



Queen Margaret
University
EDINBURGH



International Student Pre Arrival Handbook

<https://www.qmu.ac.uk/study-here/international-students/coming-to-the-uk/>



WELCOME

Congratulations on receiving an offer to study at Queen Margaret University (QMU).

From now, until you arrive at QMU there will be a number of steps you'll need to take and some key dates you'll need to remember.

Please familiarise yourself with following pages and check the QMU website and our social media feeds for important information about preparing to #STEPintoQMU.

Our QMU International Facebook page is here:  <https://www.facebook.com/QMUInternational/>

Connect with QMU on Social Media



STEP into
QMU

Welcome from the International Office

The International Office team comprises of three staff members.

Greig Lawson

International Recruitment & Support Manager

Donna Gall

International Officer

Laura Stevenson

Student Recruitment & International Student Support Coordinator


The International Office are available to help answer any questions you have, particularly if you have any enquiries about immigration or extending your visa. We offer information and advice on a range of topics and can provide you with supporting letters for extending your visa, inviting a family member to visit you, and for visiting another country.

We operate drop-in surgery hours during term time;

Monday afternoons (2.00pm-5.00pm)

Thursday mornings (10.00am-12.00noon)

In case of any changes, you can check with the Registry Information Point on Level 1 of the Academic Building.

The International Office organise a number of social events for international students throughout the year. These are usually held in conjunction with the Student's Union and include a familiarisation tour of Edinburgh, a Christmas lunch and other activities throughout the year. Like our  Facebook page to keep up to date with information.

We also encourage international students to volunteer, as a way of getting to know the local language, community and culture. If you would like more information about any of these things, please email international@qmu.ac.uk.

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

All International Students entering on a Student visa MUST ARRIVE IN TIME to attend the International Student Induction Event.

For students starting in September, this will usually be held in the first week of September and for students starting in January this will usually be held in the second week of January. Please be prepared to arrive at QMU from 9.30am on the day of Induction in order to register your attendance. Failure to do so may result in delaying your matriculation and affect your student visa.

You will receive joining instructions and induction information via email from our Admissions and Registry teams in the weeks preceding induction. Please also familiarise yourself with the following website for further induction information: <https://www.qmu.ac.uk/current-students/current-students-general-information/induction-for-new-students/>

International students who do not require a Student Visa are strongly encouraged to attend. Attending induction will welcome you to the University and provide you with the best possible start to your time with us.

The induction will include:

- An introduction to the University and the campus
- Guidance and support on matriculation (including issues relating to Student Visas and monitoring of attendance)
- Insight into Student Support Services at QMU including careers, counselling, disability, finance, welfare and visa support
- Introduction to student clubs, societies, and volunteering opportunities
- Receive your welcome pack with useful information and special offers.





Scotland

Scotland makes up the northern part of the UK and has a population of over 5 million people. Although Scotland is part of the UK, it has its own devolved parliament, as well as having distinct education and legal systems.

There is something for everyone in Scotland – historic buildings and castles, tourist attractions, events and festivals, outdoor activities such as golf and hill-walking.

For further information on Scotland visit www.visitscotland.com

Edinburgh is Scotland's capital city and is located in the south-east of the country. Edinburgh is frequently voted as one of the most beautiful cities in Europe and one of the best places to live in the UK.

As one of the most picturesque cities in the world, Edinburgh boasts an amazing mix of galleries and museums, restaurants and bars, parks and gardens, and all the shopping you could wish for. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, Edinburgh combines the medieval Old Town and the Georgian New Town. The city is also host to several arts and cultural festivals throughout the year. The most famous of these events are the Edinburgh Fringe, the Edinburgh International Festival, the Edinburgh Military Tattoo, the Edinburgh International Film Festival, the Edinburgh International Book Festival and the Hogmanay Street Party on Princes Street.

For further information on Edinburgh visit <http://edinburgh.org/>



Edinburgh



Climate

Edinburgh has very unpredictable weather, with sunny summer conditions sometimes rapidly changing into damp, showery conditions and vice versa. Summers are generally fine, with mild temperatures and bright sunshine, although days might start out misty. Winters are long and damp with many frosty days. December, January and February are the rainiest months. Snow in winter is infrequent.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Average Daily Temperature (centigrade)												
Min	1	1	2	4	6	9	11	11	9	7	4	2
Max	6	6	8	11	14	17	18	18	16	12	9	7
Average Monthly Rainfall (mm)												
	57	39	39	39	54	47	83	77	57	65	62	57
Average Monthly Sunshine (hours per day)												
	2	3	4	5	6	6	5	4	4	3	2	1



Queen Margaret
University
EDINBURGH

Visa & Immigration



Queen Margaret
University
EDINBURGH

Immigration

You will need to check with your local British Embassy, or British High Commission if you require a visa to enter into the UK. They will be able to advise you on how to make an application. Most students require at least entry clearance.

