from other students at the University of Stirling. See our Student Viewpoints page: www.external.stir.ac.uk/international/life/viewpoints.php

STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND ADMISSIONS OFFICE

There are four teams in the Student Recruitment and Admissions Office that deal with admissions to University programmes:

Undergraduate Admissions
Tel: + 44 (0) 1786 467044;
email: admissions@stir.ac.uk
For admission to undergraduate degree programmes

Postgraduate Admissions
Tel: +44 (0) 1786 467046;
email: graduate.admissions@stir.ac.uk
For admission to taught and research postgraduate programmes

Study Abroad Office
Tel: +44 (0)1786 467040;
email: study-abroad@stir.ac.uk
For enquiries about study abroad and ERASMUS programmes

International Office
Tel: +44 (0) 1786 466681;
email: international@stir.ac.uk
For admissions to English language programmes, immigration/visa enquiries and general information



LIVING IN THE UK

- › Take your time and be prepared to adjust your expectations
- › University services can help you deal with problems that may arise
- › Union activities and Societies are a great way to meet other students and try new experiences
- › Some basic information will help you avoid some practical problems

SETTLING IN – CULTURAL AND PERSONAL ADJUSTMENT

Life in the UK may be very different to life in your country in many ways, for example:

- › The weather
- › Manners and behaviour
- › Food
- › Accommodation
- › Language

It can take some time to get used to living in the UK, especially if you have never lived outside your own country before. This process is known as cultural adjustment. Each student's experience of UK culture is unique, and your own adjustment will depend on many different factors. It is important to recognise that language is only one aspect of UK culture – even if your English is very good, or you are a native speaker, there will be aspects of UK culture that you will need to get to know.

Many of these aspects of culture are not obvious and you can only get to know these by living here. Getting to know the way of life in the UK will be part of your learning experience.

Here are some steps you can take to assist your adjustment to UK culture:

Before you arrive:

- › Speak to friends, colleagues and other students who have lived in the UK before to get an idea about what to expect
- › Read news from the UK on-line (www.bbc.co.uk is a good source of information) and read the University's web site for information about life on campus before you arrive
- › Pack some personal belongings (such as photographs, postcards and ornaments) to make your accommodation feel more familiar.

After you arrive:

- › Keep in touch with family and friends who will keep you up to date with news from home.
- › Look into what's on around the University. Find leisure pursuits that interest you.
- › Join some clubs and societies at the Union.
- › Make friends with other international students but don't miss out on friendships with students from the UK.



- Find a supplier of familiar food; many supermarkets stock food from around the world. Continental Foods Stores, located at 52 Baker Street, Stirling, sell Halal food and will order any fruit or vegetable if they do not have it in stock.
- Make use of support services such as Student Development and Support Services and the Students' Union.

Do not isolate yourself. If you are feeling isolated and alone, contact the Counselling and Wellbeing team, part of the Student Development and Support Services, and staff will be happy to offer assistance and advice.

STUDENT DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT SERVICES

The *Student Development and Support Services* team aims to offer an integrated approach to student support and we aim to make sure that you get the most out of your time at the University and prepare for life after graduation.

There are three teams of staff who focus on providing a wide range of services to students – these are the Information and Advice team, the Counselling and Wellbeing team and the staff in the Career Development Centre.

- The Information and Advice team focuses on student finance and on providing

support and advice to disabled students (including those with dyslexia). If you have a medical condition or impairment please contact the disability or dyslexia adviser as soon as possible. We can discuss with you how best to support you in all aspects of student life. Email: student.advice@stir.ac.uk

- The Counselling and Wellbeing team offer a confidential counselling service which aims to help students understand personal issues more clearly and to take control. Meeting with a counsellor can be a very positive experience and help you to understand yourself better and make the most of your potential. Counselling and Wellbeing and the Information and Advice Service are located in the 4Y corridor, Cottrell Building on Campus. Telephone: 01786 467080
www.student-support.stir.ac.uk
Email: student.counselling@stir.ac.uk

- The Career Development Centre provides students with resources and services to help make informed career decisions, pursue goals and develop career management skills. They also operate the on-campus Job Shop which assists students to find part-time work. The Career Development Centre is located in room 3A1 of the Cottrell Building on Campus. Telephone: 01786 467070
www.careers.stir.ac.uk;
email: careers@stir.ac.uk



The Career Development Centre can provide information and advice about finding work during your studies and also about managing your next career move after you finish your programme.

