

COLCHESTER INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' GUIDE



CONTACT DETAILS

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ESSEX.SU



EVERY ESSEX STUDENT IS AUTOMATICALLY A MEMBER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX STUDENTS' UNION

Essex Students' Union represents all students at the university. It's run by students, for students, and works with the university to make life the best it can be for students at Essex.

The SU is led by full time and voluntary, part time officers, who are elected by the members of the SU - YOU!



VP INTERNATIONAL

Hey, I'm Asha Ali, and I'm the Vice-President International this year.

I'm a Somali-Norwegian Essex graduate, I studied Linguistics and Sociology and now I work full time to represent issues facing international students at Essex, as well as overseeing the International Students Association and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Network. I'm basically here to make sure life is the best it can be for International students, whether it's improving your course, or the support you receive - you can get in touch with me.

If you ever want a coffee or chat, or want to grill me on how I'm representing you- don't hesitate to contact me on **vpinternational@essex.ac.uk**

Memes and buzzfeed quizzes are also welcomed- you can tweet these to me @AshaVPInt !



PRESIDENT

Hi everyone, I'm Tancrede but everyone (for quite obvious reasons) calls me Tanki. I graduated from Essex 2 years ago with a Law degree. I'm the SU President this year.

I am very much looking forward to representing you this year and making sure that you have the best time here. I remember coming to Essex for the first time 5 years ago (I know I'm a dinosaur) from France. It is very scary but it's a new adventure for you!

You will have the chance to meet people from lots of different backgrounds, nationalities, ethnicities and much more. You have picked one of the best universities and we are very excited to support you throughout your time here.

If you have any questions during your time here you can ask me anything from: Is the dress gold and white or black and blue? What is the best coffee on campus? (It's pretty straightforward, it's the SU Kitchen) . And of course, you can ask me more serious questions about the Students' Union, just drop me an email at **president@essex.ac.uk** or on Facebook!



ISA CHAIR

The Chair of the International Students' Association (ISA) lead the ISA in representing and supporting all international students at Essex, working closely with Asha the International Officer.

Network elections for this position will run this October- and you could run to be chair. You can find out more about how to run at **www.essex.su/elections**.

From November onwards, you can email the elected chair at **isa@essex.ac.uk** for anything about the ISA. In the mean time you can contact **vpinternational@essex.ac.uk**



BAME OFFICER

Hey, I'm Chizi Agu, and I'm the the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Officer this year. My role is voluntary and part time, so I am still studying whilst doing this role.

I'm in my second year studying BA Law and my job is to ensure all students that class themselves as Black, Asian or Ethnic Minorities are well represented and have their voices heard.

You'll probably find me in on the 4th floor of the Library studying or at Buffalo Joe's. Feel free to contact me on **bameofficer@essex.ac.uk** for a chat or to discuss any issues!

WELCOME TO ESSEX – A GLOBAL FAMILY

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS ASSOCIATION (ISA)

The ISA brings together all students from across all three campuses - Colchester, Loughton and Southend. It is open to all individuals who wish to celebrate culture and engage with other students from across the world. The ISA ensures that all international students feel welcomed at the University of Essex by organising cultural festivities, events and trips across the UK.

BLACK, ASIAN AND MINORITY ETHNIC STUDENTS' NETWORK (BAME NETWORK)

The BAME Network brings together all students from a BAME background. It's a support network and social group that aims to combat racism and discrimination and ensure that all Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students feel welcome and at home here.

**IF YOU'D LIKE TO MEET OTHER INTERNATIONAL
STUDENTS AND FIND OUT A BIT MORE ABOUT
THE ISA AND HOW TO JOIN...**

**JOIN US AT THE INTERNATIONAL MIXER
ON MONDAY 1ST OCTOBER,
12-2PM IN THE SECRET GARDEN**

(which is found by going down the stairs next
to the SU BAR on the Colchester campus)





HERE'S SOME THINGS THAT MAY MAKE YOU FEEL LIKE ESSEX IS YOUR HOME AWAY FROM HOME

CULTURAL SOCIETIES

As a member of the Students' Union, we welcome you to join any of the societies on campus! The cultural societies that have been set up and run by students on Colchester campus are:

African Caribbean, Arabic, Asian, BruEssex, Bulgarian, Chinese Student Scholars, Cypriot, Essex Hong Kong, Eurasian, Filipino, French Connection, German, Swiss & Austrian, Ghanaian, Hellenic, Hungarian, Indian, Italian Harbour, Japanese International, Latin American, Lithuanian, Malaysian, Nepalese, Nigerian, Nordic, Pakistani, Polish, Portugese Speaking, Romanian, Russian, Saudi, Somali, Spanish, Sri Lankan, Tamil, Thai, Turkish, Turkish Cypriot, Vietnamese

Want to join a society?

