

**International Staff Handbook
2007/2008**



Welcome to International Staff

The goal of Information Services is to provide the highest quality information resources and services to students and staff of the University. This commitment to quality is well illustrated by the building of the new library which will blend the best features of a traditional library with the latest learning technologies to create a truly 21st century environment for students and staff. The new Library will open in 2009.

The Language Centre is a constituent part of Information Services and as such provides “an environment in which all staff are supported in making their best contribution to meeting the University’s objectives” (Queen’s Vision and Strategic Objectives). This, of course, includes our international staff and this handbook is produced to help staff new to this country to settle in and integrate with ease into the ‘Queen’s’ and Northern Ireland community. For any new useful information – international staff are also asked to visit the online version of this handbook at <http://www.qub.ac.uk/sites/QUBJobVacancies/WorkingatQueens/InternationalRecruitment/>. You can also access it from the Language Centre website at <http://www.qub.ac.uk/lc>.

Note: In order to facilitate access to the online information mentioned in this handbook – all links are accessible from a common web page. The links can be accessed from <http://www.qub.ac.uk/lc/links>.

The Language Centre at Queen’s provides staff and students from throughout the university with language learning opportunities in classes and on-line in over 20 languages. We also offer a translation and interpreting service along with support for international staff and students. The Language Centre is based in the Peter Froggatt Centre and houses an open study room with resources for self study including books, dictionaries, satellite TV, DVD viewing and listening machines.

While every effort has been made to include practical issues which affect residency and day-to-day living in Northern Ireland in this handbook, there may be issues which are specific to you which we have not been able to include. Please feel free to contact the Language Centre where guidance will be given where possible.

The Language Centre would like to thank the Personnel Department and everyone else involved in helping to produce this handbook.

Pam McIntyre

Language Centre Manager

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Important

Queen’s University has made every effort to ensure that all information contained in the manual is accurate and up-to-date at the time of going to print, but may be subject to change.

Introduction to Northern Ireland

Location

Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom (UK) in the northeast of the island of Ireland.

Water separates Northern Ireland from the rest of the UK. The Irish Sea separates it from England and Wales and the narrow North Channel separates it from Scotland (at one point only 13 miles (21 km) wide).

Northern Ireland has a land border with the Republic of Ireland to the south and east, therefore making it the only UK country with a European border!

To the north of Northern Ireland is the Atlantic Ocean.

Counties and Cities

Northern Ireland consists of six counties:

- 1 Antrim
- 1 Armagh
- 1 Londonderry
- 1 Down
- 1 Fermanagh
- 1 Tyrone

There are five cities in Northern Ireland:

- 1 Belfast
- 1 Londonderry
- 1 Newry
- 1 Armagh
- 1 Lisburn



Belfast is the capital and largest city in Northern Ireland and after Dublin is the second-largest city on the island of Ireland.

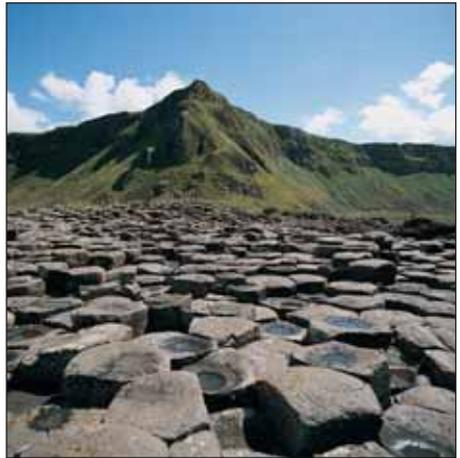
Northern Ireland also has many picturesque towns and villages hidden away in the countryside.

Landscape

Although Northern Ireland is only the size of Yorkshire or Connecticut, it has a variety of landscapes.

C.S. Lewis said of the Northern Ireland landscapes – “I have seen landscapes which, under a particular light, made me feel that at any moment a giant might raise his head over the next ridge.”

The Giants Causeway, located on the north coast, is a 60 million year old volcanic rock formation and is Ireland’s first World Heritage site. It has been described as the eighth natural wonder of the world. The site also plays host to a local myth about a giant called Finn McCool who, according to legend, once lived there.



Within 90 miles of the Queen’s campus you can climb a mountain, stroll through a forest park, plunge into Atlantic surf, travel through mystical glens, or explore ancient lakeland islands. As Northern Ireland is perched on the Atlantic coast of Europe, the air tends to be cleaner, the water purer, and the fields greener than anywhere else.

Climate

The Northern Irish weather is generally unpredictable at all times of the year. It is not uncommon to get four seasons in one day!

The coldest months of the year are usually January and February with an average temperature of 4°C - 7°C and the warmest months of the year are July and August with average temperatures between 14°C - 16°C.

The sunniest months of the year are May and June with average sunshine of 5 - 7 hours per day. The average rainfall for Ireland is between 800 and 1200 mm (or 31 to 41 inches) per year.

While sleet and snow fall occasionally in winter, snow lies in Belfast on an average of only 2-3 days per year.

Population

Northern Ireland has the smallest population in the UK. According to official estimates in 2004 there are 1.7 million people living in Northern Ireland and 269,000 people living in Belfast. Northern Ireland also has one of Europe's youngest populations with 60% of the population under the age of 40.

With the expansion of the European Union and peace and stability in Northern Ireland, the population is changing rapidly. According to the Electoral Office in 2007, 25 different nationalities registered to vote in the Northern Ireland Assembly Election. The majority of the registrations were Polish, followed by Portuguese and Lithuanian.

Religion

The main religious denominations in Northern Ireland are:

- 1 Catholic
- 1 Church of Ireland
- 1 Presbyterian
- 1 Free Presbyterian
- 1 Methodist
- 1 Baptist
- 1 Brethren

According to the last Census in 2001:

- 1 53.1% of the Northern Irish population is Protestant
- 1 43.8% of the population is Catholic
- 1 0.4% is Other
- 1 2.7% is None

People in Northern Ireland are also more frequent attendees at church than those in other parts of the UK. More than 50 per cent in Northern Ireland are churchgoers compared with 15 per cent in the rest of the UK. There are a large number of churches in different areas throughout Northern Ireland. For example: it is not uncommon to see several churches on one road.

Chaplains and other religious representatives are appointed by the University to represent

and serve students and staff. Currently, 16 faiths and denominations are represented at Queen's.

These are listed as follows:

Baptist	Brethren
Catholic	Chinese Church Chaplaincy
Church Of Ireland	Congregational
Elim	Evangelical Presbyterian
Free Presbyterian	Islam
Jewish	Methodist
Non-Subscribing Presbyterian	Orthodox
Presbyterian	Reformed Presbyterian

For further information (including contact details) on the chaplains and other religious representatives at Queen's, see [Link 1](#).

Nationality and Identity

UK Citizenship

People from Northern Ireland are citizens of the UK (similar to people from any other part of the UK i.e. by birth in the UK to at least one parent who is a UK permanent resident or citizen, or by naturalisation).

Irish Citizenship

Under the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, a person born in Northern Ireland on or before 31 December 2004 is entitled to claim citizenship of the Republic of Ireland. People born on or after 1 January 2005 may also be able to claim Irish citizenship. Find out more at [Link 2](#).

Economy

Northern Ireland has traditionally had an industrial economy in shipbuilding and textiles. However in recent years these have been replaced by services primarily in the public sector.

Today the service industries play a major role in the local economy.

Job opportunities are growing steadily in service and hospitality, information technology (due to investment by large multi-national

corporations), healthcare and the construction industries.

Education

In Northern Ireland, all children receive an education between the ages of 5 and 16 (compulsory age for attendance). The system also meets the needs of those who choose to stay on until the age of 18.

Note: Many children start school at 4 years old, but children born in July/August cannot start school until they are 5 years old.

Primary

In the last year of Primary School children sit the eleven plus transfer test and the result of this determines whether the child will attend a Grammar or Secondary school. This system is currently being reviewed and may be changed in 2008.

Secondary

The majority of Protestant children attend State controlled schools whilst the majority of Catholic children attend Catholic maintained schools.

Integrated education is increasing. In 2003, according to the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) there were 50 integrated schools in Northern Ireland,

educating over 16,000 pupils, approximately 5% of the total school going population.

However, the education system is still mainly religiously segregated with 95% of children attending non-integrated schools.

Pupils at secondary school sit GCSE exams in 5th year. Depending on their results, pupils can choose to remain in school to complete A-Levels or AS-Levels (half an A-Level) – or go to a Further Education (FE) College or get a job.

