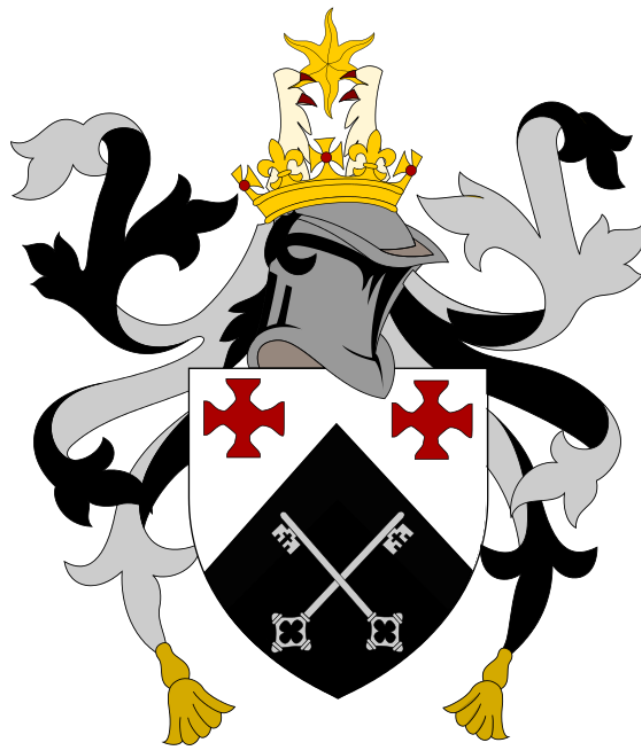


ST. AIDAN'S
COLLEGE
Durham University



International Students'
Handbook
2020

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INTRODUCTION

A warm welcome from your International Freps!



Hey everyone, first of all, many many congrats to all of you for getting accepted into the amazing Durham University and more importantly St. Aidan's College! I'm Sifat (you can call me Sif), the Head International Frep for this year. I'm a second-year Law student from New Delhi, India and I just want to say I totally understand the jitters and nerves you're all probably going through at the moment. And based on my experience here I can guarantee you're going to have a fantastic time at Durham. Aidan's creates a very inclusive environment where you have the opportunity to embrace your true self and be surrounded by absolutely incredible people.

Even though this academic year may seem to begin a bit differently, all the other Freps and I are here to make it as memorable as possible for you. The beginning of uni life may seem a bit intimidating at first that's why we're all here for you to get settled in. So if at any point any of you have any questions we're here to help you out. We also have an incredible welfare team who are here if you want to discuss something more private and in a confidential setting.

Aidan's has a lot of societies and sports that you can get immediately involved in, even without any past experience. There are also a lotttt of University societies and sports teams; there's something for everyone (and in case there's something that interests you and isn't already existent you can always create a new society). I joined the Durham Aerial Arts Society, it was something I always wanted to try, and Durham allowed me to do so. I also got the chance to become involved with sports, being a part of the Durham Golf Team and the current Badminton Vice-Captain for St. Aidan's. I'd suggest trying as many new things as possible because that's what uni life is all about. This handbook will give you a glimpse into the college and uni, but other than that if you have any concerns or doubts don't be afraid to contact us (our contact details are at the end of the handbook). I'm looking forward to interacting with all of you!



Hi guys, my name is Jing, your international frep this year and I hope you are all settled in fine. I'm a second year physics student and joined Aidan's last year, honestly it is such a fun experience.

We have formal dinners regular where you need to dress up for the theme, the beer price at the bar is brilliant, you can always pop in for a cheeky pint, and we have a little shop at the JCR where you can get some midnight snacks.

It is a fully catered college so do not worry if you can't cook like me last year. Weekend brunch is fab, having a full English breakfast after a night out on Friday and Saturday is an absolute treat.