Head to **www.essex.su/societies**

INTERNATIONAL GOODS AND SERVICES

In The Store and The Extra Store (on sq 4) you can find a great range of international food and if you can't find what you are looking for, you can request it through the product request wall. There are also lots of shops in and around Colchester.

HALAL POULTRY AND PRODUCTS

- 🏠 FoodINC - 66 Barrack Street, Colchester CO1 2LS
- 🏠 Tesco Superstore - Greenstead Road, Colchester CO1 2TE

ORIENTAL PRODUCTS

- 🏠 May May Oriental Supermarket - 30 St Botolph's Street, Colchester CO2 7EA
- 🏠 Lets Go Market - 143 Caelum Drive, Colchester CO2 8FP
- 🏠 Starry Asian Market Ltd - 13 Grange Way, Colchester CO2 8HG

AFRO-CARIBBEAN AND AFRICAN PRODUCTS

- 🏠 Yawee Foods - 8 Queen Street, Colchester CO1 2PJ
- 🏠 Choice Foods - 37A St Botolph's Street, Colchester CO2 7EA

YOU'VE GOT THE QUESTIONS? WE HAVE THE ANSWERS.

WELL SOME OF THEM, ANYWAY...

HOW TO I ACCESS CURRENCY SERVICES?

For currency conversions, we'd recommend you to refer to OANDA Rates™, which are daily filtered foreign exchange rates accessible online. For currency exchanges, we recommended that you transfer currency through local post offices and banks. The SU looks runs a Post Office on campus, located in Square 4 and offers a conversion service of over 72 currencies. Bank branches available in Colchester town including Barclays, NatWest, HSBC and Halifax. You can also use private currency exchange services such as Transferwise and Azimo, both of which have mobile apps for easier exchange.

HOW CAN I OPEN A BANK ACCOUNT?

To open a bank account, you will need a bank letter from the university, which you can get at registration. For information on everything to do with getting your finances sorted, see essex.ac.uk/welcome/international-students/banking.

WHERE CAN I FIND FOOD WHICH MEETS MY DIETARY REQUIREMENTS OR PREFERENCES?

There is a wide range of food on campus including halal, vegetarian, vegan and gluten free foods. There is an Asian buffet in the Canteen as well as international selections in Fusion, The Store and during special events in the SU Bar.

There are also stalls on campus offering Afro-Caribbean and Asian food, you can check them out during the SU Thursday market on square 3, which as you can guess takes place every Thursday during term time.

DO I HAVE THE RIGHT TO WORK IN THE UNITED KINGDOM?

EEA nationals are able to work in the UK without restriction. If you're from outside the EEA and entered as a short-term student unfortunately, you won't be able to work in the UK. For Tier 4 students the hours you can work per week in term time will be restricted and shown on your visa/BRP. You can work more hours in your official University vacations which vary depending on your course. The

type of work you can do as a Tier 4 student is also restricted. It's really important that you don't break your working conditions so, make sure you check what you can do before you start work. Your employer will have to carry out right to work checks and should ask you for confirmation of your term/vacation dates in writing - the University's International Services team can provide you with this.

More information is available on the University's immigration web pages: **www.essex.ac.uk/immigration/living/work_int**

To be eligible to carry out paid work in the UK, you must have a National Insurance number. You may already have a National Insurance (NI) number printed on the back of your biometric residence permit (BRP). If you don't, the Students' Union arranges National Insurance Number interviews on campus. Alternatively, you may apply on your own as guided on **www.gov.uk/apply-national-insurancenumber**

You can keep an eye out for jobs on the SU job page essex.su/jobs, there are roles available within services, such as marketing, finance and admin or retail, or in the SU venues such as The Kitchen, SU Bar, Frango's and more. The Employability and Careers Centre has lots of information about working and planning your career and is the place to go to find out more about work placements and internships: **essex.ac.uk/careers/**

HOW CAN I COLLECT MY BRP (BIOMETRIC RESIDENCE PERMIT)?

