



WELCOME TO YORK

International Students' Information Pack



Graduate
Students'
Association
UNIVERSITY OF YORK

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“York is a positive and inclusive place. Postgraduate study has allowed me to push my boundaries and expand my horizons in a safe and supportive environment”



The National Health Service (NHS) is the UK's state healthcare system providing a wide range of healthcare services including appointments with a doctor and hospital treatment.

Costs

The NHS is free to access for students who are in the UK for more than six months, the only things you might have to pay for are prescriptions (£8.60 per item) and dental appointments. If you are in the UK for less than six months you should ensure that you have private medical insurance.

If you are from the Non-UK European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland you should obtain a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) card. This entitles you to free access to state-provided healthcare during a stay in another European Economic Area (EEA) country or Switzerland (<https://www.gov.uk/european-health-insurance-card>).

If you are entering the UK on a Tier 4 Visa you will have already paid an immigration health surcharge which covers access to the NHS.

Health Services Available

There are a range of health services available through the NHS and it is important to choose the right service to ensure that you get the care you need in the quickest amount of time.

If you are unsure which is the most appropriate service or need advice on accessing healthcare, you can call the NHS for free on 111 for further information.

Pharmacist

Pharmacists can advise you (and sell you medication) for common problems such as coughs, colds, headaches and minor infections. There are many pharmacies in York and a full list can be found on the NHS website (<http://www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/Pharmacy/LocationSearch/10>).

If you receive a prescription from a doctor for medicine that you cannot normally buy, take it to a pharmacy to get the medication that has been prescribed for you.

HC1 claim for help with health costs: <https://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Healthcosts/Documents/2016/HC1-April-2016.pdf>

Doctor

When you arrive in York you should register with a doctor as soon as possible, this is a simple process – just visit your local doctors' surgery during opening hours and ask to register.

There is a doctors' practice located on campus (Unity Health) as well as many others around York, a full list can be found on the NHS website- (<http://www.nhs.uk/service-search/GP/York/Results/4/-1.08/53.962/4/24782?distance=25>). You will need to take proof of address and either visa and passport details or your EHIC. Some surgeries may also allow you to complete part of the registration process online.

If you are feeling unwell and it is not an emergency you should make an appointment with your registered doctors' practice – depending on the issue you may be given an appointment with either a GP (General Practitioner) or a nurse. You may have to wait a few days or even weeks for your appointment. Make an appointment by telephoning your doctors' surgery, some surgeries also offer an online booking system.

Appointments are for one person only and usually last around 10 minutes, they are completely confidential. If are unable to attend your appointment, please telephone the surgery to let them know. The GP or nurse may refer you to other services including specialists.

Urgent Care Centre

The Urgent Care Centre in York is based at the Hospital (Wigginton Rd, York, YO31 8HE) and is open 8am-midnight everyday. The Centre is for illnesses or injuries which are not life-threatening but cannot wait until a doctor's appointment. This includes cuts, burns, sprains and broken bones. You may have to wait several hours to be seen by a doctor.

Accident & Emergency (A&E)

If someone is seriously ill or injured and their life is at risk call the emergency services on 999 for an ambulance to take them to hospital.



Dental Care

Dental treatment is not free but is more cheaply available through the NHS. Finding an NHS dentist to register with is sometimes difficult and may not be worthwhile if you are only in the UK for a year. To find out which dentists are accepting patients have a look at the NHS website (<http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/AboutNHSservices/dentists/Pages/find-an-NHS-dentist.aspx>).

If you have a problem with your teeth and need to see a dentist urgently call your registered dental practice. Alternatively contact the NHS on 111 who can put you in touch with the Urgent Dental Service (you do not need to be registered with a dentist to use this).

Do not contact your doctor as they are unable to offer dental care.

Opticians

If you need eye care whilst in the UK you should visit an optician, there are many opticians in York, including chains such as Boots, Specsavers and

Vision Express as well as independently run ones. The cost of an eye test is a standard fee set by the NHS (£21.31) but the costs of frames and contact lenses may vary between opticians.

Mental Health

If you are experiencing mental health difficulties the University can offer support through The Open Door, a team of experienced professionals who provide free and confidential support for students. Appointments can be booked online through the Open Door website (<https://studentportal.pcmis.com/open.html>).

If you are experiencing severe problems or are in crisis please contact your doctor (in working hours), if you need out of hours assistance contact the NHS on 111, University Security on 01904 32333 or the emergency services on 999.

If you just need someone to talk to, you can contact your College Team (<https://www.york.ac.uk/students/health/help/college-support/>) or Nightline on 01904 323725.

Banking

There are different types of bank account available in the UK. Most students choose a current account - this is a basic day-to-day account for purchases and deposits. This type of account normally comes with a cash card so you can take money out of cashpoints (ATMs).

