



THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH

A guide to life in Edinburgh

for families & partners of international students



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Welcome to the University of Edinburgh! Moving abroad as a couple or a family is a huge decision - exciting of course, but also with a lot to think about and plan. Thinking about immigration, finances, healthcare, accommodation, schooling or childcare can be challenging. Dealing with a new culture, social mores and possibly a new language add to the challenge. The University considers the welfare of all students and their families to be of utmost importance and understands that once you are settled into life in the UK, you will have the foundation to succeed academically. Whether you are a student yourself, or the partner or child of a student, this guide will help you adjust to your new life and to feel supported during your time with us. There are plenty of people here who are more than happy to offer assistance and make you feel very welcome, and

there is a community of fellow students and their families who've been through similar. My advice is to draw on the formal institutional support structures and connect to the informal experimental ones. The University is a diverse, vibrant, warm and welcoming community and our biggest asset.

Edinburgh is a wonderful and vibrant city, offering many opportunities for you to enjoy your family life whilst living here. We hope you enjoy your time at the University of Edinburgh and in Scotland – and that you find that Edinburgh becomes your home away from home!

Professor James Smith
Vice Principal - International

Finding accommodation in Edinburgh



Before you travel to the UK

It can be difficult to find long-term accommodation before you arrive in the UK. You should arrange temporary accommodation so that you have somewhere to stay when you first arrive in Edinburgh, such as a hostel, B&B, guest house or hotel. You can find information about temporary accommodation on the Visit Scotland website:

www.visitscotland.com/destinations-maps/edinburgh-lothians/accommodation

Temporary accommodation in Edinburgh can be very expensive, so it's important to budget carefully. There are several types of accommodation that you might want to choose from:

- **Hostels** offer cheap accommodation, but you might need to be ready to share your room, kitchen and bathroom.
- **B&Bs** (Bed & Breakfast) cost a little bit more, but your breakfast will be included. You will usually have your own bedroom and sometimes your own bathroom (known as en-suite).
- **Guest houses** offer more than just a bedroom. They often have a communal lounge, and sometimes even a bar. Guest houses offer breakfast and sometimes evening meals (for additional costs). They are slightly more expensive than B&Bs.
- **Hotels** are the most expensive option and cheaper rates won't usually include breakfast.

University accommodation

The University has around 80 accommodation units suitable for couples. These are usually small, self-contained and located near George Square. There are also 65 accommodation units suitable for families. These are self-contained flats, with two to four bedrooms. Most are located at Blacket Avenue, near Pollock Halls.

Family accommodation is very popular, so you should apply as soon as you can. You can look and apply for University Accommodation online:

www.accom.ed.ac.uk

www.domus.ed.ac.uk

If you have any questions about University Accommodation for couples and families please contact:

accom.reslife@ed.ac.uk



Private accommodation

Edinburgh has a lot of private sector accommodation. You shouldn't, under any circumstances, send money to anyone for accommodation prior to viewing a property, verifying that the person is the actual landlord or a representative of the landlord (such as letting agent) and seeing the contract (tenancy agreement). You should also read the tenancy agreement in full before you sign it or make any payment.

Where to look for private accommodation

You can search for accommodation online. Some useful websites are City Lets, S1 Rental, Gumtree or Letting Web (you can find these easily by searching on Google).

You can also look for accommodation through a letting agency. You can find letting agencies in Edinburgh online. They will usually require a UK based guarantor. If you don't have one, you will probably have to pay money in advance (usually between 3-6 months' rent) to secure accommodation in the private rental sector.

You should ensure that the landlord is registered with the Council. Most private landlords need to be registered and their registration number must appear in any written or online advert. Check landlord or property registration online at:

www.landlordregistrationscotland.gov.uk

Further information:

www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/adviceplace

Where are you going to live?

Edinburgh is generally a safe city, but you might want to explore an area before signing any tenancy agreement. Younger students tend to live in areas closer to the central campus, such as Bruntsfield, Marchmont, Newington and Morningside. If you have young children, you might want to choose a location close to healthcare services, childcare provision, schools, parks/play area and other forms of local infrastructure that can support family life and reduce the risk of isolation for non-studying parents. You may also prefer to live near a bus route, with easy access to the city centre.

Things to consider

Tenancy agreement

You will have to sign a tenancy agreement: this is a contract between you and your landlord which highlights the rights and responsibilities of both parties. It's important that you understand the agreement before signing it. In particular, you should check if there is a minimum length of time to rent the accommodation (normally six months) and what happens if you choose to leave early. For further information and advice on tenancy agreements, visit the Edinburgh Council website:

www.edinburgh.gov.uk



Deposit

A security deposit is a sum of money you pay to the landlord at the beginning of a tenancy agreement. It is used to cover any damage to the property or any rent that is not paid. When your tenancy agreement ends your security deposit will be returned to you. Any cost of damages or outstanding rent will be subtracted.

