Living in Edinburgh Guide

Information for Students
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**Introduction**

You have chosen to study in an exciting and welcoming city – a major European cultural centre full of history, architecture, world-class museums, galleries, theatre, art and music. This guide contains a wealth of helpful information to help you orientate, settle in and most importantly, enjoy your time here to the fullest.

**Geography**

Edinburgh is one of the UK’s most student friendly cities. There are four universities, with a total student population of over 90,000, including around 20,000 international students. The centre is split into two distinct areas:

Old Town: a historically rich labyrinth of cobbled streets, hidden courtyards and alleyways where you will find Edinburgh Castle, The Royal Mile (including the Paterson’s Land campus), the Palace of Holyroodhouse, St Giles’ Cathedral, the Scottish Parliament, and the National Museum of Scotland.

New Town: featuring a neat and ordered grid layout inspired by the Scottish Enlightenment. Packed with neoclassical and Georgian architecture from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, New Town hosts the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, the Georgian House, and many of Edinburgh’s chic and boutique shops along Princes Street, George Street and Dundas Street.
Although it is a busy urban centre, there are many green open spaces to enjoy within the city. Most famously, there are the Princes Street Gardens, the Botanic Gardens over in New Town, and Arthur’s Seat, which is an extinct volcano located just five minutes from your classroom at Paterson’s Land!

Safety and Security
Some helpful advice on staying safe in the city....

General Tips
Whilst the crime rate in Edinburgh is relatively low, just as in all modern cities around the world you should take sensible precautions and remain vigilant to ensure your own safety:

- Always tell people where you are going and when you expect to return – keep in touch with people!
- At night, don’t walk alone on quiet or dark streets. Stay out of parks, including the Meadows, after dark. Make sure you know how to get back to your accommodation
- Don’t leave your belongings out in the open, or unattended at any time
- Be aware of where you are going and prepare accordingly (make sure you take the correct clothing, and have water and snacks with you if appropriate)
- Carry a small amount of money with you (£20 for example) in case you need cash in an emergency
- Only use licensed taxis (this topic is covered in more detail later in the guide)
- Do not accept transportation from strangers
- Try to avoid carrying critical documents when you are out (such as your passport)
- Ensure you have contact details and telephone numbers for your accommodation and for ELTC (including the ELTC emergency contact number)
- Keep main doors locked at all times when at home, and shut and lock windows when leaving the house
- Contact the police to report any lost or stolen valuables, or any serious incidents. To make an insurance claim for lost goods, you will need a police report

Emergencies
There are three emergency services within the UK, all of which can be contacted by telephoning 999:

- The Police Service
- The Fire Service
- The Ambulance Service

All are staffed by highly trained professionals and you should not hesitate to contact them in the event of an emergency. Please be aware that the services should be used responsibly, and they are not information services.

You should utilise the emergency services if you are off university campus and need to report a crime, a fire, or to seek help in the event of a serious accident or medical issue. Upon telephoning 999, state your name, location and a brief description of the emergency. The operator will contact the appropriate service on your behalf. If it is safe to do so, wait for the emergency services to arrive.

For non-emergency police assistance, you can dial 101 from any telephone.
**Accidents, Illness and Emergencies on the University Campus**
There are several first aiders, security staff, fire stewards and a Student Support Officer at Paterson’s Land, and across all of the university campuses.

If you are not feeling well, ask the reception desk or a member of staff for assistance.

If there is an emergency, or security issue, you can contact university security personnel by telephoning 2222 from a university line, or 0131 650 2257 from any other phone.

In the event of a fire, please follow any instructions the designated fire stewards may give you. If you hear a fire alarm, you should leave the building immediately using the nearest exit, if it’s safe to do so. Do not stop to collect personal belongings.

For additional advice on safety and security on campus, refer to this website: www.ed.ac.uk/estates/what-we-do/security/help-advice/advice-students

**Health Care**
Several services exist which are available to you. Most of them are free (such as hospital visits). Read on for more details:

**Hospital**
If you require emergency treatment for an injury or illness, you can go to the Accident and Emergency (A&E) department of the local hospital, The Edinburgh Royal Infirmary. It is open twenty four hours each day, and is based on Old Dalkeith Road. Bus number 7; 8; 18; 21; 24; 33; 38 and 49 all travel to the infirmary:

For more minor injuries such as a fracture, sprain, cut or small burn, visit the Minor Injuries Clinic at the Western General Hospital on Crew Road. This is open between 08:00 and 19:00 hours every day. Treatment
is free of charge, but you may have to wait if your condition is not very serious. Bus number 19; 24; 29 and 37 all travel to the hospital:

Finally, for confidential advice about any health issue, you can contact the ‘NHS 24’ helpline by telephoning 111.

