



Pre-Arrival information to support your transition to RGU

We are looking forward to welcoming you to RGU in January. To help with your planning, please read this guide carefully. It is intended to advise and guide you at this crucial time.

We've put together many key areas that international students should consider prior to travelling to Aberdeen. You can find more in-depth information by viewing the [Pre-Arrival](#) page on the RGU website.

For the most accurate help to make your plans, it is imperative that you use the legitimate information included here and on our RGU website and not information that is available through other sources.

BEGINNING YOUR STUDIES

Arrival & Start Date

Key arrival and enrolment dates:

- Semester 1 Enrolment & Welcome Checks: 15 January 2024 – 24 January 2024
- Semester 1 Welcome and Welcome Back Week: 15 January 2024 -19 January 2024
- Commencement of teaching when classes begin: 22 January 2024

The University and Students' Union have a host of events and activities planned for Welcome and Welcome Back Week, as well as several online resources to assist you as you start your studies at RGU. You can find these on the Welcome Moodle Page.

Enrolment & Welcome Check

Prior to enrolling and starting your studies at RGU, you must complete an in person 'Welcome Check'. These 'Welcome Check' appointments will be open on campus from 15th January 2024 until 24th January 2024. You can find out how to book and what documents you need on the [Pre-Arrival](#) page on the RGU website.

You must ensure that you arrive prior to classes commencing on 22 January 2024. Arriving after this date, you will not be allowed to begin studies and you will have to return to your home country.

Accommodation on Arrival

It is vitally important that you do not travel to Aberdeen to commence your studies without having accommodation arrangements already in place. There are three sectors of accommodation for students arriving in Aberdeen:

- RGU Accommodation = RGU owned halls of residence
- Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) = Privately owned halls of residence
- Private Rented Sector (PRS) = private apartments (flats) and houses

ACCOMMODATION

Key factors and other information to consider about the three main sectors of accommodation in Aberdeen – RGU Accommodation (student halls owned by the University), Purpose Built Student Accommodation (student halls owned by private companies) and the Private Rented Sector (flats and houses leased by private landlords and through letting agents).

Accommodation Availability

There is currently a limited amount of accommodation available for students in Aberdeen, so early planning is essential. We are aware that it is not always possible to find somewhere to live before travelling to Aberdeen, but it is vital that you at least book a short-term option (RGU Short Stay, AirBnB or hotel) prior to travelling to Aberdeen to ensure that you have a safe place to stay on arrival and can commence your studies with ease.

- While RGU Accommodation is a popular option for many students, it includes single occupancy accommodation only. It cannot accommodate couples and/or families so it is crucial that if family members or dependents are with you, you secure an alternative (in the Private Rented Sector).
- There is currently an extremely high level of demand for private accommodation in and around Aberdeen, and there are a limited number of properties available in the private rented sector.
- Currently, students are finding that it takes at least 14 – 28 days to find and move into a flat within the Private Rented Sector, and for some it is taking considerably longer than 28 days. Always check the advert for the 'available from' date to give an indication if this is an option for you.

** RGU Accommodation has limited availability **

RGU Accommodation – Pre-Booking is Essential

It is essential that students looking to move into RGU Accommodation (either through ShortStay or a term-time booking) pre-book accommodation. Students who arrive at Accommodation sites without a booking will not be able to move in and will be required to find alternative accommodation (for example a hotel or AirBnB) until a booking can be made, processed, and confirmed.

This is particularly important over the winter break. If you plan to arrive in the UK and move into accommodation before the University opens on Thursday 4 January, you must book accommodation prior to Monday 18th December 2023. If you have not booked by this date, you will not be able to move into RGU Accommodation until Friday 5th January 2023. Please do not arrive prior to this time seeking accommodation support.

THE RGU ACCOMMODATION TEAM REQUIRE AT LEAST ONE FULL WORKING DAY TO PROCESS ACCOMMODATION BOOKINGS. DO NOT REPORT TO ANY RGU ACCOMMODATION SITES WITHOUT A CONFIRMED BOOKING AS YOU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO MOVE-IN

Short-Term Accommodation

We are aware that many students may wish to secure short-term accommodation to allow for time to view long-term options on arrival. RGU Accommodation has limited availability for Short Stay accommodation, which is suitable for students looking for single occupancy rooms.