To protect yourself and your deposit, you should have a full inventory of the items within the property and their condition before moving in. You and the landlord should sign this inventory and keep a copy.

Landlords lodge deposits with the Mydeposits Scotland scheme. The scheme ensures that the money is kept in a safe bank account until the end of the tenancy.

www.mydepositsscotland.co.uk

Costs

The cost of rent varies depending on the type of accommodation you choose. There are additional costs you should consider when budgeting for your accommodation.

Gas and electricity

There are a few different companies providing gas and electricity in Edinburgh. Sometimes there will already be an agreement with a provider when you move in. Your landlord or letting agency can tell you who your provider is and whether you can change. A price comparison website can help you find the cheapest option, such as:

moneysupermarket.com

If you stay in University accommodation, the cost of gas and electricity will be included in your rent.

Broadband and telephone

You may be required to pay an installation fee for internet broadband and/or a telephone landline in a private flat, then a monthly subscription charge for the services.

You can compare providers and packages on a price comparison website, such as:

moneysupermarket.com

TV licence

If you watch live TV, catch-up TV or record programmes, including on a TV, laptop, tablet, smart phone or other device you must buy a TV licence. This applies to students who live in university accommodation.

www.tvlicensing.co.uk

Furniture

Flats can be rented furnished or unfurnished.

Furnished accommodation usually comes with basic furniture, such as beds, sofas, an oven, a fridge and a washing machine.

Even if furnished accommodation is generally more convenient, you will find that **unfurnished** accommodation is cheaper. If you are staying in Edinburgh for a few years, you may consider unfurnished accommodation. You could furnish it quite cheaply in shops like Ikea or charity shops. Many charity shops in Edinburgh sell furniture. When leaving the UK you could either sell your furniture online or donate it to your local charity shop.

Contents insurance

You should consider getting insurance for your home

to protect your belongings in case of theft or damage. This is particularly important if you have expensive equipment, such as a laptop or tablet. Endsleigh is an insurance company that specialises in student insurance, but you can also check price comparison websites to get the best deal for you.

www.endsleigh.co.uk

Some price comparison websites are:

gocompare.com

moneysupermarket.com

confused.com

Council tax

Exemptions

Council Tax is a charge made by local authorities for each property within the area. It helps pay for local services such as schools, libraries and rubbish collection. The amount of council tax you pay depends on the value of the property you live in. Full time students are exempt, unless studying on a programme that lasts less than 6 months. This also applies to non-EU dependants of international students (family members/partners of international students). The best way to find out whether you are exempt is to check your visa to see if it mentions any restriction upon your ability to work in the UK or if it specifies “no recourse to public funds”. If that is the case, you will be able to apply for exemption.

How to apply for exemption

If you want to apply for this exemption you should write to the council. The main applicant (student) should ask them to check his/her status with the Student Administration list and enclose copies of his/her passport as well as the dependants' passports. The Advice Place has a standard letter that can be used as a guide when writing to the council – just ask for a copy. To contact the Council, it is easiest to visit the main office at the following address:

**City Chambers, City of Edinburgh Council,
249 High Street, Edinburgh, EH1 1YJ**

Telephone number: **0131 469 5000**

Email: revenuesbenefits@edinburgh.gov.uk

For further help with accommodation please contact the Advice Place:

www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/adviceplace



Healthcare in the UK



The National Health Service

The National Health Service (NHS) is the UK's state health service which provides treatment for UK residents through a wide range of services.

Eligibility

NHS treatment is provided for all students with a Tier 4 visa and their dependants. You may have to pay for dentistry and some more specialised services. An NHS Health Charge will be payable at the time of submitting a visa application (both inside and outside the UK). This cost will vary depending on the length of your visa. For more information, please see our website:

www.ed.ac.uk/global/immigration

Access to medical care: registering with a GP

You will have to register with a doctor, also known as a General Practitioner (GP), soon after arriving in the UK. Do not wait until you are ill or require treatment to register. You will have to arrange accommodation before being able to register, as your GP must be in your local area.

Registering with a GP is easy and free. Find a local GP:
www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/GP/LocationSearch/4

You will need to take your passport, visa and proof of your UK address (e.g. your accommodation contract or a utility bill) to register. Registration involves completing a form and having a health check.

GP surgeries provide basic medical care, and if you are unwell you should always see your GP first. If you need specialist care, your GP will be able to refer you to the appropriate department. Getting an appointment with a specialist can take many weeks.