If you entered the UK with Tier 4 entry clearance that was valid for 30 days you will need to collect your BRP as soon as possible. You're UKVI outcome letter will say where you can collect your BRP from and you'll need to collect it before you go to your registration event.

For Colchester and Loughton students, if your UKVI outcome letter shows the University as your BRP collection location you'll be able to collect it from your Student Services Hub on-campus during office opening hours. For Southend students, if you selected the Southend Post Office it is a short walk away from the campus. **www.essex.ac.uk/students/contact/default**





DO I HAVE TO REGISTER WITH THE POLICE?

Some students will have to register with the Police when they arrive. If you have this condition it should be on your entry clearance sticker. Essex Police will be coming onto your campus at the start of the autumn term, and you'll be able to make an appointment to see them when you register for your course. More information: www.essex.ac.uk/immigration/living/police_registration.aspx

IS THERE A MULTIFAITH CHAPLAINCY IN COLCHESTER?

There's one on campus itself! The Multi-Faith Chaplaincy, located underneath Square 2, represents a range of different faiths, including pastoral care and prayer spaces for people of faiths and none. The Chaplaincy team supports all students and staff and can provide guidance about local places of worship. On request, the team will put you in touch with other faith leaders, where available, within the local community.

CAN I USE MY PHONE IN THE UK?

The good news is that your current international phone is very likely to function perfectly in the UK; but you will need a UK sim card to avoid high charges.

The best thing you can do is to have a look at different mobile phone companies and the deals they offer. Some of the best companies include EE, GiffGaff and Vodafone.

Even though it might feel like you don't need a UK phone number during your first months or year at University, keep in mind that you will really need one when:

- Applying for jobs, placement years or internships (both on and off campus). Most employers will ask you for your phone number to get in touch regarding your application.
- Keeping in touch with friends. Having a working phone number means less problems when trying to schedule your group's next trip abroad or night out in town
- There is a lot of free Wi-Fi but it might not exist everywhere you go

ENGLISH ISN'T MY FIRST LANGUAGE, WHO CAN HELP ME?

Getting to grips with English as a second language has never been easier because we offer a bunch of online and on-campus support services that you are entitled to whilst you are a student at Essex.

TALENT DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

During the first weeks of the autumn term, everyone whose first language is not English has to take the English Language Assessment – don't worry, this is not a fail or pass test and it will have no impact on your studies. Depending on the results you will be allocated in English support classes and there will be academic advisers ready to help at all times.

They also offer a wide range of services and opportunities for you to work on your language, writing, grammar, speaking and employability skills. If you want to know more about what the Talent Development Centre, why not drop by their Helpdesk in the Silberrad and have a chat with staff

ECDIS

ECDIS stands for English Classes for Dependants of International Students and is run by the Department of Language and Linguistics. What that means is that if you are coming to Essex with your family, they can take these free classes to develop their language skills.

www.essex.ac.uk/departments/language-and-linguistics/english-classes-for-dependants

TRY AND MEET PEOPLE FROM DIFFERENT PLACES AND JOIN CULTURAL SOCIETIES

To improve speaking skills it is crucial to surround yourself with native English speakers. Learning by listening to other people will make the different accents and pronunciations a bit more familiar and boost your confidence.

You can attend some of our society's weekly/monthly events that promote language learning experiences. You can also ask for 121 sessions with society exec members or group activities.

WATCH MOVIES IN ENGLISH (a.k.a. binge watch Netflix)

If you want to learn the conversational side of a language, movies can be super helpful. Watching movies forces you to learn English and gain skills whilst doing something you actually enjoy – this ranges from your all-time favourite movies, series or documentaries.