Your visa may allow you to work alongside your studies – normally a maximum of 20 hours during term time and longer in vacations. Before starting a job you should check your visa. You will also need to apply for a National Insurance number (a reference number used by the UK tax authorities). For more information about these issues you can consult the information sheet “Working during your studies” available at www.ukcisa.org.uk.

Working part time can help you improve your English, meet new people and adjust to life in the UK as well as earning a little extra money but you should consider carefully how much time you can devote to work without affecting your studies and also be aware that many part time jobs are not well paid.

THE STUDENTS' UNION

Every university in the UK has a students' union. The Students' Union at Stirling is an organisation run by students for students and provides a social space for students to meet, social activities, entertainment and welfare advice as well as funding and supporting many student clubs and societies. Each year a Council is elected by students to represent them and to run the Union's activities. All students are automatically a member of the Union and can participate in activities, vote in Union elections and use the facilities in the Union. The Union is an important part of life on campus for most students.

Clubs and societies

You can join some of the many Union-funded clubs and societies. Students form clubs and societies based on a common interest – for example, Drama, Photography or Mountaineering. There may be a small charge to join each club. These clubs and societies are a great way to try out new activities and meet other students.

During the first week of the Autumn semester (“Fresher's Week”) the Union organises many activities for new students and the Clubs and Societies Fayre is an opportunity to find out more.



International Students Officer

An International Students Officer is elected each year to be the voice of the International Students on the Students' Union Council. If you have any questions or concerns during your stay at University, or if you are interested in running for this post, please send an email to: susa-international@stir.ac.uk.

You will find more information on the Union web site: www.stirlingstudentsunion.com

Students' Union
University of Stirling
Stirling FK9 4LA
Scotland, UK
Tel: +44 (0) 1786 467166

International Society

As a student at Stirling, you will soon discover that the University offers you an excellent opportunity to meet not only Scottish and other British people, but students from all over the world.

The Union International Society regularly organises exciting night outs, which will show you the fun of being a student in Stirling. One of the International Society's most popular events is the Ceilidh (Scottish dancing party) and they will have one every semester. There are many other events to explore Scottish culture and the international spirit you can find at Stirling, including whisky tastings and samba classes. The members of the International Society represent over 80 nationalities, so it is an excellent environment to make friends and build networks.

Further information about the Society can be obtained from the Students' association at: www.susaonline.org.uk/international

INTERNATIONAL FRIENDS IN STIRLING

For a number of years, people from different churches in the Stirling area have occasionally invited international students to their homes. They have given them a meal, helping them to learn more about British culture and to overcome any feelings of homesickness.

They themselves have also benefited greatly by learning about the cultures and lives of their guests and enjoying their friendship. A group of local Christians called 'International Friends in Stirling' arrange this and other activities including an evening event called 'Welcome to Scotland', usually in late September or at the beginning of October. If you are interested in knowing more you can visit the University Chaplaincy to speak to Hamish who is one of the Chaplaincy team or to pick up an application form. More information is available on the web site www.ifstirling.org

RELIGIOUS WORSHIP

In Stirling and Bridge of Allan students are welcome to join with local faith communities in their regular worship and other activities. Full contact details are available in the University Chaplaincy, located in the Andrew Miller Building. Contact information for Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, Muslim and Jewish students is also available in the Chaplaincy.

WEBCT – INTERNATIONAL STUDENT INFORMATION

After you enrol at the University, each time you log in to the University Portal, you will see on the left side of the page 'WebCT', click on this and go to 'International Student Information'. This site will give you a wealth of useful and interesting information about living and studying in Scotland. The site also has a 'student chat room' and discussion board. Events and activities are posted on the 'announcements' section.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Driving in the UK

Many international students will notice that vehicles travel on the opposite side of the road to cars at home. It is therefore very important to take care, whether a pedestrian, a driver or a cyclist.

