

Welcome Guide

2025–2026



Top tips for
International Students

Student
Services



International Student Support



Version 01/26

Contents

Welcome to UWS.....	3
5 things to do in your first week.....	4
Top tips for studying at UWS.....	7
5 things to do in your first month.....	9
5 things to do in your first term	11
Additional Useful Information	13
Ayr Campus	14
Lanarkshire Campus.....	16
London Campus.....	18
Paisley Campus	20
Contact details.....	22
Term dates	23

The International Student Support Team welcomes you to UWS!

We hope that this guide provides you with some useful information for settling in.

The International Student Support Team is here to support you and ensure that you get the most out of your student experience. The team offer advice and guidance in a number of areas that may be relevant to you during your studies, including visa support and advice on work rights and travel during your studies. You can find out more on the [UWS website](#).



5 things to do in your first week at UWS

1) Join in the student induction events

As a new student, there is a lot of information to take on board. To help you settle in and learn about UWS support services, come along to one of our induction sessions on campus. Dates and times of sessions are on the **International Student section of the Student Enrolment and Induction webpage**.

It may take time to settle in, especially if this is your first visit to the UK, and you will probably experience some aspects of 'culture shock' – the impact of moving from a familiar culture into an unfamiliar one. Culture shock can have a significant effect on your emotions. For further information see the **UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) website**.

International students at UWS have access to the full range of counselling services. Counsellors aim to encourage academic success and to assist students to increase their enjoyment of study and university life, by helping to reduce the effects of stress and anxiety that may be caused by issues like homesickness & adjustment to university life. For further information visit the **UWS Counselling and Wellbeing webpage**

There may also be differences in the laws governing your home country compared to the laws in the UK. See the **UK government website** for information on UK law. See the **Scottish Law Online site** for information on Scots law.

2) Provide your right to study documents and register at the UKVI checkpoint

The University is required by UK Visas & Immigration (UKVI) to conduct a right to study check on all student visa holders to demonstrate that you have the right to study in the UK.

UWS must keep a copy of these documents and check regularly for any updates on your immigration status.

Students are required to register attendance with Student Administration twice (2 times) each academic session. You will receive this information by email.

You can check this information on the [**Student Records webpage**](#).

Once your visa has been granted by UKVI, you will be able to complete online enrolment prior to your passport/ visa being checked.

Protect Your Immigration Status as a UWS Student Visa Holder

Your student immigration permission is subject to you meeting Home Office requirements in relation to your studies. It is therefore important that you fully engage with your studies, always pay your tuition fees on time, limit travel to official holiday periods only and limit working hours to 20 hours per week in term time. If you fall behind with your studies or your fee payments, you risk being withdrawn from your course.

3) Open a UK Bank Account

To open a bank account, you will need your passport or identity card and a 'bank letter' from UWS. If you are studying at a Scottish campus, you can request this letter through the [**Hub portal**](#). Once you are logged into the portal, use the search facility to search for 'bank letter' then complete the online form and submit your request. London campus students should complete the London [**Hub Enquiry Form in the Hub portal**](#) for this letter. Basic bank accounts are easier to open than other types of account.

Tuition fees and student accommodation fees cannot be paid in cash. Most large payments in the UK are made electronically, either by bank transfer or debit/credit card. Please do not travel to the the UK with large sums of cash.

You will also need a debit/credit card to purchase food/drink on campus from any of the catering outlets or vending machines.

There are many [**fully online or app-based bank accounts**](#).

Check [**Unidays**](#) and [**Student Beans**](#) for student discounts on a range of goods and services. Check if you qualify for [**discounted rail travel**](#) with the Young Persons Railcard. Full time mature students over the age of 26 can also apply for this railcard. The railcard costs £35 per year and can cut rail travel costs by up to 1/3. Note however that [**restrictions do apply**](#) see the website for full details.

4) Register with a Doctor (GP)

It is important that you register with a local doctor as soon as possible – don't wait until you need medical treatment. Students living in Scotland can find details of local doctors' surgeries and other health services on the **NHS Inform website**. Students living in England can find a GP on the **NHS website**.

5) Meet other students

To meet up with other students, check out the induction events which are listed on the **International Student Support Team SharePoint events page**. (note that you need to be logged in to your UWS Microsoft 365 account to view our SharePoint site and you may need to amend the date range to see all upcoming sessions). Visit **The Union** for information on social events. Connect with other UWS international students through the **Students' Union Facebook page**.

