

www.winchester.ac.uk

Welcome Handbook for American Students



Preface

Roger Richardson
Director of International Relations (USA)

We are delighted that you have chosen to come to study abroad at the University of Winchester and wish to assure you of a warm welcome and continuing support during your stay with us. This University has been hosting American students for over thirty years and we have developed a number of special relationships with a variety of American universities stretching from the east coast to the west. The benefits of this long and successful experience and these close, special relationships will be freely available to you. We realise that temporarily leaving behind your own country, state and university is a big step – perhaps the biggest you have so far taken. But it is the kind of step which everyone should take; everyone's experience now needs to extend beyond what, by accident, happens to be closest to them. Today's world, 'global' in every sense, demands it. The Atlantic, after all, is only a (large) pond separating two nations which have so much in common as well as some obvious differences.

Practical help of all kinds follows in this handbook to equip you to cope with your time at this University and in this country. Study comes first, of course. That is the reason for your being here. But we recognize that you will rightly want to enrich your experience by travel and by meeting new people and new challenges, visiting new places and making new friends. Advice follows on how to maximise the opportunities available to you and on how to make your dollars go further. There are lots of bargains around. Your time here is probably a once in a lifetime opportunity. In the future you may well come back to the UK for short vacations or for business visits connected with your careers but this is probably the only occasion you will spend such a relatively long time in another country, experiencing at first hand another culture, another society, another political system and another system of higher education. Make the most of it and we will do everything we possibly can to assist you to ensure that your time spent here is both valuable and enjoyable.

Welcome

A very big welcome from all of us here at the University of Winchester – we look forward to welcoming you in person at the beginning of the semester. We are sure that when you come to Winchester, you will have a wonderful time enjoying all that the University has to offer and that your time in Winchester will be rewarding, both academically and socially.

This handbook has been produced to help you prepare for arrival in the UK and to ensure that your time with us is as worry free and as enjoyable as possible.

Please read this hand book very carefully and bring it with you when you arrive.

We hope that it helps to answer all of the questions that you will be asking yourself while you make arrangements for your journey to Winchester but should you have any questions you wish to ask before you arrive please contact us at the addresses given below and at the end of this guide. We are here to help you and will be happy to do so.

The International Support Team contact details

International Student Welfare Advisers
+44(0) 1962 827482
welfare@winchester.ac.uk

Karolina Taylor,
Visiting Exchange Co-ordinator
Tel. +44 (0)1962 827581
karolina.taylor@winchester.ac.uk

Carol Smith,
Visiting and American Exchange
Academic Co-ordinator
Tel +44 (0) 1962 827370
carol.smith@winchester.ac.uk

The University of Winchester

The University of Winchester is located on an attractive hillside campus close to the historic City of Winchester. University accommodation is either on campus or located a short walk away. The University has a population of around 5,300 students, including approximately 350 international and EU students from around the world. We are committed to helping our international students settle into University life and look forward to welcoming you in September.

At Winchester, we take the needs of our international students very seriously. With a strong network of welfare and support, we continually strive to provide a dynamic, supportive and stimulating environment. Winchester is a safe and compact city – the University campuses, accommodation and city centre are all within walking distance and easy to find your way around. We're sure you'll find student life new and exciting but you may also find it a bit bewildering at first, especially if you are coming to the UK for the first time. We aim to make sure that, right from the start you have access to any support you might need - academic, personal, medical, financial - from people who are easy to contact and who can give you friendly and expert guidance when you need it. In the mean time, the following information will be useful to you as you plan and prepare for your time in the UK.

To do list

- Return all completed forms / paperwork to the University or your home institution as required
- Read this handbook carefully
- Email the International Welfare Adviser with your expected arrival time in Winchester on Saturday 15th or Sunday 16th September (see details on page 10)
- Take out medical insurance (this may be covered through travel insurance) if you will be a student here for less than six months
- Insure your personal belongings (this can be done on arrival but you may want to take out travel insurance for the journey)
- Organise currency / cash / travellers' cheques for your journey and the first 2 weeks of your stay (you may wish to open a UK bank account when you arrive or you may simply wish to rely on credit cards and cashpoint machine (ATMS))

- Transfer of money or Bankers' draft if applicable (you MAY be able to open a UK bank account before you arrive in the country if your own bank has a reciprocal arrangement with a UK bank but most students will open a bank account after arrival in the UK)
- Ensure that you have had the Meningitis Group C vaccine
- Ensure that you have had the MMR (Mumps, Measles and Rubella) vaccine
- Go to your dentist for a check up! Should an emergency appointment be required whilst at University, there are dentists available but students will only be seen on a private basis. This will incur significant charges (again your travel / medical insurance may be able to cover this but please check).