It is best to open an account as soon as you arrive in the UK, as the process can take up to two weeks. You should, therefore, make sure that you have enough money to cover your expenses for the first few weeks - this can take the form of travellers cheques, a cash card or credit card.

Please do not carry large amounts of money with you or keep a lot of cash in your room.

To open a bank account you will generally need:

- An application form from the bank
- Your passport
- Confirmation that you are a full-time student (you can request this through e:vision)
- Proof of your address, if you live on campus you can request a letter to prove this by logging onto e:vision. If you live in a private hall or other private accommodation a tenancy agreement will serve as proof.

You can open a Santander account with just a passport/national ID and your University of York student card.

Working in the UK

There are no working restrictions on you if you are a student from the EU, although the University recommends that students on full-time degree courses should not work more than 20 hours per week.

If you are an international student from outside the EU studying full-time you will usually be able to work alongside your studies for up to 20 hours per week. You must not work more than this as it is a criminal offence to do so and could affect your visa. More information can be found on the University's website (www.york.ac.uk/international-students/work)

If you would like to work alongside your studies you can find more information on where to look for jobs on the University website (<https://www.york.ac.uk/students/work-volunteering-careers/look-for-work/temporary/>).

National Insurance Number

A National Insurance (NI) number is your own personal reference number for the UK tax system and you will need to have one once you start working. You can apply for a NI number for free by calling 0345 600 0643 (Monday-Friday, 8am-6pm).

You will need to provide personal details including your passport or visa number, your date of arrival in the UK and a full UK address including postcode, so it's a good idea to have all of this information ready before calling.

Support

If you are struggling with your finances or need advice on working during or after your studies (along with other visa-related information) contact the Student Hub on Market Square for an appointment with a relevant advisor (<https://www.york.ac.uk/students/support/student-support-hub/>).

Living in the UK

Interacting with Others

British people are usually very friendly but can be reserved, particularly when talking to strangers. They greet people in a range of ways from a wave or a nod in the street to a hug, depending on how well they know someone and how long it is since they have last seen them. There are no hard and fast rules about greetings but you don't need to repeatedly greet someone that you see throughout the same day. If you are being introduced to someone for the first time a handshake is usually appropriate unless you are meeting a large group.

Always say please and thank you when asking for anything

Punctuality is very important – You must make sure that you are on time for lectures, tutorials, seminars, interviews and when meeting people.

If you find you are going to be late or cannot keep an appointment try to contact the person you are meeting beforehand.

When you are in a bank, shop or waiting for a bus you are expected to queue, stand in line and wait your turn. People can get angry if you 'queue jump'

If you don't understand what someone means or are confused about someone's behaviour – just ask, most people will be more than happy to explain.

Food and Drink

The legal age that a person can purchase and consume alcohol in the UK is 18.

If you don't drink alcohol you may be worried if you are invited to go to the pub. Pubs are popular social meeting places and sell a wide variety of soft





drinks as well as alcohol. Everyone is welcome and you usually order and pay for your drinks at the bar.

If you go out for a meal it is customary to tip in the region of 10% (although check a tip has not already been added to the bill). Place your cutlery together on your plate to indicate to the serving staff that you have finished your meal.

Equality

Men and women have equal rights in the UK. It is illegal to discriminate against anyone according to race, gender, age, class, sexual orientation or disability.

Relationships and Sex

British attitudes to sex may be different from those in your own country. It is often accepted that people that are involved in a relationship may have sex together, although, of course, the choice is a personal one. You are free to live according to your own personal standards and shouldn't feel pressured to adopt those of your fellow students.

It is quite normal to see couples, including same sex couples, kissing and holding hands in public.

If you choose to have sex, consent is very important; sex without consent is illegal in the UK. If you want to do something sexual with your partner you have the responsibility to get their agreement. Using contraception such as condoms prevents unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections.

Contraception and contraceptive advice is available free of charge from your doctor. You can also get free and confidential advice on a range of issues from YorSexual Health (on campus every Wednesday 12.30pm-3.00pm during term-time – more information <https://www.yorsexualhealth.org.uk/clinics/york-university/?map>). Free condoms are available from the GSA Office, the YUSU helpdesk, Langwith College Reception and the Nightline Office.

Smoking

In 2007 England introduced a complete smoking ban in public places. All University residences and buildings are non-smoking. If you are in the company of others it is polite to ask if they mind whether you smoke.

Drinking Water

All British tap water is safe to drink unless it is labelled 'not for drinking'. Do not use water from the hot water tap for making hot drinks – boil a kettle instead.

Toilets

British toilets are the flushing, pedestal type. Toilet paper is provided in public and shared facilities and should always be flushed away after use.