**Doctor**

General Practitioners (GP) are doctors within the UK National Health Service (NHS). They can diagnose and treat non-critical injuries and illnesses, refer you to specialists if required, and provide you with prescriptions for medication. Doctor’s surgeries will only accept patients who live in the nearby area, so you will have to visit the surgery closest to your accommodation.

If you are in Homestay accommodation, your host family can give you the name and address of the local doctor’s surgery.

If you are not in Homestay accommodation and are unsure about your local doctor’s surgery, you can find which one is closest to you using this link: [www.nhs24.com](http://www.nhs24.com)

Students who are studying with the University of Edinburgh for less than three months do not need to register with a doctor. If you have to visit a doctor’s surgery during your stay, make sure you explain that you are in the UK temporarily. Be aware that in this situation, you may be charged for a doctor’s appointment. As such, it is strongly recommended that students obtain medical insurance prior to arrival in the UK.

Those who are studying with the University of Edinburgh for more than three months must register with a doctor’s surgery. To do this, you will require a special letter confirming your studies with the university, which you can obtain from Registration staff in Paterson’s Land. Upon your first visit to the surgery, you
must take this letter with you, alongside proof of your Edinburgh address, your passport, and another form of identification (your University of Edinburgh student card for example). Note, doctors will not usually make house calls – you will have to attend their surgery. A doctor will only make a house call in an extreme circumstance, for those who are unable to travel to the surgery.

**Dentist**

If you require emergency dental treatment during your stay, but are not registered with an Edinburgh dental surgery, you can contact the Chalmers Dental Clinic, located on Chalmers Street:

![Chalmers Dental Centre Map]

Their telephone number is 0131 536 4800. They also have a walk-in clinic, which is available Monday to Thursday from 09:00 to 16:45 hours, and Fridays from 09:00 to 16:15 hours.

Be aware, you will usually be asked to pay for any treatment at the time of receiving it.

**Mental Health**

Your emotional and mental health is extremely important to your overall wellbeing, and the university takes this aspect of your health seriously. In the past, mental health in the UK was regarded as a taboo subject which many people were uncomfortable discussing and addressing. However, the importance of mental health has become a well-established principle, and there are many resources now available to help promote and encourage positive mental wellbeing.

If you are worried about your mental health, or that of a friend, help is at hand. You can speak to a GP for advice, and they can refer you to specialists, counselling services and offer treatment as appropriate.

The University of Edinburgh provides a free and confidential counselling service for all students, and they can be contacted by e-mailing: student.counselling@ed.ac.uk

Visit their website for more information: www.ed.ac.uk/student-counselling
The Chaplaincy Centre at Bristo Square (near George Square) is also a good place within the university to have an informal chat with members of staff, or to find a quiet and calming space to get away from things. All faiths and religions are welcome, including those who are not religious:

Visit the Chaplaincy Centre website for more information:
www.ed.ac.uk/chaplaincy

There are many online resources too, such as the website Mood Juice, which is a highly recommended tool:
www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk

The university also offers a confidential advice line called ‘Nightline’. Call 0131 557 4444 between 20:00 and 08:00 hours each night during term time, and someone will talk with you about any worries you may have.

The Samaritans offer a similar service to Nightline, but its run by members of the public rather than students. They offer a free listening and support service twenty four hours a day. Telephone: 116 123. You can also visit their website for more information:
www.samaritans.org

Breathing Space is another great service which enables you to speak to someone confidentially about any stresses and issues you have. Call 0800 83 85 87 free on Mondays to Thursdays, 18:00 to 02:00 hours, and Fridays, 18:00 to 06:00 hours. Visit their website for more information and support resources:
www.breathingspace.scot
The most important thing if you are experiencing issues, is to talk to someone (even if it’s your teacher). Don’t suffer in silence, and remember that you are not alone.

