

UK Travel and Accommodation: An International Student Guide

International | Rhyngwladol



Swansea University
Prifysgol Abertawe

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CampusLife



Welcome

Hello, this leaflet is designed to help you with planning your travel to, and accommodation for, your time at Swansea University.

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Travelling to University from Your Port of Entry

You will, undoubtedly, be more relaxed during your travel to the UK if you have planned the onwards journey to join us here at Swansea. This section can help you plan this.

If possible, arrange your journey so that you can **arrive into the UK during the day** rather than late at night. It really helps if you can travel in the daylight, when there are plenty of people around to help if you need guidance. If you arrive into the UK very late at night, you may want to book a hotel close to the airport etc. and make the onward journey the next day instead.

Remember to allow time for any delays and queues at immigration control when making your travel plans. There are a number of Airports that are accessible from Swansea and this is the most popular way for our international students to travel to the UK:

Travelling by Air

Cardiff Airport is approximately 46 miles from Swansea. Visit the airport website here: www.cardiff-airport.com

Taxi to Swansea: The taxi journey from Cardiff Airport to Swansea University will be more expensive than public transport. The journey will take approximately 1 hour and 5 minutes (depending on traffic) and could cost between £99 - £130. You can pre-book online at www.flightlinkwales.com or you can visit their taxi stand within the arrivals hall at the airport.

Reaching Cardiff city centre from Cardiff Airport: To get into Cardiff city centre from the airport, a **taxi**, which takes approximately 30 minutes and costs between £50 - £75.

RailLink operates on public transport. From the airport, bus 905 operates to Rhoose Rail Station, connecting to trains to Cardiff Central, with a total journey time of 45-70 minutes

Direct Bus service 304 operates into Cardiff city centre, and take around 80 minutes.

Train: You can get a direct train from Cardiff Central Station in the city centre, to Swansea Station. The journey will take just under 1 hour and will cost between £10 - £13. Visit www.nationalrail.co.uk for details, times and prices.

Coaches: There are frequent, reliable coach services that operate direct between Cardiff and Swansea daily. These services operate to Swansea's central Bus Station, but also stop at our **Bay Campus**. If you are staying at Bay Campus, this is an excellent choice of transport! From the Bus Station, you can connect to numerous local bus services serving the University Campuses, and there is a taxi service available there 24 hours a day:

National Express - most frequent services with baggage allowance of 2x 20kg medium suitcases or 1x large 20kg bag, plus one hand luggage - prices range from £7-20

Megabus - Less frequent but often cheaper, luggage allowance 1x 20kg bag plus one hand luggage - prices range from £5.50 - £15

Flixbus - Least frequent but usually the cheapest, luggage allowance 1x 20kg bag plus one hand luggage. Prices range from £2.99 - £15.

You should always book transport as far in advance as possible to get the best prices, and add luggage allowance if needed.

Bristol Airport is approximately 85 miles from Swansea.

Visit the airport website here: www.bristolairport.co.uk

Train: Bristol Temple Meads train station is just 8 miles from Bristol airport. To get from the airport to Bristol Temple Meads you can get the Bristol A1 Flyer shuttle bus that runs every 20 minutes directly to the train station for £8 that will also take approximately 20 minutes. Here, you can take a train to get to Swansea (with one change at Cardiff) in just 2 hours for around £30 - £40 www.nationalrail.co.uk.

Bus: A regular National Express bus service runs between Bristol Airport and Cardiff Coach station. There is also a service between Cardiff Coach Station and Swansea Coach Station so travellers can take the whole journey by National Express bus with just one change in Cardiff. The whole journey duration is around 3.5 to 4 hours and costs around £15 - £22. For further information and to book tickets visit www.nationalexpress.com

Taxi: The taxi journey from Bristol Airport to Swansea is approximately 2 hours. Arrow Cars are the dedicated taxi company operating from Bristol Airport. This mode of travel is significantly more expensive than public transport (from around £215). You can find further details and request a quote on the Arrow Cars website here: www.arrowcars.co.uk/airports/bristol-airport/



London Heathrow Airport is approximately 175 miles from Swansea.

Visit the airport website here: www.heathrow.com

Train: The London railway terminal for trains to Swansea is Paddington Station. Trains to Swansea are direct and you should not need to change trains at all during this journey. The journey time is approximately 3 hours. You can get to Paddington station from Heathrow within 15 minutes on the Heathrow Express for £25. You can purchase tickets for both trains at www.nationalrail.co.uk, or buy them at the station. You can also use the new [Elizabeth Line](#) between Heathrow and Paddington - this takes 35 minutes but costs £12.80

Bus: Both National Express and Megabus provide direct coach service from Heathrow Airport to Swansea Coach Station. A National Express coach will take around 5.5 hours and costs £35 - £55. The Megabus will take around 4.5 hours and cost around £30 - slightly cheaper and faster than the National Express. Flixbus also operate services direct to Swansea or with one change - these take around 5 hours. www.nationalexpress.com, www.uk.megabus.com & www.flixbus.co.uk

London Gatwick Airport is approximately 202 miles from Swansea.

Visit the airport website here: www.gatwickairport.com

Train: You can take a train from Gatwick Airport to Swansea with just one change at Reading station. The journey from Gatwick to Reading is approximately 1 hour and 20 minutes and the onward journey from Reading to Swansea is 2 hours 30 minutes. This will cost you approximately £100 - £160 depending on how far in advance you book the tickets and what time you wish to travel. You can purchase tickets for both trains at www.nationalrail.co.uk.

Bus: There are direct National Express coach services from Gatwick Airport to Swansea Coach Station. The National Express coach runs every 2 hours with a journey time of 6.5 hours and costs approximately £60. You can book your tickets here: <https://www.nationalexpress.com/en>

London Stansted Airport is approximately 230 miles from Swansea.

