



INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS HANDBOOK* SOUTHEND

*A GUIDE TO LIFE AT ESSEX

welcome!

Dear International Students,
Welcome to the University of
Essex – Southend Campus!

Whether you're arriving from
across the globe or just a short
flight away, we are so excited
to have you join our diverse
and vibrant community. As
your VP Southend, it's my
pleasure to welcome you to what I hope will be one of the
most exciting and transformative chapters of your life.

Moving to a new country can feel overwhelming – new
culture, new systems, new faces but you're not alone.
This guide has been created especially for you, to help
make your transition to life in Southend as smooth and
enjoyable as possible. Inside, you'll find everything from
practical tips on setting up a bank account and navigating
public transport, to where to find your cultural food and
how to meet new friends.

Southend is a friendly, seaside town with a growing student
community. There's always something happening and your
SU is here to support you every step of the way, whether it's
through events, advice, or just someone to talk to.

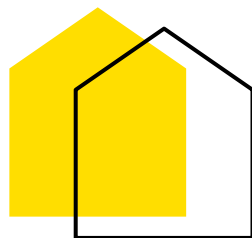
Remember, this is your journey and it starts now. Make the
most of every opportunity, don't be afraid to ask questions,
and most importantly, enjoy the experience!

Wishing you a fantastic start to your time here.



Best wishes,
Your VP Southend, Rebecca

Your SU



This is your place - shaped & run by you.

Your SU membership comes with serious perks.

No forms. No fees. No drama.

Just support, community, opportunities, and a team whose job is to make your university experience better.

We're here to help you:

Get a great degree + your dream job

Study support, revision tips, career advice. We've got your back.

Grow your own way. No pressure

Try new things, explore what matters to you, and take up opportunities that work for you.

Find your people. Feel at home

Events, socials, Just Play, Societies, volunteering; however you want to get involved, we'll help you find your people.

Use your voice. Make change happen

Run a campaign or just rant about the kettle. We'll help you speak up and lead the change.

Get support when you need it

Life happens. We're here for the ups, downs, and everything in between.

SU spaces that belong to you

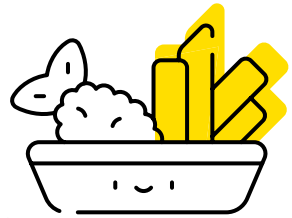
Look for the house icon on campus – that's how you know it's an SU venue. If there's a house on the door, it's **yours**.

**Find out more
about your SU
membership:**



Food

Food in the UK is more diverse than ever, but some traditional dishes are still enjoyed:



Afternoon Tea – A light meal usually served in the late afternoon, including tea, finger sandwiches, scones with jam and cream, and small cakes.

Sunday Roast – A traditional Sunday meal featuring roast meat (usually beef, chicken, lamb or pork), potatoes, vegetables, and Yorkshire pudding, all covered in gravy.

Fish and Chips – Fried battered fish with chips (fries), usually eaten with mushy peas and vinegar. Often served in takeaways or near the seaside.

Full English Breakfast – A hearty breakfast that may include eggs, bacon, sausages, beans, tomatoes, mushrooms, toast, and sometimes black pudding.

Not usually eaten every day, but popular on weekends or in cafes.

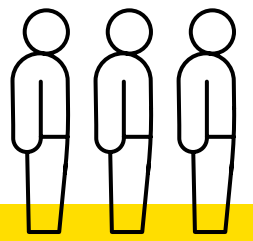
Weather



The British are known for talking about the weather because it changes often and can be unpredictable. You might get sunshine, rain, and wind in the same day, even in summer. Winters are usually cold and wet, while summers are mild with average highs around 20–25°C.

Snow is uncommon but does happen sometimes. People often dress in layers and carry an umbrella or waterproof jacket. Talking about the weather is also a popular way to start a conversation.

British Culture

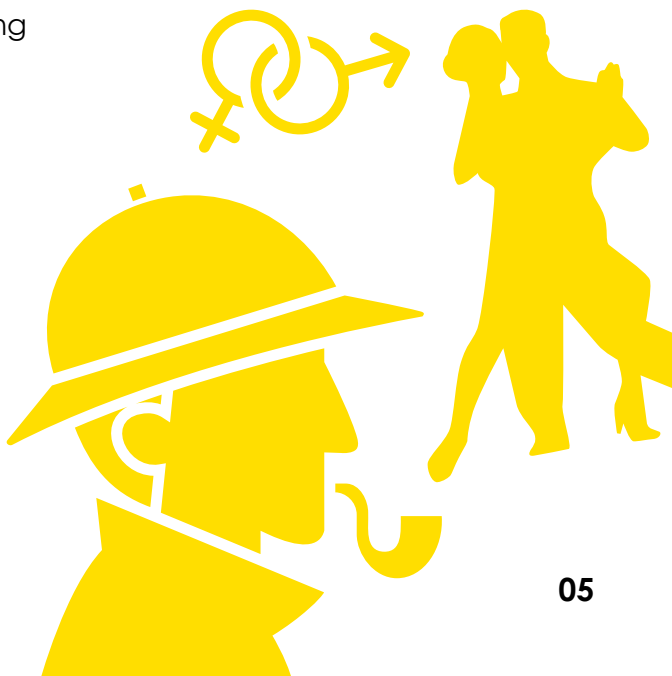


Queueing is an important part of British life, and people take it seriously — everyone is expected to wait their turn at shops, bus stops, or for food, and skipping the queue is seen as rude.