**Sex**

It is important to be responsible and respectful regarding the other person’s physical and emotional wellbeing, and it’s considered grossly unacceptable to abuse or mistreat someone, including pressuring them to do something they are uncomfortable with. All parties must give their full, and willing consent. You should always respect the beliefs and wishes of each other.

Practice safe sex and use protection where appropriate. If you need access to things like condoms, you can purchase these over the counter from any local pharmacy or supermarket. A doctor or pharmacist can also give impartial and confidential advice on any concerns or issues you may have.

If you suspect you may have a sexually transmitted disease (STD), have concerns about your sexual health, or simply have questions, you can visit a local clinic for specialist advice and treatment. All visits are private and confidential. The closest clinic is the Lothian Sexual Health Centre, located on Chalmers Street. They are open from 08:30 to 19:30 hours, Monday to Thursday, and 08:30 to 15:30 hours on Friday. A walk-in service is available between 08:30 and 10:00 hours. Bus number 23; 27; 35; 45; 47 and N27 all stop at Chalmers Street:

![Map of Chalmers Sexual Health Centre](image)

Telephone the centre on 0131 536 1070, or visit their website at: [www.lothiansexualhealth.scot.nhs.uk/services/howtofindus/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.lothiansexualhealth.scot.nhs.uk/services/howtofindus/Pages/default.aspx)

You can find more information about STDs at the following website: [www.cdc.gov/std](http://www.cdc.gov/std)
Medication
If you are suffering from a minor illness such as a cold, sore throat, or indigestion, you can visit any local pharmacy (chemist) in the city. They are highly trained professionals and can provide advice and sell non-prescription medicine (drugs that do not require a doctor’s authorisation). If you have a doctor’s prescription, the pharmacy can also fulfil the medication order.

Money
We have put together some basic, but important information regarding money in the UK, to help you understand the local currency and what facilities are available to you:

Currency
UK money is described in pounds and pence. One pound = £1 (often called a ‘quid’ in Scotland), and one pence = 1p. There are 100p in every £1.

Coins come in denominations of 1p; 2p (all copper coloured); 5p; 10p; 20p; 50p (all silver coloured); £1 and £2 (all gold coloured). You are unlikely to use the copper 1p and 2p coins very often, but will receive them in change given from cash transactions.

Banknotes come in denominations of £5 (often called a ‘fiver’); £10 (often called a ‘tenner’); £20; £50 and £100. Five, ten and twenty pound notes are by far the most common in daily use:

You can access money using an ATM machine (also called a ‘hole in the wall’ or ‘cash machine’):
Almost all ATM machines are free – look out for a sign advising ‘free to use’ – but some will charge you to withdraw money. Legally, the machine must notify you of these charges before you proceed with your transaction. Unless it is an emergency, it is best to avoid using cash machines which charge you, since there is likely to be a free to use machine nearby. Don’t get caught out! Most cash machines will dispense £10 and £20 notes, but a limited selection will also provide £5 notes.

Services in Edinburgh, and indeed Scotland, are reliable and trustworthy, so you are unlikely to encounter any issues with people giving you incorrect change from cash transactions. None-the-less, it is advisable that you keep track of what money you are handing over for payment, and what change you receive from transactions.

Almost all shops and services will accept debit and credit card transactions too, so for convenience and added security, you may wish to use a card to pay for services. Visa and MasterCard are the most commonly accepted, but certain venues may also take American Express.

Be aware that depending on the type of debit or credit card you are using at cash machines, you may incur additional charges for withdrawing money. Check with your card issuer for details if you are unsure.

**UK Bank Accounts**

If you are staying in the UK for less than six months, there will be little benefit to opening a bank account, and you may also find the process difficult.

However, if your stay will be more than six months and you would like a UK bank account, you may be able to open a ‘deposit account’ (this type of basic account comes with a debit card for withdrawing money from ATM machines, and paying for services by card). To obtain a full student bank account, you normally have to be resident in the UK for over two years.

