

International Study Centre

WELCOME TO YOUR NEW HOME

A guide for students preparing to join us at
Durham University International Study Centre

Welcome to your new home

Queen's Campus at Stockton-on-Tees is a fantastic place to live and study. This friendly and welcoming campus will be your new exciting home away from home, a place where you will create new memories that you'll treasure for life.

We want to help you settle into your new home quickly and easily, so that you can concentrate on your studies and start enjoying student life at Queen's Campus. This one-stop guide provides all of the important information you need to prepare for travelling to the UK as well as living and studying at Durham University International Study Centre (ISC).

For up-to-date information before your arrival, visit:
welcome.studygroup.com/durham

Contact details

Address:

Durham University
International Study Centre,
Ebsworth Building, Queen's Campus,
University Boulevard, Stockton-on-Tees
TS17 6BH United Kingdom

Useful websites:

durham.ac.uk/isc
ukcisa.org.uk
gov.uk/student-visa



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Get ready to join us at the International Study Centre

You will find useful information on our Welcome Hub to help you to prepare for starting your course. Before you join us, there are five things you need to do first.

1 Apply for your visa

To study in the UK, you are required to have a valid visa. Our Admissions Centre will advise and issue the relevant documents you will need.

Student visa

For a Student visa you will need a Confirmation of Acceptance of Studies (CAS) number which will be issued to you by our Admissions Centre. You can only apply for your Student visa once you have received your CAS number.

Step 1: You may be required to have a Pre-CAS interview. You will be contacted by Admissions to book your Pre-CAS interview via a link. Remember to then attend your interview on the pre-booked date.

Step 2: Our Admissions Centre will issue a CAS preview by email usually within **six months of the course start date (three months if you are in the UK)**, provided you:

- Have met all academic, English language and other conditions in your offer letter
- Have completed, signed and returned your Acceptance and Indemnity Form to the Admissions Centre
- Are up-to-date with your payments as stated in your offer letter and payment plan.

Step 3: Carefully check all the details on the CAS preview and return the signed CAS Declaration document. Once we have received your CAS Declaration, we will issue you with your CAS statement that will include your CAS number.

Step 4: Before you submit your Student visa application make sure you understand and meet all the requirements to avoid a visa refusal. Before you apply, make sure you have:

- sufficient funds in an acceptable account maintained for at least 28 consecutive days and the financial document is not expired at the time of payment for visa application
- paid the Immigration Health Surcharge for NHS health care treatment
- all required documents in support of your visa application.

As part of your visa application you may be asked to attend a visa interview either face to face, by video conference or on the telephone. You may be asked questions about the reasons for studying in the UK, why you have chosen to study at your chosen destination and why you will study your chosen course. You should know about your chosen study destination and course and how it relates to your overall career plans as well as how you intend to fund your studies in the UK. You must answer all questions truthfully and accurately.

The Biometric Residence Permit (BRP)

The BRP holds your details (name, date and place of birth) as well as your photo and fingerprints. It shows your immigration status and entitlements such as working rights while you remain in the UK. It can, however, be issued with incorrect information and may need to be sent back for correction. It is the responsibility of each applicant to understand their entitlements, regardless of what is printed on the BRP itself. More information on this is provided at your induction sessions on arrival.

If your Student visa application is successful, you will have an entry vignette in your passport (entitling you to enter the UK within the period indicated) and a UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) decision letter outlining the details of your Biometric Residence Permit (BRP). When you apply for your visa from your home country, you will need to include the ACL code 2HE937 on the visa application. This will enable the UKVI to send your BRP directly to the International Study Centre. See page 10 for information on how to collect this once you arrive in the UK.

2 Complete our Pre-Registration form

It's important that we have up-to-date information for you. Fill out and verify the information in the form at any time as you finalise your study and travel plans. The form can be found on your Welcome Hub.

3 Book your accommodation

During your time at the International Study Centre you can choose to either live in allocated student accommodation or arrange your own private accommodation.

If you have requested accommodation on your application form, our Central Student Support Team will contact you directly regarding the options available. Keep your contact details up to date via the Pre-Registration form so we can contact you without delay regarding your accommodation request.

You may prefer to arrange your own accommodation. Make sure that you have secured your accommodation before arriving in the UK and update the details in your Pre-Registration Form. Please note that you must live within a 60-minute commute of the International Study Centre.