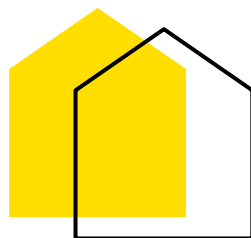
Sport is also central to British culture, with football being the most popular, followed by rugby, cricket, tennis (especially during Wimbledon), and Formula 1, often sparking lively debates and uniting or dividing the nation during big matches.

British television is a great way to understand the culture, humour, and daily life. Here are some popular shows that reflect different aspects of the UK:

- Outnumbered
- Inbetweeners
- Strictly Come Dancing
- Sherlock
- Sex Education
- Bridgerton
- Fleabag



Get involved



There's loads to get stuck into at your Students' Union; whether you're looking to meet new people, try something different, or make a real impact while you're here.

Just Play

Run by the SU, Just Play is our free social sport programme all about getting active, making friends, and having fun - no commitment or experience needed!

Find out what's on and book your space here:

essexstudent.com/southend/justplay



SU Events

There's always something happening in the SU Lounge! Join us for weekly events like SU Makes craft sessions, quiz nights, bingo, games nights, and loads more.

To see what's coming up, head to our What's On page:

essexstudent.com/whatson



Use your voice



Become a Student Rep

Be the voice of your course!

As a Student Rep, you'll share feedback, support your classmates, and work with staff to make real changes that improve the student experience.

Anyone can apply - it's a great way to build confidence, develop skills, and make a difference.

Apply now: Scan the QR code below.



Become a Student Community Officer (SCO)

Represent your student community and help make campus a place where everyone feels they belong.

As an SCO, you'll lead on projects, share ideas, and work with the SU to create positive change for your peers.

Anyone can apply; gain leadership experience, meet new people, and make a lasting impact.

Find out more at essexsu.com/southend/council



Education



Courses offered at Southend

- Essex Business School
- School of Health and Social Care
- East 15 Acting School

What you need to know about Education in Southend

- Lectures are usually held in the Forum (TF) and Gateway Building (GB)
- Lectures are recorded on Listen Again
- You can track your attendance via LEAP
- You can access materials on Moodle
- You can check your results, upload assessments and see your deadlines on FASER

Spaces for you

The Forum

A shared public and university space with a modern library, study areas, and lecture rooms, its 24 HOURS for students

The Lounge

– run by your SU. A relaxed space for students to socialize, study, and attend events. Also has a kitchenette to heat your food and grab a hot drink.

The Mezz

- run by your SU, it's a social space for events.

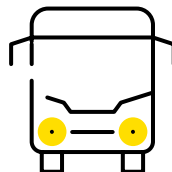
Studio Spaces

Purpose-built performance and rehearsal spaces for East 15 students

Campus Accommodation

University Square offers modern, en-suite rooms with shared kitchens or studio rooms just minutes from campus buildings.

Southend + Transport



A lively seaside town with beaches, cafés, green spaces and great links to London - the perfect mix of coastal charm and city life.

Must-sees:

- Southend Pier – the world's longest pleasure pier
- Adventure Island – rides, games & seaside fun
- Priory Park – gardens, ponds & sports areas
- Seafront – beaches, arcades & fish & chips
- Southend Museum – local history & treasures
- Southchurch Park – a peaceful lakeside escape

Getting Around Southend & Beyond

Southend has great public transport links, making it easy to get around town or travel further afield.

Trains:

Regular services run from Southend Central and Southend Victoria - it's about 1 hr 15 mins to London. Save 1/3 on fares with a 16–25 Railcard (£35 a year or £80 for 3 years). Buy tickets at stations or via apps like Trainline or Trip.

Buses:

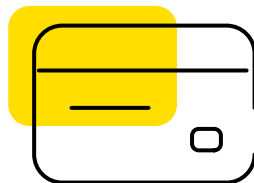
Single fares cost around £2–£2.80, or get a Day Pass for £6. Student passes (ages 16–19) start at £27.50 for a week. Use Tap & Cap with contactless - capped at £22 per week. Check routes and times on the First Bus App.

Airport Bus:

The X30 Airlink connects Southend, Southend Airport, Rayleigh, Chelmsford, and Stansted. It's £3 per journey, with tickets available from the driver or the First Bus App.

Plan your trip with Google Maps or Trainline, and check out local discounts here: essex.ac.uk/staff/travel-and-transport/bus-travel-discounts-southend

VISAs



It's important to tap your student card each time you enter class. You can do this from 15 minutes before the lecture starts until 15 minutes after. Tapping your card outside of these times will mark you as absent. Visa holders are expected to attend all teaching events in person, unless you have an authorised approved absence request. If you have any enquiries about your Visa or Immigration status, please use the form on this page to submit your question: www1.essex.ac.uk/immigration/enquiry/ Check your university email every day- Important updates are sent there, including changes to teaching events and updates from your department.