When you contact your GP you will be offered an appointment time. You could have to wait up to 2 weeks before you are seen, so if your problem is urgent you must let them know. They may be able to offer you an emergency appointment on the same day. Remember to keep your contact details (address, email address, phone number etc.) up-to-date so that your GP can stay in touch with you and so that you can book an appointment when required.

Prescriptions

If you need medication, your doctor will give you a prescription which you must take to a dispensing pharmacy. In Scotland, prescriptions are **free** for everyone.

You won't need a prescription for some first-line treatment medicines such as aspirin, some painkillers or cough medicines. These can be purchased in local pharmacies and supermarkets. Your GP or pharmacist will be able to provide detailed advice about this.

If you require regular medication for an existing condition (diabetes, asthma etc.), you should bring details of your current treatment to help medical staff here to work out a prescription for you. You may be given slightly different medication from the one originally prescribed, as local protocols vary and some medications are not available in the UK.

Vaccinations

If you belong to a risk group (e.g. pregnant women, children, older people and people with certain health conditions, such as diabetes) some vaccinations are free. If you do not belong to a risk group, you could be charged for vaccinations against flu or to prepare you for international travel (e.g. vaccinations against rabies, hepatitis B, yellow fever etc.).

Out of hours services

If you need medical attention and you can't wait until your GP surgery opens, you should call NHS24 on **111**.

During the call you will be asked about your location and your reason for contacting the service. This will be used to direct your call to a suitable health professional, such as a nurse, pharmacist or dental nurse. They will talk to you about your symptoms and tell you what care they think you need. They might suggest that you treat yourself at home, that you see a doctor or another health professional or, in some cases, they might call an ambulance for you.

Emergencies

If you have an accident or are seriously ill, you may need to go to the hospital. The emergency department in a hospital is called A&E (Accident & Emergency). If you cannot go there yourself you can call an ambulance by dialling **999** (this is a free number). Be prepared to provide the telephone number from which you are calling and the address where help is needed.



Pharmacies

Your local pharmacist can give advice on common health problems and can answer questions about medicines. Appointments are not necessary. Ask to speak to your pharmacist in a private area if there is something you don't want other people to hear. If your symptoms are serious, your pharmacist might suggest you should go to your GP. To find an out of hours service pharmacy, phone NHS 24 on **111**. No pharmacies provide 24 hour services.

Eye care

It's important to get your vision checked once every 2 years. Eye tests are free in Scotland.

You can find a **list of opticians** in Edinburgh on the NHS website. Children under 16 years of age (or under 19 if in full-time education) don't have to pay for prescription lenses, but have to pay for their frames. Most opticians have a low cost range of frames; adults pay for both spectacle lens and frames.

Find your local optician:

www.nhsinform.scot/scotlands-service-directory

Dental care

You should register with a dentist soon after you have arranged accommodation. Check that your dentist will accept you as a patient under the NHS, as charges will be cheaper (dental treatment is not free in Scotland). You should always check prices with your dentist before you proceed with any treatments as fees can vary. **You can obtain details of NHS dentists currently registering patients by visiting the NHS website.** Pregnant women, nursing mothers and children under 18 are usually treated at the dentist free of charge.

Find your local NHS dentist:

www.nhsinform.scot/scotlands-service-directory



Sexual health

Sexual health services in Edinburgh are offered through the **Chalmers Sexual Health Centre**. The centre offers help and advice on contraception, pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, and general gynaecology queries. For appointments and advice visit their website:

www.lothiansexualhealth.scot.nhs.uk

Keeping healthy

A healthy diet will help you to feel good both physically and mentally. Adjusting to being away from home can be difficult: different routines and mealtimes can affect when and where you eat. You should also try and eat a varied, balanced diet, with the recommended five portions of fruit or vegetables a day. The **NHS website** offers lots of advice on healthy eating:

www.nhs.uk

It is also important that you take some form of regular exercise. You can join a gym (the University's **Centre for Sport and Exercise** offers discounts for families and partners of international students), choose an activity that you enjoy or simply walk or cycle.

www.ed.ac.uk/sport-exercise

www.edinburghleisure.co.uk

Culture shock

After you arrive in Edinburgh you may experience culture shock. It's natural to feel homesick or anxious when you first move to a new country. In time you will begin to settle into your new life, though there are some things you can do to help ease some effects of culture shock.

You may miss your family and friends, so you should arrange to talk to them regularly. Skype or Facetime is usually a better way to connect than phone or email, as you will be able to see them, so you will feel closer. Our website provides tips and advice you may find helpful as you adjust to life in Edinburgh.

www.ed.ac.uk/students/academic-life/adapting-well/culture-shock

You might also want to read our 'In and around Edinburgh' chapter – it's full of suggestions for your spare time!

