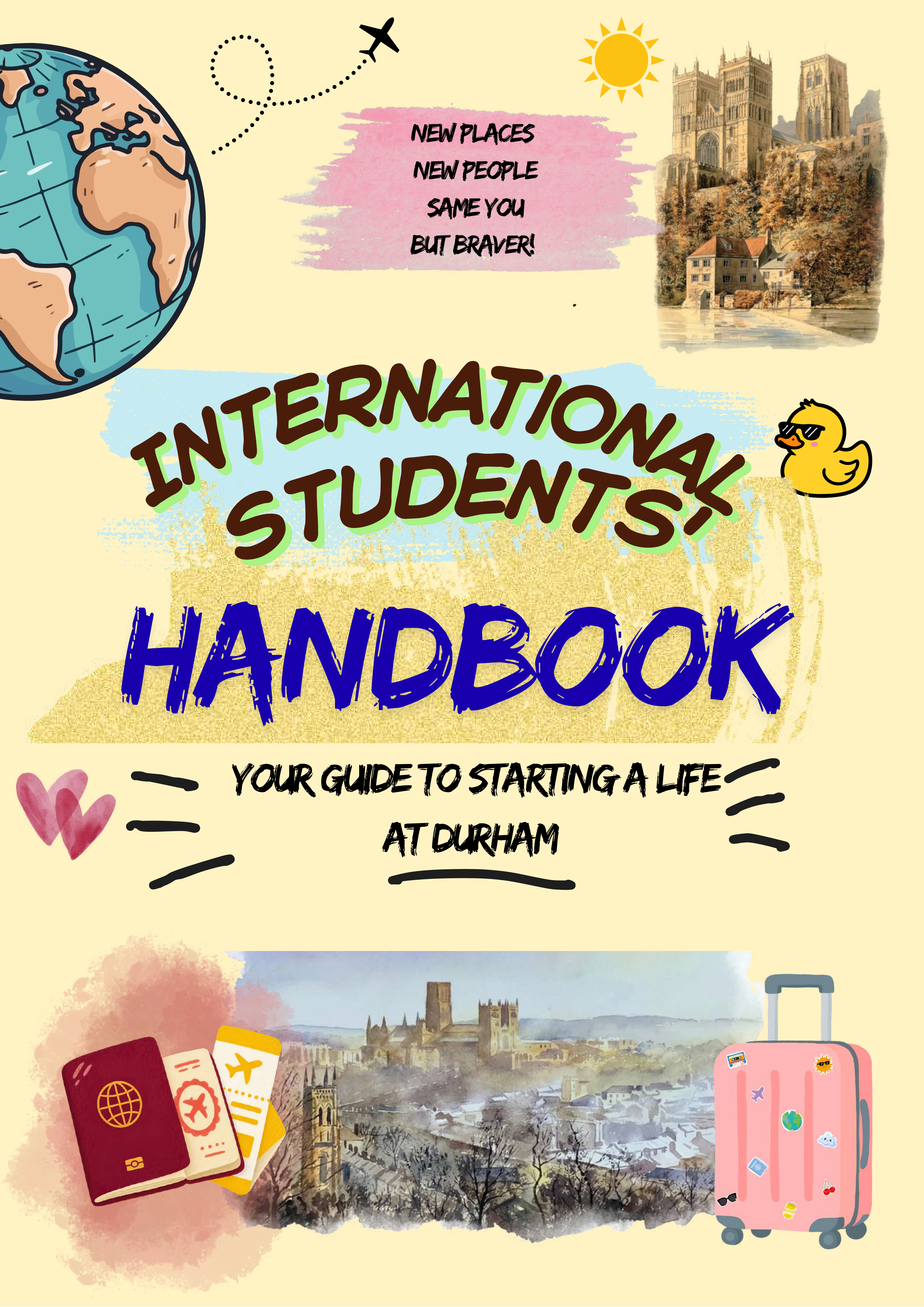




NEW PLACES
NEW PEOPLE
SAME YOU
BUT BRAVER!

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS! HANDBOOK

YOUR GUIDE TO STARTING A LIFE
AT DURHAM





WELCOME TO DURHAM!

A WARM HELLO FROM YOUR INTERNATIONAL OFFICER



I am so excited to welcome you to our college, Van Mildert! (The best college in Durham)

I am a 3rd Year law student from India and I know how daunting it can feel to start university especially in a whole new country.

but I am here to assure you that you have nothing to worry about. We made this handbook to give you practical info, the best tips and a little bit of reassurance for your first few weeks and beyond.

you've got this!