Visit the airport website here: www.stanstedairport.com

Bus: There are no direct methods of travel from Stansted to Swansea. One of the cheapest ways to travel is by getting a National Express coach to London Victoria Coach Station which will take approximately 2 hours and then catch another National Express Coach to Swansea from Victoria Coach Station which takes around 4.5 hours - this whole journey will cost you £30 - £80. <https://www.nationalexpress.com/en>

Train: You can get a train from Stansted airport to Swansea with 2 changes. You will catch the train from Stansted to London Liverpool Street Station (50 minute journey), then a train from London Liverpool Street Station to London Paddington (11 minute journey) and finally a train to Swansea from London Paddington (2 hours and 45 minute journey). This is considerably more expensive than the National Express Coach and can cost between £140 - £165. You can book your tickets here: <https://www.thetrainline.com/>



Travelling By Boat

Port of Dover - Ferries arrive here from France please see the port website here <https://www.doverport.co.uk/>.

It is just over 260 miles to Swansea from Dover. If you come by car, the journey to Swansea will take approximately 5 hours. Various public transport methods are also available via London. You can get the train from Dover Priory to Paddington for train connections and to Victoria for coach connections. Journeys can be anywhere between 5 and 7 hours respectively. Google Maps will show you the quickest/easiest options on the day.



Port of Holyhead - Irish Ferries and Stenaline Ferries arrive here from Dublin.

It is approximately 180 miles to Swansea from Holyhead. If you come by car, the journey to Swansea will take approximately 5 hours. There is also a train connection between Holyhead and Swansea, which entails just one change at Crewe. The journey takes around 5 hours and 45 minutes. Please visit National Rail for tickets and further information - www.nationalrail.co.uk.

Travelling by Eurostar

The Eurostar arrives in London St Pancras Station from Belgium and France. If you want to travel direct to Swansea from St Pancras you will need to take the [train](#) from London Paddington. You can get from St Pancras to Paddington station within 14 minutes via the [London Underground](#).



Travelling from a Major UK City

If you are already in the UK and travelling from a Major City you can travel to Swansea via Train, Megabus, National Express or car (taxi).

Trains:

The Great Western Railway (GWR) is a train service that operates long-distance inter-city services along the Great Western Main Line to and from the West of England and South Wales, inter-city services.

There is a direct train from London Paddington to Swansea that runs every hour - this train stops at Reading, Swindon, Bristol Parkway, Newport, Cardiff Central, Bridgend, Port Talbot Parkway, Neath and Swansea (where the train terminates). This train takes approximately 2 hours and 45 minutes.

You can either book tickets at the station - you run the risk of the train tickets being sold out - or you can book in advance using the GWR app or Trainline app. You can also book tickets on their websites. Simply plug in where you are travelling from and put the destination as Swansea - depending on where you are travelling from you may have to get multiple trains to reach Swansea.

GWR Website here: <https://www.gwr.com/>

Trainline Website here: <https://www.thetrainline.com/>

National Express, Megabus and FlixBus:

Coach operators National Express, FlixBus and Megabus are a cheaper option than trains but can take significantly longer to reach Swansea. There are also toilets available on majority of the coaches and free WiFi.

To book tickets for National Express: <https://www.nationalexpress.com/en>

To book tickets for Megabus: <https://uk.megabus.com>

To book tickets for FlixBus: www.flixbus.co.uk



Entering the UK

When you arrive into the UK after the journey from your home country, it's important to understand the process for entering the UK to ensure you enter correctly and legally. Read the following sections for more information.

Passport and Immigration Control

All passengers arriving at UK ports of entry are checked through passport control. When arriving at an airport, follow the signs for 'Arrivals' which will guide you to passport control. There are usually two main queues: one for European Economic Area and Swiss nationals, and one for all other passport holders.

ePassport Gates: Nationals from all EEA countries, Switzerland, Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, Singapore, South Korea and the United States of America can now use automatic ePassport gates at some airports. Your passport must have a 'biometric chip' on it and you must be 18 or over. These gates use facial recognition technology to check your identity against the photo in your passport. As Tier 4 students from the above countries who use the eGates will no longer receive a stamp in their passport on entry to the UK, it is advisable that you keep some form of evidence of the date of entry to the UK in case you need to evidence this in the future. Acceptable evidence includes a boarding card, ticket or booking confirmation for travel to the UK.

IMPORTANT: Students entering on Short-term Study Visas must not use the eGates. Short-term students must speak to a Border Force Officer in order to obtain a short-term study stamp in their passports.

Short-term students who use the eGates to enter the UK will not be permitted to study as they have entered the UK incorrectly. Short-term students who leave the port without seeing a Border Force Officer may need to leave the UK and re-enter in order to speak to a Border Force Officer. In order to avoid this, it is essential that short-term students avoid using eGates on initial entry.

Border Control Officers: If you are from a non-EEA country (that is not listed above in ePassport Gates) and entering the UK on a Study Visa (Short-Term & Tier 4) you must visit a Border Control Officer to obtain a stamp in your passport. You cannot get a stamp if you use the ePassport gates.

Students who are arriving in the UK for the first time or with a new visa may be asked to show following documents, therefore, they should carry these documents with them in their hand luggage:

1. Your passport or travel document with a valid student visa.
2. An offer letter or copy of certificate of acceptance for studies (CAS).
3. Any previous degrees/certificates mentioned in the CAS.
4. Copy of English language test (if mentioned in the CAS).
5. Evidence to prove that you have sufficient funds to pay your course fees and maintain yourself (and your dependants if applicable). You can prove this with one or more of the following documents:
 - a. Recent bank statements
 - b. A letter from your bank confirming that you have access to the required funds
 - c. A letter or document to show that you have successfully transferred funds to the UK bank in your own account
 - d. A letter or receipt from the institute to show that you have paid all or part of your course fees
 - e. An official sponsor letter
6. Pre departure clearance certificate or country specific health-related certificate.

Be prepared to answer a few simple questions about yourself and your intentions. There is no need to be nervous; the Immigration Officer will just need to ensure that you are coming to the UK for your study and not any other reason.

Please see the '[Student Arrivals: 10 Top Tips](#)' information leaflet produced by the UK border agency for guidance on getting through the UK border controls as efficiently as possible.