Your children

Education

Nursery and pre-school

Pre-school/nurseries are provided by the Council. Children aged 3-5 years have access to free, pre-school education on a part-time basis (either morning or afternoon, Monday-Friday). You can apply to more than one pre-school/ nursery, but you may be placed on a waiting list and your first choice is not guaranteed. For information on local nurseries check the Edinburgh Council website:

www.edinburgh.gov.uk

Private nursery and pre-school options are also widely available. Nursery Guide Edinburgh have more information on their website:

www.nurseryguideedinburgh.co.uk

Primary and secondary school

In the UK, the state provides compulsory, free education from 5-16 years old. There are two stages: primary school (4/5-12 years) and secondary school (11/12-18). Primary school goes from primary one (P1) to primary seven (P7) and secondary from first year (S1) to sixth year (S6).

School year

The school year starts around the middle of August and finishes towards the end of June. In Scotland, the school year is divided into 3 terms (autumn, spring and summer) with mid-term breaks and a long summer break (usually around 6 weeks). For the latest information on term dates in and around Edinburgh, visit the Edinburgh City Council website:

www.edinburgh.gov.uk

Catchment area

Placement in primary and secondary schools depends on your home address. Each postcode has a catchment area. Your children will be given a priority place in schools in your area. To find out about schools in your catchment area, enter your postcode in the catchment area map on the Edinburgh City Council website:

www.edinburgh.gov.uk

English language support

If English is your child's second language, Edinburgh City Council can provide language support in their school. All schools in Edinburgh have regular contact





with language teachers, who provide additional classroom support to help children learn and develop their English.

English as an Additional Language (EAL) works in partnership with schools to support pupils in early years, primary, secondary and special schools. There is not usually a regular EAL teacher in nurseries but staff can contact the EAL Service for advice:

0131 469 2890

Registering your child

Find a school for your child by in 3 easy steps:

- Find schools in your catchment area
- Choose one school
- Make contact with the school directly to check if they have space for your child and find out about registration. A schools directory is available on the Edinburgh City Council website.

Private education

There is a wide variety of fee-paying schools throughout the city, including mixed and single-sex. Consult the Scottish Council of Independent Schools website for more information:

www.scis.org.uk

Childcare

Out-of-school care

Out of school clubs for school-age children offer a safe, stimulating and sociable environment for your children. Breakfast and after-school clubs are often held in or

near schools and community centres and are widely available across the city. These clubs give your children a chance to play with their peers and take part in a range of activities and crafts. They're very popular and you may be placed on a waiting list. Contact your local school, nursery, community centre, library or leisure centre for more information.

Parent and toddler groups/playgroups

Parent and toddler groups are a great way to meet other parents and for your children to interact. Prices are generally low. Information can usually be found at local libraries and health centres. Netmums is a useful website for information on what is available around Edinburgh:

www.netmums.com/edinburgh

Healthcare

It's important to register your child with a General Practitioner (GP). If your child is ill, being registered with a GP makes seeing a doctor quicker and more convenient. Most parents register their children with their own GP practice. For more information on how to register with a GP you should refer to pages 8-10.

Health visitors

If you have young children, you may be interested in the Health Visitors service. Every family with children under five has a named health visitor. Health visitors offer support to pregnant women and families with young children. They aim to help people stay healthy and avoid illness.

services.nhslothian.scot/healthvisitors

Vaccinations

It's important that your children receive vaccinations at the right age. You should bring your children's vaccination record to Scotland with you. Your GP will send you an appointment to bring your baby in for their immunisation. Most GPs and health centres run special immunisation or baby clinics. If you can't get to the clinic, contact the surgery to make another appointment. All routine childhood immunisations are free.

Culture shock in children

Your child may suffer from some form of "culture shock" as they settle into their new environment. This can be brought on when experiencing changes in climate, language, food, dress or behaviour. Each child and family will experience this in different ways, but taking the following steps may make the process easier:

1. Preparation

You should start to prepare your child before you relocate, to help them adjust to their new life in the UK. Research as much as possible before the move. Why not ask your child what they'd like to know about the UK or Edinburgh and work together to find the answers?

2. Communication

Try to communicate with your children about the relocation as openly as possible, regardless of their age. Perhaps reassure them that although there will be certain changes (new food, climate or language for example) some things will stay the same (familiar faces, activities, playgrounds, sports etc.).

