



Ustinov College
Durham University

Family Guide 2024-2025



BRINGING YOUR FAMILY TO DURHAM

Bringing your family to Durham can be a daunting process. The purpose of this guide is to help you with that process, give you the information you require before coming to Durham and signposting you to sources of help and advice.



OVERSEAS STUDENTS

Before bringing your spouse and children to the UK you will have to prove to the UK Border Agency (UKBA) that you can support them financially. You may like to consider coming to Durham alone and looking for suitable accommodation for your family before they join you

It is strongly recommended that you check all the details regarding visa information available at www.durham.ac.uk/immigration/. The Student Immigration Office provides advice for international students looking to enter or extend their leave to remain in the UK to study and works with Departments across the University to ensure compliance with UK Visas & Immigration (UKVI) regulations. You can also speak with an International Student Adviser by calling +44(0) 191 33 46069, or through www.durham.ac.uk/immigration/contact/.

Please also read carefully all the information sent to you by the University Colleges Postgraduate Office and Ustinov College Office.

COLLEGE ACCOMMODATION



Ustinov College welcomes students and their families from all over the world. Many choose to live in Ustinov College accommodation at Keenan House, Dryburn Court, where they can meet other families and develop support networks. Others live in the local community, in areas such as Gilesgate or Newton Hall. All students with families are welcome to seek the College's help in settling into life in Durham.

More details on College accommodation can be found on the Ustinov College web pages.

All enquiries should be emailed to ustinov.accommodation@durham.ac.uk.

Once you have accepted your offer from the University to study you will receive an email about becoming a member of College and applying for accommodation.

College family accommodation is very popular and demand is always high so try to apply as soon as possible and note that we cannot guarantee family accommodation.

PRIVATE ACCOMMODATION

Finding accommodation suitable for families can be difficult before you arrive but there are many houses in Durham and the surrounding areas that are suitable. Living in suitable accommodation is a vital component of a successful period of study in Durham and the University has a dedicated accommodation office which holds information on private landlords and available accommodation.

To contact the accommodation office, please email

accommodation.office@durham.ac.uk or visit:

<https://www.durham.ac.uk/colleges-and-student-experience/colleges/the-accommodation-and-allocations-office/private-accommodation/>

You need to bear in mind that cheaper accommodation will be located further away from the campus and/or your department. Paying a lower amount in rent may not make up for extra time and money that might be needed for travelling.

There is an Advice Service at Durham Students' Union (Durham SU), where you can access help/advice on accommodation as well as other student issues. You can access free resources online www.durhamsu.com/advice-and-support or contact an advisor directly at dsu.advice2@durham.ac.uk.

It is highly recommended that you source suitable accommodation for your family before you bring them to Durham as staying in hotels and guest houses can be very expensive.

For information on guest houses and hotels contact: Durham Tourist Information Centre, 2 Millennium Place, Durham, DH1 1WA, telephone: +44 (0) 191 384 3720 or email: www.thisisdurham.com/visitor-info

MONEY MATTERS

It is very important that you have sufficient funds in place to meet your tuition fees and living costs before you start your course. The University has a small amount of hardship funding available to help students who started their studies with a sound financial plan which was compromised by circumstances beyond their control. However, it is unable to help students who started their studies with insufficient funds in place to meet their tuition fees and living costs.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Your living costs will depend on your personal circumstances, but the majority of students will need to pay for accommodation and related costs such as food and other household shopping (toiletries, washing powder etc.), utilities, essential clothing, travel around Durham, study related costs and leisure. You should work out how much you will need to spend on your living costs before you start your course.

An estimate of the annual living costs for students with families is:

Per student	£15000 for 12 months
Per dependent adult	£6000 extra
Per dependent child	£4000 extra

The above charges do not include tuition fees, travel outside of Durham, luxury items (electrical equipment etc.), special equipment or field trips required by some academic departments and childcare costs. It is strongly recommended that you look into basic costs you might incur to ensure you have sufficient funds. Additional funding is not available once you and your family are living in the UK.

For further information on managing your money visit: [Finance Service - Durham University](#) or www.moneyadvice.service.org.uk

COUNCIL TAX

Council tax is paid to the local authority for the provision of public services, e.g. rubbish collection, police service, fire & rescue service. The tax is based on the value of the property you live in and the number of adults in the property when the assessment is made. If one of the adults is a student then there will be a 25% reduction in the tax bill. If the spouse of an international student is not a British citizen and not allowed to work or claim welfare benefits then council tax is not normally payable on the property.