Student Visa System

For full details on the complete immigration policy, you should visit the UK Visa & Immigration (UKVI) website at: www.gov.uk/browse/visas-immigration/study-visas
In order to obtain a student visa for a course at Queen Margaret University you must be in receipt of an Unconditional Firm Offer, and have paid a deposit towards your tuition fees at QMU (or provided evidence of sponsorship). You must then request a CAS from the Admissions Office. After you have satisfied these requirements QMU will issue you with a Confirmation of Acceptance of Studies (CAS) which you will be able to use in your completed Visa Application. Information and Guidance on obtaining your student visa, paying your deposit etc. is available on our website:
www.qmu.ac.uk/study-here/international-students/visas-and-immigration/

Visa Problems?

An offer of a place at the University and the issuing of a Confirmation of Acceptance of Studies (CAS) does not guarantee the issue of a Student Visa.

Responsibility for valid student "Leave to Remain" in the UK lies with the student at all times.

Local Assistance

All countries have a British Embassy/British High Commission and most also have a local British Council Office who can provide help or advice. Check your local phone directory to locate them or visit the British Council website (www.britishcouncil.org).

Immigration Health Surcharge

An immigration health surcharge will be required to be paid by non-EEA nationals who apply to come to the UK to study for more than 6 months. This means that health surcharge payers will be able to access the National Health Service in the same way as a permanent resident, i.e. they will receive NHS care generally free of charge but may be charged for services a permanent resident would also pay for, such as dental treatment.

The health surcharge is payable in full at the time of the immigration application. The amount charged will be calculated based on the amount of time a migrant would be permitted to stay in the UK.

Immigration Health Surcharge

Further information about the immigration health surcharge can be found on www.gov.uk/healthcare-immigration-application/overview

Credibility Interviews

As part of the application process you may be required to attend an interview to confirm your reasons for choosing the UK, QMU and your course, how you intend to fund your studies in the UK and also how this fits into your career aspirations.

Biometric Residence Permits

You will receive a vignette in your passport which will last for 30 days. Within 10 days of arrival in the UK you will be required to go to a designated Post Office in order to collect your Biometric Residence Permit (BRP). You will be required to bring your BRP to the International Office in order for us to take copies along with your passport.





Accommodation



Queen Margaret
University
EDINBURGH



Queen Margaret University offers on campus accommodation in our student halls of residence.

There are 800 single bedrooms, in self contained flats for three to six students. Each flat has a shared kitchen/living area.

You will need to apply in advance as availability cannot be guaranteed.

We are unable to provide accommodation for couples or families.

What is provided?

Each en-suite single bedroom is equipped with a bed, wardrobe, desk, chest of drawers, shelves and chair and has en-suite toilet, shower and sink.

Each bedroom has a WiFi internet connection. The kitchen contains a fridge, freezer, electric cooker, microwave, an electric kettle and an electric toaster. Irons and ironing boards are also provided, as are

brooms, mops and vacuum cleaners. Each living area (open plan to the Kitchen) is equipped with a dining table and chairs.

You'll need to provide your own bed linen, towels and kitchen utensils.

Personal contents insurance is also provided as part of the lease.

It is possible to purchase a pack of essential items to be in your room when you arrive. Purchases can be made online with www.click2campus.com

Please note that once you sign the accommodation lease, it is legally binding for one full academic year, (or 38 or 50 weeks). One-semester study abroad/exchange students who sign an accommodation lease are liable for the duration of the semester.

Once your application has been processed you will be sent an offer of accommodation which you should accept and make a £250 prepayment to confirm your place.

To apply online and complete a virtual tour of the halls of residence please visit the accommodation website: <https://www.qmu.ac.uk/campus-life/accommodation/>

You can contact the accommodation team directly with any questions: accommodation@qmu.ac.uk

External Accommodation

For external accommodation, there are many things that you should be aware of including location, deposits and agency fees. Student Pad (www.studentpad.co.uk) provides excellent advice and hints on dealing with landlords, contracts, etc. Accommodation can also be found via the following links:

Student Pad

www.studentpad.co.uk

UNITE

www.unite-students.com

ESPC

www.espc.co.uk

City Lets

www.citylets.co.uk

Letting Web

www.lettingweb.com



A suggestion of what to bring

Think about what type of clothing you will need to help you cope with the changeable weather in Scotland. Below are some items you might consider bringing or buying once you get here.

- Hat
- Long sleeved jerseys or pullovers
- Warm winter jacket
- Sturdy footwear
- Thick socks
- Scarf
- Gloves

Please note: there are strict rules governing the import of products into the European Union. Information about the products you can and cannot bring with you can be found on the DEFRA website

www.gov.uk/personal-food-plant-and-animal-product-imports

Personal Insurance

It is a good idea to take out insurance for your personal belongings especially if staying off-campus. A number of companies offer inexpensive cover. Search on the internet for 'Student Personal Insurance'.