WHAT DOES THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE DO?

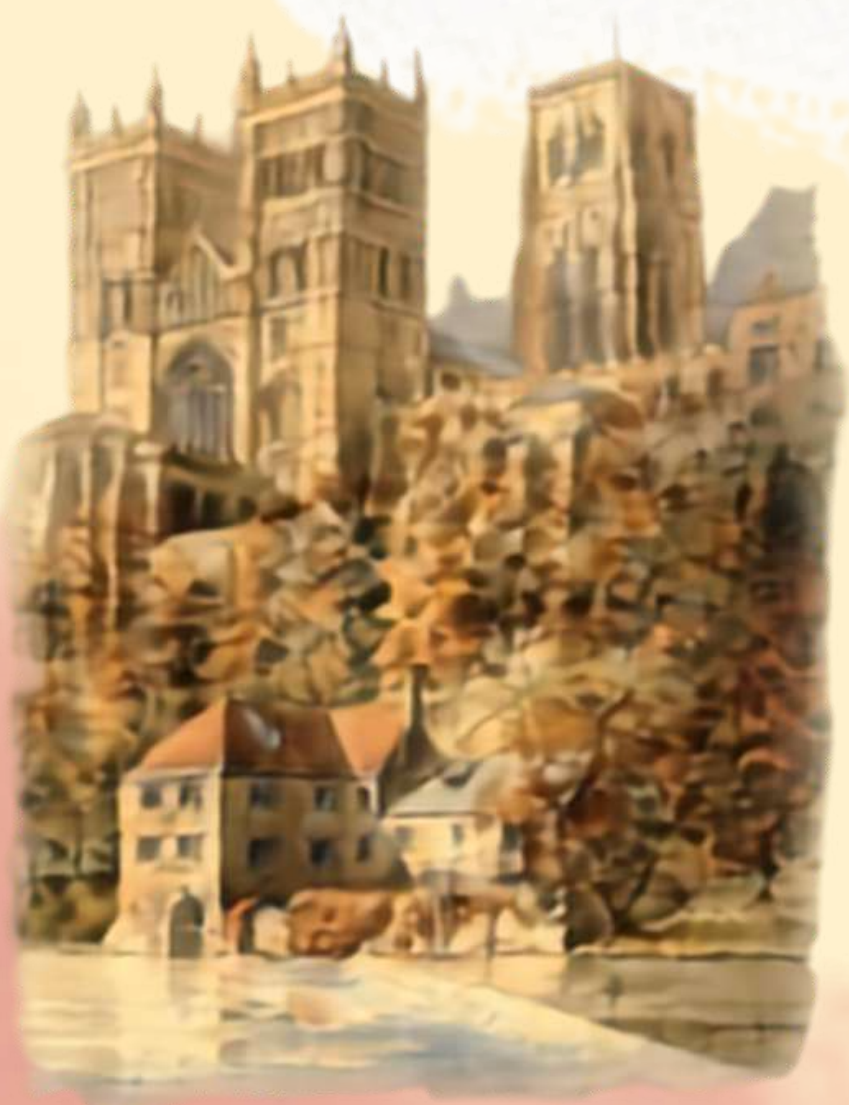
- organises cultural and social events
- provides support for international students
- creates a safe community for all students

INTERNATIONAL FRESHERS' WEEK

We'll be hosting a bunch of events to help international students settle in and adjust!

YOU CAN COME TO US ABOUT

Homesickness
language and cultural adjustment
cultural events
food and travel
UK life
college life
any "Is this Normal?" Questions



SO... WHAT EXACTLY IS DURHAM?



A LITTLE HISTORY



1832

The University is founded with the support of Bishop William Van Mildert and the Dean and Chapter of Durham Cathedral.

1833

The first students arrive.

1837

Durham Castle becomes University College.

TODAY

One of the UK's most distinctive collegiate universities, with students belonging to a college as well as their academic department.

TRADITIONS YOU'LL HEAR ABOUT



Matriculation

Your official welcome into Durham University, held in the Cathedral



Formals

A dressed-up college dinner. Some colleges wear gowns, others don't. There may be speeches, toasts, and entertainment



Balls

Think: fancy party, food, drinks, entertainment, music and dressing up!



College sport

You can represent your college, not just Durham University.



College traditions

Every college has its own little rituals, events, rivalries and traditions. Some will make sense. Some won't.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT TIP:

You'll hear ~700 words in your first week that mean nothing to you. Don't panic!. There's a glossary later

WAIT, WHAT'S A COLLEGE?