It may take several weeks to go through the process of opening a UK bank account, and you will have to complete application forms and provide identification documents. This will include a ‘bank letter’. If you are in Homestay accommodation, speak to Registration staff at Paterson’s Land for advice. If you have arranged your own accommodation in Edinburgh, refer to the following link for advice on the bank letter: [www.ed.ac.uk/student-administration/order-documents/bank-letter](http://www.ed.ac.uk/student-administration/order-documents/bank-letter)

Be aware that some banks may charge you for opening, and maintaining, a UK account. Do your research before you commit to anything!

**Communication**

Basic information to help you stay in touch with people during your stay in Edinburgh....

**Wi-Fi**

Many locations around the city offer Wi-Fi hotspots you can connect to. Some restaurants and stores may require you to purchase something before they will give you the passcode to connect. But there are many places where you can connect for free, including Edinburgh buses and trams.
The University of Edinburgh provides free Wi-Fi also across all of its campuses. Upon your arrival, one of the Paterson’s Land administrators will help you set up a university Wi-Fi connection. Note, that whilst our Wi-Fi works on almost all devices, we cannot guarantee compatibility and subsequent connection.

**Telephone**

Each region within the UK has an area specific dialling code. For Edinburgh, it is 0131. For example, if you wanted to phone the number 555555 (let’s pretend this is a number for a local Edinburgh business), you would need to dial 0131 555555.

The only exception to the above rule, is if you are using a local landline to phone a local telephone number. For example, if you were calling the Edinburgh number 555555, using a local Edinburgh landline, you would not need to add the 0131 area code, you could simply dial 555555.

For a list of all UK area codes, refer to this link: [www.thephonebook.bt.com/publisha.content/en/search/uk_codes](http://www.thephonebook.bt.com/publisha.content/en/search/uk_codes)

Remember that to dial a number outside the UK, you will need to use the appropriate country code. For example, to dial the Edinburgh number 555555 from Australia, you would need to add the UK country code, and the Edinburgh area code, before you could successfully dial the number: +44 131 555555. Note that when adding the country code to a number, you always drop the first zero (0) from the local number. It usually costs significantly more money to telephone another country.

For a list of all country codes, refer to this link: [www.countrycode.org](http://www.countrycode.org)

For cheaper calls and messages within the UK, and if your chosen mobile device is compatible, you may wish to obtain a UK based SIM card from one of the UK network providers. The biggest providers are O2; Vodafone; EE and 3 (Three), but many third party services exist, such as Tesco Mobile; Virgin Mobile and Talk Talk Mobile. Look around for the best deal. It is recommended that you obtain a pay as you go SIM card (meaning you prepay for all your calls and messages):

You will also find pay to use telephone boxes throughout the city which you can use:
**Post**

Letters and parcels can be posted using the UK mail service. For letters, documents and postcards, look out for red coloured post boxes throughout the city:

You will need to obtain a postage stamp to successfully mail something using a post box. Note that the cost of postage can differ depending on the size and weight of the document. Many shops will sell stamps, including supermarkets, local newsagents and the Post Office itself. The nearest Post Office is on St Mary’s Street:

To mail a parcel, visit the Post Office for advice. They will advise you of postage cost after weighting the item, and will take the parcel from you in the shop for shipping. For more details on postage costs and other information, refer to this link: www.postoffice.co.uk

**Food and Drink**

Basic information on food vendors and local customs:
Supermarkets
There are many shops, services, cafés and restaurants around Edinburgh, but a great place to go for food and general supplies is one of the large supermarkets. There are several all over the city, and many are open from early in the morning until late at night. From snacks, meat, vegetables, fruit, toiletries, stationary, medicine and books to alcohol and pet supplies, supermarkets are a valuable resource. The biggest ones are Tesco; Sainsbury’s; Lidl; Asda; Co-Op (Co-Operative); Aldi and Marks & Spencer (M&S):

Eating
A tremendous benefit of being in the UK is the diverse range of world cuisines that are available. Being the capital city of Scotland, and a cultural centre too, Edinburgh hosts amazing restaurants, cafés and food shops from all over the globe. There is bound to be something to suit your tastes, whether it’s Italian, Mexican, Asian, African, British, American, French, German, or anything else!

Most British supermarkets sell food from other cultures, and there are dedicated shops within the city offering specific ingredients and speciality foods. There is also a wide range of ‘take aways’ to choose from, providing fast food either for collection, or for delivery to your home.

