Editor’s Note

Congratulations on coming to Queen’s University Belfast. Although this is your first step, I hope this becomes a remarkable journey for you. This is the beginning of your university life and as overwhelming as it may seem at first, it will be filled with experiences, memories and people you will cherish for a lifetime.

As an international student myself, I understand what it feels like to study abroad which, is why this student guide is hand-made to best fit your needs and expectations of Queen’s University as an international student. From registration information to where the party’s at, you’ll find it all in here.

I hope this guide helps you during your time here and covers all the areas of interest. Don’t hesitate to try new things and meet new people.

Remember to have fun and learn as much as you can!

Tuba Sharif
Editor

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“The communication I received from the staff at Queen’s was extremely quick and helpful from my very first email inquiry. None of the other UK universities I visited offered the same level of facilities and support that is available to students at Queen’s. The friendly and helpful staff made me feel comfortable straight away on arrival.”

Saad Almohammond, Kuwait
Now that you’ve got the important bits sorted, here’s a packing checklist in case you are cramming everything in your luggage bags.

What to Pack

✔ Warm clothes (don’t worry if you don’t have winter clothes, you will find plenty of shops in Belfast)
✔ Gadgets (a portable charger is ALWAYS helpful)
✔ Universal Adaptor
✔ Things that remind you of home
  - Family photos
  - Favourite books
✔ Any prescribed medication

Don’t Bother With

✘ Cutlery (it takes up too much space that you can utilise for something useful instead)
✘ Blankets and Duvets (student accommodations can provide these, so save that space unless you have a favourite blanket you absolutely can’t live without)
✘ Notebooks and Stationery (You will get PLENTY of freebies during Freshers’ fairs)
✘ Toiletries (they weigh a lot and you don’t want to exceed the weight limit. You can purchase all you need in Belfast.)

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### Packing Checklist

#### Document checklist

- Passport
- Driving License
- CAS statement
- Accommodation confirmation
- Passport-sized photos (always good to have a few)
- Currency (safer to carry debit/credit cards than cash, but always good to have some cash on hand)
- Academic documents (e.g. previous results, IELTS)
- Photocopies of documents (to keep them as backup)
We decided it would be a good idea to get some real advice from students who have had similar experiences as you will.

**Airport Meet & Greet service**

To make your arrival as swift as possible, the University has set pick-up days to welcome you and get you settled in. Student Guides will greet you at the airport and point you in the right direction, so you’ve got nothing to worry about.

**Pick-up days:**

Sunday 9 September - Tuesday 11 September (inclusive)  
08:30 until 21:30 each day from Belfast International Airport  
and George Best Belfast City Airport.

**In the Loop**

The Students’ Union is a great support when you first get here. They organise engaging and fun events to make sure no one is missing out on the party – a key example would be the International Buddy Scheme. Don’t forget to follow them on social media to stay in the loop and find out what’s happening, because there is something always happening in Belfast.

**Student Blogs**

Queen’s University encourages students to interact with those around them and get the best out of their experience, which is what student bloggers do best. These students write about various topics, so don’t forget to look through these blogs in case something may catch your attention!

qub.ac.uk/Yourstudentguide/Studentprofiles

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**Q.** If you could advise international students on one thing they could bring from home, what would it be?

**Confidence**

**Pictures of Family**

**Favourite book**

**Spices/Seasonings**

**Anything that reminds them of home**
First week in Belfast

“You are guaranteed a warm welcome at Queen’s, which starts with a meet-and-greet at the airport. During International Welcome Week, there are lots of opportunities to meet new people and enjoy new and varied activities. The Buddy scheme means you can discover the city together with other students. The support network at Queen’s made the transition to life in Belfast easy, and Queen’s felt like home in no time.”