Science site is also really close, you can probably walk down in 10 minutes. Town centre is slightly further, 30 minutes tops. Oh forget to mention, we love the Aidan's stairs, genuinely keeps you fit. Don't be scared of joining any societies, try things that interest you!! I currently fence for Durham and I'm a member of the college football team, not gonna lie the socials are very fun.

Remember to register with your GP!!! And with the police if you need to.

You can always come to me or anyone in the frep team if you have any questions or concerns.

Work hard but enjoy yourself as well, they are equally as important freshers.



Hi Freshers! I'm Badal, one of your international freps. I am currently a second-year Geography (BSc) student from Kenya. I've always lived between the UK and Kenya but coming from a 3rd world country I can completely understand the nerves, stress and confusion related to starting a new life here in Durham, thousands of miles away from home (about 6500 miles in my case). Coming to university I felt very scared to blend in and make friends (a complete fresh start compared to school). I remember switching to the mindset in which I thought of it as an advantage. No one knows you and therefore you can choose the impressions you make and the reputation you keep here at

Durham. Besides this mindset I still felt overwhelmed. Luckily, I had help from my freps, so do not hesitate to ask me any questions related to any aspect while adjusting to uni life from exploring Durham to even wanting to just chill out. Fresher's week is a super exciting time full of fun activities in and out of college as well as a great opportunity to join sports and societies and make friends. I continued badminton from high school and went the extra mile to try out ultimate frisbee and bouldering, where I met some of my best friends. One thing I learnt to get through fresher's week and to have an amazing time is to BE YOURSELF! You will start to notice the friends you make during fresher's do not necessarily remain throughout the year. Therefore, remain open to making new friends throughout the year and eventually you will find the people you are most comfortable with. It's never late to join sports and activities you've never participated in before as there's always a beginner's team (completely judgment free!). I'm always here if you have any further questions. I can't explain how thrilled I am to meet you and help you have fun adjusting to the Durham student life!

WHAT IS A COLLEGE?

One of the things that makes Durham University stand out from others (and makes it a lot more fun) is its collegiate system. The collegiate system differs from other types of student accommodation in various ways, here is a few:

- Every college has its own spirit, traditions, and community (like the literary universe of Harry Potter, which makes Durham Uni even cooler ☺)
- Every College has both a Junior Common Room and a Senior Common Room (which will be explained in detail further below)
- Students are the ones shaping the college and they are the contributors to the way it is ran. You can do this by joining the JCR in all sorts of sports, societies, and committees. Everyone has a say here so don't be shy to express your opinion!
- Colleges have a great support system:
 - The **Student Welfare Committee** provides daily contact hours (from 6-7pm) and our officers that will be more than happy to listen to anything you have to say.

- The **Staff College Student Support and Development team** can be contacted at sa.studentsupport@durham.ac.uk.
- **College Family System:** according to your interests and subjects you study, you will get assigned to College Parents (who are students just like you) and they will be here to guide you through a bunch of things – academic or personal. We have a team of College mentors who are here to support your student development and progression, and help encourage intellectual curiosity.

ST. AIDAN'S COLLEGE

St Aidan's College (aka the best college) is an open-minded and welcoming college, providing its community with a friendly and accepting environment where everyone can feel at home.

Few facts about us:

- We are a mid-sized college, welcoming around ~ 210 undergraduate Freshers this year.
- Even though things seem a bit different this year it doesn't make it any less special and in order to make sure that the Freshers' Week run smoothly, we have a fantastic team of 39 Freps.
- Our Principal, Dr. Susan Frenk, Vice-Principal, Mr. Stefan Klidzia, and the rest of the College Support and Development Team can liaise with your department in case of any academic or personal difficulties.
- We have a team of College Porters who are able to offer help and guidance to the students on many diverse issues to do with how the College runs. You can contact them via College reception. Reception is an important central point in College and is staffed 24 hours. It is the first point of call for information and in an emergency.

