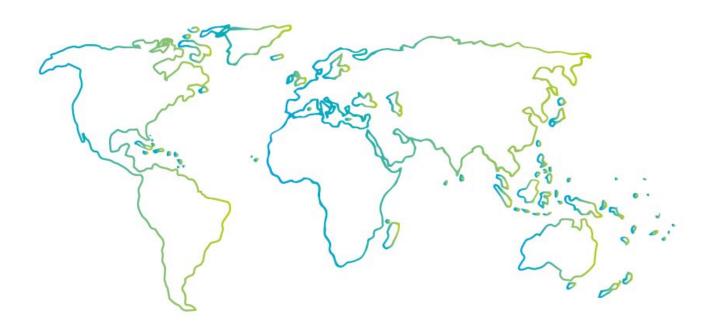


Pre-arrival guide

for exchange and study abroad students



Thank you for choosing University of Essex and congratulations! You're on your way to becoming a lifelong member of our University and we're really excited to welcome you to our community.

This booklet contains useful and important information with lots of handy tips that you'll need between now and your first few weeks at Essex. Please read it carefully.

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GETTING HERE AND GETTING AROUND

Entering the UK

Studying with us for less than six months



EU/EEA nationals

If you are an EU/EEA national, you do not currently require a visa to study in the UK.

Please ensure however that you read the University webpages for the <u>latest news on the UK's withdrawal from the European Union</u>, which at the time of writing is scheduled to take place on 31 October 2019. Please note that this may be subject to change. UKCISA have provided detailed information on their webpages for students coming to the UK to study during 2019/2020.



Non-EU/EEA nationals

If you are a non-EU/EEA national, you may be required to apply for a <u>Short-term student visa</u> in order to study at Essex. If eligible, you should already have been issued a *letter to support your entry to the UK as a Short-term student* by Essex Abroad. Please see the <u>University immigration webpages</u> for detailed information about making a Short-term student application, in addition to the <u>guidance</u> produced by UKCISA.

If you are a <u>visa national</u> you **must** apply for entry clearance overseas before you travel to the UK. Do not travel until you have received your passport back that contains your vignette visa (sticker).

If you are not sure whether you need to obtain entry clearance for the UK in advance of travel, you can check this on the Home Office webpages.

If your country is not on the <u>visa national list</u>, you can choose to apply overseas <u>or</u> when you arrive at the UK border, provided your course is a maximum of 6 months long. If applying at the border, you will have to <u>show evidence</u> you meet the short-term student requirements to be granted entry. Your passport will be stamped showing you have been granted entry as a short-term student for 6 months from the date of entry.

Additional guidance for non-visa nationals

ePassport gates

From summer 2019, eligible travellers from *Australia*, *Canada*, *Japan*, *New Zealand* and the *United States* will be able to use the automated ePassport gates upon arrival to the UK. ePassport gates are available to passengers aged 18 and over who have a biometric passport. The gates are intended to provide a faster route through the immigration control for nationals of certain countries.

It is **not possible** to obtain entry clearance as a Short-term student (6 months) at an e-gate so it is very important that you **do not use these gates** upon arrival, even if you are directed to do so at UK

immigration. You should instead look for an immigration channel staffed by UK Border Force in order for your passport to be stamped to show that you have been granted entry clearance as a Short-term student (6 months). If you accidentally use the e-gates, you will be entered as a visitor and **we won't be able to register you** to start your course.

Make sure you get the correct UK entry clearance stamp

You should carry the letter you have been issued by Essex Abroad upon arrival to the UK and show this to the Border Official at the airport or port of entry. State your main purpose of coming to the UK as **study** - this should ensure that you are issued with the correct immigration stamp. The correct stamp will contain the words "leave to enter as a short-term student", if it does not you may have been issued an incorrect stamp and it is important you **check this** and if necessary obtain the correct stamp from a Border Official before leaving immigration control.

Travelling to the UK via the Republic of Ireland

Non-visa nationals who enter the UK via the Republic of Ireland (for instance Dublin) will not pass through UK immigration and will not be able to seek entry for up to 6 months as a Short-term student, in most cases you will automatically have permission to remain in the UK for up to 3 months only.

If your course at Essex is for longer than 3 calendar months from the date you travel from the Republic of Ireland you should ensure that you either, book a flight that does not come via the Republic of Ireland or that you apply for entry clearance overseas prior to travelling to the UK and obtain a short-term student visa (vignette) in your passport instead.