To bring list

- A valid passport
- An entry clearance visa (i.e. the visa in your passport IF you wish to work part-time whilst you are here)
- Acceptance letter from the University of Winchester and any other University documentation (e.g. confirmation of accommodation)
- Proof of financial support. When you apply for your visa, you must prove that you have sufficient money to pay for your fees, accommodation and living costs during your stay in the UK. Evidence for this should take the form of copies of recent bank statements, recent payslips, proof of any scholarships or if you are being privately sponsored, a sponsor's letter e.g. from a parent / university / college or government authority. This might be required at the airport too though it is unlikely if you have a relevant visa in your passport already.
- The more you can bring in the way of official paperwork / documentation which you think may be in any way helpful and relevant to the immigration authorities / arrival at the airport / enrolling at the University / opening a bank account, the better.
- Personal belongings
- Your laptop if you have one
- Money (UK currency - sterling)
- Any medication you are on – students who take regular medication are reminded to bring sufficient supplies for the first few weeks.

Things to bring for enrolment

- Passport
- If you are dyslexic, please bring a copy of your most recent Educational Psychologist's report
- If you have any other special needs please bring the appropriate documentation and evidence to support this
- 8 colour passport size photographs - you will need two for enrolment and the others will be required for Faculty registration and your NUS card

Before I arrive

Do I need a visa?

If you are coming to the UK for **more than six months, you do need a visa** (entry clearance) to come to the UK to study.

You do not need a visa (entry clearance) to come to the UK to study for **less than six months**. However...

If you are intending to get a part-time job whilst you are studying in the UK, you should definitely apply for a visa (entry clearance) before coming to the UK. Every year we have the problem of students arriving at the airport and receiving a “visitor stamp” in their passport – a stamp which prohibits them from working part-time in the UK whilst they are studying.

If you are given a “visitor” stamp, there is no way to change the stamp (other than by paying the Home Office £295 and waiting up to 6 weeks to get your passport back). Therefore, if you know you wish to work in the UK, please follow the guidelines under “How do I apply for a visa?” In addition, if you think you may wish to extend your study time in the UK (e.g. from one semester to one year) and you want the option to remain in the country rather than having to return over Christmas to apply for a visa in the US, you should also apply for entry clearance before you arrive.

If you are definitely not intending to get a part-time job, there is no need for you to apply for a visa before arriving in the UK.

How do I apply for a visa (entry clearance)?

In order to apply for a visa you need to complete form VAF1 (non-settlement). This form is available from your nearest British Embassy/High Commission or can be downloaded from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website www.ukvisas.gov.uk > How to apply > Application forms and guidance.

If you are bringing your spouse or children with you, there is no need to fill out a separate form for them - you can include their details on the same form.

For a directory on where to find your nearest British Embassy (British mission overseas), go to www.ukvisas.gov.uk > How to apply > UK missions overseas > UK diplomatic missions overseas.

It is advisable to contact your nearest British Embassy as soon as possible to find out how they would like you to apply. For example, some embassies ask that you apply online (on the Internet), some by post and some by appointment in person. When you contact them, you should also ask what supporting documents they would like you to include with your application and how long you can expect to wait for a result.

You must allow plenty of time for this form to be processed. You may also be asked to attend an interview after submitting your application.

How do I fill in the VAF1 (non-settlement) form?

You should fill out the application form clearly, accurately and honestly. Here are a few pointers to help you:

- In Section 1 of the form, you are asked to tick to indicate what type of visa you are applying for. Tick the box that says “student”
- In Section 5, Question 6 (5.6) you are asked to give the address and telephone number of the place where you will be staying whilst you are in the UK. If you do not know this address yet, do not worry. Students can be issued with a visa even if they do not have accommodation booked at the time of application. Students simply have to show that they have enough money to meet their likely accommodation costs
- Do not fill out Section 7 or Section 8 – leave these blank
- Section 9, Question 2 (9.2) asks what the ‘duration’ of the course will be. You should give the start and finish date of the course. The semester officially ends on Friday 1st Feb 2008 and Friday 13th June 2008 respectively.
- Section 9, Question 4 (9.4) asks how many hours of organised day-time study you will attend each week. You should simply write “full-time degree course”.

- Section 9, Question 9 (9.9) asks what you intend to do when you have finished your studies in the UK. Students should intend to leave the UK at the end of their studies
- Do not forget to sign and date the application form on page 8 (Section 11)

What supporting documents will I need to include with my VAF1 application form?