For more information on council tax, e.g. how to pay, council tax exemption etc. please visit: www.durham.gov.uk/counciltax

To obtain an exemption certificate visit: www.dur.ac.uk/student.registry/student/counciltax/

Please note this is your responsibility and it is important that you do not ignore any bills or correspondence that you may receive from the Council. Contact: ustinov.studentsupport@durham.ac.uk or the DSU Advice Centre on 0191 33 41777 for advice.

UTILITIES

If you live in private accommodation you will need to pay for gas, electricity, water and telephone/broadband (known as utilities). Your Landlord should be able to tell you which companies supply your utilities—it will then be necessary to contact the providers and give them your details so that you can arrange payment.



BANKS

You should open a bank account once you are fully registered as a student. Details on how to apply and to open a bank account will be provided in the welcome information. This will be sent out mid-August via email to the address you provided on your application and will also be available on the college web pages.

Please be aware that all banks operate differently and vary regarding fees and charges. International students do not usually qualify for an overdraft, credit card or loan.

We advise that you do not carry large amounts of cash on your person—the safest and easiest way of making payments is by debit or credit card.

SCHOOLING

Schooling in the UK is compulsory if your children are aged 5 up to 16 years (and living in the UK for more than 6 months). Nursery schools take children aged 3- 5 years but this is not compulsory. Private nurseries will take children from 3 months old to school age but these charge per the hour. Education in state schools is free and a full list of schools in Durham can be found at: www.durham.gov.uk/education

Private schools are also available which charge from around £3500 per term and there are 3 terms per year.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Before you can apply for a school place you must have a confirmed address in Durham where you will be living. This may mean that you cannot apply until later in the year, after the normal deadlines. However, this is not a problem as applications can be made at any time and the schools are used to receiving late applications for children of students.

APPLYING FOR A SCHOOL PLACE

For information on how to apply for a school place email:

schooladmissions@durham.gov.uk

You will need to decide which school you would like your child to attend. All schools welcome visits from parents—this gives you the opportunity to find out more about them before you decide if it is the right school for your child. You will need to consider the distance from where you will be living to the school and how your child will be getting there. All schools in Durham and immediate surrounding areas provide good levels of education and they are used to having children of international students in their classes. For information on all the schools visit:

www.durham.gov.uk/schools

The County Durham School Admissions Team will be able to advise you what year of study your child will go into and what schools have the appropriate places available: schooladmissions@durham.gov.uk

SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

Please be aware that schools have holiday breaks during the school year which could impact on your study time. The academic year for schools in the UK is from September to July and is divided into 3 terms. Each term also has a half-term holiday of one week.

UNIFORM AND SCHOOL LUNCHES

Most schools have a uniform that all children must wear. This will be available to buy from the school itself.

Children will spend lunchtime at school and can either buy a school lunch or take in a packed lunch from home. School lunches cost approximately £2.50 per day for Primary school children and £2.75 per day for Secondary school children. (<https://www.durham.gov.uk/schoolmeals>)

CHILDCARE

A wide range of childcare services are available in Durham and for information on private day nurseries, childminders and playgroups please visit: www.childcare.co.uk. Charges vary and are dependent on the type of service appropriate for your needs.

Advice on finding and choosing childcare can be found at: www.durham.gov.uk/article/2955/Nursery-and-pre-school-education

CHILDMINDERS

Childminders look after children in their own home and these must be registered with OFSTED (the national standards agency). The cost of childminders are significantly less than nurseries and the hours are more flexible. Hourly rates can vary but you could expect to pay £4.00—£5 per hour per child.

PARENT AND TODDLER GROUPS

There are plenty of parent and toddler groups (also known as playgroups) and they are great places to meet other parents with children your child's age, and your child can make new friends too—they will be entertained and stimulated by a whole variety of toys. Parents stay with the children all the time and these groups usually meet in the morning during school term times. For further information: www.locallife.co.uk/durham/mother-toddler-groups.asp

[Baby & Toddler Groups and Events in Durham | Families Online](#)

UNIVERSITY NURSERY

Durham University day nursery is a diverse community open to all, including University staff, students and members of the public. Nursery staff are caring and experienced professionals who work in partnership with parents to provide a safe and stimulating environment for babies from three months to pre-school children. The nursery has excellent special needs facilities.