Sanitary products should be disposed of in the specially designated sanitary bins in shared facilities. Sanitary towels should not be flushed down the toilet.

Accommodation

Electrical Equipment

The British electricity supply is 230 volts and sockets take 13-amp, square three-pin plugs. Please check that any electrical equipment you bring from home can be used on this voltage. You can buy adapters in the UK but be aware that it is dangerous to overload sockets with too many adapters and you should never put a two-pin plug into a three-pin socket.

Maintenance

If you have a maintenance problem with your accommodation it is important to report it as soon as possible

If you live on campus you can report issues online, further information about this can be found on the University accommodation pages (<https://www.york.ac.uk/about/departments/support-and-admin/accommodation/currentstudents/reportaproblem/>).

If you live in private accommodation and have a problem you should contact your landlord directly.

Television Licence

You are required by law to have a television licence if you use a TV or any other device to receive or record television programmes (including a laptop or personal computer). If you are resident on campus and have a television you must buy an individual television license. If you are living in a house where the television is shared by all of the residents you can purchase a single license between you. You can find out more about whether you need a licence and how to apply at www.tvlicensing.co.uk.

Council Tax

Council tax is a UK tax on households, based on the estimated value of a property and the number of people living in it. Full-time students do not generally pay Council Tax (unless there are non-students in the household). If you are living on campus you will be exempted from Council Tax automatically. If you live off campus you will need to fill in a student exemption form. For further information or to fill out the exemption form online visit the York Council website (https://www.york.gov.uk/info/20021/council_tax_discounts/28/council_tax_discount_and_exemptions_for_students).



The Police

The police in the UK are friendly and helpful, they have a duty to protect everyone and can always be safely approached.

When you first arrive; you may need to register with the police. Your visa letter, which accompanies your temporary 30 day visa sticker in your passport, will confirm whether you need to or not.

Fulford Police Station is only 20 minutes walk from the University campus and students can register everyday from 9am until 4pm. You will need to take the following with you when you attend the police station:

- £34 cash or a credit/debit card to pay the registration fee
- Three passport photos
- Your current passport containing your visa
- Proof of residence (usually a rental agreement)
- Confirmation of study letter from the University (this can be requested through your e:Vision account)

Reporting Crime

If you need to report an incident or crime on campus you can contact campus security on 01904 323333 (emergency) or 01904 324444 (non emergency).

If you are off campus and a crime is being committed or someone is in danger call 999. If you need to report a crime which is not an emergency or to provide the police with information you can contact them on 101.

River Safety

Bodies of water can be dangerous and there have been a number of accidental student deaths in the river. Always avoid walking by the river or going near the water during hazardous weather conditions or after nights out drinking, particularly in areas where there is no guard rail between the footpath and the water.

Safety tips

York is a very safe city but by taking on board some simple advice you can help to keep you and your belongings safe.

- Don't walk on your own through quiet or secluded areas at night, walk with friends or take a bus or taxi.
- Ensure that your windows and doors are locked when you leave your room or property.
- Don't leave your valuables on view and don't keep or carry large amounts of money.
- Don't give people your money, personal details or property if you have only just met them
- In the UK you should not hitch a ride or accept the offer of a lift from someone you do not know.
- Contents insurance is included in the price of University accommodation (up to £7000). If you are living off campus, check any insurance arrangements with your landlord or accommodation provider. If you are not covered, it is sensible to think about purchasing appropriate insurance for your belongings.

Teaching and Study



It may be that you have experienced teaching methods that are different from those commonly used in British universities. If you are on a taught programme it is likely that you will attend some or all of the following:

Lectures

The lecturer is normally a full-time member of academic staff who has expertise in the subject area being taught. Lectures are usually formal and you listen to the lecturer and take notes.

Seminars

Seminars take the form of group discussions. They are led by a member of academic staff and are usually attended by between eight and eighteen students. You are expected to do the required reading prior to the seminar and participate by asking questions or discussing your opinions. You might also be asked to give presentations.

Tutorials

Some departments offer tutorials, these are meetings between a small number of students and an academic staff member. They are an opportunity to discuss work in detail and ask any questions you may have.

The right to express opinions is considered

important and it is all right for you to disagree with others, particularly in an academic context.

Academic Support

If you have any academic problems it is important to discuss them with your supervisor. If you need extra help with maths or statistics you can contact the Maths Skills Centre, appointments are free, available to all students and can be booked through an online system (<https://www.york.ac.uk/students/studying/develop-your-skills/study-skills/maths-skills-centre/appointment/>).

The Writing Centre is a free service open to all undergraduate and taught postgraduate students interested in discussing and developing their academic writing. They offer drop-ins and appointments, which can be booked online (<https://www.york.ac.uk/students/studying/develop-your-skills/study-skills/writing/appointments/>).

