International Summer School 2016 – a guide for parents and guardians

Dear Parents and guardians,

We are looking forward to welcoming your son/daughter and hope that he/she will have an enjoyable and productive stay with us. We understand that as parents, you may have some questions. This brief guide provides the answers to some that are frequently asked. Further information can be found in the Student Handbook, which will be mailed to all students attending this summer and also at www.sussex.ac.uk/iss. If you have any questions either before your son/daughter’s arrival, or during their time with us, please contact us at the address given at the end of this guide.

What should my son / daughter expect about life in England?

Living abroad and immersing yourself in another culture takes courage and may seem rather daunting, but remember that all ISS students are in the same position, and this tends to make for good bonding and camaraderie. Your son/daughter may feel lonely or disconcerted. We would like to reassure you that these feelings are very common and do generally pass quickly. To help them get over this, we advise you to help ensure that they arrive on time, and participate in the social activities that we have organised for students, such as the Welcome Reception or the Big Brighton Tour.

The British are famously rather reserved, and it may take a little longer to establish friendships, but there is a general tolerance in attitudes. Women are independent and accustomed to going out unaccompanied. Smoking in many public places is banned, and is generally less tolerated nowadays; alcohol is widely available to over 18s. The International Summer School Student Handbook gives detailed advice on life on campus, going out and keeping safe.

What is the campus like?

Sussex has a large, exciting campus with plenty of facilities, such as sports, which are free to Summer School students. Fields surround the campus; students from cities have noted that particularly near the accommodation, it feels very rural with an abundance of wildlife. However it is easy to leave the countryside behind and get into Brighton on the bus, which comes onto campus, or the train, both taking 10 minutes. Brighton is a huge attraction as it is one of the most exciting, cosmopolitan and beautiful cities in the UK.

Accommodation and what’s included?

All Summer School students living on campus will be housed in the brand new Northfield site in single en-suite rooms. This means that each room has its own bathroom. Your son/daughter can also live off campus in privately rented accommodation (though we ask any high school students to live on campus). Be aware, however, that Brighton is a tourist centre, and prices rise in the summer months. All campus accommodation is mixed sex, though there is the option for female-only flats, if requested prior to arrival.

All campus accommodation is self-catering. Kitchens are fully equipped with a cooker, fridge and all equipment needed. Bedrooms have a bed, cupboards, desk, chairs and phone. The price of accommodation includes all utilities. All students are
provided with a mattress, mattress protector, pillow, sheet, pillowcase, duvet, duvet cover, and towel. Students are expected to launder their own linen and other laundry. Student bedrooms are cleaned once a week and communal areas twice a week. Please note that cleaners will not tidy bedrooms or wash up after meals.

Students often make their own breakfast and get into groups to prepare an evening meal together or go out. There is a small supermarket on campus, or students can take the bus to larger supermarkets in town. There are plenty of cafés on campus for eating lunch. Brighton has a huge range of restaurants and cafés and is easy to get to by a 15-minute bus or train ride. Buses are frequent and come onto the campus.

**What clothes should my son / daughter pack?**

Be realistic about the size of suitcase your son/daughter is bringing! Campus has self-service laundry facilities and students are responsible for all their own laundry. Smart/casual style clothes with non-sneaker style footwear is acceptable at most clubs and restaurants in town. Remember to bring a jacket/fleece for evenings and light outer layers to cover up if the weather changes rapidly! The UK has varied and rapidly changing weather patterns, especially on the coast, so there might be a range of temperatures within a short time. Generally temperatures in the area are around 70F, 21C, but British summers are variable so a fleece and wet weather clothes are advisable. Good footwear may be particularly important if your son/daughter is taking one of our outdoor modules which may require a lot of walking over uneven ground. If your son/daughter is planning on outdoor activities such as swimming, hiking etc. remember to pack suitable items also. Brighton is an excellent shopping centre for any forgotten items.

**Important items my son / daughter should bring?**

He/she will need to bring any medication and prescriptions, spare contact lenses, glasses and contact lens cleaning fluid, and evidence of insurance. Before leaving home please check whether electrical devices (laptops, hair dryers, etc,) will only work on the voltage from your country. If it can auto switch, then all you need is a physical adapter to convert the plug socket on your appliance to a UK one. If the device works only on the voltage for your country, it will need a transformer as well as an adapter.

**How do I get in touch with my son/daughter once they have arrived in the UK?**

Students have a lot to take in when they arrive, so please do not worry too much if you have not heard from your son/daughter straight away. However, if you have asked them to call you and they have not been in touch, please contact us at the address at the end of this guide, and we will ask a residential advisor to check that they have arrived safely, and ask your son/daughter to get in touch with you.

**Email:** There are computer clusters throughout campus where students can check email. Some are open 24 hours. Students have to register (between 1 and 15 June) in order to use Sussex computing facilities. Residences are wired for internet access, and many areas on campus are set up for wireless access, so students may use their own laptops.