Before crossing the road, it is essential to check the traffic flow from the right before attempting to cross. Accidents can happen so it is advisable to be extra vigilant in the first few weeks of arriving in Stirling. It is also essential that you check that the driving licence you hold is valid in the UK. For information about international students driving in the UK please see: www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/information_sheets.php

The rules of the road, road signs and markings vary from country to country. Regulations in the UK may differ from those at home.

Pay attention to speed limits, parking rules, traffic lights, seat belt and child car seat regulations and road signs. Give way to pedestrians at crossings. The best advice is to buy and read carefully a copy of the Highway Code, available from bookshops or online at: www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/Highwaycode/index.htm

If you buy a car or drive another person's car when you are in the UK, you must make sure that you are driving legally. You need to have a certificate of insurance for the car, an MOT (Ministry of Transport) Certificate if your car is over 3 years old, and road tax. A road tax certificate must be displayed on the windscreen.

It is a criminal offence to drive a vehicle without an MOT certificate, road tax, car insurance or a valid driving licence. If you are not clear on what you must do, after you read the web pages above, you can speak to our community police officer, Graham Meikle, and he will advise you. You can find Graham in room 2W1 in the Cottrell Building on Campus. Alternatively, you can speak to Ian MacLellan our International Student Adviser. For an appointment with Ian or for information, please email: international@stir.ac.uk

Insurance

If you bring valuable items with you, you should consider insuring them. If you intend to travel during vacations you should also consider taking general travel insurance.

Some insurance companies send salesmen to the University residences, and although persuasive they may not be offering a good deal. For good advice on insurance visit the Union office.



SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR IN THE UK – SOME GENERAL POINTS

It is difficult to generalise about social expectations in the UK but the following information may help you in the first few weeks:

Manners

Although “politeness” is expected (it is customary to say “please” and “thank you” or “thanks” for even minor requests), people are generally relaxed and easy going and there is little formal etiquette. Young people are usually very informal when socialising with other people of the same age.

However, the British are keen on punctuality. It is important to be on time for formal meetings – for example tutorials or a meeting with a member of staff. Socially, it is important not to be late but an appointment time may be slightly more flexible. If you find you may be late you should try to telephone and inform the person you are to meet. If you are invited to someone’s home for a meal, you may wish to take a small gift (even better if this is from your country), or, if you prefer, you could invite them to your ‘home’ in return.

When waiting for a service (for example in the bank, waiting for a bus, at a shop), it is normal custom to queue – whoever arrived first is at the start of the queue and others wait behind in order of the time they arrived at the service. British people may be very offended if they feel you have ignored the queue and gone, for example, straight to the next available member of staff in the bank.

Alcohol and Pubs

If you do not drink alcohol, you may be alarmed if invited to a ‘pub’ (public house or bar). Pubs are convenient and popular meeting places that sell soft drinks and fruit juices as well as alcohol. There is usually no waiter/waitress service and you should pay for drinks when you order them. The legal age for buying alcohol in the UK is 18. Some bars and nightclubs may restrict entry to those over 21. If you look under 25, you will probably be asked to provide proof of your age (for example your passport) if you want to buy alcohol.

You should never feel pressured into drinking alcohol and be aware that drinking to excess can be dangerous and upsetting. If you are not used to drinking alcohol be very careful about the amount you consume.



Gender Roles

In Britain men and women have equal status professionally and socially. Members of both sexes are independent and are free to enter public places – such as restaurants and bars – unaccompanied.

Smoking

Smoking is not allowed in public areas such as restaurants, bars, shops, cinemas, offices and hospitals. Many people do not allow smoking in their homes.

PERSONAL SAFETY

In Stirling city centre, as with many other towns and cities in Scotland, video cameras are used to help promote safety and discourage casual theft or assault. This system has proved successful in reducing street crime, but you should be aware of this. Stirling generally has a very safe and friendly environment and its streets are safe at night. However, it is always advisable to be careful, particularly with your possessions. At night, especially in areas you do not know, try to be with a friend. Our campus, according to Central Scotland Police, is one of the safest in Britain. However, it is always sensible to take precautions. You should be particularly careful of small valuables – for example, lap-

top, mobile phone, handbag etc. If you are a victim of a crime you should always report this to the police.