Accommodation

- This year Fresher's are allocated households of 15 students or less. Each fresher has a room completely to themselves as none of the rooms are being shared this year. Rooms are in different parts of college named the straights, the curves, and the houses. The bathrooms and kitchens are shared amongst each household.
- Most Postgraduates live in Elizabeth Pease House but some live in the New Houses, with some of the returning students that want to live in College.

The JCR

- The JCR (Junior Common Room) is the main communal area in college, great to socialise in or to just have a snack from the College Shop (they usually go hand in hand). We have pool tables, table tennis, and console games in the JCR – all of them are free of charge for student use – and there are also a variety of board games in the Shop!
- The Junior Common Room is also the organisation that organises most sports, clubs, societies and social activities within College. It is also the representative body for undergraduate students within college, so if you have any issues and concerns you can get in touch with the JCR for support.
- The JCR is funded by an optional payment called the levy (you'll receive information about this soon), which provides membership to the JCR. This gives you access to sports and societies, the ability to speak and run for positions at JCR meetings, and discounts to many events such as formals and balls. It also funds a completely free freshers week, as well as the JCR's overall running. It is £180, but provides membership for your whole degree (i.e. £60 per year normally).
- There are 8 JCR meetings in which the "Exec" will talk you through the decisions which are being taken with the JCR money, and the positions which you can run for. To get involved in one of our committees (such as the Shop Comm, Social Comm or Welfare) you have to either:
 - "Hust" (stand up in front of the JCR members and explain why you think you'd be a good candidate for the position and then answer some questions) OR
 - Be interviewed by the members of said committee (such as Welfare positions etc.)
- Why get involved in the JCR?
 - You get to meet lots of different people that are passionate about the same things that you believe in. You get an opportunity to meet people who are not on your course with whom could have interesting conversations and exchange knowledge.
 - You can have a strong influence in shaping college life and even the university.

- To try new things – it's so easy to get involved and you might try something that you grow to love: I have been always passionate about things that the Welfare committee do, but had never before had the opportunity to get involved. So, when I came to Durham, I was very eager to learn more about it and get involved!

Our Facilities

- The Dining Hall
 - Meals are served in in the Dining Hall three times a day – more information about meal times will be inside the Livers' In Handbook (they have changed due to covid-19).
- Bailey Room
 - The Bailey Room can be booked by households as a space for relaxing, watching films/playing games, and as a study space.
- Lindisfarne Centre
 - There are regular talks, workshops and other events there, many of which are open to students both from St. Aidan's and other colleges.
- The Bar
 - Open every evening for socialising while keeping in mind social distancing and there will be events organised throughout the year held at the bar. (there will be a Summer fest after the finals, so I recommend you stay for the events after your exams finish!)
 - You can also request to watch your favourite shows or sport matches in the Bar
 - There are plenty of non-alcoholic drinks
 - During the exam season, you will be able to use bar as a study space during day times.
- The Shop
 - Sells hot food (especially toasties) as well as biscuits, snacks, and some other useful stuff.
 - Opens twice a day and has board games and DVDs that you can borrow
 - You can also apply to become a part of the shop team (You could work toastie-worker and join the shop-com, especially if you enjoy making food or like meeting new people while earning some extra cash)
 - It is a great place to socialise!
- The Plodge (Porter's Lodge)

- It is the main entrance to St Aidan's College – there you will find the porters and the receptionists
- This is where you get your mail, keys to the music room, report missing laundry card etc. and have a good ol' chat with our porters because they are lovely people. ☺
- The JCR
 - It's basically the main social hub in which people get together to chill, play games and chat
 - Often events are organised such as open mic nights or other big events such as the Diwali Night organised last year during international Week.
- The Library
 - With an absolutely breathtaking view of the castle along with contemplation point it is the ideal place to spend a few dedicated hours towards your course.
 - It's open 24 hours every day of the week – it's a great working space, has quite a few of the core texts you need that you can easily borrow, also some fiction so we'd definitely recommend that you check it out!
- Interfaith/Meditation Room (located next to the library)
 - The go to place when you need a quiet break from the constant hustle around you. The name itself explains the rest.
- Laundry
 - There are 2 Laundry rooms: the main one is on B-Curve corridor, but the houses have another one between E and F houses.
 - You can load your laundry card quite easily using the Circuit website.
(<https://www.circuit.co.uk>)
- The Gym
 - The 85 steps up to Aidan's are already quite the workout but if you fancy going to the gym you can get a termly membership for £15 or a yearly membership for £35 (this may change this year due to covid-19). Speak to our Sports and Societies Officer, Tom Cox, for more information.
- The Music Room
 - There is a music room right across the Gym and there is a piano and drums inside. There is also some sheet music you can check out. You could sign up at College reception to schedule a practice time.