If you have any questions or need further support, you can contact our International Services team for immigration advice by emailing <u>international@essex.ac.uk.</u>

Studying with us for more than six months



EU/EEA nationals

If you are an EU/EEA national, you do not currently require a visa to study in the UK.

Please ensure however that you read the University webpages for the <u>latest news on the UK's withdrawal from the European Union</u>, which at the time of writing is scheduled to take place on 31 October 2019. Please note that this may be subject to change. UKCISA have provided detailed information on their webpages for <u>students coming to the UK to study during 2019/2020</u>

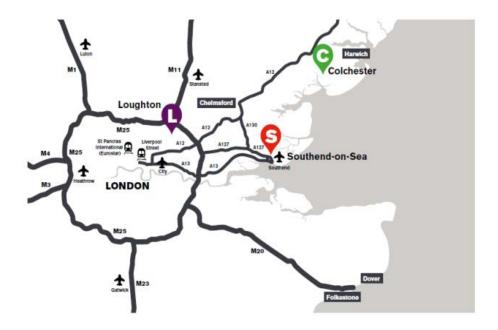


Non-EU/EEA nationals

If you are a non-EU/EEA national, you may be required to apply for a Tier 4 (General) visa, providing you are eligible for a <u>CAS</u> (Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies). Please see the <u>University's webpages</u>, the information on <u>gov.uk</u> and guidance provided by <u>UKCISA</u> for further advice.

Travelling to Southend

Our Southend campus is located in the centre of this vibrant seaside town. There are lots of different ways to <u>get to our campus</u> but most international students choose to fly into London Gatwick, Heathrow, Stansted or Southend airports. Southend airport is just 1.7 miles from London Southend Airport. You can travel from the airport by bus or train.



If you are arriving at **London Heathrow** or **London Gatwick** airport, you can take advantage of our <u>airport transfer service</u> to travel to Southend but you'll need to book a seat in advance. This service only operates on official Arrivals Day in the autumn term only (Sunday 29 September 2019).

If you are travelling to Southend on a different date, or from a different airport, the <u>National Express</u> coach services operate between Southend and Gatwick and Heathrow. To travel to and from Stansted, the <u>X30</u> <u>service</u> operates frequent services. We recommend booking tickets in advance where possible.

Once you have arrived in Southend, thanks to the campus' great location, you're only a short distance from the University.

LIVING IN SOUTHEND

Southend-on-Sea us home to the world's longest pleasure pier and seven miles of stunning coastline. This vibrant and modern seaside town has over 300 places to eat, award-winning nightlife, a theme park, museums, sporting opportunities, and even an international airport, we think you'll discover there's much more besides the seaside in Southend.

Travelling to London and nearby European destinations during weekends and vacations is always a major advantage for our students, making it easy to forget to explore the local area. Our location makes it easy to enjoy days out and get to know your new home. We've put together a **Bucket List** for you to make the most of your time in Essex.

	Visit the pier in Southend – it's the longest pleasure pier in the world!
	Head along the coast for a day trip to picturesque Leigh-on-sea for fish and chips
	Adrenaline junkie? Take a ride at Adventure Island, Southend's very own theme park
	Explore the night sky at Southend Planetarium
	Take a trip to Colchester Zoo – Essex's most visited attraction
	Escape the #1 Escape Room in Essex at Escape Live
	Visit Clifftown Theatre and catch a show performed by East 15 students
	Jump on a train to London from Southend and you'll be in the city within an hour!
	Head to Priory Park for some rest and relaxation
П	Get your skates on at RollaCity

Travelling in and around Southend and the UK



Arriva buses provide most bus services in and around Southend. With the campus' town centre location, there are lots of bus stops nearby. Day, weekly and 4-weekly tickets make it easy to travel around. Most buses only accept cash payments and it's best to have change rather than a note.



<u>SU Free Bike Hire</u> is your new best friend! This is available for students of the University of Essex during term time. You can hire a bike for a few hours, or up to 7 days. You need to book at least 24 hours in advance, and helmets are provided. Did we mention it's **free**?



Frequent train services operate between London and Southend. In Southend there are two train stations, with journeys to London taking between 45 minutes to one hour:

- Southend Victoria (0.3 miles from our campus) to London Liverpool Street - operated by <u>Abellio</u> Greater Anglia
- Southend Central (0.2 miles from our campus) to London Fenchurch Street - operated by c2c

If you're aged 16-25, or a full-time student over 26, you can apply for a <u>discount railcard</u>. It costs £30 a year and can save you 1/3 off rail fares.