3. Support

There are a wide range of support services available to you and your family at the University and throughout the city (see Support Services section). The Multi-Cultural Family Base is a useful organisation which promotes opportunities and supports the wellbeing of families:

www.mcfb.org.uk

Activities

Parks and green spaces

Edinburgh is home to a fantastic range of child-friendly parks and green spaces. You can search by area for your nearest park on the Edinburgh council website:

www.edinburgh.gov.uk

Leisure centres

There are many indoor leisure and soft play centres throughout the city. Edinburgh Leisure, run by the Council, operates across a number of venues and locations in the city. Their website has information about leisure and soft play centres and the activities they offer.

www.edinburghleisure.co.uk

Sports and dance

Taking part in sports and dance classes is a great way for your children to keep fit and socialise. To find your nearest sports club see Club Sport Edinburgh:

www.clubsportedinburgh.org

Public libraries

Public libraries are an excellent resource for you and your children. They offer reading groups, workshops, crafts and other opportunities for children and teenagers of all ages.

If your child is under the age of 5, they are eligible for the BookBug programme which is a programme of free, weekly story-telling sessions for parents and children:

www.scottishbooktrust.com/bookbug

Library notice boards are also a great way of finding out about local events and activities that your children can get involved in. For more information and to find your local library visit the Your Library website:

yourlibrary.edinburgh.gov.uk

English language support & adult education

If English isn't your first language and you feel you could do with some help, there are plenty of options to explore.

English language courses

Edinburgh University Women's Club

A support group for female postgraduate students, and the partners and children of postgraduate students and post-doctoral workers. English classes are taught every Tuesday during term time by qualified teachers and cost £1. To find out more, contact the Global Community team: globalcommunity@ed.ac.uk

Edinburgh College Community Based English

Edinburgh College offers part-time English courses across the city, with priority given to people settling in the UK and asylum seekers. Fees are usually very low - for more information contact Edinburgh College:

www.edinburghcollege.ac.uk

The Welcoming

The Welcoming Association brings together people new to Edinburgh, asylum seekers and people from Scottish and local minority ethnic communities. English classes are free on a drop-in basis (new people can join the class every week). See The Welcoming website to learn more:

www.thewelcoming.org

Edinburgh also has private language schools. Basil Paterson, Kaplan School of English, and the Edinburgh School of English all have a strong reputation. Contact these institutions directly to find out more. The English Language Teaching Centre also offers English courses targeted at those preparing to study at the University.

www.ed.ac.uk/english-language-teaching

Online resources

The British Council

The British Council has many online resources to help

adults, teenagers and children learn English. They include videos, games, stories, listening activities and English grammar exercises. There is also a range of apps you can download to your phone or tablet.

learnenglish.britishcouncil.org

BBC Learning English

BBC Learning English offers help with grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation.

www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish

If English isn't your first language it may take time to understand the Scottish accent. Try listening to Scottish radio, or watch films/programmes set in Scotland.

Adult education & leisure courses

Edinburgh offers a range of adult education courses - whatever your skills and interests, you'll find something that will tickle your curiosity! It's also a great way to socialise, make new friends, and get to know new places.

Adult Education Programme

Edinburgh Council delivers a variety of day, evening and weekend courses at a reasonable cost. Languages, sport, art, cookery and computing programmes can be found on their website. Most courses start in September and early January, but there's plenty on offer year-round.

www.joininedinburgh.org

Centre for Open Learning

The Centre for Open Learning offers courses on subjects including language, art & design, creative writing, professional development, as well as Access courses to help you prepare to re-enter full time higher education. Most start in January and September. Fees vary.

www.lifelong.ed.ac.uk

There are also courses offered by a range of other institutions (such as art galleries, studios etc.).



Personal finances

Opening a bank account

It is advisable to open a UK bank account shortly after arriving in Edinburgh. This is because you will probably have to use it to pay for things such as rent and utility bills. Using an overseas account can be impractical and it is highly likely you will be charged for every transaction.

You can open a bank account once you've moved into your accommodation. Usually it's not possible to open a bank account in the UK before you arrive.

There are many different banks in Edinburgh, and they all have different policies on international students and their family members/partners. As we are unable to recommend a particular bank over another, our advice is to do some research before you open an account. Think about the services that are included (such as overdrafts), and about any charges that might come with them. You will usually need to book an appointment to open a bank account.

What do you need to open an account?

The documentation you'll need varies depending on the bank you choose to open an account with. It is usually easier for a student rather than a family member of a student to open an account at first. With this in mind, you should ensure you have the following in place:

- Proof of UK address. For students, this is usually a bank introduction letter found through MyEd.
- Passport and immigration permission (visa)
- Student status letter confirming status, course name and dates. You can get this from the

Student Information Points:

www.ed.ac.uk/student-administration/student-info-points

If you are a family member or partner of an international student with a source of income (i.e. you have started working in the UK) and you'd like to open a bank account for yourself, you will generally need:

- Passport and immigration permission (visa)
- Proof of UK address (tenancy agreement, utility bills)

These are general guidelines: you will need to contact the bank to ask about their requirements.