If you are struggling to pay your fees, speak to the university about a payment plan for tuition fees, that can make things easier.

Create an account on Gradintelligence to access your official certificates like the Certificate of Registration and academic transcripts.

Make sure you understand any Student Visa conditions about working during your studies – breaching these conditions can have serious implications for you.

For one-to-one help, especially with financial matters, visit the Student Services Hub in the Silberrad building.

For further information and to make immigration-related enquiries, you can go to: www1.essex.ac.uk/immigration/enquiry/

Working in the UK



Working or Volunteering During Your Studies

You can usually do part-time work or volunteering while you study, but some types of work aren't allowed.

If you're on a Student Visa and studying at degree level or above, you can normally work up to 20 hours per week in term time and unlimited hours in holidays - just check what counts as "holidays" for your course.

Always check your visa conditions before starting work.

Find full guidance here: essex.ac.uk/student/immigration-and-visas/working-in-the-uk-during-your-studies

To work in the UK, you'll need a National Insurance (NI) number. You may already have one linked to your visa, but if not, apply online at gov.uk/apply-national-insurance-number

Want to Start Your Own Business One Day?

Essex Startups offers free workshops, 1:1 mentoring and funding advice to help you grow your ideas. It's open to all students, with many events held at Colchester Campus. Reimbursement may be available, please speak to Essex Startups to find out more at startups@essex.ac.uk.

Find out more:

essex.ac.uk/student/support-with-starting-your-own-business

Wellbeing & Support



SU Advice

1st floor in SU Lounge

01702 328235

The Students' Union Advice team can guide you with visa extensions, academic appeals, extenuating circumstances, housing advice, university complaints, and more. **suacsou@essex.ac.uk**

Student Services

2nd floor in The Forum

01206 874000

askthehub@essex.ac.uk

Library Services

The Forum

01206 874000

library@essex.ac.uk

IT Team

2nd floor in The Forum

01206 872345

it.helpdesk@essex.ac.uk

Wellbeing

0800 9705020

include@essex.ac.uk

Mental Health Support #YouAreNotAlone

Help is always available. The University offers free counselling and wellbeing services — visit the Student Services Hub or go online:

essex.ac.uk/student/mental-and-emotional-health

Medical Services in Southend



In an emergency:

Southend University Hospital – main hospital for emergency and specialist care.

999 – ask for mental health crisis support

111 (option 2) – NHS Urgent Mental Health Helpline

Out of hours:

SU Wellbeing Line (24/7): 0800 028 3766

Samaritans: 116 123

Papyrus HOPELINE: 0800 068 4141

SHOUT: text 85258

Togetherall – online peer support

Wisdom App – live chat & video support

GP Clinics – register with a local doctor for check-ups and prescriptions.

Dentists & Pharmacies – find local NHS services for dental care, prescriptions, or health advice:

nhs.uk/nhs-services/services-near-you

Need advice?

- NHS 111 – for urgent but non-emergency health concerns
- 999 – for medical emergencies

Registering with a GP:

You can register with any local GP - it's quick and free. Register online via the NHS website and have your photo ID, proof of address, and Immigration Health Surcharge reference number ready.

Shopping Tips for International Students

Southend has plenty of places to shop for everyday essentials and international foods.

World food stores: Kim Quang (Asian), Southend Food Centre (Oriental), Sabri Foods & Khan Supermarket (Halal), and Easy Way Food (African/Caribbean).

Supermarkets: Lidl, Tesco, Iceland, Sainsbury's, Aldi.

Budget shops: Poundland and Poundstretcher for low-cost household items.

Save while you shop: Use Tesco Clubcard, Nectar Card, or the Lidl Plus app for discounts. Most stores accept contactless and offer student discounts - always carry your student ID!

Gym & Fitness

Stay active with local, affordable gyms.

Welcome Gym

– open 24/7 with classes, £31.99/month or £10/day.

The Gym Group

– flexible memberships from £17.99/month or £8.99/day.

There are also plenty of free ways to stay active on and around campus!

Banking in the UK



Most banks offer student accounts with perks - compare options on sites like MoneySupermarket.com to find the best deal.

You can apply online, via app, or in branch. Once approved, your debit card usually arrives within 5 working days (the whole process can take up to two weeks).

You'll need:

- Passport (and visa/BRP if applicable)
- Proof of UK address (e.g. tenancy or accommodation letter)
- Proof of student status – download your Certificate of Registration via Gradintel

Top tips:

- Update your UK address with the University before applying
- Temporary addresses (like hotels) aren't accepted
- Use digital wallets or prepaid cards while you wait

Open an account early for tuition, work, and everyday spending

More info:

essex.ac.uk/welcome/international-students/banking

WELCOME
home

A thick, horizontal yellow brushstroke underline that spans the width of the word 'home'.