Most food venues will offer vegetarian and vegan options, and also cater for those with food allergies, such as nut, lactose and gluten intolerances. Ask your server, or a member of venue staff for help and advice. Many stores and restaurants also sell halal meats.

Drinking
Local drinking establishments (pubs) which serve alcohol are central to many Scottish people’s lives, and serve as normal social gathering spots, but you don’t have to drink alcohol to enjoy the venues. Many places have contemporary and traditional music on offer, live bands, and fun games like pub quizzes each week. Lots of people choose to have soft drinks and food as a preferred and perfectly acceptable alternative to drinking alcohol.

If you wish to drink alcoholic, you will find a varied selection of world beers, craft ales and ciders, spirits and liquors from all over the globe (including a good selection of traditional Scottish malt whiskies) and glamorous cocktails. Just remember to drink responsibly!

A popular daytime alternative to the pub is to visit a café or coffee shop.
You will find some restaurants do not serve alcohol, only soft drinks. Normally, they will advertise a ‘bring your own bottle’ (BYOB) policy. This means you can drink alcohol, but will have to supply it yourself. Some establishments will charge you a ‘corkage’ fee – a small amount for opening the bottle. Check with the venue for specifics about their BYOB policy.

Note that it is against the law to have open alcohol containers in public, meaning you cannot drink alcohol whilst in the street or in non-designated public areas.

**Tipping**

At restaurants and cafés in the UK it is customary to tip the waiting staff. These staff members often work long hours and do not get paid much money, so they rely on tips to help boost their income. If you have received good service from the venue and / or the staff have been friendly, leave at least 10% of the bill value as a tip. Some places allow you to leave a tip using a debit or credit card, but where possible, it is best to tip with cash.

You do not have to tip staff in regular shops and stores.

**Transport**

You have many transport options available to you in Edinburgh:

**Buses and Trams**

Edinburgh hosts a regular bus and tram service, for cheap and convenient transport around the city, including the airport. The bus service is operated by Lothian Buses. There are stops throughout the city, which will have route and timetable information displayed. Look out for bus stop signs:

Buses run throughout the day until late at night (normally until midnight in central areas), and after that, night buses service some areas of the city. Lothian Buses look like this:
Tickets can be bought directly from the driver, and are valid for one journey only. You will need exact change. You can also purchase a special day ticket, which provides unlimited bus travel around Edinburgh for twenty four hours. For up to date prices, refer to the official Lothian Buses website: www.lothianbuses.com

If you are staying in Edinburgh for more than a week or two, we recommend you purchase a Lothian Buses Ridacard – which will give you unlimited travel around Edinburgh using both the bus and tram service (including travel to the airport). It is the most convenient and easy option for city travel. The card can be purchased for periods of one week, one month, or annually. There are various payment plans available, and you should refer to the Lothian Buses website for full details. The easiest way to obtain a Ridacard is to visit one of the Lothian Buses Travel Shops. The closest one is beside the Waverly train station in the heart of the city centre:
Trams operate throughout the city centre, and if you do not have a Ridacard, you must purchase your tram ticket before boarding, otherwise you will be charged more by the conductor. Tickets can be purchased using the machines located at each tram stop:

Look for the ‘Transport for Edinburgh’ app on the Apple or Google Play store, which contains live bus and tram timetables, and route maps.

**Taxis**

Most taxi businesses in the city are reputable, but for your safety, only take properly licenced taxi services. The most recognisable and well established taxi service is the ‘black cab’ taxi, which looks like this:

If the yellow taxi light is on, the cab is available for hire. You can hail a taxi in the street by waving your arm at it, and if it is safe to do so, the driver will pull over to collect you. You can also obtain a taxi from designated pick up zones, such as outside Waverly train station.