For further advice on banking matters, you can contact the following:

- The [Advice Place](#):
www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/adviceplace





- Your local [Citizen Advice Bureau](http://www.citizensadviceedinburgh.org.uk):
www.citizensadviceedinburgh.org.uk
- Free impartial advice is available through the [Money Advice Service](http://www.moneyadvice.service.gov.uk), a UK Government service
www.moneyadvice.service.gov.uk
- [New Students Website](http://www.ed.ac.uk/new-students/banking):
www.ed.ac.uk/new-students/banking

Living expenses

Non-EU students on a Tier 4 visa and their family members have 'no recourse to public funds' - this means you won't be allowed to claim benefits like income support or child benefits. Because of this, it's important to budget for living costs in Edinburgh before you travel. We have a helpful guide with estimated costs on our website:

www.ed.ac.uk/international/cost-of-living

The International Student Calculator website can also help you plan and manage money for your studies in the UK (costs of living will vary from place to place):

www.ucas.com/budget-calculator

Bringing money to the UK

For safety reasons, we do not advise you to bring large amounts of cash when travelling. Your home country may also have regulations restricting the amount of money you can take out. There are also restrictions on traveling from outside the European Union with over 10,000 Euros (or the equivalent in any currency). Visit the **HM Revenue & Customs** website for more information:

www.gov.uk/bringing-cash-into-uk

Make sure you have a few ways of accessing money in your first few weeks in Edinburgh, as it can sometimes take a couple of weeks to set up a UK bank account. The safest option is to bring a few ways of obtaining money: some cash, a credit/debit card from home you can use in the UK, or travellers cheques.

Insurance

It's a good idea to insure your possessions against theft, loss or damage while you are here. Insurance can be arranged on arrival but, if travelling here, make sure your travel insurance continues until you have other arrangements in place.

If you're in University accommodation, contents insurance is included in the rent.

Endsleigh offers insurance specifically for students:
www.endsleigh.co.uk

Compare insurance providers on price comparison websites:

gocompare.com

moneysupermarket.com

confused.com

Running out of money

Falling behind in paying rent, university fees or utility bills can have serious consequences. If you are in financial trouble, we advise you to get in touch with the Advice Place as soon as possible. You can also contact your local Citizens Advice Bureau. Both will be able to look into your individual situation, and find the best solution available.

Finding a job

If you are thinking about working in Edinburgh, first find out whether you have the right to do so. Family and partners of students that are in the UK on a Tier 4 visa are usually able to work full-time without restrictions (including self-employment), but cannot take up employment as a doctor or dentist in training. Please note, this information is correct at the time of printing. Immigration Rules change frequently, so please email the Student Immigration Service team if in doubt.

www.ed.ac.uk/student-administration/immigration

National insurance number

Your **National Insurance (NI) number** is a unique personal number used to record your NI contributions. Employees and employers both pay NI contributions to help fund benefits like state pensions and jobseeker's allowance. You'll need to apply for a NI number but do not need to have received it before you can start work.

To get a NI Number you need to telephone **Job Centre Plus** on **0845 6000 643**. The telephone interview will take about 7-10 minutes.

www.gov.uk/apply-national-insurance-number

Curriculum vitae

To apply for jobs you normally need a Curriculum Vitae (CV), also known as a résumé. This is a short account of your previous employment or career path which you can give to potential employers. If you need help with updating or refreshing your current CV, you can refer to **Skills Development Scotland** or the **National Careers Service**. Both these services are also the go-to resources if you need some basic career guidance.

www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk

nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk

Where to find work

Jobs are advertised daily in Edinburgh – so where do you start looking? That depends on the type of job you have in mind.

If you are looking for a position in a restaurant, café or shop, your best option might be to **apply in person**. These businesses (especially when they are small) might only advertise vacancies in windows, so we suggest that you print out a few copies of your CV and take an opportunity to explore the city! The best times to look for this type of employment are the summer (before the festival season starts), and before the Christmas period.





Most jobs are advertised **online**. You can search jobs on recruitment websites like these:

www.reed.co.uk

www.s1jobs.com

www.monster.co.uk

Business networking sites such as **LinkedIn** are popular among jobseekers who want to promote their skills.

These sites allow you to develop relationships that can lead to finding unadvertised vacancies.

Some recruitment websites use tactics to get you to sign up with them. Always be careful about providing your personal information or making payments.

Employment agencies can help with your job search, whether for temporary or permanent employment. If you find employment through an agency, they remain the point of contact between yourself and the company. There are many employment agencies in Edinburgh, easily found by searching on Google.