You must book and pay for Short Stay accommodation in advance, and you will not be able to move into the accommodation without a confirmed booking. You can book on the [RGU Accommodation Short Stay webpage](#). If you plan to arrive in the UK and move into accommodation before the University opens on Thursday 4th January, you must book accommodation prior to Monday 18th December 2023. If you have not booked by this date, you will not be able to move into RGU accommodation until Friday 5th January 2024. Please do not arrive prior to this time seeking accommodation support.

The maximum duration of a Short Stay booking is four weeks.

THE RGU ACCOMMODATION TEAM REQUIRE AT LEAST ONE FULL WORKING DAY TO PROCESS ACCOMMODATION BOOKINGS. DO NOT REPORT TO ANY RGU ACCOMMODATION SITES WITHOUT A CONFIRMED BOOKING AS YOU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO MOVE IN.

Term-time Accommodation

Information about longer term options available in RGU Accommodation:

- Couples/families cannot be accommodated in university residences – these are only suitable for students looking for a single room.
- If you are interested in this, contact RGU Accommodation via accommodation@rgu.ac.uk or simply [apply](#). If you have firmly accepted an offer to study at RGU, you can also register and apply for university accommodation using the [accommodation portal](#).
- Once signed, leases are a legally binding contract for the duration of the lease, so you should ensure you will be able to commit to paying throughout the full lease term.
- The biggest benefit is that all costs are inclusive, and you will be looked after by RGU staff throughout your stay. As you are part of the RGU Community, you will not be asked for a **Deposit or a Guarantor**.

** Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) has extremely limited availability **

- Families/dependents cannot be accommodated in PBSA properties – these are only suitable for students looking for a single room or Studio apartment where applicable.
- There is a wide range of PBSA options in Aberdeen (including shared and studio accommodation). Providers in Aberdeen include: [Bauhaus Students](#), [Every Student](#), [Hello Students](#), [Homes for Students](#), [Mezzino](#), [Prestige Student Living](#), [Student Roost](#), [This is Fresh](#), [Unite Students](#) and [U-Student](#).
- PBSA's are private companies, do not have RGU staff on their sites and whilst nearly all of these are inclusive rent prices, it is worth confirming this.
- These properties are sold on a lease basis which is a legally binding contract for the duration of the lease, so you should ensure you will be able to commit to paying throughout the full lease term.
- You will be required to pay a deposit and may be asked to provide a guarantor. The University cannot stand as your guarantor.

** Private Rented Sector (PRS) has limited availability **

Short-Term Accommodation

We are aware that many students may wish to secure short-term accommodation, to allow for time to view long-term options on arrival. Providers such as [airbnb](#), [booking.com](#), [hotels.com](#) and [trivago](#) are all good options. These are likely to cost between £65 and £100 per night of stay.

Longer-term Accommodation

- Suitable for students who wish to live outwith a hall's environment. This is also the only option for students who wish to live with families or dependents.
- Sites such as [City Lets](#), [Rightmove](#) and [Zoopla](#) will show you a number of available properties around Aberdeen. These websites will also allow you to filter your search results by size, location, and cost.
- Aberdeen has many Letting Agents shops around the shopping areas. These are great places to walk into and ask the staff what properties they have available within your budget range. You can find more of these Accommodation search engines on our [Alternative Accommodation webpage](#).
- Take advice from Letting Agents on the appropriate number of bedrooms required, as you may be evicted if you are found to exceed the occupancy limits, by statutory overcrowding of a property.
- Additionally, a website which may be useful would be the [RGU:Move Facebook page](#). This page was set up by former RGU students and allows landlords to advertise their properties directly to students.