Maria Luiza Amadeu Henriques dos Santos, Brazil
1. Lanyon Building  
2. Whitla Hall  
3. Peter Froggatt Centre (PFC)  
4. Bell Lecture Theatre  
5. Drama and Film Centre  
6. Harty Room  
7. Sonic Labs (SARC)  
8. No.6 University Square  
9. McClay Library  
10. Student Accommodation  
11. Queen's Sport (PEC)  
12. Students’ Union

Students can book a campus tour by visiting www.qub.ac.uk/about/Visit-Us/Campus-Tours-Meet-Us/Bookacampustour/
Went out more
Bought a sandwich maker
Arrived early
Made a plan and stuck to it
Familiarised myself to the city
Socialised more
I wish I had involved myself more in societies and events instead of waiting until the end of second year

What is that one thing you wish you had done earlier but never got around to doing it?

Arriving Early

If you are one of the eager ones and decide to come earlier than orientation week, that’s absolutely fine. You’ll get more time to get to know the city better.

If you arrive earlier than your move-in date for student accommodations, there are several hotels in Belfast to spend a couple days in. Airbnb’s may also be a great option as they can be very budget friendly.

Some hotels close to campus are:

1. Europa Hotel
2. Jury’s Inn Hotel
3. Ibis Hotel
4. Dukes at Queen’s

Queen’s Accommodation may also have short-term vacancies over the Summer. Contact them on accommodation@qub.ac.uk to get a quotation.
Getting Around Belfast

The best part about the city is that everything is close by, giving you the safety and peace of mind you need when you come to a new city. You can travel around Belfast through affordable buses, taxis, trains and bicycles.

**Bus**
Translink metro bus services have a convenient network of buses servicing the city at all times. If you are living in Queen’s accommodation, you will mostly find yourself using ‘8A, 8B and 8C’ as these travel back and forth to the city centre and main campus. You can buy single or day tickets as you step onto the bus. The bus drivers are friendly, so don’t hesitate to ask if you are confused about where you are going.

**Pro tip:** They have timetables available on their app for easy access.

**Taxis**
Taxis are comparatively more expensive than buses, but save you time if you are in a hurry or if it’s late at night, as they operate 24/7. Students mostly use ‘FonaCab’ and ‘Value Cabs’.

**Pro tip:** You can book and track your ride on the app. So download the app as it also gives you a better idea of maps and your pickup locations.

**Value Cabs** 028 9080 9080
**Fona Cab** 028 9033 3333

**Trains**
Botanic Train Station is about 5 minutes’ walk from the University, so if you’re in the mood for exploring the scenic Northern Ireland coast or taking a day trip to Portrush (a coastal town with a beach), trains are an accessible and inexpensive way of getting around Belfast and Northern Ireland.

**Cycling**
Cycling keeps you moving and healthy and doesn’t cost a thing! Belfast is equipped with cycling lanes, making it safe and convenient for you to travel. You can buy second-hand bikes online or even a brand new one to keep you on the move. Belfast bikes are also a handy way to get moving around the city by renting a bike for a day from over 41 docking stations spread around the city.
International Welcome and Orientation

We understand that socialising can become intimidating and with so much happening in the first few weeks of arrivals, it is sometimes the last thing on your mind, but we’re here to help ease you into life at Queen’s!

The University organises a series of events during Welcome and Orientation week and throughout the year. Movie nights, ice-skating and free pizza are a few of the MANY things you’ll get to do. Yes, you heard your two favourite words together: ‘Free’ and ‘Pizza’.

The Welcome and Orientation Week covers the most crucial bits of your time here so make sure you make the most of it.

Here’s a Checklist for Arrivals During Welcome and Orientation Week:

- Inform your parents you have arrived
- Check your emails or social media for updates on Orientation week
- Decide which events you are most interested to go to
  Pro tip: go to all of them to make friends, don’t be shy. Everyone is feeling the same way as you.
- Double check your documents to see if you’ve got everything
- Collect your Biometric Residence Permit (BRP)
- Activate your university account
- Open a bank account
- Register with Police (Registration day will cover this)
- Register with a GP Doctor (Registration day will cover this)
To get you up and running

Register
Welcome and Orientation Week will cover several aspects of your registration process.