Getting to Edinburgh When to arrive



Queen Margaret
University
EDINBURGH



Remember—all International Students entering on a Student Visa **MUST ARRIVE IN TIME** to attend the International Student Induction Event. Failure to do so may result in delaying your matriculation and affect your Student Visa.

You may wish to plan your travel so that you have a few days of rest to get over jet lag and get used to your new surroundings before the Student Induction. Please contact accommodation in advance if you are planning on arriving early to ensure a place will be available for you.

Meet QMU @ EDINBURGH AIRPORT

For students starting in September, member of the QMU International Team will be available to meet you upon your arrival at Edinburgh airport.

If you would like further information please email – international@qmu.ac.uk or provide your arrival information via the following website:

<https://www.qmu.ac.uk/study-here/international-students/>

Getting to Edinburgh Arriving in the UK



Queen Margaret
University
EDINBURGH

Clearing Immigration

You will need to bring the following documents with you when travelling to the UK:

Passport

A valid passport is required. Check that your passport is valid for a minimum of one year after you enter the UK. If in doubt get a new passport.

Visa or Entry Clearance

See information on Page 3 on how to obtain a visa/entry clearance.

Offer Letter

We would also recommend you bring a copy of your offer documents sent to you by our Admissions Team.



Getting to QMU from Edinburgh Airport

Airport Bus

A regular Airport Bus service to the city centre is available from outside the main terminal building. The journey time to Waverley Bridge (opposite Waverley Train Station) is 25 minutes. From Waverley Bridge you can either take a taxi to the University (fare approximately £25 and journey time 20 minutes) or take a train from Edinburgh Waverley Station to Musselburgh Station.

<https://www.edinburghairport.com/transport-links/buses-and-coaches>

Tram

A regular tram service to the city centre is available from outside the main terminal building. The journey time to St Andrew's Square (near Waverley Train Station) is 30 minutes. From St Andrew's Square you can either take a taxi to the University (fare approximately £25 and journey time 20 minutes) or take a train from Edinburgh Waverley Station to Musselburgh (see next page).

www.edinburghtrams.com

Taxi, Edinburgh City Private Hire (ECPH)

ECPH offer a special set fare which is set at £32 for a car of \$36 for a people carrier from the airport to the QMU campus during the September and January arrivals weekends.

City Cabs (Black Cabs)

The journey will be priced as per the meter reading. These taxis are larger and good if you have a lot of luggage. City Cabs taxi's are queued up on the ground floor of the multi-storey car park outside the main exit. Follow the signs for 'taxis'

Both companies are perfectly safe and secure. Tell the driver where you wish to go and either pay the set price or the meter rate.

Link to this page:
www.qmu.ac.uk/location-and-getting-here/



Getting to QMU from



Queen Margaret
University
EDINBURGH

Waverley Train Station



An hourly train service runs between Edinburgh Waverley and Musselburgh (the nearest station to the University) Taking a train from Edinburgh Waverley to Musselburgh will take under 10 minutes and there are regular trains during the day and a single fare will cost around £2.70. The University Campus is a 2 minute walk from Musselburgh station.

<https://www.scotrail.co.uk/>

Edinburgh Bus Station



St Andrews Square Bus Station is Edinburgh's main bus terminus. From here you can either get a taxi to the University (fare approximately £25 and journey time 20 minutes) or walk the short distance to Edinburgh Waverley Train Station and take the short train ride to Musselburgh and the University (see left for further information). Whilst there are also a number of bus services to the University from the city-centre these would not be suitable when travelling with luggage.

Glasgow Airport



Public Transport
Upon arriving at Glasgow Airport please follow signs for Buses/Coaches and proceed to Stance 1. From here board the Number 500 bus service to Glasgow Queen Street Railway Station then onward train to Edinburgh Waverley.

Register as a student using our online matriculation system



We call the student registration process Matriculation. Please complete this process before you attend your induction programme. You will require your student number to log-in, which can be found on your offer letter.

You will be able to complete this process during August (if you're starting in September) or during December (if you're starting in January).

Please check this website for further information <https://www.qmu.ac.uk/current-students/current-students-general-information/induction-for-new-students/>

Police Registration



Are you from one of these countries?

Afghanistan, Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Belarus, Bolivia, Brazil, China, Columbia, Cuba, Egypt, Georgia, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, North Korea, Oman, Palestine, Peru, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Yemen.

Does the visa in your passport state that you have to register with the police within 7 days of arrival in the UK?

If the answer to either of these questions is yes, you will need to register with the police within seven days of your arrival in the UK. You should first attend the Police Scotland Headquarters to book an appointment (it is not possible to book an appointment by phone or email). You can only book one appointment for yourself and any dependants. The headquarters reception is open Monday to Sunday 9.00am-5.00pm. Appointments for registration are available Monday to Thursday 8.30am-12.00noon and 12.30pm-3.00pm.