You should include all the documents requested. If you do not, your application may be refused. You will be asked to include the following:

- A valid passport
- Two recent passport-sized colour photographs (45mm x 35mm) of yourself. These should be:
 - taken against a light coloured background
 - clear and of good quality and not framed or backed
 - printed on normal photographic paper
 - full face and without sunglasses, hat or other head covering unless you wear this for cultural or religious reasons
- A visa fee (your embassy will be able to tell you how much this will be). This cannot be refunded and you must normally pay it in the local currency of the country where you are applying
- All relevant diplomas, educational certificates and evidence of qualifications
- Proof of financial support. You must prove that you have sufficient money to pay for your fees, accommodation and living costs during your stay in the UK. Evidence for this should take the form of copies of recent bank statements, recent payslips, proof of any scholarships or if you are being privately sponsored, a sponsor’s letter e.g. from a parent / university / college or government authority
- A letter from the University of Winchester (which you will be sent once you have been accepted as an exchange or visiting student) confirming the following:
 - That you have been accepted on an approved course of study (all courses offered to international students at the University of Winchester are approved by the immigration authorities)
 - When the course begins and ends

Make sure you keep photocopies of your application form, of your passport and all the other documents you give the embassy.

What should I do if there is a problem with my application?

If you are told that there is a problem with your application, ask the embassy why. If the problem is in relation to your course or if the embassy tells you that there will be a delay which means you will arrive late at the University of Winchester, please contact the International Student Adviser to ask for help (see contact details on page 2)

What should I do when I get my passport back?

Please check your visa when you get it. You should make sure that:

- Your personal details are correct
- It correctly states the purpose for which you want to come to the UK (i.e. to be a student)
- It does not prohibit you from working in the UK. If it does, ask the Entry Clearance Officer to change it. You should have a “restriction” on work, not a “prohibition”
- It is valid for the date on which you want to travel

If you think there is anything wrong with your visa, contact the British Embassy immediately.

My arrival in the UK

Arrival dates

Semester 1: Saturday 15th & Sunday 16th September 2007
(Orientation: Monday 17th September – Sunday 23rd September 2007)

Semester 2: Saturday 2nd & Sunday 3rd February 2008
(Orientation: Monday 4th February)

Money on arrival

You will need approximately £100-£200 in British currency (Pounds Sterling) on arrival in the UK. This is to pay for transport and meals for the first few days. Do not carry any more than this in case it gets lost or stolen. It is advisable to bring some travellers cheques with you for emergencies; they can be cashed at the airport bureaux de change offices and in banks. It may take a little time to open a UK bank account so be prepared for that.

How do I travel to Winchester?

If you are flying to the UK you will probably land at Heathrow or Gatwick airport. It takes approximately 2-3 hours to travel by coach to Winchester from these airports. Travel from the airport to Winchester is easy if you read the details in the following table. It is advisable to buy your ticket to Winchester online before you arrive at the airport.

NATIONAL EXPRESS COACH	From HEATHROW AIRPORT	From GATWICK AIRPORT
How to get here	You need to take a coach (most are number 032) from Heathrow airport to Winchester. The coach leaves from "Heathrow Central Bus Station". (Just ask for directions from the Information desk in the terminal).	You need to take a coach from Gatwick coach station to Heathrow airport. (Just ask an airport official for directions if not clear). Then change at Heathrow for coach (as left) to Winchester.
Approx' length of journey	1 Hour 30 minutes	3 hours
Approx' coach times*	Coaches every 2 hours	Coaches every 2 hours
Where can I buy a ticket?	Tickets can be purchased from the information desk in each terminal (it is advisable to pre-book online via the website on page 12).	Tickets can be purchased from Gatwick Coach station main desk (it is advisable to pre-book online via the website on page 12).
Approx' cost of journey	Single fare: £15-£20	Single fare: £20- £25

*PLEASE BE AWARE that services are not as frequent in the evening and all day on Sunday. Journeys in this instance may also take longer and stop in more places

- For more details on both of these services and to purchase a ticket, please check the transport website: National Express coaches www.nationalexpress.com
- Taxis / cabs from London airports are possible, but are likely to cost about £100.
- Travel by train is also possible, but is complicated and expensive than the coach.

How do I travel to the campus?

Please arrange to arrive in Winchester on the set arrival dates – Saturday 15th and Sunday 16th September. We hope to meet you at the coach stop or train station in Winchester on those days. Taxis are also readily available and a journey from either the coach stop or train station will take between 5 – 10 minutes and cost approximately £5.