- These properties usually contain rent but there are additional costs for utilities (Wi-Fi, Electricity, Gas etc) so take these into account when making your decision. Once again you will be asked for a deposit and may be asked for a guarantor. The University cannot stand as your guarantor.
- If you don't have a UK guarantor, landlords often ask for 3 to 6 months rent in advance so the initial outlay can be quite expensive. An alternative is to look for private companies such as [Housing Hand](#) who offer to take on the UK Guarantor role at a cost.

Further Information & Links

Websites that provide the most up-to-date information about RGU Accommodation and where to find accommodation related advice and support:

- [RGU Accommodation \(Term-time\)](#)
- [RGU Accommodation \(Short Stay\)](#)
- [RGU ResLife \(Advice & Support\)](#)

You can also find information about how to apply for accommodation and key things to consider on our [Alternative Accommodation](#) webpage and by reading our [Moving On Guide](#).

COST OF LIVING

Living Costs in Aberdeen

The cost of living in Aberdeen may be significantly different from your home country. In recent months, the cost of accommodation, groceries and utilities have all increased. In addition to this, the rate of inflation is expected to exceed an average of 10% in the coming year, which reflects a direct increase in the cost of essential goods and services. Given this, we would highly advise that you research costs and ensure you have adequate financial resources to cover your living costs, before travelling to Aberdeen.

When you apply for your visa, the [UKVI](#) asks you to show that you have £9,207 to cover your living expenses (plus £6,120 per dependant) whilst this is just for the first 9 months of your course you will need to ensure that you have sufficient funds to cover all of your time studying in the UK.

To assist students arriving in Aberdeen, the University has created a [Cost of Living](#) page on the RGU website. Here, you can find the latest figures on the average cost of living in Aberdeen. In addition to tuition fees, the page [provides an estimate on the average](#) monthly costs, which currently sit at between £1,100 and £1,500 for individual students. If you are bringing your family with you, it is essential that you research additional costs such as family sized accommodation and childcare as these may be considerably more expensive than in your home country.

Students should also consider the impact that exchange rate fluctuations may have on the value of your own currency when exchanging this for Sterling. You should contact your bank or exchange organisation to confirm the rates you will be offered.

VISA INFORMATION

If you're still in the process of applying for your visa or preparing for your application you might find RGU's [Visa Immigration](#) Page helpful. This includes important information on meeting the conditions of your offer and entry, immigration and financial requirements, your CAS, Visa and BRP, and much more.

Review the resource from UKCISA on [Protecting your Student Status](#). This includes information on conditions of student immigration permission, considerations regarding immigration rules, and good practice.

Most Student Visas will state that you have 'no recourse to public funds'. This means that there is limited support available from local authority and publicly funded services and organisations. You can find out more about no recourse to public funds on the [No Recourse North East Partnership](#) webpages.

An exception to this is that you will have access to the National Health Service (NHS), once you arrive in the UK, as you will have paid the Healthcare Surcharge. If you are arriving with children, they will also be able to access primary and secondary education. You can find out more about children's education in the Student Parent's section of this document.

If you are arriving on a Student Visa, you will likely have limitations placed on you during your academic study periods regarding the numbers of hours you can undertake paid or unpaid employment. The limit is generally set at 20 hours per week which can only be extended during non-academic periods approved by your school. To gain employment you must have a National Insurance number for your employer and you can apply online for free on the [Government website](#).

EMPLOYABILITY AND PLACEMENTS

Our Careers Team, located within the 'Centre for Employability and Community Engagement', support students with their Career Planning which is a life skill. We prepare you for careers, not jobs, and ensure that you are able to make well informed successful decisions now, and throughout your career. We ensure that you can take full advantage of the ever-changing economy and labour market, as well as providing information on international markets should you wish to work elsewhere.

Our main online careers resource, [eHub](#) includes a range of career related learning topics. You can access eHub on receipt of your university username and password once you have enrolled on your course.

The topics will take you from the very first stages of thinking about your future, right through to supporting you in making a positive impression in the graduate workplace. Here you can find practical information and guidance on subjects including finding part time work, writing your CV, and updating your LinkedIn profile.