You will receive an appointment card with the date and time of your appointment written on it along with a list of everything that you are required to bring to your appointment. If you attend without the listed documentation, you may not be able to register and may have to book another appointment.

You should arrive 10 minutes before your appointment, and your appointment will take around 10-15 minutes. You will not be seen if you are late for your appointment, and you will have to book for another day. If you cannot attend, you must cancel your appointment as soon as possible in person at Fettes, and rebook for a suitable time. If you miss your appointment without cancelling you will be emailed advising of your requirement to register with the police as part of the conditions of your visa, and you may be reported to the Home Office for late registration.

Contact Details

You can get further information at:
www.gov.uk/register-with-the-police

Police Scotland Headquarters

Overseas Visitor Registration Office
Fettes Avenue
Edinburgh EH4 1RB
Tel: 0131 311 3171/3977
SCDOVROEast@Scotland.pnn.police.
uk

Office Hours:

To get there from campus, take the number 30 Lothian bus into the city centre or the train from Musselburgh to Edinburgh, then change to 24, 29, or 42 Lothian Bus.



Queen Margaret
University
EDINBURGH



Tuition Fees



Queen Margaret
University
EDINBURGH



Please note that if you miss one instalment, the Finance Office will automatically request the remaining outstanding balance.

Credit Card Payments: You can pay your Fees, in full, by credit card or debit card at the Finance Office. You should check prior to payment whether you will be charged by your bank for using your card abroad and what this charge will be.

Sponsored Students: Sponsored students should provide written evidence of who will be sponsoring their studies and what exactly will be paid by the sponsor.

Details of fees are available on the QMU website www.qmu.ac.uk/study-here/fees-and-funding.

Regardless of how you decide to pay your tuition fees it is essential that you arrange a payment method with the Finance Office within 21 days of your arrival at QMU. A full copy of our Student Debt Recovery Procedures can be found on our website.

The Finance Office will issue you with an invoice for your tuition fees for that year after you have matriculated. These are due to be paid, in full, 21 days after the invoice date, however an instalment option is available as described in this section.

Information about scholarships can be found by visiting the following websites:

SCHOLARSHIPS

www.qmu.ac.uk/study-here/fees-and-funding/

www.britishcouncil.org

www.postgraduatesearch.com/funding

One Single Payment: Students can pay their tuition fees in full on or before arrival. For tuition fees over £9,000, where the student is self-funding and the fee is settled in full prior to 31 October or within 7 days from the date of invoice, whichever is the later a 5% discount will be applied. The discount will be calculated at 5% of the net fee payable (i.e. after any scholarship).

****Please remember to check on scholarship deadlines****

Instalments: You can choose to pay fees by instalments by Direct Debit. You must hold a UK Bank Account to operate this system. Instalments start in October and run through to May the following year (8 payments). You must complete a Direct Debit Mandate, which you will find on the QMU Portal as soon as you have your UK bank account details.



Term Dates

A full calendar of the Academic Year is provided on our website www.qmu.ac.uk/about-the-university/quality/committees-regulations-policies-and-procedures/academic-calendar.

Teaching and Learning Methods

During your studies at QMU, it is possible that methods of teaching and learning will differ from what you are used to.

Lectures

Traditional teaching, where a lecturer speaks on a particular subject to many students.

Tutorials

This is where you meet your tutor with a small group of students. Here you will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of the topic and contribute to discussions.



Remember, if you are struggling with your studies you must seek advice from academic staff rather than wait for them to approach you.

Further information about study methods used in the UK is provided on the UKCISA website www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Preparation-and-Arrival/Study-skills-for-success.

Independent Study

You are expected to do a fair amount of independent study either on your own or in small groups. To be able to contribute in class and to write assignments you are expected to read about your subject. Reading lists are provided as guidance.

Assessment

Assessment is carried out through examinations and course work. Do not put work off to the last minute as pressure soon mounts.

Plagiarism is a very serious matter in the UK. You should NEVER copy someone else's work or even repeat it in different words without stating where you found the information and who it came from. Guides about referencing are available in the Learning Resource Centre. (LRC)

Personal Academic Tutor (PAT)

Your personal Academic Tutor is the member of staff who will be your guide and mentor for academic issues throughout your time at QMU. Your PAT will:

- be a friendly and helpful first point of contact within the institution
- be a source of advice and guidance on all matters relating to academic progress
- act as a link with other academic staff
- be aware of the broader network of support services at QMU and advise you as appropriate

Your PAT will contact you within the first 6 weeks of the first semester to arrange a meeting. You will then be able to meet again at least once every semester, or more if you need to.

