

University & Beyond

*Come to the edge.
We might fall.
Come to the edge.
It's too high!*
COME TO THE EDGE!
*And they came,
And he pushed,
And they flew.*

Christopher Logue

- Living with others - good housekeeping advice. Includes tips for parents too.
- RESPECT (of self & others).
- Budgeting:
 - Income and expenditure at university.
 - Beyond university.
- Graduate applications.
 - Prevention is better than cure. Clean up your digital act.
 - Applications.
 - Interviews.

Good luck to you all. Remember - we are still here to help you - at university & beyond. Get in touch - we continue to support you.

The University of Life

Here are Home's tips for surviving life in halls or house-shares - follow them and you may even get a bit of work done

Alicia Burrell

Freshers' week is over. For the record number of first-time students, the initial taste of university life - a week-long frenzy of sambucas and socialising - has dissolved into the grind of studying, subsistence... and hiding from all their new "friends".

For most, it will be their first time living away from home - and, as shown in Channel 4's realistic student comedy *Fresh Meat*, which returns to our screens this autumn, surviving in shared houses or halls of residence can be as challenging and unfamiliar as any other aspect of the great adventure of studenthood. As I made my way up the M1 to Leeds six years ago, I couldn't wait to start enjoying my new freedom: a utopia of no chores, my own space and the constant company of friends. Well, it's not always such a rosy picture. Rather rapidly, the squeaky-clean living environment descends into a wasteland of mould, unwashed plate mountains and weird smells. You will be forced to eat dinners in your bedroom because no inch of the kitchen is unsoiled. I became an avid cleaner overnight after finding icebergs of rancid milk in the sink. "My worst fear is the food stealing," says Megan Gildea, who is embarking on an economics degree at the University of Nottingham. Unfortunately for her, that is par for the course. As is enduring the excruciatingly annoying habits of others. One of my flatmates insisted on leaving used plates in her room until there were none left in the kitchen for the rest of us. Another didn't wash his bedsheets for a year. Disaster is never far away. Before leaving home, I had formed a passing acquaintance with the family washing machine, so I thought the communal laundry room would be a breeze. Glowing with smug pride, I poured powder into the industrial-sized barrel, set the timer and left. When I returned, I found that I had pressed tumble-dry, rather than wash. My clothes were caked in hot, sticky washing powder. As I pulled out my ruined new blouse, I vowed, from then on, always to read the instructions.

Yet it is possible not to become the stereotypical clueless, beans-on-toast fresher that the world expects. Here is Home's ultimate student survival guide. Follow our advice and you will emerge as better students - and better human beings. And if you get truly stuck, mum and dad are only a phone call away.

General house rules

Learn to share. Everything you own will be used without your permission. Get used to it. With the possible exception of your actual subject, sharing is the biggest thing you will learn at university. Put up with it or you will forever be one of "the weird ones who keep all their stuff to themselves". Nicknames stick.

Put your foot down. In a hall of residence, night becomes day and day becomes night. If you have an exam/early lecture/sports match and your flatmates are being noisy at 3am, you must say something. People are (usually) reasonable. Failing that, earplugs always help.

Love your cleaner. The cleaners in halls have the thankless task of doing what you daren't - actually cleaning. The weird goo behind the bin? Gone. The crusty carpet of crumbs? *Au revoir*. They are true heroes in pale blue aprons. Make them tea, always say thank you and buy them a Christmas present.

Bedroom

DO

- **Decorate.** Finally, a room of your own to arrange how you like. Leave behind the ubiquitous Che Guevara poster and pop treasured photos into cute picture frames such as Oliver Bonas's copper ones (£10; oliverbonas.com). When hanging up a poster, use white tack, rather than blue, as it leaves less of a mark. If you want to liven up your walls with something new, La La Land stocks quirky pop-culture artwork (from £12; livinginlalaland.co.uk).
- **Make space.** University-issued wardrobes are notoriously small and flimsy. You'll need to provide extra hanging space for all the new outfits you've bought to completely reinvent yourself. Ikea's Rigga clothes rack will do the job nicely (£14; ikea.com).