If English is not your first language, you'll have a lot of fun learning new words as you meet new people. Another way of practising your English is listening to **podcasts by the British Council**.

Knowing how to act appropriately in social situations can be difficult, especially when you are in a new country.

The UK is famous for its strict etiquette rules – See the **Total Student Care's guide** to etiquette and customs for international students in the UK.

Consent

Attitudes towards relationships in the UK might be quite different to those in your home country. The University expects high standards of behaviour and you should abide by policy even if this is different in your country as cultural difference will not prevent disciplinary action. UWS encourages a culture which is respectful, promotes equality and does not tolerate violence or related misconduct. For further details please go to the **UWS webpage on consent**. For information on sexual health, students in Scotland can see the **NHS Inform website**. Also see the **Students' Union website for information on sexual health**. Students in England can access sexual health information on the **NHS website**.

Family

If you have dependants with you in the UK, see the **UKCISA website** for useful information including schooling for children. Contact the local authority for your area for further advice.

See the **UWS Funding and Advice Team SharePoint page** for information on support towards the cost of childcare (note that you need to be logged in to your UWS Microsoft 365 account to view our SharePoint site).

Top Tips for Studying at UWS

Digital Resources

You will need a digital device such as a laptop or tablet plus headphones or earbuds for your academic study in the UK and it is expected that you have this accessible from the first day of teaching. (A mobile phone is not suitable to work/study from).

You should have plug and power adaptors in order to use British outlets. The UK uses type G plugs and 230 volts at 50 hertz.

In order to access UWS digital systems securely you are required to use a multi-factor authentication system (MFA) which requires you to identify yourself by more than a username and password. For details on how this works and resetting of passwords, see the **UWS website**.

Remember to access your UWS email account!

UWS provides free email accounts to all students and there are many computer labs where the internet can be accessed. Emails from personal email accounts may get blocked so always use your student Banner email address. If you have problems logging on, contact the IT and Digital Services team on your campus or call 0141 848 3999. You can access the internet wherever you are by using a Wi-Fi finder app. You can find PCs on any UWS Scottish campus through the UWS App. On the London campus, you can borrow a laptop from the laptop lockers by scanning your student ID on the panel.

Travel to campus

For information on public transport in the UK, see the **Traveline website**.

If you are under 22 years old and living in Scotland for more than 6 months of the year, you can **apply for a free bus pass**. You can use this to travel on most bus services in Scotland for free.

London campus students – see page 18 of this guide for information on the Oyster Card.

Council Tax

Council Tax is set by local authorities to pay for local services they provide, such as schools, roads and refuse collection. You can **apply for a council tax exemption** if you are a full-time student and you are living on your own or with other students.

Insuring your personal belongings

Insuring your personal belongings (this can include valuables like laptops/PCs and mobile phones/tablets) against theft, loss and damage (including due to accidental fire damage) is recommended. To find out more, see the **Save the Student webpage** which explains how Contents insurance works and where you can arrange affordable insurance cover.

Stay Safe at University and avoid fraud or money scams!

Be vigilant about being targeted by fraudsters. Unfortunately, some criminals specifically target international students telephoning them and pretending to be from a legitimate organisation such as UKVI or an education agent. They may demand money (calling it a fine for an immigration problem that doesn't exist) and claim that if you do not pay your visa will be cancelled!

Tips to stay safe

- Never share your bank account or debit/credit card details or passwords with anyone.
- Never email your credit or debit card details to anyone, even the University.
- Be wary of offers of easy money. If it sounds too good to be true, then it probably is.
- Beware of adverts and emails with bad spelling and grammar.
- Don't allow someone that you do not know or trust to transfer money through your bank account. If in doubt, end the call.
- If you receive suspicious texts, do not reply or click any links.

Where to get help if you are a victim of fraud:

Action Fraud Support

Victim Support

For Information for international students see the **UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) website** (Frauds and Scams).

5 things to do in your first month at UWS

1) Apply for a National Insurance Number

If you wish to work in the UK, you need to apply for a National Insurance number for UK tax purposes. Apply on the [UK government website](#).

2) Join a society or team

The UWS Student Union runs a wide variety of societies and sporting teams open to all students. Check the [Student Union website](#) for further information. If you don't see anything you like, you can always set up your own society! See the [UWS website](#) for information on sport and fitness facilities and also the [Team UWS Facebook page](#) for information on how you can get involved.