WELL-BEING AND MENTAL HEALTH

Most University of Essex students will have access to free healthcare via the NHS whilst they are in the UK. If you live on campus you will be given an appointment to register at the health centre, but if you live off campus, you will need to register with your local doctor (called a “GP”, or General Practitioner). If you are coming from Europe, you'll need an EHIC card. For complete information on everything you need to know to stay healthy physically, mentally and emotionally, see **essex.ac.uk/students/health-and-wellbeing/**

Mental wellbeing describes your mental state - how you are feeling and how well you can cope with day-to-day life. Our mental wellbeing can change from moment to moment, day to day, month to month or year to year.

If you are struggling with your wellbeing, the university and the SU offer plenty of support for you. You can contact Student Wellbeing, Inclusivity and Support team (SWIS) with any concerns about your own wellbeing you might have. They will be able to help you or guide you towards someone who can. They can also be accessed through the Student Services Hub, at **askthehub@essex.ac.uk**, or on **01206 874000**.

There's also Nightline on campus, which is a service run by students for students. You can come in to see them on the ground floor in the Keynes

Tower at the North side of campus. You can also call them at **01206 87 2020/2022** and talk about any issue you might have. If you do not want to talk to someone directly, you can send an email to **nlhelp@essex.ac.uk**. They are open from 10pm to 8am every night during term time.

The Students Union also offers support through SU Advice. SU Advice located on square 3 is open 10am to 4pm Monday – Friday during term time, and 1pm to 4pm during the breaks. You can book an appointment through **suadvice@essex.ac.uk** and they can help you with any problem you might have. It is a great place to start if you are unsure what to do with the problem you have.

If you have a mental health emergency, you can contact the on campus emergency service on **2222** or **01206 872222**.



THE STUDENT SERVICES HUB

If you have questions to do with anything about the university, the Student Services Hub is the place to go for the information you need. It is located on the first floor of the Silberrad Student Centre, and is open from 9am to 5pm every day.

The Information desk is the place to go with general questions, and can help you with issues such as accommodation, course administration, exams, coursework, money matters, funding queries, official documentation, and getting a replacement registration card. There is also a cash desk where you can go to pay your rent or tuition fees.

You can also email **askthehub@essex.ac.uk**.

IMMIGRATION INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

The University has specialist immigration advisers, as does SU Advice. In the UK, immigration advice and services are regulated by the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) and only our authorised advisers are able to offer information and guidance to our students about the UK's student immigration laws.

If you're a Tier 4 student you will receive additional information when you register about your obligations to both the University and the Home Office. The University's website is a good place to start if you have a query, and if you can't find what you're looking for or need further information you can find out who to contact and how in the 'Ask us a question' section: **www.essex.ac.uk/immigration**



EMERGENCY CONTACTS

ON CAMPUS

If there is an emergency whilst you are on campus, do not call **999**. You will need to phone campus patrol or security officers by dialling telephone extension **2222** or from your phone use **01206 872222**. Security on campus is 24 hour.

OFF CAMPUS

If you are in an emergency off campus that requires urgent attention from the emergency services, call 999. You will be asked if you need an ambulance, the police or the fire services.



POLICE

The police in the UK are helpful and can be approached by anyone, and can be reached on the phone number **101**. However, if it is an emergency, you should contact **999** and ask for the police department.

The number to the Essex Police station is **01245 491491**



FIRE

If there is a fire emergency, you should call **999** as quickly as possible and ask for the fire department.



MEDICAL

If there is a medical emergency, you should call **999** and ask for an ambulance.

If you do not need an ambulance but feel you need medical attention and you are unable to get to a local doctors surgery or it is out of hours, you can call **111**. This is the NHS helpline and they will put you in contact with a doctor who will assess over the phone if you need to go to hospital, have an out of hour's doctor visit you or if you are safe to wait till you can get to your local doctor.

WAYS TO TRAVEL IN COLCHESTER – JUST REMEMBER TO RETURN TO UNI!

There are so many different options for travelling in Colchester and beyond! You can purchase a Unicard yearly bus pass around Colchester at £165, or pay as you go.

- 🟡 £1.50 for a return ticket to Tesco (a fifteen-minute walk away) on the 74/62 bus
- 🟡 £3.00 for a return to the town centre on the 61/62 bus
- 🟡 £3.50 for a return ticket to the train station on the 61/62 bus
- 🟡 £4.00 for an all-day ticket

You could also download the Uber mobile application or call a taxi service - this is more convenient for late nights or Sundays, when the buses don't run as often. Just let them know whether to drop you off at the North or South side of campus. Alternatively, you could purchase a bicycle and cycle to town.

