Self-guided tour

King's Buildings Campus and surrounding area

A warm welcome to The University of Edinburgh and the city of Edinburgh. This tour is for the King's Building Campus, the University's second largest campus. Subjects within the College of Science and Engineering are taught here, with the exception of Informatics and Geography which are taught at the Central Campus in George Square. The Students' Union is also open for all students at the University.

The recommended starting point is from the campus main entrance outside Ashworth Laboratories (Number 1), near Mayfield Road. The tour should take no more than an hour if walking at a leisurely pace, with time to take in the main buildings and facilities on campus. Add on 20 minutes if you wish to include Blackford Hill for The Royal Observatory Edinburgh. Please note that the Nucleus Building (Number 14), at the end of the tour, is the only one open to the public.

Directions to the campus from the city centre are on the back of this leaflet. You can also use the postcode EH9 3JT to find your way via a map app/site. A map showing accessible routes and entrances can be downloaded from:
www.ed.ac.uk/estates/buildings-information/disability

King's Buildings Campus map key

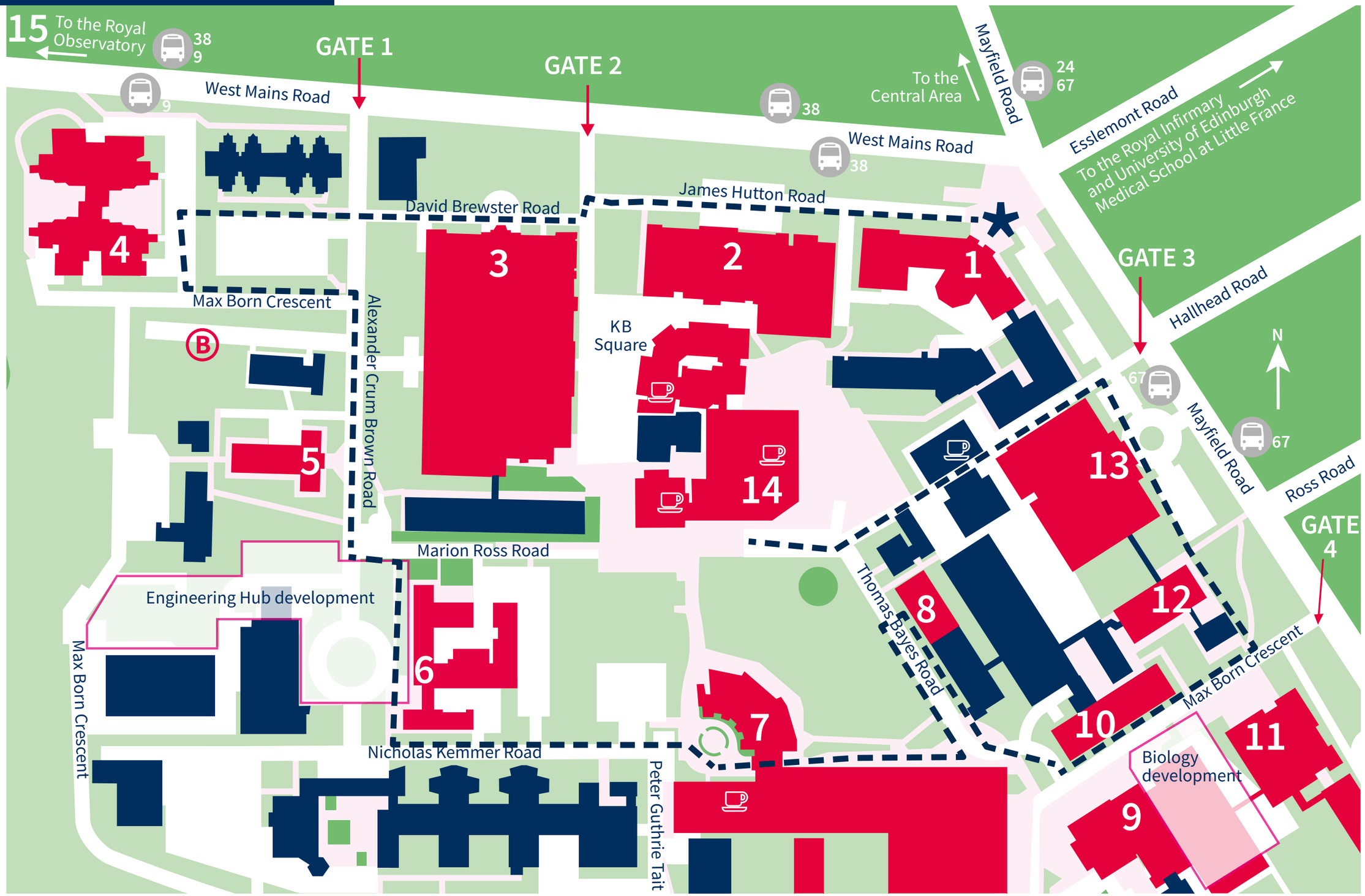
★ Starting point

1. Ashworth Laboratories
2. Grant Institute
3. Joseph Black Building
4. Murchison House
5. Crew Building
6. Roger Land Building
7. James Clerk Maxwell Building
8. Alexander Graham Bell & William Rankine Buildings
9. Swann & Darwin Buildings
10. Alrick & Faraday Buildings
11. Daniel Rutherford & CH Waddington Buildings
12. Hudson Beare & Fleeming Jenkin Buildings
13. Sanderson Building
14. Nucleus Building, Murray Library & KB House
15. Blackford Hill - The Royal Observatory, Edinburgh

Facilities/Services

Lothian Bus Stop

Refreshments



1 Starting Point - Ashworth Laboratories

The best place to begin the tour is on the north east corner outside the Ashworth Laboratories, where the main entrance to King's Buildings lies. This building is used by the School of Biological Sciences.

