



**International
House**
Aberdeen

STUDENT HANDBOOK



Welcome to International House Aberdeen. We hope that you have a great time with us. The Student Handbook should answer all your questions about your studies, homestay accommodation and Aberdeen.

If you need any more information, please ask a teacher or the office staff. We are always here to help!

WELCOME

مرحبا

欢迎

Vítáme tě

Velkommen

Welkom

Bienvenue

Willkommen

Καλώς ορίσατε

Shalom

Benvenuto

ようこそ

환영합니다

Bem-vindo

Bienvenido

Välkommen

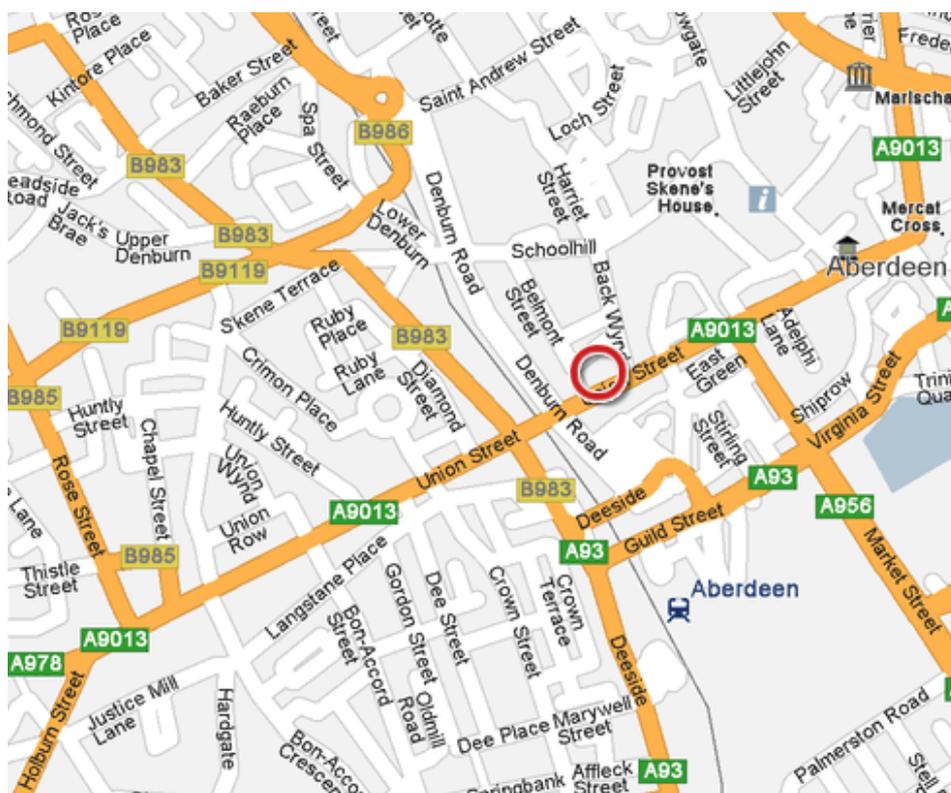
Hoşgeldiniz

How to get to International House Aberdeen

Our address is:
International House Aberdeen
130 Union Street
Aberdeen
AB10 1JJ

Telephone Number: 01224 634006

We are located on the corner of Union Street and Belmont Street across the road from Primark and above The Money Shop.



The nearest airports are Aberdeen Airport (30 minutes to Aberdeen City Centre by bus) and Edinburgh Airport (2.5 hours to Aberdeen City Centre by train).

The train and bus stations are on Guild Street, a 5-minute walk from International House Aberdeen.

The nearest bus stops to the school are on Union Street at the front door of the school! All bus services go through the city centre.

General information about the school

School hours



The school is open from 9.00 until 5pm Monday to Friday. Lessons start at 9.30 so please don't be late as this can disturb other students in your class.

On your first day you will have an assessment test to find out which is the best class for you. You will get information about the course and one of the staff will show you around the building.

Class times / changes

Please don't be late for your class. If you are more than 15 minutes late please wait until the break and then join the class.

If you think you need to change your class (if you find it too easy or hard) please speak to your teacher first. Don't do this on the first day - make sure you give yourself time to settle in first.

Teachers

All our teachers are professionally trained – to find out more about them please see the website and the notice board in reception.

Extending your course

All courses run for a minimum of 2 weeks. If you would like to stay longer please see the office staff.

Leaving early

If you intend to stop your course please tell the office staff as soon as possible. You will not receive a refund of your course fees if you leave early.

Completing your course

When you finish your course you will receive an International House Aberdeen certificate. You will also get a questionnaire to fill in about your course and the school.

