



UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH

International College



PRE-DEPARTURE GUIDE
JANUARY 2025

MESSAGE FROM THE UPIC TEAM

Dear Student,




We're looking forward to welcoming you to Plymouth, Britain's Ocean City!

This guide will help to prepare you for your new adventure with UPIC at the University of Plymouth. Once you have settled into life in the UK, we know that you will love Plymouth as much as we do.

Choosing to study in a different country is exciting, but we understand that it can also be daunting, which is why our dedicated Student Experience Team is always on hand with advice and guidance. If you have any queries or concerns, please get in touch. We are happy to help and wish you every success in your studies.

The UPIC Team

P.S Don't forget to follow us on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube!

-  @youpickUPIC
-  @youpickupic
-  University of Plymouth International College

UPIC at Plymouth University, 15 Portland Villas,
Plymouth, PL4 8AA, United Kingdom

KEY CONTACT DETAILS

You can make appointments to discuss study approaches, academic assistance, accommodation, and also personal issues, family matters, and homesickness. We're here to help!

For information on accommodation, arrival planning or the UPIC airport pick-up service, please contact:

UPIC Student Experience

student.experience@upic.plymouth.ac.uk
+44(0) 1752 411114

For help with offer letters, acceptance of offer forms and CAS, please contact:

UPIC Admissions

admissions@upic.plymouth.ac.uk



WELCOME TO UPIC

WHY STUDY HERE?

We can't wait to welcome our next cohort of students to the UK!

Plymouth is a vibrant coastal city in the South West, located in an area of outstanding natural beauty. Offering the best of both city life and the great outdoors, it's the ideal place to live and study. The iconic Dartmoor is just a short drive away, as are the sweeping coastlines of Devon and Cornwall.

We're committed to providing a high-quality educational experience for everyone at UPIC. 85% of our students progress into their chosen degree with confidence, thanks to the support of our dedicated teaching staff. Our lectures, seminars, and fully equipped libraries will give you all the tools you need to succeed.

This is a really exciting time for you, so keep up to date with all the latest events by following us on socials:

 youpickUPIC

 @youpickUPIC

 Scan the QR code below



EXTRA-CURRICULAR

SU SOCIETIES

As a member of the Students' Union (SU) you will have access to over 100 societies. They are a gateway to help you connect with others and find new interests. From amateur dramatics, sports clubs, robotics, creative writing, and sailing – you'll have lots to choose from! It's all about having fun and discovering your passion.

PART-TIME WORK

If you would like to find part-time work during your time at university, the Student Hub is a great place to start. Whether you're looking for an opportunity to earn extra money, an internship to boost your experience, or future employment after graduation – you can visit our online careers service or come along to the Student Hub on campus!

FUN FACTS

- Top 2 UK Young University (Times Higher Education Young University Rankings 2024)
- There are seven beaches within city limits
- Home to the UK's largest aquarium
- 63% cheaper rent than London (Numbeo, 2024)
- Plymouth accounts for 9.2% of England's entire marine industry (DataPlymouth, 2024)
- Over 40% of the city is designated as green space (DataPlymouth, 2024)
- University of Plymouth has achieved TEF Gold Rating (Teaching Excellence Framework 2023)

FAQS

Q. Can I stay with a member of my family in London?

A. No, you must make your way to Plymouth to get settled before the start of Enrolment.

Q. Do I need a proof of address to enrol?

A. Yes, you will need a copy of your tenancy agreement to complete Enrolment.

Please contact us if you need to discuss your personal circumstances: info@upic.plymouth.ac.uk

CHOOSING ACCOMMODATION

It is essential that you live within commutable distance from the University of Plymouth, so make sure you book accommodation that is close by. We may have to stop sponsoring you if you cannot attend face-to-face sessions as required.

Fully online study in the UK is not permitted.

Please note that we are unable to offer accommodation for families.