You should ask the taxi / cab driver to take you to the main reception of the University of Winchester on Sparkford Road, unless otherwise advised. There you will be given a key and shown to your accommodation. The Reception is located in the Main Building.

It is very important that you advise the International Student Welfare Adviser of your anticipated arrival date and time by emailing these details to: welfare@winchester.ac.uk. If you do not have access to email, please write to, fax or telephone the address found on page 2.

Likewise, please indicate in an email if you are unable to arrive on these dates. If this is so then please ensure that on your arrival to the University, you report to the Main Reception on the King Alfred campus, unless otherwise advised through contact with the International Welfare Adviser.

Making contact with home

When you first arrive, you will be able to phone home using the pay phone on the campus. During the first week, you will also be given your computer username and password so that you can log on to the University's computers to email home.

Pre-paid phone cards, sometimes called calling cards, normally offer the cheapest and easiest means to make long distance overseas phone calls from your home or mobile phone. There are a variety of international calling cards that can be purchased from the Post Office and many newsagents. All cards will carry clear instructions for you to follow when making your call from a pay phone or landline telephone.

Some students find that the option of a mobile telephone, while sometimes more expensive, provides a convenient method of communication. There are a number of mobile phone shops in Winchester and you may be able to find a special offer for phoning overseas. There are five main mobile networks operating in the UK – Orange, Vodafone, O2, T-Mobile and network 3. It is generally cheaper to make telephone calls to people who are on the same network as yourself.

All five networks offer two types of payment systems – monthly subscriptions and ‘Pay as You Go’. With a monthly subscription you are usually required to sign a contract for 12 months and then pay monthly for the use of the phone network and the cost of the handset. With Pay as You Go, you initially buy your handset and then purchase top-up cards to use the network. Top-up cards can be purchased from numerous outlets such as newsagents or supermarkets, normally in denominations of £10, £15 and £20. As many retailers run different promotions on mobile phones, it is always advisable to shop around to find the best deal and the most convenient payment system to suit your needs, particularly if you wish to use the phone to make overseas calls.

For those of you bringing your own laptop, calling through Skype computer software is another very cheap option for staying in touch with home. Skype is available as a free download from the Internet at www.skype.com. It enables you to call another person who has Skype installed free of charge or make cheap phone calls to overseas landlines by buying Skype Credit. You will need a microphone that plugs into your laptop.

My first week

Orientation Programme

A programme for all American Exchange / Visiting students (along with all other international and EU students) is held before the start of each semester. During the orientation, you will:

- Be welcomed to Winchester and to the University!
- Enrol and register with the University, your Faculty and your programme of study
- Participate in a series of information sessions on aspects of life in the UK
- Receive important and essential information about life at Winchester, culture shock, travel, the computer systems, email, referencing, study skills, essay writing and much, much more
- Meet your International Adviser and fellow students
- Meet your tutors and the support staff
- Pay your fees and accommodation bills
- Receive ID card and Student Union card
- Register with a doctor
- Find out how to open a bank account
- Join a tour of the Campus and a local tour of Winchester
- Use the week to settle in and familiarise yourself with your new environment before lectures start
- Have the opportunity to visit another UK city as part of an organised excursion
- And importantly, make friends and have fun!

It really is an excellent opportunity to “find your feet” when you first arrive and we strongly advise that you participate in all that has been organised for your benefit.

Finances

If you have a financial enquiry or need to make arrangements for payment, the Finance Office on the first floor of the Main Building is open from 11.00 to 15.00 Monday to Friday. Any queries regarding your payments can be discussed with our credit controller on + 44 (0)1962 827536 (internally 7536).

If you have already paid the University or through your home institution before leaving the US, you will only be billed directly if you have booked extra nights in accommodation. All invoices should be paid promptly.

Transferring money to the UK

Bringing money into the UK is straightforward if you plan ahead. There are a number of ways of getting money into the country and the various options open to you are listed below:

- Credit/debit card - most banks in the UK will accept MasterCard, American Express or Visa cards. These can be used to withdraw cash from ATMs (cash dispensing machines). Please note the University does not accept American Express.
- Travellers' cheques are very useful because they enable you to obtain money before you have organised a bank account
- Electronic transfer of funds – this is the easiest and quickest way to send money from a bank in your country to one in the UK. You can use this method once you have opened a bank account in the UK.

Opening a bank account

You may wish to open a UK bank account for the duration of your time here (especially if you are here for more than three months). International students do not always find it straightforward to open a bank account in the UK as different banks have different policies and apply different conditions. So you must assume it will take at least 2-3 weeks to open a bank account and make sure you have access to the money that you will need during this period by making financial arrangements similar to those you might make if you were a tourist.