DURHAM UNIVERSITY

Sports

- Whether you want to join your College's sports team, or the university's team, it is quite easy to get involved with sports at Durham. Plus, you don't have to be a professional to do so.
- There's such a wide variety of sporting opportunities, available within the College, that I would recommend you giving it a go! It is the best time and place for you to try out new things!
- College sport teams compete against each other whilst if you play for Durham, you'll be competing against other universities
- Maiden Castle is the main sports complex in the City, many colleges and university teams train there.

Durham Students' Union

- Every Durham student is a member of [Durham Students' Union](#).
- They organise events and fairs such as the Freshers Fair, where you can get information on sports and societies that you can join in Durham.
- They also run the Palatinate, our student-run newspaper, and Purple Radio, our online radio station
- If you have any questions about the Union and how to get involved, ask Emily Jolliffe or Tom Chapman and they'll be glad to fill you in!

Societies

- There are lots of societies you can join and there's a 90% chance that you'll find what you're looking for, we even have a Quidditch Team and a Bubble tea society!

- You can find more information on Durham's societies in the following link: <http://www.durhamsu.com/groups#club-society> Remember to attend the Fresher's Fair to get a good overview of the things you can get involved in!
- Our College also has a lot of societies that will be showcased to you during the College's Freshers Fair, which will take place in the JCR.
- Societies are great because you get to meet people that share the same passions as you. Plus, every society organises socials, with all the members that usually ends in great night outs!

Volunteering

- **STUDENT COMMUNITY ACTION**
 - Involves more than 400 students from across the University in over 40 different voluntary projects.
 - Whether you enjoy working with children, animals, helping the elderly, being outdoors or supporting those with disabilities, SCA will have a project for you.
 - If you are not sure whether you want to commit fully to volunteering regularly, there are loads of SCA projects that have one-off opportunities to get involved
 - To get more information on SCA and volunteering, you can contact community.action@durham.ac.uk, or ask Emily Jolliffe, the St Aidan's Outreach Chair, to get involved in College volunteering opportunities
 - Give volunteering a try, it's always great to give back to the community within which you will be living for the rest three to four years of your life! ☺
- **TEAM DURHAM COMMUNITY OUTREACH**
 - Offers both sports and non-sports based volunteering opportunities – over the years it has organised sport sessions for vulnerable adults and continued the DU SHINE project, which aims to increase physical activity participation in those aged 40-70
 - Team Durham also gives students the opportunity to volunteer internationally during the summertime in the Sport in Action Zambia Project.

- You can contact teamdurham.community@durham.ac.uk if you want more information

- **DUCK**

- Durham University Charities Kommittee, is the most successful student-run charity in the UK.
- They run events such as Rag Raids (fancy dress charity collections in the big city centres), the Durham University Charity Fashion Show (DUCFS), creative fundraisers and expeditions in the summer! You can get involved in DUCK by signing up for one-offs or by getting involved in the committee itself.

