

# International Student Arrival Guide 2023

**SUSU**

Southampton University

Students' Union





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# Welcome!



Welcome to Southampton or Winchester!

We (SUSU) are really pleased you're here, and we're all about making your experience as positive as possible.

Moving to a new country for your studies is a big deal, and we understand that it can be a mix of excitement and nerves. But don't worry, we've got your back! That's why we have put together this guide to help you settle into your new life in Southampton or Winchester and make the most of your time here.

Inside, you'll find tips on everything from what to pack to getting around like a pro.

Remember, you're not alone in this adventure. There are other international students who are ready to welcome you and offer you a community away from home, so make sure you also look into our student clubs and societies while you're here.

Once again, a huge welcome from all of us at SUSU! We hope this guide and our support will help you start a fantastic year at the University of Southampton.

# What to Pack

Packing to study abroad can be challenging because you won't have the option to make regular visits to your home. Everyone is different when it comes to packing. You may need additional items for your accommodation, but we hope this list of basics will help you prepare for your journey.



- Passport and VISA
- Travel Insurance
- Cash (to use before you open a bank account)
- List of contacts
- Warm winter clothes
- Shoes, hats and gloves
- Rain Coat / Jacket
- Umbrella
- Sports clothing and trainers
- Summer clothing
- Slippers
- Towels
- Pyjamas and Dressing gown
- Laundry bag
- Toiletries
- Hairbrush
- Bedding
- Personal medication
- Plasters / mini first-aid kit
- Ear Plugs
- Room decorations
- Family Photos
- Adapters and charging cables
- Laptop
- Pens
- Notepads
- re-usable water bottle
- Rucksack or laptop bag

# Travel from the Airport

## Meet & Greet

The University offers a meet & greet service to international students arriving for Semester 1 in September 2023.

Their Meet and Greet team will meet you at London Heathrow Airport and will help direct you towards onward public transport and answer your questions.

To find out more about Meet & Greet and the dates and times of this service, head to the information page [here](#).

## Public Transport Options

- [National Express](#)

There is direct coach travel available from Heathrow Airport to Southampton through [National Express](#). The Journey takes around 2 hours.

- [Train](#)

There are rail travel options from Heathrow Airport to Southampton or Winchester station. If you travel by train, there will typically be one or two changes during your journey. While rail travel is generally more expensive than coach travel, you can make savings by booking your ticket in advance on [trainline.com](#).

# Opening a Bank Account

## Choosing a bank

When selecting and opening a bank account or building society account as an international student in the UK, it is important to take various factors into consideration. We can't offer guidance on the specific account or financial institution you should opt for, but there are several consumer websites in the UK that focus on giving tips regarding the accounts offered by local banks.

Banks will often offer a basic bank account, which is different to a standard 'current account'. It offers limited facilities, is usually fee-free, and allows you to receive money and pay bills but does not allow you to have an overdraft.

Money Helper has [comprehensive information on the identity requirements needed for basic bank accounts](#).

## Changing your address or other personal details

You should let your bank / building society know as soon as possible if you change your address or any other personal details while you are in the UK. Try to keep copies of any correspondence you have with your bank / building society. If you are leaving the UK for a long break, for example for the summer vacation, you should let your bank know, in case they treat your account as 'dormant' and close it.





# Healthcare

## Registering with a local doctor

To access health care in the UK, you need to register with a GP (General Practitioner) when you arrive. Some treatment provided by the UK's National Health Service (NHS) is free for everyone, including a visit to your GP.

If your GP refers you to hospital for treatment, you will usually be given an appointment to see a consultant (specialist doctor). If you think you need to see a specialist, you should approach your GP first and ask them to refer you.

## Registering with a local dentist

When you contact a local dentist, you should ask whether they will accept you as an NHS patient. Many dentists in the UK now only accept private patients. Even if you are treated under the NHS there will be a charge, but the cost will be lower than that of a private practice. You can register with a dentist close to where you live.