Further Education

Northern Ireland has a number of Further Education (FE) Colleges located throughout the province. Visit [Link 3](#) for a complete listing. The FE Colleges offer a wide range of full time and part time courses.

Higher Education

Northern Ireland offers two Universities, the Queen's University of Belfast (see [Link 4](#)) and the University of Ulster (see [Link 5](#)).

Students who have applied for University and have received the necessary A-Level grades at school or college will be offered a place on a degree or HND course (half a degree). Degrees at University usually take 3 to 4 years full time to complete, however some other courses i.e. medicine may take longer.



Following completion of an undergraduate degree students have the choice of continuing with their education by completing a postgraduate course such as a Masters degree or Doctorate. The length of time to complete Masters and Doctorate courses will vary - however, it may be possible to get a Masters in one year (full time) and a Doctorate in two years (full time).

There are also two teacher training colleges, which are part of Queen's – Stranmillis

University College (see [Link 6](#)) and St Mary's University College (see [Link 7](#)).

Traditional Study Methods

Throughout the school years pupils are fully supported in their learning by their teachers and classroom assistants. However, when entering Further or Higher education, students are encouraged to become more independent learners. One to one teaching does not usually take place.

Language

The official language is English. However, Irish Gaelic is spoken by some people - mainly from the Nationalist community. Ulster-Scots is also spoken – but by a small number of the population.

Meanings

It is important to be aware that words in other English speaking countries may have entirely different meanings in Northern Ireland and the UK in general.

For example:

Word	UK Meaning	American Meaning
Pants	Underpants/ Knickers	Trousers
Pavement	Pedestrian Path	Roadway/ Sidewalk
Fancy Dress	Costume	Formal Attire
Vest	Undershirt	Waistcoat
Jelly	Dessert	Jam
Nervy	Nervous	Bold
Trunk	Large Box	Car Boot
Petrol	Car Fuel	Gasoline

Regional Accents

Within Northern Ireland there are many different regional accents. At first some of these accents may be difficult to understand so you may need to ask the person to speak slowly.

A selection of Northern Irish accents can be heard online on the International Dialects of English Archive website at [Link 8](#).

The BBC also provides a selection of English, Irish and Ulster Scots language clips at [Link 9](#).

Colloquialisms

Northern Ireland also has a large number of colloquialisms.

Examples of these are listed as follows:

Northern Ireland Colloquialism	Meaning
Bevy/Scoop	Drink
Gutties	Trainers
Poke	Ice-cream
Offee	Off-Licence
Bog	Toilet
Piece	Sandwich/ Slice of bread
Chippy	Chip Shop
Dead On	Fine/OK
Skint/Broke	No Money
Scundered	Embarrassed
Scratcher	Bed
Craic	News/Fun (e.g. 'What's the craic?' and 'The party was good craic!')
'Do you think I came up the Lagan in a bubble?'	'Do you think I am stupid?'
'As thick as champ'	'Really Stupid'
'You will not walk the length of yourself'	'You will not walk anywhere'

Politeness

Northern Irish people tend to be polite often saying 'hello' even to strangers on the street. Also in Northern Ireland, people often use the words 'please' and 'thank you' even for small things.

Foreign Languages

Chinese and Urdu are spoken by Northern Ireland's Asian communities.

With the expansion of the European Union, European languages, in particular Polish, are becoming increasingly common.

Sign Language

The most common sign language in Northern Ireland is British Sign Language (BSL), but Irish Sign Language (ISL) is commonly used in the Nationalist community.

Body Language

Most Northern Irish people are very friendly. Many will smile – even at strangers on the street. When a person from Northern Ireland is introduced to you for the first time (or perhaps they have not seen you for a long time) they will usually shake your hand.

In Northern Ireland, nodding your head means 'Yes' and shaking your head means 'No'.

Note: Visit the University's Language Centre website (see [Link 10](#)) to find out what services it offers, such as an award winning translation service and a wide range of language courses which are free of charge to staff and students.

Time Zone

Local time in Northern Ireland (UK) is GMT/BST. This is one hour behind most European countries.

Currency

The unit of currency in Northern Ireland (UK) is pounds sterling (British Pound £).

Note: The Republic of Ireland has a different currency – the Euro.

100 pence (100p) = £1

Notes are issued to the value of £50, £20, £10 and £5. Coins are issued to the value of £2, £1, 50p, 20p, 10p, 5p, 2p and 1p.

Every major bank in Northern Ireland is entitled to issue its own notes – therefore you may see Northern Bank notes, Bank of Ireland notes, Ulster Bank notes etc. It may take time to get used to all of these notes.

When travelling to England, Scotland, or Wales – it is advisable to bring Bank of England notes – as local Northern Ireland bank notes may not be accepted.

Food and Drink

Northern Ireland's dependable rain, clear waters and lush green pastures produce some of the world's tastiest food and drink.

Traditional food includes champ (creamy mashed potatoes and green scallions), Irish stew (tender lamb cooked with potatoes, carrots and onions), Ulster fry (fried bacon, egg, sausage, soda farls and potato bread), buttermilk, creamy butter, wheaten bread and scones. Northern Ireland is also renowned for its seafood, in particular salmon, but also various other types of fish such as trout, plaice, herrings, mackerel as well as mussels, lobsters, oysters, prawns etc. Many Northern Irish people also eat dulse which is dried red seaweed.

The Northern Irish people love a 'wee cup of tea'! It is a fact that Irish people today drink more tea per capita than any other nation.

Whiskey has been an Irish drink for centuries. Northern Ireland is home to Bushmills the oldest whiskey distillery in the northern hemisphere. You may have heard of an Irish coffee which is made up of coffee, Irish whiskey, and sugar, with whipped double cream floating on top. Beers are also popular in Northern Ireland, the most popular being Guinness commonly referred to as 'the black stuff'!

Traditional Music and Dance

Traditional Irish music can be heard in many locations (such as pubs) in Northern Ireland. Usually it involves a group of musicians sitting in a circle playing the Bodhran (Irish drum), tin whistle, flute, accordion, or fiddle.

Irish dancing consists of sean n3s dancing, ceili dancing, set dancing, step dancing and stage dancing. In 2006 Belfast hosted the World Irish Dancing Championships.

To find out more about traditional Irish music and dance visit [Link 11](#).

Ulster Scots music and dance is currently being promoted in Northern Ireland. Similar to traditional Irish music, flutes and fiddles are often played. The Lambeg drum and bagpipes are also often played.

Ulster Scots dancing usually consists of highland dancing, Scottish country dancing and Ulster-Scots square and country dancing.

To find out more about Ulster Scots music and dance, visit [Link 12](#).

Traditional Festivals and Events

St Patrick Festivals (March)

St. Patrick is the patron saint of Ireland. Many people mark the day by wearing a shamrock

(a clover-like plant). Celebrations take place throughout Northern Ireland, but mainly in Counties Down and Armagh (see [Link 13](#)). These include parades, funfairs, face-painting, storytelling, traditional song and dance, street entertainment and all kinds of arts and crafts. 'Green beer' is also very popular on this day!

The work of St. Patrick was a vital factor in the spread of Christianity in Ireland. St Patrick is buried in Downpatrick Cathedral.

Ballyclare May Fair (May)

The Ballyclare May Fair (see [Link 14](#)) is a local custom dating back to 1756. The festival includes the Mayor's Parade, sport and street events, concerts, children's fancy dress, exhibitions and the selection of a May Fair Queen, who will represent the town over the next year.

The famous horse fair is the highlight of the week. The finest breeds from the surrounding area are brought to the show, and most are for sale.

Twelfth of July Celebrations (July)

The annual 12th July events across Northern Ireland mark the anniversary of the Battle of the Boyne (see [Link 15](#)). Events begin with the burning of bonfires on the 11th night. On the

12th July – parades involving bands, Orangemen and Orangewomen from all over the world take place throughout Northern Ireland. The largest parade is held in Belfast – which takes approximately two hours to pass.

Note: On certain holidays i.e. July 12th – the vast majority of shops, eating establishments and businesses will be closed.

Lammas Fair (August)

The 'Oul Lammas Fair' (see [Link 16](#)) first began in 1612. It has grown considerably in recent years featuring about 400 stalls, sheep, pony and livestock sales, traditional music and delicacies like dulse (seaweed), and yellowman (honeycombed sticky toffee).

The Fair takes place in late August, attracting thousands of people from all over the world.