Our course syllabuses

If you want to know more information about our courses then please see your teacher or Director of Studies.



Course books

Your course book(s) are included in your course fee if you study 15 hours or more.

Homework

This is an important part of your course which helps to improve your English. If you are unable to complete it, please get the answers from another student in your own time instead of doing it during the class.



Self-study

We have great online resources for you to use to practise your English such as exam practice, grammar and pronunciation exercises in our computer suite. You can also use self-study books and borrow graded readers from our library. The computer suite is next to the reception.

Exams

If you want to take an exam please speak to your class teacher or one of the Directors of Studies for advice and information.

Internet/email

The computer suite is free for you to use outwith lesson times. If there are others waiting please limit your session to 15 minutes to give others a chance to use the computers.



Food and drink

There are lots of cafés and supermarkets for buying lunch near the school. We can show you where you can buy food on your first day.



Social programme

The activities for the week are advertised around the school and on our Facebook page. Please join in – it really helps your English! If you want to take part in an activity, just write your name on the list at Reception. If you would like to recommend an activity, please tell our Social Activities Coordinator.

Complaints about your course, teachers or administration

If you want to complain please speak to your teacher or one of the Directors of Studies (more details at end of handbook).



Problems and advice

If you would like advice about living in Aberdeen or are having personal difficulties and need someone to talk to, then please see our Welfare Officer. There are 2 weekly meetings in reception – please see the notice board for days and times.

International Student card (ISIC)

If you are studying for a minimum of 15 hours per week and are at International House Aberdeen for at least 12 weeks, you can buy an NUS ISIC Extra card. This international student's card costs only £12.99 and can give you discounts such as on entertainment and travel (**but not on local buses**). Please ask the reception for a student card letter then buy your card from STA Travel, 30 Upperkirkgate, Aberdeen.

Smoking

The school is a non-smoking building. If you do smoke you can use the street in front of the school.



Fire

If you see or think there is fire then press the alarm. There is one on each landing. When you hear the alarm you must leave the building immediately by the front entrance. Do not stop to collect coats, bags or books. Students should meet at the assembly point on the corner of Union Street and Belmont Street. Fire drills are carried out regularly.

Administration

Visas

If you need to extend or change your visa, please see the Office Manager in Reception. Make sure you apply for a visa extension in plenty of time. Applications can take up to 8 weeks.



Registering with the police

Some nationalities will need to register with the police when they arrive in the UK. You

only have to register if the sticker in your passport says this. You must register within 7 days of arriving in the UK. The staff at the station will help you complete the forms and give you a registration certificate. You will need to keep this safe. You should phone the Police Station first on 01224 306105 to make an appointment. You will need to bring your passport, 1 passport photo, £34 in cash and a letter of confirmation. Please ask at reception for this letter. If any of your details change you must tell the police within 7 days.

You must register at the Nationality Department, Police Headquarters, Queen Street, Aberdeen, AB10 1ZA.

Opening a bank account

You will need to be studying for several months to be able to open a bank account in this country. Ask at reception for a special letter for the bank. This will tell them about your course, how long you are studying at International House Aberdeen, your address here in Aberdeen and your home address. You will also need your passport. You will probably not get a credit card.

Getting a bus card



You can buy weekly bus cards from the bus driver. They cost £14 per week. You can get these at First Travel Centre, 47 Union Street, Aberdeen.

Personal and medical insurance

You should have personal and medical insurance. If you do not have medical insurance please ask at reception for details of a company who specialise in student insurance. If you do not have the necessary personal and medical insurance, medical treatment can be very expensive in the UK. This will also cover you for any cancellation costs.

Doctor

Treatment should be free for EEA students who have a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). You can get this from your local health authority before leaving your country. Non EU students will have to pay for the treatment. If you have medical insurance you will be able to claim back the cost through your insurance company.

Please look at this website for more information about healthcare in Britain and how to register with a local doctor: <http://www.foreignstudents.com/student-guide/health/>

If you feel ill when the doctor's surgery is closed and you cannot wait until the next day, phone NHS24 on 08454 242424. If you think someone's life is in danger then you should call 999.

Dentist

Most dental practices in Aberdeen will take only private patients. If you need a dentist you can phone GDens on 01224 558140 or 0845 4564 990. You will need to pay for treatment at the time. If you have medical insurance you will be able to claim back the cost through your insurance company.