IMPORTANT DATES

Accommodation starts	Upon arrival	Your tenancy fees are payable to your accommodation provider. If you do not make an accommodation booking, please be prepared to stay in a hotel/guest house while we help you to arrange your accommodation.
Undergraduate/Postgraduate orientation begins	13 th - 17 th January	Attendance is required for all new students.
Undergraduate classes (Foundation and Year 1) start	20 th January	You will receive your timetable during Orientation.
Postgraduate classes start	20 th January	You will receive your timetable during Orientation.
Last day of undergraduate enrolment	31 st January	You cannot start classes if you have not paid and enrolled by this day.
Last day of postgraduate enrolment	20 th January	You cannot start classes if you have not paid and enrolled by this day.
May 2025 semester fees due	21 st March	If you are studying with UPIC in May 2025, your tuition fees must be paid by this date. Failure to do so will result in late payment charges being incurred.
Undergraduate exams	14 th - 18 th April	For more information, email: student.experience@upic.plymouth.ac.uk
End of term	18 th April	
Accommodation finishes	As stated in the contract with your accommodation provider.	



GETTING TO PLYMOUTH

FROM HEATHROW AIRPORT, LONDON

By train...

Take the **rail-air link coach**, which leaves from each terminal and goes directly to Reading railway station, where you can change for a direct train to Plymouth. Trains normally leave from platform 4, but please check this.

You can also take the **Heathrow Express** to London Paddington, where you can change platforms for the train to Plymouth. The Heathrow Express takes 15 minutes – faster than the rail-air link, but more expensive. Tickets to London Paddington are usually £22 for a single and £35 for a return. For full details visit **Heathrowexpress**.

For all train timetables in Britain, visit **National Rail**.

When you arrive, we recommend taking a taxi from Plymouth railway station. This will cost approx. £8 - £15. The taxi rank is outside the station entrance.

Combined ticket...

Great Western Railways (GWR) has introduced a combined ticket, which can be purchased at the same time as your air ticket with airlines including British Airways and Singapore Airlines. This ticket covers the cost of air travel and onward rail travel to Plymouth, which will make things easier for you when you arrive in the UK.

By coach...

There are direct coaches from the central bus station at Heathrow Airport. These usually run around every two hours. Buy your ticket at the office in the bus station. For current fares and schedules visit **National Express**.

When you arrive, we recommend taking a taxi from Plymouth bus station. This will cost approx. £8 - £15.

Private collection...

To book the UPIC Airport pick-up service, please submit a request via the UPIC website:

<https://upic.navitas.com/new/travelling-to-plymouth/booking>

Exeter £90 / car share £60

Bristol £175 / share £110

Heathrow £280 / share £200 each

Gatwick £300 / share £210 each

Once the request has been placed, you will receive a confirmation email.

FROM GATWICK AIRPORT, LONDON

By coach...

Coaches to Heathrow Airport run around every 30 minutes. You can change there for a coach to Plymouth. Buy your ticket at the office in the bus station.

For current fares and schedules, visit **National Express**. When you arrive, we recommend taking a taxi from Plymouth bus station. This will cost approx. £8 - £15

By train, via Reading...

Go to the British Rail desk in the Arrivals Hall and buy your ticket to Plymouth. If you are planning to return to London within four weeks, make sure that you buy a return ticket. This is valid for 28 days and is much cheaper than two single tickets.

Your best option is taking a train from Gatwick Airport to Reading, where you can change for the train to Plymouth.

ARRIVAL AT OTHER AIRPORTS...

Your flight may arrive at Stansted Airport (30 miles north of London), or Bristol Airport (110 miles north-east of Plymouth).

From Stansted, you need to travel to central London by train, then continue your journey from London Paddington or take a coach from Victoria Coach Station. For details of onward travel, visit **Stansted Express**.

From Bristol Airport, you can buy tickets for the Falcon coach which will take you directly from the Airport to Plymouth Coach station: www.stagecoachbus.com/promos-and-offers/south-west/south-west-falcon. For more details, visit **Bristol Airport**.

From Exeter Airport, you can take a bus or taxi to Exeter St. David's railway station and then travel to Plymouth by train. For more details, visit **Exeter Airport**.

For further guidance notes on arrival to the UK, please visit the **UKCISA website**.