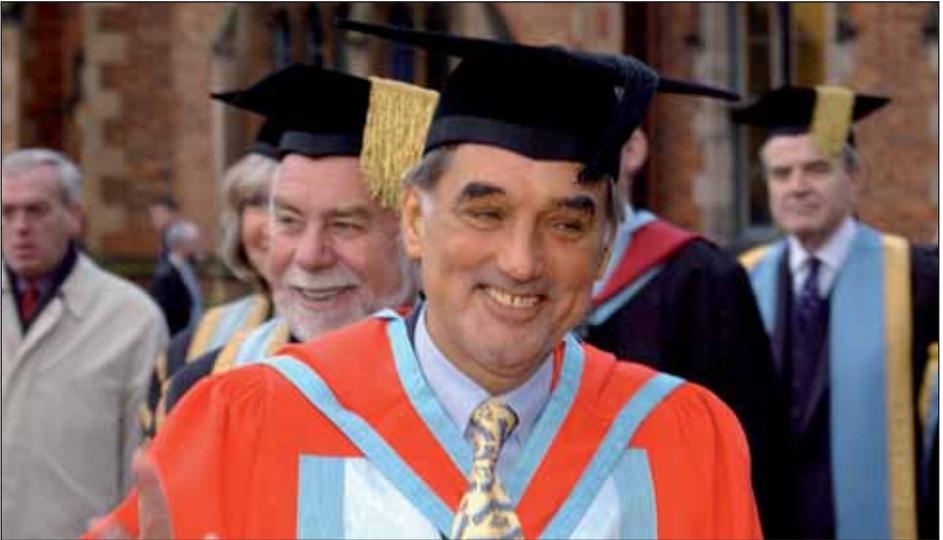
Hallowe'en (October)

Hallowe'en, which is Celtic in origin (see [Link 17](#)) is celebrated on the 31st October every year.

Throughout Northern Ireland children dress up in Hallowe'en costumes, with masks, and knock on their neighbours' door singing for money or sweets. This tradition is known as Trick or Treating. Firework displays also take place. Londonderry is the main venue for a Hallowe'en extravaganza, including street entertainment, fancy dress, music and drama. Every year, approximately 40, 000 partygoers arrive in Derry for the annual Hallowe'en festivities.

Bank/Public Holidays

New Year's Day	January 1st
St. Patrick's Day	March 17th
Easter	March or April 2 days
May Bank Holidays	First & Last Monday in May
Public Holiday	July 12th/13th
Bank Holiday	Last Monday in August
Christmas Day	December 25th
Boxing Day/ St. Stephen's Day	December 26th
Bank Holiday	December 27th



Famous Faces

Famous people born in Northern Ireland include:

- 1 George Best (Football)
- 1 Mary Peters (Olympic Gold Medal Winner)
- 1 Darren Clarke (Golf)
- 1 Eddie Irvine (Formula One)
- 1 Alex Higgins (Snooker)
- 1 Dennis Taylor (Snooker)
- 1 Joey Dunlop (Motorcycling)
- 1 Mary McAleese (President of Ireland)
- 1 Charles Lanyon (Architecture)
- 1 Sir John Lavery (Artist)
- 1 Thomas Andrews (Shipbuilder)
- 1 Seamus Heaney (Poet)
- 1 C.S. Lewis (Author)
- 1 Eamonn Holmes (Television)
- 1 Kenneth Branagh (Actor)
- 1 Amanda Burton (Actress)
- 1 Liam Neeson (Actor)

- 1 James Nesbitt (Actor)
- 1 Sam Neill (Actor)
- 1 Stephen Rea (Actor)
- 1 James Galway (Flautist)
- 1 Van Morrison (Singer)
- 1 Phil Coulter (Composer)

Driving in Northern Ireland (UK)

To drive a vehicle in Northern Ireland you must:

- 1 Be licensed to drive
- 1 Have valid insurance cover
- 1 Display a valid UK road tax disc on your car
- 1 Register the car if in the UK for 6 months or more

The Highway Code (available online at [Link 18](#) and widely available in most bookshops) is essential reading and contains full details of all UK driving regulations.

Drive on the Left

Northern Ireland drivers drive on the left side of the road (same as UK and Republic of Ireland drivers).

Driving Licence

Licences issued outside the UK, and international driving permits, are valid in the

UK for twelve months. Before the twelve months elapse a Northern Ireland Provisional Licence must be obtained and a driving test passed. If this is not done you run the risk of being prosecuted for driving without a valid licence and are also likely to invalidate your insurance.

Nationals of European Union/European Economic Areas who take up residence in another member state country can continue to drive, using their own national licence for as long as it remains valid, even after twelve months has elapsed.

Licences from the following countries can be exchanged for a full UK licence:

- 1 Australia
- 1 Barbados
- 1 British Virgin Island
- 1 Gibraltar
- 1 Hong Kong
- 1 Japan
- 1 Malta
- 1 New Zealand
- 1 Republic of Cyprus
- 1 Singapore
- 1 Switzerland
- 1 Zimbabwe

Application forms for driving licences and an explanatory leaflet can be obtained from main post offices.

Application forms for a driving test can be downloaded from the website of Driver and Vehicle Licensing Northern Ireland (DVLNI) which contains all current relevant information (see [Link 19](#)).

Motor Insurance

Every driver in Northern Ireland **must** have insurance.

There are three main types of insurance policy as follows:

1. Third Party Only

This insurance provides cover if you injure someone else or damage their property in a motor accident.

However, if you are injured or your car is damaged, you will need to cover the costs yourself.

2. Third Party Fire and Theft

This insurance provides protection if you injure someone else or damage their property. It also provides cover if your car is stolen or set on fire.

However, you will have to pay the costs if your vehicle is vandalised or involved in an accident.

3. Comprehensive (often referred to as Fully Comprehensive)

This insurance covers injury to someone else, damage to their vehicle, damage to your vehicle from theft or fire and accidental damage. There is also some cover for items stolen from your vehicle, medical expenses and personal accident protection. However, these will vary depending on the insurer.

There are 100s of different insurance companies so it is important to shop around to get the right insurance cover at the right price for you.

The BBC has provided useful advice on how to reduce the cost of your insurance. Visit [Link 20](#) to view the advice.

M.O.T. (Ministry of Transport Test)

All cars over 4 years old must be tested annually for roadworthiness (the test is known as the M.O.T.). Testing must be carried out at a Government testing centre. Visit [Link 21](#) for more information.

Road Tax

All cars and motorcycles need a road tax (or Vehicle Excise Duty) licence before you can drive in Northern Ireland. Tax discs can be purchased for a 12 month or a 6 month period. When purchasing road tax you must have proof of valid vehicle insurance and an MOT certificate (if appropriate).

Road Tax discs must be displayed at all times on the car windscreen and can be purchased at main post offices. There are different charges depending on the size of the engine.

Driver and Vehicle Licensing for Northern Ireland (DVLNI) carries out a computer check each month to identify those vehicles without a tax disc. If you fail to renew your car tax every year, you will incur an automatic penalty.

Further information is available on the Driver and Vehicle and Licensing website (see [Link 22](#)).

Importing a Vehicle

A vehicle which is permanently imported for use in Northern Ireland must be registered and licensed as soon as possible after it arrives in this country. For further details visit the Driver and Vehicle and Licensing website (see [Link 23](#)).

Buying a Used Car

There are a number of Used Car Dealers in Northern Ireland. Used cars dealers are advertised in local newspapers and magazines as well as on a number of websites.

Traffic Signals

Northern Ireland uses various traffic signals to help control traffic i.e. red, amber, green traffic lights, motorway signals etc. For further information, visit the UK Highway Code website (see [Link 18](#)).

Roundabouts

All roundabouts must be accessed by going clockwise.

Use indicators appropriately when exiting a roundabout or changing lanes.

All traffic on your right side is considered to have 'right of way' which is extremely important i.e. when approaching roundabouts.

Traffic Signs

Northern Ireland uses a number of traffic signs. Each sign is a different shape or colour. For example: Warning signs are always displayed as a red triangle.

Further signs, including road and vehicle markings can be viewed on the UK Highway Code website (see [Link 24](#)).

Speed Limits (displayed in miles per hour (mph) not kilometres per hour (km/h))

Be aware that speed limits are displayed in miles per hour (mph) on all sign-posts in Northern Ireland (unlike the Republic of Ireland where speed limits are displayed in kilometers per hour km/h).

Speed limits are very well sign-posted in Northern Ireland so you should be aware of the restrictions. It is important to check the UK Highway Code (see [Link 18](#)) for the latest speed limits.