There are a number of local <u>taxi companies</u> with reasonable fares. Not all taxis take card, so it's best to have cash available when you travel by taxi.



Our Southend Campus is just 1.7 miles (2.8km) from London Southend Airport and you can travel by bus or train between the airport. We're also not far from London Stansted Airport, the quickest way to travel is by coach, and the journey takes about 1 hour 30 minutes.

ACCOMMODATION AND SETTLING IN

What to pack

Packing to go to University is always a big task, but it's even bigger when you're moving to a different country! Remember that you'll be able to purchase most things you'll need whilst you're here.

- Passport/ID card
- Academic transcript
- Visa (if applicable)
- Passport photos
- Umbrella
- Backpack/small travel suitcase (if you're planning on some weekend trips away)
- Homely items (photos, your country's flag, whatever brings you some comfort!)
- Clothes for all weather types (the UK is a little unpredictable)
- Extension cable (this will save you bringing lots of plug adaptors, instead you'll just need one)

Moving in to your accommodation

There is a lot to do when you first arrive in Southend. First, and most importantly, you need to move into your accommodation.



University accommodation

When you arrive in Southend, you will need to <u>collect your accommodation keys</u> from the University Square reception, open 24 hours a day.



Private accommodation

If you are living in private, off-campus accommodation, liaise with your landlord so they know what time you're arriving. Where possible, it is best to arrive during the day to allow you some time to go to a supermarket to pick up the essentials like bedding, food and utensils.

When you get here

Most of the household items you'll need can be purchased through <u>Essex Essentials</u> or at the local Sainsbury's superstore behind University Square. If you're living in University accommodation, <u>check what is included</u> in your Essex accommodation.

Need some groceries or extra household items? There are lots of shops in the high street, a short walk from the campus. Be aware that most shops have reduced opening hours on Sundays and operate between 10am and 4pm.

TERM DATES AND ORIENTATION

2019-20 term dates

Autumn Term

Event	Begins	Ends
Arrivals Day	Sunday 29 September 2019	
Orientation (Welcome Week)	Monday 30 September 2019	Sunday 6 October 2019
Autumn Term	Monday 7 October 2019	Friday 13 December 2019
Autumn Term exams (only for	Monday 16 December 2019	Friday 20 December 2019
students here for the autumn		
term only)		

Spring and summer terms

Event	Begins	Ends
Arrivals Day	Wednesday 8 January 2020	
Orientation	Thursday 9 January 2020	Friday 10 January 2020
Spring Term	Monday 13 January 2020	Friday 20 March 2020
Summer Term (revision and	Monday 20 April 2020	Friday 26 June 2020
exams)		

Please be aware that if you are living on campus, you are liable to pay the accommodation charges for the duration of your contract which is until the end of term, even if you leave after your final exam/assignment.

Orientation

All students are expected to be on campus for Orientation events. Orientation is your essential introduction into University life and life as an exchange student at Essex. Orientation is a little different if you're starting in October to January. In October, you're joining hundreds of new undergraduate students about to embark on their degree. Orientation cover:

- Registering
- Module add/drop period
- Social events
- Welcome talk
- English language assessment

The Essex Abroad office is based in the **Colchester** campus (1-2 hours from Southend by car), you can contact us by email or telephone Monday – Friday 9am-5pm, or we can Skype you if you would prefer, just

let us know. We try to visit Southend when we can, so we'll be in touch to invite you to meet with us if when we know we'll be on campus.

The Student Services Hub is open 9am-5pm during term time and is on the second floor of The Forum. They're happy to help with general enquiries. Pop in, email askthehub-sc@essex.ac.uk or telephone +441702 328444.

THE IMPORTANT STUFF

University Regulations

As part of the registration process, you will be asked if you agree to comply with the University's regulations, policies and procedures. You are therefore advised to read these in advance of registration. A full set of the University Regulations is available on our <u>website</u>.

Right to study in the UK

The University must ensure that all students have the right to study at the University of Essex for the whole duration of their course. If you require immigration permission to study in the UK this will be checked when your first register on your course.