Socials, Formals and Balls

- Socials are organised by the different societies for their members, they happen quite often although the number of socials depends on the society – if you can get involved by helping to organise those events.
- Formals: Communal dining is an important part of college life whether you live in or live out of college. On several evenings per term there is a Formal Dinner and they are usually non gowned, themed events either black tie or fancy dress themed events composed of a 3-course meal in College, usually followed by entertainment (such as karaoke or dancing) organised in the JCR (although these will be different this year due to covid-19)
- Balls: St Aidan's has one ball per term, the most important one being Summer Ball (it's one of the best events – maybe even the event of the year and we couldn't recommend it more!)

International Students' Association

- The ISA is a university-wide association which represents students to the university and runs events across campus, like balls, fashion shows and trips

Aidan's International Society

- Do join the Aidan's' International Society, which I mentioned in my little introduction! The Society won of the Best College Society or Club in Durham Award for the past 2 years running
 - We hold international nights twice a year, which are basically evenings with food and games centred around different cultures.
 - There are also International Cafés every fortnight in the JCR – they're basically events where you can meet other people that are interested in cultural exchange, all this while having free cake and coffee. You will meet some great people there!

BEFORE TRAVELLING TO THE UK

Quarantine

- If you are arriving in the UK from a country that requires you to undertake a 14 day period of quarantine (self-isolation) then please can you let the college admissions team know at aidans.admissions@durham.ac.uk as soon as possible so that we can make the necessary arrangements for your arrival. Recommended arrival times for those required to quarantine is Saturday 12 or Sunday 13 September. Check here to see whether or not you are covered by the current Travel Corridor Exemption list: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-travel-corridors>.

Visa

- For the moment, only non-EU students require a visa to study in the UK. Find out whether you need a visa or not online, and all the practical information regarding how to get one and how much it costs is here: [_](#)
- The university website also has information concerning Visas which can be helpful: <https://www.dur.ac.uk/immigration/studentvisas/> <https://www.dur.ac.uk/immigration/>. EU students - <https://www.dur.ac.uk/about/password/eu/students/>
- General information on Visas can be found on the UK border's Agency page: <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas-immigration/studying/> → please check it out!!
- Most International Students classify as **Tier 4** (either General or Child, depending on age)

- If that's the case, you need to complete the Tier 4 General or Child form and the relevant Appendix → Said Appendix is what will earn you points and grant you the visa (the other form being only for personal details). Your English Language Proficiency (IELTS), your CAS details and grades will go on the appendix.
- If you're only in the UK for up to 6 months (or 11, if you're after an English language course) then you will classify as a Visitor (again, depending on your age, you could be a regular Student Visitor or a Child Visitor).
- If you need help with your application, you should either contact Durham University's International Office or the High Commission/ Embassy in your country.

<http://www.dur.ac.uk/international/>

international.office@durham.ac.uk

Tel: +44(0)1913346328

Ask: <https://www.dur.ac.uk/study/askus/>

- The letter you need from the University is available on UCAS once you have accepted your unconditional offer at Durham University.
- Make sure to thoroughly read your **Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS)** Statement, as it will not only give vital details for your Visa application, but also inform you of any additional documents you may require (for example, an ATAS certificate, which takes about 6 weeks to obtain).

Vaccines

- Your vaccines need to be up to date when you get to Durham
- Depending on where you come from, you may need additional vaccines, so please check the British High Commission/Embassy in your country.
- If you are not able to get them done before you come to Durham, you can arrange it with the NHS in Durham and do it when you are here.
- The recommended vaccines are those for (1) Measles, (2) Mumps & Rubella, Polio, (3) Meningitis and (4) Hepatitis.

- Also check whether UK asks for additional vaccines from your country.