Current limits are:

- 1 **Motorways** (blue signs) – 70mph. (113 km/h)
- 1 **Built Up Areas** (towns and cities) – 30mph. (48 km/h)
- 1 **Elsewhere** – 60mph. (96 km/h)

Also be aware that speed cameras are in operation throughout Northern Ireland.

Zebra Crossings

Traffic is required to stop when a pedestrian is crossing the road at a zebra crossing.

Traffic Calming Measures

In Northern Ireland, some roads have traffic calming measures such as road humps, which are in place to slow drivers down. When you approach these features reduce your speed.

Seat Belts

Seat belts **must be** worn if fitted.

Motorcycle Helmets

Crash helmets **must be** worn on a motorcycle.

Mobile Phones

Hand-held mobile phones, or similar devices, **must not** be used when driving.

Note: This document only mentions a small selection from the Highway Code. Please refer to the Highway Code for more detailed information (see [Link 18](#)).

Living in Belfast

Personal Safety

Northern Ireland has “...one of the lowest crime rates in Europe (lower than the United States and the rest of the United Kingdom)” – according to the U.N. International Crime Victimization Survey (ICVS 2004). Therefore, the chance that you or a member of your family will be a victim of violent crime is low.

The best way to cut the risk of attack is by taking sensible precautions.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) provides useful information relating to personal safety (see [Link 25](#)). The information includes advice on staying safe:

- 1 At home
- 1 When you are out and about
- 1 In taxis
- 1 On public transport
- 1 When driving

There is also specific advice to men on what they can do to help a woman feel safe. Details are also provided on what to do if a crime has been committed.

Other useful safety and security advice is available on the following web sites:

- 1 Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland (see [Link 26](#)).
- 1 Get Home Safe Campaign (see [Link 27](#)).
- 1 URZone - Advice for Young People (PSNI) (see [Link 28](#)).
- 1 Identity Theft Information (see [Link 29](#)).
- 1 Child Line (see [Link 30](#)).
- 1 Suzy Lamplugh Trust - Personal Safety (see [Link 31](#)).
- 1 Crime Reduction - Personal Safety (see [Link 32](#)).

Medical Care

As a member of staff of the University you are allowed to register with the National Health Service (NHS).

On arrival in Belfast you will need to register with a local family doctor (GP). The doctor with whom you register is dependant upon where you are living. You can look to locate a GP near you (see [Link 33](#)). Another helpful website is the Central Services Agency (see [Link 34](#)).

Note: If you need to see your GP – you must phone and make an appointment in advance.

National Health Service treatment covers consultation with GPs and hospital treatment for conditions that arise while you are in the UK. It does not cover treatment for pre-

existing medical conditions. If drugs are prescribed by a GP, a prescription charge is made – currently £6.50 for each item.

There are 4 main NHS hospitals in Belfast:

- 1 Royal Victoria Hospital (see [Link 35](#))
- 1 Belfast City Hospital (see [Link 36](#))
- 1 Mater Hospital (see [Link 37](#))
- 1 Musgrave Park Hospital (see [Link 38](#))

There is one private hospital in Belfast – the Ulster Independent Clinic (see [Link 39](#)).

Dental Treatment

Charges are made for all dental treatment, whether it is private treatment or treatment subsidised by the National Health Service. Many dentists do not undertake NHS work, and those who do, may not be able to take on additional patients. Therefore, be prepared to pay the full cost of dental treatment. You can search for a listing of NHS dentists on the healthandcareni.co.uk website.

Optical Treatment

Eye tests are carried out by ophthalmic opticians who operate from shop premises in Belfast and towns throughout Northern Ireland. There is a charge to have an eye test carried out and you will then choose and pay

for spectacles or contact lenses. Prices for these vary greatly and you should check around.

As a member of staff at Queen's, you may be entitled to a free eye test.

Pharmacies/Chemists

You should visit your local chemist if you are suffering from a minor ailment such as a cold or cough etc. There are a large number of local chemists available in Belfast (see [Link 40](#)) as well as Boots chemists (one of the UK's major chemists) (see [Link 41](#)).

Chemists tend to be open from 09.00 to 17.30 – however some of the local chemists may close early on certain days of the week. During holiday periods – only a small number of chemists will be open. These will be listed in the local newspapers.

Medical Care (when travelling outside the UK)

It is recommended that you obtain travel insurance when travelling outside of the UK.

Travel insurance will vary by provider but will generally cover not only cancellation and delay, but also medical emergencies while abroad. The insurance should also include medical cover.

Travel insurance is available from a number of providers and can be bought online from many. The Post Office offers travel insurance, as do many of the main supermarkets. These are not recommendations and you are advised to shop around to find the best coverage for you.

For EEA and Swiss nationals, the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) permits you to obtain healthcare during temporary travel in member states. The EHIC makes it easier for you to obtain access to medical treatment you may need whilst staying temporarily in other member states and guarantees you reimbursement of the medical costs when treatment is received or soon after. The EHIC is valid in:

- 1 Austria
- 1 Belgium
- 1 Cyprus (not Northern Cyprus)
- 1 Czech Republic
- 1 Denmark
- 1 Estonia
- 1 Finland
- 1 France
- 1 Germany
- 1 Greece
- 1 Hungary
- 1 Iceland
- 1 Ireland
- 1 Italy
- 1 Latvia
- 1 Liechtenstein
- 1 Lithuania
- 1 Luxemburg
- 1 Malta
- 1 Netherlands
- 1 Norway
- 1 Poland
- 1 Portugal
- 1 Slovakia
- 1 Slovenia
- 1 Spain
- 1 Sweden
- 1 Switzerland

The EHIC gives you access to state-provided medical treatment only.

You should apply for an EHIC in your home country before departing for the UK. You should be able to obtain information about the EHIC from your home country's Department of Health or an equivalent body.

Please remember that having an EHIC does not guarantee total cover of your care as your cover is in accordance with the State in which

you are staying. Therefore, as a staff member in the UK, your healthcare under the NHS will be in accordance with that of any other UK resident and may not include all cover that you would expect in your home country.

You should investigate the benefits of obtaining comprehensive private health insurance before coming to the UK. Any further requirements should also be checked with your country's Department of Health.

Schools in Belfast

Note: The BBC has produced a useful website which details the schools system in Northern Ireland (see [Link 42](#)).

The Department for Education in Northern Ireland also provides useful information at [Link 43](#).

Children aged between 5 and 16 who are in the UK as dependants of those resident in the UK may attend a State school, Catholic maintained school or Integrated school free of charge.

Children can normally start primary school in the September term following their fourth birthday. Then transfer to secondary school at the age of eleven.

You may only apply for a school place for your child once you have a residential address in Northern Ireland.

A full list of State-funded (public) schools in the Belfast area is available at [Link 44](#). A list of private schools is available at [Link 45](#).

Note: Useful pre-school information i.e. when and how to apply for a pre-school place, is available at [Link 46](#).

Childcare

The University offers a range of childcare support. This includes:

- 1 full-time day-care in two crèches for children aged two months - four years
- 1 part-time care - mornings only for children aged 2 months - 4 years
- 1 after-school care for primary school children
- 1 a summer activities scheme for children aged 6 -14 years

To find out more, visit [Link 47](#).

Note: There tends to be waiting lists for Queen's childcare services – therefore to avoid disappointment of not getting a place – it is advised that you enquire at an early stage.

There are a number of other childcare facilities in Belfast, such as crèches and nursery schools. Some parents also choose to use child minders to look after their children.

Note: As a member of staff you are entitled to child care vouchers, which may help to reduce your Income Tax and National Insurance contributions. Find out more at [Link 48](#). You also have the option of the Salary Sacrifice Scheme. Contact the Finance Department to find out more information.

Banks

There are a number of banks in Belfast and Northern Ireland. Banks are generally open Monday to Friday 09.00 – 16.30 (some may close one hour for lunch).

Internet banking is increasingly popular. Many of the banks are strongly encouraging their customers to carry out internet banking to enable 24 hour access to their accounts.

Many people use credit and debit cards to purchase goods and services. Mastercard (Access) and Visa credit cards are generally acceptable – but Diner's Club and American Express are less so.

Chip and PIN offers a secure way to pay with credit or debit cards. Instead of using your signature to verify payments, you will be asked

to enter a four-digit Personal Identification Number (PIN) known only to you.

Cheques are also used – but are decreasing in popularity. Also, be aware that some shops have a minimum purchase amount before they will accept cheques (usually around £5 - £10).