POLICE AND CITIZENS' RIGHTS

The police, a civilian and unarmed force, are here to assist and serve the public. Their role is to protect life and property, prevent crime and, when crime is committed, to investigate it in an effort to detect offenders and bring them to justice. Police officers do not routinely carry firearms (pistols and rifles) in the UK, although some specialist police and airport police officers may carry such weapons. The police do, however, carry other equipment to help them apprehend suspects and also defend themselves.

Generally, if you find yourself involved with the police, be co-operative. If you are ever arrested, you have the right to remain silent until you have arranged a solicitor/lawyer to help you. If you need legal advice you can consult the Students' Association or the Citizens' Advice Bureau.

The police officer with responsibility for the University campus will make a short presentation to international students during the September induction programme.



- › If you are an EEA resident, obtain a European Health Insurance Card before leaving your country
- › If you have an ongoing condition, discuss your plans with your doctor at home before you travel
- › Consider whether you want or need private medical insurance

MEDICAL CARE IN THE UK

People access medical care in the UK through:

› *Their National Health Service General Practitioner (GP)*

A General Practitioner is a doctor with a wide range of skills and expertise. GPs can treat many illnesses and conditions and provide a first diagnosis before referring to specialists in more severe cases.

Everyone in the UK registers with a GP. Most GP surgeries provide a range of services including special clinics, travel vaccinations, services for young children and parents as well as general medical assistance.

If you need medical help, you will most likely need to contact your GP. If your GP decides that you need specialist help, they will refer you to a specialist doctor, service or hospital.

GPs provide a 24 hour service: if you contact a medical centre out side normal opening hours your call will be transferred to a out-of-hours service that will deal with your call.

› *Accident and Emergency (A&E) services at hospitals*

If you need emergency treatment you can use Accident and Emergency services at a hospital. At A&E, medical staff will assess the urgency of your condition and treat you. If you call an ambulance for an emergency you will be taken to the nearest A&E service.

› *Their local pharmacy*

Local pharmacists can provide advice and assistance with minor ailments and have the power to prescribe some medicines.

› *National Health Service Telephone Advice*

The NHS also provides a 24 hour advice service by telephone. Trained staff can advise you and refer you to appropriate services. The number for dialling in Scotland is 0845 424 2424.

› *Private medical care*

Some people in the UK take out private medical insurance, or pay directly for private treatment. In some cases this means you can access a specialist directly, or more quickly.



Paying for Medical Care

International students enrolled on a full-time, recognised course in Scotland and their spouses and children will usually be entitled to NHS treatment. The same applies to EEA nationals and nationals of a country that has a reciprocal agreement with the UK.

If you are an EEA national you should obtain, from your own health authority, a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) before coming to the UK. Check with your own Health Authority what treatment will be covered.

Access to most NHS services is through your GP so it is very important to register with a GP (see page 30) when you arrive in the UK.

Treatment from medical staff in the NHS is free – you do not pay to see a doctor. However, you may need to pay a fixed charge for medicines, and you may need to pay for some optical treatment, for glasses and for dental treatment.

Private medical treatment is charged at market rates and you should check any insurance policy carefully before undertaking treatment.

For full information, see the information sheet “Keeping Healthy” from the UK Council for International Student Affairs: http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/info_sheets/keeping_healthy.php

PHARMACIES

Access to medicine is strictly controlled in the UK. This means that many medicines you can buy freely from a pharmacy in your home country may be restricted in the UK.

Pharmacists sell medicines and remedies for a wide range of medical conditions. If you need a specific medicine, you may need a Prescription – this is an instruction from your GP or other doctor authorising the Pharmacist to give you a restricted medicine.

Pharmacists can also supply some restricted medicines for minor medical problems if they believe it is advisable. Pharmacists also sell other health supplies – for example vitamin supplements, bandages and baby goods.

Some examples of medicines for which you need a prescription in the UK:

- > Asthma medicines, including inhalers
- > most medicines that contain steroids or strong hydrocortisone – including skin creams for dermatitis and eczema
- > all antibiotics
- > Insulin



The standard charge for a prescription medicine in Scotland is £4 per item. If you are on a low income you may qualify for help in paying this (forms are available from your GP).