School rules

1. No smoking in the school.
2. Please hang up your coats on the coats hooks in the classrooms. Do not put them on chairs – this can be dangerous if the students need to leave quickly in a fire.
3. Classes start at 9.30am. If you are more than 15 minutes late, please wait until the break before joining the class.
4. If you cannot come to school for any reason (for example, you are ill) you must phone the school to let us know. It is school policy to record your attendance at every class (please see important note below*).
5. Please take part in all classroom activities and remember to do your homework.
6. Please do not eat in the classrooms. You may drink from a bottle. Please do not bring cups into class.
7. Please do not chew gum in school.
8. Please turn off your mobile during class time.
9. Please respect your fellow students. Always speak English in public situations.

* Important

Please note that the school must inform the UK authorities if you do not meet the conditions of your entry clearance. This includes:

- students whose attendance is less than 70% of classes
- students who do not arrive for the start of their course
- students who leave before the end of their course (unless there is an agreement that you will attend a course with another accredited provider)

Tier 4 visa students: if you miss 10 consecutive classes of your course without good reason the school will automatically inform the UK Border Agency.

Abusive behaviour policy

The following are not tolerated at International House Aberdeen (in class, on school premises, with a host family and on IHA organized social events):

- bullying of any kind (physical or verbal)
- racism (of other nationalities, cultures or religions)
- excessive and/or loud swearing
- sexual harassment of any kind
- aggressive behaviour towards staff, students or visitors (for example, shouting at other students inappropriately, kicking furniture)
- theft (stealing other people's property or International House Aberdeen's property)
- vandalism (for example, deliberately breaking school furniture or computers)
- any illegal activity

Important:

It is the school's decision if your behaviour is unacceptable or not. If your behaviour is unacceptable, the school will give you a written warning. If unacceptable behaviour happens again, the school will ask you to leave the school immediately with no refunds of fees. Please note that if your behaviour is very serious in the school's opinion you will be asked to leave the school immediately with no refund of fees or written warning. We will record all incidents in writing. (For more details, please see policy at end of handbook).



Homestay accommodation

Staying with a homestay family should be a great experience and an excellent opportunity for you to learn about Scottish and British culture. In Scotland families may live differently from what you are used to and so there may be misunderstandings. Please let your homestay family know if you are not happy or you don't understand something they have asked you to do or not to do. Here are some hints on how to get on well with your host family.

Keys

Your host family will probably give you a set of keys. Be careful with them. Do not carry them with the house address in case you lose them.

Meals

Please let the host family know if there is any food that you don't like or are allergic to. Do try the food that the host family prepare for you, even if you think you will not like it. If you don't like it you can apologise afterwards! You might be surprised at what you enjoy. Please

let the family know if you are going to be late or not coming home for a meal.

Laundry

Please check what the family's arrangements for laundry are – can you use their washing machine or will they do it for you?



Telephone

Check that you can use the phone before you use it and also find out when is the cheapest time. Remember that calls can be expensive in the UK, especially international calls.

Heating

If you are too hot or too cold, ask politely if you can adjust the heating or have more covers for your bed. Please don't leave gas or electric fires on overnight or when you are not at home – this is dangerous.

Smoking

If you smoke, check if your family allows smoking in the house. Please respect your host and smoke outside if they ask you to.

Friends

Ask if you want to invite friends to your host family's home. Some families will allow it but some won't. If they do, remember to introduce your friends to your host.

Bathroom

Make sure you know how to use the shower/bath and check when the best time to use it is. Most homes have only 1 bathroom so there will be other people needing to use it in the mornings and at night so please don't take too long. You will need to bring your own toiletries, for example, toothpaste, toothbrush, shampoo etc.

Damages

If you break or damage anything, tell your family as soon as possible and offer to pay for it to be mended or replaced.

Problems

We try our best to place students with a suitable family, but if you are really unhappy with your host family, come to the reception to make an appointment with the accommodation

officer. Please be patient: it is not always possible to move you immediately as we have a limited number of host families. You must tell the school 1 week before you leave your host family.

Renting a flat or a house in the UK

If you choose to rent a flat or house you will need to provide a deposit to the landlord or agency of usually 1 month's rent, and pay 1 month's rent in advance. You cannot rent a flat for less than 6 months at a time. You will need to pay council tax and all your bills. If you have problems with your private accommodation or landlord, please see the welfare officer (days and times are on the notice board in reception).

Living in Aberdeen - useful information

Many foreign students visit Aberdeen every year and they usually receive a warm welcome from the people of Aberdeen. However this also depends on how each individual and group of people behaves. It's important to remember British people may behave differently from people in your country.

Queuing

In Britain it's normal to queue at bus stops, cinemas and in shops. It's rude to push in at the front or the middle of the queue.

Noise

Many local people go to bed quite early compared to people in other countries. Please do not make a lot of noise at night especially when with a group of friends.