ATMs (Automated Teller Machines) are located throughout Belfast and Northern Ireland. These ATMs enable you to get money out of your account 24 hours a day.

Note: some ATMs may charge a transaction fee.

Postal Service

Post Offices and red post boxes are located throughout Belfast.

The Post Office offers a number of services i.e. insurance, savings, postal etc (see [Link 49](#)).

The main Post Office in Belfast is located at 12/16 Bridge Street. It is open from 09.00 – 17.30 Monday to Saturday and 09.00 – 17.00 on a Sunday.

Note: The branch closes at 12.00 - 13.00 for lunch on Sunday. Late mailings are accepted at the Tomb Street Sorting Office.

Small books of UK stamps are available to purchase in most convenience stores and petrol stations.

Postal Charges

Full details on postal charges are available at [Link 50](#).

Post-Codes

Belfast City Centre is divided by two postcodes, BT1 and BT2. The industrial estate and docklands share BT3 and the rest of the Greater Belfast area postcodes are set out in a clockwise system.

Although BT stands for Belfast - its abbreviation is used across the whole of Northern Ireland.

Electricity and Heating

- 1 Electricity is provided by Northern Ireland Electricity (NIE) (see [Link 51](#)).
- 1 Gas is provided by Pheonix Natural Gas (see [Link 52](#)).
- 1 Oil is provided by various oil distributors

Note: Some properties also use solar power.

Northern Ireland Housing Executive offers good advice on saving energy in the home. Find out more at [Link 53](#).

Land and Property Rates

Information on the rating system in Belfast is available at [Link 54](#).

Water Charges

At present, there are no water charges to domestic consumers in Northern Ireland.

Telephones

BT (see [Link 55](#)) and Virgin Media(see [Link 56](#)) are the two main providers of telephone land lines in Belfast. Most calls, including international calls, are cheaper between 18.00 – 08.00 (UK) and at the weekends.

Payphones are available throughout Belfast and Northern Ireland. The use of prepaid phone cards, available from newsagents and post offices, is a cheap and convenient way to make long distance calls.

Mobile phones are very common and there are a number of mobile phone providers. Be warned – some of the mobile phones may be cheap to buy but expensive to use! Visit [Link 57](#) to find out more about UK mobile phone networks and prices.

Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) phone calls via the computer are increasing in popularity. Find out more about VOIP at [Link 58](#).

International Dialing Codes

- 1 UK to elsewhere 00 followed by the country code, area code and number.

- 1 Elsewhere to UK 00 44 +Area code (minus the first '0') and number.

Television

You may wish to rent or buy a television when in Belfast. Televisions automatically receive BBC1, BBC2, ITV, Channel 4 and Channel 5.

Digital television offers more choice and a better quality viewing experience. The UK is due to change from analogue to digital television services between 2008 and 2012. To find out more, visit [Link 59](#).

Satellite television offers a lot more channels to choose from. The 3 main providers of satellite television in the UK are:

- 1 Sky (see [Link 60](#))
- 1 Freeview (see [Link 61](#))
- 1 Virgin (see [Link 62](#))

Television Licences

It is compulsory to buy a TV licence if you rent or buy a television. Licences for colour televisions currently cost £135.50 per year and can be purchased at the Post Office. You may purchase it in full or pay by instalments. TV licences must be renewed yearly and failure to obtain a licence will result in a heavy fine.

Find out more at [Link 63](#).

Radio

A complete list of local radio stations available in Northern Ireland is available at [Link 64](#).

Internet Service Providers (ISPs)

To get online, you need an Internet Service Provider (ISP). The UK has thousands of ISPs to choose from - offering Broadband and Wireless services. Local ISPs also exist. Costs will vary, depending on your choice of service and internet package.

Newspapers

Belfast has 3 daily newspapers:

- 1 Belfast Telegraph (see [Link 65](#))
- 1 Irish News (see [Link 66](#))
- 1 Newsletter (see [Link 67](#))

Local area newspapers are also available on a weekly or monthly basis.

Many of the world's newspapers are available online at [Link 68](#).

Public Libraries

You may join Public libraries and borrow books free of charge. To join the Public Library you need to have a Belfast address and some proof of identity. See [Link 69](#).

International Festivals and Events

Previously held International Festivals in Belfast include:

- 1 Belfast Mela (see [Link 70](#))
- 1 Polish Cultural Week (see [Link 71](#))
- 1 Chinese New Year (see [Link 72](#))
- 1 Food and Drink (see [Link 73](#))

Policing

Northern Ireland is policed by the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) (see [Link 74](#)).

Emergencies

If an emergency arises outside of the University, you should dial **999** on the nearest telephone. This is a free service and will put you in contact with Police, Fire Brigade and Ambulance services.

If on University premises the number is **2222**. These numbers should be used in **emergency** circumstances only.

Smoke-Free

From the 30th April 2007 it is against the law to smoke in enclosed and substantially enclosed workplaces and public places, and in certain vehicles in Northern Ireland. For more information, visit [Link 75](#).

Clothing

It is up to you what you decide to wear. However, when considering the Northern Ireland climate – it is advisable to have a raincoat and waterproof shoes for all seasons and warm clothing during the winter months.

Electrical Current

The standard electricity supply in Northern Ireland is 240 volts.

3-pin plugs are used in Northern Ireland – therefore you may need a plug adaptor to convert 2-pin plugs to the 3-pin plugs. These adaptors can be bought at any electrical supplier.

Embassies and Consulates

New Zealand Consulate

118a, Lisburn Rd, Glenavy, Crumlin,
County Antrim, BT29 4NY
Tel: 028 9264 8098

Canadian Consulate

35, The Hill, Groomsport, Bangor,
County Down, BT19 6JS
Tel: 028 9127 2060

Italian Consulate

42 Glenholm Drive, Belfast, BT8 6LW
Tel: 028 9070 9415

Netherlands Consulate

14-16 West Bank Road, Belfast, BT3 9JL
Tel: 028 9077 9088

Unit of Measurement

People in Northern Ireland tend to measure distances in miles rather than kilometers. All road signs are marked in miles (unlike the Republic of Ireland).

Weight is often measured in stones, pounds and ounces rather than grams and kilograms.

Travelling Around Belfast

Unlike many other major European cities Belfast does not have an underground transport system. However, Belfast does provide an excellent transport network – offering many options for the commuter.

Rail

Rail connections are available from both the UK and Dublin.

- 1 Irish Rail (see [Link 76](#))
- 1 Network Rail (see [Link 77](#)): Travel information from UK
- 1 Northern Ireland Railways (see [Link 78](#)): Belfast-Dublin Enterprise service

Road

All ferry ports are well connected by road. Within Northern Ireland, the road network is good. Motorway sections leave Belfast to the north (M2), the west (M1) and the east (M3). The sea is never more than a half hour drive away. Minor roads are well signposted and there are convenient places for picnics and sites for caravanning or pitching a tent.

A city ring road, the Westlink (currently being enhanced) makes it easy to navigate Belfast's traffic system. A good road link connects Belfast with Dublin in the Irish Republic to the south.

The main Queen's University campus is easily and quickly reached from the city centre.

Bus

Local bus services within Belfast are provided by Translink Metro Services (see [Link 79](#)).

The Metro Network has 12 high-frequency corridors along main arterial roads into Belfast City Centre with additional services operating throughout the Greater Belfast Area.

These Metro corridors are listed as follows:

Antrim Road	Metro 1
Shore Road	Metro 2
Hollywood Road	Metro 3
Upper Newtownards Road	Metro 4
Castlereagh Road	Metro 5
Cregagh Road	Metro 6
Ormeau Road	Metro 7
Malone Road/ Stranmillis Road	Metro 8
Lisburn Road	Metro 9
Falls Road	Metro 10
Shankill Road	Metro 11
Oldpark Road/ Cliftonville Road	Metro 12

Service variations to Metro corridors are denoted by 'A', 'B', 'C', etc. For example, there are 3 bus options from Belfast City Centre to the main Lanyon Building at Queen's, either bus 8A, 8B, or 8C.

The last bus is normally about 23.00. However, after a Saturday night in Belfast City Centre, Metro operates a Nightlink bus service at 01:00 and 02:00. For more information visit [Link 80](#).

Further details i.e. on timetables (see [Link 81](#)), fares/tickets (see [Link 82](#)) etc are available on

the Translink Metro Services website or phone 028 90 66 66 30 (7am – 8pm daily).