Alternatively, you could approach your local **Job Centre**. Jobcentres are run by the UK Government and advertise full-time, part-time, permanent and temporary vacancies. You can either visit a centre in person or look for work online on the **Universal Jobmatch** website:

www.gov.uk/jobsearch

Finally, if you are looking for graduate jobs, you can also look into the **Prospects** website:

www.prospects.ac.uk

Volunteering

Volunteering is a valuable experience while you are looking for work. It's a great way to make new friends, get to know the city better, improve your confidence and build up your experience and skills.

The **Volunteer Centre Edinburgh** acts as a placement and advice service for volunteers in Edinburgh.

You can search their current opportunities online:

www.volunteeredinburgh.org.uk

You can also try charity shops, community centres and local churches.

Available support

Support at the University

Advice Place

The Advice Place provides free, independent and confidential advisory service for all students at the University. They offer information and advice on topics including money, funding, accommodation, employment, health, sexual health, harassment and crime reporting. Email, make an appointment or simply drop in.

www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/advice

The Women's Club

The Women's Club provides services including social activities, basic English lessons, information about living in Edinburgh, and a small crèche with baby equipment available to borrow. You are welcome to bring your child along. Free child care is available during morning English classes. The group meets once a week during the academic year.

www.facebook.com/UoEWomensIntGroup

The Chaplaincy

The Chaplaincy offers support regardless of religious affiliation. Services include confidential, non-judgemental listening, help in time of crisis and links with specialist sources of help (including faith contacts).

www.ed.ac.uk/chaplaincy

Student Parents at the University of Edinburgh

This Facebook group is a safe space where parents can come together, share experiences, discuss issues affecting them, and campaign to improve their student experience.

www.facebook.com/groups/edunistudentparents

Support in and around Edinburgh

Multi-Cultural Family Base

This organisation supports children and parents dealing with transition, for example the move to Edinburgh for families new to the UK. They run projects supporting different ages with a range of issues. They work with children and parents by themselves, together as a family, and with children in groups. Many of their users are families from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities and can be new migrants to Edinburgh.

www.mcfb.org.uk

Welcome Home Multi-Language Support

An organisation providing counselling, psychotherapy, life-coaching and social support specifically for non-UK nationals living in the UK. Counsellors have a variety of cultural and language backgrounds. They help users integrate into their new environment, and provide support to overcome difficulties in a new country, such as culture shock, loneliness, homesickness, depression, anxiety and isolation.

www.welcomehomeuk.com

PF Counselling Services

These services provide counselling to everyone over the age of 18, regardless of ability to pay (a donation is expected for each session but this can be as little or as much as the person can afford). Due to high demand, it will normally take 10-12 weeks for the first appointment.

www.pfcounselling.org.uk

Citizens Advice Bureau

The Citizen Advice Bureau provide free and confidential advice and information for everyone and for every problem. They cover areas such as debt and money, work-related problems, housing, relationships and consumer issues. Find your local branch:

www.cas.org.uk



In & around Edinburgh



Getting around the city

Buses

The main bus operators in and around Edinburgh are **Lothian Buses** and **First Edinburgh**.

Lothian Buses offer different ticket types:

- Single Fare
- Day Ticket (unlimited travel for 1 day)
- Ridacard (unlimited travel for 1 week to 1 year)

Please remember Edinburgh buses only accept the correct change.

For prices, visit the Lothian Buses website:

www.lothianbuses.com/tickets

You can also buy tickets to use on your mobile phone:

lothianbuses.com/getting-around/smartphone-apps

Night buses

Lothian Buses offer a limited service from midnight to

4am. For current fares visit the Lothian Buses website:

lothianbuses.com

Edinburgh Trams

The tram line runs from York Place to Edinburgh Airport. Tickets must be bought before you get on board. For more information and ticket prices visit:

www.edinburghtrams.com

Cycling

Cycling is a popular way for students to get around Edinburgh. Cyclists can use the bus lanes and cycle paths around the city. Edinburgh has a good network of cycle routes.

www.innertubemap.com

Walking

Walking is a great way to explore the city and keep active. Check out Visit Scotland for excellent walking routes throughout the city and further afield.

Sport and exercise

Sport & Exercise is part of the University of Edinburgh and includes the Pleasance sports centre, FASIC physiotherapy, Peffermill playing fields and Firbush outdoor centre. There are also specialist facilities for climbing and swimming. Staff and student discounts apply, however families and partners pay full price.

www.ed.ac.uk/sport-exercise

Edinburgh Leisure offer sport facilities from swimming to climbing at reasonable prices.

www.edinburghleisure.co.uk

You can also choose from a range of gyms located all over the city – a Google search is the best way to find out what deals are available and what is most convenient for you.

Shopping

Shop opening times vary but generally, service hours are 09:00-17:00 although many shops stay open later.