**By phone:** All students have a phone in their room and you should be able to phone your son/daughter as soon as they tell you their number. Students may choose to buy a mobile phone while they are here; ‘pay-as-you-go’ options, which do not require a monthly contract, are very popular among students. We provide information on this in the Student Handbook.

**By mail:** Students are given an address when registering (between 1 and 15 June), but occasionally this address changes before the programme start. If it changes, they will be notified. Mail is delivered to locked mailboxes, and mailbox keys are issued alongside room keys. If mail is likely to arrive before the student, it’s best to send it via the International Summer School Office, Jubilee Building, University of Sussex, Brighton, BN1 9SL, UK. The residence address will look like this:

- **Student name**
- Northfield (Flat x, Room x)
- University of Sussex
- Brighton
- BN1 9BJ
- UK
What should my son / daughter do if they become ill?

The University Health Centre (Phone +44 (0)1273 249049) provides doctors and nurses administering general medical care. It is open Mon-Fri 9am – 5pm. In the event of an emergency when the surgery is closed there is a recorded message to put students in touch with a doctor, or for emergency help they should dial 3333 (on campus) or 999 (off-campus). The Health Centre website, www.unimed.co.uk, provides information on symptoms of illnesses, health insurance, late-opening pharmacies and many other links.

Paying for treatment As most Summer School students will be in the UK for only a short period, they will not be covered by the NHS unless they are from the EEA or a country with a reciprocal arrangement. The NHS will only provide free emergency treatment to nationals of countries with reciprocal arrangements with the UK, and students are advised to carry appropriate insurance for any other treatment needed. Students who are not covered by the NHS must ensure that they have adequate and appropriate insurance for the whole of their stay in the UK. They will not be permitted to register unless they have proof of insurance. At the campus health centre they will be expected to pay for any treatment, and reclaim it from their own insurer.

How safe will my son / daughter be?

As a simple guideline, we would encourage your son/daughter to read the detailed information in the handbook on safety and looking after oneself when travelling. Some essential guidelines for your son/daughter are:

- Keep essential phone numbers with you.
- Don’t carry unnecessary / lots of cash and keep all valuables out of sight.
- If you lose credit cards cancel them at once.
- Don’t carry your passport with you unless you need it. Leave it in your locked room.
- Keep a photocopy of your passport, airline tickets and ID in your room.
- When travelling never leave your bags unattended or ask others to watch them for you.
- Be sensible, read the handbook on alcohol and going out.

How much money will my son / daughter need?

Your son/daughter will need some cash for immediate needs on arrival and travellers’ cheques could be useful too. It is difficult to predict how much money to bring in total, it depends on your son/daughter’s lifestyle and factors such as how much independent travel will be undertaken, but £100 per week is a rough guide, to cover costs of food, local travel, books and supplies and laundry. The International Summer School also organises additional local trips and social activities at an extra cost. Our Going Out trips guide lists the cost of each trip. We recommend that your son/daughter bring cash in small value notes (£5, £10, £20) and travellers’ cheques.

How do I send him/her money?

Cards from major credit card companies can usually be used to draw cash in the UK. You can also send an International Money Order to be cashed at a Post office, providing the Money Order is Canadian or US Citibank with the £ Sterling equivalent shown. Money can also be sent by bank draft, electronic and telegraphic transfer to a UK bank account.

How do I help my son / daughter to get the most out of the Summer School?

Your son/daughter has full information in the International Summer School Student Handbook on the University’s expectations of him/her, regarding academic matters. We would advise them to pay particular attention to assessment, general contribution to class and submission of work.

If my son / daughter travels after the Summer School - can you store his / her luggage?

Sorry, for a number of reasons we cannot do this. We do not have secure space nor are we insured for possible damage. Additionally we cannot accept luggage because of security implications.
Who should my son / daughter contact about problems?

The International Summer School Office in the Jubilee building, in the heart of campus, should be the first port of call. See below for details. The University offers a range of support services to students. See the Student Handbook for details.

Where do I get further information?

The International Summer School web address is www.sussex.ac.uk/iss. See the Student Handbook (available on the website) for details on all aspects of student life.

For emergencies contact the International Summer School office
Phone: +44 (0)1273 877556 / +44 (0)1273 678406
Email: issoffice@sussex.ac.uk

Out of hours, and in an emergency, call 24-hour Security on campus at +44 (0)1273 678234

For academic matters contact Chris Sykes, ISS Director, International Summer School, Jubilee Building, University of Sussex, Brighton, BN1 9SL, UK. Phone: +44 (0)1273 678454 / Email: c.sykes@sussex.ac.uk

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any further queries. We look forward to welcoming your son/daughter to Sussex this summer.