Library Services

The Learning Resource Centre is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. As a student at QMU, you have access to thousands of books, journals and online resources to support your studies.

In the Learning Resource Centre you will find:

- Books, journals and DVDs
- Group study spaces (with smart-boards)
- Quiet study spaces (with IT and somewhere to plug in your laptop)
- Silent study spaces
- Large open plan areas with terminals
- Comfy seating
- Workshops to help you find and use online resources
- Friendly staff who are available 9am-9pm Monday – Thursday, 9am – 7pm on Fridays and 9am – 5pm at the weekend.

Online you will discover:

- eBooks, eJournals and databases (via our “Discover” service)
- Friendly staff!

Email us on lrhelp@qmu.ac.uk

View our webpage at www.qmu.ac.uk/lb/

English Language Support

Free English language support is available from Tim Freckleton and Hazel O'Hara in the Effective Learning Service, which is based in the Learning Resource Centre. The Effective Learning Service provides support for all students wishing to develop their English language skills. www.qmu.ac.uk/study-here/student-services/effective-learning-service-els/

Throughout the year the Effective Learning Service offers:

- Individual appointments
- Drop in facility, for quick advice
- Workshops on a range of study skills
- Language support for international students
- Online guides and resources
- Tim and Hazel can be contacted at ELSinternational@qmu.ac.uk



Student Services



Queen Margaret
University
EDINBURGH



Student Services acknowledge the diversity of students' backgrounds and experiences, and have established a range of support services designed to meet students needs and requirements.

There is a team of specialists in the areas of careers and student employment, disability advice, counselling, financial advice, transition and pre-entry guidance and a medical service linked to the Riverside Medical Practice in Musselburgh.

Services are confidential and free. Further information about Student Services can be found on www.qmu.ac.uk/study-here/student-services.

Student Services are located alongside the International Office at the Registry Information Point on Level 1 of the Academic Building. The office is open Monday – Friday, 9.00am – 4.00pm.

You can also access information and resources 24/7 through the online Student Support Portal, OurQMU. Once you have matriculated, you can use your QMU ID details to log in.

Wellbeing Services

The Wellbeing service offers practical and emotional support, daily drop-ins for a confidential chat and signposting to relevant internal and external support resources to help you stay on track with your studies. The service also offers groups, for example to manage stress and anxiety, and advice on self-management to ensure you stay well throughout your time at university.

Please contact our Wellbeing Adviser if you have any questions or concerns - Wellbeing@qmu.ac.uk



Careers and Employability

The Careers and Employability team offers you support throughout your studies and after graduation. There is a wealth of information, resources and access to support available through the new online portal, Student Central. Once you have matriculated, you can use your QMU ID details to log in. The portal will allow you to:

- Access information and resources 24/7
- Book one-to-one guidance appointments for advice on future career or study choices
- Find events details including careers fairs, workshops and employer presentations
- Find advice and appointments for getting a National Insurance Number
- Search for part-time jobs, internships and volunteer opportunities

You can book appointments with the team or drop in to the Employability Centre for advice and support on developing your skills and attributes that will contribute to your future success. You can get information and advice on lots of topics including:

- Mentoring from industry professionals through the Employer Mentoring Programme
- Support with CVs, job applications and interview skills
- Work experience and placements
- Finding graduate level jobs

Careers advice and support is available to you throughout the course of your studies and beyond, as QMU offers a 'Careers Advice for Life' service to its graduates. Our door will always be open to you as a graduate of QMU.

Contact us:

Email: careers@qmu.ac.uk

Tel: 0131 474 0000 (say 'Careers' when prompted) Web: www.qmu.ac.uk/careers

Drop in to: Employability Centre, Level One

Follow us on Twitter: [@QMU_Jobs](https://twitter.com/QMU_Jobs)

Like us on Facebook: QMU Careers and Employability

Living in Scotland



Queen Margaret
University
EDINBURGH

Leaving home to study in a foreign country can be a very exciting experience but it can also be quite stressful. Often students are surprised by the effect that travelling to another country can have on them. However, it is important to realise that many of your reactions are perfectly normal, regardless of where you are from or what you are studying. Culture Shock can be caused by a number of things:

- The shock of a new environment
- Different study methods
- Constantly meeting new people
- Being separated from your loved ones and the people who you would usually turn to for advice
- The climate of your new home
- The food
- Being submerged in a foreign language
- Social customs that challenge what you have always accepted as 'normal'.

It is important to recognise the symptoms of culture shock and look after yourself. It is perfectly normal, and to be expected, that you may feel homesick and you may be surprised when it hits you. You may have difficulty sleeping, or alternatively want to sleep all the time; you may get headaches or be over anxious. Often your concentration span is affected, and your emotions may fluctuate more than normal.



