

STUDENT LIFE GUIDE



WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Durham University International Study Centre!

We are very excited you have chosen to study with us and hope that you will have a great time learning about your chosen subject, exploring new cultures, and expanding your prospects for the future.

Welcoming and supportive, the DUISC offers excellent facilities, resources, and student support services to help you settle into life in the UK. As part of an international community, you will prepare for your degree at Durham ISC here in Stockton, before moving to Durham City for your undergraduate and postgraduate study at Durham University.

This booklet has been put together to outline important information that will help you settle into life in the UK. Please read this booklet carefully and reach out to our Student Experience Team if you have any questions: DurhamISCStudentSupport@studygroup.com



KEY CONTACTS

Name	Email	Telephone
Student Support Helpdesk	durhamiscstudentsupport@studygroup.com	0191 334 0698 (9am – 5pm Mon – Fri)
Durham ISC Welfare	durhamiscwelfare@studygroup.com	07500 557914 (9am – 5pm Mon – Fri)
Durham ISC Exams	durhamiscexams@studygroup.com	
Durham ISC Visa & Compliance	durhamiscvisacompliance@studygroup.com	
Durham ISC Student Enrichment	durhamiscstudentenrichment@studygroup.com	
Durham ISC Progression	durhamiscprogression@studygroup.com	
Durham ISC Accommodation *	durhamISCaccommodation@studygroup.com *for general accommodation enquiries.	
Rialto Court Accommodation	rialto@qedpm.co.uk	07983 772502 (available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week)
Infinity House Accommodation	infinity@qedpm.co.uk	07983 772519 (available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

KEY CONTACTS

Emergencies (Police, Ambulance, or Fire Services) Call 999

Emergency Procedures

How to report an emergency during normal office hours (09:00 – 17:00 Monday – Friday):

1. Ring 999 – in the first instance, if it is an emergency, you must ring the Police/Fire/Ambulance. This will ensure you receive the correct support in a timely manner.

2. Notify the Welfare Team – by calling 07500 557914 or emailing DurhamISCWelfare@studygroup.com

The Welfare Team will then support you appropriately and will notify the relevant Managers at the ISC and recommended accommodations (if required).

Non-Emergency Helplines

Police non-emergency number - 101

NHS non-emergency number - 111

Mental Health Crisis Line - 0800 0516171

Durham ISC Welfare Team (9:00 - 5:00 Monday - Friday) 07500 557914

College Guardians (for students under 18) 07513 106451

Other Important Contacts



GENERAL RULES

ALL students must adhere to the below rules whilst on campus and within any associated accommodation.

- No smoking/vaping on campus or in your accommodation you must use the designated outdoor smoking areas on campus and at your accommodation. Failure to adhere to these rules may lead to disciplinary action.
- Arrive/join in good time for ALL timetabled lessons. Timekeeping is an essential life skill that we promote throughout your student journey.
- When you arrive in the UK, we require a UK telephone number for you. As part of your Visa requirements, you must provide a valid UK mobile phone number within 7 days of arriving in the UK. Please email <u>DurhamISCStudentSupport@studygroup.com</u> to confirm your UK phone number.
- Be polite to and respectful of fellow students and staff.

The Virtual Reception on SharePoint lists important policies and rules that all students must follow, as well as tips for wellbeing and student enrichment updates. Please refer to the Virtual Reception for detailed policies and procedures.

The DUISC virtual reception is available here (using your Durham University credentials):



MEET THE SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM



Alison Coutts - Centre Director



Gary Henderson Deputy Centre Director
(Academic)



Daniel Goodfellow Deputy Centre Director
(Quality, Enhancement
and Progression)



Donna Cutler Deputy Centre Director
(Student Experience)

THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE TEAM

Whilst on campus, DUISC aims to provide a wide range of support to students from day one of induction right through to when you progress to Durham University.

The Student Experience Team is split into three areas: the Registry & Operations Team, the Progression and Enrichment Team, and the Student Support Team.

The Student Experience Team works in conjunction with students and academic staff to deliver an outstanding educational experience.

The Student Experience team operates during the hours of 09:00 – 5:00 Monday to Friday. We're here to support you!



Heather Watson
Head of Registry and
Operations



Donna Cutler
Deputy Director, Student
Experience



Victoria Howes Head of Student Support



Jillian McGuren
Head of Progression and
Enrichment

SAFEGUARDING TEAM

We have a designated Safeguarding Team here at DUISC. The team helps to ensure your experience at DUISC and onward transition to University is a safe and supportive one.