Age-restricted Products

In the UK you must be 18 years old to buy alcohol, tobacco and other age-restricted products. Anyone who appears to be under the age of 25 can be asked to prove their age when attempting to buy such products.

Food shopping

You can buy food from supermarkets and local shops. The main supermarkets in the UK include Tesco, ASDA, Sainsbury's, Morrisons, Lidl and Aldi. There are also many smaller shops that sell food from the local area or from around the world, in which you may be able to find foods and produce from home.

The **Hearty Squirrel Cooperative**, run by the Edinburgh University Co-Operative Society (EUCS), sells healthy, ethical and organic food at affordable prices.

www.heartysquirreledinburgh.weebly.com

Every Saturday between 09:00 and 14:00 there is also a **farmers' market** on Castle Terrace – the stalls offer a variety of local produce.

www.ed.ac.uk/international/cost-of-living

www.yelp.co.uk/c/edinburgh/grocery





Charity & second hand shops

Charity shops are operated by charitable organisations for the purpose of fundraising. There is a wide selection of charity shops (Oxfam, British Heart Foundation, Shelter and more) near the University central campus, between South Bridge and South Clerk Street, and on the west side of the city, between Home Street and Leven Street. Most of their products are second hand items in very good condition, ranging from clothes to toys and household items.

www.dickins.co.uk/blog/great-things-to-do-in-edinburgh/an-edinburgh-charity-shop-guide

Mobile phones

If you are using a mobile phone you bought abroad you could be paying much more than you need to. If your phone is unlocked you can simply change the SIM card, or you can buy a mobile phone in the UK for a reasonable price. Before you proceed with any purchase, do a bit of research on the tariffs available. Price comparison websites, like Money Supermarket or Confused.com, are a good place to start. You will usually have two options when you approach a mobile phone provider - contract or Pay As You Go.

Places to visit

The **National Museum of Scotland** on Chambers Street is open daily all year except Christmas Day (25 December). It is free to enter the general museum, though fees apply for special exhibitions. There are also plenty of resources available for children.

www.nms.ac.uk

The **Scottish National Gallery** is home to one of the best collections of fine art in the world, while the **Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art** is a must-see venue for modern and contemporary art. Finally, the **Scottish National Portrait Gallery** houses an exceptional range of portraits from Scotland's past and present. Admission to the National Galleries of Scotland is free. A charge may be made for special exhibitions.

www.nationalgalleries.org

Walks

Edinburgh and the surrounding area has many excellent routes for walking. Here are some highlights:

Arthur's Seat and Holyrood Park

Climbing the iconic Arthur's Seat is one of the most popular activities the city has to offer. Arthur's Seat is an extinct volcano in Holyrood Park, around 1 mile east of Edinburgh Castle. While you're there you could visit Dr Neil's Garden, a hidden gem located in Duddingston Village, making it the perfect stop-over on a walk around Holyrood Park.

The Royal Botanical Gardens

The Botanical Gardens are an excellent place to go for a walk and explore wildlife. They host a year round calendar of events, workshops, performances and exhibitions for adults and children. From the top of the Chinese rock garden you can enjoy views of the city.

Calton Hill

Calton Hill is one of the most popular viewpoints Edinburgh has on offer. From the top you can enjoy views of the city and the Firth of Forth. Among the monuments situated on the hill is the 'National Monument', an unfinished replica of the Parthenon.

For more day trip ideas it's worth visiting:

thisisedinburgh.com

Places of worship

Edinburgh is an inclusive and diverse city and you will find a wide range of faiths are represented at the University and throughout the city. The University's Chaplaincy Centre is an excellent resource for you and your family, whatever your background, culture or belief. They have an extensive team of honorary chaplains and belief contacts, encompassing all faiths and none.

You can easily find out further information on places of worship around the city by searching on Google.

Safety in Edinburgh

Edinburgh is generally regarded as a safe and welcoming city. Like any city environment, however, it's important to be aware of personal safety.

Advice for staying safe:

- At night, don't walk alone on quiet or dark streets. Stay out of parks, including the Meadows, after dark.
- Always make sure you know your way back to your accommodation safely - it is easy to get lost in an unfamiliar place.
- Keep your valuables and bags with you at all times. It's advisable to keep only a small amount of money in your wallet especially in clubs and bars.
- Lock front doors at all times, and remember to shut windows when people are out of the flat or house.
- Tell the police about any lost or stolen valuables, or any serious incident.

Emergencies

In the event of an emergency, call emergency services on **999** (free of charge, UK-wide). You will then be asked if you require police, ambulance or fire services.

If you require non-emergency police services you can contact your nearest station by calling **101**.

If you have information about crime or criminals then report it anonymously on **0800 555 111** or at www.crimestoppers-uk.org



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