Taxis are a great way to travel around Edinburgh, but they are expensive. The fare is always displayed on a meter inside the cab, and you can tip the driver 10% if you wish. For convenience, you can call a taxi company to send a cab to pick you up from a specified location. We recommend that you keep a note of the following numbers in your phone:

- City Cabs: 0131 228 1211
- Central Radio Taxis: 0131 229 2468

If you are travelling alone at night and you are a female, let the taxi company know this when you call them. They will often prioritise lone female passengers at night, for your safety.
If you see a regular looking vehicle with a Private Hire Car plate, this means it is a private hire taxi. These cannot be hailed in the street, and you normally have to pre-book these cabs directly with the company:

[Image of a private hire taxi plate]

If the taxi does not have an official taxi plate, or if you feel suspicious or uncomfortable about the taxi, **do not get in.**

**Trains**

ScotRail operate regular services across all of Scotland. The main train line links Glasgow and Edinburgh. There are two central stations in Edinburgh: Waverly in the heart of the centre, and Haymarket towards the West End. Tickets can be purchased from the station, using customer service booths, or ticket machines. Information attendants are on hand to help you if you need assistance:

[Image of a train station]

Tickets are valid for a single trip, and you can also buy return tickets. You will need to purchase your ticket before boarding the train, and most stations have ticket conductors and barriers in operation, so make sure you keep your ticket safe, and do not throw it away. For timetable information and prices, refer to the official ScotRail website:

www.scotrail.co.uk

Look for the ‘National Rail Enquiries’ app on the Apple or Google Play store, which contains live train timetables.

**Driving**

If you are planning to drive whilst in the UK there are a few key things you need to know about the law which may be different than in your home country. You should familiarise yourself with the Highway Code, which is available using this link:

www.gov.uk/browse/driving/highway-code
You are expected by law to know this code, and ignorance of the regulations is not an accepted defence for accidents and injuries caused by negligent driving. Be aware of the rules, and stay safe on the roads. Key points to remember are:

- You must **drive on the left side of the road**
- Everyone in the vehicle is required to wear a seatbelt
- You must have a valid driving licence
- If you are on a motorcycle or moped, you must always wear a proper crash helmet
- You must have motor insurance
- It is illegal to use your computer, tablet, smartphone or mobile device whilst driving
- It is illegal, and socially unacceptable to drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Speed limits are displayed in mile per hour (mph). Speed limits vary depending on the area you are driving in. Always check for speed signs and stay under the limit:

![20 mph speed limit sign](image)

**Cycling**

If you are cycling in the UK, it is also crucial that you are familiar with the Highway Code. See the above link for this document. Key points to remember are:

- You are expected to cycle on the road with other traffic, unless using a designated cycle path
- You must always wear a proper cycle helmet
- Front lights (white) and rear lights (red) need to be attached to your bike when cycling at night
- You must wear high visibility (Hi Vis) clothing when cycling at night. This is for your personal safety:
- Do not use your smartphone or mobile device whilst cycling
- It is illegal, and unacceptable to cycle under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Secure your bike when leaving it unattended, and do not leave valuables with the bike
- **Never cycle or overtake on the left hand side of traffic** – especially heavy goods vehicles such as lorries, trucks and buses. People have been killed doing this

You may come across designated cycle lanes within the city, and where possible, you should use these:

The university has some excellent advice about cycling in the city, and available facilities on campus for cyclists. Check out this link for more information:
[www.ed.ac.uk/transport/cycling](http://www.ed.ac.uk/transport/cycling)

**Walking**

Edinburgh can be easily explored on foot. In urban areas, be aware of surrounding traffic at all times. Remember that in the UK, people drive on the left side of the road. To cross a street, press the button at a designated crossing point and wait for the ‘green man’ to show before stepping onto the road:
You may also come across ‘zebra crossings’, where there are no crossing light systems in place. At these crossings, you have the right of way over traffic, so cars should stop for you. Please do not cross however unless it’s obvious that it’s safe to do so (always remain vigilant):

Legal Issues
Find out about basic laws in Scotland which you should be aware of:

Age Limits
There are various legal age restrictions in place across the UK to protect people from harm:

- The minimum age requirement to drink alcohol is eighteen
- To purchase tobacco you must be eighteen years old
- To purchase a lottery ticket you must be sixteen years of age. However, to place a bet at a gambling establishment, such as a ‘bookies’ or casino, you must be at least eighteen
- To engage in sexual relations with someone in the UK, both parties must be over sixteen
- To drive in the UK, you must be at least seventeen years old

It is always good practice to carry photographic ID at all times, preferably with your date of birth on it, to serve as proof of age when purchasing restricted products. A driving licence is a good option. Passports are accepted too – although you may not wish to keep this on you all the time. Your official University of Edinburgh student card can sometimes be used, and can also provide you with student discounts at various venues (see our separate guide on student card rewards for more details).