The Safeguarding Team works together to implement support around the safety and wellbeing of all students on campus. They will always work in the best interests of students and provide advice and guidance on student wellbeing.

Please reach out to us if either yourself or one of your peers is at risk of harm, is being abused (hurt), or is in a vulnerable position.

If you are worried about your own safety or the safety of one of your friends (but is not an emergency) during your time at DUISC, please get in touch with us immediately and we will support you.

Find out more about Safeguarding at the ISC and the team here:



ACADEMIC TEAM

Throughout your studies at Durham ISC, you will be supported by our academic team.

This includes:

- Subject tutors who will teach your classes,
- Academic Personal Tutor (APT) who you will meet with regularly
- Heads of Subject that lead each subject area.

Our Academic Team is here to support you with any questions related to your course or any academic related queries.

You will meet your tutors during Welcome Week and you will find out who your APT will be for the duration of your course.

The academic team is a vital resource for student success. Please know that they are all here to support you and will be happy to do so.

Contact details for all members of the academic team can be found on our Virtual Reception.

Please find out more on The Virtual Reception (VR) here:



QUEEN'S CAMPUS INFORMATION







<u>Durham University International Study Centre</u>

Queens Campus
University Boulevard
Stockton-on-Tees
TS17 6BH

Email: DurhamiscStudentSupport@studygroup.com

Call: 0191 334 0698

ACCOMMODATION INFORMATION







Rialto Court

(QED)
66 Bridge Road
Thornaby
Stockton-on-Tees
TS18 3DG

Infinity House

(QED)
Sorbonne Close
Thornaby
Stockton-on-Tees
TS17 6DD

Endeavour Court

(Mezzino)
East Drive
Thornaby
Stockton-on-Tees
TS17 6JZ

LOCAL AREA: STOCKTON-ON-TEES

Durham University International Study Centre is located in Stockton-on-Tees, a small market town in the Northeast of England, close to the towns of Middlesbrough and Darlington. Stockton on Tees is approximately a 40-minute car/bus journey from Durham City Centre.

Stockton town centre is located a 5-minute walk from the International Study Centre. It's Highstreet offers an array of shopping and leisure facilities as well as a variety of restaurants and cafes. At the heart of High Street stands the town hall and the Shambles Market Hall. There is also a weekly market that is held every Wednesday and Saturday.

The town centre offers a range of retail shops and a shopping centre - Wellington Square. As well as providing commercial retail facilities, Stockton town centre also provides a variety of services including national banks and building societies, travel agents, a post office, and hairdressers/beauticians.

The famous Infinity Bridge is an engineering marvel, and at night it showcases the inspiration for its name. You will likely see it on all DUISC promotional materials; the Infinity Bridge crosses over the river Tees and is the backdrop to the ISC.

The riverside hosts many riverside events and activities, including rowing, canoeing, jet skiing and dragon boat racing (ran by the River Tees Water-sports Centre which is located just a 4 minute walk away from the ISC).

There are various walking routes along the river. The Tees Walkway on the north bank of the river can be accessed from the town centre by the Teesquay Millennium Footbridge or the Riverside Footbridge, and provides a walk along the embankment, as well as a cycle path which forms part of the National Cycle Network. Alternatively, take a short walk from the ISC up along the river to the impressive Tees Barrage, where you can grab a coffee and take in the river air.

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GETTING TO STOCKTON-ON-TEES

The area is served by excellent transport links including national train lines, Durham Tees Valley airport and links from all major motorways.



Car

Stockton-on-Tees can be accessed via the A66, the A19 & the A1 (Motorways), the transport links provide easy access from the both the North and South of England.

Coach

Coach services in the local area are provided by National Express Travel. National Express provides coach journeys from Stockton to a range of places in the UK, including London and Edinburgh. National Express travel can be contacted by calling: 0990 808080 (calls are answered daily between 8am and 10pm).

Bus

Students can also travel within the local area using the public bus service. The Arriva X12 bus service travels between Middlesbrough, Stockton, Sedgefield, Durham and Newcastle. It is the recommended transport to use to travel between Stockton and the Durham University City Campus. Students will receive discounted travel on the X12 bus service by showing their valid Student ID card.

GETTING TO STOCKTON-ON-TEES

Air

Newcastle and Teesside International Airports are the closest airports to the ISC. They handle flights to and from both UK and Europe and other international flights. For flight information you can contact: Newcastle International Airport - Tel: 0191 214 4444
Teesside International Airport - Tel: 01325 332811

Rail

Thornaby railway station is the closest railway station to Durham University International Study Centre. A fast and regular train service runs between the Northeast and London, the service stops at Thornaby railway station and Durham Train station.