Some banks will ask for a specific letter addressed to them, from the University, confirming your status as a student. If you require such a letter or if you experience problems opening a bank account contact The International Welfare Adviser.

How do I enrol as a student at the University?

Before you can begin to study you must formally enrol with the University. The timing of your enrolment session depends on the Faculty which you are joining. You will be told the name of your Faculty when you receive your class schedule in August. Enrolment takes place during your first week (Orientation Week) and will be held in The Stripe. This will be well sign-posted on the King Alfred Campus.

During the enrolment process, you will:

- Receive your student ID card (every student receives one of these cards which, for security purposes incorporates a photograph)
- Pay your tuition fees (if you have not already paid through your home institution) or before you arrived.
- Be given your IT account allowing you access to the University systems
- Collect your Student Handbook which will give you information on living and studying at the University and will include a copy of the Academic Regulations relating to your programme of study
- Register with a doctor
- Meet the University Nurse to discuss any health concerns
- Obtain your Student Union card, giving you membership of the National Union of Students (NUS)
- Collect your timetable

Enrolment dates and times for Semester 1 students

Remember your Home Faculty will be confirmed in the letter accompanying your class timetable.

ART Faculty of Arts
EDN Faculty of Education
SOC Faculty of Social Sciences

Please arrive at the time stated and allow at least one hour to complete the enrolment process.

Wednesday 19 September

09.00 SOC (surnames A)
09.30 SOC (surnames B)
10.00 SOC (surnames C –D)
10.30 SOC (surnames E – G)
11.00 SOC (surnames H – J)
11.30 SOC (surnames K – M)
14.00 SOC (surnames N – P)
14:30 SOC (surnames Q – S)
15.00 SOC (surnames T – Z)

Thursday 20 September

09.00 ART (surnames A – B)
10.15 ART (surnames C – D)
11.00 ART (surnames E – G)
11.45 ART (surnames H – K)
14.00 ART (surnames K - M)
14.45 ART (surnames N - P)
15.30 ART (surnames Q – S)
16.15 ART (surnames T - Z)

Registering with my Faculty

In addition to enrolling with the University you are required to register with your Faculty.

If you are studying two or more subjects offered by different Faculties, you must register with both Faculties. Further information will be given at enrolment.

It is also essential that you attend Programme Meetings, Faculty Welcomes and the University Welcome. Further information will be given at enrolment.

Faculty of Arts (ART)

Dean of Faculty – Professor Anthony Dean
Faculty Manager – Jill Barnes +44 (0) 1962 827309

Due to re-location over the summer, please check the website address below for the whereabouts of the Faculty Office.

Faculty Office opening times
During Enrolment Week and Week 1: 10.00 - 17.00
Weeks 2-15: 10:00 – 15.30:

Faculty Registration

All students whose Home Faculty is the Faculty of Arts, or who are studying a subject in the Faculty must register at the Faculty Office during Enrolment week or during Week 1, bringing with you two colour passport-sized photos per subject.

Students with mobility difficulties needing to register with the Faculty should telephone internal ext 7523 so that staff can arrange to meet you at a suitable time and venue.

Induction meetings/workshops

Induction for students studying a subject within the Faculty of Arts begins on Friday 21 September. The programme will include subject induction meetings and a whole range of other activities, both Faculty and subject based. Full details can be found on the University website at www.winchester.ac.uk/arts/newstudents and will be given to you at enrolment.

For further information or queries please contact either Lesley Wood on +44 (0) 1962 827421 or Leonie Lipton on +44 (0) 1962 827065.
Email: Lesley.Wood@winchester.ac.uk, Leonie.Lipton@winchester.ac.uk

Faculty of Social Sciences (SOC)

Dean of Faculty – Dr Helen Betts
Faculty Manager – Louise Day +44 (0) 1962 827278
Faculty Office, Ground Floor, Herbert Jarman Building (HJB).

Faculty Office opening times
Enrolment Week: 9.00 - 17.00
Weeks 1 and 2: 09.00 - 15.30
Week 3 onwards: 10.00 - 15.30

Faculty registration

All students whose Home Faculty is the Faculty of Social Sciences (SOC) or who are studying a subject in the Faculty must register at the Faculty Office during enrolment week or during Week 1. You will need to bring two colour passport-sized photos per subject.

Welcome meeting

Welcome by the Dean, Dr Helen Betts, Thursday 20 September 2007, The Stripe, 09.30 or 12.30.