Drugs
The sale, purchase and possession of illegal substances and controlled medicines, unless prescribed by a doctor, is strictly prohibited. For legislation, and more details on what is considered illegal in the UK, refer to the government website:

www.gov.uk/penalties-drug-possession-dealing

If you have any questions or concerns about drugs, including help if you are suffering from drug addiction or are worried about a friend, you can find impartial and confidential help at the dedicated website ‘FRANK’:

http://www.talktofrank.com
**Weapons**
It is illegal in the UK to carry any form of offensive weapon, including knives, firearms, gas canisters such as mace, and indeed anything that is intended to cause harm. For more details on what is ok to carry and what is not, refer to the government website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/knives-and-offensive-weapons-information

**Discrimination, Harassment and Equality**
It is illegal in the UK to harass, persecute and discriminate against people due to race, religion, colour, gender and sexual orientation. Any form of this is not tolerated. The UK promotes a culture of understanding and acceptance amongst everyone, and to do otherwise is socially unacceptable.

If you feel you have been discriminated against, or feel threatened, report the matter to university staff, or in serious instances, the police. You will be treated with dignity and sensitivity. Any matter you raise will also be kept confidential.

**Environment and Culture**
Be prepared with these helpful tips about weather and cultural issues in Scotland:

**Weather**
Scotland is renowned for its dynamic and unpredictable weather climate. It can literally be sunny and warm in the late morning, then cold, windy and rainy in the early afternoon. As such, it is always advisable to dress appropriately and take precautions in case the weather turns bad. This usually means having some waterproofs handy (such as a raincoat kept in a rucksack or handbag), and / or an umbrella, even in summer time. It’s also a good idea to keep a warm layer with you too, such as a jumper, in case it suddenly gets cold. Do not make assumptions about the weather in Scotland, things can change very quickly!

**Dress**
You may come across modes of dress and behaviour that are unfamiliar, and perhaps unacceptable to you. All students and staff are expected to respect the values of others, including choice of clothing and fashion. If you have any concerns, please speak with a member of university staff.
Religion
Edinburgh is a very multi-cultural city and there are places of worship throughout the centre for most major religions. If you need help finding a suitable venue, the Chaplaincy Centre can offer support and guide you in the appropriate direction. Find out more at their website: www.ed.ac.uk/chaplaincy

You may encounter practices and beliefs that you do not agree with or find unacceptable. You do not need to get involved with anything that makes you uncomfortable or goes against your own cultural or religious beliefs. Remember that ‘culture shock’ is normal and something that many people experience when first visiting a new country, and keep in mind that many other students will be feeling the same – including students from other parts of the UK. You will find Edinburgh, and Scotland in general to be a very welcoming place with accepting and friendly people, who will be happy to share and celebrate different cultures and beliefs in a respectful manner.

The university supports and encourages diversity, and religious intolerance and persecution in any form is unacceptable. If you have any issues or concerns, please speak with a member of university staff.

Smoking and Vaping
It is illegal to smoke tobacco products, or to use electronic cigarettes and vaping devices, in any enclosed public place. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Restaurants and cafés
- Bars, pubs and clubs
- Shops
- Buses (and bus stops), trams, trains and taxis
- University buildings
- Cinemas
- Airports

If you smoke or vape, you need to go outdoors to do so. Many venues, such as pubs and restaurants, will have designated spots outside the premises for you to do this. If you are unsure whether you are allowed to smoke or not, ask a member of venue staff, and look out for these signs:

Please make sure you dispose of any cigarette butts responsibly – do not simply throw them in the street, use a designated smoking bin. Make sure all hot ashes are fully extinguished before disposing of them.
Recycling and Waste
The University of Edinburgh, the city of Edinburgh, and the UK as a whole, are committed to recycling waste. When you are disposing of plastics and papers, look for a blue trash bin designated for these types of recyclable materials. They often look like this:

General waste bins look like this:

You will also find glass bins for empty glass containers, and food bins for waste food products. Use these where possible:
Help keep Scotland tidy and dispose of waste responsibly. Look out for signs advising which type of waste belongs in which bin:

**Enjoy!**

We look forward to welcoming you to Scotland, and hope that you have an amazing time with us!