As long as your documents are in order, you should pass through immigration trouble-free. However, if you need any emergency assistance or advice from us, you can ask the immigration officer to telephone the university on **01792 205678** (keep this telephone number with you).

Baggage Collection

Once you are clear of passport control, follow the signs to the baggage reclaim area, where you can collect your luggage. Identify the correct carousel using the screen displays; they will show your flight number alongside a carousel number. Occasionally, the luggage can take a little while to come through from the plane to the carousel so please be patient. If any items of your luggage do not appear, find a representative of the airline on which you travelled and complete a lost-luggage form.

Customs Check

Once you have collected your luggage you can proceed to customs. At UK airports there are usually 3 exits/channels through customs:

Red Channel - if you are travelling from outside the EU and have items to declare.

Green Channel - if you are travelling from outside the EU and have nothing to declare.

Blue Channel - if you have travelled from an airport within the EEA so your luggage has already cleared customs at departure.

Be prepared that a customs officer may request you to open your baggage for inspection in all customs channels.

There will be signs telling you what items you need to declare but if in doubt then check with a customs officer before passing through. The British Government has produced an excellent leaflet, which outlines what you can and cannot bring into the UK. Please read it [here](#).

There are very heavy fines imposed and even imprisonment for the illegal importing of drugs into the UK. It is a serious criminal offence, which could lead to deportation. Once you have cleared customs, then you have successfully arrived in the UK!

What happens if there is a delay in me coming to the UK to start a new course?

If you have an issue, which is going to delay you in starting your new course, you need to contact your university college/school urgently. They will check whether you will still arrive within the deadline to enroll for your course. If you can only arrive after the enrollment deadline, you may have to make arrangements to defer starting your course until a later date or the following year, regardless of the reason for the delay (e.g. delay in getting your visa).

If the University advises you that it is too late to start your course, you should not attempt to enter the UK on your existing visa. This is because UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) will cancel your existing visa and you will need to apply for a new visa to enter the UK to start your course at a later date.

Email international.campuslife@swansea.ac.uk if you need visa advice.

Travel Tips

- UK train and coach tickets are often a lot cheaper when bought online in advance.
- Take copies of your passport and other paperwork before travelling and keep secure in a different place to your passport. You could also leave copies with your family so that they can be contacted for them if needed.
- Keep your passport, tickets and important documents safe and never give it to anyone other than the immigration officials.
- Do not carry large amounts of cash but bring enough money to cover your immediate needs on your arrival in the UK, including customs charges, rail fares and any emergency expenses.
- Do not leave your luggage unattended and keep valuable items out of sight, on your person

For more information on how to travel safely, read the British Council pre-departure guide: [First Steps](#).

Re-entering the UK

If you are re-entering the UK on a current Tier 4 student visa, you must be able to prove that you are enrolled/registered with the University as a full time student. You may be asked to show following documents so you should carry these documents with you in your hand luggage:

- Student statement from MyUniHub to prove your student status
- Recent bank statements or sponsor letter
- Valid passport and BRP card (if you have one)
- CAS statement for the next course (if you are re-entering the UK to start a new course)

If you are unable to show any of the required documents or as part of the immigration checks/examinations, an Immigration Officer decides to refuse entry or cancel your visa, you have the right to an Administrative Review.

If you encounter any problems on arrival at a UK port, we advise you to contact us immediately.

If you have suspended or withdrawn from your course, you should not attempt to travel and re-enter the UK on your existing visa. That visa would have been cancelled. You should apply for a new visa before travelling to the UK.

In an emergency, you can contact International@CampusLife on 01792 602000 between 0900 and 1630 Monday to Friday, or email international.campuslife@swansea.ac.uk.
Outside these hours, phone the University on 01792 205678.

Public Transport Around Swansea

If you have arrived in Swansea at the **bus station or train station**, you may need to get local transport or a taxi to your accommodation or hotel.

There are taxis situated outside the train station or at the taxi rank adjacent to the bus station - just follow the signs or ask someone if you need guidance. A **taxi** may be the best option for your first journey as you will not need to worry about getting on the right transport/getting off at the right stop or have to struggle with your luggage. It would be a better time to explore public transport options once you have settled in and rested from your journey.

Public transport is also a safe, affordable and sustainable way to get around town. **First Cymru's UniBws** services link our two campuses via the city centre. Swansea Council have a 'Plan My Journey' facility available so you see which times and service number of buses you will need: <https://www.swansea.gov.uk/article/4117/Bus-times>

Public Transport During Your Stay

There are a range of ticket options for public transport, and you can get some fantastic discounts via the University or other methods. There is a lot of information on the **University Travel Pages**, so make sure that you are checking there for the best option for your own situation: <https://www.swansea.ac.uk/travel/public-transport/>

For example: if you are aged 16-21, as soon as you know your Swansea address, you should apply for your **My Travel Pass**. It's a free pass (there's no admin fee) and you'll get one third off all your bus travel! You can use this pass on any bus in Wales, not just First Cymru's Campus to Campus services. The pass will last up until your 22nd birthday.

<https://mytravelpass.gov.wales/en/application/start>

First Cymru busses operate the UniBws service - busses designed to connect our campuses and key accommodation and important locations across the city. These are excellent ways of getting around, with some routes operating 24 hours a day. For information see:

[First Cymru - UniBws Services and information.](#)

There are student tickets available at a discounted price. These are available from the bus driver (you will need your student ID), but the best value and easiest option is to use eTickets in the First Bus App. To find up-to-date ticket prices please visit:

<https://www.firstbus.co.uk/south-west-wales/tickets/ticket-prices>

You can also download the FirstBus m-tickets app and have your tickets sent straight to your mobile phone to use immediately or when you are ready - mobile tickets can even save you money!