The GSA Advice Service can offer advice or support on academic issues including academic misconduct, appeals, complaints, course changes or problems with your supervisor. Appointments can be booked online (<http://www.yorkgsa.org/students/welfare/book-an-advice-service-appointment/>).

Cars

York is a convenient city to get around without a car and there are very limited student parking spaces on campus. Very few students have cars and it is recommended that you use public transport as an alternative.

You can drive in Great Britain for 12 months if you've got a non-European Union (EU) driving licence or international driving permit (<https://www.gov.uk/driving-nongb-licence/y/a-foreign-student-studying-in-great-britain/non-european-union>).

Buses

There are regular buses from the Railway Station and York city centre to campus. The number 66 runs around every 10 minutes during term-time and every 15 minutes in the holidays. It also operates every hour between midnight and 7am.

You can purchase a weekly, monthly, termly or yearly bus pass which allows unlimited travel during the specified period and these often work out cheaper if you use the bus regularly. Alternatively you can buy a single or return ticket when you get on the bus.

The 66 and UB1 services are free to travel around and between campuses (<https://www.firstgroup.com/york/routes-and-maps/your-bus-66-and-university-services/your-bus-student-tickets>).

Walking and Cycling

York is easy to get around on a bicycle or by foot. It is a 15 minute cycle ride or a 30 minute walk from Campus West into the city centre. There are many off-road cycle paths and on-road cycle lanes offering safe access into and around the city.

You can buy a second-hand bike relatively cheaply and there are bicycle storage areas and cycle hoops located all over campus.

The University has a small number of bikes available to hire for 48 hours at a time. These are located at James, Halifax and Goodricke Colleges and King's Manor. Access the University website for more information and to register for the scheme (<https://www.york.ac.uk/students/getting-around/cycling-walking/>)

Trains

There is a frequent, fast train service to York on the East Coast mainline from London King's Cross and Edinburgh. There is also a direct service between York, Leeds and Manchester Airport.

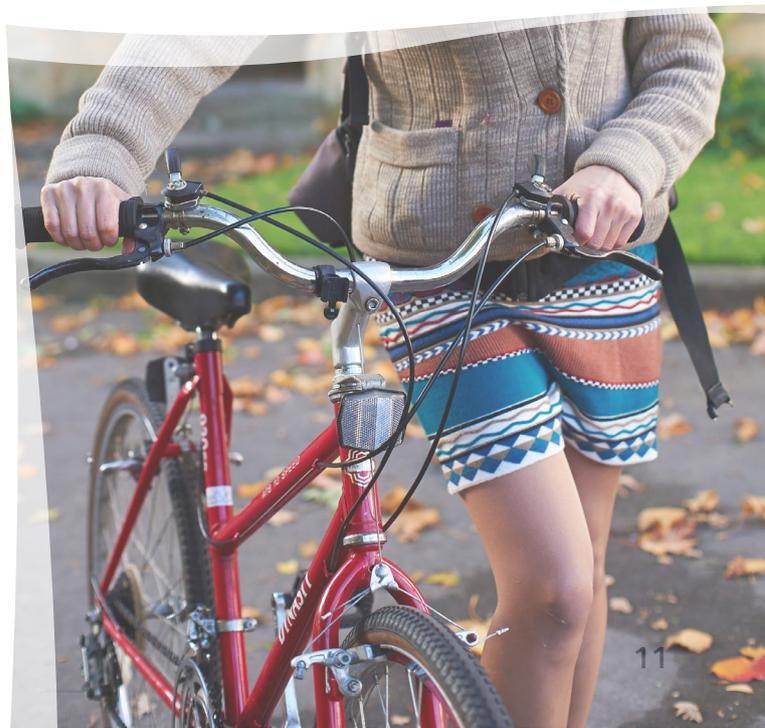
Train tickets are often expensive if purchased on the day but can be bought cheaply in advance. If you are likely to be travelling by train regularly a student railcard is a good investment, saving you 1/3 on rail fares (<https://www.16-25railcard.co.uk/>).

Taxis

Taxis are expensive and should not be used for travelling long distances. The University has close links with local taxi providers including: Streamline Taxis - 01904 656565 (<http://www.streamlinetaxisyork.co.uk/students>). 659 Taxis – 01904 659659

If you live on campus and do not have the money to pay for your taxi fare, ask the taxi driver to take you to your college reception where your college porter will cover the fare. You will be expected to repay the full cost of the taxi fare the next day.

Do not get into an unmarked taxi. All taxi drivers must be registered and if you have any concerns you can ask to see the drivers licensing details which are usually displayed within the vehicle.



Find out more at: www.yorkgsa.org