For Tier 4 sponsored students, you will have <u>conditions</u> attached to your leave restricting study and work; some nationals are required to register with the Police. You are expected to have the finances in place to pay any tuition fees that may be due and cover your living costs for the duration of your course. Tier 4 students do not have access to state housing or benefits. The University has many duties as a Tier 4 sponsor and must ensure we remain compliant in order to retain our Tier 4 license – this includes monitoring your attendance and engagement with your studies while you are here.

For students studying with permission as a Short-term student, you also have <u>conditions</u> associated with your stay and it is important you familiarise yourself with these.

Find out more on the University's website.

Working in the UK

EEA nationals are able to work in the UK without restriction.

If you are from outside the EEA and entered as a short-term student, unfortunately you won't be able to work in the UK.

For students on a Tier4 visa, the hours you can work per week in term time will be restricted and shown on your visa/BRP (Biometric residence permit). The type of work you can do is also restricted. It is really important that you don't break your working conditions, so make sure you check what you can do before starting any work.

To be eligible to carry out paid work in the UK, you must have a National Insurance Number. You may already have one printed on the back of your BRP. You'll need to <u>apply for a National Insurance Number.</u>

SERVICES AND SUPPORT

Healthcare

The National Health Service (or "NHS") is the publicly funded healthcare system in the UK. Most services are free at the point of use, and temporary <u>visitors to the UK</u> may be able to access free NHS services.

If you are not able to access NHS care, there are still some services that are free to all. These include A&E services, family planning services, treatment for most infectious diseases, and treatment for victims of violence. Check the NHS website for more information, and some exemptions to the above.

If you have prescription medicine, please check with your doctor before you travel to ensure you can access your medicine while you are abroad. You may have to bring a prescription with you in order to access your medicine while in the UK, or your doctor may advise you to stock-up and bring enough medicine with you to last your time abroad.

Familiarise yourself with the UK Government's guidance for <u>travelling with medicine containing a controlled</u> <u>drug</u>, and please ensure you carry a prescription in your name for any prescription medicine you travel with.

Studying at Essex for less than six months

EU/EEA Students

You should be able to access <u>NHS care</u> for whilst you are in the UK as a student. You need to apply for a <u>European Health Insurance ("EHIC") Card</u> from your home country before you travel to the UK - make sure you familiarise yourself with the type of EHIC Card you need and <u>EU guidance</u> on how to use your EHIC card abroad.

Continue to check the <u>GOV.UK</u> and <u>Essex</u> websites for updates and guidance for European nationals in the UK post-Brexit.

Students studying in the UK for **less than 3 months** may not be able to register at a GP, and may be referred to the local walk-in centre for treatment as a doctor is not obliged to see you (unless deemed a medical emergency).

Short Term Study Visa students

It is unlikely you will be able to access NHS health care **for free**. You will be treated as a private patient and may have to pay for healthcare in the UK.

Please make sure you make arrangements and purchase private health insurance for your time in the UK. Contact Essex Abroad if you have questions relating to your individual circumstances, or have any questions about obtaining health insurance for your time in the UK.

Students studying in the UK for **less than 3 months** may not be able to register at a GP, and may be referred to the local walk-in centre for treatment as a doctor is not obliged to see you (unless deemed a medical emergency).

Studying at Essex for over six months

EU/EEA Students

You should be able to access <u>NHS care</u> whilst you are in the UK as a student. You need to apply for a <u>European Health Insurance ("EHIC") Card</u> from your home country before you travel to the UK - make sure you familiarise yourself with the type of EHIC Card you need and <u>EU guidance</u> on how to use your EHIC card abroad.

Continue to check the <u>GOV.UK</u> and <u>Essex</u> websites for updates and guidance for European nationals in the UK post-Brexit.

One of the first things you must do during orientation is register with a GP. If you are not registered with a GP, you may be referred to the local walk-in centre for treatment as a doctor is not obliged to see you (unless deemed a medical emergency). Find your nearest General Practitioner, or "GP" using the NHS website.

Tier 4 students

As part of your immigration application, you paid the Immigration Health Surcharge. This means you are entitled to NHS treatment from the time of your arrival in the UK. Check <u>GOV.UK</u> for guidance on how to access NHS services.

One of the first things you must do during orientation is register with a GP. If you are not registered with a GP, you may be referred to the local walk-in centre for treatment as a doctor is not obliged to see you (unless deemed a medical emergency). Find your nearest General Practitioner, or "GP" using the NHS website.