[Download the FirstBus m-tickets app from the app store here](#)

[Download the FirstBus m-tickets app for android here](#)

Accommodation

If you are coming to study at Swansea University, either as an independent student or bringing your family, your accommodation will probably be one of your biggest concerns. It is important to try and get this organised as soon as possible, both in order to feel more relaxed about your transition to the UK, and to be able to access essential services as soon as you arrive (e.g. registering with a doctor, accessing schools, libraries and for employment purposes).

It is likely that in a lot of cases, you will not be able to sign a longer-term accommodation contract until you can evidence that you have been granted a visa to study. So, make sure that you are also applying for any visas you need at least 3-4 months before you plan to travel (Student Route visas can be applied for up to 6 months before travel), as this will prevent additional delays.

See University information about Visas and Immigration:

<https://www.swansea.ac.uk/international-campuslife/immigration/>

Although we always recommend that you try and sort your longer-term accommodation before travelling to the UK, sometimes this isn't possible and you may need an interim solution while you are looking for your perfect home. It may also be that you (or family/friends) are only making a short visit to the UK and don't really need to find a long-term accommodation solution. The **section below** will help you understand some of the options available for you in those circumstances.

Sourcing Temporary or Short-Term Accommodation

We advise that, if at all possible, you try and arrange accommodation **before you arrive**. Unfortunately, the University doesn't have on demand or emergency accommodation and so you could end up having to pay for a last minute hotel if you come unprepared, and this can be both costly and stressful.

So, if you haven't secured permanent/long-term accommodation before arrival, you should at least have a plan for a temporary stay somewhere. There are plenty of hotels in and around Swansea and so you hopefully can find one that suits your needs.

Below we have listed a selection of hotels and booking sites to help you with your search, other hotels and websites are available:

Hotels

The Dragon Hotel - This hotel is in Swansea city centre. It has a lounge area and 24-hour room service. Breakfast options include cold, continental options or a cooked breakfast. The hotel's rooms are spacious, with sleek colourful décor. Each also has a flat-screen TV with satellite channels, and facilities for making tea and coffee. Prices range from £92 - £112 a night for one standard room. <https://www.dragon-hotel.co.uk/>

Address: 39 The Kingsway, Swansea SA1 5LS

The Alexander Hotel - This hotel is privately owned offering a friendly service and advice about the local area. It is within walking distance of the University, Singleton Hospital and the Wales National Pool. They offer a range of rooms including, a standard double room, twin room and a range of family rooms. All rooms have an en-suite (unless you book the single room with a shared bathroom), TV, tea and coffee facilities, a desk, and complimentary toiletries. They do not offer breakfast but they do have deals with local restaurants. Prices range from £30 - £87 a night. <https://www.alexander-hotel.co.uk/>
Address: 3 Sketty Rd, Uplands, Swansea SA2 0EU

Delta Hotels by Marriott, Swansea - This hotel is in Swansea city centre, right by the Marina, with spacious rooms, large windows, flat-screen TV, and ample workstations. They have 24-hour room service and a buffet style breakfast available. Room prices range from £90 - £200 per night for a deluxe double room. <https://delta-hotels.marriott.com/>
Address: Maritime Quarter, Swansea SA1 3SS

ibis Hotel - This hotel is a cheaper option located in Port Tennant - great for if you are studying at Bay Campus. From £43 - £60 a night you get a large double bed, en-suite, hairdryer, tea/coffee facilities, desk, internet and TV.
<https://all.accor.com/hotel/6653/index.en.shtml>
Address: Fabian Way, A483, South Wales, Port Tennant, Swansea SA1 8LD

Additional Options

Airbnb, as in “Air Bed and Breakfast”, is a service that allows property owners rent out their spaces to travelers looking for a place to stay. This can be a room with a shared kitchen or a whole apartment/house - these are furnished with bills included in the price. They verify personal profiles and listings, and maintain a smart messaging system so hosts and guests can communicate with certainty. They also manage a trusted platform to collect and transfer payments. Your length of stay can start from just one night to months - simply set your destination to Swansea and the length of time you wish to stay and appropriate listings will be shown. Pricing can range from £50 - £150 a night or £1000 - £3000 a month - this all depends on: the time of year; what is available; the location. If you are attending Singleton Park Campus, you will want to look for Airbnbs around the Brynmill, Uplands and Sketty areas. If you are attending Bay Campus, you will want to look for places around St. Thomas and Port Tennant. **View the website here:** www.airbnb.co.uk.

Serviced Lettings provides fully furnished properties which are available both short and long term (you can stay just one night or up to a year). Their nightly rates also decrease the longer you want to stay. A lot of these properties are contactless self check-in, in other words, you may have no initial in-person contact with the property owner (they may give you a code to a lock-box which houses the key by the front door). Most properties have a TV, WiFi and laundry facilities. A security deposit may be taken at the time of booking which will cover any breakages, damages, extra cleaning and further accommodation charges incurred during your stay - you will get this money back if no additional charges occur. The cost of these properties vary from around £70 - £110 per night. **Book your stay here:** www.serviced-lettings.co.uk and make sure to put the location as Swansea.

Booking.com provides listings for local hotels as well as short-term apartments/homes, holiday lets and hotels from a range of private and professional hosts. However, reservations for more than 90 nights aren't possible on booking.com (approximately 3 months). Pricing can range from £47 a night to £763 a night (pricing can be high for high-end hotels). **To book your stay visit:** www.booking.com.

Spareroom.co.uk lets people create an advert for a spare room they have in their house/apartment. The bills are usually included in the price upon booking. You will also need to make note of the minimum term contract you can stay for as some of these properties are 12 months - meaning you will have to pay each month for a minimum of 12 months. However, there are properties with short stay with a minimum of 1-2 nights. A lot of properties require a deposit upon booking (you will get this money back if you have made no damages to the property). These spare rooms are usually priced between £150 per calendar month (pcm) - £1200 pcm. **Visit** <https://www.spareroom.co.uk/> to view spare rooms - make sure to set your destination as Swansea.