Evolutionary biology, immunology and infection research is carried out in the Ashworth Laboratories, the home of the Centre for Immunology, Infection and Evolution. Ashworth is also home to the Aubrey Manning Gallery which houses part of the University's collection of natural history specimens.

2 Grant Institute

Take the path to the right along past Ashworth and the Grant Institute bike store until you reach a two storey building on your left. This is the Grant Institute, where the School of Geosciences is based.

The building was named after its donor Alexander Grant, creator of the popular McVitie's Digestive biscuit! At the Grant Institute the subjects Geology, Geophysics, and Environmental Geosciences are housed. It has a number of research facilities, including a high-tech microanalytical facility where students can analyse rocks, minerals and fluids and measure the physical properties of rocks.

3 Joseph Black Building

Continue along- the path, crossing at the pedestrian crossing. Stop at the large red brick building on the left.

This is the Joseph Black Building, home to the School of Chemistry. King George V laid the foundation stone for this building in 1920, making it the earliest building on campus. It has developed over the decades into a state-of-the-art facility for all modern branches of Chemistry. New teaching laboratories are used by undergraduates and for cutting-edge research into nano-technology, protein structure and function, drug discovery, battery as well as fuel cell materials.

4 Murchison House

Continue straight ahead, passing the bus stop, until you reach Murchison House.

The former British Geological Survey building, has had an extensive refurbishment, turning it into a multi-functional building with an open-plan teaching hub alongside study spaces, lecture theatres, exhibition spaces. You'll find a Student Information Point, the Student Counselling Service and Elements Cafe all located on the ground floor. Murchison is also home to administrative services for the College of Science & Engineering including Admissions and Academic Affairs.

5 Crew Building

Head back along past the bus stop and turn right at the pedestrian crossing to head up Alexander Crum Brown Road. On your right you will see a three storey building with stone steps up to it's entrance - this is the Crew Building, used by the School of GeoSciences.

The Crew laboratories, used to prepare equipment to monitor greenhouse gas fluxes and ecosystem behaviour, were inaugurated by Piers Sellers, former NASA astronaut and graduate of Edinburgh. Here research into Ecology and Atmospheric Chemistry is carried out. This focuses on terrestrial, freshwater and coastal ecosystems and their interactions with other components of the earth system.

6 Roger Land Building

Continue along Alexander Crum Brown Road heading over the pedestrian crossing to the Roger Land Building.

The Roger Land Building houses the UK Centre for Mammalian Synthetic Biology. Research aims to pioneer development of the underpinning tools and technologies needed to implement engineering principles and realise the full potential of synthetic biology in mammalian systems. This builds on the multidisciplinary research carried out by SynthSys, the Centre for Synthetic and Systems Biology, which is housed in the Waddington Building.

7 James Clerk Maxwell Building

Continue along to SRUC then turn left along Nicholas Kemmer Road and Peter Guthrie Tait Road. The large building ahead of you is the James Clerk Maxwell Building (JCMB). Enter through the main entrance on the left, near the circular seating outside. (If you would like to take a break, you will find the Magnet Café on level 2.)

The principal academic units within JCMB and its annexe, the Erskine Williamson Building, are the School of Physics & Astronomy, the School of Mathematics, the School of Geosciences and the Biology Teaching Organisation. The centres of excellence within the building are the Centre for Science at Extreme Conditions (CSEC), the Higgs Centre for Theoretical Particle Physics and the Tait Institute which is dedicated to mathematical physics. In addition, the building has five lecture theatres, a large multi-media teaching space and many group study rooms.

Continue straight ahead to exit via the double doors in front of you.

8 Alexander Graham Bell & William Rankine Building

Continue straight ahead beside JCMB for around 30 metres and at the end of the footpath to your left you will see a glass-panelled structure- this is the Alexander Graham Bell Building. To the left of this you will see the entrance of the connecting William Rankine Building.

Researchers in the Alexander Graham Bell Building work on mobile and digital communications, including the latest technology for mobile phones and digital communications systems. The William Rankine Building opened in 2006 as part of the School of Engineering. It houses Civil Engineering, environmental and buildings research and is home to Edinburgh's Fire Safety Engineering research group.

9 Swann and Darwin Buildings

Head to the right following the path away alongisdeJCMB. You'll immediately face the Michael Swann and Charles Darwin buildings. These buildings house Biological Sciences.