Here are a few things you’ll be doing throughout the week:

- **Activate your Queen’s Online account** (the magical portal that has your timetables, results, library information and lots more)
- **Collect your student card** during the registration process
- **Register for your courses** (if applicable)
- **Complete your Right to Study Check** (if applicable)

Bank Account
Carrying lots of cash everywhere is not recommended. Freshers’ fairs will include bank account registrations, but if you choose to register separately or miss out on any of this process, here are some banks students open a bank account with.

- **Santander** santander.co.uk
- **Barclays** barclays.co.uk

You may also need a bank letter confirming your student status, which is available from the Information Desk at the Student Guidance Centre.

**Pro tip:** You will need your passport information, so don’t forget to take your passport along when you are getting yourself registered.

Sim Card
We understand that having access to the internet is a necessity, so here is how you can get your sim card set up.

There are two ways to get you connected:

1. **Contracts:** These are year-long contracts based on your preferences and you will need a bank account to set up a direct debit.
2. **Pay as you go:** This allows you to buy minutes and internet whenever you want. You have more flexibility in choosing your contract and changing it as you like.

Some supplier names to get you started:

- **EE** shop.ee.co.uk
- **Giffgaff** giffgaff.com
- **Three** three.co.uk
- **O2** o2.co.uk

Police Registration
If your visa requires you to register with the Police, you can check this here: [gov.uk/register-with-the-police/who-needs-to-register](https://gov.uk/register-with-the-police/who-needs-to-register)

You will need your Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) for this, so make sure you collect your BRP during your Right to Study Check. This will be part of your registration process so don’t worry as you will be guided throughout.

Society Fair
Your Students’ Union has over 200 clubs and societies you can take part in. You can EVEN play quiddich! You just have to show up to the society fair, have a wee chat about what each society has to offer and get started. If you want to overview societies beforehand, Students’ Union website is the place to be.

**SU website** qubsu.org
After you settle in

"By joining a club or society here at Queen’s, you will have no problem meeting new people, socialising and enjoying your time at University. Multicultural campus events enrich your University experience and allow you to learn about different cultures, interact with people from all over the globe, and to make new friends.”

Moustafa Faheem, Egypt
Student Card Perks

Once you’ve got your student card, you can use it around campus things such as:

- Access to the library
- Access to Queen’s Physical Centre (PEC)
- You can use it for printing in the library
- You can use it to purchase from on-campus shops and cafés

Health Care

It’s very common for students to forget about health registration but it is an essential part of your time here at Queen’s. Whether you are here for one semester or a couple of years, it is important that you register with the Health Care Centre at Queen’s.

For registration, you will need your passport and proof of address. Health Care is free of charge so if you have any health issues, you are more than welcome to call in, book an appointment and see a doctor.

Steps to book an appointment:

1. Open universityhealthcentreatqueens.co.uk the official University Health Centre website
2. Go to appointments and call on 028 9066 4634 (you can call in and book an appointment as well)
3. Explain your reason for calling and the staff will be able to help you the best they can.

How to top up your student card?

You can top up your student card online via your Queen’s Online or you can pop into the library, find one of the copy rooms and use the top up machines in there.
Budget Buys

As a student you definitely want to save money and make the most of your time here. There are several shops that sell cheaper products:

**Household products, makeup essentials, grooming items.**

**Poundland**

Poundland sells many household, food and grooming items for £1.

**B&M Bargains**

B&M Bargains is great for cheap household products.

**Lidl**

Compared to Tesco’s and Asda, Lidl is cheaper. Perfect if you want to save on your weekly grocery shop!

**Gumtree**

Gumtree is an online outlet where you can buy second hand items for a lot cheaper than buying brand new items. You do have to be careful about who you are buying from and don’t forget to check the item thoroughly before you buy it.