ACCOMMODATION

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CLEVER STUDENT LETS (WWW.STAYCLEVER.CO.UK)

Accommodation is an important part of your UPIC experience. We have five styles of room, with something to suit every student and every budget. All UPIC accommodation is within walking distance of the University of Plymouth's city centre campus.

How to apply

- 1) Browse our accommodation options [here](#)
- 2) Fill out the online application form, which will ask you to:
 - Enter your personal details
 - Submit your two preferred styles of room

What happens next?

- 1) We will send you a confirmation email to say we have received your application
- 2) We will send you a formal offer letter with photographs of your room
- 3) You will need to accept or decline the offer*

**If you decline the offer, we will find alternative accommodation for you.*

INSURING YOUR ITEMS

Your personal property is not covered by property insurance. If you have valuable items, you should arrange cover as soon as you settle in.

There are companies that specialise in student insurance cover. You can find the best deals online. Try:

- www.endsleigh.co.uk
- www.cover4students.com
- www.eandl.co.uk/student-insurance

Some banks also provide student insurance. Take a look at:

- www.hsbc.co.uk
- www.barclays.co.uk/insurance
- www.natwest.com/personal/insurance.ashx

PLEASE NOTE

There is a very high demand for student accommodation in Plymouth, so we strongly advise you to apply early.

LIVING IN PLYMOUTH

Everything you need is within walking distance of the University of Plymouth campus – from the multi-million-pound Drake Circus shopping centre, to cafés, clubs, restaurants, cinemas and theatres. The city has its own ferry port, with regular crossings to France and Spain, and is just an hour away from Exeter International Airport. The train station is a two-minute walk from the University, and you can get to London in three hours.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Local buses run regularly. Further information and student bus passes can be obtained from www.plymouthcitybus.co.uk.

For UK and European coach travel, visit www.nationalexpress.com. As a student you can apply for a coach card that gives you up to 30% off coach tickets.

You can also apply for a student railcard. Visit www.16-25railcard.co.uk or purchase at any railway station once you are living at a UK address.

EMPLOYMENT

The majority of international students are allowed to work for a maximum of 20 hours per week during the semester – check the conditions of your visa. During holiday periods you should be able to work full-time. Find more information at www.ukcisa.org.uk

Please note that you should not rely on part-time jobs to fund living expenses or pay tuition fees. Income from part-time jobs should be seen only as a supplement to established sources of funding.