Subject induction meetings

All students studying one or both subjects in the Faculty of Social Sciences MUST attend subject induction meeting(s) which will take place on Thursday 20 and Friday 21 September. Further details will be handed to you at enrolment and details of the subject induction meetings will also be posted on the University website at www.winchester.ac.uk/inductionsoc. It is important that you read this.

For further information or queries about any of the above information, please contact the Social Sciences helpline on +44 (0) 1962 827278.

Faculty of Education (EDN)

St Grimbold's Court
Dean of Faculty – Professor Anne Williams
Faculty Manager – Lis Baker +44 (0) 1962 827430
Faculty Offices, St Grimbold's Court

Offices opening hours during Enrolment Week
09.00 - 15.00

Education Studies and Education Studies (Early Childhood)

As well as enrolling with the University, students studying Education Studies and Education Studies (Early Childhood) need to register with both the Faculty of Education and with the Faculty responsible for their secondary subject (see details under other Faculties' sections in this booklet).

All students studying Education Studies and Education Studies (Early Childhood) must attend the Induction Programme on Monday 24 September 2007 at 15.00 hours in the first teaching session for Education Studies and Education Studies (Early Childhood). Full details are available on the Education Studies website at www2.winchester.ac.uk/edstudies/courses.

Registration with the Faculty of Education will be part of the Induction Programme. You will need to bring one colour passport-type photograph with you, with your name printed on the back.

For further information or queries about Education Studies, please contact the Helpline on +44 (0) 1962 827357.

Living in the UK

Can I work in the UK?

Students are advised that the main purpose of their stay in the United Kingdom is for study purposes. However, you may wish to take up a part-time job whilst you are here. Provided you have a visa in your passport (entry clearance – see page 6) you do not need to obtain a work permit in order to work but are restricted to working no more than 20 hours a week during term time. There is no restriction on the number of hours worked during vacation periods. More information on how to find a part-time job will be given to you on arrival.

Where can my friends and family stay if they want to visit me?

For families who may require accommodation in Winchester, you can find information at www.visitwinchester.co.uk

Electrical safety

Please ensure that any item of portable electrical equipment that you bring with you conforms to British Safety Standards and is safe to use before it is plugged into the University electricity supply - 220V-240V AC 50Hz.

The University, in accordance with the Electricity at Work regulations 1990, and Electrical Equipment (safety) Regulations 1994, must ensure all electrical equipment on its premises (including residential buildings owned or managed by the University) is PAT tested for safety. Any portable electrical equipment you bring into Halls will be tested by the University's nominated contractor during the autumn term. The charge for this service will be approximately £1.05 per item (exact cost to be confirmed). If you have had any items PAT tested independently, please bring the certificate to the Housing Office during the first two weeks of term.

Insurance

Your personal possessions, particularly valuable belongings - including bicycles - should be insured against theft, loss or damage. The University is

unable to provide insurance for personal effects. You will be given information on how to insure your possessions during your Orientation week when you arrive or you can take this out before you come to the UK.

My health

When you first arrive in a new country, it can be easy to concentrate on your studies and take less care of your health. But many health problems can seem a lot worse and even be brought on by the effects of adjusting to a new climate, different food and the emotional strains of being away from home. Please do not panic – this is normal!

You may help yourself to stay healthy by preparing for the British climate, eating healthily and taking sufficient rest. Should you require medical treatment whilst you are in Winchester, you should contact the University Nurse who will be able to help you (see page 31).

The National Health Service (NHS)

The NHS is the UK's state health service which provides treatment for UK residents through a wide range of health care services. The National Health Service provides medical treatment through three main routes:

1. General Practitioners (GP's / Physicians): usually the first point of contact for medical treatment
2. Hospitals: You may be seen as an in-patient (where you stay at the hospital for treatment) or as an out-patient (where you visit the hospital each time you require treatment)
3. Accident and Emergency (A&E) hospital department: This department is usually open 24 hours a day and deals with patients needing emergency treatment

If your programme of study is for six months or more, you can get free health care from NHS. Your spouse and children under the age of sixteen will also be entitled to NHS treatment.

However it is likely as American Exchange students that your programme will be for less than six months and so you are strongly advised to take out health insurance from a reputable company to cover yourself.

It is recommended that all international students register with a doctor at St Paul's surgery during enrolment week.

Student Services

The Student Services team provides a Welfare, Counselling, Health, Chaplaincy and Careers Service for all students.

Our aim at the University of Winchester is to make your stay here a happy and memorable experience. The University has Welfare Advisers in Student Services specifically concerned with the needs of international students and are available to provide you with assistance on a wide range of issues from information on travel, shopping and day-to-day living in the UK to personal issues, visa information and help with extending your leave to remain in the UK if applicable.