Prescriptions are free for Children under 16 years or 16-19 years old but studying full time in further education (for example at college or school).

Students with an ongoing medical condition

If you have a medical condition for which you are currently receiving treatment, and that treatment will continue in the UK, please:

- discuss your studies in the UK with your doctor at home
- make sure you have a supply of medicines for the first weeks of your stay in the UK and carry a letter from your doctor confirming that these medicines are necessary for your treatment
- contact the Medical Centre - www.apmc.co.uk/ on campus to tell them you will be coming to Stirling. The staff will need information from you and your current doctor about your medical history and treatments, any investigations that have been made and your current treatment and medication.

These steps will help medical staff in your country and in Stirling make arrangements for your care in the UK and ensure that you do not run out of essential medicines in the first weeks of your stay.



Registering with a doctor

You should register with a local doctor (GP) as soon as possible after your arrival. There is a Medical Centre on campus with which you can register – most students choose to register here. Alternatively a list of GPs, dentists and opticians can be obtained from the Student Information and Advice Centre, Room 4Y4, Cottrell Building.

You will get more information from the Medical Centre at induction.

When you have located a suitable GP, you should visit the surgery. You will be asked to fill in an application form, which should be completed and returned immediately. You will then be sent a medical card by post. Keep this card in a safe place. Before seeing a doctor, most surgeries require you to telephone to make an appointment. You should not be late for an appointment and you should be aware that you may have to wait when you do arrive on time. If you cannot attend please telephone to cancel the appointment.

Dental and Optical Care

Dental and Optical care are also offered under the National Health Service. There is no need to register with an optician but it is advisable to locate and register with a dentist shortly after arrival. There is a dental practice located in the campus Medical Centre. You can find more information about this after your arrival in the UK.



Emergency Treatment

In case of accident or emergency, you can either go to the Accident and Emergency or Casualty Department of the nearest hospital or, if the case is very serious, you can call an ambulance by telephone, by dialling 999. Ask for the ambulance service and give the information asked for by the emergency operator. (In the event of an emergency on-campus, you must call the University emergency number 2222.)

If you are living in University accommodation you will be given information about emergency procedures. The Medical Centre on campus can also give you more information about looking after your health and dealing with emergencies.

MEDICAL INSURANCE

You may want to consider taking out medical insurance to cover private medical care costs if you fall ill, and other possible related costs such as costs of returning to your home country for treatment, costs of returning home if a relative is ill or costs of a relative visiting you if you are ill. If you have private medical insurance in your home country, check if you can extend this to cover your stay in the UK.

USEFUL LINKS

Airthrey Park Medical Practice:
www.apmc.co.uk

UK Council for International Student Affairs:
health information: [www.ukcisa.org.uk/
student/info_sheets/keeping_healthy.php](http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/info_sheets/keeping_healthy.php)



INTERNATIONAL STUDENT FAMILIES

- › Think carefully about bringing your family to the UK
- › Many students arrive alone at first and arrange accommodation before asking their dependants to join them

If you have a spouse/partner and dependant children you may want them to join you in the UK. You should consider carefully the practical arrangements you will need to make so that your family will have a fulfilling and productive stay in the UK:

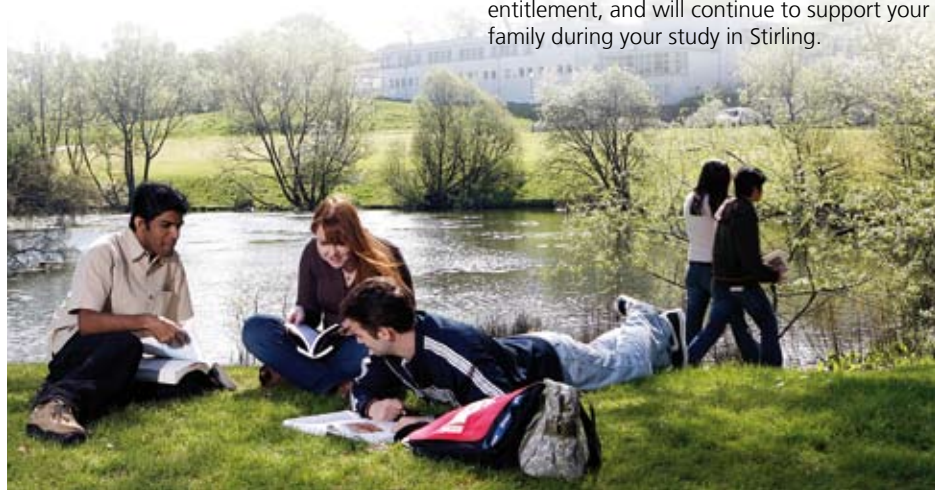
- › *Accommodation* – you will need adequate accommodation for your family to be comfortable
- › *Childcare and schooling* – you may need help in caring for your children, especially if both parents are studying. Many families in the UK use professional childcare services and there is a wide range of provision. If your children are of school age, they will usually be able to study at a local school in Stirling but you should consider how this will fit in to their longer term education.
- › *Life in Britain for your family* – you will probably be very busy with your studies so you need to think about what your family will do while you are studying