Students with Dependents

Please check our Information for Families Guide for useful information -

<https://www.swansea.ac.uk/international-campuslife/pre-arrival-information/guide-for-families/>

Due to a serious shortage of family housing, we advise you to travel UK first with temporary accommodation, and for your dependents to join you once you have arranged family housing. It is important to remember **your dependents do not need to be in the UK for the duration of your course.** They may join you at any time during studies - so there is no urgent need for them to arrive with you.

You may be able to find temporary accommodation via one of these sites:

- AirBnB - www.airbnb.co.uk
- Serviced Letting - www.serviced-lettings.co.uk
- Booking.com (provides listings for hotels/short-term apartments) - www.booking.com

Accommodation beyond Swansea

Due to the difficulty and cost of securing family property in Swansea, many students with dependents are choosing to live in nearby towns with lower prices and more availability. You can find further information on this in our **Information for Families Guide** -

<https://www.swansea.ac.uk/international-campuslife/pre-arrival-information/guide-for-families/>

Advice and Guidance

Around Seeking Long-Term Accommodation

This section will look at long-term accommodation, types of accommodation that are available, how to find this and things that you need to think about when renting a property in the UK.

If you are planning on bringing your family to the UK, we recommend that you travel alone at first and do not bring your family over until you have secured suitable accommodation. As of September 2022, we are aware of significant issues regarding the availability of family housing in and around Swansea - not just for students but also for local community members. It is very important that you are aware of this. Accommodation availability for single students or couples occupying a single room remains readily available.

It is also important to note that as soon as you have a confirmed UK address you can apply for any school places that you will need for your child dependants - even if you haven't yet arrived in the UK! We recommend doing this if possible. See our Information for Families: <https://www.swansea.ac.uk/international-campuslife/pre-arrival-information/preparing-for-swansea/guide-for-families/>

Many new students live in University Accommodation during their first year and will then move into Private Accommodation for the remainder of their time at Swansea. As there is limited University family accommodation, families often go into private accommodation from year one or bring their families just before the end of their course (if they wish to apply for the Graduate Route visa post study). For families, as well as the information below, please see our Guide for Families: <https://www.swansea.ac.uk/international-campuslife/pre-arrival-information/preparing-for-swansea/guide-for-families/>

Accommodation Application Timings

We advise that, if at all possible, you try and arrange accommodation before you arrive. Unfortunately, the University doesn't have on demand or emergency accommodation and so you could end up having to pay for a last minute hotel - which can be both costly and stressful.

For families, as there currently is a lack of family suitable accommodation in Swansea and surrounding areas, it is especially important that you either fully secure accommodation before you arrive or you travel alone first and your family joins you only when you have found someone for you all to live.

If you can't get permanent/long term accommodation sorted before arrival, you should at least have a plan for a temporary stay somewhere. **Please see the Sourcing Temporary or Short-Term Accommodation section of this leaflet (page 9).**

Types of Accommodation

There are 5 types of accommodation available to students.

These are:

- University accommodation (individual and family)
- Private landlords through Studentpad
- Private letting in a bespoke student accommodation centre
- Private accommodation via an external Letting Agent
- Private accommodation direct with a landlord.

There is further information around these available on the University Accommodation Services pages. Their information includes how to apply for University accommodation, fees and services available, as well as some guidance around private lettings. You will find that here: <https://www.swansea.ac.uk/accommodation/accommodation-options>



University Accommodation

The University has a wide range of accommodation available on Singleton Park Campus and Bay Campus, or located off campus at Hendrefoelen Student Village or Beck House.

University accommodation is conveniently located on campus, within walking distance or a short bus ride from campus. Most bedrooms are single occupancy with free wireless and internet access. You provide your own bed linen, towels, crockery, cutlery and cooking utensils. University Accommodation provides for a range of needs and budgets. A huge amount of information regarding accommodation at Swansea University can be found at: www.swansea.ac.uk/accommodation/

Swansea University Family Accommodation

Swansea University provides a small range of properties on Singleton Park and Bay Campuses, as well as very limited off-campus options.

A popular University accommodation choice is Ty Beck / Beck House, located within walking distance of Singleton Park Campus in the Uplands area, where there are 29 family flats available to students. You will need to apply early for this accommodation as it is usually in very high demand and can be oversubscribed.

You can find information on this property, how to apply, fees and services at <https://www.swansea.ac.uk/accommodation/accommodation-options>

There is currently a waiting list for family accommodation

You must apply as soon as possible for this accommodation. If you are offered a place, you **MUST** accept this before the deadline advised and remember that you may also need to provide evidence of any necessary visas to do so. Applying for a place and/or being on the waiting list does not mean that you will be offered a place. Do not travel with your family until you have signed a contract which confirms the accommodation is yours.

Private Accommodation - Via Studentpad

There are a lot of single room/shared house private accommodation to rent both in and around Swansea - mainly in Brynmill, Uplands, Sketty, Sandfields, Port Tennant and St. Thomas (information about these areas can be found in the **Locations and Neighbourhoods** section below).

Many local landlords advertise their properties via Studentpad so it's a good place to start your accommodation hunt! They list a large range of properties off campus and the properties are marked under a grading system. Private landlords must apply to register with Studentpad and the University Accommodation Services recommend this as a safe place for searching for non-University managed accommodation. For more information, visit the website: <https://swanseastudentpad.co.uk/Accommodation>

Private Letting in a Bespoke Student Accommodation Centre

There are several new and modern accommodation blocks or centres in Swansea that have been designed specifically for students. For many students, this offers a similar level of security and benefits as living in University accommodation - due to them being set up specifically to cater to student need.

Most offer private en-suite rooms within larger flats, as well as one/two bedroom options. Benefits of this type of accommodation include on site amenities such as concierge/front desk staff, security, laundries, gyms, social and study spaces and in some cases shops or cinema rooms! Some offer incentives, such as free bus passes, laundry passes or cashback - so make sure you are looking at several to find the best deal.