Pre-Arrival Enrolment

- You can find information on the Enrolment process in the following link: <https://www.dur.ac.uk/student.registry/registration>
- Before you get to Durham, you should enrol online on DUO, which stands for Durham University Online, an online platform where you will have to register for your modules, where your department will upload course-related information, where you upload your assignments and where you can find your results.
<https://duo.dur.ac.uk/>
- Your Durham Email is the email you will use for university purposes. You can log into your email here: <https://dur.ac.uk/cis/email/> - check your email regularly as you will start receiving course related information on there!
- DUO, your Durham Email and the University's IT systems, have the same log in details, which will be emailed to you shortly.
- Make sure you start updating your DUO page as soon as possible, choosing the modules you will study. Even if some of your modules are compulsory, you should register for them on DUO. The deadline to register for your modules should be on the first or second day of term. Check the extra modules availability (whether it is at the same time with a compulsory module or whether it requires another module taken from the same course etc.)
- If your department has emailed you prior to your arrival to Durham, telling you not to register for your modules yet, you should do as they tell you. This is usually the case if you are a Combined Honours student.

Informing the University about your Arrival

- In order to ensure your health and safety and for the smoothest possible start, you should inform about travel plans by completing the form at www.dur.ac.uk/conference.booking/details/?id=1583 **as soon as possible**. Completing this form also enables you to book a place on our **free pick-up** service from Newcastle Airport on selected dates.
- The University offers a free pick-up service **for students only** (unless your family is accompanying you for the duration of your studies) from Newcastle Airport on the following dates:

Saturday 12th September 2020
Sunday 13th September 2020
Saturday 19th September 2020
Sunday 20th September 2020
Monday 21st September 2020
Tuesday 22nd September 2020

Finance

- Opening a bank account is something that should be your top priority at this time as it is essential at the moment and will be a necessity for you throughout your time at Durham.
- Keeping in mind health and safety of all, many shops and restaurants in town as well as the shop and bar in college are no longer accepting cash and having a card at hand would be a necessity.
- Things to know:
 - You need a bank account in your name that has your term time address (aka the address where you'll be residing whilst studying)
 - The account currency has to be in pounds (£) (the standard currency used to pay for the University fees, to sign up for phone contracts and to cover your expenses)
 - Make sure you inform yourself about your bank possible account before you sign up for it as they all have their own perks and drawbacks
 - Look out for overdraft charges and fees linked to maintaining the account before you sign up for anything
 - Some banks offer certain benefits such as a free Rail Card but make sure to not be blinded by it and do your research on the possible disadvantages of the account.
 - Some of your options could be -
 - **Lloyds Bank** - Durham Market Place, 19, Durham DH1 3NL, United Kingdom (<https://www.lloydsbank.com/current-accounts/all-accounts/student-account.html?collapse2-1499456163436#collapse2-1499456163436>)

- **TSB Bank** - 33 High St, Durham DH1 3UL, (United Kingdom (<https://www.tsb.co.uk/current-accounts/student-bank-account/>))
 - **HSBC** - 1 Saddler St, Durham DH1 3NR, United Kingdom (<https://www.hsbc.co.uk/current-accounts/products/student/>)
 - **NatWest** - 12 Market Place, Durham DH1 3NG, United Kingdom (<https://personal.natwest.com/personal/current-accounts/international-student-account.html>)
 - **Barclays** - 6 Market Pl, Durham DH1 3NB, United Kingdom (<https://www.barclays.co.uk/current-accounts/student-account/>)
 - **Santander** - 86-87 North Rd, Durham DH1 4SR, United Kingdom (<https://www.santander.co.uk/csdlv1r/BlobServer?blobtable=MungoBlobs&blobkey=id&blobcol=urldata&blobheader=application%2Fpdf&blobheadervalue1=inline%3Bfilename%3DInternational+Student+Current+Account+KFD+do-ec-191.pdf&blobwhere=1314024202648&blobheadername1=Content-Disposition>)
 - **Halifax** - 86-87 North Rd, Durham DH1 4SR, United Kingdom (<https://www.halifax.co.uk/bankaccounts/current-accounts/student-account.html>)
 - **The Co-operative bank** - 29 High St, Durham DH1 3PL, United Kingdom (<https://www.co-operativebank.co.uk/student-accounts>)
- Paperwork needed to open a bank account:
 - A headed letter from Durham University/St. Aidan's College, clearly stating your name, course and address in the UK (You can request St. Aidan's to provide you with one via the online form on the Induction pages)
 - Passport
 - Some things to be aware of:
 - Your CAS statements are not a valid document to open a bank account
 - Check with your future bank before arriving to Durham whether they need more documents.