Make sure that you utilise the resources available online:

- [Need a professional CV?](#) Then look at the online resources available on eHub and apply the information to your CV before coming to see a Careers Consultant.
- [Research the career area](#) you are interested in, use to guide you in opportunities available.
- Attend employer events, and on-course careers input to develop your employability skills. Keep an eye on our [LinkedIn page](#) for details of upcoming employer events and careers fairs.

We encourage students to utilise the resources available before booking an individual careers appointment to ensure they make the most of the time they have with the Careers Consultant. Appointments can be booked via [AskRGU](#) where there is also a list of FAQs which may assist with your query.

[Part time work](#) can help support student finances and provide evidence of your growing employability. Working part time can allow you to further develop and subsequently provide evidence of your skills and work behaviours when applying to graduate and professional roles. Most universities will advise that students don't work more than 15-hours a week, to enable a good balance of work and study.

An [academically accredited placement](#), which may be an option on your course, is typically secured through a competitive recruitment and selection process, and students need to ensure that their CV is suitable for the UK market, and that you are selling the appropriate skills, knowledge and experience with the application. Being able to progress to placement requires you to meet certain minimum academic achievements on your course.

To be successful in applying to [graduate level and professional roles](#) international students need to be focused on their future career paths from the very start of their course. International students need to ensure that they have [researched the job market](#) before they commence their studies to be aware of the key recruitment sites, events and opportunities that will support them in looking for and applying for Graduate opportunities.

Many of our international students are studying at postgraduate level, and there is a need for them to present themselves and their employability professionally, and efficiently through their CV, job applications and on professional networking sites such as LinkedIn. RGU has subscribed to Student Circus and GoinGlobal, which can be found within our international resources on [eHub](#) to support our international and UK students to explore opportunities throughout the globe.

Students need to be able to [evidence their employability](#): their relevant knowledge, experience and skills (from their studies, work and wider life achievements) in a focused and connected way to be able to convince any future employer of their suitability for the role they are applying for.

The Careers Team at RGU supports you in developing your job search strategy to empower you to secure a job. We provide you with the opportunity to engage with employers at Careers Fairs and Employer Events, ensure that you have access to the latest job directories and support you in understanding how you develop your employability skills through on-course presentations and one-to-one appointments with one of our Careers Consultants. Don't forget to keep an eye on our LinkedIn page www.linkedin.com/showcase/robert-gordon-university-employability/ for details of upcoming employer events and careers fairs.

STUDENT PARENTS

This section is relevant for those who are considering bringing dependants to join them during their studies (the ability to bring dependants, and therefore this information, is applicable only to those who are studying a research-based higher level course at SCQF Level 11 or above, or those who are fully sponsored by the UK or other overseas government. Full information on eligibility to bring dependants to the UK is available on the UKVI website). At this time, we know there is limited family accommodation, school spaces and GP services in Aberdeen and therefore we advise significant research should be undertaken by any future students considering bringing dependants

Student Parents & Children on Campus

The University believes that having parenting or caring responsibilities should not be a barrier for success at RGU, which is why we make every effort to accommodate student parents to ensure they can reach their academic potential. We have recently created two policies - [Student Pregnancy and Parenting or Caring Responsibilities Policy](#) and the [Children & Young Persons on Campus Policy](#) - that students need to be aware of to understand their responsibilities.

We understand the childcare challenges that students can face at the start of the semester, especially for those who have moved from a different city or country and who find themselves in an unfamiliar environment, away from their support networks. Guidance for Expectant Mothers and Student Parents can be found on the website: [Expectant and Nursing Mothers, Student Parents](#). The University reserves the right to direct that a child or young person be removed from its premises where the presence of the child or young person is causing an unacceptable health, safety, data protection risk or level of disruption to others. Failure to adhere to our Children and Young Persons on Premises and University policies could result in misconduct proceedings. More information can be found for [Student Parents](#) on the website.

Schooling

All students and staff who have recently arrived or are due to arrive in the UK with dependents need to consider education for their children if they are of UK school age. Primary school generally starts from the age of 5 years and secondary school finishes at a minimum 16 years of age. To register your child for a school place in an Aberdeen school, visit the [Aberdeen City Council](#) website.