You need to apply to these centres directly to find out the type of accommodation they can offer, and it is important to remember that the contract is with the provider (not with the University):

- Student Roost: <https://www.studentroost.co.uk/locations/swansea>
- Prime Student Living: <https://www.primestudentliving.com/swansea/>
- Fresh Oldway Centre: <https://www.thisisfresh.com/swansea/oldway-centre>
- Fusion CRM Students: <https://www.crm-students.com/student-accommodation/swansea/seren-swansea/>
- CRM Students: <https://www.crm-students.com/student-accommodation/swansea/crown-place-swansea/>
- True Student: <https://www.truestudent.com/swansea>



Private Accommodation Via a Letting Agency

Letting / Estate Agencies can be a great option, often providing a “one-stop” service - managing all aspects of the letting, from contracts to maintenance, and have numerous properties available. You can provide them with a list of requirements (for example, two bedrooms, in a certain area, furnished or unfurnished) and they will provide options and show you the properties.

When you are looking, you may see houses that are listed with multiple bedrooms - unless stated, the price listed will usually be for an individual bedroom within the shared house. If you have friends you wish to share with, you can usually ask to rent multiple rooms to make up part of the whole of a house.

There are several established agencies across the area, including but not limited to those below*:

- Dawsons Property - A local agency with properties in many locations in the area - www.dawsonsproperty.co.uk
- Belvoir!- www.belvoir.co.uk/swansea
- Bay - www.bayestateagents.com
- Peter Alan - www.peteralan.co.uk
- Swansea 4 Students - <https://www.swansea4students.com/>
- Studentdigz - <https://www.studentdigz.com/>
- Condor Properties - <https://www.condorproperties.co.uk/properties/swansea>
- Unihomes - <https://www.unihomes.co.uk/student-accommodation/swansea>
- Accommodation for Students - <https://www.accommodationforstudents.com/swansea>

***Please note that we are providing these links from light touch web-based research only and cannot comment on the efficacy or reliability of any individual company or organisation.**

If you choose to use an agency, your contract will usually be held directly with them and all aspects of your agreement will be between you and the agent. The agent then holds a separate relationship with the property owner.

Private Lettings

If you choose to let directly from the owner of a property, this is a 'Private Letting'. The property owner (known as the 'Landlord') will usually arrange a contract with you directly and agree their responsibilities and roles.

You should not have to pay any 'Agency' fees if renting directly from a Landlord. Your rental contract will be held directly with the property owner, and they will usually be your sole point of contact and assistance for any issues that arise.

Similar to an Agency arranged let, you may see houses that are listed with multiple bedrooms and, unless stated, the price listed will usually be for an individual bedroom within the shared house. If you have friends you wish to share with you can usually ask to rent multiple rooms to make up part of the whole of a house.

There are a number of services where you can search for Private Lettings which include:

- Zoopla - www.zoopla.co.uk
- RightMove - www.rightmove.co.uk
- On The Market - www.onthemarket.com
- Open Rent - www.openrent.co.uk

We are also aware that many students and Landlords use the Overheard at Swansea University! Facebook group* to offer and request accommodation, so you may also want to join that: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/945080628890568>

***Please note that the University has no affiliation with, or control over, that Facebook group whatsoever.**

Rent Guarantors

Some lettings require an additional "guarantor" - another person or service who will agree to fulfill your rental payments should you fail to. Typically, this would be a UK National on whom a full referencing for credit and employment can be carried out.

If this option is not available to you, there are several independent Guarantor Services which are provided for a fee. Once again, we do not recommend or affiliate with these services, so you need to check them yourself, however some services include:

- Rent Guarantor - www.rentguarantor.com
- Housing Hand - www.housinghand.co.uk

The University, its staff or services cannot act as guarantors, so please ensure this is not your expectation. Some Landlords or Agents may waive the necessity for a UK guarantor if you pay a significant part of your accommodation fees up front. It might be worth offering to do this if they are asking for a guarantor and you are unable to provide one.

Signing a Contract

Once you have signed a contract it is legally binding and you may not be able to break this without the Landlord's permission. You cannot just walk away and switch to a different property (unless the house is legally unsafe). This is why you should not sign a contract in haste, and make sure you are happy with the property, location and your housemates before making a decision. The University cannot intervene in private contract agreements between Landlords and students, so make sure you think carefully before signing a contract.

Always make sure that you know who to contact should there be an issue with your accommodation. If renting privately, this may either be the Letting Agent or the Landlord direct.

The Welsh government provides further advice and information at gov.wales/renting-from-private-landlord - we recommend you read this before entering any contract.

If you have an issue with your contract, the **Students' Union Advice Centre** is best placed to advise you. Find their contact details here:

https://www.swansea-union.co.uk/support/advice_support_centre/



Accommodation Costs

There are many things you must consider when viewing a property and agreeing a contract. Your main consideration should be the total cost of housing and transport - not just the rent. Finding out all these costs, and checking they are within your budget, will help protect you from any financial shocks.

Please see the [University information on UK Finances and Living Costs](https://www.swansea.ac.uk/international-campuslife/living-costs/) (<https://www.swansea.ac.uk/international-campuslife/living-costs/>) as this has a detailed breakdown of costs associated with living in the UK.

According to Numbeo: <https://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/in/Swansea> (with a slight adjustment due to the expense and scarcity of family accommodation in Swansea) headline living costs as of August 2023 are:

- Family of four estimated monthly costs are £2,445.30 without rent (using the Numbeo estimator).
- A single person estimated monthly costs are £710.90 without rent.
- Family accommodation rent ranges from £600.00 to £1000.00
- University Family Flats are approximately £600.00- £900.00 (depending on number of bedrooms- these need to be applied for by the end of June)
- Single person (or couples sharing a room) from £450.00 (price often depends on whether some bills are included)
- Average Monthly Net Salary (Full Time Role After Tax) £1,662.00 (please note that international students can only work restricted hours, see the University's **Working During your Studies** information: <https://www.swansea.ac.uk/international-campuslife/pre-arrival-information/arrival-and-induction/working-during-studies/>)

Cost of living increases

It is important to note that the UK is currently experiencing very high increases in cost of living due to historically high inflation rates.