Long-distance express services across Northern Ireland are operated by Translink Ulsterbus (see [Link 83](#)). For further information i.e. fares etc visit the Translink Ulsterbus website (see [Link 84](#)) or phone 028 90 66 66 30 (7am – 8pm daily).

Note: Ulsterbus also organise lots of tours i.e. day tours, educational tours, short breaks and quality coach holidays. For more information, check out [Link 85](#).

Free Travel (Bus and Rail)

All men and women 65 years of age or over, who are residents in Northern Ireland, for 3 months or more, and are in possession of a Senior SmartPass are entitled to free travel within Northern Ireland.

For further information, including information on other concession fares, visit [Link 86](#).

Taxi

Taxis are relatively cheap and easily available.

London-style metered taxis operate from airports, railway stations and particular locations in Belfast City Centre i.e. front of the City Hall.

Private taxis are plentiful and operate 24 hours a day, but must be booked by telephone.

Points to Note:

- 1 Black taxis will stop if flagged down in the street. Private cabs will not stop.
- 1 Not all private taxis have meters, it is advisable to agree a fare before setting out.
- 1 A taxi fare from Belfast city centre Europa bus station to the main Queen's University campus costs approximately £3.00-£3.50.
- 1 All legitimate taxis in Belfast should be registered and display registration information. Remember to look for this registration information.

Bicycle

The Main Campus of the University is easily reached from the city centre (approximately 1.5 km).

Bringing a bicycle on public transport:

- 1 All ferries accept bicycles, usually free of charge.
- 1 Train services will usually accept bicycles; often a small surcharge is made.
- 1 Coach services are generally less willing to carry bicycles, although it is often discretionary; check first.

- 1 The policy of airlines varies a lot, so again enquire before travelling.

The road system can be busy in and around Belfast, although pleasant cycling can be found on the Lagan Towpath (to Lisburn) and in the surrounding countryside.

Bicycle hire is available in Belfast - check with the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (see [Link 87](#)).

Foot

A fifteen minute walk from Belfast city centre brings you to the Main Campus at Queen's.

Car

Please refer to the section entitled 'Driving in Northern Ireland'.

Buying Petrol

There are numerous petrol stations on the major roads in and around Belfast. Many petrol stations close at 22.00 or 23.00, but some of the main supermarkets offer 24 hour opening.

Parking in Belfast

Download the Roads Service Guide to Car Parking in Belfast, which includes details on parking spaces, multistorey car parking, tariffs

etc and provides useful car parking tips (see [Link 88](#)).

Parking at the University

Parking space at the University is limited and at a premium. Car parking currently costs £16 per month. Staff can apply for a car-parking space by contacting the Estates Department at 028 903010. It may be advisable to make alternative arrangements or find on-street parking in the local area.

Top Attractions in Belfast

There is so much to see and do in Belfast. For example – did you know the Titanic was built in Belfast? Visit the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and Belfast Tourism websites to find out more.

- 1 Northern Ireland Tourist Board (see [Link 87](#))
- 1 Belfast Tourism (see [Link 89](#))



Top Entertainment in Belfast

Pubs, Bars and Clubs

Belfast offers a huge variety of pubs, bars and clubs across the city.

Traditional Pubs

Traditional pubs in Belfast enable you to enjoy the friendly 'craic' or listen to some Irish traditional music while sipping on a 'pint of the black stuff'!

A complete list of traditional pubs in Belfast is available at [Link 90](#).

Belfast also offers a number of Traditional Pub Tours. Visit [Link 91](#) to find out more about Belfast's famous and historic pubs!



Chic Bars

There are a growing number of chic cosmopolitan bars in Belfast. For a complete list, visit [Link 92](#).

Pub/Bar Entertainment

Many of the pubs and bars in Belfast offer different types of entertainment i.e. quizzes, live music, comedy nights, DJs etc. on different nights of the week.

Other forms of pub/bar entertainment include jukeboxes, arcade games, darts, snooker, pool etc.

Clubs

There are also various nightclubs in Belfast – many attracting the best DJ's from all over the UK and beyond. For further information, visit [Link 93](#).

Pub/Bar/Club Opening Hours

Most pubs/bars tend to open at 11.30. Closing time is usually 23.00 on weekdays (22.00 on a Sunday) or 01.00 on a Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

Many nightclubs tend to get busy between 21.00 and 22.00. Some nightclubs close at 01.00, while others have later licenses until 03.00.



Concerts and Gigs

Belfast is a hub of activity with a number of entertainment venues to choose from. A comprehensive list is provided at [Link 94](#).

Festivals/Events

Belfast hosts a number of internationally acclaimed arts festivals and events. The latest events which are taking place in Belfast are highlighted at [Link 95](#).

Cinemas

Belfast provides a good choice of cinemas, including Ireland's only 3D and 2D large format cinema – the Sheridan IMAX cinema (see [Link 96](#)).

Cinema tickets vary in price – some cinemas offer cheaper prices on certain days of the week. Many also offer discounts for students and family tickets.

A complete list of Belfast cinemas is available at [Link 97](#).

Museums

There are two national museums in and around Belfast:

- 1 **Ulster Museum** (see [Link 98](#)) - known for its collections of Irish art, history, natural sciences and archaeology.
Note: the Ulster Museum is closed for refurbishment until spring 2009.
- 1 **Ulster Folk and Transport Museum** (see [Link 99](#)) - illustrates Northern Ireland traditions and the way of life.
Note: the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum is located at Cultra - on the outskirts of Belfast.

There are other smaller museums in Belfast. Find out more at [Link 100](#).

Theatres and Arts

Theatres

There are 3 main theatres in Belfast:

- 1 **Grand Opera House** (see [Link 101](#))
Northern Ireland's Premier Theatre, which presents musicals, opera, ballet, comedy, concerts and pantomime to suit all tastes.
- 1 **Lyric Theatre** (see [Link 102](#)) Located on the banks of the River Lagan, the Lyric Theatre offers a wide repertoire of plays.
Note: the Lyric is hoping to undergo refurbishment soon. This is due to be completed by 2010.
- 1 **Queen's Film Theatre** (see [Link 103](#)) – Ireland's longest established cultural cinema.

Arts/Art Galleries

The Naughton Gallery at Queen's is a very popular gallery in Belfast. It was recently named as one of the Top 10 University Galleries in the UK and Ireland by The Times Higher. The Gallery has become one of Belfast's most exciting visual arts platforms, featuring a rolling programme of works from the University's own collection, touring exhibitions and shows by local and international artists. Find out more at [Link 104](#).



A complete list of Belfast Art Galleries is available at [Link 105](#).

Visit the Arts Council of Northern Ireland website to find out more about the Arts (see [Link 106](#)).

Sport

Sports facilities in Belfast are very good providing top class venues for a wide range of sporting events. It is hoped that by 2012 Northern Ireland will have a National Sports Stadium – which will provide a premier venue to help host the 2012 London Olympic Games.

Queen's Sport

Queen's University itself provides one of the biggest and best university sporting facilities in the UK and Ireland. The range of facilities provided includes:

- 1 State-of-the-art fitness suite and free weights area
- 1 Swimming and diving pools
- 1 Sports halls and squash courts
- 1 Climbing wall and dance studios
- 1 Outdoor playing fields
- 1 Activity cottage and boathouse

The facilities are brought to life by a wide range of sports clubs, and over 60 classes and courses such as Yoga, Hip Hop, Aqua Aerobics and Circuits. A High Performance and Lifestyle Centre offers fitness advice and support.

Find out more (including information on staff membership fees) on the Queen's Sport website (see [Link 107](#)) or view the Queen's Sport media clip on Virtual Queen's (see [Link 108](#)).

Leisure Centres

As well as the excellent sports facilities on offer at Queen's - Belfast City Council provides 11 leisure centres located throughout Belfast. Find out more information at [Link 109](#).

Health and Fitness Clubs

Belfast also provides a number of private health and fitness clubs.

Popular Sports

Popular sports include:

Football: Belfast football teams in the Premier League of the Irish League include Linfield Football Club based at Windsor Park in South Belfast (Northern Irish football team (see [Link 110](#)) are also based at Windsor Park), Glentoran Football Club based in East Belfast, Cliftonville Football and Athletic Club and Crusaders based in North Belfast and Donegal Celtic based in west of the city. Belfast is also the birthplace of one of the world's best and famous football players – George Best.

Gaelic Football/Hurling: Casement Park located in West Belfast is the second largest GAA ground in Ulster with a capacity of 32,000 and is home to the Antrim Gaelic Football and Hurling Teams (see [Link 111](#)).