17

You have TWO university identities:

YOUR DEPARTMENT

Where you study your degree



YOUR COLLEGE

Your community, social life and home base



colleges
(including Ustinov for postgrads)



The University has two groups of colleges:

BAILEY

- Historic
- Central
- Traditional
- Cathedral
- Close to city centre



HILL

- More modern
- Close to Mountjoy
- Green spaces
- A little further from town



Bars

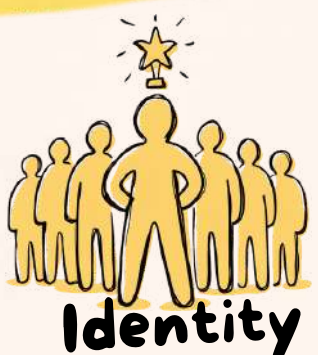
All colleges have their own bards with signature college drinks. For example Mildert has the Ugly Duckling. Collingwood has the Stagger etc. College bar crawls are central to your social life!

College Shops/Toastie Bars

You can get all of your basic essentials in your college including customisable toasties



BUT EVERY COLLEGE HAS ITS OWN:



Identity



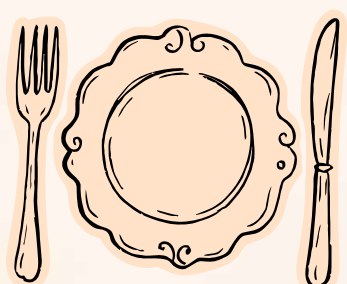
Traditions



Sports



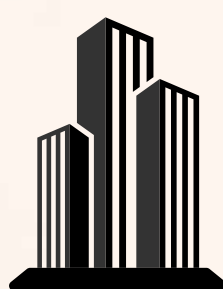
Societies



Formals



Balls/events



JCR



Community





WELCOME HOME, VAN MILDERT



Van Mildert was founded in 1965 and named after William Van Mildert, the last Bishop of Durham and an important figure in the University's founding. It has a strong tradition of outreach and community engagement.



Our motto

- Sic vos non nobis
- Not for yourselves =



- the Junior Common Room (JCR) for undergrads
- Senior Common Room (SCR) for masters students

WHO'S WHO?

THE EXECUTIVE

- Your student reps, organise events, represent you.

OUTREACH

6 Fundraising projects, volunteering, impact.

WELFARE AND SUPPORT

The JCR offers Talk & Support Services which run regular drop-ins. Don't try to everything by yourself. We are happy to help you!



We have a lake so we love ducks!! (From our mascot to our college drinks)

SPORTS & SOCIETIES

Beyond the university, every college has their own societies and sports. Attend the Sports & Socs fair to learn more

MILDERT EVENTS

- Formals, balls, socials, BOPs, fashion shows, college traditions.

ProTip:

The first few weeks are taster sessions for Sports & Socs in College. try everything that looks interesting!



DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK:

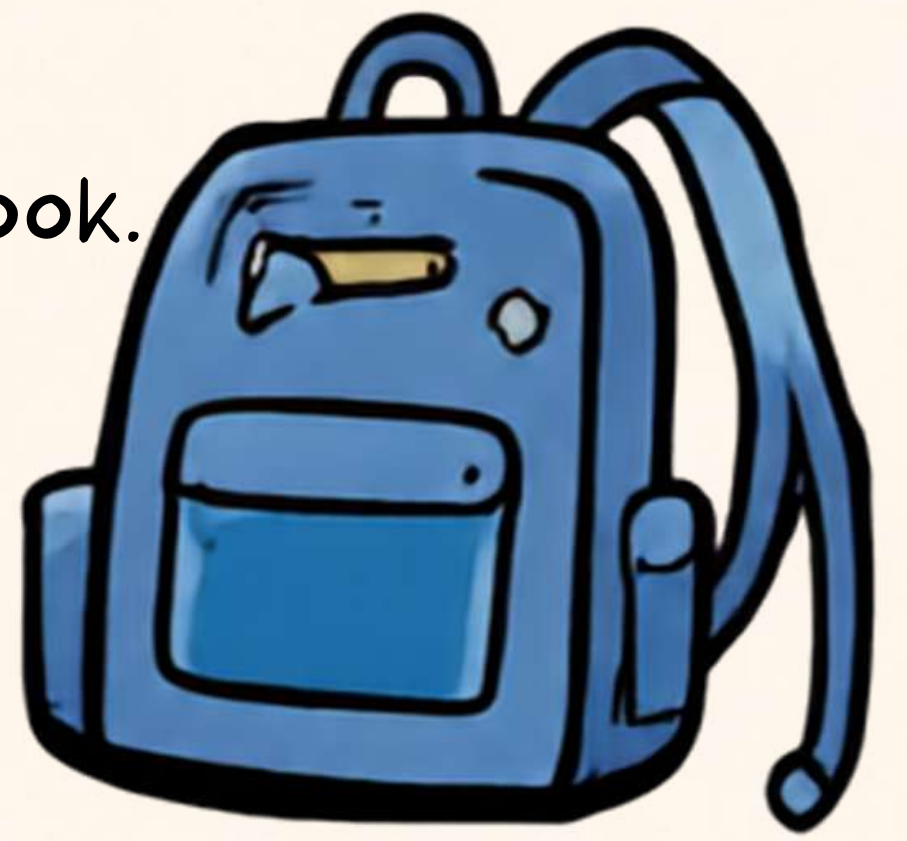
There are hundreds of people in Midert who are there to help you.