NATIONAL INSURANCE

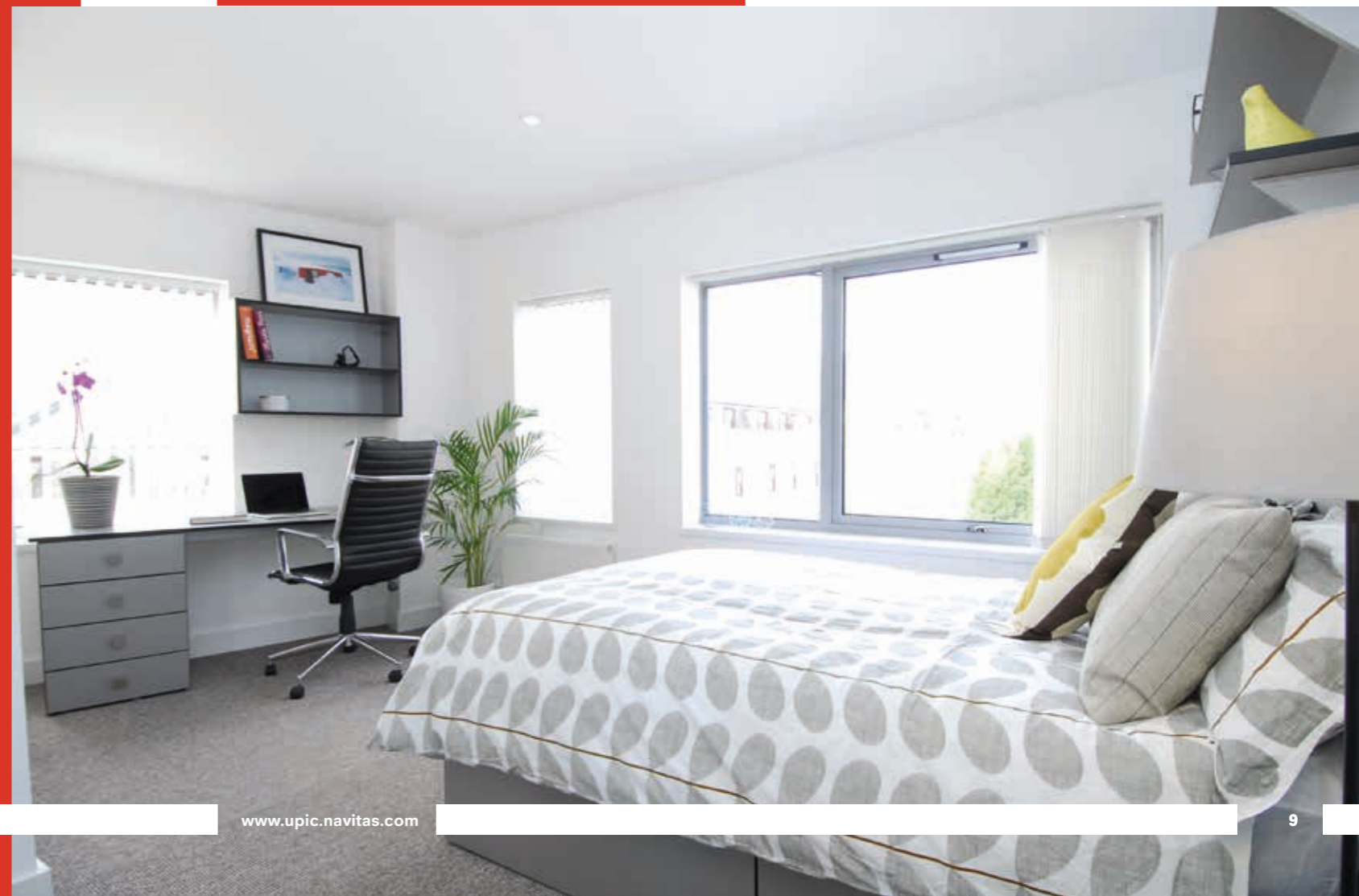
Everyone who works in the UK must pay National Insurance (NI) contributions. If you have a part-time job offer or can provide evidence that you are actively seeking work, you can apply for an NI number. Please contact Student Services for further information once you arrive at UPIC.

MEDICAL INSURANCE

You should ensure that you have medical insurance to cover costs should you fall ill. These costs can be substantial, and include:

- Lost fees if you are unable to complete your course
- Costs of a relative visiting you in the UK if you fall ill
- Cost of returning to your home country for treatment
- Costs of returning home if a relative is ill

Even if you are entitled to free NHS treatment while in the UK, you should still have adequate medical insurance to cover the above. If you have medical insurance in your home country, check whether you can extend it to cover your stay in the UK, and look at options available from UK insurers such as NavInsure. Find out more on our [Insurance Product Information Document](#).





SHOPPING AND FOOD

ONLINE GROCERIES

There are many supermarkets in Plymouth that will deliver groceries directly to you. These range in price, quality and stock – we have listed some links below so you can start investigating. Please bear in mind: you may not get everything that you order; certain items may be out of stock and you could be given a replacement. Supermarkets often make offers to entice you to use the online delivery service, so it is worth doing some research to find the best value for you.

Your options...

Sainsbury's

Sainsbury's is one of the UK's biggest supermarket chains and has a very large choice of food and other essentials. They have a large out-of-town supermarket and a smaller shop in the city centre, very close to the university campus. They also have a smaller convenience store on Mutely Plain, about a 10-minute walk from campus which may be close to your accommodation.

Sainsbury's is not the cheapest but is known for the quality of food. Their delivery service is very popular so you may not get an immediate timeslot and could be asked to wait a few days.

Find out more: <https://www.sainsburys.co.uk/shop/gb/groceries/discoverhome/shopping-online>

You will be asked to sign up and then you can book your slot and start shopping. It is more cost-effective to do a larger shop as you will not get charged for delivery; it is currently a £1 charge for shopping over £40 and free delivery over £100. This may change so keep an eye on it.