Remember that there are support networks in place to help you through any difficult times. Here is some basic advice:

- Maintain a healthy balanced diet
- Take light exercise
- Keep in touch with your friends and family at home by email or make a few extra phone calls home
- Make friends with other international students, as often they will understand what you are going through
- Join some societies, or get involved with your local community as this is a way of keeping yourself busy and also getting to know other Scottish students who can in turn help you to understand the culture better
- Speak to someone from the International Office or the Student Counsellor
- Ultimately, look after yourself and remember that culture shock is a perfectly natural reaction to life in a new environment.





Currency

Notes: £100, £50, £20, £10, £5, and £1

Coins: £2, £1, 50p, 20p, 10p, 5p, 2p, and 1p

In Scotland, three different banks can issue bank notes: the Bank of Scotland, the Royal Bank of Scotland and the Clydesdale Bank. In England, only the Bank of England issues bank notes.

Before you leave home, you may consider getting a bank draft in your own name in Pounds Sterling (£GBP) so that you can safely bring a large amount of money with you. Please ensure that the draft is drawn on a UK bank as this speeds up transactions and ensures that commission payments are dealt with locally in your own country. Once you arrive at the University, you can then open up your own bank account and deposit the bank draft. Do not bring personal cheques as many banks will not accept them.

In addition, you may consider bringing some travellers cheques in Pounds Sterling as a small working reserve, enough for two weeks (about £250 - more if you are seeking accommodation outside of the University halls of residence, as you will have to pay a deposit). MasterCard and Visa credit cards are also widely accepted.

Also bring with you about £250 in UK bank notes. This will cover your taxi fare and allow you money for food etc until your bank account becomes operational (normally about two weeks).

Opening a Bank Account

ATMs will accept Visa, MasterCard, cards with the Cirrus logo and various UK bank cash cards. There are a number of banks nearby in Musselburgh where you can open an account including:



www.santander.co.uk



www.tsb.co.uk



BANK OF SCOTLAND

www.bankofscotland.co.uk



www.rbs.co.uk



Clydesdale Bank

www.clydesdalebank.co.uk

There are also more banks in the centre of town. Banks are usually open from 9.00am until 5pm, Monday to Friday, with the exception of bank holidays.

It is essential that you open a bank account as soon as you arrive in the UK. If you bring a bank draft in GBP with you, you can open an account at a convenient bank. The draft should take between seven to ten days to clear.

The bank will ask you to provide photo identification, confirmation that you are a student at QMU and your postal address. Therefore, once you have chosen a bank, go to the School Office in the University and they will prepare a letter confirming your student status and your postal address. Please make sure you give at least 48 hours notice. We can only issue one bank letter per student.

ATM

There is an ATM located opposite Main Reception of the University. You should be able to withdraw cash from most UK banks free of charge.





Cost of Living

University Halls of Residence (40 weeks)	Per Week	Total
Accommodation (including heating, electricity and internet) (2014 prices)	£104-£120	£4160-£4800
Food	£25	£1,000
Other costs (books, clothes, phone, travel, photocopying, hobbies, etc)	£40	£1,600
University Halls of Residence (50 weeks)	Per Week	Total
Accommodation (including heating, electricity and internet) (2014 prices)	£104-£120	£5200-£6000
Food	£25	£1,250
Other costs (books, clothes, phone, travel, photocopying, hobbies, etc)	£40	£2,000

TYPE OF RESIDENCE	COUNCIL TAX LIABILITY
University accommodation	Exempt
Private accommodation where all the residents are students	Exempt
Private residence where a student is living with a spouse or dependent who is subject to immigration control	Exempt
Private accommodation with one adult non-student resident	All liable for the tax but with 25% discount
Private residence with more than one adult non-student resident	All liable for full tax

Please note that these costs are estimates and will vary depending on the individual and the choice of accommodation. You can rent a flat privately in Edinburgh - the cost will vary depending on the size of the flat and the location. You will also have to budget for the costs of travel to and from QMU. These costs do not include tuition fees.

Council Tax

The Council Tax is a property based tax based on the value of the house you are living in and is used to pay for local services. Whether you are liable to pay council tax or not will depend on where you live and whom you live with. If you live in halls of residence you are exempt from council tax and don't need to take any further action. The adjacent table explains the situation for private accommodation. When you move into a new flat you will need to inform the Council of everyone who is living in the flat. Council tax exemption forms can be stamped by the School Office.





Most international students studying for longer than six months do not require a work permit to work part-time. Therefore, international students studying full-time are allowed to work in the UK for up to 20 hours per week as long as the work meets certain conditions:

- Students must not work for more than 20 hours a week during term time, except where a work placement is to be undertaken as a necessary part of the course of study as agreed by the education institution.
- The stamp in your passport must not say “prohibition on taking employment.”
- Students cannot engage in business, self-employment, the provision of services, or take work as a professional entertainer or sports person.
- Students should not pursue a career by filling a permanent full-time vacancy.

