



University of
Nottingham

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University Life

What to expect in
your first term

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Congratulations, and welcome to the University of Nottingham

For most students, coming to university is an exciting and positive experience.

However, for many, some aspects of student life can be difficult to cope with; living away from home, learning independently, coping with financial pressures and social inclusion can play a part in how we feel about ourselves and our self-esteem.

Unrealistic expectations of what it's going to be like, the media and our peers all play a part in presenting an idealistic view that we are about to experience the 'best time of our lives'. But the reality can often be very different.

Many students struggle to manage the transition between home and university. Research shows

that between 50% and 70% of new UK students struggle with feeling homesick to some extent within their first three weeks at university.

It's something that can affect anyone. This booklet provides you with some helpful advice on the common challenges faced by many students in the first term.





Transition to university

At university, you are seen as an independent adult who is responsible for your behaviour, learning and looking after your health and wellbeing.

Remember to give yourself time to adjust, but if you are feeling overwhelmed by your new situation, then please talk to someone. Within schools this might be your personal tutor or a member of the Support and Wellbeing Team. Halls of residence have a Residential Student Experience Team.

This pastoral care extends into the community where students in other accommodation receive support from our Off-Campus Affairs Team.

Contact details for a range of support services can be found on the inside back cover of this booklet.

Feeling isolated and lonely?

The people you surround yourself with when you first get to university are important. It can be difficult if you feel you don't connect with your peers. You may also be missing your old friends and don't have anyone to talk to about how you're feeling.

What can help?

- Remember that feeling lonely is very common in the first few weeks of starting university
- Be proactive, make the effort to talk to people first. Remember building new relationships takes time and effort
- Social media is great for keeping in touch but it is also a source of peer pressure. Try not to compare yourself with what you see on social media. If you find you are, remind yourself that social media also gives people the chance to only post the fun things they are doing and presents their life as more popular and successful than it really is
- Join clubs, societies, university sports centre, or volunteer
- Don't feel ashamed if you are struggling – the most important thing is that you seek help and support



Feeling homesick?

It's okay to feel homesick and given that it's such a significant life-changing event it's understandable. Going to university – often in a new city, with new people and starting a new course – is a huge transition and it takes time to adjust. Be kind to yourself; don't expect to get everything right straight away.

What can help?

- Stay in touch with family and friends; it can be reassuring to hear a familiar voice or see a familiar face. Set up regular times to talk or video chat; you can reassure your family that you are okay
- If you are a UK home student, plan a trip home (but not too soon) as something to look forward to
- Keep busy. Try to establish routines quickly. This can make your surroundings feel more stable and will help you feel more settled. Scheduling social activities will give you things to look forward to
- Volunteer for something
- Treat yourself to a good film or food you enjoy
- Explore your surroundings; walk around your campus and find out where you can eat, shop, meet up and relax
- Decorate your room to make it feel personal to you; add posters, photos, plants, cushions to make it feel like your space
- Talk to someone, if you haven't made any friends yet you can talk to your Students' Union, course tutors, residential experience team, support and welfare team or chaplaincy
- If your homesickness is making it difficult to cope, make an appointment with your GP, or the University Counselling Service who offer a number of workshops that could also help



Tips for international students

Studying abroad can be an amazing experience, yet it comes with its challenges. It might be very different to what you expected. On top of that, you might be missing home. Here are some tips to help you settle in:

- With our diverse international and EU student community, Nottingham has a great range of student societies representing the many countries, cultures and religions of the world. Joining will be a way to meet like-minded people in a similar position
- Talking about feelings of unhappiness with people who are sharing your experiences can be helpful
- Bring something special from home with you; it's often a great way to introduce others to your culture and background
- Look after yourself; eating healthily, getting plenty of sleep and exercise all contribute to a positive state of mind
- Cooking your favourite meal can remind you of home. Most supermarkets have aisles for "international" foods
- Stay in touch with family and friends back home, schedule specific times for video calls
- Make friends with home students too; having a broad circle of friends will make you feel supported. Try Global Buddies and Chaplaincy

Whether you are a UK or international student remember, give yourself time to settle in and talk to someone if you are struggling. If you are concerned about yourself or someone else, please see overleaf for services that can help.

Help and support

Within schools

Your assigned personal tutor plays an important part in identifying and supporting students who are struggling. The Support and Wellbeing Team work alongside personal tutors, supervisors, and other university services to provide practical advice on a wide range of issues. They can help you find the right service and advise on policies and processes.

Support and Wellbeing Service

Visit nottingham.ac.uk/go/support-wellbeing

Where you live

The Residential Experience (ResX) Team consists of full-time staff, supported by student residential assistants. They provide wellbeing support and promote positive community behaviour within halls of residence and partnership accommodation sites. Contact ResX by emailing resx@nottingham.ac.uk

Students living in non-university accommodation receive pastoral care and support from our Off-Campus Student Affairs team: visit nottingham.ac.uk/go/off-campus-student-affairs

University Security Service

If you are concerned for yourself or a friend. Call 0115 951 3013, or – in an emergency – 0115 951 8888.

GP/doctor

The GP will decide what kind of support may be required and can make a referral onto a specialist service.

Cripps Health Centre: 0115 846 8888

Orchard Practice, Kegworth: 01509 672 419

Chaplaincy and Faith Support

Whatever your background or faith, University chaplains offer spiritual and pastoral support. Call 0115 951 3931 or visit nottingham.ac.uk/chaplaincy

Disability Support Services

Supports students with a disability, mental health difficulty, long-term medical condition, autistic spectrum condition, or a specific learning difference. Call 0115 823 2070 or visit nottingham.ac.uk/go/disability-support

University Counselling Service

University Counselling Service offers free one-to-one support for staff and students, and run groups and workshops. Call 0115 951 3695 or visit nottingham.ac.uk/counselling

The **University Mental Health Team** support students with significant mental health problems or students who are in crisis. To access this service you need to be referred by a member of University staff, GP or the NHS.

Students' Union Support

Students' Union Advice offers information and representation on all aspects of student welfare and education, such as financial, housing and course issues.

Call 0115 846 8730 or email SUAdvice@nottingham.ac.uk

Nightline

A student-run service providing a confidential listening and information.

Call 0115 951 4985 or email nightlineanon@nottingham.ac.uk

Positive Minds

A student-run service providing support to students with low mood, depression or anxiety.

Visit positivenottingham@studentminds.org.uk

For information about health and wellbeing, visit nottingham.ac.uk/currentstudents/healthy

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