This is expected to continue for the foreseeable future and so you should consider this when planning your budgets.

Contract Fees and Agency Administration Charges

Some Letting Agents charge finding or administration fees - either at the beginning of a contract and/or as an on-going cost. Make sure that you ask about these and are clear before signing a contract.

There is legislation around fair fees and charges. You can find a guide to fees and charges at www.gov.wales/letting-fees-guidance-tenants. **You should read this information before agreeing to pay any fees or charges.**

Rental Deposits

Most rental contracts require a deposit payment. This is a set amount that you pay separately from the rent, which is held to make sure that you return the property and any furnishings in the same condition. **It is usual that you may have to pay the equivalent of between 4 and 6 months rent upfront in total to rent a house and you should be prepared for that.**

Some deposit may also be retained by a Landlord for the property to be cleaned after you leave. The deposit is held in a registered deposit protection scheme - **you must check that the deposit will be held in a government approved scheme.**

Deposits can be anywhere from 1-6 months' rent - so if your rent is £500pcm, your deposit could be £500 - £3000. The deposit can legally be used at the end of the tenancy to cover repairs for proven damage to property or furnishings. Should you fail to pay rent or leave your tenancy early, you may forfeit your deposit.

In the event of a dispute, the Deposit Protection Scheme will assist in managing this situation.

It is worth taking photographs of your rental property before you move in and again before you move out. Take care then you record any existing damage when you move in - to prevent you being unfairly charged for this later.

Bills and Essential Services

Services and bills may, or may not, be included in your rental price - **it is important you find out what is included and what is not BEFORE entering any contract as these charges will be your responsibility!**

The most common charges you should consider are:

- Gas and Electricity Charges
- Water charges
- Internet and Phone services
- Television License
- Council Tax (more below)

When viewing any property, you must establish which of these charges are “inclusive” in the cost and which are not. Charges that are not inclusive will need to be paid by you directly.

You can find some example costs in the ‘Living Costs’ table in the UK Finances and Living Costs page: <https://www.swansea.ac.uk/international-campuslife/living-costs/>

Rent

There is a broad variety of property available throughout the Swansea area, from “Studio” apartments (open-plan with one main large living and sleeping space and separate bathroom) to flats and houses with multiple bedrooms. Rents will vary depending on the size and the location of the property. Rents may be advertised as “PCM” which means Per Calendar Month, or “PW” which means Per Week

Typically 1 - 3 bedroom properties within a short walk of the Singleton Park Campus, in areas like Uplands and Sketty, are available from around £595 to £900PCM. Areas closer to Bay Campus, such as Port Tennant, have one-bedroom properties from around £400. The highly sought-after area of Mumbles has much higher rents, with small one-bedroom properties starting from £650pcm

Council Tax

If you live in a house wholly occupied by full time students, that property should be exempt from Council Tax. If you live with people who are not full-time students, then the Council Tax on that property will be adjusted to reflect that. So, for families, you will be eligible to pay Council Tax as you will only get a reduction for the full-time students in the house.

Please see further information on the MyUniHub page on Council Tax:

<https://myuni.swansea.ac.uk/myunihub/council-tax-exemption/>

Repairs and Damages

Make sure that, before you enter any contract, an inspection of the property is carried out to identify all existing damage or defects within the property. You should be provided with an agreed list and, at the end of your tenancy, this can be used to identify any new damage to the property caused during your tenancy.

If additional damage is found, additional repair costs may be due - these should be reasonable and agreed upon, although in the event of a dispute some or all of your deposit may be retained to cover these costs.

'Furnished' and 'Unfurnished' Properties

Rental properties usually fall into three categories:

- Unfurnished - you are paying for the property. Only “hard fittings” such as kitchen cabinets and bathroom fixtures are usually included, but no other furnishings
- Part Furnished - some items will be included, typically this will include essential basic items such as a sofa, beds and washing machine / fridge. This will vary from property to property.
- Fully Furnished - this will be an “instantly liveable” property with hard and soft furnishings provided throughout.

For Unfurnished or Part-Furnished properties, you must consider the costs of the furnishings you'll need to buy to make the property liveable. It is always worth asking at first if it would be possible for the Landlord to add any furniture for you - you never know, they may be willing to assist! There are a selection of charity shops within the city centre, such as the Wales Air Ambulance shop on College Street, and the YMCA shop on Portland Street. These shops stock pre-owned large furnishings such as sofas and beds, and a range of other items too. You may also wish to join an online “Swap Shop” or “Buy and Sell” groups on Facebook, or search [Gumtree](#), [Ebay](#) and [Facebook Marketplace](#), as people often list second hand or unwanted furniture on those sites. These can be great ways to find low-cost furnishings if needed.

You will be required to remove any of your own furniture and items if / when you leave the property. There may be a disposal charge applied if you leave things behind which the Landlord or Agent must dispose of.

For Part or Fully-Furnished properties, make sure an inspection is carried out of all furniture before you sign your contract (take photos if you can). You should be provided with a full list of the items (“inventory”) as well as notes on any existing damage and defects. If this is not completed and agreed, you may be held liable for costs of damages that were not noted in the first inspection.



Residential Locations and Neighbourhoods

Although, central Swansea, Brynmill, Sketty, St Thomas, Port Tennant and Sandfields are all popular student areas which you may have heard are the closest places to the University to live, it may be unrealistic to expect to get cheaper or family suitable accommodation in these areas. Many of the properties have been converted to Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMO's) and, as such, Landlords rent them out on a room by room basis rather than as whole properties.