Further details about the regulations on employment can be found at www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Working/Can-you-work

Students on short term Study Abroad or Exchange programmes from countries which do not require a UK entry visa, will need to obtain a Tier 4 Student Visa if wanting to work part time while studying. If you are a Study Abroad or Exchange student please contact StudyAbroad@qmu.ac.uk for further guidance.



If you decide to work you will need to get a National Insurance Number by following the procedure below:

- Get a job offer in writing.
- Telephone 0845 600 0643 to make an appointment for getting a National Insurance Number.
- When you go for your appointment, take your passport, matriculation card/ unconditional course offer and the job offer letter from your prospective employer. The interview may last over one hour.
- It can take up to 10 to 15 days for your permanent number to come through and 10 to 12 weeks for the National Insurance card to come through.

Visa Extensions

If you need to extend your visa, you are advised to meet with the International Office as early as possible. Not all students are eligible to extend.

You will need to complete an online application under the Tier 4 (General) category, and obtain a new Confirmation of Acceptance of Studies (CAS) from the International Office stating that you are a registered student.

You can apply online and then either submit your supporting documents by post or attend an interview in person in Glasgow. You should aim to organise your visa extension 4 – 6 weeks in advance of your visa expiring.

It is advisable to make a note in your diary of the date your visa expires.





All international students who study full-time in Scotland and have paid the Immigration Health Surcharge are entitled to free medical advice and hospital treatment under the National Health Service (NHS) in Scotland. The cost of dental care, and eye tests are not covered by the NHS.

It is advisable to register with a doctor once you are settled in your accommodation. If you are living on campus you can register with our local GP by picking up a form at our Student Services reception desk.

Student medical services are delivered in partnership with:

The Riverside Practice
Esk Medical Centre
Ladywell Way
Musselburgh
EH21 6AB
0131 665 2267

Local Services

Shops

There are a number of shops within walking distance of the University and on close-by public transport links, including supermarkets Tesco, Asda, Lidl and Aldi, as well as high street retailers Marks & Spencer, Boots and Superdrug. These shops sell many homeware items together with food, toiletries and clothing. Edinburgh's city centre offers a large ranges of shops that are usually open Monday—Sunday from 9.00am—5.00/6.00pm.

There is also a retail park close to the University called Fort Kinnaird (www.fortkinnaird.com) which offers over 50 high street stores.

An International Student Identity Card (ISIC) card can allow you discounts on travel, accommodation and flights in the UK and overseas. You can get an ISIC card from STA Travel on Forrest Road, Edinburgh.

Post Office

There are Post Offices available in the following locations close to the University:

105 High Street
Musselburgh
EH21 7DA

c/o Asda
The Jewel
EH15 3AR

Getting around Edinburgh

As a student, you can apply for rail and bus discount cards which will provide you with money off standard fares.

There are two main bus companies that operate throughout Edinburgh: Lothian Buses and First Bus. To find out more about the various bus routes you can visit their websites: www.lothianbuses.co.uk and www.firstedinburgh.co.uk

The main bus that runs from Edinburgh city centre to Queen Margaret University is the Lothian No. 30. The Number 45 also serves the campus. The 30 bus runs approximately every 10 minutes, with a journey time of

20-30 minutes. Sunday service tends to be every 30 minutes. It is possible to travel between Edinburgh and QMU by train in an average of 7 minutes. Timetables can be found on the First Scotrail website www.firstscotrail.com.

Edinburgh is extremely accessible by road, rail and air.

Bus

National Express:
www.nationalexpress.com
Scottish Citylink:
www.citylink.co.uk
Megabus:
www.megabus.com

You can purchase student discount cards, which will offer you up to 30% discount on fares (visit their websites for further details). The main bus station is in St Andrews Square, behind Princes Street.

Train

Scotrail:
www.scotrail.co.uk
Virgin Train (East coast mainline):
www.virgintrainseastcoast.com
Virgin Train (West coast mainline):
www.virgintrains.co.uk

Alternatively, visit Waverley Station on Princes Street for further information. You can purchase a young persons/

student railcard that lasts for one year and gives you up to a 1/3 off all rail travel.

Air

Edinburgh is well serviced by a number of airlines, including budget airlines such as easyJet (www.easyjet.co.uk) and Ryanair (www.ryanair.co.uk). Have a look at their websites for details of special offers. STA Travel (www.statravel.co.uk) specialises in student travel and is located on Forrest Road near the Museum of Scotland and

Nicholson Street. Remember to check if you require a visa for your chosen destination if you decide to travel outside the UK – even within Europe. Don't leave this until the last minute!

Car

Please note that there is no on-campus parking for students in University accommodation who wish to bring their own cars. This is in accordance with the University's Green Travel Plan. Exceptions can be made for students with mobility impairments.

