

Freshers Week Survival Guide

Before you go

- ✓ Make sure that you have details of your accommodation in writing, and that you know how to find it when you arrive.
- ✓ Check that your finances are in order too. Confirm how you will be paying for your course, and if you have been awarded bursaries or scholarships, check when these will be paid into your bank account.
- ✓ Make sure you have opened a student bank account.
- ✓ If you have a reading list, make a start! This will help you to feel less overwhelmed when your workload is heavy.

Packing

The most basic list of what you will need is:

- ✓ Important documents – ID (passport or driving licence), university acceptance letter, student loan letters, details and contract for your accommodation, bank details and cards, National Insurance card, student discount cards (including railcards and other travel passes)
- ✓ Electricals essential to your course – laptop (mobile printers are useful, but your library will allow you printer access), mobile phone and charger, extension cables, USB stick, and headphones.
- ✓ Stationery - this includes pens and pencils, notebooks, a calendar or study chart, diary, and paper clips.
- ✓ Basic kitchen utensils – if you are coming from overseas, these are purchases you may wish to make when you get here. There are lots of shops that will cater to a student budget, so look for Poundstretcher, Argos, Wilko and other discounters. Only buy what you need. An espresso machine is not a necessity!
- ✓ Bedding – again, this may be provided, or you may wish to purchase this when you're here. The university should be able to give you advice on what you may need to buy.
- ✓ Personal medications – if you have a health condition that requires regular medication, make sure you have a reasonable supply (around a month's worth) before you arrive so that you can find a new GP.

When you arrive

- ✓ You will get the most out of Freshers' Week if you settle into your halls of residence or student house as soon as you are able to. This will enable you to make friends with your housemates, or those with rooms near to you. If you know that you are shy, a few packets of biscuits (or other gift) to share around will help to break the ice.
- ✓ There are likely to be dedicated student mentors to help you settle in. It's always reassuring to have people that have been there and done that around to help you, and to give you advice.
- ✓ Use your first day to find the mundane things, and also how they work.
- ✓ For example, if you're in a hall of residence, this means the laundry, the bathroom, the canteen or kitchen, and the student bar. In addition, find the nearest big supermarket – this is also likely to be useful for buying basic kitchen and household equipment – and branch of the bank where you have your [student account](#).

- ✓ This is also a good time to find where you'll need to go for lectures, even though your course won't be starting properly for a week yet.

Settling in and making friends

- ✓ Be brave and go to where you hear conversation – get involved.
- ✓ Unpack early, so you don't have an excuse not to go out and meet other people.
- ✓ There are lots of activities and events laid on for you during Freshers' Week. Take advantage of as many of them as you can. This is your opportunity to find social groups and clubs that not only appeal to your interests.
- ✓ Parties are obviously a huge part of Freshers Week.
- ✓ Most universities will have a Freshers Ball, so don't forget to bring or borrow formal wear for this.
- ✓ You may have a few lectures during Freshers' Week. They are introductory classes, so you might view them as unimportant, but it's a good idea to go so that you recognise some faces in class the following week.
- ✓ Many universities publish Freshers' Week schedules on their websites or on the Students' Union website. Finding out what's happening in advance might give you a heads up on what you'll need for partying the night away!
- ✓ You will be able to find out about events at your Student Union or you may be able to sign up for email alerts about what's happening around the university.

Managing money

If you have never had to manage your own money, budgeting and buying your own food and toiletries can come as something of a shock. Here are a few basic tips that will help:

- ✓ Work out your income – this will include your student loan, any bursaries or scholarships, gifts from parents and relatives, your savings
- ✓ Think about what you will need to spend – you will have to estimate some of these costs at the start.
- ✓ These are essential costs – tuition fees, rent, utility bills, mobile phone and internet, and contents insurance (do not skip this last expense!)
- ✓ Variable costs are where you can make savings if necessary – food and drink, travel, clothes and personal care, books and other course costs
- ✓ Become a bargain hunter, and before you part with a single penny for variable costs, ask yourself the following – can I afford it, and do I need it? If the answer is “no”, save your money.
- ✓ Club together with your roommates so you can buy in staple food such as rice, pasta and noodles in bulk or large quantities at least.

Staying Healthy & Safe

- ✓ If you can't cook, spend a few days learning some simple recipes that can be adapted for variety. Not only will cooking your own food keep you healthier, you'll save money. Cooking in bulk will help you save money.
- ✓ Register with a Doctor and Dentist.
- ✓ Ask a friend call you at a certain time to check you're all right if you are out alone or with someone you don't know very well.
- ✓ Have a stock of medicines, vitamins and first aid items.