

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ARRIVAL GUIDE 2026



Table of Contents

3	<u>Welcome</u>
4	<u>What to Pack</u>
5	<u>Travel from the Airport</u>
6	<u>Opening a Bank Account</u>
7	<u>Healthcare and Emergency Numbers</u>
8	<u>SIM Cards and Phone Plans</u>
10	<u>Give It A Go</u>
11	<u>SUSU Advice Centre</u>
12	<u>Fraud and Scams: How to Protect Yourself</u>
13-14	<u>Transportation - Southampton</u>
15	<u>Transportation - Winchester</u>
16	<u>Your Safety - SUSU Safe</u>
17-18	<u>Your Safety - Reporting Nuisance and Crime</u>
19-20	<u>Clubs and Societies</u>
21	<u>Student Representation</u>
22	<u>Student Discounts</u>
23	<u>Local Supermarkets</u>
24	<u>Local Food, Drink and Nightlife - Southampton</u>
25	<u>Local Food, Drink and Nightlife - Winchester</u>
26	<u>SUSU Contact Details</u>
	<u>Useful Links and Contacts</u>

Welcome to Southampton!



Welcome to Southampton and Highfield campus!

We (SUSU) are really pleased you're joining us in Southampton, and we're all about enriching your experience as a student.

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

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

Remember, you're not alone in this adventure. There are other students who are ready to welcome you. Connect with UK students as well as fellow international students through our clubs and societies, and through our events and activities

So once again, a huge welcome from all of us at SUSU! We hope this guide and our support will help you settle into an exciting year.

What to Pack

Packing to study abroad can be a challenge. You won't have the option to make regular visits to your home, so it may be helpful to create a checklist of things you need to take.

Everyone is different when it comes to packing and you may need additional items depending on 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 and 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 and greet service to international students arriving for Semester 1 in September 2026.

Their Meet & Greet team will meet you at London Heathrow Airport or London Gatwick 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 and Gatwick Airport to Southampton through [National Express](#). The journey from Heathrow takes around 2 hours and around 1 hour from Gatwick.

- [Train](#)

There are rail travel options from Heathrow and Gatwick Airports 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

It is important to let your bank or building society know when 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 or building society. If you are leaving the UK for a long break, for example for the summer vacation, it is best that you 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 near your accommodation.

Emergency Health Care

In the UK, the emergency number for life-threatening situations is 999. The Accident & Emergency (A&E) department at hospitals is for emergencies only.

If you're unsure whether it's an emergency, you can call the NHS non-emergency helpline 111 or visit your local pharmacy. They can advise you on what to do.

Emergency services such as ambulances are free of charge in the UK, so you don't need to worry about ambulance fees

SIM Cards and Phone Plans

When you arrive in the UK as an international student, it's important to start your mobile phone plan as soon as you can. This will allow you to access essential services (such as emergency numbers) and will help you stay connected with fellow students.

Many essential activities will require a working phone number, such as setting up a bank account, registering healthcare services, or receiving important notifications from local authorities.

Choosing a SIM Card or Phone Plan

Start by researching the different mobile network operators (MNOs) available. These operators offer various plans, including Pay-As-You-Go (PAYG) for flexibility or monthly contracts for fixed rates.

Think about your usage patterns, including data needs and whether you'll be making international calls. Comparison sites can help you pick the best plan based on your personal needs. Look out for student discounts and special deals offered by MNOs, and be prepared with the necessary documents like:

- your passport
- your visa
- your proof of address

Before you choose a plan, make sure to also check:

- the coverage of your chosen network (checking it's reliable in your area and on campus)
- whether your phone is locked to a network from another country. You may need to unlock it to use a UK SIM card.

Give It A Go

Give It A Go is an activity programme where you can join exciting experiences and taster sessions by our clubs and societies. If you're only in the UK for a short amount of time, it's the perfect way to try something new without needing to commit to a membership.



To find out about our Give It A Go events head to [this page](#).

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, or visit them at Highfield campus in building 40 above the Stags (our SUSU pub).



Sam

Head of Advice



Ash

Manager



Michelle

Adviser



Sarah

Adviser



Adam

Adviser

Fraud and Scams: How to Protect Yourself

Some criminals specifically target international students, using social media, email or phone calls pretending to be from a legitimate organisation (such as the UK Home Office, your university, or UKCISA).

They often demand money, calling it a "fee" or a "fine" for a non-existent problem, and claim that if you do not pay them quickly, there will be damaging consequences (for example ending your studies, deportation or cancelling your visa).

It is important to be aware that organisations such as the university and the Home Office would never contact you under such basis.



As an international student, it is very likely that you will receive scam calls or messages throughout your studies. If you are unsure about a message or email, please make sure you check with the Student Hub or our SUSU Advice Centre. The university also has [guidance](#) available on their website about recognising and reporting phishing emails.

If you receive a call and you think it might be a scam:

- Do not give the caller/sender any personal information, and do not confirm that any information they have is correct.
- Do not make any payment.
- Report the incident to the Student Hub or the SUSU Advice Centre

Transportation - Southampton



Breeze App

Breeze helps you find the fastest, cheapest, and eco-friendly ways to get where you want to go in Southampton. It compares all transportation options, saving you from having too many apps. You can also use it to unlock an e-scooter, bike or e-bike in the city, and check bus and train schedules to plan your route.

Uni-link Bus

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](#)



Transportation - Southampton

Cycling

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.

Travel by train

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

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](#).

Your Safety - SUSU Safe

At the University of Southampton's Student Union (SUSU) we want to ensure every student feels safe on campus and at our events, and that campus is a safe environment for everyone. We have put a number of safety initiatives in place, which together are known as: SUSU Safe.