3) Find a place of worship

There are many places of worship in the UK, representing all religions, and the different branches of Christianity. Search online for places of worship close to your campus/accommodation. The websites below may also help you find a place of worship. For information on local churches or UWS student worship groups, see the notice boards in the University and Students' Union, or visit the [University's Multifaith Chaplaincy webpage](#).

The following websites may help you find a place of worship:

[Hinduism](#), [Islam](#), [Judaism](#) and [Sikhism](#)



4) Take part in our events

Our events are your chance to meet the International Student Support team and other UWS international students.

To find out what's happening, see the **International Student Support team events calendar** (note that you must sign in to your UWS Microsoft 365 account to access the SharePoint events page and that you may need to amend the date range to see all upcoming events). All social events and information sessions are listed in the events calendar and are shared on our social media channels. See the end of this guide for links to the International Student Support team social media accounts.

5) Get to know UWS Student Support Services

There are many sources of help at UWS and most teams can see you in person or by online video call.

The Academic Skills Team, Careers, Counselling, Disability, Funding & Advice teams offer support to all UWS students. You can also speak to your personal tutor, staff at the Students' Union and the Residence Life team in University accommodation.

There is a range of **self-help resources** online.

Now is a good time to familiarise yourself with the various UWS and Students' Union social media accounts. The main ones are:



[Your Union UWS Facebook](#)



[UWS Facebook](#)



[UWS X \(Twitter\)](#)



[UWS Instagram](#)

5 things to do in your first term at UWS

1) Go on a day trip with friends

Most cities have a local **tourist information centre** where you can get ideas on where to visit or what to do at the weekend and in the holidays. You can either go on an organised tour or arrange your travel independently.

Scottish campus students – see the **International Student Support team events calendar** (note that you must sign in to your UWS Microsoft 365 account to access the SharePoint events page and that you may need to amend the date range to see all upcoming events) for details of the next **Discover Scotland** trips organised by the International Student Support team. There is usually one day trip each term as well as occasional local visits/walks.

2) Enhance your academic skills

You will find a wide range of resources on the **Academic Skills website**, including support with reading skills, critical thinking, exams and revision, giving presentations, referencing, and writing essays, reports and dissertations. This is also where you can book an appointment with an Academic Skills Adviser and to attend workshops. (Log in with your student email address.)

The teaching styles, ways of learning, assessment methods and expectations universities in the UK have of their students may be very different to what you are familiar with in your home country. Adapting to these new ways of doing things may require you to approach your studies in a very different way. See the **UKCISA Study skills** for success web page for study tips and information on UK academic culture. If you need help with study methods, speak to your course supervisor or personal tutor in your School, or an Academic Skills Adviser

TextAid is a free to use reading, writing and studying literacy tool. TextAid can help to boost your academic skills and independent learning at UWS. For more information on this, and other useful study tools, visit the **Digital Resources** page of the Academic Skills website.

Being successful and gaining the qualification that you are studying for requires organisation and commitment. Your fees cover the cost of your tuition and does not guarantee that you will gain the qualification you are studying for. Please make use of the Academic Skills support and resources to help you succeed!

3) Get to know the UK

You have a great opportunity to travel around the UK, Europe or return home during the university holiday. Plan travel for the holiday period and do not travel during term time. Student visa holders should read our Travel Guide. You can access the **Travel Guide in the International Student Support team SharePoint site** (note that you must log in to your UWS Microsoft 365 account to access the SharePoint site). The travel guide is in the **Resources for UWS students** section under the **'Term Dates and Travel Guides'** heading.

UWS subscribes to the **HOST UK** programme. HOST UK is an organisation that links international students at UK universities with friendly approved hosts who offer an invitation to their home for a day, a weekend, or at Christmas.

This is a unique opportunity to experience real life in Britain and students who have visits agree that it is one of their best experiences in the UK.

For further information, see the **International Student Support team SharePoint site** (note that you must log in to your UWS Microsoft 365 account to access the SharePoint site).

For information and ideas on what to do and see in the UK, see the **Visit Britain Tourist Information** website. Search online for **attractions in London**.

Use review sites such as **Trip Adviser** to find out about popular visitor attractions close to your campus. See the **Scotland Welcomes You website** for information on money saving and discount passes for attractions and travel in Scotland.