Grocery Stores

If you are missing homemade food or fancy a change in cuisine, Belfast caters for all tastes and budgets. Here is a list of grocery stores close to Queen’s campus, where you will manage to find a range of products:

**Asia Supermarket**

Korean, Chinese, South Asian
189 Ormeau Rd, Belfast BT7 1SQ

**Makkah Market**

Halal and Arabic
58 Bradbury Pl, Belfast BT7 1RR

**Istanbul Market**

Turkish and Halal
1 Botanic Avenue, Belfast BT7 1JG

**St George’s Market**

Organic, Irish
12-20 East Bridge St, Belfast BT1 3NQ (On the weekends)

**Spice World**

South Asian, local produce
35 Donegall Pass, Belfast BT7 1DQ

**Gumtree**

If you are missing homemade food or fancy a change in cuisine, Belfast caters for all tastes and budgets. Here is a list of grocery stores close to Queen’s campus, where you will manage to find a range of products:
Wellbeing

Disability Services
We understand that students may face disability in several forms such as mobility, physical or mental health related illnesses. It is essential that everyone feels comfortable and safe as part of the community at Queen’s University. If you require any information about disability services available at the University and the city, feel free to contact the University.

The University has a dedicated team and you can contact them here: qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/disability

Some organisations that provide disability support in Northern Ireland are:

NI Human Rights Commission  nihrc.org
Equity Commission  equalityni.org
Disability Action  disabilityaction.org
Disability Rights UK  disabilityrightsuk.org
Mencap NI  mencap.org.uk
Eating Disorders Association NI  eatingdisordersni.co.uk

Emergency Medical Care
In case of a medical emergency, there are several outlets you can choose from depending on the how severe the emergency is.

a. Call the police
b. Call an ambulance
c. There are on call doctors you can call for advice or home visit if needed.

Emergency contacts
Immediate emergency  999
Non-emergency police  101
Royal Victoria Hospital emergency  028 9063 2250
GP Out of Hours Service  028 9079 6220
Elms Village Residential Life Team  028 9097 4718
We understand that leaving your home to come to a foreign country can be intimidating and uncomfortable. Culture shock can be experienced in several forms; it can be the language, accent, food or cultural behaviour. You may notice differences compared to that of your culture and find it hard to settle in or adapt to these differences. You are not alone in this experience as many students go through a culture shock before they learn to adapt to changes. If you find it hard to cope with these emotions or changes, here are a few tips that can help you get more comfortable with your new surroundings:

- It is important that you remember you are not alone in this. Students around you may be feeling the same detachment and are going through these transitions just as you are. Talking to other international students may be an outlet to help make you feel at ease.

- You will learn that People in Belfast and Northern Ireland are very friendly and helpful. If you want to talk to a staff member or a friend, feel free to do so as this will help you cope with your emotions better and create the confidence you need to face this transition between cultures.

- Take time out to absorb and reflect on your experience and your time here. Take care of yourself, engage in social activities and exercise as these help if you are feeling low.

- It is important that you engage with other students, international and local, to make new friends. Don’t be hesitant, as everyone is trying to make friends and would love to have a chat with you if you initiated the conversation.

- If you find yourself struggling despite doing the things mentioned above, don’t hesitate to talk to someone professional. The University and Students’ Union has a wide range of outlets, including the Student Wellbeing Service in the Student Guidance Centre, and Advice SU-based in the Students’ Union.

- Elms (student accommodation) has a residential life team devoted to help you if you want to talk to someone. You can contact them on 028 9097 4718.
Homesickness

We understand that for many students it is a very critical time as they leave their friends and family to come to a new city. Homesickness is a common experience for many new students and it may affect everyone differently, as some may not feel it as first while others find themselves missing home more than ever.

The arrival period is a roller-coaster of emotions as you are trying to juggle so many things at once such as settling in, making friends, getting to know the place and attending classes. It is a possibility that between all this, you may feel sad or alienated with no one to talk to.