DON'T

- *Forget to wash.* There is nothing enticing about grubby sheets. Nor scabies.
- *Bring a printer.* Only Hermione Granger would turn up with one. They drink ink and are too bulky. Library printers are more convenient and cheaper.

THE ESSENTIALS

- **A clothes horse.** There were so many drying clothes hanging in our house, it felt like a washerwoman's shop. Save space with Wilko's three-tier ailer (£9.50) and buy a laundry basket (from £3; wilko.com). Dirty clothes on the floor don't look good.
- *A good bin.* Choose one with solid sides for the nights when you've drunk one too many Jagerbombs. Ikea's Fniiss bin costs 95p and will save you a lot of hassle. And bleach.
- **Insurance.** A shiny new laptop or tablet is expensive, and students aren't the most careful people - whether it's leaving doors unlocked or knocking over a pint of rose. For £163 a year, Endsleigh will cover your gadgets against theft, liquid damage and accidental loss (endsleigh.co.uk).

Kitchen

DO

- **Master the basics.** Get to grips with quick, simple meals, which are tastier than takeaways and better for you.
- *Always remember to wash up.*
- *Buy a lunch box.* Make packed lunches from leftovers to keep costs down. Happy Jackson has a set of four eye-poppingly bright snack boxes (£10; happyjackson.com).

DON'T

- **Take a wok.** Every student arrives with a wok, and every single wok ends up stacked on top of the fridge, covered in dust. A frying pan works just as well.
- **Get angry.** Someone stole your last piece of bread? Seek revenge and steal theirs back. Just joking. If you get mad, the perpetrators will keep stealing just for the kicks.

THE ESSENTIALS

- **Dinnerware.** Don't bother splashing out on restaurant-worthy crockery. It will all end up lost or broken. Two of everything will see you through the year. Tesco has simple plates and bowls (from £1; tesco.com). For something fancier, Habitat's Blot range will make Super Noodles look gourmet (from £7; habitat.co.uk).
- *Extras Bake Off.* Wannabes should check out George at Asda's baking range for cheap and cheerful tins, bowls and scales (from £1). A constant supply of treats is a great way to make your flatmates love you.
- **Caffeine.** A lifeline for the one week of studying you'll be doing. Pull an all-nighter with Argos's three-cup black cafetiere (£6; argos.co.uk).

Bathroom

DO

- **Keep an emergency roll.** Stash some loo paper away for when your flatmate forgets to buy any - despite the 10 reminder texts. Never, ever tell anyone about it.

DON'T

- **Be precious.** In a shared bathroom, what's yours is everyone's. Your toothpaste will be squeezed dry and your fancy body wash will disappear. Only leave things around if you won't miss them. But don't overshare your bathroom habits - some things are best left unsaid.

THE ESSENTIALS

- **A towel set** Extra towels are always handy, so buy a bundle of four from John Lewis for £12.20. Choose darker colours, as they hide a number of sins - including the blue face paint from when you dressed up as a Smurf.

10 top transition and wellbeing tips for new students starting Uni

It's normal to feel unsure about what to expect when starting university. It's also normal to feel nervous at times of change, which is why we've written these top 10 tips to help you steady your nerves:

- 1. Prepare:** Sit down with someone you trust and write a list of all your worries and concerns, so that you can start to address them together.
- 2. Create an action plan:** Put all your worries or concerns into different categories, such as making friends, your studies, budgeting, living away from home and make an action plan for each one, containing solutions for each worry.
- 3. Organise your medical care:** If you need support for any health condition or disability, plan how you can get the care and support you need. A good starting point is to search your university's website for 'student support' to look for information about available services.
- 4. Register with a new GP:** Check out your university's website to see if they have a surgery on campus or whether they recommend a particular GP practice. Phone the new GP practice and see if they have anyone who specialises in student health. If you have mental or physical health issues, make the call yourself if you can. If you find it hard, ask your next of kin to call and sit next to them so you can listen and join in if needed.
- 5. Medication:** If you take regular medicines or need medical devices or equipment, plan what you need and get an appropriate supply of prescriptions in advance (to be agreed with your GP) so you don't run out!
- 6. Contact Student Support:** If you have ongoing mental health issues, get in touch with Student Support before you go to Uni. They're there to support you and will do what they can to help. Phone or email them for advice and don't be shy in asking for help if you need it.
- 7. Sort out ongoing care:** If you're under specialist care for conditions like asthma, diabetes or a mental health problem, register with a new GP as soon as possible so that you can discuss ongoing care and possible referral to local services.
- 8. Get comfortable:** Take a few things with you that remind you of home, like a dressing gown or your usual duvet and bedsheets instead of buying new ones. You could also make a playlist of your favourite songs and photos of family and friends for times when you need a boost.
- 9. Look after your wellbeing:** Make a 'Personal Wellbeing Plan' of 5 things you can do every day and to help build your wellbeing. Include things in your plan like sleep, exercise, activities that you enjoy, something relaxing, socialising with friends, small treats, Uni clubs, support from home, and so on.
- 10. Make a Safety Plan:** Sit down with someone you trust and make a plan of things you can do for yourself. Write down how you can get in touch with people you can ask for support if you ever feel low, get stressed or you are struggling. Check out the leaflet ['Feeling Overwhelmed and Staying Safe'](#) for ideas.

If you're worried or stressed after reading our tips, please talk to someone about how you are feeling as you may need extra support.

Tips provided by **Dr Alys Cole-King** (@AlysColeKing) with input from **Dr Dom Thompson**, Student Health Expert (@DrDomThompson | buzzconsulting.co.uk) and **Dr Knut Schroeder** (@DrKnut and @expertselfcare)

Top Tips for parents sending their child off to university

1. **Cooking:** Teach them how to cook. Start with 2-3 simple recipes they can cook for themselves and others, which can help them make new friends.
2. **Laundry:** Teach them how to do their laundry. It's a simple and essential life-skill and it saves your own time!
3. **Healthcare:** Teach them where to get over-the-counter medicines and prescriptions, how to register and book a GP appointment and how to navigate NHS if they're unwell.
4. **Budget:** Plan a budget for food shopping and other essentials. Instead of organizing food delivery, let them learn for themselves how to shop sensibly. Useful financial tips for students are available at www.blackbullion.com.
5. **First aid:** Teach them basic first aid and provide them with a small kit containing essentials like plasters, bandage/dressings, paper stitches and painkillers (make sure they know how to take them!)
6. **Security:** Explain basic security measures, such as avoiding using cashpoints at night, protecting drinks so they don't get spiked and how to keep their belongings safe. Ask them to download a mobile security app such as Companion.
7. **Parental contacts:** Agree and plan in advance how often you'll contact each other, and which medium you'll use, such as weekly phone calls or WhatsApp every other day. Allow some flexibility and don't expect daily contacts, so you won't get stressed if they oversleep and don't check in.
8. **Drop-off:** Don't hang around too long when dropping them off. They need to get on and meet people and start blending in, not be worrying about you.
9. **Biscuits:** Take biscuits or cake (ideally low-sugar and low-fat with gluten and nut free options ...) when dropping them off to create an instant talking point with other new students and their parents.
10. **Coming home:** Allow at least four weeks before they come home, so they can meet people and don't miss out on early events that help them build connections that are key to feeling settled and part of the wider university community.

Tips provided by **Dr Dom Thompson**, Student Health Expert (@DrDomThompson | buzzconsulting.co.uk) with input from **Dr Alys Cole-King** (@AlysColeKing) and **Dr Knut Schroeder** (@DrKnut and @expertselfcare)



Personal Safety

Guidance from Queen's University Belfast

The best way to minimise the risks is by taking sensible precautions. Most crime is against property, not people. Opportunists commit most crimes on the spur of the moment when they see the chance. You can reduce the risk by securing your office and car; and you can take steps to maximise your personal safety.