## When to call 999

The number for life-threatening emergencies in the UK is 999. The accident and emergency department in hospitals (A&E) is for emergencies only, if you are not sure what to do you can call the National Health Service's helpline (111) first or visit your pharmacy. They will be able to advise you.



# The Advice Centre: Housing, Academic Matters and Finance

The SUSU Advice Centre provides free, independent and confidential support to all students. Visit the website to access guides and documents to help you with practical topics such as academic matters, finances and housing.

For example, if you have found accommodation but you are not sure about the fine print in your contract, our advice team can help you look through the document.

If the online guides on the website don't answer your questions, please contact the Advice team at [advice@susu.org](mailto:advice@susu.org).



**Sam**

Head of Advice



**Michelle**

Adviser



**Ash**

Adviser



**Sarah**

Adviser



**Nicola**

Adviser



**Adam**

Coordinator



# Transportation - Southampton

The University of Southampton is easy to access on foot, by bike or via Uni-link buses.

## Uni-link (Southampton)

The University runs the Uni-link bus service. Details of our routes and timetable are available on the Uni-link website. Printed copies of the Uni-link timetable are available in various buildings across our campuses, including the Uni-link Office (located above our SUSU Shop on the Highfield Campus).

[View timetables and maps on the Unilink website](#)



## Cycling (Southampton)

The University has a number of secure cycle sheds across Highfield campus for staff and student use. Please note that you will need your student ID activated to use the bike stores. This can be done by visiting the UniLink office on Highfield campus.

Southampton has a good cycle network, though it may be advisable to look into the [UK's Highway Code for cyclists](#) so you know how to stay safe.

To plan your cycling route in Southampton, you can use the [My Journey](#) website.

# Transportation - Southampton

## Travel by train (Southampton)

Southampton has two mainline railway stations - Southampton Central and Southampton Airport Parkway. The average journey time to London Waterloo from Southampton Central is 1 hour 30 minutes. You can travel from campus to both railway stations by Uni-link bus.

[National Rail Enquiries](#) is a useful website to help plan your route. Trainline sometimes offers discounted rates for advance ticket purchases.

## Travel by coach (Southampton)

Coach travel is often more affordable than train travel in the UK. A coach trip can be a great, inexpensive way to take a holiday or a city break. To find out more about coach travel, visit the [National Express website](#).



# Transportation – Winchester

## Travel by train (Winchester)

Winchester Train Station is a short 10–15 minute walk away from Winchester School of Art Campus. A train journey from Winchester to Southampton Central station will take you 16 minutes, and London Waterloo is only one hour away.

[National Rail Enquiries](#) is a useful website to help plan your route. Trainline sometimes offers discounted rates for advance ticket purchases.

## Travel by bus (Winchester)

The Unilink U7 or Bluestar 1 bus services can be a convenient way to travel between Winchester and Southampton, especially if you live near one of the bus stops on the routes. Plan your journey and find out more about fares on the [Unilink](#) or [Bluestar](#) website.



## Cycling (Winchester)

Winchester has a good bike network and beautiful cycling routes, though it may be advisable to look into the [UK's Highway Code for cyclists](#) so you know how to stay safe.

To find out about the best and worst roads to cycle on in Winchester, you can consult Cycle Winchester's [Big Map of hazards and suggestions](#).