The Wellcome Trust Centre for Cell Biology is based in the Swann Building alongside other researchers in cell and structural biology which includes drug discovery, chromosome biology, RNA biology and epigenetic control of cell function.

The Darwin Building, is undergoing redevelopment. The new building will provide state of the art laboratories, technologies and spaces to support strategic research in Biology of our Changing World, Biology of Health & Disease, and Engineering Biology for Health & Wealth.

10 Alrick and Faraday Buildings

Across the road from the Swann and Darwin Buildings is the Alrick Building. Immediately behind it, tucked away, is the Faraday Building.

The Alrick and Faraday Buildings are home to marine renewables and energy systems research. Edinburgh has a long tradition of wave energy production from Stephen Salters's work in the early 1970's - including Salter's Duck. The Fkowave research facility here at King's Buildings supplements this research by enabling large scale testing of marine energy devices.

11 Daniel Rutherford and CH Waddington Building

Continue straight on. After the Swann and Darwin Building on your right is the Daniel Rutherford Building, used by the School of Biological Sciences. Interconnected behind it is the CH Waddington Building.

The Rutherford Building houses research in plant cell biology to understand processes in plant growth, development and immunity that underpin research in plant biotechnology. The Waddington Building houses SynthSys, the Centre for Synthetic and Systems Biology. Research is multidisciplinary and aims to understand and re-design biochemical systems.

12 Hudson Beare and Fleeming Jenkin Building

Cross to the opposite side of the road from the Rutherford Building, then take a left through the gardens and walk along the path parallel to the main road. On your left hand side you will see the interconnected Hudson Beare and Fleeming Jenkin buildings. Hudson Beare is the centre of the School of Engineering, while research is carried out in the Fleeming Jenkin Building.

The Hudson Beare Building is home to Engineering classrooms and a lecture theatre. The Fleeming Jenkin Building has a number of labs, including those for structural, chemical and electrical engineering.

It also has a small wave tank located in the hydraulics lab and a freezer for conducting experiments. There are a number of Carbon Capture research projects running, which aim to find methods of putting carbon dioxide into storage or transportation, thereby helping reduce the levels of this 'greenhouse gas' in our atmosphere.

13 Sanderson Building

Head right on to the main road. The Sanderson Building is on your left. The Sanderson Building houses the Institute for Materials and Processes; it has two chemical and mechanical engineering workshops, where academic researchers, research fellows and postgraduate students work in the areas of biomedical engineering, carbon dioxide capture, materials science, molecular simulation and design, multi-phase flows and complex fluids.

Turn left back on to campus at Colin McLaurn Road and head up the side of Sanderson by Mary Bruck Building towards the Nucleus.

14 The Nucleus Building, Murray Library & KB House

Continue along Colin McLaurin Road where on your left you will see the King's Buildings campus history exhibition. Take some time to stop and look at how the campus has evolved over the last 100 years. Ahead on your right is the brand new Nucleus Building, the Murray Library, and KB House.

The Nucleus Building, opened in 2022, is a learning, teaching and social hub at the heart of King's Buildings campus. It has five lecture theatres, studio classrooms and specialist teaching labs as well over 400 study spaces.

You'll also find the Careers Service, a café, and Students' Association shop. The Nucleus is also open to the public on weekends. The Nucleus Building is directly connected to both the Murray Library and King's Buildings House.

The Murray Library, opened in 2012, is named after the late Professor Noreen Murray and Professor Sir Ken Murray, who both worked in the School of Biological Sciences. The ground floor has the KB Café, and the upper floors have study spaces, helpdesk and collections.

KB house is run by Edinburgh University Students' Association (EUSA), King's Buildings House includes a branch of The Advice Place offering students free, impartial and confidential information on a range of issues. It is also home to the MathsBase.

The next part of the tour is the optional visit to the Royal Observatory on Blackford Hill, 10 minutes' walk from King's Buildings campus.

15 Blackford Hill – The Royal Observatory Edinburgh

Exit the King's Buildings campus at the main entrance, and head left up West Mains Road. Around 200 metres ahead on the left there is a grand archway. Go through this, and up the hill of Observatory Road. At the top, the paved area becomes a footpath – take the one leading left. Approach the Observatory by continuing along its near side, enter under the archway, and find the reception to your immediate left.

Built in 1893, the Royal Observatory houses the Institute for Astronomy, the UK Astronomy Technology Centre and a visitor centre. One of the UK's major centres of astronomical research, the Institute for Astronomy specialises in survey astronomy, cosmology, active galaxies and the formation of stars and planets.

Return to the main entrance to King's Buildings.

Getting to King's Buildings

King's Buildings is well serviced by public transport from the city centre. Lothian Buses 24 and 67 buses both pass the campus, and Lothian Buses 9 stops on campus by Murchison House. All of these buses stop in the city centre, and also pass by the George Square (central) campus. During semester a free shuttle bus service for students and staff also runs Monday to Friday from King's Buildings to Central Campus. King's Buildings is around a 30 minute walk from George Square, while many students prefer to cycle. Use the postcode EH9 3JT to search for directions.

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