4) Think about your future career

The UWS Careers Team is here to support you with advice and support on career topics such as career planning, recruitment processes, job searching and volunteering.

Visit the **Careers Service Website** for a range of careers resources, employer videos, interactive tests and activities to help you prepare for graduate employment. The website has a **Careers Guide for International Students** with specific information and advice. This is also where you can book an appointment with a Careers Adviser or to attend Careers Workshops and Events. (Log in with your student email address).

5) Look for volunteering opportunities

Volunteering is a great way to gain valuable experience, meet new people and enhance your CV.

An international student who is permitted to work in the UK, can do voluntary work, but this work and any paid work must not exceed the total number of hours you can work during term time. For example, if you are permitted to work 20 hours a week during term-time and you have a paid job working 15 hours a week, you can then do up to 5 hours of voluntary work per week. If you are not permitted to work, you cannot do voluntary work.

For further information visit: [**Volunteer Rights & Worker Rights**](#).

Volunteering can be recognised by the university through the **UWS Volunteer Recognition Award**. For more information about this, and links to help you find volunteering opportunities, visit the Volunteer Recognition Award web page on the Careers Service Website. (Log in with your student email address).



Podcasts

Hear International Student Adviser Sarah speaking about **the work the International Student Support team do** to support our students.

Hear International Student Adviser Ana speaking about **working in the UK during your studies**.

Additional Useful Information

For information and advice on accommodation options, see the **UWS website**, the **UWS Student Union Accommodation Advice webpage** and the **International Student Support Team SharePoint page**. From the International Student Support Team SharePoint page, scroll to the **Resources for UWS Students** section and under the heading '**Arriving in the UK**' you can access the **Accommodation: Private Rental Guide** and the **Accommodation for UWS Students** guide.

It's also worth chatting to other students in your cohort and asking if they have any suggestions of where to look for a place to stay.

See the **Funding & Advice team SharePoint page** for advice and guidance to help you manage your money (note that you must sign in to your UWS Microsoft 365 account to access the SharePoint site).

Ayr Campus

Catering

Catering services operate from the Atrium and the Student Union as well as vending machines in the Atrium.

Entertainment

The **Astoria cinema** is a short walk from the campus. See the website for advance bookings and programme information.

The **Gaiety Theatre** is a multi-purpose venue with a range of performances including, plays, live music and the traditional pantomime at Christmas time. The popular restaurant, Stage Door Cafe, is on site. Local newspapers will have details of local events and **'The List'** has details of what's on throughout the UK.

Glasgow city centre is 1 hour from Ayr by train and is one of the most vibrant and popular cities in the UK. There is a lot to do and see – cultural events, museums, art galleries, parks, monuments, live music, cinema, theatre and a lively night life. See the **[Visit Glasgow website](#)** for information on attractions and events in Glasgow.

Shopping

Ayr town centre has a wide range of shops including specialist independent stores and national retailers. **Ayr Central** is a covered shopping area adjacent to the train station. There are also shops in the town centre.

Every Sunday a large well established **market** is held at Ayr Racecourse. As well as the traditional market, there is also a large 'Car Boot Sale' where second hand goods are sold.

Food Shopping

For general food shopping, the nearest supermarkets are 'Morrisons' adjacent to the train station and 'Tesco' on Whitellets Road. Budget supermarkets 'Lidl', 'Aldi' and the mainly frozen food stores 'Farmfoods' and 'Iceland' are also close to the campus. The larger supermarkets may offer a delivery service in your area – check online.

A **'Farmers Market'** is held on the first Saturday of each month (except January) at the bottom of the High Street. Local businesses sell their produce including a variety of good quality organic food. Expect to pay more for some items.

Most supermarkets sell halal, vegetarian and vegan food. There are a number of local butchers and bakers selling fresh produce. Local supermarkets and shops sell some international food items. Search online for specialist stores.

Sport & Fitness

The **Students' Union** runs a wide variety of sporting clubs open to all students. Check at the Students' Union or email sp@sauws.org.uk for an up to date list of teams and societies. There is a fitness suite on Ayr Campus in room 2.090 just off the atrium. Further information is available online including membership, charges and opening times.

The **Citadel Leisure Centre** on South Harbour Street, KA7 1JB in the seafront area has a swimming pool, spa facilities and also offers a range of indoor sports. The HUB Ayr promotes active travel – email: activetravelhubayr@gmail.com for information.



