Stage 1: Pre-arrival

Congratulations! We are delighted that your son or daughter has received an offer to study at the University of Exeter. There are a number of tasks your son or daughter will need to have completed before they arrive at the University of Exeter – including obtaining a visa, applying for accommodation and booking our airport collection service, should they need collecting from the airport on arrival. Our International Student Support team has put together a helpful guide here on our website: http://ex.ac.uk/aNr

With regard to the application process, all conditions of your son or daughter’s offer must have been met and scans of transcripts and certificates sent to the University before the 31 August. If, for any reason, their final grades haven’t met the conditions of their offer, they may be considered for other courses if there are places available. If your son or daughter experienced difficulties which may have affected their performance in their exams, they can notify the University by submitting an Extenuating Circumstances Form, available here on our website: http://ex.ac.uk/aNs. These forms can only be considered if they are received before final results are published.

In addition, their academic department will let your son or daughter know if there are any specific tasks or pieces of work which need to be completed before their course begins, such as reading welcome e-mails from their College or looking at the reading lists for their course.

Help them best by making them independent, responsible students and adults

Help your son or daughter brush up on basic life skills over the summer before they leave to lessen the impact of independent living on arrival. These basic life skills include:

- using a washing machine
- doing the household shopping
- doing the washing-up
- cooking (at least a few basic recipes)
- living on a budget: understanding and appreciating the funds they have available.

As far as packing is concerned, resist the urge to over-pack. Moving-in checklists produced by our Accommodation Office set out what our residences provide and suggest additional items to pack. The kitchens in our residences, for instance, are typically very well-equipped shared spaces; your son or daughter should wait until after they arrive to buy any additional appliances, when they and their flatmates can identify together what they are missing as a group. A few key mementoes of home, family photos, a favourite cuddly toy are likely to be a much better use of your luggage allowance than blenders, cutlery and crockery – and won’t make your son or daughter’s suitcases so heavy they are unable to lift them!

We hope that this short guide helps you support your son or daughter through this new chapter in their lives.

BEING AT UNIVERSITY IS HUGELY EXCITING AND LIFE-CHANGING

New students sometimes experience a range of emotions - euphoria, anxiety and homesickness - all of which are completely normal. The process of transitioning to a new study environment, particularly one in another country, away from networks of family and friends, involves decisions and changes that may seem daunting at first. It may take a while before your son or daughter feels completely settled. Encourage them to ask for help when they need it: it will often be available through the University. They will also make a network of friends along the way who will also provide support.

We hope that this short guide helps you support your son or daughter through this new chapter in their lives.
Among other things, make sure they understand how and when to pay their university fees.

‘Prepare for Success’ (www.prepareforsuccess.org.uk) is a useful interactive web learning tool for international students getting ready to come to the UK for study. It explores some of the differences international students encounter between how they have been used to studying in their own countries and in the UK, and introduces them to concepts such as critical thinking and independent study. It would be worthwhile visiting the site with your son or daughter as preparation for what will be expected of them as university students in the UK.

Stage 2: Post-arrival

After they arrive, your son or daughter will have a number of tasks to complete, including attending orientation activities, registering with a health centre, and opening a UK bank account. Our International Student Support team provides advice on our website here: http://ex.ac.uk/aNt

Communication

Agree when and how often you will keep in contact and trial messaging and internet calling software together if you don’t already use it. We recommend all new students make contact with home within 24 hours of their arrival in the UK. Freshers’ Week can be very busy, so be realistic about how often you will be able to speak with your son or daughter during this crucial integration and organisational period. When they’ve found their feet they will be keen to share their news and experiences.

Safety and emergencies

By international standards, the UK is quite a safe country, with low levels of violence and street crime. Exeter and Falmouth are fairly compact towns with a high student population, with local populations which are broadly welcoming of international students.