Travel Accommodation

You may wish to become a member of the Scottish Youth Hostel Association (SYHA) which gives you access to budget accommodation across the country.



Students' Union & Sports



STUDENT LIFE

Students Union

As a student at QMU, you are automatically a member of the Students' Union. The Union is a safe social space for all students to relax, socialise, volunteer, receive advice and participate in extra curricular activities.

The Students' Union Officers and staff can be found in the first floor offices. They are there to help with all your needs and enquiries during your time at University - pop along to see them!

The Students' Union Welfare Point is also on the first floor: welfare@qmu.ac.uk. The Help Zone is also the place to go if you wish to campaign, to get free sexual health and safer sex materials, and general information.

You can get involved in Student Parliament and various sports clubs and societies where you can voice your opinions and gain valuable new skills - contact union@qmu.ac.uk for more information.

The bar and café have a pool table and a games machine, an internet area where students can use their laptops and a partitioned area that can be used for private/alcohol-free events.

For more information visit www.qmusu.org.uk.



SPORTS CONTACTS



Queen Margaret
University
EDINBURGH

There is a sports centre on campus, offering a range of facilities. The staff endeavour to provide you with a high quality service and are happy to assist with any questions.

Our facilities include:

- Fitness suite
- Astro turf suitable for 5-a-side or 7-a-side football
- Sports hall
- Exercise studio

Further information about the sports facilities can be found on www.qmu.ac.uk/sports.

There are many sporting events and activities that take place within Edinburgh and Musselburgh, including:

Football

Football is one of Scotland's most popular spectator sports. There are two professional teams that play in Edinburgh: Hibernian www.hibs.co.uk and Heart of Midlothian www.heartsfc.co.uk.

Golf

Golfers regard Scotland as the home of golf. East Lothian alone has 20 golf courses. Further information can be found on www.golfeastlothian.com.

Rugby

There is a local rugby team in Musselburgh and it is also possible to watch rugby at the national stadium, Murrayfield. Further information about the local and national team can be found on the Scottish Rugby website www.scottishrugby.org.

ACCOMMODATION SERVICES

0131 474 0000 or email: accommodation@qmu.ac.uk

BRITISH COUNCIL

www.educationuk.org
www.britishcouncil.org

BRITISH TOURIST AUTHORITY

Web: www.visitbritain.com

CONSULTATIONS AND HIGH COMMISSIONS

An up-to-date list of consulates and contact addresses in Edinburgh can be found at www.visitscotland.com/travel/information/embassies-consulates

EDINBURGH EVENTS INFORMATION

www.list.co.uk.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE

Effective Learning Service
0131 474 0000 or email: ELSinternational@qmu.ac.uk

Foreign & Commonwealth Office
www.fco.gov.uk

HOME OFFICE

www.gov.uk/browse/visas-immigration

INTERNATIONAL OFFICE

0131 474 0099 or email: international@qmu.ac.uk

STAY WITH A FAMILY

You may also wish to take part in a HOST UK home-stay weekend visit. Through HOST UK you will be introduced to a family who have an interest in meeting international and European students or maybe even have an interest in your home country. Further details about this scheme can be found at www.host.org.uk.

STUDENT SERVICES

0131 474 0000 or email: studentservices@qmu.ac.uk

STUDENTS UNION

welfare@qmu.ac.uk
union@qmu.ac.uk

UKCISA

(United Kingdom Council for International Students' Affairs)
Email: enquiries@ukcisa.org.uk
www.ukcisa.org.uk

Advice Line: +44 207 788 9214(1.00-4.00pm, Monday to Friday)

You can visit the UKCISA website before you depart for the UK as it is an excellent source of advice for international students, and includes many useful information sheets for download.

VISIT SCOTLAND

Web: www.visitscotland.com
Email: info@visitscotland.com



CHECKLIST



Queen Margaret
University
EDINBURGH

Below is a list of some of the most important things you must arrange before leaving for the UK. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact us:

- Valid Passport
- Visa/Entry Clearance (if required)
- Letter of Offer from the University
- Your original school/academic certificates/transcripts for checking at matriculation
- Airline ticket (check dates and reconfirm flights)
- Travel Insurance (yourself and luggage)
- Medical insurance for Exchange and Study Abroad students studying for less than six months
- Complete lease and return to Accommodation Office with deposit
- Make travel arrangements to the University upon arrival in Scotland
- Matriculate online at www.qmu.ac.uk
- Provide arrival information to the International Office

Money:

- Bank draft in pounds sterling
- Traveller cheques in Pounds Sterling
- Pounds Sterling in cash
- Credit Card

The International Office Queen Margaret University

Outside the UK:
+44 131 474 0099

Inside the UK:
0131 474 0099

Within Edinburgh:
474 0099

Email:
international@qmu.ac.uk

CHECKLIST

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