Students with disabilities

If you have a disability you are strongly encouraged to contact our Disability Co-ordinator (on email at welfare@winchester.ac.uk or telephone +44 (0)1962 827439) as soon as possible to enable us to discuss with you your support needs and our ability to meet them. You must provide evidence of your disability, such as a medical letter or psychologist's report. This is a requirement for all students.

You are advised to seek funding from your home country to cover the cost of any non-academic support that your disability may incur as unfortunately, non-UK students are not eligible for government funding to help with disability support. The University of Winchester will provide you with the same level of academic support as a UK student would receive but you must ensure that you contact the disability co-ordinator as soon as possible with evidence and details of your disability in order that your support needs can be met.

Counselling

Life as a student can make considerable demands and there may be times when it is helpful to seek support. Counselling provides an opportunity and a space to reflect in confidence with a person who is trained to listen and to help explore issues.

Religion

The Chaplain is resident on campus and is available to the whole community of the University of Winchester.

There is a chapel and a Muslim prayer room on campus. Students from many faiths come to Winchester and the Chaplain is able to help locate places of worship in the surrounding area and provide links between students from similar traditions.

If you would like to make contact with the Chaplaincy before your arrival, you can do so by emailing: chaplaincy@winchester.ac.uk

Climate

In the UK we often talk about the weather. This is partly because talking about the weather is a social "ice-breaker" and, being a nation of reserved people we need to find something safe to talk about when we first meet! Also, as you will learn, the weather is very changeable so there is always something to say!

Being in the south of the country, Winchester enjoys some of the best weather that England can offer but it can still be unpredictable! During the summer months temperatures occasionally reach 30°C. The spring time is usually sunny and cool and the autumn cooler and sometimes wet and windy. January- February is the coldest time, when the temperature is sometimes below freezing. Snow is only an occasional hazard. Also, for the occasional rainfall it is advisable that you pack an umbrella!

Average monthly temperatures:

October - January 6 - 8°C February - May 11 - 15°C June - September 22°C

My social life

The Student Union

All students at the University of Winchester automatically become members of the Student Union, a democratically run organisation which represents students' interests at all levels within the University.

During the enrolment process you will meet members of the Student Union and will receive your NUS card which, as evidence of your student status and membership to Winchester Student Union, can be used to gain discounts on various products, services and in shops. You also have the chance to obtain a Winchester Student Union Student Activities Card, enabling you to participate in all the Student Union's clubs and societies.

University of Winchester Society for International Students

University of Winchester Society for International Students (UWSIS) is run by students through the Student Union. The role of the society is to help integrate international students into life at Winchester, providing a social group, day trips and other events. The International Students' representative is an elected member of the Student Union Council. His/her role is to further the interests of international students throughout the University.

The University Centre

The Student Union is lucky enough to be moving into this brand new, purpose built facility in the autumn.

Bars & shops

The Student Union bars are for most students the social hub of the campus and during Freshers' Fortnight they are the best places to be! Over 18's can legally drink alcohol in the UK. Our Venue, 'The Vault' is the largest venue in the city by far and can play host to a wide variety of events and entertainment from live music (R'n'B, alternative and cheese) to live comedy, hypnotists, karaoke, fancy dress, movies and even bingo! If the busy and frenetic atmosphere of The Vault isn't your thing, or you'd just like to take a

breather during an event, then why not pop into our relaxing bar and bistro, 'Terraces'. Open all day, Terraces offers hot food and great drinks.

As well as a fantastic little shop at West Downs student village, the new University Centre will also house our new mini-mart style shop, with everything from groceries and frozen goods to an off-license and official University clothing ranges. So we hope there will always be something for everyone at least one night of the week and a wide range of products that are useful to you in our stores.

Freshers' Fortnight

When you arrive you will be given an 'Entertainments Schedule' outlining all the events taking place in your first two weeks at Winchester. Freshers' Fortnight (running from Monday 17 September and ending with the Freshers' Ball on Friday 28 September) is your chance to get involved, socialise and find out what your Union will provide for you! The Freshers' crew will be on hand to guide you through two non-stop weeks of activities and events, supplied by your Union. We are here to answer all your questions. Our Freshers' Fair on Saturday 22 September at the West Downs Centre is the place where you can sign up for sports and societies, as well as meeting lots of local organisations (and get lots of free goodies). With sports ranging from rugby to ultimate frisbee, whether playing competitively or just for laughs, the Union aims to provide sports for all. And if sports are not your thing you will have the opportunity to sign up for other societies ranging from The Role Play Society to the Dance Squad and many more in between!