It is important to remind yourself that homesickness is a common experience for students and you are not alone in this. Every student at some point had to go through this transition and you will eventually get through this.

Tips to cope with homesickness:

a. Find a balance between support from your parents or friends at home and your friends here. If you spend too much time talking to your parents or friends at home, you may be missing out on socialising here and this might be causing you dependency issues.

b. Make it a point to leave your room and make conversation with students in your accommodation or in your class. It may feel safer staying in your room but if you never try and experience the world outside your room, you will find it hard to cope with homesickness. Invite friends for coffee or food and go to events organised by the University to meet people. Remember that everyone is new and trying to make friends.

c. Create a hobby or a habit that brings consistency to your life. Having something to do every day motivates you to look forward to your day. Create a blog, take pictures, join the gym or any club or society that may catch your interest.

d. Weekends can get boring with local students going home. Make sure you find something to do on those days; e.g. organise a dinner party with friends who are still around or use these days to explore Belfast and Northern Ireland! You’d be surprised!
Exploring Belfast and Northern Ireland

Belfast has many hidden gems that one has to explore and find for themselves. The beautiful mountains in the distance and the mix of countryside is bound to capture your attention. Students frequently plan hiking, camping and traveling trips to nearby places around Northern Ireland.

If you need a quick start as to where to go, here’s a little list to steer you in the right direction:

a. **Queen’s Film Theatre** – Queen’s University has its own film theatre with cheap tickets for students and a great experience if you love watching movies and documentaries on the big screen. Don’t forget to enjoy a few cocktails while you wait on your friends and the best part? You can take your drinks in with you!

b. **St. George’s Market** – If you love organic local produce, head to St. George Market to grab a bite and immerse yourself in the Northern Irish atmosphere.

c. **Cave Hill** – If you’re in the mood for some trekking, Cave Hill is the place to go. You can see all of Belfast once you reach the top.

d. **Ulster Museum** – Situated beside the Botanic Gardens, Ulster Museum is a great place to visit if you want some time to reflect and absorb art from all around the world.

**Pro tip:** You will find many places which offer student discounts, so don’t forget to ask. Sometimes even 10% makes a difference.
Weather Essentials

Northern Irish weather is more unpredictable than an exam question on exam day, so here are a few things you should plan on carrying with you:

- Rain Coat
- Umbrella
- Extra pair of socks
- Waterproof backpack

Part-time jobs

To make the most of your time here and learn skills you can use for life, part-time jobs are a great opportunity. There are jobs advertised online and if you look out for vacancies, you will be sure to find those that fit your routine. Volunteering is also a great way to help the community and be part of something bigger. Some paid and voluntary work can also contribute to a Degree Plus Award. Visit qub.ac.uk/degreeplus for more details on how to enhance your degree qualification.

The Students’ Union offers great opportunities for you to get involved in and you will find ‘On-Campus’ job postings on your ‘my future’; an online service for Queen’s University students for job hunting.

Job Hunting Websites:
- qub-csm.symplicity.com
- indeed.co.uk
- ni.jobfinder.co.uk
The Slang Guide

You may find yourself hearing words that are used way too frequently without a clue as to what they mean! So, here is a list to get you sorted.

**What’s the craic?**
What’s happening? What’s up?

**Hoover**
Vacuum Cleaner

**Wee**
Little

**Grand**
Great

**Dead on**
Okay

**Quid**
1 pound

**Fiver**
5 pounds

**Tenner**
10 pounds

**Banter**
Playful chat

**Crisps**
Potato chips

**Chips**
Fries (I know right?!)

**Wee-buns**
Easy

**Dander**
Walk

**Eejit**
Silly person

Notes

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For further information:

Queen’s University Belfast
University Road
Belfast, BT7 1NN
Northern Ireland

T: +44 (0) 28 9024 5133
(during business hours)

T: +44 (0) 28 9097 5099
(outside business hours)

qub.ac.uk