Tesco

Tesco is another large UK supermarket chain – also not the cheapest but has a very large range of options. There are a couple of large out-of-town sites and a number of smaller stores – and it is very likely that one will be close to your accommodation.

Their delivery slots are also very popular so you will need to plan ahead as there is currently a 4-day wait for a delivery slot. Tesco currently charges £4.50 for delivery and you must be over 18 to receive the delivery. You will need to register on the website: <https://www.tesco.com/groceries/>

TAKEAWAY OPTIONS

Whilst the staff at UPIC would love to think of you pursuing healthy options and cooking food at home, we are aware that at times nothing but a takeaway will do! Fortunately, there are many options.

Deliveroo, Just Eat and Uber Eats

These three websites/apps will give you access to many different options including well-known takeaway chains such as McDonald's, Pizza Hut and KFC. They are very easy to use but you will need to register your address and phone number.

You will also find a number of local takeaways on here and a wide variety of choices from kebabs and fried chicken to Chinese and Indian meals. You will even be able to order the famous Cornish pasty delivered straight to your door! They all guarantee 'contactless' delivery.

<https://deliveroo.co.uk/>

<https://www.just-eat.co.uk/>

<https://www.ubereats.com/>

Morrisons

Morrisons is a mid-range supermarket and can be a little cheaper than Sainsbury's and Tesco. There are two Morrisons in Plymouth, and both are relatively large.

Their food choices (fresh vegetables and fruit etc.) are good quality and they do have a wide range of choices. Their delivery slots are very popular though and there is currently a long wait, so you will need to plan ahead. Find out more: <https://groceries.morrisons.com/webshop/startWebshop.do>

Waitrose

Waitrose is an upmarket supermarket located in a small town just outside Plymouth. They are quite expensive and have a limited choice compared to Sainsbury's or Tesco, but the food is of the highest quality.

Their delivery slots are very popular and they are often fully booked for days in advance. Find out more: <https://www.waitrose.com/ecom/help-information/customer-service/shoppingonline/deliveries>

Iceland

Iceland is the cheapest option for online delivery and will currently offer free delivery for orders over £35. This store is primarily known for frozen food so if you do book a delivery from Iceland, make sure you have a freezer and space to store it. However, if you want a good range of fresh fruit or vegetables then you may need to look at other options.

Iceland has a constant supply of delivery options and can do next-day delivery should you wish. Find out more: <https://www.iceland.co.uk/book-delivery>

Before arriving in the UK, please make sure you have enough money to pay for shopping until your UK bank account has been activated.

Whatever you decide to do, please be prepared and organise your shopping so you don't run short of supplies. If you would like some local recommendations on takeaways then please ask and we will give you some pointers towards personal favourites.



FINAL STEPS

UNDERSTANDING YOUR E-VISA

The eVisa is just a different way of proving that you have a UK visa. Instead of the physical documents like a BRP, you will now have digital permission.

Your eVisa is linked to your passport. When you travel to the UK, you'll be asked to provide your passport – and the airline or Border Force Control Officer will be able to see on their systems the details of your visa.

Should you have any questions or queries, please do not hesitate to get in contact.

We're here to help you and ensure your arrival process goes smoothly!

Our emergency telephone number is: +44 (0) 7875 372004.

COMPLETE YOUR RIGHT TO STUDY CHECK

You should now have received an e-mail from Adam Smith to complete your right to study check, this needs to be completed once you have arrived in the UK, follow the link in his e-mail and upload a copy of your Passport and Vignette.

CONTACT THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE TEAM

Email student.experience@upic.plymouth.ac.uk to confirm that you have arrived safely in the UK and you are making your journey down to Plymouth. Please remember that our opening hours are 8.30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. If you are set to arrive outside this time, you will need to book a hotel in Plymouth and arrive at the College the next working day.

COLLEGE ADDRESS

15 Portland Villas
Plymouth
Devon
PL4 8AA



**UNIVERSITY OF
PLYMOUTH**
International College


CREATING CHANGE TOGETHER

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