



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 suffer from homesickness 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 School Welfare Officer. Halls of residence have a Warden and Resident Tutor Team, who provide key support.

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.

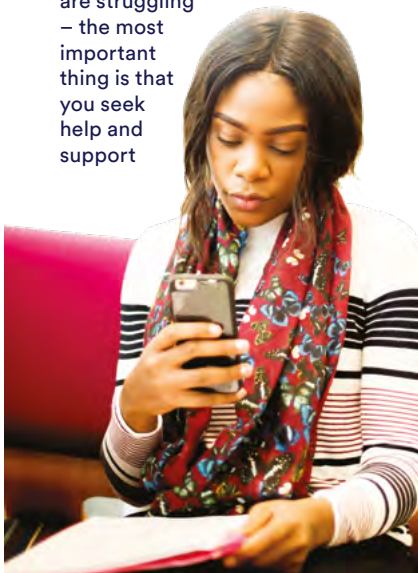
## Feeling isolated and lonely?

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 ok 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 ok
- 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
- 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 Hall or Course Tutors, Chaplaincy or School Welfare Officers
- If your homesickness is making it difficult to cope, make an appointment with your GP, or the University counselling service. The counselling service runs 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 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

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

## Welfare Support

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](https://nottingham.ac.uk/counselling)

## Within schools

Personal Tutors provide one-to-one support and play an important part in identifying and helping struggling students. Each school has a Welfare Officer to support with significant or complex issues. These officers can refer students on to specialist University services as needed:

[nottingham.ac.uk/go/welfaresupport](https://nottingham.ac.uk/go/welfaresupport)

## Where you live

Halls of Residence have a Warden and Resident Tutor team who provide key welfare support. This pastoral care extends into the community where students in other accommodation receive support from our Off-Campus Student Affairs team:

[nottingham.ac.uk/go/off-campus-student-affairs](https://nottingham.ac.uk/go/off-campus-student-affairs)

## University Security Service

This service can help if a student is concerned for themselves or a friend. Call 0115 951 3013, or – in an emergency – 0115 951 8888.

## GP/Doctor

Your GP is the main point of contact for general healthcare. They can make a referral onto a specialist service if required.

Cripps Health Centre: 0115 846 8888

## 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](https://nottingham.ac.uk/chaplaincy)

## Accessibility team

Provides specialist advice and support for students who consider themselves to be disabled.

Call 0115 823 2070

or visit [nottingham.ac.uk/go/disability-support](https://nottingham.ac.uk/go/disability-support)

or [nottingham.ac.uk/go/acadsupport](https://nottingham.ac.uk/go/acadsupport)

## Students' Union Advice

Offers information, advice and representation around all aspects of student welfare and education, such as financial, housing and course issues.

Call 0115 846 8730 or email [SUAdvice@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:SUAdvice@nottingham.ac.uk)

## Nightline

A student-run service providing confidential listening and information.

Call 0115 951 4985 or email [nightlineanon@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:nightlineanon@nottingham.ac.uk)

## Positive Minds

Student-run service providing a free and inclusive six-week programme to support students with low mood, depression or anxiety: [positivenottingham@studentminds.org.uk](mailto:positivenottingham@studentminds.org.uk)

For information about health and wellbeing:  
[nottingham.ac.uk/currentstudents/healthyu](https://nottingham.ac.uk/currentstudents/healthyu)

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