Student activities are a great way to meet new people, help boost your CV / Resume and most importantly help you let off steam during times of study! If there's nothing available to join that takes your fancy you can speak to the Vice President of the Union about starting up something new.

Staying with a British family

HOST UK is a nationwide voluntary organisation which brings together international students at universities and colleges in the UK with friendly British residents who welcome students to their homes for a short visit (for a weekend or over Christmas or New Year). Host families (who live in all parts of the UK) give students an experience of the culture and way of life in the UK. You will find the website at the back of this handbook.

Culture shock

We hope that you will enjoy the challenge of living in a new culture. Most British people are friendly when you get to know them but cross-cultural friendships can take time to build. You may experience 'culture shock' during your first few months in the UK.

Culture shock is about more than homesickness – and it is a normal reaction to living in a different country. You may find that you will go through many changes of mood, attitude and levels of contentment / discontentment / elation and despair in the first few weeks and months of being in the UK.

At first you may go through a “honeymoon period” where everything is new, different, “quaint” and exciting. As time moves on, these new things (for example, different food, different weather, different customs) can change from being interesting and exciting to being irritating, annoying, confusing, frightening or depressing. Hopefully this stage of adjustment will not last too long. As you start to adapt to being here, your confidence will grow as you begin to understand British culture and the environment you find yourself in. At that point you should start to enjoy and appreciate the new life you are leading and gain a lot from it.

If you really struggle with homesickness or culture shock you will not be left to cope alone. The International Adviser will be happy to listen and will help you to find ways to work through it.

My studies

You may find, as many international students do, that the teaching methods used by lecturers are very different to those you have been used to. The relationship between staff and students is often relaxed and informal and a high importance is placed on students' abilities to take responsibility for their education and organise their own time. The UK higher education system assumes that students will develop independence and individuality.

Degree programmes consist of a series of lectures, seminars and tutorials. In addition to timetabled activities, much emphasis is placed on private study and you will be expected to spend at least as much time studying on your own as being taught. Tutors are there to help and guide you. You should always ask the tutor who is leading your class if you have any queries of any kind. They will expect you to come to them with ideas, drafts and plans of assignments. Each tutor has office hours where you can go and see them outside class times. You can also contact them by e-mail.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism means presenting someone else's work as your own. If you present the words or ideas of an author or another student without acknowledging the source, you could be accused of plagiarism. Whenever you use a quotation from a book, or reproduce an author's ideas (even in your own words) you should record the source. This process is known as referencing. You will be taught how to reference once you start your course. Penalties for plagiarism, especially in assessed work and examinations, can be very severe, and may include failing the course. If in doubt, always ask your tutor!

Useful information / contacts

UKCOSA (The Council for International Education)

Tel: + 44 (0)207 107 9922

Fax: +44 (0)207 288 4360

www.ukcosa.org.uk

Foreign & Commonwealth Office

www.fco.gov.uk

www.ukvisas.gov.uk (for visa information)

Immigration and Nationality Directorate (Home Office)

www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk

Immigration application forms

www.homeoffice.gov.uk/ind/afm.htm

Embassy list

www.embassyworld.com/embassy/directory.htm

The British Council

www.britishcouncil.org

www.educationuk.org

www.educationuk.org/downloads/first_steps_students.pdf (useful guide)

Universal Currency Converter

www.xe.net/currency

HOST UK

www.hostuk.org

Interfaith Network for UK

www.interfaith.org.uk

National Health Service (NHS)

www.nhs.uk

University of Winchester staff contacts

University of Winchester

Tel : +44 (0)1962 841515

<http://www.winchester.ac.uk>

International Student Adviser

Tel: +44 (0)1962 827482

Fax: +44 (0)1962 827515

Email: welfare@winchester.ac.uk

Disability Co-ordinator

Tel: +44 (0)1962 827439

Email: disability@winchester.ac.uk

University Nurse

Tel: +44 (0)1962 827212

Email: welfare@winchester.ac.uk

Housing Services Manager

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Email: housing@winchester.ac.uk

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Tel. +44 (0)1962 827581

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Registry

Tel. +44 (0)1962 827582

Email: registry.enquiries@winchester.ac.uk

University Chaplain
Tel: +44(0)1962 827246
Email: chaplaincy@winchester.ac.uk

Have a safe journey!

It is very important that you read ALL of this handbook. We do hope this information will be useful to you as you plan your journey and as you prepare to live and study in the UK. If you have further questions or are unsure of anything, please do not hesitate to contact us. We are here to help and will be happy to do so.