Safety

Aberdeen is a safe, friendly city, but you should take a few simple precautions to make sure you keep safe.

- When you go out at night, always tell a friend where you're going, who you're going with and what time you expect to be back
- Try not to go out alone at night - walk with a group who are going the same way as you
- Stay on well-lit main roads and don't use small streets or short cuts
- Make sure you know when the last bus home is or if there is a night service – check out http://www.firstgroup.com/ukbus/aberdeen/journey_planning/night_services/
- If you take a taxi, remember they have a white roof sign with TAXI written on it - don't get into a car that doesn't have this sign. Private taxis have a red identification plate at the front and back of the car. They cannot pick you up on the street - you can only use them if you have pre-booked them. You can find some taxi numbers on the useful and emergency number page



Crossing the road

Be careful! In Britain the cars drive on the left so always look RIGHT first. Cross at a pedestrian crossing if there is one.

Valuables

Do not leave purses or wallets where people can see and take them, for example, in your back pocket or in an open bag on the floor. Do not carry lots of money with money – just take what you need for the day.

Working

Please note that Student Visitor and Tier 4 visas do not entitle you to work while studying English at a private institute.

For non-visa students: You will need a CV (curriculum vitae) - there are many websites to help with writing this. You will also need a national insurance number - you can apply for this at Job Centre Plus, Ebury House, 14 Dee Street, Aberdeen. It's open Mon, Tues, Thurs & Fri 09.00-17.00; Wed 10.00-17.00. There are also opportunities to do voluntary work for charities. If you're interested in this or need more help with finding a job, please see the Welfare Officer for more information (days and times on the notice board in reception).

Some laws that may be different in your country

Litter

It's an offence to drop litter such as chewing gum and cigarette packets or butts in the street or other public places. You can be fined.

Alcohol

You are not allowed to buy beer, wine or spirits if you're under 18 years old.

Smoking

You are not allowed to buy cigarettes or other tobacco products if you're under 18. There is NO smoking in public places in Britain, for example, public transport (including taxis), pubs, restaurants, cinemas, work places, stations and shops.

Drugs

It is illegal to buy, sell or use non-prescribed drugs.

What happens if you are arrested by the police

If you are arrested by the police, you will be taken to a police station. You can ask for a translator and a solicitor (lawyer) to help you. You will be told your rights. You can make 1 phone call. You must contact the school to tell us about the situation. It's a good idea to carry the school phone number with you.

You must obey the British law at all times

WHAT TO DO IN ABERDEEN

Here are a few examples, for more information please pick up an Aberdeen City Guide from the tourist office at 23 Union Street or ask at Reception.

Attractions in Aberdeen

Aberdeen Art Gallery, Schoolhill, Aberdeen AB10 1FQ
Maritime Museum, Shiprow, Aberdeen AB11 5BY
Codona's Amusement Park and Ten-pin Bowling, Beach Boulevard, Aberdeen
Hazlehead Zoo, Hazlehead Park, Aberdeen
King's College and Old Aberdeen
Tolbooth Museum, Castle Street, Aberdeen

Restaurants

La Tasca, Spanish Tapas Bar, Union Street

Pubs

The Prince of Wales, 7-11 St Nicholas Lane

Shopping

Bon Accord Centre, St Nicholas Centre, Trinity Centre and Union Square

Clubs

Liquid, Bridge Street
Priory, Belmont Street
Espionage, Union Street

Entertainment places

The Lemon Tree, 5 West North Street
HM Theatre, Denburn Viaduct
The Music Hall, Union Street

Union Square, VUE, Belmont and UGC Cinemas

Sport and Leisure

City Moves, Belmont Street, Aberdeen
Beach Leisure Centre

Attractions in Scotland

For information, please contact the **Tourist Office**, 23 Union Street. Phone number: 01224 288828.

Useful and Emergency Numbers

Emergency Services (police/fire/ambulance)

Dial **999** from any telephone. You can also use the international emergency number **112**. The operator will ask you, "Which service do you require?" You should reply, "Police, "Fire," or "Ambulance". They will then connect you to that service.

Other Emergencies

The school has an emergency phone number which you can call 24 hours a day. Please only use this for **real** emergencies: 07894 708585.

Medical Emergencies

If you have a very serious medical problem which cannot wait until the next working day (Monday-Friday), when you can see a doctor, the nearest hospital with an Accident & Emergency (A & E, also known as "Casualty") department is :

Aberdeen Royal Infirmary (ARI)

Foresterhill Road

Telephone: 0845 456000

Emergency Dentist

These dentists are very near the school and have an emergency service.

Fergus & Glover, 160 Union Street.

Telephone: 01224 644876.