Direct trains operate to Newcastle, Darlington, York, and Middlesbrough on a regular basis from Thornaby train station.

Taxi

Locally, Stockton has a selection of registered taxi companies. Taxis are available in different sizes from 4 seats to 16 seats.



COOKING AND FOOD SAFETY

With shared food storage, preparation, and cooking areas/facilities in the student accommodation, it is important that you store food in the correct places to reduce the risk of food contamination. Cupboard space should be used to keep your dried food items including tinned food, pasta, rice, soups and cereals. Food hygiene precautions should be followed to ensure your safety, it is important to always ensure the kitchen is tidy and that food is stored correctly.

All meat and fish produce must be stored in the fridge. DO NOT store them in the cupboard. Also, do not mix raw meat with cooked food when storing them in the fridge. Raw meat should always be kept at the bottom of the fridge in a sealed container. Failing to do either of these things could result in serious health risks to you and your fellow students. You could fall very ill and require hospital care.

Freezing and Defrosting

Most foods can be stored in the freezer. Freezing food pauses bacterial growth, meaning that food can be safely stored for months longer than they would in the fridge. The safest way to defrost foods such as meat is to take them out of the freezer the night before and leave them in the fridge (in a sealed container!) IMPORTANT: Once food has been defrosted DO NOT refreeze it unless it has been cooked. Bacteria can start to grow as the food warms up, so it must be used immediately. Refreezing defrosted food, particularly meat could make you very ill.

For more information on cooking and food safety, please visit the Welfare Pages of the Virtual Reception or contact the Welfare Team directly by emailing DurhamISCWelfare@studygroup.com.

EATING OUT

Café Aroma

Café Aroma is located on the campus itself and is open throughout the day, serving hot and cold refreshments and snacks such as sandwiches, wraps, pastries, and salads.

They have fresh tea and coffee and have a lots of seating available.

Stockton High Street

Stockton plays host to a cultural blend of restaurants; there are a variety of cuisines to suit all tastes, be it Italian, American, Nigerian, Chinese, or Indian. The table below outlines some popular restaurants in the local area.

Teesside Park

You can visit Teesside park for big chain restaurants like Wagamama's and Nando's. Or you can grab a coffee from Costa or Tim Horton's!

Take Away Food

Alternatively, you can enjoy a treat in your own room by checking out the local takeaways:



SHOPPING AND SUPERMARKETS

Durham University International Study Centre has excellent links to a range of supermarkets, including global superstores (some of which are open 24 hours a day).

There are also independent retailers and international food retailers.

Our student accommodations are situated close to Sainsbury's, Lidl, and Asda.

For international supermarkets, it's worth a trip to Linthorpe road in Middlesbrough, where you will be able to get lots of recognisable foods and even a bubble tea whilst you're there!

Visit the QR Code below to see where you can get your food shopping in Stockton on Tees:



MUSEUMS, THEATRES, AND ARTS VENUES

If you love live music, have an eye for the arts, or get a thrill from the theatre, Stockton-on-Tees has something for you. The Borough is home to the nationally acclaimed Preston Hall Museum and Grounds, and three fantastic theatres in the form of the Globe Theatre, Billingham Forum, and the ARC.

ARC Theatre

ARC is a modern venue in the centre of Stockton-on-Tees which offers an extensive programme of professional and cultural entertainment including music, comedy, drama, dance, spoken word and film.

Forum Theatre

The Forum Theatre is an impressive 649 capacity theatre based in the popular Forum in Billingham Town Centre. The theatre plays host to an incredible programme of events and entertainment, with a variety of performances suitable for everyone.

The Globe

Some of the biggest names in entertainment have played at the Globe. In the summer of 2021, the Globe re-opened its doors, this time as a nationally renowned, 3,000 capacity live entertainment venue. Set to host world class names from today's music and comedy circuits the Globe is sure to have something for everyone.

Green Dragon Studios

The Green Dragon Studio is an exciting music facility which was opened in 2007. Nestled among the narrow, cobbled alleyways of old Stockton, within the developing Stockton Cultural Quarter, Green Dragon Studios provides a fully equipped rehearsal space, a state-of-the-art recording studio with live rooms and isolation booth.