Out and about

If you walk home in the dark, get a personal attack alarm from the Students' Union. Carry it in your hand so you can use it immediately to scare off an attacker. Carry it in your hand so you can use it immediately to scare off an attacker. Carry your bag close to you with the clasp facing inwards. Carry your keys in your pocket. If someone grabs your bag, let it go. If you hang on, you could get hurt. Remember your safety is more important. If you think someone is following you, check by crossing the street - more than once if necessary - to see if they follow. If you are still worried, get to the nearest place where there are other people - a pub or anywhere with a lot of lights on - and call the police. If you regularly go jogging or cycling, try to vary your route and time. Stick to well-lit roads with pavements. Don't take short-cuts through dark alleys, parks or across waste ground. Walk facing the traffic so a car cannot pull up behind you unnoticed. Don't wear music headphones, as this can make you vulnerable. If a car stops and you are threatened, scream and shout, and set off your personal attack alarm if you have one. Write down the number and make of the car as soon as possible.

On public transport

Try to stay away from isolated bus stops, especially after dark. On an empty bus, sit near the driver or conductor. On a train, sit in a compartment where there are other people. Check to see where the emergency chain is.

Taxis

If you've booked a taxi - check that the one that arrives is the one you ordered. If you gave your name when you booked, check that the driver can tell you it before you get in. When you get home, ask the driver to wait until you are inside. Always sit behind the driver. If you feel uneasy, ask to be let out in a well-lit area where there are plenty of people. Always use a licensed taxi. You can check whether the taxi is licensed by looking at the back of it to ensure an official license plate is attached before you get in. You should never agree to travel in an unlicensed taxi with an unlicensed driver. If in doubt - don't get in.

When driving

If someone tries to flag you down, drive on until you come to a service station, or somewhere busy, and call the police. Do not pick up hitchhikers. Keep doors locked and keep car phones or valuables out of sight. After dark, park in a well-lit, busy place. Look around before you get out. If you are parking in daylight, but coming back for your car at night, think about how the surroundings may look in the dark. Have your key ready when you go back to your car.

Consent & Healthy Relationships (**RESPECT**)

- **Informed consent -**

Permission granted in full knowledge of the possible consequences.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZwvrxVavnQ> Tea and consent (Thames Valley Police)
- <https://www.disrespectnobody.co.uk/consent/what-is-consent/>

- **Sexual assault is not part of uni life**

How do you like your tea?

- **Milk - no sugar**
- **No milk - no sugar**
- **No milk - with sugar**
- **Milk - with sugar**
- **With a slice of lemon**
- **I don't like tea - I like coffee!**

Of course, you should stand your ground about your preferences and respect the preferences of others (beverage wise) - of course, this is much more true relationship-wise!

Most universities offer courses / support in the areas of general wellbeing - including relationships and what is and isn't acceptable behaviour. E.g.

- <https://www.warwicksu.com/advice/sexualviolencepreventionsupport/reportinganincident/>
- <https://www.aettinaiton.ora.uk/useful-contacts>

Finance / Budgeting - at university

Income	Expenditure
Tuition Loan	Tuition fees
Maintenance Loan	Accommodation
Bursaries (linked to personal circumstances / household income)	Living expenses (food etc)
Scholarships (linked to academic results or sporting / musical ability)	Books & materials
Earnings	Travel
	Servicing debts
	Etc.

Overdrafts

- Do apply for financial support (bursaries / scholarships / grants) - everyone thinks someone else will be more eligible. If you don't apply - you definitely won't get it.
- University is still free at the point of entry. Your student loan is effectively a graduate tax.

Key Facts and Figures - Student Loans

Key figure	What is it?
£9,250	Maximum tuition fee a university can charge per annum.
£25,000	Level of graduate annual salary, after which, debt repayment will be deducted.
9%	Loan will be repaid at 9% of earnings over £25,000.
£38,333	At this annual salary, the monthly repayment will be £100 (9% of £13,333)
40 years	Any remaining debt expires - is written off.

Don't be bashful: sell, sell, sell yourself

The Sunday Times

Stage one: the application

Recruiters are busy people with a lot of applications to get through. Graduates who make their lives simpler by showing they hit an employer's "must have" buttons will get through to the next round.

Research

Use your university's alumni network to make contact with a current employee at the company and ask them what it wants. Pay attention to the requirements listed on the advertisement.

More information - nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/advice

Target

A good CV is clear, succinct and no more than two pages long. Include keywords that will be picked up by search engines, but make sure it makes sense to humans. "Use bullet points so it's easy to scan and digest," says Lee Biggins, co-founder of CV-Library.