Swansea has a diverse variety of neighbourhoods and areas, all of which have their own characteristics and friendly communities. Here are details of some of these areas:

- **Uplands** - Uplands is a small area located a few minutes' walk from Singleton Park Campus. It has a variety of bars, restaurants and shops, and is very popular with our student population. Transport links are excellent, with bus services connecting to both campuses and the city centre. It has a great mix of people, families and culture, with easy access to parks and schools.
- **Swansea Marina / SA1** - the Marina and SA1 areas, sited around the city's waterfront and docks, are very central but are much quieter than the city centre itself. This area is mostly popular with couples and young professionals, but it also offers family suitable housing too with great access to the seafront.
- **Swansea City Centre** - the city centre area has a wide variety of accommodation options to suit all needs. Please bear in mind that this is a relatively busy area, close to the heart of Swansea's main shopping and nightlife districts. Wind Street, the hub of night-time activity, can be busy and noisy until the early hours of the morning. However, city centre living is very convenient for shopping, transport links and access to services.
- **Mumbles / West Cross** - located to the west of Singleton Park Campus, Mumbles is a small "village" with independent shops and many family facilities - the neighbouring area, West Cross is mainly residential. These areas are highly desirable, and rents are higher here. Transport links to Singleton Park Campus and the city centre are good, however they are not on any of the UniBus routes. Discounted student bus tickets cannot be used to or from these areas. Travel to Bay Campus is difficult and takes considerable time.
- **Brynmill** - situated between the city centre and Singleton Park Campus, and with excellent links to both, Brynmill is a relatively quiet neighbourhood. Its centre, Brynymor Road, provides many independent shops and restaurants. It has great access to schools, parks and the beach, as well as other facilities, and has a relatively high student population.
- **St Thomas / Port Tennant** - these areas are located to the east of the city centre, meaning it is closer to Bay Campus - if this is your study location, this area is well worth considering. They are residential areas with services and amenities for families within easy reach. They are a short walk from the city centre and have great access to UniBus services.

There are many suburbs of Swansea (within a 1 mile radius of the city centre) that have both good public transport links into the city centre (you can [check bus routes](#) here) and which also have local school options. You may find that you will discover a family home more easily in these areas if that is what you are looking for. You will often find that these are the areas in which University staff are living, and tend to be more community focused. Some of these areas include Mount Pleasant, Winch Wen, Hafod, Cockett, Forestfach, Morriston, Duvant, Killay and Llansamlet.

You can find maps of all the Swansea Wards on the [Gov.UK website](#) here to help you.

Travel

Both the Singleton Park and Bay Campuses are served by numerous bus services - these run via core student population areas such as Uplands, Brynmill, Sketty and Hendrefoilan.

University busses (UniBus) can be used with a discounted Student Ticket, but other busses require full price tickets. Take a look at <https://www.firstbus.co.uk/south-west-wales> for information on services and costs.

If you intend to use a car, check for parking costs in the area, and consider distance to campus and petrol costs.



Living in Shared Accommodation - How To Do This Happily

It is very important when sharing a house or flat that you show respect to your housemates.

There is nothing worse than having bad feeling in a house that has been created by housemates acting in a manner that is distasteful to each other. It is really important that you sit down with your housemates at the beginning of your shared time together and set some ground rules.

These should include:

- If you have shared bills to pay, how, when and by whom will they be paid?
- Will everyone be responsible for their own cleaning and washing up or will you have a shared rota?
- What about the shared spaces like the living room, kitchen or bathroom?
- What is an agreeable period of time in which people must do their washing up?
- Will you cook separately or together?
- What time do you like to eat and will this be a problem if you all want to cook together?
- Will you have shared utensils or only use your own?
- What day must you put rubbish out for the Council to remove, and will you have a rota for this?
- If you have a washing machine, will you have set days for each person to do their washing? Will you have a rule that wet washing can or cannot be hung in shared spaces?
- Will you have an agreed time for music and televisions to be switched off or turned down? Will this be the same at the weekend or will the rules be relaxed?
- Will you be able to have friends stay over and if yes, how many and for how long?
- If you have problems in the house how will you resolve them?
- Do you need a weekly or monthly 'house meeting' to air any differences or sort out rotas etc?
- Have you discussed safety issues and is everyone aware of them?
- Do any of you smoke and if so, will this be allowed in certain rooms in the house (note: most Landlords do not allow smoking indoors) or just outside?

Through honest discussion and careful rule making at the beginning of your tenancy, you can ensure that you avoid tensions and problems later on.

It may seem strange and difficult to suggest such action to you new housemates but you could perhaps show them this booklet and use the pointers above as a guide.

Further Help and Advice Around Accommodation

It is important to know that Swansea University doesn't offer a direct advice and assistance service for students in private accommodation. You have a responsibility to source and secure your own accommodation.

If you encounter problems or have questions about your property or contract, you will need to make every effort to sort these out between yourself and the Landlord and/or Letting Agency.

The University takes no liability for you: not seeking or obtaining appropriate accommodation; for your failure to secure a suitable contract; or for any difficulties such as failure to pay your bills, rent or for any other financial or contractual issues you encounter. They are unable to compel a Landlord to release you from a contract or to intervene in legal disputes.

While serious issues are rare, there are a number of independent services and organisations available to assist you in the event of disputes or issues.

Some of these include:

Swansea University Students Union

The Students Union operates an 'Advice and Support' service - it is available online via live chat and by phone. Some of the services they provide include:

- Contract Reviews - they will review any contract before you sign it and provide explanations and guidance, this is a great service, and we recommend taking advantage of it.
- Housing Checklist - a list of things to consider when viewing a property
- Legal and Contract dispute assistance

Please see their website for further information and contact details: www.swansea-union.co.uk/support

Shelter Cymru

An independent organisation providing free help and support to those in need of legal advice, or in urgent need of housing assistance. They have online and phone services available as well as local offices. You can find details at www.sheltercymru.org.uk/get-advice

Swansea Council Housing Options

Provided by Swansea Council, this service provides emergency support as well as general advice and guidance on housing issues within Swansea. You can find them online at www.swansea.gov.uk/contacthousing.

Welsh Assembly Government

The Welsh Parliament / Assembly provides an online guide to laws and regulations they have established to manage the property rental sector. This is for the protection of both renters and property owners. Take a look at www.gov.wales/renting-property for general and detailed information.

UKCISA

You will also find helpful information about accommodation in the UK on the UKCISA website:

www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Studying--living-in-the-UK/Looking-for-housing