- › *Your partner/spouse may have to take a career break to join you in the UK.* Alternatively coming to the UK may present new opportunities for them (for example for studies that fit in with the length of your visa)

You and your family will have to consider the advantages and disadvantages of living in the UK versus remaining apart for a period. Some students find it easier to concentrate on their studies if they know their family are safe and happy in their home country (and they can visit during vacations) but other students find it very upsetting to be separated from their family for several weeks. Reaching the correct decision will be a matter for you and your spouse/partner and it is important that you consider this very carefully.

Family Support

If your partner accompanies you here for the whole, or part of your studies, s/he may initially feel isolated and wish to meet others in a similar situation. The Student Development and Support Services and the International Office are happy to assist all families of the University community and will help wives, husbands and children of students settle into their new life at Stirling. Staff can offer help and advice on many things including English classes, nurseries, schooling and health care entitlement, and will continue to support your family during your study in Stirling.



Schools within the Stirling area

All children of five years and older are entitled to free schooling and the local schools are accustomed to welcoming international pupils.

Local Authority schools near the University campus are provided by Stirling Council. Children normally attend their "catchment" school – the local school. Children staying on the University campus usually go to Bridge of Allan Primary School and to Wallace High School. Parents should contact the schools direct to enrol their child. As part of this process, Stirling Council checks your address details. You will need evidence of your address, for example your rental agreement, gas or electricity bills and also a letter confirming your attendance at the University. You will also need to provide your children's birth certificates. Students resident off campus should contact Children's Services on Tel: 0845 277 7000 to confirm their local catchment school or go to: www.stirling.gov.uk and click on 'services'.

Parents have the choice to send their child to a school other than the catchment school. It is advisable to contact Children's Services as soon as possible if you want to request a place in another Stirling school.

General enquiries on school admissions can be made by telephoning 01786 442648 or by email: mcmenemyc@stirling.gov.uk

Full details on Stirling Council Schools, including contact telephone numbers and school brochures, are on the council website: www.stirling.gov.uk.

Baby and Toddler Group

For mothers of younger children, a parent and baby group meets once a week in Bridge of Allan. This is a useful way to meet others in similar positions and meet with the local health visitor. Please contact the medical centre on campus: www.apmc.co.uk

Childcare

For childcare information: www.childcarelink.gov.uk/index.asp

Visas

If you are coming to the UK for more than six months on a Tier 4 Visa (see the immigration section on page 5), your spouse or partner and dependent children (under 18 years old) can apply for visas as your dependants. You will need to provide evidence to show that you have enough money to support your family in the UK.

This is an area of law that changes quickly – for up to date information consult the information sheet "Your family's immigration" at www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/info_sheets/your_family.php



CHECKLIST FOR SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS

PASSPORT

- › Apply for a passport / travel document if you do not have one
- › Make sure your passport / travel document is valid for at least six months and preferably for the duration of your time in the UK

ENTRY CLEARANCE (VISA)

- › Check your CAS information – contact the University if there are any errors
- › Check that you have the original qualifications mentioned in the CAS
- › Check your financial information:
 - Do you have enough money to meet the visa requirements?
 - Do your documents meet the requirements?
- › Apply for your visa

INSURANCE

- › Consider your insurance needs and ensure you have insurance for journey to the UK
- › Consider taking out insurance for health & personal possessions whilst you are in the UK (basic contents insurance is included with university accommodation; the National Health Service will provide basic health treatment).