- Useful websites:
 - http://www.studentbankaccounts.co.uk/#c_table
 - <http://www.bba.org.uk/>
 - <https://www.bba.org.uk/publication/leaflets/international-students/>
 - <http://www.xe.com/ucc/> (currency converter)
- You can also ensure your belongings (this can either be done from your own country or here at Durham) – the most popular insurance company among Durham Students is **Endsleigh**. You can find more information here: <http://www.endsleigh.co.uk/>

Packing

Now for the fun bit if you enjoy packing, – unless you are a terrible packer like me and try to move your entire house from place to place.

What to pack-

- **Plugs:** you'll need 3-pin square plugs for the UK (the standard voltage being 230 V), you might need to buy a transformer for your electrical appliances depending on where you're coming from.
- **Required Documents** (passport/ID, CAS statement, Letters from the University): you'll need some of them for the airport, also to open your bank account or work in the UK.
- **Pounds:** It's best to come to Durham with some cash in hand, in case you need to take a taxi from Newcastle Airport (more or less £30-40), or from Durham Station, which is a 30 minute walk from St Aidan's (approx. £6) Also, the nearest cash point from St. Aidan's is a fifteen-minute walk away.
- https://www.dur.ac.uk/international/newstudents/airport_trainstation_welcomeservice/
- **Toiletries and towels:** you can obviously buy some of these in Durham, but bear in mind that St Aidan's is 15-20 minutes away from town, where most shops are.
- **Medicines and prescriptions:** you may need to show these at the airport for security reasons, and you will have to inform the NHS about the medication you are taking, so that they can have an up to date version of your medical background.
- **Passport-sized photographs:** take some just in case, and you may need more than you expect
- **Clothes:**

- Definitely pack warm clothes! Unless you are a superhuman (or British), you may need your sweaters starting from the first week.
- Also, bring formal clothes and fancy dress items if you have any – you’ll use them more than you’d expect, both during Freshers Week (a Freshers formal and the matriculation ceremony) and throughout the rest of the year for formals and other stuff.

What not to pack-

- **University books:** look out for unofficial Facebook Pages where older students are selling their books at a cheaper price! Also, most of the books that you are required to read can be found in the Library. So, unless you have a massive reading list to get through during the summer, you’ll be alright with buying your books once you’re in Durham. I managed to get all the books I needed in either Durham or Amazon.
- **Food:** College is catered, so you do not need to cook whilst you’re living in. If you want to have any snacks, you can just buy them from town. Please note that if you’re not from the EU you are not allowed to bring meat, dairy products or potatoes into the country (<https://www.gov.uk/bringing-food-animals-plants-into-uk/food>) But if you like cooking your own food, you are allowed to do so in shared kitchens.
- **Pets:** as heart-breaking as it is, pets aren’t allowed in College :(
- **Candles:** they’re a fire hazard, so they’re banned from college
- **Cleaning tools:** Your room will be cleaned every 2 weeks and if you ever need a Hoover, you can ask to borrow one from the Plodge.

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DO AFTER YOUR ARRIVAL

Student Card

- Getting your student or campus card is one of the first things you have to do when you get to Durham – this card allows you to access the Library, the printers and means that you get great discounts when shopping!