Wellbeing and counselling services

Everyone has mental health – sometimes good, sometimes not so good. There is help available at the University. If you are experiencing mental health difficulty, you can contact our <u>Student Services Hub</u> who will be able to guide you to help and support. We have a range of services that are available to you:

Nightline

<u>Nightline</u> provides a confidential listening, emotional support, information and supplies service, run for students by students. Our trained volunteers are available to discuss any problems you may have from 10pm-8am over telephone or via email.

Counselling

If you're experiencing mental health or emotional difficulties, counselling can provide a safe space for you to talk through and explore your feelings. You can contact the <u>Student Services Hub</u> for short-term counselling. You can also contact the Validium 24-hour Student Wellbeing Support Line where you can have an initial chat about the difficulties you're experience and the support available to you, all in confidence. Call **0800 970 5020** or **+44 141 271 7168**.

Silvercloud

If you're worried, feeling low, stressed or finding it hard to sleep, you may want to explore our new online mental programme from <u>SilverCloud</u>. There are four courses to help with: anxiety, depression and low mood, stress and body image.

Chat with Charlie

<u>Chat with Charlie</u> offers online mental health support every evening between 6-10pm. You can get support with exam stress, relationships, low mood, anxiety or anything else which may be troubling you.

Student services

Residence Life

Every student living in campus accommodation is allocated to a specific RA (Residents' Assistant). There is a RA in each area of accommodation whose role is to get to know their residents, encourage communication and organise a range of social activities. Residence Life operates outside of office hours when other University support services are closed. The RAs also respond to concerns and complaints you may have.

Disability

If you have a disability, specific learning difficult, long term medical condition or mental health condition, please let us know before arriving in Southend so that we can consider your support needs.

Faith

There is a <u>Faith Centre</u> at our Southend campus. It's located on the 2nd floor of <u>The Gateway Building</u> (<u>GB.2.23</u>). The Faith Centre offers a safe place to practise or explore faith through worship, meditation, prayer and quiet reflection.

Paying fees

If you're visiting us through an Erasmus or Exchange programme, you won't pay any tuition fees to Essex. If you're a study abroad student, you can make your tuition payment at the Income Counter, part of the Student Services Hub in The Forum.

Opening a bank account

To open a bank account in the UK, you will need a bank letter from the University of Essex, your passport or national identity card, and a valid visa/immigration document (if applicable). The University can only produce a letter once you know the name and address of the bank, and will only produce one bank letter. Bank letters can be produced when you first register in person at Essex.

You may not be able to open a UK bank account if your visa is valid for less than 6 months. Unfortunately the University does not have any influence over a bank's decision.

Download our app

Our official University of Essex app is called **Pocket Essex**. It has everything you need in one place – from Welcome Week information, what's on and how to find your way around to academic and study resources. Find it in the app store, and log in using your Essex email address and password.

Social media

Join us on Facebook and Instagram. Don't forget to share your Instagram photos using the #AbroadAtEssex hashtag so we can share them on our page. There is private <u>Facebook group</u> for all new exchange and study abroad students at Essex in 2019-20.

Follow the University's Facebook and Instagram account to keep up-to-date with all the latest news and information so you know where to go and what to do during your time at Essex.

Students' Union

When you become a student at Essex, you automatically become a member of the <u>Students' Union</u> (for free!). As a member, you are entitled to:

- Free advice and support
- Access to different student sports club and societies
- Full use of The Mezz and SU Lounge
- Independent academic support from dedicated student representatives
- Training and support to help you realise your employability potential
- Volunteering opportunities to give you valuable experience and make a positive difference to others

Access to a student-focused entertainment programme packed with events to cater for every taste

ACADEMIC LIFE

Studies at Essex

Grading

Each department has their own grade criteria and marking scale. For undergraduate modules, anything above 40 is a pass. For postgraduate modules, anything above 50 is a pass.

Teaching methods

Generally, most modules have both a lecture and seminar; sometimes they can also include practical or laboratories too.

A **lecture** is a large class usually lasting one or two hours. The lecturer will guide you through new concepts and theories, participation is not usually required.

A **seminar** is normally a small class. Students are encouraged to discuss, debate and analyse a specific topic. Contribution is usually required, so you might be asked to prepare for a seminar.

A laboratory/practical is common for modules from the Faculty of Science and Health.