Preston Park Museum and Grounds

Nestled alongside the River Tees, Preston Hall, houses a varied collection of Teesside's historical treasures in its impressive museum. The grounds also provide great places to unwind and relax and take in the impressive views of the river Tees.

The Georgian Theatre

The Georgian Theatre is a 200-capacity venue, tucked away in a courtyard just off Stockton's riverside, The Georgian Theatre's interior provides an intimate setting for an evening's entertainment. The Georgian Theatre has become a popular venue boasting a fantastic programme of year-round events.

UK MONEY ADVICE

The price of everyday goods can vary quite a lot depending on where you shop and where you are. Stockton has a reasonable cost of living; major things like housing, rent and transport are reasonably priced, including taxis.

Tipping

Tipping is not that common in the UK. In pubs and most bars, you would not be expected to leave a tip when you pay. However, if you have table service in a restaurant it is common to leave a small amount of change or 10% of the bill as a tip.

Bank Cards

Most people in the UK will have a Debit Card that is "contactless" which means they do not have to use a pin number to pay for goods. Contactless payment can be used on purchase from a few pence right up to £100 so many people pay for goods in this way. Cash machines are readily available and it's easy to find one that doesn't charge you to take money out (provided your bank is a UK bank account). Look for cash machines at banks (these are free).

How Do I Keep My Money Safe?

Most British people do not carry large amounts of cash. This means that if we lose our bag/purse, or it is stolen, we do not lose a lot of money. Because we can pay with debit card almost everywhere, there is no need to carry a lot of cash.

Criminals sometimes target international students as they know they are more likely to carry a large amount of cash with them – It is vital that you keep your money safe by:

- 1. Carrying only the amount of cash you need when you are out.
- 2. Carry your purse in a bag that can be closed securely with buttons or a zip, or in your front pocket so you are aware of it.
- 3. Do not keep large amounts of cash in your accommodation, deposit it into a bank as soon as you can.
- 5. When shopping online ensure that the payment pages you use are secure (little padlock symbol next to web address).
- 6. NEVER share your card details / passwords / pin numbers.

STUDENT PERSONAL SAFETY

It is important that you follow the steps below to keep yourself and your personal belongings safe.

In your accommodation:

- Please do not be tempted to remove any retainers/locks/latches off your accommodation windows, especially on the ground floor; they are there to keep you safe.
- If you are living on the ground floor, please close your windows when you leave the room.
- Close and lock the main door to your apartment/room when you leave and when you enter.
- Keep items out of sight this is essential if you are on the ground floor. Please don't leave bags or electrical items on the windowsill – it is a temptation for a thief.
- Do not cover up the smoke alarms the alarms are for the safety of you and the other residents.

On campus and at the accommodation:

The security teams on campus and at the accommodation work hard to keep you and the buildings safe and secure. You can help them by not letting strangers through doors behind you (known as tailgating); anyone who needs to be in has their own key fob/key card. If anyone does follow or attempt to follow you in, please let security know immediately.

ISC Campus Security: 0191 334 0081 Rialto Court: 07983772502 Infinity House: 07983772519

Begging

The residents of Stockton have access to health and wellbeing services, and everyone in the area has access to food and housing. If anyone approaches you and asks for money, please politely decline and walk to somewhere visible where other people can see you.

If you would like to donate to a charity group who help people in this situation, the Student Support Team can advise further – DurhamISCStudentSupport@studygroup.com.

STUDENT PERSONAL SAFETY

Scams

A scam is where someone tries to dishonestly trick you into handing over money or goods. Recently the police have seen an increase in international students being scammed. Scams often seem convincing and therefore it is difficult to know that you are being targeted.

No official organisation will pressure you into making a payment on the spot. Students have been contacted via telephone, emails and through use of the QQ and WeChat apps, please remain vigilant and never give your personal information.

If anyone contacts you and you believe it might be a scam, we are here to support you. Please reach out to our welfare team to discuss this or report it directly at www.actionfraud.police.uk.

General Safety Tips

The points below are general safety tips that we recommend all students follow:

- · Make a note of all your electronic devices' IMEI, MAC address and serial numbers and consider registering them with www.immobolise.com this is the world's largest free property register. It works in line with the National Mobile Phone Register and together they can be used to assist in detecting crime and returning lost property. Various items of property can be registered including mobile phones, laptops, tablets, cameras, satellite navigation devices, games consoles and much more.
- · If you are purchasing a bike for your stay, always ensure you secure your bike using a good quality D lock and make use of the secure storage sheds located on campus and at Rialto Court and Infinity House accommodation.
- · Register your bicycle on the National Cycle Database at www.bikeregister.com
- · During induction periods the local council paint footprints on the footpaths from the accommodation to campus and to Stockton town centre. If you are unsure of your location, follow the footprint

STUDENT PERSONAL SAFETY

Road Safety

Remember, the traffic in the UK drives on the left.