# Clubs & Societies

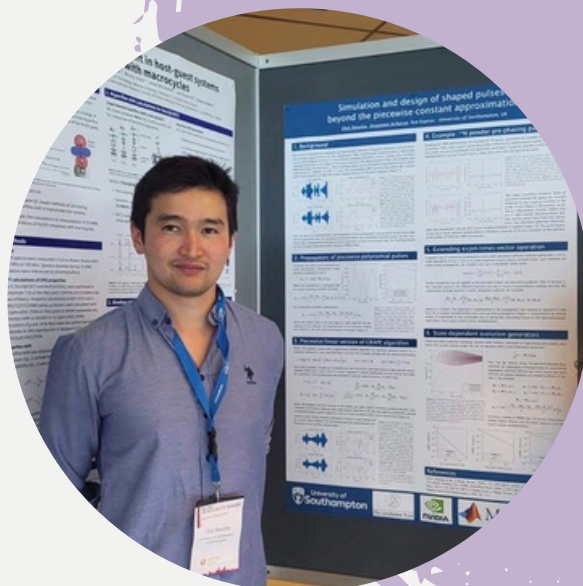


With over 300 sports and activities, we can almost guarantee that you will be able to find a group based on your hobbies or interests. Studying on campus is just the beginning, and the Students' Union gives you plenty of opportunities to have fun and get involved with something new. Whether it's competing in a sport you love, giving back to the local community through volunteering or trying something completely new, there's a club or society out there for you!

To explore all of our student groups, head to the [Activities section on the SUSU website](#). Though all of our groups are open to all students, we understand that it may feel a bit daunting to jump in and join a club or society as an international student. Most groups will have a general contact address on their SUSU web page to contact with any questions. If you scroll down to the committee you can also reach out directly to the group's Welfare Officer (if they have one) to talk through any concerns.

# Clubs & Societies

## Hear from Uluk



"I come from a small country of Kyrgyzstan in Central Asia. Coming from abroad to the UK can be difficult and daunting. However, it doesn't have to be. Southampton University is a unique opportunity to have an adventure in this part of your life. Your university experience is what you make of it. So go on and make your story. Meet new people, make friends, experience new things, learn new skills. I trained at the Boxing society and made my way to become the president of the club. I made lifelong friends at the Russian Speaking society and met like minded academics with the Physics and Chemistry societies. Starting from undergraduate physics degree, I built my academic career and currently I am completing a PhD in Chemistry and am now teaching undergraduates myself. Every story starts with a single step, so start your story at the University of Southampton"

-Uluk Rasulov



# Clubs & Societies

## Hear from Lucia



“As an international student, settling in at university can prove to be challenging. The different food, culture and general habits can you easily put you off and make you feel lost. My best advice to overcome any fear and find your comfort zone is to put yourself out there and join a society or club! I joined the Italian society as soon as I started to feel homesick. By joining this society I was able to share my feelings and thoughts with people from my native country and receive reassurance and advice from them. Joining this society also gave me the opportunity to bring a piece of Italy at the uni, by organising socials and events as their president. As an opportunity to keep active and free my mind after long lectures or intense study sessions I also joined a sports club. In my case, Water polo was the perfect choice. A not too small club, where everyone knows and support each other. With regular training planned but also with frequent scheduled socials that shaped some of the best memories at university.”

-Lucia Ciardo



# Clubs & Societies

## Hear from Nicolas



“When I first came to the UK, I knew it would be a challenge to fit in as everyone around me had different interests and had different ways of living. I never felt excluded or that it was harder to approach people as everyone was in the same position. Within the first week I had already joined two societies, one was the Greek and Cypriot society of Southampton. This helped me meet new people from my country. Joining the society helped me solve any questions I had about the university and general things about the city and way of life. Back in Cyprus I was always a big fan of sports especially basketball, this encouraged me to join the university’s basketball team. Me and my teammates quickly fit in as we all shared the same love for the sport. Joining the basketball team helped me make new friends from countries all around the world which was amazing. I am now going into my second year, and I will be staying with a few friends that I met through the Greek and Cypriot society. I am honestly really happy for choosing to study at the University of Southampton and haven’t regretted my choice.”