Email: durhamisc.css@studygroup.com

4 Book your travel

Once you receive your visa, you can book your travel. You should arrive ready for the first day of the semester to get a good start to your studies. If you have booked your accommodation with us, it will usually be available two days prior to the start of the semester.

You should book any flights home after the official end of the semester date, which can be found in your offer letter.

Please see page 9 for your suggested arrival airport.

If you require a taxi transfer from the airport, you need to complete the relevant section in the Pre-Registration form.

5 Ensure you are insured

In our experience, it is essential that international students have the protection of personal insurance for the duration of their time in the UK.

When you applied to the International Study Centre, you will have had the option of taking insurance cover with StudyCare Insurance. This insurance policy covers loss of personal possessions as well as providing health and medical insurance. If you have not taken this option, please make sure you have secured your own policy.

For full information on StudyCare Insurance, visit:
studygroup.com/studycare

Depending on the country you live in, you may need to have a tuberculosis (TB) test before you apply. Please read the full visa guidance at: gov.uk/student-visa

If you need help and advice, your local representative or your student enrolment advisor can help you.

What to bring with you to the UK

You'll need to pack some important items, such as your passport and visa, in your hand luggage for easy access, while other non-essential items can be packed away in your suitcase.

Things to pack in your hand luggage

- ☐ Passport and visa
- ☐ UKVI decision letter
- ☐ Your offer letter
- ☐ Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) letter
- ☐ Academic qualification certificates and IELTS certificate or other original Secure English Language Test result
- ☐ Evidence of funding for your tuition fees and living costs, including sponsor letter (if you are being sponsored)
- ☐ Accommodation documents, including your signed tenancy agreement
- ☐ Four passport-sized photographs
- ☐ Any insurance documents
- ☐ Medical certificates including vaccination records
- ☐ Essential toiletries and medications (please check with your airline what's permitted)
- ☐ If you are under the age of 18, a copy of your UK Guardian details
- ☐ Enough money to live on in the first few weeks. We advise you do **not** bring large amounts of cash.

*To access course materials, LMS/VLE/platform and undertake assessments, it is important that you are prepared with the appropriate technology. While it is possible to access and interact with most course content using various tablets and smartphones, such as iPads, iPhones and Android devices, these devices will not work for assessments. Therefore, you must have a PC or Mac based computer available for use. Please note that Linux and Chromebooks are not supported.

Windows

Operating System: Windows 10 or a more recent version of Windows (Note: Windows 10S/11S Mode are not compatible operating systems)
Memory: 4 GB RAM
Hard Disk Space: 200 MB of free hard disk space
Hardware: Webcam and Microphone
Software: Installation of Zoom for Virtual Classrooms
Web Browser: Google Chrome or Microsoft Edge (Chromium version)

Mac

Operating System: Mac OS/X 10.12 or a more recent version
Memory: 4 GB RAM
Hard Disk Space: 200 MB of free hard disk space
Hardware: Webcam and Microphone
Software: Installation of Zoom for Virtual Classrooms
Web Browser: Google Chrome or Microsoft Edge (Chromium version)

Things to pack in your suitcase

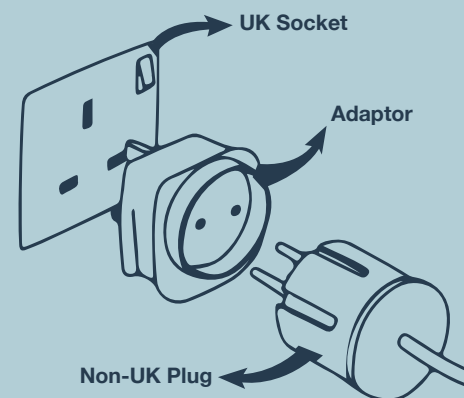
Stockton-on-Tees has a variety of shops so you'll be able to buy everything you need to live comfortably. Many of the personal items you wish to bring with you, such as clothes, accessories and books can go in your suitcase.

We recommend that you bring:

- Comfortable clothes – the International Study Centre has an informal dress code. You can bring comfortable clothing such as trainers, jeans, t-shirts, jumpers and a warm/waterproof coat.
- Study supplies e.g. pens and paper notepads – these may be less expensive in your country.
- Laptop computer and charger.*
- Mobile phone and charger
- At least one travel adaptor plug – 240v with a three-pin plug (like the one pictured opposite).