Further details, including daily/weekly rates can be found at:

www.durham.ac.uk/university.nursery/

CHILD PROTECTION IN THE UK

Child abuse which includes physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect is a criminal offence in the UK. For further information or advice please visit the website of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) at:

www.nspcc.org.uk or telephone one of the helplines: 0800 1111 (for children and young people), 0800 800 500 (for adults).

English law does not specify at what age a child can be left unsupervised, however, the NSPCC advises that no child should be left alone under the age of 12, or alone overnight up to the age of 16. In any event, you should never leave a baby or toddler alone, not even for a few minutes.

Parents may be prosecuted for neglect if they leave a child alone 'in a manner which is likely to cause unnecessary suffering or injury to health'.

Everyone in the UK who works with children and young adults, in either paid or unpaid work, are required to undergo a criminal record check which ensures that those who work with children do not pose a potential risk to their safety and well being.

HEALTHCARE

Health services in the UK are run by the National Health Service (NHS) which is organised and funded by the government.

All visits to the doctor (GP at your local health centre) are free of charge but you will have to pay for any medication that you are prescribed.

Current prescription charges are £9.65 per item. The dependent of an international student (that is husband, wife or children aged up to 16 or 19 if in full-time education) is entitled to free GP treatment on the NHS provided:

- They have a visa which confirms they are in the UK as the dependent of a student
- They arrived in the UK at the same time as, or shortly after, the student
- The UK is their main home

If you are in the UK for less than six months then you are advised to take out health insurance.

For information on the current rules and charges for hospital treatment please visit: [When you need to pay towards NHS care - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)

REGISTERING WITH A DOCTOR (GP)

You should register with a doctor (at a health or medical centre), for yourself and each member of your family, as soon as possible after arriving in Durham. As a Ustinov College member you will be given information about all of the local GPs and how to register with them as part of the enrolment and induction procedures. All students are able to pre-register before arriving to Durham, if they have already accepted their offer, for further information on pre-registration please visit: [Patient Registration – Claypath and University Medical Group \(durhamstudenthealth.co.uk\)](https://durhamstudenthealth.co.uk)

For further information on the GPs in and around Durham please visit: <https://countydurhamccg.nhs.uk/>

Doctors in health/medical centres are trained in all areas of medicine and they will be able to give you appropriate advice/treatment, and also refer you to a hospital or specialist services if necessary. Any medication prescribed will be available from a pharmacy.

EMERGENCY TREATMENT

If you are in need of emergency treatment (for life threatening conditions) you can telephone 999 and you will be asked what service you require (police, fire or ambulance). You should ask for ambulance and provide any details requested by the operator. If necessary an ambulance will be dispatched and will arrive to take you to the Accident & Emergency (A&E) department at the hospital. For all non urgent illness you must wait until the health/medical centre is open and then contact them for an appointment.

Please note the above instructions are to be followed ONLY in an emergency.

If the health/medical centre is closed you can obtain health advice 24 hours a day from qualified nurse practitioners over the telephone by ringing 111.

HEALTH VISITORS

Every family with a child under the age of 5 years has access to a Health Visitor. A Health Visitor is a registered nurse who is a specialist in all aspects of child care and development, supporting and advising parents. Health Visitors will visit you in your home. To contact a Health Visitor ask at your health/medical centre for more information.

DENTIST

In the UK dentists are not associated with any health/medical centre or doctor. To find a NHS dentist visit: www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/Dentist/LocationSearch/3/.

NHS dentists have a 3 band charging policy which starts from approximately £25 for a check up and a basic clean and polish. Ask the dentist to explain the further charges to you before you have any treatment.

You will be able to get private treatment from any dentist but charges for treatment can be expensive, so you should ask first to have the charges explained to you.

OPTICIAN

You can use any high street optician to get an eye sight test. The charge for this is approximately £25 but some opticians offer the test for less so it is worth shopping around. If you need to wear glasses or contact lenses the optician will give you a prescription which you can take to any opticians. It is a good idea to shop around for the best value glasses or contact lenses.