National Insurance Number

- To work in Durham and the rest of the UK, whether it is in town, or at the College Bar, Library or Shop, you need to get a National Insurance Number, which is a free procedure that, however, requires an interview at a job centre (the closest one being in Newcastle). You can find more information about this on here: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-national-insurance-number>

NHS

- When you come to Durham, you need to register with the National Health Service, which can be done by filling up a registration form which you get in your Fresher Package (that you get by post) or during Freshers Week.
- Once you hand in the form, you will be assigned a GP and will be able to access the Student Health Centre (called the Claypath and University Health Centre). You can find more information about the opening hours and contact details of the centre here: <http://www.durhamstudenthealth.co.uk>

Police Registration

- Check your Visa stamp to see whether you have to register with the police on your arrival as it is not a requirement for all students

Phone Network Providers

- If you are looking for a contract deal (i.e. a pre-paid deal), you must have a UK bank account.
- Make sure you know the deals each place has. You might be able to get an Internet package, free texts or even a phone
- If you get pay-as-you-go, you can top up in lots of places in Durham.
- Most of the providers listed below have shops in Durham -

Three (<http://three.co.uk/>)

They offer quite cheap deals – However their signal distribution isn't great and it is one of the few network providers that don't seem to have great coverage in College

Vodafone (<http://www.vodafone.co.uk>)

You can either choose “Pay as You Go” or a “Pay Monthly” plans

On top of that, you can opt for a Vodafone International Option which lets you make calls from the UK to anywhere in the world at convenient rates (to have this option you have to text “international” to 2345, if you are on “pay as you go”)

Or if you call regularly the same international numbers, you can buy a “Pay Monthly Bundle” with the following offers:

10£ a month for 75 international minutes

15£ a month for 125 international minutes

20£ a month for 200 international minutes

O2 (<https://www.o2.co.uk/>)

Their International Favourites deal allows you to call landlines and mobiles in different countries (check out their websites to see which country the deal includes)

For 10£ a month, you get 3000 minutes of landline calls and 100 minutes of mobile calls to three international numbers.

For 20£ a month, you get 3000 minutes of landline calls and another 200 minutes to five international numbers.

T-Mobile (<https://prepaid-phones.t-mobile.com/prepaid-plans>)

Their international plan gives low rates on international calls from the UK and an extra 70 minutes for free every month when you top up 10£.

However, like 3, T-Mobile is one of the few providers that does not have very good signal in College

Giffgaff (<https://www.giffgaff.com/sim-only-plans>)

They are one of the cheapest networks

They offer SIM-only pay as you go programs and monthly goody-bags that you can choose to stop buying whenever you want, which is perfect if you spend a lot of time abroad and don't want to continue paying for a UK mobile line

Their goody-bags range from £5 to £20 – the £5 one offers 60+ extra UK minutes, 300 UK texts, 20MG Internet and calls to giffgaff numbers are free

Their only downside is that they are internet-based so they do not have a shop in Durham

Travelling Around the UK

- The best thing you can do if you plan on travelling around the UK quite a bit during your stay in Durham is to get a 16-25 rail card, which is worth £30 a year or £70 for 3 consecutive years. The railcard allows you to get discounted train rates, and even get discounts if you pair it with your Oyster Card (which you use to travel around London)
- Durham is quite good for travelling around the UK:
 - You can get trains to and from Newcastle, which is the closest (15 min away with train) big city to Durham, where you can find a lot of shops, cinemas, restaurants, clubs, museums, and art galleries – if you get a railcard, return tickets can be as cheap as £4.90.
 - Travelling to London takes 3 hours on average and it can get quite expensive, even with a railcard. However, if you book your tickets in advance the price is much

lower – for instance if you book your train 24 weeks in advance, you can get a return ticket for £22.90.

- York is only a 45-minute train ride away and it's a very cute British city, which has a lovely cathedral
- Edinburgh is also quite close, about 2 hours away, and the city is so worth visiting, even if it's just for the day. Also, you are 30 minutes away from Newcastle International Airport!

Get in Touch:

Website: www.st-aidans.com

Facebook: “St Aidan’s Freshers 2020 (Official)”

Twitter: @aidansjcr

Instagram: staidansjcr, staidansintsoc, staidanswelfare

Weibo: StAidansJCR

WeChat: St Aidan’s 2020新生交流群

Contact your International Freps :)

We’re more than happy to answer any questions you have so don’t hesitate.

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