



HOW TO COPE WITH CULTURE SHOCK

As you start to prepare for your studies in Bournemouth, we would encourage you to keep an open mind about what you expect the British people and the UK to be like. If you find that, there are situations, which confuse you in the UK, remember that individuals may be following social rules, which you do not know about. Here are some tips to help you settle in:

- Where you do come across differences between the UK and your own culture, try not to see one as better or worse than the other, but try to think of them as different.
- Ask for help if you need it. Asking for help is seen as a usual action for someone to take and is viewed positively.
- Ask questions about social customs – this is often a good way to find out more about British culture.
- Exercise and maintaining a healthy diet helps to reduce stress. It is important you eat properly as a student and achieve a healthy balance between your studies and your social life.
- Language can be a barrier to people understanding each other clearly, so continually improving your language always helps. Although it can be difficult, allow yourself to see the humour in misunderstandings.
- Make friends with a broad mix of people, both British and International.
- Keep in touch with home and bring familiar things with you, such as photos or keepsakes.

Cultural differences and 'slang'

We will never be able to prepare you for all the cultural differences that you will experience in the UK. The main thing to remember is, if you are unsure of anything do not be afraid to ask. Generally speaking, the UK is a very culturally diverse place. You will find that most UK students are very accepting of those with different cultures and backgrounds to their own, and will be happy to help you adjust to and learn about life the UK.

You may find that UK students speak very fast and use 'slang' words. Sometimes the 'slang' is only known by a particular age group so do ask if you do not understand and offer to teach UK students some of your 'slang' terms; most UK students would be interested to know more about your culture and would be happy to discuss the differences and the similarities!

Language

You will find that British people use a lot of informal or colloquial language. Some slang is recognised nationally while other words and phrases are only used in certain regions. Here are some examples to get you started.

Slang term	What it means
Quid	£1
Grand	£1,000
Alright	How are you? (This term is usually used as a greeting rather than a question!)
Cheers! / Ta	Thanks!
Your round	Your turn to buy drinks (usually in a pub)
See you	Goodbye
Knackered	Extremely tired
Skint	Broke / no money



Some insights into British culture

Although the UK has a very diverse population, the following few insights into British culture may be helpful as you start to settle into UK life.

Punctuality and queuing

The British place a great deal of importance on punctuality, both professionally and socially, so if you are going to be late, or you need to cancel an appointment, you should telephone in advance to explain, if at all possible, and apologise when you arrive.

Queuing (waiting in line) is also considered very important and happens in most places, for example in shops, banks, stations and bus stops. You will probably be amused to see how carefully the order of the queue is respected. If you try to push into the line (queue-jump), you will find that you are suddenly very unpopular!

Please and thank you

British people use “please” and “thank you” very frequently and sometimes in situations where in other countries these words would seem inappropriate. For example, you may find it odd to hear someone thanking a bus driver or, most curiously, saying “sorry” when someone else steps on their foot!

Smoking

Smoking is banned in all places of work including restaurants and bars, shopping centres, trains and buses. When you are in someone’s home, it is polite to ask your host and your companions first whether they mind if you smoke. All AUB Halls of Residence are strictly non-smoking.

Alcohol

Pubs and bars are very popular meeting places, and they will always serve non-alcoholic drinks as well. It is quite usual for people to choose not to drink alcohol in a pub or in someone’s home.

British reserve

Visitors sometimes say they find British people very reserved. For example, you may be surprised by how rarely people start a conversation with strangers in waiting areas and on public transport. You may also find that the distance people like to keep between themselves when they talk to each other is further than seems natural to you. Once you get used to this, you will find these features are usually not due to unfriendliness, but are a way of showing respect for each other’s privacy and personal space.

Weather

British weather is very unpredictable. This is probably why we talk about it so much! It is rarely either extremely cold or extremely hot, but anything in between can be experienced in any season of the year. You may be surprised to find how rapid the changes in weather can be: a warm sunny morning can be followed by a cold, wet and windy afternoon so it is a good idea to bring warm clothing and a waterproof jacket, whatever the season you are travelling in! It can be particularly cool from September to March and if you come from a warm climate, you must be prepared to dress warmly when you arrive.

Rain can be frequent throughout the year, and during the winter months, you can usually expect a couple of days of snowfall and some days with temperatures below freezing.

Average temperatures in degrees Celsius for the Bournemouth area are:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
5	4	7	8	11	20
Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
22	22	19	12	7	6

Clothing

Many people dress casually in the UK, and this is certainly true for students. During the autumn and winter months, you will need a warm coat and a solid pair of shoes or boots that will protect you from the wet and cold weather. There are many large clothes stores in Bournemouth, which sell warm clothes at reasonable prices. You may be surprised to find that even in the winter months, people will dress very lightly when they go out in the evening, especially to a nightclub!

Food

One of the things many International students worry about before they arrive is British food, but we think you will be pleasantly surprised! The United Kingdom is a multicultural society, and food from all over the world is readily available in both supermarkets and restaurants.

In Bournemouth, there are also a number of delicatessens and International food retailers. You will be able to pick up a list of shops selling International foodstuffs when you arrive at the University. Listed below are some traditional or popular English dishes. Pubs often serve this sort of food at reasonable prices.

- Traditional English breakfast comprises sausages, bacon, eggs, tomatoes, baked beans and fried bread (also known as a “fry-up” as it is often all fried in the same pan).
- Fish and chips is fish fried in batter and served with chips along with sides of mushy peas, gravy or curry sauce. A traditional meal usually bought from a take-away shop or “chippy”, which is particularly associated with seaside towns.
- Roast dinner is a traditional Sunday lunch. A whole joint of meat, typically beef, lamb, pork or chicken, is roasted and served with roast potatoes and boiled vegetables. At Christmas, a turkey is usually roasted.
- Sausage and mash is a dish of sausages, usually made from pork, served with mashed potato and gravy.
- Baked beans on toast is not really traditional, though it is very popular. It is often associated with students as it is a very cheap meal. Baked beans are haricot beans cooked in tomato sauce and bought in a can ready to eat.
- Apple pie and custard is a traditional pie made with thick pastry and served with custard, a hot sauce made from milk, eggs and sugar.

Mealtimes

Breakfast is usually eaten at home before travelling to work or university. This usually consists of cereal with milk, or toast (most people do not eat a full English breakfast every day!). Lunch is usually taken between 12pm (noon) and 2pm and is often a quick sandwich or another small snack. The main meal of the day, dinner, is eaten in the evening between 6pm and 8pm.

Launderettes

On-site launderette facilities are available for students living in University accommodation. Students living in private accommodation will usually find that a machine for washing clothes is provided.

If it is not, local launderettes are available for washing and drying clothes. These are normally coin operated and the facilities are self-service, but it is usually also possible to arrange for your washing to be processed by the member of staff on duty, for an additional charge. This is called a service wash. Check www.yell.com for your nearest launderette.

Postal services

Bournemouth town centre post office is on 9 – 13 Old Christchurch Road. All post-boxes are painted bright red and display the days and times of collection on them. Stamps can be bought at post offices, newsagents and supermarkets. Mail within the UK can be sent by either first or second class. First class aims to deliver the next working day within the UK, whereas second class takes approximately two to three working days. We recommend you send valuables or gifts using the Recorded Delivery and Special Delivery Services, which are available at an extra charge.

Visit www.royalmail.com for details on postal costs, customs documents and sending parcels overseas.

Post offices also offer numerous other services including sending money abroad and currency exchange.