HEALTH

- › If you are an EEA student – get an European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) from your home government
- › If you have an ongoing condition, discuss with your doctor and contact the University Medical Centre
- › If you take regular medication, arrange to bring enough to last you for the initial six weeks of semester until you have registered with a doctor
- › Bring details of any medication you take – including confirmation from your doctor that you need any prescriptions you are carrying

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

- › Book flights
- › Consider how you will get to Stirling from your arrival airport: book onward travel and overnight accommodation if needed
- › Book Stirling Direct airport pick up if arriving Saturday / Sunday prior to the start of semester

ACCOMMODATION

- › Research accommodation options – University or private accommodation – and make booking
- › Book temporary accommodation for any friends or relatives who will travel with you
- › Book temporary accommodation if you will arrive before your main accommodation is ready

FINANCE AND MONEY

- › Bring adequate cash/traveller's cheques in the form of GBP to last you for at least two weeks
- › Contact your bank if you plan to use their credit/debit cards in the UK
- › Consider how you plan to pay your tuition fees (if appropriate) and basic living expenses until you have opened a UK bank account (should you wish to do so)

PACKING AND LOGISTICS

- › Pack a variety of clothing, so you can adapt to Scottish weather – dress in layers
- › Pack a few items from home, such as postcards, photographs, ornaments etc
- › If you plan to bring a laptop, check if it needs a transformer / adaptor
- › Label your luggage clearly with your UK address
- › Pack relevant documentation in your hand luggage, including evidence of your intended course of study, finance and planned accommodation
- › Make a list of contact information of your family and friends at home
- › Leave photocopies of all relevant documentation, such as your passport, with someone in your home country
- › If possible scan all relevant documentation and email to yourself
- › Pack a small English dictionary, if you have one
- › Consider setting up an email account (hotmail; yahoo! etc) if you do not have one so you can contact home before you have registered with the University
- › Bring at least ten passport-sized photographs, taken recently

STUDY PREPARATIONS

- › Read any information provided by your tutors
- › Start pre-course reading from the book lists for your modules
- › Check the information at www.prepareforsuccess.org.uk about UK study methods

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**UNIVERSITY OF
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Email: student.advice@stir.ac.uk
Email: careers@stir.ac.uk
Email: student.counselling@stir.ac.uk
www.student-support.stir.ac.uk
www.careers.stir.ac.uk

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Email: celt@stir.ac.uk
www.loe.stir.ac.uk

British Council Scotland

The Tun, 4 Jacksons Entry
Holyrood Road
Edinburgh EH8 8PJ
Scotland, UK
Tel: +44 (0) 131 524 5700
www.britishcouncil.org/scotland.htm

UK Visas

The official visa website of the UK Government
www.ukvisas.gov.uk

UKCISA

UK Council for International Student Affairs
9 - 17 St Albans Place
London N1 0NX
England, UK
Tel: +44 (0) 207 107 9922
(1pm – 4pm, Monday - Friday)
www.ukcisa.org.uk

Immigration Advisory Service (IAS)

Telephone advice line: +44 (0) 207 199 7790
www.iasuk.org

Central Scotland Police Headquarters

Randolphfield
Stirling FK8 2HD
Scotland, UK
Tel: +44 (0) 1786 456000
www.centralscotland.police.uk

Central Scotland Police Sub-Station

Henderson Street
Bridge of Allan FK8 4HA
Scotland, UK
Tel: +44 (0) 1786 456000
www.centralscotland.police.uk

NHS Forth Valley (National Health Service)

www.nhsforthvalley.com

Stirling and our local area:

www.stir.ac.uk
The University of Stirling website

www.stirling.gov.uk
Stirling District Council

www.visitscotland.com
The official site of Scotland's national tourism organisation

www.visitscotlshheartlands.com
Tourist information for Stirling and our local area

www.aboutbritain.com/towns/stirling.asp
Stirling local tourist information

www.destination-scotland.com
Travel advice and accommodation information

student handbook 2010/11
international handbook – pre-entry
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