The University itself has its own campus security service: the Estate Patrol in Exeter, and Penryn Campus Security in Cornwall. Uniformed officers are on duty 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. You can find full details of our security services here on our website: http://ex.ac.uk/aNu

Health and well-being

We place a high priority on the health and well-being of our students and provide a range of services, including counselling, around areas such as housing issues, money, academic support and students’ general well-being. You can find details about the full range of health and welfare services on offer here on our website: http://ex.ac.uk/aNv

We would hope your son or daughter will enjoy their time at the University of Exeter. However, should they at any time encounter problems of a personal, emotional nature, they need never face these alone. Please encourage them to request help proactively if required. Our International Student Support team offers advice on a range of issues, including transition, immigration, and pastoral issues. They can be contacted at sid@exeter.ac.uk (Exeter) or sidcornwall@exeter.ac.uk (Penryn) or visited on campus.

Food and drink

The South West is renowned for its contribution to the UK’s food and drink culture, with regular farmers markets and food festivals celebrating local produce. Exeter and Falmouth also have an array of restaurants, cafes and shops catering to multi-national cultures and cuisines.

These sites give you information about eating out and food shopping in Exeter:
http://www.exeter.ac.uk/thesouthwest/exeter/foodanddrink
http://www.exeter.ac.uk/undergraduate/exeter-guide/food
and in Cornwall:
http://www.exeter.ac.uk/thesouthwest/cornwall/foodanddrink

The public house or 'pub' is culturally unique to the UK and is an important part of British life. British people like to meet, drink, talk, eat, and relax at their local pub. Pubs serve alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks. Whilst alcohol can be readily purchased in the UK (by over 18s) it is important to remember that not everyone drinks and over 85% of Freshers' Week events don't include alcohol. You can remind your son or daughter that it is perfectly acceptable to decline an alcoholic drink in favour of a soft drink and that if they do choose to drink they must recognise their own personal limits.

Teaching, learning and assessment at the University of Exeter

Teaching at the University of Exeter will be through lectures, seminars, tutorials and presentations. Your son or daughter will be expected to have strong essay-writing, presentation, time-management, note-taking and exam skills. Much of their learning will be self-directed; much will also be collaborative.

Assessment will be both formative and summative. Formative assessment is feedback delivered throughout the course of each teaching unit to provide guidance and improve learning, without contributing to the final mark; summative assessment is a quantitative measure of how successfully students have completed a teaching unit and does contribute to the final mark.

The University of Exeter’s agreement with its students

It is important to emphasise that the University of Exeter considers each student to be an adult. Legally, the University’s ‘contract’ is with the student. The University regularly receives enquiries from parents and other third parties regarding students. However, it will never release information about a student to parents or to anyone else, even where they are paying a student’s fees, without that student’s explicit consent, in line with UK Data Protection legislation.

Future employability

University study offers students the chance to build a portfolio of skills valued by employers, in addition to the academic knowledge they gain directly from their degree. It would be useful for you to encourage your son or daughter to start thinking about their career options early on in their degree: to think beyond their studies to their professional career.

The University of Exeter’s Career Zone (www.exeter.ac.uk/careers/) is there to help your son or daughter with their career planning. The Exeter Award (www.exeter.ac.uk/exeteraward) will give them the chance to stand out from the thousands of other students graduating from UK universities each year, to catch the eye of potential employers. Our Global Employability team will offer help and advice throughout the year and for up to three years after graduation. Encourage your son or daughter to engage with the team and participate in their events.

Stage 3: Returning home

After having spent a considerable amount of time living and studying abroad, and after having made friends from all over the world, it is only to be expected that your son or daughter may initially experience some adjustment issues when they return home for holidays or when they have completed their course. They may feel frustrated, as their experience overseas will have broadened their horizons considerably, while everything at home may feel the same. You should be prepared for them to experience a range of emotions and requests for change or personal space. It is important to be patient, and to allow your son or daughter to share stories, memories and experiences of their time at the University of Exeter. With time, often several months, they will adjust to life back home, as they face new and exciting challenges.

Useful information


www.exeter.ac.uk