Rugby: The Ulster Rugby Team (see [Link 112](#)) play at Ravenhill in East Belfast and are the 2005–06 Celtic League champions and former European Rugby Union Champions. In 2007, Belfast hosted the U19 Rugby World Championship, the third biggest rugby tournament in international rugby.

Fishing: Northern Ireland offers some of the finest angling destinations in Europe (see [Link 87](#)).

Ice Hockey: The Belfast Giants Ice Hockey Team (see [Link 113](#)) are the 2005/2006 Elite League Champions. Home matches are played at the Odyssey Arena.

Golf: Belfast has a number of good golf courses, including a premier indoor state-of-the-art golf facility, called CitiGolf, which allows golfers to play on 57 of the most famous golf courses in the world, in Belfast's city centre! For more information on golfing in Belfast, visit [Link 114](#).



Cricket: Following the success of the Irish Cricket Team in the 2007 World Cup – cricket is increasing in popularity. Although there are numerous cricket clubs and grounds – the Civil Service Cricket Ground at Stormont, Belfast tends to host all the major internationals (this ground can accommodate a large amount of spectators). In June and July 2007 - India and South Africa were the visitors. For more information on Ireland's Cricket Team, visit [Link 115](#).

Athletics: Athletic Clubs are located throughout Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland's most famous Olympian is Mary Peters who won the gold medal in the Pentathlon in 1972. Today on the Malone Road in Belfast, the Mary Peters Track hosts many local and international track and field events. Belfast also hosts the biggest marathon in Northern Ireland. The Belfast Marathon (see [Link 116](#)) is run annually on the May Day Bank Holiday, attracting over 14,000 participants in 2007.

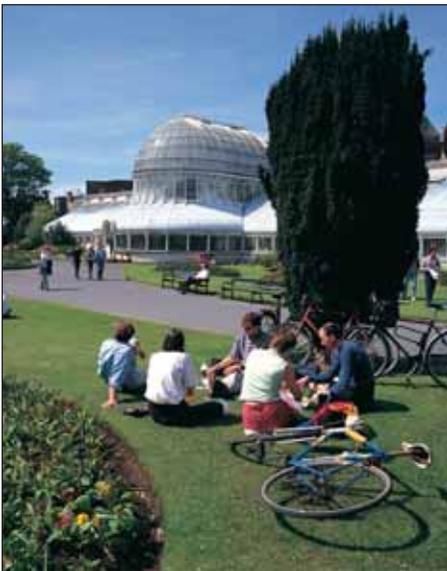
Swimming: There are lots of good indoor swimming and diving pools in Belfast. Many schools use these facilities – to encourage children to learn how to swim. Due to the Northern Irish weather – outdoor swimming in the sea and lakes is not very common. However, outdoor swimming pools do exist in Belfast, Bangor and Newcastle. Lisburn has an outdoor water slide.

Sports Events

For the latest information on major forthcoming sporting events in Belfast and Northern Ireland as a whole, visit [Link 117](#).

Family Days Out

Belfast provides lots of fun for all of the family. Find out about the wide range of activities which are on offer at [Link 118](#).



Eating Out In Belfast

Cafes, Bistros and Restaurants

If it's good food you want, then look no further as eating out has never been better in Belfast with more new cafes, bistros and restaurants offering a huge variety of international flavours such as, Asian cuisine (Chinese, Malay, Korean, Thai, Japanese, Indian), European cuisine (Italian, Spanish, French), etc.

Queen's itself offers a continental-style eating experience at 'Deanes at Queen's' (see [Link 119](#)), owned by Michelin Star chef and restaurateur Michael Deane. Scholars Bistro and Bar also offers a wide range of food and drink in the Elms Village.

Download the Belfast Restaurant Guide (see [Link 120](#)) to get a taste for what's on offer!

Making a Reservation

It is advisable to reserve a table in advance as many of Belfast's cafes, bistros and restaurants are very busy, especially at weekends. Some restaurants have two sittings for an evening meal. The first sitting is usually at 19.00 and the second sitting is usually at 21.00.

Leaving a Tip

Service is normally included in the bill, but if it is not and you are satisfied with the service then leave 10% - 15% of the total bill as a tip.

Pub Grub

Many of the pubs in and around Belfast offer the best of local produce served in a friendly and welcoming environment. Lunch and dinner menus often include traditional food such as champ (potatoes and scallions), Irish stew and even beef and Guinness pie! Check out [Link 121](#) for more information.

Coffee Houses

There are many coffee houses in Belfast, where you can drop in for a speciality coffee or tea and maybe a bowl of hot soup, a sandwich or even a mouth watering desert!

There is an array of global and locally owned coffee houses around the University campus (within five minutes walking distance). For example, Queen's Students Union located on University Road offers several coffee houses.

Some of these coffee houses offer a 'bottomless cup of coffee' which means that you pay no extra for refills! Some also provide a loyalty card which is stamped after each time you make a purchase. After so many

purchases (usually between 8 - 10) and stamps, you will get a free cup of coffee or dessert.

Within Queen's, Hospitality Services offer the MBCafe (Medical Biology Centre), PFCafe (Peter Froggatt Centre) and the ECIT Café (Ecit Research Centre – Titanic Quarter). 'Deanas at Queen's' is also conveniently located for a quick 'cuppa'.

For more information, visit [Link 122](#).

For a list of Belfast coffee houses, visit the 'Belfast in your pocket' website at [Link 123](#).

Fast Food and Takeaways

If none of these mouth watering cafes and restaurants take your fancy – then there is always the many global fast food restaurants which are located throughout Belfast and Northern Ireland!

Takeaways are also very popular. People who choose to stay at home in the evening may decide to phone their local Chinese or pizza place or pop into their local fish and chip shop to get some takeaway food.

Many of the takeaways stay open until the early hours of the morning – especially at weekends - for those leaving the pubs/bars and clubs.

Scores on the Doors

A new pilot scheme has been introduced in Belfast to keep you informed about food standards and help you decide where to eat. Any business selling food i.e. cafes, restaurants, pubs, shops etc are given a 'star' rating to show how well they comply with food safety standards. Five stars is the highest rating and zero is the lowest (see [Link 124](#)).

To find out this information:

- 1 Carry out a search on the 'Scores on the Doors' website (see [Link 125](#))
- 1 Send a text message (see [Link 126](#))
- 1 Ask the business directly
- 1 Look in the window or on the door of a restaurant to see if they are displaying a 'Scores on the Doors' sticker

Shopping in Belfast

City Centre Shopping

For the shopaholic, Belfast is paradise, offering an enormous choice of shops, ranging from the top High Street names to specialist and small boutique shops.

A useful guide to shopping in Belfast City Centre, including a comprehensive list/description of shops in north, south, east and west of the city centre, is available to download from [Link 127](#).

Opening Hours

Shops in the City Centre usually open from 09.00 (some open earlier at 08.30) and close at 19.00. There is late night shopping until 21.00 on a Thursday night. The shops are open Monday – Sunday (Sunday opening hours are from 13.00 – 18.00).

Note: Outside Belfast - some towns close for a half day on one day a week (the day varies from town to town) and small shops may close at lunchtime.

Markets

There are 2 markets in Belfast City Centre, St George's Market and Smithfield Market.

St George's Market

St George's Market (located opposite the Waterfront Hall, Oxford Street, which runs parallel to the River Lagan) is held every Friday and Saturday. On Friday there are 248 market stalls, selling a huge variety of products from bananas to antiques. Twenty-three of the stalls sell fish, therefore making St George's the leading retail fish market in Ireland. The Friday market opens at 06.00 and closes at approximately 13.00.

Every Saturday, the City Food and Garden Market takes place in St Georges, from 09.00 to 15.00. The market enables you to enjoy the

best food, tastes and smells brought by local producers, such as fish from Portavogie, pork from Cookstown and beef from Armagh. Alternatively, you may choose to sample a huge range of continental and specialty foods, such as wild boar, tapas and Caribbean delights. The Saturday market also has a number of quality flower stalls, including some of Northern Ireland's leading florists.

On special occasions i.e. Christmas, Hallowe'en and St. Patrick's Day – St George's hosts specialised markets, featuring exotic foods and live music.

For more information on St George's Market, visit [Link 128](#).

St George's Market Shuttle Bus

A free market shuttle-bus departs from St George's Market every 30 minutes during market days. For more information, including timetables, visit [Link 129](#).