5. YOUR FIRST 7 DAYS CHECKLIST

• Tick it off
(you'll be fine!)

BEFORE / WHEN YOU ARRIVE:

- ☐ Collect keys
- ☐ Get your university ID
- ☐ Complete enrolment, set up your outlook.
- ☐ complete all required training
- ☐ Visit the Bill Bryson Library (Billy B)
- ☐ Find your department
- ☐ Register with a GP / healthcare
- ☐ Get a UK SIM
- ☐ Sort out banking
- ☐ Find your nearest supermarket
- ☐ Download essential apps
- ☐ Join college WhatsApp/social channeds
- ☐ Go to international events
- ☐ Go to at least one society/sport taster
- ☐ Explore Durham without a map!



Don't try to do everything in Week 1. Freshers' Week can be overwhelming so don't overexert yourself. You'll have plenty of time to explore later.

Take your time.
Be kind to yourself.

7.



GETTING A UK PHONE NUMBER



SIM VS ESIM

Both work the same – eSIM is digital and doesn't need a physical card.

TIP:

Compare providers like EE, Vodafone, O2 and giffgaff.

You can buy a SIM card from Tesco after which you can set it up easily. Use the provider's websites or YouTube Tutorials if you are confused. I promise it's not scary and It will be probably take you less than 30 minutes to set it up! But be sure to get a UK SIM as soon as you reach Durham.



ALL ABOUT BANKING

HSBC, Barclays, Natwest are some of the most popular banks. You can set up an account online using-

- Identity Proof
- Proof of Address

Proof of address is a letter which is provided by the University which you can access on Banner Self-Service. However, this is usually not available as soon as you reach Durham. Setting up an account might take time and you will need an account/card for payments and public transport. So, you can set up an online bank account as well!

Online banks such as Monzo and Revolut are easy and fast to set up. You are mailed your debit card in less than 2 days. These are also great for international money transfers.



Be sure to compare the pros and cons of the banks and choose one which matches all your particular needs. I personally recommend HSBC and Monzo!

YOUR FIRST SUPERMARKET RUN



TESCO

Everyday essentials

Sainsbury's

Good variety

ASDA

Value & variety

ALDI

Budget friendly



Great value

M&S

Premium / special



THINGS YOU MIGHT NOT REALISE YOU NEED

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| ☐ Laundry detergent | ☐ Food containers | ☐ Cleaning supplies |
| ☐ Bin bags | ☐ Hangers | ☐ Basic medicine |
| ☐ Kitchen roll | ☐ Umbrella | ☐ Reusable shopping bags |
| ☐ Toiletries | ☐ Extension lead/adaptor | |



Most of these supermarkets have a great variety of international foods. Otherwise, city centre also has Asian Supermarkets from where you can buy any extra essentials. But remember, Van Mildert is a catered college so you don't have to worry about meals. Your accommodation does come with basic kitchen appliances for any emergency, midnight meals that you want to cook up.



Warning!
With Freshers' Week comes Freshers' Flu, so stock up all your vitamins and medicines. You can buy these at Boots in town.

Boots

GETTING AROUND DURHAM



Durham is a pretty small town. You can get around town, your college, the library, lecture spots just by walking. But these are some other modes of transport that you might need to use-



BUSES

- ★ local buses that go all around Durham
- ★ Contactless payment
- ★ Timetables online / at bus stops



UBER

Ubers are convenient and easy to hail in Durham. Be sure to download the Uber app when you reach. It is more expensive than public transport but a great option especially for emergencies or after a night out.