PHARMACY

Pharmacies in the UK sell over the counter medication which you can buy without a prescription. These include medicines for coughs and colds, flu, hay fever, painkillers, lotions and creams. A qualified pharmacist is available to provide you with advice and guidance. You cannot buy antibiotics or any other prescribed medication without having a prescription from your doctor. Prescription charges are currently £9.35 per item. More information about NHS charges can be found at: www.nhs.uk

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

A number of events are organised throughout the year for families to attend. The most popular of these are the Summer Ustinov day BBQ, Egg Hunt, Christmas and Halloween parties. All activities and events are advertised through uv-info emails which all members of the College receive to their Durham University email account.

The Graduate Common Room (GCR)—the elected student representatives) and the International Women’s Group (IWG) organise trips to various places such as York, Beamish Museum, Edinburgh, Lake District and stately homes, Covid-19 regulations permitting. These trips are subsidised but there will be a small charge to contribute to the costs of transportation. There are also various Ustinov societies and sports clubs you can become involved in.



ACTIVITIES AT KEENAN HOUSE

There are various activities held for both residents and non-residents of Keenan House, all of which take place in the Common Room, these are free, and include:

- **International Women's Group (IWG)** for the wives and partners of students and staff of the University. Held on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of every month from 10:00-12:00. Craft activities, talks, cooking demonstrations and a friendly welcome guaranteed.
- **English as a second language class (ESL)** for the wives and female partners of students and staff of the University.
- **Movie Nights**
- **International Pot Luck dinners**
- **Keenan House Dinners**



DURHAM AND LOCAL ATTRACTIONS

For information about what's on in Durham and local attractions you can visit any of the following:

Durham Clayport Library

Millenium Place, near the Market Place.

The library offers a full lending service of books, CD's and DVD's, as well as being an information resource and offering various classes and workshops.

Tourist Information Centre

Millenium Place, near the Market Place.

The tourist information centre provides information about all local attractions, hotels and guest houses, directions and maps of the city. Their website is: www.thisisdurham.com

Durham County Council

Visit the council's website at: www.durham.gov.uk and click the 'Leisure and Culture' link. Here you will find a list of attractions, museums and galleries and places of interest in County Durham.

For a comprehensive map of Durham City and a list of local attractions go to: www.thisisdurham.com/tourist-information-and-maps/city-and-county-maps

PARKS AND CHILDREN'S PLAY AREAS

There are a variety of parks and play areas in Durham City and surrounding areas.

Details of these can be found at:

www.durham.gov.uk/pages/Service.aspx?ServiceId=8194



LOCAL PLACES OF INTEREST

Alnwick Castle & Gardens	www.alnwickcastle.com
Beamish Open Air Museum	www.beamish.org
Raby Castle	www.rabycastle.com
Hall Hill Farm	www.hallhillfarm.co.uk
Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust	www.wwt.org.uk/visit/washington
Bowes Museum	www.thebowesmuseum.org.uk
Adventure Valley	www.adventurevalley.co.uk

TRANSPORT

CARS

The University discourages students from having cars whilst they are in Durham—it is a small city with a good public transport system. However, if you believe you need a car for your course requirements or family needs then you must be aware that space for the parking of motor vehicles within the University and its car parks is limited.

In the UK it is law that any child under 135 cm in height and under 12 years of age must have an age appropriate car seat or booster seat that is correctly fitted. You should only buy a properly fitted, purpose made child seat—never buy a second hand seat unless you know it has never been involved in an accident as it may be damaged. Advice on buying a suitable car seat can be found at:

www.childcarseats.org.uk

International students need to check that their driving licence covers them to drive in the UK. Please also note that legal requirements regarding insurance and the good state of repair of the car will also apply. For further information visit:

[Driving in Great Britain on a non-GB licence - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Durham has good public transport with a good network of regular buses and trains to get you where you need to go. You can find out more about timetables and fares in our region by visiting: www.traveline.info/index.html

Durham also operates a Park & Ride scheme which is when you leave your car in a designated car park and take a bus from that car park into town.

Details of the scheme can be found at: www.durham.gov.uk/pages/Service.aspx?ServiceId=1112

National Rail provides information on all UK train services. They can give you advice on timetables, routes, special offers and family fares and discounts:

www.nationalrail.co.uk

National Express is one of the larger national travel companies with coach (and train) services operating throughout the UK and to destinations in Europe: www.nationalexpress.com/home.aspx

During the day there are **taxi ranks** in Durham City situated outside The Gates shopping centre at the bottom of North Road and also at the Railway Station. In the evening, there are additional taxi ranks at North Road, near to the Bus Station and in the Market Place. Taxis can also be pre-booked by telephone and details can be found in the telephone directory or on the internet.