Smithfield Market

Smithfield Market (located at the back of the Castlecourt shopping complex, in Winetavern Street) consists of approximately 28 retail units selling a wide range of goods and services which are not always available on the 'high street'. Examples include:

- 1 Dressmakers
- 1 Books



- 1 Leather Work
- 1 Carpets
- 1 Picture Frames
- 1 Computer and Games Equipment
- 1 Toys and Models
- 1 Collectable comics
- 1 Antiques
- 1 An Art Gallery
- 1 African and Caribbean Food
- 1 Camping Equipment
- 1 Shops Which Buy and Sell Pre-owned Electrical Goods
- 1 Musical Instruments

For more information on Smithfield Market, visit [Link 130](#).

Food Shopping

Main Food Shops

There are many large supermarkets, located throughout Belfast and Northern Ireland, which provide a good range of produce at competitive prices. Some of these supermarkets are open 24 hours a day (except on Sundays).

Convenience Food Shops

For convenience shopping, smaller food shops are available - however be warned you may pay more for convenience!

International Food Shops

Belfast is rapidly becoming a multicultural city. Therefore, international food shops are growing in number.

In previous years – Belfast City Hall has hosted the Continental Christmas Market which offers a great range of crafts, food and decorations from across Europe, Asia and Africa.

Also, to celebrate the European Day of Languages, the Language Centre at Queen's has hosted a European Taste Fest – where waiters and waitresses native from countries all over Europe served up a variety of food and refreshments from their countries.

Organic/Health Food Shops

Organic produce is increasing in popularity in Northern Ireland and is becoming readily available. As well as local farming markets i.e. St George's Market, many of the major supermarkets are now stocking organic food. Organic food tends to be more expensive than ordinary food.

Ice-Cream

There are many ice-cream parlours throughout Belfast and Northern Ireland. As well as having ice-cream parlours, you may see and hear ice-

cream vans in the streets/parks etc of Belfast. Ice-cream vans usually play children's music to attract people to buy an ice-cream.

Food Shops: Helping the Environment

Some of the large food shops i.e. Marks and Spencer and Lidl - are trying to save on the wastage of plastic carrier bags and therefore do not provide free carrier bags. You should bring your own bags when shopping here.

FairTrade

FairTrade products are readily available in shops throughout Belfast and Northern Ireland as a whole. Queen's University already has FairTrade status – for example providing FairTrade products in all of its catering outlets.

To find out more about Fairtrade and the retailers who are offering FairTrade products – visit [Link 131](#).

Local Arts and Crafts

For Queen's University gifts, visit the Queen's Welcome Centre at [Link 132](#).

The Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau (see [Link 133](#)) also offers a great choice of local gifts.

Home Improvement

Home improvement stores are located throughout Belfast and Northern Ireland.

Boucher Road and Boucher Crescent, which are located close to Queen's University, are popular areas for home improvement outlets such as Do It Yourself (DIY) stores, furniture stores, flooring stores, specialist kitchen and bathroom stores, garden centres etc.

For a complete listing of premises on the Boucher Road visit [Link 134](#).

For a complete listing of premises on Boucher Crescent visit [Link 135](#).

Hairdressers

Barbers offer male hairdressing only, while unisex salons offer hairdressing for both males and females.

It is customary but not obligatory to give your hairdresser and the assistant who washes your hair a tip. About £2 is adequate.

Car Boot Sales

Car Boot Sales are increasingly popular in Belfast and throughout Northern Ireland. A Car Boot Sale is an outdoor sale (usually takes place in the grounds of a supermarket or church) at which people sell items such as

books, ornaments, clothes and plants from the boot of their car. It usually costs £3.00 - £5.00 to participate i.e. enabling you to sell from the boot of your car. Alternatively you may only want to shop, therefore there is no fee.

Charity Shops

There are a large number of charity shops located throughout Belfast and Northern Ireland. These charity shops depend on donations from the public i.e. clothing, books, ornaments, toys, accessories etc. These items are then sold by the charity shop.

Many people in Northern Ireland choose to send charity cards at Christmas time.

Shopping Malls

Shopping Malls offer a good range of shops and services. They are located outside the city centre in North, South, East and West Belfast as follows:

North Belfast

Abbeycentre (see [Link 136](#))

South Belfast

Forestsides (see [Link 137](#))

West Belfast

Westwood Centre (Kennedy Way)

(see [Link 138](#))

Curleys (Anderstown Road) (see [Link 139](#))

South-West Belfast

Park Centre (see [Link 140](#))

East Belfast

Connswater (see [Link 141](#))

Opening Hours

The shopping malls are open from 09.00 – 21.00 on most weekdays. Saturday opening is from 09.00 – 18.00 and Sunday opening is from 13.00 – 18.00.

Note: International retail shopping outlets such as Junction One (see [Link 142](#)) in Antrim and The Outlet (see [Link 143](#)) in Banbridge offer big savings in designer names.

Guide to Shopping in the University Area

Shopping in South Belfast (in and around the University area) also has a lot to offer (see [Link 144](#)).

Loyalty Cards

Many of the shops offer loyalty cards (also known as rewards cards, points cards, discount cards, or club cards) to their customers. Owning a card may entitle you to discounts, vouchers, invitations to special discount evenings and updates on current promotions.

PERKS for Staff

Queen's University provides all University staff with a PERKS directory containing hundreds of benefits and vouchers for members across Northern Ireland. Offers include discounts in various high street shops, such as:

- 1 10% off Lifestyle Sports
- 1 10% off Body Shop
- 1 10% off DV8
- 1 10% off Halfords (including gift vouchers)
etc

It also offers discounts on:

- 1 Weekend Breaks – choose from over 40 hotels and holiday cottages across Ireland
- 1 Eating Out - choose from over 70 restaurants
- 1 Health and Fitness - choose from 12 fitness packages

For more information, including contact details, visit the PERKS web page at [Link 145](#). Students can also receive discount at a number of popular shopping outlets in Belfast by using their NUS-USI card (see [Link 146](#)).

Useful Contacts at Queen's

Accommodation Office

Tel: +44 (0) 2890 973076

Fax: +44 (0) 2890313354

Email: s.accommodation@qub.ac.uk

Admissions Office

Tel: +44 (0) 2890 975081

Fax: +44 (0) 2890 975137

Email: admissions@qub.ac.uk

Centre for Education Development

Tel: +44 (0)2890 973821

Email: ced@qub.ac.uk

Communications Office

Tel : +44 (0) 2890 973087/3091

Fax : +44 (0) 2890 973401

Email: comms.office@qub.ac.uk

Counselling Service

Tel: +44 (0) 2890 972727

Email: counsellor@qub.ac.uk

Childcare Service

Tel: +44 (0) 2890 328615

Disability (Staff)

Tel: +44 (0)2890 975139

Email: eou@qub.ac.uk

Estates Department

Tel: +44 (0) 2890 973010

Fax: +44 (0) 2890 321005

Email: estates@qub.ac.uk

Finance Department

Tel: +44 (0) 2890 973020

Fax: +44 (0) 2890 314591

Email: finance.dept@qub.ac.uk

Human Resources

Tel: +44 (0) 2890 973044

Fax: +44 (0) 2890 344944

Email: personnel@qub.ac.uk

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Administration Support

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Email: adm.support@qub.ac.uk

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Language Centre Manager

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Email: langcent@qub.ac.uk

Information Services:

Learning and Teaching

Tel: +44 (0) 2890 976581

Email: itcourses@qub.ac.uk

Information Services:

Library Services

Tel: +44 (0) 90 973613

Fax: +44 (0) 90 974309

Information Services: Media Services

Tel: +44 (0) 2890 974293

F : +44 (0) 2890 975628

Email : avs@qub.ac.uk

Information Services:**Research Support**

Tel: +44 (0) 2890 974824

Email: research-zone@qub.ac.uk

Information Services: Training Unit

Tel: +44 (0) 2890 976581

Email: itcourses@qub.ac.uk

Queen's Sport

Tel: (+44) 028 90 681126

Internally from Queen's: 4317 and 4319

Fax: (+44) 028 90 68 1129

Email: sport@qub.ac.uk

Queen's Welcome Centre

Tel: +44 (0) 2890 975252

Fax: +44 (0) 2890 975252

Email: queens.welcomecentre@qub.ac.uk

Staff Training and Development Unit

Tel: +44 (0)2890 976590

Email: training@qub.ac.uk

University Health Centre

Tel: +44 (0) 2890 975551

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Email: reception.157@uhcq.gp.n-i.nhs.uk

Vice Chancellor's Office

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