Attendance

You're expected to attend all mandatory sessions on your timetable. Your attendance is monitored at teaching sessions using your student card and an electronic record system called Count-Me-In. An electronic reader is installed in all rooms, usually near the entrance. You simply tap your student card on the reader, and wait for the light to turn green.

Assessment at Essex

Assessment can take many forms at Essex including coursework, group work, presentation, practical assessments etc.

Coursework

<u>Coursework</u> is usually in the form of an assignment submitted online via a system called FASER. **Deadlines are strict and cannot be changed.** If you miss a deadline and believe you have extenuating circumstances, you can submit late submission request. Guidance on plagiarism is available on <u>Moodle</u>. Some modules may have practical coursework elements. You'll find details on the <u>Module Directory</u>.

Exams

Exam dates will be communicated to students in advance. Our website contains useful information about what to expect from exams at Essex. You will receive an exam registration card and entry form which you

need to take to very exam; you'll also be given a specific seat in advance. **Exam dates are final and cannot be changed**; please plan and travel accordingly.

English language support

If English isn't your first language, you'll need to take a short assessment on arrival at Essex. You must take this assessment even if you already have English language qualifications. It's not a pass/fail assessment and the results won't affect your entry to study at Essex. Your score will be sent to you within ten days with information about how to register for English language and academic skill classes.

Library

Students in Southend access to The Forum - a state-of-the-art public and academic library with outstanding research and learning facilities. It has over 150,000 public, university and college books, and an entire floor dedicated to Essex students.

Languages for All

Learn a language alongside your studies at Essex. Our award-winning <u>Languages for All</u> programme gives Essex students the opportunity to learn a language alongside their studies, at no extra cost, for one year. You can learn **French**, **German** or **Spanish**. Our beginner 1 modules are beginner classes if you have no previous knowledge of the language. This option is only available for students studying at Essex for the full academic year.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Essex Abroad

The Essex Abroad office is located in the Colchester campus; we are open from 9am-5pm. For any non-emergencies you can email us at incomingexchange@essex.ac.uk or essexabroad@essex.ac.uk and call us at +441206 872715.

Student Services Hub

The Student Services Hub is the place to go for the information you need. It is open between 9am – 5pm during term time, and 10am – 4pm during vacation time. Call +44 (0) 1702 328444 or email <u>askthehubsc@essex.ac.uk</u>.

Out-of-hours contact for emergencies and non-emergencies in student accommodation:

- telephone University Square reception on 01702 328408 or 07920821678
- ask for the required service first aid, ambulance, etc. and give your location

It's a good idea to review these phone numbers and add them to your mobile so you have them to hand.

Emergency and non-emergency contact details for first aid or incidents requiring security or police attendance are listed on our <u>website</u>.

If you are in an emergency **off campus** that requires urgent attention from the emergency services, call 999. You will be asked which service you require: **Police, Fire or Ambulance.** If you're at the coast, and require emergency help you can ask for a **Coastguard.**

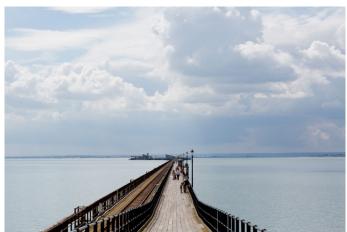
LEARNING THE LINGO

Like everywhere in the world, the UK has its own phrases, vocabulary and slang which you might not be used to hearing. Here a few you're bound to hear within your first week at Essex to get you started.

Mate	Alright?
Slang for friend	A common greeting and brief form of 'are you alright?'
"Have a good weekend, mate!"	"Alright? How's it going?
Sick	Chips
Used to state that something is good	Fried potato, but not French fries and not potato chips (they're called crisps in the UK!)
"Last night was sick!"	"I'll have a burger and chips please"
Banter	Сирра
The playful and friendly exchange of teasing remarks	A cup of tea.
"She's funny; she's got good banter."	"Fancy a cuppa?"
Quid	Innit
Informal for British pound sterling	Isn't it? Often used as a conversation filler or when seeking confirmation
"I went shopping today and spent 40 quid"	"It's such nice weather today, innit?"













Essex Abroad

University of Essex Colchester Campus Wivenhoe Park Colchester CO4 3SQ United Kingdom

T +44 (0)1206 872715

E incoming exchange@essex.ac.uk

This guide refers to entry for exchange and study abroad students in October 2019 and January 2020. All information is correct at time of publication (August 2019).