Your accommodation may provide a bedding and catering pack.

If you have booked private accommodation, you will need to check what is supplied.



Top Tip

Check with your airline on what you can bring in terms of size and weight for hand and checked luggage.

Calling from the UK? Once you're in the UK and calling from a UK phone, you don't need to include the '+44' just replace it with an '0'. For example, a number that internationally is +44 191 334 0698 becomes 0191 334 0698.

Arriving in the UK

Travelling to a new country can be a little overwhelming. To make it easier for you, we've outlined the process below so that you know exactly what to expect when you arrive.



For up-to-date information visit: gov.uk/uk-border-control

At Border Control

Be prepared for an immigration interview with UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) staff.

You must be able to answer some questions in English and have a basic conversation without the assistance of an interpreter – failure to do so may result in you being denied access to the UK, at which point you will have to return home. The UK border control can be very busy, so don't be surprised if you have to wait in a queue.

After collecting your luggage and making your way through customs, you will reach the Arrivals Hall.

Welcome to the UK!

Top Tip

Make sure you have original, paper copies of all your documents, not in digital formats on smart phones, tablets or other electronic devices. Keep them in your hand luggage in case you need to show them at the UK border.



Getting to Durham University ISC from Newcastle Airport

Newcastle Airport or Durham Tees Valley are the closest international airports to Durham University International Study Centre at the Queen's Campus, Stockton-on-Tees. Alternatively, you can fly to Manchester.

By plane and pre-booked transfer

If you are arriving by plane and pre-booked a taxi transfer, you will be met by the taxi driver in the Arrivals Hall. The driver will be holding a sign with your name on it.

You will need to have completed the Arrivals Form we will send you and return it to durhamisc.css@studygroup.com

If you are heading directly to your accommodation booked with our Central Student Support Team, the taxi driver will take you to collect your keys – they will have been informed where you will be staying, but it is a good idea for you to have the details to hand.

Check your room confirmation for details of where and when to collect your keys, particularly if you are arriving late at night or early in the morning when residence receptions may not be open. If you are arriving when the reception is not open, check your room confirmation for out of hours key collection information.

If you are staying in private accommodation, you will need to have provided the address at the time of booking directly with the taxi company via the Pre-Registration form.

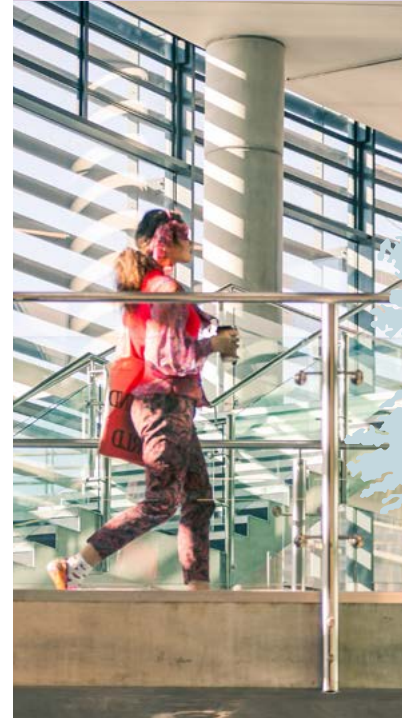
Making your own way

The closest train station is Thornaby which can be reached from Darlington, a station on the main rail line between London and Scotland.

By train: visit nationalrail.co.uk

Top Tip

Don't forget to email or phone your parent or guardian to let them know you have arrived.



Keeping your information up-to-date

It's really important that you keep your contact details up-to-date via our Pre-Registration form in case we need to contact you at any point.



Your Induction Programme

On your first, exciting day with us it is important that you start on time.

It's vital that you start on time so that you don't miss out on meeting your new classmates and enjoying all of the great social activities that have been planned for you.

We will work with you in your first week to find out about your academic levels and how we can best support you in your studies.

What to bring with you when you come to the Centre

Please bring the following documents, so that we can register you on the course:

- Evidence of your Secure English Language Test
- Passport
- UKVI Visa Decision Letter
- Sponsor letter (if you are being sponsored)
- If you are under the age of 18, a copy of your UK Guardian's details
- Evidence of eligibility to study
- Decision notification letter if you were granted eVisa (student route application EU/EEA nationals)

During your Induction Programme you will learn about:

Opening a bank account

If you bring a banker's draft in pounds sterling with you (payable to yourself) or arrange for it to be sent, you can open a bank account once you have registered for your course.