Local Taxi Services

- 🟡 Lucky 6: 01206 666 666
- 🟡 Panther Cabs: 01206 525 525
- 🟡 Roman Cars: 01206 521 521
- 🟡 Hawaii Five O: 01206 543 210

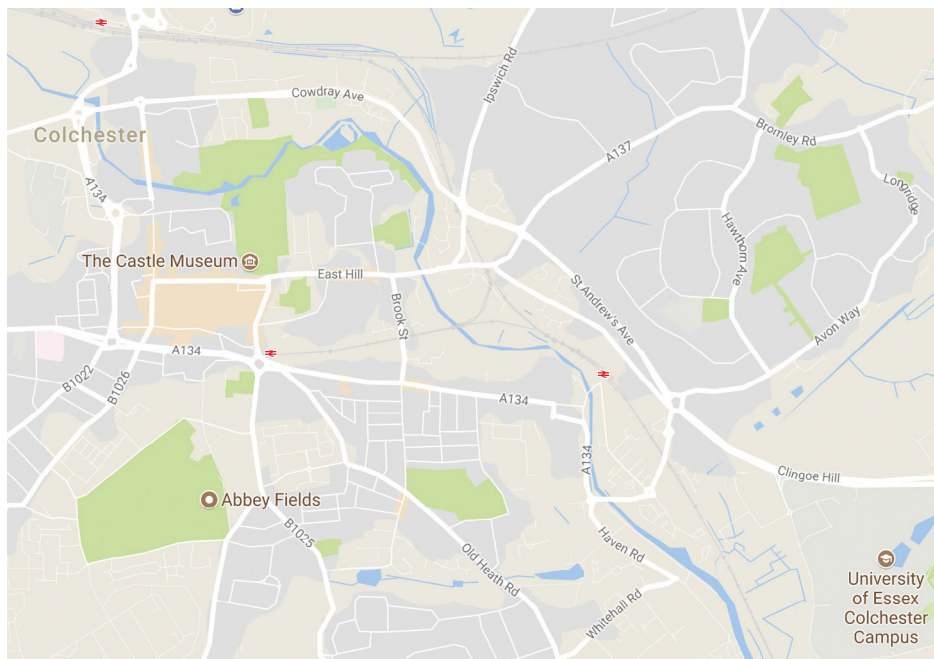
Trains are usually the most convenient way to travel to other parts of Britain – it's an hour to London direct from Colchester North, and you can get there from the Hythe (15 minute walk from campus) or Colchester Town stations.

Book tickets in advance to get the best possible price. Tickets are generally available 12 weeks before the date of travel from train booking sites such as National Rail, Greater Anglia and Virgin Trains.

If you're aged 16-25, or a full-time student aged 26 or older, you're eligible to apply for a discount railcard! This costs £30 yearly and can save you £s off most rail fares across Britain. You may apply online at **www.16-25railcard.co.uk**

If you are travelling back to an airport National Express coaches are the cheapest and most convenient way to get there. Buses go direct from Colchester town centre to and from London Heathrow and Stanstead.

Alternatively, you can get the train to London then use the Heathrow or Stanstead express, a train that takes you directly from central London to the airport.



FIND YOUR WAY AROUND CAMPUS

The university's online campus map and navigation guide is called "Find Your Way", and will help you get around campus. You can either get it by downloading the Pocket Essex app for your phone, or via the internet – www.findyourway.essex.ac.uk

LAST MINUTE TIPS FOR THE ROAD:

1. Don't leave your cash in your room! Do deposit it in your bank account as soon as possible.
2. Bring a jacket with you when you first arrive - the weather in Britain changes often, it's best to be prepared.
3. If your country's chargers don't fit UK electrical sockets, remember to bring an international adapter! But if you forget, don't fret - they're also available on campus at Everything Essex located in Square 4.

**NOW YOU'RE TRULY READY TO ENTER UNI.
WE CAN'T WAIT TO SEE YOU AROUND!
#ESSEXINTERNATIONALS**



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