Lanarkshire Campus

Catering

Lanarkshire campus has numerous catering outlets, there are also vending machines available for drinks and snacks 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Entertainment

There is a range of entertainment options in various towns close to Lanarkshire campus and in nearby Glasgow. Check with other students on what the popular options are locally. The [Students' Union](#) runs events for all students on campus.

[Hamilton Park Racecourse](#) (Bothwell Road ML3 0DW) hosts regular racing events throughout the season and is good for a day out. Strathclyde Country Park offers a range of activities including sailing, walking, cycling and running. Located within Strathclyde Park is [M&D's Theme Park](#) with lots of rides and attractions.

Glasgow city centre can be reached by public transport from the Lanarkshire area and is one of the most vibrant and popular cities in the UK. There is a lot to do and see – cultural events, museums, art galleries, parks, monuments, live music, cinema, theatre and a lively night life. See the [Visit Glasgow website](#) for information on attractions and events in Glasgow.

Shopping

There are many shopping areas in Lanarkshire and in Glasgow. [The Regent Shopping Centre](#) (ML3 7DZ) has many high street chain stores and Quarry Street has independent shops. The town square shopping area and the Douglas Park Retail Park have many large stores as well as restaurants and leisure facilities.

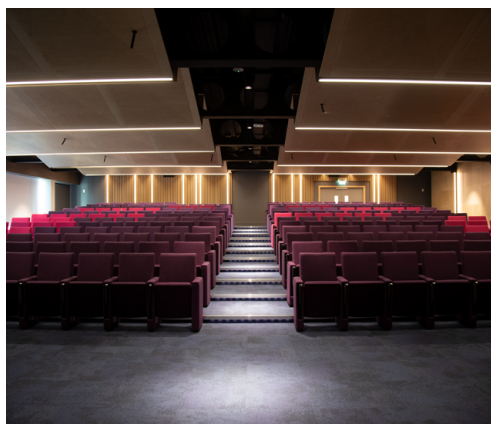
Food Shopping

For general food shopping, there are many supermarkets in the Lanarkshire and Glasgow areas including Asda, Morrisons, Sainsbury's and Tesco. Search online for stores near your accommodation. Large supermarkets may offer a delivery service in your area – check online. Most supermarkets sell halal, vegetarian and vegan food. There are a number of local butchers and bakers selling fresh produce. Local supermarkets and shops sell some international food items. Search online for details of specialist stores.

Sport & Fitness

The Students' Union runs a wide variety of sporting clubs open to all students. Check at the Students' Union building or email sp@sauws.org.uk for an up to date list of teams and societies. Lanarkshire campus has a fitness studio. For further information on [UWS Lanarkshire Campus Gym](#).

Hamilton Water Palace has a 25m swimming pool, fitness studio and health suite plus a variety of fitness classes are run at the centre. There are outdoor 5-a-side football pitches at **Hamilton Palace Sports Ground** (Motehill ML3 6BY).



London Campus

For comprehensive information on entertainment, eating out, sport and much more, see the [London Campus website](#) including the [Student Life in London](#) page.

If you live in a London borough, see the [Transport for London](#) website for information on the student Oyster card for discounted travel in London.

Catering

There are many restaurants, cafes and coffee shops close to London Campus with plenty of places to get a wide range of high-quality food and refreshment.

Entertainment

There are many small, independent music venues close to the campus as well as much larger venues such as the O2 Arena. London is also home to five permanent symphony orchestras and many iconic classical music venues such as the Royal Albert Hall, Wigmore Hall and the Royal Opera House.

If you enjoy eating out, Covent Garden and Soho are the place to go if you like a wide range of different types of food. From pop-up BBQ and burger stalls, to Japanese, Spanish and Peruvian restaurants, there is something for everyone. Brick Lane is the number one destination for South Asian food, with curry houses and street food stalls from Bangladesh, India and beyond.

Shopping

There are loads of fantastic places to go shopping in London including Oxford Street, Carnaby Street, Covent Garden, Harrods department store and Westfield shopping centre. For places to get student discounts, check out [Student Beans website](#)

Food Shopping

There are a number of small independent shops and supermarkets including Nisa and Tesco Express within a short walk of the campus so you will never be too far from everything you need to feel at home.

Sport & Fitness

London campus features a wealth of calming spaces, including a water garden and lake.