ARRIVING IN ABERDEEN

What to Bring (Equipment and Clothing)

Depending on the course that you are studying, there may be specific equipment that you are required to purchase. Ensure you have read all the information that you have received about your course, to ensure that you have adequate resources. Most studies will also require a laptop or tablet device, in order to engage with the Moodle Virtual Learning Environment. Ensure you review our [Pre-Arrival information](#) to ensure you have an adequate device.

With average temperature in Aberdeen during the Autumn months between 5°C and 15°C and winter months between 0°C to 5°C and the likelihood of snow conditions in winter months, it is essential that you prepare for such conditions: i.e., gloves, socks, hats etc. and clothing you can layer to provide additional warmth (t-shirts, shirts, jumpers/hoodies, coats).

Additionally, appropriate clothing, bedding, cutlery, crockery etc can be purchased at shops such as Asda, Tesco, Primark and other supermarkets, as well as the RGU: Union [Go Green](#) shop, where you can find recycled alternatives.

National Health Service and Medical Practice (GP) Registration

It is important that all students register with a GP medical practice after arriving in Aberdeen, so that you can easily make an appointment to be seen by a doctor if you become unwell or require medical assistance. There is currently a shortage of GP appointments in Aberdeen, and you may find it difficult to register with a GP, or you may have to join a waiting list, so it is important you register as soon as you arrive.

The University has a dedicated webpage about [Medical Services](#) which details how students can register with a GP and which GP you should register with, as well as other information relating to costs for international students and how to seek medical attention when required.

All GP surgeries are shut from 18:00 on Friday night until 08:00 on Monday morning. GP surgeries are also closed on public holidays. If you feel you cannot wait for your surgery to open, call NHS 24 on 111.

Council Tax

Council Tax is a compulsory tax and is based on the property rating set by the local council. Full time students living with other full-time students or on their own are exempt from Council tax from the time of their enrolment, however you must apply for exemption. Failure to do so will require you to pay the tax on the property.

If you are living with your family in a private flat/house and your partner is not a full-time student you will be entitled to a 25% discount on the council tax rating for that property. Student exemptions and discounts can be viewed on the [Aberdeen City Council](#) and [Aberdeenshire Council](#) websites. If you live outside these council areas, you will need to apply through the local council for your area.

STUDENT SUCCESS

Understanding Cultural Differences

Sometimes it can feel hard to prepare for and adjust to life in a new country, but there are some excellent resources available to help you. We highly recommend keeping up to date with advice from the British Council through their [Pre-Departure Briefings](#) and also reading thoroughly the guidance from the UK Council of International

Student Affairs in their useful "[Facing Culture Shock](#)". This guidance helps outline some of the most common causes of culture shock on coming to the UK, with tips on ways to help with the adjustment.

Rules and Regulations

The University has its own regulations, which all students must adhere to, and are set out on the University website. The regulations include such matters as academic regulations and university policies. These regulations may differ from what you would have experienced or known so it is important you familiarise yourself with these rules for the greatest chance of academic success. As a student in the UK there are legal regulations you are expected to comply with, these may include requirements in respect of copyright, intellectual property, data protection, and freedom of information etc. These are intended to ensure integrity and authenticity is at the heart of everything we do.

UK Higher Education requires levels of academic and non-academic conduct which all RGU students must adhere to. For example, good non-academic [conduct](#) includes being respectful to others (and the professional and personal boundaries in place), and good academic conduct would include ensuring you avoid things such as collusion, plagiarism, cheating and so on. RGU will provide information about [Academic Regulations](#) and these topics as part of induction, and support will be provided to ensure students understand what is expected of them.

We know that this is a lot of information to digest, so we'll share the key messages again over the coming weeks. Don't forget, you can also join one of our [Pre-Arrival LIVE](#) drop-in sessions. Visit the website for the next date and to register to attend.

We look forward to welcoming you to campus for Welcome Week on Monday 15 January, and starting your studies on Monday 22 January .