More information - totaljobs.com/careers-advice/interviews

Emphasise

Use your cover letter to explain how your application fits the company's needs, says careers strategist John Lees. "Keep it simple," he says. "Don't oversell yourself - it makes you sound desperate."

More information - askamanager.org/category/cover-letters

Follow up

"If you've emailed an application, there is no harm in getting on the phone to chase it," says Biggins. "That way, you start a conversation and you might find out about other roles you'd be good for."

More information - theadders.com/career-advice

Stage two: the interview

Interviews are not an interrogation - they're an opportunity for each side to get to know the other. "Be professional, but be yourself," says Jane Sunley, the author of It's Never OK to Kiss the Interviewer (Uanesunley.com). "Let them see who you really are."

Prepare

Look up your interviewer on LinkedIn or the firm's website, and read up on the company, says James Callander. "Know how it makes money and what its market is," he says. "Check its dress code and plan your outfit accordingly. Pack a notebook and a copy of your CV."

More information - theundercoverrecruiter.com

Practise

"Picture yourself in a room, being interviewed," says Lees. "Think about what you will say at the beginning and how you will answer the questions that always come up, such as 'Why do you want to work here?'" Write a list of things you want to find out from the interviewer about the job and the company. Consider doing a dry run of your journey to the office, to check travel times. Then relax - you're going in for a conversation, not an exam.

More information - Jobsite.co.uk/bemyinterviewer

Analyse

After the interview, think about how it went and what you can do better in your next one. Don't rely on your own judgment - contact the interviewer, and be prepared for honest, but useful, criticism.

More information - totaljobs.com/careers-advice

How do you measure up as a graduate job applicant? Take our digital quiz at www.sundaytimes.co.uk/whatsnext

Prevention is better than cure

Clean up your digital act - Cambridge Analytica furore (spring 2018) shows how important this is

The web can tell people a lot about you - make sure it's not too much, says Francesca Angelini -

Before applying for any position, Google yourself. It might sound vain, but you can be sure any future employer will do the same thing. If the first thing that crops up is a photo from **Facebook** of you placing a shopping trolley on a car/clambering into a wheelie bin / sticking straws up your nose, your application is likely to be ditched. Unless your Facebook account is a paradigm of respectability, change your privacy settings to the highest possible. If there are images that you can't delete yourself, contact whoever posted them. You can even set up a Google alert to get an automatic update every time new content with your name in appears online.

Potty-mouthed **Twitter** rants about disappointing footballers aren't likely to impress anyone, although an engaged, informed Twitter account can work in your favour - advertising firms and PR and media outfits encourage you to have a digital presence. But make sure you do a thorough check of all your tweets, scrolling right back to when you started the account, and delete anything off-message.

As for **email**, make sure your address sounds professional - theitalianstallion@gmail.com, elliedabomb@hotmail.co.uk or chickwithbrains@me.com are unlikely to land jobs. If you've applied from your university email account, beware that it will soon expire. If you've already sent off applications from that account, send a follow-up email asking that all replies are directed to a personal address.

Remember that **MySpace or Bebo** account you opened when you were 14? Chances are it's still available for anyone to see when they start looking into your digital profile. Delete - or at least thoroughly clean up - any dormant social media accounts. You never know what a prospective employer might uncover ...

Many companies now use **LinkedIn** when recruiting. If you haven't already, set yourself up with an account. Put up a photo of yourself looking professional, upload your CV - having made sure it's fully up-to-date and free from spelling and grammatical errors - and start adding connections. Don't be shy of adding someone you've only emailed or met a few times - unlike Facebook, LinkedIn is a professional networking site and generally people don't mind being asked to be a connection. If you've done work experience or internships, you can ask whoever you worked with to endorse you for relevant skills.

A well-designed, well-written blog on any subject you're interested in (especially one that might be relevant to whichever job you're applying for) shows genuine passion for the subject. If you're professing a niche love for, say, evolving economic relationships between countries from the old Warsaw Pact, this is an effective way of substantiating your claim. Likewise, if you're applying for a creative job, it's an opportunity to showcase your design skills. Linking to other bloggers and making well-judged contributions to relevant blogs, online magazines and news articles is also a good way to network and develop contacts.

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