-Nicolas Petsas

# Clubs & Societies

## Hear from Marina



Moving abroad for my studies was very exciting but naturally came with a sense of fear of the unknown. There was so much to learn and even more to do. In fact, there was almost too much to do, the number of possibilities, responsibilities and opportunities can sometimes leave you feeling overwhelmed. There have been times when the fear and hesitation almost outweighed my determination to make the most out of university experience. Fortunately, I decided to put myself out there, and have never looked back since. Joining the Greek & Cypriot society allowed me to seek comfort when being away from home was tougher than usual. The Riding Club welcomed me with open arms, supported my passion for the sport and expanded my mental horizons. I have made lifelong friends, been on committees, and fell in love with the sense of social responsibility and the effect it's had on my personal growth and development. It is safe to say that I now a far more well-rounded person thanks to these experiences and more eager than ever to place my own milestone in others' journeys as the current Vice President of Sports. Always remember that you are braver than you think, so go out there and live every moment to the fullest. It's the best gift you can ever do to yourself.

-Marina Stasi

# Freshers 2023

This September, we're bringing you an amazing line-up of events for the University of Southampton Freshers 2023!

All official Freshers' events for the University of Southampton are available to view on our [Freshers page](#) and on our [events calendar](#).

Please be cautious if you see Freshers' 2023 events being promoted by external companies & venues - official events are only hosted by SUSU and the University.



# Student Representation

One of SUSU's most important objectives is to represent the voice of every student at the University of Southampton. We are one of the most fully independent student unions in the UK, run by students, for students. We are here to represent you and ultimately help make your university experience the best it can be.

## YOUR SABBATICAL TEAM



**Ed Brooker**  
Union President



**Marina Stasi**  
Vice President  
Sports



**Amy Moir**  
Vice President  
Activities



**Rebecca Would**  
Vice President  
Education &  
Democracy

Our Sabbatical Officers are responsible for overseeing the policy and activity zones, and setting the direction for the Students' Union each academic year. They oversee and support the Student Leaders and other voluntary officers in their roles throughout the year.



# Representation: Elections

## Why get involved in our Student Elections?

Standing as a candidate for a representation role provides you with experience and employability skills. Putting together your nomination and campaigning for the vote of students demonstrates public speaking, social media marketing, networking and project management skills. If you are successful, you will have full training with the Union, so don't worry if you don't have any previous experience. The work you do through the year will improve student life for others and you will gain recognition for your work. Head to [this page](#) to find out more about our elections.



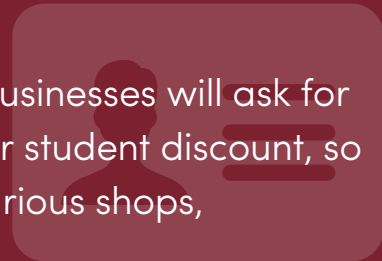
## How else can I get involved?

- Voting in our elections is one of the key ways you can make your voice heard by the Union. The student officers and academic reps we work with each year represent all students and inform projects and activities at the Union. If you aren't running for a role yourself, you can still be involved by following the elections campaigns and voting for the candidate that you feel best represents you.
- Talking to our officers and reps throughout the year ensures they know about your concerns or ideas about student life at Southampton, and means we can work towards any positive changes students want to implement. You can find information about your elected representatives here: [Academic Reps](#) and [Student Officers](#).

# Student Discounts

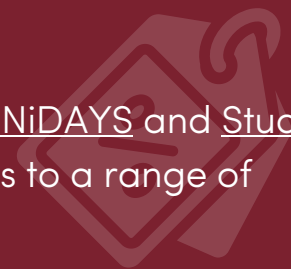
## Your Student ID Card

Your student ID will help you save money. Many businesses will ask for your student ID as proof before they offer you their student discount, so make sure to bring it with you to save money in various shops, restaurants and other venues.



## UniDAYS and Student Beans

Some student discount schemes ask for a fee, but [UNiDAYS](#) and [Student Beans](#) are completely free and both give you access to a range of online shopping deals.



## Railcard

If you plan to travel by train often, it is worth buying a Railcard so you can get a 33% discount on all rail travel. Head to the [Railcard website](#) to find out more.



## TooGoodToGo

[TooGoodToGo](#) is an app which aims to fight food waste by connecting customers to restaurants, cafes and stores that have unsold food surplus. Here, you might find full meals, coffee, or pastries left over from the day at a cheaper price. It's a great way to save on food whilst also ensuring none of it goes to waste. Some of the outlets on University campuses are part of the TooGoodToGo scheme.