In order to open a bank account you will need:

- a passport
- proof you are a student – we will issue you with a letter
- proof of a UK address
- proof of your current immigration status

Obtaining your Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) – Students visa holders only

You must collect your BRP within 10 days of arrival or before the 90 day vignette expires, whichever is later. When you apply for your visa from your home country, you will need to include the **ACL code 2HE937** on the visa application. This will enable the UKVI to send your BRP directly to the International Study Centre.

If you did not use the ACL code at the time of your visa application, your BRP will be delivered to the Post Office closest to your UK address you entered within your visa application.

If you collect your BRP from the Post Office, you must bring it to the International Study Centre and see a member of Registry in order to ensure all the details are correct. The Registry will also scan the BRP onto the system to make you compliant. This must be done within 3 days from collecting the BRP.

You will not be required to collect BRP card if you were granted your leave via eVisa or you received a visa vignette for the whole duration of the course (courses in duration of 6 months or less).

If you have a Student visa, you are entitled to work during your pathway programme at the International Study Centre. Please note the main purpose of the Student visa route is for students to come to the UK to study.

Where a student is permitted to work, the intention is that this should be an opportunity to gain work experience in their field of study.

"It's my first time in the UK, so the first couple of weeks were hard, but now I'm getting into it. The staff did a great job, helping me and showing me around and trying to make me feel like I belong here."

Jad from Lebanon

Studying International Foundation Year in Business, Economics, Accounting and Finance
Aiming to study BA (Hons) Business and Management



Advice on settling in

- 1. Say hello** to your new neighbours. Living in a student residence is a great way to make new, life-long friends.
- 2. Other students** around you, both from the UK and abroad, will be feeling the same as you. Talking to each other will really help you settle in. Why not take the first step by introducing yourself?
- 3. Join in!** There will be events planned at the International Study Centre as well as plenty of clubs and societies to join.
- 4. Don't forget** to set your morning alarm on your first day – you'll need plenty of time to get ready.

We want you to feel at home as quickly as possible. If you have any worries, you can always approach any of our friendly staff and they will be very happy to help.

Your campus



Aerial map



1. Teesside Retail Park
2a. Ebsworth Building
2b. Wolfson Building
2c. Holliday Building

3. Infinity Bridge
4. Queen's Campus Sports Centre
5. Thornaby Railway Station

6. Rialto Court (accommodation)
7. Stockton Town Centre
8. Infinity House (accommodation)

Your checklist



As soon as possible

- ☐ Have you checked your contact information and provided other details in the Pre-Registration Form?
- ☐ Have you paid the required fees for your tuition, accommodation and insurance (if applicable)?
- ☐ Have you checked your passport is valid for at least six months from your course start date?
- ☐ Have you applied for and received your visa?

Up to one month before you depart

- ☐ Have you checked the information in your Pre-Registration form?
- ☐ Have you received your visa and booked your travel?
- ☐ Have you arranged a taxi transfer through the Pre-Registration form?
- ☐ Have you booked your accommodation and received confirmation of your room allocation?
- ☐ Have you organised money to bring with you?
- ☐ Have you made a copy of your passport and other essential documents?
- ☐ Have you obtained four passport-sized photos?

What to bring with you to the Centre

Please bring the following documents, so that we can register you on the course:

- ☐ Passport and visa
- ☐ UKVI Visa Decision letter
- ☐ Decision notification letter if granted eVisa (student route application EU/EEA)
- ☐ Confirmation of Acceptance for Study letter (CAS)
- ☐ Sponsor letter (if you are being sponsored)
- ☐ If you are under the age of 18, a copy of your UK Guardian's details
- ☐ Evidence of your Secure English Language Test

Get involved!

Why not join our social network

 facebook.com/iscdurham

 instagram.com/durhamisc

 youtube.com/c/DurhamUniversityInternationalStudyCentre

#MyDurhamFuture

We can't wait to welcome you.



Durham University International Study Centre is run by Study Group in collaboration with Durham University.
For more information visit: studygroup.com