TRAINS (TRIPS TO CITIES)

- ★ Newcastle (12-17 minutes)
- ★ York (Around 45 Minutes)
- ★ Edinburgh (Around 2-2.5 hours)
- ★ London (Around 3 hours)

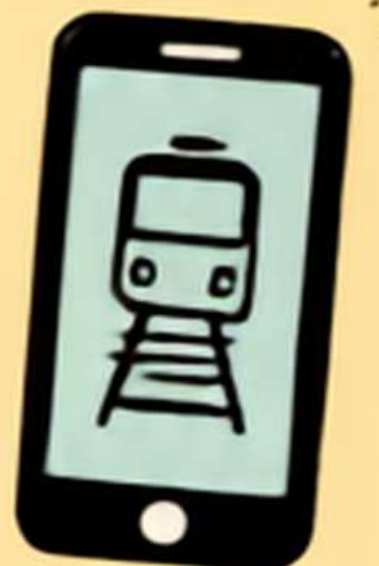


RAILCARD

16-25 Railcard – big savings of up to 30% off on your travels

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT TIP

Download a train app before you need to travel! A simple UK trains fare app can save time with three suitcases and a panic attack. Trainline is a great option. Cheap trains and very convenient



10.

DURHAM:

THINGS YOU NEED TO DO

THE DURHAM STARTER PACK

- ☐ Walk along the River Wear
- ☐ See Durham Cathedral
- ☐ Visit Palace Green
- ☐ Explore the Castle
- ☐ Walk the Bailey
- ☐ Go to the Botanic Gardens
- ☐ Explore the city centre
- ☐ Get coffee somewhere random
- ☐ Visit the Market
- ☐ Attend a college formal
- ☐ Go to as many college events
- ☐ Watch college sports
- ☐ Find your favourite study spot
- ☐ Picnic at the racecourse



Bars/Clubs
Boat Club,
Mixology, Swan and
Three Cygnets, Blue
Eye, Klute, Jimmy
Allens, Babylon,
Osbournes

RECOMMENDATIONS

CAFÉS



Chapters, Riverview Kitchen,
White Church, Flatwhite, Vennels



RESTAURANTS



Akarsu, Zen, Spags, Tango, Urban
Chai, Rudy's, Holi and Bhang



THINGS NOBODY TELLS YOU ABOUT THE UK



"You alright?"

A way to say Hello

Fancy a pint?

= beer / friendship / both.

Cheers!

thank you / goodbye / you're welcome.

Weather:

Four seasons before lunch.



Queues

Respect them.



Small talk:

The weather is a hobby.



Tea

You will be asked how you take it.

HOMESICKNESS

& FINDING YOUR PEOPLE

HOMESICKNESS IS NORMAL

You may:

- miss your family
- miss your food
- miss your language
- miss festivals
- suddenly want to go home
- feel everyone else already has friends.

FIND YOUR PEOPLE

- ☐ International College events
- ☐ Cultural societies
- ☐ College events
- ☐ Faith communities
- ☐ Joining Societies and Sports
- ☐ Having Meals in the Dining Hall
- ☐ Call home
- ☐ Grab food/coffee



We understand how overwhelming you would be feeling. That is why the International Committee is with you through everything. We will help you resolve any issue you might have and signpost you to resources that you can avail. It is our responsibility to build a safe community so you feel at home with us!

WHAT TO PACK FOR DURHAM

DOCUMENTS & ESSENTIALS

- ☐ Passport
- ☐ Visa documents
- ☐ University offer letter
- ☐ Extra Identity Card (Drivers' License, Citizen Card etc.)
- ☐ Travel insurance



Pack light — you can buy most things in the UK!

During International Freshers' Week, we are going to be taking you on a shopping trip so you can get bedding, toiletries and other essentials. Don't waste previous space by getting these from home!

CLOTHES

- ☐ A warm, waterproof jacket
Durham is cold and rainy. You will need a sturdy outer coat especially for winter months. A Northface Puffer is a good option
- ☐ Boots/Shoes with a strong grip
Durham Roads are covered in ice and snow. It is essential to have good shoes that won't slip
- ☐ Formal Clothes
Durham has events such as matriculation, formals, balls, fashion shows that require formal clothing. For male-presenting students this is suits and tuxedos. For female-presenting students this is maxi/midi dresses. Also remember to carry formal shoes! (Does not have to be heels)
- ☐ Ethnic/Traditional Wear
Van Mildert celebrates all festivals so be sure to carry your traditional attire for festivities. Van Mildert Fashion Show also features an International Walk where you can model your clothes!





DON'T

WORRY,

YOU'RE

COMING

HOME