You can also take advantage of the [on-site gym](#) or grab a hire bike and cycle around London.



Paisley Campus

Catering

Catering facilities can be found in the Hub and at the Atrium and offer a variety of hot and cold food. The campus is only a 5 minute walk to the town centre which also has a wide choice of cafes, restaurant and takeaways. There are vending machines throughout the campus including at the Neuk, selling drinks and snacks.

Entertainment

The **Students' Union** runs a wide variety of events for all students on campus – see the website or visit the Student Union building on Storie Street.

The **'Showcase'** multi-screen cinema complex is located at Phoenix Retail Park, Linwood Road, Paisley. See the website for advance bookings and programme information. Buses leave from Paisley Cross for Linwood Road. There are also multi-screen cinemas at Xsite (Braehead) and Silverburn shopping centres. Paisley Arts Centre in New Street, PA1 1EZ and Paisley Town Hall, in Abbey Close PA1 1JF host musical and theatrical events. For tickets and information see **What's On Renfrewshire**. Local newspapers will have details of local events and **'The List'** has details of what's on throughout the UK.

Paisley also has a variety of pubs and clubs – check with other students which ones are popular. Glasgow city centre is 10 minutes by train and is one of the most vibrant and popular cities in the UK. There is a lot to do and see – cultural events, museums, art galleries, parks, monuments, live music, cinema, theatre and a lively night life. See the **Visit Glasgow website** for information on attractions and events in Glasgow.

Shopping

See the **Paisley Shopping Centre** and the **Piazza Shopping Centre** for more details. A greater selection of stores can be found nearby at **Braehead Shopping Centre** and **Silverburn Shopping Centre**. Buses run from Paisley to Braehead and Silverburn regularly throughout the day. Alternatively, travel into Glasgow city centre by train or bus.

Food Shopping

The nearest supermarkets to UWS student accommodation are 'Morrisons' at Anchor Mills or Falside Road, 'Tesco' at East Lane and 'Asda' at Phoenix Retail Park on Linwood Road. Budget supermarket 'Aldi' is also on Neilston Road and on Ferguslie Main Road and 'Lidl' is located on Renfrew Road. These supermarkets are located on bus routes with buses leaving from Paisley town centre. Tesco and Asda may offer a delivery service to your area – check online.

A 'Farmers Market' is held on the second and the last Saturday of each month in Paisley Town Centre. Local businesses sell their produce including a variety of good quality organic food. Expect to pay more for some items. Local supermarkets and shops sell some international food items. Search online for details of specialist stores.

Sport & Fitness

The **Students' Union** runs a wide variety of sporting clubs open to all students. Check at the Students' Union building in Storie Street or email sp@sauws.org.uk for an up to date list of teams and societies. The gym on level 3 of the Students' Union building is free to all UWS students and has a wide range of equipment.

The **Lagoon Leisure Centre**, 11 Christie Street, PA1 1NB has a swimming pool and a fitness suite. Various fitness classes are also held there.

Pure Gym offer gym access and fitness classes and no contract membership. The gym is located a 15 min walk from campus on Renfrew Road PA3 4BX.



Contact the Student Hub Team

If you require support, see the [**Hub team webpage**](#) for up to date contact details and opening hours.

Contact the International Student Support Team

See the [**UWS website**](#) for information on how the team can support you.

Enrolled students can access the [**International Student Support team SharePoint page**](#) for information on how to get in touch with us (note that you must sign in to your UWS Microsoft 365 account to access our SharePoint site).

Students who are in the UK can visit the Student Hub in person on campus to access support.

Follow us on social media: [**X**](#) & [**Instagram**](#)

In the event of any immediate emergency, the Emergency services (the Police, Fire Brigade and Ambulance) can be reached by phoning 999. (After dialling 999, if you are in too much danger to speak, dial 55).

Contact the Police by dialling 101 for any non-emergency matter.

Term Dates 2025/2026

Term 1

Monday 8 September – Friday 19 December 2025

Official Vacation Period

Saturday 20 December 2025 – Sunday 11 January 2026

Term 2

Monday 12 January – Friday 3 April 2026

Official Vacation Period

Monday 6 April – Friday 10 April 2026

Term 2 Continues

Monday 13 April – Friday 8 May 2026

Term 3

Monday 11 May – Friday 21 August 2026





Student
Services



International Student Support