Only cross busy roads at the designated crossing – Wait for the signal to turn green and keep looking both ways.

Don't allow yourself to be distracted by your phone when crossing roads. You should also take extra care when crossing roads when wearing headphones.

If you are a cyclist, wear a protective helmet and high visibility clothing. Pay careful attention to other road users and go left around roundabouts (clockwise).

E-Scooters are illegal to use on public roads and pavements and they are not permitted on campus (unless via an authorised scheme in other cities). Please do not purchase an E-Scooter as you will not be able to use them.

Pedestrian Road Safety

As a pedestrian in the UK, it is important to stay safe as you use the pavements, walkways, and cross the road. Remember to:

- Stop, look, and listen.
- Traffic drives on the left-hand side; please look right then left before crossing a road.
- Do not cross the road between parked cars.
- Cross the road at a pedestrian crossing or traffic lights.
- Never cross on a bend.
- If there is a footpath, use it.
- If there is no footpath, walk/run/jog on the right-hand side of the road, facing oncoming traffic and keep as close as possible to the side of the road.
- Wear reflective clothing at night, where possible.

SELF-CARE AND SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS



STUDENT SPACE















LIVING IN THE UK

The biggest element of change that students face is the everchanging weather, often with multiple seasons in one day. Below is some information that will help you to understand our climate and some guidance on how to prepare for this during your time in the UK.

- The UK can famously have all four seasons in one day but the coldest time of the year is between November January, and the warmest is between May-July.
- Summers in the UK are not usually hot we do not have air conditioning in most homes as it wouldn't get used very much! Winters can be very cold with snow but not for long periods of time.
- In August and Spring, we can have very changeable weather, with warm sunshine one day and wind, rain and fog the next, at this time of year it is a good idea to prepare for all weather when you leave the house.

Summer – Days are very long. It is light from around 4am – 10pm

Winter - Days are very short. It is only light from around 8am - 4pm

Clock Changes

In the UK the clocks go forward I hour at Iam on the last Sunday in March, and back I hour at 2am on the last Sunday in October – most of your devices will be connected to the internet and will change automatically, but make sure that manual alarm clocks and watches are changed the night before.

UK CUSTOMS AND CULTURES

As with all cultures and societies, there are some "unwritten rules" and customs in the UK that you need to be aware of. Don't worry too much about these as you will gradually get used to them.

Be Polite (Thank You, please, sorry, Excuse Me, I Would Like): On campus and in public you are expected to be polite to everybody, you will notice that British people say 'sorry' and 'excuse me' a lot!

In your language you may be more straightforward but try to include these phrases in your English practice as it is considered quite rude to just demand things, even if that is ok in your language.

Queuing and Following the Rules

British people are renowned for queuing. If you do push into a queue, it is likely you will be told to go to the back – this includes when on campus. It is important that you understand that things may sometimes take time to do because there will be a process to follow.

Not Speaking Over People or Raising Your Voice

If somebody is talking to you, listen! It is not acceptable to speak over another person, it is considered very disrespectful. Make sure that you take the time to listen when someone is speaking to you. It is also considered rude to raise your voice too much when talking, and in public spaces it is polite to keep your voice lower.

British Culture

- British culture has its roots in the United Kingdom's rich history, the people and the four countries England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland.
- Tea is the world's second most popular drink (after water!).
- British architecture depicts styles from different periods of history, from the 5th century of Roman conquering, throughout the Dark Ages and Renaissance whose impact is still present in British architectural heritage.
- Old castles can be found in the UK. Some of the most beautiful and most visited are Windsor Castle, Alnwick Castle, Stirling Castle, Warwick Castle and Bamburgh Castle.

LIBRARY INFORMATION

The International Study Centre has a dedicated student library, it is located in Ebsworth Building (2nd floor).

The ISC library is open 5 days a week (Monday to Friday).

We encourage all students that are in the UK to make use of this fantastic facility, the library is a great place to study, revise and spend time away from your room!

Find out more about the ISC library here:



As a DUISC student, you also have access to the Bill Bryson Library up at the main campus in Durham City.

You can find out more about the Bill Bryson Library here: www.durham.ac.uk/departments/library/