# Local Supermarkets

Southampton and Winchester have a range of supermarkets that cater to all budgets and tastes. Here are some examples of popular supermarkets in the city.



- **Lidl and Aldi**

Lidl and Aldi top the list as two of the most affordable places to do your weekly shop.

- **Asda, Tesco and Sainsbury's**

Asda, Tesco and Sainsbury's offer great discounts and vouchers. If you shop at Sainsbury's or Tesco regularly, you may want to sign up for ASDA rewards, a Nectar Card (Sainsbury's) or Clubcard (Tesco) to collect points and get discounts on some of their products.

- **The Shop at SUSU (Highfield Campus)**

Selling everything from food and drinks to stationary, The Shop is the place to visit when you're on campus and need something during the day or before you head home.

- **Waitrose and Marks & Spencer**

Waitrose and Marks & Spencer are more upmarket options for food shopping. They have great quality products but are not the best choice if you are trying to save money on your food shop.

# Local Food, Drink and Nightlife - Southampton

## Highfield Campus

If you need to eat, drink or shop on Highfield campus, SUSU has got you covered! Aside from the [SUSU Shop](#), our Union also has a popular pub ([The Stags](#)), a vegan restaurant ([Plant Pot](#)) and a bar and coffeeshop ([The Bridge](#)). Explore the options on our website [here](#).

## Portswood

Portswood is a suburb of Southampton and it is the area which is closest to Highfield Campus. [Portswood Road](#) is a great place for shopping, food and drink, and many of the establishments are student-friendly.

Restaurants include a range of international cuisines, and there are plenty of popular student clubs and pubs to try.

## Central Southampton and the Docks

Central Southampton has a host of eating and drinking options available. [Bedford Place](#) is an area with many outlets and night clubs and its nightlife is very popular with Southampton students. The [Westquay Shopping Centre](#) hosts a range of different dining options to enjoy in between or after shopping. Head further south to [Oxford Street](#) to find lots of independent business in Southampton. Southampton's [Ocean Village Marina](#) is also surrounded by shops, sophisticated bars, restaurants and a cinema.



# Local Food, Drink and Nightlife – Winchester

Though Winchester is smaller than Southampton, it is home to many amazing eateries and pubs.

In Winchester, you'll find a range of dining choices, from traditional English pubs serving hearty local dishes to upscale restaurants offering diverse cuisines from different countries. The city's traditional pubs will give you a chance to try local ales and ciders.



## Nightlife

The Winchester Business Improvement District (BID) runs an accreditation scheme to help identify safe night-time venues in the city. You can view the list of the selected bars and pubs [here](#).

## Independent Businesses

Winchester prides itself in having almost 200 independent businesses which include shops and restaurants, coffee shops, bars and galleries. [Winchester BID's Indie Map](#) can help you explore them when you're in town.

# SUSU Contact Details

## SUSU Website

Visit our Union's website at [www.susu.org](http://www.susu.org) to find out about our different areas, support initiatives and events.



[@union\\_soton](#)

[@susuwhatson](#)



[@UnionSouthampton](#)



[@Union\\_Soton](#)



[@unionsoton](#)

# Useful Links and Contacts

- SUSU Website: [www.susu.org](http://www.susu.org)
  - [SUSU Help and Support](#)
  - [SUSU Events Calendar](#)
  - [SUSU Clubs & Societies](#)
- [Student Hub](#): The University's support hub for questions and concerns relating to fees, financial support, accommodation, wellbeing, disability, careers and course administration.
- [UKCISA](#): information and advice for international students: [www.ukcisa.org.uk](http://www.ukcisa.org.uk)
- University of Southampton '[Before You Arrive](#)' page: [www.southampton.ac.uk/uni-life/international/before-you-arrive.page](http://www.southampton.ac.uk/uni-life/international/before-you-arrive.page)