SUSU Safety Bus

The Safety Bus is a FREE service to help make sure you get home from our venues on campus safely. It runs every evening during term time from outside SUSU Building 42 at Highfield Campus, and will drop you off right at your door! Find the running times [here](#).

Ask for Angela

If you're in any situation at a SUSU evening event which is making you feel unsafe, you can go to the bar and ask for 'Angela'. Our staff will know you need help getting out of your situation and will call you a taxi and/or discreetly help you leave.



To learn about more of our SUSU Safe Initiatives and resources, head to our [SUSU Safe page](#). You can speak to our team about any safety concern, at any time, either in person or via our SUSU Safe email address: sususafe@susu.org.

Your Safety - Reporting Nuisance and Crime

As a member of the Southampton or Winchester community, your voice matters. If you witness crime or antisocial behaviour, don't hesitate to report it using the contact list below. After submitting a report, you may or may not be contacted for further details by the agency involved, depending on the issue. Be assured the information you submit is used to help build a picture of activity, enabling the police and city councils to target resources and address the issues raised.

Issue	Phone Number	Email or Link	Responsible Agency
Danger or threat to life	999	N/A	Police and/or other emergency services
Vandalism	101 (or 999 if happening now)	How To Report a Crime	Police
Antisocial behaviour (such as public urinating or drug taking)	101	Report Antisocial Behaviour	Police
Fly tipping, graffiti and litter	Southampton: 023 8083 3008 Winchester: 0300 300 0013	Southampton: Report Online Winchester: Report Online	Southampton or Winchester City Council
Aggressive begging	101 (or 999 if happening now)	How To Report a Crime	Police
Noise (pubs, loud music, dog barking, shouting,..)	Southampton: 023 8083 3002 Winchester: 01962 848097	Southampton: Environmental.health@southampton.gov.uk Winchester: EH@winchester.gov.uk	Southampton or Winchester City Council

Clubs & Societies



With over 300 sports and activities, we can almost guarantee that you will be able to find a group that shares your hobbies and interests!

Studying on campus is just the beginning, and SUSU gives you many 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](#).

If you are not sure whether to jump in and join a club or society, you can always contact its committee with questions, attend a taster session or you can follow them on social media to see what they get up to. Our committee members are usually very keen to meet new members and all groups are open to all students, so don't hesitate to reach out to a club or society if there is anything you're unsure of. The Bunfight (Clubs & Societies Fair) during Freshers week is also a great opportunity to meet our committee members in person. If you don't want to miss the event, make sure to keep an eye on the [SUSU website](#) during the summer for the announcement of the 2026 Freshers programme.

Clubs & Societies

Lucia's Story



Joining a club or society as an international student is a great way to make the most of your time here at the university, but we understand that you might feel nervous about taking that step for various reasons. If you're not quite sure about joining our groups, then we hope that Lucia's story will inspire you and answer some of your questions:

"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 to 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

Student Representation

SUSU's main purpose is to represent the voice of students at the University of Southampton.

We are one of the most fully independent student unions in the UK, and our democratically elected student leaders are here to listen to your feedback and concerns.

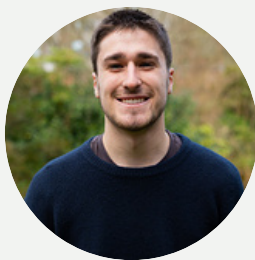
YOUR SABBATICAL TEAM

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.



**Krzysztof
Mikulski**

Union President



**Charlie
Bell**

VP Sports



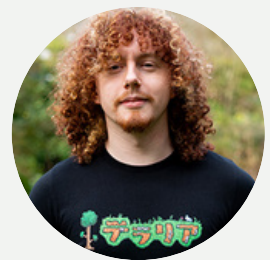
**Joshie
Christian**

VP Education



**Annie
Whyman**

VP Inclusion



**Henry
Penycate-Smith**

VP Communities

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 are not 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](#).

SUSU Student Networks

SUSU's networks are safe, supportive communities where students can connect, share their experiences, and advocate for their interests. If you self-identify as part of any of these groups, you're welcome to join!

YOUR NETWORKS



**INTERNATIONAL
STUDENT
NETWORK**

International Student Network

Are you an international student or studying abroad as part of your studies? This network is dedicated to supporting international students at the University of Southampton, providing a space to connect, share experiences, and create positive change.



**PARENT/CARER
NETWORK**

Student Parent and Carer Network

Are you a student balancing studies with parenting or caring responsibilities? This student-led network provides a space to connect with others who understand your challenges, share experiences and resources, and advocate for better support at the University of Southampton.



**STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY
NETWORK**

Student Accessibility Network

Are you a disabled or neurodivergent student at the University of Southampton? The Student Accessibility Network (SAN) is here to provide a safe, student-led space where you can connect, share experiences, and advocate for meaningful change.

Student Discounts

Your Student ID Card

Your student ID will help you save money. Many businesses will ask for student ID as proof before they offer you a 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 regularly travel by train, it is worth investing in a Railcard, which will get you 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 our University campuses (including SUSU outlets) 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.



- **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-focused.

Restaurants include a range of international cuisines, and there are plenty of popular 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.

Winchester's night scene is relatively laid-back, focusing more on intimate venues rather than big nightclubs, but here are some lively pubs with extended hours that offer live music, karaoke nights and DJs.

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 to find out about our campaigns, events and services.



[@union_soton](#)

[@susuwhatson](#)



[@UnionSouthampton](#)



[@Union_Soton](#)



[@unionsoton](#)

Useful Links and Contacts

- SUSU Website: 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
- University of Southampton '[Before You Arrive](#)' page: www.southampton.ac.uk/uni-life/international/before-you-arrive.page