BICYCLES

There are designated bicycle racks where you can secure your bicycle safely at Keenan House and Sheraton Park. Bicycles must be registered with the college registration scheme. To register your bicycle please contact the Porter at Sheraton Park and a tag will be issued with a unique code to put on your bicycle—this will make it more identifiable and more secure. Bicycles that are not registered are subject to removal from the site.

Email: ustinov.porters@durham.ac.uk or call 0191 33 45470

COLLEGE WELLBEING



College staff are always here to help so please call in to see us - We are located in Neville House, Sheraton Park. Our office hours are Monday-Friday from 9:00-1700. There is a Porter on duty 24 hours every day.

If you are unable to come to Sheraton Park then please email ustinov.college@durham.ac.uk and your message will be forwarded to the appropriate member of staff. For student support enquiries please email: ustinov.studentsupport@durham.ac.uk

UNIVERSITY SUPPORT SERVICES

Careers, Employability and Enterprise Centre

www.durham.ac.uk/careers

Chaplains

[Faith Support - Durham University](#)

Computing & Information Service (CIS)

www.durham.ac.uk/cis/

Durham Students Union (DSU) Advice Centre

www.durhamsu.com/advice-and-support

Maiden Castle Sports Centre

www.teamdurham.com

International Student Advisers (for visa & immigration advice)

www.durham.ac.uk/immigration

INFORMATION FOR KEENAN HOUSE RESIDENTS

COMMUNITY LIAISON

There are two community liaison living at Keenan House who can help you with information, advice and any problems you may have. If they cannot help you themselves they will be able to signpost you to someone who can.

COMMUNITY LIAISON CONTACT INFORMATION:

To be confirmed for 2024-25, further information will be circulated to residents following the appointment of our new resident tutor.

ROOM LAYOUT

All of the family flats (depending on number of bedrooms) are furnished with one double and then either one or two single beds. If you have more than one child you will need a single bed for each one.



BUS INFORMATION

Buses from Keenan House (Dryburn) into town run very regularly, approximately every 15 minutes before 18:00 (after that they are less frequent). The bus stops are behind Keenan House on the road down to County Hall.

There are many buses that go into town, either to the Bus Station or to stops on North Road.

The same buses will bring you back from town either from the Bus Station or North Road to County Hall or the 'hospital stop'.

Students can also travel for £1 day ticket on production of your campus card on any Arriva bus.

You can buy tickets for bus travel on the bus, but you will need to have change to give to the driver. You can also purchase weekly, fortnightly and monthly travel tickets so ask the driver for details and where to purchase.

You can find out more about timetables and fares in our region by visiting: www.traveline.info/index.html

The **park and ride** bus runs past Keenan House and stops at the County Hall stop. You can purchase a daily ticket at the Sniperley park and ride site (on the main road heading to Framwellgate Moor) for £2.

You may also get on the bus at the County Hall stop and pay cash to the driver.

The park and ride bus runs every 10 minutes between 7:00—19:00, Monday to Saturday.

SUPERMARKETS

There are two supermarkets close to Keenan House:

Sainsbury's is situated at the Arnison Centre Retail Park just outside Framwellgate Moor. From the main entrance to the Dryburn site, turn right and follow the signs for the Arnison Centre. Sainsbury's sells all grocery items, fresh fruit & vegetables, fresh meat & fish, toiletries, cleaning products as well as household items such as cutlery, crockery, utensils, electrical appliances (toasters, kettles etc.) and linens & towels.

There is also a smaller Sainsbury's on Framwellgate Moor High Street which is closer to Keenan House.

Lidl, a discount supermarket, is located at the entrance to the Arnison Centre.

There are many other shops at the Arnison Centre. Some of these are: Marks & Spencer, Boots, Asda Living, Next, McDonalds.

KEENAN HOUSE CODE OF CONDUCT

The Keenan House Code of Conduct must be read by any adult resident of Keenan House. The code applies to all residents, their families and visitors.

The Code of Conduct can be found on Ustinov College web pages.



KEENAN HOUSE CONTACT ADDRESS

Your name and flat number

Keenan House
Old Dryburn Way
Durham
DH1 5BN



The information in this booklet is correct at the time of printing (August 2023) however changes may occur and Durham University/Ustinov College reserves the right to amend or change any information in this brochure at any time.

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Email: **Ustinov.accommodation@durham.ac.uk**